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CULTURAL FESTIVALS IN URBAN PUBLIC SPACE: CONFLICTING CITY PROJECTS IN CHILE'S CENTRAL ZONE

This article explores the urban fabric of three cities in Chile based on the history of the cultural festivals held there in recent decades. Taking as a background a series of cultural milestones that marked public space in Santiago, Valparaíso, and Concepción in the transition to the twenty-first century, I investigate the broader city projects that have resulted in the Santiago a Mil International Festival, the Thousand Drums Carnival, and the Rock en Conce (REC) Festival. Focusing on the urban tensions and conflicts that emerge in this type of event, I analyse the public discourses that arise around these festivals, the uses of the city that they promote, and their ways of mobilising a particular mode of understanding and exercising cultural policy in their territories.

Keywords: Cultural festivals, city, public space, cultural policy

The study of cultural fairs and festivals tells us that these events can provide a useful lens to understand what remains in their wake: the social fabric of the cities that host them. The event, when analysed as a "social situation" (Gluckman 1958), ceases to be an alien occurrence that is outside the norm. Instead, it can crystallise and make visible what is latent in daily life. Interruption and continuity, immediacy and *longue durée* should be examined jointly and in their interrelations. In this article, I suggest that cultural festivals take place in this double inscription: the effervescence of those few days concentrates in time and space a cultural offering that is invoked and yearned for throughout the rest of the year and is able to stage a conversation about *collective identity*. My reading highlights how these festivals give expression to the condition of *place* that the urban flux ordinarily blurs, and how they raise questions about the city's specificity, in other words, about its cultural matrix.[1]

To a large extent, this conversation about collective identity is anticipated "from above": as the analysis of various international events makes clear (Stringer 2001; Merkel 2015), contemporary festivals have played a significant role in the global positioning of cities, while providing a key resource through which urban policies develop and circulate their distinctive branding and their promotion in the tourism market (Aguilar 2016). But festivals also foster the collective expression of views "from below". In the midst of the road alterations, the emergence of commerce, and the media saturation that festivals bring, the city's inhabitants find a channel

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for expressing tensions and urban conflicts that are latent throughout the year and acquire a greater visibility in this critical context. In this article, I investigate the city projects that materialise and come into tension in the context of three Chilean cultural festivals, which have been held annually from their founding until the present in the cities of Santiago, Valparaíso, and Concepción: the Santiago a Mil International Festival, the Thousand Drums Carnival, and the Rock en Conce (REC) Festival, respectively. I examine how the context of the festival transforms each of these cities into the setting for various social, economic, urban, political, and cultural tensions in relation to the construction of public space and the civic bond. *Who is the city for? What are its possible uses? What kind of citizenship do we hope to exercise around it?* I suggest that the analysis of cultural festivals can be a fruitful entry point to examine these questions.

This text is part of a broader research project that seeks to elucidate how the inhabitants of three Chilean localities reworked the link with their city in the context of cultural festivals, understood as a specific modality of cultural consumption. In this study, I ask to what extent the sociability, the exchange, and the emerging forms of social coexistence that unfold at this extraordinary time can generate spaces to experience the city in another way. What symbolic operations do these events put into play? In what ways does "culture" – music, theatre, or carnival arts – become a tool for participation or a vector of civic identity?[2] To explore these questions, I developed a qualitative methodological strategy that approached the experiences of these festivals' audiences through short interviews and ethnographic observations, as well as in-depth interviews with organisers and researchers in the field. The events that I focused on – all of them taking place in public space, freely accessible to participants, and able to accommodate large audiences – allowed me to observe that the different festivals deal with their respective urban contexts in a distinctive and identifiable way, and that the context of these events foregrounds a myriad of tensions and disputes about the city that remain dormant for the rest of the year. In this article, I look at the public discourses that have shaped the meanings of each festival and its symbolic resonances. In analysing these discourses, I counterpose them with the ethnographic experience of this research, in order to understand how cultural festivals play a performative role in the construction of a particular city project, by dramatising and putting multiple competing agencies in friction with each other.

Before discussing the actual case studies, it is necessary to look at the history of these festive modalities of cultural consumption in the Chilean context. To that end, I survey some approaches that will allow me to examine the link between *culture*, *public space*, and *democracy* during the transition to democracy in Chile. I argue that, far from being ornamental or superfluous, cultural festivals have played a crucial role in constructing an imaginary of democratic life in a country marked by the experience of dictatorship (see also Pinochet Cobos 2016).

The cultural uses of public space in post-dictatorship Chile

The close link between the concepts of "democracy"[3] and "public space", from their remotest antecedents in the classical era, and throughout their various

redefinitions in the work of thinkers such as Hannah Arendt and Jürgen Habermas, has been a constant, to such an extent that the two can be viewed as co-constitutive. Thus, the threats that affect one of these terms also violate the existence of the other. It is no surprise, then, that the uses of public space in its multiple dimensions were weakened during the long civil-military dictatorship that marked the history of Chile between 1973 and 1989, given the deliberate dynamic of control and administration that characterised the regime of Augusto Pinochet (Subercaseaux 2006). Under military control, the street was emptied of actors and conflicts, and the very concept of "public space" became dangerous. After the coup d'état, as Lechner (2006, 282) points out, "politics became a private matter and individuals only appeared in public" as consumers rather than as citizens. In the Chile of those years, especially in the cities of the Central Zone, the uses of the street were marked by civic restrictions and a forced retreat towards the domestic.

After the 1989 plebiscite and the victory in the polls of the Centre-Left coalition, the country underwent a period of transition conditioned by the safeguards and "authoritarian enclaves" that the 1980 Constitution had set up. As in all other domains, in matters of public space, the democratic conquests advanced "as far as possible", in the context of a negotiation policy that reduced civic participation to the election of representatives within two large blocs. As Delamaza (2010) notes, the agenda of the four consecutive *Concertación* (1990–2010) governments[4] was therefore oriented towards "the reconstitution and institutional redesign" of a "low-intensity" democracy. Policies concerned with the right to the city were a clear example of this. Indeed, the new governments responded to the most obvious political uses of the street by resorting to various practices of restriction (Fernández 2013; Rojas 2007) or open repression (Pincheiras 2014), which demonstrated a continuity with the dictatorship and its policies' focus on "internal security".

In the field of political protest, the rupture with the authoritarian regime was weak. Nevertheless, the epic speech that President Salvador Allende delivered during the bombardment of La Moneda Palace strengthened the powerful symbolic link between the return of democracy and the recovery of public space. The end of the dictatorship took up that speech's promise to "open up the big avenues" and allow a new and free man to socialise there. Culture occupied a strategic role in this endeavour. The regional climate in Latin America pointed in this direction: from the end of the 1980s, local governments in cities such as Mexico City, Buenos Aires, and Bogotá relied on different cultural programmes with the aim of "occupying the street" again (Lacarrieu 2015) and changing the hostile face that their public spaces had taken on in their respective historical and political contexts.

Culture was therefore a strategic element in the restoration of democratic life. In Chile, as in many parts of Latin America, the artistic and intellectual world was particularly punished by repression during the dictatorship. Since freedom of expression is the basic engine of artistic practice, cultural creators faced various forms of censorship, persecution, and police detention in response to the contents of their work. Part of the regime's instructive power was established through successive images showing the destruction of the cultural mystique of the left: theatres and cultural centres were closed; books were burned in public bonfires; and various iconic figures of the artistic scene were exiled, tortured, or murdered (Palma

2015). Despite these ongoing attacks, artistic production was at the cutting edge of resistance to the dictatorship. Various movements and groupings embodied a culture opposed to the military regime, and used the metaphorical resources of the arts creatively to circulate a crucial message of liberation. The creative sectors of society played a central role in the civic movement that made the defeat of the Pinochet regime in the 1989 plebiscite possible.

It was not until the third government of the *Concertación*, led by Ricardo Lagos, that these concerns about the use of public space for cultural purposes materialised in concrete policies that conceived of culture as a vector of development. From the first year of Lagos's mandate, in 2000, these policies found their privileged form in the so-called "festivals of culture", the first of which was held in Santiago's Parque Forestal. "When I said we would place culture at the centre of our concerns: here's the culture that Santiago has taken and Chile will take", the President announced at the closing ceremony.[5] The festivals that characterised Lagos's years in government privileged the encounter between culture and the public space, making it into a key tool for the construction of citizenship. In addition to artistic and cultural offerings, the festival also made available civic services, ranging from itinerant civil registration offices capable of issuing new identity cards to stands showcasing various political parties and organisations. These events were expected to contribute to the adoption of a civic culture and to lay new foundations for a democratic use of the streets. As Di Girolamo, the head of the Ministry of Education's cultural branch during Lagos's presidency, explained, "festivals must be one link in a chain, where a need to be in the street, to meet in public places begins to be generated. In doing so, people lose the habit of destroying these spaces and learn to use them" (2000). Lagos's administration thus understood this festive use of the street as a means of developing a new social pact marked by peaceful coexistence and the responsible use of public space. It staked a claim, therefore, on the consolidation of a "democratic" culture, understanding this as a constellation of social values linked to the equality and freedom of its citizens. In the context of these pedagogical efforts, the constitution of publics (in the precise sense of the word) was the natural projection of these practices of cultural consumption onto the public space. "It's a succession of things", Di Girolamo continues in the same interview. "If people want to get together outdoors, then they will want to get together in indoor venues, in theatres, in halls, which is where culture exists at another level" (2000). In some way, festivals were intended to pave the way for a New Chile in which the progressive incorporation of civic values would end up making these very festivals unnecessary. Once citizens had become familiarised with cultural spectacles and accustomed to coexistence and the respectful use of communal spaces, they would be able to access "true culture", which is, of course, on offer in theatres and indoor venues.

Cultural events as spaces of social tension

This pedagogical vocation embodied by cultural festivals as a cultural project of the *Concertación* found a specific way of connecting with the particularities of the

respective urban networks in each of Chile's three main cities. If the policy of promoting festivals was a necessary first step toward true cultural development, this was partly because these cities' artistic infrastructures were not fully conducive for their inhabitants to exercise their right to culture. If we trace the public festivals in Santiago, Valparaíso, and Concepción from their origins to their contemporary manifestations, we note that these events have constituted political arenas that include diverse and even contradictory urban projects, sometimes putting them in tension. This context uniquely summons forth ghostly echoes of the cities that did not come into being, also opening up utopian perspectives on a civic bond that vanishes in daily life.

To address cultural practices from the point of view of a set of events, it is necessary to problematise the integration and discontinuity that are present in a given social space. In this respect, several recent approaches have highlighted the contemporary possibilities and challenges involved in approaching the event as a unit of sociological analysis. Assembling a vast genealogy dating back to the Manchester School, Kapferer and Meinert (2015) have pointed out the role the event has played in anthropological theory, given its capacity to emphasise the multiplicity and dissonance at the heart of society, instead of privileging the notion of "society" as an assembled, homogeneous, and static whole. Kapferer's frame allows us to view the contradictory principles that are present in events and that, far from mechanically fulfilling a function of social integration, foreground the multiple lines of tension that cross a territory. From a multidisciplinary and transcultural approach, the texts compiled by Merkel (2015) problematise the ways in which events – especially those held on a large scale – intervene in the formation and development of social identities. The international showcase that these spectacles offer becomes an opportunity to celebrate and reinforce the supposed "essence" of a community and mark the transitions from specific identity contexts to others. A third work published in 2015 sought to highlight the element of "contestation" that is at the centre of every event. By analysing different cases from multiple perspectives and methodologies, the book edited by Lamond and Platt (2015) offers a critical perspective on contemporary events, noting both how events are constricted by the framework of the entertainment industry and how they have a strategic potential for activating civic dissent. It is not by chance that some spectacles of international scope, such as the Olympics or the World Cup, give rise to political protests organised by local populations. These events make visible the conflicts inherent in the realisation of the event or other long-term social tensions.

The cultural festivals analysed in this study allow us to observe cities marked by disagreement, and even open conflict, over unfinished projects. As I have pointed out in a previous article, these modalities of cultural offering – free, large-scale, and held in public spaces – had a controversial reception, prompting divergent arguments that can be synthesised in four paradoxes. One: despite the fact that they result from a vocation to open up public space so that communities can use it, the vertical origin of these initiatives accepts civic participation only superficially and does not consider the specific characteristics of each locality. Two: the festivals are an effective form of granting the poorer sectors of society access to the right to culture, but their exceptional and ephemeral nature does not successfully

establish new audiences or strengthen cultural infrastructure. Three: although they draw large audiences and successfully bring cultural offerings to audiences that typically would not have access to them, they end up diluting these contents by prioritising the languages of spectacle and entertainment. And four: even when they contribute to the consolidation of a democratic and civic culture, they instrumentalise its symbolic power for short-term electoral purposes (Pinochet Cobos 2017). These tensions summarise many of the debates to which these kinds of events have given rise throughout successive administrations, acquiring distinct emphases in each of the cities that concern us here.

Even though these paradoxes offer a framework that is common to all these cases, in each city the particular cultural festivals brought together different political agendas, and had to deal with specific urban configurations. Thus, in Santiago, Valparaíso, and Concepción, culture – a true “technology of happiness”, as defined in the promotional materials produced by the governments of post-dictatorial Chile – constituted a crucial tool for neutralising a series of specific urban conflicts, each of them closely linked to the cities’ recent history, as well as to their inconclusive urban imaginaries and their neoliberal transformations. Below, I provide an overview of the cultural festivals held in these three urban settings, explaining how they define what culture is and what ideals it serves, and how they articulate this in different ways with the public space.

(a) Santiago de Chile: from the festivals of culture to Santiago a Mil

The Santiago of the early 2000s became the first laboratory for the *Concertación* governments’ formula for cultural festivals. From the first event, the festivals held in the capital were well-attended, and the press covered them at length. These events were configured as an offering that combined artistic expressions and civic services, and were initially held in the Parque Forestal. The people of Santiago still remember these events as significant urban milestones. Year after year, during their first four editions, the festivals had an almost identical programme, linked to an official cultural policy whose strengths were in the fields of music and theatre. Then President Lagos was the one who gained the most symbolic capital from these events, as he was the only general speaker at most of the official festivals, and he made his voice heard even at non-government events, such as Spencer Tunick’s project of collective nude photographs in 2002, which also involved the intersection of culture and public space. After a controversy with Joaquín Lavín, then mayor of Santiago, over damage to the lawn of the Parque Forestal, the Festivals of Culture ceased in 2003 until they resumed two years later in the still more confined space of the Quinta Normal Park, where President Bachelet also held the “Festivals of Citizenship” and “Chile Plus Culture”. However, the most memorable spectacle of this recent administration was the result of a collaboration with the corporate sector from which Bachelet obtained important political benefits: the Little Girl-Giant show, sponsored by Royal de Luxe as part of the 2007 and 2010 editions of the Santiago a Mil Festival. The main site for this giant puppet was, ironically, the “Citizenship Square” (Plaza de la Ciudadanía), which was

remodelled to meet the specific needs of these large-scale cultural events. By this point, the cultural festival was well integrated into the machinery of political popularity. During Piñera's administration (and at his behest) culture took a clear turn towards the so-called creative industries and shifted away from festivals hosted by cultural institutions. Although festivals no longer happened, that same year (2010) the Paris Parade (named after the retail giant) began to take place on the Alameda (Avenida Libertador General Bernardo O'Higgins) where shortly, before Christmas, Paris paraded enormous balloon versions of popular cartoon characters for large crowds to see.

The Santiago a Mil International Festival has been an indispensable part of the history that intertwines cultural policies, public space, and democratic governance. Emerging in the mid-1990s, and developed by the same producer responsible for the major events organised during (and by) the *Concertación* (Romero and Campbell), the Festival created a space to meet the needs of large audiences through a category called "street theatre", which hosts various shows in public spaces. Working closely with local authorities, the Festival developed a popular programme of shows in the historic core and in the peripheral districts of the city. Year after year, these shows have accounted for a majority of the festivals' attendance. In the year of the Bicentennial (2010), for example, of the 3,700,000 people who attended Santiago a Mil, 97% attended shows held in outdoor venues. Santiago a Mil is therefore a large-scale experience that brings cultural offerings to areas where they are not typically available to all. Santiago a Mil claims to "be aimed at the street", since the Festival goes to where people gather: squares, parks, stadiums, museums, and churches.

Since the creation of the "street theatre" category in 2003, the Festival has divided its programming between theatres and public spaces, pursuing a dual vocation rooted in the very structure of the city of Santiago. As the producers explain, "we know we live in a socioeconomically and culturally segregated city […] The central districts with more resources in Santiago aggregate services and concentrate the quality cultural offerings. The festival is responsible for decentralizing offerings both in a geographical sense and monetarily" (Echeñique 2015). Every January, while the indoor programme is concentrated in the centre-east sector of the capital, performances of street theatre reach more remote *comunas* such as Pedro Aguirre Cerda, La Cisterna, La Granja, Quilicura, Huechuraba, Melipilla, and Lo Prado, which typically rank from high to medium-high on the list of social priority indicators such as access to health services, education, and income, that qualify a *comuna* for government assistance, according to the Ministerial Regional Secretariat for Social Development (2016). As Justo Pastor Mellado (2007) points out, the Festival's double strategy reveals how it imagines its audience by segmenting it. More specifically, depending on audiences' capacities and tastes, they will find performances in two contrasting sites for local theatre: the Municipal Theatre and the street. "The Teatro a Mil Festival is a model of crowd management based on a notion of the theatrical experience as a therapeutic one", which, the Chilean critic continues, "has known how to play both sides: bring Pina Bausch to satisfy the radical demand of the elite and produce Royal de Luxe to conform to the masses' desperate demand for mothering" (Mellado 2007). The Festival is

organised according to this geopolitical distribution: while experimental, complex productions of specialised interest are concentrated in the eastern sector of the capital, the street performances are exclusively located in the periphery and are close to the language of the circus and the carnival, and almost always catalogued as "family" entertainment.

Even though the Santiago a Mil Festival was a private initiative that emerged from the corporate sector, the coverage and constancy of the Festival over the last 20 years have made it one of the main examples of what could be called "audience formation", giving rise to a policy that must be read within the context of Santiago's urban dynamics. The Festival's programming and its territorial structure can only be understood in relation to a setting affected by segregation. As Santiago is a paradigmatic example of a neoliberal city, this city's inhabitants have been stripped of their rights and "must take responsibility for their own civil liberties, social services, and political rights" (Rodríguez and Rodríguez 2009). Even though this segregated condition was inherent to the city from its very foundation, it was during the dictatorship (1973–1989) that the instruments for urban planning were dissolved and "that the city was broken and that the fragments that made it more urban, more diverse and heterogeneous were mutilated" (Márquez 2017). The large-scale displacement of inhabitants during those years, a result of the eradication of slums, the policy aimed at reforming *comunas*, and the National Policy of Urban Development, "shaped – from a socio-spatial point of view – the concentration of urban poverty in previously selected areas, preferably located on the periphery, cut off from the rest of the city and, therefore, from society" (Morales and Rojas 2009, 137). In a city where the richest *comunas* have ten times more public spaces than the poor ones, the formula of bringing culture to poor neighbourhoods has fostered initiatives to promote a social fabric that helps reduce marginality.

Segregation, segmentation, and urban inequality are, thus, the backdrops against which the Santiago a Mil International Festival operates. In bringing "culture" to the peripheral *comunas* as a sort of antidote against crime and exclusion, the Festival assumes that these festive modalities of cultural consumption will allow an appropriation of public spaces, which in the long run will result in a greater sense of belonging and local identity. During the 2015, 2016, and 2017 editions of the Festival, ethnographic experiences in numerous localities made it possible to grasp the ambivalence that these events provoke. In stark contrast to everyday urban life that can be seen ordinarily, the effervescence of the festival offers glimpses of a social encounter that cannot last. Indeed, as soon as the events were over, the locals advised us to leave the neighbourhood as soon as possible, before their streets reverted to their usual violence and lack of safety. Thus, although peripheral communities appreciate that this cultural offering makes its way to their places of residence and indicate that its presence generates forms of coexistence that are not possible during the rest of the year, the frequent comparisons in their comments with other parts of the capital confirm the fragmented state of the city. These events, both memorable and ephemeral, are unable to erase a condition of exclusion and marginality that, as in all domains of life, is also expressed in the cultural sphere.

(b) Valparaíso: from the Cultural Carnivals to the Thousand Drums Carnival

The link between culture and public space in the city of Valparaíso was forged over a decade of Cultural Carnivals, which started in late 2001 and ended with the presidency of Sebastián Piñera in 2010. With the aim of stimulating civic participation and positioning Valparaíso as the cultural capital of the country, these events tried to revive the traditional forms of the popular port festival, and turned them into a huge party with large public stages and numerous parades and *batucadas*. The imminent declaration of the city as a UNESCO World Heritage Site in 2003 and the ensuing exponential increase in tourism turned the Valparaíso Cultural Carnivals into the epitome of a state cultural policy based on spectacles and festivals (Banda 2015). In 2005, towards the end of his mandate, Lagos closed the fifth edition this annual event by emphasising the role of carnivals in the emerging urban imaginary surrounding the city. "This is a party night", he declared in his speech. "We said that we were going to make Valparaíso the cultural capital of Chile. Today Valparaíso is the cultural capital of Chile."[6] Although these events left – for better or for worse – a significant impression in the memory of the inhabitants of Valparaíso, locals perceived this initiative as "an activity imposed by the government without greater roots in the community", which gave them little opportunity to play an active role in the event's design or execution (Rojas and Marambio 2010, 18). Controversies surrounding the accumulation of waste and the rowdiness and disturbances caused by festival-goers led Minister of Culture Cruz-Coke to close the cycle of the Cultural Carnivals, giving rise to a new festival – the Festival of the Arts – which aimed to purge the popular elements of carnival aesthetics and replicate the production standards of international festivals.

The Thousand Drums Carnival developed in the context of the occupation of a piece of land, the Alejo Barrios Park, in the town of Playa Ancha. This carnival represents the opposite of the official initiatives in matters of cultural policy surveyed up until now. In its first version, in 1999, the civic group that organised the Thousand Drums Carnival wanted to reinvent the old Spring Festival of the city of Valparaíso, and, in doing so, to dispute the right to a public space for culture through art and enjoyment. More than 15 years later, aside from the religious festivals administered by the church, it is the largest carnival in Chile: every October, about 50,000 people gather in Valparaíso. Organising an event of this magnitude takes an entire year, since it involves coordinating the numerous delegations that amount to more than 3,000 artists from all over Chile: *batucadas*, *comparsas*, and dance groups. The Thousand Drums Carnival is presented as a fusion of rhythms drawn from various cultural backgrounds, making it a "mestizo carnival", according to its organisers.

The different incarnations of the carnival and the disputes that have regularly arisen around it acquire a particular density when read in relation to the context of the urban fabric of the port area. Over the course of the twentieth century, the city of Valparaíso experienced a decline in its port activity and its main company (Emporchi) was privatised, making the working conditions of its inhabitants precarious and lowering their standard of living (Aravena 2006). The dictatorship only aggravated these conflicts. At the start of the new millennium, the city was experiencing a

demographic crisis, which led the authorities to design a programme to encourage economic and population growth: the Plan Valparaíso (2002). Among its various areas of action, this plan sought to strengthen the cultural attractions of the Valparaíso–Viña del Mar axis by promoting the reactivation of the port economy through hotel and commercial development, and by highlighting the architectural heritage of its historic area. After this agenda was strengthened by the designation of the city as a UNESCO World Heritage Site in 2003, the city of Valparaíso began to experience a new urban vocation, linked to culture and tourism (Vergara-Constela and Casellas 2016). In this way, the heritage branding became the "post-industrial destiny" of Chile's main port (Aravena and Sobarzo 2009, 14). This prompted processes of open urban gentrification, through which the emerging definition of Valparaíso as a "cultural" and "authentic" city was made productive by real-estate capital, expelling the historic residents from their neighbourhoods, which were now considered as "heritage". This was not just a matter of market penetration in times of global capitalism: as Vergara-Constela and Casellas (2016) show, the state played a significant role in these processes of urban transformation, through a set of converging policies that aimed to foster the link between capital and culture.

The city expropriated by tourism and real-estate capital is, then, the site in which the Thousand Drums resound. As noted by its organisers, the cultural expressions displayed at the Thousand Drums Carnival, with strong roots in civil society, appeal to the fact that the true heritage is in the people: in their happiness, in their bohemia, in their identity in relation to the port. That is why, although its route through the city has been modified over the years, one of its characteristics is the street parades that file up and down the hills. Marked by the illegality and DIY construction of their buildings, the public spaces of the hills above the port – especially the least accessible ones – are precarious and sparse. They make up a kind of backstage of the city that is generally excluded from the cultural amphitheatre that unfolds on "the plain" below. In this context, the Thousand Drums Carnival not only provides the inhabitants with other ways of circulating through stigmatised sectors of Valparaíso, but also operates as a sort of showcase where local communities express themselves. Many of the artistic groups come from the hills, and some particularly "unsafe" neighbourhoods, such as the neighbourhood of Playa Ancha, have found in the Thousand Drums Carnival a reason for local pride that redefines belonging to this area in a positive way.

However, far from constituting a celebration of consensus, the Thousand Drums Carnival is, year after year, an occasion for controversy, as tensions arise between various projects for the city. While thousands of people go out to the streets to dance and enjoy the party, many authorities and residents express, especially through the media and social networks, their rejection of an event that generates large amounts of waste, and that is characterized by parties, alcohol, and collective expression. "How much do we want to control participation?" asks Santiago Aguilar, the director of the Thousand Drums, warning of the risks involved in turning the party into an event that is geared toward families. Many view the Carnival's popular character as an openly "coarse" element, suggesting that these cultural expressions are vulgar and of low quality. Long discussions thus arise that force us to think about whom the city is for and how it should be used.

From the point of view of organisation, this carnival, in its connections to a series of battles for public space, has been thought of from its origins as a space for the exercise of citizenship. "We were trying to recover spaces, to understand what democracy was, because we didn't understand it either", says the Carnival's director Santiago Aguilar. The Carnival seems to make encounters, social coexistence and collective enjoyment possible, but it also highlights the disagreements and frictions that characterise democratic life. "It's clear that we're in a fight, but not about resources, not even about policies: about imaginaries", the director continues. "It's how we imagine that people are happy, which is the final meaning of democracy and life: happiness".[7]

(c) Concepción: from A Scream at the End of the Century to Rock en Conce (REC)

In the 1990s, the city of Concepción, located in the Eighth Region of Bío-Bío, saw the flourishing of a succession of cultural events that seemed to indicate that the repressive climate of the dictatorship had been left behind. The city had been particularly targeted for repression by the Pinochet dictatorship, as it was perceived as a "red zone" at the time of the coup d'état, owing to its tradition of university activism and its countercultural tradition which fostered the convergence of various social and political forces identified with the Left (Monsálvez 2013). During the 1990s, cultural activities that had been confined to the Forum of the University of Concepción began to occupy new public spaces. One milestone in this shift was the annual meeting that, starting in the mid-1990s, brought the city's community together around the local rock music scene: the large-scale concert called Un grito de fin de siglo (A Scream at the End of the Century). Even though its organisers denied that the event had a political aim, the concert did win the approval of its main promoter, then Deputy José Antonio Viera-Gallo, in alliance with the Chile-America Cultural Center and the municipality's Youth Department. "We are approaching the end of an era, the end of a century and a millennium", he said in 1995 in the newspaper *Crónica*,[8] where he also described the concert as a way of giving space to young people. This initiative played a significant role in ushering in a democratic climate: Scream at the End of the Century, states a researcher from Concepción, "became a space for expressing identity and for creating meanings after the dictatorship", making possible new modes of "inhabiting" the city: the possibility of seeing, touching, and feeling with other citizens without being afraid.[9]

During these years, cultural festivals at various urban landmarks – the University Forum, the Stadium, Parque Ecuador – played a key role in the construction of an imaginary woven around the city's rock scene. As newspaper coverage and the various organisers involved indicate, the Scream represented a great step forward for the local scene, providing unprecedented levels of professionalism and technical conditions that had previously only been available in Santiago. It also articulated a sense of communion between the scene's musicians and cultural agents, who could now leave the underground to perform in the urban public space. The Scream at

the End of the Century was a public event bringing together thousands of citizens and allowing for the coexistence of heterogeneous groups. By opening the concerts up to a diverse and familiar audience, "rock ceased to be stigmatised by rebellion and violence, and it was now possible for artistic and cultural expression to occupy Parque Ecuador – as a big 'green lung', as a large community space".[10]

Rock en Conce (REC), the rock festival that has taken place in Concepción for the last four years, is thought of by many of its participants as an heir to the large public festivals that the city experienced in the 1990s. Once again, Concepción's identity as the capital of Chilean rock is put on stage, this time in the new Bicentennial Park, staking a claim the consolidation of a music scene that wants to step outside of the eternal shadow of the capital. However, while both cities vie for the status of Chile's capital of culture, the symbolic key in which REC operates is different from that which marked the festivals at the end of the century: here, it is not so much democratic coexistence that is at stake, as the possibility of being a contemporary and global city. With 105,000 people attending REC in 2016, the event's goal is to consolidate itself as the southernmost festival in the world, and an inevitable reference on the rock scene. By doing so, the city could honour the myths that run through its streets and stages: Concepción like Liverpool or a *criollo* Manchester.[11]

The operations that are set in motion simultaneously to these large-scale cultural events can only be understood in light of the urban processes that the city has experienced in recent years. A brief analysis of the development of Bicentennial Park (2010) will illustrate some of these crucial tensions. The Bicentennial Park occupied a central place in the new urban design of Concepción outlined within the framework of the plan for the "recovery of the North Bank" that aimed to reach the border of the Bío Bío River (Ortega et al. 2010) and had an uneven impact on society, the city, and real estate (Cociña et al. 2006). Several major roads and administrative and commercial centres of great historical density converge around the Park. Flanked by the Bío Bío River, a natural barrier that had stopped the Spanish *conquistadores* from making further inroads and extending the colony, the territory on which the park is located was also an urban "boundary" marked by the railway line (1873) and the installation of various factories that stimulated the urbanisation of the area (Fernandez 2015). On this territory – a flood plain with hostile conditions for habitation – the oldest shantytown in the country, the Aurora de Chile, was established in the last decade of the nineteenth century, when the future *aurorinos* built the first lodgings. As part of the redesigning of the Costanera as a project that could make the city more dynamic,[12] the eviction of the *aurorinos* (1990–2015) began, initially through a public-private model (the Ribera Norte Plan) and then in a more deregulated way, from explicitly private interests that instrumentalised the 2010 earthquake to complete the eradication of the settlers (Matus et al. 2016). The Bicentennial Park now stands as a present-day Plaza de Armas for the era of globalisation: it is surrounded by the headquarters of the regional government and the investigative police, as well as a huge shopping centre (the Mirador Mall), a monument to the victims of the 2010 earthquake, and a regional theatre under construction and a set of towers associated with the real-estate market and corporate capital.

This is precisely the setting where Rock en Conce (REC) unfolds. Concepción's largest concert directly overlooks the river, as if the city wanted to compensate for so many decades of turning its back on it. It is held in a public space that borders the private space of the Mall, which serves as an (almost inevitable) gateway to the Park entrance. On the left, a dense row of stands blocks the view towards the Aurora de Chile, whose last population centres have not yet been eradicated. The Festival, with its international guests and its tens of thousands of attendees, omits this uncomfortable presence from all its maps and infographics. Just a few posters serve as a reminder of this imminent eviction. Events in the public space of the city of Concepción – concerts, fairs, and races – have gradually been transferred to Bicentennial Park's promenade. Culture and recreation have played their part in the policy of turning the city towards the river, providing this urban space with a new narrative which rewrites the trajectory of a territory historically marked by the river border, the railway, the manufacturing industry, and the hardship of Chile's oldest shantytown. The REC festival, whose media strategy emphasises how its international scope makes of it a cosmopolitan event, finds in rock culture a way of accessing the imaginary of the global and contemporary metropolis, unfolding on the urban stage enclosed between the new Costanera, the mall, and the tall corporate towers.

The management of the festival has not been without controversies, fuelled by the capitalist credentials of the producer who organises it and a certain tendentious inertia that prioritises musicians from Santiago in the event's advertising. Concepción's condition of "second" city is a topic of constant discussion, and audiences have reacted to this by praising the city, saying that "Santiago has nothing to envy Concepción" and that the latter "is the true cradle of rock". During the three days of Rock en Conce, young locals crowd the park's promenade to support their city's groups, and watch them share the stage with bands from Santiago and abroad. REC audiences celebrate this rock atmosphere as part of an urban pact: an identity project that opens the city to the world under the banners of rock, youth, and the refounding of the old city. This pattern of identification and belonging is repeated in the audiences' responses and the murals arranged by the organisers on which the power of amplified rock reverberates louder than the *cumbia villera* and the *reggaeton* that reign in the surrounding population.

Concluding thoughts: city, festival, and cultural policies

The present comparison of these three festivals has successfully illuminated the specificity of the socio-urban processes in which these events unfold: segregation, segmentation, and urban inequality in the case of Santiago; the heritage and gentrification processes unfolding in the city of Valparaíso; and the projects of Concepción's "metropolisation" and the symbolic rewriting of its coastal area. These constitute the backdrops against which three different models of cultural policy materialise. In each of these urban settings, an attempt is made to define in an alternative way what culture is and what it is used for, by articulating it with the public space in different ways.

In a polarised and segregated city like Santiago, cultural celebrations are a way to *enable* public space, constructing a space for healthy and peaceful coexistence. In this way, the Santiago a Mil International Festival operates according to a model of *cultural democratisation*. The culturally segregated city makes it possible to imagine a map in which certain areas of the periphery are observed as deprived places, marked by a lack of, and a need for, "culture". The desire to democratise seeks to break these boundaries by bringing to these marginal sectors artistic products that are always created and produced elsewhere: in the centre, within the elite, and almost always abroad. This gesture promotes a habitable city, where the cultural encounter reconstitutes broken social bonds and makes civic coexistence possible.

In the case of Valparaíso, where the pressures of tourism and the discourse of heritage have driven the historical inhabitants away from their traditional neighbourhoods, we can argue that the civic organisation around the Thousand Drums Carnival has offered a way of *recovering* the public space for citizens to express themselves. This recovery is, of course, partial, and not all citizens feel equally drawn to these ways of using the city: this event has as many detractors as devotees. The cultural products on offer at this carnival, unlike other large-scale festivals, cannot be separated from their creators. In this situation, culture is nothing other than these communities' expressions of identity. We could, then, think about this model of cultural policy from the point of view of *participation*: it is not premised on bringing a foreign cultural agenda to Valparaíso, but, rather, on offering the city as a showcase for the arts that develop in its streets and hills.

Finally, in a city like Concepción, eternally in the shadow of the capital, the realisation of the large-scale REC festival offers the possibility of constructing a new narrative about the territory, of *refounding* the public space through a showcase that offers a large-scale, media-friendly, and internationalised festival like REC. Updating the "metropolising" agenda that has marked the cultural history of Concepción, this time in proximity to the market, real-estate capital, and urban reform projects, this festival allows us to observe that culture can be a vehicle to promote a project of *cultural decentralisation*, as it disputes the historical dominance of Santiago. Promoting the myth of Concepción as a the "cradle of rock", REC manages to instil in its audiences a sense of belonging to and of identifying with a territory that leaves behind its history as a frontier and urban border, to construct a narrative of a metropolitan, cosmopolitan, and international city.

Thus, we can see that cultural festivals operate as exceptional events that foreground various tensions that are latent in the urban fabric. As can be observed in the three cases analysed, the various public discourses that surround these festivals tend to highlight their capacity to build spaces for peaceful and civic coexistence, but fights and conflicts soon emerge behind the apparent carnivalesque truce. The different actors that intervene in these festivals invoke the idea of a "democratic use" of the street; however, rather than effectively building a territory for the freedom and equality of the inhabitants, these events frequently end up instituting spaces of large-scale cohabitation, arbitrated by the market and instrumentalised by state policies. Citizens do not always have a space where their voices can be heard, or the tools to counterbalance the agency of other, more powerful actors and interests.

Each of the models outlined here involves different ways of defining and putting into practice what constitutes “culture”. The policies of *democratisation* and *cultural decentralisation* that we have observed in the Santiago a Mil Festival and REC assume that there are certain human assets of exceptional value that must be brought to ever broader and more diverse publics, raising the town “to the level” of these productions of excellence. The policies of *cultural participation* that the Thousand Drums Carnival mobilises – operating as what Yúdice and Miller (2004) have called the “anthropological register” of the concept of culture – broaden the definition of culture to accommodate cultural expressions that shape people’s modes of life, valuing local forms in their diversity.

In each of the three contexts, marked by their specific urban dynamics, culture becomes a resource for a specific project for the city: a project of *inclusion* in Santiago; of *citizenship* in Valparaíso; and of the *metropolis* (or perhaps the global city) in Concepción. At the same time, the appeal to culture operates in each setting as an antibody against different problems. Culture is opposed to the insecurity and marginality of the capital’s periphery; it offers resistance to the loss of local identities in Valparaíso; or it can be a key to overcoming the provincial condition in Concepción. Bringing culture to local neighbourhoods has a different meaning in each of the contexts analysed.

Cultural festivals in public space, as we have seen in the cases studied here, offer an eloquent way into the tensions that converge in different urban fabrics. Their concentrated and extraordinary character highlights a multiplicity of voices, in which city projects, and sometimes scenes of political dissent, materialise. Far from constituting a superfluous dimension of urban life, these events, and the particular cultural policies that they mobilise, have been at the heart of the development of the territories’ social imaginaries: they enable segregated or excluded areas; they help legitimise non-traditional uses of public space; they allow citizens a face-to-face meeting that is fundamental to the construction of a collective identity: a collective identity that, like the cities themselves, is always an unfinished project.

Notes

1. This statement refers to a central tension in urban anthropology over the past decades, regarding whether to account for the discontinuous and fragmented experience characteristic of *urban* space, or, rather, to focus on how the *city* harbours sedimented, and imminently political, modes of inhabiting it (Mongin 2005). In other words, if the dizzying pace of urban flows tends to have a deterritorialising effect, the modes of inhabiting public space restore this space as polis, that is, as a lived place to which meaning can be ascribed. Delgado specifies this distinction by suggesting that “unlike the city, urban space cannot be inhabited. People inhabit the city, but it's impossible to inhabit the urban” (Delgado 1999, 33).
2. The results of the study focusing on the experiences of audiences and consumers of cultural festivals were published in Pinochet Cobos (2016).
3. The meanings of the concept of “democracy” are multiple and contain at least one distinction between democracy as a system of government based on representative

elections, and democracy as a political project protected by a set of values linked to the freedom and equality of citizens. Since the present analysis refers to a historical context where the meanings of democratic life were socially constructed, it places particular emphasis on a polysemic notion of democracy. If democracy as a sociopolitical concept is also defined by the horizons that it opens (González López 2010), it makes sense to gather the multiple uses of democracy in public discourses to understand the constellation of meanings that is articulated around it.

4. The *Concertación de Partidos por la Democracia* was a coalition of social democratic political parties that included the Socialist Party, the Christian Democrat Party, the Party for Democracy and the Radical Party, and governed Chile at the end of the dictatorship, between 1990 and 2010.
5. Speech by President Ricardo Lagos at the Festival of Culture, 2001. Archivo Ricardo Lagos, Fundación Democracia y Desarrollo.
6. Intervention by the President of the Republic in Clause V Cultural Carnivals of Valparaíso. Valparaíso, 30 December 2005. Archivo Ricardo Lagos, Fundación Democracia y Desarrollo.
7. Ibid.
8. José Antonio Viera Gallo: "Este evento no tiene una finalidad política", *Crónica*, "Espectáculos" section, 4 November 1995, 24.
9. Interview with Álvaro Muñoz, cultural journalist and researcher of Concepción's rock scene.
10. Personal interview with Marcelo Sánchez, musician and organiser of Jóvenes de la Municipalidad de Concepción.
11. See "Diez mil almas esperan Un grito de fin de siglo", *Crónica*, "Espectáculos" section, 3 December 1997, 23; "Público quiere más difusión del arte", *Crónica*, "La movida" section, 5 October 2001, 12.
12. The urban morphology of the city went from a set of dispersed and auto-centric nuclei, to "a large metropolitan area surrounded by concentric rings of satellite cities". In this process of metropolitanisation, the Bicentennial Axis was urgently needed to connect the new urban settlements with the city of Concepción (Matus et al. 2016, 94; Rojas 2009).

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