

# **The role of non-State actors in the privatisation of Higher Education in Uruguay**

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# Abstract

## ABSTRACT (ENGLISH)

Globalisation has opened and expanded its approaches to new needs and policies for development, somewhat serving as an instrument to introduce new discourses, agendas, and policy paradigms across the globe (Bonal & Rambla, 2009; Dale 1999, 2005). In fact, privatisation and market-oriented education policies have not affected all national States in the same way (Ball, 2013). Despite the private provision on higher education has remarkably increased across Latin America (The World University Rankings, 2018), Uruguay stands out for having remained somehow apart from the privatisation agenda widely spread in the region (Bordoli & Conde, 2016). More recently, research has identified a significant shift in the discursive order, especially driven by a series of new actors including local think-tanks, civil society organizations, and policy entrepreneurs favourable to different forms of privatisation in primary and secondary education (D'Avenia, 2013; Verger, Moschetti, & Fontdevila, 2017). Nevertheless, there are not studies which tackle the emerging and existing shifts in the higher education discursive order in Uruguay. In this respect, the Uruguayan case is characterised by the appearance of most private universities during the 1990s, by the expansion of their educational supply in the twenty- first century, while keeping a relatively low private enrolment rate in higher education over the decades. Based on the Advocacy Coalition Approach, this thesis addresses two purposes. First, it attempts to map out which non-State actors and typologies of coalitions are involved into the privatisation of higher education. Second, and most important, it aims to draw the discourses and strategies increasingly been used by those actors in order to frame and promote policy ideas that seek a rise of the private supply in Uruguay. Methodologically speaking, the case study is based on the triangulation of three main methods: First, document analysis focusing on the main reports and education policy briefs produced by both, the public and private sector, between the 90s and 2017. Second, we conduct 21 in-depth interviews with policymakers, key informants, and public and private sector stakeholders. Third, and aligned with the first method, we used discourse analysis of a radio programme and press articles written by influential scholars. By using thematic analysis, the study shows how a small but influential number of scholars, private institutions and non-State actors have become increasingly involved in the process of promoting ideas that seek to influence policymaking by searching and creating spaces from which they can advocate for their ideas. The findings reveal that private universities, small groups of scholars from private universities (but with mediatic impact) and a few politicians had to organize themselves in the form of coalitions to impact on the policymaking, investing efforts on defining the need of the existence of a private sector to compensate the shortcomings of the public sector as the solution to the social needs and the market requirements. These ideas are broadcasted through depicting “good practices” and social demonstration programs; networking strategies’ dynamics; and legitimization and media advocacy campaigns. Moreover, we have proved that local think-tanks did not play a key role on Higher Education, but, transnational organisations are penetrating into the debate by means of seeking alliances with existing local institutions. Overall, this study can inform us about educational reform processes in other countries of the region, especially in selection and retention phases, where first, the prioritization of certain practices and meanings emerge, and later, the institutionalization of strategies/mechanisms is carried out to impinge on the public policy formation.

**Keywords:** Higher Education, privatisation, non-State actors, influencing policy-making strategies, Uruguay.

## RESUMEN (ESPAÑOL)

La globalización ha abierto y expandido sus enfoques a nuevas necesidades y políticas para el desarrollo, sirviendo como instrumento de introducción a nuevos discursos, agendas y paradigmas de políticas alrededor del mundo (Bonal & Rambla, 2009; Dale, 1999, 2005). De hecho, la privatización y las políticas educativas enfocadas al mercado no han afectado a todos los Estados por igual (Ball, 2013). A pesar de que la privatización en educación superior se ha incrementado notablemente en toda Latinoamérica (The World University Rankings, 2018), Uruguay destaca por haber permanecido de alguna manera aislado de la agenda de privatización ampliamente difundida en la región (Bordoli & Conde, 2016). Más recientemente, autores como d'Avenia (2013) y Verger, Moschetti & Fontdevila (2017) señalan la existencia de un cambio significativo en el orden discursivo, especialmente proveniente de una serie de nuevos actores incluyendo think-tanks locales, organizaciones de la sociedad civil, y de emprendedores favorables a nuevas formas de privatización en niveles de primaria y secundaria. Sin embargo, no hay estudios que aborden los nuevos cambios discursivos existentes en la educación superior de Uruguay. En este sentido, el caso uruguayo se caracteriza por la aparición de la mayoría de las universidades privadas en la década de 1990, por la expansión de su oferta educativa en el siglo XXI, a la vez que el porcentaje de matrícula privada se ha mantenido estable a lo largo de las décadas. En base al enfoque de promoción de coaliciones, esta tesis aborda dos finalidades. Primero, pretende establecer qué actores no estatales y tipologías de coaliciones están involucradas en la privatización de la educación superior. Segundo, y más importante, pretende retratar los discursos y estrategias cada vez más usados por estos actores para enmarcar y promover ideas de políticas que llevaron y que pretenden fomentar el incremento de la oferta privada en Uruguay. Metodológicamente, el estudio de caso se basa en una triangulación de tres métodos de investigación: Primero, un análisis documental, centrándolo en informes y resúmenes de políticas educativas producidas por ambos sectores, público y privado, entre los años 90 y el 2017. Segundo, llevamos a cabo 21 entrevistas en profundidad con responsables políticos, informantes claves, y diversos actores del sector público y privado. Tercero, y vinculado con el primer método, se recurre al análisis discursivo de un programa de radio y de artículos de prensa escritos por académicos influyentes. Utilizando el análisis temático, el estudio muestra como un pequeño, pero influyente número de académicos, instituciones privadas y actores no estatales se han involucrado cada vez más en el proceso de promoción de ideas que buscan influenciar la formación de políticas buscando y creando espacios desde los cuales se puedan promover sus ideas. Los hallazgos desvelan que las universidades privadas, pequeños grupos de académicos (pero con impacto mediático) y unos pocos políticos se organizaron en forma de coalición para impactar en la formación de políticas, invirtiendo esfuerzos en definir la necesidad de la existencia de un sector privado para compensar los defectos de un sector público como solución a las necesidades sociales y los requerimientos del mercado laboral. Esas ideas son difundidas mediante la descripción de “buenas prácticas” y programas sociales experimentales, estrategias de *networking*; y campañas de legitimización a través de los medios de comunicación. Además, hemos comprobado que los think-tanks no tienen un rol clave en la privatización de la educación superior, pero, las organizaciones transnacionales están penetrando en el debate a través de la búsqueda de alianzas con instituciones locales. En general, este estudio nos puede informar sobre los procesos de reforma educativa en otros países de la región, especialmente en las fases de selección y retención, donde primero, la priorización de ciertas prácticas y significados emerge, y posteriormente, la institucionalización de estrategias/mecanismos se lleva a cabo para influenciar la formación de políticas públicas.

**Palabras claves:** Educación Superior, privatización, actores no estatales, estrategias de influencias de política, Uruguay.

# Dedication

Upon the completion of the thesis' body, I am writing these dedication lines to thank to different people their support:

To Antonio, the friend who always has something to tell, the friend who is always looking forward to learning, the friend who always has something to share with me, the friend who challenges himself. To a truly Master, to a truly FRIEND.

To my stubborn and intelligent sister, an inspiration (much more than she had ever imagined).

To my parents for supporting me throughout my daily life, and for letting me be the person I wanted to be.

To the Sala Puigverd team, my physiotherapists for teaching me to live with confidence, but especially for teaching me TO BE.

To the Uruguayans who I bumped into with in this tiny country, to open their souls while drinking mate in la Rambla.

To all the people who have accompanied me along the way.

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## List of abbreviations

Abbreviation	Explanation
ACA	Advocacy Coalition Approach
ACF	Advocacy Coalition Framework
ÁES	Area of Higher Education Área de Educación Superior
ARCU-SUR	Regional Accreditation of University Degrees of MERCOSUR region Acreditación Regional de Carreras Universitarias de la región del MERCOSUR
ANEP	National Administration of Public Education Administración Nacional de Educación Pública
AUGM	Association of Universities Montevideo Group Asociación de Universidades Grupo Montevideo
CCETP	Advisory Board of Private Tertiary Education Consejo Consultivo de Educación Terciaria Privada
CEU	Uruguayan Conference of Bishops Conferencia Episcopal Uruguay
CERES	Centre for the Study of Economic and Social Reality Centro de Estudios de la Realidad Económica y Social
CLAEH	Latin American Centre of Human Economy Centro Latinoamericano de Economía Humana
FA	Frente Amplio
FENAPES	National Federation of Secondary School Teachers Federación Nacional de Profesores de Educación Secundaria
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
HE	Higher Education
IDB	Inter-American Development Bank
IRAE	Economic Activities Income Tax Impuesto a las Rentas de las Actividades Económicas
MDG	Millennium Development Goals
MEC	Ministry of Education and Culture Ministerio de Educación y Cultura
MERCOSUR	Southern Common Market

	Mercado Común del Sur
NPM	New Public Management
NSD	Norwegian Centre for Research Data
OECD	Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development
PC	Partido Colorado
PI	Partido Independiente
PN	Partido Nacional
PPP	Public Private Partnerships
PROPHE	Program for Research on Private Higher Education
SEDLAC	Socio-Economic Database for Latin America and the Caribbean
UCU	Catholic University of Uruguay Universidad Católica del Uruguay
UdE	University of the Enterprise Universidad de la Empresa
UdelaR	University of the Republic Universidad de la República
UM	University of Montevideo Universidad de Montevideo
UNAM	National Autonomous University of Mexico Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México
UNESCO- IESALC	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization- Instituto Internacional para la Educación Superior en América Latina y Caribe
UTEC	Tecnological University of Uruguay Universidad Tecnológica del Uruguay
WB	World Bank
WEI	World Education Indicators

# 1. Foreword

The current thesis on the role of non-State actors in the privatisation of the Higher Education in Uruguay is set as my Master thesis of the Erasmus Joint Master Degree on Education Policies for Global Development developed by a Consortium of three different universities: the Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona; the University of Oslo; and the University of Malta. The supervisor of the dissertation is the PhD. Adrián Zancajo i Silla, an external scholar from the University of Glasgow (Scotland). Additionally, the fieldwork of thesis was carried out in Montevideo (Uruguay) from August to December 2018.

The present Master dissertation can be framed into the broad topics of education privatisation or private sector participation in educational systems. Particularly, the aim of the thesis is to analyse the key points of the role of non-State actors in the privatisation of the Higher Education of Uruguay taking into consideration the Advocacy Coalition Framework. Moreover, since this Master program emphasizes the global dimensions of education policies, the thesis intends to bring together reflections which consider the concept of interdependence on public policies. This means that despite it focuses on Uruguay, it keeps a global phenomenon reasoning due to as Stephen Ball underlines in an interview carried out by Avelar (2016), policy is not anymore an exclusive task of nation-state actors, rather the actual policy is a more complex phenomenon consequence of the changes on the notion of space-time; and concretely, a result of globalization is its notion of economic competitiveness and the contribution of education of each State within a global economy.

In this way, the previous paragraph leads to the relevant issue of *why* is important to address a thesis on that manner about Uruguay. On the one hand, the Uruguayan case stood out for having remained somehow apart from the privatisation agenda widely spread in the region (Bordoli & Conde, 2016). Nevertheless, it has a distinctive dichotomy keeping a relatively low private enrolment rate on higher education and holding a high percentage of private higher institutions. On the other hand, another relevant idea to underline is that recently, research has identified a significant shift in the discursive order, especially driven by a series of new actors including local think-tanks, civil society organizations, and reform entrepreneurs favourable to different forms of privatization in primary and secondary education (D'Avenia, 2013; Verger, Moschetti, & Fontdevila,

2017), and in fact, this shift seems to be embedded in higher education too. This shift displays an incipient form of what Ball (2009, 2012) calls ‘privatisation *through* education policy’ to account for the different ways in which corporations, NGOs and other policy actors engage in the process of policy-formation (Ball & Youdell, 2008). Whilst the privatisation mechanisms in initial and secondary education of Uruguay have already been studied (see Bordoli, Martinis, Moschetti, Conde, & Alfonzo, 2017; Moschetti, Martínez-Pons, Bordoli, & Martinis, 2019) there are not studies emphasizing the strategies used either by the Uruguayan private sector, think- tanks or corporations to impinge in public Higher Education in Uruguay. In other words, through this master dissertation we want to insist on mapping which typology of non-State actors and coalitions have been involved, under which discursive frameworks, and by which strategies have attempted to impinge the public policy.

Beyond the justification of the thesis, we may add a motivational or personal reason for addressing this topic in Uruguay, since part of my mother’s family migrated to Uruguay in the 1950s seeking economic stability and fleeing from the Spanish dictatorship to a State which was well-known for its public services and its welfare system.

As it is mentioned previously, this work is framed within the discipline of education policy. From a traditional approach, according to Bell & Stevenson (2006), education policy may be defined as a dynamic process which nation-state actors- the authors exclude transnational stakeholders as active policy-makers- exert power and resources in conjunction with regional, local and institutional agencies. As said, Bell & Stevenson (2006) do not consider transnational forces as a key element which may shape the education policy of a country, but later, Stephen Ball (see for example Avelar, 2016) considers the supranational as essential for understanding how policy ideas flow and move beyond the nation-state. Nevertheless, the education policy as a discipline that becomes, it should follow a concrete way of proceeding in a dissertation.

In a first preanalytical phase, the object of the study along with the theoretical, analytical and methodological frameworks are developed. In other words, within this section we write down the literature review concerning higher education privatisation and the case of Uruguay. Based on the relevance of the ideas pointed out in the previous sections, subsequently we formulate several research questions and explanatory

hypothesis framing an Advocacy Coalition approach as a way to interpret the gathered data. Secondly, we present the analytical phase, where we expand the analysis of the chosen variables, dividing it into two major sections: the non-State actors involved; and the arguments or discursive framework deployed by those stakeholders together with the catalogue of identified strategies. As a clarification, the data collection and the results are based on a triangulation of qualitative methods (documentary analysis; analysis of in-depth interviews; and media discourse analysis). Finally, considering the results emerged, we drafted a postanalytical phase which includes the conclusions, prospective research lines and policy recommendations.

As a brief preview of the analysis of results, the findings of the dissertation reveal that private universities, small group of scholars of private universities (but with mediatic impact) and a few politicians had to organize themselves in different forms of coalitions to impact on policymaking, investing efforts and resources on defining the need of the existence of a private sector to compensate the shortcomings of the public sector as the solution of the social needs and the market requirements by means of demonstration programs, networking strategies' dynamics, and legitimation and media advocacy campaigns. Moreover, we have proved that in the Higher Education case (differing from Bordoli et al., 2017) local think-tanks did not play a key role on it, but, transnational organisations are penetrating into the debate by means of seeking alliances with existing local institutions.

Ultimately, the thesis strives to move beyond the “State of the question” of the privatisation process of the higher education in Uruguay, not only emphasizing the key aspects of it, rather, based on an education policy advisor perspective, the following pages attempt to analyse the role on the positionality and the strategies used by non-State actors (such as press, universities, other civil society groups or transnational initiatives) in order to impinge the policymaking of the country.

## **2. Theoretical framework**

The following section is focused on two major ideas. On the one hand, we address the privatisation of higher education, emphasising new forms of privatisation beyond the already established categorization of privatisation “*of*” and “*in*” education (Ball & Youdell, 2008), but also, we pose the emerging corporate strategies from the private sector in order to effectively impinge on public policy. On the other hand, from a political economy perspective, we tackle the higher education privatisation occurred within the region and in Uruguay.

### **2.1. Privatisation of Higher Education**

#### *2.1.1. The privatisation of Higher Education: a worldwide phenomenon*

Privatisation is a process which can be defined as the transfer of assets, management, functions or responsibilities (relating to education) which has been traditionally owned and provided by the State towards private actors (Coomans & Hallo de Wolf, 2005). In other words, privatisation of education is the result of transferring activities and responsibilities originally provided by the State (public sector) towards private actors (Lubienski, 2006). In some contexts, this privatisation occurs by default system, while in others as a result of proactive or intended specific public policies (Verger, Fontdevila, & Zancajo, 2016). Referring to the privatisation by default, Day Ashley et al. (2014) argue that this one may emerge in the absence of active policies directly fostering private sector involvement. Those cases are either examples in contexts where the public sector has difficulties and shortcomings on reaching the educational demands, or where public education has difficulties of accommodating the new demands of the middle class (Plank, 2006). In regard to the privatisation through intended public policies, Belfield & Levin (2002) would argue that the reasoning behind this categorization of privatisation does not differ that much from the “default” classification. However, they justify that global trends such as the increasing competitiveness specially in economic terms among States, leads nation-States and their governments to systematically deregulate the education systems- including tertiary levels too- in order to enhance the efficacy, efficiency and innovative capacity whilst the governments’ control and supervision is released (Belfield & Levin, 2002). Beyond the political economy

reasons, Rizvi (2016) remarks a new category of privatisation named the privatisation “through displacement”. This one occurs when people decide to move away from their reliance on the government and its public services, and therefore, they begin to purchase the services provided by the private sector; and consequently, the non-State actors began to have a prominent role. Nevertheless, according to Rizvi (2016) this displacement is carried out by a deregulation process. Using the author’s words: “[...] whereby the state decides to abandon its monopoly status, enabling the private sector to compete against its own agencies, in the belief that such competition will make the government services most efficient” (Rizvi, 2016, pp.6). The rationality that embeds this phenomenon is related to understanding knowledge as the driving force of the economy. Therefore, higher education is conceived as a source of knowledge creation, evolving into a global economic industry (Ilon, 2010). Nevertheless, the displacement phenomenon is rather linked to a reasoning of freedom of choice, justified through the liberty to ensure that educational institutions are chosen according to family practices or values (Belfield & Lenin, 2002; Whitty & Power, 2000). Indeed, this freedom of choice may become a way for educational planners and managers to exert pressure for reforms and to gain community support in favour of pro privatisation reforms. It is precisely at this point where new non-State actors emerge as new advocates which seek to impinge on public policy (Fontdevila, Avelar, & Verger, 2019; Moschetti et al., 2019).

In brief, the primary factor fostering the privatisation of higher education worldwide has been the massification of the public system, which initially was a relatively small elite class towards a mass system due to a growing pressure for access to university (Altbach & Levy, 2005). The second factor may be attributed to a switch of students and families’ perspectives concerning paying for postsecondary and higher education provision (Altbach & Levy, 2005). This phenomenon results as a consequence of replacing higher education as a public good towards a more individualistic approach. As the same authors remark, the demand for access and an unwillingness or an incapacity of the State to pay the costs of the higher education has led the growth of private institutions.

Moreover, we should add that the number of transnational or cross-border higher education initiatives have increased. An academic institution can establish an area or field of study in two or more States, deploying a networking of institutional programmes and academic exchanges (Altbach & Levy, 2005). This phenomenon of rapidly internalization is named as the “McDonaldization” of Higher Education by several scholars (Hayes,



1995; Hayes & Wynyard, 2016), understood as a typology of education which is commercialized as a purchase or trade service worldwide.

Likewise, the current private institutions are rather complex in terms of structure, orientation or financial background. In this sense, private universities are not disconnected institutions, rather the contrary, they are attached to a socioeconomic, political and legislative context.

*2.1.2. New forms of privatisation: “through educational policies”*

In addition, there is a well-known classification of the different forms of privatisation policies proposed by Ball & Youdell (2008). They establish two major categories: a) privatisation *of* education, or exogenous privatisation. In this category, the public sector opens the educational services to the private sector, allowing its participation to design, manage and provide the services of public sector. The second category is the privatisation *in* education, or endogenous privatisation, which is based on importing ideas and practices of the private sector to the public one in order to become “more like business and more business-like” (Ball & Youdell, 2008, pp.8).

**Table I-** *Types of Education Privatisation and Associated Policies*

Type of Privatisation	Aim	Education Policies	
Exogenous	Promote the emergence and expansion of private providers in the education sector.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Liberalization of the education sector.</li> <li>- Tax incentives to private schools and/or private schooling consumption.</li> <li>- Public subsidies to private schools.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Vouchers and similar competitive formulas in which financing follows the demand.</li> </ul>
Endogenous	Introduce norms, rules, and logics of the private sector within education systems.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Performance-related pay for schools and/or teachers.</li> <li>- Disaggregation of units in the educational</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Charter schools.</li> <li>- Freedom of school choice policies.</li> </ul>

		system, school-based management. - Standardized evaluation and rankings.	
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**Source:** *Adapted from Verger et al. (2016), based on Ball & Youdell (2008)*

Applying this classification into higher education levels, we may underline that although in the Uruguayan case there is not charter education supply nor a voucher system (Bordoli et al., 2017), Lubienski (2003) suggests that reformers assume that competition and choice among several options necessarily lead to innovations within the public and private universities. In addition, Lubienski (2003) argues that the complex examination of competitive institutions along with the mechanisms employed by reformers may actually weaken their intended purpose.

However, the recent years several scholars (Fontdevila et al., 2019; Moschetti et al., 2019; Saltman, 2009; Verger, 2016) highlight the need to re-update the previous classification. In this sense, Ball (2009, 2012) adds a third categorization since some international organisations and new non-State actors such as philanthropic organisations, corporations, non-governmental organisations, or policy entrepreneurs are beginning to articulate strategies of promotion, diffusion and formulation of education privatisation policies. In other words, the traditional role of the State is threatened as the articulator and executor of policies due to the private agents are taking this new role. Thus, Ball (2009, 2012) refers to this new typology of privatisation as “privatisation through educational policies”. In short, Ball & Youdell (2008) clarify it saying: “It is not simply education and education services that are subject to forms of privatisation: education policy itself- through advice, consultation, research, evaluations and forms of influence- is being privatised” (Ball & Youdell, 2008, pp.12). Nevertheless, following the reasoning line of Verger et al. (2016), this new categorization is rather a pathway towards privatisation.

Lastly, taking into consideration what it has been said concerning the typologies of privatisation and the different mentioned aspects applied into the higher education, according to Crnkovic & Pozega (2008) privatisation of higher education may be reflected into three forms: private provision; private funding; and private regulation, decision-making and accountability. The first form refers to those non-governmental stakeholders- entrepreneurs, individuals, religious groups, non-governmental

organizations or foreign providers- who own the educational institutions. The second typology is another model of privatisation of higher education based on funding from private sources such as tuition fees or scholarships run by enterprises or banks rather than through the state budget (Crnkovic & Pozega, 2008). Finally, the third modality of privatisation replaces the traditional system of higher education performance monitoring (through laws, inspections, and audits) by a new private monitoring system based on aspects such as introduction of educational vouchers, granting subsidies and assistance to private universities, or liberalisation of educational services (among other elements) (Crnkovic & Pozega, 2008, p.132).

### 2.1.3. *Private sector influencing strategies*

Expanding the knowledge on the processes of growing integration of private actors in networks and communities of education policy production (Ball, 2012; Ball & Juneman, 2012; Lingard & Sellar, 2013), Fontdevila et al. (2019) identify various strategies used by private actors to impinge on the design of educational policy.

The first of these strategies is based on the articulation of ideologically aligned networks of actors that act as influencing platforms for the design of educational policies. The authors argue that such “networking and brokerage” strategies seek to agglutinate actors from the private sector along with key actors of the educational field around various types of foundations or “coalitions” which increasingly become relevant voices in the educational policy debate. Their network strategy is based on the intensive use of events and meetings- or *meetingness*- where different actors from the private sector, foundations and government officials exchange visions, diagnosis, and education policy solutions. These spaces play an important role in strengthening the links between the private sector and governments creating informal settings where the policy lobbying emerges. As Ball & Junemann (2012) highlight, they suppose the construction and maintenance of a regime of educational network governance. Thus, in order to clarify, Fontdevila et al. (2019) differentiate two typologies of networking. On the one hand, working in coalitions which is based on the constitution of formalized alliances of actors in the public policy arena as an effective tool to influence on policymaking (as suggested on Sabatier & Weibler, 2007). Therefore, as Fontdevila et al. (2019) remark, alliances require an emergence of

more or less stable forms of collective action organized around specific policy problems. In parallel, meetingness becomes a sub-typology of networking that emphasizes the centrality of face-to-face meetings as well as of informal spaces and relationships, reinforced through worldly exchanges (Fontdevila et al., 2019; McCan & Ward, 2012). As these last authors remark, those events attempt to spread internationally a discourse of including the private sector in educational development, along with trying to strengthen their policy network.

A second strategy of influence in policymaking consists in the production and dissemination of research, or *'knowledge mobilization'* by corporations, philanthropic actors or think-tanks (Fontdevila et al., 2019). The kind of research they disseminate usually offers a somehow reductionist version of the *'what works'* epistemological paradigm, simplifying educational policy problems and advocating for predefined policy solutions (Hogan, Sellar, & Lingard, 2016).

The third strategy is called grassroots advocacy (Fontdevila et al., 2019). It is based on articulating a scholarship system on interest groups as an indirect mechanism towards the policy influence. As cited in Fontdevila et al. (2019), some authors such as Berry (1977), and Heaney (2006) refer to the *'outside lobbying'* as the mechanism of encouraging grassroots groups to pressure the legislative power. Thus, supporting grassroots organisations provides the corporate sector with a diffuse and indirect form of leverage with the intention of creating a climate of opinion favourable to policy reform. In fact, within the US context, Lubienski, Brewer, & La Londe (2015) argue that the philanthropic sector has actively supported interest groups and civil society organizations whose agendas are aligned to the pro-market agendas too.

Another idea to note is that non-State actors are rather active in investing capital in experimental projects to inform about policy change or attempting to create research-based evidence. This typology of experiences is documented in the case of the US, where several philanthropic organisations have been investing resources in charter schools and private provision in education (Scott & Jabbar, 2014). In this context, philanthropy venture's<sup>1</sup> funding goes to support private education initiatives and experiences such as charter schools or charter management organisations (see for example the Uruguayan

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<sup>1</sup> The term "Venture philanthropy" provides a blend of performance- based development finance and professional services to social purpose organisations- contributing to expand their social impact. (John, 2006, p.5)

case Bordoli et al., 2017) with the aim of reporting efficacy of the educational system. In fact, Lubienski et al. (2015) describe a process of ‘disintermediation’, where education authorities attempt to use pilot experiences as an experimental fact in order to save funding and resources. At this point, it is interesting to add that authors such as Hogan et al. (2016) remark that this typology of experiences fosters a kind of research or evidences that may be defined as a reductionist version of “*what works*”, offering many times predefined policy solutions. So as Avelar (2017) and Moschetti et al. (2019) suggest, this ‘evidence’ is disseminated and amplified through media creating a favourable setting to pro-market solutions and agendas.

Finally, the last strategy to point out is what Jackson (1982) identified as a specific tactic deployed by private higher education institutions in order to attract a larger group of potential students. This tactic is based on maximizing program efficiency, which means delivering maximum effect for the minimum expenditure, along with highlighting the attractiveness of the private sector in front of the stagnated public universities.

## **2.2. The privatisation of Higher Education in Latin America and Uruguay: a political economy**

### *2.2.1. Higher education privatisation in Latin America*

Despite the national differences, it is possible to identify two major typologies of countries regarding privatisation trends on higher education in Latin America. The first one occurs in countries such as Argentina, Mexico or Venezuela where the private higher education institutions have remained restricted due to the public institutions have been able to absorb the regional demands. The second regional trend occurred in countries such as Perú, Chile or Colombia whereby the private universities have accounted for more opportunities, restricting the public options, especially since the decade of 1990s (Holm-Nielsen, Thorn, Brunner, & Balán, 2005). Nevertheless, in general dynamics, the private provision has remarkably increased across the continent. In fact, in Latin America the 48,8% of the total amount of enrolments into higher education institutions are already private (The World University Rankings, 2018). However, what it is remarkable from this percentage, is that the substantial grow of the private enrolments mainly happened during the decade of the 90s, reaching the 40% of private enrolment over the total enrolments in

2002 (see Table II). In addition, from 2002 onwards, this dynamic of growth of private sector had continuity due to private enrolments have increased their rates as it is shown on Figure 1 (see below) where the only exceptions that have reduced the private enrolment rates in Higher Education institutions are countries such as México and Colombia.

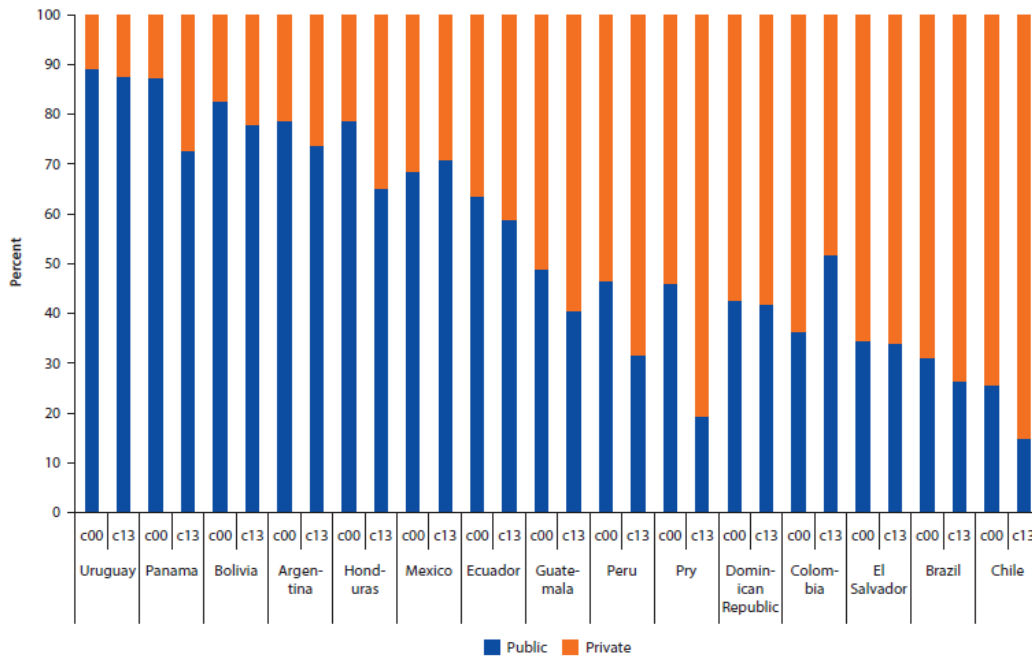
**Table II-** % range groups of private Enrolments in Higher Education in Latin America, 1985- 2002<sup>2</sup>

		2002				
1985		<b>40-75%</b>	<b>30-40%</b>	<b>20-30%</b>	<b>10-20%</b>	<b>less than 10%</b>
	<b>40-75%</b>	Brazil Colombia Dominican Rep				
	<b>30-40%</b>	Chile El Salvador Perú				
	<b>20-30%</b>	Paraguay		Argentina Guatemala		
	<b>10-20%</b>	Nicaragua	Venezuela	Costa Rica Ecuador México	Honduras	
	<b>less than 10%</b>					Bolivia Cuba Panama Uruguay

**Source:** Own elaboration based on data from OECD (2002).

<sup>2</sup>The data of the Table II is from the period 1985-2002 for these reasons: a) during those years the private enrolments grew substantially in Latin America and after this period the phenomenon kept relatively stable across the continent (with a few exceptions) ); and b) it was difficult to find updated data of all corresponding countries.

**Figure 1- Enrolment Share of Public and Private Higher Education Institutions in Latin America and the Caribbean, circa 2000 and 2013**



**Source:** Adapted from Ferreyra, Avitabile, Botero- Álvarez, Haimovich- Paz, & Urzúa (2017) based on Countries' administrative information and SEDLAC.

There are two patterns to be drawn from this. On the one hand, there are countries which have kept similar rates on private enrolment throughout two or three decades. On the other hand, there are those which have increased the private enrolment rates on their Higher Education system. Besides this, it is important to highlight that the private enrolment has not decreased in any of those cases (with two exceptions). Landoni (2008) points out that the increasing of private enrolments is caused (in part) by three main reasons: a) the dictatorships occurred in South-America contributed to reduce the public spending on education, therefore lots of students chose private options due to the lack of public quality; b) this period (1985- 2002) is located between the 'Washington Consensus', based on a number of policies fostered and imposed as part of loans' conditionalities by the World Bank in order to be applied by developing/ emerging economies, pursuing economic stability and liberalizing the market through privatisations (Bonal, 2002); and c) the State was not able to cover all the new entrants to higher education within a context of educational expansion (Schofer & Meyer, 2005). Beyond this, we may say that taking into consideration Avitabile's (2017) contribution, we identify a third period after 1985 and 2002, which is characterized for the large expansion of skilled labour force that has led to an unprecedented increase in the number of students

enrolled; and simultaneously the number of programs and institutions has significantly expanded by seeking to maximize the skilled human capital, and subsequently, the competitiveness of the economy of the country. Nevertheless, Uruguay is been an interesting case due to it has kept a relatively low private enrolment rate throughout the last three decades.

Thus, what makes privatisation of higher education in southern countries relevant to be studied are the effects of these neoliberal policies promoted since 1990s. For instance, Verger (2007) underlines that whilst in developing countries (which participate in the World Education Indicators) the private enrolments in tertiary education represent the 43% of the total amount of enrolments, the average on OECD's countries is only the 26% (Verger, 2007).

### *2.2.2. The process of higher education privatisation in Uruguay*

The logics of competitiveness within Higher Education lead to the liberalization (constitution of service markets); the privatization of institutions (participation of private actors in the university policy, especially the provision); and the commercialization (purchase and sale of service of HE in a global sphere) (Verger, 2007).

Higher Education becomes part of the strategy of the economic development of many countries, by fostering policies based on knowledge economy (Ball, 2002, 2009). And it is precisely at this point, that the universities want to stand out seeking for an academia that is able to reach external funding sources, and thus to increase the dynamics of competition (Slaughter & Leslie, 1997). However, there are other market elements that are introduced in HE too. Dale (1997, 1999) argues that the New Public Management (NPM) is a new philosophy oriented towards the market that attempts to debureaucratize the public sector and to make it more efficient. In fact, the excessive bureaucratization and massification in Uruguay have created a debate regarding a reform of the National Administration of Public Education (ANEP) along the different educational levels (Bordoli et al., 2017; Lizbona & Rumeau, 2013; Roane, 2015). So somehow, many actors advocate for a reform which liberalizes the system which would allow the creation of private institutions in order to compensate the lack of funding in Higher Education. Nevertheless, as it is pointed out on the upcoming subsection, Uruguay is based on a statist mode of governance where the value of "public" is still strong (Bordoli et al., 2017;



Marrero & Pereira, 2014). This may explain why private universities emphasize that they are offering education with a strong “*sense of public good and service*” for the society (Betancur & Clavijo, 2016a). And for instance, the webpages of the Catholic University of Uruguay (UCU) or the Latin American Centre of Human Economy (CLAEH) (among others) highlight this statement on their mission.

During the 90s, the country approved the regulatory framework of the private sector for the Uruguayan Higher Education system (Decree 308/95)<sup>3</sup>. This regulatory reform led the country towards a diversification of the tertiary education, fostering and impinging the private sector and finishing with the monopoly of the public sector, creating private universities and institutes, and offering new academic degrees and post degrees (Landoni, 2008).

It is precisely these phenomena that implicitly forced the State to mutate its role, evolving from a mere controller of the private sector towards having the responsibility of defining policies, including introducing new mechanisms of quality assurance. Thus, this supposed a change on the regulatory functions of the State (Landoni & Romero, 2006; Landoni, 2008). As a consequence of these changes, the State created the ad-hoc Accreditation Commission of Uruguay, set up by 2 representatives from the UdelaR, 2 from the Ministry of Education and Culture (MEC) and 1 representing the private universities. Moreover, the MEC participates in the ARCU-SUR system (Regional Accreditation of University Degrees of MERCOSUR region) along with Argentina, Brazil, Bolivia, Paraguay and Chile. Verger (2007) underlines that these States that may be considered developing countries- although Uruguay is considered high income State- foster the cooperation in regional dynamics. Another example of this mutative role of the State is the Advisory Board of Private Tertiary Education (CCETP), a committee whose aim is to supervise private institutions. 3 out of the 8 members of it are elected by the public university (Universidad de la República), and 2 other members from the Ministry of Education generally are or were professors from the public university (Landoni, 2008). At this point, it is interesting to remark that in both cases (Accreditation Commission and CCETP), the public sector holds the majority of the seats, being a way to still assure the dominance of the public sector over the private one. But, besides this, the States are

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<sup>3</sup> Official name of the Decree in Spanish: Reglamentación del Decreto Ley 15.661 relativo al Sistema de Enseñanza Terciaria Privada (Decreto 308/95).

seeking these alignments and regional cooperation among them, in order to gain legitimation and to improve the quality of programmes in and outside the country.

Over the time, Uruguay had experienced many resistances to allow catholic universities to operate, and it was not until 1985 that the first one was authorized. After this, during the period 1985-1994, the post-secondary institutions could offer degrees. In 1995, new private institutions of Higher Education were authorised (Landoni & Romero, 2006). The reasons of those policy changes are associated to many factors already pointed out: lack of funding in HE, increasing willingness of competitiveness beyond the public university to create knowledge, but also the massification of the public university, and the existing mismatch between the university supply and the needs of the labour market (Betancur & Clavijo, 2016a). This phenomenon may be linked to what Serna (2017) argues. The author remarks that the last two decades an increasing number of elites and think-tanks which are aligned with the Partido Nacional de Uruguay (liberal party) and the Partido Colorado (a wide Republican conservative and social democratic party) are trying to impinge on the Uruguayan policymaking, especially in aspects that directly or indirectly are related to the labor market. It is precisely at this point, where it may be interesting to see whether these groups of interests have had an impact on higher education or not; and in case that they had, it would be important to explore the scope of the influence of these groups.

As it is being said above, whilst the privatisation mechanisms in initial and secondary education of Uruguay have already been studied (see Bordoli et al., 2017; Moschetti et al., 2019) there are not studies emphasizing the strategies used either by the Uruguayan private sector, think- tanks or corporations to impinge in Higher Education public policy within this complex model of governance.

### *2.2.3. The main features of the higher education system in Uruguay*

La República Oriental del Uruguay is a small country which has 3.4 million of inhabitants. From the end of the 19th century the country received massive immigration, mainly from Europe. Since the early 20th century, the education has worked as an instrument for enhancing social progress (Bogliaccini & Rodríguez, 2015), reflected in the early extension of free public basic education across the country. Although many policies have changed since then, others such as the welfare state- which the people and

organisations such as teacher unions have not allowed to disappear- remain working (Arocena & Sutz, 2015). The same authors argue that this resistance has led Uruguay to become the least unequal country in Latin America in terms of income distribution. Moreover, The World Bank (2015) aligned on that stance, showed that the *Uruguayan Gini Index*, which is 0.41, is the lowest one in Latin America.

Besides this, higher education keeps being a high priority for the Uruguayan society (Marrero & Pereira, 2014); not just reflected in terms of the social lift function that the public university had or its capacity to improve the family income of its students, but also, because the historical importance that the public higher education has had to create concern against Latin American dictatorships: la Universidad de la República (UdelaR) was the only university in the country until 1985. As Landoni (2008) underlined, it created a sense of tradition of the Latin American university's reform movement, not because it was the only existing university, rather because people fought for democracy during the dictatorship of Bordaberry (1973- 1985), finding strong supports among UdelaR students and many of its faculties since 1970s (Landoni, 2008).

Once the democracy was re-established in 1985, the UdelaR's activities were focused on three areas: teaching; research; and cultural diffusion and technical assistance to support the most deprived sectors of the population (Arocena & Sutz, 2015). Nonetheless, these authors argue that the massiveness of the UdelaR's structure and the budgetary shortcomings complicate the change and the innovation processes within the university. For instance, the Uruguayan government expenditure per student in tertiary levels is about 29% (% GDP per capita) whilst in other high-income countries the investment is higher with 37,6% in México or lower with 19,7% in Chile and 16,25% in Argentina (The World Bank, 2016a). Moreover, salary levels are extremely low, and the arising private competition on innovation is opening a new debate regarding the role of the private sector and actors throughout the educational system in Uruguay. Meanwhile the government claims that the UdelaR must continue selling "*knowledge services*" to obtain revenues, the State invests only the 0.25% of its GDP on research, whilst in the previous countries this investment is 0,63% in Argentina, 0,37% in Chile, and 0,5% in México<sup>4</sup> (The World Bank, 2016b). Therefore, many actors have appeared advocating for

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<sup>4</sup> The available data from México and Chile is from 2016, whilst the data from Argentina is from 2015.

creating new institutions which carry out research to diversify and to compete against institutions such as the UdelaR (Arocena & Sutz, 2015; Contera, 2008; Landoni, 2008).

In this sense, the Uruguayan case stands out for having remained somehow apart from the privatisation agenda widely spread in the region of Latin America (Bordoli & Conde, 2016). Particularly, in Uruguay the privatisation process within Higher Education is recent and emerging, and it is reflected through the following statements (Contera, 2008)

a) During the 1984- 2007 the University Institutes<sup>5</sup> were created.

b) The private supply on higher education is based on 5 private universities: 4 secular institutions and another 1 which is confessional. Also, there are 12 university institutes.

c) 16,37% of the students' enrolment in higher education is private. (Ministerio de Educación y Cultura, 2016a).

Comparing the previous characteristics of the higher education of Uruguay, we present the following table with other high-income countries of Latin America:

**Table III-** *Comparative table of private higher institutions and private enrolment*

Countries	% of higher education private enrolment	% of private universities (as % of the total institutions)
Argentina	21,5%	52%
Chile	80%	66,03%
México	31,5%	26,47%
Uruguay	16,37%	71,43%

**Source:** *Own elaboration based on data from Instituto de Investigaciones UNAM de México (2016); Ministerio de Educación y Cultura de Uruguay (2016a); OECD (2016); Secretaría de Políticas Universitarias de la Nación de Argentina (2014); Universia (2017)*<sup>6</sup>

As a summary, we highlight that in the majority of cases, private universities suppose the majority of the total amount of higher institutions, excepting the case of México. However, in those high-income countries, the private enrolment rates are below

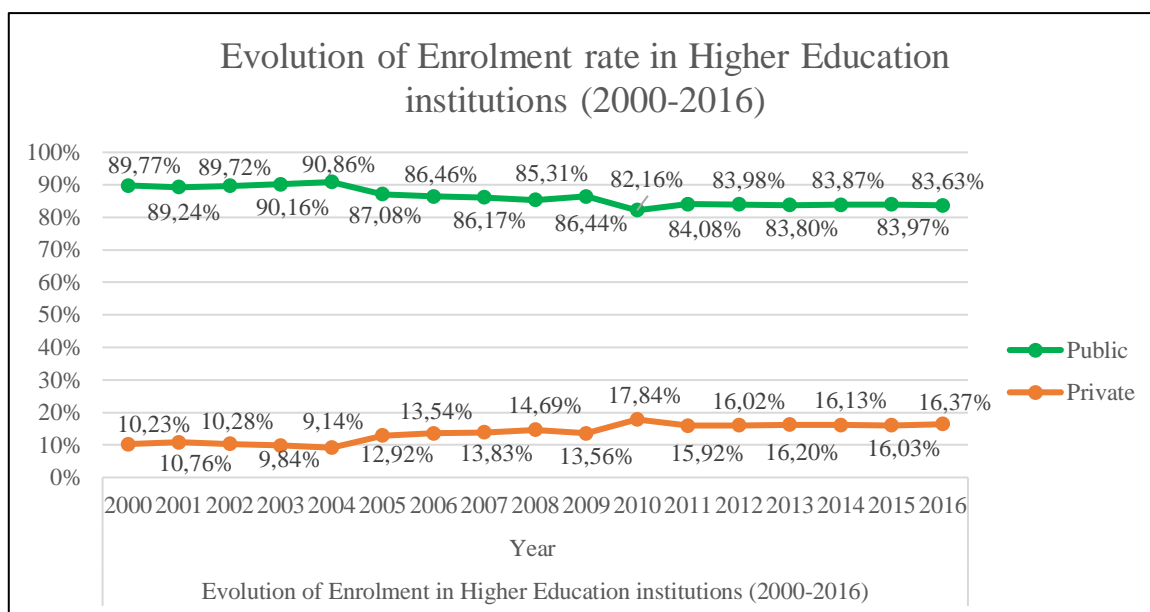
<sup>5</sup> University Institutes are institutions which conduct activities such as teaching and research in related fields, organized in faculties or departments.

<sup>6</sup> The data of all comparable countries pertaining to the same year has not been found. However, there is a difference of 3 years from the oldest to the latest one.

the Latin American average of 48,8% of private enrolments, excepting the Chilean case with a long-standing privatisation tradition (OECD, 2016).

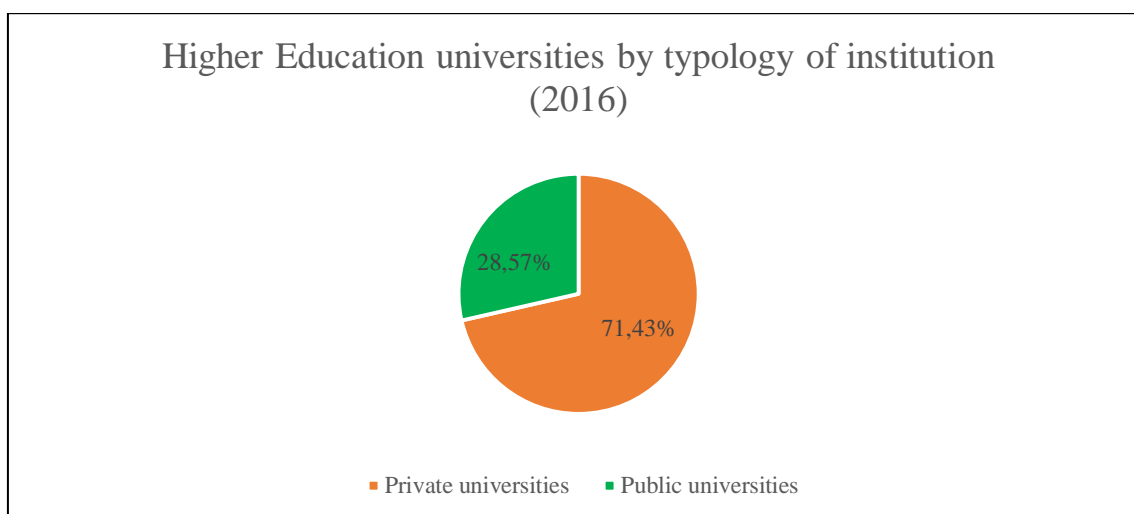
The following figures (*see below*) show the dichotomy that characterizes the Higher Education system of Uruguay. On the one hand, the Figure 2 depicts how Uruguay- unlike those developing and middle-income countries from Latin America mentioned above-, has kept a relatively low private enrolment rates across the twenty-first century, showing a maximum variation (increasing) of 8,7% more of private enrolments between 2004 and 2010 (from 9,14% to 17,84%) experiencing a slightly decreased the upcoming years; and being an exception within the continent still far from the 43% characteristic of developing countries participating in the WEI. On the other hand, new private universities have appeared within the last years in Uruguay, creating a diversification of the supply (Betancur & Clavijo, 2016a; Landoni & Romero, 2006) and increasing the number of private educational institutions (universities) in tertiary education (*see Figure 3*).

**Figure 2.** *Evolution of public- private enrolment into Higher Education institutions (2000-2016)*



**Source:** *Own elaboration based on data from the Ministerio de Educación y Cultura (2016b)*

**Figure 3.** Higher Education universities by typology of institution (2016)



**Source:** Own elaboration based on data from the *Ministerio de Educación y Cultura (2016b)*

As it can be observed on Figure 3, the private universities represent more than 2/3 of the total educational supply. The following table summarizes the main features (name, foundation year, number of students, and religious orientation or ownership) of each Uruguayan private university.

**Table IV-** Legend of private universities of Uruguay

Name of the university	Foundation as university	Number of students	Orientation/Ownership
Catholic University of Uruguay (UCU)	1985	9.500 students approximately	Catholic, Jesuit university
ORT University	1996	7.000 students approximately	Jewish university
University of Montevideo (UM)	1997	2.500 students approximately	Catholic, Opus Dei university
University of the Enterprise (UdE)	1998	2.500 students approximately	Non-confessional, Masonic university
Latin American Centre of Human Economy	2017	800 students approximately	Catholic with a Humanistic inclination

**Source:** Own elaboration based on founding acts and data from the *Ministerio de Educación y Cultura (2016b, 2017)*

However, it is necessary to underline that the UdelaR becomes one of the most important academic bodies within the country, producing the 70% of the knowledge creation and hosting most of the tertiary education's students (Arocena & Sutz, 2015). It is precisely this dichotomy or disparity- keeping low private enrolment rates but having a diverse private educational supply in Montevideo- that makes Uruguay an interesting and relevant case to be studied.

In all, the Master dissertation attempts to understand "*How*" this process happens/ happened and through which strategies. As far as I consider, we do not want to emphasize "Why" it has happened, since many authors have addressed this topic (Betancur & Clavijo, 2016b; Bordoli & Conde, 2016; Contera, 2008; Landoni, 2008; Levy, 1999, 2013a).

### **3. The Analytical and Methodological Framework**

The upcoming section presents the approach used to analyse our object of study (the privatisation of higher education in Uruguay) by drawing the necessary analytical basis to depict the policy subsystems and coalitions, and different elements and conceptions involved into this process. But also, the section aims to map out elements such as sampling, methods or methodological underpinning aspects which are essential to understand the results.

#### **3.1. The Advocacy Coalition Framework**

The positionality taken through the analytical framework serves to depict the reality and its related factors favourable or against of policy change and policy adoption<sup>7</sup>. For this reason, we believe that the Advocacy Coalition Framework might be useful to capture the previous notions and the Uruguayan parameters, opportunities and constraints in order to understand the policy subsystem of the country.

The Advocacy Coalition Framework is a policymaking framework created to understand intense public policy problems (Sabatier & Jenkins- Smith, 1988, 1993; Sabatier & Weible, 2007). The overall idea of the ACF is that attempts to explain a complex policymaking environment based on multiple levels and typologies of relationships, and it is characterized by the following ideas (Carney, 2014):

- Contains multiple actors and levels of government (p.484);
- Produces decisions despite high levels of uncertainty and ambiguity (p.484).
- Takes years to turn decisions into outcomes (p.484); and
- It processes policy in different ways. Some issues involve intensely politicized disputes containing many actors. Others are treated as technical and processed routinely, largely by policy specialists out of the public spotlight (p. 484).

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<sup>7</sup> Policy adoption can be considered the third phase of the policy process- after selection of policy agendas and its policy formulation- in which policies are adopted by government bodies and other non-state actors (Verger, Novelli & Altinyelken, 2018).

Focusing on policy adoption implies paying closer attention to, and producing more empirical research on, the processes, reasons and circumstances that explain how and why policy-makers (or other education stakeholders) select, embrace, and/or borrow global education policies, and aim to implement them in their educational realities (Verger, 2014, p.14).



An advocacy coalition is formed by people from different positions or backgrounds (elected and agency officials, interest groups or researchers) who- according to the author- share a particular belief system (including a set of basic values, causal assumptions, and problem perceptions) and who show a non-trivial degree of coordinated activity over time (Sabatier, 1988: 139). So, its focuses on the interactions between an advocacy coalition within a policy subsystem which at the same time works with a wider political and external environment. In other words, the ACF does not simply show power relations, but it also assembles ideas which are shared through a belief system. Using Carney's (2004) words:

[...] actors may be influential because they share a set of beliefs with a large number of others; translating those beliefs into policy decisions and outcomes is a common project. Beliefs are the "glue" that keeps a large number of actors together (p.486).

From that, we have three typologies of "belief systems":

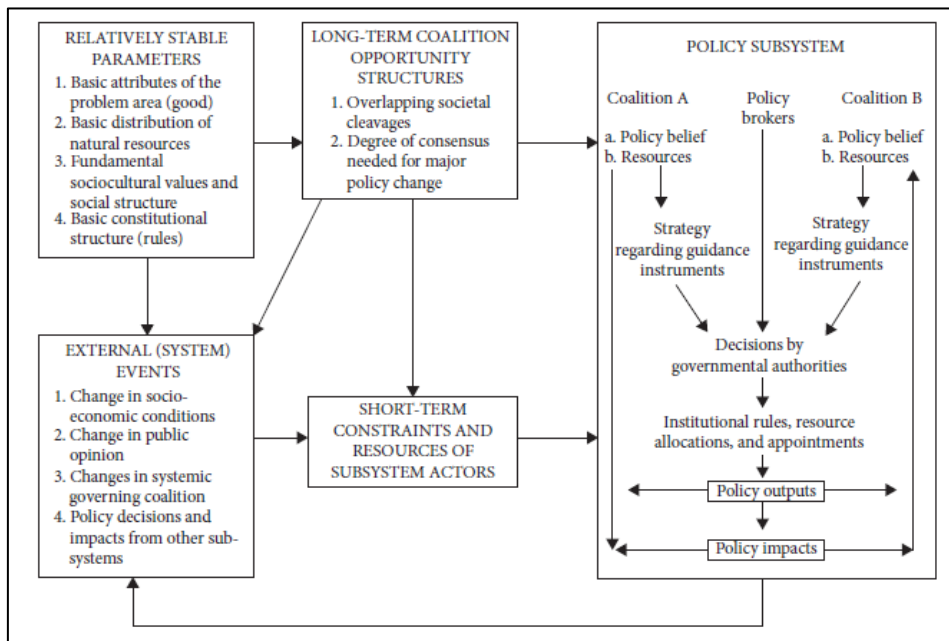
- **Deep Core Beliefs:** it relates to ideas which are fundamental and unlikely to change, but too broad to guide detailed policy (Carney, 2014).
- **Policy Core Beliefs:** these references to "fundamental policy positions." Examples include: "the proper balance between government and market and the proper distribution of power across levels of government." (Sabatier 1993, p.31; 1998, p.110)
- **Secondary Aspects:** it is related to the implementation of a particular policy. They are the most likely to change, as people learn about the effects of regulations versus economic incentives (Carney, 2014).

Further, coalitions interact within policy subsystems, which may be defined as "broader set of actors who are involved in dealing with a policy problem" (Sabatier, 1988: 138). A policy subsystem can include multiple coalitions and policy brokers too, whose role is to minimize conflict and produce workable compromises between coalitions and government authorities to impinge on policy decisions and oversee the policy. Another characteristic of coalitions is unlikely that a single coalition dominates the subsystem for a long and stable period, rather is more common the existence of this set of actors until the beliefs or the goals are achieved (Carney, 2014).

Moreover, the policy subsystems are set up within a wider system as the *Figure45* shows, pointing out the parameters for action and highlighting the constraints and opportunities of each coalition. Those parameters are:

- Factors that are “relatively stable”, such as “social values” and the broad “constitutional structure” (Carney, 2014, p.487-488);
- “Long term coalition opportunity structures” relates to the nature of different political systems (unitary/ federal, concentrated/ divided powers, single/ multi-party, coalition/ minority government) and the “degree of consensus needed for major change” (Carney, 2014, p.487-488); and
- “External (system) events” such as socio-economic change, a change in government, or important decisions made in other subsystems. (Carney, 2014, p.487- 488).

**Figure 4.** *Flow Diagram of the Advocacy Coalition Framework (2007)*



**Source:** *Adapted from Weible, Sabatier, & McQueen (2009)*

The ACF-as said above- takes years to turn decisions into outcomes, therefore, it focuses on change over a “decade or more” to obtain results of the full policy cycle. As Carney (2014) details, coalitions interact, a decision is taken, institutions or regulations are created or modified, impact of policy outputs are assessed, and the information is interpreted differently by each coalition learning from previous decisions taken, and thus,

enhancing and adapting strategies and mechanisms for prospective policy cycles. At this point, it is essential to remark the notion of policy learning as one type of change within this framework due to coalitions learn from policy implementation, and indeed, learning is related to deep beliefs, inducing different interpretations of facts and events in different coalitions. Therefore, learning is a process which implies exercising power. As Carney remarks:

[...] In some cases, there are commonly accepted ways to measure policy performance. In others, it is a battle of ideas where coalitions exaggerate the influence and maliciousness of opponents. Technical information is often politicised and a dominant coalition can successfully challenge the data supporting policy change for years (Carney, 2014, p. 488).

It is relevant enough to highlight the previous idea of policy learning since those practices of exaggerating the influence or using technical information as a political tool may be associated to the desire of creating research- based evidence (see Avelar, 2017; Moschetti et al., 2019) disseminated and amplified through media creating favourable coalitions to impinge on public policy. This dissemination strategy is precisely seeking to offer a reductionist version of the *'what works'* on policymaking, simplifying educational policy problems and advocating for predefined policy solutions (Hogan et al., 2016).

The other type of change is associated to external events and their capacity to affect the subsystem stability. Events may set in motion “internal” or “external” shocks to subsystem, and thus, affecting the power balance among coalitions and actors. Moreover, Carney (2014) notes:

An internal shock relates to the effect of major external change on a coalition’s belief system, akin to a crisis of confidence. The event prompts a coalition to revisit its policy core beliefs, perhaps following a realization by many actors that existing policies have failed monumentally, and their consequent departure to a different coalition. An external shock has the added element of coalition competition—another coalition uses the experience of a major event to reinforce its position within the subsystem, largely by demonstrating that its belief system is best equipped to interpret and solve the policy problem (Carney, 2014, p.488).

In the same vein, coalitions use the policy learning in order to frame information, to create public opinion, and a feeling of needed change. Nevertheless, the external fostered change may vary from the election of a new government with beliefs which favour coalitions over another to a “focusing event” such as the worldwide growth of privatisation through education policy that frustrates or facilitates to defend a policy. As Carney (2014) highlights:

[...] While many external factors- global recession, environmental crises, demographic changes- appear to solely cause change, coalitions also influence how sovereigns understand, interpret and respond to them. External events provide new resources to some coalitions- it is up to them to exploit the opportunity (Carney, 2014, p.488- 489).

As a clarification, sovereigns and policy brokers are actors located within a subsystem who mediate between coalitions and make authoritative decisions despite policymakers may be part of coalitions.

In brief, as John (2003) underlines, there is a lack of theories and policy frameworks which are capable to provide a holistic overview of the entire policy process, attempting to find out a relationship of the core causal processes (institutions, networks, socioeconomic processes, choices and ideas). However, the ACF allows- as we said on the first page of this section- to draw how the policy subsystem (in our case in Uruguay) has worked, not only focusing on internal aspects, but also external factors which may have directly influenced the way the different set of actors (scholars, private universities, politicians and political parties, and other non-State actors) have used policy learning in order to impinge and enact on public policy concerning higher education.

Similarly, and giving continuity to the previous paragraph, we remark a few strengths and constraints of this policy framework. First, the ACF was conceptualized as a system- based model. As Coeurdray, Cortinas, Poupeau, & O’Neill (2015) emphasize, this means that integrates most of the stages of the policy cycle (framing a public problem, design of public policy, and implementation of public policy). They state that “[...] it incorporates aspects of both the top-down and bottom-up approaches to implementation studies considering that relevant actors in policymaking are situated in different social levels not only in iron triangle (government, bureaucracy and interest groups)” (Coeurdray et al., 2015, p.3). In other words, the ACF goes beyond the governance

triangle (State, market, and civil society) attempting to reach a holistic perspective including other variables such as the policy systems and bearing in mind different set of actors. Another strength of the current policy framework is its degree of conceptual coverage and academic ambition since it may be a potential explanation of its longevity in the policy literature and its worldwide use (Carney, 2014).

In the case of the weaknesses, we can highlight 2 major aspects which may be considered. The first weakness is related to the notion of “belief” which may become problematic because is considered as something internal or attached to actors, especially on “core values”. Meanwhile, the conception of action does not include an explanation of the resources that produce “beliefs”. Thus, beliefs just exist and are quite stable (Coeurdray et al., 2015). Secondly, we must say that coalitions emerge because different actors share the same “beliefs”. This means that the ACF explains the policy change, but not the policy. In other words, Coeurdray et al., (2015) suggest that enquiries such as *“How are the beliefs created?”* or *“How is it possible that individuals from different social spheres share the same beliefs?”* are essential to tackle if the ACF is adopted.

Based on the previous paragraph, along the sections dedicated to the results we fill up the gaps or weaknesses that the ACF has. Thus, we aim to find a reasonable explanation for the origin of beliefs of the Uruguayan case. In other words, we deep into the resources to understand the positionality concerning the identified beliefs. Secondly, and related to the first idea, we consider the need to address the previous questions such as *“How are the beliefs created?”*. By doing this, we gain a clear picture of how the different positionalities are originated and through which ways those beliefs are consolidated and maintained.

### **3.2. Aim of the thesis**

As it is been detailed in the theoretical framework, according to Ball & Junemann (2012); and Lingard & Sellar’s (2013) studies (as cited in Moschetti et al., 2019) those have emphasized the increasing integration of private actors in communities and networks of education policy production, but little attention has laid on analysing the deployed strategies through which the private sector may influence the debate and formulation of pro-market educational policies (see for example Fontdevila et al., 2019; Moschetti et al., 2019). The Uruguayan case arises to be a striking case due to a long-standing tradition

against private sector involvement across the different educational levels from primary to tertiary education (Betancur & Clavijo, 2016a; Bordoli et al. 2017; Bordoli & Conde, 2016; Marrero & Pereira, 2014). We justify that this pro public resistance has led the private sector to engage new forms of policy influence and policy formation. As said above, some researches have addressed the issue, but there are not studies which address those emerging privatisation policy strategies on higher education levels in Uruguay. In this respect, the thesis addresses mainly two purposes. First, it attempts to grasp into the institutional, political and socioeconomic reasons of the low penetration of the private sector on higher education levels in the country. Secondly, and foremost, to map out and characterize the mechanisms deployed by non-state actors to foster the policy influence and formation that afterwards led to emerge new private educational options on higher education in Uruguay.

On the basis of the previous paragraphs, we formulate the following general research question and its subsequent specific ones concerning the Uruguayan case:

- *“Which non-State actors (think-tanks, scholars, civil society organisations, universities and transnational organisations) and how have they influenced the policy formation of new private educational options on Higher Education in Uruguay?”*

And more specifically, the previous question includes three more concrete inquiries:

- *“Which are the actors and networks involved into this privatisation process?”;*
- *“How have non-State actors framed the need of involving private actors in the higher education?”;*

and

- *“Which strategies/mechanisms have been used to influence on the policy-making process by those think-tanks, private institutions, policy-advocates or other organisations towards the privatization of the Higher Education?”*

Overall, to answer the research questions, an empirical research process will be conducted. Being more specific, the research may be classified as an explanatory study, since it addresses the “*why*” or “*how*” this privatisation occurred (Agee, 2009). The upcoming subsection deepens into the typology of study that this thesis addresses.

Likewise, we pose the following hypothesis which will be further validated or rejected:

- **Hypothesis 1:** The long-standing tradition for public education in Uruguay has led non-State actors to mobilize themselves in the form of coalitions to impinge on the regulative framework, and thus, on public policy formation in higher education levels.

We justify the previous hypothesis paying attention to the belief systems applied into the Uruguayan case. In other words, we can point out that an important standing deep core belief may be the defence of the value of the public education across the different educational levels made by a broad range of political parties of Uruguay along with the civil society (see among others Bordoli & Conde, 2016; Bordoli et al., 2017). However, the same authors argue that this position- despite being unlikely to change according to Sabatier & Jenkins- Smith (1988) or Weibler & Sabatier (2007)- would have evolved towards a progressive disappointment of the public education, due to the collapse or excessive bureaucratisation as underlined on the previous section. Thus, those facts may lead to political parties such as the PC, PN, part of the Frente Amplio (FA) along with civil society organisations to organize or group themselves in form of coalitions in order to impinge on public policy and subsequently, to foster the private education due to the individual action seems not effective enough to influence on public policy. Nevertheless, within the civil society there are strong beliefs composed by teacher unions which they do oppose to “this switch or this new stance”. Secondly, related to the “policy core beliefs” we might underline that those pro-privatisation groups believe that the State should subsidize part of the private education, but they also defend that private universities can not be for- profit educational organisations. Lastly, regarding the secondary aspects of the privatisation of the higher education system of Uruguay, we can underline that those are related to the economic incentives after the approval of the Decreto 308/95 which allowed the creation of private institutions.

- **Hypothesis 2:** Part of the non-State actors define themselves as institutions which provide a “public service” accompanied with a strong discourse of the *added-value* with human capital elements as differential factors from the public university along it is accompanied with a discourse of a crisis and collapse of the public education.

The formulation of this hypothesis responds to the fact that considering the well-known consideration of the public education of the country, we posit that non-State actors mimic this reasoning by arguing that they may provide education for the whole society,

keeping at the same time a strong discourse based on innovation and human capital reasoning in order to differentiate themselves from the UdelaR, and thus, positioning themselves in the educational market.

- **Hypothesis 3:** The characteristics of Uruguay such as the tradition for public education or the size of the country facilitates the policy lobbying and networking strategies operating “out” of the political system.

Regarding this hypothesis, we may underline that following the line of the justification of the previous one, it is likely, that in a country where the value of “the public” has been traditionally strong and along with the fact that Uruguay is a relatively small country of only 3 million of inhabitants, that non-State actors had to operate or organize themselves in an alternative way in order to impinge or enact public policy.

In all, we justify the line of the hypothesis by arguing that the strong role of the Uruguayan State on the educational policymaking has brought to a path dependence<sup>8</sup> of non-State actors. This may occur-as pointed above- because the individual action of stakeholders is not enough to influence the policymaking, and therefore, they are forced to organize themselves through coalitions in order to be able to promote the institutional change, and thus, to impinge on public policy (Djelic & Quack, 2007).

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<sup>8</sup> The path dependence is a concept, or a school of thought developed by authors like Brian (1994) or North (2004). For instance, Pierson (2000) argues that this concept is based on the idea that actors are part of organizations that behave according certain standards or ideas. These paths are composed by institutions with rules, ideas and public policies that constraints on institutional development processes. Therefore, the notion of dependence in relation to the path taken highlights the historical dynamic that dictates that once a path is chosen, it is difficult to change it because the processes become institutionalized and are reinforced over time (Trouvé, Couturier, Etheridge, Saint-Jean, Somme; 2010)



### 3.3. Research design and methods

In order to attain the previous goals set, and thus, achieving a characterization of the nature and mechanisms of the Uruguayan privatisation on higher education, the current study case is based on the triangulation of three different research methods. Gorard & Taylor (2004) ratify the definition of triangulation made by Perlesz & Lindsay (2003), pointing out that it is a simple mechanism of combining methods in order to enhance the trustworthiness. Nevertheless, they add that it is not a simple double check of ratifying information, rather is a way to obtain new data from at least two different vantage points. To conclude this idea, citing the authors:

“[...] if triangulation means anything in social science terms it is about complementary, and nothing at all to do with mutual validation. The two methods must be directed at different aspects of the wider phenomenon to be investigated. One of the methods might be indirect or reductionist in nature, and the other direct or holistic” (Gorard & Taylor, 2004, p.44).

Applied to our research, firstly, we carried out a documentary analysis of primary reports and legal opinion's documents concerning the entitlement of the establishment and creation of education institutions as universities centres in Uruguay for the 1996-2017 period. The sources of data under consideration are from the Area of Higher Education (ÁES) which belongs to the MEC; and being more specific, from the CCETP. To obtain these documents we had to submit a request to the MEC of Uruguay, and once it was approved, we were authorised to collect the corresponding documents in digital format (see attached the request in Spanish on the *Appendix I*). Additionally, we analysed the IRAE Law that enables the exoneration of taxes to enterprises which donate money to educational institutions (including private universities); and indeed, we emphasize it since those contributions suppose an important quantity for private higher education institutions as a sustainable mechanism. By way of summary, the following table is presented to illustrate the typology of documents consulted as part of our fieldwork:

**Table V-** *Typology of documents consulted*

<b>Typology of document</b>	<b>N=</b>
Policy documents	5
Acts and judgement reports	8
Legislative texts	3
<b>Total</b>	<b>16</b>

**Source:** *Own elaboration based on the requests carried out and the subsequent final selection in accordance with the relevance of the official documents.*

Thus, as part of the documentary analysis, we have 3 major typologies of documents: a) policy documents (*university Statutes, and education proposals carried out by the private universities*) (n=5); b) acts and judgement reports (*CCETP resolutions and analysis of the educational proposals*) (n=8); and c) Legislative texts (Decrees of regulation of private higher education and IRAE reform).

This method served us to carry out a preliminary analysis and to draw a sampling of some of the potential actors involved into the privatisation process. Besides, it contributed to consider new relevant actors to take into consideration on the research process through snowballing as a sampling technic.

Secondly, we conducted 21 in-depth interviews in Spanish with different stakeholders from the private and public sector involved- directly or indirectly- in the process of higher education privatisation. The following table summarizes the typologies of actors interviewed:

**Table VI-** *Typology of actors interviewed*

<b>Typology of actor</b>	<b>N=</b>
Representatives of the public sector ( <i>former deans, public workers or key academic informants</i> )	6
Representatives of the private sector ( <i>deans, vice rectors, rectors of private universities...</i> )	8
Representatives of political parties	3
Higher education trade unionists	3
Representatives of non-state organizations or think-tanks	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>21</b>

**Source:** *Own elaboration based on fieldwork carried out.*

Particularly, we interviewed: a) representatives of the public sector (*former deans, public workers or key academic informants*) (n=6); b) representatives of the private sector (*deans, vice rectors, rectors of private universities...*) (n=8); c) representatives of political parties (n=3); d) higher education trade unionists (n=3); representative of non-state organisations or think-tanks (n=1). At this point, it is important to underline that the corresponding selection of participants have been driven based on a basic criteria: taking into consideration that the Uruguayan higher education universe is rather limited, it has been easy to select a relevant sample that subsequently, has been amplified through snow-balling method gaining the access of those stakeholders which initially we did not have access. These interviews with key stakeholders which participated of the “debate”, and the implementation of the processes of reform and privatisation on higher education levels, have been carried out based on a semi-structured guideline of interview which included 3 major sections: 1) basic information of the interviewee and about the institution he/she represents; 2) positionality towards privatisation and the potential challenges identified -“*what*”- and attributed factors – “*why*”-; and 3) perceived actions or mechanisms used to advance towards that vision- “*how*”- and by whom-“*who*”- (see *Appendix II*). Moreover, we attach a table detailing the dimensions, some subdimensions and contents of the interview outline:

**Table VII-** *Concepts, dimensions and indicators of the interview outline*

<b>Dimension</b>	<b>Subdimension</b>	<b>Content/Category</b>
General information	Professional information  Level of bonding with higher education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Positions</li> <li>- Tasks</li> <li>- Projects</li> </ul>
Positionality	Perception public and private sector  Current status of the HE system and challenges	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Mission of different institutions</li> <li>- Achievements of the Uruguayan HE system</li> <li>- Educational supply</li> <li>- Access, quality, equity</li> <li>- Factors of the increasing privatisation on HE</li> </ul>
Mechanisms and strategies deployed	Coalition building	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- External system events, policy subsystems, Relatively stable parameters</li> <li>- Role of the press and discourses, transnational networks, demonstration programmes, coalitions of actors</li> </ul>
Actors	Typology of actors  Level of involvement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Lobbies, think-tanks, private HE institutions, press, political parties, influencers ...</li> <li>- Proactivity and/or passivity</li> </ul>

**Source:** *Own elaboration based on the subdimensions and indicators of the research.*

Moreover, to gain acceptable levels of reliability, a trial version of the test (semi-structured interview) was delivered to two academic scholars in Uruguay to check its capacity to capture what it should capture. All the interviews have been conducted, and therefore, transcribed in confidentiality; and the identity of the interviewees has been withheld from the thesis by mutual agreement (the confidentiality and the consent information are further explained in the upcoming section). The in-depth interviews and its corresponding analysis through qualitative data analysis software served up to reaffirm

the involved stakeholders into the privatisation, but also, they provided data regarding the coalitions and mechanisms involved along this process.

Lastly, media discourse analysis is carried out. The sources analysed into this category are articles of Mr. Pablo da Silveira and Mr. Grünberg taken from newspapers such as “*El País*”; or “*El Observador*”; or clips, interviews and advertising of radiophonic spaces such as “Do not touch anything” (“*No toquen nada*”) of the radio channel “*Radio del Sol*”. The media analysis draw the characterization and the typology of discourses that are beamed by the mentioned press.

Despite the first and the third typology of methods are both primary documents, we classified into two different categories since the first classification is composed by governmental and private actors who elaborate official documents; whilst the third one is composed by private key influencing actors from the Uruguayan politics who participate in press spaces.

Furthermore, we define this research as a qualitative empirical based on Bryman’s (2012) parameters. Bryman (2012) settles qualitative research as a fluid and flexible epistemological approach that highlights discovering incipient or unanticipated findings and the possibility of altering research plans in response to accidental discoveries. Thus, our research considered that in case new concepts emerged or those which were already considered had taken more importance than we initially expected, the objectives, research and hypothesis would have evolved or changed in order to gain more trustworthiness.

In the same vein, we already said that this research can be classified as explanatory, but we would not classify the way of approaching this qualitative analysis as a character-focused narrative procedure nor an individual role analysis, but it drives towards the thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006) due to the aim is to capture and understand the new contributions argued by the participants concerning mechanisms of privatisation and the actors involved within a particular context such as Uruguay. Nevertheless, it also considers that Uruguay as a middle-income State may have common elements with other countries that may explain privatisation on higher education (Verger, 2007). Therefore, the study combines deductive and inductive approaches.

### 3.4. Ethical considerations

Besides bearing in mind the underpinning concepts of confidentiality and consent as deontological manners of any social science researcher, I had to consider the [ethical guidelines](#) for research practices from the University of Oslo since my supervisor is an external scholar of the GLOBED Consortium. In a nutshell, participants were asked about informant consent, and especially, the aim of the thesis was communicated to all participant stakeholders. But besides this, the thesis respects the integrity and dignity of interviewees, recognising the individual rights to privacy and personal data protection (anonymity and confidentiality) adhering to the legal framework set by the Act Relating to Norwegian Universities and University Colleges (for further information see the English and/or Spanish version of the “Letter of consent” on *Appendix III*).

We had to notify to the *Norwegian Centre for Research Data* (NSD) the project’s intentions and ethical considerations in order to obtain the approval for my fieldwork and data collection phase. It was likely that along the interviews and their transcriptions a participant may have been identified since we asked for positions or responsibilities of professional carrier’s interviewees. The NSD states on its notification form that this may happen: “*A person will be indirectly identifiable if it is possible to identify him/her through a combination of background information (such as place of residence or workplace/school, combined with information such as age, gender, occupation, etc.)*” Therefore, by filling out the notification form of NSD, elaborating a letter of consent, and adding an executive summary of the thesis when contacting potential subjects to be interviewed, we assured the transparency and ethics of the research. Lastly, as a clarification point, it is essential to underline that all the participants signed the consent form accepting to be audio recorded and gave authorization to use information revealed for research proposes. Nevertheless, 2 participants did not accept to authorize us to specify their names or workplace positions since they may be identified through the information provided. Ahead of the risk of specifying the position or responsibilities an interviewee, we opted for not mentioning the duties of the stakeholders, and instead, we categorized the stakeholders in accordance with the classification of interviewed actors proposed on previous pages.

## **4. Mapping of influencing actors and the Advocacy Coalitions**

The current chapter becomes part of the analytical phase and one of the axes of the dissertation. In this way, the chapter addresses the first specific research question concerning which actors and typology of coalitions are involved into the privatisation process. The structure of the chapter is organized as follows. First, a brief introduction is developed where a few clarifications on the ACF are displayed together with a preamble which mentions the most prominent non-state actors identified throughout the fieldwork. Second, the following section addresses the national non-state actors which play a prominent role; and finally, the third tackles the transnational stakeholders that have participated in this process of policy-adoption.

### **4.1. The Advocacy Coalition as an instrument for understanding the Uruguayan coalitions and alliances**

The advocacy coalitions in the upcoming subsections will mainly refer to the different pro-privatisation alliances or networks in which different non-state actors group themselves in order to influence the policymaking in HE. As an introduction of the section, we remind the definition of the ACF as a policymaking framework created to understand intense public policy problems (Sabatier & Weible, 2007) which attempts to explain a complex policymaking environment based on multiple levels of relationships (Carney, 2014). Moreover, the ACF is characterized by containing multiple actors and levels of governance, producing decisions despite the high levels of uncertainty and ambiguity, and taking years to turn decisions into outcomes.

Indeed, we underline this fact since throughout the fieldwork we have identified other typologies of coalitions formed around corporatist interests which do not keep a clear stance concerning privatisation nor on the public education, rather they look for their own profits wherever they find opportunities. Said that, this section firstly points out the national coalitions that have been identified; and secondly it points out the transnational alliances formed to impinge on the higher education policy.

Across the current paragraph we shortly mention the most relevant actors appeared in the case in order to facilitate the reader what will be next. In the national case,

we identify 2 major typologies of coalitions (group of non-state actors) and 1 informal mix-coalition (coalition composed by a group of non-state and state actors too: the Board of Rectors, which becomes a coalition of private university rectors and representatives; a mix-coalition (formed by politicians, public and private representatives) born in 1995 that enhanced the creation of private higher education institutions (CCETP); and finally, the coalition between the press and mediatic scholars. In comparison, the transnational alliances classification also includes different typologies of stakeholders: international organisations, international networks of academics, philanthropic organisations and banks. From that, we identify relevant actors such as the Inter- American Development Bank (IDB), Association of Universities Montevideo Group (AUGM), UNESCO-IESALC or Santander Bank among others. Addressing the transnational actors and the role they played will help us move towards how those stakeholders grouped in forms of alliances, but especially, it will be clarifying to underline the impact of those actors on the Uruguayan context.

#### **4.2. National non-state actors**

In an attempt to map the outstanding networks of actors, the Board of Rectors seems to be a salient stakeholder which it has not been addressed as an influential focus from a policymaking perspective. The Board of Rectors is an organism composed by the 5 rectors of the Uruguayan private universities (see “*Table IV* on the section which addresses the major features of the HE of Uruguay). This consortium aims to find common points in order to work together when there are challenges which may affect the interests and the functioning of private universities. As one of the interviewees defends:

“[...] within the private sector [referring to private universities] we work well, we hold a Board of Rectors, we regularly meet, and there is a pro tempore secretary that changes every 6 months among the 5 rectors, and we have a great relationship. It is true that somehow, we compete but there is a complementary supply too between universities. Therefore, I would say that it is really beautiful to see how the private system works together or united when there are problems which can affect our daily functioning.” (Interview- representative I from the private sector)

However, as one of the stakeholders interviewed points out, the Board of Rectors does not necessarily hold a strategic approach, but it is rather a forum to discuss and reach a consensus regarding different issues based on a close and a relationship of trust:



“[...] Thus, there activities in common. There is not a strategic plan elaborated by the Board of Rectors. No. However, there is a great relationship and a standing wish to look for a consensus regarding certain policies whenever inconveniences appear, they try to be aligned on their stances.” (Interview- representative II from the private sector)

Thus, both citations remark an existing desire to build a united front with common values or ideas in order to stand with those ideas which could threaten the interests of the private sector. Following this idea and taking into consideration the ACA, the Board of Rectors and its private universities have a belief system or a corpus of values quite aligned with the values of the PN-a liberal party with catholic roots- and the PC-a width Republican conservative and social democratic party-, and representing an alternative to the values held by the public sector. Although we did not obtain an explicit response regarding the values they hold as Board of Rectors, we might devise them through the following citation:

“[...] Although this can be a simplification, I can say that there is certain community or linkage between the PN (with catholic roots) and the UCU. There is certainly this relationship. The same with the Jewish community and its university with the PC. Without doubt, the line of thought of private universities is rather close to these stances.” (Interview- representative I from the public sector)

Besides, some of the webpages of the private universities allow us to grasp into this aspect since they highlight ideas such as: “To contribute to the development of the country through applied research, innovation and development (I+D), the connection with the productive sector and the creditworthy training of professionals within the knowledge society, thus, enhancing the employability and the differential factor of the person.” (Universidad ORT webpage<sup>9</sup>); or “to serve the society where each person finds out a demanding area of academic, professional, human and spiritual growth, while the university seeks to be recognized for its quality on teaching, research and internationalization.” (Universidad de Montevideo webpage<sup>10</sup>). In another interview they remarked: “This university [Universidad Católica de Uruguay] attempts to be a high-quality university, but at the same time, with public and social sensitiveness or with

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<sup>9</sup> Webpage Universidad Ort: <https://www.ort.edu.uy/la-universidad/presentacion-institucional>

<sup>10</sup> Webpage Universidad de Montevideo: <http://www.um.edu.uy/universidad/mision-identidad-valores/>

willingness to contribute to the society keeping its Jesuit tradition and values.” (Interview- representative III from the private sector). In all, it seems that private universities are aligned with Ilon’s (2010) based on the knowledge creation and evolving towards a competitive global economic industry.

Based on the previous statements and ideas, the Board of Rectors holds and defends deep core beliefs such as the existence of a private sector with an excellent productive and competitive capacity to contribute the country’s development or to boost the economic growth of the State. In addition, another idea to bear in mind within this category is the tradition/alignment of the Board of Rectors with certain political stances and positions (as the previous quote showed) which differ a bit with the FA party’s ideas (a coalition of progressive, democratic and anti-oligarch forces). However, this is not necessarily implying that the FA is currently against private universities by itself. Moreover, we may also identify policy core beliefs, which are based on the standing belief of a proper balance between the public and the private sector, or at least, to protect the private higher education institutions and their interests, but also to obtain the accreditation and recognition of their titles abroad Uruguay. Thus, those fundamental policy positions somehow hide the desire of the institutionalization of the private interests as the following interviewee recognizes:

“[...] Those transformation processes generate an emerging sector that, at the same time, they begin to arise in form of corporativist interests, whereby the private sector seeks to institutionalize a space. I believe this space; it is currently represented in and by the Board of Rectors. According to me, it is a key stakeholder.” (Interview- representative IV from the private sector)

Finally, the Board of Rectors stands by secondary aspects such as those ones which are associated to the implementation of a particular policy. An example of this is its stances such as being against of the elimination of the exoneración of taxes (IRAE<sup>11</sup>) by private companies which donate money to private universities, or another idea could be the will and the pressure to hold a consensus presidency within the CCETP in order to

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<sup>11</sup> Article regarding the Impuesto a la Renta de las Actividades Económicas: <https://www.laizquierdadiario.com.uy/La-exoneracion-de-impuestos-a-las-Universidades-privadas-divide-al-FA>

prevent a stagnation on the recognition or approval of private supply offered by private universities.

Following this idea, the Board of Rectors seems to stand as a salient stakeholder which aims to become an operative way to develop a private coalition along with private corporatist interests (represented by the business and technological sector) to influence the parliamentarian and governmental decisions. The section dedicated to the strategies developed by non-state actors deeps into the procedures through this coalition attempts to influence the policymaking. However, an interviewed syndicalist anticipated a few names- such Santander Bank, Itaú Foundation, or the Chamber of Commerce and Industry- which represent those corporatist interests:

“It is not a naïve investment [giving money to private universities and institutions], it is not because they are worried about poor people, educational change and a better development of the society, no. They need soldiers who are going to go into institutions to boost this political project. Who is funding these universities? Santander Bank, Itaú Foundation, Chamber of Commerce and Industry. Those are a few.” (Interview- representative I from a higher education trade union)

In addition, within this coalition of rectors, we have identified a policy-broker figure. As noted, according to Carney (2014), the policy-broker’s role is to minimize conflict and produced workable compromises between coalitions and government authorities to impinge on policy decisions and oversee the policy. Based on that, within this coalition, we attach this role to Rector Jorge Grünberg, who is the maximum responsible of the ORT University, PhD in Oxford, and he made consultancy for different companies and for the Embassy of the Israel State in Uruguay. In fact, Mr. Grünberg has always been the rector of this university, and he has been defined as a person who knows how to move himself with elites and political powers: “Grünberg has been and will always be there. He is seen among the elites as a God” (Interview- representative I from a non-state organization). However, Grünberg has the ability to produce workable compromises between coalitions and authorities (e.g. with the Minister of Economy) by means of policy lobbying as an interviewee argues:

“[...] Whereas the rectors of the private universities- especially Grünberg- in order to meet with the Minister of Economy only needed 24 hours, the rector of the UdelaR needed many calls and requests to have the same meeting [...] So, what

it works in those cases is the lobby and its influence's capacity [...]” (Interview-representative I from a higher education trade union)

Furthermore, Grünberg also has spaces on press media through his monthly columns to boost his ideas on higher education, technology and development in two major newspapers such as “*El País*” and “*El Observador*” as in the upcoming sections is further detailed.

Lastly, this coalition what it aims is to seek for long-term coalition opportunities, which means that they look for a major degree of consensus for boosting a policy change, but at the same time, they are aware that relatively stable parameters such as the strong value or support for the public university are needed to foster the necessary change.

In turn, another essential issue to describe in this section is the fact of the creation of an informal mix-coalition that enhanced a privatisation of the Uruguayan higher education through a Decree in 1995<sup>12</sup>. To achieve so, as said an informal coalition was boosted composed by a few politicians from the MEC, private actors and representatives from the public sector to modify through a faster procedure the relatively stable parameters like the basic constitutional structures (legislation) or the fundamental sociocultural values. As explained by a current member of the Partido Independiente (PI), a social democrat, Christian party:

“[...] between 1985 and 1994, higher education was not addressed on political or election campaigns, but when we reached the government [PC] and Julio Sanguinetti assumes as president, Samuel Lichtensztejn becomes the Minister of Education. I had a great relationship with Lichtensztejn because both of us were member of the Partido por el Gobierno del Pueblo in the elections in 1989 (a leftist party which later would be integrated into the Partido Colorado in 1995), and I was appointed Director of Dirección de Educación by him in 1995, when the PC won the elections. What we did was creating a space where the UdelaR, the ANEP, the UCU, and other private entities where invited to a dialogue. It was not easy because the UdelaR was in favor of a monopolist option and the UCU was already approved. Nevertheless, Lichtensztejn had an advantage, he already was a rector of the UdelaR and he kept a great relationship with Brovetto, the rector of the UdelaR on 1985. Therefore, there was a fruitful dialogue that led to the approval

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<sup>12</sup>Decreto N° 308/995: <https://www.impo.com.uy/bases/decretos/308-1995>

of the Decree instead of fostering a Law in order to prevent potential resistances from other parties and civil society. So, that Decree allowed a regulation and approval of private institutes and universities, but it also included the creation of the CCETP.” (Interview- representative I from a political party)

In fact, this mix-coalition (combination of state and non-state actors) is a special case conformed by a spectrum of several actors, and thus, they represented different ideological spaces. On the one hand, as Moschetti et al. (2019) remarked, the PC cannot be considered as pro-privatisation because this party traditionally had- or at least part of it- a mistrust concerning decentralization and privatisation policies since they did not have a clear supportive privatisation agenda, rather the contrary, they defended the idea of the Statist nation-state. However, the massification of the public university began to be perceived as an increasing problem as it is seen described on the upcoming chapter. In this way, different non-state actors such as the written press played an important role to attempt to switch the public opinion and the social perception concerning the existence of private universities. On the other hand, the UdelaR had a clear stance: a vast majority of the sectors were against the creation of other private universities not because they were against the privatisation, rather because they interpreted the end of the monopoly as a threat since they could have lost the autonomy as an institution. In this way, the university uses its power of veto to stop any initiative which may affect the autonomy of the public university:

“[...] Therefore, breaking the monopoly was also a way to attack one of the places where the left-wing forces built the power [...] the UdelaR is so strong that operates with power of veto from those initiatives which may come from any political party. What it is more, when a parliamentary commission about the study of a potential law on higher education is held, the voice of the UdelaR must be taken into consideration. Moreover, this generates certain difficulty on going forward with several initiatives which may have an effect of change.” (Interview-representative II from the public sector)

Finally, there were also the representatives from the private sector who aimed for a de-monopolization of the higher education system, allowing other actors and institutions to participate into it.

It was not easy to reach a consensus between the different positionings, but at the end, a new belief system was conformed which may be summarized in the following points. First, establishing new deep core beliefs based on the agreement of a minimum regulation of the private tertiary education and the possibility to open it to private providers. This implies the role of the discursive framework in order to open up the debate regarding the status of the public sector, and therefore, it contributed to draw private alternative as long as they were not for-profit educational options. Second, building basic policy core beliefs such as protecting the autonomy of the UdelaR, and ensuring a certain power of veto represented through a majority of public representatives from UdelaR and the MEC within the CCETP were the solutions to convince part of the community from the public sector that the emerging private universities would not suppose a threat for the public one. Lastly, they also established secondary aspects such as the establishment of a Decree to regulate the private higher education supply. In this vein, these secondary aspects translated into a proposal of the Decree 308/995 that was ratified by the president Julio María Sanguinetti, and subsequently, establishing it as a new institutional rule and policy output. In this way, this procedure and the approval of the Decree enhanced or settled the basis of the privatisation and creation of the ORT University in 1996, the UM in 1997, the Ude in 1998, and the CLAEH in 2017, but also to facilitate the expansion of their educational supply. Based on the revision of this mix-coalition procedure, we identify two major figures who played the role of policy brokers (Pablo Mieres, Director of Dirección de Educación in 1995; and Lichtensztejn, Minister of Education from 1995 to 1998). We categorize them within this role since they were able to reach workable conditions between different ideological stakeholders, fostering a kind of consensus to facilitate a modification of the institutional rules, subsequently, indirectly affecting the external system events since they broke up with the previous association of the UdelaR and higher education system by institutionalizing the possibility to open up the participation of private actors.

As being said, the CCETP became an important stakeholder in order to regulate the private sector in higher education because of its duty to advise the Ministry of Education concerning the authorization of new private educational supply. Using the words of one of its members:

“Uruguay is the only country of the region that it does not have an accreditation organization or agency for its private tertiary educational institutions, and so far,

this responsibility lies on the CCETP, hosted by the umbrella of the Area of Higher Education of the MEC. Moreover, its resolutions are not binding for the Ministry. But, in fact, the CCETP has the main task to advise the Ministry concerning the requests of authorization to work as tertiary institutions (enable them) and their official recognition.” (Interview- representative II from the private sector)

As a side note, the CCETP is composed by 8 members. 3 of them are elected by the UdelaR, and 2 other members by the MEC, who generally are or were professors of the UdelaR, and also 3 representatives chosen by the private universities (Landoni, 2008). So, taking into consideration this composition, this may become a reason why the UdelaR still keeps the power of veto which has been mentioned before. To reinforce this idea, this citation may be illustrative:

“The Advisory Board has too much rigid procedures, and it has a big problem which is the UdelaR because it has too much influence, with a capacity to block changes. For 3 years I was member of the Advisory Board, I saw it working, and in many times, it operates with mechanisms of corporativist defend from the UdelaR side, abusing of its quantitative role within the CCETP. This typology of institutional design lies on a fake reasoning: to suppose that private actors are mobilized by interests, but not the State, that the State only works based on general logics or dynamics. That is a lie.” (Interview- representative II from a political party)

In addition to this argument, another scholar historically linked to the Partido Nacional remarked: “When the FA began to govern in 2005, it placed its members into the Advisory Board. I mean... it is not a formal policy of the university. But it is an informal channel of power’s transmission” (Interview-representative III from a political party)

Nevertheless, it is interesting to collect another opinion of one of its former members regarding the aim of this organism:

“[...] The issue is that the Advisory Board was born on a wrong way. The CCETP was born in 1995, at the beginning of the government of Sanguinetti, and there are testimonies of that period which prove that the real aim was not to supervise the efficacy and the quality of the private supply, rather it was to establish a mechanism that provided a public stamp or certification. Uruguay is a country

with a Statist imaginary, and even for the private universities obtaining the validity of the government was an added-value (obviously in certain cases, certain degrees needed a homologation issued by the State).” (Interview- representative II from the public sector)

Based on that, it is not possible to consider the CCETP as a different mix-coalition since it is a direct consequence of the policies fostered by the informal mix-coalition mentioned above. However, having reached this point, it is especially interesting underlining a perceived switch towards finding consensual agreements among members from the CCETP led by its president Álvaro Díaz Maynard. As one of the scholars from the private sector justifies:

“[...] I believe the CCETP made great contributions, but, especially the last years this contribution has been greater. Before the 2012 there were many discussions between sectors within the Advisory Board, tension, lack of agreements, an intern war and so on... When the period of Diaz Maynard began [2012], the Minister of Education [from the FA] emphasized the need to work in harmony, Maynard also remarked the desire to boost trusting working relations. From there, it worked, and we even approved the new Decree 104<sup>13</sup> after 20 years- which regulated with more specificities the tertiary education- with a huge consensus among all members. This Decree emphasized elements that were not regulated such as postgraduate programs.” (Interview- representative II from the private sector)

The justification of this “harmonic” or “consensual” way of behavior of the CCETP may implicitly hide an attitude favorable toward the private provision of the higher education using arguments such as not hindering an expansion of the private sector and its supply as long as the educational design holds quality and professionalism. Despite Maynard played that role, we do not interpret him as a policy broker due to these changes on the social perspectives and conceptions regarding the public and the private higher education systems already penetrated the FA, the current party in power, as one key stakeholder described:

“[...] The way to effectively penetrate and impinge the public policy has been approaching and establishing binds between traditional parties and the private universities. But the FA had done it too during the last 15-20 years. For instance,

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<sup>13</sup> Decreto N° 104/014: [https://medios.presidencia.gub.uy/legal/2016/decretos/11/mec\\_90.pdf](https://medios.presidencia.gub.uy/legal/2016/decretos/11/mec_90.pdf)



Tabaré Vázquez, the president had a positive attitude towards private universities. He has granted all the legitimization to private universities, and people who are close to him represent these interests from private universities, but also from public institutions [...].” (Interview- representative II from a higher education trade union)

In all, unlike previous periods, there were different nuances on higher education privatisation stances, there are evidences that a new belief system is built, and thus, as long as the public and private representatives are aligned, a major degree of consensus for a policy change is achieved while reducing those constraints against privatisation.

Finally, the last national coalition of non-state actors identified is the alliance between the press and a few mediatic scholars. This existing relationship does not refer to all media, it is rather attributed to right-wing and liberal media, which has a well-known tradition and important space on the information sector in Uruguay. One of the two most salient cases in the written press are the “*Diario El País Uruguay*”- which belongs to the PRISA group- and the “*El Observador*”-it belongs to an international limited group of private ownership linked to the Opus Dei- which looked for a reciprocal collaboration with well-known and media characters with clear political statements<sup>14</sup>. For clarification purposes, the upcoming paragraphs have the aim to draw which typology of actors and people are part of these alliances and which role play on it, but it does not deep into the typology of discourses or messages displayed because the upcoming chapter will further develop the discourse analysis and the argumentation broadcasted by the media. However, in this section we briefly tackle the notion of the discourse, its mediatization and the typology of journalistic discourse.

The case of the “*Diario El País*” is the most iconic one due to Mr. Pablo da Silveira-professor in Sociology at the UCU, member and advisor on education policies of the PN-; and Mr. Jorge Grünberg-rector of the Universidad ORT- hold newspaper’s columns where da Silveira writes once a week, and Grünberg once every month. In turn, “*El Observador*” sporadically interviews the mentioned rector in order to tackle the higher education, innovation, technological trends and updates. Using the classification proposed by Santa Cruz (2016), both cases- “*Diario El País*” and “*El Observador*”- can

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<sup>14</sup> Although “*El Diario El País*” and “*El Observador*” belong to international communication groups, we categorize them as Uruguayan since they have been publishing many years and they are part of the social scheme of Uruguay.

be categorized into the “critical approach” (Santa Cruz, 2016, p.59). This means that those newspapers are not neutral media and they seek to reproduce the existing power structures of the society. The lack of neutrality is even admitted by some key informants from the private sector. As an example of citation:

The tax benefits of enterprises were reduced, but indeed, they [government] wanted to eliminate them. We reached a reduction instead of an elimination, reducing them from 80 to 50%. On that period, my rector was abroad, and I assumed his competencies while he was out, we [referring to private universities] had meetings with the Ministry of Economy, with parliamentarians, and we came out in the press, we showed the importance of those funds and donations to distribute scholarships, to carry out research projects. In all, the main actors of the private universities we appeared a lot in the press (rectors and academic directors) in important newspapers such as “*El País*” and other independent channels on television and radio stations... In turn, we had less appearances in those media aligned with the government’s ideas... (Interview- representative V from the private sector)

It follows that from this comment, we notice a small distortion and scandalization mechanism- this typology of reasoning is further explained in the next chapter, which often bases its arguments on a conditionality factor, “the importance of those funds for distributing scholarships”. However, another scholar from the public university refuted this argumentation about the exoneration of taxes by arguing that the private sector offers a scarce amount of scholarships compared to the public one:

“On one side, since they are exonerating, they have to offer scholarships, so if they want an exoneration, they have to offer them. It is not an issue of solidarity. The scholarships account a % discount. In general, they vary from 5 to 30% of the total amount of the tuition. The cost is not reduced to 0. And this is applied to a minimum number of people. Comparing it with the UdelaR, universities such as the ORT, UCU or UdeE may have around 5-10% of scholarship holders, which means around 100-200 scholarships out of 16.000 students approximately. The public system holds 8.000 scholarships per year. In other words, the scholarship holder in the public system can be double holder because everybody is exonerated

to pay the tuition fee; and there are 8.000 students who are subsidized to carry out their studies.” (Interview- representative III from the public sector)

Moreover, these articles and collaborations may sometimes contain a few inconsistencies and lack of rigor or evidences. For instance, the following example compares an educational fact with football- taking into consideration the passion that football raises in Uruguay-, and indeed, it is still widely used by many consultants and scholars from the private sector despite there are not public statistics which prove that:

“[...] There is a sentence of the rector of the ORT University which I love: “*A child from the poorest quintile has more chances of reaching the football national team than completing a Master in Uruguay*”<sup>15</sup>.” The sentence is quite illustrative”. (Interview- representative III from a political party)

As a clarification, beyond the fact of whether a child has more or less possibilities of completing a Master, this kind of statement hides a scandalization intention, and indeed, the Instituto Nacional de Estadística (2018) showed that the first three lowest decyls have increased their family incomes since 2006, thus, the number of young people in the lowest quintiles have decreased.

Those reasonings and ideas are distinctive of the knowledge mobilization strategies undertaken by some private actors as Avelar, Nikita, & Ball (2018) underline. Nevertheless, Bordoli et al. (2017) already identified this phenomenon in Uruguay (focusing on primary and secondary education) arguing that CERES (Centre for the Study of the Economic and Social Reality)<sup>16</sup> began to present its policy proposals on security, education and economy in 2017; and its members are tagged as “educational experts” when neither CERES nor its consultants have produced research on education. Even so, CERES frames its proposals and ideas as “evidence-based narrative”. Following this diagnosis of lack of evidence in those newspapers’ articles on higher education, a confusion between the concept “social expert” and “expert on the journalistic discourse” may emerge since the expert on discourse can use his/her abilities to attempt to shape the public opinion and perceptions, and subsequently, to modify the fundamental

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<sup>15</sup> This sentence was written in a newspaper article on “El Observador” on 15 September 2014. <https://www.observador.com.uy/nota/rector-de-la-ort-un-juven-pobre-tiene-mas-chances-de-jugar-en-la-celeste-que-terminar-un-master-201491518170>

<sup>16</sup> CERES is an independent think-tank which aims to produce research and economic analysis, design public policies, and promote public debate at a local and international level. It also holds an alliance with the Brookings Institutions based in the US (Moschetti et al., 2017).

sociocultural values of the population. Thus, Grünberg and Da Silveira could be an example of these practices. However, there are not the only ones due to radio stations like “*Radio del Sol*” with an iconic program- “*Do not touch anything*”- frequently uses speakers who are introduced as “educational experts” but they are professors in private universities on completely different fields.

“It [the radio programme] has spaces concerning education and those are occupied by professors from private universities- which at the same time those private universities are advertised during the advertising slots- who are presented as experts of the field.” (Interview- representative I from a higher education trade union)

Moreover, MacMillan (2002) argues that media used the educational events and phenomena within a wider context of global decline of the society to influence on people’s perceptions and emotions. Further, Anderson (2007) goes beyond and argues that media uses the mechanism of the school violence to mobilize a switch on the public opinion. One of the interviewed higher education syndicalists justifies it by arguing that media uses social networks to show a stigmatizing and pejorative image of the public education:

“[...] According to me it is an issue of habitus. It is a reflection. I believe that certain ideas penetrate and flow through mass media, but they also flow via social networks. For instance, applied to Uruguay, we have seen on social networks sad events such as two students fighting for getting a chair in a lesson at the Faculty of Law or Medicine, and those scenes become viral [...]” (Interview- representative III from a higher education trade union)

In some way, these phenomena also imply a process of mass mediatization to amplify the mass media influence beyond printed newspapers, television and radio stations (Santa Cruz, 2016).

Overall, the media is aware of the importance of emphasizing the ideological dimension (Charaudeau, 2011), but the discourses on the press have connotations that implicitly contain behaviours that contribute to produce other discourses and the structure of power relations within a society (Jager, 2003). Indeed, the following fragment written on “*Diario El País*” by Jorge Grünberg denotes an ideological stance based on defending the entrepreneurial and meritocratic values among the young generations to effectively change the system’s values:

“Promoting entrepreneurial attitudes and an increasing acceptance towards changes will result on cultural and educational changes from early ages in a mid-term. And we have only a few proposals on that. The budget increases and the institutional improvements must be complemented with educational approaches which value technological education, entrepreneurial attitude, the proficiency of foreign languages, and the production of new post degrees both within and outside the country.” (*El País*, “Las universidades”, 12/10/14)

Based on what is been said, we can conclude that the belief system of this media coalition and scholars is rather aligned with the system of values of the Board of Rectors, because both deep core beliefs- e.g. existence of a private sector with an excellent productive and competitive capacity to contribute the country’s development or to boost the economic growth of the territory-; and policy beliefs- the institutionalization of the private interests- are favourable to lobby for creating new private institutions with private supply.

### **4.3. Beyond national frontiers: transnational forces**

Globalisation has expanded its approaches to new needs and policies for development, somewhat serving as an instrument to introduce new discourses, agendas across the globe (Bonal & Rambla, 2009; Dale, 1999, 2005). However, the privatisation and market-oriented education policies have not affected all national States in the same way (Ball, 2013). Moreover, the literature on globalisation and concretely on the changing nature of international relations has provided evidence that more diverse and complex array of international non-governmental organisations are emerging in the educational field (Mundy & Murphy, 2001). The same scholars add that those transnational advocacy networks (non-governmental organisations, citizen associations, trade unions...) address educational issues while they attempt to use global-level visibility to lobby for changes at the national level. Similarly, Ataman (2003) aligned on Ball’s (2013) statements, explains that the impact of those networks differs from State to State due to the typology of government, geographical ubication, but especially, the more powerful and rich a State is, the less constrained by the principles of international intergovernmental organisational.

In what follows, the identified stakeholders have been classified into the following categorization: international organisations- including intergovernmental organisms-; international networks of academics; philanthropic organisations; and banks.

The first category of actors to be addressed is international organisations. According to Simmons & Martin (2002), the definition of International Organisation may induce confusion. In the 1990s, scholars such as Ostrom (1990) remarked that the word “institution” has replaced “regime” in international relations’ field, adding that international organisations can be defined as a set of rules meant to govern international behaviour. In turn, rules are often conceived as statements that forbid particular kind of interactions (Ostrom, 1990). A prominent organisation within this categorization is the AUGM<sup>17</sup> due to its role to introduce new privatisation practices. A key informant briefly explains it:

“[...] The UdelaR is also a relevant actor, especially, during the period of rector Brovetto, who created and promoted the Association of Universities Montevideo Group (AUGM), a net of public universities from the Mercosur region, and afterwards, in the period of rector Guarga who fostered the internal evaluation inside the UdelaR as a response of the performance indicators (linked with Thatcher’s policies which were carried out during the 1980s and which had a continuity in Latin America during the 90s).” (Interview- representative from the private sector VI).

This citation may implicitly ratify the idea that NPM practices penetrated Uruguay and more concretely, into the UdelaR during 1990s whilst the rise of the private sector was on its algid point of expansion (Betancur & Clavijo, 2016a). In addition, those practices are also associated to the educational governance reforms advance through path-dependence and contingent process of policy instrumentalization which are strongly conditioned to politico-administrative regimes (Verger, Fontdevila, & Parcerisa, 2019). It is especially interesting this idea of policy instrumentalization from a global perspective

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<sup>17</sup> The Asociación de Universidades Grupo Montevideo (AUGM) is a net of public, autonomous and self-governed universities from Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Paraguay and Uruguay that sharing their similarities (academic structures; and levels of services; making feasible the conditions to develop cooperation activities (Grupo Montevideo, n.d). Retrieved from: <http://grupomontevideo.org/sitio/institucional/>

because it would debunk the following reasoning that international organizations do not point out Uruguay as a target due to its demographic characteristics:

“[...] The growth of the educational demand in a country like Uruguay is low and we are a small country. Apart from that, the amount of people who complete secondary education is the lowest one in Latin America which means that you do not have the necessary conditions to have an expansion of the private sector. Said that, the size of the country and due to its demographic conditions [3.4 million people] may have protected the country from international organisms.”  
(Interview- representative VII from the private sector)

In this sense, given the practices carried out by the AUGM, once all transnational actors are described, the AUGM's case will be retaken in later pages due to the study identifies a prominent alliance between this organism and a foundation that directly depends on Banco Santander.

After this, another necessary actor to highlight is the Interamerican Development Bank (IDB)<sup>18</sup>. First, on a side note, we classify the IDB as an international entity- as it is stated on the foot note- because it is a multilateral organism, but also because it does not lend money to individuals or particulars. Said that, the following quote outlines the scarce penetration of the IDB due to the Uruguayan elites were trained and they did not allow the infiltration of neoliberal policies within the country:

“[...] The IDB did not get its hands on Uruguay, it has not intervened. The IDB was created as an integration bank in order to stimulate human capital. Therefore, we cannot put in the same level the IDB with other entities such as the World Bank or IMF. What it is more, the less consolidated and trained is an economic or political elite of a country (it is not the case of Uruguay), the more penetration neoliberal policies will have. Why? Because if they [international organisms] go to Bermuda or Jamaica (or any other weak and poor country) will give funds and those countries will take them easily. The weight of the domestic variables is important. Then, I would say that in Higher Education there was not a national

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<sup>18</sup> The Inter- American Development Bank is a multilateral organism which is the major source of funding and expertise on economic, social and institutional sustainable development in Latin America and the Caribbean. Its major aim is to boost a respectful and sustainable development with the climate. Its main functions are donating money, lending money, technical assistance on development projects, and research (IDB webpage, n.d). Retrieved from: <https://www.iadb.org/es>

agenda, rather was a self-defensive agenda from the UdelaR.” (Interview-representative VII from the private sector)

Contrasting the previous point on the citation with the IDB’s webpage, we clearly determine that the IDB’s unique projects carried out on higher education in Uruguay are just a few related to technical assistance and training on agronomy issues with minor budgets or with no cost. In other words, at least on higher education we do not appreciate conditionality programmes. The reasons attributed to this phenomenon can be mainly for two ideas. First, as Verger & Curran (2014) argues, policy mutates and rarely travels as a whole pack, rather is adopted fragmentally or in pieces. In addition, these authors also remark that sometimes certain lobbies or other typologies of institutions attempt to find common points or ideas with governments that can be later applied, instead of creating agendas and forcing national governments and institutions to implement a particular policy. This seemed to be the Uruguayan case, because taking back Sabatier & Weible’s ideas (2007) and the ACF, it can be an issue of a clash of belief systems (protecting the public higher education vs attempting to introduce new forms of NPM). Moreover, a second and brief reason that may be associated to the described issue is that not offering free higher education can be regressive for middle-classes since they can not afford a private tuition fee, and therefore, a non-free higher education system would decrease their family income due to a lack of opportunities (Vandenberghe & Debande, 2005). Likewise, on previous pages, we have seen the benefits and impacts of the scholarship programme from the public sector. So, it seems that the higher education in Uruguay is not regressive at all. Lastly, as the interviewee underlined, the trained political positions can be a potential explanatory factor for the low penetration of this entity, and we could add the fact that the Uruguayan GINI index- as shown on the theoretical framework is 0.41 (tending to equality)- can be another explanatory reasoning for the low penetration of the private sector.

To close the international organisations category, a last entity that somehow participated and still participates is UNESCO- IESALC<sup>19</sup> (International Institute for the Higher Education in Latin America and Caribbean). As Ridge & Kippels (2019) remark,

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<sup>19</sup> UNESCO- IESALC is an International organism that belongs to the UNESCO dedicated to the promotion of Higher Education within the Latin American and Caribbean regions, contributing to implement the programme approved on the biannual General Conference of the UNESCO (UNESCO- IESALC webpage, n.d). Retrieved from: [unesco.org.ve/](https://unesco.org.ve/)



the relationship and perceptions between UNESCO and private sector changed over the time: “[...] as UNESCO seeks to define its role and exert its influence in the post-Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) world, it has increasingly sought new partnerships and revenue streams from the private sector.” (Ridge & Kippels, 2019, pp. 87).

The IESALC is without doubt an interesting case, especially, for its benchmark tasks carrying out comparative studies on educational phenomena as the next paragraph reflects:

“[...], we also funded and carried out a research on higher education in Uruguay (a study led by Enrique Martínez Larraechea) and somehow, IESALC visualized and compared its results in a comparative framework in order to have a regional approach of the phenomenon. In this sense, within the IESALC, Uruguay had the same participation as any other Latin American or Caribbean country.” (Interview- representative VIII from the private sector)

Thus, this sentence of one of the former general directors of UNESCO-IESALC does not display a clear stance regarding privatisation policies. Nevertheless, it implicitly shows an existing linkage between UNESCO-IESALC and scholars which leads to address the transnational networks of scholars and academia involved into benchmarking practices of privatisation processes in higher and tertiary education levels.

As evidenced by this feature, transnational networks may play an important role to share and to make certain privatisation practices travel between countries and regions as previously pointed out (Verger & Curran, 2014). Specifically, the following key informant details the importance of expanding the academic networks beyond the national frontiers due to the limited Uruguayan networks in a country of 3.4 million makes more difficult to adopt new knowledge and practices:

“[...] because many Uruguayan scholars participate into international networks, and they search them due to Uruguay is a small country, and therefore, researchers many times do not have anybody to share their knowledge with, his internal network is very limited [in terms of academic development]. According to me, those factors influence the status of the development of the higher education of the country.” (Interview-- representative IV from the private sector)

Furthermore, the same scholar complemented the previous reasoning, providing an example based on his experience:

“[...] Since 2016, I have participated in an informal group of researchers denominated “Grupo Cartagena”. We call it that way, because the first time we met was in Cartagena, and it includes researchers on Higher Education from Latin America. We meet once every year to share and reflect on knowledge. The promoter of this group is Liz Reizberg, colleague of Phil Albach, and it is integrated by people such as José Joaquín Bruner, Andrés Barnasconi, Mónica Marquina, Alma Maldonado, Marcelo Rabosi...” (Interview- representative IV from the private sector).

This practice can potentially show how discourses and ideas flow to foster the adoption and enactment of privatisation policies on higher education. Yet, it is especially interesting that this transnational network is aligned with the Boston College and the PROPHE group (Program for Research on Private Higher Education). As the PROPHE website<sup>20</sup> (n.d) states:

“PROPHE is a global network dedicated to building knowledge about one of the most striking tendencies in higher education around the world-- the development of large and often vibrant private sectors. [...] PROPHE's knowledge mission focuses on discovery, analysis, and dissemination, as well as creation of an international base of researchers. PROPHE neither represents nor promotes private higher education. The core activity is scholarship, which, in turn, aims to inform public discussion and policymaking”. (Fragment taken from PROPHE's website, n.d).

In this sense, if its publications and projects are revised on its website, we appreciate publications which relate to the regression of free higher education. Thus, we may conclude that they attempt to generate research-based evidence to frame alternative policies countering it in contexts with a public long-lasting relationship. In addition to this group, we have identified a new prospective actor which is the Bloomsbury Policy group<sup>21</sup>, a group of former Latin American Chevening scholars who aimed to participate on the institutional debate of public policymaking. As it is shown in the next chapter, this

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<sup>20</sup> PROPHE group website : <https://www.prophe.org/en/prophe-in-international-higher-education/2/>

<sup>21</sup> Bloomsbury Policy Group: <http://bloomsburypolicygroup.org/#about>

case is a prominent example of meetingness to influence the policymaking by strengthening the links between the private sector and governments. According to its website:

“The general feeling was that there was an open space to contribute in the discussion and promotion of rigorous, evidence-based policymaking, so they decided to start working together to transform this idea into action. Then, Bloomsbury Policy Group was created welcoming proactive Latin American professionals with studies in United Kingdom who are passionate to work for the region.” (Fragment taken from its website, n.d)

In this vein, it is necessary to underline its recent creation in 2017, therefore, it is not possible (yet) to measure the impact it had. However, assessing the prospective influence may be an interesting fact since on its official presentation on the Policy Forum held in Uruguay on October 2018, many representatives from private universities (UM and UCU) and other sponsors like Santander Bank or the British Embassy were participating on it. In other words, as a future hypothesis, the role of this policy group may settle new potential public-private partnerships as a way of functioning in Uruguay, and more given the fact, that one of its speakers said that a switch on the private sector perception is needed in the country.

Another typology of intervening actor are the philanthropic entities. As detailed previously, “venture philanthropy provides a blend of performance-based development finance and professional services to other organisations in helping them expand their social impact” (John, 2006, p. 5). Moreover, the same scholar adds that venture philanthropy’s activities are part of high-engaged partnerships in contributing to building the commercial value of companies. A clear example of this is the “*ReachingU*” Foundation. This foundation is settled in US and with global presence which has its activities’ focus in Uruguay. As its webpage states<sup>22</sup>: “We promote initiatives and we strengthen organisations which provide education opportunities to Uruguayans who live in poverty in order to allow them to develop their potential.”

In other words, to carry out these initiatives, a national partner is needed:

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<sup>22</sup> Fundación “ReachingU”s website: <http://reachingu.org/mision-y-objetivos/>

“[...] I will provide an example: We [UM] have launched a postgraduate program for school principals called “*Excellent Principals*” [Directores de Excelencia], it is 100% funded by the *ReachingU Foundation*. It is a program for 30 principals (the 75% coming from public schools and the 25% from private ones) who has their schools in vulnerable contexts. [...]. It is a program that satisfies the university, with an incredible impact. For the university does not generate any profit, it is a loss: despite we do not pay, we put the rooms, resources, administration, cleaning... However, for us, it is a fundamental program, because it represents what we want as society, it is part of our mission, to contribute to the country, and improve the education in Uruguay.” (Interview- representative I from the private sector).

In all, as it is highlighted on the previous citation, the program helps to strengthen an idea or even a commercial strategy that organisations want to emphasize in order to gain legitimation.

Lastly, within the category of banks, the Santander Bank- Universia is a salient actor. A former representative from a non-state organisation explained it as follows: “Its aim would be to serve as a linkage between universities and bank, but also with the business sphere; and it does it through offering selfless services as an enterprise with corporate social responsibility.”. Yet, to move forward with these services, Universia needs to establish agreements and alliances for social purposes, because those ones will allow them to doing business later. In other words, this foundation has the same way of functioning as philanthropic organisations. The same informant details how Universia gained an agreement with the UdelaR by means of the AUGM despite the initial opposition of the public Uruguayan university:

“[...] It was not possible to obtain an agreement with the UdelaR, but at the end, this desired agreement was gained by means of the AUGM. On that moment, the rector Guarga was the president of the Montevideo Group. He did not make a strong opposition, because most public universities (especially from Brazil or Argentina) were already members. So, the photo of Guarga signing an agreement with Universia was obtained.” (Interview- representative I from a non-state organisation)

Overall, this section suggests that despite the spectrum of intervening typologies of transnational actors, their penetration and capacity of influencing higher education privatisation have been limited due to the strong role played by the State, the UdelaR, and their total opposition to different belief systems. Yet, there are evidences enough to sustain that the transnational actors who had a higher influence are those who have found a national partner with which they conformed an alliance as we have shown throughout this section.

## **5. Discursive frameworks and strategies of non-state actors**

The present chapter tackles the second and the third specific research question, focusing first on depicting the catalogue of different arguments displayed by these non-state actors to create a switch on the public opinion regarding the participation of the private sector into higher education. The second section discusses the third specific research question but focusing on the mechanisms deployed by those actors to influence on the Uruguayan policy formation. Therefore, this part emphasizes the procedural way of intervening in policy within this country, either directly or indirectly. Finally, a third section is used to present a summary table with the most distinguished strategies, objectives, rationalities, policy outputs, and involved actors.

### **5.1. The political influence of non-State actors: the incipient idea of a cultural “battle”**

As evidenced in Moschetti et al. (2019), the Uruguayan society and policymakers share an array of policy imaginaries or “belief system”-using the ACF’s terms- that have proven the very resistance to exogenous forces. In turn, from a path-dependence perspective, the historical strong role of the UdelaR, its autonomy and capacity of veto has limited and conditioned the expansion of private tertiary education. Thus, the existence of this traditional legacy led to the alienation or association between the higher education and the UdelaR as this citation shows:

“[...] In comparison with other countries, higher education and public education have been totally associated in Uruguay until 1984. Afterwards, the UdelaR made an open discourse, but keeping its traditional and monopolizing character and even a excluding culture within the public sector, because the UdelaR does not want that the UTEC [Universidad Tecnológica del Uruguay] takes part of the budget which initially was invested into the UdelaR. Moreover, this excluding culture can be reflected in terms of internationalization, because it has a localist vision, and the development of the UdelaR has been bounded to its own political agenda; and it has not based on the development of any particular academic field nor on the internationalization of the Uruguayan higher education [...] Nevertheless, this

consolidated alienation between higher education and public sector was reinforced within the UdelaR's spaces, where members of the PC or PN (among others) lived together, and when the university opened itself to middle classes by late 50s, it generated new socialization spaces and consensuses among diverse social and political sectors. Nowadays, it is not the case for two major reasons: first, the lack of transparency of the private sector and the fact of not knowing how they train their future professionals [referring to the absence of an Accreditation Agency]. Second, private universities could have become alternative spaces of training the elites, and thus, those elites may not have the traditional values of the UdelaR, values based on building a social Uruguay regardless the ideological stance of a person.” (Interview- representative II from the public sector)

Consequently, key stakeholders had to fight this path-dependence (Djelic & Quack, 2007) or the traditional association through a ‘cultural battle’ to enable a change on the long-term coalition opportunity structures and creating a major degree of consensus for a policy adoption.

In this sense, this cultural battle already happened as Monreal (2005) described in her book *“Universidad Católica del Uruguay: El largo camino hacia la diversidad”*<sup>23</sup> just before the creation of the UCU between 1980-1985. Yet, the author does not refer to it as a “cultural battle” rather as an attempt to switch the opinion through media. This meant that the media already played an important role in arguing for pro private universities to criticize and to weaken those sectors against privatisation of higher education. Indeed, Monreal (2005) expresses this idea by arguing that from November 1981 onwards, the debate gained relevance in the mass media, the positions were defined, and the arguments were further developed with stronger basis. Nevertheless, on one side, the monopolization traditions remained keeping strong stances on the academic legitimacy of the UdelaR. On the other side, the Uruguayan university reality was analyzed as a smaller burden due to the UdelaR was perceived as an overcrowded university, with limited resources, inadequate spaces, and without a holistic training philosophy. Thus, those facts legitimated the positionings which defended the existence of enough evidences of a real need of offering an alternative educational supply by a

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<sup>23</sup> Monreal, S. (2005). *Universidad Católica del Uruguay: El largo camino hacia la diversidad*. Montevideo: Universidad Católica del Uruguay.

private university (Monreal, 2005). A year later, in 1982, the Uruguayan Conference of Bishops (CEU) presented the formal request of recognition of the UCU, and newspapers such as the “*Diario El País*” and “*La Mañana*” played an important role of supporting it (whilst the government remained in silent). Those media began displaying a reasoning based on the freedom of choice and teaching, and highlighting that the economic management of those new universities would not fall on the state’s duties (Monreal, 2005).

Nevertheless, the role of the press on that period was not isolated, rather it kept a constant presence across the different decades, improving its reasoning and justification of privatisation according to the political, historical and social contexts. In fact, despite the differences on argumentation typologies, a constant variable has been seeking a reputation of private universities to legitimate new private supply by attacking the public system. From here, we might classify the discourse framework and the different typologies of reasoning pro-privatisation based on a time sequence.

Besides, the typology of discourses displayed by the press during the 80s- e.g., massification, inadequate spaces etc.- as Monreal (2005) remarked, from the period 1985 (approval of the first private university) until the present (it is still available), a major discursive mechanism was launched. Taking into consideration the standing resistance to private education, private universities framed their mission and existence based on highlighting the important public task that they did for the society. As an example of this discourse:

“We tried to communicate that we offer a quality education and that we are a good university, but at the same time, we want to emphasized since the creation of the university its public and social awareness, or in other words, with willingness to contribute to the society keeping in mind a Jesuit tradition.” (Interview-representative III from the private sector)

Thus, it seems that private universities along their primary years of existence (1990s) tried to partially imitate the UdelaR by emphasizing that their activity would impact into the society as well in order to legitimize and to gain a space in the market within a pro-statist society. Yet, this previous idea is complemented by a differential factor, which was based on attempting to show an initial and differential innovative factor in universities such as the ORT University, and as this citation shows:



“I think we did it, launching pioneering programs in Uruguay, or offering activities that they were not offered before: relationship university-business, fostering the creation of technological enterprises, and a few years later, online training. For example, ORT founded the first technology incubator together with the National Technological Laboratory in 1999.” (Interview- representative V from the private sector)

Moreover, we identify another stage from 2005 onwards- contemporary to the year when the FA took the power-, which is characterized by a battery of new arguments and direct attacks against the public sector, developing ideas based on depicting a failure, collapse and inefficiency of the entire public educational system (including the higher education too). Through a query analysis and a Tag Cloud on N-vivo we have certified that out of 11 articles analyzed which partially address- or at least mention- issues concerning higher education, the 90% of the occasions when the authors- da Silveira and Grünberg- use the concept “higher education” or “university/es” refer to public universities, whilst private universities occupy only the 10% of mentions. In addition, after 2005 many private actors highlight that the public higher education system has its weaknesses (massification, inefficiency, inefficacy of the quality of the system) as for example da Silveira wrote:

“[...] if we do consider as student a person who at least passed a subject in the 12 months prior in the public university, the number of active students would be 30.000 out of 80.000 students enrolled [enrolment data from 2006] [...] The public university is less poor than we use to believe. If the number of active students is less than 30.000, the amount of resources for each enrollee is 3 times higher. Therefore, the public university holds more money for each student than any other university in the country [...] The UdelaR must be accountable to all citizens, not just to the government [referring to FA’s party]” (*El País*, “Bloqueo educativo”, 8/07/2006<sup>24</sup>)

Paradoxically, we also identify a mimetic justifying response from the private sector which is based on arguing that the public sector and the State do have corporatist interests as well. A representative from the PN expresses it this way: “The private sector

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<sup>24</sup> The newspaper article is not available anymore. A hard copy was obtained at the National Library of Uruguay.

has its own particular interests and the State does not. This is not necessarily true, it is not. The State does not block any initiative? Of course, it does, it has its own interests too”.

Complementing this mimetic argument, private universities display an institutional differential argument based on highlighting deeper differences between them and the public sector. For example, a strategy is the willingness of appearing and positioning themselves in international higher education rankings as one scholar from the private sector affirms:

“Our university is on the top of the QS World University Rankings, and indeed, this makes us feel proud [...] because we are performing high as other institutions such as MIT, Harvard, Cambridge or Oxford.” (Interview- representative I from the private sector)

Interestingly, this statement is imprecise and lack of evidences as conducting a fast checking on the QS World University<sup>25</sup>, the UM is placed in the number 531-540 worldwide; 80 in Latin America; and 81-90 in top 50 under 50 (fifty- year universities or younger). Therefore, the data proves that they are very far from the well-known international universities, but they are also far in terms of patent registration or research impact according to the same source. Yet, a way to interpret this practice may be linked to engaging mechanisms of participating in international rankings to adopt best practices from high-income countries to middle and low-income countries.

A third stage would be from 2010 up until now which emphasizes a reasoning against public education and several times against public using pejorative terminology and mass mediatization along with scandalization discourses without evidences. In order to impact on public opinion those ideas are reflected on media, and especially, on newspapers such as “*El País*” or “*El Observador*” as the upcoming citations follow:

“A child from the poorest quintile has more chances of reaching the football national team than completing a Master in Uruguay.” (*El Observador*, “Rector de la ORT”, 14/09/2014)

“The tragedy of the country is that the majority of the labour force, but also the youngest generations aspire to become part of the bureaucracy classes. They are not well-trained workers, without English proficiency, who want a good salary

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<sup>25</sup> QS World University website: <https://www.topuniversities.com/>

and a safer workplace without doing any sacrifices [...] wish to be plugged onto those classes who have the future solved.” (*El País, Ojalá me coloque*, 17/02/2018)

In this sense, we certify that those declarations embodied meritocracy discourses and a hard work rewarded culture, using predefined and ambiguous ideas along it places out those positions which are not innovative nor entrepreneurial, because by attacking them they seek to switch the external events by influencing the public opinion but also to lobby for adopting policies which rewards entrepreneurial measures among political parties.

Finally, from 2015 to the present, a win-win or good perception of the public higher education sector has been identified as long as the cooperation between a public and a private university exists in form of partnership collaboration. A clear example of that is the recent creation of a Joint Bachelor Degree on timber engineering between the UdelaR and the ORT University:

“In fact, six months ago, a new Degree coordinated by the Faculty of Engineering (UdelaR) and the Faculty of Architecture (ORT University) was approved. This is an historical fact. It is about the timber engineering. It is a considerable leap forward. I believe that there is an evolution towards not seeing the bad ghost of private universities [from the UdelaR], but also the flexibility from private universities.” (Interview- representative IV from the public sector)

In addition, this conciliative or switching perspective towards the public sector is ratified by a private sector scholar:

“The facts proved that there was no reason to provoke opposition between the UdelaR and private universities. They were complementary, and once this collaborative work has begun, it has fostered a wider and open system, with more opportunities. Indeed, this philosophy has enhanced the collaboration of different faculties and universities.” (Interview- representative I from the private sector)

Overall, the discursive strategies are cumulative, meaning that once the discourse is selected and adopted, that one is retained in order to be used for an ideal circumstance.

## **5.2. Reinfluencing the education policy: catalogue of identified strategies**

The last section explores and describes the strategies developed by non-state stakeholders that have contributed to promote a switch on the beliefs system and to force the adoption of privatisation policies and pro-market reforms. In this way, each strategy includes its fostered objectives, involved actors, rationality, outputs, and policy impacts (in those cases where applicable).

As a clarification, the categorization “indirect” or “direct strategy” is used and created by ourselves to differ in relation to the capacity to generate impact on public policy and its temporal dimension in order to appreciate changes since the advocacy coalition takes into consideration the policy impacts in a mid-long term. Thereby, the direct strategies are conformed by mechanisms which aim to switch an institutional design and affecting in a short term the policy adoption. In turn, those strategies classified as “indirect” aim to generate changes in terms of public opinion, shift the existing stable parameters, and therefore, to contribute for a new degree of consensus for a major policy change.

### *5.2.1. Direct mechanisms*

In the case of the strategies which attempted to generate an institutional design conducive to privatisation, the fieldwork process has identified two major mechanisms: court resolutions; and policy lobbying and networking strategies.

The results certify that the procedure of resorting to justice was a salient mechanism to force a faster privatisation without modifying external events such as fighting the cultural battle to influence the public opinion. As one of the interviewed scholars pointed out, once the UCU was approved, the Universidad ORT had to fight the decision in order to be ratified as university too:

“The fact is that in 1995, the president Sanguinetti named Lichtensztein as minister, former rector of the UdelaR, and he approved the Decree 308/95. When the ORT was discussed to become a private university by the UdelaR and the ORT institution itself, the UdelaR sent the Decree to the justice. It was a complicated moment for the ORT, but the administrative court sentenced that private universities could exist, and that they were legal. It is a weird way since it is a Decree which sustains that private universities are authorized by the MEC, and

their titles will have the same value as those ones issued by the public sector.”  
(Interview- representative III from the private sector)

Precisely, the previous reasoning implies the objective of enhancing the privatisation and the creation of a new private institution by seeking a legal ratification from courts. In other words, the rationality or the strategic procedure of accomplishing the aim was by bringing the case to courts, and therefore, to modify the basic constitutional structures (relatively stable parameters) without modifying the external system events (using Sabatier & Weible's, 2007 parameters). As said on the previous chapter a temporal mix-coalition was conformed to agree a Decree on the regulation of the private universities. Nevertheless, the rector of the UdelaR on that moment, Brovotto was not in favor of sending the appeal to the courts since, yet other organs of the public university like the governing body pushed to send it. Despite the failed attempt from the public sector, the sentence legitimated the ORT University and subsequently, it generated a chain effect on new policy outputs such as the creation of two new private universities (UM and UdE) the upcoming two years.

While the administrative courts seem to emerge as a salient and effective procedure to impinge on the higher education policy, the most repeated mechanism which has been identified-at least implicitly throughout the fieldwork- has been the networking (linkage between stakeholders) and the policy lobbying. In this sense, the idea of the informal meetings is remarkable since serves to establish links between the political and economic powers, and therefore, to strengthen a long-lasting relationship between them. For instance, the following citation from a member associated to FENAPES<sup>26</sup> shows how the networking overpasses the institutionalization:

“The discussion does not go on that way. For example, the rectors of private universities never go to the National Commissions of Education. They are out of this institutionalism, they do not want to discuss about politics in general terms, rather they are interested on the approval of their projects. What it works in order to achieve it is the lobby with the Minister of Economy, with the Education one, with parliamentarians, and with businessmen. Meanwhile, the rector of the UdelaR has more difficulties to do that even though his university produces the 80% of the university knowledge. This prove that there is not possible

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<sup>26</sup> FENAPES (Federación Nacional de Profesores de Educación Secundaria)

institutionalism which explains this. It proves the tight connection between political and economic power. They [private universities] are concerned about meeting with multinational education initiatives such as Pearson or British Council.” (Interview- representative I from a higher education trade union)

In this sense, the major goal of this strategy is to act as a prompting platform to design educational policies, but also to block those initiatives which may compromise the “status” of private universities as the IRAE’s proposal attempted to do. Thus, the strategic way to carry it out is through two different options. First, as it is detailed on the theoretical framework, the usage of events and meetings where different actors from the private sector, foundations and government officials exchange visions, diagnosis, and education policy solutions. These spaces play an important role in strengthening the links between the private sector and governments. This may be the case of the incipient role of the Bloomsbury Policy Group which gathered representatives from the private universities but also from banks such as the Santander on policy forums to exchange visions, diagnosis, and education policy solutions. Second, a sub typology of networking is the centrality of face-to face meetings as well as informal spaces and relationships (Fontdevila et al., 2019). Indeed, this is the case of the Board of Rectors which seeks this direct interaction to conditionate power decisions. Nonetheless, this idea of influencing policymaking by this means may be extremely linked to soft coercing mechanisms, meaning that this coalition of rectors has developed the ability to get what they want through attraction and culture of influence. The following example provided by an informant might be a hint of the rationality behind it:

“Different representatives from private universities met with parliamentarian representatives especially from parties such as the FA, and we convinced some of them that the IRAE reform was a crazy idea, and indeed they tried to convince the promoters of the proposal to withdraw. Some of them were ashamed of what their group was doing.” (Interview- representative V from the private sector)

Besides avoiding the suppression of the exoneration, they obtained other policy outputs such as a higher and diverse private supply consequence of a closer relationship with the CCETP as it is underline before due to the switch of the president of this organism towards a harmonic and consensual positioning.

We attribute the lack of direct mechanisms to the fact of the historical resistance to pro-privatisation reforms, thus, as said in the previous subsection, there are deployed mechanisms to advance towards a switch on the belief system, and subsequently, enhancing pro-privatisation reforms by changing the external and internal characteristics of the context through indirect ways.

Nonetheless, the findings show the need of interrelating the previous networking strategies with the upcoming indirect strategies. In other words, actors behave in a strategic and coordinated way since those direct mechanisms enhance the policy adoption and the institutionalization of new institutional rules, yet they need complementary strategies to legitimate their policy outputs and to foster a perceptive impact of effectiveness to later generate deep changes on the public opinion and its belief system.

### 5.2.2. *Indirect mechanisms*

As Moschetti et al. (2019) explained, the Uruguayan case is particular for many reasons, but a fact that it is especially remarkable is that traditional actors from the private sector have not developed an active role as policy actors nor as advocates. In turn, in higher education since 2005 approximately, we have detected a slightly switch on the private stakeholders' role in the view of developing and deploying indirect strategies to impinge on policymaking in a mid/long term.

Nevertheless, it is especially significant the interrelation identified between different typologies of strategies. In fact, we have noted an existing strategic behaviour of some actors in order to deploy their mechanisms, and thus, we may think that those actors do not plan and articulate their strategies in an individual way, rather coordinated. Prove of this statement is that several stakeholders mentioned the *Eduy21 initiative*<sup>27</sup> - citizen initiative whose fundamental purpose is to initiate a debate to raise profound, sustainable, dynamic and permanent transformations in education (Moschetti et al.,

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<sup>27</sup> Eduy21 defines itself as a "citizen initiative" whose fundamental purpose is to initiate a debate to raise profound, sustainable, dynamic and permanent transformations in education (Moschetti et al., 2019). The organization was created in 2016 and currently has more than 100 participants among founding members, an academic committee and a honorary commission, and currently it has almost 4000 supports or adhesions from Uruguayan citizens.

2019)- as an example or as a model to impact on higher education too as it is indicated in the following citation:

“[...] it [Eduy21] aims to create consensus beyond national parties and creating a winner coalition looking for an opportunity window. Once the conditions change, those politicians and businessmen will hold the tools to boost the change. Indeed, what Eduy21 is doing is creating coalitions to find alliances and supports among the civil society and the political system. When the conditions change, and the hardest leftist forces lose power, the public education and all these actors will foster the changes. And in fact, Eduy21 may become an inspirational initiative to promote changes in higher education too, despite the priority is on compulsory education.” (Interview- representative I from a political party)

Despite Eduy21 expresses the need for a reform on primary and secondary levels underlining a negative diagnosis of the situation of the Uruguayan education, the narrative of a crisis can be also applied to higher education. As Verger et al. (2016) remark, this terminology of crisis is common from the stages of variation and selection of policy formation, emphasizing aspects such as the massification or the bureaucratization. Thus, to spread this perspective of “collapse of the system” media invests efforts on displaying spaces especially in written press, where they use the discussed figure of the “educational expert” or “policy analyst” to justify privatisation practices which many times hide new NPM reforms. Other words to express this is that media’s objective is to generate a favorable opinion regarding the policies which support privatisation as alternative to the public sector. Nevertheless, the strategy to carry out is by being concerned about involving well-known academics to transmit predefined solutions in order to reach a wider sector of population. In fact, two important spokesmen are Pablo da Silveira (educational advisor of the PN) and Jorge Grünberg (rector of the ORT University). Complementary to that, some universities such as the ORT or the UM display ranking media campaigns, based on emphasizing the good performance of the university in specific areas- yet those campaigns sometimes lack evidences- concerning rankings and quality. In parallel, some private universities (e.g. UM) deploy programs such as the participation on international contests or social programs to benchmark the brand and the good practices of the university. An informant explains it on these citations:



“The Faculty of Law is doing well, and it has international prestige. Our Faculty of Law goes every year to compete at the Willem Vis Competition in Viena. Last year, we finished on the third position. We are talking about a small university which is 30 years old and it is competing in English with the best universities of the world [...]. Besides, the Faculty of Business and Economy has exchange agreements with the London School of Economics.” (Interview- representative I from the private sector)

“We have another post degree programme, called “Excellent Principals”, totally funded by the “ReachingU” foundation. In the first cohort we had 400 principals who applied coming from private and public schools all over the country. The 75% out of the 30 final candidates are from the public, and the 25% left from the private sector. It is a mix of profiles, but the vast majority are from deprived social contexts. The program entails the involvement of each principal on innovation plans for his/her institution. This university program is a satisfaction for us, because it has an almost immediate impact.” (Interview- representative I from the private sector)

In this sense, we have seen that private actors- e.g. philanthropic organizations such as “ReachingU”- have begun to sponsor private education pilot initiatives as a way to influence policymaking by using the strategy of leading as an example or pilot experiences depicted by Fontdevila et al. (2019) or Lubienski et al. (2015). The rationality behind those sponsorship practices aim to obtain an investment back to open chances for a subsequent educational reform. Likewise, Lubienski et al. (2015) highlight that this typology of strategies emphasizes the fact of saving public money, overemphasizing the impact created; and attempting to highlight the attractiveness of the private sector in front of the stagnation of the public university. Yet, it is not clear which policy output those measures had since it seems that still are fighting to change the belief system.

In connection with this previous idea, all the private universities look for other sponsorship alternatives such as going to public higher schools to hang their scholarship announcements as the following citation reflects:

“There are principals from public schools who hang scholarship announcements of private universities. The private universities seek to go to schools in order to explain their supply and projects to potential students. And it is especially

common among principals who range 45-50 years old, whom have not been raised under the value of the public education. As I see, the logic behind it is that capitalism has improved its mechanisms, evolving towards a philanthropy-capitalism.” (Interview- representative I from a higher education trade union).

These mechanisms of advertising private universities aim to attract prospective students, but especially, it aims to legitimate the discourse of reaching a few students from the lowest quintiles in order to keep advocating for what these universities consider “good practices” and their demonstration programs among other elements. However, to carry it through, they need the schools to penetrate into it, but they also need the aid and the availability of the press, especially radio stations- such as Radio Sarandí with a program like “*Closing time*” or Radio del Sol with “*Do not touch anything*”- which display spaces where the five universities participate in debates or where those are advertised. As policy outputs, we can remark as argued in previous lines, it is not clear which effect had because still they are putting the emphasis on the “cultural battle”. There is not doubt that an increasing number of scholars, key informants and citizens who admit and emphasize the social task of private universities even though the public system invests resources on social and extension activities too. Yet, the public sector does not hold the resources to broadcast these messages.

Moreover, connecting the money as a power mechanism and the direct strategy of networking, we can add that the place where a person studies can conditionate his/her networks and the extent of policymaking influence. As this citation points out: “[...] *the major businessmen of the country have been either trained in our university or in our School of business.*” (Interview- representative I from the private sector).

Prove of that quotation is, that the current general manager of *Santander Universities* was trained at the IEEM- Business school (business school of the UM). Hence, it is an evidence that the economic elites of the country attempt to articulate reproductive power dynamics within the private sector to perpetuate certain conditions, sustained and justified through values such as innovation, culture of effort, entrepreneurship and success. Meanwhile, *Universia* is concerned that it would need to switch the perception of the private sector. And to do so, it bolstered grants and social programmes on the higher education field. Besides this, *Universia* was strongly interested on the Faculties of the public university since each Faculty of the UdelaR would have

supposed a target of 10.000 people as an average (counting students and professors). Somehow or other, the sponsorship mechanism and the grassroots advocacy can be considered extremely associated to the networking mechanism due to sponsorship implies contacts and nets to create a climate of opinion favourable to policy reform. Therefore, it proves that the key actors do not articulate individually strategies, rather they conform ideologically aligned alliances to reaffirm their ideas. In other words, to maximize the sponsorship and create a sense of social impact, the existing rationality behind it is that those actors need the aid and coverage from the media, but at the same time, from a consolidated networks of actors too (representatives from universities, business chambers, banks) to keep ensuring that money flows in those circles, but especially, to assure that the influencing power positions are kept ideologically aligned.

As it is mentioned previously, another emerging indirect mechanism is the elaboration of research-based evidence or evidence informed policy (although it is minor and implicit) through transnational networks of scholars such as Telescopi; PROPHE (from the University of Albany); or the Grupo de Cartagena which has members from the Boston College. Within those groups, they debate about Higher Education (public and private sector). The informants remarked that there were not many influential agents involved in the Uruguayan Higher Education. Yet, it was clear that a few scholars from the private scholars used transnational alliances as a method to improve, debate and discuss ideas to be implemented. Thus, the kind of knowledge mobilization they disseminate offers a reductionist version of the “what works” with predefined solutions to tackle the educational problems identified. A few examples of these studies are carried out under the umbrella of the PROPHE group which sometimes generalize results found on particular contexts. As a particular case can be those studies which emphasizes the good functioning of the non-profit private universities as a solution to the outdated public higher education sector since the private sector is more attuned to the society’s challenges as Levy (2013b) remarks. But that is not all, in the same work, the scholar presents non-profit universities as victims since they are “squeezed” by the public sector but also by the for-profit private sector. Nonetheless, the author whilst he emphasizes these aspects, he skips the fact that those non-profit educational organisations may be held by other bigger entities such as Opus Dei, Jesuits etc.

The last indirect strategy identified has been the cooperation or establishment of PPPs between public and private universities as a good way of functioning. As said

previously on this chapter, this public- private cooperation is part of a discourse mechanism based on the positive perception of the public sector as long as it cooperates with the private one. This cooperation may imply the objective of fostering the attractiveness of new supply- e.g. timber engineering-, and therefore to gain new students, emphasizing an innovative and employability discourse. Yet, the rationality behind of it is elaborating a new typology of PPP between the UdelaR and ORT University. This initiative was strongly supported by some scholars from the Faculty of Engineering of the UdelaR in order to transmit that the public university is not that stagnated anymore as it seems. However, it might have the idea to open new prospective collaborations between other faculties from public and private institutions. This citation somehow summarizes it:

“[...] It is an issue about timber engineering. It is a qualitative step forward. [...] there is an evolution of the UdelaR towards not seeing the ghost or the evil of the private universities. Similarly, the private sector has become more flexible towards the public one.” (Interview- representative IV from the public sector)

In a nutshell, some groups from the public university may have consolidated their belief systems, generating a broader degree of consensus among public and private university's representatives, translated into a new public management practice.

To conclude the analysis of results and remarking a couple of facts pointed on previous pages, we underline that the soft coercing mechanism is not only present on networking strategies, but it is also identified on sponsorship's strategies since we highlighted that both- networking and sponsorship- were connected. Secondly, the majority of mechanisms are somehow linked. Thus, this relationship implies the necessary conditionality as long as the final objective is to impinge the public policy. In other words, the sponsorship or leading as example programs need a complementary strategy of media advocacy in order to contribute to transform the belief system, maximizing their impacts and reducing the short-term constrains.

In particular, this interconnectivity between strategies may lead us to a parallelism with the privatisation of primary and secondary education (see Bordoli et al. (2017) and Moschetti et al. (2019)) due to Tarlau & Moeller (2017) highlight that the practices of think-tanks and foundations from the global North seem to gain relevance across the world in order to effectively influence the public policy by means of philanthropy; the creation and production of knowledge; the power and influence of the mass media; and

creating formal and informal networks of different typology of actors. Nonetheless, the penetration and influence of transnational actors is still limited within the Uruguayan context.

### **5.3. Summary of strategies, involved actors, objectives, rationalities and policy outputs**

Lastly, as a synthesis of the analytical phase, we present a final table which summarizes the different strategies, actors, objectives, rationalities, and policy outputs identified in this research:

**Table VIII-** Summary table of strategies and actors involved in the privatisation of the Higher Education in Uruguay

Strategy	Involved actors	Objectives	Rationalities	Policy Outputs
<b>Court resolutions</b>	Mix-coalition (Mr. Mieres, Mr. Brovetto and Mr. Lichtensztejn; ORT University; Administrative court; and UdelaR).	To enhance the privatisation and the creation of new private institution by seeking a legal ratification from courts.	To bring the case to courts, and therefore, to modify the basic constitutional structures (relatively stable parameters) without modifying the external system events.	It generated a chain effect on new policy outputs such as the creation of two new private universities (UM and UdE) the upcoming two years.
<b>Networking and policy lobbying</b>	Board of Rectors; CCETP; FA; Ministry of Education; Ministry of Economy; Santander Bank; Bloomsbury Policy Group; Chamber of Commerce, Itaú Foundation.	To act as a prompting platform to design educational policies, but also to block those initiatives which may compromise the “status” of private universities as the IRAE’s proposal attempted to do.	The usage of events and meetings where different actors from the private sector, foundations and government officials exchange visions, diagnosis, and education policy solutions. These spaces play an important role in strengthening the links between the private sector and governments.  A sub typology of networking is the centrality of face-to face meetings as well as informal spaces and relationships. Indeed, this is the case of the Board of Rectors which seeks this direct interaction to conditionate power decisions.	Keeping the exoneration of taxes.  Higher and diverse private supply consequence of a closer relationship with the CCETP as it is underline before due to the switch of the president of this organism towards a harmonic and consensual positioning.
<b>Media advocacy</b>	Written press (“ <i>Diario El País</i> ” and “ <i>El Observador</i> ”); scholars such as Pablo da Silveira	To generate a favorable opinion regarding the policies which support privatisation as alternative to the public sector.	The strategy to carry out is being concerned about involving well-known academics to transmit the diverse discursive frameworks pointed out above.	Slightly switch on the belief system towards a perception of collapse of the system that can be overcome with a greater presence of the private sector.

	and Jorge Grünberg; and radio stations such as Radio del Sol or Radio Sarandí.			
<b>Good practices and ranking campaigns</b>	UM; ORT University; UCU; radio stations.	To emphasize and benchmark the good performance of the university in international rankings on specific areas and the good practices as a differential factor from the public sector.	To legitimate the discourse of reaching a few students from the lowest quintiles in order to keep advocating for what these universities consider “good practices” and their demonstration programs among other elements. However, to carry it through, they need the schools to penetrate into it, but they also need the aid and the availability of the press, especially radio stations.	Not clear which effect had because still they are putting the emphasis on the “cultural battle”. There is not doubt that an increasing number of scholars, key informants and citizens who admit and emphasize the social task of private universities even though the public system invests resources on social and extension activities too. Yet, the public sector does not hold the resources to broadcast it messages.
<b>Sponsorship practices</b>	UM, public and private schools; “ReachingU” Foundation.	To sponsor private education pilot initiatives as a way to influence policymaking by using the strategy of leading as an example.	Those sponsorship practices aim to obtain an investment back to open chances for a subsequent educational reform.	Not clear which policy output those measures had since it seems that still are fighting to change the belief system.
<b>Power and reproduction of the elites</b>	E.g. Santander Bank; Universia; UM and IEEM-Business school.	To articulate reproductive power dynamics within the private sector to perpetuate certain conditions, sustained and justified through values such as innovation, culture	To maximize the sponsorship and create a sense of social impact. The existing rationality behind it is that those actors need the aid and coverage from the media, but at the same time, from a consolidated networks of actors too	Not clear which policy impact had. Nonetheless, the influencing power positions are somehow ideologically aligned.

		of effort, entrepreneurship and success.	(representatives from universities, business chambers, banks) to keep ensuring that money flows in those circles.	
<b>Knowledge mobilization</b>	PROPHE or Cartagena Group.	To improve, debate and discuss ideas to be implemented regarding public, private university and HE reforms.	The rationality behind this strategy is that Uruguayan academia seeks foreign support to benchmark for educational reforms.	Not clear the policy outputs it had. Despite the usage of this strategy, we have determined the correlation or the impact of those studies with the pathway towards privatisation.
<b>Cooperation or establishment of PPPs between public and private universities</b>	UdelaR and ORT university.	To foster the attractiveness of new educational supply, and therefore to gain new students, emphasizing an innovative and employability discourse.  To broadcast that the public university (or a few fields of studies)is/are not that stagnated anymore as it seems.	Establishing and opening new collaborations and PPPs between the public and the private university.	Some groups from the public university may have consolidated their belief systems, generating a broader degree of consensus among public and private university's representatives, translated into a new public management practice.

**Source:** *Own elaboration based on data collected from the fieldwork.*



## 6. Conclusions and policy recommendations

### 6.1. Summary of the thesis and revision of formulated hypothesis

Despite its world-wide expansion, education privatisation (including higher education) is a diverse phenomenon which appears with different intensity in contrasting national contexts (Verger et al, 2016). In fact, Uruguay stood out as a particular case in Latin America where the historical private enrolment in this South American country has been low, but with a 71% rate of private universities. A factor to explain this disparity may be attributed to the high capacity of the public sector for hosting the entire tertiary education of the country until 1985, and indeed, the public university still represents around 84% of the total amount of enrolments in higher education (Ministerio de Educación y Cultura, 2016b). Since then, other educational institutions looked for creating an alternative educational supply to compete with the public university.

Considering a cultural political economy approach, Moschetti et al. (2019) remark that *variation* stages allow to understand how policy paradigms influence the decisions of policymakers and government officials. In other words, in this phase, aspects such as interpreting the educational phenomenon and problems results crucial thanks to the construction of a discourse and a diagnosis (Moschetti et al., 2019; Santa Cruz, 2016). In this regard, Steiner-Khamsi (2003) argues that variation can be associated to circumstances in which popular discontent gains momentum by actors in the education policy field. A clear example of that applied to the case of the Uruguayan higher education system is that the relevant identified non-State actors have exercised pressure on governments by means of lobbying in order to impinge changes on the institutional rules or the institutional resource allocation (i.e. the case of the IRAE polemic reform). Somehow, this means that policymaking does not only belong to institutions and State-actors anymore, but also to non-State actors such as foundations, private universities or networks of academics among others (Verger et al., 2017). In short, not only the provision and the funding of education services are subjected to forms of privatisation, but it is also about the privatisation of education policy through advice, consultation and research (Ball, 2009). And it is precisely at this point that the identified collaboration in forms of PPPs since 2015 between the public and the private higher education in Uruguay that

seems to be commanded by this incipient pathway towards privatisation (Verger et al., 2016).

Nonetheless, this influencing process necessarily involves a cultural battle. It is here where Tarlau & Moeller's concepts (2016) emerge, due to practices traditionally associated to global north organisms are transferred to the global south in order to effectively influence the policymaking through philanthropy practices such as sponsorship, media power or knowledge mobilization. In other words, policy adoption occurs by means of the previous strategies; and in fact, the informal mechanisms are gaining as relevance and importance as the formal ones (traditionally carried out from the institutionalization of the public system). In this sense, this is not a minor fact due to there is not a Uruguayan framework which regulates the usage of those informal strategies deployed to influence the policymaking of the government.

Simultaneously, the cultural battle implies a semiotic component since the media plays a central role into the social dynamics (Santa Cruz, 2016), and in fact, in the case of the higher education of Uruguay exists a mediatized social space, where the flow of signifiers and meanings shapes and structures the reality too.

Taking back the formulated hypothesis, we might underline the following ideas: In reference to the *hypothesis 1- "The long-standing tradition for public education in Uruguay has led non-State actors to mobilize themselves in form of coalitions to impinge on the regulative framework, and thus, on public policy formation in higher education levels"*, we confirm the hypothesis due to from a path-dependence perspective, the strong role of the UdelaR, its autonomy and capacity of veto has limited and conditioned the expansion of the higher education; and the existence of this traditional legacy led to the alienation or association between the higher education and the UdelaR. Thus, key stakeholders had to fight this path-dependence (Djelic & Quack, 2007) through the 'cultural battle' to enable a change on the long-term coalition opportunity structures and creating a major degree of consensus for a policy adoption. Moreover, we have proved the limited penetration of transnational forces on the higher education privatisation process. One of the major drivers of this phenomenon is that Uruguay is a high-income country (OECD, 2016), and in general, we have seen that the higher income a country holds, minor penetration of international organisations. Yet, another key factor which

may explain it is a domestic variable such as the self-defensive agenda developed by the UdelaR to keep a privilege position within the HE system.

With regard to the *hypothesis 2*- “Part of the non-State actors define themselves as institutions which provide a “public service” accompanied with a strong discourse of the *added-value* with human capital elements as differential factors from the public university along it is accompanied with a discourse of a crisis and collapse of the public education.”, we ratify it due to those non-State actors and more concretely, private universities tried to partially imitate the UdelaR by emphasizing that their activity would impact into the society as well in order to legitimize a space in the market within a pro-statist society. Yet, this previous idea is complemented by a differential factor, which was based on attempting to show an initial and differential innovative factor in universities like the ORT University promoted. Additionally, from 2005 onwards we have identified a battery of new arguments against the public sector, developing ideas based on depicting a failure, collapse and inefficiency of the entire public educational system (including the higher education system).

Finally, in relation to the *hypothesis 3*- “*The characteristics of Uruguay such as the tradition for public education or the size of the country facilitates the policy lobbying and networking strategies operating “out” of the political system*”, we conclude that the hypothesis is partially confirmed since it is true that the small size of the country may be a factor which enhances networking strategies. Nonetheless, the linkage between the sponsorship strategy (indirect mechanisms) and the networking (direct mechanisms) takes more relevance than the dimension or the number of actors which conformed the network with interests on higher education. In other words, money and funding conditionate more rather than proximity or the number of involved actors. This means that they are not mutually exclusive. In addition, regarding whether the tradition for public education has enhanced the policy lobbying or not, we argue that the non-state actors had to organize themselves in forms of coalition or mix coalition to foster the policy adoption, and thus, to fight the path-dependence by means of deploying a cultural battle to contribute to a switch on the belief system. Thereby, in front of the consolidated tradition for public education, non-state actors used the lobbying and networking as strategies. In brief, retaking the hypothesis, we confirm part of the hypothesis, and at the same time, we deny the fact that the size of the country conditionate the mechanisms to be used.

Despite the peculiarity of the case and the demographic size of Uruguay, this study may be useful to analyse policy-formation processes and more concretely, to analyse education privatisation processes in a globalisation era (Robertson & Dale, 2015). In a similar comparison with Moschetti et al. (2019), the findings presented in this dissertation enable us to understand how coalitions and actors operate interconnected, exercising power and pressure to produce “intersubjective meanings” (Jessop & Oosterlynck, 2008, p. 2). In addition, by policy-formation processes we may include the role of the civil society, meaning that this research can contribute to enlighten the knowledge regarding the strategies deployed by civil actors in order to group themselves and to effectively influence public policy.

However, as a limitation of this study but also as a prospective research line, it would be necessary to carry out a deeper study using network analysis to map out with more precision the intervening stakeholders into this privatisation process, taking into consideration the small size of Uruguay, meaning a limited or minor number of intervening non-State actors. By drawing those actors- civil society organizations, press, academia, business chambers...-, we can refer to past events, but it may be also necessary to scope on future events such as the rationality and involved actors on PPP agreements taking into consideration that a few sectors from the public university have begun to collaborate with the private sector as we highlighted previously. Said that, given the limited forms and penetration of the private sector, it would be substantial to study whether the actors- who fought the cultural battle and did not completely succeed on switching the belief system – have finally vied for PPP options to undermine the strong historical resistance of the public education to convince governmental stakeholders or if it responds to other rationalities.

Despite the study case is conceptualized under a flexible epistemological approach which draws a triangulation based on three different qualitative research methods, we can say that the dissertation has deepened more into the rationalities behind the privatisation of higher education instead of focusing on depicting a more extensive and detailed network of participatory non-State actors. Thus, we can assure that the thesis holds a few limitations or inconsistencies in terms of methodological aspects. First, as we said on the prospective research lines, it does not consider the network analysis. Second, it does not use quantitative data to understand the relationship between an independent variable and the dependent one. It focuses its efforts on adopting methodologies toward the

privatisation of higher education and it is not attempting to figure out whether the level of interaction between non-State actors affected the privatisation of HE. A third limitation that has emerged is related to the key informants of the in-depth interviews due to some typologies of stakeholders are underrepresented throughout the dissertation such as the category members of non-state organisations/ think-tanks with only 1 interviewee, but also, representatives from international organisations were missing since we have only interviewed a representative from the private sector who was involved into UNESCO-IESALC. The reasons of this underrepresentation are attributed to two major facts. On the one hand, it has been difficult to identify more representatives from non-state organisations. On the other hand, we had difficulties to reach representatives from international institutions like the IDB; and related to the impossibility of reaching potential interviewees, we point out that we were unable to access to members from business chambers such as the Chamber of Commerce and Industry in order to obtain their perspective concerning the way they use networking to influence policymaking (among other issues).

In addition, it is not a minor fact that only 2 interviewees out of 21 were women. The existing gender gap may hide the presence of a ceiling glass for women (Baxter & Wright, 2000) on power and board positions (e.g. the minor representation of women at the CCETP nor at the Board of Rectors nor as influential or mediatic scholars). Yet, this does not mean that there were not women associated to educational policy's issues, rather they occupied technical seats less visible or with less decision power.

Subsequently, in the following section, we explore prospective policy recommendations given the case of the higher education of Uruguay.

## **6.2. Policy recommendations**

Given the scarce privatisation case of Uruguay, it is rather difficult to provide with policy recommendations which have to do with education or policy adoption. Nevertheless, based on what has been said so far about the indirect mechanisms and the emerging role of non-state actors in the policymaking, we can come up with the following proposals:

- **The regulation of policymaking that goes beyond the formal mechanisms as a manner to democratize what policies are adopted.**

A proposal of regulating the policymaking spaces since only a small part of the formal or direct mechanisms are subjected to mechanisms of accountability whilst the indirect ones seem they escape from this dynamic. As a consequence of introducing this regulation, therefore, the system would be democratized through the regulation or control of sponsorship or networking dynamics. A collateral effect of that would be that the social capital held by the elites who attempt to operate “out” of the system would be conditioned or undermined. Yet, this is not necessarily mean that part of the civil society would not have the capacity to influence the policymaking, since their extensive networks and the social capital from the upper classes and the elites may become a factor to benefit from their capacity to lobby and to find alternative legal gaps where they can operate from. In a nutshell, this policy recommendation emerges as a need to debate if it is necessary to regulate all these informal mechanisms as an attempt to enquiry the relevance and importance of the social capital of philanthropic organisations, international organisms or scholars from private universities or if it is not necessary to do so.

- **The elaboration of a consensus framework for enhancing equity and avoiding the social stratification between private and public universities, but also, promoting the agreement on what the term “quality” means.**

Assuming that the regulation of the privatisation of the higher education system was based on private interests, a potential policy to be implemented may be the elaboration of a framework which would assure certain levels of quality and minimum standards of equity among private universities. In other words, the proposal is based on assuring an accountability system in terms of quality and equity, but especially, to avoid a social stratification, Thus, a few examples of potential indicators can be for instance, establishing a minimum percentage of students from the lowest quintiles at private universities; a minimum percentage threshold of full scholarship holders, and establishing quality guidelines to accomplish standards on quality teaching and research. Therefore, concrete measures referring to research and quality may be publishing a minimum amount of scientific research and articles by each university department; or controlling and externally assess the content taught in private universities due to the Accreditation Agency does not exist yet. As the concept “quality” is rather ambiguous within the higher

education of Uruguay, before anything else on quality recommendations, it is still necessary to hold the national debate regarding “What does quality mean?” and obtaining a consensus about it.

- **Adopting gender quotas as an instrument to reverse the gender disparity and the ceiling glass suffered by women.**

Lastly, and aligned with the dissertation’s limitations, we can propose the adoption of mandatory gender quotas in order to fight the gender disparity and the ceiling glass within organisms such as the CCETP or the Board of Rectors due to the vast majority of women (in terms of education policy) occupy technical positions at the detriment of power positions.

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## **APPENDICES**

## **APPENDIX I- Request of documents and information from the Área de Educación Superior de Uruguay (Spanish version)**

Montevideo, 31 de agosto del 2018

Área de Educación Superior  
Dirección de Educación  
Ministerio de Educación y Cultura  
Plaza Independencia 749 Of. 302, CP: 11000  
Montevideo, Uruguay

### **Asunto: Solicitud y consulta información del Área de Educación Superior del Ministerio de Educación y Cultura**

A las correspondientes autoridades del Ministerio de Educación y Cultura del Uruguay,

Mi nombre es Marc Martínez Pons, soy estudiante del Máster *Education Policies for Global Development* (GLOBED) desarrollado conjuntamente por la Universidad Autónoma de Barcelona, la Universidad de Ámsterdam, la Universidad de Oslo y la Universidad de Malta. Actualmente, como parte del programa de Máster, estoy realizando una pasantía en el Departamento de Sociología de la Facultad de Ciencias Sociales de la UdelaR con el Profesor Miguel Serna, así como el trabajo de campo de la tesis de maestría. El principal objetivo de la tesis es el análisis del proceso de diversificación de la educación superior en Uruguay, así como las políticas en educación superior desarrolladas en los últimos años y los principales actores implicados.

Por medio de la presente carta me pongo en contacto con ustedes para solicitar tener acceso a los siguientes documentos:

- **Documentos de la Universidad Católica del Uruguay elaborados a raíz de la adaptación al cambio del proyecto Tuning** (solo necesito los documentos donde se especifique el perfil del egresado).
- **Informe AES** elaboró en relación a la creación del **CLAEH** como institución universitaria.
- **Informe AES** elaboró en relación a la creación de la **Universidad Católica del Uruguay** como institución universitaria.
- **Informe AES** elaboró en relación a la creación de la **Universidad de Montevideo**.
- **Informe AES** elaboró en relación a la creación de la **Universidad de la Empresa**.
- **Informe AES** elaboró en relación a la creación de la **Universidad ORT**.

- **Informe AES** elaboró en relación a la creación de **Instituto Universitario Asociación Cristiana de Jóvenes.**
- **Informe AES** elaboró en relación a la creación de **Instituto Universitario Francisco de Asís.**
- **Informe AES** elaboró en relación a la creación de **Instituto Universitario Centro de Docencia, Investigación e Información en Aprendizaje (CEDIIAP).**
- **Informe AES** elaboró en relación a la creación de **Instituto Universitario Crandon.**
- **Informe AES** elaboró en relación a la creación de **Instituto no Universitario Centro de Investigación y Experimentación Pedagógica.**
- **Informe AES** elaboró en relación a la creación de **Instituto no Universitario Centro de Navegación.**
- **Informe AES** elaboró en relación a la creación de **Instituto no Universitario Escuela de Formación Profesional en Comercio Exterior y Aduana.**

Me permito anexar el resumen ejecutivo de la tesis “*El creciente rol del sector privado en la Educación Superior uruguaya*”; así como el certificado de la realización de la pasantía en el Departamento de Sociología de la Universidad de la República, emitido por el mismo organismo.

En caso de proceder, se pueden poner en contacto conmigo a través de este mismo e-mail ([marcmartinezpons@gmail.com](mailto:marcmartinezpons@gmail.com)) o a través del teléfono +598\*\*\*\*\*.

Desde ya, les agradezco su atención.

Reciban un cordial saludo,

Marc Martínez Pons

## APPENDIX II- Interview outline (Spanish version)

### GUIÓN DE ENTREVISTA SEMI-ESTRUCTURADA

#### Sección Introductoria

- De forma introductoria, ¿cuáles han sido las posiciones principales y rol que ha desempeñado en instituciones de educación superior en el país? (*Breve resumen trayectoria profesional*)
- ¿Cuáles han sido los últimos proyectos en los que ha trabajado o está trabajando? ¿Más allá de su tarea docente, en su rol como investigador qué espacio ha ocupado la Educación Superior?

#### Sección I: Información general del entrevistado y sobre la institución a la cual pertenece

##### *Para instituciones no gubernamentales y/o think-tanks*

- En los documentos públicos o en la respectiva web de su organización se establece que su organización se caracteriza o tiene por misión \_\_\_\_\_ A nivel personal, ¿Podría clarificar qué significa para usted esa idea o concepto? ¿Podría resumir la trayectoria y misión de su organización? *¿Podría resumir la trayectoria y misión de su organización?*

##### *Para universidades privadas*

- En los documentos públicos o en la respectiva web de su organización se establece que su organización se caracteriza o tiene por misión \_\_\_\_\_ A nivel personal, ¿Podría clarificar qué significa para usted esa idea o concepto? *¿Podría resumir la trayectoria y misión de su organización?*
- La mayoría de las instituciones privadas destacan en su misión el término “excelencia”, “calidad” o “innovación”. ¿A su parecer, qué significado y relevancia tienen estos conceptos en el esquema del sistema de Educación Superior uruguayo?

- ¿En qué se diferencia su oferta formativa con respecto a otras instituciones privadas que ofrecen posibilidades parecidas? ¿Por qué se apostó por esa oferta formativa?
- ¿Qué diferencia a su institución del sector público?
- ¿Con qué oportunidades y posteriormente barreras se ha encontrado a la hora de desarrollar su actividad en los últimos años?
- ¿Cuál es su percepción sobre la expansión del sector privado en los últimos años?

***Para agentes representantes del sector público***

- ¿Cuáles han sido los acontecimientos y fortalezas históricas del sector público en educación superior? ¿Y las debilidades? ¿En su opinión se han podido superar? ¿Cuál es la situación actual del sector público en educación superior?
- ¿Cuál ha sido el rol de ANEP para afrontar estos acontecimientos en Educación Terciaria? ¿Ha mutado este rol a lo largo de los años?
- ¿Cuál cree que ha sido el aporte del decreto n°308 al desarrollo de la educación terciaria privada? ¿Cuáles fueron sus debilidades o déficits?
- ¿Cuál cree que ha sido el aporte del decreto n°104 al desarrollo de la educación terciaria privada? ¿Ha resuelto todos los problemas o quedan aspectos pendientes?
- ¿Cuál cree que ha sido el aporte del CCTP al desarrollo de la educación terciaria privada? Y después, ¿En qué medida el CCTP ha contribuido a la diversificación de la oferta privada?

**Sección II: Posición respecto la privatización del sistema de Educación Superior, identificación de la teoría del cambio- cambios percibidos, factores, e intervenciones propuestas**

- ¿En su opinión, cuáles han sido los principales logros del sistema de Educación Superior uruguayo? ¿Y las respectivas dificultades? ¿A su parecer, se han podido superar esas dificultades históricas?
- ¿En su opinión, cuáles son los factores que favorecieron la aparición y desarrollo de la educación privada terciaria?
- ¿Cuáles son los mecanismos que garantizan la igualdad de oportunidades en la educación superior?



- ¿Qué diferencia (existe) entre el sector público y privado en términos de calidad? ¿Y en términos de equidad?

### **Sección III: Identificación de perspectivas y visiones alternativas**

- En su opinión, ¿cuáles han sido principales actores (públicos, académicos, partidos políticos, asesores) o instituciones que históricamente han participado en el debate sobre el desarrollo del sector privado en la Educación superior?
- ¿Cuál de los anteriores agentes ha influenciado la agenda política en Educación Superior? ¿Cómo lo han hecho (mediante qué mecanismos)?

Entonces: Preguntar por estrategias específicas estipuladas en el *Advocacy Strategy Framework*.

- ¿Qué núcleos (grupos) o actores apoyaron la creación de la Universidad Católica del Uruguay?
- ¿Qué núcleos (grupos) actores apoyaron la creación de la Universidad ORT?
  - o ¿Qué papel tuvo en su momento ORT World? ¿Cómo consiguió participar del debate? ¿El fuerte vínculo universidad- empresa es una fórmula de presión para favorecer la aparición de nueva oferta educativa?
- ¿Qué núcleos (grupos) actores apoyaron la creación de la Universidad de la Empresa?
- ¿Qué núcleos (grupos) actores apoyaron la creación de la Universidad de Montevideo?
  - o ¿Qué papel tuvo en su momento el Opus Dei (en un Estado donde el rol de la iglesia ha sido mucho menor)? ¿Cómo consiguió participar del debate?
- ¿Qué núcleos (grupos) actores apoyaron la creación de la Universidad CLAEH?
  - o Más recientemente, el CLAEH fue aprobado como universidad privada, ¿Cómo participó del debate educativo?
- ¿Qué opinión le merecen los anteriores actores mencionados?

- ¿Tuvieron algún rol centros privados como el CIESU o el CIEDUR en el debate de educación superior?
- ¿Qué diferencias ideológicas han tenido los tres grandes partidos en materia de Educación Superior desde la creación del Decreto de 1995? ¿Cuáles han sido sus líneas maestras?
- ¿Los partidos políticos y sus diversos gobiernos han tenido algún tipo de afinidad o influencia con cada uno de los proyectos de universidad privada que aparecieron en el país?
- ¿Qué estrategias o mecanismos han podido utilizar los anteriores actores para influenciar la privatización/ formación de políticas públicas relativas a la Educación Superior?

## **APPENDIX III- Letter of consent (English and Spanish version)**

### **Request for participation in the research project (*English version*)**

#### **"The role of non-State actors in the privatisation of Higher Education in Uruguay: The Advocacy Coalition Approach"**

##### **Background and Purpose**

This Master Thesis consists of the study of the diversification of the Uruguayan Higher Education system.

The central aim is to understand how this diversification has occurred; more specifically; which actors participate and have participated in the educational debate, and how they have been involved.

The sample has been selected based on a number of stakeholders (governmental, non-governmental, scholars, members of political parties...) which have been involved into the higher education debate.

##### **What does participation in the project imply?**

In order to accomplish the project aim, the fieldwork poses the collection of primary and secondary information. The primary data will be obtained in Uruguay, carrying out interviews to these stakeholders (based on a semi-structured questionnaire). These interviews estimate a duration of 45 min approximately each one. The questions will concern about: a) basic information about the institution that the interviewee represents; b) positionality towards privatization and the potential challenges identified, and c) perceived actions or mechanisms used to advance towards that vision. In that sense, the interview may be sound recorded to facilitate the subsequent transcription.

Regarding the collection of the secondary data, this one will be obtained through documentary analysis of reports and official documents concerning Higher Education.

### **What will happen to the information about you?**

All personal data will be treated confidentially. The only person who will have access to the personal data is the author (student) of the Master Thesis. The storage of the corresponding data -as it has been said- will be treated confidentially, which means that the recordings and the identifiable data will be stored in external memories and locked in a drawer/box to assure that the only person who has access to it is the author of the research.

In any case (submission of the thesis and a potential publication later on) the participants will not be recognizable, and their anonymity will be guaranteed as long as they wish.

The project (fieldwork collection) is scheduled for completion by [**23 December 2018**]. But the ultimate completion of thesis (writing process) will be by **1 July 2019**. Upon the submission of the thesis, all the raw data will be anonymized, and the recordings will be deleted.

### **Voluntary participation**

It is voluntary to participate in the project, and you can at any time choose to withdraw your consent without stating any reason.

If you have any questions concerning the project, please contact Fengshu Liu (UiO responsible) +47-22856163; Adrián Zancajo (Supervisor) [adrian.zancajo@gmail.com](mailto:adrian.zancajo@gmail.com); Marc Martínez (Student) [marcmartinezpons@gmail.com](mailto:marcmartinezpons@gmail.com)

The study has been notified to the Data Protection Official for Research, NSD - Norwegian Centre for Research Data. ([personvernombudet@nsd.no](mailto:personvernombudet@nsd.no), +47 55 58 21 17)

## **Rights of the participant**

As a participant you have the following rights: To request access to the personal data that is being processed; to request that the personal data is corrected or erased, the right to request a copy of the personal data being processed (data portability), and the right to send a complaint to the Data Protection Official or the Norwegian Data Protection Authority regarding the processing of personal data.

## **Consent for participation in the study**

I have received and understood information about the project “The increasing role of the private sector within the Uruguayan Higher Education system” and have had the chance to ask questions. I give my consent:

- To take part in an interview
- For the interview to be audio recorded
- For my name, occupation and information given in the interview to be published in the master’s thesis and in articles/publications on the same topic

I give consent for my personal data to be processed until the project is completed, approximately 01.07.2019.

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(Signed by participant and date)

# **Solicitud de participación en proyecto de investigación** *(Spanish version)*

## **“El rol de los actores no estatales en la privatización de la Educación Superior en Uruguay: El enfoque de coaliciones de promoción”**

### **Contexto y Finalidad**

La tesis de Máster consiste en un estudio de la diversificación del sistema de educación superior uruguayo.

El objetivo central es entender como esta diversificación ha ocurrido, y más específicamente, qué actores participan y han participado del debate educacional, y como se involucraron para conseguirlo más allá de los Decretos universitarios aprobados.

La muestra ha sido seleccionada basándose en una serie de agentes claves (gobierno, no gubernamentales, académicos, miembros de partidos políticos...) que participaron del debate de la educación superior.

### **¿Qué implica la participación en el proyecto?**

Para cumplir con el objetivo de la investigación, el trabajo de campo plantea la recogida de datos primarios y secundarios. Los datos primarios serán obtenidos en Uruguay, llevando a cabo entrevistas a estos agentes (basándonos en un cuestionario semi-estructurado). La duración de la entrevista estima ser de unos 45 min. Las preguntas se refieren a: a) información básica sobre la institución que el entrevistado representa; b) la posicionalidad respecto a la diversificación y a los potenciales retos identificados; y c) acciones percibidas o mecanismos usados para avanzar hacia esa visión. En este sentido, la entrevista sería audio grabada para facilitar la subsiguiente transcripción.

Respecto a la recolección de información secundaria, esta será obtenida a través de análisis documental de reportes y documentos oficiales en relación a Educación Superior.

### **¿Qué ocurre con mi información?**

Todos los datos serán tratados de forma confidencial. La única persona que tendrá acceso a los datos será el autor (estudiante) de la investigación de Máster. El almacenamiento de los datos correspondientes- como se ha explicitado- será tratado confidencialmente, la cual cosa significa que las grabaciones y los datos identificables serán almacenados en memoria externa y cerrados en un cajón para asegurar que la única persona que tiene acceso a los datos es el autor de la investigación.

En cualquier caso (la entrega de la tesis y una potencial publicación posterior) los participantes no serán identificables, y su anonimidad será garantizada si así lo desean.

El proyecto (trabajo de campo) su finalización está programada para el **23 de Diciembre de 2018**. Pero su finalización de la tesis (proceso de escritura) será el **1 de Julio de 2019**. Una vez entregada, todos los datos serán anonimizados, y las grabaciones borradas.

### **Participación voluntaria**

Es voluntario participar en el proyecto, y usted en cualquier momento puede abandonar su consentimiento sin explicitar los motivos.

Si usted tiene cualquier cuestión o duda acerca del proyecto, puede contactar a Prof. Fengshu Liu (responsable UiO) +47-22856163; Adrián Zancajo (supervisor) [adrian.zancajo@gmail.com](mailto:adrian.zancajo@gmail.com); Marc Martínez (estudiante) [marcmartinezpons@gmail.com](mailto:marcmartinezpons@gmail.com)

El estudio ha sido notificado y aprobado por el organismo noruego oficial Data Protection Official for Research, NSD- Norwegian Centre for Research Data. (personvernombudet@nsd.no, +47 55 58 21 17)

## **Derechos de los participantes**

Como participante de la investigación usted tiene los siguientes derechos: Solicitar acceso a los datos personales que han sido procesados; solicitar que los datos personales sean corregidos o borrados; el derecho a pedir una copia de los datos personales procesados (data portability); y el derecho a enviar una queja formal al organismo Data Protection Official o a Norwegian Data Protection Authority con respecto al procesamiento de datos personales.

## **Consentimiento de participación en la investigación**

He recibido y entendido la información sobre el proyecto “*La creciente diversificación del sistema de educación superior en Uruguay*” y he tenido la oportunidad de preguntar si así lo he deseado. Doy mi consentimiento:

- Para participar en la entrevista.
- Para ser audio grabado durante la entrevista
- Para que mi nombre, ocupación e información dada en la entrevista sea publicada en la tesis de máster y en un artículo/publicación del mismo tópico.

Doy mi consentimiento para que mis datos personales sean procesados hasta que el proyecto sea completado, aproximadamente en 01.07.2019

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(Signatura del participante y fecha )