Continuity and Discontinuity between the School and the Family *in* the Community: Bridging Conceptual and Epistemological Inquiries

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This editorial presents and extends the papers of the authors in this Special Issue by situating them in a classificatory model (Boulanger, 2019) aimed at identifying the epistemological orientations of systemic continuity and discontinuity amidst school, family, and community. This classificatory activity enables nuancing the categories with regard the specific contributions of the authors. Institutional and political tendency to make the discontinuous continuous –which signals a process leading to forms— is highlighted.

> *"The mother of Thomas underlines the importance of learning to read and to write. Referring to the child, she indicates that "this is his job." MT [Mother of Thomas] begins by underlying the relevance of reading and writing as the main tasks of the school. From this perspective, parents have to educate the behaviour while the school needs to instruct children. Here, we can observe the opposite of what the other parents (from the lower social class) suggested about the responsibility of behaviour. However, the issue **is still based on a complementarity**, implying compartmentation and **discontinuity**, and ending up in controversy concerning who is responsible for what"* (Zazzera, Pontocorvo, & Arcidiacono, 2019; the emphasis is mine)[2].

The relationship between school and family is an area of tension. In the excerpt above, Zazerra, Pontocorvo, and Arcidiacono (2019, this Special Issue) display two situations. On the one hand, the fact that two opposite epistemic orientations to education—that could also express different scientific theories about schooling—entail recognizing a DISCONTINUITY between school and family. On the other hand, the fact that the parents try to coordinate themselves with the school, thereby constructing conditions for CONTINUITY between home and school. Yet at the end of this excerpt it appears that *discontinuity underlies this continuity*. The latter implies—often implicitly—a conception of the former.

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[2] Notice that, when quoting the authors in this Special Issus, I did not always systematically differentiate between their words and them dialogically speaking through the mouth of Others.

In poverty-related contexts children are considered "at risk" of academic failure because of learning difficulties experienced in situations of "cultural" discontinuity. This concept is defined as the gap between school and family as "cultures" (Self and Milner, 2012). Ultimately, in a school setting, when children are exposed to objects that are incoherent with the basis of family, children are susceptible to experience a major disruption because of the imbalance that occurs, making them particularly vulnerable in the cognitive and relational areas (Cairney, 2001). *In response to* this phenomenon of discontinuity, educators will make discontinuity a relatively drastic treatment by establishing *conditions of continuity* in the context of discontinuity, or by reversing the direction of the current, thereby reducing discontinuity. Their actions have often involved a *static interpretation of discontinuity*, and the continuity to be established takes the form of an artificial substitution of the family environment with school "culture," a tendency which, paradoxically, reinforces discontinuity and keeps parents from poverty-stricken environments on the outer limits of the school (Boulanger, 2019*a*).

Drawing from a framework of *conceptual* and *epistemological* conception of continuity and discontinuity that I developed elsewhere (Boulanger, 2019*a*), I display in this editorial how the authors in this Special Issue present what I call SYSTEMIC continuity and discontinuity. I am interested in the epistemological basis of systemic continuity and systemic discontinuity and how these phenomena are related to one another.

A GENERAL FRAMEWORK: THE CONCEPTUAL AND EPISTEMOLOGICAL BASIS OF SYSTEMIC CONTINUITY AND DISCONTINUITY

In the above quote from Zazerra and her colleagues (2019), *systemic discontinuity* expresses underlying representations and theories on how school and family are related.

> *"Cultural discontinuity can be used as an analytic or theoretical tool to explain educational practices that demonstrated such disconnections and inconsistencies. School-based norms and values are socially and culturally constructed by people, such as teachers and administrators, and these constructions sometimes conflict with those of the student. Teachers and students' cultural identities, insights, and perspectives inform how they understand, relate to, see, and experience the world and relate to others"* (Self & Milner, 2012, p. 512-513).

And yet, systemic discontinuity as well as its counterpart—systemic continuity—can be viewed from different angles. The question as to how systemic discontinuity should be conceived is expressed as follows by Matthiesen (2019): "how can low-income immigrant and refugee families transcend marginalization? How can home-school discontinuity be addressed?" It is important to consider both phenomena— systemic continuity and discontinuity—as complementary. As stated by Matthiesen (2019) referring to Ogbu and Bourdieu, "the major differences in school experiences

between certain groups can be explained by the continuity and discontinuity between home and school." How they are conceived and how they relate to each other could be an explanatory aspect for understanding the tension between schools and families in the community, particularly in poverty-stricken environments. I propose elsewhere (Boulanger, 2019*a*) an analytical framework situating systemic continuity and systemic discontinuity in an additive or non-additive epistemological framework while considering how these two interact. I present a framework largely inspired by these ideas.

Conceptually, I am interested in systemic continuity, as well as systemic discontinuity. On the *epistemological* level, I am analyzing each of these phenomena (systemic continuity and discontinuity) through the angle of continuity (additivity reflecting a mechanistic epistemology) and discontinuity (non-additivity, dynamism). Epistemologically, I limit myself to contrasting additivity and non-additivity without situating the latter in a specific epistemology (interactionism, phenomenology, constructivism, constructionism, etc.). This will prevent my analysis from becoming too complex and getting lost in the details, for instance, regarding the fact that both additivity and non-additivity could be part of an interactionist paradigm (Overton, 2013). My analysis could be completed afterward.

Referring to additivity and non-additivity enables me to characterize how systemic continuity and discontinuity are represented. Each of them could be seen as a static or dynamic phenomenon. I therefore have four reading categories:
    1) additive systemic continuity
    2) non-additive systemic continuity
    3) additive systemic discontinuity
    4) non-additive systemic discontinuity

In a complementary fashion, I will also reflect on the tendency to make the discontinuous continuous—from systemic discontinuity to continuity. I ask myself if this move is static or dynamic. Here, I add two categories:
    5) additive relationship[3] between systemic continuity and cultural discontinuity
    6) non-additive relationship between systemic continuity and cultural discontinuity

Note that this analysis could be made more complex by combining these last two categories with the first four. I could therefore consider, for example, the additive/non-additive relationship between additive/non-additive systemic continuity and additive/non-additive systemic discontinuity. I will not delve into this meta-level of analysis.

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[3] Here, I reduce the interaction to a spatial movement between stationary objects and neglect the irreversible time. We do this to provide a first insight into the study of the suggested categories. Afterward, this analysis could be extended, for instance, by asking what (temporally) HAPPENS to cultural discontinuity when it is *transformed* into continuity.

From the perspective of these six categories, I can complete the work executed in psychology, which recognizes the static or dynamic character of the continuity and discontinuity in children's learning (c.f., Overton, 1998), while being critical as to their epistemological foundations.

From an *epistemological* perspective, continuity refers to the additive (linear) relationship between objects, actors, and systems, while discontinuity put this same relationship in a non-additive logic (Lerner, 1998; Overton, 1998). I will often use the concept of interaction to designate these relationships. The continuity/discontinuity axis is notably reflected in coherent/incoherent (Sameroff, 1983) relationships, as well as in stable/changing relationship (Markovà, 2007). Change itself can be continued (variational) or discontinued (transformational) (Overton, 1998). For the purpose of this paper, I am interested in the spatial, rather than the temporal.

Here are the different categories summarized with regard to the levels of inquiry. I mentioned earlier that *each of the concepts* of systemic continuity and discontinuity is situated in an additive **and/or** non-additive epistemological framework. For instance, taking an additive stance on systemic continuity implies imposing a consensus between people while a non-additive conception of both systemic continuity and discontinuity makes this consensus a process. It also appears that additive systemic continuity requires recognizing functional similarities between school and family. The **first level** of analysis comprises all the specific forms of school/family interaction that will be presented in the next section with regard to the contributions of the authors in this Special Issue.

The **second** level of analysis is epistemological. It characterizes each form of school/family interaction (first level) in relation to each concept (cultural continuity and discontinuity). This gives four categories:
1) additive systemic continuity
2) non-additive systemic continuity
3) additive systemic discontinuity
4) non-additive systemic discontinuity

The second level—epistemological—also characterizes the *relationship* between systemic continuity and discontinuity. Here, there are two categories:
5) additive relationship between systemic continuity and discontinuity
6) non-additive relationship between systemic continuity and discontinuity

I will skip the metatheoretical level[4].

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[4] The third level refers to the inclusive or exclusive relationship between the epistemological additive and non-additive orientation of each of the two conceptual phenomena (cultural continuity and discontinuity) interacting together. So, cultural continuity can be inclusively conceived as both a dynamic (non-additive) and a static (additive) phenomenon or exclusively as either a dynamic (non-additive) or static phenomenon (additive).
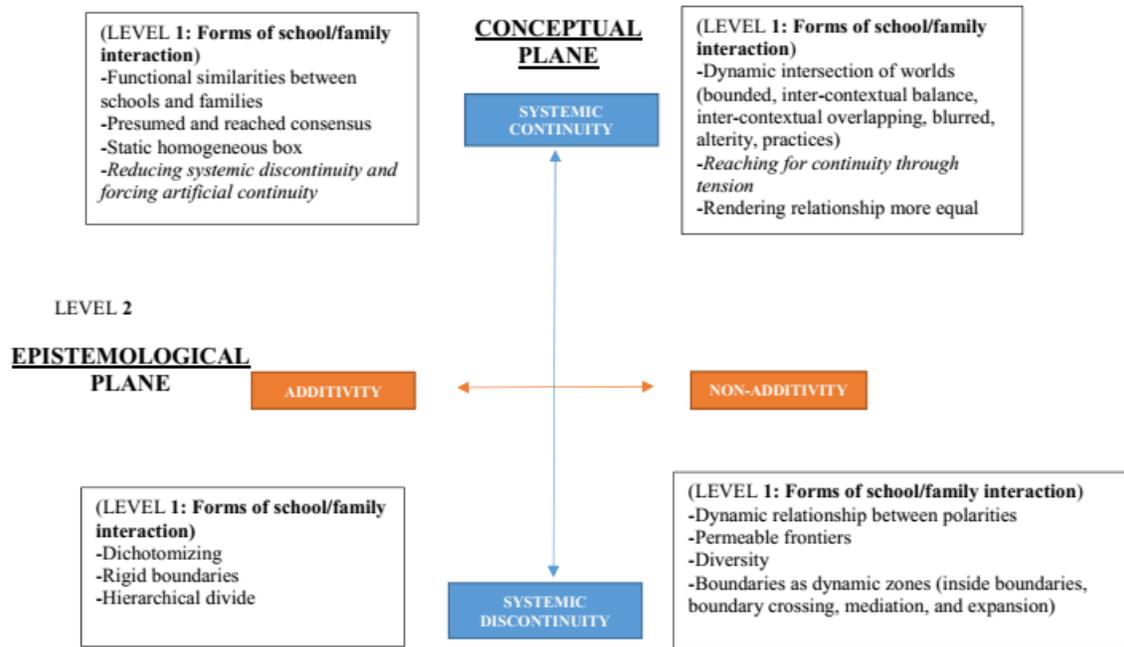
(LEVEL 1: Forms of school/family interaction)
-Functional similarities between schools and families
-Presumed and reached consensus
-Static homogeneous box
-*Reducing systemic discontinuity and forcing artificial continuity*

CONCEPTUAL PLANE

SYSTEMIC CONTINUITY

(LEVEL 1: Forms of school/family interaction)
-Dynamic intersection of worlds (bounded, inter-contextual balance, inter-contextual overlapping, blurred, alterity, practices)
-*Reaching for continuity through tension*
-Rendering relationship more equal

LEVEL 2

EPISTEMOLOGICAL PLANE

ADDITIVITY

NON-ADDITIVITY

(LEVEL 1: Forms of school/family interaction)
-Dichotomizing
-Rigid boundaries
-Hierarchical divide

(LEVEL 1: Forms of school/family interaction)
-Dynamic relationship between polarities
-Permeable frontiers
-Diversity
-Boundaries as dynamic zones (inside boundaries, boundary crossing, mediation, and expansion)

SYSTEMIC DISCONTINUITY

Figure 1. Integrative framework: Systemic continuity and discontinuity between the conceptual and epistemological levels

Figure 1 schematizes the two aforementioned levels. The vertical axis represents the conceptual aspect (cultural continuity and discontinuity). The forms (more on this later) of school/family interaction (level 1) that are listed pertain to systemic continuity when they are on the top of Figure 1 and cultural discontinuity when they appear at the bottom.

The horizontal axis represents the epistemological level (level 1). The forms of school/family interaction are part of an additive logic when they appear on the left of Figure 1 and a non-additive logic when they are on the right. The epistemological relationship between these concepts—additive/non-additive relationship between systemic continuity and discontinuity—appears where the vertical and horizontal axis cross one another.

I will use this same framework to analyze how the authors in this Special Issue present school-family interaction in the community. This will render this framework more concrete and therefore more comprehensible.

SYSTEMIC CONTINUITY AND DISCONTINUITY

Systemic Continuity

Additive systemic continuity

Functional similarities between schools and families.

Recognizing that schools and families are not so different is an argument for their functional continuity. There are "things that parents do" that fit with and therefore prepare for school. This is what Zazerra, Pontocorvo, and Arcidiacono (2019) suggest:

> *"Different studies [...] have shown that children are exposed to inputs on certain aspects of writing during the conversations with their parents, even before the* **beginning of formal instruction** *in reading and writing and the production of* **anything resembling conventional** *writing. For example, young children can learn about some of the graphic features of writing"* (emphasis added).

While forms of socialization in the family (and community) are generally informal in nature, there are formal practices within the family that fit school prior to conventional schooling. This is a major argument for defining children's transition from home to school as a (spatial) fit or similarity between these systems (more later on the temporal aspect). Zazerro and her colleagues (2019) reason that this *first form of additive systemic continuity* does not necessarily deny systemic diversity and a plurality of practices and representations in and between the family and the school. As such, this form of interaction could entail a non-additive perspective, as expressed in Zazerra's, Pontocorvo's, and Arcidiacono's (2019) paper.

Presumed or reached consensus.

The second form of additive systemic continuity pertains to presuming implicit consensus or making it an ultimate goal. Fecho and Lysaker (2019) criticize the school for sending parents instructions "about how to 'help' students with schoolwork, often without consideration for families' value orientation to that work, or familiarity with how to carry out such work." School is considered the consensual normative point of reference and families' orientations must merge with the school's and are thereby negated. In a similar fashion Zazerra, Pontocorvo, and Arcidiacono (2019) mention that "Italian teachers [...] think (often without saying it explicitly) that families should support children in the school tasks and take on the responsibility of their progress in school." This implicit goal of matching families with schools— the former having to support the latter— entails the aforementioned normative consensus. Yet Zazerra, Pontecorvo, and Arcidiacono (2019) mention that "the activities of parental help with the children's homework could be seen as an occasion to better *analyse family interactions as a whole*, since they offer natural opportunities for having positive moments, *good sharing*, transmission of values and moral behaviours." Thus what appears to me to constitute an additive form of systemic continuity can also be considered as an interactive enabler sustaining positive interaction. Again, Zezerra and her colleagues' (2019) paper leads me to see how non-additivity could be an interdependent, yet somehow invisible side of additivity (level 2 in Figure 1). It may

also be that the interaction Zezerra and her colleagues (2019) refer to is additive. This further reinforces my thinking that additivity and non-additivity constitute two viable and complementary options (level 2 in Figure 1).

I can complete the presentation of this second form of additive systemic continuity (presumed or reached consensus) by saying that a consensus signals that each system (school, family and community) and the systemic relationship between them—as a system—are conceived as a static homogeneous box.

Static homogeneous box.

This third form of additive systemic continuity is mainly criticized by Cattaruzza, Iannaccone, and Arcidiacono (2019). They denounce the static view by which authors perceive causal connections between families' educational strategies, parental involvement in school activities, parent/teacher communication, and academic achievement without deeply delving into activities and the local school culture. They conclude this critique by stating that "[t]his implies that within situations of complexity and full of implicit rules and meanings, it is essential to understand to what extent the parents' statements *cannot be adopted as unique source of information*, without the analysis of the activities and *processes of regulation/negotiation* that characterize the interactions around school-family relationships" (the emphasis is mine). They thus suggest a more integrative—considering multiple sources of information—and dynamic account of the school/family interface.

Adhering to a homogeneous view of the school/family/community system—which is expressed through a *consensual* view of actors' actions, representations, and meanings—requires an attempt to reduce systemic discontinuity and force an artificial continuity through negating systemic discontinuity. *Making the discontinuous continuous* or forcing the latter through negating the former touches the second level of inquiry identified in Figure 1.

Reducing systemic discontinuity and forcing artificial continuity.

Matthiesen (2019) expresses this general idea by mentioning that the structural differences between the school and families in poverty-stricken and multiethnic contexts are "therefore the driving rationale between the above described interventions that try to teach parents to do parenting differently in order to *reduce this discontinuity* between home and school" (the emphasis is mine). Doing things *differently* by negating their *difference* entail the families "integrating" school in a continuous-homogeneous (additive conception of systemic continuity) manner. Acting AS IF there was a consensus (the second form of additive systemic continuity) is coherent with such an approach.

Along the same line, "people in institutions such as schools and communities try to avoid conflicts, 'the urge for certainty cannot be satisfied in dialogue'" (Gomes, 2019).

That is, dialogue implies tolerating and even enabling uncertainty, which is a characteristic of systemic differences. Reaching for certainty "hinders dialogical transaction [...] and the master discourse is used many times to produce a planned monological trend in interaction" (Gomes, 2019), the monological actors being situated "on very different levels" (Gomes, 2019). This is related to a very narrow and static conception of certainty as a hierarchically pre-established and decontextualized standard of action and representation. Are educators really certain of their certainty when there is incoherence and double-bind phenomena such as the following?

- "Despite the egalitarian and emancipatory ambition embedded in these approaches" (Matthiesen, 2019)—which are "intended to strengthen and increase parental involvement by ensuring that parents have the sufficient know-how and competencies to engage satisfactorily in their children's education" (Matthiesen, 2019)—"they have been critiqued for building on a deficit approach to these parents [...], overlooking the parental engagement that characterizes ethnic minority families" (Matthiesen, 2019).
- "[A]lthough the transplantation model" (Matthiesen, 2019)—in which "professionals teach their skills and expertise to parents and thereby help them become more successful as parents supporting their children's education" (Matthiesen, 2019)—"is a strategy intended for empowerment of parents it still locates the balance of power within the hands of the professional adhering to an assimilation logic and placing the demand of change on the parents" (Matthiesen, 2019).
- While "[t]he approach that attempts to increase the cultural capital of certain families requires assimilation: it requires becoming like the dominant class [...] this approach merely sustains marginalization, as such assimilation-demands devalues the forms of being, as well as the values and ideals found in other groups" (Matthiesen, 2019).
- "Despite the vast tolerance, multi-ethnicity and plurality of Indian social life, these positions become seriously truncated when classrooms are considered, as they are still much more favourable and welcoming towards socially successful families. By the time a child reaches school he/she has an ascription to a certain cultural identity, and is developing certain modes of thinking and perceiving. *Schools cannot ignore these developments* and use a uniform bar for all children." (Chaudhary, 2019; the emphasis is mine).

With regard to Chaudhary's (2019) quote and Gomes's (2019) point on monologicality, knowledge's or belief's certainty—or belief about certainty—*blocks* the dialogical transactions and renders systemic differences and variations invisible, and even more uncertain! These aspects are made invisible to both educators and parents. For parents, this happens through what Molina (2019) calls a strange

perspective[5] and Boulanger (2019*b*, c) refers to as the process of making the familiar unfamiliar and the familial "unfamilial." Parents' own contexts appear strange, unfamiliar, and "unfamilial" to them.[6]

The hierarchical aspect, highlighted by Gomes (2019) and Matthiesen (2019), that organizes school-family interaction in the community, particularly in poverty-stricken and multiethnic contexts, is historically situated. This is true of different countries such as Canada (Moreau, 2019) and India (Chaudhary, 2019). Moreau (2019) states that in Canada "[r]esidential schools were conceived as a transmission belt of civil and professional integration that spanned across the country." Chaudhary (2019) specifies the psychological issues of such a structural process in a missionary context: "[t]eaching children in non-local dominant culture languages can lead to psychological barriers, and not just academic or learning difficulties." For this reason, because children in Canada and Europe were educated "by creating an ordered and industrious educational environment regarded as appropriate, and above all, secluded from their home environment" (Moreau, 2019) and because "[d]iscontinuation with the latter could preserve them of the values and hopes shared by their parents and their disorganized cultural milieu to promote European values and customs" (Moreau, 2019), Chaudhary's (2019) assertion that "schools cannot ignore these developments and use a uniform bar for all children" makes even more sense and invites me to bring forth a dynamic conception of systemic *continuity* that is not grounded in an instrumental view of *discontinuity* as a missionary and assimilatory tool (the **second level** in Figure 1).

Non-additive systemic continuity: A more dynamic conception of boundaries

In the additive form of systemic continuity the boundaries are recognized, at least implicitly. Promoting functional similarities between schools and families (the first form of additive systemic continuity) seems to be an argument against the claim that there are strong functional differences established through rigid boundaries and thus against hard boundary crossings. Presuming or reaching for a static consensus (second form of additive systemic continuity) in a homogeneous ecosystem (third form of additive systemic continuity) entails putting the systems together—thereby linking the systems—in a hierarchical environment. There is a paradoxical situation by which the family's actors and the school's actors are *joined together* while the family's systemic referents—so-called "cultural"—are disjoined, that is, devaluated, *excluded*, and negated. For example parents are invited to join formal school activities whereas their voices are not listened. They are invited to enter the school by keeping their referent outside.

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[5] Molina specifies that "[t]he strange perspective adopted will affect the possibilities of the family and children for *connecting* with *their own context*" (the emphasis is mine). The *continuous relationship between parents and their own context is made discontinuous*!
[6] This makes the parents' environment externally manageable.

Why trying to reach the parents if they don't perform active role in school? Some authors (Delay, 2011; Périer, 2005) explain this by the fact that nowadays families are integrated into school to be more closely scrutinized—in the spirit of the "centralized decentralizing" tendency of the Third Way politic (Gewirtz, 2009)— and controlled. Let's stay with an ecosystemic form of explanation—rather than political—that is coherent with such an explanation: in the perspective of Boulanger's (2019*b*) paper, creating a mesosystem—a relationship between the school and the family—could be a strategic means to "assimilate" a family into school by cleaning the parents and the so-called risk factors while—from a hierarchical point of view— maintaining parents' secondary status and instrumental function in education. This tendency (expressed earlier in a list of paradoxes), which historically fits missionary actions (Moreau, 2019; Chaudhary, 2019) and is based on a mechanistic epistemology (Boulanger, 2019*b*)— explains the actors' willingness to reduce discontinuity and force an artificial continuity (fourth form of additive systemic continuity). The boundaries need to be crossed in order to bring families near to or into school and to scrutinize and control the parents. This is an historical phenomenon –cleaning the infectious agents (risk factors as pathologies) through the school as a missionary agent (Moreau, 2019). And yet, *non-additive* systemic continuity requires a more dynamic conception of *boundaries*.

Dynamic intersection of worlds.

The dynamic intersection of worlds (systems and self/alter) is the **first form** of non-additive systemic continuity.

Bounded boundaries.

The dynamic intersection of worlds is **firstly** manifested in relation to bounded boundaries (the first *type* of this first *form* of non-additive systemic continuity)*.* Bounded boundaries indicate continuity. This form of non-additive continuity is mainly presented by Arcidiacono as well as Fecho and Lysaker (2019). Commenting on Boulanger's (2019*c*) paper, Arcidiacono (2019) indicates that "educators experiencing the tensions between fullness and emptiness [and who] have to canalize the interaction between the object (e.g., the presence of a parent) and the environment (e.g., the school structure […] is a step that allows to *enter in* a *boundary zone*" (the emphasis is mine). This is an "*area of contact* between two or more environments in which people are encouraged to *share* ideas and knowledge without prearranged routines or rigid patterns" (Arcidiacono, 2019; the emphasis is mine). The idea of entering into a boundary zone clashes with using a boundary as a means for exclusion (additive form of systemic continuity). Arcidiacono provides a dynamic conception of consensus through referencing *sharedness as a non-fixed form*.

Bounded boundaries also mean that the latter are inclusive because seeking a "more inclusive dialogue […] [,p]arents or other legal guardians should be *included*, but they should also be encouraged to invite others *from outside* the school who would advocate for their child" (Fecho & Lysaker; the emphasis is mine). In this context,

including external actors does not mean assimilating them with regard to a pre-established normative and hierarchical criterion. Dialogicality is central to inclusiveness:

> *"The thesis of Boulanger more over seems to agree with Dialogical Self Theory (Boulanger & Valsiner, 2017; Hermans, 1999; Marková, 1987; Valsiner 2007a), which considers the communicative and constructive interaction between different actors, i.e. educative agents, parents, children and community participants in the relation family-school to respond to the needs of education considering every agent within the system, as participant and object of observation, being part of an inclusive relation of co-creation"* (Molina, 2019).

Fecho and Lysaker (2019) also resort to a dynamic conception of continuity by suggesting "to find ways to support a *struggling* student through *dialogical* means" (the emphasis is mine) "*before* resorting to drastic *labeling* and reassignment" (the emphasis is mine). For this to happen "the school should think creatively as to how former teachers, a school nurse, classroom aides, secretaries, and other school personnel could contribute to such a conversation." (Fecho & Lysaker, 2019). In these conditions, tensions are used as fuel for dialogical and reflexive inquiry. Structural aspects are also recognized in a dynamic way. From a temporal perspective, structures are formed and reformed, and, from a relational standpoint, alliance and exclusion are forged. This is an inclusive approach recognizing that polarities (formation and reformation; alliance and exclusion) are in a constant state of tension. My decision to situate the interaction between school and family *IN* THE COMMUNITY reflects this bounded and inclusive perspective. I don't push this aspect further; rather, I invite the reader to do it!

Inter-contextual balance.

The dynamic intersection of worlds is **secondly** defined as a dynamic "inter-contextual balance between school and family" (Cattaruzza, Iannaccone, & Arcidiacono, 2019, the emphasis is mine) which "can contribute to construct an ecosystem in which teachers and parents are able to be open to the unfamiliar and to use the others' resources" (Arcidiacono, 2019, the emphasis is mine). Referring to Marsico and Tateo's concept of tensegrity, Molina (2019) highlights "tension as a developmental dynamic in terms of a tensegrity system, not as a search for homeostasis as systemic model proposes."

Inter-contextual overlapping.

The dynamic intersection of worlds is **thirdly** presented as an inter-contextual overlapping —as a process—through the activity "intrinsically" creating its own context:

> *"[i]n a school context, when students pass notes to each other while the teacher is not watching, they are effectively changing the context of their actions from*

school work to a leisure activity, without physically leaving the classroom. Similarly, when during an outdoor field trip, the class [...] [is] drawing upon the knowledge acquired in the classroom [...] [and thereby] reproducing a classroom context in nature" (Rajala, 2019).

As opposed to Epstein's (1987, 1995) overlapping model, which is based on an additive conception of continuity (Moreau, 2019) in the logic of Bronfenbrenner's organist-mechanistic metatheory (Boulanger, 2019*b*), inter-contextual overlapping implies contextually filling the school zone with other domains (e.g., leisure) (Boulanger, 2019*c*) pertaining to the everyday life outside the school and constructively reproducing school outside by recontextualizing academic knowledge. While Epstein's (1987, 1995) model puts families into school and school into families—both being "assimilatory processes" (more on this later) leading to a forced artificial continuity—, what I call inter-contextual overlapping is based on expansion, meaning that "the context of pedagogical activity is expanded when the interaction with the outside world qualitatively changes the activity" (Rajala, 2019). I will return on expansion later.

Blurred boundaries.

The dynamic intersection of two worlds is **fourthly** conceived as a blurred conception of boundaries. Again this reading of the school/family boundaries mainly comes from Fecho and Lysaker (2019). Referring, like Molina, to the Dialogical Self Theory (DST) Fecho and Lysaker (2019) situate the boundaries in the space between the individual and its external environment: "[w]hile cultures outside you engage in dialogue and cultures within you engage in dialogue, those cultures within us and outside us engage in dialogue in a *blurred* space, sometimes more external and other times more internal" (the emphasis is mine). This approach clashed with an additive logic considering the ecosystem—comprising the environment and the individual—as homogeneous. This approach recognizes intra and inter-variation. This implies "considering every agent within the system, as participant and object of observation, being part of an inclusive relation of *co-creation*" (Molina, 2019). Molina's (2019) paper sheds light on another way of conceiving blurred boundaries, namely as dynamic indeterminacy: the actors being neither fully inside nor outside the system, meaning that they are in constant movement and—through this wandering dynamic—creating options. This is not the either/or logic (in or out of the system) of an additive frame, but rather a process of constructing options (Boulanger, 2017*a*) in what a 'third space' (Rajala, 2016).

Alterity.

This dialogical approach, as well as the openness to the unfamiliar others Boulanger (2019*c*) and Arcidiacono refer to, promote alterity, which is the **fifth** conception of dynamic intersection of two worlds. When actors such as parents speak, their voices are "loaded with other's words" (Gomes, 2019). Therefore "the traditional identity question of 'who am I?'" should be rephrased as "Who am I in relation to the other?"

and "Who is the other in relation to me?" (Gomes, 2019). The paradox of blurred boundaries—the space between Me and You is blurred or absent, *therefore* WE are DIFFERENT—is transcribed here by the fact that "[d]ialogical theories of human life, then, always include *dual* (or multiple) properties, each one irreducible to the other but unavoidably *interdependent*" (Gomes, 2019; the emphasis is mine). To say it in a very approximate way, in the first case Me and You are similar—which is different than being the same— therefore different, while in the second case Me and You are different therefore We are similar.[7] Here if something happens to others that are close to me "it is as if it happens to me" (Gomes, 2019).

Matthiesen (2019) refers to the immigrant and refugee parents' "access to *experiencing how others* went about the *practice* of parenting was likewise of great importance" (the emphasis is mine) and therefore to the importance "of seeing how others interact with their children." This fluid flow of experiencing and communicating in and across borders is referred to by Zezerra, Pontercorvo, and Arciadiacono (2019) with respect to three boundary zones: "firstly, when school is considered and evaluated by the parents, individually or in group [...]; secondly, when the school enters as a topic in family conversations [...] [and] another boundary area could be offered by verbal interaction in different collective encounters." The dialogical encounter is situated here at the scale of systems. While authors generally refer to teachers judging parents, as I did myself (Boulanger, 2019*c*), Zazerra and her colleagues (2019) expand the spectrum of relationship.

Practices.

A **sixth** conception of the dynamic intersection between worlds is related to highlighting practices (Rajala, 2019) where "learning is in a social practice perspective rooted in a social historical ontology of human being-in-practice [...] [and] thus involves active participants in social worlds engaged in particular purposes connected to the practice, each with particular and significant concerns and orientations" (Matthiesen, 2019). Here engagement is an active action in and between different worlds.

Overall non-additive continuity as a dynamic intersection between worlds implies conceiving boundaries as open (possibly blurred), flexible, and tension-loaded. This entails recognizing discontinuity (level 2 in Figure 1). This is thus the opposite of an additive conception of systemic continuity in which discontinuity is negated or fought.

***Reaching for continuity through tension*.**

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[7] From a dialogical and systemic point of view, I should more specifically say about the second case that "our" differences depend on others' view of my differences, their own differences, and how I see these two differences in order for the difference to make a difference.

Reaching for continuity through tension—as a **second** form of non-additive systemic continuity—is in fact the exact opposite of reducing systemic discontinuity and forcing artificial continuity (additive systemic continuity). Gomes (2019) displays how continuity is made out of a plurality of meanings:

> *"As far as Rosenblatt (1988) is concerned, when we see a set of marks on a page that we believe can be made into verbal signs (i.e., can be seen as a text), we assume that it should give rise to some kind of a **more or less coherent meaning**. Multiple **inner alternatives** resonate with the words as they fall into phrases and sentences"* (the emphasis is mine).

Continuity is dynamically constituted of multiple and alternative meanings. As a form, continuity resembles more poetic or musical rhythm that is unfolding than a relatively-well outlined social representation (for instance, the social representation of teachers about parents). Such a dynamic continuity entails a temporally continuous dialogue. This means that there is a constant change that is an inner—which mirrors Rajala's (2019) reference to the activity intrinsically creating *its own* context as well as Molina (2019) privileging the intervener being included in the familial context as a participant instead of situating him/her outside as an "objective" observer and manipulator of the family (Boulanger, 2019*c*)—aspect of systemic phenomena. Albert (2019) also recognizes changes in the context of migrants' adaptation to a new country. She states that "difficulties in reconciling expectations might entail negotiation processes between the parents." Again, difference entails a constant state of dialogue. For this reason "[t]space between schools and communities should be seen as a *window of possibilities* and development for everyone […] in ways that *create new texts*" (Gomes, 2019; the emphasis is mine). Tension-loaded boundaries enable novelty!

Rendering relationships more equal.

The **last** form of non-additive systemic continuity is secondarily presented in the papers in this Special Issue. This is expressed by Nakagawa (2019) as follows:

> *By drawing on their own individual social histories in creating their parent committee, they were able to better nurture their own **internally** persuasive discourses. For the parents in Delgado-Gaitan's study, their **self-organization** put them on **more equal footing** with the **organization of teachers** and somewhat mirrored the taken-for-granted ways that upper-income parents assume their voice and concerns will be **recognized by educators** (the emphasis is mine).*

Nakagawa (2019) refers to the external in the internal like Gomes (2019) as well as Fecho and Lysaker (2019). The internal construction of discourse makes it possible to situate parents in an equalitarian relationship with teachers. The internal/external interplay and the fact that educators could recognize parents' specificities signal discontinuity, which is central to reaching for continuity through tension (the second

form of non-additive systemic continuity). I delve now into systemic discontinuity by tackling first additive systemic discontinuity. Because there is much in the authors' papers (in this Special Issue) on discontinuity, for lack of space (would you fully and deeply read a 30 page editorial?), because the characteristics of systemic discontinuity largely resemble those of systemic discontinuity (as far as an implicit conception of the latter is represented in the former), because I try to push up the level of abstraction a bit (from *description* to *explanation*, which is the aim of Figure 2 below), and because systemic discontinuity has already been *described* at length, I cannot be as systematic as I was in the previous sections in presenting all of the authors' principles and extensively and deeply representing them through excerpts and details. For these very reasons, readers are encouraged to **READ the Special Issue** and fill the 'holes' in order to expand my own propositions that are only a modest creative synthesis and a starting point!

Systemic Discontinuity

Additive systemic discontinuity

As in the first section of this editorial, additivity entails an implicit reading of discontinuity which is a heuristic (scientific) tool for understanding continuity. I highlighted this in the case of non-additive continuity being based on a non-additive conception of discontinuity (more on this later). The same phenomenon is noted for systemic additive continuity being grounded on an additive conception of systemic discontinuity. We are situated here in the conjunction between the levels 1 and 2 in Figure 1. As far as the second level is concerned, I delve into how additive discontinuity generates additive continuity, but this may not always be the case as suggested previously.
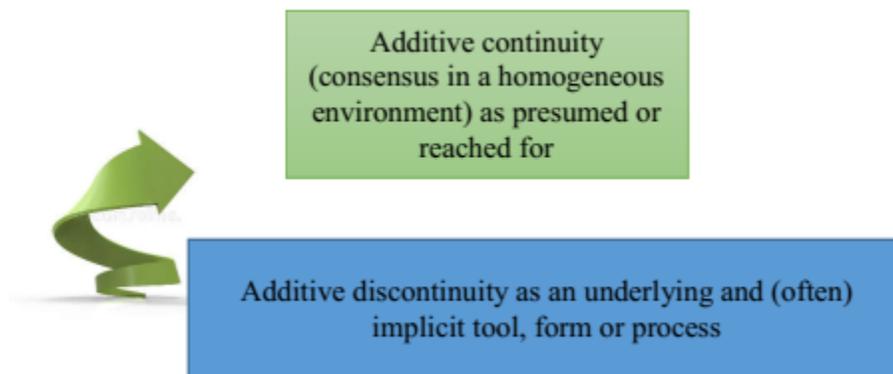

Figure 2. Relationship between additive discontinuity and additive continuity

Figure 2 schematizes this relationship. The additive conception of systemic discontinuity—closed classes as dichotomies in a homogeneous and hierarchical ecosystem—is the context and ground for an additive conception of systemic

continuity. More precisely, I suggest that systemic additive discontinuity is a tool (a "cultural" and structural instrument; Bourdieu & Boltanski, 2008; Engeström, 1987), a form (Simmel, 1950), and a process (Deleuze & Guattari, 1972/2000) supporting systemic additive continuity. Such a conception of systemic discontinuity could justify, from an ideological point of view, actions aimed at assimilating families considered as different and ultimately achieving continuity. Reaching for such continuity (generally taking the form of a consensus) passes through eliminating, reducing, or negating discontinuity, the latter being (still) ultimately based on a dichotomizing and hierarchical form of segmentation where units are mutually excluded. *Giving the false impression of putting people together in an inclusive approach whereas setting them apart is a masked ideological operation that precisely works with this very paradox* (Bourdieu & Passeron, 1970; Grignon & Passeron, 1989)!

Additive systemic discontinuity takes three forms in the papers in this Special Issue. First it entails dichotomizing, second dividing through rigid boundaries, and third dividing in a hierarchical environment. In the first case, the systems are considered as mutually exclusive polarities. The same dichotomization happens, but with a boundary break (the second form) and a hierarchical aspect (the third form). As we progress from the first to the third form, the addition of layers of analysis makes the process more complex.

Dichotomizing.

Dichotomizing entails "reified master narratives that dichotomize schools and communities […] [and] represents the imposition of meaning from 'the outside' […] [at the basis of] a pedagogy of domestication for working class […] far removed from the neighborhoods" (Fecho & Lysaker, 2019). This decontextualization and disconnection provide "little space for parents to develop internally persuasive discourses […] that challenge typical parent roles" (Nakagawa, 2019) and thereby leading to categorization (Arcidiacono, 2019; Boulanger, 2019*c*) in the form of "self-stereotyping of parents" (Albert, 2019). Decontextualization entails "distancing the learning from the physical world around" (Chaudhary, 2019). From this perspective, in which differences are constructed as exclusion from schools (Matthiesen) "social psychological processes such as labeling and stereotyping might *hinder teachers* to consider parents as partners in educational tasks" (Albert, 2019; the emphasis is mine) without teachers being aware of it. This is related to the ideological function (suggested earlier) of additive discontinuity, "implying compartmentation" (Zazerra, Pontecorvo, & Arcidiacono, 2019) as a basis for additive continuity aiming at forcing assimilation without dynamic integration. Parents and teachers are stationary—instead of *moving*— moving in a closed circle in a homogeneous ecosystem:

> *"Previous studies (Bélisle, 2006; Boulanger, Larose, Grenier, Saussez & Couturier, 2014) have shown that low social class parents expect schools to make discipline and to educate children's behavior. As reaction, teachers reply that this is a case of parental delegation of responsibilities to the school implying and sustaining discontinuity"* (Arcidiacono, 2019).

Yet, "[c]ontrary to some perception, Aboriginals are not resistant to Westernized schooling" (Moreau, 2019). This closed circling could then be an explanatory factor. This means schools must maintain a static balance through a homeostatic-circular process (Boulanger, 2019*b*, *c*), which contrasts with Arcidiacono's (2019) reference to an inter-contextual balance. Moreau proposes a complementary explanation regarding the structural aspect:

> *This point is essential: "it seems to have a 'sense of family deficit' competing with the 'sense of school deficit' as a learning place for Aboriginal teenagers" (loose translation, Gauthier, 2005, p. 281). In other words, it looks as though Aboriginal culture based by family structures decline as school learnings increase, which seems to be strange relationship.*

This is another way of explaining the homeostatic function of school (Boulanger, 2019*b*) by which an additive conception of discontinuity leads to and reinforces itself. Relationally or structurally turning into closed circles entails reproducing instead of producing something. The structural aspect highlights the hierarchical aspect of additive discontinuity (more on this later). This also helps understand why the gap between the family and the school in the community is maintained or reinforced. This leads me to talk about the second form of additive systemic discontinuity.

Rigid boundaries.

In this sense, children from immigration "*[w]anting* to fit and *having* to find their place in the school context" may artificially adopt decontextualized ways of thinking—from their point of view—"while *home* context might *remain unchanged*" (Albert, 2019; the emphasis is mine).[8] By adding that school also remains unchanged, the (superficially) changed individual is in a way lost in this systemic divide, facing contradictory yet non-flexible systems. This happens because schools ideologically (cf., discontinuity as tool, form, and process; Figure 2) "impose rigid and serious borders" (Gomes, 2019). Thus, "[p]arents who step outside of the defined boundaries of school-sanctioned involvement may be deemed as 'helicopter parents' (if they go beyond these roles) or uncaring parents (if they choose not to take part)" (Nakagawa, 2019), thereby reinforcing their status in a circular fashion—turning in closed circles in an ecosystem that maintains its homeostasis (Boulanger, 2019*b*). Personally and relationally, educators trying to externally take an objective stance toward families disconnect their own emotions and disconnect families from their own contexts and affective experience (Molina, 2019).

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[8] Let's partly nuance this by mentioning that the process by which school decontextualizes families to the point of creating a strange (Molina, 2019), unfamiliar, and unfamilial (Boulanger, 2019*c*) reality, from the parents' and child's own point of view, thereby making the school environment more manageable. From an assimilatory perspective, families are effectively changed to fit school.

The rigid creation of boundaries may be a bidirectional process in which boundary enforcement comes from both sides with "schools position[ing] parents […] [and] parents position[ing] schools often set[ing] up an artificial separation between schools and communities" (Fecho & Lysaker, 2019). This explains Albert's (2019) point that the systems remain unchanged, particularly family. For which this "might lead to an *acculturation gap* and diverging value orientations between first and second generation" (Albert, the emphasis is mine). In this context, not only are school and family concerned, but also generations. Fecho and Lysaker (2019) more generally delve into the divide between the Self and the Alter, which is established through reaching for pre-dialogical certainty (an aspect referred to previously).

Hierarchical divide.

The situation gets more complex when I consider that dichotomizing and excluding (first form of additive systemic discontinuity) through rigid boundaries (second form of additive systemic discontinuity) happens by means of hierarchical divide (third form of additive systemic discontinuity).

The interaction between families and schools "can become imbalanced" (Fecho & Lysaker, 2019)—like a lever machine with the school at the top and the central normative point of equilibrium established around the societally promoted ethos of the dominant groups as it is anchored in schools (Boulanger, 2019*c*)—and "reifies the dominant position" (Fecho & Lysaker, 2019) of the school thanks to structural dynamics and "*standardization* in school systems worldwide [that] is a prime example of such *monologism*" (Fecho & Lysaker, 2019; the emphasis is mine). This is the foundation of the compensatory intervention—coherent with Bronfenbrenner's model and how it is applied in the field of school-family-community partnership (Boulanger, 2019*b*; Molina, 2019)—in which educators act as experts compensating for the passive receivers' lack of competence (Boulanger, 2019*b*; Matthiesen, 2019; Molina, 2019). As I suggested earlier, school/family discontinuity justifies this structural operation. This occurs when parents are treated as agentic "instrument[s] in service to the school […] [leading to] reproduce existing inequalities by reinforcing existing differences" (Nakagawa, 2019). Parent's informal engagement outside the school and the familial (and community's) form of socialization are kept invisible and not considered as valuable for schooling (Arcidiacono, 2019; Boulanger, 2019*a*, *b*; Nakagawa, 2019).

In colonial times in India, "[t]he community was considered to be ignorant and inferior, and most children were treated that way, unless they made a good fit within the school and learnt the English ways well" (Chaudhary, 2019). On the other hand, those excluded developed "oppositional identity to the mainstream culture of the 'white'" (Moreau, 2019). Hence a mutually reinforced divide. The limits justify looking at non-additive forms of systemic discontinuity. This perspective is particularly rich and extensively expressed in the authors' papers. I will keep a very synthetic approach and remind the **readers to read these papers** to complete my modest contribution, rendering it more complex, nuanced, and broad.

Non-additive systemic discontinuity

Dynamic relationship between polarities.

In this first form of non-additive systemic discontinuity polarities, school and family (informal and informal, proximity and distance, etc.) are not mutually exclusive nor situated in a homogeneous ecosystem; rather, they are *inclusively* related in a flexible ecosystem, which could be hierarchical (Boulanger, 2019*b*; Molina, 2019), composed of open systems (Molina, 2019). Meanings are constructed in "a bidirectional process" (Albert) through "opposing tension" (Fecho & Lysaker, 2019). This applies to different domains such as intergenerationality (Albert, 2019). In this context, including external actors does not mean assimilating them in relation to a pre-established normative and static hierarchical criterion.

Permeable frontiers.

In a flexible ecosystem the boundaries are permeable, the systems are never fixed nor the interaction between actors as well as their relationship with the social environment predetermined. Such perspective "veers away from a *self/other dichotomy*" (Fecho & Lysaker, 2019; the emphasis is mine). This means, firstly, that there is a "gradual and perhaps hazy transition as our internal and external worlds intersect and transact." This signals, secondly, that moving from the external world to the internal implies tension and negotiation (Matthiesen, 2019).

Diversity.

This approach recognizes interaction and is based on, and institutions need to be open to, different perspectives (Albert, 2019; Gomes, 2019) as well as multiple experiences (Fecho & Lysaker, 2019). While "[t]he large heterogeneity of cultural values […] is not any more an easily manageable question" (Zazerra, Pontecorvo, & Arcidiacono, 2019), this is a resource as demonstrated, for instance, by the fact that "diversity in classroom composition results in greater complexity in school and community relationships" (Chaudhary, 2019). This implies recognizing—in the classroom and in other systems—that "'[t]here are no generic readers or generic interpretations but only innumerable relationships between readers and texts'" (Fecho & Lysaker, 2019 quoting Rosenbelt). Hence dialogue being a key component, particularly as a "critical tool to privilege the voices" (Matthiesen, 2019) of those excluded. This approach makes discontinuity a transformative tool instead of a structural tool aiming at reproducing social inequalities (Figure 2). It thus appears that "story, or narrative, is a key way to open dialogue that counters oppressive master narratives" (Fecho & Lysaker, 2019). This is related to considering discontinuity as a dynamic zone enabling dialogue, which is the next form of non-additive systemic discontinuity.

Boundaries as dynamic zones.

There are **four** *types* of dynamic zones: inside the boundaries, boundary crossing, mediation, and expansion. The boundary zone has two *general characteristics*: it is constructed through constant movements and generates flexible forms that are not static nor fixed (constantly changing). I will first present each type, then the two general characteristics.

Inside the boundaries.

The **first** type is the following: Inside the boundaries. Gomes (2019) expresses very well the idea of that which is inside the boundaries: "[i]t is the space *between* us that allows the *surplus of seeing* what happens and creating different perspectives in encounters" (the emphasis is mine). As an open and undetermined zone—as opposed to building school/family relationship around a pre-established 'sense of' certainty (e.g., additive systemic continuity)—filled with tension this dialogical boundary makes it possible to generate *more* than Me and You. Arcidiacono refers to this zone as an interface where the activity of doing homework "confronts parents to contradictory constraints" happens. This could also "be seen as transactional spaces where dialogue across stakeholders is *generated*" (Fecho & Lysaker, 2019; the emphasis is mine). This productive process refers to one of the characteristics of the zone of emergence I will present later.

Boundary crossing.

The **second** type of boundaries as dynamic zones is boundary crossing—between systems and between Me and Others. "[T]rough the entry of new elements of discourse" (Gomes, 2019)—You enter into My territory and vice versa—, "[t]he 'other' can see the situation in a different way and has the ability to make different value judgments than me because he/she is in other time/space" (Gomes, 2019). Nakagawa (2019) rather refers to how transferring school competences gained in the community is a constructive process. Rajala (2019) tackles the expansive aspect of it (more on this later). In accordance[9] with Gomes (2019), Fecho and Lysaker (2019) refer to ""contrasting voices" which inform and shape each other as their edges bump against one another," (the emphasis is mine) regarding Bakhtin. Thus boundary crossing takes on different forms.

Mediation.

The **third** type of boundaries as dynamic zones is mediation. Acting as mediators between the school and the family, "children serve as cultural brokers who have to translate current rules to their parents—even translating *between* parents and teachers" (Albert, 2019; the emphasis is mine). The term 'between' indicates that this

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[9] From a chronological standpoint, I should in fact say that Gomes—who comments on Fecho and Lysaker (2019)—agrees with them.

happens *inside* (first type of boundaries as dynamic zone). Gomes (2019), who also refers to what happens 'between', states that "[t]he process of education requires interactions between humans, in relation to bodies of culturally constructed knowledge and skills, mediated by semiotic means and artifacts, in specific social settings," leading to the "*expansion* of the capacity to think [which] happens *between* […] interactions." Rajala (2019) also refers to expansion through mediation.

Expansion.

Expansion is the **fourth** type of boundaries as dynamic zones. Rajala (2019) specifies that "[b]y 'expansion of the context of pedagogical activity,' I refer to a mutually transformative boundary crossing between the pedagogical activity and social activity outside school." He resorts to the contextual (and intrinsic) nature of the activity to explain expansion: "the idea of the context being created in and through the activity implies that school learning can be discursively expanded to the surrounding communities without physically leaving the classroom."

Rajala (2019) shows how children's productive deviation from the main tasks—which are based on 'dominant' knowledge—elaborated by educators could lead to expansion, while there remain some obstacles pertaining to teacher's blocking it by supporting *reified* 'dominant' knowledge. Gomes' (2019) suggestion to move "away from such master narratives and toward dialogical transactions between schools and communities" based on actors' openness and leading to dialogical expansion could be a dialogical response to Rajala (2019).

I delve now into the two general characteristics of boundaries as dynamics zones. The fact that they are in CONSTANT MOVEMENT is the first one. The fact that "dialogue becomes its own process for negotiating the uncertainty created by dialogue" (Fecho & Lysaker 2019) entails being open to the uncertain—instead of creating a false sense of security through pre-established "certainty"—nature of boundaries as dynamic and flexible zones entailing tension that could be considered as a fuel enabling novelty. This could also signal that dialogue is intrinsic to the process (i.e., this is an inner aspect of it). This is a "dialogical process of continued re-elaboration during the social experiences" (Cattaruzza, Iannaccone, & Arcidiacono, 2019). Echoing this perspective, Fecho and Lysaker (2019) refer to this as an "*organic* renewal process integral to meaning making" (the emphasis is mine) that constitutes "an infinite chain that draws from the past, responds in the present, and positions toward the future," hence the fact "that there can *never* be 'a first and last *meaning*'[10]" (the emphasis is mine). Referring to the process as being organic could suggest that this is part of a form—a "*form*ative process"—, while speaking of its meaning as never final, points out the product as a dynamic form emerging out of such a process.

This leads me to the second characteristic of boundaries as dynamic zones, that is, the fact that it is GENERATING FLEXIBLE FORMS. The tension related to the constant

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[10] Fecho and Lysaker (2019) are quoting Bakhtin.

movement in and through boundaries as dynamic zones allows the occurrence of emergence and novelty. Fecho and Lysaker (2019) state that "[i]t is *within tension* created by simultaneous, conflicting multiple meanings that school personnel and community members have the opportunity to grasp the idea that they seek new understanding" (the emphasis is mine). The "*commonly constructed understandings* in the *midst* of these *tensions*" (Fecho & Lysaker, 2019; the emphasis is mine) is not a reified form, but an immanent form that only makes sense through the contextual content of exchange (Simmel, 1950) as it constantly unfolds (Goethe, 1983). This new understanding could be dialogically constructed at the scale of the individual (in interaction) through internally persuasive discourse enabling renewed (external) dialogue (Nakagawa, 2019). This dialogicality—making it possible to see beyond ourselves, others, and our relationship with the later (Gomes, 2019)—may take place through the imagination (Fecho & Lysaker, 2019; Nakagawa, 2019). This process makes "new kinds of relationships possible" (Matthiesen, 2019) and "mutual change and enrichment" (Fecho & Lysaker, 2019) emerge through "synthesis and emergence of novelty between them" (Gomes, 2019; the emphasis is mine).

Non-additive systemic discontinuity as a basis for non-additive systemic continuity

Whereas additive discontinuity underlines and supports additive continuity by justifying and aiming at an assimilation of the external element which is decontextualized without being really integrated as a "participant"—so that parents feel like strangers in both their (now) unfamiliar family and school (Boulanger, 2019*c*; Molina, 2019)—, non-additive discontinuity 'guarantees' that the space of meeting and sharedness/consensus (systemic continuity) are dialogical and filled with tension. This is particularly apparent when non-additive continuity is conceived of as a bounded dynamic intersection of worlds. When **discontinuity is a condition for continuity**, making the school/family system inclusive implies including (as a dynamic whole) school and family, which are considered as polarities in dialogical or dialectical (when synthesis is produced) tension. However, additive continuity signals an *excluding form of inclusion*. What makes *inclusion inclusive* is the dialogical tension! Here *dissension* is a part of *consensus*, it's a *vital*—where organismic approaches (Boulanger, 2019*b*) are alive (Goethe, 1983; Whitehead, 1929/1978)—and dynamic element!

In these conditions, an inter-contextual balance (second type of dynamic intersection of worlds that is a form of non-additive continuity) is a constantly moving balance in which there is an oscillation between each voice's affirmative/responding and listening position constituting polarities in tension. Someone listening is in a receptive and active mode. Being situated at the bottom of a hierarchical semiotic system does not mean passivity and exclusion. Instead, this entails dialogicality. Agreement—that could be visualized when freezing the balance's movement at any moment—is part of a constant process of negotiation. Both polarities (the individual, their voices and positions, the systems, etc.) and each state of the balancing process (agreement) are *included* in a whole. An inclusive boundary (non-additive systemic

continuity) thus constitutes a dynamic boundary zone (non-additive systemic discontinuity). For inclusion to be inclusive, this boundary zone has to be permeable, which is a characteristic of non-additive systemic discontinuity.

As I have suggested, the boundary as a dynamic zone could means the state (position) of being inside the boundary. Individuals are *not restricted to* school or family nor excluded *from each of them.* They are neither completely in nor out of each system (Molina), but in the undetermined situation of being in between. This either means that individuals are in an alternative (Arciadiacono, 2019), third or hybrid zone (Rajala, 2016)—which could be informal zones in the community that is a shared zone between the school and the family—or that they are in a zone of transition, in a constant state of movement between school and family. I explain this second option elsewhere (Boulanger, 2017*a*, *b*) by referencing vagueness—with boundary case being neither here nor there but creating options—and indeterminacy as empty space (called an undetermined zone in Figure 3).
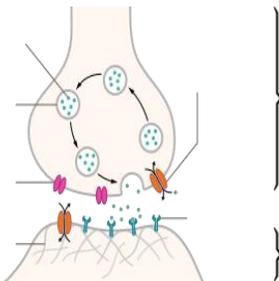

Figure 3. The synapse as an undetermined zone[11]

Metaphorically the space between two neurons is a synaptic zone—an undetermined and empty space— in which many dynamic processes occur through a process of polarization: this could be a dynamic balance between the school's actors listening (negative polarity), then speaking/responding (positive polarity) and the parents speaking/responding (positive polarity) then listening (negative polarity).

As a synaptic zone, the boundary itself is an open system interacting in an open fashion with its environment. From Gomes' (2019) perspective, being in-between, in an undetermined situation, makes it possible to generate a surplus of seeing and meaning. This could be an alternative situation that takes the form of a child wandering outside the school in a park (Boulanger, 2017*b*, 2018), deviating from the main task (Rajala, 2019), finding alternatives to dominant and reified discourses (Arciadiacono, 2019; Rajala, 2019), going inside themselves to construct persuasive discourses (Nakagawa, 2019), or moving and acting between school and family during transition (when going school and returning home) (Boulanger, 2017*b*). In the latter case, the boundary zone could be the community comprising informal and

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[11] While preparing this editorial, I've read Marsico's (2018) editorial in which she uses the same boundary metaphor. This reinforces the value of such a metaphor from both sides (my editorial and hers).

constructive spaces. In all these cases, being in a boundary situation implies and enables individuals to be in a constant state of movement—a dynamic balance—between proximity to, and distance from, school and family. The transfer and expansion of knowledge (Gomes, 2019; Mathiessen, 2019; Rajala, 2019), from school to home and from home to school (Fecho & Lysaker, 2019), happens through this tension between proximity and distance (Molina, 2019). This could occur in the community, for instance, when, after an exam, children returning home discuss the exam and thereby create conditions for learning without noticing it by synthesizing information (Boulanger, 2018), which implies a tension between proximity and distance to this content (Molina, 2019). Similarly to neuron traffic through synapses, entering information into a system, through the community as an interface, makes it possible to fill the school zone with family content and vice versa, like when water flows from one container to another (Boulanger, 2019c), thereby reaching a constant state of dynamic balance. This image grasps the idea of dynamic overlapping (non-additive continuity) through the transfer process.

The flow of waters from one recipient to another and the flow of information from one neuron to another generate a surplus (Gomes, 2019) or lead to an expansion (Rajala, 2019) that results in flexible forms. While a recipient is not a perfect metaphor because it entails a static and too spatial conception of the ecosystemic dynamic, the metaphors used show that non-additive continuity is constructed through tension (non-additive systemic discontinuity).

Whereas additive systemic discontinuity 'produces' static forms—in fact, it mainly *generates* a homeostatic process that leads to preserving the equilibrium and maintenance of the whole through feedback acting circularly and superficial change in the elements (level 1 change)—related to systemic additive continuity, non-additive discontinuity rather enables novelty to happen, thus changing the whole in a *transformative* fashion. This occurs because boundaries as dynamic zones are in constant movement (non-additive systemic discontinuity). As I mentioned, being open to the uncertain—instead of creating a false sense of security through pre-established "certainty"—nature of boundaries as dynamic and flexible zones entails tension that could be considered as a fuel enabling novelty.

CONCLUSION

The editorial tried to BRIDGE the concepts of systemic continuity and discontinuity—as boundary dynamics—with their epistemological foundations (additive and non-additivity). I started by referring to authors', educators', and political agents' tendency to *make the* systemic *discontinuous continuous*. I presented how researchers in this Special Issue offer alternatives, making the continuous discontinuous, that is dynamic. Yet I restricted myself to the SPATIAL aspect of continuity and discontinuity, and I did not delve into the sense ascribed to culture in the expression 'cultural continuity.' In this context, what is cultural? Could it ever be cultural if it is not temporal? The conclusion of the Special Issue will bring some light on the temporal aspect.

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