ENFRANCHISEMENT THROUGH FREIRE’S CONSCIENTIZAÇÃO: THE CASE OF THE BACHILLERATO POPULAR DE JOVENES Y ADULTOS “MADERERA CÓRDOBA”

A Thesis
submitted to the Faculty of the
Graduate School of Arts and Science
of Georgetown University
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the
degree of
Masters of Arts
in Development Management and Public Policy

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Washington, D.C.
April 2009
The research and writing of this thesis is dedicated to the faculty and students of the Bachillerato Popular de Adultos y Jóvenes Maderera Córdoba who choose not to be educated, but liberated.

Special thanks to:

My thesis committee, especially my advisor, Maria Matilde Ollier for her continued support and guidance,
and Guillermo Alonso and Arturo Fernandez
and my friends who have supported me throughout this process.
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INTRODUCTION

This research investigates the contributions of the conscientização inspired alternative pedagogy developed by Paulo Freire in Pedagogy of the Oppressed to the Bachillerato Popular Maderera Córdoba de Jóvenes y Adultos in the Almagro neighborhood of the City of Buenos Aires, Argentina through an evaluation of its dialogical actions. These behaviors have been evaluated through a concise framework of eight characteristics of what the researcher has concluded a complete Freirian educational program should entail. This analysis will discuss the associated implications of such behavior on the liberating and humanizing educational experience for students and faculty members.

This introductory chapter is divided into three sections. The first discusses the study rationale upon which the research is based. The second presents the research question, sub-questions and hypothesis. The final section deals with the structure of the thesis, briefly describing each chapter.

0.1 Study Rationale

The Bachillerato Maderera Córdoba is an example of an urban community organizing itself in order to set up a dynamic, question-raising education system that prepares students (adolescents and adults) for a life that is relevant to their socio-economic context and calls on them to question it. Its main characteristic is the use of an “alternate pedagogy” which has its origins in the Southeast of France in 1935 with the

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3 Bachillerato Popular Maderera Córdoba de Adultos y Jóvenes
Leaders of the CEIP and Bachillerato Maderera Córdoba maintain that their schools are an entire pedagogical project that is completely based on ideology. This is different from traditional Argentine schools because bachilleratos populares are places for social transformation and liberation. They argue that students who experience a question-raising popular education are different from those who receive traditional education in the fact that students who receive a traditional education will finish their studies, receive their...
degree and begin adapting to the disciplining force of the labor market that reproduces social inequality.

This is a case study that will evaluate the quality of popular education, more specifically the measures the members of the Bachillerato Maderera Córdoba have taken to provide and maintain a humanizing and liberating alternative pedagogy for themselves and members of the community. Studying popular education in Buenos Aires is important for two major reasons. First, schools like the Bachillerato Maderera Córdoba have begun forming throughout recovered factories in Buenos Aires rather recently - since the economic decline of 2000 that triggered the 2002 economic crisis. This is a recent social phenomenon and the progress of the movement should be documented. Given this recent spurt in the formation of bachilleratos populares\(^5\) (there are now over ten) since the Argentine economic fallout of 2002, the neoliberal development model is called into question.

As well documented, in the 1990s Argentina embarked on a strong neo-liberal reformist platform involving all areas of the government – even education. Argentina has experienced a decline in high school graduation rates since the adoption of the neo-liberal model, suggesting that traditional Argentine education may neither be consistent nor compatible with the modern socio-economic reality of many Argentines. The 2002 Argentine crisis is largely considered to be the result of significant changes and reforms that took place in the Argentine political, economic and social arenas during the 1990s. Chapter 3 will look at the context of these changes and their effects on education policy.

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\(^5\) Bachilleratos populares – popular high schools, many formed under the guidance and organization of the CEIP
Secondly, the Bachillerato Maderera Córdoba is also specifically important to studying the popular education experience in Buenos Aires because just recently in December 2007 and 2008, its first classes have graduated. An assessment of the popular education offered by the Bachillerato Maderera Córdoba will serve the school and other similar schools to focus on its strengths and weaknesses in order to further improve their educational program.

0.2 Research Question, Sub-Questions and Hypothesis

When the nature of bachilleratos populares providing urban-relevant education for sustainable development is contrasted to the scenario of the inefficient, traditional urban education in Buenos Aires; it is suggested that the popular, non-conventional school has a lot to offer Argentina in terms of social development. However because schools like the Bachillerato Maderera Córdoba are part of this recent wave of establishment of bachilleratos populares, it is impossible to evaluate the direct impacts and immediate results on the lives post-graduates and their surroundings. This is why pedagogical assessments are needed to verify how these schools, like the Bachillerato Maderera Córdoba are working and are unique to traditional public and private schools.

“Although the structure of the Bachillerato Maderera Córdoba is successful in the containment and the ability to give graduates a legal high school diploma that will allow them to obtain better work opportunities; to what extent does the Bachillerato Maderera
Córdoba’s implementation of the Freirian informal educational model lends itself to a humanizing and liberating learning experience for students and teachers?”

The sub-questions that helped addressing the main question were:

i. How does the Bachillerato Maderera Córdoba stand apart from a formal educational experience:
   o How have the ideas and concepts presented in Paulo Freire’s *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* been adopted and actually implemented in the Bachillerato Maderera Córdoba?
   o What has been done to preserve the nature of the conscious-raising nature of a Freirian education?

The Bachillerato Popular Maderera Córdoba de Jóvenes y Adultos began its formation in 2004 as a response from a proposal to the Cooperative of Popular Educators and Researchers (CEIP) from the Cooperativa de Trabajo Maderera Córdoba to open an educational space for its workers and the “barrio” of Almagro in general. The Maderera Córdoba, a wood factory was closed down after the 2002 crisis, but later recovered by its workers and established as a cooperative. The first step for the founders establishing the Bachillerato Maderera Córdoba was to understand how to connect the school to the barrio and to study of the scholastic trajectory of the potential students and how they would be

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6 Neighborhood
7 “Situacion der la Eduacion de Jovenes y Adultos, Nuestra Concepcion Objetivos, Descripcion del Bachillerato, Educacion Popular y Educacion de Jovenes y Adultos.” Cooperativa de Educadores e Investigadores – CEIP.
able to fit in within the Cooperativa de Maderera Córdoba’s educational space. After reviewing the operational methods of traditional and non-traditional academic institutions and their methods of instruction, the Bachillerato founders decided to create an educational space that would characterize and reflect the neighborhood’s diversified cultural, social and political composition. The CEIP also decided that the school would be Freirian in nature, meaning that school would adopt Freire’s alternate pedagogy and encourage a dialogical culture within the institution in order to create an environment of inclusion. The design of Bachillerato Maderera Córdoba shows that an educational space of this nature did not exist in the barrio and that there was a significant potential population sector that would benefit from the establishment of the Bachillerato.

ii. Much of Freire’s work is about the relationship between the oppressor, the oppressed and the realization of the oppressed to overcome their situation.

- Is oppression conceptualized by the instructors and students at the Bachillerato Maderera Córdoba during class discussions?

Examining the balance of power between the colonizer and the colonized remains relatively stable, Freire admits that the powerless in society can be frightened of freedom. He writes, "Freedom is acquired by conquest, not by gift. It must be pursued constantly and responsibly. Freedom is not an ideal located outside of man; nor is it an idea, which becomes myth. It is rather the indispensable condition for the quest for human completion." According to Freire, freedom will be the result of a praxis based on
iii. How can a prosperous and effective learning experience be measured within an informal environment?

○ In what ways does the school exhibit characteristics of a traditional, formal educational experience and non-traditional experience?

As mentioned above, the Bachillerato Maderera Córdoba is actually part of a much larger movement to expand educational opportunities for youth and adults through popular education, in which participate social and territorial organizations, students and faculty members from the Universidad de Buenos Aires (UBA) and recovered factories. These bachilleratos of popular education are able to promote themselves through the autonomous formation and management by its student body and faculty members while pursuing the development of its members via opportunities for training, reflection and action for their members. The type of education from the Bachillerato Popular Maderera Córdoba was conceived under the principles of the late Paulo Freire as education for liberation, for the appropriation and the reconfiguration of knowledge to overcome oppression and not simply for instruction.

Following the ideas emerged in the last sentences, the working hypothesis is:

The hypothesis of the research question is the following:

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“Despite the supposed implementation of a “Freirian model” of popular education, many elements of a traditional educational program are still visible. However, given what the school’s alternate pedagogy may lack in praxis driven conscientização” and enlightened instruction, the educational program of the Bachillerato Maderera Córdoba is counterbalanced by other necessary resources for democratic development such as increasing participation within Argentine and Porteño⁹ civil society and levels of social capital.”

0.3 Brief Description of the Chapters

This work is divided into an introduction, four chapters and a conclusion. They are all divided into sections and some of them into sub-sections in order to facilitate the reader’s comprehension. This introductory chapter briefly explains what the research is about, exposed the rationale behind it as well as presented the research question and sub-questions.

Chapter 1 discusses the theoretical framework that serves as a basis for this work, namely anti-dialogical and dialogical theories, alternate pedagogy and Paulo Freire; and presents the eight characteristics that an educational program entail for it to be humanizing and liberating within the Freirian lens. Section 2.5 displays the conceptual scheme.

Chapter 2 explains the research methodology. It presents the timeline and main activities of the research. The first section explains the reason why qualitative and quantitative approaches are used. The next one deals with the population sample to

⁹ Of/from the city of Buenos Aires
illustrate basic information of the student body. This is followed by the presentation of the ten characteristics that an education program must complete for it to be humanizing and liberating. Section 3.4 is about research methods and describes with details the conduction of each phase of the research.

Chapter 3 informs the reader about the current challenges for inclusive education in Buenos Aires and Argentina. The second part explains the social, economic and political origins of the Bachillerato Maderera Córdoba and the movement behind the school in which it is associated.

Chapter 4 displays the analysis and discussion of the work. It presents the research results, discussing the findings and it is divided into three major sections. The first section analyzes the Bachillerato Maderera Córdoba with the framework stated in Chapter 1 and its corresponding justification. The second section attempts to explain the Bachillerato Maderera Córdoba’s Freirian shortcomings in terms of the limited pragmatism of Freire’s alternate pedagogy and conscientização. The third section unites both sections by looking at education – Freirian or non-Freirian as a developing force that consolidates democratic regimes and encourages democratic culture and behavior in Argentina and Latin America.

Finally, the last section of the thesis project summarizes the project in the context of the questions posed in the introduction and answered in Chapter 4. It also makes some recommendations to be used by the Bachillerato Maderera Córdoba and similar schools that deal with alternate pedagogy and general educational policy.
CHAPTER 1
THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Familiarization with the work of Paulo Freire is central to an understanding of the proposed evaluation and investigation of the Bachillerato Popular Maderera Córdoba de Adultos y Jóvenes. This chapter gives an overview of the associated theories used as background to the discussion and analysis presented in Chapter 4. These associated theories and concepts are the alternate pedagogy, dialogical theory and anti-dialogical theory that are presented in Paulo Freire’s Pedagogy of the Oppressed. This chapter, divided into three sections, discusses the major components of the theory, presents the framework of Eight Characteristics of Liberating and Humanizing Education Programs and concludes with the research conceptual scheme showing their inter-relationships.

1.1 Alternate Pedagogy and Paulo Freire

The actual root of the alternate pedagogy began in France in the 1930s. The first Familiar Center of Alternate Formation (FCEAF), name given for institutions that follow the alternate pedagogy, was set up in 1937 in Lazun France. As Gimonet explains\(^\text{10}\), the development of this pedagogy was a long-term process of constant research-action that had both internal experiments (the work of the FCEAFs themselves) and external use of educational theories. The main influences were the “New Pedagogy” and the “Active Pedagogy” and educators such as Maria Montessori, Célestin Freinet and John Dewey. It

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can be stated that the “pédagogie de l’alternance” was effectively created in the last years of 1942 (MFR website) having André Duffaure, director of the National Union of the FCEAFs at that time, as the main “artisan” of the alternate pedagogy.\textsuperscript{11}

One of the main characteristics of the alternate pedagogy, explicit on its name, is the fact that the students alternate time and space during the learning process (at school and in the socio-economic environment). This suggests its second feature, that theory and practice are complementary. So far, nothing very innovative, since many conventional secondary and tertiary education programs include internships and practical sessions that fulfill these components. What is crucial and revolutionary about the alternate pedagogy is that it is a method of learning through life, starting from the daily life itself and from the experiential moments, thus placing experience before the concept, in other words, practice before theory. The pedagogy recognizes that student’s and the community’s experiences are central in the education process. Therefore, the role of the school and its staff is to facilitate knowledge production, rather than transmit it. Using a range of pedagogical instruments, the concepts and theories emerge naturally in the process of confronting the student’s experiences.

In the 1960s, Freire used the metaphor “banking” to characterize the kind of traditional education he criticized and strengthen his argument supporting a “liberating education”. This “banking education”, according to him, is a synonym of domination. The teacher possesses the knowledge and her/his simple role is depositing as much as she/he can within the students, filling them as if they were objects not humans\textsuperscript{12}. On the

\textsuperscript{11} Gimonet, Jean-Claue. Nascimento e Desenvolvimento de um Movimento Educativo: As Casas Familiares Rurais de Educação e de Orientação, in UNEFAZB. Pedagogia da Alternância e Desenvolvimento. First International Seminar of Alternate Pedagogy, November 3\textsuperscript{rd} to 5\textsuperscript{th}, 1999. 40-43.
\textsuperscript{12} Freire, 197-: 57-68
opposite extreme is the “liberating education”. It is based on a dialogic process in which both, teacher and student, learn and teach. A problem is posed and the teacher encourages students to ask questions and build up on a theme. The teacher, as part of the horizontal dialogue, also expresses his opinion while conducting the process. While “banking education” merely allows knowledge to be accepted, “liberating education” gives space to knowledge production, ultimately humanizing the students and promoting “critical thinking”. The themes around which the liberating process takes place are very important in Freire’s pedagogy. For him, “culture” is not pre-defined by specialist or members of the elite. It is rather what ordinary people do every day, how they behave, speak, relate and make things”. Similarly knowledge is not pre-given or based outside of realities. It is the result of a dialogical process between the teacher and students considering their environment. Situations of the students’ realities are selected and become “generative themes” to be reflected upon and produce relevant knowledge.

Alternate pedagogy and Paulo Freire’s ideas are the essence ofbachilleratos populares of Buenos Aires, such as our case, the Bachillerato Maderera Córdoba. The use of such learning process suggests that the Bachillerato Maderera Córdoba’s students have the opportunity to acquire different capabilities when compared to their community fellows who attended the conventional school. Taking the process of action-reflection as an example, if it well assimilated by the individual during the school years, she/he can carry the capability of being able to bring a specific practical phenomenon to a conceptual level and apply it to other problems she/he may face throughout his/her life. Similarly, because the student become accustomed to the Freirian horizontal and dialogical way of building knowledge, the students from the Maderera Córdoba should
have the capability of being able to question societal “truths” imposed by political, economical and social powers\textsuperscript{13}.

1.2 Dialogical Theory vs. Anti-Dialological Theory

According to Freire, in order for humans to be completely liberated from oppressive regimes, realities and myths, they must educate themselves in order regain their humanity. This method of education is conscientização, the major theme of Freire’s Pedagogy of the Oppressed and the opposite of the “banking” method, what he describes as traditional and oppressive. Conscientização and its pseudo-conscious raising/perspective-changing emotional transformation is linked to the alternate pedagogy via the praxis.\(^{14}\) The praxis, the basis of the alternate pedagogy (illustrated on Page 12) is a method of self and group education and is made up of two simultaneous processes of reflection and action that one must employ in order to achieve conscientização.

This section looks at the Freire’s Dialogical and Anti-Dialological Theories and their link to conscientização. Freire argues that dialogical action and behavior positively encourages the praxis of conscientização and supports an alternative pedagogy while anti-dialogical action encourages a traditional education based on the “banking” concept and encourages oppression.

Freire explores the role of dialogic action and the essence of education as the practice of freedom in Chapter 2 of Pedagogy of the Oppressed. He states that dialogue is an essential part of regaining ones humanity in order to overcome oppression, “dialogue with the people is neither a concession nor a gift, much less a tactic to be used for denomination. Dialogue, as the encounter among men to “name” the world, is a fundamental precondition for their true humanization.”\(^{15}\) Chapter 3 of Freire’s Pedagogy

of the Oppressed discusses explicitly the concepts of anti-dialogics and dialogics as matrices of opposing theories of cultural action: anti-dialogics, as an instrument of oppression and the dialogics as an instrument of liberation. The theory of anti-dialogical action and its characteristics are conquest, divide and rule, manipulation, and cultural invasion. The theory of dialogical action and its characteristics are cooperation, unity, organization and cultural synthesis. Anti-dialogical and dialogical cultural theories are used to evaluate the educational program of the Bachillerato Maderera Córdoba and produce the Eight Characteristics that qualify a humanizing and liberating educational program. The next four subsections serve to describe the relationship of each of the four pillars that make up dialogical and anti-dialogical theory\(^\text{16}\).

1.2.1 Conquest vs. Cooperation

The conqueror is to the conquered as the oppressor is to the oppressed. The conqueror imposes characteristics on the vanquished makes them his possession; reducing the conquered person to a thing, dehumanizing the individual. Once a situation of conquest has been initiated, anti-dialogue becomes indispensable to its preservation. The oppressors mysticize the world, a world of deceit designed to increase their alienation and passivity, showing the world as a fixed entity. According to Freire the conquerors created a myth that the oppressive order is a “free society” because all people are free to work where they wish. The myth that his order respects human rights, anyone who is industrious can become an entrepreneur, myth of equality. Freire also mentions the myth of Western Christian civilization, charity and generosity, promotion of  

advancement of the people, rebellion is a sin against god, private property, industrious oppressor vs. lazy oppressed. The content and methods of conquest vary historically, what does not vary is the passion to oppress.

Freire refers to cooperation as the subject who meets in cooperation to transform the world. He uses as an example “I” knows that “though” - has called forth his or her own existence. “I” transforms “though” into an “it” making “though” not a thing, or a non-human. Revolutionary leaders do not own the people and have no right to steer them blindly towards the “salvation”, by steering them blindly they are breaking the dialogical bond. Cooperation can be achieved only through communication. Dialogue does not impose, manipulate, domesticate or produce propaganda. Commitment to the oppressed is at the same time a commitment to freedom, leaders cannot attempt to conquer the oppressed – but must achieve their adherence to liberation. Cooperation serves to unveil the world instead of mythicize it through praxis. Adherences coincide with trust the people begin to place in themselves and in the revolutionary leaders. Trust reflects confidence in the leader. However, confidence should not however be naïve. The leaders must believe in the potentiality of their people. Communion in turn elicits cooperation, which brings leaders and people to the fusion described by Che Guevara.

1.2.2 Divide and Rule vs. Unity for Liberation

Division is a fundamental objective of anti-dialogical action. As the oppressor minority subordinates and dominates the majority, it must divide it and keep it divided in order to remain in power. It is in the interest of the oppressor to weaken, isolate and crate

and deepen rifts among them. There is a focalization of the view of problems instead of seeing them as dimensions of a totality. An example of this is “Leadership Training Courses” that promotes selected leaders as opposed to communities as a whole. Oppressors preach for understanding and harmony between those who buy and those who are obliged to sell their labor. There is division in order to facilitate the preservation of the oppressor state, interference in the unions, favoring certain representatives of the dominated classes. There are forms which exploit directly and/or indirectly, one of the weak points of the oppressed: their basic insecurity. The oppressed are insecure in their duality as beings which “house” the oppressor. People are fulfilled to the extent that they create their world and create it with their transforming labor.

Dialogical theory requires leaders to dedicate themselves to a uniting effort for unity among the oppressed and unity of the leaders with the oppressed in order to achieve liberation. Friere says that slogans do not deal with fundamental aspects of unity. He concurs that unity occurs at human level, not at the level of things because unity is for humans, not things. That is why Freire argues that humanization requires unity. Peasants have a closed reality, with a compact center of oppressive decision where as the urban oppressed have an oppressive command center that is plural and complex. What unites the oppressed in both cases is that the actual “oppression” is invisible in both contexts due to its proximity and dispersion. Clarification to the oppressed of the objective situation is ultimately what binds them to the oppressors. Therefore forms of action which avoid mere speech make and mechanistic activism can oppose the divisive action of the dominant elites.
1.2.3 Manipulation vs. Organization

Manipulation is when the dominant elites try to conform the masses to their objectives. The greater the political immaturity of these people, the more easily the latter can be manipulated by those who do not wish to lose their power. Manipulation by this mythical model that the bourgeoisie presents to the people as the possibility for their own ascent, support the national bourgeoisie in defense of national capitalism. This is a fundamental principal for domination. The populist politician manipulates the masses with little sense of revolution at all. Manipulation is accomplished by means of pacts betweens the dominant and the dominated classes – acts which if considered superficial might give the impression of a dialogue between the classes, while the true interest of their objectives are determined by their unequivocal interest of the dominant elites. Pacts are proposed only when the people began to emerge from the historical process. Manipulation is the fundamental instrument for the preservation of domination.

Organization is the dialogic opposite of manipulation. It is not directly linked to unity, but it is a natural development of that unity. It shows that the struggle for liberation is a common task. This is a constant, humble and courageous witness emerging from cooperation in a shared effort – the liberation of women and men. Manipulation is superceded by authentic organization, daring and loving. Organization must occur with the people, not of the people. Organizing the people is the process in which the revolutionary leaders – who are prevented from saying their own word initiate the experience of learning how to name the world. This is a true learning experiences – therefore dialogical freedom and authority – cannot be isolated - must be considered in

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relationship to each other. Authority is affirmed through delegation or in sympathetic adherence. Organization is a highly educational process in which people together experience true authority and freedom, which they seek to establish in society by transforming the reality that mediates them.
1.2.4 Cultural Invasion vs. Cultural Synthesis

Cultural action either serves domination or it serves the liberation of men and women.

The invaders penetrate the cultural context of another group by imposing their own view of the world upon those they invade, thereby inhibiting the creativity of the invaded by curbing their expression. Cultural conquest leads to the cultural inauthenticity of those who are invaded, they respond to the values, the standards, and the goals of the invaders, oppressed view their reality through those of the oppressor – convince them of intrinsic inferiority through manipulation, conquest and invasion. Revolutionary leaders use the tactics of the dominators when they do not oppressed. Internationalization of the oppressors by the dominated consciousness of the peasants explains their fear and their inefficiency. What distinguish revolutionary leaders from the dominant elite are not only their objectives, but also their procedures. Cultural invasion, which serves the ends of conquest and the preservation of oppression, always involves a parochial view of reality, a static perception of the world, and the imposition of one worldview upon another. It implies the superiority of the invader and the “inferiority” of those who are invaded, as well as the imposition of values by the former, who possess the latter and are afraid of loosing them.

Cultural synthesis is a mode of action for confronting culture itself. They create dialectical relations of permanence and change. Actors become integrated with the people who are co-authors of the action that both perform upon the world. The subjects of thematic investigation are not only the professional investigators but also the men and
women of the people whose thematic universe is being sought. Investigation – the first omen of action as cultural synthesis establishes a climate of creativity which ill tend to develop in the subsequent states of action. Leaders and people, mutually identified together create the guidelines of their action. In this synthesis leaders and people are somehow reborn in new knowledge and new action. Knowledge of the alienated culture leads to transforming action resulting in a culture that is being freed from alienation. This resolves the contraction between the worldview of the leaders and that of the people for the enrichment of the both. Cultural synthesis does not deny the differences between the two views, and indeed it is based on these differences\textsuperscript{19}.

1.4 Eight Characteristics of Liberating and Humanizing Education Programs

“Naming the world" was one of many of Paulo Freire’s actions that he described as dialogical behavior that is especially significant to communities like the Bachillerato Maderera Córdoba who are formed by vulnerable groups and those who are excluded and/or discriminated against within traditional educational systems. Naming the world creates the ability for learners to discuss what it is that is relevant to them. The Dialogical and Anti-Dialogical cultural action theories have been utilized in this investigation because they can be linked on human and communal level. Freire’s framework is accessible which makes theories more applicable to larger and smaller groups of people. Upon naming an object or concept in a student’s world; a statement is made, asserting that these things do have value and that these students are in fact members of society have a voice and a place within it. When a program, such as the Bachillerato Maderera Córdoba allows a student to discuss in their own language the issues that they face in their own society (may it be their academic, social, economic setting or treatment by other members of society), the student is put in a place where it is possible to regain their humanity and involves other program members in similar situations to be involved to find solutions to the issues concerning that student. Students the researcher observed at the Bachillerato Maderera Córdoba were encouraged to discuss issues in group settings and were able to turn this around and self-reflect thus providing them with non-threatening opportunities to define themselves and their particular situational needs.

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One of Freire’s main critiques in *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* is that much of the traditional forms of instruction and education do not acknowledge the prior learning and experience of students and also treats the world as a static, fixed environment in which students simply need to adapt. As a response to this Freire developed the Alternative Pedagogy, a problem-posing education – in which Dialogic and Anti-DIALOGIC theories have stemmed. Based on these theories, this investigation has interpreted and arranged Freire’s ideas into framework to objectively evaluate the humanizing and liberating qualities of Bachilleratos Populares of City of Buenos Aires. As mentioned earlier, this research will use the Bachillerato Maderera Córdoba as a case study. The researcher has deduced from the concepts presented in *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* that a program is Freirian and therefore liberating and humanizing through the following eight characteristics.

1. The program’s stated objectives are to encourage links between the school and the community.
2. The program must emphasize the importance of historical and political context in understanding the underlying logic that fuels educational change.
3. Community involvement is the key element, it must create the curriculum of the program and all aspects must be community based.
4. Accountability and translucency by the community has to exist.
5. Activeness, relying upon students to define their needs and to acquire and construct knowledge for themselves.
6. Model should be specific to the community.
7. The programs approach to working with groups is to first look at their realities and the issues that are important to the group.
8. The education has to be learner centered.
1.5 Conceptual Scheme

![Diagram showing the conceptual scheme with Anti-Dialogical Actors and Dialogical Actors. Anti-Dialogical Actors include Conquest, Divide and Rule, Manipulation, and Cultural Invasion. Dialogical Actors include Cooperation, Unity for Liberation, Organization, and Cultural Synthesis. Bachillerato Maderera Córdoba connects to Argentine Social Development.](image-url)
CHAPTER 2
RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Freirian strategy has been implemented in different cases around the world. The most publicized case being São Paulo during the 1990s when Paulo Freire was the actual Minister of Education. Most of the revised Brazilian Constitution addresses and promotes the inclusive measures for social sectors that were traditionally excluded from public education. This is a contribution from the influence Paulo Freire’s work.

The core of this thesis project is the Freirian evaluation of the behavior of the Bachillerato Popular Maderera Córdoba, placing the institution’s behavioral culture as the actual unit of analysis. Besides six weeks to prepare the research proposal in August and September 2007, there was an fieldwork of period of two and a half academic years (starting March 2007 and ending in October 2008) to observe the school and collect data, followed by sixteen weeks to analyze the data and write the actual thesis. The entire fieldwork, research and most of the writing of the thesis took place in the city of Buenos Aires, Argentina. The thesis was finished in Washington, D.C.

The predominant methodological approach in this research is qualitative with basic quantitative methods. This chapter starts with a discussion on these two approaches and attempts to justify the combination of the both. The following section, 3.2, explains the Bachillerato Popular Maderera Córdoba and why this school was selected. Section 3.3 presents Freire’s cultural action theories as well as variables and indicators. The following section, 3.4, deals with research methods, starting with the research’s exploratory phase and moving to the qualitative and quantitative methodologies.
2.1 Qualitative versus Quantitative

Both approaches, qualitative and quantitative, have advantages and disadvantages. The quantitative perspective usually produces objective conclusions and can be easier generalized to a wider population; on the other hand, it tends to oversimplify complex nature of social phenomena and its methods are rigid. Therefore it is adequate when the problem to be analyzed is well known and very specific questions can be posed. In contrast, the qualitative methodology can much better explore relatively unknown grounds; analyze complex phenomena; and I understand how people give meaning to their lives. Nevertheless, the results cannot be easily generalized to a wider population and carry a high level of subjectivity. In order to reduce their limitations and exploit the advantages, both approaches have been used in this investigation. The socially complex phenomena such as anti-dialogical and dialogical cultural theory were examined in a qualitative perspective. In order to gain basic information of the students and faculty, attendance lists and grading records were reviewed.

2.2 Eight Characteristics of Liberating and Humanizing Education Programs, Variables and Indicators

The ease of identifying variables and determining indicators for qualitative and quantitative approaches differ. In quantitative investigations, the variables are usually evident, whereas qualitative studies may have the identification of the variables themselves as the main purpose. In the case of the present essentially qualitative research, the variables derive from the research Eight Characteristics of Liberating and
Humanizing Education Programs, stated in Chapter 1 built during the whole experience in the field from inputs of the observations, informal interviews and literature review.

This Eight Characteristics of Humanizing and Liberating Education set is the final work of a process that began when the thesis proposal was being developed and only ended after informal observations. The set of Characteristics is composed of characteristics from the perspective of (i) Paulo Freire’s *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, (ii) official Cooperative of Popular Researchers and Educators (CEIP) documentation, (iii) Bachillerato Maderera Córdoba (staff and students), (iv) the researcher. These Eight Qualities were formed to essentially “quantify” a popular education that successfully implemented the dialogical actions of Paulo Freire.

In focusing on the quality of education from a social perspective, it is important to consider the inputs, processes and environments that surround and foster, or hamper learning, in order to ensure that the various components of education are sensitive to social inclusion and to each key group in each context. A number of dimensions of quality may thus be considered both at the level of the learner in her or his learning environment as well as the level of the system that creates and supports the learning experience. Learning for social inclusion may be approached at the level of (1) the learners and their backgrounds, (2) the learning environment and the schooling process, as well as at the level of (3) the structures and policies of the education system.

It is important to look at and to analyze who is deciding the educational goals and what relative weight is being given to the voices of parents, children and the community. The program needs to make schools more accountable to the local community by, for example, specifying parent and community representation on school governing boards.
There should be shared visions and goals that are agreed upon by all members of the program. I will look at how the Bachillerato Maderera behaves in a Freirian manner based on the Eight Characteristics stated above. My conclusions are based on informal interviews, post from the Bachillerato Maderera Córdoba’s Yahoo Groups website, observations within the classroom, inter and intra-Bachillerato meetings.

2.3 Research Methods

The investigation was basically divided into three complementary phases: (i) exploratory, (ii) quantitative, and (iii) qualitative. Different methods were used in each to attain their specific objectives. The following sub-sections discuss each phase and the application of the research methods.

2.3.1 Exploratory

The research started with an exploratory phase that began in March 2006 upon the invitation of colleagues from the Maestría de políticas públicas y gestión de desarrollo at the Universidad Nacional de San Martín (UNSAM) to teach English classes with them at the Bachillerato Maderera Córdoba. The main methods of this phase were literature review, direct observation and informal interviews.

These exploratory experiences supplied the following phases of the investigation with relevant data and information: (i) the cultural theory set had significant influence from these observations and information interviews, (ii) the sample frame was organized; and (iii) familiarization of the basic methodological instruments for quantitative research such as the attendance lists, student profiles and grades.
2.3.2 Quantitative

The following part of the research was quantitative, gathering information through public records available at the Bachillerato Maderera Córdoba. Attendance lists, grading rubric, student grades and profiles of the 2008 school year were reviewed by the researcher to collect data on the student body.

The qualitative investigation offered the researcher an opportunity to review basic background information (age, origin and civil status) through the student profiles of the student body. The attendance lists and grades indicated to what extent to a student is participating within the Bachillerato Maderera Córdoba as well. Attendance lists showed the frequency of a student attending class throughout the school year. Student grades and grading rubrics also showed to what extent the student felt that they were participating because the grading rubrics were largely based on self-evaluation. The information in the table presented below indicates a sampling of the class of 2009. This class includes 36 students about 45% of the entire student body21 at the Maderera Córdoba. This information was derived from public enrollment forms to provide an indication of the student population. The majority of the students were younger men between the ages of 17 and 25. A significant portion (45%) of the students were born outside the Buenos Aires capital region22, many from the northeastern provinces of Misiones and Corrientes. Several were also from Bolivia and Perú who had moved to the Buenos Aires capital region with their parents in search of greater employment opportunities. Some of the

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21 See Figure 3.1 for statistical breakdown or Appendix A for information
22 See Figure 3.1 for statistical breakdown or Appendix A for information
students are married or have been married at some point. Also, some of the students had children – many being single mothers.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sex:</th>
<th>Origin:</th>
<th>Civil Status:</th>
<th>Children:</th>
<th>Age:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Male/Female</td>
<td>Buenos Aires Capital Region/Non Buenos Aires Capital Region</td>
<td>Married at Least Once/Never Married</td>
<td>Have Children/No Children</td>
<td>17-25 or older</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>60% - Male</td>
<td>55% - Buenos Aires Capital Region</td>
<td>8% - Married at Least Once</td>
<td>14% – Have Children</td>
<td>84% %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40% - Female</td>
<td>45% - Non Buenos Aires Capital Region</td>
<td>92% - Never Married</td>
<td>86% - No Children</td>
<td>16%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>25 or Older</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 3.1

2.4.3 Qualitative

Although the two previous phases and their respective research methods were essential for the research, this was the densest and most important. It basically consisted of daily postings on the Bachillerato’s blog from members, observations of Inter-Bachillerato meetings, Intra-Bachillerato meetings and time within the classroom.

Inter-Bachillerato meetings consisted of meetings that would take place every month on a Saturday at one of the Popular Bachilleratos in the city of Buenos Aires. Every bachillerato would send people and it would be presided by members of the

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23 See Appendix A for information
Cooperative of Popular Researchers and Educators. These meetings usually dealt with political questions, on where the Bachilleratos were sitting within the formal educational environment.

Attending the Inter-Bachillerato meetings headed by the CEIP, the researcher was able to see the interaction of Bachilleratos with each other, what were their common struggles and see the method of management and leadership of the CEIP. Inter-Bachillerato meetings provided insight as to how decisions were made and by whom they were made.

Intra-Bachillerato meetings occurred the Saturdays when there was not an Inter-Bachillerato meeting. These meetings take place at the Bachillerato Maderera Córdoba and are for all members of the Bachillerato Maderera Córdoba committee, this includes teaching staff, students and members of actual wood factory. The meetings are led by the directors of the Bachillerato Maderera Córdoba, Fernando Lazzaro and Ezequiel Alfieri, founding CEIP members. The meetings usually dealt with planning, school improvement, events and pedagogical matters.

The Intra-Bachillerato meeting provided the researcher with the observation of how power and authority was distributed in within the Bachillerato Maderera Córdoba. It also, viewing who was attending these meetings as well proved to show who - either the students or the teachers were the major players in intra-Bachillerato Maderera Córdoba affairs.

As my research aims to evaluate the Freirian behavioral culture of the Bachillerato Maderera Córdoba, time within the classroom was where the bulk of the qualitative observation was completed.
The purpose of the classroom observations was to witness the relationship with teachers and students, to see how material was presented, what material was presented and the reaction of the students.
CHAPTER 3

CONTEXTUAL INFORMATION

3.1 Structure of the Formal Argentine Education System

The organization of the Argentine education system reflects the representative and federal structure of its nation state that is detailed in the national constitution. It is composed of educational services on national and provincial levels for both private and public schools. As stated in article 31 of the national constitution, all education legislation and policy from the national level are to have authority over are provincial laws. Institutionally, education is coordinated by the Consejo Federal de Cultura y Educación, presided by the National Ministry of the area and integrated by whoever is responsible for the management of education for each jurisdiction with representation of the Consejo Interuniversitario and of the Consejo de Universidades.

The current structure of the Argentine Sistema Eduactivo Nacional has been determined by Ley Nacional de Educación was passed in December 2006 (26.206/2006) and is made up of four levels of formal schooling: Educación Inicial, Educación Primaria, Educación Secondary and Educación Superior. It also provides for eight modules: la Educación Técnico Profesional, la Educación Artística, la Educación Intercultural Bilingüe, la Educación en Contextos de Privación de Libertad y la Educación Domiciliaria y Hospitilaria. The new education law also provided for an increase in the schooling requirement from ten to thirteen years the structural changes of the educational system that are taking place currently and have yet to be implemented. This law also unified the

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educational system of the country, returning to the previous primary and secondary school system.

3.2 The Situation of Youth and Adult Education (Educación de Jóvenes y Adultos)

The case of the Bachillerato Popular de Jóvenes y Adultos Maderera Córdoba is part of a network of popular secondary schools that offer a secondary school education to the population of youths and adults that live in the City and the Province of Buenos Aires have completed primary school and are above the age of 18.

A quick glance at the levels of education attained by Argentines shows that more than 60% of the population has not successfully completed secondary school. According to the statistics of the population over the age of 15 in Argentina,\(^{25}\) 3.7% has never had any schooling (SI), 14.2% has had some primary schooling (PI), 28% has completed primary schooling (PC), 20.9% has not completed secondary schooling, 16.2% has completed secondary schooling.

This educational panorama demonstrates the large proportion of Argentines that do not have significant educational opportunities. This promotes a strong situation of educational exclusion and a direct violation of the right to education. In 2001, it was found that one of every four youths between the age of 14-18 and two of every three youths between the age of 19 and 24 were in a situation of educational exclusion. Between 2004 and 2006 dropout rate increased a 9.4%: 860,000 youths had stopped going to school.

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3.3 Recovered Factories and Bachilleratos Populares:

The Bachilleratos Populares de Jóvenes y Adultos (Popular High Schools for Adolescents and Adults), like the Bachillerato Maderera Córdoba, in recovered factories and social organizations movement began to expand in the 1990s as neo-liberal policy reforms were implemented by the Argentine federal government and as a response to a critical education situation, limited public policy and public funding. In Argentina, the neo-liberal orientation had similar characteristics as they had in the majority of Latin America, in particular with the reduction of public expense, the administrative decentralization and a shift of health and education responsibilities away from the national government to the provincial and municipal levels. This was accompanied by a series of reforms designed to deregulate work, production and the market under a privatized orientation, strongly impacting the quality and the advances of fundamental rights for all actors in society, even within the power of the Argentine nation state.

In an effort to liberalize its economy, in the 1990s Argentina released a good part of its authority and responsibility to the general public through privatization schemes, large national and multinational companies found few obstacles within Argentina to limit their growth, therefore resulting in monopolistic control of many industries, forcing an enormous amount of smaller and medium size companies that were once supported by the state to close. This privatization of state enterprises was also a major contributor to the concentration of wealth and the regressive distribution of income, increase in unemployment, poverty and social exclusion within Argentina.
While the design and the decisions of the public social policy were resolved within the centralized government, the “Tercer Sector”\textsuperscript{26}, or the Third Sector was formed in an attempt to participate in the local environment with the objective of managing resources and containing local problems. Different than any other social organizations that had received state funding and now were adopting neo-liberal models, these organizations tried new forms that took active political positions with a strong questioning of the structure of the current power and the unequal distribution of income, asking the state to guarantee their rights.

As the neo-liberal economic reform program was implemented throughout the 1990s, the increase in poverty and social exclusion put the actual sustainability of the neo-liberal program into risk. The implementation of focalized policies was the manner in which the government tried to contain the social situation. Such policies, implicated a restricted social participation that consisted of networks and social organizations that were characterized by a clientelistic relationship between the haves and have-nots.

In the educational arena, the neo-liberal policy orientation centered its discussion in the argument that promoted the educational crisis as the consequence of a highly centralized, bureaucratized and homogenized education system that required to be reformed, particularly for its inefficient management. This appealed to the left and the right as it sustained “freedom and liberty” and for the “respect of diversity of regional particularities” and to greater “autonomy” through decentralization.\textsuperscript{27}

The education reform came as three major laws (\textit{Ley de Transferencia Educativa}, \textit{Ley Federal de Educación} and \textit{Ley de Educación Superior}) that sustained a new idea of

\textsuperscript{26} Sverdlick and Costas
\textsuperscript{27} Sverdick and Costas
public education that was administered in a decentralized manner through a transfer of education services away from the national level, and in the modification of the structure and the restriction of the university autonomy.

The educational reform left the system fractured and fragmented, with a negative balance (from external debt) due to an expensive reform that didn’t attend to the most serious problems. In particular, in 1992 the education of youths and adults suffered a devastating blow due to the decentralization of education services were transferred to provincial levels. The Ley Federal de Educación included it within “Special Regimens” – together with Special Education and Art Education – making it a separate segment from the structure of the National Education System. This, combined with the close of the Dirección Nacional de Educación del Adulto (DINEA), meant that each jurisdiction had the ability to organize or not organize its structure and reduce its size and costs.

The apparent absence of policies for this sector constituted truly a clear political decision, coherent with the inability to address of the needs of popular sectors. Protests in response to the reforms made in the education system were seen when the “Carpa Blanca”, a white tent was placed in front of the national Argentine Congress building that was accompanied by teachers in support of a new educational finance law.²⁸

Amongst the new social movements that showed open opposition to the traditional political movements and to a political style that was fundamentally linked with corruption, were the Popular Assemblies and the Movimientos de Trabajadores Desocupados (MTD) and the recovered businesses and factories gained support after the crisis of December 2001.²⁹

²⁸ Sverdlick and Costas
²⁹ Sverdlick and Costas
In the case of the recovered businesses, the process began in which many owners used the crisis of 2002 as a means to recreate the business with more favorable conditions due to the drastic devaluation and be able to recuperate earnings. In many situations however, a sizeable part of these situations came about with conflicts with workers who began to recover their plants with the objective of guarding their sources of work. It was actually the process of recovery of the businesses by their workers that gave support to this movement.

Currently there are about 240 recovered businesses and factories, in which most are part of one of the two major groups. One is the National Movement of Recovered Businesses, (MNER) Movimiento Nacional de Empresas Recuperadas, which is made up of 180 plants and businesses that have been reactivated through this movement and over 15,000 jobs have been recovered. The MNER characterizes itself as an independent body from both the state and political parties. The other major group that has also has pursued a similar motive, the national Movement of Recovered Factories by their workers after closures and bankruptcies, in which there work some 10,000 people. Eighty of these factories are located within the province of Buenos Aires. The MNFRT is linked with leftist political parties (Partido Obrero y Partido de los Trabajadores por el Socialismo) and pushes for the “state ownership of companies under the control of its workers.”

Each group shares the idea of recovering sources of genuine work and support a more equitable level of income. The MNER dedicated to incorporate new strategies to action linked to the fight for the right to education. During 2002, a group of popular educators (the CEIP) that had already the first Bachillerato Popular proposed to the MNER their intention to multiply their experience of their Bachillerato Popular for

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30 “Son Abridores de la Cabeza” Prensa del Frente.
adolescents and adults in a nation-wide scheme and to collaborate for the consolidation of
the social movement of cooperative work environments. This gave a great support for the
Bachilleratos Populares, that began to grow within recovered businesses located within
the MNER, giving place for the right for education and the right to a decent work
experience.  

In this context, the Bachilleratos Populares’ initiative presented themselves as an
alternative option to existing educational offers, bringing a different educational
opportunity that was characterized by the insertion of a project opposed to neo-liberal
policies and the promotion of participation and democratization.

The Bachilleratos Populares’ initiative also presented itself as a participative and
democratizing proposal that brought an opportunity to a population of adolescent and
adults who had had experienced educational setbacks, such as “dropping out” in their
past. This alternative had to imply something different from the same system that had
allowed for them to discontinue their studies. This alternative was a project that would
enable its students to construct a critical and subjective manner of thinking and
processing information that would encourage them to participate, opinion and discuss,
therefore avoiding the reproduction of the classic, exclusionary mechanisms for
adolescents and adults. Popular Education in this perspective, tries to combine different
pedagogical relations that contemplate the realities and knowledge of the students in the
construction of critical vision in society. The proposal presents as “schools as social
organizations”, considering that it is about the educational spaces and social movements
and organizations. The idea is that the creation of these alternative schools, inserted in
neighborhoods, or “barrios” will become and serve as generators of an integral and

31 Peker, Luciana. “El Circulo Magico”
liberating education – in the Freirian sense- that will note the formation of political subject and values such as self-management, cooperative work and the development of critical and reflective capabilities. The liberating education is understood as an end in and of itself and a mean for the construction of a popular power in the form of social transformation.

As of March 2008, there are eleven Bachilleratos Populares in which five are located in federal capital district of the City of Buenos Aires and six are in different localities within the Province of Buenos Aires. Four of them were created in recovered businesses by their workers: Bachillerato de Jóvenes y Adultos IMPA (Industrias Metalúrgicas y Plásticas Argentina); Bachillerato Maderera Córdoba; Bachillerato 19 de Diciembre; Bachillerato Chilavert, and seven were developed within social organizations (Bachillerato El Telar; Bachillerato Simón Rodríguez; Bachillerato Centro Cultural de los Trabajadores-Los Troncos; Bachillerato Popular Villa 21-24, Bachillerato Movimiento Teresa Rodríguez, Bachillerato Rodolfo Walsh, Bachillerato Las Dos Palermas-Las Tunas).32

After various years of development, it became possible for the Bachilleratos Populares de Jóvenes y Adultos to put together an organized system that offered an education program that was directed to a population that had few resources with work problems, excluded from the formal educative system. The Bachilleratos Populares define themselves as self-managed, popular, public and non-state schools.

3.4 Unit of Analysis: Bachillerato Maderera Córdoba

32 "Situacion der la Eduacion de Jovenes y Adultos, Nuestra Concepcion Objetivos, Descripcion del Bachillerato, Educacion Popular y Educacion de Jovenes y Adultos.” Cooperativa de Educadores e Investigadores – CEIP.
In 2003, it was announced to creditors that the Maderera Córdoba was bankrupt and would be closed. As the owners showed no interest in making an effort to re-open the company, the workers organized themselves with MNER to recover the factory. The workers reopened the wood factory as a cooperative in order to preserve it as a source of work. The Cooperativa Maderera Córdoba currently dedicates itself to the production of wood products for various projects for profit.\(^{33}\)

The team of the Popular Educators and Researchers is an example of the Tercer Sector’s response to the reforms in Argentine education policy and also responsible for the creation of the Bachillerato Maderera Córdoba in 2005. In the late 1990s as the impacts of Argentina’s neo-liberal adoption had become increasingly evident, this group was initially formed by several university professors from various institutions due to the growing educational crisis that manifested itself in decreasing quality and retention rates among schools across Argentina. Since its formation, the team has coordinated workshops, meetings, and conferences to promote equality within the educational arena. In addition to these activities, the CEIP has greatly contributed to the creation of the Bachilleratos de Educación Popular within social organizations.

The CEIP’s declares its main objective is to constitute a scholastic space that conforms to the formative principles of popular education, specifically for students and teachers to form part of a cooperative and self-managed social environment. In addition, it proposes to establish a relation between the tutor and the tutee, the teacher and the scholastic organization that has a sense of construction of the cultural educative power towards subjects who are traditionally excluded, oppressed, expanding the space of participation and making transparent the mechanisms of management, un-bureaucratic

\(^{33}\) Cooperativa de Educadores e Investigadores – CEIP-
decision making, germinating a dialogue and the appropriation of knowledge and innovation in the curriculum.”

The CEIP claims to have created a school not as a result of institutional mechanisms, but rather as a dynamic power of a multi-faceted social organization.

The CEIP describes the Bachillerato Maderera Córdoba as an institution that has the ability to provide an entirely social education that is not a commercial enterprise and is directed to a population that has scarce resources, work problems and has been excluded from the formal education system. Matriculation is free and there are no tuition fees throughout the entire three years of study. Currently the teacher plans the activities of each class and subject on the condition of Ad honorem and therefore it is believed that it is necessary to implement immediately the subvention that assure the continuity of the educational proposal.

The majority of the students have had work problems and a large percentage been expelled from the formal educational system. The grading of each student at the Bachillerato is based on a combination of attendance with a personalized follow up of the students with in order to maintain a high retention.

There is no school board, however two coordinators and an assembly in which participate students and teachers. The creation of the Bachilleratos is the product of a series of formal investigations. One of them was the realization on part of the team responsible for the area of research for the CEIP, a process of revitalization of the barrio, considering the need to diagnose the needs of the barrio and organize a pedagogical and educational proposal. The same research project discussed social map of the area and contemplates the socio-economic and educative demands of the neighbors.

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34 Cooperativa de Educadores e Investigadores – CEIP-
The Maderera Córdoba and the other 10 bachilleratos that make up the CEIP are an educational proposal directed to students older than 17 years old and above, with duration of three years and with a faculty to grant recognized the Bachiller degree by the Ministry of Education of the City of Buenos Aires and the Republic of Argentina. Members of the CEIP and the Bachillerato Maderera Córdoba believe that education is a right and a principle of social justice.

Their proposal deals with the construction of a political subject that questions not only the utility of knowledge but also the transformation of society and in particular the case of applied knowledge used in order to transform society. The CEIP defends the
construction of anti-hegemonic popular power that struggles for spaces and imbalances the relation between existing powers.

The CEIP shares with Paulo Freire, the idea that education should not be thought as something neutral and without political intentions. “An entire pedagogical project is political and finds itself wrapped in ideology. The matter of knowing in favor of what and of whom, against what and against whom make the politics of education never omit anything.”

The schools of the CEIP are places for social transformation and liberation, where one is education in order to see the world as a place where it is possible to make a difference with the individual and collective actions.

The CEIP differentiates their bachilleratos populares for Youths and Adults from those of Argentine public schools for Youths and Adults based on the fact that the public schools are formed by students who at the end of their studies will receive a their high school degree, who will be able to adapt to the disciplining labor market that reproduces social inequality. They are taught to connect citizenship with the imperative gains of the relations of the market, in which they are never questioned. The school as an institution presents itself neutrally, knowing that is not. It appears naturalized and encloses in itself the conception of a state also naturalized that guarantees and promotes a supposed equality of opportunities. The epistemology that is being questioned is the Keynesian or neo-liberal concept upon which of which these naturalizations are realized as part of the state.

35 “Las Comisiones y Actividades Donde Participa la CEIP.” Cooperativa de Educadores e Investigadores - CEIP
36 Las Comisiones y Actividades Donde Participa la CEIP.” Cooperativa de Educadores e Investigadores - CEIP
In short, the objectives of the Bachilleratos of popular education, including the Maderera Córdoba exceed the appropriation of the content of the teaching program and include knowledge that necessarily imply the contact, work and exchange with others. The CEIP argues that teaching is not a neutral activity, not immune to the changes and socio-economic influences; it is an activity completely charges from ethical, political and social values. Not speaking of variant of these values, speak to them of the social character of education, in the not only possible to reproduce capitalistic logic of the dominant sectors, without also generating spaces of resistance and social struggle.
CHAPTER 4
RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Chapter 4 is a core chapter; data collected during the fieldwork is present, analyzed and discussed here. It provides answers to the research question and sub questions with arguments supported by the results. The chapter is divided into three sections. In section one, the Bachillerato Maderera Cordoba is evaluated under the Eight Characteristics of a Liberating and Humanizing Educational Program that were developed and discussed in Chapter 1 and presented in Chapter 2, evidencing both traditional and nontraditional behaviors. The second section presents a critique of Freire’s concept of conscientização and why its implementation is difficult. Section three accepts this investigation’s hypothesis and examines the implications education and schools like the Bachillerato Maderera Cordoba may have on development.

Research Question:

Although the structure of the Bachillerato Maderera Córdoba is successful in the containment and the ability to give graduates a legal high school diploma that will allow them to obtain better work opportunities; to what extent does the Bachillerato Maderera Córdoba’s implementation of the Freirian informal educational model lend itself to a humanizing and liberating learning experience for students and teachers?

Hypothesis:
Despite the supposed implementation of a “Freirian model” of popular education, many elements of a traditional education program are still visible. However, what the school’s alternate pedagogy may lack in literal praxis induced conscientização, the educational program of the Bachillerato Maderera Cordoba is counterbalanced by other necessary resources for development such as social capital that often enhances and fortifies democratic institution and culture.
4.1 Analysis of the Bachillerato Popular Maderera Córdoba de Jóvenes y Adultos by Eight Characteristics of Liberating and Humanizing Education Programs

The Eight Characteristics of a Liberating and Humanizing Educational Program have been derived from Pedagogy of the Oppressed, stressing the dialogical actions described by Freire: cooperation, unity for liberation, organization and cultural synthesis and have placed them within the context of a classroom in order to support a dynamic praxis and an alternate pedagogy. The synergy of these actions directly contribute to Freire’s ultimate goal: a humanizing and therefore liberating educational experience.

The analysis below shows that looks at each of the eight characteristics in the context of the Bachillerato Maderera Cordoba and shows that the Bachillerato given its placement in a recovered factory and almost non-existent budget does warrant an untraditional appearance, orientation and behavior. However upon a direct and consistent observation of the school, it is noted that many of the schools members from both the student body and faculty bring many aspects of a traditional educational experience to the Bachillerato Maderera Cordoba. These experiences have taken root in the Bachillerato, which have strayed away from humanizing and liberating experience for all participants.

Upon reviewing the analysis below, it must be noted that this analysis is based on extensive observation of the Bachillerato Maderera Cordoba. The dynamics have been viewed in classroom observations, interactions among faculty members, students and community leaders.

4.1.1 The program’s stated objectives are to encourage links between the school and the community.

Cooperation is one of the four major pillars of Freire’s dialogical action theory for liberation. A liberating and humanizing education program should be committed to
freedom for all and therefore involve the school’s community-wide plight. Links between the school and the community are necessary and are established through cooperation and communication. Dialogue should not impose, manipulate, domesticate or make propaganda to encourage school-community ties. Commitment to the oppressed is at the same time a commitment to freedom – leaders cannot attempt to conquer the oppressed – but must achieve their adherence to liberation.

The Bachillerato Maderera Cordoba founding members agree that upon the Bachillerato’s inception, the notion of involving community and including as many as possible to provide a dynamic and liberating education has been essential. The Bachillerato Maderera Cordoba has a reputation for continually cooperates with the community in Almagro and the other bachilleratos populares. The school’s location in the attic of the Maderera Cordoba Cooperative serves as a constant reminder of the importance of cooperation. As mentioned earlier, the Maderera Cordoba Cooperative invited the CEIP to form a school in their empty attic space. The Maderera Cordoba also has links with local librerías that provide students and teachers with discount photocopy rates for assignments and classroom materials.

The Bachillerato Maderera Cordoba has also worked with other bachilleratos populares within the region to gain recognition from the Argentine Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Education for the City of Buenos Aires. By participating in manifestations with other schools and signing petitions to allow recognition for all bachilleratos populares. These cooperative efforts have been successful in gaining vital, yet small stipends in order to make necessary renovations within the classrooms and

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37 Librerías – book stores
allow for students to receive a scholarship at the beginning of each semester to pay for their transportation to and from school.

Although these cooperative efforts are essential in supporting the Freirian goal of liberation, it is also necessary to note that these cooperative efforts are lead by the leaders of the Bachillerato Maderera Cordoba and the CEIP, and not the students. The Bachillerato Maderera Cordoba can be viewed as an institution composed of two groups – students and faculty. Although the founders of the CEIP and the Bachillerato Maderera Cordoba stress the theme of popular unity, the faculty members do decisions and strategies made. The faculty members, products of traditional education systems have inadvertently imposed a break between the roles of the teacher and the student. Teachers given their background take on a leadership role without the prior consultation of students. Freire argues that liberation must come from humanization and when teachers/leaders do not consult the will of the students, a division is created.

4.1.2 The program must emphasize the importance of historical and political context in understanding the underlying logic that fuels educational change.

The Bachillerato Maderera Cordoba has emphasized the historical and political context of education in Argentina and Latin America. Such emphasis argues Freire will induce the cultural synthesis necessary for a liberating education. Cultural synthesis establishes a climate of creativity, which tends to develop in the subsequent stages of action. The leaders and people identify themselves mutually together are able to create guidelines for liberating actions. In this synthesis leaders and people are reborn in a new knowledge and new action.
Leaders from the Bachillerato Maderera Cordoba have designed coursework to review and analyze the historical and political context of Argentina. Readings and coursework include the Argentine Dirty War, Argentina’s culture of authoritarian leadership and neoliberal reform. Faculty members have participated and contributed to the Memoria Docente project at the Laboratório Políticas Públicas, a local think-tank. This project is designed for members of schools to share their experiences within traditional and nontraditional education programs. The Memoria Docente project also serves as a library, where journal and articles may be found that discuss education and pedagogical matters.

Given that Bachillerato’s recovered factory context, coursework also looks at cooperativism, the history of labor unions within Latin America and the world. Coursework requires students to study social movements like the MNER and Brazil’s Landless Workers Movement, Movimento dos trabalhadores Rurais Sem Terra (MST). Class activities include comparing and contrasting social problems of the Bachillerato’s students and other excluded members of society.

Despite the dynamic coursework and untraditional scholastic themes presented at the Bachillerato, the underlying logic that fuels educational change is not present. Much of the required coursework is theoretically based and worded in an exclusive manner. Many of the students have low reading levels, and faced with the task of reading philosophical documents can be viewed as method of oppression as the Bachillerato is divided into those who are able to read and extract knowledge from such elaborate texts, and those who are not.

38 http://www.lpp-buenosaires.net/documentacionpedagogica/
39 http://www.mstbrazil.org/
4.1.3 **Community involvement is the key element, it must create the curriculum of the program and all aspects must be community based.**

As mentioned in the first characteristic on this framework, the outside community of the Bachillerato is highly involved within the educational program. However it has also been mentioned that there is a certain cleavage between the students and the faculty members. Given this gap between the two groups, it is not a true statement to say that the curriculum of the Bachillerato Maderera Cordoba is community based. The lack of input from the students puts the leaders of the Bachillerato in the spot of the dominant elites who try to persuade the masses to their objective. Students are exposed to only themes that the leaders of the Bachillerato Maderera deem necessary.

Each teacher designs the content of each course and their corresponding class work. Each teacher has to turn in end of term grades and how those grades are determined is up to the teacher. Under the researcher’s observations of classes of all three year, it was seen that class work was organized by the teacher to include many learner-centered activities to empower students and encourage discussion and questioning of social concepts and terms.
4.1.4 Accountability and translucency of decision-making must exist and be available to the community.

Intra and Inter-Bachillerato Meetings are open to all members of the community. As mentioned in Chapter 3, Inter Bachillerato Meetings are held once a month. These meetings address all issues that involve the Bachillerato; however there is a consistent lack of participation from the student portion of the community.

Also given the openness of the meetings, it is difficult to keep an agenda. Also the meetings last for three to four hours. The lack of organization becomes an obstacle when wanting to strengthen the program. Within the confusion and lack of organization, dominant elites have emerged from the faculty. CEIP original members and Bachillerato Maderera Cordoba administrators Fernando Lazaro and Ezequiel Alfieri have emerged as the dominant leadership among the Bachillerato’s faculty. Most administrative decisions are made by them and therefore have contributed to a manipulation of the Bachillerato itself. Given that the staff of the Bachillerato is unpaid, teachers must seek income in other areas. The other faculty members have ceded their decision-making powers to the administrators. Although this may be practical, it can be viewed as what Freire declares as a pact between the dominant and the dominant classes. He argues that pacts may be considered superficial and give the impression of a dialogue between the classes – the true interest of their objectives are determined by the unequivocal interest of the dominant elites.
4.1.5 Activeness, relying upon students to define their needs and to acquire and construct knowledge for themselves

Given the lack of participation from students in meetings, it is difficult for students to define their needs. However, it has been observed that students when engaged one on one will participate and define their needs.

During the researcher’s time at the Bachillerato Maderera Cordoba, it was observed that the entire student body would participate in marches and manifestations to gain funding and recognition from local and federal education ministries and to support other bachilleratos. However the Bachillerato faculty administrators always solicited their support and participation. Again, this supports another characteristic of a traditional education where Freire would argue that the dominant elites try to conform the masses to their objective. If the students were not interested or asked to participate in these marches, there would be no participation on their end. The actions were not coming from the students needs for funding or state recognition of their school.

4.1.6 Model should be specific to the community.

The model of the Bachillerato Maderera was relatively specific to the community. As mentioned in characteristic number two, the Bachillerato is open to all members of the community at meetings for suggestions.

Also the class scheduling is convenient to the demographics of the student body. Classes are Monday through Thursday from 1:30 pm until 5:30 pm. There are three classes taught a day a one hour and ten minutes each. Fridays are considered a day of
make-ups and teachers from all subjects will be available from that time for any questions. As it was shown in Chapter 2, several of the students have had children and single mothers. Also, many of the older male students work as doormen at apartment buildings. The afternoon schedule allows them to be with their children and/or work in the morning and attend school in the afternoon. Given the loose attendance policy at the Maderera, the Friday make-up date is essential for many of the students have difficulty attending class regularly.

The model of the structure is specific to the community and does suggest the cultural synthesis that Freire sites as a dialogical action as it resolves the contradiction between the worldview of the leaders and that of the people. It supports enrichment for both parties and does not deny the differences between both views of how an educational model should be run. It is based on the difference of the faculty member and the student.

4.1.7 The programs approach to working with oppressed groups is to first look at their realities and the issues that are important to the group.

Freire describes the second pillar of dialogical action, unit for liberation as leaders dedicating themselves to a uniting effort for unity among the oppressed and unity of the leaders with the oppressed in order to achieve liberation. The Bachillerato’s teachers are allowed design the coursework themselves and upon observation it shows that classroom activities are based on the realities of the students.

Given the imbalance between the faculty and student participation, the planning of an education program is primarily developed by the teacher. The lack of student participation forces the teacher to develop the majority of the course’s curriculum on their own.
4.1.8 The education must to be learner centered.

The classroom activities at the Bachillerato are learner centered. However, due to the lack of participation from the student body, the faculty members are forced to supplement the student’s input with their own.

The act of supplementing the faculty member’s ideas of what a course should be in place of those of the student can be considered as an anti-dialogical action, or a form of conquest. As Freire suggests, once a situation of oppression has been initiated, anti-dialogue becomes indispensable to its preservation.

The analysis above of the Bachillerato shows that it is indeed different from a formal education experience. The setup in a recovered factory, loose attendance, grading policies and participation in manifestations and marches provide students with an environment of inclusion and a non-traditional education. An environment of inclusion is one that humanizes – according to Freire and this is what the Bachillerato Maderera seems to obtain. Section 5.3 discusses the developmental implications of such an education.

4.1.9 Responses to Sub-Questions:

i. How does the Bachillerato Maderera Cordoba stand apart from a formal educational experience:
   a. How have the ideas and concepts presented in Paulo Freire’s Pedagogy of the Oppressed been adopted and actually implemented in the Bachillerato Maderera Córdoba?
   b. What has been done to preserve the nature of the conscious-raising nature of a Freirian education?

ii. How can a prosperous and effective learning experience be measured within an informal environment?
In what ways does the school exhibit characteristics of a traditional, formal educational experience and non-traditional experience?

The eight characteristics and their explanations portray the school with both anti-dialogical and dialogical actors creating a mix of traditional and non-traditional elements. The individual analyses above answer the sub questions posed in Chapter 1. Measuring a prosperous and effective learning experience in the Freirian sense is difficult and that is why the framework was formed and used to evaluate the Bachillerato. The extent of the prosperous and effective learning experience is illustrated in the analysis in this chapter. Also The Bachillerato does not provide a completely humanizing nor liberating educational experience as it shows that student participation is low and the design of the coursework consistently calls on the teacher, consequently reinforcing what Freire would consider the “banking “ instruction system.

Based on observations, oppression is not directly conceptualized within the classroom. However in an effort to preserve the nature of the conscious-raising nature of Freire, the students are encouraged to question the daily struggles and as to why they may are struggles and where they originate. Despite limited student participation, class work is centered on discussion and an open forum where students are to reflect on material presented and expound upon their interpretations.
4.2 Pragmatic Limitations of Freire’s Conscientização

As proved in the first part of the analysis in this chapter, the Bachillerato Maderera Córdoba does not offer a completely liberating and humanizing educational program due to the low student participation level and the institution’s consolidated executive power that encourages anti-dialogical action such as invasion and divide and conquer. The second part of Chapter 4 looks at these, the Bachillerato’s liberation and humanization shortcomings and places them in the context of the overall shortcomings and limited pragmatism of Pedagogy of the Oppressed.

One of the main criticisms of Pedagogy of the Oppressed is its actual language. The tone used set by Freire is not one that most people can clearly understand. Pedagogy of the Oppressed was originally written based on Freire’s experiences working with illiterate populations in Northeastern Brazil. The wording is dense and for those who are coming from an oppressive environment and have limited education, it will most probably be difficult for them to grasp the concepts that Freire sets out for the reader. An example of Freire’s convoluted language is an example here where he describes the banking concept as a form of oppression.

“(Teachers) must be partners of the students in their relations with them.

The banking concept does not admit to such partnership – and necessarily so. To resolve the student-teacher contradiction to exchange the role of depositor, prescriber, domesticator for the role of student among students would be to undermine the power of oppression and serve the cause of liberation.
Implicit in the banking concept is the assumption of a dichotomy between human beings and the world: a person is merely in the world, not with the world or with others; the individual is spectator, not re-creator.\textsuperscript{40}

Freire’s pseudo-biblical tone clearly sets the stage for the major shortcomings of the Bachillerato Maderera Córdoba’s attempt at sustaining Freirian praxis of conscientização – low student participation, the division rather than union of the student and faculty bodies and the concentration of decision-making power within the faculty. The Bachillerato’s vertical power structure is an example of this, tacitly allowing for the school’s directors and some key faculty members to make the majority of the schools administrative and political decisions. These key decision makers are also the founders of the popular education movement in the Buenos Aires region, founders of the Cooperative of Popular Researchers and Educators. These leaders have strong, traditional education backgrounds and therefore have the reading ability to interpret Freire’s text. On the contrary, many of the students (most likely the majority) of the Bachillerato come from lower income households, if not villas\textsuperscript{41} where education is typically not a priority, and are likely not familiar with the meaning of the Pedagogy of the Oppressed text and or the work of Paulo Freire.

Another critique of Freire’s writing style is the fact that none of his examples are concrete and cited in an inconsistent manner. In Pedagogy of the Oppressed, Freire attempts to provide a method for overcoming oppression without citing examples or giving firm instructions. The lack of examples of liberating and humanizing action gives the reader room to interpret their concept oppression and focus on overcoming such

\textsuperscript{40} Freire, Paolo. Pedagogy of the Oppressed. Continuum. New York. 1970
\textsuperscript{41} Villa - shantytown
hardships through cooperation and the other concepts of dialogical action detailed in Chapter 1. However, the lack of clear and succinct exemplification proves to be oppressive as well. Freire does warn against charismatic leaders but the open endedness of the text can be perverted and clearly used to support captivating yet dehumanizing leaders and regimes. The book’s language can be misinterpreted especially when it comes to what is dialogical and anti-dialogical action.

This cleavage between those who understand Freire/decision makers and those who do not understand Freire/non-decision makers has resulted in what seems to be a cultural diffusion or what Freire would refer to as a non-dialogical action of “divide and conquer.” Those who are able to understand Freire make the decisions based on their interest and not those of the entire group. The lack of student input and participation directly affects this. If the language of the Pedagogy of the Oppressed were simpler and written for a less select audience, there might be more interest from the student body and therefore greater participation and the leadership bloc would more likely be more open to ideas. Freire writes of a single, solid movement to conquer oppression and promote liberation through humanization. However, Freire’s style of writing makes it difficult for the majority of oppressed peoples to comprehend his work, especially those who have limited educational background, therefore potentially thwarting the liberating effects he champions.

Another critique of Pedagogy of the Oppressed that may explain the Bachillerato Maderera Córdoba’s limited Freirian implementation is the concept of opposing principal establishment and formulating a new culture in the sake of overcoming oppressive regimes. In Chapters Three and Four of Pedagogy of the Oppressed Freire discusses how
dialogical action must be used to overcome oppression through individual actions of humanization. Through these humanizing actions, liberation from oppression will be achieved. Formulating a new culture has proven to be difficult when class time only a couple of hours of week and the rest of the time outside of the classroom is spent in the “oppressive” culture. Given that most students under the age of 22, their priorities are quite different from those who are middle-aged adults and even more different than many of the faculty members.

Loose grading and attendance systems – although established to promote an environment of inclusion and openness also serve as a way to diffuse the group. Student attendance typically drops 50% between the beginning and end of the year. The lack of structure that characterizes the school as informal and an example of praxis can also be seen as uninterested students taking advantage of a system for their benefit with little commitment to overcoming oppression.

Outside of the Bachillerato, students are faced with many other pressures that may limit their commitment to the liberation quest at the Bachillerato. Many students work, have children and families to take care of which makes school and formulating a new culture a lesser priority. Give the fact that the teaching faculty is not paid, all teachers have other jobs. Many are graduates from the Universidad de Buenos Aires. Teachers are often as exhausted as students are from their “oppressed” reality and often do not show interest in recreating.

The teachers and students already products of an oppressive reality arrive to class tired and stressed automatically revert to the traditional student and teacher roles within
the classroom. Oppressive reality inhibits the formulation of a new culture therefore causing students and teachers to be divided into two separate groups.
4.3 Developmental Implications of Education

In the first section of the Chapter 4, the Bachillerato Maderera Córdoba was analyzed based on a Freirian “checklist”, designed to serve as a litmus test to measure the humanizing and liberating degree the educational program is. The second part of this Chapter, the researcher presents two major criticisms of the limited pragmatism of Paulo Freire’s alternate pedagogy presented in Pedagogy of the Oppressed, the book in which the education program of the Bachillerato Maderera Córdoba and many other bachilleratos was based on. Section Two then looks at the Bachillerato’s shortcomings from Section One and explains them within the context of the criticisms of Pedagogy of the Oppressed. The section below takes a look at education at a whole and its implications for democracy.

The principle of democracy is violated when real political equality cannot produce anymore because of extreme socio-economic inequality. Many indicators regarding political participation and equal treatment in court proceedings show that poverty as an extreme force of inequality put the poor at a huge disadvantage in the exercise of their civil and political rights. The table presented below supports this assertion. Argentina, Brazil, Chile and Mexico all are classified as Free Nations by Freedom House, although, each of these nations have high rates of socio-economic inequality (see table) and considerable amounts of political corruption that render the democracies defective. The high Gini coefficients express the high degree of social and economic inequality within the countries presented.
There is a strong need for a homogenous economic basis among citizens, such as a large middle class – which most of Latin America lacks to enable opportunities for equal participation enables a democratic process. This basic guarantee provides a security blanket for democracy from other methods of democracy through its developed economy, prevention of extreme poverty via the fair distribution of the material resources within a society. These qualities present challenges of various degrees to the aforementioned Latin American nations in their path to liberal democracy. These characteristics also enhance

<table>
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<th>Latin American Democracy:</th>
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<td>2, 3</td>
<td>Free</td>
<td>49.5</td>
<td>Illiberal</td>
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$^{46}$ Wolfgang Merkel defines a delegative democracy when the legislature and judiciary only have limited control over the executive branch. Governments are lead by charismatic presidents that circumvent legislative bodies, influences the judiciary, such as Menemismo, Kirchnerismo of Argentina.

$^{47}$ Wolfgang Merkel defines exclusive democracies where one or more segments of all adult citizens are excluded from the civil right of universal suffrage. This was the case in Brazil when illiterate adults were unable to vote.

$^{48}$ Wolfgang Merkel refers to illiberal democracy when constitutional norms have little binding impact on governmental actions and individual civil rights are either partially suspended or not yet established.

$^{49}$ The Alywin government of Chile, a restricted democracy where the constitution is guided by an authoritative force.
the quality of democracy with regards to the rule of law and participation. Now that this
has been stated, it is important to keep in mind that the opposite of this relationship is
also true. The lack of a well-developed economy, and an abrupt downward change
endanger the stability and the quality of a liberal democracy. The question that must be
answered is what potential impacts do the popular education movement and Paulo
Freire’s educational techniques present to Latin American defective democracies?

In most of Latin America, mass state education is a relatively recent institution,
and the neo-liberal policy trends of the 1990s and its impacts on the modernization
educational systems through decentralization have largely been unsuccessful. The
combination of these two factors has resulted in an unequal distribution of educational
resources. It was reported in Argentina, one of the Latin American countries that spends
the most per head in terms of education, that in 2005, 56.2% of the population in urban
Argentine areas had not received a high school diploma. As an educated populace is
often listed one of the prerequisites for democratization, such high incompletion rates
present a serious challenge for further consolidation of liberal democracy.

Regardless, the current statistics of enrollment in basic education compared with
those of the 1960s and ‘70s show certain advances in the educational opportunities open
to the very poor. This universal access to basic education has been a sign of greater social
democratization and, at the same time, the prelude to the kind of problems that
accompany any mass activity. The inequality in the outcomes of learning is a typical
symptom of dual, not to say fragmented, societies such as those of Latin America. During
the 1990s, while enrollment rates were rising among popular classes, the living

50 INDEC 2005, INDEC. Dirección Nacional de Estadísticas Sociales y de Población.
Dirección de Estadísticas Sectoriales en base a datos de la Encuesta Permanente de Hogares.
conditions of a large part of the population deteriorated. The poverty and exclusion of the vast majority, particularly children, became more severe. This trend towards greater exclusion and poverty raises doubts in countries about the supposed direct relationship that may be established between access to schooling, social justice and democracy.

Popular education presents a methodology of instruction that is intended to raise the consciousness of its supporters to respond politically and educationally to the requirements of schooling, social justice and democracy. One of the challenges involved in revising its activities is the difficult relationship with the state, which is constantly under strain in the majority of the countries and should give rise to concern, analysis and, where necessary and possible, to concerted action. Despite the generally poor condition of education systems, and the factors causing this, it is no less certain that circumstances differ widely between countries. An examination of national data and situations suggests that an attempt should be made to expand educational opportunities, or at least that consideration should be given to doing so. In the relationship with the state, the best schemes and options for renewal of education for young people and adults have not always been adopted – although there are some excellent schemes that need to be reinforced.

Almost any political scientist will also agree that the long tradition of a positive relation between a well-developed civil society and a strong democracy. Popular education must raise the quality of its educational activities so that it serves the most excluded. Good intentions will not be enough if the outcomes – better organization and learning – do not match the time invested and the most urgent needs of the participants. Institutional policies and programs need to have an effective impact on access to
education and learning, and actually result in reduced inequality. First, there is still a need for empirical research and firmly based evaluation of institutional policies and educational processes and results. These should receive greater attention through an examination of outstanding tasks and alternative ways of continually improving educational practices and services. This notion has its roots in the Lockesian ideals on the protection of individual autonomy, the development of individual rights and the protection of individual property in order to protect the individual from the state. Montesquieu and De Tocqueville also discussed the importance of civil society, as being schools of democracy, free associations that allowed citizens to practice democratic behavior and use it on a daily basis. Associations to be places of self-government, they must not be too large, yet should be numerous. They should exist on all levels of the political system, since freedom and democratization would be forged on a national level. Such organizations assist in the establishment of honest, reliable, trustful and civil courage, also recognized as social capital.

Paulo Freire’s notion of popular education asks the question if Latin America is capable of producing and sustainable, embedded, liberal democracies. Popular education, a Latin American creation, is at the heart of these questions and its achievements have certainly been affected by their implied demands on the region. New situations and concepts have had an influence on the continuing acknowledgement by popular education of the requirements of reality, even resulting in the danger of its moving in directions quite different from those at the outset. Popular education suggests that the form of human development that expands the horizon of national development beyond rises in Gross Domestic Product and macroeconomic advances, and raises questions about the
purpose of this process, stressing fair distribution and the creation of successful economic growth without divorcing the economy from society.

Despite the benefits of educated masses and critical thinkers, social mobilization and a well developed civil society, the popular education movement has the potential to be co-opted by the existing social system and make it function according to its interests as the prevailing social structures and accumulated capital. In many Latin American countries where clientalism practices are often used in order to guarantee votes, the popular education movement is potentially susceptible to be overtaken and/or dominated by local parties, where elected officials and constituents often exchange votes for demanded goods.\(^{51}\)

Popular education is strongly based on ideology and on limited practice, thus making policy planning and projecting outcomes slightly difficult. The conscious raising enlightenment techniques presented by Freire lend themselves to vertical action and responses- without any previous consultation, such as the dilemma of one citizen viewing his misery as the direct result of a certain actor. These responsive actions, given their over-simplification can be viewed to possess a certain degree of anarchism.

Upon considering an ideal project or policy and what is should consist of, it seems to make sense that it should be utilitarian in nature and therefore seek to benefit the greatest amount of people possible. This thesis offers an evaluation of the Bachillerato Maderera Córdoba to essentially see if the school keeps to its self-proclaimed Freirian roots and to see what the associated implications may be. The Bachillerato Maderera Córdoba seeks to extend the right of education to excluded segments of Argentine society.

by enfranchising their students, allowing for a great deal of autonomy within the school setting in terms of curriculum setting and planning. As our analysis above proves, the Bachillerato Maderera is not completely a Freirian institution however certainly promotes innate actions towards promoting Porteño social and political development.

An ideal project would be based on the cooperation between national or local authorities, non-governmental organizations, the private sector, local and academic communities. The project must contribute to sustained eradication of poverty and/or social exclusion, allow for social mobility, especially by the involvement of participants. It is clear that there is no single ‘right’ recipe for improving schools and the educational system as a whole. But school improvement projects need to be focused more directly on teaching, pedagogy and classroom management. Programs must make high quality education a priority in all areas. They must confront low expectations, put the students at the center, avoid neglecting emotions, establishing a positive climate, develop deep understanding processes, work between and beyond schools, listen especially to students and promote collective responsibility. All of these tasks are framed within Freire’s Dialogical Theory.

Traditional education programs tend to use student’s scores as a measure of understanding the rate of success but the model has not given proper weight to issues of equity and efficiency – especially the long term benefits of an educated population. There must be a means of incorporating new approaches in order to increase the involvement of communities in school management and resources. A variety of motivations lead societies to provide strong support of schooling. Some are purely economic, while others are driven by ideas of using education to improve political participation, social justice
and the general development and modernization of society. It is very important that educators understand these concepts.

In Argentina, the traditional education system has successfully isolated itself form “outside” conflicts, but it cannot keep itself far from the social problems that are faced by a growing amount of Argentines. A new education system based on learning to live together requires new strategy and position. It is necessary for the school to include and get involved in social matters and in those related to the evolving momentum of the students, who are the real subjects of learning. In an interview, Mauricio Macri, the mayor of the City of Buenos Aires suggested that, “material inequality is deeply related to the inequality in access to learning. The person who has greater opportunities for learning also has better access to high paid salaries: this consequently depends social inequality. The only way to solve this contradiction is to guarantee universal policies of equality in education quality. It is also essential to develop policies that guarantee access to education.”

Educational opportunities must be available without discrimination. Diverse aspects related to their living conditions and to their culture have to be considered. Many of the adolescents and young people coming from slum communities bring to the educational institutions a diversity of cultures, learning styles, approaches and perspectives that might either enrich learning and add value to inclusion or force them into failure, according to the capability of the educational systems, schools and teachers to take advantage of that diversity. How knowledge, skills, competencies, values and attitudes are transmitted and shaped are as important as the content of the officially prescribed curriculum. Updating educational contents and improving educational
processes will be effective if the learning environment is also improved accordingly to the needs of each context. Both the physical environment of learning (adequate attention paid to the promotion of physical and mental health, safety and security), as well as the psycho-social environment of learning (absence of gender or minority discrimination, bullying) will enable or hinder learning the needed contents through the adequate processes to form competencies for inclusion that are derived through inclusive educational programs.

To promote an inclusive public education, there is also a need to improve social and educational framework and make the educational structure flexible and compatible with all population segments. A sustainable legislative framework that enables the realization of the right to education for all is needed in both of these countries. This may involve forms of compensatory or affirmative action to ensure equitable educational opportunities for students. Brazil has taken many steps towards generating projects that tackle issues of inequality in education, much more than the current government in Argentina. Such affirmative action should be implemented in the future also need to involve educational processes and not only the provision of the necessary material conditions for schooling, such as inadequate spaces, textbooks and other learning materials.

The development of a strong civil society is a major challenge for many developing countries. Societies need to respond to the challenge of adapting to constantly changing labor market by providing pathways and alternatives that enable students to maximize their full potential. Investment in education benefits the individual and society. Although a central goal of education is to allow all individuals to develop their full
potential, the realization of this goal does not imply the elimination of individual differences in educational achievement and the associated benefits, nor does it necessarily mean access for all to the same educational experiences. Thus, consideration of equity in education must address issues related to outcomes, as well as to access. When social crises, such as crime, unemployment or civil unrest demand the time and resources of the public funds, citizens may support channeling resources to remedy these crises rather than in invest in education. Governments must promote education as potential remedies to such crises. Children who receive more education now may have higher earnings in the future, and investment in schooling can therefore influence distribution of per capita income or of consumption.\textsuperscript{53}

Education contributes to the development of social capital by increasing an individual’s propensity to trust and be tolerant. Building trust, extending and reconstructing social networks, and reinforcing behaviors and attitudes are important because they influence individuals toward community participation. Policy makers need to design and implement targeted interventions with the overall objective of improving the quality of secondary education and reducing the quality and relevance gap. What appears to matter most is how a country’s education system deploys and uses resources in order to provide good learning opportunities. There should be no question that expanding access, and improving relevance and quality should be key policy objectives to ensure that both access and quality are enhanced for those generally excluded by poverty, ethnicity, gender or other factors, including geography.

The marginalized and vulnerable populations are not always consulted or included in the search for good alternatives for ensuring the quality of education for social
inclusion. One answer to this which has been provided through this paper and especially through the specific case study is that Freire’s Cultural Action Theory is a legitimate means towards making these disenfranchised population sections a part of the education system dialogue. However, it seems that the degree of consultation and stakeholder participation policy dialogue, formation and implementation and linkages to other sector polices are very important as well in guaranteeing quality for all citizens, particularly for those under conditions of exclusion and vulnerability. Tailored solutions are required to address the particular needs, capacities and conditions of each culture.
CONCLUSION

The goal of this research was to analyze to what degree the Bachillerato Maderera Córdoba has implemented the alternative pedagogy based on conscientização described by Paulo Freire in *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*. In order to respond to this inquiry, the researcher the following series of questions:

1. To what extent does the Bachillerato Maderera Córdoba’s implementation of the Freirian informal educational model lend itself to an alternate pedagogy that provides a liberating and humanizing experience for others?
2. How does the Bachillerato Maderera Córdoba stand apart from a formal education experience?
3. Is oppression conceptualized by the instructors and the students at the Bachillerato Maderera Córdoba during class discussions?
4. How can a prosperous and effective learning experience be measured within an informal environment?

In Chapter 1, the researcher analyzed Freire’s Dialogical and Anti-Dialogical theories to develop a set of Eight Characteristics of Liberating and Humanizing Education Programs. The list of eight distinguishing qualities was put together in order to correctly and objectively identify an informal Freirian educational program. This was developed also to assist in answering Question 4 and measure an effective learning experience within an informal environment. Each characteristic supports a horizontal and popular education by embracing the concepts of cooperation, unity for liberation, organization and cultural synthesis. The set of characteristics was used to answer the main research question and its supporting sub-questions.
The responses to the three sub-questions were used to support the main research question and support the hypothesis. Responses to Sub-questions 2 and 3 were based on qualitative observation and Sub-Question 4 was based on the set of Eight Characteristics of Liberating and Humanizing Education Programs that was used to essentially quantify a conscientização based alternative pedagogy.

The first section of Chapter 4 was used to evaluate and rate the Bachillerato Maderera Córdoba’s educational program, therefore answering the Question 2. It was pointed out that despite the non-traditional setting and nature of the program there were many traditional aspects in present. Chapter 3 looked at the movement, the Cooperativa de Educadores y Investigadores to which the Bachillerato Maderera Córdoba pertains and also the school itself. The description of the school shows that the Bachillerato Maderera Córdoba is different from a formal education system given its scheduling, setting and flexible grading and attendance policy. Chapter 4 then looked at the Bachillerato in terms of its humanizing and liberating characteristics and what actually makes and does not make it Freirian. Question 3 is also answered in the first section of in Chapter 4. Identifying oppression is essential when the purpose of an institution is to humanize its participants to overcome oppression.

In the end the hypothesis presented in the Introduction of this thesis project is successfully proved. Despite the implementation of the non-formal Freirian education model Bachillerato Maderera Córdoba’s does have very un-Freirian characteristics such as marginalized participation and a rather vertical and non-popular decision making structure. However it should be noted that a complete Freirian implementation faces pragmatic limitations that ultimately and indirectly support a traditional, “banking”
educational experience. Regardless a populated that is educated of any form – formal or non-formal lends itself to promote and sustain a consolidation of democratic regimes. The case of the Bachillerato Maderera Córdoba has successfully formed a community and network amongst its members and other bachilleratos that are part of the Cooperativa de Educadores y Investigadores in which positively impacts Porteño civil society and Argentine social development.
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