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The Córdoba Reform Movement of 1918 and Ecological Systems Theory

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A little more than 100 years ago, the students at the National University of Córdoba (UNC) rebelled against university leadership and accused professors of being autocratic, ineffective, religiously oriented, and obscurantist. Founded in 1613 by Jesuits, UNC, Argentina's first university and the sixth oldest university in Latin America, was led by conservative members of Córdoba's most prestigious and wealthiest Catholic families. After more than two centuries of Jesuit and Franciscan administration, the national government assumed control of the university in 1856. With this change in leadership, UNC faculty members fully embraced anti-secularism and nepotism, which endured even after the Avellaneda Law of 1885 permitted the university to govern itself without state intervention (Walter, 1969).

The rebellion against UNC leadership in 1918, coupled with previous student activism at other Latin American universities that oriented the Córdoba Reform Movement, established the Latin American academic tradition. The Latin American academic tradition stresses the importance of university autonomy, a concept that would continue to be a powerful force in the region. What started as student protest ultimately generated significant university reform in Argentina and most of Latin America. Consequently, this reform led to many of the region's public universities becoming autonomous by law and tradition, which would impact universities' relationships with the state and the Catholic Church, and have implications for academic freedom in the proceeding decades (Altbach, 2016). Moreover, autonomy provided protections for faculty, staff, and students during periods of political turmoil in Latin America. Although these protections were not comprehensive, and were threatened during eras of military dictatorships, they certainly reshaped the Latin American academe and contributed to how the region views higher education.

Some scholars argue (Berry & Taylor, 2013) that Latin American higher education is relatively under-researched. To a certain extent, this claim is true; in the context of English-speaking and/or Western, industrialized nations, Latin American higher education is a neglected area of study. Within the Latin American region, however, there is a wealth of research, analysis, and commentary on the subject. This essay draws on scholarly contributions from Latin America and external sources to explain how UNC student reformists strategically advocated for policy that would enhance and enrich the university experience at UNC and other Latin American universities. This advocacy would set new standards for university students in Latin America and define a new purpose for Argentine and Latin American higher education.

The historical analyses and accounts of the Córdoba Reform Movement of 1918 largely examine the demands and ideological components of the movement, its different historical stages, and the numerous setbacks it suffered from counter-reformist governments during the twentieth century. Richard J. Walter (1969) focuses on the intellectual background, specifically the prevailing intellectual climate in Argentina and the prominent intellectuals who served as "*maestros de la juventud* (teachers of youth)" (p. 233), out of which the university reform developed. Akin to Walter's (1969) focus on the foundational elements of the Reform Movement, Mark J. Van Aken (1971) thoroughly examined the antecedents of the Córdoba revolt and debatably contends that scholars "overemphasize the historical importance of the Córdoba student revolt" (p. 448). Other scholars, primarily Latin American

scholars, centered the students who participated in the movement and wrote their biographies or detailed their ideological trajectories from the Reform Movement era through later stages of their life (Caldelari & Funes, 1997; Marsiske, 1989; Portantiero, 1978; Schvartzman & Stang, 1998; Tunnerman, 1978).

Expanding on the aforementioned foundational histories, Natalia Milanesio (2005) wrote "Gender and Generation: The University Reform Movement in Argentina, 1918" to analyze the collective self-representation of the young, male, and socioeconomically privileged reformists who participated in the Reform Movement. Milanesio's (2005) examination successfully identifies the unique intersection of masculinity, generation, and reformist identity, which explains how reformists constructed their identities as activists and enacted their masculinity to achieve their goals.

For the purpose of this analysis, the existing literature provides a useful foundation for understanding the complexities of the Reform Movement and its legacies. Using this scholarly and historical foundation, I first examine the Reform Movement and subsequent events through a historical lens. Then, I review Urie Bronfenbrenner's (1979, 1986, 1993) ecological systems theory and model, with particular focus on the components that I use in my analysis. Including comprehensive historical context and analysis is necessary to complete a robust analysis of the Reform Movement through the lens of an ecological systems framework.

By employing a historical analysis and situating the Reform Movement within Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems model, I elucidate how the university environment affected students and how students ultimately affected their university, national, and regional environments. Furthermore, throughout this analysis I explore how issues, challenges, and opportunities to alter institutional policy and structure arose at different levels within the student activist experience at UNC. This exploration provides insight into how these transformative experiences create shared and unique realities for student activists that promote student development. Moreover, understanding the historical complexities and institutional environmental factors that affect students' experiences in higher education offers a framework for practitioners to build campus environments that promote holistic development for diverse student populations.

A Historical Examination of the Córdoba Reform Movement of 1918

Dissatisfaction among UNC students originated from multiple sources in the decades prior to the Reform Movement. The city of Córdoba was a conservative refuge, infamous for resisting the fight for independence 100 years prior (Marques, 2018). The university was a bastion of traditionalism and was steeped in Catholic doctrine, which was incongruous with the modernization occurring throughout the rest of the country and viewed as repressive by many UNC students (Marques, 2018). According to students at the time, teaching methods were authoritarian and relied on repetition and obedience (Marques, 2018). Teaching methods such as these derived from the university's Jesuit roots, with obedience being central to the mission and union of the Society of Jesus (Boston College, n.d.). In medicine, teaching was performed orally and never offered practical experience or patient visitation. Moreover, at UNC there was a general rejection of modern scientific knowledge and practice. Students also despised the rampant nepotism at the university and how professorships were largely inherited (Marques, 2018). The autocratic and clerical academic model that prevailed at UNC, a remnant of Spanish colonization, was insufficient for student growth and development, and students were desperate for momentous reform (Marques, 2018).

The Reform Movement had several national and regional antecedents of student organization and mobilization, such as the Uruguayan Association of Students (1893), the First International Congress of American Students in Montevideo (1908), and the League of American Students (1908), which sponsored two international congresses in Buenos Aires (1910) and Lima (1912) (Milanesio, 2005). Argentina possessed a well-established history of student activism and protest against oppressive university hierarchies and disciplinary measures. For example, in 1871, a law student at the University of Buenos Aires (UBA) committed suicide after failing an exam, which instigated mass student protests against oligarchic university leadership and academic standards that threatened student welfare (Aiken, 1971). In 1903, students at the UBA Law School went on strike, and by 1905 medical students joined them in protest. The students protested the exam system, high fees, and the appointment of professors for personal and political reasons rather than intellectual or professional competence (Milanesio, 2005). After three years of protests, several of the UBA students' demands were met, but a crucial result of the students' activism was the creation of student centers managed by students at the Law, Medicine, and Engineering schools (Milanesio, 2005). These student centers provided student representation at the governing bodies, organized and coordinated academic and social activities, and published a periodical (Milanesio, 2005).

In addition to the national and regional student movements that precipitated the Reform Movement, the dramatically altered sociopolitical context of the early twentieth century profoundly influenced students at UNC. The students who coordinated and joined the Reform Movement witnessed the 1910 Mexican Revolution and its sweeping social reforms that benefitted the peasantry and working-class. These students also witnessed the 1917 Bolshevik Revolution, which established the first communist regime of the modern era. Lastly, UNC students were also affected by the atrocities of World War I, "which represented a profound intellectual disappointment with nineteenth-century political and social philosophies" (Milanesio, 2005, p. 508). Collectively, these events engendered a climate of political mobilization and social unrest, and revived hopes for robust social, political, and economic transformation. Situated in this sociopolitical context, the student movement that originated in Córdoba in 1918 was well-positioned to exceed earlier attempts of student organization and protest, and to secure overdue institutional reform.

The Reform Movement

At the conclusion of the academic year in 1917, the student center at the UNC School of Medicine sent a memorandum to the University Superior Council and to Dr. José Salinas, the National Minister of Justice and Public Education. In the memorandum, medical students decried the poor quality of curricula and teaching, the lack of experimental laboratories, and the recent end to the internship program at the Hospital de Clínicas, which was fundamental to their intellectual and professional development (Milanesio, 2005; Rock, 1987). When students returned for the new academic year in March 1918, they discovered their demands were ignored. In response, the medical students went on strike and the School of Engineering student center joined them in solidarity. Students from the School of Engineering were dissatisfied about newly imposed regulations for student attendance, which motivated their decision to join the strike (Milanesio, 2005; Marques, 2018). This strike caused tremendous student absence from classrooms and other campus spaces, which was felt widely across campus and could not be ignored (Milanesio, 2005).

Not long after the strike began, law students joined the medical and engineering students, thus cementing this student mobilization as an institution-wide movement. Because the reformists sought

to improve the quality of UNC's faculty, much of their rhetoric was anti-professorial (Walter, 1969; Rock, 1987). Due to this rhetoric, few professors initially supported the student movement, although many appreciated the overall reformist aim of educational improvement (Walter, 1969). The student partnership resulted in the *Comité Pro-Reforma* (Pro-Reform Committee), which consisted of 24 delegates from the law, medical, and engineering schools. The committee's primary goal was to shed the ecclesiastical orthodoxies of Jesuit scholasticism by secularizing and democratizing UNC (Walter, 1969).

To achieve this goal, the committee advocated for radical institutional changes that would ensure student participation in university councils, modernize curricula, and permit greater control over the appointment and retention of professors. Moreover, to accommodate low and middle-income students with work obligations, the committee sought to make university education more accessible and affordable. Methods for enhancing accessibility included removing entrance restrictions and establishing greater flexibility in attendance policy and examinations (Milanesio, 2005; Walter, 1969). From there, the committee went on to form the University Federation of Córdoba (FUC) and assisted the newly created Argentine University Federation (FUA) in organizing its first congress in the city. Throughout the first few months of 1918, reformists and activists continued to strike, protest, and rally.

After months of protests, the FUC called for the rector, Dr. Antonio Nores, to resign and published the Córdoba Manifesto on June 21, 1918. The manifesto detailed the reformists' arguments to modernize the antiquated university structure (Roca, 1918). The manifesto also outlined why increased student participation in the university assembly was essential to the prosperity of the institution and its students (Roca, 1918). Furthermore, the document offered a robust analysis of the miseries of the oligarchic, dogmatic, and pious university that ignored scientific progress and evolving social norms. One month after the manifesto's publication, the FUA organized the first National Student Congress in which they advocated for autonomy and contested the regime's attempt to subvert and control the reform process (Walter, 1969). As pressure mounted, Nores resigned from his position as rector. Because of his resignation, the Superior Council closed the university. After the university's closure, the reformists requested that the Argentine president, Hipólito Yrigoyen, order a diplomatic, national intervention (Milanesio, 2005). President Yrigoyen appointed Dr. Telémaco Susini to lead the intervention, but Susini never traveled to Córdoba. Yrigoyen then appointed the National Minister of Justice and Public Education, Dr. José Salinas, to lead the intervention. By September, however, Salinas had not arrived at UNC and the FUC feared betrayal and decided to act (Milanesio, 2005). On September 9, 1918, 83 students forcefully seized control of UNC. Though heavily armed police and military confronted them, the students had anticipated the opposition's maneuvering and preemptively armed themselves to fend off an attack (Milanesio, 2005; Marques, 2018).

During the seizure, the students assumed authority roles they argued their professors were unable to fulfill. Upon assuming their new positions, students reopened the university and designated themselves as professors to teach and give exams. This role-play quickly ended when the army re-entered the building and arrested the 83 students. Although violence ensued and some students, police, and military were injured, no fatalities were reported. As students left in automobiles and ambulances, they were met with applause and cheers from onlookers (Milanesio, 2005).

The Reform Movement continued to grow, and in late September 1918, several labor groups in Córdoba organized with the students and called for a general strike. To reciprocate and demonstrate their support for the labor unions, the FUC condemned the capitalist economic system and sent

student representatives to assist the striking workers. Two leaders of the FUC were arrested for inciting workers to armed revolt, which prompted labor groups throughout Argentina to protest as well (Walter, 1969).

In October 1918, President Yrigoyen conceded to the students' demands. He issued an executive decree that approved a student reform program at UNC in which students could be elected representatives in the university's administrative councils and influence school policy (Walter, 1969). Additionally, the reform program made class attendance optional, eased restrictions on education materials, and permitted flexibility in examination procedures (Walter,
1969). The reform program also resulted in the creation of an autonomous model known as co-governance. This model established a management system for public tertiary institutions in Argentina in which decisions are made by professors, students, and alumni (Marques, 2018). This idea of university autonomy from direct government and religious control would become a cornerstone of the Latin American academic tradition and a powerful force throughout the region (Altbach, 2016).

Aftermath and Reverberation

The UNC reforms were swiftly adopted at the universities of Buenos Aires and La Plata, in addition to the newly founded Universities of Santa Fe and Tucumán (established in 1919 and 1921, respectively). Alongside the UNC reform program's nationalization, several other Latin American countries quickly experienced the effects of the Reform Movement. The Reform Movement rapidly spread to Lima (1919), Cuzco (1920), Santiago de Chile (1920), Mexico (1921), Cuba (1923), and Colombia (1924). Obtaining autonomy enabled universities to freely define their own curriculum, independently develop policy, and manage their own budgets without government interference, thus profoundly improving academic life at the various public institutions. The radicalism and success of the UNC student mobilization not only altered the identity and politics of Argentine and Latin American students in 1918 and the 1920s, but also of future generations that embraced the ideals of their predecessors.

Academic Freedom in Latin America: Setbacks and Persistence

Political turmoil throughout much of Latin America in the mid and late twentieth century upended the Reform Movement's progress. The tumult led to military coups, social instability, and guerrilla struggles. Many student and faculty groups in the universities, particularly the large autonomous institutions located in capital cities, were heavily involved in the conflicts and primarily sided with the leftist dissidents (Altbach, 2016). In Peru, for example, some of the key leaders of the *Sendero Luminoso* (Shining Path) movement, which committed shocking acts of violence and created severe civil unrest between 1980 and 1992, were former faculty (Altbach, 2016).

In other parts of Latin America, some activist students left their universities to join, or perhaps lead, guerrilla movements against their governments (Altbach, 2016). In areas that military authorities controlled, academic freedom was not valued or protected, and these authorities violently confronted the academic community. Professors and students known for their dissenting views were forced into exile, jailed, or murdered. Student movements were also brutally repressed. Between the 1960s and 1990s, academic freedom and the concept of university autonomy eroded, especially in countries such as Argentina, Peru, Brazil, Uruguay, El Salvador, and Chile (Altbach, 2016).

In Argentina, specifically, the goals achieved in 1918 suffered dramatic and sustained setbacks during the era of conservative governments in the 1930s, the Peronist government in the 1940s and 1950s, the dictatorships of the 1960s and 1970s, and the neo-liberal governments of the 1990s. Throughout these difficult periods, however, students consistently returned the ideals of their predecessors; they looked to the spirit and model of the 1918 Reform Movement but also incorporated new goals such as anti capitalism, anti-imperialism, and anti-neoliberalism as elements of their agenda. As such, multiple generations participated in the movement and enabled it to persist because they viewed the goals, mission, and values of the Reform Movement as an unfinished project worth developing and defending (Milanesio, 2005).

Gradually, as violent dissent decreased and military rulers were replaced with democratic governments, the chaotic situation in Latin America settled and academic life regained a relative sense of normality. Latin American universities continued to be involved in national politics, and partisan politics often influenced campus elections, campus culture, and academic life (Altbach, 2016). Once democracy was restored, however, universities were able to rebuild and even strengthen academic freedom (Altbach, 2016). This resilience demonstrates that strong traditions of academic freedom can endure and survive periods of severe political and social repression (Altbach, 2016), because they are essential to the educational process.

The Córdoba Reform Movement and Ecological Systems Theory

Through a historical analysis of the Reform Movement it is evident that university students were profoundly affected by their university environment and, in turn, deeply influenced their university, national, and regional environments. Their activism greatly reformed and shaped other university environments as well. In higher education, ecological systems theory provides a way to understand how students interact with campus environments to promote or inhibit development (Patton, Renn, Guido, & Quaye, 2016). An ecological approach accounts for individual differences and multifaceted contexts in holistic student development (Patton et al., 2016). Developmental psychologist Urie Bronfenbrenner (1979, 1993, 2005) introduced a four-component person-environment theory of development. The four components are *process*, *person*, *context*, and *time*, and their interactions create an individual student's development ecology or environment (Patton et al., 2016). This theory provides a framework through which higher education practitioners can examine individuals' relationships within communities or the larger society. As individuals encounter different environments and settings, their behavior and experiences are often influenced in varying degrees.

For the purpose of this analysis, I will focus on the component of *context*. This framework is useful in considering the complexities of student activist experiences because it identifies the five levels embedded within and external to the college environment that affect a person's development: microsystems, mesosystems, exosystems, macrosystems, and chronosystems (Bronfenbrenner, 1979, 1986, 1993). Together, these levels demonstrate the interconnected effects of social contexts and processes on individuals over time (Barber, Espino, & Bureau, 2015). In what follows, I examine the Reform Movement through the lens of each of the five levels, which demonstrates the movement's significance in student development within Latin American higher education.

In this adaptation, the student activist is situated at the center of the model and is surrounded by the microsystem, which is the relationship between individuals and their environment within a particular setting. In this case, the microsystem would involve the student activist's relationship with UNC, the city of Córdoba, faculty, the Catholic Church, social and activist groups, and work settings.

Mesosystems include the relationships between these settings, such as the relationship between UNC and the Argentine University Federation. Bronfenbrenner (1993) determined that a defining element of the mesosystem is the focus on the "synergistic effects created by the interaction of developmentally instigative or inhibitory features and processes present in each setting" (p. 22). The exosystem is an extension of the mesosystem, including events and processes that indirectly affect the student (Barber et al., 2015). Governing body policies, national economic trends, and changes in federal law are examples of these events and processes. The macrosystem describes the attitudes or ideologies of a culture in which an individual lives (Barber et al., 2015). Examples of attitudes or ideologies are campus culture, Argentine culture, and piety. Across these aforementioned systems, the chronosystem accounts for the change that occurs in the environment over time (Bronfenbrenner, 1986, 1993). All of the five systems are interrelated and affect each other and the individual (Barber et al., 2015).

The Individual: Student Reformists at UNC

At the center of the Reform Movement are the student activists who mobilized to enact sweeping reform at their institution. Every UNC student within the Reform Movement originally arrived at the institution with a distinct educational background, personal history, and positionality that would ultimately influence their thinking and motivation to mobilize. College student development theories based on empirical research describe how individuals in this stage of life are at a formative period in cognitive development, identity, and indispensable relationships (Barber et al., 2015). Baxter Magolda's (2001) research on self-authorship conveys how many traditionally aged college students are heavily reliant on external authorities and are only beginning their journey toward a more internally driven orientation.

Although Baxter Magolda's (2001) research is situated within the United States, self-authorship theory easily translates to Argentine society, which was and still is oppressively *machista* and patriarchal (Carnes, 2017; Dizgun, 2010). *Machismo* and patriarchy are societal norms that serve as external authorities. The Catholic Church and the staunch conservatism in Córdoba would have also been prominent external authorities in the lives of young Argentine students.

A university education, across many geographic contexts, provides students the opportunity to begin forming their own personal values and self-awareness. Therefore, students arriving to UNC in the early twentieth century began engaging in higher-order critical thinking that led them to challenge established norms and advocate for their needs and aspirations. At this level, students also grappled with developing and understanding their own identities while interacting with individuals who may or may not share their values, ideas, or beliefs in the classroom and in the larger environment.

Microsystem: Argentine University Federation (FUA)

Arguably, one of the most significant organizational legacies of the Reform Movement was the establishment of the Argentine University Federation (FUA) in April 1918. The federation held its first congress in July 1918 with delegations of more than 70 students from Córdoba, Buenos Aires, Santa Fe, Tucumán, and La Plata. The initial congress' goal was to establish mutual recognition and intragroup social identification as student activists (Milanesio, 2005). The FUA coordinated reformist efforts on a national scale, organized national meetings and congresses, supported local federations, and became the official national representative for university students of which there were 14,745 in 1918 (Milanesio, 2005). Today, the FUA is still governed by a council of delegates from each

university federation and, theoretically, represents all university students in Argentina. In applying Bronfenbrenner's (1979, 1986, 1993) ecological systems model, the individual members of the FUA form the microsystem.

The FUA functioned as a way for students to get to know each other, communicate, and understand one another (Watson, 1918). FUA meetings and congresses enabled students to have personal, face-to-face interactions; they provided opportunities to discuss common issues and a forum for proposing alternatives and solutions. The FUA supplied students with a sense of community, built in solidarity that reinforced their common identity as students, and differentiated them from other social groups. A sense of belonging is essential to the development and persistence of university students (Strayhorn, 2019). For students who shared experiences of confronting and surviving threats and injustices, membership in the FUA reaffirmed a sense of belonging.

The FUA also had the responsibility of fostering the development of individual students while also enacting the values that the organization espoused. The FUA most notably cultivated student development through self-organization, which was essential to demonstrating their ability and aptitude for participating in university councils. Its members also showed impressive organization and mobilization skills by coordinating and executing large public demonstrations that sought to foster public support for the reformist cause.

Mesosystem: The Relationship Between FUA and UNC

In applying Bronfenbrenner's (1979, 1986, 1993) ecological systems model to the Córdoba Reform Movement, the mesosystem is most notably comprised of the relationship between the FUA and UNC. With this convergence of different constituencies and stakeholders, "the mesosystem is also the area where conflict is most apparent in the ecological systems, especially with regard to adhering to regulations and campus-specific policies" (Barber et al., 2015, p. 250) that affect student organizations.

A major point of contention between the FUA and universities such as UNC was the lack of accessibility to tertiary education for working-class individuals. During the FUA Congress, reformists recognized that a university education was a socioeconomic privilege and aimed to democratize access to higher education by bridging the relationship between the university and society. To achieve this goal, the reformists developed the idea of *extensión universitaria* (university extension). *Extensión universitaria* entailed a formal institutional democratization of the university based on easing course requirements, adopting open attendance, and abolishing fees and tuition to encourage working people to attend. The concept also promoted the participation of university students and faculty in teaching courses, hosting conferences, and organizing workshops at factories and labor unions. In essence, *extensión universitaria* was the "proletarianization of the university" (Milanesio, 2005, p. 517).

Within the context of higher education, the greatest challenge within the mesosystem is managing and negotiating the tension between the organization and the university. A partnership between these entities is crucial for ensuring students gain meaningful educational experiences as members of their organizations and the university. The coalition is also important for ensuring that students adhere to policy. Within the Reform Movement no such partnership existed and the FUA and UNC had drastically different opinions regarding meaningful educational experiences and policy, which was the crux of the conflict between the reformists and the university.

Exosystem: National Economic Trends in Argentina

The exosystem is an extension of the mesosystem; however "exosystems do not contain developing individuals but exert influence on their environments through interactions with microsystems" (Patton et al., 2016, p. 44). More specifically, the exosystem provides an opportunity to examine factors outside the institution that influence students' environments (Patton et al., 2016). In this framework, the influence of national economic trends in Argentina during the early twentieth century in the microsystem is the primary focus.

Adhering to a broader trend that links the working and middle classes with the student movements of the twentieth century, the Reform Movement is an extension of that historiographical tradition and an expression of the educated, ascending middle classes (Walter, 1968). Argentina's early industrialization, external commercial explosion, and extensive urbanization had consequences for the emerging middle classes (Walter, 1968). For the children of European immigrants who started arriving to Argentina at the end of the nineteenth century, those consequences included the possibility for economic prosperity, social ascendance, and cultural integration (Marques, 2018). Higher education signaled prestige among the middles classes and fulfilled aspirations of social mobility and political leadership. Despite Argentina's impressive economic advances by the turn of the century, the benefits and the distribution of national wealth, including the benefits of higher education, were heavily concentrated among the elite (Dizgun, 2010). The urban and rural working classes, in particular, failed to share in the economic boom. This maldistribution of wealth was a principal motivator for the students leading the Reform Movement (Dizgun, 2010).

Regarding the Reform Movement as an expression of the working and middle classes aligns with the reformists' self-characterization of their movement (Bermann, 1946; Mendioroz, 1918). Reformists viewed their professors as clerical, materialistic, and bound to traditional colonial families, which were characteristics associated with the landed oligarchy (Van Aken, 1971). Conversely, students identified themselves with science, liberalism, and liberal professions, characteristics related to the middle-classes (Van Aken, 1971). To achieve the goals of university expansion, a central focus in the mesosystem, reformist students viewed educational reform as a necessary and desirable means to guarantee that progress and complete Argentina's ideological transition from the nineteenth to the twentieth century.

Macrosystem: Campus Cultures at Argentine Universities

The macrosystem represents a more complex and abstract level of context in the developmental ecology model (Barber et al., 2015; Patton et al., 2016). This level includes the underlying culture, values, and social norms of the environment (Barber et al., 2015). Bronfenbrenner (1977) described macrosystems as "carriers of information and ideology that, both explicitly and implicitly, endow meaning and motivation to particular agencies, social networks, roles, activities, and their interrelation" (p. 515). As a result, macrosystems are often difficult to fully identify due their implicit and covert characteristics.

The campus culture at UNC and how it related to marginalized or underrepresented groups serves as the macrosystem in this framework. Reformists recognized that UNC was restricting access to tertiary education and excluding the lower socioeconomic classes through multiple means. These reformists actively sought to disrupt, challenge, and alter the prevailing patterns of culture, privilege, and oppression by influencing policy and procedure at UNC.

Examining this particular macrosystem also uncovers that the reformists lacked an intersectional perspective and ignored the issue that women were very poorly represented among university students. Since the *extensión universitaria* plan was explicitly designed to benefit the proletariat, it is reasonable to conclude that reformists were largely concerned with the democratization of the university exclusively in class terms. Julio V. González (1930), a prominent leader of the Reform Movement, argued that this was because workers would supply the university with a clear understanding of social, economic, and cultural problems, and were "the only class that is not yet included within the University" (p.154). Indeed, the working classes had no access to higher education, but they were not alone. Very few women enrolled in higher education, yet the reformists never addressed women, let alone working-class women, as a distinctive social group also excluded from receiving a university education. For example, between 1905 and 1910, only 25 women completed undergraduate and graduate courses at the University of Buenos Aires, which was considered to be one of the most liberal universities in Argentina (Carlson, 1988). Therefore, when reformists devised the *extensión universitaria* plan, they thought of it not only in class terms but in gendered class terms as well; when they referred to the working class, they meant the *male* working class. Further demonstrating that the reformists viewed the Reform Movement as a struggle for the male working class, FUA President Osvaldo Loudet (1918) equated the universal ballot (which was restricted to men at the time) to universal access to higher education. Loudet (1918) argued that in a country in which all *men* could vote, those men should have the possibility of entering the university. Therefore, from the right to vote, Loudet (1918) derived a new privilege for men: the right to higher education.

Women rarely appear in the reformists' sources, but when they do, they are linked to religion, obscurantism, inertia, and tradition (Milanesio, 2005). Reformists believed faculty members' wives, daughters, and mothers compelled the faculty to vote for the church's candidate because the clergy and the Jesuits supposedly swayed these women (Milanesio, 2005). Additionally, women (mothers) were blamed for the Catholic university students who opposed reform. Deferring to misogynistic and reductive views of womanhood, the reformists made women the clear scapegoat for many of the issues in the university system. Placing blame on women, a group that held very little social, economic, or political power, is particularly paradoxical yet unsurprising. Negative attitudes towards women reflected social and cultural attitudes of the time period. These attitudes also contributed to delaying widespread access to higher education for women until the 1960s, which coincided with substantial urban growth and industrialization throughout the region (Balbachevsky, 2014). This expansion helped raise women's education levels and facilitated their incorporation into the expanding labor market (Jaquette & Wolchik, 1998).

Chronosystem: Era of Collegiate Experience

The chronosystem is a newer addition to the ecological systems theory, which Bronfenbrenner included in 1986 to address the changes and continuities in the environment over time (Barber et al., 2015). Some students attend university during times of unprecedented change, while others attend in times of relative stability. The chronosystem is the most abstract and long-ranging element of Bronfenbrenner's (1986) model. Due to the relatively short time of an individual's undergraduate experience (typically four to six years in Argentina), major shifts in sociohistorical context are not often perceived in the moment. As demonstrated in previous sections of this essay, Argentina was experiencing extraordinary social, political, and economic developments. Externally, there were numerous social and political movements occurring in other Latin American countries and elsewhere that greatly influenced the sociopolitical climate throughout Argentina, at both the national and local levels. Having a broad yet clear overview of the changes in the environment over time helps to identify

how the Reform Movement fits within Argentine and Latin American higher education history. More importantly, this understanding reveals how the Reform Movement would become a vital reference point, even to this day, for universities across the region in defending the issue of autonomy and overcoming the pressures imposed by governments (Marques, 2018). After the Reform Movement, universities across Latin America emphasized the importance of developing a student body that sought active participation both within and external to its walls, and recruiting and retaining professors "who are not hidden away in their ivory towers" (Marques, 2018, para. 12).

Discussion and Conclusion

The Córdoba Reform Movement permanently altered Latin American higher education and even inspired the leaders of student movements outside of Latin America during the twentieth century (Altbach, 2007; Walter, 1969). The movement not only established academic freedom as a fundamental prerequisite for an effective university and a core value for academia (Altbach, 2007), it also confirmed university students as an organized, articulate, and often effective force (Walter, 1969). Higher education is global in scope, and student movements are a unique part of the culture of higher education, so issues arising in one country affect others (Altbach, 2007). Therefore, this historical example is still salient.

A sophisticated understanding of the Reform Movement also demonstrates how student movements are a critical gauge for understanding college students' experiences. Using a historical example such as the Reform Movement provides a large-scale, enduring example of how and why individuals transform into student activists. Moreover, the Reform Movement showcases how student organization, mobilization, and activism offer invaluable opportunities for student learning, engagement, and development. Through activist work, students navigate multiple contexts and systems, within and external to their community, while interacting within an organization that is anchored in leadership and service. Bronfenbrenner's (1979, 1986, 1993) ecological systems theory is a useful framework for examining and conveying the intricate, interconnected contexts in which students live, work, and study. Student development scholars have used ecological models to study student identities such as race and ethnicity (Guardia & Evans, 2008; Hoffman & Peña, 2013; Renn, 2003, 2004) and functional areas such as academic advising (Stebleton, 2011), residential colleges (Jessup-Anger, 2012), and fraternity/sorority membership (Barber et al., 2015), as well as White students' experiences at Historically Black Colleges and Universities (Peterson, 2014).

However, student development theorists and scholars have not previously explored the identity formation of student activists. Developmental ecology is a useful method for mapping students' development across a number of domains and for understanding how these students interact with campus environments (Patton et al., 2016). With student activists' experiences at the center of an ecological systems framework, researchers can further illuminate ways in which higher education leaders can shape campus environments to promote holistic development for diverse student populations.

In the case of the Reform Movement, students were dissatisfied with stifling academic policy, archaic teaching methods, exclusionary practices, and ultraconservative ideology. Because of this, students asserted their agency and advocated for policy and procedure that would comprehensively elevate their educational experience and development, while expanding higher education access to some underrepresented populations. Their model for reform was then disseminated throughout Latin America and influenced numerous universities' policies. Situating the Reform Movement within the various levels of the *context* component illuminates where the work of development

occurs and how the student activists' developmentally instigative characteristics provoked reactions from the local, national, and regional environments. These reactions produced sweeping reforms that not only altered the micro-, meso-, exo-, macro-, and chronosystems for UNC students, they also altered the various systems for students at other universities in the ensuing decades.

In addition to affecting the environments and experiences of Latin American university students, the UNC reformists demonstrated the importance of holding leaders and practitioners accountable. When their leaders failed them, students sought to determine their own trajectories by reimagining the possibilities for higher education in Latin America and forming a new generation of university youth. This new generation became instrumental in determining a new character and a new purpose for Argentina and Latin America, which cemented the Reform Movement as a defining example of student-led institutional innovation.

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