

BEING AN LTGBIQ+ ACTIVIST AND SEXUAL NON-CONFORMIST.

AN APPROACH TO THE
TRANSFORMATION OF THEIR
POLITICAL HORIZONS

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This investigation was requested and financed by Fondo Alquimia.

We hope its findings allow us develop better support systems for the wide spectrum of activisms and movements present in our region. It represents a humble contribution towards activism sustainability and a Good-Living for everyone.

We would like to thank the author for her vision and commitment towards said movements, and Fondo Alquimia's endeavors.

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PRESENTATION

One of the consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic was that activist movements, more than ever, were faced with the harsh reality that the State has always prioritized Capital over life. In such an unprecedented context, we could observe how activist movements rose to the challenge and bolstered support networks que, undoubtedly, ushered a transformation of their political horizons.

“Being an LTGBIQ+ activist and sexual non-conformist. An approach to the transformation of their political horizons”, touches precisely upon said transformation of the LTGBIQ+ and sexual non-conformist movements. Whilst focusing on the concepts of community, sustainability and Good-Living, it approaches the subject from a standpoint critical of colonialist, capital and patriarchal domination. This approach is embraced in relation to the challenge of utopic and relational horizons that current times entail, whilst also emphasizing the importance of anti-racism in said context.

Several elements support the aforementioned:

“Collective organization has highlighted the importance of relations and community as a means to push back against capitalistic individualism. The adherence to an anti-racist approach has been bolstered, among other factors, by the criminal hoax that Machi Francisca Linconao Huircapán was a victim of (2013-2018); the visibility of the murder of Camilo Catrillanca (2018), the more than 300 monuments that were destroyed along the country during the 2019 political crisis, anti-migrant policies, and the debate that ensued in the context of the Constitutional Convention (2019-2021)”.

This goal, in the context of the LTGBIQ+, lesbian, trans and non-binary activist movements, was approached by means of a general objective, aimed at discovering the way in which COVID-19 has influenced the transformation of said movements' political horizons, emphasizing the confrontation of the aforementioned triple-domination and the manner in which it has nourished their ideas of Good-Living, which in turn are necessarily related to the idea of a sustainability in activism, that doesn't fragment the human/-

non-human elements present in their territories. The broadness of said objective is linked to the exploratory nature of this work, which employed a referential/interpretative framework to this end. Three exploratory dimensions were established, as a consequence of the problems, solutions and calls to action observed during the pandemic, which in turn allowed for the structuring of the specific objectives of the work. These are:

1.-Describing the problems of the LTGBIQ+ & sexual non-conformist communities in Chile have faced during the pandemic, and the impact on their political, economic, personal and interpersonal being.

2.- Identifying the solutions to said problems which were implemented during the pandemic, highlighting their thoughts and reflections regarding confrontation with the dominant order and the meaning behind their strategies and practices.

3.- Discern the calls to action, emphasizing the common concerns that arise regarding the triple-domination and Good-Living, and that way these concerns impact and transform their political horizons.

These objectives were focused on three levels of relating or interacting: **INTIMATE**, as in the level of interaction between activists of the same movement or organization; **ALIANCE**, as in the level of interaction between activists of different movements or organizations which share a common cause or identity; and **COMMUNITY**, as in the level of interaction between these communities and different activist movements, outside the LTGBIQ+ and sexual non-conformist cause, which can operate either as enablers or obstructors of their political actions.

From the basis of these interactions, different consequences were observed on their notions of Good-Living and sustainability, which can be thought of as transformative seeds for their political horizons. The process is related to the following research question:

How does the pandemic crisis context affect their confrontation of the triple-domination, regarding their notions of Good-Living and sustainability of their political horizons?

1- THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

It is structured in two chapters: The first is related to the approach to the genealogical-pandemical context, and the second gathered accounts from LTGBIQ+, lesbian, trans, etc. movements which developed and interacted during the pandemic.

The first chapter touched upon the following topics:

ONE. The political crisis which preceded the pandemic, and laid the foundations of care practices which could be observed during the pandemic. From this perspective, a critical stance is taken regarding the post-dictatorship distributive policies, neoliberalism, and its logics of inequality and precarisation, which entailed an approach to the pandemic that, unlike the State, was centered on life, and not Capital.

TWO. The relationship between humans and non-humans which is developed on the basis of the importance of the concepts of Good-Living and sustainability. This section defends the idea that they are interwoven concepts, since sustainability enables Good-Living, and without Good-Living there can be no sustainability. This section also briefly describe the relationship between Fondo Alquimia and activist movements, explaining that they are part of a diverse and complex network of activist that, despite their differences, are motivated by their joint desire to change the violent status-quo, by means of the transformation of everyone that partakes in the network.

In this segment, it also explained that the concept of 'sustainability' does not refer only to a financial aspect, but rather entails situating life as the central and most important value. This is precisely why the idea of community is so relevant, for it can act as a counterbalance for capitalist individualism, elevating the importance of relations between humans, non-humans and/or nature, which have been discarded by the triple domination.

THREE. Long standing colonialism. This section touches upon the manner in which colonizers imposed their order, regarding

nature/culture, therefore ensuring the submission of the former to their ambition, which in turn led to the degradation – and therefore, exploitation – of anybody who proposes or holds a different vision regarding the relationship with nature. The continuation of this to this day is described as “Long standing colonialism”.

“There, the idea of race reemerges, since it operates as a dividing yardstick, on the basis of the self-proclaimed racial superiority of the colonizer, who see themselves as the saviors of the colonized, helping them overcome their alleged “unevolvedness”, which entailed the eradication of their beliefs. In other words, the subordination of the indigenous peoples on the basis of their skin color, entailed that their culture (knowledge, beliefs, bodies, relationship with nature, dynamics between men and women, etc.) was suppressed by racism, and the consequences of this, to this day, are linked or affect the experiences of sexual nonconformists – as clearly racism has contributed to shaping society’s concepts of gender and sexuality”.

This analysis stems from a series of reflections and developments which point towards the existence of a long standing damage which must be repaired in order to halt its further development. Its healing will entail the display and strengthening of the importance of relations, community and nature, as tools to help organize our world. Therefore, it is of the utmost importance that this perspective is employed when analyzing the previously mentioned levels of interaction.

The second chapter focuses on the LTGBIQ+ and sexual nonconformist movements from the following standpoints:

ONE. A historical approximation to activism. This section observes the differences between organizations which have been linked to an institutionalization (as in linked to the State) and movements which are foreign to said process. This analysis is not aimed at reinforcing an antagonistic relation between both, but rather focus on common concerns in which neoliberalism and the colonial burden rise as a topic of debate. Especially relevant is the exclusion of certain sectors as a consequence of dominant privi-

leges related to race, class, and gender, that enable societal fragmentations that threaten sustainability, and therefore, the Good-Living.

TWO. Antiracist genealogy. This section analyzes certain findings related to connections between these movements, and criticism of racism. In broad terms, specific local and regional milestone events were highlighted, which permitted the inclusion of an anti-racist perspective. One of the most important events was the murder, during the pandemic, of trans lamien Emilia Bau, as it showed that an intersectional rendezvous aimed at accomplishing certain transformations, although complex, is possible. The section finalizes with the following thoughts:

“(…) One of the main positives of the crisis context was the reconsideration of the concept of ‘normality’ in our lives, and therefore, of our demands, and the way we struggle towards achieving them. Said ‘normality’ begs the following questions: Are we willing to carry on in the same manner as we have? And, if not, what will we do to change the course? How will we innovate in our struggles? And what aspects must we maintain?”

THREE. Being a sexual non-conformist during the pandemic. This experience is described through the analysis of micro and macropolitical practices that, despite certain struggles, contribute in a joint effort towards achieving transformations. Several practices of political incidence (and others foreign to said formula) are presented, which design and construct new collective imaginaries, including a subtopic related to the workshops held by Fondo Alquimia, during the years 2020 and 2021.



2- METHODOLOGICAL FRAMEWORK

At the start of this document, we touched upon the work's objectives and methodology. Regarding this, there are certain relevant points we wish to expand upon here:

ONE. The process is exploratory and descriptive, as the scene is subject to constant evolution and development.

TWO. The interpretative framework has three dimensions: diagnostics, solutions, and calls to action.

THREE. Open questions were prepared for each dimension, which in turn defined the framework of the investigation.

FOUR. An approved semi-structured question guideline was applied to collaborators and external collectives, some of which had worked with or been supported by Fondo Alquimia, whilst others had no relation with it. This, in 5 conversation sessions, which lasted 2 hours each.

FIVE. The conversation sessions were organized geographically: three in the Central Zone of Chile, with 13 groups of activists; one in the South of Chile, with 7 groups of activists; and finally one with ten external organizations, in the North, Center and South of Chile. A total of 30 groups participated.

SIX. The North Zone was not directly represented; however, three activist groups from said zone partook in the external organization conversation session, and they also participated through representatives of the Center Zone organizations, which also had presence in the North.

SEVEN. The conversation groups were held during what has been described as the “second stage of the pandemic”, one year after the workshops which were previously mentioned, held during the “first stage”.

EIGHT. In order to distance itself from colonial elements during the research, especially during the meetings held through Zoom, the following measures were implemented:

- Strengthening horizontality between the participants and the mediator. The latter – following the Participative Action Investigation (IAP) guidelines – took part in the conversations, as she was also an activist. The goal was to limit the traditional asymmetry between investigator and participants of the study.
- Strengthening the balance of interactions, with an emphasis on not imposing terms upon others, whilst at the same time making sure not to silence different opinions, as to avoid the risk of limiting proposed solutions to a single point of view, which could hamper the development of grassroots solutions and the process of healing that these meetings aspire to.

3- FINDINGS AND ANALYSIS

3.1. COMMON PROBLEMS AND SOLUTIONS OF BEING AN ACTIVIST

1. During the pandemic, a form of activism focused on urgency developed. The post-dictatorship State-logic of transferring government responsibilities to civil society organizations, entailed an inability of the State when confronted with social demands, and said situation only became worse on the pandemic began. In this context, activists are charged with ensuring their own survival, as the State perpetuates a model of inequality and therefore exacerbates practices associated with sexism, racism, lesbophobia, transphobia and homophobia – all of this, in a context where conservative fundamentalism is resurging or on the rise.

2. The highly demanding pandemic context hampered the agency of both independent and institutionalized activism. Nonetheless, it enabled the support of grassroots groups and other affected communities affected by the State's abandonment. This was accomplished through the establishment of activist networks and the creation of care spaces, which included therapeutic, economic and legal aid. Additionally, they kept in touch with their grassroots communities through the spreading and circulation of information. Qualitative and quantitative data was procured, regarding the different situations which

affected communities during the pandemic, which helped to shed light on the impressive capability they had to manage, face and resolve the urgencies that arose as a consequence of the pandemic crisis.

Regarding more detailed aspects, the conversations held allowed the study to adequately observe and describe the experience of being an activist in the Center, South and North Regions during the pandemic, which was linked to the common problems and concerns described in the Specific Objectives No 1 and 2 of this work.

The analysis of said conversations allowed us to identify three major issues which were commonly reported by activists:

Centralism, on the basis of hierarchies which enable asymmetric relations of power between different identities, demands and territories.

Conservative fundamentalism, in relation to the increased violence within family units, and public and institutional spaces. In the South, specifically, in some cases, there were several cases of transphobic and extractivist alliances, which cause Trans organizations of abandon that space.
Control social activists

A weakening of Activist social control, which allowed for the commission of acts that directly impinge minority rights. In the North Zone specifically, the merging of the House of Women and the House of Migrants was perceived as a step back in relation to the achievements of said communities.

3.2. SPECIFIC IDENTITARY AND TERRITORIAL ASPECTS OF BEING AN ACTIVIST

The negative elements of the development model were not dampened by the pandemic, and continued affecting activists in many ways. This led, in certain cases, to a transition from a form of activism centered around identity, to one aimed at strengthening and connecting identity struggles with more local wisdom and demands. In this context, the following aspects were deemed noteworthy:

1. In rural sectors, territorial issues have a

stronger impact and therefore influence local activism, linking them with specific practices which aid in the territorial struggles, which in turn contribute to nurturing the relation between body and territory.

2. Stress and attrition were more prevalent in urban sectors. There, activism tended to focus on identity-centered issues which affect said urban zones, and closely linked rural sectors.

3. The pandemic forced activism to focus more explicitly on survival issues, related to occupancy, food supply and health. This shed light on their particularly vulnerable situation, especially in the case of trans people, whom oftentimes were victims of hate speech and crimes, in addition to not being timely provided with State aid, and suffering from obstacles when it came to their hormone treatment. Additionally, in the case of trans children, there was a notable setback in their reparation process, among other issues.

3.3.COMMON CALLS TO ACTION

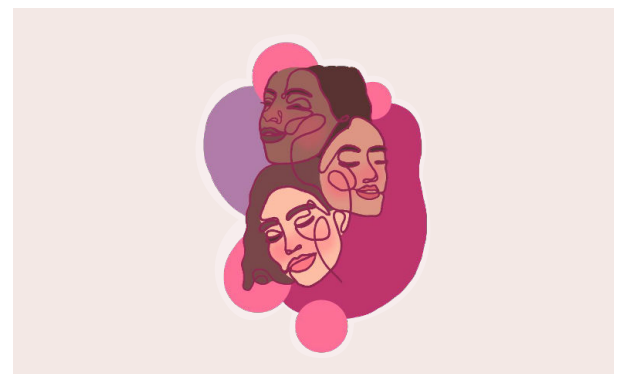
Operating on the basis of the diagnosed problems and solutions, “calls to action” were observed to have emerged. “Calls to action”, for the purpose of this research, should be understood as narratives and practices which aim at or enable the transformation of political horizons. In said context, the pandemic, combined with the political, economical and cultural violence it entailed, contributed to a series of deep reflections regarding the unjust societal order relation to the idea or concept of life. Despite clear identity-related differences, as a consequence of the different problems each community faces and must deal with, the common reflections and learnings showed that there is ground for the design of a shared path towards the end-goal of decolonizing the idea of life, which is reinforced by the urgent need to restructure the system of relations of power, which affect every one of its components.

These views contrast and nurture with/from each other, with none of them claiming to herald the one and only true path towards the transformation of said relations of power. On the contrary, the complexity of the process is assumed beforehand, recognizing that the encounter of viewpoints stemming

from such varied and diverse communities will never be exempt from some degree of tension. Nonetheless, the shared aim of widening the available avenues towards common goals, contributed to overcoming previously defined narrow-paths which are inextricably tied to the personal and identity struggles of each community, whilst simultaneously preserving the values which define said identities.

Calls to action:

- 1 Strengthening and encouraging meetings on an intimate level between Alliances and Communities, in order to enable the furtherance of trust and affection between them, especially in cases where we are faced with complex differences, in order to nurture collaboration; sharing strategies aimed at confronting the triple-domination; shed light on common concern, with an emphasis on constructing a new community paradigm in relation to care practices, including humans and non-humans.
- 2 Development of education and self-instruction processes, in relation to the combating of the triple domination, in order to, in turn, contribute to the balance which stems from reciprocity and its imperative and potential flow as a basis to loosen the hierarchies of the dominant order.
- 3 Reaffirming ideas pertaining to the construction of shared demands, in line with the ethics of honesty in the meetings with communities and political self-instruction, which aid in the affective-listening, in order to strengthen trust and regenerate social fabric.



3- CONCLUSIONS AND CHALLENGES

In this section, the investigation's central question is answered:

How does the pandemic crisis context affect their confrontation of the triple-domination, regarding their notions of Good-Living and sustainability of their political horizons?

Activisms have identified the menace of a capitalist model which has become ever more aggressive, and threatens the viability of life itself. Therefore, the idea of sustainability, as previously mentioned, is not centered around an economic aspect, but rather on the transformation of dimensions pertaining to collective wisdom or the manner in which we produce knowledge, and subjects permanently confronted with the constant threat of triple domination. Their voices are encouraging, for – at the same time that they denounce the failure of capitalist models – they show us that the expansion of its harmful practices have not defeated the utopic energy of their political horizons. This is of the utmost relevance, for, despite the 'apocalyptic' forecast, creative and imaginative ideas continue to thrive in relation to the importance of a new outlook on being and existing on our planet.

The aforementioned outlook is constructed on the basis of shared experiences and encounters held during the pandemic; of the realization of the limits of State contribution and their own activism; in the internal and interlinked tensions among communities stemming from differences in privilege, among other factors. From this exercise, recurring problems were identified, stemming from: centralist identity, territorial and ideological issues; a remarkable conservative fundamentalism as a consequence of the political and economic context of the country, which weakened activist social control, removing their ideas and shared wisdom pertaining to the value of alliances with different territories and communities.

From the same point of view, there is also a criticism of the existing competition between organizations for government funds; of the purely decorative antiracist policies; rooted

colonialism, to the point of identifying racism as a point of political fragmentation. Additionally, there is an analysis of conservative fundamentalism, due to the violence aimed at sexual non-conformist bodies, which in turn affects the territories, nature, and spirituality. These reflection broaden the understanding of the concepts of Good-Living and sustainability, in contrast to the occidental paradigms in which nature is not a part of the process, but rather is relegated to a secondary level. This entails the need for innovative approaches, languages and contents that contribute new ideas to the different systems of beliefs, integrating the rural aspect, the wisdom of indigenous people, the environmental cause, among others. This requires a levels of consciousness which can only be achieved at an Intimate level of Alliances and Communities, and that links to all aspects of life, in order to defend the central role of encounters between different communities.

The aforementioned ushers an analysis that, from a logic of reciprocity fractured by the pandemic due to the burden and stress that the demands of their grassroots communities caused, traverses from the consequences to the causes that motivated said fracture. Thus, the mental and physical health deterioration of activists, led to the implementation of a series of care or self-care measures, which influence their ideas regarding sustainability and which, from the basis of their own particular experiences, produced an advance in their statements towards meetings related to territorial defense. Given that, evidently, relationships are hardly ever linear, and that people do not start from the same place in a broad sense, these ideas appear as a sort of genealogical "patchwork" that, when verbalized or exteriorized, refine the contours of a design that recognizes and places value on the differences between them, in order to promote and construct imaginaries that attack both the structural and collective issues, as well as the specific needs of each community, that demand a prompt solution. These imaginaries –critical of thought systems which propose a single interpretation of the world – revealed their approach to groups affected by extractivism and racism, showing the materiality of a critique of capitalism and colonialism that attempts to overcome merely identity demands.

Here, we wish to highlight the importance of a critique that does not focus exclusively on identity issues, as this approach favors a counter-hegemonic analysis of the fragmentary dominant model which has only seen itself strengthened during and as a consequence of the pandemic. In line with this, peripheral content and practices were distributed/informed in relation to the historical demands of these groups – something which was unthinkable merely one or two decades ago – such as, for instance, transvestites fighting against migratory racism; curricular programs that educate trans children in relation to capitalism and racism; lesbians complementing the discourse against the compulsory heterosexual regime, with a sociability that does not exclude nature from the equation, and that raises question regarding their own role as a colonizing agent. The aforementioned stems from a connection with territorial conflicts, which open the door to environmental struggles as a part of the political agenda, in relation to the a different development model which places a higher emphasis on collective Good-Living as a basis for sustainability.

In this context, utopian political horizons are born, which envision – in the words of some of the participants – a world where there is no racism, where nature is not merely at the service of humankind, and it is understood that lesbophobia, transphobia, homophobia, and the hierarchical reproduction of social constructs is perpetuated and supported by the concept of “race”.

Along this path, and from an interregnum standpoint, sexual non-conformist activisms signal the changes that, especially at a micro-political level, are required for a transformation of the existing order, and that challenge them to find alternatives to rally the resistance in order to “reexist” (a merging of the words

“resist” and “exist”). This “reexistence” is counter-hegemonic, and therefore – it is assumed – will lead all of us that partake in the system of relations of power to confront the neo-fascist movements on a global scale, as well as vigilant States that broaden police powers and defends the interests of the bourgeoisie. It is the dying order that must finally die, which – if it is not approach from a counter-hegemonical standpoint, as several activist voices pointed out – will simply manage to adapt and rearrange the colonial order. On the other hand, the new order which must finally be born, is a restructuring of the systems of meaning and representation of reality, enabling new mandates to contribute to and construct a Good-Living that, first and foremost, is the result of a collective and communal effort.

Finally, those who partook in these meetings, represent that which the State has not managed to do. The topics that they have raised, are that issues that State has discarded. The reflections that stem from them, are the reflections that the neoliberal State will never realize, as they threaten its own survival. Their *raison d’être* is to continue the struggle for an internal change, and a change of a community that nourishes from these interactions. This is precisely the reason why some are so adamant in the defense of the imaginary that is born from the autonomy of the community, in the counter-hegemonic and subversive ideas that these activisms embody, and that represent, to a certain extent, the processes of transformation that resounded with such strength after October 18th, 2019, leading the charge in a process that aims to breach the existing fragments between identity, economic and eco-social dimensions.



We wish to thank the activists, organizations and collectives that participated in this study. Without them, this knowledge-production process would not have been possible.



We invite you to read the research and results of this work in full, at the following link.

