

Chilean televisions series. Themes, content and gender representation (2008-2014)

Contenido y representación de género en tres series de televisión chilenas de ficción (2008-2014)

Conteúdo e representação de gênero em três séries de televisão chilenas de ficção (2008-2014)

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ABSTRACT

Chilean television is facing a new phenomenon: the production and broadcast of national fiction series that have reached an important place in television programming and in the loyalty of the audience. *Los 80*, *Los archivos del Cardenal* and *El reemplazante* are representative productions, both by the audience reached and the social debate they provoked. In this research, we examine these series analyzing the narrative and the gender representation. The results allow us to relate the socio-political context of the country to the choice of fictional contents. These series begin with innovative and original intentions, but as they develop they become more simplify and stereotyped proposals.

Keywords: television, television series, story, gender, Chile.

RESUMEN

La televisión chilena ha enfrentado un nuevo fenómeno: la emisión de series de ficción nacionales que alcanzaron un lugar prioritario en la programación y en el seguimiento del público. Los 80, Los archivos del Cardenal y El reemplazante son producciones representativas, tanto por su audiencia como por el debate social que provocaron. En esta investigación se examinan estas series a partir del análisis tanto del relato como de la representación de género. Los resultados permiten relacionar el contexto sociopolítico del país con la elección de contenidos de ficción. Las series comienzan con intenciones innovadoras, pero devienen en propuestas más simplificadas.

Palabras clave: televisión, series de televisión, relato, género, Chile.

RESUMO

A televisão chilena enfrenta um novo fenômeno: a emissão das séries de ficção nacionais que alcançaram um lugar prioritário na programação e na audiência. *Los 80*, *Los Archivos del Cardenal* e *El Reemplazante* são produções representativas, tanto graças à audiência como a partir do debate social que provocaram. Nesta pesquisa são examinadas estas séries a partir da análise tanto do relato como da representação de gênero. Os resultados permitem relacionar o contexto sociopolítico do país com a seleção dos conteúdos de ficção. As séries começam com intenções inovadoras mas convertem-se finalmente em propostas mais simplificadas.

Palavras-chave: televisão, séries de televisão, relato, gênero, Chile.

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THE RISE OF CHILEAN TELEVISION SERIES

Since the beginning of the 21st century, fiction in Chilean television has been revalued, becoming the content of higher consumption (Fuenzalida, Julio, Aguirre, Mujica & Silva, 2009). After the success of *Los 80* (C13, 2008-15), audiovisual narratives were produced incorporating mechanisms of representation of the past set in the dictatorship begun in 1973, but without the intervention of real historical figures. They are series of fiction whose plots come closer to reality and whose characters wander through a context that accounts for the recent history of the country. Among them are *Amar y morir en Chile* (CHV, 2012); *Ecos del desierto* (CHV, 2013); *El reemplazante* (TVN, 2012) and *No* (TVN, 2013)¹. We can point out that Chilean television is facing a new phenomenon: the production and broadcast of national fiction series that have reached an important place in television programming and in the loyalty of the audience.

In this reflection we will analyze three productions that meet the requirements stated above: *Los 80*, *Los archivos del Cardenal* and *El reemplazante*. These series form a corpus which represents, from the fiction and chronologically, a defining historical period for the shaping of the current Chilean society, which encompasses the social changes that have taken place and the evolution of society in the last forty years, from the dictatorship begun in 1973 to the present. These series have reached the first places in the lists of the most-watched programs in their respective time slots, have been well valued by the audience, received different recognitions by their quality, and have nourished and motivated the social debate.

Therefore, and considering that television viewing is the activity to which Chileans devote more time in their leisure time², we propose an analysis of the story and other another of gender, looking into whether the mentioned series present new forms of representation or maintain traditional gender expressions.

CONCEPTUAL APPROACH AND METHODOLOGY THEMES AND CONTENTS IN THE TELEVISION SERIES

The thematic approach has a strong institutional existence. The notion of subject (subject, idea or proposition developed in a work) is responsible for the abundance of research in fiction. A long-held principle is that there is no content independent of the form through

which it is expressed. The idea of an interaction between form and content also appears in cinema theorists (Bazin, 2008; Metz, 1970), who state that the true study of an audiovisual text must necessarily presuppose the study of the form of its content (Metz, 2002).

Richard Monod (1977), on the subject of theatrical texts, proposed a classification that distinguishes, in a given work, three types of questions: (i) of what they speak (main themes presented); (ii) what is told (myth where the text comes from); and (iii) what is said (discourse or thesis). The aim is to understand that the content of the audiovisual text is not an immediate result, but must be constructed (Aumont & Marie, 2009, pp.131-134).

FICTION SERIES AND GENDER REPRESENTATION

In recent times, studies on cultural industry have not been outside the reflection on the representation of women and what is feminine on television (Ayuso et al, 2015; Coronado & Galán, 2015; Sangro & Plaza, 2010). Research on gender representations has analyzed the invisibility and/or stereotypical characterization of women (Menéndez, 2014), the stereotypes of male representation (Menéndez & Zurián, 2014) and female representation (Guarinos, 2011), including representation of new identities in fiction series (Cobo, 2011).

In general, studies suggest that television fiction has developed according to the canons established by the representation of the patriarchal order (Ortega & Simelio, 2010), although it has not been alien to the social changes that occurred in contemporary society (García, Fedele & Gómez, 2012). For the studies and approaches proposed, television fiction is a vehicle for the representation of women and men (through gender stereotypes) and also for new gender identities (through different expressions of the masculine and feminine distinct from the patriarchal imperative). That is, in no case it has been alien, indifferent or neutral to these considerations (Belmonte & Guillamón, 2008).

Television creates models, and one of its resources is to offer situations and behaviors by which it suggests scenarios or protagonists in order to be internalized by the audience through the process of immersion. Fiction is always a modeling of the real universe, even in the case of the most fantastic products. Hence, television fiction offers models of the world that can then be reinterpreted and signified by the audience. (Schaeffer, 1999, p. 218, in Menéndez & Zurián, 2014)

Although the contents of some of the series discussed have been analyzed in other authors' works (Castillo, Simelio & Ruiz, 2010), gender has hardly been studied. From this perspective, we are interested in the representation of gender contained by national fiction series inspired by the recent history of the country.

The questions that guide us are:

- What are the topics covered in the series and how are they told?
- What is the thesis that these stories support?
- What gender representations can we find in these series and how are they articulated?

METHODOLOGY

The research has an interpretative approach and a qualitative methodology (Valles, 1999). We made this choice due to its pertinence to know in-depth and in an integral way complex social phenomena, such as the meanings and representation of gender contained in the televised stories studied (Casetti & Di Chio, 1999).

The object of research were television series, of national production, of high audience in the last decade³. We viewed them completely: seven seasons (76 chapters) of *Los 80* (2008-2014); two seasons (24 chapters) of *Los archivos del Cardenal* (2011-2014); and two seasons (24 chapters) of *El reemplazante* (2012-2014).

We conducted an analysis of the story (Aumont & Marie, 2009, p. 130) of each series. This analysis consisted of recognizing the main themes that arise in the argument and in the selection of both the character that sustains the dramatic axis and the fundamental plot. Subsequently, we traced the relationship of these plot motifs with the classic narratives and, finally, we proceeded to establish the thesis that each of the series raises and on which it bases its main plot.

Gender representation is a social construction configured as a system not exempt from rules and norms, in which the following components participate: the roles and the sexual division of labor, gendered identity, norms and gender sanctions, stereotypes and discourses of gender legitimation (Puleo, 2007, pp. 17-26), as well as the social assessments and expectations related to each gender in a given social group.

Therefore, we opted for a strategy of comprehensive, relational and dynamic analysis of the gender representation, rather than identifying stereotypes of female and male characters, with the aim of deepening the dynamics produced in the narrative of these representations. We conducted a study of qualitative content, creating a code-sheet for each of the main characters, where we recorded gender, social class, personality, relationship between the characters (kinship, romantic, work or other) and situation of alliance and conflict between them.

Finally, we identified the archetypes with which the articulating characters of the story were constructed and we performed an analysis of the gender representation in each of the series.

Combining both analyzes—content and gender—shows that the archetypes contain certain representations of gender that function in the narrative framework of each series. This allows for a comparative study of the representations of gender in series that resort to similar archetypes, which exceeds the scope of this work. However, it allows us to raise the question of a possible neutrality or non-intentionality of narratives of fiction regarding gender representations.

THE SERIES: CONTENT AND GENDER REPRESENTATION

THE FAMILY AS A SHELTER OF STABILITY IN *LOS 80*

The family, mainly the patriarchal family, is a basic and ubiquitous referent for generalist television, and has a notable presence both in programming and in television narratives. The family is significant for television because it brings together all kinds of audiences (Buonanno, 2009, p. 96).

Since the nineteenth century, the family has acted as a central nucleus of cohesion and is one of the key themes of the narrative of realistic aspiration (Balló & Pérez, 2005, pp. 24-25). The construction of this collective character and its adaptation to television fiction is relevant, because it has a strong resonance and incidence in the social imaginary. Even more so in the case of *Los 80*, since it is born—inspired by the Spanish series *Cuéntame cómo pasó* (TVE, 2001-present)—within the framework of the celebration of the bicentennial of the country, so its narrative construction transcends fiction to become a kind of prototype of the Chilean middle class in a concrete era.

The Herrera López family, the collective protagonist of *Los 80*, is a classic (patriarchal) family, composed of a father, a mother and their four children (two women and two men). The approach of the series is designed under the construct of a united family in the face of adversities related to the social, economic and political context that takes place in a representative segment of recent Chilean history: the decade of the eighties, lived under the military dictatorship.

The format used by *Los 80* is the dramedie (García de Castro, 2002, p. 123), since it combines abundant dramatic plotting that dyes the narrative of constant references of social and political type, characteristics of the era that it tries to represent, with comic touches typical of family comedy. The desire to inscribe the series in the realist current leads to the interweaving of drama and comedy, using close stories with no apparent end, known in advance and taken from everyday life.

Although the series proposes a collective protagonist, the family, the narrative weight is sustained by the patriarch, Juan Herrera, a good father and acceptable husband, old-fashioned, who must face a change of life motivated by the transformations occurring in the country. The patriarch has to overcome unemployment, the demands of a new job, and a complex household that every day threatens to be more dispersed, in which he lives with his wife, his children, and his best friend, the neighbor, her son and their in-laws.

The Herrera López family is an average family of the Chilean middle class, susceptible to suffer all kinds of human and social conflicts. It has children of different ages, with adults and the elderly, so all sectors of society are represented. These ingredients are spiced up in the episodic plot, but are subjected to a main plot that will develop in most of the seasons: the relationship, in continuous tension, of the couple formed by Juan Herrera and his wife, Ana López.

A PROTOTYPICAL AND PATRIARCHAL FAMILY

As we have pointed out, *Los 80* is the story of a family under the dictatorship. But it is not just any family. It is a standard Chilean family prototype, that is, a patriarchal family made up of father, mother and children, who lives on the income received by the patriarch as a factory worker in a textile factory. The parents of this family are of rural origin and migrated to Santiago to establish themselves and, from the mutual effort, to

support the family. This translates into achieving good economic status, ensuring education for the children (conceived as the greatest legacy that they can leave them, given their humble origin), be an example of behavior and ascend according to their own merits, without exceeding established standards. In short, *to be good people*.

In this family, father and mother have specific roles and spheres of performance: the father is the one who ensures economic well-being through work and takes care of matters outside the domestic sphere. That is, the productive sphere is in the hands of the male and the reproductive, in charge of the woman. The patriarch postulates for his sons as an example to follow, according to a definition of specific masculinity: to be a good father, a faithful husband, an honest worker and a dedicated friend. The mother is in charge of the house, in terms of order and cleanliness, availability of food, attending the needs of daughters and sons, ensuring that they go the right way and supporting the husband when he has difficulties, without interfering directly in the sphere of decision that corresponds to the man of the family. She also encourages the daughter in her professional development, without this preventing her from being, in the future, a model wife (respectful of her sexuality) and an excellent mother.

These familiar premises, which simultaneously establish gender definitions, begin to be shaken by the social and political context in which the characters live. A first blow is the bankruptcy of the factory where Juan works, due to the decisions taken by the military dictatorship and that entail a deep economic crisis. The patriarch loses his job and this affects him in the fulfillment of his responsibility as an economic holder of the family. From here, although the family economic situation is strengthened, the father ceases to be the only source of household income, which stresses his patriarchal masculinity.

Faced with the difficulty mentioned, Ana joins the labor market and the generation of income, initially through the sale of products from home, and then as an executive of the credit sales business born in dictatorship. This new activity makes her reconsider her role and position within the family and generates tension with the different members of the family: with the husband, by the competition in the generation of income; with the children, by her absence in the

home; and with the family, for the need to reconcile their work outside and inside the house. This mother begins to live what many women who participate in the labor market must face: a double day, the fault for not fulfilling her role as mother and wife, and the lack of support and understanding from the family. This situation will reach such a level of tension that it will lead to the separation of the marriage and the search for alternative couples, although at the end of the last season they are reunited, and this reunion allows the family to remain united.

On the other hand, the political context in which the series is located, characterized by the repression of any manifestation of dissent, also challenges the Herrera López family. This tension focuses on the eldest daughter, Claudia, who at the beginning of the series is an example of a daughter: studious, dedicated, respectful and with a clear motivation for personal progress (she wants to study medicine and thus become the first member of the family in college). Claudia is opposed to the Pinochet regime and, unlike the rest of her family, she repeatedly expresses her criticism, which leads her to become involved in the political life of the country, even becoming a partner of one member of the resistance. This position, which questions the values that her parents have instilled, also affects the patriarch, who loses the capacity to protect her or sees that his efforts in this regard are useless. Claudia presents an alternative femininity to that of her mother, theoretically more autonomous, although in practice she is dependent on the romantic relationships that, paradoxically, are the ones that mark the different stages of her life.

Gender representation in *Los 80* is interesting, because from the experience of a standard Chilean family, protected by traditional values and led by a patriarchal archetypal figure, we can appreciate the tension generated in that social and gender structure by the dictatorial social and political context in which they are. The family and its members must adapt, and they do. However, the narrative is consistent with the patriarchal story because, after each critical moment, the family remains united and firm, externally guarded by the father and internally protected by the mother.

This family represents a space of stability, in which truly significant changes are not assumed. It crosses through innumerable different episodes that, however serious they may be, do not erode the stable family

identity; on the contrary, they propose a happy and immutable paradigm of the domestic world. Each episode that alters the routine of one of the family members' affects, directly or tangentially, the others, provoking an inbreeding mechanism that works as an antidote against dissolution and that tends to lead it back to order. Time happens, misfortunes appear, changes are proposed, but all this contributes to strengthening the family structure. Then, the patriarch and his family remain as a solution, as a refuge of stability in difficult times. For this reason, this narrative model seems quite coherent with a series thought for the bicentennial of the nation. That is, it configures a sense of national identity based on a familiar domestic space with standardized gender relations, which transcends the difficult historical context in which the series is framed.

ANTIGONE AND *LOS ARCHIVOS DEL CARDENAL*

Antigone's mythological argument confronts an innocent martyr, Antigone, who defies a tyrant, Creon, by disobeying a law prohibiting her from burying her brother. Her pious gesture to bury him provokes the irritation of Creon, who condemns her for her disobedience and for interfering as a woman in the affairs of men. The female martyr has been an archetype to which both cinema and television have paid attention in many works (Balló & Pérez, 1997, pp. 104-114) and its projection reaches nowadays, becoming the axis of *Los archivos del Cardenal*.

Los archivos del Cardenal is a series associated with the commemoration of the forty years of the 1973 coup. The original idea is of Josefina Fernández, daughter of a lawyer who worked in the Vicariate of Solidarity. The author, influenced by one of the earliest records of human rights violations during the dictatorship, realized that victims' statements and cases could become the chapters of a fiction series. Based on real events, she decided to articulate the story under the genre of police and suspense, inspired by the series *Law and Order* (NBC, 1990-2010).

The Antigone of *Los archivos del Cardenal* is Laura Pedregal, an activist who opposes the relentless State. She is a young woman, daughter of a middle class family, independent, social worker in the Vicariate and committed to the cause: she supports the people affected by the repression of the dictatorial regime. Heroes of this type of story are built from a past that inspires them

to choose a profession oriented to a transcendent and vocational goal, and that strengthens their commitment. That experience, for Laura, emanates from her family. Her father is a lawyer who seeks to clarify the truth, her mother a journalist who denounces injustices in the media, her uncle is a disappeared detainee. In addition, in the Vicariate, Laura attends an incessant drip of unresolved cases. Her search, therefore, is the search for the Truth distorted by her opponents. Laura is an Antigone who opposes tyranny and, as it happens to her, ends up paying her daring with suffering.

His ordeal is determined by the murder of her father, slain by the repressive organs of Pinochet. From here, our Antigone confronts the Creon system, embodying an anti-dictatorial revolutionary of the armed group *Frente Patriótico Manuel Rodríguez* (FPMR).

Thus, the scheme varies. Laura's search no longer pretends to clarify the Truth, but seeks to do Justice, or what she believes to be Justice. This Antigone puts her life to the fate of the destiny, integrating herself in the side that opts for the way of the arms like solution to overthrow the dictatorship, a spinning argument that distances the protagonist of her beliefs. A radical loss, like that of the father, makes Laura join the armed resistance, which also distances her from her partner and the life they have started together. In turn, it presents a more intimate account of the resistance and those who compose it.

Female protagonism in dictatorship

In *Los archivos del Cardenal*, the representation of the characters manifests in the professional performance or ideological position they hold in the face of the dictatorship. The action of the characters allows them to be identified with a certain political tendency: adherence to the regime, ignorance regarding its repressive and criminal actions, opposition to it, struggle for truth and justice through the peaceful way, or the armed resistance.

Laura and her parents are in the struggle for truth and justice. They are active opponents of the regime. Both from their work performance and from their personal commitment, they take this fight even risking their lives. Alicia, a young militant of the armed group MIR, who in the first season is pregnant and must leave the country to protect her life and that of her son, along with Manuel Gallardo, Laura's boyfriend, represent the armed resistance to the regime. On the opposite side are the

members of Ramón's family. His brother and his father initially declare adherents to the military regime and the mother shows a position of ignorance regarding the crimes committed by it. It is interesting to observe how the women opposing the regime are critical and active, while the women who are related to it are represented as conservative and oriented to domestic life.

The series also gives clues about the private dimension of the characters. In this context, we observe how gender configurations are articulated around sentimental and family life, mainly in relation to the love triangle formed by Laura, Ramón and Manuel initially, and the progressions of the couple constituted by the first two, after.

Although Laura appears as independent, active and motivated, her action is influenced by emotions, since Ramón and Manuel represent different life alternatives and political positions. The dilemma is to choose between Ramón, a more conservative man, formal in his way of dressing and acting and—until that moment—, without a clear position regarding the dictatorship, and Manuel, openly opposed to the regime, with a simpler aspect, that has opted for resistance. Despite their differences, they both agree to maintain a protective attitude towards Laura, whose initiative and commitment in the Vicariate put her in danger. She must explain and defend herself before them about the decisions she makes and the way she conducts herself when she gets involved in the cases, just as she has to do it in front of her father, who is also protective. In short, her professional work is constantly analyzed and judged by the male characters that surround her.

On the contrary, Laura and her mother present greater complicity. Mónica encourages her daughter's work for internal coherence: she is engaged and faces repression, including being imprisoned in a clandestine detention center. This affinity entails a more intimate relationship between mother and daughter, nurtures trust between them and allows them to share confidences, feelings, thoughts and mutual care.

Laura, as well as Antigone, represents and assumes a role that patriarchy has given to women: the protection of others, the sense of one's life for others, even if they have passed away. Such a role is manifested in the work of women in contexts of dictatorial repression. That is to say, in dictatorship, at moments of annihilation or atomization of political and social action, women—before other groups, such as those of political militancy—acquire

preponderance in the struggle for the defense of human rights. This struggle has been a crusade carried out by women, when they have not been directly subject to repression. They are the ones who constitute themselves as seekers of their people and as guarantors of the well-being of their detainees, as well as material and affective support for their families (Maillard & Ochoa, 2014; Peñaloza, 2003). This is shown by the Groups of Relatives of Missing Detained Persons in Chile, or the Mothers of the Plaza de Mayo in Argentina.

Finally, Laura's motherhood—like Alicia's motherhood at the time—emerges as an obstacle to her continuance in the confrontation with the dictatorial regime for which she has opted. Again pregnancy determines a milestone: the closing of the series shows Laura as a new mother, already distanced from what was her work in the Vicariate and her approach to resistance, assuming her new role.

Through this experience, the series marks a line between the dictatorial present and the possibility of a democratic future. The eldest son of Laura and Ramón is seen by his paternal grandfather—now a member of a political group that seeks the end of the dictatorship by peaceful means—as the augury of the political change that is coming. As a result, the series presents the transfer of a female protagonist, defender of life (Laura), to a male protagonist, a builder of future (Laura's son).

EL REEMPLAZANTE OR THE INTRUDER BENEFACITOR

The narrative of the messianic stories explains the advent of a leader who helps a community in crisis threatened by the established order. The intervention of the leader focuses on combating the current and corrupt status quo and, in the most extreme case of messianism, success entails a self-sacrifice. The action of the hero is not only limited to solving problems by proposing an egalitarian rebellion, it also points to a new code of values. This work is usually accompanied by the demonstration of a force (miracles or prodigies) that protects the hero and allows him to capture new adepts. Between these two poles of subjectivity, hero and community, oscillates the complexity of the messianic narrative (Balló & Pérez, 1997, p.63).

The argument of *El reemplazante* seems to come from this story. The hero, professor Carlos Valdivia, is an engineer who works as an executive in a stock investment firm. His excessive ambition leads him to an illegal financial operation whose consequences are dismissal

and his imprisonment. After leaving jail, ruined, he returns with his family to a working-class commune of Santiago. There, he is welcomed by his widowed father and his brother, both teachers of the school Príncipe Carlos. They will be the ones who encourage him to remake his life by proposing him to be the substitute teacher of mathematics. The hero is as a kind of intruder benefactor to a school community in crisis, where the despotic exercise of the owner and the endemic evils of the educational system become increasingly unsustainable for the group that suffers them both.

Carlos is an imperfect but integral messiah who, without knowing it, has been called for a mission: to form a group of students with scarce resources of a working-class school. He demonstrates his messianic strength with his own miracles and prodigies transmuted into initiatives (cooperative for the purchase of the school, classes for adults, reinforcement teaching for students); personal commitment to students (help in their personal problems putting his life at risk) and punctual successes (one of the youngsters gets the highest national math score), which give him partial victories with which he wins followers. In addition, the replacement teacher must face a double threat. On the one hand, the one that supposes the established order, personified in the owner of the educational institution that, far from looking for a quality education, craves a personal profit. And on the other hand, his antagonist, the trafficker of the commune, a young man from the underworld of the lumpen, who will seek to influence the students so they participate in his business.

El reemplazante is a dramatic series of nowadays. Despite having a cast mostly composed of teenage actors, it is not a series of teenagers. It is conceived from a realistic point of view, where social issues that refer to racism, drugs, youth violence, abortion, gender violence, pederasty, homosexuality, stand out; and in the educational issues such as professional scenarios, the quality of education in the country, social inequality, the demand for public education and quality.

A display of masculinities

In *El reemplazante* we witness the expression of different masculinities embodied in key characters of the series. Therefore, we focus our attention on the representation of these masculinities.

A proposal of masculinity is embodied by Carlos, the protagonist, who represents in the first instance a

competitive, aggressive and conqueror of the world of financial speculation executive, which has come from below thanks to his intelligence, ability and drive. He is triumphant, self-preoccupied and showing his visionary and leadership qualities in the world of business: he seeks to make a fortune. From the labor stumble that sends him to jail, the character evolves. The error committed does not make this man confident of himself and his abilities to reflect significantly on his way of acting, but rather challenges him to carry out repeated attempts to return to *Sanhattan*, a world to which he feels he belongs.

The first chapter of the series shows us that it is Dionisio, his father, who accompanies him in his misfortune. The father shapes another form of masculinity, one more emotional, more empathic, centered on the welfare of others and the pursuit of the common good. Dionisio is a protective father and concerned for his children, but also for the students of the educational establishment where he works. This sense of paternity allows him to offer his child an option to meet with what he feels is the true meaning of life: doing good, caring for others, disregarding material success. Dionisio is a haven, a welcoming person, but he is also seen by some of the remaining characters with distance and a certain skepticism, because within the framework of prevailing values – where the value of a person is measured in terms of power, their possessions, their conquests—he represents a weak position, a masculinity lacking firmness and possibilities of triumph.

Another male representation is built from the brother of Carlos, Francisco, professor of history in the same institution where his father works and to which his brother arrives as a substitute teacher. In him we find an intermediate character, halfway between the desire to prove to be like his father—a committed father, a self-sacrificing professional, an honest man—and the inner drive to be like his brother: a victor, a conqueror without commitments. Between these two counterpoints, we observe that this character lacks a clear definition of his own identity, and when he tries to look for it, he loses everything: wife, lover, family, reputation, work.

The drug trafficker Claudio is the antagonist of Carlos. With the same skills, but located on the opposite side, he revolves around the students of the school,

either to sell them drugs or to involve them in his business. Claudio has also achieved success in the underworld through his intelligence, his leadership and his drive. For this reason, he identifies in a student of Carlos, Micol, these characteristics and proposes to recruit him, which will place him in the center of a conflict, by the influence that little by little the substitute teacher begins to exert in his students. On the other hand, when Claudio discovers Carlos's past—the crime he committed—he feels that they are not alien beings and will seek, under different strategies, that the teacher put his financial skills and his knowledge of the business world at the service of his activity. Thus, one of the main plots in the series faces these two dominant masculinities that seek to influence students.

It is worth noting in this range of masculine expressions—more for its particularity than for its incidence in the plot—Ariel, one of the students. He is a young homosexual, which is known by his classmates, his teachers and his family. In this way, the series presents in the youth world an expression of masculinity outside the heteronormative canon, which serves to put the issue of acceptance of sexual diversity into society.

One of the points of attention of the series has to do with the interaction of the students with the modality of the masculinity represented in each one of the indicated characters. This point is interesting because the series has as its pivotal axis the experience of a secondary level course, i.e., a group of adolescents in full growth and definition of their identity. Implicitly, young people observe these expressions of masculinity, internalize them and relate them to their personality, in order to project their life in society. This is where the new code of values is shown, the teaching that the substitute teacher transmits to his students once he definitively assumes his role as teacher. The doctrine is that they can get out of the disadvantaged situation in which they find themselves, and do it through their own means, if they apply in effort, work and dedication.

The expression of these masculinities seems to be related to the options that young people have to deal with in adulthood. This is evidenced in the tension resulting from the relationship between the substitute teacher and the drug trafficker. These polarized options share an individualistic, triumphalist approach to

developing in the world. Although sometimes the intentions of the teacher are oriented to the collective –to save the school, to help the class–, finally their answers are coherent with the current neoliberal model.

INNOVATIVE APPROACHES AND TRADITIONAL DEVELOPMENTS

According to the above, we conclude that the three analyzed series condition their content to the sociopolitical context in which they are inscribed at the time of their production. For example, *Los 80* is born of the commemoration of the bicentennial of Chile. In this sense, the series aims at the general audience by its central protagonist: the patriarchal family as an identity element. It shows a standard Chilean family in which characters of different ages appear, facilitating a greater identification from the audience. The family neutralizes social differences by enrolling in the patriarchal model (father-mother-children), a cultural model that transcends all social classes and is found in the imaginary of all Chileans. *Los archivos del Cardenal*, on the other hand, is a series designed to commemorate the forty years of the coup of 1973. In this context, presenting a female protagonist as the axis of the story is coherent, because at that time women exercised a role: fulfilling their gender mandate, they went out in search of the detainees and provided material and affective support to their families. Finally, *El reemplazante* takes place within the framework of the student movement, whose main demand refers to a public and quality education. The series responds to this social interest by showing the situation of a subsidized private establishment of a peripheral commune of the capital, which allows to reflect critically on the situation of the educational system and, by extension, the inequality on which the Chilean society has been constructed.

Regarding gender representation built in the series, we observe at first some updating of conventional and stereotyped representations. This allows us to work out an innovative bet of the story: the gender roles of the patriarchal family in *Los 80* are stressed by the social and political context it faces, even breaking the couple; the protagonist of *Los archivos del Cardenal* is a young professional, independent, with clear political ideas and ready to fight and to die for them; *El reemplazante* presents the transformation of the protagonist from the

triumphant and individualistic male canon, typical of neoliberal society, to a masculine model protector and concerned for the common good.

Subsequently, with the development of the narratives, we notice how these initial proposals become in a more stereotyped, traditional gender representation, inscribed in the commercial melodrama. Thus, in spite of the avatars to which the family of *Los 80* is exposed and the tensions that occur in it, at the end of the series the group is united again, with the patriarch accompanying the son in the solution of problems and the mother waiting for them at home. In addition, the socio-political context faced by the family loses strength throughout the story, until disappearing after dramas that can be found at any time. Also, the protagonism of Claudia, an independent young woman with a clear life project, is diluted in the plot as the seasons happen, to the detriment of a story that focuses more on her affective relationships and that connects more with the usual form of representation of women. A similar situation is observed in *Los archivos del Cardenal*, where its protagonist, Laura, despite the complexity and depth that could be given to the character by her work and political choice, maintains characteristics related to the female stereotype, such as the high emotionality that guides her, a love triangle and motherhood as a decisive milestone in her life, a situation that finally distances her from both her work in the Vicariate and from resistance against the dictatorship. Finally, what is striking in the case of *El reemplazante* is the marked masculine protagonism arranged from the wide range of masculinities that serve to enhance the characteristics of the central character. In this arc, at the center of the narrative individuality is situated as a possibility of social promotion: usually individuality and personal triumph is associated to masculinity while concern for the other and domestic care are related to femininity (Menéndez & Zurián, 2014). Thus, we can see that archetypes are tools that economize the narrative and that, by themselves, function as specific containers of certain representations of gender, which are dynamized and updated according to the characteristics of each series and the context in which they generate.

From a perspective of the story in general, and from a particular gender perspective, the series analyzed were, at the outset, an original, novel, innovative bet on Chilean television. They opted for new approaches in which female characters were

diverse, acquired a greater prominence and seemed to surpass the classic assignment of roles. That is, they possessed dramatic perspectives that were more interesting and transgressive. They had high ratings, were well valued by the public and became current, provoking social debate around them. However, based on the analyzes made, the series became less risky productions in their approaches, with more conventional narratives, more simplified, taken from melodrama and telefilm, playing with stereotyped gender constructions. Even the audience declined in the final part of their broadcasts.

This situation opens the way for another reflection: the possibility of responding to the dilemma between innovation in audiovisual production (proposing

new issues of social interest, with modern and less stereotyped gender representations) and the commercial dimension of the television product. The success of these series (the success of the first four seasons of *Los 80* and the decrease of rating in the followings, as well as the cessation of production of *Los archivos del Cardenal* and *El reemplazante*), allows us to ask ourselves about the difficulty of maintaining in the Chilean television broadcast a series of national production with deep, critical and reflective content. From this perspective, broadening the field of study of television fiction series would also allow us to delve into these possibilities, linking them with other elements, such as the reception of audiences and their perception of an audiovisual product of these characteristics.

FOOTNOTES

1. C13: Canal 13 UC; CHV: Chilevisión; TVN: Televisión Nacional de Chile.

2. *La televisión es el medio de comunicación con mayor audiencia, principal forma de ocio de los chilenos, promedio 150 minutos/día/persona* [Television is the media with the highest audience, the main form of leisure for Chileans, average 150 minutes/day/person]. In <http://bit.ly/Uf6A7>

3. In its second season (2009), *Los 80* had in all its broadcastings about 22 rating points; in its first season (2011), *Los archivos del Cardenal* obtained a pick of audience of 17.5; and the pick of *El reemplazante* in its first season (2012) was 16.8. Source: Time Ibope.

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