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Title	Paulo Freire's theory of education in the 1990s:from a political struggle to a social struggle
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Citation	北海道大學教育學部紀要, 80, 133-149
Issue Date	2000-03
Doc URL	https://hdl.handle.net/2115/29612
Type	departmental bulletin paper
File Information	80_P133-149.pdf

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Paulo Freire's theory of education in the 1990s: from a political struggle to a social struggle

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ABSTRACT *In this paper I focused on examining from a historical perspective the development of the social thematics in Paulo Freire's seven works published in the 1990s compared to his masterpiece "Pedagogy of the Oppressed" written in 1970. In the 1960s and 1970s, 'conscientization' was an important educational tool for people to gain political rights in order to struggle for the transformation of the social structure. In the 1990s however, with the redemocratization process that started in the beginning of the 1980s, people had acquired some political rights and it became necessary to teach them how to use these rights. As a result, in the 1990s, Paulo Freire gives emphasis on the need to construct a democratic and popular school that gives the chance to everyone participate in its construction and "practice" their rights and duties as citizens.*

[要旨] 1990年代パウロ・フレイレの教育論：政治闘争から社会闘争へ
本論文は，フレイレの代表作『被抑圧者の教育学』をもとにし，1990年代に書かれた著作7編の教育主張を，政治的革命から社会的革命を求める闘いへと重点を変化させたものとして，歴史的な観点から検討した。1960年代と1970年代のブラジル社会では，人々の政治的権利の獲得のために，「意識化」は重要な教育手段でありえた。しかし，1990年代のブラジル社会では，人々はいくらかの政治的権利を獲得したため，教育の一つの重要な役割は，市民の義務と権利を教えることに変化した。従って，1990年代のフレイレは，地域に密着した民主的でポピュラーな公立学校の構築の必要性を強調した。

I) Introduction

Following John Dewey as one of the most important educators of the first half of the century, it would be no exaggeration to say that Brazilian philosopher and politicaleducator Paulo Freire (1921-1997) is one of the main 'catalysts' of educational innovation and transformation in the second half of the century.[1]

Paulo Freire became internationally known in the 1970s by being the first one to create a method of literacy specifically for adult education and by implementing it first in Brazil and later in other Latin American and African countries. The method proved to be efficient in teaching adults how to read and write in a short period of time as well as to raise the learners' level of critical consciousness. In spite of the fact that Paulo Freire wrote an innovative *theory* of education, it was mostly interpreted to be merely a *method*

for adult literacy.

In Japan,[2] Paulo Freire's works became the focus of attention from the late 1970s to the beginning of the 1980s among sociologists and educators that were concerned with the problem of minorities' illiteracy and discrimination as well as education in Third World countries. Paulo Freire's philosophical and theoretical principles however, have often been reduced either to a method of literacy for adult education or to an educational theory applicable only in Third World countries. As a consequence of this limited view of his works, there are few works that thoroughly analyze Freirean thoughts as a theory of education. Moreover, there are almost no works or papers that analyze or refer to Paulo Freire's latest works, such as the so-called 'talking books' published in the 1980s and the seven books published in the 1990s, which are important to have a complete view of the development of his philosophical and theoretical principles.

In a North American context, similar to Japan, Paulo Freire's thoughts were also often reduced to methods, which tendency, according to Stanley Aronowitz, is one of the main problems of American educators: their tendency to reduce pedagogical theories to mere methods, to mere "aspirin practices," which are expected to solve their "headache as quickly as possible."[3] In the 1990s, however, Freirean works began to gain renewed attention and this time not only among adult educators but also among schoolteachers. It can be argued that this increase in interest is a consequence of two main factors: 1) his pedagogy was rediscovered as an alternative to solve the problems North American schooling is facing nowadays, such as the high rate of drop-outs among minorities; 2) Freirean works published in the 1990s focus on the necessity to redefine the role of schools in the society by questioning the existing educational system. Consequently, in North America, all Freirean works written in the 1990s have already been translated into English and, books and dissertations analyzing his latest tendencies and experiences in public schools have been published.[4]

In Brazil, the rebirth of the progressive educational movement in the early 1980s brought the revival of Freirean works that had been labeled 'subversive' during the military dictatorship period (1964-1985). The economic crisis caused the power of the military to weaken and allowed the redemocratization process to start. In addition, this process was accelerated by the subsequent political opening and strengthening of popular movements that until then had been suppressed. The appointment of Paulo Freire as Secretary of Education for São Paulo City in 1989, was a precious opportunity to put the progressive educators' ideas into practice in a formal schooling context.

Freire resigns from the post in 1991 and returns to academic life. From 1991 until 1997, he wrote seven books in total. *Pedagogy of the City* (1991), *Teachers as Cultural Workers* (1993) and *Pedagogy of Freedom* (1997) are addressed to educators and offer concrete suggestions on how teachers training programs as well as school reforms must be conducted in order to construct an educational system based on progressive and democratic principles. In *Pedagogy of Hope* (1992) and *Letters to Cristina* (1994), Freire critically

reviews his life and works. Finally, in *Politics and Education* (1993) and *Pedagogy of the Heart* (1995), emphasis is given to the need to be alert to the dangers posed by neoliberal ideology based on the ethics of the market, in contrast to progressive postmodern ideology based on universal human ethics.

In this paper I will examine from a historical perspective the development of the social thematics in Paulo Freire's works in the 1990s compared to his masterpiece *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* written in 1970. In his latest works, the emphasis shifts from the struggle for a political revolution as found in *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* to a struggle for a social revolution. In the 1960s and 1970s, when Brazilian society was ruled by authoritarian governments, there was an urgent need for people to gain political rights in order to struggle for the transformation of the social structure. In the 1990s however, with the redemocratization process that started in the beginning of the 1980s, people had acquired some political rights, but had no experience in exercising these rights. It was therefore necessary to teach them how to use these rights, i.e., through education, there was a need to teach them how to fulfill their duties as citizens. In a society dominated by neoliberal ideology based on the ethics of the market, educational proposals were reduced to mere training of a skilled workforce for the sake of Brazil's economic development. For Paulo Freire, education participates in the 'formation' of individuals and this implies the need to educate the individual 'scientifically' and technically as well as socially for the individual to fulfill his/her role as a citizen. To truly develop a country, economic development is not sufficient: social and cultural development is also indispensable.

In contemporary Japanese society, according to Teruhisa Horio, education has been "organized so as to make sure that the overwhelming majority of students never grow up to become the kind of citizens who will demand much of anything, least of all their political and intellectual rights."[5] The State recognizing the 'power' of education in 'forming' people, has been controlling it to fulfill its objectives, which was to form obedient and disciplined citizens that would strive for the country's economic development. This objective was attained by the 1980s and since then, Japan has been struggling to redefine its educational system, exemplified by the occurrence of problems such as bullying and the increase of school refusal by students. Subsequently, pressures from society on the Minister of Education to introduce reforms have strengthened. In Japan, similar to the situation in Brazil, there is a need to redefine the basic concept of education to one that returns to children what characterize them most: energy, creativity, curiosity and joy in learning and living. Paulo Freire's theory of education can be a guide at this point in time when Japan is looking for a new type of education. This new education should form participant and active citizens that will work for the construction of a better society, rather than emphasizing training of 'skilful yet passive workers.'

II) Pedagogy of the Oppressed: education for conscientization

From the 1930s to the 1960s with industrialization in the developing stage, Brazilian

society experienced years of turbulence, extraordinary economic development and changes in the social structure. Paulo Freire, as a middle class intellectual influenced by Escolanovistas'[6] pedagogical optimism, developed his thoughts during this period "of political crisis which began in the 1930s and which finished with the military coup in 1964."[7]

Paulo Freire's theory of education is based upon the literacy programs developed with popular classes during the period of the 1950s and 1960s. He was able to work with popular classes because of 1) political liberalization after 15 years of authoritarian government and 2) a series of popular mobilizations arising as a consequence of Brazilian government policies that put priority on economic growth at the cost of impoverishment of the popular class, mainly of the Northeast region.[8] Paulo Freire, an intellectual living in the impoverished Northeast region with 30 million illiterates, corresponding to about half of the region's population, felt the necessity not only to teach these people how to read and write. Through educational practice, he had the ambition "to both, engage the people politically and educate them in this process of conscientization and mass movement."[9] Subsidized by Recife[10] government, along with other progressive intellectuals, Freire founded the MCP (Movement for Popular Culture) in the beginning of the 1960s, during which literacy campaigns were developed based on what became known as the 'Paulo Freire Method.' With the 1964 coup d'état however, Freire, labeled communist and subversive, had to go into exile.

Pedagogy of the Oppressed was written in his first years of exile in the turbulent Chile, whose social context resembled that of Brazil. The coup d'etat convinced Freire that the only ones who could radically transform society were the ones who were suffering the injustices and were in a 'miserable' situation in a society molded to benefit only the few elite. Nevertheless, for the oppressed to overcome their situation, they "must first critically recognize its causes, so that through transforming action they can create a new situation-one which makes possible the pursuit of a fuller humanity."[11] For Paulo Freire, the oppressed are 'dual beings.' On the one hand, 'immersed' in the oppressive reality, they adhere to the oppressor's values, interests and ideologies and are afraid of being liberated from this 'secure' world and on the other hand, they want to free themselves from their oppressive reality. At the same time the oppressed are 'dehumanized' by their oppressive reality, they also want to free themselves from this given reality and fulfill their roles as human beings. Hence, having humanization and dehumanization as possibilities, only humanization should be the option, and, for the oppressed to be able to fight for their own liberation from the dehumanized condition and recover their sense of historicity as human beings, "Political action on the side of the oppressed must be pedagogical action in the authentic sense of the word...The conviction of the oppressed that they must fight for their liberation is not a gift bestowed by the revolutionary leadership, but the result of their own conscientization."[12] Only through an education for 'conscientization' by means of praxis of reflection and action, "men simultaneously create history and become historical-social beings."[13] Influenced by the pedagogical optimism of Escolanovistas, Freire believed that

for the oppressed to be active participant in the construction of a new Brazilian society, the "only effective instrument (was) [is] a humanizing pedagogy in which the revolutionary leadership establishes a permanent relationship of dialogue with the oppressed."[14]

The traditional and authoritarian bourgeois education is a dehumanizing pedagogy that rather than developing 'critical consciousness,' it forms passive and manageable people. This type of education corresponds to what Paulo Freire called the 'banking concept of education' in which the teacher, who knows everything 'deposits' the knowledge to the students for them to 'fill' their consciousness with fragmented 'bits' of information, i.e., the act of knowing is reduced to an 'act of depositing communiqués.' Subsequently, "the more completely they accept the passive role imposed on them, the more they tend simply to adapt to the world as it is and to the fragmented view of reality deposited in them."[15] Banking education maintains the division between the teacher and the students, i.e., those who know everything and those who do not know anything and have to 'obey' and 'adapt' according to what is 'dictated.' Besides, it reproduces the division between the oppressor and oppressed.

To react against this authoritarian, 'dehumanizing' education, Freire proposes what he called 'problem-posing' education, which "bases itself on creativity and stimulates true reflection and action upon reality, thereby responding to the vocation of men as beings who are authentic only when engaged in inquiry and creative transformation."[16] Consequently, whereas 'banking' education suppresses creative power to maintain the *submersion* of consciousness, problem-posing education stimulates creative power "for the *emergence* of consciousness and *critical intervention* in reality."[17] Moreover, while the 'banking' concept of education is founded on the narrative and dissertative relationship between educator and student, problem-posing education, on the contrary, is founded on the dialogical relationship in which both learn and teach together.

Dialogue is part of human nature because human beings, as social beings, are essentially communicative; human beings need each other to learn new things. Dialogue thus, enables communication, and through communication people are able to overcome the situation that limits them and to develop their consciousness to a more critical one:"They cannot sloganize the people, but must enter into dialogue with them, so that the people's empirical knowledge of reality, nourished by the leaders' critical knowledge, gradually becomes transformed into knowledge of the *causes* of reality."[18]

Therefore, education's main goal is to develop the naïve consciousness of the oppressed to a more critical one by objectifying their concrete reality and making them reflect upon it. This process will lead them to unveil the causes of their oppression, which will enable them to act upon their oppressive reality in order to transform it:"Men emerge from their submersion and acquire the ability to intervene in reality as it is unveiled...Conscientization is the deepening of the attitude of awareness characteristic of all emergence."[19]

Brazilian society marked by its authoritarian and populist regimes does not have the tradition of offering education that develops critical consciousness since the dominant class

is afraid of having critical, active and participant people and of losing control over them. Paulo Freire developed an educational practice and theory that went completely against the principles of the dominant class. He took as a starting point the power that every ordinary person, every human being has in constructing society. For this purpose, based on his experience with literacy programs with the popular classes in the 1950s and 1960s, Paulo Freire developed a theory of education that through conscientization the oppressed will learn how to organize themselves in a way that together, as a group, they fight against their 'main enemy' with the goal of changing the existent elitist and discriminatory social structure.

III) Education for the development of critical citizens

The military coup d'état in 1964 was seen as necessary by the generals to solve the political and economic confusion caused by the democratic governments in the early 1960s. For this purpose, the military centralized public finance and political power. Following the years of the first OPEC oil shock in the early 1970s, their power started to weaken as a consequence of the slowing down of economic growth as well as growing evidence of the military's corruption and forgeries. At the beginning of the 1980s when the economy began to stagnate,[20] the military's legitimacy was questioned, opening space for the revival of the opposition who ultimately obliged the military authorities to restore democracy.[21] The resumption of democracy was marked by the promulgation of the Constitution of 1988, in which "political, fiscal and administrative decentralization, along with better public services, economic growth and income redistribution...received special treatment"[22] and by a direct presidential election in 1989. Several intellectuals who had to go into exile after the coup d'etat, were allowed to return to Brazil by the end of the 1970s. Paulo Freire got amnesty in 1979 and returned to Brazil in 1980. After 16 years of exile, he returned to Brazil eager to refresh his knowledge of the country and to cooperate in the process of redemocratization. His works written in the 1990s reflect the turbulent political years of a society in transition towards democracy.

Paulo Freire's first book written in the 1990s is *Pedagogy of the City* (*A educação na cidade*) published in 1991. In the elections of 1988, the PT (Partido dos Trabalhadores-Workers' Party) won the mayorship of the city of São Paulo, the country's largest and economically most powerful city, with a population of over nine million. Paulo Freire, a member of PT since its foundation in 1980, was nominated to the post of Secretary of Education. Under his initial leadership,[23] PT introduced an educational reform based on three principles: participation, decentralization and autonomy. The educational reform carried out by PT administration embodied both the transformative pedagogical principles of Paulo Freire's philosophy and the socialist principles of the PT's political platform of constructing a 'Popular Public School.'[24] PT's municipal administration was able to carry out such a drastic reform in education as a result of changes introduced in the new Constitution of 1988 in which for the first time the autonomy of the municipal education

systems was acknowledged, expanding the opportunity for administrative and policy innovation. *Pedagogy of the City* discusses and analyses the achievements of the first two years of the implementation of this drastic educational reform in the city of São Paulo during the period of 1989 and 1990.

In this book, Paulo Freire, as a progressive educator, joins his colleagues for the struggle for the improvement and expansion of public schooling. After 1986, while the conservatives defended private schooling and the freedom of choice, the progressive sectors struggled for the expansion of what they called 'popular public school.' This school is 'public' in a sense that to receive education and actively participate in its construction is the right of every citizen. However, it maintains the popular character of education by teaching the students how to reflect upon their own reality, by integrating what they study with their lives in order to develop critical capacity and help for the democratization of the society.[25] Education then, is taken as an obligation of the State while it is also the responsibility of the people to participate in the construction of the school. In Freirean words:"Positioning myself among the progressive educators of Brazil, today I would say that assuming this position means to work perspicuously for the public schools, for the raising of teaching standards, for the dignity of teachers and for their permanent development. It means to fight for popular education, for the increasing participation of the popular classes in the councils of the community, neighborhood, and school. It means to motivate the mobilization and organization not only of their own professional class but of workers in general as a fundamental condition for the democratic struggle leading up to the necessary and urgent transformation of Brazilian society."[26]

In his next work, *Pedagogy of Hope* (1992), Paulo Freire rethinks the importance and actuality of the theoretical principles presented in *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, by taking into consideration the problems and conflicts of our present society as well as the 20 years of practical experiences with the application of these theoretical principles in different contexts throughout the world. Moreover, influenced by the results of the first direct presidential election held in 1989, it is a book written with anger towards the conservative, neoliberal elite that uses all tools to manipulate and deceive the people to maintain the status quo. However it is also written with 'love and hope' in the possibility of the people to overcome the situations that limit them and to organize themselves for the struggle for the transformation of the society to a more democratic one.

In the presidential elections of 1989, the PT leader Luis Inácio 'Lula' da Silva was one of the strongest candidates. He, nevertheless, lost the election to Fernando Collor de Melo, the son of an oligarchic family of the Northeastern state of Alagoas, supported by Brazil's conservative elite, with a small margin of difference. Collor however, though he represented the hope to advance in the process of redemocratization of the society, betrayed the faith of the people by adopting economic policies that produced an even deeper and extended recession. In addition, Collor's government was tainted by a series of corruption scandals, which led to the impeachment of the president in 1993. The

Vice-President Itamar Franco succeeded Collor. Not different from the predecessor, the economic crisis deepened further and series of scandals in the National Congress led the people to question the legitimacy and authority of political institutions and politicians.[27]

Paulo Freire considers this turbulent political moment opportune to mobilize the people to fight for their rights as citizens:"The fact is that the 'democratization' of the shamelessness and corruption that is gaining upper hand in our country, contempt for the common good, and crimes that go unpunished, have only broadened and deepened as the nation has begun to rise up in protest...It is as if most of the nation had been taken by an uncontainable need to vomit at the sight of all this shamefulness."[28] In this atmosphere, the task of a democratic and popular education is "that of enabling people to develop their own language...the language as a way to the invention of citizenship."[29] That is, through education the 'culture of silence' is broken and the people discover that they could not only speak "but that their critical discourse upon the world, their world, was a way of remaking that world."[30] Yet it is necessary to make clear that a more critical understanding of reality by itself is not enough for its transformation. The revelation is a step that will engage the people in a political struggle:"The revelatory, gnosiological practice of education does not of itself effect the transformation of the world: but it implies it."[31]

In order to fight against this increasing 'shamelessness and corruption' in the society, education that participates in the formation of individuals and has an important role for the transformation of the society, must be based on ethics that will collaborate for the advancement of the democratization process of the society. Hence, in his next work *Politics and Education* (1993), Paulo Freire calls upon the need to recognize the importance of the political nature of educational practice as a consequence of the directive character of education. Consequently, any decision or option taken in the process of teaching and learning carries its political weight, which is one's positioning towards education, towards the world:"the *directiveness of education* - that, not allowing the neutrality of educational practice, demands from the educator the assumption, in an ethical form and in view of the individual's dreams, that it is political."[32]

The traditional and authoritarian bourgeois education has the tendency to be depoliticized and defend its neutrality for the sake of scientific truths. Moreover, questioning social structures is not considered a topic to be taught at schools since the bourgeois school was created for the maintenance of the elites' hegemony. Progressive educators therefore, have to struggle for the realization of an education that by teaching subject areas also "clarif(ies) the reality that has been obscured by the dominant ideology."[33] A school that participates in the formation of the students must aim at the technical and scientific development of the students as well as their moral, political and ethical formation; it is a school that cannot exist apart from an education of and for citizenship. For Paulo Freire, to be a citizen means to be "an individual in pursuit of the civil and political rights of the State and that citizenship is related to the condition of the citizen, that is, to the use of these rights and the right to the duties of a citizen."[34] Citizenship, then, is a social invention

and demands to be practiced based on certain ethics and political knowledge in order to fulfill its requirements. For the schools to fulfill this purpose there is a need for all educators to assume the responsibility towards their profession and be coherent with their political choice of being either democratic or authoritarian. To be responsible in any "professional practice implies, on the one hand, the duty to fulfill the responsibilities and, on the other hand, the exercise of rights."[35] It implies that at the same time that it is the obligation of the State to fulfill its duties in order to be able to demand from us to meet our duties as citizens, we also have to fulfill our duties as citizens in order to pressure the State to accomplish its own duties. However, what is occurring in Brazil nowadays is a complete irresponsibility of the people in power such as presidents, ministers, clergy, legislators and fiscal agents, to name some, to fulfill their minimum duties as 'respectful authorities':"Disrespect of our rights or our failure to meet our responsibilities is of such a generalized and affronting nature that it creates a climate that we characterize as irresponsibility...Impunity is the rule. People applaud themselves for their cleverness in stealing millions. It is only the miserable poor who are punished, and then just for stealing a loaf of bread."[36] Citizenship becomes an important issue since, according to David Plank, Brazil has a tradition of having a very weak sense of asserting and defending the rights of the citizen against the State since the 'rights' are privileges to be conceded by the State, weakening the popular pressures on public authorities and privileging those who have 'personal ties to the powerful.'[37]

Paulo Freire's next two works, *Professora sim, tia não: cartas a quem ousa ensinar* (*Teachers as Cultural Workers*: Letters to Those Who Dare Teach: 1993) and *Cartas a Cristina* (Letters *to Cristina*: 1994) are both strongly influenced by his experience at São Paulo's administration, the municipal elections of 1992 in which the PT was defeated by a right wing party and mainly, the coming presidential elections of 1994. In *Teachers as Cultural Workers*, Paulo Freire calls for the need for educators to assume their professional task with seriousness and dedication since educational practice, in charge of forming citizens, is indispensable for social life. In *Letters to Cristina*, Paulo Freire critically analyses the roots of his theory of education by scrutinizing his life experiences since childhood from a progressive post-modern perspective.[38] Along with his memories, there is a forthright criticism towards the neoliberals, whose principles go completely against Freirean humanist utopian ones.

When the PT won the São Paulo municipal elections in 1988, Paulo Freire was appointed Secretary of Education. He worked on the implementation of the 'Popular Public School' which aimed at empowering the popular classes by making them participate collectively in the construction of a school that truly attends to their interests,[39] based on "commitment and solidarity, in the formation of class consciousness."[40] Unfortunately in the following municipal election in 1992, the PT lost against the conservative right wing Democratic Social Party (Partido Democr tico Social, PDS). According to O'Cadiz (1998), the new, neoliberal conservative administration introduced a "project called Controle de

Qualidade Total (CQT, Total Quality Control) into the municipal schools. The CQT proposal is based on Japanese managerial models for industry," which obliged educators to "participate in the 'molding of workers' in the interests of industry and capitalism" by adopting "more efficient modes of school administration and curriculum planning." This school reform is based on the logic of technical rationality of market models, in which in the name of "order, morality and ethics in educational endeavors," they propose a school reform "to more efficiently produce competent workers." It however neglects the "development of critical social issues of schooling and fails to advance a proposal for pedagogical change and transformation of the broader structures of society."[41] This neoliberal project is counter to the vision of the PT's popular public school.

For Freire, once education is taken as political and directive, school cannot be "a space exclusive of teaching and learning. The type of teaching and learning that is technically well supported, carefully guarded against the political nature of the process of teaching and learning."[42] Educational practice that aims at educating critical citizens must teach how to transform information into knowledge, i.e., it must teach how to 'think correctly.' For this end, the process of learning must transcend the act of receiving information to one in which the students become the subjects of the process of knowing. Only when the students participate in the process of knowing, it is possible to develop "critical knowledge, which implies the technical domain as well as political reflection, which asks the following: for whom, for what, against whom, and against what will these technical instruments work?"[43]

To realize a popular and democratic education, teachers must assume their professional task with seriousness when engaging in the teaching practice. It is essential to comprehend the teaching task as a joining of theory and practice and not just a joint of techniques and skills: 1) for teachers to be recognized as intellectuals requires serious study of history, philosophy, culture and critical theory 2) for teachers to be in constant professional development requires a critical analysis of their practice. The recognition of the professionalization of the teaching profession and its subsequent empowerment is a very important issue in a Brazilian context. Teachers (particularly women) are often devalued to a parenting role,[44] taking away certain professional responsibilities of teachers such as to be engaged in permanent professional development and political projects. Consequently, the social status of teachers is low and their wages are comparable to those of "home keepers."[45]

In *Letters to Cristina*, Paulo Freire also alerts us that, for the true advancement of democratization of the society, only 'political or economic democracy' is not enough; social 'democracy' is also a crucial issue. In Brazil, one of the only political right offered to the masses is the right to vote. However, under the miserable situation in which the masses live, the vote is manipulated, or as Paulo Freire refers to it, "the vote is insulted and degraded."[46] Moreover, the mere existence of laws that assure 'equality' is not enough;"it is indispensable that they be applied regardless of who the individuals involved may be."[47] At the same time, economic development does not necessarily mean more equal income

distribution, since in Brazil, with the advancement of capitalism, the income inequalities have only increased.[48] In order to struggle for equal rights and overcome injustice, it has to be "blended with an orientation toward humanization...a quality that human beings have incorporated into their nature historically and socially."[49] The public denouncement of a series of scandals during Collor and Itamar Franco's administration, the advancement of popular movements, the advances made by the landless, all are signs of the advancement of democracy throughout the 1980s and into the 1990s. Hence, one of the main duties of progressive educators is to 'add' more democracy and one way of doing it, is by 'voting better' as well as teaching the masses how to 'vote better.'

In *Teachers as Intellectuals* and *Letters to Cristina*, Paulo Freire is especially concerned about the need to vote consciously and supervise those elected as one important duty of citizens, because the second direct presidential election was to be held in 1994. Lula representing the PT was one of the strongest candidates and, Paulo Freire put his faith in the possibility of a leader representing the masses to be elected for the first time, as the rightists had been weakened by the series of scandals following Collor's election. Nevertheless, in this election Lula again was defeated by a narrow margin, but this time against the sociologist of the Brazilian Social Democratic Party (Partido Social Democrático Brasileiro, PSDB), Fernando Henrique Cardoso. Cardoso is originally a Leftist intellectual who, like Paulo Freire, had to go into exile during the dictatorship. But in the 1994 elections, he formed an alliance with the rightists to gain votes. He introduced the Plano Real, an economic plan that aimed at reducing the rate of inflation and stabilizing the economy. In addition, his administration's educational policy, according to Luiz Antonio Cunha, gives priority to the development of an education that will contribute to economic growth: "Nowadays, education is a prerequisite for exercising citizenship at the same time for carrying out everyday activities, for peoples' integration into the labor market and for economic development. In addition, it is an essential element to change society towards a more just, mutually supportive and integrated one."[50] According to Cunha, in spite of the fact that Cardoso's administration's educational policy mentions the development of citizenship, it is only an 'additional element' since the main objective is to make education the base for economic development by 'training skillful workers' that are able to handle new technologies. The need to develop this neoliberal educational plan is justified by the dual characteristic of the Brazilian economy in which the 'modern Brazil' with a lack of qualified people for its work force coexists with the 'archaic Brazil' that incorporates millions of unemployed as a consequence of lack of proper qualification.[51]

Reflecting the results of the elections of 1994, his next two works *A sombra desta mangueira* (1995) translated into English as *Pedagogy of the Heart* and *Pedagogia da autonomia: saberes necesários à prática educativa* (1996) translated into English as *Pedagogy of Freedom: Ethics, Democracy, and Civic Courage*, were written with anger towards the power of the dominant neoliberal elite, to the persistence of social injustice, the impunity of those in power, the perversity of capitalism. However, they were also written with

hope to organize and mobilize the people to struggle for democracy. Paulo Freire exhibits some sympathy towards President Cardoso as a fellow former exile and as an intellectual, yet as a president, Freire criticizes him for the administration's neoliberal character as well as for the strong influences of the conservative rightists.

Pedagogy of the Heart is a criticism towards the deterioration of ethics, of the public properties and the persistence of the excesses of the government, its arrogance towards the masses, unemployment, poverty and hunger in the present Brazilian society. For Paulo Freire, these facts tend to make people accept reality as it is, leading them to what he called 'immobilist fatalism.' There is a need to make viable the realization of democracy and one way to attain this is through popular education by developing "critical optimism, one that may engage us in the struggle toward knowing, knowing on a par with our times and at the service of the exploited."[52] *Pedagogy of Freedom* follows the same line of thinking but it is a book directed to educators. Progressive educational practice aims at the formation of autonomous individuals, and to this end, teachers' training programs have to be implemented from a progressive perspective, in which education or the 'formation' of an individual has to be more than training skillful and competent workers. Moreover, for Paulo Freire, the present educational system is the result of a social structure constructed according to the dominant neoliberal ideologies along with the ethics of the market "with its cynical fatalism and its inflexible negation of the right to dream differently, to dream of utopia,"[53] asserting itself as the only option. Paulo Freire cannot simply accept fatalistically the neoliberal ideology based on the ethics of the market when people are suffering the violence of all sorts of social injustices and discrimination such as hunger, unemployment, illiteracy, not only in Brazil but all over the world. Paulo Freire is utopian, has hope for the transformation of the society to a more just and democratic one based on universal human ethics.

One of the basic requirements to practice popular education is that educators must be concerned about the ethics of education, which implies to know what and whom an education is for and not to only master the techniques of the teaching process. To have correct ethics becomes necessary because critical educators are supposed to "deconstruct the social construction of (this) fatalism so as to unveil the inherent ideology that informs and shapes and maintains an ethic of greed"[54] and re-construct with the students a new society. There is a need for teachers to become conscious that education represents human formation and it is not possible to do it without ethics. For Freire, to have *ethical* clarity means to have *political* clarity to understand the manipulation of ideologies hidden in the ethics of the market that is so dehumanizing:"the political clarity (that) would tell us that it is ethically wrong to allow human beings to be dehumanized so that a few can enrich themselves because of market greed."[55]

Thus, Paulo Freire's progressive and democratic pedagogy aims at forming active and participant citizens that will struggle for a more democratic and just society, based on universal human ethics as opposed to the neoliberal ethics of the market. To fulfill this

purpose, the basic concept of education has to be redefined as well as the role of school in the society. School must also have the role of community center in a sense that it is constructed by the community at the same time that it participates in the life of the community.

IV) Final Considerations

In this paper, I focused on examining the influence of Brazilian historical events on the development of social thematics in Paulo Freire's works written in the 1990s as compared to *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*. Paulo Freire, very alert to the changes that occur in society, incorporates the complexities and thematics of the Brazilian society and changes the emphasis given in each work accordingly. Nevertheless, one could say that the cornerstone of Paulo Freire's theory of education has not changed, since the struggle for liberation and to put an end to social injustice and violence is still as urgent an issue as before.

In the 1970s, conscientization, i.e., the development of a naive consciousness into a critical one, was an important educational tool to make the oppressed aware of social injustices and create class-consciousness. Through conscientization, education aimed at changing passive and manipulative individuals into active and participant ones that will struggle for the transformation of the discriminatory and elitist political structure. In the 1990s, to develop critical consciousness is still an issue of utmost importance since the critical perception of the political and social structure is what will enable the formation of critical and active citizens. Paulo Freire, however, struggles for the realization of his ideal education not only in informal educational context as found in the 1950s and 1960s, but also for its realization at public schools. He defends the realization of a democratic and popular education at public schools that, different from the bourgeois and authoritarian school, it gives the chance to everyone to participate in the construction of the school and practice their rights and duties as citizens. For Freire, schools must "become a space to gather and engender certain democratic dispositions such as the disposition to listen to others...a disposition towards tolerance...the disposition to question, criticize, and debate; the disposition to respect the public matter."[56] A democratic and popular school, by assuming the role of 'forming' citizens, cannot confine education to the mere development of technical and scientific skills of the individuals but it must also participate in the moral, political and ethical formation of the students. For this purpose, educational practice has to transcend the 'transference of information' to the *production* of knowledge in which the students along with the teacher participate in the process of knowing. Moreover, in order to fulfill this role, school has to be redefined as a place where not only teacher and students share 'knowledge' but as an educational and cultural community center that participates in the life of the local community.

In the North American educational context, to improve schooling to one that gives people critical knowledge in order to struggle for citizenship is seen as one crucial point to guarantee a democratic society. On the other hand, in a Japanese educational context, to

struggle for an education that forms active and participant citizens is part of the struggle to return to children, the joy of learning and living, something relegated to second plan in the existing educational system that relies mostly on strict discipline and obedience. There is a need to return to the students their role in the learning process in which they "recognize themselves as the architects of their own cognition process...they assume the authorship of knowledge of the object known."[57] At the same time that knowledge is constructed with the participation of the students, the school in itself must also be constructed with the participation of the school and local community. According to Manabu Sato,[58] educational reforms that have been successfully implemented at Japanese public schools are those that are carried out in cooperation of the school community with its environment through the participation of parents and the local community.

In the 1990s, Paulo Freire's theory of education shifts the emphasis from a political struggle to a social struggle as a result of the advancement of the democratic process in the Brazilian society. This change made his works to be of importance also for societies with democratization and economic stability in a more advanced stage. Paulo Freire analyses Brazilian society in depth and points out the principles that will guide future educational reforms. His theory of education, in this way, transcends the limits of the Brazilian society and can be considered as an alternative theory for restructuring educational systems in countries like Japan and North America. In addition, Paulo Freire does not restrict himself only to theoretical principles; in his works, he also proposes how his theory can be applied and/or has been applied in concrete school realities, be it in formal schooling contexts or in informal ones. Nevertheless, within the limited space of this paper, it was not possible to analyze his propositions of how the theory of education can be applied in schools as well as its limitations, which are topics that need to be explored in future papers.

1 TORRES, Carlos Alberto. *Pedagogia da Luta*: da pedagogia do oprimido a escola pûblica popular. Campinas São Paulo, Papirus, 1997, p.40.

2 The books translated into Japanese are 4 in total: *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (1970), *Cultural Action for Freedom* (1968), *Extension or Communication* (1969) and *Paulo Freire × Ivan Illich* (1977).

3 ARONOWITZ, Stanley. "Paulo Freire's Radical Democratic Humanism," in MCLAREN, Peter & LEONARD, Peter. *Paulo Freire: A Critical Encounter*. London and New York, Routledge, 1993, pp.8-24.

4 Some interesting books and dissertations concerning the topic are: MCLAREN, Peter & LEONARD, Peter. *Paulo Freire: A Critical Encounter*. London and New York, Routledge, 1993; FRASER, James W., MACEDO, Donaldo and others. *Mentoring the Mentor*. New York, Peter Lang Publishing, 1997; O'CADIZ, Maria Del Pilar, et al. *Education and Democracy: Paulo Freire, Social Movements, and Educational Reform in São Paulo*. Boulder, Westview Press, 1998; WONG, Pia Lindquist "Moving from Pinochet to Piaget: Implementa-

tion of the interdisciplinary project in the São Paulo public schools." Ph.D. Thesis, Stanford University, 1994; O'CADIZ, Maria Pilar "The Politics of Schooling in Brazil: A Freirean Curriculum Reform in the Municipal Schools of São Paulo." Ph.D. Thesis, University of California, Los Angeles, 1996.

5 HORIO, Teruhisa. *Educational Thought and Ideology in Modern Japan*: State Authority and Intellectual Freedom. Tokyo, University of Tokyo Press, 1990, p.4.

6 Escolanovistas are educational reformers who in the 1920s, influenced by European and North American currents of the end of the 19th century, fought for the implementation of a 'New School.' It is a period characterized by enthusiasm in education and pedagogical optimism, since these reformers believed that education was a decisive factor for social change.

7 GADOTTI, Moacir. *Convite a leitura de Paulo Freire*. São Paulo, Editora Scipione, 1989, p. 51.

8 RIBEIRO, Maria Luisa Santos. *História da educação brasileira*: a organização escolar. Campinas, São Paulo, Autores Associados, 1998, p.154.

9 GADOTTI, Moacir. *Reading Paulo Freire: His Life and Work*. Albany, State University of New York Press, 1994, p.49.

10 Recife is the capital of Pernambuco State, located in the Northeast of Brazil.

11 FREIRE, Paulo. *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*. USA, Penguin Books, England, Middlesex, 1970, p.24

12 Ibid., p.42.

13 Ibid., p.73.

14 FREIRE, Paulo. *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, p.44. The stressing lines were added by the author.

15 Ibid., p.47.

16 Ibid., p.56.

17 Ibid., p.54.

18 Ibid., p.104.

19 FREIRE, Paulo. *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, p.81.

20 The Gross Domestic Product (GDP) growth rates reached the lowest level of the century. (SOUZA, Celina. *Constitutional Engineering in Brazil: The Politics of Federalism and Decentralization*. Great Britain, Macmillan Press; New York, St. Martin's Press, 1997, p.33)

21 PLANK, David N. *The Means of Our Salvation: Public Education in Brazil, 1930-1995*. Boulder, Westview Press, 1996, p.43.

22 SOUZA, Celina. *Constitutional Engineering in Brazil*, p.33

23 Paulo Freire resigned the post in 1991 and was replaced by his former Cabinet Chief, Mário Sérgio Cortella who gave continuity to his works.

24 This term was first used by Moacir Gadotti in 1986. (GADOTTI, Moacir. *Escola pública popular* (mimeograph), 1999.)

25 GADOTTI, Moacir. *Escola pública popular*.

26 FREIRE, Paulo. *A Educação na cidade*. 2nd ed., São Paulo, Cortez, 1995, p.50.

27 PLANK, David N. *The Means of Our Salvation*, p.44.

28 Ibid., p.8.

29 FREIRE, Paulo. *Pedagogia da Esperança: um reencontro com a pedagogia do oprimido*. Rio de Janeiro, Paz e Terra, 1992, p.41.

30 FREIRE, Paulo. *Pedagogy of Hope*, p.38.

31 Ibid., p.31.

32 FREIRE, Paulo. *Politics and Education*. California, UCLA Latin American Center Publications, 1997, p.65.

33 FREIRE, Paulo. *Política e educação*. 3rd ed., São Paulo, Cortez, 1997,p.53

34 FREIRE, Paulo. *Politics and Education*, p.45.

35 FREIRE, Paulo. *Política e educação*, p.53.

36 FREIRE, Paulo. *Politics and Education*, p.81.

37 PLANK, David N. *The Means of Our Salvation*, p.14.

38 For Paulo Freire, to be 'progressive' implies to have an "ethical position, an almost instinctive inclination toward justice and a visceral rejection of injustice and discrimination" (*Letters to Cristina*, p.85) and to be 'postmodern' implies the need to break the modernist certainties and overcome the limits imposed by these certainties.

39 YAMAGUCHI, Ana Mami. "The Late Freire's Theory of Education from a School Education's Perspective." In: *Bulletin of the Faculty of Education Hokkaido University*. Vol. 78, 1999, pp.241-274.

40 GADOTTI, Moacir and PEREIRA, Otaviano. *Pra que PT*: Origem, projeto e consolidação do Partido dos Trabalhadores. São Paulo, Cortez, 1989, p.191.

41 O'CADIZ, Maria, et al. *Education and Democracy*, pp.30-2.

42 FREIRE, Paulo. *Professora sim, tia não*: cartas a quem ousa ensinar. São Paulo, Olho D̀ água, 1993, p.17.

43 FREIRE, Paulo. *Letters to Cristina*: Reflections on My Life and Work. New York and London, Routledge, 1996, pp.99-100.

44 Instead of being addressed with the more authoritative sounding "teacher," they are addressed as "tia" (aunt).

45 The best-paid part-time teachers (category EM-12-E,20 hours week) earn about 365 dollars a month. (O'CADIZ (eds.), *Education and Democracy*).

46 FREIRE, Paulo. *Letters to Cristina*, p.146.

47 Ibid., p.147.

48 Even with the advent of the industrial revolution, the country's societal structure had not changed much from its colonial period in which there were only two classes: the 'master' and the 'slaves', since political and social power still resided with the local landowners or industrialists. Unequal distribution of incomes did not decrease with the industrialization and modernization of the country. In 1960, the richest 15 percent of the population received about 70 percent of national income meanwhile the poorest 50 percent received only 17

percent, with the concentration of the income worsening in the Northeast. In 1990, the distribution income worsened with the richest 15 percent receiving about 85 percent of national income meanwhile the poorest 50 percent receiving only about 12 percent. These numbers show that the gap between the richest and the poorest had widened since the 1930s, reinforcing the overruling and abuses of the landowners and industrialists. In the 1990s, the inequalities in distribution of income has grown, therefore, the struggle for a society with more 'equal' rights and privileges for all is still a relevant issue. (PLANK, David N. *The Means of Our Salvation*)

49 FREIRE, Paulo. *Letters to Cristina*, p.147.

50 CUNHA, Luíz Antônio. *Educação brasileira: projetos em disputa.* São Paulo, Cortez, 1995, p.47.

51 CUNHA, Luíz Antônio. *Educação brasileira: projetos em disputa.*

52 FREIRE, Paulo. *Pedagogy of the Heart*. New York, Continuum, 1997, p.58.

53 FREIRE, Paulo. *Pedagogy of Freedom*: Ethics, Democracy, and Civic Courage. Boston, Rowman & Littlefield Publishers Inc, 1998, p.22.

54 FREIRE, Paulo. "A Response" In: MACEDO, Donaldo, FRASER, James W., et al. *Mentoring the Mentor*. New York, Peter Lang Publishing, 1997, p.313

55 FREIRE, Paulo. "A Response," p.315.

56 FREIRE, Paulo. *Teachers as Cultural Workers*: Letters to Those Who Dare Teach. Boulder, Westview Press, 1998, p.66.

57 FREIRE, Paulo. *Pedagogy of Freedom*, p.112

58 SATO, Manabu. *Kyouiku kaikaku wo dezain suru* (To design an educational reform). Tokyo, Iwanami Shoten, 1999.