1 Introduction

In 1915 the magazine *Chile cinematográfico*, which specialised in cinema, published an article titled “La acción civilizadora del cinematógrafo” (The civilising action of cinema) (No. 2, 31–32).¹ The piece highlighted the cosmopolitan and transnational aspect of cinema, which was directly linked to the idea that the cinematograph allowed people around the world to learn about themselves through films. In the first instance, these films did not have to be documentary-style films (often a genre equated with education and learning) to be able to fulfil the educational aspect, because the stories they told and the spaces (natural or human made) they captured on camera said something about culture and how people lived in other countries. In this respect, the article also argued that cinema had challenged the stereotypes of certain nations, which were nothing more than falsifications of reality. Thus, cinema dismantled audiences’ state of ignorance, promoting tolerance and good morals. In other words, the civilising character of cinema offered the possibility of opening the minds of its viewers and “educating” them with respect to new realities. The idea that a civilised person was someone who had a moral character and who could distinguish between good and evil was a notion that appeared repeatedly in relation to questions about the educational capacity of cinema. This discussion on the civilised character of people was not exclusive to cinema but echoed broader societal debate and interrogation throughout the world.

The history of educational cinema is intertwined with ideas about prohibition and civility. The discussions around these ideas were very prominent during the first half of the twentieth century, particularly during the interwar period. This was a conversation that was happening beyond national borders, and it did not depend on the size of national cinematographic industries. The focus of the discussion was the content of the films being watched by global audiences. In the specialised cinema press, the arguments fluctuated between thinking of cinema solely as entertainment and the possibility of it being an

¹ All translations into English were done by the author. The author is grateful to Fondecyt Postdoctoral Project No 3190267 for their support.
educational tool. Given the strong relation between cinema and society, it was frequent to find these questions linked to those related to ideas of censorship, particularly in the specialised cinema press. The need to regulate cinema went beyond any political position. Both left-wing and right-wing groups thought that cinema might be a tool that had the ability to influence the masses because it could mirror reality. The issue of realism was also linked to the belief that watching immoral or criminal scenes could ruin people’s minds, particularly people whose minds were already thought of as feeble (mainly women and children), pushing them towards a life of indecency. Therefore, controlling what audiences watched became fundamental to the project of creating better citizens. Scholars like Orellana and Martínez have stated that since the nineteenth century, the school in Chile played a similar “civilising” role in relation to the working classes, aiming to “rescue them from ignorance” (2010, 25).

At the same time, during the interwar period, education became an indispensable tool that encouraged peace internationally because of its ability to generate dialogue through mutual understanding (Pita González 2014, 115). The discussion around the educational character of cinema focused on its capacity as an exceptional medium that was believed capable of promoting ideas about internationalism and cultural cooperation. To respond to these preoccupations and contribute to the development and strengthening of intellectual cooperation, the League of Nations (LoN) supported the creation of the International Educational Cinematographic Institute (IECI), which was based in Rome (Italy) and active between 1928 and 1937. Benito Mussolini’s government, which was in the middle of its ventennio fascista (1922–1943), recognised the potential of cinema as a communication tool for the masses (Sorlin 2007, 111–117). Besides Italy, countries like Germany, France, and Switzerland had also set themselves up as major defenders of educational cinema. Italy turned itself into a key actor in educational cinema by financially backing the foundation of this cinema institute (FRMAE 242QO-1889; Druick 2007, 83). Although in spirit the IECI aimed towards internationalism understanding among nations and peoples, the funding of the IECI could be understood as a cultural diplomacy strategy (and as soft power) on Italy’s behalf, one that was aimed to create a strategy that fitted the LoN’s aims.

Censorship is understood to involve the efforts of local or national governments to ensure that society remains principled and virtuous and operates within acceptable (or decent) moral parameters (often falling under the Catholic conception of morals).

In 1925 Mussolini decided that the state was to oversee the Istituto Luce, a small cinematographic enterprise that became a powerful propaganda centre with its own newsreel and also produced documentaries and photography. For more information on the Istituto Luce, see Lussana (2018).
In this context, cultural internationalism became a central concept, gaining a wider scope beyond Europe and North America (Iriye 1997, 51). The LoN was designed to be an institution that could secure and promote cooperation as well as preserve peace among a wide number of nations (Iriye 1997, 57). However, for cultural internationalism to have an impact, mutual understanding needed to be the base, and cultural elites needed to play an important role by developing and strengthening a network of active cooperation, turning them into what Iriye calls “modern crusaders” (1997, 60–61). These cultural elites were meant to be a group that transcended the culture of one nation (Iriye 1997, 60). In other words, the project depended on the ability of cultural/intellectual actors to form cultural international networks and to move cultural goods across national borders. Agents of cultural internationalism were inspired by a certain promise of universality and collective improvement that could be reached through developing and thinking about culture being part of an international body, such as the IECI.

This chapter explores the exchanges between the IECI and the Chilean government and the subsequent development of the local Instituto de Cinematografía Educativa (Educational Cinematographic Institute, ICE). The aim is to discuss the ways in which international dynamics informed local policies, taking a life of their own by shedding light on how Chile translated into the local context the ideas and projects of cultural internationalism that were put forward by the IECI. Moreover, by focusing on a Latin American nation that joined the LoN in 1920, this chapter aims to include this region in the discussion of cultural internationalism from the perspective of a country’s agency and to think about the ways in which nations used and appropriated ideas that came from supranational organisations, such as the League of Nations and the IECI, developing their own local versions of these international projects. To this end, I will discuss two case studies: first, the role of Chilean Gabriela Mistral within the IECI, and second, the development of Chile’s ICE. Both cases allow us to understand the involvement of Chile in the international project of educational cinema from different scopes (international and national).

In this respect, one concept that is useful to understand these international dynamics is that of soft power (Nye 2004), which is often defined as the ability of nations and other groups to exert power abroad through attraction rather than force. In many cases this attraction came in the form of cultural displays. In this sense, soft power helps to analyse the ways in which nations aim to take part in the international arena, particularly thinking on the way they are perceived internationally. This chapter will navigate the link between soft power and cultural relations, by placing the focus on cultural diplomacy, defined as a “promotion abroad of ‘national culture’ and interactive international cultural exchange” (Gienow-Hecht 2010, 10). Moreover, and particularly with the case
of Mistral, cultural diplomacy will entail an attempt to promote the culture of a
country (and/or a region) while identifying as part of it (Gienow-Hecht 2010,
10). In this case, diplomatic activities carried out by actors could attempt to ac-
complish a change in the way a country or region was perceived.

The chapter will focus on the period between 1928 and 1937, which was
when the IECI was active. The archival approach includes using data from the
United Nations archive (UN), the Archives of the French Ministry of Foreign Af-
fairs (series 242QO) (FRMAE), and the Administration National Archive in Chile
(series MEDU and MREL) (ARNAD), as well as correspondence preserved in the
Digital National Library of Chile (DNLC). The annals of the Universidad de
Chile, the institution which housed the Chilean Cinema Institute, are held digi-
tally on the University’s website, and Cine Educativo, the ICE’s publication, is
also available online thanks to the digital archive Memoria Chilena (MC).

2 The IECI and Gabriela Mistral

The IECI was created “to encourage the production, dissemination and ex-
change of educational films in order to promote international understanding
among the world’s peoples” (UN, C-694-M-291-1930-XII). As part of its work, the
IECI actively collaborated with many of the LoN’s sections, producing educa-
tional films for the Health Section, for example (Tollardo 2016, 32). The Institute
also served as an office for the collection of information about educational
movies, associations, and organisations that were involved in educational films
around the world, as well as information about practices used in cinema in ed-
ucational settings. An example of the type of information being collected is re-
vealed in a survey letter sent in late 1928 by Luciano de Feo, Director of the
Institute, asking the different countries to help to collect data on cinema legis-
lation and cinema industries (FRMAE 242QO-1895, 1). According to Zoë Druick,
the IECI was “extremely active in the realms of both film studies and interna-
tional politics” (2007, 80). The IECI also published several journals, the most
important one being The International Review (RICE), which was intended to be
the medium through which the Institute could communicate its day-to-day ac-
tivities and those it promoted (Alted Vigil 2016, 25). Perhaps one of the main
accomplishments of the IECI was securing circulation of educational films with-
out having to pay customs duties (UN, C-350-M-163-1934-XII). This project was
the biggest and most ambitious the IECI put together and came to fruition after
years of research and study, gathering the support of film producers and
distributors (FRMAE, 242QO-1895). The project even surpassed the Institute’s existence.\footnote{This IECI law project was intertwined with the foundation of the Venice Film Festival in 1932, which Luciano de Feo created and organised (Tollardo 2016, 32). There are two issues that stem from this festival and the IECI’s involvement: (1) the way in which “educational films” were being conceptualised in the law project and how that would be read in the context of a film festival, as it would mean an “incursion upon the realm of fiction movies, with which the institute started to deal from 1934,” where the idea of education was extended to also include “cultural films” (R4016-5B-8169-2450); (2) how festivals would change the circulation of films, particularly because the Venice Film Festival was taking advantage of the network and circulation that the IECI had developed (Tollardo 2016, 33).}

Akira Iriye has stated that the IECI was “one of the most successful interwar experiments in cultural cooperation” (1997, 71). One of the reasons why the IECI was so successful was its ability to reach many members of the League of Nations, as well as to extend invitations to participate to states that were not, at the time, active members of the international body, such as Mexico (Herrera León 2009, 172). However, scholars like Susan Pedersen have stated that the efforts of these “technical” sections of de LoN were “more symbolically significant than effective” (2007, 1109). Looking at Latin America, and Chile in particular, can help to understand such a claim.

The first time the International Educational Cinematographic Institute was mentioned in the Chilean archives was in the memoires of the Eighth Assembly and Council of the League of Nations, held in September 1927. The information was sent, translated into Spanish, to the foreign minister by the Chilean delegation (and dated November 1927) (ARNAD, MREL, V. 2637, No. 112/26). The document briefly described how the Italian government was inspired by “opinions presented in different meetings and international congresses on the application of cinema to the intellectual education of nations, as well as its use as an auxiliary system for teaching in all public schools” (ARNAD, MREL, V. 2637, 74–75). The Italian proposal was unanimously supported by the Assembly, and the Italian representative Vittorio Scialoja) was invited to present organisational details and draft statutes at a later meeting. A draft project regarding statutes was presented in January 1928 by Vittorio Scialoja (UN, C-63-1928-XII_EN) and discussed throughout the year (FRMAE, 242QO-1890).\footnote{The director of the International Labour Bureau and the Committee for the Protection of Children were involved in the process of developing the statutes.} One of the main ideas that was constantly reinforced during the discussions was how important the IECI was, as a medium, for the idea of collaboration not only between the different Institutes and Commissions that made up the LoN (such as the International Institute of Intellectual Cooperation) but also between the different nations...
The fact that Italy moved quicker than other states that were interested in the subject by proposing to fund and create the IECI, revealed that educational cinema was indeed a tool for Italy’s soft power, and a way to place themselves among the nations with important roles within the LoN. After the discussions regarding the statutes had been settled, the IECI held its first meeting between November 5th and November 9th, 1928, in Rome (UN, C-573-1928-XII_EN).

The members of the IECI’s governing body were Professor Alfredo Rocco (Italy), who became the president of the Institute in his role as the Italian representative on the International Committee on Intellectual Cooperation (ICIC); Professor Gonzague de Reynold (Switzerland), also a member of the ICIC; Professor Ragnar Knoph (Norway), a member of the Sub-Committee on Intellectual Rights; Don Pedro Sangro y Ros de Olano (Spain), a member of the Child Welfare Committee; Dr. R.P. Paranjpye (India), former Minister of Education in Bombay and a member of the Council of the Secretary of State for India, London; and Gabriela Mistral (Chile), former principal of a girls’ college and author (UN, R2229-5B-7316-3135). The IECI’s governing body unanimously decided to name Luciano De Feo Director of the Institute, who had many administrative and technical qualifications, particularly as the former director of L’Unione Cinematografica Educativa (The Educational Film Union), also known as Istituto Luce (Light Institute) for its Italian acronym.

The inclusion of Gabriela Mistral as a member should not be taken lightly. She had previously been director of the Section for Literary Relations at the International Institute of Intellectual Cooperation between 1926 and 1928, although this previous role was not mentioned in this context. Following the list of members present in the first session of the IECI, she was there as “Director of a School of young girls. Woman of Letters,” meaning an educator first and an author second (UN, R2229-5B-7316-3135). Gabriela Mistral, the pseudonym of Lucila Godoy Alcayaga (1889–1957), was born in the town of Vicuña, in the north of Chile. She started teaching in the early years of the twentieth century in a small school near La Serena (north of Chile). In 1910 she was certified as a teacher by the Escuela Normal No. 1 in Santiago and worked in many towns across Chile. Her activity as an author began in the early twentieth century, when she wrote op-eds and articles for different local newspapers while still living in the north of the country. In December 1914 she won Santiago’s Juegos Florales (Floral) with Sonetos de la Muerte. This was the beginning of a very productive writing career. In 1918 she

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6 The Floral Games were a spring celebration that used to be organised by the Student Federation of the University of Chile.
became director of the Girls’ High School in Punta Arenas (the capital city of Magallanes, Chile’s southernmost region). Between 1922 and 1923 she was invited by José Vasconcelos, Director of Mexico’s Secretariat of Public Education, to take part in the design of the educational reform, in which she included documentary films in her work as a teacher in the rural schools in Mexico (Orellana and Zegers 2008, 103–120). In 1923 the University of Chile awarded her the title of teacher of Spanish. In 1927 the Chilean government proposed her as liaison between Chile and IIC as she already was “part of the committee in charge of the Ibero-American collection” (Dumont 2018, 62). From the 1930s onwards she worked as a consul in different countries, a role that was given to her for life in 1935 by the Chilean government. Her biggest achievement as a writer was receiving the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1945. As Nicola Miller has pointed out, Mistral followed “the standard women’s routes into the intellectual arena, working as a schoolteacher and publishing poetry in local periodicals, gradually building up a national and then a regional reputation” (2005, 135).

In a letter sent to the Chilean minister of education dated October 4, 1929, Mistral defined her role within the IECI in the following terms: “in the Institute of Educational Cinema I represent my country in the first place, and Spanish America second” (ARNAD, MEDU, V. 5463, No. 5411). This idea offers an interesting answer to the question posed in relation to cultural internationalism about whether intellectuals as agents of peace and dialogue could work effectively beyond national borders. Mistral had a clear sense of who she was representing and had established hierarchies within that representation. Something that becomes clear is that she saw herself as part of a cultural network where Spanish America could be a key actor. This claim is not a minor one. Juliette Dumont (2018) has pointed out that Latin American countries had an interest and desire to join international organisations, such as the LoN, because it was seen as a way to integrate international (European) networks. It would also translate into the “possibility of conferring a certain recognition on States which, not having the status of power, aspired likewise to exist on the international scene, to appear on the ‘planisphere of intellectual life’” (2018, 55). To this respect, Mistral wrote in 1927 about the need for the region to contest Europe’s “superficial judgements” on Spanish America, by securing “information about herself that [was] frequent, orderly and honest” (Mistral, El Mercurio, 13-07-1927 in Dumont 2018, 55). Thus, by situating herself within the Chilean and

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7 For more details, see https://www.uchile.cl/portal/presentacion/historia/grandes-figuras/premios-nacionales/literatura/6670/gabriela-mistral (21/01/2022).
Spanish American cultural network, she was aiming to work towards bringing down those damaging judgements in her capacity as cultural agent. In 1933 Mistral was re-elected as a member of the IECI. The information that follows helps to understand how seriously she took her role within the IECI. Although she was appointed Chilean consul in Madrid, the new appointment had its perks, as the Chilean government had given her permission to be absent from Spain at any time she needed to be, and this allowed her to attend the sessions of the IECI “more punctually” (DNLC, AE0020105, 1). Overall, the letter shows a strong commitment to and involvement with the aims of the Institute and its goals, a commitment that is further reflected in Luciano De Feo’s reply, where not only the latter mentions how pleased he is about her reelection, but also how grateful he is to her “for all the useful propaganda [she is] making in [the IECI’s] favour” (DNLC, AE0020817).

The other letters between De Feo and Mistral focus on general information regarding activities of the Institute. However, there are a couple of letters that are worth exploring in terms of the IECI’s attempt to exert soft power. One letter, from December 1934, points out the need for the Institute to use more propaganda of the “objective and expositive” kind so that the Institute’s activities and work would come to be more widely known (DNLC, AE0020843). The reasoning behind the need for such propaganda was the perception that there were many misconceptions about and critiques of the work of the IECI precisely because its work had limited circulation. A possible explanation has to do with the fact that the Institute was based in a fascist country, so some people in liberal democracies might have been more suspicious of what was produced by the Institute. As a solution, De Feo proposed that Mistral should put together a diagram showing the activities that the Institute had organised so far and the work currently being developed (DNLC, AE0020843), possibly due to her being a well-known diplomatic figure and author. The plan was to circulate this information in periodicals to generate positive propaganda concerning the Institute and, more particularly, about educational cinema. This mention of propaganda links to the perceived need to reach a wider audience with information about the IECI’s activities and create “favourable conditions for the development of production and the use of this kind of film” (UN, R3982-5B-6704-646, 55). Among the elements listed as means of propaganda was “the formation and extension of a whole network of corresponding bodies of the I.C.E.,” as well as “moral support for the constitution

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8 For more on Mistral and the tensions between Europe and Latin America within the LoN see Pernet 2015, 135–154 in McPherson and Wehrli 2015.
of National Institutes of Educational Cinema, or by our entry into immediate relations with these Institutes” (UN, R3982-5B-6704-646, 55).

Mistral was very aware of the relevance of communicating the importance of education cinema in periodicals as a work of propaganda. In March 1930 she published the article “Cinema documental para América” (“Documentary Cinema for America”) in the journal Atenea (1924-present). The piece conducted a geographical and spatial tour through the Americas, poetically discussing the landscape that makes the continent: the cordillera and the different types of plains (llano-selvoso, llano-estepa, llano-pradera, llano-jardín) [plain-jungle, plain-steppe, plain-prairie, plain-garden]. Once the psychological landscape was set, she moved on to discuss cinema and what cinema could and would do for America: help to organise it and to present it to others. By drawing on the same criterion – the idea of movies as a tool to open minds to new realities – documentary cinema was called on to show the possibilities of what people could watch, and in this case,

documentary cinema will verify our definite admission in the European mind, and it will be superior as an informative force than all written propaganda, almost always trivial or ruined by exaggeration. It will say our excellencies without the need of hyperbole and without the possibility of make-believe. (Godoy Alcayaga 1930, n/p)

The article then moves on to discuss the IECI and what it could do to benefit the continent. The main element that Mistral signals is that the Institute could do what no other European institution has done before: “excite businesses to graphically disseminate our continent; (. . .) and purify, with the sole increment of geographic and historical documentary cinema, the plague of the stupid or perverse cinema that floods our markets” (Godoy Alcayaga 1930, n/p).9 For Mistral, the topics of these documentary films were going to be enough to fulfil the latter function, since American topics, landscapes, customs, and history were sufficiently colourful to compete with other types of films. In this sense, the poetess goes back to the idea that she was not only a representative of Chile but also of Spanish America as a whole, which is the landscape that she discusses in this piece.

The correspondence between De Feo and Mistral (1933–1935) is an example of the cultural mediation role that figures like the two of them could play in the context of the League of Nations project and how it got translated into local

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9 Mistral names the type of cinema that she perceives as stupid or perverse counter-education or counter-school cinema, which was, mainly, the kind of cinema that told stories about famous crimes, functioning more like a school for crime that did nothing other than corrupt the masses (Orellana and Zegers 2008, 177)
projects in particular countries. The letters showcase Mistral as a cultural mediator who was considered an expert on the subject, as well as someone personable who was able to develop work, which was planned, strategic, and professional. From her position, which she defined very clearly as being a Chilean representative first but also a representative of Spanish America, she could help to build relations between these geographical spaces and the IECI’s projects. As a cultural mediator, Mistral used her official roles to create active cultural networks that would benefit what she identified as her main duty of representation: Chile and Spanish America. Thus, Mistral’s work, as discussed through the correspondence with De Feo and her articles, is understood as that of a cultural actor who was active across “cultural and geographical borders, occupying strategic positions within large networks and being the carrier of cultural transfer” (Roig-Sanz and Meylaerts 2018, 3). Following Nicola Miller (2005), through her work, Mistral was able to challenge the roles often played by women in the 1930s by positioning herself as a key figure in the LoN because of her knowledge on education and as an author. She developed her role as an education expert, an intellectual, and a diplomat, filling positions that would have made her male Latin American counterparts envious. Moreover, her devotion to cultural and political life, which can be appreciated when examining her work, was part of her construction of herself as a public intellectual according to her own understanding of what being an intellectual meant (Miller 2005, 137). This understanding is prevalent in her Atenea article, where she develops a description that is both technical and poetic, appealing to knowledge and the cognitive character of the senses through her language skills and highlighting the possibility of using documentary film in education. By enacting a different approach to intellectual life, she was able to shape her roles as she saw fit, which is illustrated in the letters.

3 The Chilean Instituto de Cinematografía Educativa

In the Latin American context, Chile was perhaps one of the most constant members to take part in the LoN, and IECI in particular, within the region (Dumont 2018; McPherson and Wehrli 2015, 3). Chile did not have an active cinema industry and produced only a few films per year, which were the result of private initiatives (Ossa Coo 1971, 29–30). The Chilean government founded the Instituto de Cinematografía Educativa (ICE) in December 1929 (La Nación 21 Dec 1929), which initially depended on the Ministry of Education and was later set under the management of the Faculty of Fine Arts of the University of Chile.
However, the project of the ICE began a year before, in 1928, and it had a link to the reformulation and modernisation of the Section of School Decorations and Projections (Álvarez et al. 2014, 24). This project was part of a wider reorganisation of the education system carried out by Carlos Ibáñez del Campo, a young military officer who came to power by force in the second half of the 1920s, becoming the Head of State. Ibáñez carried out many reforms in the state, all of them aiming to establish more social and political control, and education played a big part in this project (Correa et al. 2001, 103–107). One of the main elements of the reform of the education system was the reorganisation of artistic education at a national level, which came to include the use of cinema in the classroom (Serrano et al. 2018, 271–289).10

A direct precedent for the work of the ICE was the implementation of fixed images (paintings, murals, and prints) in schools from the 1880s, which showed the efforts made by Chilean education officials and teachers to follow the main pedagogical trends coming from Europe and the United States (Orellana and Martínez 2010, 27). By 1911, reports coming from authorities linked to the Ministry of Public Education were already discussing the advantages of using “luminous projections” in class, seeing doing so as “a higher form of teaching,” for example using magic lanterns (Alvarez, Colleoni and Horta 2014, 22–23). The use of visual didactic tools was part of the objectives set for the Section of School Decorations and Projections, created in January 1913, and was the first attempt to institutionalise working with images in the classroom (Alvarez, Colleoni and Horta 2014, 23). Between 1924 and 1925 the Ministry of Public Education bought cinematographic projectors from the Krupp-Enemann-Kino-Apparate-G.m.b.H for the Department of Primary Education, which were “the most appropriate models for teaching, because they are easy to use and have no risk of film inflammation” (ARNAD, MEDU, Vol. 4737). Besides the technical arguments, there was the idea that the projection of images had become an important element when teaching “in all of its stages,” facilitating the teacher’s job because images presented a “quick, clear, and enjoyable way to imprint lessons in the student’s minds” (ARNAD, MEDU, Vol. 4737).

However, examples like those just mentioned seemed to be isolated attempts to integrate moving images into the classroom and were often hindered by budgetary issues. The ICE, as a project, was the result of the modernisation of the Section of School Decorations and Projections undertaken by Ibáñez del Campo’s

10 From the 1930s until the 1973 coup d’etat, the Universidad de Chile became the main institution in charge of cultural diplomacy (Dumont 2018).
regime. As part of the educational reform, art needed to be oriented towards the material and intellectual progress of the country. According to Alvarez, Colleoni, and Horta (2014), the body that became the ICE began to be developed in 1928. In 1929 the Ministry of Education gave administrative powers held by the Section of School Decorations and Projections to the University of Chile, and the Section was renamed the Instituto de Cinematografía Educativa (2014, 28). In December 1929 the Ministry of Education attached funding to the ICE, which allowed it to have laboratories and workshops and to produce educational films (2014, 28). The ICE was part of the newly inaugurated School of Fine Arts of the University of Chile, which was created by decree in December 1929 (ARNAD, MEDU, Vol. 5488, Decree No. 6348). The school was to be the centre for artistic instruction in three different fields, represented by different organisations: the Academy of Fine Arts, the National Conservatory of Music, the Department of Artistic Extension, and the Institute of Educational Cinematography. The regulations under which the ICE was created stated that its main task was to “progressively implant in all educational establishments in the country the use of the cinematograph and other projection systems” (Anales Universidad de Chile, 1930, 702), making it dependent on the university (administratively and economically) but with general freedom to carry out its own projects. This freedom was permitted because of the Estatuto Orgánico Universitario (University Organic Statute), which gave the university autonomy and freedom from the government’s interference; this meant that the university had responsibility for the arts and the administration of them and that the state or external institutions could not intervene (Anales Universidad de Chile 1929, 1469–1498). From February 1931, however, the administration of the ICE became dependent on the University of Chile’s Faculty of Philosophy and Educational Sciences (Anales Universidad de Chile 1931, 135), which meant linking the Institute directly with the space within the university that involved thinking about how to teach and studying how to teach, which involved a move away from the arts.

Despite the link with the IECI, the Chilean ICE was a small organisation. The job roles it included were as follows: director, submanager, machine manager, laboratory manager, two operators, a mechanic-electrician, a copy manager, five lab workers, and a motorcycle rider (Anales Universidad de Chile 1930, 206). By the end of 1930 the following jobs were added: photography technician, cartoonist, secretary, doorman. The type of work titles and the number of people required indicate that it was a small operation, but it had the capacity to produce and develop its own films. Information found in the annals of the university suggest that there was very little extra money to spend, and that any personnel or budgetary change needed to be approved by the Central University, giving the institute very little leeway in this respect. Maintenance was
key when it came to artefacts and materials, particularly projectors. In a short note, teachers are asked to please be careful with the De Vry projectors, as the lightbulbs were very delicate and broke easily, and each new one required was expensive for the Institute (Cine Educativo, 1932, No. 2, 3).

Armando Rojas became the director of the ICE as well as the main actor within the local Chilean education cinema scene, and his films were closely associated with the ICE’s work. Among the information that can be found about the Instituto de Cinematografía Educativa, there are three newsletters published by the ICE and called Cine Educativo (Educational Cinema), which are dated from 1932 through to 1935. The aim of the publication was to “encourage the development, in Chile, of cultural film and the popularisation of scientific films” (UN, R4016-5B-8169-2450, 1). Besides these publications, there are a few of the films produced by the ICE available today, mainly those directed by Armando Rojas. These films are focused more on the modernisation of the city. In her inventory of documentaries, Alicia Vega (2006) includes Educación física (1929), El cerro Santa Lucía (1930), Santiago (1933), and Estadio Nacional (1938). The focus on the topic of modernisation and the city was not uncommon in Latin American film in the first decades of the twentieth century. City symphonies became a popular genre that allowed viewers to watch and experience through film one day in the life of a city. Scholars like Pablo Corro (2021, 130–131) have mentioned that there is a corpus of films on geography and landscape (in the vein that Mistral encouraged in her Atenea article). Corro (2021), in the same way as Alicia Vega (2006) and www.cinechile.cl, has established that the films that focused more on these other topics were La pesca en alta mar (1941), Antártida chilena (1943), La Tirana (1944), and El hombre y la montaña (1953). A more complete list can be found in Vergara, Krebs and Morales’s Sucesos recobrados (2021).

During 1931 there were 6,207 screenings of films in classrooms, films that were provided exclusively by the ICE and were associated with the pedagogical plan that had been prepared for a particular lesson. This is not a minor detail – the use of cinema was deliberate and was organised accordingly, with skills and learning objectives determined by teachers. These films were shown in 80 public schools. To carry out these projections, the ICE had 79 projectors (MC, Cine Educativo, 1932 No. 2, 1). During 1932 the ICE wanted to extend its work further by starting a “crusade of cultural dissemination through popular neighbourhoods of Santiago and nearby towns of the province” (MC, Cine Educativo, 1932 No. 2, 4). The plan was to use a truck equipped with everything to show the films (including a generator in case of a lack or shortage of electricity). The exhibitions were going to include synchronised music and a conference that were played through speakers.
A year later the ICE reported the figures shown in Tab. 1 regarding the screenings of the films.

**Tab. 1:** Statistical for the ICE, 1932 and 1935.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1932</th>
<th>1935</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Working projectors</td>
<td>79</td>
<td>93</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Classes using cinema in Santiago</td>
<td>6,259</td>
<td>10,212</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Classes using cinema in Provinces</td>
<td>1,017</td>
<td>2,482</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Classes using cinema in private schools in Santiago</td>
<td>243</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Private exhibitions and before corporations</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>249</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total of exhibition in the Republic</td>
<td>7,333</td>
<td>13,186</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New teachers with membership card</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total of teachers with membership card</td>
<td>182</td>
<td>212</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New films in circulation</td>
<td>12</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total film copies in circulation</td>
<td></td>
<td>312</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The teacher that used cinema the most in their class, exhibitions</td>
<td>554</td>
<td>1,164</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

_Source: MC, Cine Educativo 1932, No. 3, 2; Cine Educativo 1935, No. 4, n/p._

By 1933 the number of pages in the newsletter had increased from 4 to 24, and it included long articles and photos of the organisation’s activities and films (and in 1935 the newsletter reached 50 pages). The articles were more varied and included descriptions of the experiences of teachers who were choosing to use film in their classes. The newsletter also included (as did No. 2) a series of articles about experiences from abroad with educational film, as well as news about educational film in other countries.

**Tab. 2:** Number of screenings organised by the ICE from 1930 to 1934.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Screenings shown in</th>
<th>1930</th>
<th>1931</th>
<th>1932</th>
<th>1933</th>
<th>1934</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Screenings shown in 1930</td>
<td>2,487</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Screenings shown in 1931</td>
<td></td>
<td>6,207</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Screenings shown in 1932</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>7,333</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Screenings shown in 1933</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>10,935</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Screenings shown in 1934</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>13,186</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

_Source: MC, Cine Educativo 1935, No. 4, n/p._
None of the films were longer than 10 minutes and the aim was to make them relevant to the current educational programmes. The ICE also used foreign films, making sure that the themes fit the curriculum. The idea was for teachers to be able to manipulate a film as much as they needed to get the most out of the experience of integrating moving images into the classroom (*Cine Educativo*, 1932 No. 3, n/p). Moreover, there is a guide from 1931 in the annals of the university that was developed for teachers who wanted to integrate moving images into their classes. This “Guía confidencial” (Confidential Guide) was to be accompanied by the “Guía para el alumno” (Guide for students) (*Anales Universidad de Chile* 1931, 1:3, 359). Both guides were aimed to be companions to films and to spark debates and discussion in the classroom.

One of the main objectives of the ICE was to be able to expand beyond the schools located in the capital into the ones located provinces, which it was slowly able to do. Moreover, the circulation of information allowed the ICE to compare and contrast its activities with those of other similar organisations around the world. It could use examples of what worked in other countries to work out whether those experiences could be replicated in Chile.

One major issue had to do with the way educational films were being classified in Chile and in its censorship laws. At the beginning of this chapter, censorship was discussed in relation to the interest that the IECI had in the different ways in which cinema was regulated around the world. This was particularly relevant in the case of Chile, because once a national censorship law was passed in 1925 (Law No. 558), censorship and the application of it became the responsibility of the Ministry of Education. The main classifications that could be given to films were “rejected,” “suitable for people aged 15 and older,” and “suitable for adults and people under 15 years old.” In 1928, with Carlos Ibáñez del Campo as head of state, a tougher and more restrictive Censorship Regulation was passed. Besides making certain amendments to Law No. 558, it added two classifications to the existing three: “not suitable for ladies” and “approved only for scientific centres” (*Reglamento de Censura Cinematográfica* 1928, 628–629). Scientific centres were defined as “those in which this scientific quality predominates over any other and which are exempt from any spirit of profit; these centres will be able to exhibit in private the films approved for them” (629). These new regulations kept the focus on the moral side of censorship, and the only distinction that could make the law flexible was if a film was classified as “scientific.”

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11 The Censorship Board was to be funded by cinema businessmen. It was to be based in Santiago and composed of a director of libraries, who would preside over it, plus two people appointed by the president of Chile and two people chosen by the Municipality of Santiago.
would have allowed films that focused on themes deemed inappropriate to be projected in schools because they were labelled as scientific (thus, having an educational character), highlight the relevance of the educational character of films over sheer morality, by understanding that education was a way of civilising and moralising.

Another issue was law decree 337, passed in May 1931, which stated that films of scientific dissemination, geography and history, natural sciences, hygiene, physical education, pure art and application, industries, customs, vocational, and of a general instructive character will be considered cultural. The Censorship Board will rule over the films that fulfil these requisites. (Anales Universidad de Chile 1931, 395)

The director of the Institute needed to advise the boards when it came to what the law defined as cultural films. However, this law decree was not perceived as positive within the ICE, but as one that needed to be abolished, which was set as one of its aspirations in 1935. Another of the aspirations in the same year was to reform the Censorship Law to allow “the intervention in its functions by competent educational authorities,” especially when it came to the classification of films for children under 15 (Cine Educativo, 1935, No. 4, 1). However, one of the things that is worth highlighting is that, thematically, the decree had the same areas of focus as those the IECI had defined as subjects to which film could really contribute in terms of the pedagogy in the classroom: geography, sciences, arts, languages, history, and maths (Taillibert 1999, 183–188). Thus, linking ideas on topics in which cinema was a particularly helpful tool when it came to the classroom.

A notion that can help understand the relationship between the ICE and the IECI is that of “translation,” which is taken from Barbara Cassin’s (2014) work on untranslatables. The notion of translation provides an interesting take on the exercise of translating ideas from one part of the world to another, especially when those ideas become policies and cultural practices. Language has its own rules and nuances, making the national specificity relevant when thinking about the role language plays in everyday life (Cassin 2014, xix). In light of this, and building from the idea that “translation” means “to lead across” (Cassin 2014, 1139), the way in which ideas travel and are introduced and adapted to a new context through a process of translation from the original context (in this case the IECI) to a new local setting (Chile and the ICE) also presents a supranational project that is communicated and translated into that new reality in which these ideas need to be embedded. Like language, these ideas are not designations of the same thing, but different perspectives and visions of the world (Cassin 2014, xix). In this sense, the dialogue between the supranational
and the national elements are key to understanding the process and conditions in which the ICE was developed.

The creation and inauguration of Chile’s ICE was not carried out in coordination with the IECI. However, by June 1930 (six months after its inauguration), the IECI had already been made aware of Chile’s local efforts concerning educational cinematography through the Information Section of the LoN. In a letter signed by Carlos García Palacios (a Chilean national working in the Information Section) and sent to Pierre Comert, head of the section, it is confirmed that the Council of the University of Chile had approved a project for “the organisation of the Chilean Institute of Educational Cinematography, a project recently presented by Director, Mr. Armando Rojas Castros.” The correspondence includes a clipping from the newspaper *El Mercurio*, and says “I think that the Intellectual Cooperation Section or the Institute of Educational Cinema in Rome would have interest in knowing the future organisation of this new Institute” (UN, R2239-5B-7056-20400). The information quickly reached Luciano de Feo, who confirmed that the IECI was already in contact with the Chilean Institute.

Although the ICE emerged from the efforts of the state and a university, it was designed to be a transnational collaborative enterprise and needed to be in contact with similar institutes throughout the world (Anales Universidad de Chile 1930, 703). This contact was vital because it allowed for a circulation of films within countries besides the films they could produce, which were limited to those that the ICE was not able to get through exchange (Anales Universidad de Chile 1930, 703). In a way, the ICE worked both as a production space, as well as a distributor and exhibitor for Chilean schools. Thus, the Chilean institute was thought of as part of a wider international cultural network of collaboration, in the spirit of the LoN and the IECI, that followed the ideal of cultural internationalism and intellectual cooperation that the LoN had put in place for this type of organisation. A clear example of the latter ideal was the list in the report given by Luciano de Feo to the Section of Information in the LoN’s Secretariat in October 1933; he listed the activities of the corresponding national bodies of the institute in the different countries it was part of, stating that, “[t]he Chilean Institute Educational Cinematography of the University of Santiago, our corresponding institution, works actively” (UN, R3982-5B-6704-646, 13).

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12 The newspaper *El Mercurio* (1900–present) was printed in Santiago, Chile and had the largest circulation of all newspapers, making it one of the most important in the country. This is still an important publication, and it has a conservative and right-wing political inclination.

13 Although there is a University of Santiago, the correspondence is clearly referring to the University of Chile, where the ICE was based. The mention of Santiago rather than Chile in relation to the university appears in several other documents.
The connection with the IECI was further confirmed in a note prepared by the IECI in November 1933 regarding its relations with Latin American nations. The document highlights the relevance of working on creating centres of culture and cinematographic propaganda and the relevance of the local actions of these centres, particularly when it came to the topics of language (Spanish) and “traditions of the race,” as well as “the formation of committees in connection with the IECI,” which are intended to work “in favour of a greater diffusion of the cultural and educational film” (UN, R4016-5B-8169-2450, 1). The first local centre that is mentioned is the Chilean ICE, and it is stated that “in agreement with the authorities of the Chilean government, the Institute for Educational Cinematography at the University of Santiago, directed by Mr. Rojas Castro, was recognised as an official organ of the IECI by the Chilean Republic” (R4016-5B-8169-2450, 1). The two institutes began working together in early 1932.

The ICE’s active link with the International Educational Cinematographic Institute was always mentioned in the ICE’s newsletters, and it was stressed that the local institute was its representative in Chile. The ICE included a summary of the work done by the IECI during its first phase (Cine Educativo, 1935, No. 4, 44–46). One of the elements that had been mentioned as key to the success of the international project of educational cinema was “favouring and supporting the constitution of national centres of coordination, which meant the best medium to obtain a wide international cooperation” (Cine Educativo, 1935, No. 4, 45). The acknowledgement of the relevance of international cooperation emphasised ideas about both cultural intermediaries and cultural internationalism, as educational cinema was seen as a project that needed networks to be set in place for it to fully work. Although the ICE was not created as part of the IECI, it was soon integrated into that network. Moreover, the IECI did not dictate which local institutes should carry out their projects but invited them to be part of the international institute. This meant that Armando Rojas Castro could develop the institute so that it fitted more closely with what suited Chile best, while still linked to the work being done in Rome.

The International Educational Cinematographic Institute was closed in 1937, which meant that from 1938 onwards, Chile’s Instituto de Cine Educativo lost its official international network. The ICE produced many scientific films beyond those mentioned above and directed by Armando Rojas Castro, and between 1940 and 1944, the ICE began to film newsreels, thanks to the support of Chile Film. In 1948 the institute was linked to the Ministry of Education. When collaborating with the ministry, it produced several newsreels, the last of which was produced in the 1960s.

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14 To find out more about Chile Films, see Peirano and Gobantes 2015.
4 Conclusion

This chapter aimed to give an idea of the ways in which international dynamics, particularly those that had to do with educational cinema, could be read under the concepts of soft power linked to cultural diplomacy. The two case studies explored in this chapter aimed to explore through the notions of cultural mediators and translation, how cultural projects (international and local) could develop and have an impact on the way a country or region was perceived.

The role that Mistral played as a representative of Chile in the IECI allowed her to lend her expertise within an intellectual and political project where her interest in education became intertwined with her interest in the potential role that cinema could play in the classroom. Reading her letters and articles from a cultural mediator perspective allows us to consider the ways in which she was linking herself, from her diplomatic and international persona with a national project, which later became the ICE. In this sense, Mistral’s work was key to translating ideas about film and education into the Chilean context, and she was one of the first supporters of the idea to create the Chilean Instituto de Cinematografía Educativa.

Although the ICE initial project was done independently from the IECI, the rapid interest shown by the international body to incorporate the Chilean institute into their network, is telling of the relevance that the IECI saw in building a network that extended beyond Europe. In this sense, the transnational element of educational cinema was quite extensive and central to its success at local/national level. The translation of the aims and scope of the IECI to its Chilean counterpart allowed to understand the dynamics between national and international and the extent to which cultural diplomacy helped to build these networks.

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