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Branding the Chilean nation : socio-cultural change, national identity and international image

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Propositions

1. Chile's neoliberal modernization has always presented a serious legitimacy problem. Although it has produced many economic, social and cultural changes that have been generally catalogued as successful, the point remains that it found its roots in the Pinochet dictatorship and hence it was the result of an authoritarian imposition.
2. Since democratic restoration in 1990 Chilean politics has been largely characterized by its consensus-oriented nature. This has resulted in a strengthening of the political centre, leaving the radical Right and Left on the fringes of the public forum.
3. The Pinochet dictatorship and the four Concertación administrations have in common that they have all promised the achievement of full development and the subsequent abandonment of Chile's third world status. As that achievement of goal has proved to be very elusive, the timetable for reaching the promised first world status has been constantly postponed in time.
4. The simultaneous existence of a very repressive dictatorship and an extremely market-oriented economic system in Chile resulted in a quite paradoxical situation: while during the Pinochet years the country became extremely isolated in political and diplomatic terms, Chile became very well incorporated into the world economy as a result of its flourishing foreign trade.
5. A nation's reputation operates in tandem with its people's identity and idiosyncrasy. Image and identity also bond through nation-branding given that the construction of a message to convey a country's standing requires the selection of historical events, psychological traits, and behavioural trends among others.
6. Instead of unifying the country, the process of nation-branding, based on the promotion of the image of a liberal Chile, have made clear that there are two main visions about which of the country's features should have to be stressed. So while some sectors in society agree in stressing the country's socio-economic success, others are almost ashamed for the neoliberal nature of Chilean development.
7. The self-representation of Chile as being a successful country ('país ganador') has visibly damaged the country's insertion with the rest of Latin America: it has become a permanent obstacle in its regional standing, commerce and diplomatic relations.
8. One of the key elements upon which Chileans have constructed their self-image of exceptionality has been the country's long tradition of political stability and institutional rule which started as soon as in the early decades of the twentieth century. This is one of the reasons why many Chileans find so difficult to accept and to understand the very existence and longevity of Pinochet's authoritarian rule.
9. The idea of being the 'jaguars of Latin America', a country erroneously located in a bad vicinity, has risen in the minds of many Chileans and foreigners that have fostered the idea of Chile as a model to be imitated. This newly acquired arrogance is a novel angle of Chile's centuries-long self perception of being exceptional.
10. Although the present-day Chilean student movement is furiously condemning neoliberal rule in the country, it is in a sense the product of the strongly rooted market-oriented mentality installed by neoliberalism as students in fact are demanding as true consumers 'quality for their money'.