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Working to Keep Studying:
The Struggle of Guatemalan Youths for Social Mobility

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List of Acronyms

CCT: Conditional Cash Transfer
ILO: International Labour Organisation
MDG: Millennium Development Goal
NGO: Non-Governmental Organisation
UNDP: United Nations Development Programme

Abstract

This paper presents a qualitative case study of upwardly mobile urban young men from the lower strata in Panajachel, Guatemala, who work to finance their own secondary schooling. The case study reveals that engaging in privatised and stratified schooling requires sustained, holistic efforts that have potentially damaging effects on the individual, making their pursuit of mobility potentially impoverishing. These men continue to pursue schooling despite these effects because they are persuaded by a myth of education that is globally, nationally and locally cultivated, as well as conditioned by a reality where education is the main, if not the only, available channel of mobility. As schools monopolise the right to produce mobility and are privatised for profit production, there is a risk that poor students be exploited based on their commitment to the education system that benefits some and disadvantages others with the help of body and soul of those ultimately disadvantaged.

Relevance to Development Studies

This paper on young men who work to finance their own secondary schooling in Guatemala questions the global push for expanding access to education, which rarely questions the level of privatisation and stratification of education in developing countries, and which can cause the incorporation of the poor to schooling to have adverse effects. It also questions the focus on education and individual mobility as the main means of reducing poverty arguing that these cannot change fundamentally unequal social structures. The paper studies working and studying youth who have not received scholarly attention, the experiences of whom can help us re-evaluate the policy options for expanding secondary education in the wake of the universalisation of primary schooling.

Keywords

[youth work, secondary education, social mobility, adverse incorporation]

Chapter 1
Introduction

Education became a source of hope for the polarised Guatemalan nation after the signing of the Peace Accords in 1996 that ended the country´s civil war. Schools, historically a privilege of the few, are now, in times of peace, labelled a indispensable tool for cultural, economic, social and political development, as well as transformation of the lives of those traditionally marginalised (Gonzalez Orellana, 2007: 463).

Efforts in the 1990s and 2000s succeeded in bringing primary education to most poor in Guatemala. This happened through significant public investment. Now, the attention of policy makers and the general audience is shifting to secondary education because primary schooling fails to guarantee poverty escapes (World Bank, 2004: 108; Porta et al., 2006). Interesting tensions arise as the state fails to provide secondary schooling for all those that demand it, forming a vacuum filled by private schools. The poor majority are persuaded by the discourse of education as a source of social ascent, and incorporate themselves into the most thoroughly privatised secondary education in Latin America (Pereyra, n.d.: 5) by means of private investment coming out of their own pockets. The mainstream development discourse does not problematise these investments or the high degree of privatisation and stratification, but commends individual pursuits of mobility through schooling. Ultimately, private schools are seen as loyal allies in reaching the access-centred MDGs because they reach populations public schools do not (see e.g. UNDP, 2003: 7), and individuals who engage in private schooling are seen as lucky because of such schools' superior qualities (Tooley and Dixon, 2006).

The subsequent Guatemalan governments have focused on access, assuming that incorporation into schooling is merely a blessing that automatically improves individual well-being. Exclusion is identified as the problem, and academic literature focuses mainly on what keeps poor youth *out* of school and not the motivations and strategies that allow them to enter and stay *in* school, even under adverse circumstances. For instance, there is research about the financial boundaries to schooling in Guatemala (see e.g. Edwards, 2002), but no attention to how they are crossed. The coverage of secondary schooling remains limited, but there are young pioneers from the lower classes who work their way through secondary school, despite obstacles. This study focuses on the experiences of these pioneers entering a traditionally exclusive sphere - young, urban men who finance their own secondary education by working, a silent but significant minority[1], whose struggle has not been documented. It contributes to understanding why and how poor youth overcome the many

[1] In Guatemala, a large proportion of students are economically active. 26% of youth work in both private and public schools, high levels in regional comparison. (Pereyra, n.d: 16-17).

obstacles to secondary schooling, and analyses the changes that occur in these youths' lives, minds, and bodies when they are mobilised in pursuit of privatised education, taking into consideration the possible negative effects of incorporation into schooling. The aim is to re-evaluate the 'access above all' policy paradigm and illustrate the power and potentially dangerous effects of the limited global discourse of education as the main source of poverty reduction and mobility in highly unequal, low-growth societies with privatised education. If wide-scale expansion of secondary education is to take place in Guatemala, interaction between the individual and the educational institutions must be understood to reveal the obstacles to and costs of the inclusion of poor youth.

Research Focus

This paper presents a qualitative case study of the experiences of young men from the lower social strata in Panajachel, Guatemala, who work to finance their own secondary education in pursuit of social mobility. These youth merit special attention because they are the most likely case of social mobility among the low strata - urban, male, motivated and ambitious, and able to coin effective strategies in conscious pursuit of education and social mobility. Their experiences are revealing of both the constraints of their social origin and the demands of their mobility pursuits. They commit themselves to the available schooling system 'at all cost' due to their motivation and conviction that education produces poverty escapes. If we see what incorporation entails for those fully committed and what the effects of their full incorporation are, we can see why so many fail to pursue schooling and mobility - the roots of differentiation and inequality.

This study seeks to explain why these youth seek social mobility through education, and so motivated to do so that they go to great lengths to work to pay for their own schooling. Also, considering that access to and survival in schools are not free of difficulties, and that combining work and study is in many ways the most demanding path (versus just studying or just working, or doing neither), what 'material' and 'internal' strategies do these youth employ to keep studying? Also, how do the characteristics of the country's education system condition these youths' mobility struggle? Lastly, and most importantly, what are the impacts on the individual of this kind of a struggle?

The study finds that these men's struggle is driven by a 'myth' of education that claims that by individual mental and bodily reform the individual can become useful and successful in school and society, and gain mobility. This idea has infiltrated, through the Guatemalan society, down to the individual level. I show how this myth is actively cultivated and the individual student *must* be persuaded by it because education is his only way to become mobile. Thus, they absorb the myth and invest all their time, money and energy in schooling, adapting their bodies and minds to fit the exigencies of the system. The hope of a better life through education, the myth, fuels their struggle. Yet, in the process of absorbing the myth, and mobilising all their internal and material resources, they take great risks, make sacrifices, and might suffer impoverishing short- and medium-term consequences. Due to the design of the education system, education risks becoming exploitative and requires exaggerated

sacrifices. In other words, the terms of inclusion of these men into the education system are adverse and might cause them to be left with permanent scars from the mobility struggle, while the difficult terms of inclusion risk continuing in the working life, based on their education track record in the stratified system. Also, in addition to creating actual stratification or inequality within the education system and in the labour market, education may function to perpetuate and legitimate the country's exaggerated social inequalities. This reflects how the education system is used to exercise power and control over the population in Guatemala, which has undergone a shift from emphasising physical power to one based on more implicit, 'soft' power techniques that work through the internalisation of certain 'truths' by the individual. Based on the experiences of these most upwardly mobile individuals, we are forced to question certain aspects of the linear link made between education and social mobility or poverty reduction in the Guatemalan context.

The paper starts by laying out the context and methodology of the study in Chapter Two, which leads to Chapter Three, a review of relevant academic debates around education, social mobility and the individual. Thereafter, the findings of the case study are presented, analysed and synthesised in Chapter Four. Chapter Five concludes.

Chapter 2
Methodology and Context

Methodology

While mobility studies are usually longitudinal, this study provides a snapshot of individual mobility pursuits. The snapshot consists of a qualitative, most-likely case study of the experiences of young (secondary school age or slightly above due to distorted schooling trajectories), urban males from the lower socioeconomic strata, who are so motivated to pursue secondary schooling that they finance it by working. Among the poor sectors of the Guatemalan population, these men are advantaged because they are Spanish-speaking, not identifiably indigenous (while many come from indigenous families), urban (educational opportunities are better than in rural areas), and so driven to gain mobility that they use all means possible to continue schooling despite obstacles. They show adaptation skills and the kind of internal qualities – drive, motivation, ambition – that one would expect to facilitate individual mobility.

Fieldwork was conducted in Panajachel, Guatemala, during seven weeks in the summer of 2010. Some interviews with key informants were conducted in the capital, Guatemala. Panajachel was chosen because of the one factor that conditions all field research on Central American youth, and defines the parameters of existence in the region – the ubiquitous everyday violence. Working in bigger city would have been more dangerous and required extra arrangements, such as hiring accompaniment when moving about at night. Thus, I chose the small but sufficiently 'urban' Panajachel in the department of Sololá in the central Guatemalan highlands by the shores of the world-famous Lake Atitlán. The local context is described in the last section of this chapter.

In Panajachel and the capital I spoke with roughly 40 people of different ages and positions. First, I interviewed key adult informants working in the field of child rights and education, and the local supervisor of education to ensure my access to local schools and institutions. In the course of my fieldwork, I interviewed local school teachers and headmasters, while the main focus was on the experiences of young men.

I searched for young men that fit the pre-set profile through many channels. I got contacts through a local youth organisation, where I had worked previously. Some of the organisation's members were claimed to fit the profile I was interested in, and as it turned out, these individuals shared with me some of the most informative and revealing stories. Our having met each other the previous year enabled trust, and the youths felt comfortable sharing their experiences. I tried snowballing with the help of these participants, but failed. I then approached schools known to have a lot of students who work (this in itself was revealing as it gave me the first indications of highly stratified education). One of my 'gatekeepers', a local child NGO worker, took me to some, introducing me to the cooperative headmasters, whom I interviewed first, and then asked them to introduce me to working students. Often I wished I could

have been present when they went to fetch the students, because I felt they might have distorted the purpose of my study somewhat. Some students thought I was handing out scholarships. Also, some headmasters introduced me mainly to adult or female students despite knowing my focus, whom I nevertheless always interviewed. In one school, I went to the students through the secretary, who had great insight and good rapport with the students. In that school, I spoke directly with all the students to recruit volunteers, which proved successful – the students were genuinely interested in participating. I also purposefully visited the two public secondary schools to evaluate the differences in the experiences of those in public and those in private schools. Yet, I failed to find public secondary school students who would fit the profile and share their story. Most of the public school students who I met were helpful, but very timid and succinct, which discouraged me from interviewing them further (which might have been a mistake). Thus, the youth selected for further analysis are all from non-public schools. Towards the end of my fieldwork I interviewed three recent (2009) diversified secondary school graduates.

In total 30 qualitative, semi-structured and recorded interviews of the duration of 0.5 to 1.5 hours were conducted with young men during their free moments – during recess, on Sundays, days-off from school or after school. Two interviews were done in pairs due to time constraints. The men were inquired about the schooling and working histories and present situation, their feelings regarding their lifestyle, as well as their aspirations and future prospects. In addition to qualitative interviews, I organised a Focus Group Discussion, which only five people attended (due to busy schedules). I aimed to conduct participant observation, which was nonetheless met with resistance. After each interview, I would explain to the interviewee the goal and method of observation and ask him to consider letting me observe his daily routine and trajectory. Some asked for time to think the proposal over, others outright rejected it because of difficult family conditions, danger of getting in trouble at work for bringing someone to observe at the working place, doubts whether I could keep up with the person, and fears that I would get bored. After approaching the first interviewees with the proposal and seeing their discomfort, and realising I had no time to build the trust needed, I stopped pursuing the idea.

11 youth (see Appendix A) who were open, expressive, and fit the pre-set profile were selected for detailed analysis, done with the help of Atlas TI. They were given pseudonyms – most of which they themselves picked. The age range of those analysed is 16 to 21 years. Six study in upper secondary (*diversificado*) and three in lower secondary (*básico*). They all study in private or semi-private (*por cooperativa*) schools. Two are recent, 2009, *diversificado* graduates. They all have a long history of working to pay or help pay for their education. Most work in tourism: selling handicrafts, gardening in hotels, as waiters in restaurants; others in the municipal market place, or construction.

An extensive document, literature and newspaper review, as well as education policy-focussed interviews with key informants in the capital complement and contextualise the interviews with youth.

Education in Guatemala

After the Peace Accords that ended Guatemala's 36-year civil war, relentless demand for improving the fragile education system ensued. Education is envisioned to boost the country's economy, quality of citizenship, and social stability (see e.g. Ministerio de Educación, 2008b; ICEFI, 2007: 12). Schooling is the largest item of government expenditure, the rising budget allocation being due to commitments made in the Peace Accords and in international arenas. Also individual citizens are placing their hope in education - the government's investment in education worth 3% of GDP is complemented by a similar private investment by households. (Ministerio de Educación, 2008b.) Yet, Guatemala's long history of highly exclusionary education still casts its shadow - the schooling system lags behind on all indicators globally, regionally and in comparison with other low-middle income nations (CIEN and PREAL, 2008). Advances have, nonetheless, been made, in the last decades, most notably in expanding the coverage of primary education, corresponding to what Tedesco and López (2002) label 'the easy phase of expansion' of education that most other Latin American countries have completed.

The structure of schooling in Guatemala is as portrayed in Figure 1.:

Figure 1. Structure of Guatemalan Education
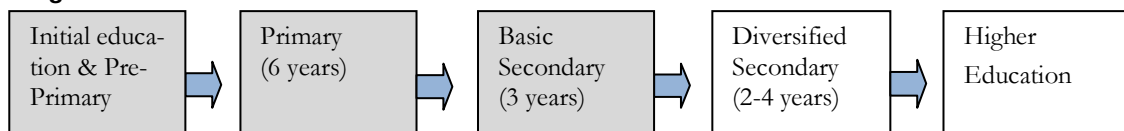
Source: Own elaboration

The levels marked with grey in Figure 1. are obligatory and free according to the Constitution (Republic of Guatemala, 1985: article 74). Obligatory schooling reaches basic secondary, which provides general skills and knowledge. Diversified secondary school is more vocationally specific and divided into four types of programmes: general (prepares for university), primary school teacher, technical, and commercial. At all levels, there are public and private schools. In secondary school there are also *por cooperativa* schools[2]. While the Constitution declares obligatory education free, in reality many public schools have charged fees, and the current government is ridding these. Private schools, on the other hand, charge higher fees. They are profit-driven businesses that do not pay taxes, while the Ministry should supervise the fees charged, as dictated by The Constitution (Republic of Guatemala, 1985: article 73). Yet, supervision is currently very limited due to institutional weaknesses of the Ministry (Juan Carlos Villatoro, personal interview 19 July 2010; Francisco Cabrera, personal interview 24 August 2010).

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[2] *Por cooperativa* schools are non-lucrative institutes run jointly by parents, the municipality and the Ministry of Education, and in some cases private sector actors (Ministerio de Educación, 2004).

The current Colom government's education policy tackles exclusion, and prioritises expanding education while working towards improving its quality and relevance to fit the multi-ethnic Guatemalan context (Ministerio de Educación, 2008c), following international commitments. Different modalities, such as decentralisation and bilingual education have been employed to bring education to traditionally disadvantaged rural, indigenous, poor and female children and youth (CIEN and PREAL, 2008). Also donors, especially the biggest donor USAID, focus on dissolving geographical, language and cultural barriers to education (see e.g. USAID, n.d.: 5). The government currently counts on its conditional cash transfer programme and re-affirmation of the free nature of public schooling to raise enrolments in primary school, as has happened. Yet, the drop in coverage when moving to higher levels of schooling remains dramatic, as Figure 2. shows.

Figure 2. Net enrolment rates per level of schooling in Guatemala and department of Sololá in 2008
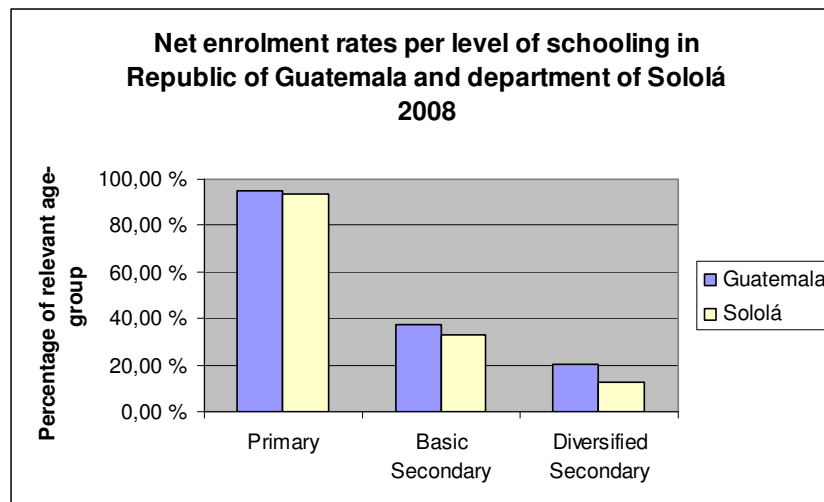
Source: Own elaboration based on Ministerio de Educación 2008a.

The social demand for secondary education, currently a bottleneck, is likely to increase as primary school completion rates grow, and become an attractive tool of poverty reduction. The Colom government is widening its inclusion efforts to include also secondary schooling, as an expression of its 'social justice' agenda that aims to dissolve traditional exclusions (Ministerio de Educación, 2008c). Secondary schooling is not only a source of justice, but also productivity that attracts foreign investment (Gobierno de Álvaro Colom, 2010b) that flows out of the country due to the financial crisis and high violence. The government has thus decided to provide 50 000 scholarships to talented youth (Gobierno de Álvaro Colom, 2010a), rid fees from public basic secondary schools, expand the modality of *Telesecundaria³,* and open new public

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³ Telesecundaria is a secondary school without a teacher, where students receive classes through a televised programme. Yet, sometimes such schools lack a television and other essential infrastructure, which obviously makes many question the quality of such a modality of schooling (Mario Mazat, personal interview, 20 August 2010).

secondary schools. Yet, efforts like scholarships will only benefit a minority, and the government's effort are neither meant nor likely to reverse privatisation. Most demand continues to be covered by private schools – 45% in basic and 78% in diversified secondary schooling in 2008 (Ministerio de Educación, 2008a). 54% of all operating basic secondary schools and 88% of diversified schools are private, as figures 2 and 3 show.

Figure 3. Guatemalan Basic secondary schools in operation by type 2008

Basic secondary schools in operation by type, Republic of Guatemala 2008

15 %
31 %
54 %

Public
Private
Por cooperativa
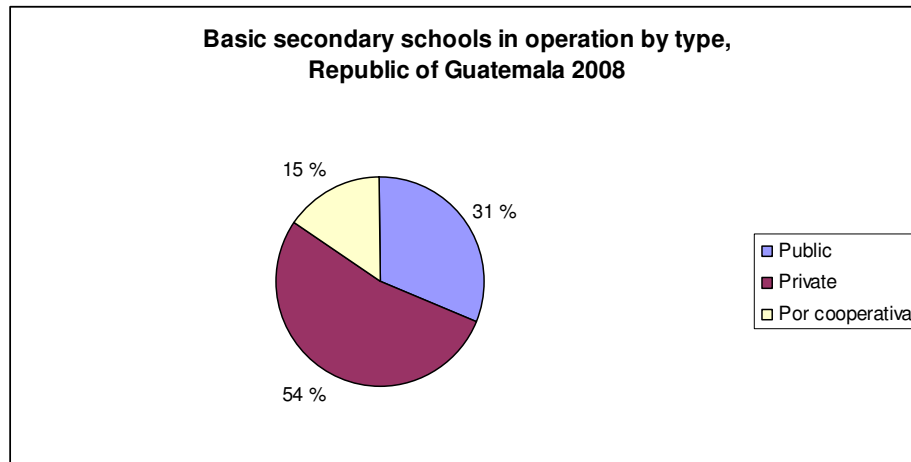
Source: Own elaboration based on Ministerio de Educación, 2008a.

Figure 4. Guatemalan diversified secondary schools in operation by type 2008

Diversified secondary schools in operation by type, Republic of Guatemala 2008

3 % 9 %
88 %

Public
Private
Por cooperativa
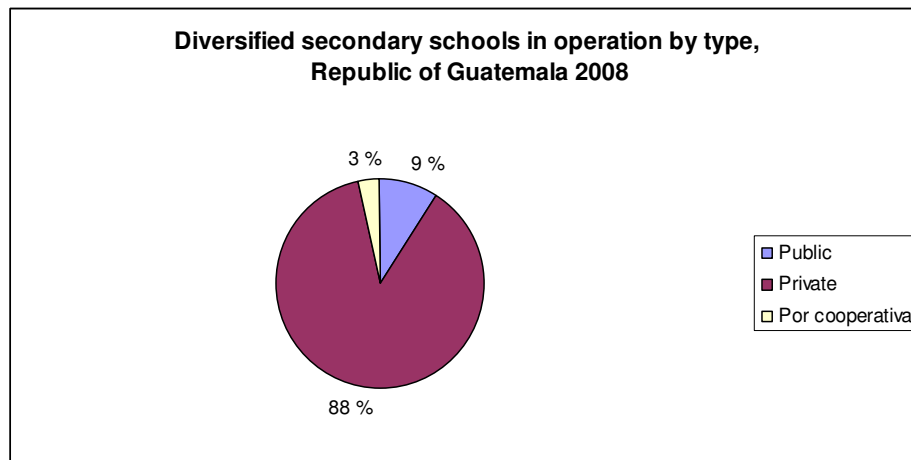
Source: Own elaboration based on Ministerio de Educación, 2008a.

The high level of private provision stems from a consistent lack of public secondary schooling that is, despite the current efforts, allocated only around 10% of the limited education budget (CIEN and PREAL, 2008: 53). What has ensued is *de facto*, not *de jure,* privatisation (Tooley and Dixon, 2006: 444): the private sector has gradually grown to assume responsibility for secondary education without conscious legal reform. Thus, the weak presence of state schools, along with other state institutions, especially in poor areas of the country - documented in the 2009/2010 *Guatemalan National Human Development Report* (UNDP, 2010) - makes these areas a free playground for private schools.

Secondary schools remain mostly accessible to a homogeneous, better-off group who can pay for private schooling or are fortunate enough to live close to a public school. Contrary to popular beliefs that private schooling is for the middle and upper and public schooling for the lower classes, they cater for all classes since they are stratified by price. There are private schools for the low, as well as for the middle and higher classes. While one could expect the poor to concentrate in public schools, in reality also these cater mainly for the non-poor. Thus, the non-poor receive 68% of public spending on secondary education (CIEN and PREAL, 2008: 27)[4]. This signals that the poor remain excluded from both public and private secondary education, as shown by the gap in attendance rates between the poorest and the richest quintile, which was 48% to 93% in basic secondary and 18% to 80% in diversified secondary in 2006 (ibid: 50). The poor do not study because secondary school is never free – all schools burden their clients with a bundle of direct and opportunity costs: *'The average secondary school student pays Qz 2,951 per year. Ministry school students pay Qz 1,705, and Cooperative students pay Qz 1,525. The average annual direct costs paid by a private school student are nearly enough to keep one person out of poverty for an entire year'* (Edwards, 2002:19)[5]. Thus, the lack of public investment is complemented by a high rate of private investment, largely in private schooling.

The country risks producing professionals with expensive qualifications, of questionable quality[6], which do not guarantee a job that corresponds to the qualifications. There seems to be an acute lack of coordination in the provision of secondary schooling. Competition for the few students who can pay has led to a situation where there are 233 diversified secondary programmes, with a wide range of combinations of subjects and specialisations (Arevalo, 2009), for many of which there is no demand in the job market. Edwards (2002: 58) warns that *"the current four-track system with reportedly dozens of "programs" together with the dominance of the private schools in the sub-sector provide too much scope for unscrupulous for-profit operations".*

According to Bruni et al. (2009) and the World Bank (2004), education is the main factor driving income inequality Guatemala. Secondary education is the main point of differentiation: the low and socioeconomically selective coverage, high returns and quality differentials between schools of different prices contribute to income inequality (World Bank, 2004: 108). A year of expensive diversified secondary schooling in Guatemala, for example, promises an average private return of 24.3%, while a year of primary school only 8.2% (CIEN and PREAL, 2008: 40). The current rates of return are, nevertheless, calculated

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[4] Public expenditure on secondary education is much more regressive than that on primary. This is true even as we acknowledge that most secondary students are in private schools and public schools students generally less well off. (Edwards, 2002: 20).

[5] Qz, the quetzal, is valued at € 0.09 in November 2010.

[6] According to a study by the Ministry of Education, in 2006, less than1/4 of students graduating from secondary school achieved the recommended level in reading comprehension, while only 1/20 achieved it in mathematics. Sololá students perform poorly. (CIEN and PREAL, 2008: 45.)

based on the experiences of people from the privileged groups, who access secondary schooling, and who might have other assets to help insert themselves better in the labour market. Averages reveal little about how youth with credentials from lower-quality, cheaper private schools fare after graduation. Bonal (2004) also reminds us that return rates do not consider youth unemployment figures. In the context of little job creation and a culturally entrenched and very unequal social structure that is reflected in the school system, we can question the ability of education to guarantee mobility to a poor person, especially as poverty escape require high levels of education (Porta et al. 2006).

In the following, the case of Panajachel, lauded for its educational progress, is presented.

Panajachel

Panajachel is a town of 14 000 inhabitants (Morales et al. 2008: 35) in the department of Sololá. Just as in this region in general, 62% of the inhabitants are indigenous (ibid.), the rest being people of mixed race (*ladinos)* or foreigners. The town has grown rapidly in recent decades, with a growth rate of around 6% per year, some of which attributable to migration in search of opportunities (ibid.: 35). The perception of opportunity is linked to jobs in tourism and the largely informal-sector services. 47% of the economically active population work in tourism and 35% in services and trade, while agriculture, construction and other livelihoods are of relatively little significance. 60% of the working population are salaried workers, 37% are self-employed, and the rest are pensioners or depend on remittances (ibid.: 47-48).

Recently, Panajachel has suffered from many unfortunate social, economic and environmental factors that have deteriorated livelihoods. There is a consensus that the economy is "down" as one of the youths exclaimed: *'The economy is down, it is so hard now, and sometimes there is no work, no work… But what can we do?'* (Alfonso). Different versions of the events circulate, but all are associated with a feeling of helplessness. Firstly, the global economic crisis decreased the inflow of tourists, and those that come spend less. In addition, competition for the few tourists strains incomes. Secondly, international tourism to Guatemala is discouraged by the high and rising levels of violence and drug-related crime. While Panajachel has little crime, attracting national tourists, there was an incident of a public lynching in January 2010, which shook people's perceptions of Panajachel. Thirdly, for many tourists Panajachel is unattractive because of its relatively strict drugs policy, which causes tourists seeking to consume drugs to go to other towns around the lake. The fourth explanation is concerned with the contamination of the Atitlán lake, Panajachel's main attraction. To aggravate things, natural catastrophes, such as storm Agatha in 2010, have hit the town frequently.

In this context of stagnation, education becomes crucial in competing for the few jobs available. There is growing demand and supply of education, turning Panajachel into a centre of educational opportunities. Education levels are high, and the town is among the ten municipalities that have made the best

advances in expanding education (USAID and Ministerio de Educación, 2008)[7]. Secondary school enrolment rates shot up between 1994 and 2006 from 47% to 91% of the relevant age group – far higher than the national or Sololá average. (Morales et al 2008: 76.) In 2010, there are 1525 students enrolled in secondary schooling (Juan Carlos Villatoro, personal interview 19 July 2010)[8]. Morales et al (2008) state that in the last 15 years, the number of schools in Panajachel has grown to 57. Currently, 23 secondary schools, mostly small private or *por cooperative* schools, serve the youth. Public secondary schooling was unavailable until 2008, when two public institutes were opened, thanks to lobbying by locals and the policy of the current government to expand secondary education. This development is so recent that most poor students still study in private or semi-private schools. The near-universal coverage means that the population is making efforts to pay for at least the most economical school. Also, enrolments have been supported by municipal scholarships which used to benefit around 150 students (Juan Carlos Villatoro, personal interview 19 July 2010) – almost 10% of all students - until recently that the current mayor terminated the programme. Also many foreigners and NGOs provide scholarships. Yet a scholarship often does not cover the whole cost of schooling.

Panajachel's secondary schools are stratified by price and quality (as per public perceptions). The most economical schools charge as little as Qz 100 a month, while the most expensive, American-style schools, attended by the wealthy, charge up to Qz 1500, or even in dollars (Edgar Us, personal interview 17 July 2010). High enrolments signal that those able to pay have already enrolled and schools have to compete for students by offering morning, night, afternoon and intermediate shifts, on weekdays or weekends, and at different price points. Some specialise in providing cheap education for the lower classes, some for working youth and adults, while other seek profits by targeting the wealthier with new specialisations, and imagery of quality and technological advancement. Yet, while there is a whole range of prices and images of quality, there are no studies available on the quality of instruction.

In this context, it is common for youth from poor families to finance their own secondary education by working - fieldwork revealed that headmasters and teachers estimate that a third of secondary school students work. The wide offer of schooling with different schedules and prices make it easier for the youth to do this. My study will shed light on these youth, a phenomenon considered 'normal' in Panajachel's schools, but which has never been researched.

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[7] The indicator used is the Municipal Education Advancement Index, which measures the advances made by a municipality between 2002 and 2006 to reach the goal of universal coverage and completion of pre-primary, primary and basic (lower) secondary schooling (USAID and Ministerio de Educación, 2008:7).
[8] Public sector enrolment figures may be inflated due to the per-enrolled-student modality of funding employed by the Ministry. Enrolments also conceal repetition and drop-out rates.

Chapter 3
Literature Review

Social mobility processes influence and are influenced by the subject's mind and body. Different perspectives on mobility have differing views on what happens to these in the pursuit of mobility, and why these changes occur. Both the mainstream and the critical perspectives recognise the crucial role played by school in holistically reforming a person so as to regulate his mobility. The mainstream sees school as a source of ideas and abilities that, if absorbed well, will lead to mobility. The critical strand sees school as a source of ideas and abilities that reproduce and legitimise an unequal economic system. While the critical perspective helps us analyse this particular case study of mobility, it must be complemented with Foucauldian literature that has the conceptual tools to understand in more detail how schools work through the active individual to perpetuate a social order. The three perspectives are reviewed in this chapter.

Dream, Study, Compete, Achieve – the Mainstream View of Education and Mobility

The current academic interest in social mobility stems from an interest in alleviating poverty. The general recipe for mobility seems to be that by aspiring high, having talent, and making an effort to study one can earn a better place in society. Social mobility can be defined in numerous ways, as Fields (2007) outlines, but the focus is generally on individuals' or groups' movements (up or down, even horizontally, of varying distances) in the distribution of wealth during their lifetime or between generations, while it is debated whether absolute or relative movements should matter more. Mobility can also be measured with other indicators, such as educational attainment (ibid.).

The poverty debate revolves around mobility across the poverty line, in which education is labelled of key importance, notably by The World Bank (Bonal, 2004). Research on Latin America, such as Andersen's influential paper (2001) and a recent book by The Inter-American Development Bank (2007), identify education as the main factor explaining a person's mobility chances. Investment in education to produce 'human capital' is good for the individual, as well as fundamental for developing countries' long-term economic growth and global competitiveness (World Bank, 2007), which benefits all citizens. This message is reflected in the comment by the Guatemalan president about how *'education, education, education'* is the country's main recipe for economic success (Gobierno de Álvaro Colom, 2010b). Thus, there is a concern that the poor fail to benefit from global capitalism because they are excluded from education. Poverty is considered an *'aberration rather than an aspect of how the modern state and a market society function,'* Harriss (2007: 3) points out. Thus the poor are encouraged to learn the appropriate ideas and skills so as to assume their role in the markets to escape poverty.

The mainstream discourse reflects a 'functionalist' perspective on society as a functional, benevolent whole, where the individual must learn his role well to be useful for society. Talcott Parsons (1959), the grandfather of structural functionalism in sociology, writes that schools differentiate people so as to effectively allocate human resources to different roles. Schools create the kind of motivations and technical abilities that a certain social role requires, as well as commitment to the society's values and one's role. Education, for Parsons, therefore serves to create and maintain an integrated and efficient society. According to Feinberg and Soltis (2004: 22-25) functionalists, the dominant school also in education studies, consider that schooling reaches this end by selecting, socialising and training citizens in the technical, attitudinal and political senses. According to Souto-Otero (2010) this 'human capital' perspective one education and mobility relies on the meritocratic idea that talented (high IQ) and hardworking (high effort) individuals attain higher levels of schooling and better rewards in the labour market. Souto-Otero (ibid.) explains that education is praised for making the economy more effective and developed because it gives the highest jobs to such individuals, no matter what their socioeconomic background. Andersen (2001: 18) claims that education allows for a more effective use of human resources and 'intelligent people' for the benefit of the whole society. Grammack (2004 193-194) reminds us that inclusion of the poor in education aims to improve their productivity to make it easier for global capitalism to extract their labour power.

The mainstream policy recommendation is equality of educational opportunity to level the playing field for mobility (World Bank, 2007: 12, 32). The Guatemalan fight against educational exclusion based on geography, ethnicity and illustrate this. Access requires that the poor make an effort to improve themselves and achieve mobility through schooling, while the minimal state supports them by providing them access and, as the World Bank (2007) recommends, targeted credit, scholarships, or other cash transfers. Private education is promoted because it is seen as creating inequality-reducing opportunities for the poor, especially when public schooling fails to cater to the poor (Tooley, [1999] 2001: 165) as is the case in Guatemala. Private schools offer better quality, efficient education to respond to the rising demand for education that the state cannot cover due to resource constraints (Jimenez and Lockheed, 1995). Educational choice serves to create functional differentiation and inequality based on personal efforts and characteristics (Souto-Otero, 2010: 399). The 'carrot' for poor people's investment in education is the *chance to try* to succeed in schools to later *compete* for better jobs.

Based on this idealization of opportunity and effort, the mainstream sociological mobility literature is curious about interaction between opportunities and individuals. Some scholars remind us that not only individual IQ, but also contextual factors define mobility outcomes. This literature, nevertheless, studies *individual,* agency-driven mobility processes defining agency roughly as the ability to dream the *right kind* of dreams and make the *right kind* of choices that *may* allow you to escape poverty (see e.g. Narayan and Petesch, 2007: 15) without questioning the power relations behind such expectations. Narayan and Petesch (ibid.), conceptualise the individual and the household in the context of social structures and social interaction that regulate mobility. They seek to

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understand mobility by analysing the interaction between individual agency, fed by material, social and psychological 'assets', and the 'opportunity structure' formed by institutions (including school) shaped in a certain cultural and political context. Agency or the ability to have 'psychological mobility' are central in fighting one's way up by using one's mental a physical assets to fight against contextual obstacles. Perlman's (2007) longitudinal study of families in the Sao Paulo favelas reveals the tight constraints that structural and contextual factors place on mobility, while accentuating the importance of individual 'drive'. Crockett (1966) provides an overview of the psychological factors that Narayan and Petesch (2007) lament are little studied. He categorised these factors into capacities (intelligence, learned skills), cognitions (attitudes, beliefs, values), and motivations. Psychological factors are thus considered of influence, but they are not produced in a vacuum: Dardanoni et al. (2006) maintain social connections, beliefs and skills, genetic ability and preferences and aspirations are partially inherited from parents, constraining intergenerational mobility. Also the World Bank (2009: 34) joins this choir and admits that equality of opportunity may not result in mobility due to inherited personality or intelligence level. The weight of this kind of household and individual characteristics in defining mobility are the focus of the economistic research that dominates mobility studies, as Narayan and Petesch (2007: 5-7) synthesise. The contribution of schools to the formation of personality, aspirations, or definition of talent is evaded.

The mainstream view proves little helpful in analysing Guatemalan youths' struggle for social mobility. It considers incorporation into schooling solely beneficial, and encourages the poor to better incorporate themselves into a benign system. It evades the possibility of negative effects on the subject of incorporation into (largely privatised) education or the capitalist economy. 'Adverse incorporation', an enlightening concept, is not of much help in criticising these positions, because it is mainly studied in the context of the economy and labour market (see e.g. Hickey and du Toit, 2007). The mainstream accepts differential returns to incorporation - unequal educational and labour market outcomes, identifying their source in individual and household characteristics, as Raffo et al. (2007) point out. Yet, the men in this study make their best effort, but might not attain mobility because they do not enjoy equal opportunity, and nor are they integrated into a meritocratic whole. Souto-Otero (2010) emphasises that the meritocracy discourse just uses education to justify non-redistribution, and Tilly (2007: 47) states that the 'virtue × effort = success' approach suggests that poverty research must explain individual-by-individual poverty escapes thus implying that individual characteristics and behaviour define them. This perspective thus idealises an individual, not collective, type of mobility, and a type of redistribution that moves individuals to rewards without changing the allocation or rewards to strata or the stratification system, as Smelsen and Lipset's (1966: 7-8) categorisation shows. Idealisation of individual achievement ignores economic *rights*, and makes it seem that survival must be achieved through effort, which, as this study shows, burdens the individual and denies him his citizenship rights instead of bolstering them.

Education as Puppetry – Critical Leftist Alternatives

If we want to problematise social inequality and schools' role in it, Marxist alternatives are instrumental. They see education as tampering with mindsets with the aim of maintaining a contradictory and unequal socioeconomic system. Also mobility is seen as legitimising inequality, and as possibly only through the mental alienation of the mobile person of his origin.

The basis for the critical, Marxist analysis of mobility and education is class. Crompton (1998: 118) is an example of literature focusing on mobility as an issue of moving across class boundaries. Whereas the Weberian perspective on class focuses on how the control of productive assets shapes the 'life chances' of individuals, the Marxist perspective understands that this creates exploitation, accentuating the existence of conflict of interest between actors (Western and Wright, 1994: 607). Feinberg and Soltis (2004) explain that a Marxist perspective sees schools as reflecting the unequal class and power structures of the capitalist economic order, inclusion in schools thus perpetuating class positions.

Tampering with the mind-set of the working class to produce discipline has always been a key challenge for capitalism (O'Neill, 1986: 49) and education has been employed, according to Poulantzas ([1975] 1978: 33), to subject people to the 'ideological state apparatus' that trains and subjects them through the ideological, complementing the workings of the economic apparatus. In response to the functionalist optimism about individual mobility, Marxist thinkers believe that individual mobility only undermines class consciousness through the persuasion of members of the proletariat to absorb the owning class's interests as theirs (Goldthorpe et al., 1987: 5) and explain that this 'false consciousness' contributes to the mobile person's own disadvantage (Jost, 1995). The prospects of mobility serve to make inequality tolerable - everyone thinks they are next in line to benefit (see e.g. Hirschman and Rothschild, 1973). A poor person acquiring mobility, nonetheless, rarely escapes exploitation. Attaining a managerial position may only end up putting him in a contradictory location where he is both an exploiter and exploited (Western and Wright, 1994: 608). Individuals who gain mobility are in a sense 'fooled' and paraded as heroes of the system, while being exploited. The system is reproduced through schools as Bowles and Gintis (1976) maintain: Schooling, in the American context, functions to supply workers with the kind of socialisation employers demand, and reproduce the kind of values, aspirations and attitudes that the capitalist society and employers require. They conclude that education is a 'safety valve' and a social control mechanism.

There are numerous detailed studies about how processes within schools perpetuate inequality. For example, Kerckhoff (2001) conceptualises school as a 'sorting machine', the 'ability to structure' of which depends on its levels of stratification, standardisation and vocational specificity, which then divide adults into occupational strata by means of educational attainment certified by credentials. Farrell (2003, 155-156) studies how the school system differentiates people through regulating access to school, survival in school, and the learning output of different children from different classes. He explains that 'sorting points' (such as transition between lower and upper secondary) and 'streams'

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contribute to the creation of different levels and types of education for children from different social groupings, that then lead to different occupational and social positions. Walther (2006) refers to a process called 'cooling out', a thesis developed by Goffman, that refers to schools lowering the aspirations of certain students to reduce the contradiction between the equality of educational opportunities and scarcity of social positions. For example, in schools some children can be made to think they 'cannot do it' to make them drop out.

This study benefits from the application of a broadly Marxist perspective that empowers us to question the usefulness of the economic system and institutions, while showing their links, but struggles with the perspective's conceptualisation of power and the role of the subject. Yet, there are authors who offer a more nuanced understanding of the role of the individual: Bowles and Gintis (1976: 13, 39) point out that schools discipline children through a system of punishments and rewards to internalise certain behavioural norms so as to equip them with a 'built-in constant supervisor'. Yet, this still risks seeing power as emanating from 'above'. Tilly's (2007) interactive model of the generation of inequality takes a step further, and liberates us from the sticky idea that disadvantage can be blamed on the individual. It explains how the elite, sometimes through or with the support of the state, engages in 'opportunity hoarding' by confining the benefits of a value-producing resource to members of the in-group, or exploiting the disadvantaged by enlisting their efforts in the production of value, while excluding them from the value added by their efforts. The disadvantaged individuals are seen as active, adapting to the system by adjusting their behaviour. Both the advantaged and disadvantaged commit to the interaction, even if benefits are unequally distributed. While Tilly never explicitly mentions education, his framework is a useful step to explore the possibility of poor youth incorporating themselves into education, adapting well to a differentiating system, but without necessarily benefitting from it, questioning mainstream expectations. These contributions are helpful, but leave us with few tools to study what happens at the micro-level, *inside the individual* for him to expose himself to exploitation. To deepen our understanding of these issues to analyse this particular case study, the Foucauldian perspective on school, 'softer' power and the individual will be applied to complement the Marxist framework.

Foucauldian Perspectives on Education, Power and the Individual

Foucauldian literature broadly adheres to the critical tradition alongside the Marxists, but offers more refined tools for analysing how a certain social and power structure is perpetuated with the help of the individual's mind and soul. Thus it is helpful in analysing individual struggles for mobility. While Foucault wrote little about education, his ideas have been applied to the field by other authors.

In Guatemalan there has been a recent shift from war, repression and use of physical power by the state against its own population to more elusive, subtle and 'soft' forms of maintaining a social order. This transition to a peacetime democracy and non-repressive methods of social control can be analysed

through the concept of 'governmentality' that refers to the diverse tactics, institutions, and procedures that exercise complex forms of power over the population (Foucault cited in Rose, [1996] 1998: 68). Governmentality shows how the authorities use a range of tactics to achieve political goals, including increasingly subtle tactics that involve the individual. Rose ([1996] 1998: 19-29) explains that democratic rule over citizens means *'ruling them through their freedoms, their choices and their solidarities rather than despite these. It means turning subjects, their motivations and interrelations, from potential sites of resistance to rule into allies of rule.'* Democratic rule is based on disciplinary power, in the exercise of which schools are central (ibid.). Schools create norms and then punish 'abnormal' individuals (Davidson, 2003). Covaleskie (1993) describes disciplinary power as light, less visible and diffuse – power that comes from everywhere and acts on everyone and all aspects of life. Power is no longer repressive, but productive, invoking positive transformation of the individual (Davidson, 2003) through 'technologies of the self' - *'the ways individuals experience, understand, judge, and conduct themselves'* (Rose, [1996] 1998: 29). According to Rose ([1996] 1998), modern governmentality makes citizens conduct themselves and shape their lives in a desired way so as to allow authorities to 'act at a distance'. The imagined authority of a truth, which often claims scientific bases, persuades people to change their lives and souls to fit in because they see the *'discrepancy between how life is and how much better one thinks it could be.'* (ibid.: 73), and in the process subject themselves to subtle social control. Technologies of the self *'permit individuals to effect by their own means or with the help of others a number of operations on their own bodies and souls, thoughts, conduct and way of being, so as to transform themselves in order to attain a certain state of happiness, purity, wisdom, perfection or immortality'* (Foucault cited in Rose, [1996] 1998: 78). 'Hard' power is made unnecessary (ibid: 68-73).

Educational institutions are of prime importance of producing social order in post-war Guatemala. At the same time, education has authority due to its international clout as tool for developing nations and individuals. The mainstream explicitly promotes secondary education that is 'practical' and "combines occupational and behavioural skills" (World Bank, 2007: 13), revealing that schools are a valid control mechanism and a machine to inculcate in people the kind of values, skills and character that the economy and democracy need. Educated is used to tie citizens' ambitions with institutionally and socially valued ways of living (Rose, [1996]1998: 79) so that governance can rely on the educated subject as a psychologically regulated citizen to govern himself (Fendler, 1997: 52), especially so in the context of the neoliberal, minimal state that governs subtly through the illusion of individual 'freedom' (Rose, [1996]1998: 79). For the Guatemalan individual, education is the only valid option to pursue mobility, since most other channels (e.g. political) of mobility are partially or entirely closed. The citizenry absorb the idea of education as the key to better living standards that is cultivated as an 'authoritative truth', and thus choose to educate themselves, despite any obstacles. They consider schools' intervention in their lives legitimate because of this promise of them becoming the right kind of citizen – modern, useful, integrated (not excluded) and good to society. All these labels bear power in Guatemala - a polarised, divided society. It is both in the interest of the citizen and the state to foster integration. Schooling becomes a key way of prevent falling into 'deviancy' – a

category that always occurs as an effect of power (Fendler, 1997: 59). Yet, just as education is promising holistic benefits, it disciplines citizens not only inside schools, but in most if not all other fields of life (Popkewitz and Brennan, 1997: 23). And, as Youdell (2006: 38) reminds us, studenthood comes with costs. My study will delve deeper into the disciplining power and cost of schooling in the Guatemalan context.

Chapter 4
Findings

Broken Trajectories – the Difficulty of Studying

In Panajachel, the pressure to get educated touches everyone regardless of their social position. As schooling levels rise, mobility requires increasingly long trajectories of schooling. Yet, as the young men in my study pursue schooling, they face a contradiction between their socioeconomic position and the high costs of education, which then twists and elongates their schooling trajectory, exposing them for structural obstacles built into the education system for long periods of time. The intriguing thing about these individuals is that while they struggle, they have managed to continue their studies until secondary school, unlike many other vulnerable youth. What is behind their perseverance is a persistent dream of social mobility, and efforts to work to pay for their schooling.

The men in my study are predominantly from poor, some rural, family backgrounds. All have parents with little formal education – without exception less than complete primary schooling – who are mostly unable to support their children's studies, especially if these are many. For example, Ismael's parents gathered all their children together one day to ask for their forgiveness because they had only been able to pay for their primary schooling, and now the children had to work to pay themselves through secondary school. Ismael is lucky for he has the moral support of his parents, something which other parents refuse to offer. Such lack of support causes negative emotions in the youth, and leaves them very alone with their struggle. Yet, importantly enough, these youth remain hopeful despite their backgrounds, showing a type of psychological mobility and reflective agency.

Even though these youth use their bodies and minds earn and income that buffers against obstacles and allows them to anchor themselves in school, they still struggle. Their trajectories clearly reflect their disadvantage. Reflecting general Guatemalan tendencies[9], many of the participants enrolled late in primary school and took 'gap years' to work full-time either demotivated due to lack of money or to work and save money to continue studying. Some have been forced to repeat grades. Illustrating the resultant problem of over-age, the three participants in the last grade of *básico* are 20, 20 and 16, instead of 15-years old, and the three participants in second grade of *diversificado* 21, 21 and 18, instead of 17.

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[9] The Guatemalan schooling system is characterized high repetition and drop-out rates, as well as a problem of over-age students. The need to work explains 20% of drop-outs. (CIEN and PREAL, 2008: 8-9.)

The participants acknowledge studying is demanding for 'people like them', but decide to give it a go. The decision to work to pay for one's studies is based on an analysis of the structural conditions and constraints they face in the present and future. All the participants realise the lack of job opportunities for uneducated people, and reject the poverty and 'backwardness' their families suffer, thus reaching the conclusion that they want to have something 'better'. Pablo's comment is representative of this analysis:

> When I reached basic secondary, I thought I want better opportunities for myself. I said (to myself) that working collecting sand in the river is a little difficult. I said, no, no, no, I don't want to do this. (…) I said no, I don't want to live all my life like this, I want to go somewhere in life. (…) Maybe I am not in extreme poverty, but you could say in poverty. I don't suffer from lack of basic necessities – I have a roof, I have food, but when I was a child I might have wanted something and my parents were not able to give it to me. I don't want that with my children. (Pablo)

Yet, the decision is not purely rational. These men's transition to adulthood is characterised by a pursuit of social inclusion – a wish to become part of modern society, escape poverty and enjoy the material benefits of modernity. Yet, there are different routes to choose from. The participants acknowledge the options associated with modern Guatemalan manhood - such as turning to crime, or abusing drugs or alcohol - that are realistic options to youth with limited opportunities. Nevertheless, they reject them because they are considered unacceptable, immoral or undesirable by family and society, as Alexander explains:

> They [parents] tell me to keep studying. They tell me that, "if you see your friends do bad things, that they veer your attention away from your studies because they do bad things in school, if you see them drink or something, don't do it. Just read one book, even if they laugh at you, even if they tell you are a nerd." (Alexander)

The participants, like all young men in developing countries, struggle to find a 'decent' path to manhood amidst social exclusion and few opportunities (see e.g. Barker, 2005). And because of their explicit wish to have mobility, they choose education, which also provides good excuse to avoid the vices of modernity. It is perceived as the best and possibly the only morally acceptable channel of mobility. Political organisation is rare, and so are social connections with more privileged groups – thus, other channels of mobility are mostly not available. Education is the only option, but the decision to study not necessarily simple, because it may be challenged by others. Some might think these men escape important cultural expectations, such as working and forming a family early, as the following comment by Alfonso demonstrates:

> Since the early days they told me that because I was a bit misbehaved I had to work. And in our case, as we come from a village where there are indigenous people, the people there don't study, to work once and for all. Everyone works. And if you don't want to, they beat you up - that is the law there. Work hard, hard. And the people work, without thinking about studying. But here [in Panajachel] it's different. I decided for myself. I said that even if my dad didn't like it, I would study, I had to get somewhere in life, I told him.

> And he didn't say anything. I went to enrol even though he didn't want me to. I did it for me. I didn't do it for him. (Alfonso)

These expectations are met especially by those from rural areas. The participants try to reconcile their individual search for progress with such traditional pressures in order to be accepted in both worlds. Combining work with studies allows them to, on one hand, to show 'traditional' responsibility by working, providing for their needs, and economically contributing to the family and, on the other hand, 'modern' responsibility for their own future.

These men are breaking intergenerational cycles of educational deprivation. They are pioneers, but have to bear the financial and psychological burden that stems from this role. Yet, even they as pioneers are subjects to the contradictions between the demands of a school system that was not designed with their interests in mind, and their poor family background, resulting in distorted schooling trajectories, and the values and norms emanating from both. If completing secondary school what is needed to rise out of poverty (Porta et al., 2006), these men's twisted and elongated schooling trajectories mean that 11 or 12 years might not suffice for them to finish secondary school. Thus, they need to maintain themselves in the system longer, which makes the struggle more challenging both psychologically and physically.

Symbiosis of Work and School

These men's experiences reflect a *lucha* (fight) for self-improvement - as Alexis says: '*One fights for who one wants to become.*' As outlined above, education is these individuals' personal priority, but the cost of schooling and poverty make incorporation into the labour market a precondition for incorporation into the education market. Thus, their struggle becomes double. This section outlines the interlinked nature of work and school that are found to exist in a symbiosis.

Most participants have worked since their childhood because of a cultural tendency and economic necessity. Each has experienced various jobs, mostly in informal sector services, construction and tourism. Work schedules vary – some work full-time six days a week, others half-time, others at the weekends. Max's experience is illustrative of long working histories conditioned by poverty and necessity:

> All my life has been work. Despite all that I have had, it's been difficult, because I worked because they [parents] paid for my studies, but my clothes and everything else I needed, they didn't give me. (…) All my life I have worked, from the age of seven onwards maybe. I started working as a bricklayer's assistant. They paid me a misery. Some Qz 5 to 10 per week. It wasn't sufficient. It only paid for a pen, something like that. (Max)

The men consider working a normal part of life, but this normalisation conceals the commonness of harmful or negative experiences, alluded to by Max. While not all complain about negative work experiences, those mentioned include the difficulty of finding a job that allows studying financially and time-wise, difficult and dangerous work conditions, and uncertainty of work relationships and pay (dealt with in the Money Strategies section). For example,

working in the river collecting sand or in construction, subject the youth to accidents, harsh environmental conditions:

> One works all day in the sun and gets sunburnt, and then goes to study with big sleepy eyes, without having slept the night before. And work is not about going to sit and admire the landscape - one has to move, be careful not to get hurt, because [in construction sites] they throw things around. If you are not awake, you get hit. (Ismael)

Men, including Ismael, nevertheless insist that work allows them to learn useful skills, gain maturity and economic independence. Above all, work allows one to study.

For these individuals, work and schooling are not mutually exclusive, but rather symbiotic in a prolonged manner. They depend on each other, not only temporarily, but in a structurally entrenched way. Work is the precondition for studying and one's future work opportunities depend on how well one combines work and study throughout one's years of schooling. The instability of work, e.g. temporary unemployment, may endanger studies, especially because incomes are so small so as to rule out saving money to be used as a buffer in times of crisis. Thus, work is fought for, and almost any work is welcomed. Pablo switched to an exhausting night-job in a bakery to be able to study during the day, and Ismael boast about how quickly he rides Panajachel's dangerous roads on his bike to arrive to work on time in order not to lose the entire day's pay that pays for school. They are constantly aware that if they fail in their struggle, their future is at risk.

Ultimately, these men's mobility process and outcome are doubly challenged, as they are exposed to both the vagaries of the education system and those of the highly unregulated, informal and precarious Guatemalan labour market. In the worst case, they might be exploited in both spheres. The men cannot refuse this, and think that personal effort in work and school is the defining factor of success and thus do their utmost to keep the symbiosis going. They legitimise their struggle by concurring that what is earned through sweat and tears tastes the sweetest. Their mentality is that suffering and sacrifices in the present will be compensated in the future as high returns to what is fundamentally an *investment*. The demands of working to keep studying may nonetheless be an investment with negative returns or one that leaves scars because they occur in the context of highly unregulated and stratified labour and education markets. I will proceed to analyse these scars to understand the cost of this symbiosis.

The Scars of Inclusion

Success in school, in the case of the youth studied here, is not solely dependent on IQ and effort, as the mainstream mobility literature would suggest. Schooling requires that these men meticulously manage all aspects of their life, making schooling a full-time, all-encompassing examination that sets certain requirements for how time, money, body and spirit should be allocated and employed. These men have so far succeeded in school because they are able to exercise self-discipline, adapt, and work hard to earn their place in school and

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society. Yet, their success hides how schools, while not explicitly excluding, exclude through transformative inclusion that resembles a constant examination that differentiates schooling trajectories through the application of arbitrarily demanding norms. This filters out those who cannot bear the brunt and controls the daily experience of successfully included poor youth in a way that may scar and impoverish them.

In the following two sub-sections, I examine the time and money strategies struggle for mobility demands, as well as their effects on the individual.

Time strategies – exhaustion that vitamins can't fight

Deacon (2006: 182) claims that disciplinary institutions, such as the school, aims to exercise control over their subjects' time. As schooling is the priority of these young men, they allow its exigencies to control the totality of their time – after all, they have no other choice if they want to gain mobility. Without control over and tight budgeting of time, schooling would be impossible – homework would not be done, work days missed. Thus, schedules are made and followed with great self-discipline, prioritising some and sacrificing other activities, often leading to demanding and exhausting daily schedules that overlook important human needs. Ismael's description of his daily routine is representative of the experiences of all participants:

> Go to work at 6 in the morning, get out at five. Go to the type-writing class in the afternoon and get out to go straight to school, and then to do homework and all that, sleep at 2 or 3 AM, and then wake up again at 6 AM. That was the routine I had to have. (Ismael)

Yet, not always is the daily organisation of time stable or effortless. Schedules are constantly adjusted, because finding a balance that allows for sufficient work and sufficient studying is difficult. Sometimes one or the other have to be sacrificed, as the experiences of Alberto, who had to change school to allow for more income generation, shows:

> Before, I didn't work much because they would leave me so much homework and I almost couldn't work, and that affected me quite a lot. Sometimes I didn't have means to pay some things they asked for in the school. Sometimes I didn't hand in my homework for that reason. Now, more or less, I have more time because I study on the weekends, and almost the whole week I work from 8 to 4, more or less. And afterwards I do homework […]. (Alberto)

The men's schedules are vulnerable to collapse because of sudden peaks in how much time and money each sphere requires, as Alberto's comment shows. Juggling aims to prevent collapse, but causes risky situations. For instance, a sudden peak in schooling costs forces one to take time *away* from studies to gain more money, which puts success in studies under threat. The limiting factor of time makes for a great deal of overall vulnerability and a feeling of 'pressure' (*presión*), as Tony and many other participants named the feeling:

> (...) I started basic secondary here in Institute X. I would go to school at 2 PM, until 7 PM. That time I found another job, because where I was they

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wanted me to work the whole day, and since my studies were in the afternoon, and since it's 8 hours of work a day, I had to find a double-shift job. I started working from 7 am to noon, then I had one hour to do my things and went back to work in the night and left work at 10 pm. So, from 11 PM to 1 AM I did my homework. (…) I would sleep at 2 or 3 AM throughout the three years of school, all the same in the first, the second and the third grade. That is when I most felt the most pressure, because we had a lot of schoolwork, 13 courses. I had to research this, do that, on Saturdays I had to do machine typing lessons. Aside from being difficult economically, I had little time. (Tony)

As Tony's comment exemplifies, sleep is what is most commonly sacrificed to pursue the dream of mobility that requires tight scheduling. All participants complain that they sleep too little. Tony's two to three hours of sleep are the most common figure mentioned by the participants. There is no leeway to reduce work or schooling hours, and they are prioritised above sleep. This shows the motivation level of the youth, but tiredness aggravates the feeling of 'pressure' and the mental and physical burden that the men are under, as the following analysis by Alexis shows:

Now in my last year [of *diversificado*] I felt that I couldn't bear it because I had to stay up all night, my head would hurt, I would get ill all the time. I didn't feel like doing anything. (...) In my free moments, I would go see the doctor, but the only thing he gave me were vitamins. But the vitamins aren't a substitute for sleep, sleeping at least seven or eight hours. And I would sleep two or three hours. But I never wanted to tell anyone because these are personal things that you hold inside you. (Alexis)

Thus, the men know and feel in their bodies that the lack of sleep is harmful, but sacrifice it because it is necessary for them to follow their dreams – after all, sleep is inactive time taken away time from the active pursuit of one's future, and it thus becomes a luxury that they cannot afford. Yet, in the medium and long run, sleep deprivation may lead to physical symptoms and health problems, which can equally pose a threat to the men´s success in life.

Sleep is just one extreme example of the sacrifices made - also free time, participation in social and political organisations and play are eliminated from the schedules, with potentially detrimental physical and psychological effects. '*I think I was limited in partying, playing, having fun, all that… Now I notice they are important,'* Tony reflects back on his secondary schooling. These men are denying themselves significant aspects of youth.

The way in which schools force these men to harness their present for building their future is characteristics of schools as disciplining institutions that control people through forcing them to reform themselves personally and internally. This serves to train the body to 'fashion the future'. (Deacon, 2006: 182.) The body is trained to get accustomed to constant exhaustion and needs and comforts deprivation. The mind, hoping for a better future, organises and legitimises the efforts so as to make them possible. These men's everyday life resembles a constant examination, as mentioned. Their ability to do well is not tested by how they manage time in school, but in how they manage it outside of school. Failing to manage time is punished by the schooling institution, with

an impact on their future mobility. And at the same time, the cost of schooling makes managing time very challenging. The danger is that in trying to do well in this exam, the men end up sacrificing their present well-being for uncertain and illusory rewards in the future.

Money strategies – the high price of high aspirations

Money is another key resource that must be carefully managed. It is very closely linked to time, as shown above. Money management is difficult because the participants face costs and have incomes over which they have very little control. Thus, they adapt by controlling the costs of their lifestyle and aspirations.

Naturally, the financial situation of each participant is different. The poor family backgrounds and a cultural disposition to seek early economic independence discourage these youths from relying on their parents' support. Those who have to cover all their needs with their personal income manage a much tighter budget, while those who get money from their family or earn more can breathe easier, revealing differentiation in the level of financial constraint. Despite differences, all have low and fluctuating earnings ranging between Qz 200 and Qz 1500 a month, clearly less than the Guatemalan minimum wage[10], which is out of reach even for those who work full 8-hour days six days a week. The only way to increase earnings would be to work more or access better jobs. Yet, working more is out of question because of time limitations. Little control over wages touches especially those working short-term jobs for outside employers. '*You have to eagerly take any job that makes money fall your way, if not, you won't eat (…),*' Max describes the compulsion to work. Sometimes, the men face situations where they have to carefully think what conditions to accept and what not: Max continues by saying that he has his pride so as not to sell his labour without due compensation. The necessity makes these men subject themselves to uncertain, low-pay informal wage labour relationships that hinder budget management efforts.

The participants' most important consumption item is school expenditure, over which they have minimal control. Poor youth who pay for their own education seem to concentrate in the cheapest institutes with tuition fees ranging between Qz 100-300 a month. Even with such low tuition fees, however, they have to find ways to cover the material costs. While working half-time, as most of these youth do, reduces the opportunity cost, it undermines their ability to pay for schooling. Ernesto explains his expenditure:

> In addition to that [a Qz 250 monthly tuition fee], there are other expenses in school – food, snacks, papers, clothing, a lot. So, yes, if you don't work, you cannot make it. That is why I work and study. (Ernesto)

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[10] The Guatemalan minimum monthly salary totals approximately Qz 1800, according to the current legislation ('Salario mínimo: trabajadores del campo y ciudad ganarán igual', accessed 16 Novermber 2010).

Other costs include internet café fees, coloured pens, transport, school trips and events, uniforms, food, snacks, drinks and even bribes solicited by teachers. Most of the youth try to prioritise needs and save by using old uniforms, spending less on internet or printing, and using the public library and recycled materials. Yet, school practices hamper these efforts and the youth continuously engage in a struggle against the arbitrary costs in secondary schools not designed for poor youth. Pablo tried to buy cheap fruit for lunch outside of school, in the street, but the teachers forbade this to maintain the school kiosk monopoly. Alberto handed in homework written by hand and not typed, as was expected. The teacher refused it*: 'I had stayed up all night writing it. I told the teacher I had no money to print. He insisted. Damn it! I took the paper, tore it apart in front of him and left'.*

When climbing the education ladder, passing through the 'filter' becomes more difficult because schooling costs rise steadily, as demonstrated by nationwide studies (CIEN and PREAL, 2008: 26; Porta et al., 2006; see Annex B Figure 1.). Each 'sorting point' – for example graduation or transition to diversified secondary - poses a peak in costs that filters out those who cannot pay. At each point, the youth reflect about whether continuing schooling is wise or possible. Rofo's experience of the costs of graduating diversified secondary school illustrates this experience shared by all participants:

> Another moment that we had a lot of costs was when we had to buy the uniform [for final year work practice] and they told us that the following we had to pay Qz 1000 for the uniform. I don't have the money, what do I do? I cannot go and rob, I don't have the money, I'd better just stop here. (Rofo)

These are the dangerous junctures which demoralise many and cause drop outs. These individuals probably succeed because of their fervent belief in education as the key to success, their social support networks, luck (as Rofo insisted) as well as their ability to constantly reform themselves.

Social networks, as well as formal financial institutions come in handy when work income runs short. A majority has borrowed money, and personal debts range from some thousands to Qz 10 000. A few even have bank loans with high interests. Private schools allow students a chance to pay their accumulated fees whenever they can, but the fees accumulate and turn into a consumption peak that often requires a loan. Re-paying debt is a long process, in the worst case preventing the youth from pursuing further education. Some are lucky enough to get a scholarship to cover their school expenses. Yet, even scholarships, while a stroke of luck and a lease of life, do not remove the need to work. Ernesto explains his situation:

> I wanted to study a *bachillerato* (academic diversified track) in the *diversificado* as you say here, and so before starting that I didn't have the money to study. A little after that I found an American friend here in Panajachel, and she told me she wanted to help me to pay the whole year of tuition, it was Qz 2500 for the whole year. That helped me. I continued working, and bought my school materials. (Ernesto)

Some youth had a scholarship before, but because they are not permanent, studying is made easier only temporarily. Scholarships do not remove the systemic obstacles or structural disadvantage of youth from poor families.

Money has intimate links with psychological well-being. Own money brings a feeling of independence, control and self-confidence. Lack of money, on the other hand, disciplines, punishes and causes negative emotions, which can function to undermine one's motivation to study, as Alberto reflects:

> Sometimes they leave you homework that costs a lot of money [to do]. And sometimes one doesn't have [money] to do it. And then you lose points. Many get exasperated, and see that the others hand in their work really beautiful… Since they lose their motivation, they don't want to go anymore [to school]. Sometimes you ask your parents, and they say there is no money. One gets discouraged. (Alberto)

Lack of money becomes a signal of personal inability. This disciplinary power is felt as many of the participants have at one point of the schooling trajectories dropped out temporarily due to lack of money. Often this is portrayed as free choice, but it is largely structurally conditioned, as we have seen. Sometimes re-taking schooling requires a re-adjustment of dreams.

Some participants, especially those trying to enter spheres of privilege - 'better' and more expensive schools - have had to realise that dreaming 'too high' is expensive. Thus the force of self-discipline and budgeting extend to one's aspirations. Ripas's story is an example of this phenomenon:

> There were moments that I ran out of work, my sister was in economic crisis as well. (…) Who to run to? I didn't have anyone else to run to. Halfway through the year, I stopped studying the *carrera* I was in. It was electronics. So, halfway through the year I said no, threw in the towel and went to the capital to live there. (Ripas)

Ripas later returned Panajachel but decided to enrol in a cheaper school. Interestingly, it is those who aim the highest, trying to enter more prestigious schools that require a bigger investment of time and money, who have to revise their aspirations. The barriers to the better-quality (as per perceptions of quality differentials), and more selective schools are higher and often impossible for these youth from the lower strata to overcome, as Alberto recounts:

> Before I studied in Sololá in a computer science institute, but it was very expensive. A lot of money… And since it was the last year, with the final year project, transport, food and all that, I couldn't make ends meet. (Alberto)

The obstacles do not prevent these men from trying, but all dreams are reachable, even if all possible strategies are employed. When barriers cannot be overcome, a painful shattering of dreams may ensue, as Rofo, who gave up his dream of becoming a teacher, grippingly explains:

> I never failed a subject [in basic secondary]. (…) And then we got to diversified secondary, which for me was like to say ok, I got this far, I will only finish basic secondary. And then I will go and find a job with the basic secondary diploma. I don't care, no, I said to myself, I don't care that I have to destroy my dreams, that I have to trample on all my dreams, the dreams that I

had till here [high up], I had to trample on them and bring them down. (Rofo)

Through trial and error these youth find their place in the stratified schooling system. For Rofo, continuing schooling required 'cooling down' his ambitions with his consent – his potentialities are subjected to control by school, as is the aim of disciplinary power (Davidson, 2003). Instead of becoming a teacher, he now studies administration in a local low-cost school. Realising one's inability to reach one's ambitions can be a humiliating warning not to dream 'too high' because of one's socioeconomic background.

Social mobility moves an individual in the wealth distribution. Yet, these findings illustrate that mobility through education has a money cost, which results in a physical and mental cost – a need to engage in wage labour, discipline oneself internally. I wish not to judge whether this is outright 'bad', or to portray the participants as victims, but to show that all this has a function. Because education is a positional good, that acquires value in the context of scarcity (Hollis, 1987), and a potential key to higher positions in the social hierarchy, it is a powerful medium for opportunity hoarding. The filtering process studied here reveals this. Because outright repression can no longer legitimately be used to control people, and education must be inclusive due to international and national pressure, it is made to require high money, physical and mental investment so as to reproduce the unequal social order. Lack of money demoralises and discourages, making people exclude themselves voluntarily. As happens in opportunity hoarding, it is common that those ultimately disadvantaged commit to the system (Tilly, 2007) based on an imagery of what education does to a person. In privatised education systems, profits are fuelled by such commitment based on aspirations. These youth believe they are investing in themselves, and thus volunteer to participate in the system and reform themselves. They become addicted and run risks – commitment to schooling is hard to reverse, because the more you believe and the higher you go, the higher the money, time and spirit investment required, and the higher the losses if you fail. Because education is a test of personal aptitude, failure is easily blamed at individual faults. Schools, the only channel of mobility, have the authority to entice students to discipline themselves and downgrade their upwardly mobile minds to fit the system, without necessarily materialising the promise of mobility. It also has the authority to pretend to measure people's worth on a scale and then allocate them material benefits. All this certainly subdues social conflict, but also creates legitimised inequality. It also scars and impoverishes the most mobile minds and bodies of the lower strata to exercise control over their future. This I elaborate on in the last section of this chapter. First, I examine the myth of education that alleviates the pains of incorporation and makes these poor youth pursue education despite the systemic obstacles. Even if the myth reduces the pain, the scars of incorporation may remain.

In Pursuit of the Myth of Education

A myth of what schools do to a person and what a person has to do to become 'better' is built globally, nationally and locally. These youth are absorbed in this web of discourse that numbs the pains of their incorporation into schooling

and legitimises their struggle. The right to attempt mobility through schooling hinges on personal strategies, and on the cultivation of certain attitudes and dispositions.

The discourse of education as opening doors to inclusion is everywhere. During fieldwork it became evident that everyone from peers and parents to teachers and the Ministry of Education portray schooling as an avenue of free personal improvement and mobility. For example, the Guatemalan Ministry of Education (2007) published a booklet called *100 Stories of Success* that shows students how mobility through education requires cultivating aspirations, optimism, respect, honesty, perseverance, self-discipline and dedication to studies. The booklet insinuates that this way, one can become useful for society, and have dignity. Schools and the Ministry are painted as allies of the individual striving for his dreams, but this support hinges on the person's behaviour.

Also the participants' accounts are replete with this imagery. Education is not senseless consumption but a carefully managed investment in becoming a thoroughly included, accepted person, who is able to support and help his family, provide for his children thanks to a stable and decently compensated 'professional' indoor job. Schooling is perceived as a holistic insurance against adverse aspects of life that punish those who fail to insert themselves into society, which the participants are accustomed to but wish to avoid in the future (e.g. unemployment, poverty). See Rofo's comment as an example of these expectations:

> (...) I thought that education for me will be like a root to grow from, have a lot of fruits, but not to have great wealth, a huge mansion, but to have what is most important, be a professional, and help other people. Education for me is essential, something that will help me develop. *Not develop myself*, but develop my society, my family, and the people around me. (Rofo, italics added)

School will help a youth to overcome one's own person's obstacles, better oneself, become a different kind of person, as Max's comment demonstrates:

> Well, for me education is primordial because we live in an age where without education one cannot better oneself, have a more honest wage, you could say. One cannot have the commodities that one desires. So I have tried to ensure that education would aid me – learn new things that would help me, that would make me feel that I am worth something, to be someone in this society, someone who is not hidden but present. And so it goes, step by step, despite the obstacles. (Max)

Bettering oneself is a manifestation of rejection by society of who these men are. Inclusion in school is the first step towards insertion into mainstream society. Incorporation is an individual process that entails mental adaptation so that school could 'help' one's person. And these youth are truly motivated to get the help. They desire change:

> I am one of those people who say: I won't stay like this, I want to better myself. And when one wants to better oneself, the strength to do so come from who knows where. (Alberto)

Alberto expresses the strong sense of individualistic optimism and hard-headed determination typical of all the participants and implored by the Ministry. To earn school's benevolent assistance, a specific mentality is required: 'mature', rational, resilient, fearless, optimistic. These are reflected in these so-far successful pioneers' dispositions.

Because so much is invested in education, the doubts about whether education is just a myth must be kept at bay to keep up the motivation to study as Tony tells us.

> You sometimes say: "Will I succeed, will I fail?" Don't do that. Try things! At least I tried, at least I had the intention of making it. (Tony)

Contradictions arise despite the discursive mythology that surrounds education. Doubts cannot be subdued as the youth see the rising number of graduates without decent jobs around them, and experience the difficulty of studying. These thoughts may arouse fear, admitted only by Max:

> [I view my future] with fear. Yes. Because there are unexpected things that happen in life, things that are so strong, and one gets scared, at least I do, of failing. But it is a fear that is only a fear. It is not an impediment for me to reach my objectives and goals. It's just a thought that passes through everyone's mind. It is not an obstacle. (Max)

As Max says, fear cannot become an obstacle, for it would immobilise the body and mind, rendering all prior efforts futile. Thus, the investment on education to realise one's dreams becomes a kind of ransom and you cannot give up your belief and commitment for fear of losing all your past, present and future capital. Failure would inherently be one's own fault.

In sum, the soul of these motivated and upwardly mobile men are reformed through techniques of the self, such as the cultivation of a certain type of mentality, internal discipline and values, as shown above. These techniques are complemented by power techniques exercised in school, such as surveillance, normalisation, exclusion that are common in all pedagogical situations (Gore, 1998). These techniques control, discipline and differentiate. And the individual techniques of the self aid this process. The participants describe acts of unfair treatment by the teachers, punishment, discrimination, and hierarchical teaching methods. An extreme example is Pablo's experience of having to bribe a teacher to graduate:

> In my last year, I had to pay 700. They gave us an exam, we did it. But the teachers put in things we had not studied in class. "Teacher, how do you do this?" – "I don't know, you find out, you have half an hour for the exam". It was too much, we couldn't do it. At the end he gathered us all and said: "Give me a thousand and you pass." (Pablo)

Power techniques meet rebellion by these strong-willed individuals: Ernesto protested for bad teaching, Alexis for his being expelled for arbitrary reasons, Pablo for corruption. Yet, protest is usually punished, ineffective and, rather, has damaging effects on the students, who quickly realise they are not in a position to criticise, but must conform. They are gradually subjected to the normalising power of the school. Conformation entails acceptance of that which

they would initially have considered unjust. In order to continue schooling, they accept the rules of the game, the locus of the control of which is elusive. In the case of Pablo, all his classmates paid so that they could graduate:

> We went to the Ministry of Education, but what did they do? Yeah, that is what they say but nobody has evidence. (…) We got tired of fighting and when it was only 15 or 20 days till graduation, we said: "Guys, how much can you pay?" – "I can only pay 700". We spoke with the teacher, said we will give him 500 for the four courses – "No, guys, that is very little, I need to build my house, need money". "Ok," and we gave him the money. What other option did we have? It wasn't our ignorance, but it was the reality. Unfortunately it's like that in all schools. (Pablo)

Obstacles therefore urge internal, not school, reform. The youth focus on their personal improvement and exercise power towards themselves when they cannot change their surroundings. Alexis's description of his coping mechanism, in the face of an attempt by teachers to make him drop out, shows this clearly:

> To cheer myself up I told myself: If I go back [to Panajachel] they will make fun of me because I came and didn't reach the goals I wanted. And I said: You have to try hard, because no-one else but you will make you succeed. And phrases like, try harder, if you stay back you will never go forward. Sometimes I would write them on papers and put them on the walls of my room. And each time I turned around I would see and read them.

Also families and friends encourage the participants to persevere. Some give up, and this is how education differentiates and creates categories of the adaptable and the non-adaptable through the power techniques that differentiate according to mental and material dispositions, excluding those who fail to conform to the subtle and often arbitrary criteria for success that is formed in certain power relations, not guided by any natural law or necessity.

Gore (1998) reminds us that we can analyse power techniques employed in school to question their usefulness. This study reveals the use of arbitrary power techniques with dangerous effects. Yet, it also reveals the consent of individuals to be subjected to them and complement them by techniques of the self. This is the non-material price of schooling. Individual educational mobility by means of techniques of the self is possible, but fails change the structure of the education or economic system, applying Tilly's (2007) ideas. If we, nonetheless, show that successful students actually adapt to a system that harms them, we can empower these individuals. If we show that techniques of the self may be based on a general *myth* of 'education=mobility', the pain becomes unbearable and begs structural change. We can expose these issues to see the function of the myth: it serves to boost demand for education met by private schools. Privatised businesses ride on the myth, but may use disciplinary power to control those who *could* escape poverty and compete for higher positions. Individual subject themselves to the 'sorting machine' driven by the myth, and absorb the, possibly impoverishing, consequences, elaborated on in the next section. To call the promise of education a myth is perhaps harsh, and does not aim to dismiss the possible transformational potential of education, but reflects s fear that exaggerated high private investment in education in the context of low and jobless growth and a highly stratified, informal labour market

with ubiquitous discriminatory practices and few 'decent' jobs with protected labour rights[11] can end up being just another impoverishing expenditure in the budget of those already poor. These ideas are developed in the following synthesis and conclusion.

Synthesis - the Impoverishing Struggle to Escape Poverty

This case study shows that the struggle by young, urban men to escape poverty, driven by the pains of poverty and the myth of education, risks being impoverishing, at least in the short-and medium-term. The long-term effects are out of the scope of this research while on them hinges our judgment about whether the myth of education is actually a myth, as I suspect. The impoverishing struggle that the education imagery inspires might contribute to the impoverishment of these men, who, *because* of and *despite* their full commitment, are far from immune to the power of schools to discipline, exploit and differentiate.

These youths' pursuit is physically impoverishing because of the degree of control over time, money, and body it requires. The participants control their most fundamental needs through self-discipline. For example, they skip meals to pay for school, skip sleep to do homework. Their time arrangements involve sacrifices that may have harmful effects on both the body, and the spirit. Their money arrangements involve the mobilization of a significant share of family and personal income and savings. Even future incomes are invested to pay for schooling, indebtedness further damaging the men's chances of finishing diversified secondary, not to mention pursuing expensive tertiary education. This is worrying, for in the context of rising education levels, these are necessary for mobility (if we settle for a definition of mobility as earning more than the minimum wage or enough to keep a family out of poverty)(Porta et al., 2006).

As school abandonment rates show, the schools do *something* to make youth think that they cannot do it. They also do *something* to those who choose to stay in school - the impoverishment of these 'mobile souls' haunts us. Ernesto's comment, *'It's not the physical exhaustion that bothers me, but the fact that my soul is tired!'* illustrates the injustice of the participants, capable of dreaming great futures, having to re-adjust their aspirations to fit what is possible within the boundaries of the system. Disillusionment and mental adaptation serve to keep these men within the channel of mobility, but is dangerous considering the prospects of changing the unequal social structures of this country. Schooling, more than showing a young man his potential, may just reproduce the social hierarchy through the socially constructed binaries of includable and ex-

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[11] Between 1980 and 2007, the Guatemalan GDP grew at an average annual rate of 2.7% while the population grew at a rate of 2.6%. Formal employment is at 20% and underemployment at 15% of the PEA. (UNDP, 2007.) Formal employment is decreasing and underemployment and informality on the rise (Poitevin and Pape, 2003: 33)

cludable, worthy and not worthy of mobility that circulate in society. The school contributes to the creation of these categories and has the power and means to classify and exclude people with the help of internalisation and persuasion by the students, who give up their own potential.

These youth invest their physical and mental resources in education, but the outcome of their struggle may depend on the quality of their schooling and the symbolic value of their credentials. Dornbusch et al (1996) argue that credentials, not effort or intelligence, determine labour market outcomes. These men study in schools of the lowest end of the stratified education offer. While education might provide high average returns, these men's credentials from the cheapest schools might not live up to what they expect - even if they are 'good students' and try their hardest. Also, Guatemalan secondary school students' reading and mathematics ability is lower, the lower their socioeconomic status (MINEDUC, 2006 cited in UNDP, 2007: 28). This puts the participants at a disadvantage in the job hunt, where they might be disadvantages for the stigma their schools bear, as well as their stigma as poor youth, who are considered dangerous and distrusted in this violent society. Thus, they will never compete for the room at the top. Tragically, while their schools might be better than thought, the tiring lifestyle and the constant depletion of mental, financial and physical energy paying for school requires might hamper their learning results. The constant tiredness, along with the placement of these youth in the stratified schooling system, may be a subtle mechanism to control them and demobilise their intellectual potential.

Ultimately, I fear these youth are victims of the effects of a system that impoverishes not only the students but also other actors involved. Just as the youth live in uncertainty and adversely incorporated into the economy and school, so do the low-paid teachers work several jobs just to get buy, and the employees at the Ministry of Education lack job security and lack of funds to do their work thus being unable to effectively reform Guatemalan education (Francisco Cabrera, personal interview 24 August 2010).

Chapter 5
Conclusion

This paper has presented a case study of the most upwardly mobile young men of the lower strata in Panajachel, Guatemala who work to finance their own secondary education. Their experiences are presented in order to argue that the mainstream development discourse about the importance of education for poverty reduction and social development ignores the potentially dangerous effects of the incorporation of poor youth into highly privatised and stratified education systems. The experiences of these youth reveal that schooling requires sustained and burdensome efforts to control all aspects of their existence. Incorporation compels these men to make sacrifices and choices with possibly damaging and impoverishing effects. Yet, they have no choice but to do so to pursue education, which is pictured as the main if not only available channel of mobility. It is also the most legitimate way for the state to discipline, structure and control the population. The myth of education is cultivated and employed to persuade the population to invest in education and subject themselves to its demands. As schools monopolise the right to produce mobility and are mostly privatised, producing profit, there is a risk that poor students be economically exploited in both work and school. Education consumption is high, but education is not an automatic guarantee of mobility even if it promises to be, and private schools may cultivate this myth to increase their earnings. The youth who seek this myth may suffer adverse incorporation into the education market. Their adverse incorporation increases the value of the credentials of those from more privileged backgrounds that can insert themselves higher up in the stratified schooling system. Ultimately, the marketisation of channels of mobility such as schooling purports to expand freedom, but it might actually end up incarcerating people in poverty after exploiting them for 12 years in school, just like a proper Foucauldian disciplinary institution. I aim not to ridicule this mobility strategy, but criticise the way in which educational expansion in Guatemala ignores the needs and realities of Guatemalan youth while hypocritically disseminating the 'truth' that education is the key to success and mobility, without paying due attention to individual realities and larger socioeconomic structures.

The larger significance of this struggle lies in the questions of if, why and how we should expand secondary education in developing countries. Thus, for example the ILO (2008: 60) has started promoting goals for the coverage of secondary schooling in Latin America. The demand for secondary education is likely to continue rising in Guatemala and elsewhere, but weak states can do little to support the pursuits of mobility through schooling. Academics and policy-makers must problematise the common strategy of working to keep studying to allow better options to arise. In Latin America, it is thought that working and studying puts are in the best possible position because 'idle' youths are dangerous and uneducated youths seen as a social risk (See e.g. CELADE, 2000: 119). Yet, I have tried to show that the situation of this 'best case' scenario entirely positive neither for the individual nor for society. Hope-

fully this help spark a re-evaluation of how secondary education is expanded. More concern over the degree of stratification and privatisation of education would not be misplaced at this juncture. This concern could be justified by research around the concept of adverse incorporation into schooling. If privatisation and the necessity to work to pay for school trigger adverse incorporation, should not we seriously consider the universalisation of also secondary education, based on quality public provisioning and redistributive taxation? In Guatemala, the need for tax reform to improve public services is recognised, but universal and free public secondary education is not seriously proposed. This global disposition stems from a perception that the state is unable to provide quality and coverage (see e.g. Tooley and Dixon, 2006). Undoubtedly the efforts required by the Guatemalan state to universalise public secondary schooling are notable, but could be motivated by the realisation that only this way inequality, a recognised social problem, can be attacked. As the weaknesses of scholarship and other targeted programmes make clear, universalisation is the only way to rid the need for a poor youth to suffer simultaneous adverse and exploitative incorporation into both schooling and working life, while recognising that the right to education applies to all and need not be 'earned'.

The exclusive focus on education as the avenue for social mobility reveals that anti-poverty policy and research avoids envisioning structural change and mass redistribution. Poverty and mobility are individualised, and while isolated cases of individual mobility serve to conceal the effects of a poverty-generating capitalist system, they only reproduce inequality and drain our most entrepreneurial individuals, while these blame themselves for their own failures. Inequality is, at the same time, labelled an incentive for mobility (e.g. Andersen, 2001), while it demoralises the world's young men, who are probably not consoled by the calls for educational opportunity that blatantly ignore the systemic obstacles to climbing up the ladder that they face in school and work every day. Instead of genuine massive redistribution or improvement of the conditions of those at the bottom, poor youth are enticed to compete to move up to the jobs where the money is without regard for the cost or difficulty of the process. Also, we can never guarantee there is enough 'room at the top' to accommodate all, no matter how much they educate themselves, compete and achieve, because measures to create jobs are not taken. If we expect all the world´s poor to get highly educated to compete for the few formal jobs, we expose them to the 'adverse incorporation into education' dilemma and might push down wages. I call for real measures, not myths, to passify our youth - improving labour rights, creating decent jobs, universalising social security and services, and redistributing assets so as to guarantee a life of dignity across the job hierarchy.

The current Guatemalan and Latin American focus on targeted conditional cash transfer programmes and educational opportunity are not promising, especially since they are recommended along with further flexibilisation of the labour market that will further deteriorate working lives. Ironically, the channelling of public funds by the current Guatemalan government to the presidential CCT programme weakens the quality of public education (Montenegro, 2010) that benefits far more people than the targeted CCT. The programme is short-sighted and actually undermines its own aim to educate the poor. The

effects of the CCT are already visible in Panajachel, were enrolments in public schools have risen but the quality of education weakened due to crowding and lack of funding. This deterioration legitimates the existence of private education and boosts its image. The government continues to give out cash transfers and declare education free to gain votes, but in the light of this case study the president's declarations that education is 'free' and always beneficial to the person seem misled, thanks to the government´s own contradictory policies.

This paper has intended to argue all the above based on a limited set of qualitative, context-specific data that omits many intriguing issues that would complement its content. Future research could explore the outcomes of these youths' struggle to attain the longitudinal dimension that makes social mobility studies so fascinating and help us re-evaluate the concept 'myth of education' by seeing whether scars differentiate people in the long run, for example in the working life. Does the struggle for education leave these youth with credentials that expose their vulnerable backgrounds in the labour market, curbing their mobility through the perceptions and categorisations of employers? This would counter what is currently thought – that flexible, informal, and cheaper modes of education that allow the most disadvantaged to study, are solely positive and empowering for the individual. Also, since this study lacks in its ethnographic dimension, it could lead to future research over longer time periods to gain better access and insight into what happens inside the households, schools, working places and minds of the individuals who engage in the struggle for mobility.

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Appendices

Appendix A

Table 1. List of Participants and their characteristics

| Pseudonym	Age	School	School type	Job	Scholarship
Ismael	20	3rd basic secondary	*Por cooperativa*	Construction worker	No
Alfonso	20	3rd basic secondary	*Por cooperativa*	Vendor in the market place, miscellaneous	No
Alexander	16	3rd basic secondary	Private	Street vendor	Yes
Ernesto	19	3rd diversified secondary	Private	Salesperson, miscellaneous	Yes
Alberto	21	2nd diversified secondary	Private	Collects sand in the river	No
Alexis	19	3rd diversified secondary	Private	Electronics workshop assistan	No
Rofo	19	3rd diversified secondary	Private	Salesperson	No
Max	18	2nd diversified secondary	Private	Construction worker	No
Ripas	21	2nd diversified secondary	Private	Salesperson, miscellaneous	No
Tony	21	Diversified secondary graduate ('09)	Private	Waiter	Yes
Pablo	21	Diversified secondary graduate ('09)	Private	Plumber	No

Appendix B

Figure 1. Break-down of Average Household Spending on Education per Level of Education in Guatemala
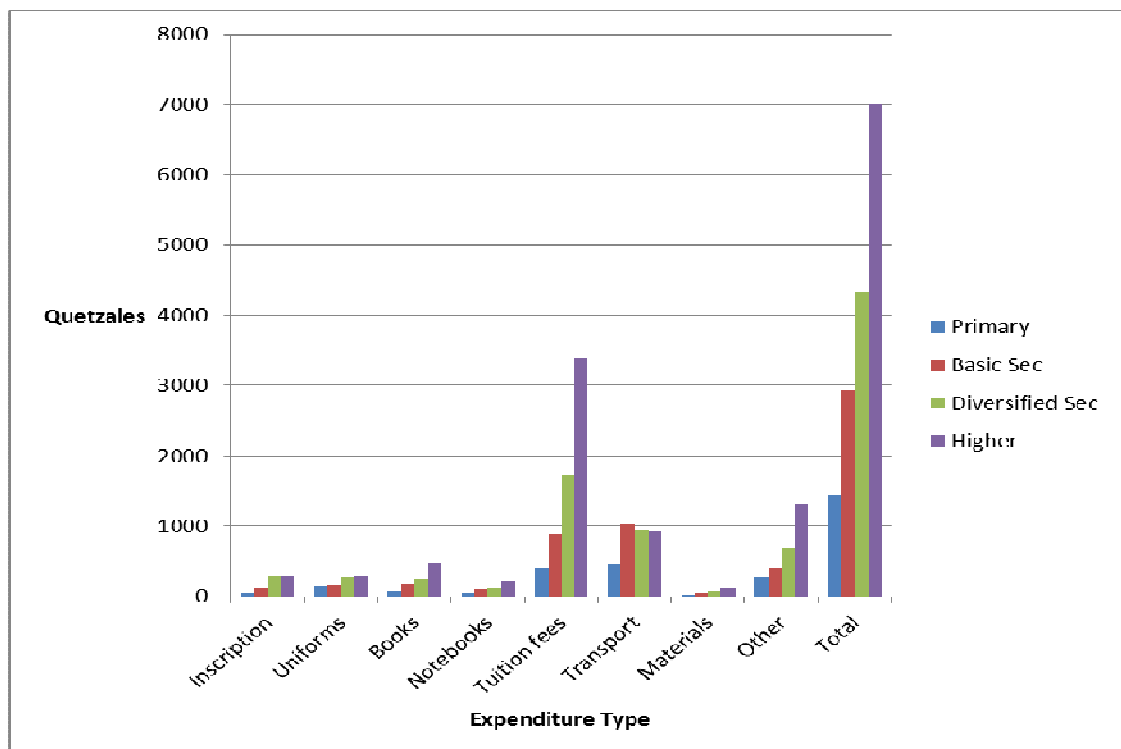
Source: Own elaboration based on Porta et al. 2006, data from the Guatemalan Living Standards Measurement Survey 2000.

Figure 2. Guatemalan Earnings Profile per Age and Level of Study
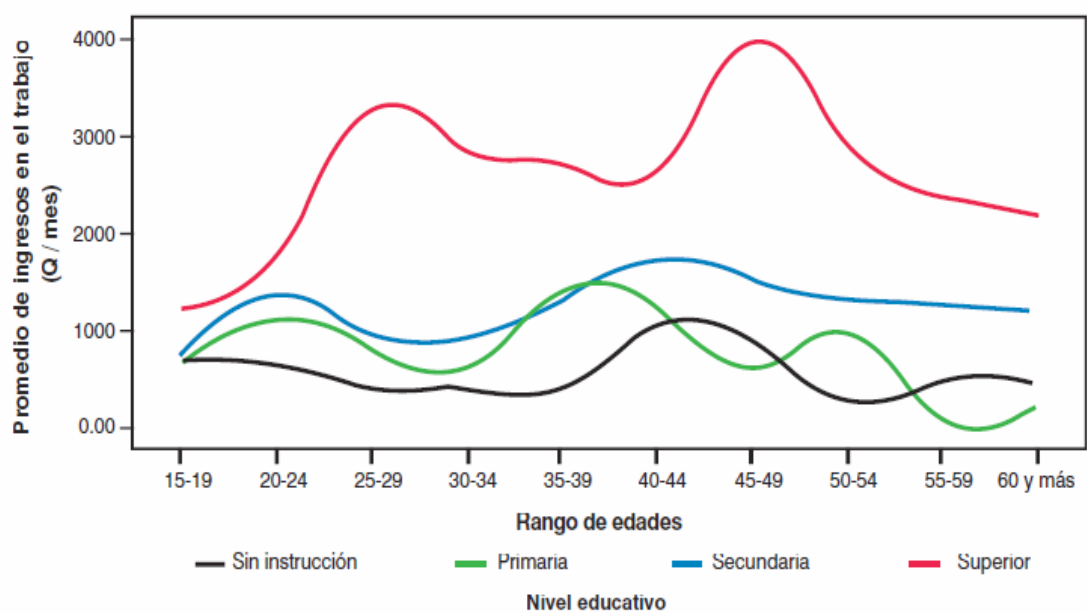
Source: Porta et al., 2006. (Translation: Sin instruccion – without education, Primaria – primary, Secundaria – secondary, Superior – higher education; Y-axis: average work income, Qz/month)