

TRANSGRESSIONS, CONTINUITY AND DISRUPTIONS. AN INTERPRETATION OF LATIN AMERICA'S AUTHORITARIAN REPUBLICANISM¹

Transgresiones, continuidad e interrupciones. Una interpretación del republicanismo autoritario latinoamericano

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Abstract

This article presents a cultural analysis on the authoritarian structures in Latin America, specifically in Chile. The main hypothesis of the text is that there is an incomplete understanding of the symbolical and physical violence through the republican periods (19th century onwards) in Latin America without treating the institutional violence as result of vertical and hierarchical cultural legitimations. The use of historical material is thus functional to pursue the main goal of the paper which is to trace the authoritarianism as a permanent factor on the Chilean structures and, sometimes, feasible to be expanded to other Latin American contexts.

Keywords: authoritarian republicanism, Chile, ruptures, democracy, Latin America.

Resumen

Este artículo presenta un análisis cultural de las estructuras autoritarias en América Latina, específicamente en Chile. La hipótesis principal del texto es que existe una comprensión incompleta de la violencia simbólica y física a través de los períodos así llamados "republicanos" (siglo XIX en adelante) en América Latina sin tratar la violencia institucional como resultado de las legitimaciones culturales, verticales y jerárquicas en su base. El uso de material histórico es, por lo tanto, funcional para perseguir el objetivo principal del trabajo el cual es trazar el autoritarismo como un factor permanente en las estructuras chilenas y potencialmente factible de ser ampliado a otros contextos latinoamericanos.

Palabras clave: republicanismo autoritario, Chile, rupturas, democracia, Latinoamérica.

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Introduction

The history of Latin America provides several examples of transgressions between democracy and dictatorial moments (Góngora 1981; Salazar 2014). Across its history, Latin America has had a specific mixture of *Authoritarian Republicanism*, where *republicanism* is usually related to institutional and democratic impulses and *authoritarianism* to dictatorships, in a first gaze, but as result of colonial structures strong connected with a Republican State culture with control mechanisms over economy and the political system similar to oligarchical regimes in a deeper sight. In addition, transitions to democracy plays a major role regarding disruptions by authoritarian moments. Democracy was often the previous political scenario for dictatorial powers (i.e. Chile 1973, Argentina 1976), but also for moments of social instability. My hypothesis is that the *authoritarian republicanism* is a useful concept for grasping the moments of continuity and disruptions in the same framework. It develops a precise socio-political *temporal regime* (Torres 2021) by which traditional structures and conservative stances emphasize the influence of the past over the future, reducing the chances for transformations into an open 'to-come'.

However, this authoritarian culture has been defied and transgressed several times during Latin American history, from the Mexican Revolution (1910-1920), Cuban Revolution (1953-1959) or Chile's Unidad Popular (1970-1973) until current social movements for gender equality and new educational systems (Chile 2011, Colombia 2019), more democracy (Nicaragua 2018) or against neoliberal politics (Ecuador, Chile 2019). In synthesis, this article considers Latin American history as a temporality of continuities and discontinuities, while continuity is related to a socio-political culture named *authoritarian republicanism* and discontinuity to moments of crises by which traditional values are challenged, defied or restored.

As relations between moments of crises and their political backgrounds, Latin America regards crucial transgressions for the emergence of the Nation-State during XIX c., until the contemporary socio-political context. The framework of this work is that *transgressions* are attempts to change, to conserve or to re-establish (depending the case) a set of practices and dispositions that are tied to a culture of *authoritarian republicanism*. If the thesis of *authoritarian republicanism* is applicable: what kind of future(s) is(are) possible(s) in the Latin American context? What sort of time to come is feasible to expect according to this past and present? The willingness of the future depends on structures formed on the past, which means that for an influence of possible future(s) in the current imaginary is advisable to get inputs from the Latin American structures in order to make any effort not just achievable, but thinkable first of all.

Following this effort, which are the crucial political concepts that shift these conditions? Which trajectories did ideas of crisis take in Latin American context, in particular for historical junctures? Considering these questions (Palti 2007; Fernández Sebastián 2016) I propose to analyze how transgression can be understood as accelerated process of self-reliance and formal democratization in the emerging Latin American Nation-States. Giving special attention to notions such as 'independence', 'autonomy', 'liberalism', 'modernity', I observe conditions and explanations for accelerated moments of transgressions, crisis, and decisions-making in early republican impulses. During 19th century Latin America experienced several crises and revolutions in their traditional colonial structures. Among these crisis and revolutions, the most influential is a New Republic configuration with process of independence from the Spanish Crown (Cid & Stüven 2012). Inside of this 'period of revolutions', acceleration of democratic processes as well as Nation-State configurations, are described as underpinnings of the young republican Latin American societies. The success of crisis stemmed from their capacity to force, courtesy of a selective use of violence, a sort of historical democratic acceleration (Fernández Sebastián 2016).

Thus, the following article thematises transgressions as major actor for moments of crisis in Latin America from a political and social perspective. Following Koselleck's *Sattelzeit* (2010) it is possible to conceive process of independence from Spanish Crown, even Dictatorships and revolutionary impulses, as socio-political moments of transgression motivated by particular adoptions of 'illuminated', 'liberal', 'secularized' as well as 'modern' and 'revolutionary' ideas about the future of the region.

I. Transgressions to and continuity of authoritarianism(s)

As I have already exposed, the article explores transgressions and continuities under the umbrella-concept of *authoritarian republicanism* regarding the political and social Latin American Modern History. Considering this, *transgressions* cannot be totally understood without transversal socio-political factors that motivate transformative process from progressive as well as reactionary impulses paralyzing them. In order to address those processes of transformations, the article will be focused in moments of crises particularly in three periods: 1) transition of structures of colonization, 2) movements of independence-Nation States, and, 3) finally and with particular interests, dictatorships and the new conservative wave. Those steps show that fundamental moments in Latin America (henceforth LA) History have been crossed by a culture of *authoritarian republicanism* that has been present, in turn, as stable or continuous factor among them, either as a restoration of the 'order' or, likewise, a *state of things* that must be *transgressed* along the

transformations that have occurred in process for more democratic and egalitarian structures. At the end, I expect to thematise how this *authoritarian republicanism* is experimenting a revival in the region during the latest years (Sebastián Piñera in Chile, Mauricio Macri in Argentina, Iván Duque in Colombia, Jair Bolsonaro in Brazil) that even though they cannot be separated from a global *conservative-nationalistic* wave (the list could be quite extensive. To name a few: advance of *Vox* in Spain, *Fratelli* in Italy, *Rassemblement National* in France and AfD in Germany, Trump election in the U.S., Erdogan in Turkey, Duterte in Philippines, Orbán in Hungary); they also cannot be fully explained without the *authoritarian* structures that are activated (or deactivated) under some circumstances in LA and are intrinsically part of its history. This analysis becomes notably relevant in a context of rise of conservatism “[s]ince... modern fascism is inconceivable without a mass basis, the inner complexion of *its prospective followers still maintains its crucial significance*, and no defense which does not take into account the subjective phase of the problem would be truly “realistic”” [My italics] (Adorno 1950 748), which means that the institutional level of the analysis (governments, institutions, main figures) is only one part of the phenomenon, do not exhausting aspects housed in each individual that are result, in turn, of a cultural level. In this respect, transgressions are understood as critical moments, usually violent, in which previous traditional structures are defied or defeat, and then envelop reactions from the establishments against reformative or revolutionary movements such as the *coups d'état* in Brazil 1964, Chile 1973, Argentina 1976.

By summarizing the cases of colonialism, independence, and dictatorships, it is possible to describe Latin American History as, paradoxically, *continuity of transgressions*; that is to say, as relations between moments of crises and their political background that even when were experienced as moments of exception, they appear as recurrent circumstances. From early condition of colonized space until current days of postcolonial reality, America as a whole has lived in process of ruptures and disruptions. In this regard, the first rupture on their westernized registered history was provided by the Spanish and then Portuguese invasions. This pretty well-known event represents the interwoven history of instability seen afterwards. Other examples of the ruptures and transgressions are illustrated by the denomination of a *European America* vs *Indigenous* or *Native America*, as well as the difference between the *North* and *South* that far away to name just a geographical allocation sparked a hierarchical division. In this regard, without being exhaustive, the current postcolonial theory has emphasized the relevance of a discussion on how to name the continent, since almost every solution until now suppose a marked eurocentrism (‘Latin’ America, and the even worse options, ‘Ibero’ or ‘Hispanoamérica’ are pointed out as the major examples). Regarding this

some solutions have been identified as *Interamérica* or just *América*. For an overview of the discussion see (García Canclini 2004 131 and ff.).

Now, putting away the question about when it is possible to start speaking with a proper concept of "history" for "America", in the following I will be focused in these 3 exemplar movements of transgression and continuity. The first movement is related to colonialism, the second to rebellion against Crowns and the third one with dictatorships until current authoritarian revival. The purpose for analyzing these three steps is to trace the change impulses for one side, and the resistance against them that traditional forces oppose, for another, all of them composing the foundations for a concept on *authoritarian republicanism*.

II. Transgresional overview

i. Stabilizing Criticism

The purpose of this part is not to be exhaustive with the colonial history, its causes and consequences. There are several works that have already studied these many times (Stanley and Stein 1970; Sarkari 1972; Stern 1996; Assunção, Naritomi and Soares 2007). I would just like to shed light in some conditions during the Colonial Era that allow us to think how a *new temporal horizon* arose at some point of the LA History creating impulses for a rupture within the past, triggering several political transgressions and their authoritarian reactions. "[C]olonial critique did not question the inevitability or beneficence of European culture. Europe constituted a civilizational necessity and the colonial legacy remained its hindrance" (Ortega 2018 91). In this hindrance, the previous -namely, the indigenous legacy- was swallowed up by the new -i.e. colonial structures. It does not mean that there was just an imposition from the European perspective, but also an appropriation usually as syncretism at the popular level, as imitation in the upper class and elites, and even as reappreciation, and reinterpretation in critical terms by intellectual spheres (Vaz Ferreira, Mariátegui, Rodó). According to Ortega, "[t]he inequality perceived by Spanish Americans during the parliamentary debates in Cadiz (1810–14) supplied the word with unprecedented pugnacity... *Colony* had begun to designate a state of despotism exerted over other people, a kind of injustice or moral damage that had to be resisted. As the war intensified (1816–25) a second meaning became dominant among young military officers in the republican armies: *colony* designated the lack of self-determination experienced by a territory or population when subjugated by another nation" (Ortega 2018 99). Since here, emerges an impulse of rebellion from the *Criollas* elites. With the word *criollos/criollas* people who were born in America from European ancestors were

identified as the new actors of process of self-reliance. Different things occur when European backgrounds are already settled there.

In this context, transgressions in language by using words with strong political consequences, such as *Colony* and *Criollas*, were “exponentially multiplied [in] the occurrence of a series of metaphors and concepts [such as] representation, sovereignty, constitution, freedom, equality, separation of powers, public opinion” (Fernández Sebastián 2016 373). Furthermore, this concepts emergence it would not have been possible without a rising journalism. They were facing colonial previous structures as a sort of mirror image that deserves to be altered. The ‘politicians’ whose were parallelly landlords, lawyers, liberal professional, and journalists as well, increasingly made use of leaflets and press to influence and homogenize the public opinion. The rate of production of newspapers and constant bombardment with surprising and unexpected news publicly generated an insatiable demand for novelty: “All of this contributed towards dramatically raising expectations and sharpening awareness of contemporaneity amongst readers, whilst the deluge of information gave them the impression that time and space were becoming more and more compressed” (Fernández Sebastián 2016 374).

For the very first time on an inner worldly horizon, the present began systematically to look more towards the future than to the past, producing a widening breach between fatalism of the ancient and the radical voluntarism of the ‘new’. This was a manner into defeat the traditional authority, that in turn began several reforms in order to appease and to control the emerging insurgency. This was a moto for a step forward in the forthcoming process of independence. The liberal ideas were confronted with the authoritarian stances, although after a successful process of self-reliance from the Crowns, the *criollas* elites adopted in various ways the same social stratification. In spite of the idea of a public society with rights and recognition, the stablished power acquired unusual strength, and the authoritarian colonial structures produced struggles among the new *criolla* elite and the old one under the claim of *Reconquista*. However, the political scenarios in Europe and America were already settled in favor of an open and uncertain new order.

ii. Towards a Republican-State configuration

As I have just shown, during 19th century LA experienced several crises and revolutions in their traditional structures of colonization. Among them, the most influential is the genuine attempt for a *Republican* configuration with process of independence from the Spanish and Portuguese Crowns (Cid & Stiven 2012). In this regard names like Andrés Bello, Simón Bolívar, Francisco Bilbao and Manuel

Rodríguez to name a few (all of them white men from the upper class) were actual promoters of a new institutionalism in order to develop more egalitarian procedures with a strong appropriation of their own culture through the promotion of arts and humanities, as well as the creation of productive modes according to the resources of every region. Inside of this 'period of revolutions', acceleration of more democratic institutions as well as an emerging Nation-State configuration, are described as crucial impact in the young Latin American republican societies. Thus, under this context, transgression means an accelerated process of self-reliance and formal democratization in the rising Latin American Nation-States. As I said before, by giving special attention to notions such as 'independence', 'autonomy', 'liberalism' or 'modernity', we observe managing conditions and explanations for accelerated moments of transgressions, crisis, and making-decisions in early republican impulses. As the case of former Colonies, the recurrence of words in the public sphere contributes also to standardize the language and the feeling of being part of another possible imagined communities. In this sense, can be considered as contribution to the formation of 'national' feelings.

Following Koselleck's *Sattelzeit* (2010) it is possible to conceive the processes of independence from Spanish and Portuguese Crowns as time of transgressions motivated by particular socio-political adoptions of illustrated, liberal, and secularized ideas about the future of colonies –with all their specificities in each particular case. According to the *Geschichtliche Grundbegriffe* [Fundamental Historical Concepts] (1972), *Sattelzeit* (literally 'saddle-times') describes the movement and transit from one epoch to another². In the Latin American case this process was explicit in the transit from a dependent Monarchy to more than 30 new republican states, that "shows the evident revolution that affected every dimension of political and social life, perceived at the same time as cause and consequence of a great cosmovision emerged during the Latin American *Sattelzeit*. Concepts such as 'popular sovereignty', 'citizenship' or 'representation' start to appear inside public debates reshaping the social life and its structures. This contributes to a politicization of the public spheres that were traditionally governed by religious and oligarchical structures, especially regarding access to education (Puiggrós and Torres 1995). At the same time, the resistance to the 'new' and its redistribution of powers, provoked several struggles inside upper and ruling class, which sometimes ends with civil wars and other times forced more

² *Sattelzeit* is a concept coined by Conceptual History, specifically in the work of Reinhart Koselleck, to name the period in which takes place the passage from an 'old regime' to a 'modern' one in Europe. The word *sattel* refers directly to the saddle for horses, alluding to the double character of being over an object (in this case an animal) with presence on both sides of its physiognomy, as it happens with hinges (bisagra).

democratic relations. However, although the new republican states signify a new political and economic scenario, it did not mean a structural change of social life. Most of the previous colonial hierarchies regarding ethnical differences and social classes, but also the role of the father of family, landlords, or the relevance of the 'familia' and its privileges, were kept them. "America is ungovernable for us" says Simón Bolívar into a letter to J.J. Flores [Nov. 9, 1830] (1950 501-2), synthetizing the feeling of a revolutionary that faced the paralyzing force of traditional structures.

This process of independence belongs to a general process inside of an Ages of Revolutions in different regions across the world. The revolutionary moment heads a transgression in the level of meaning, even though does not imply a better or candid future. No one of these words has a proper meaning by itself, but inside a context of struggles for the appropriation of concepts and their implications for social life. Conservative and liberal-progressive forces were both political stances that shaped the following circumstances of neocolonialism that LA experienced during the 19th and 20th centuries. Now, beyond the transgressional moments, it is important to highlight how they were crossed by a general pattern and assumptions in the direction of *authoritarian* and *republican* impulses that have been hand in hand with attempts for a more democratic republic as well as their resistance.

III. Republic, Order, and Authority. Towards to *Authoritarian Republicanism*

Claims for order and stability have been a common-place for the *criollas* elites in Latin America. From the privileged groups extending their influence to other lays of society, the idea of chaos and ungovernability appear as the worst of all evils³. Then, to guarantee and to preserve the traditional order, usually identified with landlords and owners of capital, hierarchical structures were preserved from colonial times with a new legitimation from the legal power of the State. In doing so, the State administration has played a major role in the postcolonial order as well as the dictatorial moments during 20th century. Then, it is not a coincidence that the periods of dictatorship have been described as *state terrorism*, highlighting the crucial influence that the state structures have played in the authoritarian moments being used for kidnapping, torturing or murdering people (Ros 2013). Maybe even more extended is the denomination of *bureaucratic authoritarianism* (O'Donnell 1973) that explain the civil and military component of the dictatorships as impossible without the administrative apparatus of the Nation-State. However,

³ To see a detailed exposition about the notion of Order in the early Chilean State configuration see (Cid & Stuvén 2012). Particularly, the chapter *Orden. "El ídolo más sagrado de nuestros corazones."* 1810-1851. 497-532.

my hypothesis is that the *bureaucratic* and the *state terrorism* are not considering the intrinsic permanence of the *authoritarianism* in LA history. In other words, the instrumental use of the states cannot be fully understood without the influence of a culture of dominance and control. O'Donnell's *bureaucratic authoritarianism* is a helpful concept for explaining the administrative use of the State resources for dictatorial purposes, but insufficient to conceptualise the vertical, hierarchical, and segregated patterns of relationship that evolves the Latin American stratification. The same is the case for the *state terrorism*, that explain pretty well the fear that the state provokes in their populations at some historical moment, but it does not express properly the historical role of the pattern behind family structures, labour relations, or educational systems. That is why it seems necessary another analytical tool for grasping the specificity of this vertical patterns even when successful attempts for getting a more equal society were established. Or to put it in other words, that republican endeavors for public education, health provision, infrastructure are also crossed by authoritarian norms regarding the role of (white) men, the justification of violence, indigenous segregation, and the exclusion of non-accepted forms of life according to catholic standards such as gender or LGTB equality.

In this scenario appears the Latin American Dictatorships as crucial examples of authoritarian moments. As common place, they conceived themselves as reinstatement 'of order', perceiving their 'task' as restoring a 'natural course of things'. That is quite clear at the level of the discourse of dictators. Just to name a few: with the following words Augusto Pinochet pointed out the role of the military intervention in his first speech after the *coup d'état* in Santiago of Chile: "... as palliative of such nefarious events the armed forces have assumed the government... to ensure for the *internal order*" (October 1973). In parallel, the Argentinian dictator Jorge Videla's first speech by TV in 1976, stated "we are going to begin, then, by *re-establish* a fair *order* inside of which would be valid to work and sacrifice oneself". And in Brazil Castelo Branco, during a press conference to Brazilian Journalism in 1965 said that the new authoritarian government pursued "... confidence and security in the task of national *recovery*" as its justification for the military intervention. From those examples we can infer that the dictators did not perceive themselves as transgressing the 'state of things', but rather recovering the 'proper' history. Sometimes regarding nationalisms and traditional values, in other occasions saving the country from Marxism or Communism, and the menace of URSS (all of these with an active support of the US), dictatorial moments interpret themselves as saviors of the homeland, or 'heroes' that are reconstituting the 'correct' or 'right' history. As it is quite clear with the last quotations, the dictatorial forces see themselves as executing a necessary duty for the homeland [*patria*] (Mainwaring and Pérez-Liñán 2013).

This is leading us to the last point which is related to the social and political structures in LA. Although, as I have shown, there have been democratic impulses during the process of independence that can be tracked until today, Latin American history has been marked by impulses in the very opposite direction. Tendencies to concentrate political influence as well as economic and cultural wealth in small traditional groups, reproduces advantages just as disadvantages, that are reluctant to mobility or social change, constituting a permanent circumstance in several Latin American contexts (Levy 1981). This continuity deserves to be conceptualized by itself. In this article, the situation of inequality is approached in connection with a context of *authoritarianism* that during the colony is related to the social structures that are coming from the Crown. Then, 1) the traditional distinction between European ancestors and native population had as consequence a division of the society that contributes to authoritarian structures strong tied to catholic and military influences. In a second step, 2) those structures were modified across the time with democratic demands coming from external pressure⁴ for more egalitarian norms and economic advantages, but also from movements inside societies, claiming for more democratic relationship regarding gender, indigenous people or religion. Thus, 3) the last results in different mixtures between democratic claims and vertical and non-integrative structures. Put in other words, the colonial heritage cannot explain by itself the authoritarian present culture, that is to say, that current forms of vertical relationships are not explained as such by the colonial history without understanding other more contemporaneous forms of colonization (i.e. to the global market), but for the reproduction of patterns that are usually not recognized and criticized as everyday forms of domination. Thus, Latin American authoritarianism is both the result of neocolonial structures pretty associated to an authoritarian sociopolitical-culture, particularly regarding patriarchalism, as well as racial and gender misrecognition, alongside with a strong marked classism, that have been present during about 200 years of 'independent' life.

Next, in order to show how this authoritarianism operates within practice, we can observe a few words that a representant of the Chilean parliament dedicates to the common people in the 19th century: "The owners of Chile are us, the owners of the capital and the land; the rest is a mass that can be influenced and sold; it doesn't matter either as an opinion or as a prestige"⁵ (Matte Pérez 1982).

⁴ Either by the pressure of international potencies in order to get more legitimate ways of exchange (i.e. favourable trade terms, commodity pricing, etc.) or from some liberalised ideas adopted internally for the same reasons.

⁵ "Los dueños de Chile somos nosotros, los dueños del capital y del suelo; lo demás es masa influenciabile y vendible; ella no pesa ni como opinión ni como prestigio".

Eduardo Matte Pérez was a congressman and direct ancestor of the current 'Matte Larraín' family, one of the wealthiest family clan in Chile today, and whose control the CMPC, the biggest exporter worldwide company of pulp and paper according to the Forbes Global Ranking (2018). The Matte Larraín family is normally stopping via lobbying laws regarding social policies such as guarantees for an educational system entirely provided by the state. They actually also finance relevant *think tanks* (like the Centro Estudios Públicos / CEP) what is an influential institution in the highest spheres of Chilean politics and economics.

Even though is not possible to ensure that the authoritarian heritage is automatically passed on to descendants, their political positions and support make it truly hard to think otherwise. At the end, an *authoritarian republicanism* is a precise mixture between impulses for democratic and institutional developments that can improve the public sphere as well as the idea of Republic (*res publica*)⁶, while strong hierarchical and non-egalitarian practices cross every aspect. In this regard, dictatorships appear as a paradigmatic example since they use the government, i.e. institutional sphere, for influencing and taking a monopoly of the use of law and its force, when at the same time they support a vertical cultural path that is part of traditional structures across the society.

Another example of the authoritarian reactions in the Chilean case is provided by the history of its Constitutions. Meanwhile the constitution of the early independent republic in 1828 was focused in to promote federalism (in a clear attempt to distribute the power by areas), the subsequent constitution of 1833 was a counter-reaction pursuing to centralize the country by promoting a presidential system with all sort of authorities. Almost one century afterwards, a new constitution was declared in 1925 as reform of the former constitution of 1833 in order to update the previous one alongside the emerging "*Cuestión social*" —a popular movement claiming for more social care and civil rights. Finally, in 1980 Pinochet's dictatorship was consolidated via a new constitution that pursued to abolish the fundamental aspects of the former ones in order to refund the political and economic underpinnings of the Chilean society in a complete new fashion: by stabilizing a model of privatization of the public sphere and minimizing the state role as far as possible (Cristi 2000; Heiss 2017; Cordero 2019).

⁶ As it's well-known *res publica* is the root of the word 'republic', and the word 'commonwealth'. Its meaning regards public affair, issue or matter. Therefore, it shouldn't be identified with a conservative political stance as the U.S. *republicanism*. The latter is only one adoption (truly arguable) of the political theory of republicanism. To see a conservative explanation on the difference between republic/republicanism: Hart, Gary. *Restoration of the Republic: The Jeffersonian Ideal in 21st-Century America*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2002.

IV. Democracy and politics for another day. Police, authoritarianism, and neoliberalism

Returning to dictatorial moments, reformations in economic structures that presupposes cultural changes were seen as transgressions to a traditional order within a context of what I propose to name *authoritarian republicanism*. The transgressions are moments of disruption in which the order is challenged and the limits of the *status quo* are put into suspension. In this sense, “[t]ransgression is a gesture that concerns the limit; that is where, in the thinness of that line, the radiance of its passage is manifested, and perhaps also its trajectory in its totality, its origin itself. The line that crosses very well could be all its space” (Foucault 1999 167)⁷. In this game of boundaries and overlaps, it is necessary to get an overview of the forces that maintain the limits and to grasp what kind of limits they are. For the latter, thus, *authoritarianism* is understood archetypically as strong figures that imposes control and norms, it is identified with the law as control but also with force over institutional frames when necessary. In other words, all that is related to the care of limits and/or boundaries. However, beyond the institutional and legal aspects, even the brutal violent level, the authoritarianism that I refer is a cultural practice that crosses legal and formal systems to reach several areas on the everyday life, i.e. as one specific form of culture. Otherwise, it would have been quite unlikely the support that many times authoritarian movements receive from massive portions of the population. Then, this ‘authoritarian culture’ is close related to the notion of *police* in the sense used by Jacques Rancière, for whom represents the assignation of limits for practices and resources, as well as the observation of what is admissible and tolerable. To name this order, Rancière use the term ‘distribution of sensible’ which refers to the social allocation of territories, populations, areas, but also symbolical positions, knowledge, status, emotions, and every kind of possible natural and social resources. In Rancière’s words,

[t]he essence of the police lies neither in repression nor even in control over the living. Its essence lies in a certain way of dividing up the sensible. I call ‘distribution of the sensible’ a generally implicit law that defines the forms of partaking by first defining the modes of perception in which they are inscribed. The partition of the sensible is the dividing-up of the world (de monde) and of

⁷ From Spanish version: “La transgresión es un gesto que concierne al límite; ahí es donde, en la delgadez de esa línea, se manifiesta el resplandor de su paso, y tal vez también su trayectoria en su totalidad, su origen mismo. El trazo que cruza muy bien podría ser todo su espacio. El juego de los límites y de la transgresión parece estar regido por una obstinación simple: la transgresión franquea y no deja de volver a franquear una línea que, a su espalda, enseguida se cierra en una ola de poca memoria, retrocediendo de este modo otra vez hasta el horizonte de lo infranqueable.” En *Prefacio a la transgresión*. Homenaje a Geores Bataille. (Original: “Preéface a la transgression”. *Critique* 195-196 Hommage á G. Bataille (1963): 751-769).

people (du monde), the *nemein* upon which the *nomoi* of the community are founded (Rancière 2010 36).

According to Rancière, the police *logic* is just the opposite of politics since the police seeks to preserve the distribution of positions, territories, recognitions. It is based on the contrary of the political *logic* because politics would pursue to address social problems without clear solutions *a priori*. In Rancière words, "Politics, before all else, is an intervention in the visible and the sayable. [...] The essential work of politics is the configuration of its own space. It is to make the world of its subjects and its operations seen. The essence of politics is the manifestation of dissensus as the presence of two worlds in one" (2010 37). In other words, the authoritarian stances that rely on the social structures are against to any promoted politics —in Rancière's terms— by principle. Being result of, and encouraged for the structural conditions, the authoritarian character is one of the most highly developed ways for accoupling fascist ideas and to do things 'as usual' by avoiding dissensus. Then, authoritarians do not have to create new forms of life, but to defend strong enough patterns and norms based on common assumptions regarding diverse dimensions such as immigrants, gender role, 'traditional' life, and the relevance of family, among many others. Tied to the fascist mindset, an authoritarian perspective also pinpoints a dominant social stance for which the social differences are already settled and deserve to be maintained as they 'are'. In doing so the police logic becomes especially functional since is presented by Rancière as the 'guardian' of the 'distribution of sensible'. Thus,

[t]he essence of the police lies in a partition of the sensible that is characterized by the absence of void and of supplement: society here is made up of groups tied to specific modes of doing, to places in which these occupations are exercised, and to modes of being corresponding to these occupations and these places. In this matching of functions, places and ways of being, there is no place for any void (2010 36).

In other words, Rancière's perspective on *police* regards the stances that take care of the social order as such. The forces that promote to keep on the 'distribution of the sensible' in the way that is established, represent the police role since they ensure the distribution of what is possible, keep in it to the detriment of other possibilities. The distribution of resources as well as status, recognition, places, and positions cover the vast spectrum of what is allotted. By *whom*, *how*, to *whom*, and to *what extent* are some of the questions within the distribution of the sensible organize the social order. In the Latin American context, the distribution can be seen in many different examples such as the distribution of rights of property for natural resources, as well as the use of the land, or rights for ethnic recognition, LGTB+ or another subaltern groups. Then, the *authoritarian republicanism* shares radically a

police order either with the use of armed forces or as the use of symbolical weapons that are strong connected with cultural patterns such as birthplace, the role/position in social hierarchy regarding class, ethnicity, gender or misrecognized groups.

i. Authoritarianism and Republic at the service of the neoliberal forefront

For sure the use of the term police does not just refer to the partitioning of social boundaries. Armies and police forces are in fact used to the service of the leading power. Without being exhaustive, a short overview on the second half of the 20th century shows that an important part of the region was under authoritarian governments an almost the entire South-American continent with an active participation of the Army and police forces.

Country	Period	Dictator
Cuba	1952-1959	Fulgencio Batista
Paraguay	1954-1989	Alfredo Stroessner
Brazil	1964-1985	Castelo Branco
Bolivia	1967-1982	Luis García Meza
Perú	1968-1975	Juan Velasco Alvarado
Uruguay	1973-1985	Juan María Bordaberry
Chile	1973-1990	Augusto Pinochet
Argentina	1976-1983	Jorge Rafael Videla
Guatemala	1982-1985	José Efraín Ríos
Panamá	1983-1989	Manuel Antonio Noriega

Source: Own elaboration

In the case of Chile, the dictatorship was the best timing for implementing the neoliberal agenda of the right-win supported by the U.S. interest (Cuevas and Rojas 2014). In this sense, Chile represented the neoliberal forefront not just for the region, but even for the whole second-half of the 20th century (Madariaga 2020). The dictatorship was the right moment for implementing the radical new economical-politics of the free market and the financialization of the economy (banking surpluses, circularity of credits, loans) with privatization of social services such as health, pensions, education, and a subsidiary system for education. In concrete, all the parcellated economic changes introduced a 'set of reforms', that in aggregation supposed more than an economic reform. To take a short overview upon the economic changes that this implementation supposed:

[t]he main reforms were abolition of price controls; across-the-board import liberalization; sharp deregulation of the domestic financial market, in terms of both access by new financial institutions and interest rate and lending policies, followed at the end of the decade by a deregulation of capital inflows; reduction of the public sector and restrictions on the activities of public enterprises; privatization of the pension system and part of the national health service; the return of expropriated businesses and lands to their former owners; privatization of many traditional public enterprises; suppression of most current labor union rights; and a tax reform, which, along with eliminating some distortions (e.g. the cumulative effects of sales taxes corrected by implementing a value added tax), sharply reduced the share of direct and progressive taxes (Ffrench Davis 2010 11).

As a piece of the Theater of the Absurd, the dictator declares that his government had the goal of making a society of 'free men' (Ffrench Davis 2010 10). By using the neoliberal economy, the military government supported strongly by parts of the Catholic Church and owners of big companies, coined the slogan of a government 'for freedom'. Then, from the very beginning the neoliberal imposition was a result of an authoritarian deployment making use of a rethoric of 'freedom'. It is not trivial that the adoption of neoliberal politics, namely the latest stage on 'free economy', were imposed under an authoritarian regime. For another side, the neoliberalization of the economy cannot be fully grasped if we do not consider the international project that demand the 'free' markets. This means that only one area of the world it would not be sufficient for a neoliberal trade, less an isolated country. That is why Chile is perceived as the first step in the propagation of the neoliberal agenda in the region.

In this regard we can understand the almost global 'neoliberal' indifference by making use of authoritarian regimes for its propagation. Actually, "Hayek told a Chilean newspaper that it was possible for a "dictator to govern in a liberal way," and that he preferred a "liberal dictator to a democratic government lacking liberalism" (Iber 2018).

At the very beginning of his *One-Dimensional Man* (1964) and referring to the current state of capitalist societies Herbert Marcuse states that "... it seems to make little difference whether the increasing satisfaction of needs is accomplished by an authoritarian or a non-authoritarian system" (1964 4). Far away to indicate that an authoritarian culture it does not matter for late industrial societies, Marcuse's sentence is consistent with his diagnosis about the monolithic path in current times. The authoritarian or liberal patterns play a subordinated role in a context of capitalistic predominance. For Marcuse, the industry and techniques of dominance do not differ substantially in an authoritarian or liberal government, even among west-capitalism and east-regimes sometimes. Almost half-century after Marcuse's diagnosis, in a context of revival of autocratic figures, what remains universal is the economic system instead of the style of government. Thus, is feasible to indicate that,

[o]ne distinctive feature of neoliberalism is its "globalism": that is, its neglect of the implications of sectoral imbalances; of the heterogeneity in productive structures and among economic agents, and in access to voice and power of different sectors; of the social and allocative implications of market segmentations, and of the difficulty of transmitting transparently information to all sorts of economic agents so that they can contribute to fulfilling the expectations of policymakers (Ffrench Davis 2010 10).

As a historical paradox, the current authoritarianisms (most of them publicly declared conservatives in moral terms and liberal in economic regards), are against to the neoliberal conditions. Even when they need this economic system, they reject various of its ground basis. The most notorious is the declared nationalism: "They aim to recapture a national sovereignty, ever more diminished by global powers and interconnectedness, and call for economic protectionism for the sake of 'native' labor, yet at the same time they condemn regulated markets and policies of public provision (from education to health care) that promise even the most modest protection from capitalism's extreme inequalities, dislocations, and threats to planetary and species existence" (Brown et al. 2018 2-3). Then one of the inner contradictions to the authoritarianism and neoliberalism is that the claimed 'free economy' was imposed by force in dictatorship and now, almost 50 years later, the authoritarianism defeat its own product by seeking more nationalism and protectionism.

V. Authoritarianism Today. Facing Liberal Democracy and Social Media

The authoritarian stance cannot be complete without a repressive mechanism of control that is not just related to the violence in an explicit way. The use of repressive forces and physical deprivation is just one aspect of the use of power. Taken as whole, the control is also exerted over perceptions of inclusion/exclusion within social spheres, as well as the capacity to be considered as potential friend or menace. In this sense, the authoritarian perspective works hand in hand with every effort to maintain the social distribution. As I said before, every aspect should be classified and to keep it in an assigned position. Thus, one of the psychological features of the authoritarian personality is the *rejection of uncertainty* and *lack of clarity*, that is why usually feels support in the already established norms and cultural patterns. Since legal systems and normative aspects avoid unpredictable practices, the authoritarian mindset tends to protect rules and mainstream structures in tune with the 'conformist' ideal type in Robert Merton's famous sociological classification. According to Merton (1968) the conformist is a social type characterized for her/his adaptation to the norms and to the stable social structures. In this regard, the socialization is successful since it manages to

integrate the social norms into the individual as *her/his own* norms. Nevertheless, the difference between the 'conformist' and the 'authoritarian' personality is that meanwhile the conformist does not feel the necessity to protect the norms, but rather follow them, the authoritarian considers that the rules must be maintained and imposed to others when necessary. The latter supposes an active role in defense of the established traditions, values, or customs. This is the case, for instance, when the Chilean ex-congressman José Antonio Kast from the ultra-conservative *Acción Republicana* proposes a 'gender registration' in order to have a sort of national list about who is the people who declare themselves as transgender or having a different sensibility to their self-established birth-gender⁸; or Jair Bolsonaro reproducing a long history of racism in Brazil against black people (Alfred 1973)⁹. Both of them are defending what they think is the 'natural' order and the social stratification as it 'must' be. Since the authoritarian represents a pretended 'common-sense', most of the time the conservative and fascist political movements are using persons that can meet the stereotypes of what is 'desirable', 'better', and/or 'superior' in society. That is why they seek to be represented usually by (white) men, from middle-upper class, with a full amount of energy defending ideas of traditional groups (as is actually the case with Kast and Bolsonaro).

Then, the distribution of the social is a crucial aspect that deserve to be saved from an authoritarian perspective. This is the situation in the discourses of restauration of the 'order' (the 'natural' order for them) in dictatorial moments and also in the defense of the social distribution with its inequalities (as they 'must' be, since some people 'deserve' to be in high positions and other people 'has' to be in lower positions). Other aspect of the authoritarian personality is that they do not have to show weakness. As a recurrent behavior, the authoritarian personality has to demonstrate every time that they are strong and they can face any obstacle. In psychological terms, "[t]he Authoritarian type is governed by the superego and has continuously to contend with strong and highly ambivalent id tendencies. He[she] is driven by *the fear of being weak*" [Own cursives]" (Adorno 1950 753). And one might also add: by *the fear to lost the control*.

Interestingly, in the last years we have witnessed how the contemporary forms of authoritarianism is using democratic procedures (at least the *liberal* democratic ones) for getting more influence among the people. At the moment,

⁸ "José Antonio Kast propone la creación de un 'registro de género'". ADN Radio. April 11, 2018. <https://www.adnradio.cl/noticias/politica/jose-antonio-kast-propone-la-creacion-de-un-registro-de-genero/20180411/nota/3735677.aspx> Accessed on June 27, 2019

⁹ "O que Bolsonaro já disse de fato sobre mulheres, negros e gays". El País Brasil. October 7, 2018 https://brasil.elpais.com/brasil/2018/10/06/politica/1538859277_033603.html Accessed on June 27, 2019.

they are not using the brutal force to take the power, but influencing the public opinion through social media and technologies of communication. This is not really new since the authoritarian movements have been using propaganda from the beginning of the 20th century as the totalitarianisms show consistently.

Therefore, the main point today is that current authoritarian efforts have another potential extension by using the digital media. As contemporary examples, during the last elections in Brazil, Colombia, and Mexico, several mobile-phone companies offered plans that allowed unlimited Instant Messaging access to subscribers in order to be competitive (such as WhatsApp, Telegram, WeChat, Facebook messenger). Even though people cannot afford an internet-housing plan, nevertheless they can use mobile-phone connections. Just in Brazil are 120 million people that were able to vote in the last elections (2018), while Mexico and Colombia add 90 and 20 million, respectively. By reaching people in rural and marginalized areas, social media influence and reinforce people opinions in vast areas at the same time via mobile-phone networks. This is an astonishing potential reach since rural and marginalized areas are normally influenced by traditional forms of life, instead of liberal and cosmopolitan stances, conforming a fruitful melting point for authoritarian/conservative-wing oriented vote.

In another way, this extension shows a sort of successful digital alphabetization in vast traditional areas of Latin American countries, through which people can get access to technologies of information and communication. Because of that, the political campaigns identify clusters by which they can focus the influence upon diverse groups of the population. A 15-year-old teenager probably will not follow mainstream politician accounts on Twitter or Facebook, but she/he will probably follow influencers from pop music, tv series or youtubers¹⁰. Then, digital innovations may change how democracy works by making it more focalized and contentious since they make feasible to control what offers were fulfilled by checking the politician's campaign. However, in rural or marginalized areas the people do not use social media for deliberating about politics, but rather to share information concerning everyday life issues. That is why the strategy for those campaigns is not to speak directly about 'politics', but to practical concerns or threats to the usual way of life. 'Bolsonaro defends family against gender ideology' was one of the spread messages through WhatsApp during his last campaign, gaining the favor of catholic and evangelical groups, especially in the north of Brazil.

Final remarks

¹⁰ Source: Mariano Tato, CEO of Becom1, agency of Advertising working for candidates' strategic communication during Argentina 2015's presidential elections).

The historical overview exposed at the beginning of the article provided a short framework for understanding continuity and discontinuity within the authoritarian aspect of LA culture, while process for more democratization, civil rights, and autonomy among others were developed contesting established stratification.

Until here I have been trying to justify why we should add a notion of *authoritarian republicanism* to understand the continuous authoritarian-patterns in LA. However, I would like to address some critical remarks that I can observe until this point. On the one hand, it is a narrow way of understanding to identify an authoritarian stance just with the right-wing movements. Although the fascist stances are well-integrated with authoritarian manners, leftist movements also have experience with authoritarian practices and non-integrative habits in their own movements. This is not a situation confined to political opponents exclusively, but usually against people inside the very same movement. From the excessive prominence of the leader (as *caudillo*), to a nonintegrative discourses toward other oppressed groups beyond the classical 'class' division (such as gender, indigenous, LGBT+), the traditional Left has replicated authoritarian structures as well. Then, is still open the question about how will become the resistances and revolutionary movements, when is also feasible to identify authoritarian trends within the experiences in diverse latitudes such as Pol Pot, Vietnam, or the U.R.S.S until Cuba or Venezuela in LA more recently. On the other hand, the presence of authoritarianism does not always occur with the same intensity. According to Lührmann & Lindberg (2019) it is possible to identify waves of authoritarianism, not just for the Latin American context, but in a global scale. That is to say, even when the authoritarian practices are latent, not always they have the same force or public acceptability. Actually, when they are normalized, they do not need to be really aggressive most of the time. In fact, they are often activated when they feel a threat on them. In this path can be rendered the conservative wave in the Latin American context as a reaction against liberal democracy, but also in opposition to the *socialismo del siglo XXI* that governed most of the continent during the first two decades of 2000's.

Last, but not least, a brief set of exploratory phenomena related to the Latin American history and the *authoritarian republicanism* are the already mentioned *Colonial* heritage regarding social hierarchies and ethnical privileges alongside the Nation-State considering the institutional social connection between the upper class. All of this within another not well-developed aspect in this paper such as the *Catholicism* associated with the control of practices and beliefs. These aspects (Catholicism, State) are some of the most recurrent components of the Latin American structure that cannot be separated from an analysis of the authoritarian

culture (Reyna & Weinert 1977; Collier 1979) and that this concept cannot overlaps in order to grasp the consequences for possible future(s). If the thesis of *authoritarian republicanism* is applicable, what kind of future(s) is(are) possible(s) in the Latin American context? What sort of time to come is feasible to expect according to this past and present? The willingness of the future depends on the past, which means that for an influence of the future in the present is advisable to get inputs from the Latin American order to make any effort not just achievable, but thinkable first of all. When an authoritarian culture is identified implies several (im)possibilities that should alternate possible futures as result of correct diagnoses of the present. At the end,

[f]ascist propaganda has only to reproduce the existent mentality for its own purposes; – it need not induce a change – and the compulsive repetition which is one of its foremost characteristics will be at one with the necessity for this continuous reproduction. It relies absolutely on the total structure as well as on each particular trait of the authoritarian character which is itself the product of an internalization of the irrational aspects of modern society (Adorno 1992 [1951] 6706-6707).

Therefore, an approach treating the links between republic and democratic structures alongside patriarchal and authoritative ones is required in order to grasp the latest event in the region as result not just of contingent situations, but rather an inner path that deserve further inquiries.

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