

De Facto School Choice and Socioeconomic Segregation in Secondary Schools of Argentina

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Abstract

Argentina's educational system is made out of a State-run and a private sector. Private school choice is subject to household income since all private schools charge fees, which may, however, vary widely. Drawing on household survey data and focusing on the secondary school level in Buenos Aires, we first build a nested logit model and attempt to identify determinants of public-private school choice across the city's neighborhoods. Second, we analyze socioeconomic segregation across public, private religious and private non-religious schools. Results show that the education of the head of household and income are good predictors in the school choice decision. Still, we note that privatization encompasses very different social strata and thus Buenos Aires is not strictly the case where private schools serve exclusively children from well-off backgrounds. Finally, segregation indices show a quite homogeneous socioeconomic composition within each type of school and three quite different realities among each sector.

Key words: school choice; segregation; secondary school, privatization; Argentina.
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1. Introduction

The Argentine educational system is federally organized and thus schools are subject to the statutory and regulatory requirements of each of the twenty-four jurisdictions (23 provinces and the Autonomous City of Buenos Aires), as stated in the Constitution. Each jurisdiction has significant social, economic and political differences and these impacts on the organization of their pertaining educational systems for which they hold a great deal of autonomy. Nonetheless, for much of the twentieth century, the educational system was in practice centralized by the national government. (Morduchowicz 1999).

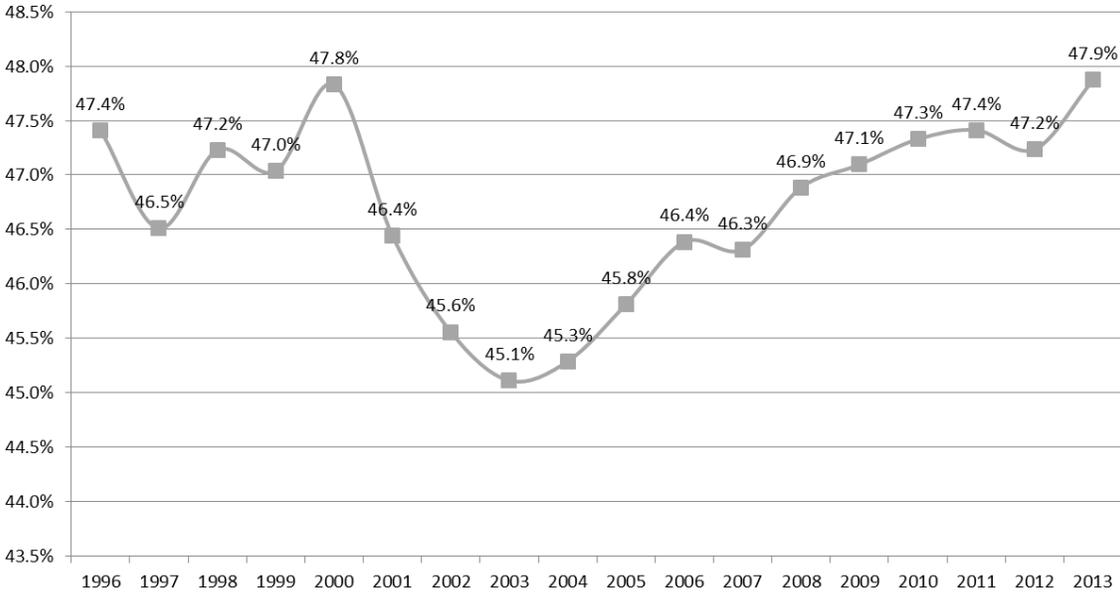
Until the mid-1960s, the Federal State had almost complete control over the financing, regulatory and pedagogical fields and the system showed a scenario where private schooling made up for less than 10% of total enrolment while reaching schooling rates above the regional average (SITEAL 2006; James 1987; Narodowski and Andrada 2001; Morduchowicz 2001). However, throughout the late 1960s, a series of new regulations began to change the state of affairs as regards private education initiating a steady process of growth in private schools enrollment, both in absolute and relative terms. As a result of this process, private schools were granted more pedagogical autonomy, State regulation faded, and government expenditure on private schools increased (Narodowski 1999; Petrucci 2005). In parallel, during the 1970s and 1990s, the federal government transferred school governance to provinces abandoning a long-standing traditional centralized structure (see Tommasi 2006).

As is the case of many Latin American countries, Argentina's population is highly concentrated in a few cities, thus determining that 65% of the total enrollment is concentrated in 4 out of the 24 jurisdictions, namely the provinces of Buenos Aires, Córdoba, Santa Fe and the City of Buenos Aires which also show private education shares above the national average for kindergarten, primary, secondary and tertiary levels (DiNIECE 2015): private education represents about 50% in the City of Buenos Aires, 35% in the province of Buenos Aires, 33% in Córdoba, and 30% in Santa Fe (Moschetti 2013). While these rates are somewhat lower in the other jurisdictions, in all of them private education has been steadily gaining ground (Narodowski and Moschetti 2013).

Among all provinces, the City of Buenos Aires has shown the highest private enrollment share over the last 20 years. Currently, more than half of all students in kindergarten, primary, secondary and tertiary levels (Common Education) attend private institutions. This rate was 50.7% for 2013, according to the last available data (DiNIECE 2015). In

particular, the secondary level shows a long-standing private education tradition only affected by the socioeconomic crisis Argentina went through in 2001-2003. Figure 1 shows the evolution of the private enrollment rate for secondary education.

Figure 1. Private secondary education enrolment rate. City of Buenos Aires. 1996-2013



Source: Own preparation based on figures from DiNIECE – Ministry of Education

Private education share for each level shows the dramatic significance of the private sector in the city’s educational system: Kindergarten, 56%; Primary level, 48%; Secondary School, 48%; and Tertiary (non-universitary), 62% (DiNIECE 2015).

Despite the lack of systematic standardized evaluations, some studies evidence a remarkable increase of the social prestige and quality perception of the private sector over the public during the last decades especially for primary and secondary levels (Scialabba, 2006; Gómez Schettini, 2007; Tiramonti, 2009).

Within the State-run sector, each child is guaranteed a place in a school located in the corresponding school district. In practical terms, however, these zoning regulations are hardly ever enforced, thus determining a *de facto* or by default free school choice system

(Narodowski 2002; Narodowski and Nores 2002; Davies 2004) that operates within the boundaries of the public sector. In parallel, all families can choose to exit the public sector and educate their children in private schools. Nonetheless, choice in those cases is relentlessly subject to the possibility of families to pay their way out of the traditional system and afford private school fees (Narodowski 2008).

Private education in the City of Buenos Aires has a long-standing tradition and presents a remarkable heterogeneity. Among religious schools, many are Roman Catholic but there is also a great deal of Evangelical, Jewish and Muslim institutions. The country's immigration heritage is also present: there are Italian, Galician, Spanish, Japanese, Turkish, and Armenian schools, among many others. Finally, the late 1950s saw the beginning of many experimental schools: Waldorf, progressive, constructivist, conservative, just to mention some. While unfortunately there is no statistical information regarding the different types of private schools (except for the distinction between religious and non-religious) several works account for this diversity (Newland 1995; Morduchowicz 2001; Narodowski and Andrada 2001; Perazza 2011).

Government expenditure on private education largely explains why private school fees vary significantly depending on the case and providing quite a heterogeneous supply. This widely spread subsidy system consists of direct transfers of public monies to private schools which contribute to the decline in prices of private education making it more accessible for middle and middle-low socio economic status (SES) families. Government funding may be allocated both to religious and non-religious schools on the basis of a series of criteria among which the students' socioeconomic status and the school's location are considered the most determinant. However, some studies reveal that, in practice, these criteria are not usually observed and thus discretionary mechanisms tend to prevail (Morduchowicz 1999; Mezzadra and Rivas 2010).

In general terms, some studies have shown that it is middle and high-income sectors that mostly choose private schools. In particular, for the case of Buenos Aires and some other urban areas, these sectors seem to have definitely abandoned State-run schools (Scialabba 2006; Narodowski 2008). Furthermore, as some other studies have observed, this 'exit' strategy –in the classic sense developed by Hirschman (1970)– is also being increasingly adopted by some low-income sectors (Gómez Schettini 2007).

Socioeconomic segregation has been the outstanding consequence of the privatization process, as has been evidenced from multiple perspectives. In the 1980s, Braslavsky's (1985) classical works reported the existence of 'differentiated schooling circuits' by

socioeconomic level. Other works observed an educational context that, by the beginning of the 1970s, had begun to reflect the logics of polarization of the social structure and pauperization of middle classes. It is in this sense that Veleda (2005) addressed the relation between educational and socio-urban segregation and identified the existence of segregated markets that amplify social differences, especially in densely-populated areas. Other studies used the concept of ‘fragmentation’ (Ziegler 2007; Tiramonti 2009) to address these dynamics across urban areas of Argentina. Unlike processes of segmentation, fragmentation processes evidence the growing difficulty of conceiving the educational social structure as an integrated whole with measurable differences between ‘circuits’ or ‘segments’.

In view of the singularity of the Argentine case, where privatization gained ground and ran parallel to a dramatic process of segregation without voucher schemes or demand-side subsidies (Narodowski 2002), this paper seeks to offer statistical evidence regarding school choice determinants and to analyze its consequences on socioeconomic segregation. Focusing on the secondary school level, the aim of this work is then twofold. We first build a nested logit model and attempt to distinguish potential variables that influence the public/private decision and understand the school choice dynamics across the city’s neighbourhoods. Second, we analyze the impacts of these dynamics on socioeconomic segregation across public, private-religious and private non-religious schools. In that sense, in the next section we discuss a number of studies that have analyzed school choice and introduce some key concepts to understand its dynamics. Then, we present a conceptual framework that aims to characterize the operation of the Argentine education system in a systemic way. After some methodological considerations, we present some descriptive statistics followed by the results of our logit model and segregation indices. We finally conclude discussing the major findings.

2. School Choice and segregation

The United Kingdom, U.S.A and Chile, among others, implemented school choice policies or programs in the 1980s. Since then, and in this respect, the debate that Friedman (1955) brought to light has become more and more intense. According to what its supporters have highlighted, efficiency, efficacy and quality achievement are its potential advantages, within a framework of free school choice (Chubb and Moe 1990; Moe 1995; Hoxby 1996, among others). They also consider that parental involvement, satisfaction, empowerment and a sense of community would help to revive public education, improving students’ achievement as a result. Without the introduction of competition among school, this could

not be achieved within this market theory. This competition would in turn result in a variety of school programs (Bosetti 2004). There are some who do not completely agree on this matter, and have not only warned extensively about the lack of empirical correlate in these statements, but have also emphasized racial and socioeconomic segregation as the most striking consequences of these programs regarding free school choice (Ball 1993; Gewirtz, Ball and Bowe 1995; Levin 1998, among others). These researchers consider that school choice would provide with the needs of only particular small groups, increasing and deepening social fragmentation. As a result, those who show social and economic resources would benefit from this situation, asserting their privileges (Bosetti 2004). In this sense, we consider the contribution of Levin (2002) and Levin, Cornelisz and Hanisch-Cerda (2013) of great value. It also provides a comprehensive framework in order to evaluate these programs and educational systems in general, taking into account: (a) freedom of choice, (b) productive efficiency, (c) equity, (d) social cohesion.

‘Freedom of choice’, according to Levin (2002), refers to the right that families have to choose schools for their children within the existing educational alternatives so as to match their ‘values, educational philosophies, religious teachings, and political outlooks’ (2002, p. 162). In order to fulfill this criterion, and taking into account parental preferences, which are widely diverse, an educational system should offer an equally diverse supply structure. The logical conclusion is, then, that uniform supply or limited enrolment mechanisms pose a restriction to freedom of choice.

‘Productive efficiency’ is described as ‘the maximization of educational results for any given resource constraint’ (2002:162). It might be considered the most important aspect of the Argentine ‘quasi-State monopoly’. Within this scenario, there is, on the one hand, a growing demand for education; on the other, financial limitations associated with the granting of full coverage, which implies a true challenge for provincial States. These are, according to the current legislation, the main responsible agents for the education system. Two key elements of market-driven solutions are precisely freedom of choice and productive efficiency, which define the criteria usually emphasized by voucher advocates.

The ‘equity’ and ‘social cohesion’ criteria somehow determine a trade-off in relation to the previous two. The meaning of ‘equity’, according to Levin, is fairness in access to educational opportunities, resources, and outcomes by gender, social class, race, language origins, and geographical location of students’ (2002:163). As regards ‘social cohesion’, this concept implies the existence of an educational offer equally enough so as to provide students with a common experience in the exercise of the values of a given society.

Considering the context of differentiated education systems, and due to the wide variety of market alternatives, school choice unfolds itself as a multiple-staged and complex process (Bowe, Ball and Gewirtz 1994), which exceeds the mere individual taste to fall into the social domain. Micropolitics of school choice (Andrada 2002) is an issue that has fostered a series of sociological investigations concerning the characterization of social actors' behavior. In this respect, we can mention those who have dealt with this issue: Echols and Willms (1995) in Scotland, Ball, Gewirtz and Bowe (1996), Tooley (1997), Ball and Gewirtz (1997), Reay and Ball (1998) and Ball and Vincent (1998) for secondary schools in England, Langouët and Léger (2000) in France, Goldring and Hausman (1999) and Holme (2002) for the U.S., Villarroya (2003) in Spain, Davies and Quirke (2007) in Canada, and Kosunen (2013) in Finland, among others. In particular, and by means of a similar analytical strategy to the one we use in this study, Lauen (2007) examined whether and how elementary school and neighborhood context influence the exercise of school choice in Chicago.

Research suggests that the process and context of parental decision-making is far more complex than a traditional rational cost-benefit analysis. Considering this perspective, school choice turns out to be a social process more than an individual one, where social class and networks play an important if not determinant role. According to this theory, a mixture of rationalities is employed by parents, who resort to their own personal values and goals, and those of their personal or professional network to collect information. The capacity to make informed choices seems to be limited to the access to relevant and valuable information (Bosetti 2004).

Taking into account the way in which public-private school choice decision is exercised, Goldring and Phillips (2008) consider that, on the one hand, the process for the city of Nashville could be analyzed in terms of 'push and pull' mechanisms. On the other hand, two factors are certainly critical to determine public schools exiting. Nevertheless, these authors suggest that exiting is not necessarily associated with the fact that parents are not satisfied with the corresponding public school (push). The association, instead, should be made with respect to the fact that parents consider private schools as environments where parental involvement is facilitated (pull).

This may not be the case as regards the City of Buenos Aires, where evidence shows that dissatisfaction with public schools still explains to a large extent the exit process (Scialabba 2006). However, it could be of great interest to regard these 'push' and 'pull' mechanisms as complements to the concepts of 'exit' and 'voice' (Hirschman 1970; Di

John 2007). Capacity and possibility to express dissatisfaction defines the notion of 'voice'. As for 'exit', this notion suggests that the fact that individuals leave an organization could be a consequence of dissatisfaction. Given these two notions, they shed light on the logic of organization and distribution of students within the Argentine educational system. In the case private schools, they operate a pull mechanism, providing a potential environment for exercising voice. At the same time, recent research shows that public schools are not considered as voice-friendly institutions, which pushes families away towards the so-called 'exit sector' (Tuñón and Halperín 2010).

Recently, Butler, Carr, Toma and Zimmer (2013) have produced an article in which they analyze the role that socioeconomic status, race, and ethnicity play in school choice decisions when educational alternatives are to be considered. They also suggest that charter schools attract families with higher SES. This is similar to what occurs in the case of traditional nonsectarian private schools. This research uses a nationally representative sample from the Early Childhood Longitudinal Study in the U.S.

For the case of Argentina, parental decision to exit the traditional state sector, a current growing practice in the urban middle and upper middle classes (Naradowski and Andrada 2000; Narodowski and Andrada 2001; Morduchowicz 2001), has brought about consequences in terms of segregation and fragmentation (Braslavsky 1985; Braslavsky and Filmus 1987; Duschatzky and Corea 2002; Veleda 2005; Tenti Fanfani 2007; Tiramonti 2009). The motives of these sectors to abandon public school have been analyzed, either directly or indirectly, in some studies, which is the case, for example, of those by López (2002) for Quilmes district, in the southern suburban belt of the City of Buenos Aires, and by Scialabba (2006) for the case of the City of Buenos Aires. Specific information can be found in these studies as regards the perceptions of the current situation and quality of education together with the public-private differences perceived by school choosers. A further approach by Veleda (2005) and del Cueto (2004) brings about a typology in terms of strategies and criteria that the middle classes of the suburban belt of the City of Buenos Aires, on the one hand, and gated communities on the other exercise for school choice. Narodowski and Gottau (2014) have demonstrated that public secondary school choice by middle and upper middle classes and the construction of a specific social identity are intimately interconnected. As a final point, the study of Gómez Schettini (2007) that has been mentioned, dealing with lower income sectors, shows among other issues an incipient social actor who, even under difficult conditions, chooses private education.

3. A systemic approach to understanding the structure of the Argentine educational system

In Argentina, the school choice dynamics function within the complexity of the public-private provision context. During the late 1960s, as it has been noted, a number of changes at a structural level began to be applied to the education system in Argentina. This was performed by implementing new regulations, the result being the growth of the private sector which, in turn, gave shape to the current organization of the system (Narodowski and Andrada 2001).

‘Quasi-monopoly’ is the term used to describe the current organization of the system. This description is facilitated by a structural approach that conceptually articulates the dynamics of the public and private sectors of education (Narodowski 2008). This approach proposes that there are two sectors: on the one hand, a traditional sector monopolized by the State, which includes, in general terms, children from low-income households; on the other hand, an exit sector of private subsidized and non-subsidized schools that is functional to the State sector in terms of public expenditure efficiency, has a wider scope for decision-making, reveals capacity to structure autonomous education projects, and it mostly serves middle and upper-middle income sectors.

Jean D’Aspremont and Jaskold Gabszewicz (1985) originally developed the concept of quasi monopoly in the sense we use it herein. These authors analyze the following situation: thanks to a steady increase in demand, a monopoly structure, already in existence, allows for a generation of a new closed supply structure, as long as it only absorbs the exceeding demand that the old monopoly cannot capture because of several structural restrictions.

By means of the concept of quasi-State monopoly, it is possible for us to understand that the increasing enrollment in private education in Argentina cannot be simply considered as the result of a ‘withdrawal’, ‘weakening’ or ‘disappearance’ of the State, but instead, as the result of a conversion in its actions involving a shift from a monopolistic performance – regarding the system administration– to a greater and complex structure. This complex structure is, in itself, a contribution that guarantees the quantitative growth of the education system as a whole, not by employing the ordinary method to increase public schools enrollment, but by combining and balancing this growth with that of private schools.

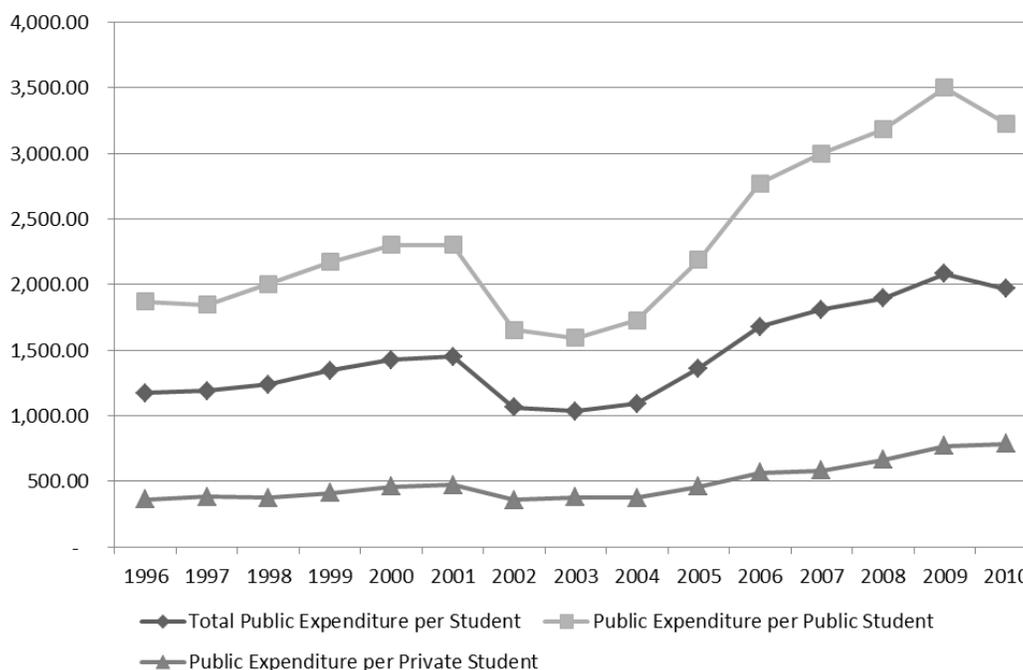
There is not a direct competition among the private sector as such and the traditional State sector, but rather a contribution of the private sector to the State sector maintenance. The

way in which this is achieved is by granting coverage where it is impossible for the old State monopoly to set up its presence (Narodowski 2008). In this sense, there has been a redefinition of the provision, regulation and financing of the educational system taking into account the logic of the quasi-State monopoly: the existence of a dynamic balance receives the support of the quasi-State monopoly model. This dynamic balance enables the maximization of per-student funding transferred to the traditional public sector. At the same time, exiting to the private sector is encouraged by minimum State funding (Narodowski and Moschetti 2013; Moschetti 2013; Narodowski and Moschetti 2014). Private spending on education on the part of middle and high-income sectors allow the State financial flow to be allocated to the schooling of low-income sectors. Understanding the logic of the privatization process of education is impossible without establishing a relation with the future of public education and the demand for education. The State indirectly allows the demand to exercise the freedom of choice as an individual educational right.

As for the City of Buenos Aires, this point articulates with the cost efficiency dimension stated in Levin's model (2002). If we observe Figure 2, we can see that public expenditure per student in public schools is four or even five times higher than public expenditure on private schools throughout the whole period.

Given the public and private sectors, the distribution of students within the city's education system is almost equal between both. A reduced fraction of the total expenditure on education –24% for 2010– as shown in Figure 2 is enough to fund the whole private sector –52% of the total enrollment for the same year–. Meanwhile, the remaining 76% of the total expenditure is allocated to the public sector (48%). Evidently, private expenditure on schooling –which is represented by school fees that those families that have decided on private schools should pay monthly–, certainly finances their children's education. At the same time, it also contributes to sustain public schooling, maximizing the available public funding per public school student. Middle and upper-middle classes are the two segments that mostly send their children to private schools. This fact helps verify the fiscal progressivity of the quasi-monopolistic structure. At the statistical level, this assumption has been put to the test for the case of the Province of Buenos Aires (Mezzadra and Rivas 2010) and Puig y Epele (2013) have arrived at the conclusion that public expenditure in the district is progressive and pro-poor.

Figure 2. Public expenditure per student – City of Buenos Aires. Total, Public, Private 1996-2010 In 1993 Argentine Pesos



Source: Own preparation based on the information provided by DiNIECE and CGECSE – Ministry of Education.

An educational system with the quasi-State monopoly model denotes a cost-efficient option. This alternative allows that most of the public resources turn out to be available for the lowest income sectors to benefit from them, while the middle and upper-middle classes make use of private resources and a small portion of public funding for education (Narodowski 2008).

Nevertheless, the question is raised regarding the impact on social cohesion and equity that this scheme puts in motion. (Levin 2002): the studies that have been discussed suggest that socioeconomic segregation is a conceivable consequence of a system characterized by a free school choice (without vouchers), the actual possibility of choosing schools is the result of families’ economic capability.

This study proposes the analysis of a statistic evidence so as to attain a more accurate understanding of primary school choice performance in the City of Buenos Aires, and its potential segregation effects.

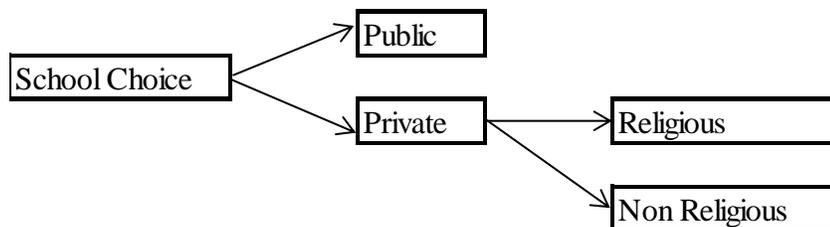
4. Data and Method

The data used in this research is that provided by the Annual Household Survey of the City of Buenos Aires for 2013. It is an annual survey conducted by the General Bureau of Statistics and Census (Dirección General de Estadística y Censos - DGEyC). The survey involves sampling a large number of private homes spread over the territory of the City and is designed so that the results of the survey allow representation of the entire City and each of its communes (DGEyC 2013). The survey aims to provide information on the socioeconomic status of the population of the City regarding living conditions, household income, employment, health and education. The target population consists of the inhabitants of the City and the sample gathers information from 5,899 households (14,986 individuals).

4.1 School Choice Decision

In order to identify the potential factors affecting school choice in Buenos Aires, we have resorted to a sequential logit model. The analysis focuses on the secondary level of education. Secondary school education in Argentina is compulsory for all children aged between 13 to 18 years.

The insight behind this sequential logit model is that instead of making a decision among three alternatives (public, private religious and private non-religious education) at the same time, the decision of the families is, according to Scialabba's (2006) findings, first, between public and private education, and then those families who decide to send their children to a private school choose between religious and non-religious education. Diagrammatically, the sequential series of binary choices are,



In each choice, family i maximize its utility between the two choices they have. For example, if $U_{i,Public}$ is the utility of sending their kids to a public school and $U_{i,Private}$ the utility of sending them to a private school, then family i send them to a public school if

$$U_{i,Public} > U_{i,Private}$$

Now, considering the utilities of each alternative to be composed of a random and a deterministic part, $U_{i,j} = V_{i,j} + \varepsilon_{i,j}$, (j =Public or Private school in the first decision and Religious and Non-Religious in the second decision) where $V_{i,j}$ is the deterministic part of the utility depending on observed attributes of i and j and $\varepsilon_{i,j}$ is a random term. Then, random utility maximization renders the following probability that family i send their kids to a public school:

$$\Pr(Y_i = 1) = \Pr(U_{i,Public} > U_{i,Private}) \quad (1)$$

Where $Y_i = 1$ denotes family i sends their kids to a public (Religious) school and $Y_i = 0$ indicates the family sends them to a private (Non-Religious) school. Equation (1) can be written as,

$$\begin{aligned} \Pr(Y_i = 1) &= \Pr(V_{i,Public} + \varepsilon_{i,Public} > V_{i,Private} + \varepsilon_{i,Private}) \\ &= \Pr(\varepsilon_{i,Private} - \varepsilon_{i,Public} < V_{i,Public} - V_{i,Private}) \end{aligned}$$

Assuming an extreme value distribution for the random utility terms, the probability of choosing a public education (private religious education in the second decision) can be written in more familiar terms as the logit model probabilities (Butler, Carr, Toma and Zimmer, 2013)

$$\Pr(Y_i = 1) = \frac{e^{V_{i,Public}}}{1 + e^{V_{i,Public}}}$$

The attributes considered in this analysis affecting the deterministic part of the random utility are:

- Socio economic status
- Neighborhood vs shantytown
- Head of household (HH) education level
- HH female

- HH Foreigner
- Number of children in high school age

Therefore, our specification is,

$$V_{i,Public} = \alpha_0 + \alpha_1 Q_1 + \alpha_2 Q_2 + \alpha_3 Q_3 + \alpha_4 Q_4 + \alpha_5 S + \alpha_6 HH_F + \alpha_7 HH_{sec} + \alpha_8 HH_{uni} + \alpha_9 HH_{foreign} + \alpha_{10} \#Children + c_j$$

Where Q_k is an indicator variable adopting the value one if the household belongs to the k quintile of income (first quintile is the richest one), HH_F is a dummy variable adopting the unit value if the head of the household is female, HH_{sec} and HH_{uni} are binary variables indicating that the head of the household has secondary or university education, $\#Children$ is the number of children in high school age in the family and c_j are communes indicator variables.

4.2 Segregation Indices

So as to estimate the level of segregation among the high school children in the city of Buenos Aires, we use two different segregation indices: Duncan Dissimilarity Index and Gorard's Segregation Index. The Duncan index is computed with,

$$D = \frac{1}{2} \sum_{i=1}^I \left| \frac{EV_i}{EVT} - \frac{ENV_i}{ENV_T} \right|$$

Where i is a school of one type (public, private religious or private non-religious), EV are the vulnerable students and ENV are non-vulnerable students, while EVT and ENV_T are the total, vulnerable and non-vulnerable, students in the city, respectively. Vulnerable students were defined as those belonging to a family whose HH has completed primary education or less. The Duncan index range from zero to one where zero represents an equalitarian distribution and one indicates absolute dissimilarity.

An alternative measure of segregation is the Gorard's index:

$$S = \frac{1}{2} \sum_{i=1}^I \left| \frac{EV_i}{EVT} - \frac{(ENV_i + EV_i)}{ENVT + EVT} \right|$$

The key difference between both indexes is in the base figure used to compare the distribution of any particular group. Hence, while D compares the proportion of two groups with each other by sub-area (defined by the sum of students with a particular characteristic), S compares the proportion of one group with the total for that sub-area.

5. Results

5.1 Some descriptive statistics

As presented above, the private sector is composed of religious and non-religious schools. Table 1 shows the percentage of children attending each type of secondary school according to the 2013 Annual Household Survey. Student enrollment is distributed along the 15 communes of the City of Buenos Aires and each of these communes is described in terms of the socioeconomic status (SES) of its inhabitants.

Table 1. Percentage of children attending secondary school by commune and type of school. City of Buenos Aires. 2013.

Commune	SES	Public	Private Religious	Private Non-Religious
1	Middle	74.92	20.94	4.15
2	High	14.89	50.62	34.49
3	Middle	56.70	22.49	20.81
4	Low	71.50	20.43	8.07
5	Middle	42.46	39.90	17.64
6	High	41.33	34.12	24.55
7	Low	50.31	34.29	15.40
8	Low	76.61	11.83	11.56
9	Low	47.26	36.62	16.12
10	Middle	42.69	49.02	8.29
11	High	32.34	43.78	23.88
12	High	36.01	38.81	25.17
13	High	15.93	38.31	45.76
14	High	53.30	42.94	3.76
15	Middle	57.78	24.29	17.93
Total		48.56	32.95	18.49

Source: Own preparation based on figures from 2013 EAH City of Buenos Aires (Annual Household Survey)

Unsurprisingly, low SES communes hold the highest public education rates whilst high SES communes show higher private rates. However, low SES communes still show high private education rates when compared to the national rate (28.4% for 2012) (DINIECE 2013). A similar but subdued phenomenon can be seen among school population living in shantytowns, Buenos Aires' greater vulnerability areas. Table 2 shows the percentage of students attending each type of school considering whether they live in shantytowns.

Table 2. Percentage of children attending secondary school by shantytown and type of school. City of Buenos Aires. 2013.

Shantytown	Public	Private Religious	Private Non-Religious	Total
No	43.80	35.81	20.39	100
Yes	95.02	4.98	0.00	100
Total	48.56	32.95	18.49	100

Source: Own preparation based on figures from 2013 EAH City of Buenos Aires (Annual Household Survey)

According to these figures, around 5% of children living in shantytowns attend private religious high schools, presumably low-fee subsidized schools, and there are not families living in shantytowns and sending their children to private non-religious high schools.

Both the data from the communes and that of shantytowns anticipate that privatization is quite a ubiquitous phenomenon in the City of Buenos Aires encompassing very different social strata to some extent. This is confirmed when we observe the enrollment rates by quintile of household per capita income. Table 3 shows that almost 50% of the city's families belonging to the 4th quintile and 32% of families belonging to the 5th quintile in fact opt for private high schools for their children.

Table 3. Percentage of students attending secondary school by quintile of household per capita income and school type. City of Buenos Aires. 2013.

Quintile	Public	Private Religious	Private Non-Religious
1 (Richest)	6.586	51.35	42.06
2	20.48	48.72	30.79
3	33.94	44.45	21.62
4	50.16	35.64	14.19
5 (Poorest)	67.69	20.14	12.18
Total	48.56	32.95	18.49

Source: Own preparation based on figures from 2013 EAH City of Buenos Aires (Annual Household Survey)

Table 4 offers an overview of the characteristics of the head of household's maximum education level by type of school. As it can be seen from the table, the more educated is the HH the less the percentage of children attending public secondary education.

Table 4. Maximum schooling level of the HH by school type (%). City of Buenos Aires. 2013

HH education level	Public	Private Religious	Private Non-Religious	Total
No formal education	0.27	0.00	0.00	0.27
Incomplete Primary	3.31	0.00	0.21	3.51
Complete Primary	7.80	1.69	0.38	9.87
Incomplete Secondary	11.54	3.76	1.42	16.71
Complete Secondary	11.27	6.71	3.88	21.86
Incomplete University	7.52	6.06	3.41	16.99
Complete University	6.86	14.73	9.20	30.79
Total	48.56	32.95	18.49	100

Source: Own preparation based on figures from 2013 EAH City of Buenos Aires (Annual Household Survey)

5.2 Sequential Logit Model

Table 5 shows the estimation of a sequential logit model. Columns (1) and (2) with the heading 'Public Education' present the estimation of a logit model for the choice between public and private education high school education and the last two columns of the table show the estimation of a logit model for the choice between private religious and private non-religious education.

The first column of the table shows the explanatory variables affecting the deterministic part of the utility as shown above. The next two columns show the estimated coefficients of a logit model for a dependent variable adopting the value one for those children attending a public high school and adopting the value zero for those attending a private school. The last two columns in the table show the estimated coefficients of a logit model for a dependent

variable adopting the unit value for those children attending a private religious high school institution and adopting the value zero for those attending a private non-religious school. For both logit estimations column (1) shows the estimated coefficients while column (2) shows the odds ratios. The estimation sample comprises all individuals between 13 and 18 years old.

In the first logit estimation, the base category is a child living in Commune 1 of the city, whose family belongs to the poorest quintile of per capita household income, with an Argentine male HH with primary or less education.

In terms of interpretation of the model we use odds ratios presented in column (2) of both estimations. These odds ratios suggest that families living in a shantytown have almost 6 times more chances, than families living in the city, of sending their children to a public high school. Families located in the second highest quintile of income have almost 3.7 times less chance to send their children to a public school and families in the highest quintile of income have around 10 times less chance to send their children to a public school. Coefficients of income quintiles decrease in absolute value suggesting the chances to send children to public high school increase for families in the poorer quintiles.

Coefficients on education of the head of household show a similar pattern than income. Both coefficients are negative and decreasing in absolute magnitude as education increases. Both odds ratios are less than one suggesting that as the education of the head of household increases there are less and less chances that the family sends their children to a public school. A family with a HH with secondary education has around 2.2 less chance to send their children to a public high school while this figure is 4.32 for families with a HH with university education. Families with more children in high school age have more chance to send their kids to a public high school.

Finally, families living in communes 2, 7, 12 and 13 have less chances of sending their children to a public high school than families living in Commune 1.

Table 5. Sequential logit model estimates

Dependent variable:	Public Education		Private Religious Education	
	(1)	(2)	(1)	(2)
Shantytown	1.770*** (0.547)	5.873*** (3.213)	NA	NA
Commune 2	-1.597** (0.721)	0.203** (0.146)	-1.349 (0.827)	0.259 (0.215)
Commune 3	-0.223 (0.549)	0.800 (0.439)	-1.665* (0.851)	0.189* (0.161)
Commune 4	-0.081 (0.551)	0.922 (0.508)	-1.264 (0.845)	0.282 (0.239)
Commune 5	-0.557 (0.601)	0.573 (0.344)	-1.041 (0.848)	0.353 (0.299)
Commune 6	-0.263 (0.632)	0.769 (0.485)	-1.320 (0.894)	0.267 (0.239)
Commune 7	-0.914* (0.547)	0.401* (0.219)	-1.028 (0.867)	0.358 (0.310)
Commune 8	-0.018 (0.543)	0.982 (0.533)	-1.967** (0.810)	0.140** (0.113)
Commune 9	-0.609 (0.581)	0.544 (0.316)	-1.208 (0.852)	0.299 (0.255)
Commune 10	-0.752 (0.554)	0.471 (0.261)	-0.042 (0.853)	0.958 (0.818)
Commune 11	-0.814 (0.599)	0.443 (0.266)	-1.333 (0.826)	0.264 (0.218)
Commune 12	-0.974* (0.583)	0.377* (0.220)	-1.580* (0.807)	0.206* (0.166)
Commune 13	-1.470** (0.737)	0.230** (0.169)	-2.177** (0.843)	0.113** (0.096)
Commune 14	0.089 (0.911)	1.093 (0.996)	0.325 (1.275)	1.384 (1.764)
Commune 15	0.311 (0.575)	1.365 (0.785)	-1.739** (0.876)	0.176** (0.154)

Q1	-2.334*** (0.628)	0.097*** (0.061)	-0.312 (0.413)	0.732 (0.303)
Q2	-1.300*** (0.349)	0.273*** (0.095)	0.023 (0.376)	1.023 (0.385)
Q3	-0.826*** (0.275)	0.438*** (0.121)	0.309 (0.364)	1.363 (0.495)
Q4	-0.413* (0.240)	0.661* (0.158)	0.453 (0.376)	1.574 (0.592)
Secondary education (HH)	-0.794** (0.313)	0.452** (0.142)	-0.256 (0.574)	0.774 (0.444)
University education (HH)	-1.470*** (0.313)	0.230*** (0.072)	-0.159 (0.582)	0.853 (0.497)
HH female	0.097 (0.200)	1.102 (0.220)	-0.405 (0.269)	0.667 (0.179)
Foreigner	0.181 (0.393)	1.198 (0.471)	-1.641*** (0.632)	0.194*** (0.122)
Number of children in high school age	0.479*** (0.131)	1.614*** (0.211)	-0.111 (0.215)	0.895 (0.193)
Intercept	1.097* (0.574)	2.996* (1.719)	2.332** (0.939)	10.297** (9.666)
Number of Observations	1128	1128	539	539

Source: authors' estimation. Statistical significance: * 10%, ** 5% and *** 1%. Robust standard errors in parentheses.

When looking at the second logit estimation, there are only a few explanatory variables statistically relevant for explaining the choice between the two types of private education. Families living in communes 3, 8, 13 and 15 have fewer chances, than families living in commune 1, to send their children to a private religious high school. . If the family has a foreigner HH then it has around 5 times less chance to send their children to a private religious high school Interestingly, and in line with the intuition behind our sequential model, neither income nor education of the head of household is a good predictor of the choice between the two forms of private education,.

Overall, these results suggest some expected results like families living in shantytowns, with more children, and with low income and less education have more chances to send their kids to a public high school.

5.2 SES Segregation

In this section we present some measures of SES segregation for the three types of schools in the city of Buenos Aires. Table 6 shows Duncan’s dissimilarity and Gorard’s segregation indices. The reference category in both indices is students with high school education in all schools in the city of Buenos Aires. As it can be seen in the table the values for the three types of education are less than 20%, in both indicators, suggesting vulnerability is not a much relevant issue in the city of Buenos Aires. Comparing the three types of education there seem to be more SES segregation in the public schools of the city. From the table it is easy to see that Duncan’s dissimilarity index for the city of Buenos Aires is around 32% while Gorard’s segregation index is about 26%.

Table 6. Segregation Measures for Public, Private Religious and Private non-Religious Education

Segregation measure	Education in the City of Buenos Aires		
	Public	Religious	Non-Religious
Duncan dissimilarity index	0.16054	0.09381	0.06553
%	16.05%	9.38%	6.55%
Gorard segregation index	0.12993	0.07593	0.05304
%	12.99%	7.59%	5.30%

Source: authors’ estimation

Table 7 disaggregates vulnerability measures by the socioeconomic status of communes. Accordingly, the reference category in this table is all students with high school education in the city of Buenos Aires in each socioeconomic status. Again as the evidence in Table 6 there are only a few measures just larger than 20% suggesting there is little support for segregation in the three types of schools in the city. The evidence in Table 7 indicates that if there is a potential issue of segregation it seems to be in public schools in the high SES communes, although this evidence is weak. In all three type of school there seems to be more segregation in high SES communes than in low SES communes.

Table 7. Segregation Measures for Public, Private Religious and Private non-Religious by Commune SES

Communes SES	Education in the City of Buenos Aires					
	Public		Religious		Non-Religious	
	Duncan	Gorard	Duncan	Gorard	Duncan	Gorard
Low (Communes 4, 7, 8 y 9)	9.22%	6.76%	5.99%	4.39%	3.23%	2.37%
Middle (Communes 1, 3, 5, 10 y 15)	15.69%	12.61%	9.16%	7.36%	6.53%	5.25%
High (Communes 2, 6, 11, 12, 13 y 14)	22.56%	21.40%	12.18%	11.55%	9.96%	9.45%

Source: authors' estimation

Tables 8 and 9 show Duncan's dissimilarity and Gorard's segregation index by type of school and commune. The reference category for both indices is all students with high school education in each commune.

Table 8. Duncan's Dissimilarity Index by Type of School and Commune

Communes	Duncan Dissimilarity Index		
	Public	Religious	Non-Religious
1	4.1%	2.0%	2.1%
2	NA	NA	NA
3	19.4%	9.7%	9.7%
4	6.6%	3.3%	3.3%
5	23.3%	13.1%	10.2%
6	27.1%	17.1%	10.0%
7	17.0%	12.7%	4.3%
8	5.2%	4.0%	1.1%
9	8.6%	1.6%	7.0%
10	20.4%	15.4%	5.0%
11	33.3%	21.1%	12.3%
12	20.3%	19.0%	0.4%
13	10.9%	34.4%	23.4%
14	1.5%	1.5%	2.9%
15	12.7%	3.7%	9.0%

Source: authors' estimation. NA means not available due to not having enough observations.

Table 9. Gorard's Segregation Index by Type of School and Commune

Communes	Gorard Segregation Index		
	Public	Religious	Non-Religious
1	2.5%	1.2%	1.3%
2	NA	NA	NA
3	17.1%	8.6%	8.6%
4	5.3%	2.6%	2.7%
5	19.7%	11.1%	8.7%
6	24.4%	15.4%	9.0%
7	12.2%	9.1%	3.1%
8	3.4%	2.7%	0.7%
9	6.9%	1.3%	5.6%
10	18.2%	13.8%	4.5%
11	32.2%	20.3%	11.9%
12	19.0%	17.7%	0.4%
13	10.6%	33.3%	22.7%
14	1.3%	1.3%	2.6%
15	11.3%	3.3%	8.0%

Source: authors' estimation. NA means not available due to not having enough observations.

As it can be seen from the tables, the values for Duncan's and Gorard's indexes are in general larger for public education in almost all communes followed in magnitude by the indexes for private religious education. Private schools show a somewhat more homogeneous socioeconomic composition.

6. Conclusions

In this study, we presented statistical evidence regarding school choice determinants and analyzed its consequences on socioeconomic segregation. We focused on the secondary school level of the City of Buenos Aires and built a nested logit model to distinguish potential variables that influence the public/private decision across the city's neighbourhoods and then analyzed the impacts of these dynamics on socioeconomic segregation across public, private-religious and private non-religious schools.

The educational system of the City of Buenos Aires has shown throughout its history a remarkable increase in private school enrolment in all levels, reaching today more than

50% of the total enrolment. Private school enrolment share in the City of Buenos Aires is almost twice the private enrolment share in the rest of the country. Surprisingly, in Argentina there are no voucher or demand-side subsidy programs, or tax reductions for those who pay for their own education. There are, however, supply-side subsidies which, in some cases, and to different degrees, reduce school fees. An illustrative consequence of this is the fact that over 30% of children living in the poorest households attend private schools.

In this scenario, we infer that far from competing, the private and public supply structures shape a dynamic balance, which we have described in previous works as a quasi-State monopoly of the educational system drawing on D'Aspremont and Gabsewicz's (1985) framework. In terms of Levin's criteria (2002), this configuration makes public expenditure on education cost-efficient every time that most of the fiscal effort goes to public education on the grounds that a great sector of society privately funds its own education. Growing inequity and segregation may be regarded, however, as the side-effects of this articulated dynamics.

As for the secondary education level in Buenos Aires, the evidence collected shows that all 15 communes depict high private school enrollment shares, ranging from 75% in high-SES communes to 25% in low-SES communes. In line with Lauen's (2007) findings on contextual-level predictors of school choice in the Chicago area, both income level and education of the head of household are good predictors of private school choice in Buenos Aires. The higher the income and level of education of the HH, the higher the probability of sending the children to a private, religious or non-religious, school. Still, we note that privatization encompasses very different social strata and thus Buenos Aires is not strictly the case where private schools serve exclusively children from well-off backgrounds. About 50% of families belonging to the 4th quintile and 32% of families belonging to the 5th quintile –the poorest families in the city– actually send their children to private schools. Social prestige, public school perception and State subsidies may explain this phenomenon.

Both Duncan's and Gorard's indices show similar values for our sample. Even when in none of the cases high segregation scenarios are evidenced, it is possible to identify three quite different realities since results show a rather homogeneous socioeconomic composition within each type of school. The data suggests that private school choice in the City of Buenos Aires has taken a giant leap reshaping the landscape of provision and challenging the social cohesion once promised by the free public school.

7. Research ethics

This study relies exclusively on secondary use of anonymous and publicly accessible statistical information provided by the General Bureau of Statistics and Census of the City of Buenos Aires (DGEyC).

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