

# Chapter 14

## Convergences and Divergences in Career Paths: Recruiting Foreign Teachers in Binational Schools in Argentina



Liliana Mayer and Verónica Gottau

**Abstract** This chapter seeks to analyze the reasons why binational schools house foreign native speakers' teachers as part of their staff and the reasons that make foreign residents work in binational schools in Argentina. We developed a multiple case design to predict similarities or contrasts based on arguments that explain these differences (Yin, *Case study research: design and methods*. Sage, Thousand Oaks, 2003) and conducted 15 in-depth interviews with educational agents – teachers and authorities – from binational schools, between 2017 and 2020.

Our findings show that divergences in 'career paths' are marked by different contracting mechanisms: while foreign teachers are recruited through specific networks and enjoy economic privileges similar to diplomatic corps, Argentine teachers receive their salary in the local currency and according to national parameters. From these material advantages other symbolic ones will land. By creating a sense of belonging to an *endogroup*, some foreign teachers have the power to set the values and identities that create meaning within the school. This 'minority though elite' group of teachers finds a fertile soil in the school ethos of binational schools, closely in line with cultural diplomacy. We conclude that binational schools tend to legitimate their added value through the hiring of foreign teachers, and foreign teachers find solid ground for a successful career path, granted by their place of birth, and by the credentials derived from educational paths that have proved to be advantageous for specific institutional projects.

### Introduction

Towards the end of the nineteenth century, 65 North American teachers packed their suitcases and left privileged and secure positions to begin their journey to Argentina, within one of the many initiatives that the then Minister of Education Domingo

---

L. Mayer (✉)

University of Buenos Aires, Buenos Aires, Argentina

V. Gottau

Torcuato Di Tella University, Buenos Aires, Argentina

© The Author(s) 2023

M. Gutman et al. (eds.), *To Be a Minority Teacher in a Foreign Culture*,  
[https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-031-25584-7\\_14](https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-031-25584-7_14)

217

Sarmiento developed, to foster and strengthen the national educational system, which he created with Law 1420<sup>1</sup>.

More than 150 years have passed since these ladies accomplished their dream and built a new life. Nowadays, in a much-extended education system that has undergone changes,<sup>2</sup> certain schools continue to receive foreign teachers, but in the private subsystem. However, this is no longer the outcome of a national educational policy, nor the result of the absence of locally trained human resources as it once was. This article seeks to analyze the reasons why binational schools house foreign native speakers' teachers as part of their staff, on the one hand, and on the other, the reasons that make teachers and expatriates, that is, already foreign residents in Argentina, work in schools of their own country of origin.

### *Where to Work: Binational Schools and Foreign Teachers*

Binational schools are among the institutions that most encourage hiring of foreign teachers. With this term, we refer to institutions that besides being located in Argentine territory and belong to the Argentine educational system, are also part of another educational system, mainly from the Europe's most powerful countries.

The latter supports the institutions in financial terms, subsidizing part of their expenditures, on the one hand and taking active part in the Curriculum and its definition, on the other. Binational schools are long-standing institutions, with origins

---

<sup>1</sup>The Law 1420 on General Common Education passed in 1884 established free, public and compulsory education for primary school, while secondary school was reserved for the advantage and privileged sectors of the population, especially urban upper middle-class males. High School enrolment rates started increasing from the 1940s on, in relation to public policies that generated processes of inclusion.

This law was first modified in 1993, with the Federal Education Law that established the compulsory nature of the lower path of secondary school. In 2006, with the currently in force National Education Law, the entire secondary level became mandatory. This expanded state commitment. A large part of the Latin American countries and the Caribbean have undergone similar processes of expansion of compulsory schooling.

At present, Argentina, like many countries of the region, has reached universalization for primary level, but the same doesn't happen with the secondary level. By 2018, Argentina reached a secondary enrollment rate of 88.7%, while 69.7% of students finished High School.

<sup>2</sup>During the post-World War II period, the Argentine State had control over the financing, administrative and pedagogical or educational fields, showing a clear picture of a sort of unchallenged State monopoly over the educational system (Narodowski et al., 2016; Morduchowicz, 2001). The allocation of State subsidies (Law 13.047) to private school provision was first introduced in 1947. Throughout the 1960s, private schools were granted more pedagogical autonomy. Nowadays, 65% of private educational institutions in Argentina are subsidized by the State to some degree. Half a century later, private schools have an enrolment share of 28.7% for 2012 (Narodowski & Moschetti, 2013). The privatization of education in Argentina, which has been the scenario for governed and ungoverned processes, has brought about serious consequences in terms of equity and social cohesion (Tiramonti, 2004; Gasparini et al., 2011).

that can go back more than 100 years (Banfi & Day, 2004; Silveira, 2011). Originally these schools were linked with Argentine immigration processes, to generate integration processes within minority groups of European citizens in exile. In this sense, binational schools initially had a center- diaspora relationship, by endowing the Argentine schooling processes with the cultural heritage of the communities they represented. These schools guaranteed this “differentiated integration”, where specific cultural capitals were preserved.

As we said above, these schools correspond to the European, mainly Italian, French, German and English-speaking migrant communities. The institutions within the British community had from their earliest days’ policies of greater openness and connection with the local public.

Several works (Mayer & Schenquer, 2014; Mongiello, 2012) show that by the 1980s, these *communitarian* schools had no longer only housed descendants of immigrants, but also diversified their audience. Although some continue to harbor proportions linked to their roots and to children of nomadic or diplomatic families (Resnik, 2012), today they have been converted into *elite* schools. Though we agree with local scholars that the *elites* in Argentina are shaped in different ways than in other countries, we take the importance of this term then as it refers to advantageous sectors of the societies that “bet” on certain schools to consolidate their positions of privilege, power and accumulation of capital intergenerationally (Larrondo & Mayer, 2018). Tiramonti et al. (2008) define elites as those social sectors that combine economic, social and cultural capital in its different forms. In line with Bourdieu (2016), we understand that the elite is neither homogeneous nor monolithic, but rather its heterogeneity is expressed through different interests and behaviors, which is reflected, among other, in schools’ choice.

Currently these schools have a diversified curriculum, which includes the national (Argentine) curriculum, but also adding extra loads for learning the language of the foreign educational system to which the institution belongs, and other subjects taught in that language to improve their learning. These schools offer the three education levels stipulated as compulsory by law in Argentina: kindergarten, primary school and secondary school.

Furthermore, in order to facilitate the processes of mobility and internationalization of education they include in their curriculums the high school completion exams typical of their countries, which allow studying abroad (Mayer, 2019; Mayer & Catalano, 2018). The objective of these schools is that their students become bilingual (Banfi & Day, 2004) and also have a high level of English.

The educational field contains different types of schools: as Braslavsky (1985) and Tiramonti (2008) specified, this exceeds the classic public-private division, which also predates the rise of neoliberal discourses in the region (Morduchowicz, 2001). Although between 1940 and 1950 the private sector reached the lowest school enrollment rate in its history, between 1950 and 2015 there was a process of sustained and progressive growth in private enrollment until reaching nowadays 30% points. This process should be analyzed in the light of the new regulations

introduced towards the end of the 1940s (Morduchowicz, 2005; Narodowski & Andrada, 2002).<sup>3</sup>

Beyond its scope of management and the public to which it caters, schools are legitimate groups to which certain social actors give - to a greater or lesser extent - a certain entity and specificity. Thus, school institutions are spaces of struggle and power dispute rather than a thoughtless reproduction of current regulations. However, as we will analyze, privately run schools have greater margins of autonomy (Morduchowicz, 2001), where many aspects of decisions are consequences of the specific schools' dynamics, within the frame of national educational policy.

A common feature in all binational schools is the presence of teachers from the second country to which the school belongs. These educational agents have two main mechanisms of access to schools. The first refers to what we will call "career teachers", meaning educational agents who belong to the Network of Schools Abroad in each of these countries. As we will develop later, these teachers are recruited and *sent* to different destinations for certain periods of time, analogously to the diplomatic corps, and often hold managements positions. Then, secondly, and with various heterogeneities within this group, are the residents of those countries in Argentina, who have arrived in the country for various reasons, often unrelated to educational purposes, but for various reasons related to their career paths, they join these institutions. In the third place, there are of course the *local* teachers. These are the Argentineans and Spanish speakers schooling agents, mainly born, raised, and educated in Argentina, by Argentinean pedagogical and scholastics traditions and perspectives (Banfi et al., 2016).

Hence, these private schools hold an heterogenous staff which include foreign and local teachers. Usually, the later are the majority, while the first category, holds sub-categories that consists of fewer schooling agents who only teach in the second language of the school. In other words, while foreigners or international teachers teach on subjects related to the second language or on subjects taught in that tongue, the rest of the subjects take place in Spanish. This *mixture* in nationalities, career paths and biographies bring more heterogeneity to institutional staff to the regular heterogeneity existing in other schools. This heterogeneity within the group of foreign teachers, leads us to propose the term *minority* in the plural, that is, *minorities*. By doing this, this concept allows us to account for the diversity and multiplicity of the agents included, articulated around intersectionality with other social markers that structure the action on the one hand and that allows accounting for different

---

<sup>3</sup>Gamallo (2015) argues that since the 1990s, when the name "publicly run public schools" was incorporated into national legislation, private schools increasingly resemble public ones. There is also a transfer of school management to the provinces in the 1970s and a system of social polarization and educational massification is consolidated, with an increasingly polarized system. The participation of the private subsystem in Argentina isn't the result of educational policy (Morduchowicz, 2001; Ball & Youdell, 2009), but rather the conversion of privately run schools "increasingly similar to public ones" monopolized enrollment, accounting for a sociological component in the population, where migration to the private sector is recorded even in the lowest quintiles of society.

distributions of power within these *minorities* and in their relationship with the majority groups (in numerical terms).

## Methodology

To conduct this research, we have developed a multiple case design, which according to Yin (2003) can be used to predict similarities or contrasts based on arguments that explain these differences. Hence, Eisenhardt (1989) conceives a contemporary case study as “a research strategy aimed at understanding the dynamics present in unique contexts”. The general objectives are to analyze the ways in which binational schools are structured, as well as their dual membership. From there we derive other objectives related to the institutional agents that inhabit them (teachers and authorities) and the public to which the schools cater: the students.

For this paper, we selected 15 in-depth interviews (Saltalamacchia, 1992) with educational agents -teachers and authorities from both foreign teachers' categories-between 2017 and 2020. The schools selected are 8 binational institutions located in the city of Buenos Aires.

For the analysis of the interviews we used the software Atlas Ti. We applied inductive and deductive techniques on the data obtained searching for patterns or recurring themes. The first encoding was made based on the conceptual criteria extracted from the theoretical framework and the following encodings were made by layers with native categories. Considering that the interviews are based on the narratives of the interviewees, we resorted to cross-examination as a way of reinterpreting the stated and constructed meaning. We tried to go beyond the premise from which the narrative started, understanding that all argumentation constitutes a social construct.

In all the cases interviewed, the narratives were approached comprehensively, that is, considering the specific contexts within which they develop. From our perspective, every social actor produces their own social context through its narration: we agree with Saltalamacchia when he points out that the individual is “a place of knotting” of a determined set of social relations” (1992: 38). In view of this, the interview must be understood as the framework of a joint theoretical elaboration in which total agreements or similar uses will not necessarily arise; but there are interpretations that did not exist before the relationship.

Regarding the analytical categories, and in line with the deductive-inductive technique for data analysis, there are two different types: conceptual, those that derive from the theoretical framework and they refer to the concept of *Minority*; *Elite*, *School Autonomy and Cultural Diplomacy*, and those that were constructed or emerged from the analysis of the interviews and they allude to *Native People*, *Institutional Weight*, *Internal Hierarchy and Career Teacher*.

Fieldwork included also class observations and analysis of institutional documentation. All the interviews were anonymous, and we have provided fictional names to the extracts of the interviews for confidential reasons. Argentina has 10

binational schools, all situated in the metropolitan region of Buenos Aires, where more than one third of the population resides. In general terms, bilingual school provision is located either in the neighborhoods with the highest purchasing power of the city and/or in the suburban districts of the northern area.

## Findings and Discussion

### *The Working Scenarios and Conditions from the Teachers' Perspective*

In one interview with an Italian teacher, she explains how she ended up in Argentina:

I had been on vacation before and I loved it, but my then husband didn't like it enough to stay. We went back to Italy, where I was working as a journalist. Sometime later, my mother died and I divorced. I had no strings attached and took up the idea of coming to Argentina for a while, being able to keep my job remotely. At the time I started working [at the Italian school] and ended up staying here.

When interviewing a German teacher, she explains that she came to Argentina due to her husband's work. At an embassy event she met a school principal, who hired her, since she is a native speaker. She has never worked in education before and had no degree related. We talked about German and Argentine educational systems:

Teacher (T): I think it is very cool the way [Argentine] system is, from k-5 till high school graduation, that students don't change institutions.

Researcher (R): but that's not the way it is. It is in your school, because it's a private one. State schools are different: you change from elementary to primary and finally, go to a different high school. You don't stay in the same place.

T: I didn't know that. I thought it all was the way my school is.

This teacher introduced us to several other international teachers to interview. Before contacting them, she explained:

There are different situations. I collect very little at school: I have a few hours' dedication and my salary is in the local currency. Others' are in euros, such as Katarina, they have huge salaries! And then there are other teachers, like Peter, which is like an intermediate: since they stayed in Argentina, they get lower salaries, but still better than ours.

Karina, who is also coordinator of the German department, explained her motives and professional path:

I have always been a teacher. I studied to be one and worked in Germany all my life. My kids are adults, and I returned to the idea of traveling. I searched for opportunities for German teachers abroad and Argentina appeared. I had never been to a Latin country and I found it fascinating. I didn't know a word of Spanish. After 3 years, I still don't speak much. I don't really need it: at school everything is in German and I socialize with most people from my country. With the rest, I use English.

When interviewing another Italian teacher, she describes her working atmosphere:

The school has many foreign teachers. But with different hiring conditions. There are those who are like me, who looking for a job started working in education. Our salary is like that of the locals, or a little higher, hardly. Then there are those who come from the official teacher system, those are what I call “the viceroys”: with salaries in euros and lots of benefits, they are exempt from various tasks and obligations. They are the schools’ favorites, the “untouchables”, even being very few, they have a special treatment and relevance and a great influence on the authorities.

### *Career Paths for Foreign Teachers in Binational Schools*

In another work (Mayer et al., 2020) we analyzed how Argentina has been nourished from its beginnings by a great cultural diversity, which was conceptually reflected in the “melting pot”, although the possibilities of integration were different depending on the origin of the immigrants, often to the detriment of the *native peoples* of the Americas. This is relevant because the specific weights that minorities had -and have- aren’t necessarily related to quantitative issues, but to others related to geopolitics and valuation of western values and westernization. As shown in some works, these repertoires are not absent in the educational field, which has always been influenced by the ideas and development of the western educational systems (Beech, 2009).

The literature suggests that due to endogenous issues that exceed the objectives of our article, the Argentine educational system has remained resistant to certain contemporary waves or trends proposed by central and international agencies (Beech & Barrenechea, 2011), even more in the state subsystem (Mayer, 2020). Argentina lacks standardized tests and a high school final exam which enables or not admission to university, which in Argentina is unrestricted. Furthermore, it lacks modalities for *grouping and segregating* students according to their abilities and qualifications, a persistent modality in several of the jurisdictions of the central countries though there are some trends to modify those (Mayer, 2019). Though there is a certain consent in local didactics and pedagogies and within policy makers that the introduction of those approaches would have a negative impact in the classrooms, the private sector shows a certain openness to these discourses and practices but there is usually a lack of professionals to enact those practices (Larrondo & Mayer, 2018). There is also a difference in the modes of insertion of foreign teachers in relation to other countries (Wallace & Bau, 1991) which is processed through the state schools, while in Argentina these spaces are opened from privately run schools, especially, binational ones. Although the private education subsystem is subject to the same regulations as the state one, the former has higher levels of autonomy than the latter (Morduchowicz, 2001, 2005), including hiring its teachers.



The analysis of the narratives of the schooling agents interviewed, allowed us to see that even when foreign “career” teachers are appointed by the central authorities of the networks of binational schools, this is possible due to the high levels of autonomy that these schools have with respect to the State sector. As interview fragments show, foreign “career” teachers have financial and symbolic benefits, ranging from preferential treatment to privileged positions. Most of the teachers in their countries of origin didn’t occupy hierarchical positions, so, when becoming part of the teacher networks abroad, they access coordination or leadership positions more easily than if they had remained at home.

Here we see an extra benefit: a quicker promotion possibility, especially for “careers teachers” whose possibilities to reach leading positions are higher mainly because of their nationality which implies a training under the foreigner pedagogical and academic perspectives and trends that are fundamental for binational schools. The promotion seems to be more in line with a specific capital (nationality), unavailable for local teachers and reconfigured for non-careers foreign teachers or expats.

### *Landing Into the Unknown*

The adventurous spirit is also a special issue that stands out in teachers’ career path, translated into other concepts. As Blackmore (2014) states, teachers’ mobility in their careers should be understood within wider global transformations, considering globalization and mobility processes (Appadurai, 2000; Bauman, 2001; Beck-Gernsheim, 2001), developing and creating skills related to flexibility, new and reflexive identities and adaptable to different international environments (Tran & Nguyen, 2014; Singh & Doherty, 2004). As Ball claims (2016), this professional is flexible and adept in the languages of reform. Rizvi and Lingard (2010) state that travelling teachers need to be understood as territorially situated in global spaces integrated and articulated, in relation to methodological approaches accountable for the complex interchange that takes place between unequally empowered discourses focused on cross-cultural and cross-linguistic terms and conditions that underpin globally interconnected/localized relationships. As one resident teacher claims:

We learn and they learn from us: for example, we learn about the “mate”,<sup>4</sup> and from us about punctuality. Those are big issues!

As another teacher mentions:

Kids come to this school and realize that Germany isn’t only what they thought: here we are not so structured, nor disciplined in terms of popular imagination; we believe in freedom and from there we build the school.

---

<sup>4</sup>Mate is the typical hot drink in Argentina made of green leaves.



The analysis of the interviews shows that foreign teachers usually have little or no knowledge of the society. Not speaking Spanish and lacking specific knowledge related to the development and historicity of the Argentine educational system and its pedagogy are among the main indicators of this situation.

In the case of “career” teachers, we observed that they bring with them their heritage and teaching experience typical of their educational systems, while in the case of expatriates or residents here, lacking specific knowledge of both educational policy and didactics and in pedagogy, they work with students according to their own experience as students. However, this second group is more permeable to education and training, so they usually adapt their teaching strategies to local modes. Different is the case of career teachers, who work according to their own imported criteria in pedagogical matters and are indulged for that:

They think [pedagogy and didactics] the same way as the Principal. Here things are different, less strict, that I like more. But that helps the Principal to guide a path even if it is with few teachers. But that doesn't mean that we take it.

In this sense, what the fragments show is that the same attribute, the nationality, isn't enough to generate a “community solidarity”. Quite the contrary, the heterogeneity of hiring and ways of going through the teaching career, can break or hinder social ties within apparent homogenous groups. Following Bourdieu (1998), foreign teachers are agents who move in a field and within which they occupy certain positions, associated with the unequal distribution of power. Even being a minority, many of these teachers occupy hierarchical or determining positions in the schools, spots that it would take a long time for a local teacher to reach. According to one interviewee:

If we all get along? No, it's very funny, but at recesses and events, we go to different terraces [referring to her school building, which consists of several formerly familiar houses bought by the school when expanding].

According to Beech et al. (2019), the teaching career in Argentina tends to be “flat”, since it has rigid promotion mechanisms and access to hierarchical positions. Although we agree to a certain extent with this, we can also consider how the exogenous mechanisms favor, in particular institutions, this “flatness”. If foreign professors -especially those who correspond to the “career” sectors - are those who occupy these positions, the chances of promotion to positions of leadership of agents that are the same or more qualified, decrease due to not having a certain nationality.

In Argentina, teaching in secondary schools requires a teaching degree of 5 years that can be obtained at University or Higher Education Institutions. Training doesn't involve standardized evaluation practices. State schools for example, are subject to strict bureaucratic regulations. In these schools, promotion is based on the accumulation of credits which are acquired through specific trainings endorsed by the State. Private schools, however, deal with promotion, hiring and firing procedures in many ways, since each educational institution has its own legitimacy processes for a career path.

In binational schools, a main factor that legitimates professional progress might be -and actually is- being a foreign citizen. As we have outlined above, schools are

institutions that comprise multiple interlocking arenas with front and back stages (Goffman, 1976; Hall, 1996). The front stage refers to the departments, teachers, meetings, among others, and the backstage involves friendship, hidden power mechanisms and legitimacy process.

Between the front and backstage there is a struggle over dissention and competition where teacher training or professional knowledge may not be the best value at stake. So, beyond the endogenous mechanisms that may or may not make the rigidity and “flatness” of the teaching career, we can also analyze concomitant processes that in certain institutions and under certain criteria, are increased by the attributes of career paths in institutions, and together with the material privileges, they collaborate in the “terrace” division that one of the teachers mentioned in her interview.

### ***Building Bridges Through Foreign Teachers***

Part of that adventurous spirit to which we refer and the very development of being a teacher abroad, also involves settling either in little-known or familiar places. The “adventurous” or “free spirit” is translated now in benefits for schooling agents in CV terms, and benefits in institutional terms. The flexibility to new and remote environments is associated with the development of “soft” skills, promoted also within students (Mayer, 2019). As Brown (2013) states, within a context of global *social congestion* for quality and good jobs, upper and middle-class professionals interpret and seek to provide access to processes that activate the kinds of ‘personal capital’ now arguably rewarded by multinational institutions. As Tran and Nguyen (2014) pointed out, the qualities emerging from traveling teachers are various. In the literature, flexibility, physical and professional mobility, variations in destination and the ability to adapt to different environments are highlighted. This is conceived as the adoption of new identities – that García Canclini (1995) calls “hybrids” – that mix the roots with cosmopolitan components (Beck, 2008) where identities are negotiated, made and remade in practice and in the contact with international education (Singh & Doherty, 2004).

Now, whether speaking of career or non-career foreign teachers, this is crucial for schools representing countries pretending to get closer to the local culture, since it brings binational links beyond official ways. Here the concept of cultural diplomacy becomes important (Fierro Garza, 2008): this notion refers to the promotion of the values that nurture a national identity and the history, where the language acquires a central place from two dimensions: it improves language and assumes that teaching and using the language of a country abroad becomes an essential tool to improve the knowledge of the country’s politics, economy, society and culture (Djian, 2005; Montiel, 2010; Saddiki, 2009).

The concept of cultural diplomacy implies also public diplomacy, as the set of actions by which governments directly address the population of another country. This perspective differs from the readings regarding education abroad as a “country

brand” sales tool (Mongiello, 2012), due to its emphasis on marketing and commerce, but also due to its reductive nature and poor interpretation of the identity of the countries. Cultural and public diplomacy suppose ties of cooperation and interaction between two of them, allowing us to see the different strategies that the State interested in expanding takes not only for each national case, but within it.

In this respect, we observe that most teachers regarded as minority -or minorities- within the staff, constitute a set of actors with a certain power and hierarchy based on credentials that fundamentally “local” teachers cannot have. One of these is nationality. This *capital* is common to all types of foreign teachers who work in the institutions, regardless of whether they have a career or not. Then, there are the credentials derived from the socialization and schooling processes in that country. Finally, there is the pedagogical and didactic dimension, referring, for example but not only, to the lack of final exams and standardized tests that we have described above, where Argentina shows different approaches than western central countries.

In addition to the “bridges” between cultures that teachers weave, they are strategic in the introduction of foreign pedagogical formats and perspectives in the institutional projects, within the frameworks of possibilities established by Argentine educational policy. We understand these “transfers” are not necessarily due to a deliberate or *master* plan, but rather to the extension of their own educational practices beyond conventional (national) limits. Of course, this inclusion of new and often disruptive pedagogical perspectives can bring resistance within the staff and the educational community, but they can also be supported by school authorities. As a teacher says:

They (career teachers) think like the Dean. They learned pedagogy that way and work as if they were in Italy. Many times, the ways and tradition of this foreign pedagogy is imposed, sometimes it coexists with Argentinean one, and others are negotiated, but for example “competition” between students is very common in this school.

As we have underlined, Argentinean educational policy discourages internal classroom competition. However, many private schools consider it an option or a value to encourage: as we have pointed out (Mayer, 2020), some schools claim particular forms of meritocracy and stand out within local frames, which are often resisted by local schooling agents. So foreign teachers play a fundamental role in introducing these pedagogical trends mixing them up with local boundaries.

In this context, head teachers are key figures that play a vital role in mediating between the external regulations and the internal culture and expectations. It is therefore expected a certain degree of disagreement regarding aims and problem-solving, and that each institution builds its own working conditions and consensus, partly because the stakes of competition are not the same for all the groups. As we have mentioned, this is not accidental, but part of an institutional project. Ball (2016) refers to the processes of “borrowing educational policy” that occur beyond the reforms -or the impossibility of carrying them out, as we argued above- through *policy windows*, where schooling agents take a major place.

Hence, the contributions of institutional agents in binational schools should not be understood only in terms of the contributions to their CV, or to the possibility of

bringing two cultures closer together, but also to the ways in which agents incorporate their professional practices in schools. By doing this, they may help in the reconfiguration of teaching practices in binational schools, incorporating exogenous elements to local traditions.

## Conclusions and Implication

Throughout the article, we have analyzed the modes of insertion of foreign teachers in binational schools. As we have observed, what at first glance can be understood as native teachers of the second school system to which these institutions belong, are in fact, a cohesive group where solidarity logics prevail. Grounded on a school-based management model, and, due to institutional action, divisions are built based on the material and symbolic benefits that some have to the detriment of others. In other words, it is the school itself that fosters and establishes differences among teachers: by creating a sense of belonging to an *endogroup*, some foreign teachers have the power to set the values and identities that create meaning within the school. One of the findings of this article is, that this cluster doesn't mean homogeneity, since it establishes hierarchies within an apparently homogeneous unit. Thus, this *endogroup* contributes in the delimitation of a minority within minorities, from a group that appears to be homogeneous at first sight, based on a particular capital: nationality. This analysis creates tensions regarding the classic concept of minority, usually associated with sectors that accumulate lesser volumes of power in certain networks which can be examined in additional national contexts in follow-up studies. As we have seen, some foreign teachers have a greater say in their institutions, a fact legitimated not only by nationality, but by their career status and paths. In fact, these international teachers appear as an "elite" within the teaching body. As a consequence, specific forms of knowledge, dispositions and professional paths play a role in the process of a sense of belonging to a particular group, enacting forms of social closure (Van Zanten, 2009).

This 'minority though elite' or minority between minorities group of teachers finds a fertile soil in binational schools. One of the main reasons for this is the school *ethos* which is closely in line with cultural diplomacy and the working conditions that each institution stipulates. Foreign teachers legitimate the position that these schools aim at in the local *spectrum* and help them take distance with other schools. Another reason is that this geo-repositioning of teachers' hierarchy marks some limits to the growth or at least the imagery of growth of the local ones and leaves a disputed but open space for the foreign teachers to land. Where the local teachers find a 'roof' for professional growth the foreign teachers find just a platform for growth.

## References

- Appadurai, A. (2000). Grassroots globalization and the research imagination. *Public Culture*, 12(1), 1–19.
- Ball, S. J. (2016). Neoliberal education? Confronting the slouching beast. *Policy Futures in Education*, 14(8), 1046–1059.
- Ball, S. J., & Youdell, D. (2009). Hidden privatisation in public education. *Education Review*, 21(2).
- Banfi, C., & Day, R. (2004). The evolution of bilingual schools in Argentina. *International Journal of Bilingual Education and Bilingualism*, 7(5), 398–411.
- Banfi, C., Rettaroli, S., & Moreno, L. (2016). Educación bilingüe en Argentina Programas y docentes. *Matices en Lenguas Extranjeras*, 3, 5.
- Bauman, Z. (2001). Consuming life. *Journal of Consumer Culture*, 1(1), 9–29.
- Beck, U. (2008). Mobility and the cosmopolitan perspective. In W. Canzler & V. Kaufmann (Eds.), *Tracing mobilities: Towards a cosmopolitan perspective* (pp. 25–35). Routledge.
- Beck-Gernsheim, E. (2001). Mujeres migrantes, trabajo doméstico y matrimonio. Las mujeres en un mundo en proceso de globalización. In E. Beck-Gernsheim, J. Butler, & L. Puigbert (Eds.), *Mujeres y transformaciones sociales* (pp. 59–76). El Roure.
- Beech, J. (2009). Who is strolling through the global garden? International agencies and educational transfer. In R. Cowen & A. Kazamias (Eds.), *International handbook of comparative education* (pp. 341–357). Springer.
- Beech, J., & Barrenechea, I. (2011). Pro-market educational governance: Is Argentina a black swan? *Critical Studies in Education*, 52(3), 279–293.
- Beech, J., Guevara, J., & del Monte, P. (2019). *Diploma Programme implementation in public schools in Latin America: The cases of Costa Rica, Argentina (Buenos Aires) and Peru*. Documento de trabajo interno.
- Blackmore, J. (2014). ‘Portable personhood’: Travelling teachers, changing workscapes and professional identities in international labour markets. In R. Arber et al. (Eds.), *Mobile teachers, teacher identity and international schooling* (pp. 141–161). Brill Sense.
- Bourdieu, P. (1998). *The state nobility: Elite schools in the field of power*. Stanford University Press.
- Bourdieu, P. (2016). *La distinction: critique sociale du jugement*. Minuit.
- Braslavsky, C. (1985). *La discriminación educativa en Argentina*. FLACSO, Grupo Editor Latinoamericano.
- Brown, P. (2013). Education, opportunity and the prospects for social mobility. *British Journal of Sociology of Education*, 34(5–6), 678–700.
- Djian, J. M. (2005). *Politique culturelle: la fin d’un mythe*. Gallimard.
- Eisenhardt, K. M. (1989). Building theories from case study research. *Academy of Management Review*, 14(4), 532–550.
- Fierro Garza, A. (2008). La diplomacia cultural como elemento privilegiado de la política exterior. *Revista Mexicana de Política Exterior*, 85, 23–28.
- Gamallo, G. (2015). La “publicación” de las escuelas privadas en Argentina. *Revista SAAP. Publicación de Ciencia Política de la Sociedad Argentina de Análisis Político*, 9(1), 43–74.
- García Canclini, N. (1995). *Hybrid cultures: Strategies for entering and leaving modernity*. University of Minnesota.
- Gasparini, L., Jaume, D., Serio, M., & Vazquez, E. J. (2011). La segregación entre escuelas públicas y privadas en Argentina. Reconstruyendo la evidencia. *Desarrollo Económico: Revista de Ciencias Sociales*, 189–219.
- Goffman, E. (1976). *Estigma. La Identidad Deteriorada*. Amorrortu.
- Hall, S. (1996). Who needs identity. *Questions of cultural identity*, 16(2), 1–17.
- Larrondo, M., & Mayer, L. (2018). *Ciudadanías Juveniles y Educación: Las otras desigualdades*. Grupo Editor Universitario.

- Mayer, L. (2019). Viajar para aprender y aprender viajando. Estrategias educativas de sectores aventajados de Argentina. *Universitas*, 30(1), 41–62. Ecuador.
- Mayer, L. (2020). Educación internacional en Argentina: Grandes proyectos para pequeños públicos. In L. En Mayer, M. I. Domínguez, & M. Lerchundi (Eds.), *Infancias, juventudes y desigualdades: experiencias, procesos y espacios*. CLACSO.
- Mayer, L., & Catalano, B. (2018). Internacionalización de la educación y movilidad: reflexiones a partir del caso argentino. *Universitas, Revista de Ciencias Sociales y Humanas*, 29, 19–41.
- Mayer, L., & Schenquer, L. (2014). Europe outside Europe: Developing a German Jewish citizenship in Argentina. The case of the Pestalozzi Schule. In J. En Galkowski & H. Kotarski (Eds.), *Pragmatics of social and cultural capital*. University of Rzeszow.
- Mayer, L., et al. (2020). Desigual y diversa: producción de ciudad y vida urbana entre jóvenes de Buenos Aires. In L. Mayer, J. P. Duhalde, A. A. Ortega, & M. J. Silva (Eds.), *Ciudades x Jóvenes: aportes a la Nueva Agenda Urbana de las Juventudes Latinoamericanas*. CLACSO/CINDE.
- Mongiello, E. (2012). *Cambios en la relación escuela y nación. Las escuelas italianas en el exterior: el caso argentino*. Tesis de Maestría en Ciencias Sociales, FLACSO.
- Montiel, C. J. (2010). Social representations of democratic transition: Was the Philippine People Power a non-violent power shift or a military coup? *Asian Journal of Social Psychology*, 13(3), 173–184.
- Morduchowicz, A. (2001). *Private education: Funding and (de) regulation in Argentina*. National Center for the Study of Privatization in Education Teachers College, Columbia University.
- Morduchowicz, A. (2005). Private education: Funding and (de) regulation in Argentina. In L. Wolff, J. C. Navarro, & P. González (Eds.), *Private education and public policy in Latin America*. Partnership for Educational Revitalization in the Americas (PREAL).
- Narodowski, M., & Andrada, M. (2002). Nuevas tendencias en políticas educativas: alternativas para la escuela pública. In E. J. Granica (Ed.), *Nuevas tendencias en políticas educativas: estado, mercado y escuela* (pp. 9–28). Ediciones Granica.
- Narodowski, M., & Moschetti, M. (2013). The growth of private education in Argentina: Evidence and explanations. *Compare: A Journal of Comparative and International Education*, 45, 47–69. <https://doi.org/10.1080/03057925.2013.829348>
- Narodowski, M., Gottau, V., & Moschetti, M. (2016). Quasi-State monopoly of the education system and socio-economic segregation in Argentina. *Policy Futures in Education*, 14(6), 687–700.
- Resnik, J. (2012). The denationalization of education and the expansion of the International Baccalaureate. *Comparative Education Review*, 56(2), 248–269.
- Rizvi, F., & Lingard, B. (2010). *Conceptions of education policy. Globalizing education policy*. Routledge.
- Saddiki, S. (2009). El papel de la diplomacia cultural en las relaciones internacionales. *Revista CIDOB d'afers internacionals*, 107–118.
- Saltalamacchia, H. (1992). *La historia de vida: reflexiones a partir de una experiencia de investigación*. Cijup.
- Silveira, M. L. (2011). Territorio y ciudadanía: reflexiones en tiempos de globalización. *Unipluriversidad*, 11(3), 15–34.
- Singh, P., & Doherty, C. (2004). Global cultural flows and pedagogic dilemmas: Teaching in the global university contact zone. *TESOL Quarterly*, 38(1), 9–42.
- Tiramonti, G. (2004). *La trama de la desigualdad educativa: mutaciones recientes en la escuela media*. Ediciones Manantial.
- Tiramonti, G. (2008). As mutações da escola média na Argentina no marco da reconfiguração de um mundo globalizado. *Pro-Posições*, 19(3), 105–129.
- Tiramonti, G., Ziegler, S., & Gessaghi, V. (2008). *La educación de las elites: aspiraciones, estrategias y oportunidades*. Editorial Paidós.
- Tran, L. T., & Nguyen, N. T. (2014). Teachers' negotiation of professional identities in the 'contact zone': Contradictions and possibilities in the time of international student mobility. In *Mobile teachers, teacher identity and international schooling* (pp. 43–61). Brill Sense.

- Van Zanten, A. (2009). The sociology of elite education. In M. W. Apple, S. J. Ball, & L. A. Gandin (Eds.), *The Routledge international handbook of the sociology of education* (pp. 329–339). Routledge.
- Wallace, M. J., & Bau, T. H. (1991). *Training foreign language teachers: A reflective approach*. Cambridge University Press.
- Yin, R. K. (2003). *Case study research: Design and methods*. Sage.

**Liliana Mayer** is a sociologist; she holds M.A and Ph. D. in social sciences, Buenos Aires University (UBA), Argentina. She was tenured Researcher Position at CONICET (National Council for Scientific and Technological Research). Currently she is serves as a senior consultant at TECHO Latino America. Her area of research focus on education, youth and a social inclusion

**Verónica Gottau** is Associate Researcher at Centre for the Evaluation of Evidence at Torcuato Di Tella University, Argentina. She holds PhD in education from the University of San Andrés. Her research relates to educational policies, the privatization of education, the autonomy of school institutions, and family processes of school choice.

**Open Access** This chapter is licensed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License (<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>), which permits use, sharing, adaptation, distribution and reproduction in any medium or format, as long as you give appropriate credit to the original author(s) and the source, provide a link to the Creative Commons license and indicate if changes were made.

The images or other third party material in this chapter are included in the chapter's Creative Commons license, unless indicated otherwise in a credit line to the material. If material is not included in the chapter's Creative Commons license and your intended use is not permitted by statutory regulation or exceeds the permitted use, you will need to obtain permission directly from the copyright holder.

