The concept of absent popular culture and its application to the Chilean case from a historical perspective*

El concepto de cultura popular ausente y su aplicación al caso chileno desde una perspectiva histórica

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Abstract

Re-elaborating the categories of representation of the popular in Sunkel (1985), the concept of absent popular culture is proposed, whose foundation arises from the articulation of 3 theoretical matrices: Latin American communicology of social change, cultural studies and decolonial thinking. The hypothesis is that the illustrated rational matrix was introduced into urban Latin American popular culture during the nineteenth century and its gradual institutionalization as a worker culture generated a process of internal divergence of the popular in the process of modernization, where popular culture -that were not massive or worker- was politically invisible. The well-founded identification of 12 expressions of absent popular culture in Chile from the beginning of the nineteenth century onwards allows us to conclude that there is a third way of existence of urban popular culture in the Latin American context, with an internal consistency despite historical transformations, whose discourses and representations should be analyzed thoroughly.

Key Words: History; Chile; Popular Culture; Modernity; Popular Communication.

Resumen

Re-elaborando las categorías de representación de lo popular en Sunkel (1985), se propone el concepto cultura popular ausente, cuya fundamentación surge de la articulación de 3 matrices teóricas: comunicología latinoamericana del cambio social, estudios culturales y pensamiento decolonial. La hipótesis es que la matriz racional ilustrada fue introducida en la cultura popular urbana latinoamericana durante el siglo XIX: su paulatina institucionalización como cultura obrera generó un proceso de divergencia interna de lo popular en el proceso de modernización, donde la cultura popular que no es masiva ni obrera quedó políticamente invisibilizada. La identificación fundamentada de 12 expresiones de la cultura popular ausente en Chile desde principios del siglo XIX en adelante permite concluir que hay una tercera vía de existencia de la cultura popular urbana en el contexto latinoamericano, con una consistencia interna a pesar de las transformaciones históricas, cuyos discursos y representaciones deben ser analizadas en profundidad.

Palabras Clave: Historia de Chile; Cultura Popular; Modernidad; Comunicación popular

1. Introduction

The decade of the 90s in Latin America was marked by a democratization process of neoliberal roots. This had its correlative in the research agenda on popular cultures, that experienced a process of shut down or marginalization in regards to previous decades (Alabarces, 2016), especially in the sphere of social theory. On the other hand, the decade of the 2000s brought a rise of progressive–populist governments that developed its own discourse on the popular, that however did not manage to anchor itself in the social structure, as has been shown with the changes of politic parties in emblematic governments of this type like Argentina, Brazil and Ecuador from 2015 on. During these decades, Chile has experienced a process of neoliberal establishment with some resistances, such as the case of the public education movement. In this country, research on popular cultures seems to have abandoned the aspiration to theorize on this category and its contradictory and dynamic character, given that the worker identity is less and less menacing. In this scenario, the objective of the article is to present the theoretical foundation of a research program on popular culture in Chile, founded on the recovery of historiographic material and aimed at reintroducing today the question on the popular in the problematization of the social conflict and its symbolic expressions.

2. The concept of absent popular culture: theoretical matrices of research

The research program proposed begins with the concept of absent popular culture, understood as the sphere of popular culture that historically does not form part of the popular worker culture or has been absorbed by mass culture. It traces back to the notions of popular not represented and popular repressed coined by Guillermo Sunkel in his book *Razón y pasión en la prensa popular* (1985). These categories refer to diverse popular subjects that have been invisibilized in the working class expressive and communicative forms; which Sunkel denominates "the popular represented" (41).

The popular not represented is comprised of a group of figures, spaces, and conflicts that are socially accepted but are not questioned by the left-wing political parties (or that do not constitute their object of main questioning). It includes women, young people, those "without a home", retirees, handicapped and the poor. Spaces not represented would be the house, family relationships, social security services, the hospital system and public charity establishments. Finally, conflicts not represented would allude to conditions of existence of these subjects. It also includes popular religion —"one of the basic forms via which popular sectors make their conditions of existence intelligible" (1985, p.42)—, and popular knowledge like popular medicine, magical thinking, poetic wisdom, and indigenous cultures, sustaining that "traditional beliefs are not necessarily and in all situations conservative: they may transform into areas of rebellious feelings" (1985, p.42).

On the other hand, the popular repressed is defined as "the group of participants, spaces, and conflicts that have been *sentenced* to subsist on the margins of the social: people that are part of a constant ethical and political condemnation and that are thus transformed into objects of moralizing campaigns" (1985, pp. 42-43). Thus, the popular repressed would include people like prostitutes, homosexuals, criminals, drug addicts and alcoholics. Their spaces are brothels, strip clubs, clandestine establishments, and public places like parks and backstreets[1]. All of these constitute spaces of the other side: detention centers, jails, prisons, correctional centers for women and alcoholics anonymous. Finally, their conflicts focus on the law, their representatives, and correctional institutions.

Sunkel also distinguishes between two matrices of express of popular culture: "symbolic-dramatic" and "rational-illuminist". The original matrix of popular culture would be symbolic-dramatic, characterized by a language and aesthetic marked by dualities, (up–down, good–bad), of simple concepts and images rich in meaning, result of their linking to a mystic-religious vision of social order. This matrix is juxtaposed to the rational-illuminist, that Sunkel establishes as the base of popular worker culture and that operates like an "derivative or external" element (p.46) on popular culture. Although it does not operate in the same binary logic of the symbolic-dramatic matrix "it has certain unity because it expresses some very general, basic elements" (p.47): it is anticlerical, rationalist,

adheres to illustrated values and believes education to be a vehicle of progress. Despite being anti-religious, it is moralizing, but no longer from the magical thinking of the symbolic-dramatic matrix, but rather from faith in reasoning. Meanwhile, the rational-illuminist matrix would be associated to the popular represented, the symbolic-dramatic matrix would be more linked to the popular not represented and the popular repressed.

The concept of absent popular culture points to the comprehension of what we have identified as an object of differentiated research. The hypothesis is that there is an expressive-communicative circuit of absent popular culture in which it is possible to identify different cases and experiences, some of which even maintain forms of continuity until the present. The historiographic work proposed aims at making the content of this circuit, its representations and world visions visible.

The analytical foundation of this *section of reality* denominated absent popular culture is made by the base of three theoretical macro-matrices: Latin American theory of alternative communication (Beltrán, 1976; Díaz-Bordenave, 1976), critical cultural studies (Williams, 1980; Martín-Barbero, 2003) and decolonial thinking (Sousa, 2005; Mignolo, 2010). The integration of these three perspectives lets us take a step forwards in regards to some limitations of the social sciences in its analysis of the relation between society, culture, and communication. What is proposed is look at the historical-political terms and from this triple perspective, popular culture.

2.1. Communication and culture in the modernization-marginality matrix

In the sixties and eighties of the twentieth century, the concept of marginal sectors began to be used in Latin American social sciences to show those popular figures that that had not been able to be integrated in the Latin American version of modernization. In these analyses, the urban marginal was seen as residual element and consequence of main development processes: "a paradigmatic situation of the new modernity" (Tironi, 1987: 20). It was not considered as part of a parallel and pre-

vious process to the forming of the working class, thus lacking a long-term historic perspective.

The economist focus of the sociologic reflection on the marginality supposed a displacing and even an omission of the question for culture; even more so, of communication. The United States incorporated the communicational perspective in its politics of development oriented towards continent's the poor population, via a strategy of diffusion of innovations, with the belief that attitude changes on an individual level in adoption of new technologies would resolve the structural problem of underdevelopment. The Latin American communicology emerged in this theoretical context of reflection on the popular subject and modernization, quickly adopting a critical perspective in regards to the persuasive use of communication media —radio and press, especially— to generate behavior changes or eliminate cultural factors of these marginalized sectors —farm workers, indigenous, urban sectors excluded— that were considered as barriers or obstacles to "development", understood as a process of imitation of cultural values of the global north (Beltrán, 1976; Díaz-Bordenave, 1976).

This group of researchers focused on the knowledge, opinions, and world visions generated by social sectors considered marginal and/or underdeveloped from the theories of modernization. Their theoretical reflections were strongly influenced by a wide range of alternative communication experiences arising in the 50s: the mining radios of Bolivia, the radiophonic school projects like Sutatenza in Colombia, and diverse popular projects of edu-communication all over the continent, that allowed them to advance on the reflection on the possibilities of communication as a dialogic process (Freire, 1970) that supposes an active position of participative subjects (regardless of their knowledge, education or formal culture) in the construction of their own forms of communication and culture, that brings these different subjects to discover conditions of their oppression and build community change alternatives (Beltrán, 2008).

1.2 Cultural Studies

In Latin America, starting in the 80s, there is also a debate in regards to the concepts of "urban popular sectors" and "popular culture", that seeks to rethink the social sectors excluded, giving more depth to the discussion on the popular. This discussion maintains certain correspondence with the path paved by British heterodox Marxism of the cultural studies. The main contribution of this school was an approach to the popular sectors based on a theoretical reflection that, integrating the material dimension and the symbolic dimension of the existence, would not end up being determinist or essentialist in regards to the popular. The authors linked to this matrix observed the impact of modernization processes on traditional European culture, the transformation of this in urban popular culture and the mode in which their subjects were focal point of policies of re-education, molding and even repression via the processes of industrialization. Nevertheless, they also observed cracks in this process, such as the existence of various forms of resistance to emerging logics of modernity on behalf of the popular groups, both in their social and economic dimensions (Williams, 1980; Thompson, 2013).

A similar process —perhaps more intense and accelerated— occurred in Latin America throughout the 19th century, leading to the generation of a new sense of time centered on production for the market and a liberation of the subject from the communitarian forms of belonging, yet generating at the same time forms of resistance to the proletarianization (Pinto, 2000). These differences can explain the particularities that the development of cultural studies would have in the Latin American context, whose original focus was on everything related to urban popular culture-mass culture, and the relationships of continuity between them, given that the debate in which this discussion emerged was the search for alternatives to the elitist vision of the culture that had contributed the critical theory of European origin, where the massive was seen as a form alienated from cultural experience, allowing for advance in the comprehension of mass culture as disactivated popular culture: "denial and historic mediation of the popular" (Martín-Barbero, 2003: 119).

From the historiographic perspective, Romero (1990) proposed the need to make visible the historic character of the urban popular sectors and the need to incorporate this historicity in the classic Marxist analysis: "not focus exclusively on the industrial workers, but rather on a broader group" (269) than that of the working class, its socioeconomic structure, its unionized and political action, suggesting to enter the territory of popular culture: "much less safe and firm than the until now privileged" (272), pointing to the comprehension of the existing relationship between material experience and symbolic expressions of popular subjects.

1.3 Decolonial Perspective

Although the integration between Latin American communicology and the specific appropriation that is done from the matrix of the cultural studies continent-wide allows for advance in the problematization of the popular from a critical perspective, incorporate the decolonial perspective as third theoretical vertex gives even more complexity to this viewpoint, upon seeing popular culture and popular subjects from a questioning of the emancipating promises of modernity. Decolonial thinking contributes to observing the distinction between the illustrated and popular not illustrated, allows conceiving the working popular like the proposal of integration that the modern matrix of European origin proposes to popular sectors within the modern emancipatory promise. But, what do we call the popular sectors that do not ascribe to the illustrated matrix of the modern project and its rational proposal of emancipation, that also make it from an affirmative position of identity and not just as failed cases ("the marginals" of modernization theories)?

According to Sousa (2005), social sciences have carried out a wasting of heterodoxic experiences, making initiatives and alternative movements invisible, taking away their credibility from inside the social investigation and political action: in social sciences what does not exist as object of investigation is actively produced as non-existent, this is, like an unbelievable alternative to what exists. The invisibility of these forms is related to the problem of the coloniality of power, understood as "a network of beliefs on which action is perpetrated and rationalized" (Mignolo, 2010: p.12), that involves the economy, politics, knowledge, subjectivities, but whose identification allows it to reconstruct

and restitute "silenced stories, repressed subjectivities, languages and secondary knowledge by the idea of totality defined under the name of modernity and rationality" (p.14).

The observation of the popular not represented and the popular repressed from the decolonial perspective allows the instilling of the idea of an absent or omitted popular culture that, although historically coexists and maintains relations with worker culture, at times it also manifests important difference with it. On the other hand, although an important part of the symbolic-dramatic matrix of popular culture has been appropriated by the cultural industry or the masses, it is also possible to infer cultural expressions inversely; in other words, to the non-worker popular subjects, appropriating from its symbolic-dramatic matrix of the formats of technical reproducibility of culture in the context of industrial society, as well as its strategies of diffusion, production and circulation, thus subverting its use and consumption as mechanism of cultural domination. Therefore, this that we call absent popular culture not only has a relation in tension with the worker culture and with the culture of the dominating elite, but also with mass culture. All this is found in a context of permeable borders, where the distinctions are more analytical than objective.

In summary, there are three matrices that contribute to critical thinking of communication and culture, in materialist terms and from a peripheric perspective, but until now there is no theoretical proposal that integrates these three streams in a reflection from communication and culture. The proposal of articulation presented here allows one to see a third way of existence of urban popular culture in the Latin American context: neither massive nor worker-illustrated, that maintains an internal consistency despite the historic transformations and that, therefore, is possible to track in a long-term historical perspective. This third form of popular urban culture in the context of modernization processes, that starts with the processes of independence in the early 19th century and continues to today, is absent popular culture.

But for the relationship between these three theoretical perspectives to be capable of contributing to the comprehension of the cultural and communicative phenomena found in the Chilean context

(and its potential application to other countries of the region), it is important to incorporate historiography as an auxiliary tool and work on concrete cases that give empirical support to that proposed. In other words, to *historize* what we have named absent popular culture, establishing anchors that allow for the identifying the long term existence of the subjects, practices, and spaces, as well as the connections, continuities, and discontinuities among them that can be framed under this concept, as well as the potential that they have to understand the present and propose alternative ways of thinking the politics of social change, from a different cultural place than that of critical thinking of the illustrated left.

2. Methodology

The following are the results of the empiric study stemming from the exposed theoretical problematization. It is a study of exploratory character, for being a scarcely investigated topic, that for now is centered mainly in the 19th and early twentieth centuries[2]. Via the methodology of the documentary analysis (Erlandson, Harris, Skipper & Allen, 1993) a work was produced using historical sources that included the revision and analysis of classic texts of Chilean social history, as well as classic and recent texts of cultural and communicational history of cultural sectors in Chile. For such, historic information was collected on two levels:

> i) Main national milestones of economic, political, and social character with emphasis on the 19th century and early 20th century, differentiating between main cultural milestones of the elite, mass culture, worker culture and absent popular culture. The objective of this work was to be able to establish whether there existed historical milestones of absent popular culture that would allow proposal of a specific meaning of the period from this perspective.

> ii) Based on the same historical sources, a basic chronology of experiences and expressions of absent popular culture was made, for the same period. The information collected classified using the categories of case, collection technique, and sphere of analysis to which the case referred.

Based on the aforementioned, three results are presented:

a) Identification of historic milestones that allow for making a proposal of interpretation of the period of analysis, from the perspective of the people and processes of absent popular culture, that differ from traditional historiography and most classical social historiography, although it maintains links with both.

b) Establishment of some dimensions of analysis used to group expressive forms of absent popular culture.

c) Proposal of a sample of documented cases that accredit the existence of an expressive-communicative circuit of absent popular culture.

3. Results

3.1 Historic milestones of absent popular culture

Absent popular culture is expressed in Chile's history in various ways. These manifestations do not necessarily coincide with the periodization of traditional historiography -that emphasizes the political history of the elites- or with the periods of the new social history -that centers its attention on periods of ascent and descent of political struggles by the workers, country people, settlers or students-. Although there is a proximity with this last one, absent popular culture possesses other milestones and processes.

In general, once independence from Spain was declared, between 1810 and 1850 in Chile there was a modernizing project that did not manage to root itself in popular sectors. The wars for independence implied a forceful military draft, mainly from rural areas. The State took on the task of "converting the 'barbarous' traditional low class into an illustrated people, 'rational' and virtuous" (Pinto & Valdivia, 2009, p. 161), but from the other side there was not an active attitude of integration. Possibly because together with the aforementioned, starting in 1815, a process of control begins of the expressions be-

longing to and practiced by the popular sectors in the public sphere. Social spaces like *chinganas and ramadas* (Zapiola, 1974), "carnival games, drum playing, contortionist dances and 'extravagant black costumes" (Vitale, 2001, p.465) are prohibited and theatrical representations are regulated (Torres, 2008). For Alegría (2008) this systematic process of regulation of popular expression went on from 1800 to at least 1840 and on its foundation is built the fear of popular rebellion on behalf of the new people in power, that were seen in a position of precarious legitimacy. According to Pinto (2000, p.17) the popular sectors do not feel invited to the experience of modernity that arises after the processes of independence because it means proletarianization and uprooting: "an entirely new social identity that certainly had not been born of a personal option".

The later entrance of capitals and technologies -from England, mainly- that points to an economic modernization, would also translate into diverse forms of active resistance to the proletarianization and disciplining of the workforce that is paradigmatic in the mining in northern Chile (Illanes, 1990), where the low participation in its benefits is fought with the robbing of metals and other strategies of peddling, that meanwhile are accepted tacitly by the owners of the capital as negative externalities of a protoindustrial economy in process of development.

Starting in 1850-1860, this rejection tends to change and there is an increased interest on behalf of these groups for an integration of modern discourse, that is explained by a migration from the countryside to the city and the urban uprooting, that also makes the process an opportunity with a "liberating effect" (Pinto, 2000, p. 5), upon allowing some sectors to have greater control over their own future. The initial resistance of the popular sectors leads to certain negotiated forms of integration. It is what Pinto calls, a "secondary assault of modernity" (p.22) from the proletariat condition in process of conformation. For these groups, the dilemma is no longer if one has to modernize or not but rather becomes how to participate in modernization at a low cost.

Nevertheless, the work of Purcell (2000) shows the resistance of the popular subjects to education and hygiene proposed by the modern regimen and

the authorities, as well as other forms of resistance and swindling to these measures of control of public space. According to this author, the authorities classify as dangerous -even themselves- the spaces of leisure of popular sectors. Thus an image of these sectors and their spaces is made depicting them as violent and immoral. The elites also demonized the heterodox religious devotion, laughter, and the fun music found the popular sectors in the city (Salinas, 2006; Salinas, Prudant, Cornejo & Saldaña, 2007). Political power actively intervenes via the establishment and supervision of those official spaces of public entertainment, as the only way to incorporate the forms of expression of popular sectors into the modern city. Likewise, throughout the century, there would be a gradual expulsion to the outskirts of the city of the forms of commerce -formal and informal, legal and illegal- of the popular sectors (Salazar, 2003).

Despite this, there would be throughout the entire 19th century, a wide array of artistic expressions linked to absent popular culture, such as the zamacueca (Spencer, 2007: Torres, 2008) and the cueca (Claro, 2010); el canto a lo poeta (Acevedo, 1933); el canto a lo humano y lo divino (Uribe, 1974; Sepúlveda, 2009; with the implications of its passage from the rural to the urban and the specificity of the cantora women, indicated by Salinas & Navarrete, 2012); various forms of circus shows, whose presence in the public space will be persecuted or judged negatively by illustrated sectors.

The inauguration of the first Workers Congress in 1887 started a process of strengthening of a workers institutions that was both politically and culturally autonomous, that is expressed publicly and expanded intensely (friendly and commonwealth societies, philharmonics, workers press, workers theater, musical groups) until the early 1920s. The emergence of a illustrated worker culture materializes (Devés, 1992), that is related to the category that Sunkel calls "popular represented". This culture, whose main spokesperson would be Luis Emilio Recabarren, is expression of a group of influence outside the State -but with vocation of power- that creates a working and middle-class intellectuality (specialized artisans, public employees, typography) and that seek to take advantage of the institutions for their own purposes. At the same time, they seek to differentiate themselves from "the oligarchic materialized culture in the

State" and "the traditional pre-illustrated culture" (p.131), paying the cost of a self-censorship of the senses: "it certainly was not a culture known for sensuality. It was a culture of poverty and scarcity" (p. 135). This confirms the idea that the illuminist matrix is imported to the popular sectors, in tension with a symbolic-dramatic matrix that is anterior and structuring, allowing concrete observation of the way in which both matrices have differing processes of development. This divergence has a particular expression in determinant modes of appropriation of the mediatized cultural dispositives from the absent popular culture like the popular printed poetry (Lenz, 2003), the popular satirical press (Rustom, 2018), the appropriation of cinema on behalf of the "produce sellers or shopkeepers" that from 1904 to 1915 converted their barracks into show halls located in the outside neighborhoods of Santiago (Iturriaga, 2011, p. 6) and finally, the debate on the canon of folklore in the context of the first musical recordings of traditional Chilean music, as shown by the case of the Society of Chilean Folklore (Donoso, 2006).

In 1925, a new constitution is made, which leads to the possibility of a national popular Chile with a working class inserted in partisan politics, in a gradual process of acquisition of rights that ends with the 1973 military coup. This date marks the beginning of another cycle, that for now could be named post-worker.

3.2 Cases and categories of analysis

Three dimensions of analysis have been identified that approach the forms of expression of absent popular culture, in long term perspective and seeking to surpass the mere mediatic dimension. They are: corporality, representation and mediatization. At the same time, within each dimension there are 4 concrete experiences of visibility of absent popular culture in the city of Santiago, Chile. This selection corresponds to the themes and experiences that emerged from the very analysis of the bibliography Chilean social and cultural history. The selection of 12 cases is arbitrary and is founded on two criteria: diversity and approachability.

A. The notion of corporality can be considered "zero degrees" of expressivity, in which the body, refers

to an embodied figure, it is used directly and without mediations like tool of an experience. In the words of Tijoux, Facuse & Urrutia (2012, p. 437), the body is "the place of invention for the deprivations of property". In the corporality, the expressivity does not always respond to a meta-story or to a reflection, nor does it necessarily require audiences or spectators. It can take on an individual, collective and even inter-corporal form: "The inter-corporeidad allows us to think of a communication without narrative mediations between the bodies" (Contreras, 2013, p.22). Corporality, precisely for its interactive character is very linked to the use and appropriation of the spaces: "Nor the daily forms of resistance, nor the occasional insurrection can be understood without taking into account the closed social spaces in which that resistance is fed and acquires meaning" (Scott, 2003, p. 47). The four expressions identified are:

A1. Strategies of control and resistance to popular sound, and the spaces where it is found. Especially in the sphere of popular non-musical sound in the city, on which there is no record of an important level of investigation.

A2. The strategies and spaces of resistance of formal and informal economic exchange in the marginal neighborhoods of 19th century Santiago (Mapocho, Estación Central, Matadero), considering the relevance that informal commerce had during the 19th century as a form of occupation of the peon- laborer[3] in the city.

A3. Popular devotion in regards to religious celebrations of the Cruz de Mayo and the figure of Fray Andresito. The first for being a celebration that integrates a particular Afro-indigenous-Catholic syncretism. The second for its recognition as patron of the poor and marginalized.

A4. Popular death and violence. The reference to this most agonistic dimension has to do with making distance from an idealist vision of absent popular culture and some exclusively festive uses of the body.

B. The Representation corresponds to forms of expression that suppose distance, use of codes and acting. On this level, the body and what it can produce become medium to say something with some degree of symbolism and abstraction. They are not necessarily forms of expression belonging to popular culture: instead this category refers to collective forms of signifying these dispositives on behalf of these sectors: "given that these popular classes are very sensitive to the symbols of hegemony, the field of the symbolic (…) converts into precious space to investigate the forms of popular protest" (Martín-Barbero, 1987, p.108). The case proposal is the following:

B1. Performaticity and performativity (Taylor, 2003; 2006) of the zamacueca and the cueca. The topic proposed for analysis here is the festive spatiality; this is, the logics of distribution and circulation of popular music in spatial terms.

B2. El canto a lo poeta, specifically in terms of the figure of the cantoras as part of a double invisibilization.

B3. The so called villancicos *rotosos* that had been prohibited within the persecution of the expressions of popular religion (Pereira, 1941, p.189-190).

B4. The Chilean circus as space of sociability, liberation and integration of popular subjects of the absent popular culture (Ducci, 2012).

C. The m*ediatization* refers to forms of representation that incorporate supports of technical reproducibility. Starting with the printing press and continuing via the electronic media (and digital, considering the 21st century). It supposes a space of specific mediation between the popular culture and mass culture, problematizing the tension between both as a relation of mutual influence: on one hand, mass culture like popular culture that "the historical project that the bourgeoise produces for the people" (Martín-Barbero, 2003, p.118-119) and, on the other hand, like a source of contrast and appropriation for the very reinvention of subversive forms of popular culture. The cases identified are the following:

C1. The popular poetry, that emerged from the war with Spain (1865-1866) as printed poetry with a certain informative and contingent component. It constitutes a form of existence of the popular that appropriates the beginning mass forms (reproducibility) and of informative language of the first newspapers for their own interests. Although, there have been various compilations published on

this topic (Navarrete, 1998; Navarrete & Cornejo, 2006; Navarrete & Palma, 2008), as well as studies on its production and circulation (Araos, 2012), we will work with the cosmovisions present in them, given that it is a topic only partially addressed (Yáñez, 2012).

C2. The popular satirical press created by the popular sectors themselves. Two important examples of the era, both in terms of its discursivity and its caricatures will be *El Ají* and *José Arnero*.

C3. The "plebian" cinema business owners, that from 1904 to 1915 converted their barracks into show halls located in the outside neighborhoods of Santiago and transformed cinema in an popular entertainment far from the control of the elites.

C4. The battle on the canon of national music between the Society of Chilean Folklore and the illustrated press in the context of the first recordings of traditional music.

4. Conclusions

The articulation between the theoretical matrices mentioned earlier make way for a appropriation of the debate on heterogeneity of popular culture, in which we can observe at least three analytically different variations in the Latin American context -worker, massive and absent-, although in constant relationships of attraction and tension among them. The identification of 12 expressions of absent popular culture in the period studied leads to a new proposal of the question on the matrix of Chilean popular culture and opens a new axis on the debate on Latin American popular culture. The exercise performed analyzed the relationship between culture and communication: the place of culture and, within it, de the forms of expression and the messages that these communicate as forms to be, know and experience that -in this case, beginning with some material conditions of subordination and negation from the subjects and institutions domesticated by the modern European project -, are carriers of other epistemologies where the body, emotions, spirituality, sensuality and laughter occupy the main stage. Despite the absent popular culture, its key figures and forms of expression are "named" by the elite for their disqualification or

"invisibilization" by the worker culture considering that they have a regressive character due to their opposition to modern values. They could also be considered as a form of daily de-colonizing political struggle, that is only able to be fully and completely observed when its historical perspective and archive work is incorporated.

That being said, the relevance of the research program proposed lies in visibilizing a group of apparently disconnected expressions, with the purpose of advancing the analysis of its potential discursive articulation. In a long-term perspective, seeking to establish continuities and discontinuities. The aforementioned does not suppose an evolutionary process. Rather what it wants to continue investigating is the uncovering of the message or discourse (visual, audio, corporal and written) that communicate these concrete experiences as representative cases of absent popular culture and observe the relations that these groups maintain with other social sectors (worker culture, illustrated elite, cultural industry). In this sense, the article comes to problematize a gray zone of social investigation and invites us to think about political proposals of today and the future, capable of overcoming the logics and mechanisms of modernity / coloniality.

Endnotes

1   In the long term history that we are interested in, it would also be acceptable to speak of fondas, ramadas and chinganas, concepts that refer to different spaces of popular sociability, where there is a combination of music, food and drink, differentiated mainly due to the physical spaces the take place in and the more or less temporary character of their constructions.

2   This same simple of cases is currently being thoroughly researched, with more resources and more archive work, via the project [information reserved to ensure blind review].

3   Concept used to refer to unqualified workers, of unstable employment, frequently out of work.

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