***REVIEW: “ANTHROPOLOGY OF CONFLICTS: POLITICS AND CULTURE IN CHILE IN THE 1990s”, BY ANDRÉS G. SEGUEL.***

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**Abstract:** This bibliographic review seeks a complete description of the investigative work of the book "Anthropology of conflicts: politics and culture in Chile in the 1990s", which highlights the relationship between the political system and culture. This is done through an introductory body to the work, consisting of the delivery of general data that enters the reader in the discussion about cultural conflicts, dynamic systems and figures of catastrophes of meaning. The review concludes with the presentation of the analysis of the cases addressed by the author, after understanding them as emerging phenomena that reveal the transformation of the limits of politics and that, in their maximum degree, point to new forms of symbolic structuring. The relevance of this book lies in the analysis of new social movements during the 1990s and 2000s, around environmental, gender, and cultural issues, which are relevant for social change in Chile after the social outbreak of 2019.

***Keywords:***Social change, Catastrophes of Meaning, Cultural conflict, Political System, Social movements.

**Introduction**

This book opens a new perspective about the way in which the study of the post-dictatorship period during the 1990s has been approached from the social sciences in Chile. Through different theoretical tools that come from cultural anthropology and theory of systems, the author introduces the discussion on culture and politics around "the rules of the game", and the engine of socio-political change based on emerging cultural conflicts.

This is possible because of the tension between politics and culture, where border figures emerge that are the product of catastrophes of meaning after experiencing the limits between both logics, under a dynamic of attraction and repellence. The political system is presented as a binding proposition of the social order, while culture is proposed as an area destined to the configuration of a world view and communicative interactions.

This research is considered a relevant antecedent of a sensitive period in the history of Chile (1990-2000), a decade where the discussion about the emergence of new social movements (NSM) is gestated in a subtle way until it is visible. These are loaded with an identity root, considering a globalizing approach around issues such as gender, environment, old age, among others. In this aspect, the importance of this book for the social sciences lies in the fact that the discussion raised about social movements and the change in the rules of the game is a relevant antecedent to understand and analyze the current constituent process in Chile after the so-called "social outbreak" of October 2019.

**Politics and culture in changing the rules of the game.**

Throughout the research, both politics and culture are worked on as two control variables that transcend the investigation in its entirety and that are defined in functional terms, referring to the capacity to link a series of meanings under a referential scheme and of negotiation. When the political is observed, it develops convergent symbolic schemes and condensers of social meanings, around the aspects related to the cultural. It is understood as responsible for producing the redundancy of social communication associated with order, a field where different imaginaries about the possible social order are originated, destroyed and reconstructed. Politics is presented as an organizer and mediator of social meanings, its function lies in pointing out the rules of the political game that operate as a sign, which are achieved by constituting a semantics of decisions. The logic of the sign refers to the permanent, the fixed, the continuous, the calculation and the arbitrary separation. From this enunciation, the institutional problems of politics revolve around democracy, participation, legitimacy and equality.

Regarding culture, the book points out that objects, meanings and social forms are fused in it; it is approached as an autonomous and dependent system with respect to social agency, since it opens the meanings to an evolutionary production where agent, object and interpretation are confused. Its function refers to the concentration of affectivity, emotion and association with new contexts, being understood as dense, unconscious and bearer of a symbolic order. The dynamics of the symbol deals with the ability to reorganize the references, being "break and link" at the same time, for which it is considered an operator. The problems associated with culture are found around social transformations, responding to the recognition of differences by integration, diversity and conservation.

This empirical research identifies the main cultural conflicts in Chile in the 1990s, after 17 years of military dictatorship. For this, it uses a qualitative methodology based on the study of the main formal means of communication, around the written press of the time. It should be noted that, at that time in Chile, the internet was not massive, which reduced the possibilities of communication and also the sources of data collection. Another important aspect to highlight is that the main written media during that time (El Mercurio and La Tercera) responded to corporate and political interests. Therefore, the selection of these media by the author is a reflection of the way in which the emerging cultural conflicts of that time were constituted as disaffection for a certain sector of the population.

Regarding the methodology applied to the research, it is made up of units of analysis located in types of manifestations that result from contradictions or complementarities that become symmetrical and asymmetrical. These are typical of the field of ideas and the exchange between agents, as well as contextualized by conflictive situations in the written media. The sensitivity with which the movements are made from the agents on their statements and positions, allows the recognition of sociocultural units that imply conflict. In these, the symbolic scheme that points to the communicative exchanges between agencies and their positions prior to the moment of friction is investigated. That form is used to understand the dynamics of the conflict system, highlighting the cultural processes that are activated in emergency situations and that indicate culture, as a field made up of a system of ideas and communicative interactions that enable political transformations.

The search for this book aims to model the logic of cultural conflicts taking into account the variability of complex behaviors. This in order to abstract and contextualize the structures of the observed cultural conflicts, producing a type of intelligibility not aligned with the taxation of certainties that demonstrate classificatory perspectives, framed exclusively in the development of numerical data. A conjecture that seeks to transcend positivist calculus and attempts to establish a perspective centered on the construction of a phenomenological dialogue and hermeneutical emphasis.

The main conflicts found by the author are related to the following topics: Senior citizens, Ethnicity, Gender, Young political actors, Environment, New social movements, Cultural policies and Values.

They define the symbolic structuring of political conflicts and the emergence of cultural conflicts as dynamic systems, finding the analytical potential of these cases, in the break they enunciate and the impossibility of returning to the previous order. On the one hand, the arbitrary separation of the political operation in negotiation schemes, on the other, the ambivalence and blurring by association and affective condensation of symbolic schemes in culture. Considered as complex systems, the observation of their dynamics reveals the characteristics that they acquire from the symbolic structuring processes that the political system carries out and that translates into a moment understood as one of greater clarity for the approach of emerging forms, where the social it embodies.

The form of analysis required by this ecological relationship between politics and culture is called "system dynamics", resulting from a scientific epistemology that attends to the construction of unstable systems that present complex behaviors. There where its trajectory and the function of its form stand out: a temporary observation that allows variables associated with the state of the system, its phase space and subsequent evolution. In the definition of the analysis resources, the difficulties in understanding the theoretical and conceptual scaffolding behind the definition of "cultural conflict" are recognized. The concept is proposed as a tool that contextualizes the communication relations between agents in dispute, the latent structures of the political sphere that influence them and the cultural condition as a producer of meanings and objects of political value in its double function: as a reorganizer of the structure symbolic of the conflict itself.

Accompanying this illustration, we work with the process of circularity between ideas and actions, a layout that is located graphically for the understanding of the structural dynamics of the cultural conflicts addressed during the book. In them, the direction of the irritations that influence the morphogenesis process of the conflict system and that thus allow its emergence, in terms of the causality of meanings, as well as the communicative exchanges between agents involved, is made explicit. This constitutes an organization regulated according to stability and sociocultural change, by virtue of a situational logic capable of evolving and learning from its own doing together, inevitably encouraging new forms of representation.

**Dynamic systems and social change: Cultural conflicts in Chile in the 1990s.**

The cultural conflicts analyzed during the investigation are considered from two movements, which account for a permanent dynamic that runs through the narrative of the book: a visibility on the latent relationship constituted from the political to the cultural and another, which goes from the cultural to the political. Cultural themes are presented as a result of a refounding process of negotiation and discussion, and through the politicization of cultural schemes, the emergence of new forms in symbolic structuring. It is indicated that a total of seven conflicts were selected, which are organized according to their relationship around the limits of culture and politics.

To better understand how the conflicts studied in this work develop, the relationship between politics and culture is presented in the author's words through signs and meanings:

*"Each one of these areas operated on the basis of a certain logic, Politics as a distinction that is made in society, propitiating binding social orders through meanings (signs), and Culture on the symbolic organization of the social" (G. Seguel, 2017, p. 92).*

Following this logic, in those conflicts that range from cultural to political limits, work is done with cultural, environmental and ethnic conflicts. In this category, the following are indicated: the conflict over the construction of a dam in Ralco, a Mapuche indigenous protection zone (1994 - 1998); the conflict over the construction of the dam in Pirque (1994 -1996); and the conflict over the constitution of the Pumalín reserve by Tomkins (1993 - 2002).

As a primary distinction that describes cultural conflicts according to dynamics and internal tendency, two examples are presented that are constituted as part of the border space between political composition and culture. For these cases, their understanding is developed thanks to the leading role configured from the rationality exercised by the State and its institutionality, in the face of a hetero-referenced and peripheral agency, described as antagonistic. The conflict is not understood except with the figuration of the State. Politics in these examples seeks an appropriation of the symbolic order and resignifies it according to its contingent interests; the logic of the political system establishes the rules of the game as a consensus reference, making the manifest latent.

In a transitory movement, cultural conflicts referred to catastrophes of meaning are studied, where the historical relationship between the secular State and the Catholic Church, presents a moment of high complexity, imbrication and evolution. The indicated problems deal with the prohibition of the film "The Last Temptation of Christ" (1996 - 2001) and with the "Jocas" case, a government sexual education program (1996 - 1997).

As an intermediate configuration, there are two cases of cultural conflicts that merit the theoretical use of elements related to the theory of catastrophes of meaning. These respond to a space designated as striated, accounting for the political complexity through the multiplicity of meanings at stake and the symbolic complex by condensation of these, which includes the affective appropriation of the objects of political mediation. Which we can review in the words of the author:

*"The behavior that is in the middle, folded, by the action of the political/cultural substratum, generates one of the fundamental characteristics of social complexity: informative hyperactivity and the flexibility of forms, defined as catastrophes and hysteresis of meaning." (G. Seguel, 2017, p. 284).*

In this way, it is indicated that one of the relevant characteristics that stands out from these conflict systems deals with the considerable resonances that occurred in the courts of justice and the intervention of variables outside political and cultural control. In this case, religious institutionality becomes part of the returns described above, based on the political structuring of culture.

Regarding the cultural conflicts that go from the limits of the political to the cultural, contradictions are enunciated that imply cultural policies (specifically related to the field of art) and gender (registry that accounts for a social problem associated with the urban sex trade). There are the conflicts that represented the execution of the play "Arturo Prat", financed by the National Fund for the Arts (2001 - 2002) and the conflict "Red District", which occurred in the city of Santiago (1998-2001 ).

Here lie the topologies that narrate the contribution of political agencies between traditional and avant-garde action. Both are capable of evidencing a transit associated with cultural complexity, marked by the density coming from the communicative exchanges that involve mobilized agents, to the displacement of the internal limits of the political system. In this regard, a fissure develops between the forms that reveal the tension between politics and culture, allowing the evolution of the rules of the local political game. These emerge thanks to a scenario of exchange in agency positions, a dynamic of reinvention that fosters the creation of environments that mobilize systemic borders; the cultural dynamic generates mechanisms that allow the evolution of the rules of the political game in extreme cases, making the latent manifest.

This accounts for a trajectory of the national political system between the end of the 20th century and the beginning of the 21st, constantly permeated by irritations coming from the field of culture. Those, with greater or lesser success, have been thematized according to a type of well-known institutionalized negotiation mechanism, which turns out to give signs of exhaustion for the future of the new local social movements, which burst into the political arena during the beginning of the spring of the year 2019.

**References**

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