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COUNTRIES IN TRANSITION

ETHICS IS NOT THE KEY ON THEIR SUCCESS

ANALYSIS OF CHILEAN EXPERIENCE

Jorge Mendoza & Orlando de la Vega

1.- PRESENTATION

Social processes have a dynamic not always fully understood by those who experience them. Indeed, the complexity of these processes leads the political and social actors to what in psychology is called “tunnel effect”, that is, seeingonly what they want to see, but that does not reflect the whole idea into a holistic point of view that allows seeing the mutual interactions between the different areas in a specific period of time. They often overlook the dynamics with regards to past and future times (HUNNEUS, 2000).

This work, in its exploratory nature, is based on two main ideas: the first one is trying to clarify whether Chilean society is moving toward democracy; and the second one, if this movement (transition) is performed simultaneously in all aspects and variables.

In this document we can use the concept **transitions of the transition**. Not just one transition exists, but many of them occur at different rates: political-institutional, political power in itself, social reconciliation, civil-military relation, cultural and ethical, and economical transitions; consider that an effective transition toward democracy in all areas place particular emphasis on the relationship between cultural environment and its ethical derivations, particularly in relation to economy.

Chilean current situation and future events are not made by chance or spontaneous generation; there is a timeline or a certain continuity that passes through all stages of our recent history. It is not intended to state a historical determinism, since mankind and the society it is part of are always able to be “amazing”, to choose new paths, and to imagine new solutions. However, it is possible to say that the current situations are the complex sum of decisions, attitudes and events that are linked together; is possible to add new elements and orientations to those above; as long as we know what their current course is and what direction we want to follow.

The first point that must be addressed in this area is the recurring subject of the so-called “value crisis” or “crisis of values”. Although both terms indicate a similar direction, the first points of distinction between them are related either to the behaviors in the society (this would correspond to the term “value crisis”) or to a more academic discussion about the origin and recognition that should promote some values and value systems in the society. As to Chile and its economic system, this can be seen in the gap between values proclaimed at a public level, also through companies’ ethical codes, and the actual behaviors qualified as criminal acts; violations that have been revealed to the public by the press, both from the businessmen and the political authorities.

In Chile, the topic about values has several connotations that show the path toward the structuring of behavior patterns and they are explained both by the same historical circumstances in which we live and by the cultural and ethical influences that come from the outside world. These influences are transmitted through phenomena such as globalization and the new currentsof philosophical, anthropological and cultural thought that influence the upper-class executives of the country.

The economic model, based in the "free-market" has been validated by the governments of the Concertación[1] and by the SebastiánPiñera's current government. It is our opinion that the market not duly regulated is "cruel"; and this cruelty has only been mitigated just partially. The model has generated wealth, but has been unableto distribute equitably the wealth created with everyone's contribution.

A form of these manifestations that demonstrates this discontent—which adds to the "outraged" movement around the world—are the demands made by the "Chilean student protest" carrying this recently 2011, being supported by thinkers with an evident ideological tendency.

In this sense, it is necessary to analyze a factor that has been relegated in the political thought, **the transition** subject. People have tried to end the transition since the 90's, and for that purpose, there have been attempts of closure, especially with regard to political issues and, particularly, human rights. However, the transition is not just "one," but several processes, for this reason it is more appropriate to speak of "**transitions**." One of the transitions that has not been fully realized and that has great importance nowadays is the economic system that has maintained, or even increased, the gap in income distribution. With the resultant structural poverty that affects not only the monetary income, but also the access to high quality education (elementary and high-school) that allows access to higher education and also to stay in the system. In this connection, it is advisable to keep in mind that a significant amount of students, with economical resources to go to college, have already dropped out their studies. Among the reasons why they leave school we can find: lack of training, culture, and discipline to enable them to perform well academically, and the economic costs for the family group. It is important to note that just the welfare as a resource to overcome the inequities of the system has proved inadequate.

2.-CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

The first task that must be faced is to try to distinguish between terms such as "transition", "liberalization" and "democratization," (FLAX, 2002; OTANO, 2006).

Transition means moving from-toward some point, but this can mean either a "return", a certain circularity, a "renovation" of an unfinished political dream, or simply to build labile structures for the ephemeral or reactive characteristics of their motivations.

As to **Liberalization,** one of the complex aspects generated by their consequences is the coexistence of the so-called dual State, that is, two opposite sides: the political coercion on the one side and the promotion of economic freedom on the other (HUNNEUS, 2000). This is the starting point of the current Chilean state: on the one hand, reverting the order in an attempt to better regulate the economic functions and, on the other hand, increasing the opportunities for political expression and participation.

Regarding **Democratization** in Chile and how to move towards it, we can say that it occurred as a "painless transition," that is, with severe rules that have prevented from any traumatic event or improvement to create a milestone between before and after (OTANO, 2006). It should also be made clear whether the post-1988 referendum was foundational or a modified continuity, in relation to the necessity for governance that appears as a must in political decisions and, therefore, should be mentioned that has been both a "negotiated transition" (PORTALES, 2000) and, in more than some aspects, a "patterned transition." Somehow the decisions made during the military regime, sheltered under the concept of "protected democracy", still exist but in more subtle forms, since governance is a thing that nobody wants to risk, even though this could mean lowering the levels of community involvement and social conflicts resolution (the expression used by thinkers and politicians from Concertación before 1990 was "pent-up social demand"). State policies that existed during the Concertación government were marked by this timeline, until the government of Michelle Bachelet, who presented her motto "Protecting our people". In the current government (centre-right), neoliberal economic criteria are reinforced, which has generated several social conflicts, such as the one of education, and decentralization of the State, such as regional conflicts.

[1]Group of political parties (social democracy) that between 1990-2009 assumed the government of Chile, after military dictatorship of General Pinochet.

3.-CULTURE AND ETHICS

Chile's structural values have experimented the most changes through historical events, such as the "idealisms and utopias" of the 60's, the disenchantment, frustration, or refoundational spirit of the dictatorship years, the hope generated by its electoral defeat and the pragmatism of "the possible"—which was extreme in cases of corruption.

> *"And thus, we arrive to the matter of power limitations. Someone who judges superficially might think that when they come to power they can do whatever they want to. Truth be told, a politician's duty consists, on the one hand, of the noble aspirations that inspire them, their aims, the values they want to establish and, on the other hand, of the reality that limits them due to a lack of resources, legal instruments, economical resources, general consent, or any other circumstance.*
>
> *It is beneficial to always remember that ruling is not doing whatever you want, but doing what you can of what you want. This is why it has been said that "politics is the art of the possible." This, sometimes, limits us to situations where no alternative is truly good, or none of them is as good as we would like. Circumstances force us to choose between alternatives that seem to be bad or just average. So the right, ethical, brave thing to do is to choose the lesser of two evils and not just sit there doing nothing or try to find a perfect, ideal solution, which is not really possible.*
>
> *This is where caution plays an important role. The ruling authority, the politician, must be brave, courageous, audacious, in order to fight for their beliefs and remain faithful to their convictions. But they must also be cautious in order to avoid taking risks that could lead the country to a disastrous result or a greater evil* (AYLWIN, 1991)*."*

In this sense, the first thing we must deal with is the recurrent and so-called "values crisis" or "crisis of values" (MENÉNDEZ-CARRIÓN, 1999). Although both terms indicate a similar direction, the first points of distinction between them are related either to the behaviors in the society (this would correspond to the term "value crisis") or to a more academic discussion about the origin and recognition that should promote some values and value systems in the society. The value systems refer to cultural paradigms being the focal point of the subject, whether it is a religious, modern or disputable post-modern paradigm. The latter presents us with the dilemma of "moral crisis" or "morality in crisis" (PARRINI, 1993).This issue requires further discussion than provided in this presentation.

For few authors, none of them properly exist, since the values that guide social dynamic change according to social needs, especially towards a greater liberalization regarding social and individual behaviors. This characteristic is proper of social dynamic.

Regarding what is generally named value crisis, it is beneficial to keep in mind that this might mean both the non-existence of values (in sociology this is known as "anomie"), and the emergence of new "values" (in some cases these might be considered as "anti-values" or "counter values") that replace the ones of a previous cultural structure leaving members of society in a state of perplexity. The paradigm of post-modernity could fit more properly in the latter situation.

In Chile, the topic about values has several connotations that show the path toward the structuring of behavior patterns and they are explained both by the same historical circumstances in which we live and by the cultural and ethical influences that come from the outside world. These influences are transmitted through phenomena such as globalization and the new currentsof philosophical, anthropological and cultural thought that influence the upper-class executives of the country.

Perhaps the focus of ethical and cultural aspects is found in the conceptual diversity related to the meaning of "democracy." In Chile, shared fear (MENÉNDEZ-CARRIÓN, 1999) expressed in different ways, about bringing back past conflicts has caused a "block of dreams," as they would be responsible for past events. This creates two features of Chilean society: a "presentism" that refuses to look ahead and a tolerance that does not imply accepting diversity, but bearing with it out of fear that the conflict repeats past events. Certainly, there is a fear of violence and mistrust generated by the dangerous nature of

humankind. All this weakens the institutional part of democracy, but not its normative side. Chile, as a society, does not seem to take any kind of risks when uncertainty is present.

Concertación, assuming it does not intend to explore new paths, has been working with key elements of the institutional legacy of the dictatorship, especially referring to the internalization and expansion of all the decisions of market criteria: competitiveness, utility, efficiency. In this sense, development policies are much more influenced by economic evaluations than by the potential social advantages. Moreover, the idea of market cruelty leading to real situations of marginalization encouraged politicians to take action and create policies that somehow decrease the consequences of market laws.

Democracy has been changing towards a strong **pragmatism** (LECHNER, 1988), which can be easily confused with "political realism." This happens because political actors convince themselves that they should perform a good administration (called "government management"), and because of the strategic necessities of the government and the opposite party, which most of the times need each other in order to establish balance and predominance within their own parties about national interests. Because of this, some bills have been approved with votes of one or the other sector, according to these parties' needs. This type of action has been so magnified in recent years that when both the Concertación, during its governance, and the current government by not having the majority of votes in the Parliament, had to pass bills as independent or opposite parties in order to balance the votes against their own political grouping.

> *"The natural way to reassure the peaceful struggle for democracy, refusal to being trapped in political acknowledgement of the Constitution's legitimacy, and the need to bring together the greatest possible consensus in order to establish a solid, democratic society was gradually drifting to position where any agreement made to reach democracy had to include the previous support, if not completely, from most of the right party. This not only began to pose as an ideal, which certainly was a positive aspiration, but it also increasingly began to be seen as a sine qua non requirement for any democratic advance (PORTALES, 2000)."*

A particularly sensitive point is the so-called "values agenda," which was explicitly left out of Bachelet's government program and caused several bills to be dismissed only because they were not considered in that program. Furthermore, administrative measures that do introduce values issues were taken with no previous discussion and put the ministries' administrative power to good use. This power includes Health and Education. Thus, the government implemented measures resisted by social sectors and demanded that they were obeyed:

> *"However, as well as it is recognized that the issue of values is increasingly present in public discourse, some ambiguities should also be noted. Indeed, it seems that, at least in our country, in a more common and reiterative level, there is a reduction of the real and profound approach. Usually, when speaking of "values", we refer to specific dilemmas from the personal, familiar, and sexual areas. It seems that only divorce, abortion, homosexuality, and euthanasia entail values. We cannot deny that this type of problems jeopardize individual and social conscience. This issue is still open for debate and is subject to rational discussion. However, the simplification of the concept of "values" conceals the ethics inherent to social coexistence, and has an underlying meaning that distorts the moral implications on issues of most importance, which compromise people's lives and dignity, freedom, drive for seeking the truth, social justice, and a better coexistence. The use of "values" that can be found in the common language tends to put in a second place the morality of the choices related to fundamental rights, currently considered as human rights, that are part of the political, economic, social, and cultural spheres (OPAZO, 1999)."*

Taking this into account, we can affirm that the statement made by the actor NissimSharim (MENÉNDEZ-CARRIÓN, 1999) is true: the State does not want to take responsibility for their people's cultural development. Perhaps Sharim's statement does refer to cultural expressions, but it is even more plausible when the subject of culture as a transmitter of values is not addressed and is passed on to the personal judgment of every member of society. Denying the problems seems to be more democratic than having a discussion based on axiology.

4.-SOCIO-ECONOMIC

As previously mentioned, while the economic model, used and validated by the Concertación governments and ratified by current government of President Piñera, has reduced its "cruelty" only partially, it has maintained its structure and market logic.

In Chile, we can find a record of the current economic model[2] back in 1955, when the model of "inward economic growing" already showed signs of exhaustion. The government of Carlos Ibáñez del Campo hired the American consulting company Klein-Saks in order to diagnose Chilean economy. The results showed a large number of problems, and recommended less government intervention and more market freedom. It was both an impeccable analysis from a technical point of view and an impossible task during those days and under that regime. Months after the arrival of the American experts, in March 1956, Universidad Católica de Chile and University of Chicago signed a student exchange program that, unlike the Klein-Saks experience, did have long-term effects on Chile's development. Thanks to this agreement, Chilean students obtained postgraduate degrees in Chicago, where they acquired knowledge that was later put into practice by the military regime. Nationalization and import substitution were dismissed; the government fought against inflation, and the foundation for the current model was set. It is fair to say that the agreement signed 56 years ago ended up being one of the most transcendental milestones of the history of Chilean economy. The exchange program between both universities allowed to train several experts, and gave an opportunity to economists to travel abroad in order to continue their studies. When the agreement ended in 1964, it was replaced by scholarships financed by North American foundations. Later on, the military regime started a scholarship program which helped hundreds of Chilean students to go not only to Chicago, but also to other universities from Europe and United States, to study a wide variety of academic fields and specialties. This initiative was continued by the democratic governments.

This is how Chile's current economic model was created, which has been criticized (it has even been wrongly considered as a mistake related to the origin, since its implementation, not its origin, is associated to the military regime that ruled the country since 1973) because it was not the result of a consensus reached by the Chilean society. Be that as it may, the fact that the model is active up to this day is constantly in the discussion table within the political and academic circles. As a consequence, it became an ever-present element when discussing government projects.

This "mistake" related to the origin is recognized both by the defenders of the economic model and its detractors. As an example, we quote an author who supports the neoliberal economic system:

> *"The military regime that followed the 1973 coup d'etat set into motion a thorough economic and social reform, which finally led to a market economy. As it has been said, free market in Chile was born with an 'original sin' (…) Furthermore, the same government drastically changed the Chilean economic scene by reducing State intervention in economy and increasing in the same way individual freedom. The contradiction between both sides of Pinochet's regime has disturbed many outside spectators and analysts. I will not address many of the topics involved in the tense relationship between economic freedom and political authoritarianism. I only intend to discuss how this association came to be in the Chilean model* (FONTAINE, 1993)*."*

For those who have criticized the economic model, its political and social outcomes, despite accepting that the country was facing a political and economic crisis, it is evident that its implementation went beyond the initial purposes. All this amidst social chaos and an increasing inflation. Thus, Jorge Cauas, former Minister of Finance of Pinochet's regime, states that the purpose of the economic policy of the military regime *"intended to control Chile's inflationary process and redistribute income in favor of the wage sector* (CAUAS, 1991)*."* This statement is strongly refuted by those, from a critical point of view, believe the economic model served other purposes:

> *"Pinochet's regime is also associated with the reforms that contributed to overcome the critical economic crisis present at the time of the coup, caused by the policies of the Unidad Popular government. These reforms yielded great macroeconomic results (decrease in inflation, increase economic growth, exports, better fiscal balance, etc.) and transformed the country's productive*

[2]As a counterpart, we can mention a record for the economic model with other purposes and characteristics in the so-called "Socialist Republic" (June to September, 1932, governments of Marmanduque Grove and Carlos Dávila), that served as a precedent to the Unidad Popular Government, led by Salvador Allende (1970-1973).

structure. These policies had "revolutionary" results and generated a sustained economic growth since 1985 that continued during democracy, with an annual growth rate of 7.9% until 1997.

The policies covered a wide variety of measures, from suppressing price controls, opening of international markets and promoting exports, to an extreme process of privatization of public companies and even of public health and social security. Moreover, they covered hundreds of companies that had been intervened and nationalized during Salvador Allende's government. They promoted the rise of a numerous and dynamic entrepreneurial class and a remarkable diversification of exports. Such policies benefited not only entrepreneurs, but also wide segments of the population that had been in need and insecure during the last months before the coup. That is why they also served as a way to increase the popular support (…) The economic reforms were created in an authoritarian context that influenced them in a great way. Especially due to certain aspects of clientelism and patronage, which were particularly evident during nationalization of companies. These had not a neutral nature, but were driven by political interests instead, thus, economy was subordinate to politics and not the other way around, as claimed those who supported independence (HUNNEUS, 2000)."

However, in addition to the criticism regarding the origin of the economic model and the way in which it was implemented in the country, new criticism arises over the fact that the Concertación governments have maintained, in a general sense, the criteria and requirements of the neoliberal economy (LARRAÍN, 2000) in order to obtain macroeconomic results that will make the country viable in the international scenario. Different opinions revolve around this economic model. Some people think that it only lacks the appropriate implementation (LARRAIN, 2000), while others consider it has caused a further concentration of wealth and economic power (CLAUDE, 2006). To others, this economic model has been adapted in such a way that it could be considered as a Concertación economic model, characterized by higher levels of government intervention in order to regulate the economy (MUÑOZ, 2007). The current government—with "two souls"—tries to meet the social demands with a technical approach, instead of one that has as its goal the restoration of the much needed and wanted economic justice. An example of this is the contradiction between the many studies and surveys that show the good macroeconomic situation of Chile in Latin America and the inequality of income distribution, as shown in the next figure.

INCOME DISTRIBUTIONCHILE 1990-2009

DECILE	**1990**	**1992**	**1994**	**1996**	**1998**	**2000**	**2003**	**2006**	**2009**
I	1.4	1.5	1.3	1.3	1.2	1.1	1.2	1.0	0.9
II	2.7	2.8	2.7	2.6	2.5	2.6	2.7	2.4	2.7
III	3.6	3.7	3.5	3.5	3.5	2.6	3.6	3.3	3.7
IV	4.5	4.6	4.6	4.5	4.5	4.5	4.7	4.1	4.6
V	5.4	5.6	5.5	5.4	5.3	5.7	5.5	4.9	5.6
VI	6.9	6.6	6.4	6.3	6.4	6.5	6.6	6.0	7.1
VII	7.8	8.1	8.1	8.2	8.3	7.9	8.3	7.7	8.5

VIII	10.3	10.4	10.6	11.1	11.0	10.5	10.8	10.3	11.1
IX	15.2	14.8	15.4	15.5	16.0	15.2	15.3	15.6	15.6
X	42.2	41.9	41.9	41.6	41.3	42.3	41.2	44.7	40.2

Another transition that has not been considered, manifested in the characteristics of the “student movements” of the years 2006 and 2011, is the cultural transition. Today’s generation does not seem to experience the same forms of democratic coexistence that we, as people who lived during the time of the military dictatorship, experienced. This is because the simple fact of getting rid of the dictator was an achievement that allowed us to breathe and live with satisfaction. We consider the use of force as something strange since we lived under its threat. That is why under no circumstances we condone its use. Some parts of the newer generations do not hesitate to make use of the spaces of freedom and democracy that we obtained if they believe the goals they are seeking are fair. Therefore, they also legitimize whatever means are necessary for achieving those goals. Other segments of this generation immediately relate the concept of “authority” to “limitations”, rather than to rules to protect coexistence. Authority is, almost automatically, related to authoritarianism. Another thing to consider is the asymmetry in which they present their points of view: they do not accept others’ conditions, but they do impose their own; they complain when they consider some proposal is vague, but their demands and determination tend to be just as vaguely expressed; they use forcible means, but do not accept that their counterpart uses them as well. However, this asymmetry can also be perceived by the common citizen when they are faced against the so-called “de facto powers”, like the economy, information, and, even to some people, church power.

With these two factors taken into account, it is easier to understand that the demands, that were postponed for so long, have an all-or-nothing nature. There is no faith in a social-political system that lacks the capacity or interest for solving the underlying problems. We, the universities, also fall into this way of seeing society and its institutions. We restrict ourselves to train professionals that will be useful to the model, but we hardly take a stand on the ethics of it.

Regarding the independence of judgment unclouded by economic factors, those that have the responsibility of being in charge of an organization must showcase their best decision-making skills, based on a complete and total independence of judgment. Then, one cannot help but to wonder, up to what point are those who work in the government willing to honor their convictions, to not ignore their fundamental values, even if that means sacrificing a big paycheck?

Overcoming the economic problem has nothing to do with having an important current account, a big fixed-term deposit, or assets (stock market assets or other kind); it is not just about the personal material security, but also about a responsibility to the social group.

True freedom and authority to govern are founded—essentially—on the independence of judgment unclouded by economic factors that we mentioned earlier; that is, to make decisions free of economic pressure means to act for the greater, common good, just because it is the right thing to do.

Organizations areconstituted by the people who form a unity/multiplicity paradox. The enormous differences between organizational structures are real, in terms of objectives and purposes—in a sports club, a medical services company, the tax revenue service, and a foundation for people with disabilities—; besides, there are explicit differences in their legal classifications.

In contrast, there are also enormous similarities between them: some people have a necessity or a need that they wish to fulfill, which results in a demand for e.g. recreation, health; the State, fulfilling demands of its citizens, provides a good quality of life for which it needs financial resources. First, a demand is identified, then “someone” tries to satisfy it and, finally, takes the appropriate measures.

Just as self-regulation (DE LA VEGA, 2011) is not enough by itself, the same thing happens with regulations. It is not enough to impose the criteria that must be followed, but that does not mean that the act of obeying is being undermined or diminished in importance. On the contrary, the act of honoring commitments, without a doubt, helps the creation of trust and stable relations between individuals. It being not enough means that people must "do" things not because it is what it is expected of them, or because there are punishing measures that force them to do so, but because there is a real disposition (moral) to do them, even to the point to do more than what it is expected of them. Being this the case, as Mèle states, "it is not about following some rules for some reason," it "also requires good will, that is, to act on ethical motives." This is how the ethical issue comes into play amongst organizational relationships.

Reactive immediacy has been translated according to "ethical codes" or, better said, pseudo-codes since people have understood that it helps, in some way, to fit into society, as a kind of measure for being collectively accepted. It is like an ID for being viewed favorably in public. The consequence is a development of culture or fever of codification. Organizations entrust "experts"—internal and external—to elaborate them. Obviously, that is not enough and not just that: it is not logical, or even reasonable, that those who have big responsibilities in organizations "delegate" their inherent duties to a third party.

As to the country, generally speaking, we can use the events of the 2011 earthquake as an example. When it came to the first balance and evaluations of the consequences of the earthquake and tsunami, many people claimed that this catastrophe had shown the best and the worst of our country: lootings and honesty, collaboration and lack of coordination, meanness and generosity, and a long list of things that were well and badly done.

What is left for thinking? It seems that the answer is that, after all, we are still doing something wrong or, even worse, that there is something good we are not doing. We think that we have been dazzled by our own positive image, as a typical Chilean would say "we ended up believing our own story." And the story we tell about ourselves is related to a false superiority of our country in terms of economy and a political stability that make us predictable and, thus, reliable in the international scenario. We could also add our success in several sports, which also gives us a feeling of superiority. To this, we must add the ability we have shown, as a country, to raise after this catastrophe.

The glare, as in physical terms, obstructs the view from other aspects of life that are overshadowed by the intense brightness that dazzles us. The macroeconomic successes of our country have prevented us from seeing that their benefits have not reached everyone in this long and narrow country. A few years ago our Bishops spoke to us about two sides of Chile that coexist without getting to know each other. On one side, we have an image of success, modernity and technological advancement, and a complete reliability that we offer to the outside world. On the other side, we have the majority of our country that is not able to enjoy that modernity and technology.

On the one hand, we can find a country that educates their children in schools with all facilities and favorable conditions to provide a good learning. On the other hand, there is a Chile that has access to an education, which limits its opportunity to improve the quality of life. One is the Chile that has access to a health system which ensures—using medical and technological advances—a good treatment for its medical problems. The other Chile is the one that must wait for months to receive any medical attention. All of these problems still exist despite the enormous efforts made by the political authorities to overcome the shortcomings.

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