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# **Structural Informality and Occupational Classes in a Peripheral Country: Precariousness and In-Work Poverty in Argentina 2003 - 2020.**

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STRUCTURAL INFORMALITY AND OCCUPATIONAL CLASSES  
IN A PERIPHERAL COUNTRY: PRECARIOUSNESS AND IN-WORK  
POVERTY IN ARGENTINA 2003 – 2020

*INFORMALIDAD ESTRUCTURAL Y CLASES OCUPACIONALES  
EN UN CONTEXTO PERIFÉRICO: PRECARIZACIÓN Y POBREZA  
LABORAL EN ARGENTINA 2003 – 2020*

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ABSTRACT

This article aims to relate the tradition of studies on socio-occupational classes with the perspective of structural informality. Taking Argentina as a case study, it examines how occupational class inequality and job quality condition the level of welfare of the employed population. The study follows a quantitative methodology based on Argentina's Permanent Household Survey. Regression models show a persistent effect over time of social class and job quality on the probability of experiencing poverty and interaction between both variables, suggesting that job insecurity is a transversal phenomenon across occupational classes.

*Keywords:* Social classes, informal employment, job quality, in-work poverty, Argentina.

RESUMEN

El artículo relaciona los estudios sobre clases socio-ocupacionales con la perspectiva de la informalidad estructural en un país periférico. Tomando a Argentina como caso de estudio, se examina el modo en que la desigualdad

de clases ocupacionales y la calidad de los empleos condicionan el bienestar de la población ocupada. El estudio sigue una metodología cuantitativa basada en la Encuesta Permanente de Hogares. Los modelos de regresión muestran un efecto persistente en el tiempo de la clase social y la calidad del empleo en la probabilidad de experimentar pobreza y una interacción entre ambas variables que sugiere que la baja calidad del empleo es transversal a las distintas clases sociales.

*Palabras clave:* clases sociales, empleo informal, calidad del empleo, pobreza laboral, Argentina.

*JEL Classification / Clasificación JEL:* D63, E26, I31.

## 1. INTRODUCTION<sup>1</sup>

Social stratification and labour informality have been studied separately in peripheral areas, such as Latin America. This lack of linkage may have been due to the focus on social mobility in the post-war period, whose theoretical imprint maintained that Latin American countries would consolidate as 'modern' industrial societies. As a result, social classes studies scarcely included peripheral countries (Hout & DiPrete, 2006).

Meanwhile, in Latin America, the thesis of 'structural heterogeneity' consolidated against the classical theories of economic development and social modernisation by arguing that peripheral countries are characterised by technological imbalances that express specific patterns of employment and the generation of labour force surpluses (Salvia, 2012; Salvia, Poy y Robles, 2021). Whereas some economic sectors have productivity levels similar to developed countries, most labour force works in low productivity sectors (Infante, 2011). The reproduction of these imbalances undermines what 'modernisation' theories predicted; thus, informality and segmentation are structural characteristics of peripheral labour markets (PREALC-ILO, 1978).

This article aims to relate the tradition of studies on socio-occupational classes with the perspective of 'structural informality' in a peripheral country. The main argument is that structural informality plays a leading role in the economic welfare of the active population not only independently but in interaction with social class inequalities (Ayo y Pla, 2021).

Argentina provides the scenario of a peripheral society, characterised by economic instability derived from its subordinated position in the world market as a raw material's (mainly agricultural) supplier. Argentina consolidated this position from 1880 to 1930's crisis, and since then developed an import substitution industrialisation. Although it led to the expansion of the urban middle class and active social mobility, this model was insufficient to reach the international technological frontier and eventually collapsed. Since the 1970s, the new international division of labour coincided with a deterioration of these achievements. After the 'debt crisis' of the 1980s, Argentina tried different political-economic models that have not succeeded in overcoming the cyclical restrictions of the payment balance. This article examines the

<sup>1</sup> A first draft of this paper was presented in SASE's 33rd Annual Conference: After Covid? Critical conjunctures and contingent pathways of contemporary capitalism, Virtual, 2-5 July, by same authors.

Argentine case since the early 2000s when a severe economic crisis ended the decade of neoliberal 'structural reforms'. Since then, rising commodities prices have favoured a significant reactivation -with GDP recovery rates of 8% on average. In this context, employment recovered, whereas inequality and poverty declined. The exhaustion of this favourable external cycle eventually led to a new stage of economic stagnation that partially reversed previous trends (Cantamutto, Constantino, Schorr, 2018): a throwback in income distribution and a deceleration in employment creation, adding the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Within this historical framework, it is worth asking how class positions and labour informality affect the welfare of the working population (Poy, 2021). We use a class scheme validated in advanced countries (Erikson y Goldthorpe, 1992: 35) to prove that class position does not sufficiently describe social inequalities in peripheral countries, as labour informality plays a central role (Salvia, 2012; Pla, 2016). In general, the main contributions to this debate have sought to discern the degree to which the class classification schemes applied in developed countries were relevant to account for social inequalities in underdeveloped ones. One of the main concerns involved showing that class positions usually considered homogeneous constituted, in our region, heterogeneous collectives, with their consequences in terms of collective or political action (Portes, 1985; Portes & Hoffman, 2003). This paper provides empirical evidence to argue that social class schema elaborated within the context developed countries are, if not incorrect, at least insufficient to account for the peculiar characteristics of our continent that have a direct incidence on the workers' living conditions and welfare (Salvia, Poy y Robles, 2021).

Summarising, we aim to contribute to a better understanding of the relationship between inequalities in social stratification, job quality and working poverty on a global scale, within the framework of the substantial transformations in global productive structures, characterised by increased outsourcing and technical change that impact on the deterioration of job quality worldwide (ILO, 2019).

We use a quantitative methodology based on Argentina's Permanent Household Survey (EPH for its acronym in Spanish). EPH is a national survey of urban households with information on the labour force and family income. As comparable microdata is available, our research comprises almost two decades of Argentine socioeconomic history (2004-2020). Erikson, Goldthorpe and Portocarrero's (EGP) class schema, a measure of job quality associated with structural informality and the incidence of working poverty, was constructed from this data source.

The article has four sections. The first presents the theoretical approaches of the two fields that we brought together in this paper: social class and labour informality, highlighting the linkages with welfare regimes. The second section presents the methodological approach. Finally, the third section deals with statistical results, both descriptive and explanatory. The article concludes with

a series of considerations about how the case we analysed illuminate a broader question about the segmentation of labour markets, social class and welfare.

## 2. LABOUR INFORMALITY, CLASSES AND WELFARE

Analyses about the convergence between Latin American economic and class structures gave more than five decades ago to theoretical debates. Despite the importance of bringing together general dynamics of capitalism and social class structure, these concerns were blurred at the end of the 20th century. A period in which studies on class structure shifted first towards issues such as poverty and democratic transitions and then towards the processes of change in labour markets resulting from neoliberal reforms (Franco, León and Atria, 2007: 29).

The peculiarities of the occupational class structure in Latin America have been extensively studied (cfr. Solís, Benza and Boado, 2016). Until the 1960s, these studies were influenced by the modernisation approach, as in Gino Germani's research on social structure (Germani, 1966; 1969, among others). However, by the late 1970s, research revealed the limits of structural change in Latin American societies and the obstacles to expanding their middle classes (Figueira and Geneletti, 1981). For our purposes, it is important to note several contributions aimed to discern the degree to which the class classification schemes applied in developed countries were relevant to account for social inequalities in underdeveloped ones. One of the main concerns involved showing that class positions usually considered homogeneous constituted, in our region, heterogeneous collectives, with consequences in terms of collective or political action (Portes, 1985; Portes & Hoffman, 2003).

Indeed, Portes' (1985) pioneering work pointed out the limitations of class schemes conceived for developed countries when applied to developing ones. Using a Marxist scheme, added two criteria: the control over the labour force and the mode of remuneration (1985: 8). It allowed him to define a ruling class and a bureaucratic-technical class (at the top of Latin American societies), a 'formal proletariat' (with access to legally regulated wages and indirect wages), and then an 'informal' petty bourgeoisie (with irregular income) and a precarious proletariat (with neither regulated wages nor access to indirect wages). Thus, Portes considered the (in)formal character of labour relations as a structural feature of peripheral societies (Portes, 1985; Portes and Hoffman, 2003: 10)<sup>2</sup>.

At this point, studies on social stratification intersected with research on labour informality. After Keith Hart's work in Ghana that introduced the notion of 'informal' work to refer to the various forms of non-salaried employment

<sup>2</sup> Several recent contributions have sought to update these analyses on occupational classes and labour informality, even using other classificatory approaches of social structure (Elbert, 2015; Maceira, 2016; Solís, Chávez Molina and Cobos, 2020) and addressing the shared identities between informal and formal workers within the framework of peripheral capitalism.

(Ruesga Benito, 2021), an ILO mission proposed the concept of ‘informal sector’, which extended to our region through the Regional Employment Program for Latin America and the Caribbean (PREALC for its acronym in Spanish). The PREALC approach pointed out that economic growth in Latin America during the post-war period was insufficient to generate the jobs positions required by the demographic growth. The ‘informal sector’ (as opposed to the ‘modern’ or ‘dynamic’ sector) comprised several characteristic phenomena of the continent: a large proportion of own-employed workers, generally in low-productivity jobs, in competitive, unregulated markets.<sup>3</sup>

This ‘structural informality’ approach links socioeconomic structure and welfare. On the one hand, structural heterogeneity had consequences in terms of labour demand and thus on income distribution and poverty. On the other hand, since Latin American ‘welfare regimes’ relied on employment status, workers in the informal sector had lower incomes and lacked access to social protections (Tokman, 2006).

During the 1980s and 1990s, the PREALC-ILO view on informality faced various criticisms,<sup>4</sup> and the ‘productive’ conceptualisation underwent an expansion. The purpose of this reformulation was to incorporate a view of employment *precariousness*, understood as a phenomenon derived from the productive and institutional capacities of economic units (Husmanns, 2004). The current approach relates the ‘productive’ paradigm with the compliance with legal norms, explicitly applied to dependent workers, which is why it is also often referred to as the ‘legalistic’ or ‘social protection based’ approach. The intersection of both forms of conceptualisation retains elements of the traditional way of understanding the informal sector but incorporates workers in job vulnerability or insecurity conditions.

In this context, it is worth understanding how the heterogeneity of the economic system, the social classes and the labour market segmentation have outcomes in terms of economic welfare. This article analyses how: a) occupational classes and b) the quality of jobs -as an expression of structural informality- modulate economic welfare. The intersection between informality, occupational classes and welfare can be understood as a *process of social stratification*. The analysis of the processes of social stratification must overcome the limitations of the classical paradigm, which is biased towards market mechanisms and especially towards the labour market, and focus on state interventions and the informal economy.

<sup>3</sup> The informal sector was defined ‘in terms of the characteristics of the productive units (firm-based approach) rather than in terms of employee’s characteristics or their jobs (work-based approach)’ (Husmanns, 2004: 1). For this reason, this way of understanding informality is referred to as ‘productive’.

<sup>4</sup> On the one hand, Portes and Castells detached the concept from its ‘productive’ connotations and introduced the issue of the regulatory frameworks of informal activities (Portes and Haller, 2004). On the other hand, De Soto (1987) criticised the idea of informality as an expression of exclusion, and later studies returned to this tension, identifying in informality both a component of ‘exclusion’ and ‘escape’ from regulations (Maloney, 2004; Perry et al., 2007).

### 3. DATA AND METHODOLOGY

The data source is Argentina's EPH, a household survey conducted quarterly by the National Institute of Statistics and Census (INDEC for its acronym in Spanish). EPH is a periodic survey that reports statistical information on the labour force in urban areas of Argentina, covers about 62% of the total population and has more than 20000 observations per quarter<sup>5</sup>.

Occupational class is operationalised based on the EGP class scheme (Erikson and Goldthorpe, 1992), disseminated internationally and with recent applications to the Latin American case (see a reference in Solís and Boado, 2016). The eleven class positions of the EGP scheme were re-grouped into five categories: I + II) Service class; IIIa + IIIb) Routine Non-manual workers; IVa + IVb) Small proprietors and own-account workers; V + VI) Skilled workers; VIIa) Non-skilled workers<sup>6</sup>. Agricultural workers were excluded from the analysis. This scheme was constructed using the classification suggested by Ganzeboom and Treiman (2021), based on the International Standard Classification of Occupations (ISCO). Since occupations are coded in EPH with a specific national classifier, a conversion to ISCO-08 had to be made to construct the EGP scheme (INDEC, 2018).

Occupational classes are observed through the relationship with job quality. An indicator of job quality was developed according to the type of labour regulation, both for salaried and non-salaried workers (Husmanns, 2004). In the case of salaried workers, the worker's declaration of social security contributions was used to construct this variable, using this category as an indicator of greater or lesser labour regulation. This indicator has a high correlation with informal jobs -of low productivity- and with unprotected and low-quality labour situations.<sup>7</sup> The database does not have a similar indicator for non-salaried workers. Therefore, health coverage was used as a proxy since it is related to social security contributions (given that workers without contributions do not have health insurance).

The paper examines how occupational class position and job quality shape differential living conditions among the employed. Drawing on the working poor's literature (Maître et al., 2012), we consider income poverty as an indicator of living conditions. In Argentina, income poverty measurement is based on a 'poverty line' method, which compares family income per adult equivalent with the monetary value of a basic basket of goods and services. It is considered an appropriate measure of the living conditions of different workers' profiles, although it involves household characteristics that go far beyond a simple association with occupational conditions.

<sup>5</sup> According to the last National Census estimates, almost 90% of the population lives in urban areas in Argentina.

<sup>6</sup> We follow the recommendations of Solís (2016).

<sup>7</sup> Due to the characteristics of the regulatory framework governing labour relations, fixed-term contracts are very infrequent in Argentina.



The paper presents a descriptive analysis of the evolution of the occupational class structure and its relationship with job quality between 2004-2020. Second, the relationship between occupational class position and job quality concerning poverty among workers is analysed. Multiple binary logistic regression models are presented. The main dependent variable is in-work poverty with two independent variables, their interaction and other control variables. Formally, if  $x$  represents a vector of covariates, the probability of in-work poverty can be written as:

$$P(y=1|x) = P(y = 1 | X_1, X_2, \dots, X_k) = G(z) \quad (1)$$

In a logistic regression,  $G$  is the logistic function:

$$G(z) = \frac{\exp(z)}{1 + \exp(z)} \quad (2)$$

For our purposes,  $z$  can be written as:

$$z = (\beta_0 + \beta_1 X_1 + \beta_2 X_2 + \beta_3 X_1 * x_2 + \dots \beta_k X_k) \quad (3)$$

In (3),  $X_1$  is the class position (one dummy is incorporated for each class),  $X_2$  is job quality (a dummy variable indicating low-quality jobs), the interaction between the two variables is incorporated, and  $X_k$  denotes a matrix of control variables including the worker's sex, educational level, age, type of household, the presence of children, and the number of employed people in the household. The interaction term captures the modulation of the effect of occupational class on living conditions when controlling through job quality (Norton et al., 2004). regression models.

Odds ratios are presented to facilitate the interpretation of the models since, unlike the conventional linear model, the coefficients in logistic regression are not interpretable in substantive terms. The exponential function of the regression coefficient is the odds ratio associated with a one-unit increase in the exposure. Whereas the odds ratios of the variables can be interpreted as the *ceteris paribus* effect of each regressor, the interaction term expresses a ratio between two odds ratios. It will indicate that the effect of variable  $x$  on the dependent variable  $y$  is not equal for different values of  $z$ , denoting an interaction between both independent variables. For our purposes, a statistically significant interaction coefficient will denote that the relationship between occupational class and poverty is modulated by job quality.

## 4. RESULTS

### 4.1. DESCRIPTIVE ANALYSIS

The evolution of the occupational class structure reflects the changes in economic dynamics under different cycles in the last two decades (Table 1).



After the 2001-2002 crisis in Argentina, the first movement is a reduction in the unemployed population (unemployed with previous occupation). Between 2004 and 2013, the incidence of all classes grows, except two: classes IVa and IVb (small proprietors with and without employees) and class VIIa (non-skilled workers).

This trend during the first decade of the century corresponds to the growth cycle experienced by Latin American countries (ECLAC, 2013), which in Argentina increased the demand for employment, compared to the 1990s, in labour-intensive activities, such as construction, manufacturing industry and commerce (Sacco, 2011). Therefore, there was an increase in the occupational structure of the skilled manual worker class (V + VI). At the other end of the scale, the increase in the service class is mainly explained by the demand for highly skilled workers by sectors with high productivity and the outsourcing processes of the economic model.

TABLE 1. DISTRIBUTION OF THE WORKING POPULATION(A) ACCORDING TO OCCUPATIONAL CLASS. ARGENTINA, 2004-2020. IN PERCENTAGES

	2004	2008	2013	2017	2020
I + II) Service Class	20.0	22.8	22.6	23.5	23.7
IIIa + IIIb) Routine non-manual workers	17.9	19.5	19.2	18.8	15.9
IVa + IVb) Small proprietors with and without employees	16.1	15.7	16.4	17.8	20.8
V + VI) Skilled manual workers	16.9	18.1	18.6	16.2	15.2
VIIa) Non- Skilled manual workers	21.8	20.3	20.4	20.7	19.1
Unemployed	7.4	3.6	2.9	3.1	5.3
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

Notes: (a) The employed and unemployed population with previous employment is considered.

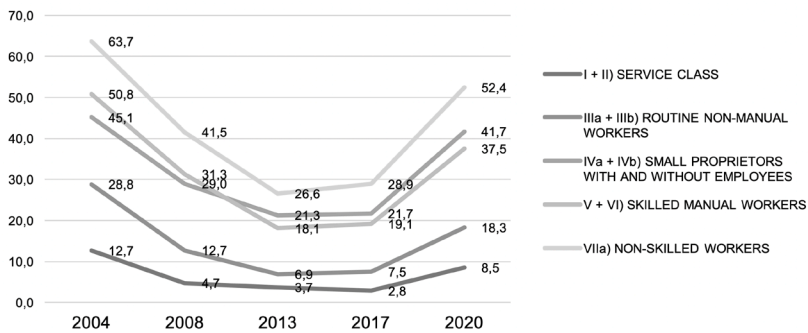
Source: Authors' elaboration based on EPH-INDEC (fourth quarter).

With the decline of the economic growth propitiated by the commodities boom (Gasparini et al., 2016), Argentina entered a cycle of stagnation and crisis, later aggravated by the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic. Between 2013 and 2020, the incidence of service class (I + II) increases, but the routine non-manual worker class (IIIa + IIIb) and the skilled manual class decrease. In contrast, the small proprietor class with and without employees thrives. These dynamics suggest the counter-cyclical character of the petty bourgeoisie positions in peripheral countries, which seem to correspond -although not exclusively- to survival strategies.

Figure 1 presents a first approach to the analysis of household welfare by relating the incidence of poverty according to socio-occupational class. We analyse the employed population since we are interested in analysing poverty across this. As expected, household income inequalities correspond to class inequality, an association that is more prominent in times of economic recovery

or stability. Workers in the service class always remain well below average in terms of in-work poverty incidence. The routine non-manual class improves its economic welfare until 2013; from that year onwards, it declines. Similar behaviour is observed in the working class, particularly in the skilled one. The small proprietor class has a less dynamic behaviour, revealing their significance in peripheral countries. Its situation is close to that of the non-skilled working class. In addition, the incidence of poverty among workers in this class has risen sharply since the COVID-19 pandemic.

FIGURE 1. INCIDENCE OF POVERTY AMONG THE EMPLOYED ACCORDING TO OCCUPATIONAL CLASS. ARGENTINA, 2004-2020. IN PERCENTAGES



Source: Authors' elaboration based on EPH-INDEC (fourth quarter).

Table 2 shows two main aspects. First, the incidence of precarious non-regulated employment follows a pattern consistent with the structural informality of peripheral countries: despite high progress in economic growth, low-quality jobs occupy between half and a third of the labour force.<sup>8</sup> Second, low-quality employment is higher at the bottom of the occupational structure but is transversal to the different occupational classes. Non-regulated employment exceeds half of the non-skilled workers' class, and a similar pattern follows in the small proprietors' class with and without employees. In the latter case, the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic tends to increase the trend of worsening employment.

A final descriptive approximation in Figure 2 shows how job quality articulates with living conditions. Between one-third and one-half of workers with low-quality jobs are working poor. The incidence of poverty among workers with regulated jobs has remained well below that of workers with precarious jobs. Occupational fragmentation and structural informality produce a significant cleavage in living conditions.

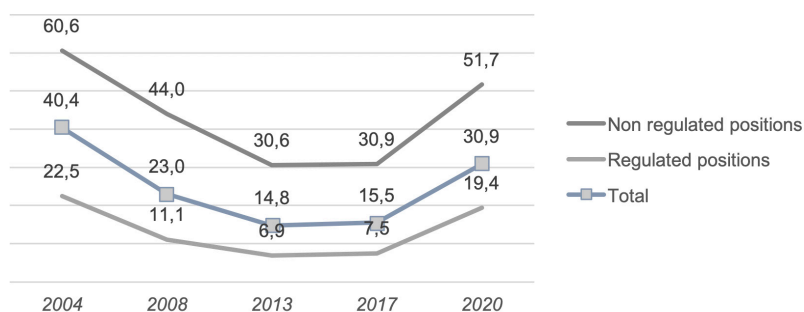
<sup>8</sup> In an exploratory work on 112 countries, Williams & Horodnik (2019) find a strong correlation between the level of economic development and the incidence of different expressions of informality.

TABLE 2. INCIDENCE OF UNREGULATED PRECARIOUS EMPLOYMENT ACCORDING TO OCCUPATIONAL CLASS. ARGENTINA, 2004-2020. IN PERCENTAGES

	2004	2008	2013	2017	2020
I + II) Service Class	18.1	12.5	10.6	10.2	8.1
IIIa + IIIb) Routine non-manual workers	34.8	25.6	19.3	22.2	20.8
IVa + IVb) Small proprietors with and without employees	56.4	47.9	48.0	48.6	60.6
V + VI) Skilled manual workers	48.4	37.3	36.0	34.2	34.0
VIIa) Non-Skilled manual workers	74.8	63.2	58.2	58.7	56.7
TOTAL	46.8	36.2	33.5	33.9	35.7

Source: Authors' elaboration based on EPH-INDEC (fourth quarter).

FIGURE 2. INCIDENCE OF POVERTY AMONG THE EMPLOYED ACCORDING TO JOB QUALITY. ARGENTINA, 2004-2020. IN PERCENTAGES



Source: Authors' elaboration based on EPH-INDEC (fourth quarter).

In summary, the descriptive analysis has revealed a series of changes in the structure of occupational classes in the light of different moments in the economic cycle. Using an occupational classes scheme conceived for advanced capitalist countries allowed us to verify that the positions of classes associated with own employment lost incidence in stages of growth and gained relevance in stages of crisis or stagnation. On the other hand, we accounted for a strong correlation between class position and labour informality, implying the overlapping of class inequality and exclusion from labour regulation systems. In turn, we verified that job quality constitutes a significant disadvantage in terms of poverty. The following section discusses how occupational class and job quality affect and interact concerning in-work poverty.

#### 4.1. EXPLANATORY ANALYSIS

Multiple binary logistic regression models were specified for each of the years analysed. It was decided to use a method of successive steps to enter

the covariates. The objective of this decision was to examine the contribution of each regressor to the explanation of monetary poverty and the eventual interaction effect between them. The first step introduces the variable that identifies the occupational class; in the second step, the variable that refers to the job quality is incorporated. The third step introduces the interaction between the previous variables. The fourth step is similar to the previous one but incorporates a set of control variables relevant to studies of the working poor (Lohmann & Crettaz, 2018). Table 4 summarises the last step for each year. One table with 4 models for each year is presented in the annex.

As it is possible to observe in the annex, the first two steps allow approximating the independent effect that the two main variables of this study - occupational class and job quality - would have on the probability of experiencing poverty.

The analysis of the four specified models yields relevant conclusions about the relationship between occupational classes and job quality. Each step introduced improves the overall fit (as assessed by both Nagelkerke R<sup>2</sup> and the classificatory ability of the model). The models also show that occupational class and job quality are two of the most relevant variables in explaining poverty among the employed.

The first step of the model confirms that occupational class stratifies the chances of experiencing poverty among workers. The ratio of poor to no-poor among non-skilled manual workers is almost ten times that of workers in the service class. Interestingly, small proprietors with or without employees are the second most likely group to experience poverty after non-skilled workers.

The second step incorporates job quality as a crucial attribute that structures the probability of experiencing poverty. In all years included in the analysis, incorporating this covariate improves the model's goodness of fit and weakens the coefficients of the occupational class. In this sense, the ratio of being poor versus not being poor among workers with unregulated employment is between four and five times -depending on the year considered- the ratio among workers with quality jobs.

The third step incorporates the interaction between the main variables of the study. Since the difference between the third and fourth steps of the models is the inclusion of other relevant covariates, it is worth analysing what happens in the last step. The coefficients associated with the interaction term are less than the unit for the different years considered. In this case, the coefficient indicates that the quotient between the odds ratio of being poor (versus not being poor) among workers in the service class with unregulated employment and the odds ratio of being poor among workers in the same class with regulated employment is higher than the same quotient among workers in the other classes. In other words, these interaction coefficients show that - for all years except 2004 - low-quality jobs penalise workers in the higher classes more intensely. The absence of statistical significance for 2004 suggests that, in a context of crisis, the effect of low-quality jobs was transversal and equivalent for all occupational classes.

TABLE 3. LOGISTIC REGRESSION COEFFICIENTS (ODDS RATIO) ON THE PROBABILITY OF BEING WORKING POOR. ARGENTINA, 2004 - 2020. MODEL 4\*

	2004	2008	2013	2017	2020
<i>Occupational class</i>					
Service class <sup>®</sup>					
Routine non-manual workers	1.227***	1.227***	1.025	1.035	1.144***
Small proprietors	2.023***	2.629***	2.908***	3.103***	3.146***
Skilled manual workers	1.632***	1.9***	1.584***	1.792***	1.888***
Non-skilled manual workers	2.671***	3.081***	2.961***	3.223***	2.979***
<i>Job quality</i>					
Regulated <sup>®</sup>					
Non-regulated	4.492***	5.759***	5.836***	5.732***	4.69***
Class-job quality interactions					
Routine non-manual – Non-regulated	0.95	0.98	1.012	0.897	0.872
Small proprietors – Non-regulated	0.914	0.752***	0.606***	0.571***	0.556***
Skilled manual workers – Non-regulated	1.01	0.755***	0.692***	0.642***	0.61***
Non-skilled – Non-regulated	0.912	0.787***	0.648***	0.564***	0.617***
<i>Sex</i>					
Man <sup>®</sup>					
Woman	0,968	0.95**	0.939**	1.002	1.071***
<i>Educational level</i>					
Complete university degree and above <sup>®</sup>					
Up to incomplete secondary school	5.153***	4.641***	4.424***	4.243***	3.694***
Complete secondary school	2.468***	2.416***	2.331***	2.362***	2.142***
Incomplete university degree	1.673***	1.732***	1.825***	1.755***	1.696***
<i>Age</i>					
45 to 59 <sup>®</sup>					
18 to 29	1.074***	0.983	0.919***	0.944**	0.942**
30 to 44	1.027	0.972	0.964	0.929***	0.894***
60 and above	0.72***	0.583***	0.544***	0.436***	0.45***
<i>Household type</i>					
Nuclear two-parent <sup>®</sup>					

Single-person	0.225***	0.306***	0.352***	0.344***	0.293***
Nuclear single-parent	0.964	0.994	0.866***	0.899***	0.806***
Extended	1.292***	1.136***	0.935***	0.976	0.843***
<i>Household children</i>					
Household without children <sup>©</sup>					
Household with children	4.108***	4.851***	5.007***	4.706***	4.101***
<i>Employed in the household</i>					
With two or more employed persons in the household <sup>©</sup>					
With only one employed person in the household	2.629***	3.278***	3.558***	3.376***	2.67***
Constant	0.025***	0.007***	0.005***	0.005***	0.019***
Nagelkerke R2	0.459	0.425	0.372	0.364	0.371
Fit (global %)	68.8	73.4	77.9	77.9	70.0

Notes: <sup>©</sup> reference category / p-value < 0.1 \* / p-value < 0.05 \*\* / p-value < 0.01 \*\*\*.

\*Models 1, 2 and 3 are presented in the annex.

Source: Authors' elaboration based on EPH-INDEC (fourth quarter).

The regression models also show other relevant results on the determinants of in-work poverty. Low-educated workers are much more likely to be in poverty than highly educated workers, and this pattern is consistent over time. In turn, middle-aged workers are more likely to experience poverty (especially relative to those over 60), possibly due to higher family burdens. These results are consistent with a higher propensity to poverty among workers living in nuclear or extended households and among those living in households with children. Finally, as in-work poverty research shows, employees living in households with low work intensity are strongly more likely to face poverty.

In summary, the specified models show a persistent effect over time of occupational position and job quality on the probability of experiencing poverty. In addition, the models show that the gap in the probability of being working poor when one has a low-quality job versus the probability of being non-poor when one has a quality job is more significant among the higher occupational classes. It contributes to the idea that job insecurity is a transversal phenomenon across occupational classes.

## 5. CONCLUSIONS. TOWARDS A COMPREHENSIVE VIEW OF CLASS AND INFORMALITY

This article presented outputs of an ongoing and more far-reaching research that reflects the potential of relating the study of class structure with structural informality in peripheral capitalism. To do so, we analysed the case of Argentina,

a peripheral society characterised by economic instability, a subordinated position in the world market as a raw material's (mainly agricultural) supplier.

The empirical analysis revealed that the service class is stable, both in its relevance in the social structure and concerning informality and poverty (which, as expected, presents the lowest incidences). The routine non-manual working-class and skilled workers present trends closely associated with political-economic cycles: their weight increases in periods of economic expansion as welfare indicators improve. On the contrary, the class positions associated with own-employment show counter-cyclical behaviour: lose incidence in stages of growth and gain relevance in stages of crisis or stagnation, an indicator that this stratum acts as a 'refuge sector'.

The analysis of several logistic regression models yielded empirical evidence on the relationship between occupational classes and job quality. As variables are incorporated into the initial model, occupational class and job quality remain the most relevant variables in explaining poverty among the employed population. In addition, a persistent effect over time of occupational position and job quality on the probability of experiencing poverty is observed across all social classes, with the gap in the probability of being working poor when having a low-quality job, compared to the probability of being a non-poor worker when having a quality job, being more significant among the highest occupational classes. This exercise allows accounting for the fact that although labour informality, in terms of precariousness, has a greater incidence in the non-salaried and non-skilled workers, the effect on the probability of being poor occurs in all classes, thus constituting a transversal phenomenon in the occupational structure. Finally, we argue that job insecurity is a transversal phenomenon across occupational classes, and so the class position does not sufficiently describe social inequalities in peripheral countries, as labour informality plays a central role in it.

This evidence supports the hypothesis that we sustained at the beginning of this article. The process of socio-occupational stratification interacts with structural informality, resulting in an accentuation of social inequalities in terms of material welfare in peripheral capitalism. Based on these empirical emergences, we retake our concern to establish a dialogue between social classes and labour informality approaches. Even though we only analyse one country, the frame we use can be of particular interest for understanding the processes of segmentation of labour markets, the emergence of new forms of contracting and regulation, the increase of outsourcing and technical change that can be observed not only in our continent but also on a global scale. In this way, it would be possible to better understand social inequalities and improve methodological tools to observe social reality and compare between different and heterogeneous regions of the world.



## ANNEX

TABLE A.1. LOGISTIC REGRESSION COEFFICIENTS (ODDS RATIO) ON THE PROBABILITY OF BEING WORKING POOR, ARGENTINA, 2004

	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4
<i>Occupational class</i>				
Service class <sup>®</sup>				
Routine non-manual workers	2.207***	1.787***	1.909***	1.227***
Small proprietors	4.834***	3.126***	2.923***	2.023***
Skilled manual workers	5.509***	4.203***	4.606***	1.632***
Non-skilled manual workers	10.302***	5.347***	6.059***	2.671***
<i>Job quality</i>				
Regulated <sup>®</sup>				
Non-regulated		4.199***	4.764***	4.492***
<i>Class-job quality interactions</i>				
Routine non-manual – Non-regulated			0.837***	0.95
Small proprietors – Non-regulated			1.067	0.914
Skilled manual workers – Non-regulated			0.786***	1.01
Non-skilled – Non-regulated			0.782***	0.912
<i>Sex</i>				
Man <sup>®</sup>				
Woman				0,968
<i>Educational level</i>				
Complete university degree and above <sup>®</sup>				
Up to incomplete secondary school				5.153***
Complete secondary school				2.468***
Incomplete university degree				1.673***
<i>Age</i>				
45 to 59 <sup>®</sup>				
18 to 29				1.074***
30 to 44				1.027
60 and above				0.72***
<i>Household type</i>				
Nuclear two-parent <sup>®</sup>				
Single-person				0.225***
Nuclear single-parent				0.964
Extended				1.292***
<i>Household children</i>				
Household without children <sup>®</sup>				
Household with children				4.108***
<i>Employed in the household</i>				
With two or more employed persons in the household <sup>®</sup>				
With only one employed person in the household				2.629***
Constant	0.223***	0.153***	0.147***	0.025***
Nagelkerke R2	0.189	0.293	0.294	0.459
Fit (global %)	59.9	59.1	59.1	68.8

Notes: <sup>®</sup> reference category /  $p$ -value < 0.1 \* /  $p$ -value < 0.05 \*\* /  $p$ -value < 0.01 \*\*\*.

Source: Authors' elaboration based on EPH-INDEC (fourth quarter).

TABLE A.2. LOGISTIC REGRESSION COEFFICIENTS (ODDS RATIO) ON THE PROBABILITY OF BEING WORKING POOR. ARGENTINA, 2008

	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4
<i>Occupational class</i>				
Service class <sup>®</sup>				
Routine non-manual workers	2.341***	1.891***	1.944***	1.227***
Small proprietors	6.772***	4.031***	3.763***	2.629***
Skilled manual workers	5.919***	4.488***	5.517***	1.9***
Non-skilled manual workers	11.973***	5.916***	7.229***	3.081***
<i>Job quality</i>				
Regulated <sup>®</sup>				
Non-regulated		4.587***	6.049***	5.759***
<i>Class-job quality interactions</i>				
Routine non-manual – Non-regulated			0.874*	0.98
Small proprietors – Non-regulated			0.979	0.752***
Skilled manual workers – Non-regulated			0.594***	0.755***
Non-skilled – Non-regulated			0.656***	0.787***
<i>Sex</i>				
Man <sup>®</sup>				
Woman				0.95**
<i>Educational level</i>				
Complete university degree and above <sup>®</sup>				
Up to incomplete secondary school				4.641***
Complete secondary school				2.416***
Incomplete university degree				1.732***
<i>Age</i>				
45 to 59 <sup>®</sup>				
18 to 29				0.983
30 to 44				0.972
60 and above				0.583***
<i>Household type</i>				
Nuclear two-parent <sup>®</sup>				
Single-person				0.306***
Nuclear single-parent				0.994
Extended				1.136***
<i>Household children</i>				
Household without children <sup>®</sup>				
Household with children				4.851***
<i>Employed in the household</i>				
With two or more employed persons in the household <sup>®</sup>				
With only one employed person in the household				3.278***
Constant	0.07***	0.05***	0.046***	0.007***
Nagelkerke R2	0.163	0.269	0.271	0.425
Fit (global %)	59.2	70.7	70.7	73.4

Notes: <sup>®</sup> reference category /  $p$ -value < 0.1\* /  $p$ -value < 0.05\*\* /  $p$ -value < 0.01\*\*\*.

Source: Authors' elaboration based on EPH-INDEC (fourth quarter).

TABLE A.3. LOGISTIC REGRESSION COEFFICIENTS (ODDS RATIO) ON THE PROBABILITY OF BEING WORKING POOR. ARGENTINA, 2013

	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4
<i>Occupational class</i>				
Service class <sup>®</sup>				
Routine non-manual workers	1.888***	1.625***	1.684***	1.025
Small proprietors	7.242***	4.222***	4.374***	2.908***
Skilled manual workers	5.07***	3.687***	4.821***	1.584***
Non-skilled manual workers	9.846***	4.999***	6.945***	2.961***
<i>Job quality</i>				
Regulated <sup>®</sup>				
Non-regulated		4.276***	6.744***	5.836***
<i>Class-job quality interactions</i>				
Routine non-manual – Non-regulated			0.838*	1.012
Small proprietors – Non-regulated			0.765***	0.606***
Skilled manual workers – Non-regulated			0.518***	0.692***
Non-skilled – Non-regulated			0.507***	0.648***
<i>Sex</i>				
Man <sup>®</sup>				
Woman				0.939**
<i>Educational level</i>				
Complete university degree and above <sup>®</sup>				
Up to incomplete secondary school				4.424***
Complete secondary school				2.331***
Incomplete university degree				1.825***
<i>Age</i>				
45 to 59 <sup>®</sup>				
18 to 29				0.919***
30 to 44				0.964
60 and above				0.544***
<i>Household type</i>				
Nuclear two-parent <sup>®</sup>				
Single-person				0.352***
Nuclear single-parent				0.866***
Extended				0.935***
<i>Household children</i>				
Household without children <sup>®</sup>				
Household with children				5.007***
<i>Employed in the household</i>				
With two or more employed persons in the household <sup>®</sup>				
With only one employed person in the household				3.558***
Constant	0.044***	0.033***	0.028***	0.005***
Nagelkerke R2	0.129	0.217	0.219	0.372
Fit (global %)	65.7	76.6	76.6	77.9

Notes: <sup>®</sup> reference category /  $p$ -value < 0.1\* /  $p$ -value < 0.05\*\* /  $p$ -value < 0.01\*\*\*.

Source: Authors' elaboration based on EPH-INDEC (fourth quarter).

TABLE A.4. LOGISTIC REGRESSION COEFFICIENTS (ODDS RATIO) ON THE PROBABILITY OF BEING WORKING POOR. ARGENTINA, 2017

	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4
<i>Occupational class</i>				
Service class <sup>®</sup>				
Routine non-manual workers	1.934***	1.632***	1.664***	1.035
Small proprietors	7.687***	4.450***	4.504***	3.103***
Skilled manual workers	5.481***	4.044***	5.228***	1.792***
Non-skilled manual	9.989***	5.280***	7.625***	3.223***
<i>Job quality</i>				
Regulated <sup>®</sup>				
Non-regulated		3.949***	6.477***	5.732***
<i>Class-job quality interactions</i>				
Routine non-manual – Non-regulated			0.832**	0.897
Small proprietors – Non-regulated			0.759***	0.571***
Skilled manual workers – Non-regulated			0.502***	0.642***
Non-skilled – Non-regulated			0.456***	0.564***
<i>Sex</i>				
Man <sup>®</sup>				
Woman				1.002
<i>Educational level</i>				
Complete university degree and above <sup>®</sup>				
Up to incomplete secondary school				4.243***
Complete secondary school				2.362***
Incomplete university degree				1.755***
<i>Age</i>				
45 to 59 <sup>®</sup>				
18 to 29				0.944**
30 to 44				0.929***
60 and above				0.436***
<i>Household type</i>				
Nuclear two-parent <sup>®</sup>				
Single-person				0.344***
Nuclear single-parent				0.899***
Extended				0.976
<i>Household children</i>				
Household without children <sup>®</sup>				
Household with children				4.706***
<i>Employed in the household</i>				
With two or more employed persons in the household <sup>®</sup>				
With only one employed person in the household				3.376***
Constant	0.044***	0.034***	0.029***	0.005***
Nagelkerke R2	0.132	0.213	0.216	0.364
Fit (global %)	65.3	76.5	76.5	77.9

Notes: <sup>®</sup> reference category /  $p$ -value < 0.1\* /  $p$ -value < 0.05\*\* /  $p$ -value < 0.01\*\*\*.

Source: Authors' elaboration based on EPH-INDEC (fourth quarter).

TABLE A.5. LOGISTIC REGRESSION COEFFICIENTS (ODDS RATIO) ON THE PROBABILITY OF BEING WORKING POOR. ARGENTINA, 2020

	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4
<i>Occupational class</i>				
Service class <sup>®</sup>				
Routine non-manual workers	2.003***	1.711***	1.726***	1.144***
Small proprietors	6.957***	4.094***	4.334***	3.146***
Skilled manual workers	4.781***	3.743***	4.411***	1.888***
Non-skilled manual workers	8.626***	4.994***	6.232***	2.979***
<i>Job quality</i>				
Regulated <sup>®</sup>				
Non-regulated		3.231***	5.116***	4.69***
<i>Class-job quality interactions</i>				
Routine non-manual – Non-regulated			0.811**	0.872
Small proprietors– Non-regulated			0.673***	0.556***
Skilled manual workers – Non-regulated			0.528***	0.61***
Non-skilled – Non-regulated			0.517***	0.617***
<i>Sex</i>				
Man <sup>®</sup>				
Woman				1.071***
<i>Educational level</i>				
Complete university degree and above <sup>®</sup>				
Up to incomplete secondary school				3.694***
Complete secondary school				2.142***
Incomplete university degree				1.696***
<i>Age</i>				
45 to 59 <sup>®</sup>				
18 to 29				0.942**
30 to 44				0.894***
60 and above				0.45***
<i>Household type</i>				
Nuclear two-parent <sup>®</sup>				
Single-person				0.293***
Nuclear single-parent				0.806***
Extended				0.843***
<i>Household children</i>				
Household without children <sup>®</sup>				
Household with children				4.101***
<i>Employed in the household</i>				
With two or more employed persons in the household <sup>®</sup>				
With only one employed person in the household				2.67***
Constant	0.095***	0.081***	0.073***	0.019***
Nagelkerke R2	0.153	0.218	0.221	0.371
Fit (global %)	60.6	58.4	58.4	70.0

Notes: <sup>®</sup> reference category /  $p$ -value < 0.1\* /  $p$ -value < 0.05\*\* /  $p$ -value < 0.01\*\*\*.

Source: Authors' elaboration based on EPH-INDEC (fourth quarter).

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