

# LAREC

Research Center  
Graduate School of Business

## TOWARD AN ALTERNATIVE HISTORY OF COMMERCIAL EDUCATION IN LATIN AMERICA: LESSONS FROM THE EMERGENCE OF THE FIRST COMMERCIAL SCHOOL IN 1820S ARGENTINA

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### ***Abstract***

#### **Purpose**

This paper aims to examine the creation of the first commercial school in early independent Argentina in 1826 – the Academy of Accountancy of Buenos Aires (AABA) –

at the request of the Argentine Government, which entrusted its direction to French expatriate Amédée Brodart, who was considered an expert in commercial education.

### **Design/methodology/approach**

This study adopts a microhistory approach based on individual biography and archival research. First, it investigated published biographies of contemporary political figures Brodart had been in contact with. Then, the Argentine archives of the Ministry of Finance and the Arturo Jauretche Museum of the Bank of the Province of Buenos Aires provided information on Brodart's life during his expatriation to Latin America. Finally, the French Archives of the Paris National Library and ESCP Business School in Paris provided information on Brodart's life before his departure for Argentina and after his final return to France. These primary sources include extracts from Brodart's correspondence, financial ledgers, study plans and a few rare iconographic documents.

### **Findings**

AABA was connected to a nationalist agenda: to develop Argentinian trade to overcome national underdevelopment and to counter political agitation in the country. However, the lack of local expertise in commercial education, as well as Argentine authorities' desire to avoid depending on foreign powers, led them to call on a French expatriate rather than on a network of organizations to open this school.

### **Research limitations/implications**

This paper contributes to the literature on the history of commercial education in Latin America and to the literature on the international transfer of commercial education models. This paper is also among the first to consider the origin story of Argentina's relationship with commercial education.

### **Practical implications**

This research offers new reflexive perspectives on the emergence of commercial education in Latin America by highlighting the agentivity of local actors.

### **Originality/value**

Through a lens of dependency ambiguity, this paper repositions narratives of the development of commercial education in Latin America away from a Western-centric explanation, highlighting the role of local contextual actors. In doing so, it offers an alternative history of commercial education focused on Latin America.

Lien d'accès à l'article => Emerald Insight