

One foot in the streets and the other on Facebook: Digital constructions of popular identity

*Un pie en la calle y otro en Facebook:
construcciones digitales de identidad
popular*

*Um pé na rua e outro no Facebook:
construções digitais da
identidade popular*

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Following the Chilean social outburst of 2019, social movements positioned themselves from a popular stance. This study examined the construction of popular identity among organizations of the pobladores in Las Condes, Chile, through co-present and digital practices on Facebook between 2019 and 2021. A digital ethnography was conducted using multiple strategies, including a historical approach and content analysis. The findings show a hybrid form of collective action that expressed a heterogeneous and digitalized popular identity. Historical memory, critiques of neoliberalized popular identifications, and an emerging form of popular connective action stood out.

KEYWORDS: Popular identity, collective action, connective action, social outburst, Facebook.

Tras el estallido social chileno de 2019, los movimientos sociales se situaron desde lo popular. En esta investigación se indagó en la construcción de identidad popular de organizaciones de pobladores de Las Condes, en Chile, a partir de prácticas copresenciales y digitales en Facebook entre 2019 y 2021. Se condujo una etnografía digital que combinó estrategias, incluyendo un enfoque histórico y análisis de contenido. Los hallazgos muestran una acción colectiva híbrida, que expresó identidad popular heterogénea y digitalizada. Destacó la memoria histórica, las críticas a identificaciones populares neoliberalizadas y una acción conectiva popular emergente.

PALABRAS CLAVE: Identidad popular, acción colectiva, acción conectiva, estallido social, Facebook.

Após a revolta social chilena de 2019, os movimentos sociais se posicionaram a partir do povo. Esta pesquisa investigou a construção da identidade popular de organizações de moradores de Las Condes, no Chile, a partir de práticas presenciais e digitais no Facebook entre 2019 e 2021. Foi realizada uma etnografia digital que combinou estratégias, incluindo uma abordagem histórica e análise de conteúdo. Os resultados revelam uma ação coletiva híbrida, que expressou uma identidade popular heterogênea e digitalizada. Destacaram-se a memória histórica, as críticas às identificações populares neoliberalizadas e uma ação conectiva popular emergente.

PALAVRAS-CHAVE: Identidade popular, ação coletiva, ação conectiva, protesto social, Facebook.

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INTRODUCTION

During the Chilean social outburst of October 2019, one striking feature was the extensive role of activism on digital social networks (Calderón et al., 2021). As early as 2011, youth organizations used these platforms during the rise of the student movement (Amador-Baquiro & Muñoz-González, 2021), and even earlier, websites had already served as spaces for activism in various struggles (Millaleo & Velasco, 2013). We could say that disputes have taken place not only in the streets, but also in digital spaces. Even the social movement of *pobladores* in Chile has appropriated these information and communication technologies (ICTs) in its collective action, an issue that has not been sufficiently researched.

CHILEAN POPULAR REVOLT OF 2019

The social outburst, also called an uprising or revolt, marked recent history—we prefer the term *popular revolt*, because it was a historically grounded process, not a spontaneous explosion. It was a conjuncture of street protests and digital activism in which discourses and practices associated with the struggle of the popular were reused on a massive scale. It was the expression of accumulated discontent caused by inequalities in the neoliberal system imposed by Chile's last dictatorship of 1973-1990 (Ponce, 2020), amid an incomplete democratization in the postdictatorship (Pinto Vallejos, 2019).

These processes have led to the precarization and depoliticization of citizens in various spheres, such as work, social security, education, health, and housing (Ruiz Encina & Boccardo Bosoni, 2020). Given this, it became evident that the popular revolt expressed dynamics of politicization associated with class struggle (Ponce, 2020). As Venables and Alfaro (2022) argued, protesters in the revolt identified themselves as part of the *pueblo* when protesting, rather than merely as citizens or people in general.

POBLADORES OF LAS CONDES

Within the popular movement, the pobladores movement is among those most affected by neoliberalism's impoverishing, depoliticizing, and individualizing effects (Garcés, 2019); this includes pobladores of Las Condes, a municipality made up mostly of affluent and middle-class neighborhoods, known for being home to a large share of the ruling class of the capital city. It covers a territory of 99 km² in northeastern Santiago. According to the Ministry of Social Development, the 2017 census recorded 294 838 inhabitants in Las Condes and projected 341 183 by 2023; it also reported an income poverty rate of 0.19 % and a multidimensional poverty rate of 4.23 % (Biblioteca del Congreso Nacional de Chile, 2023). Therefore, the presence of economically poor people in the area is low.

However, popular sectors do exist in this territory and have a dense history of social conflict (Potocnyak Rodríguez, 2009). Among them are *pobladores* –subjects who live in *poblaciones*, land occupations, camps or villas (economically poor neighborhoods); in this case, the villas of Colón, Fleming, Los Municipales, Las Cooperativas, among others, which have been rendered invisible and stigmatized. During the dictatorship, for example, there were processes of neighborhood eradication and unequal resettlement with negative effects, such as the disappearance of Villa San Luis in Las Condes (Chiara & Pulgar, 2008). In the face of segregation and gentrification, as Potocnyak Rodríguez (2009) notes, associativity has been central, both in the origins of their poblaciones and in the organized struggle against the dictatorship and everyday resistance in the postdictatorship.

Thus, popular organizations of pobladores in Las Condes joined the popular revolt of 2019. A few months after it began, we came across the collective *Hasta que la dignidad se haga costumbre*. Pobladores de Las Condes through digital networks, one of the popular organizations in the Colón Oriente neighborhood, and later took part in the communal kitchen it organized during the COVID-19 pandemic. We then came across another organization: Coordinadora Fleming. We were interested in their constant use of identifications such as *pueblo* and *popular*, both in co-present settings and on Facebook.

Therefore, regarding the brief role of platforms in their recent history, we arrived at the following question: how do two organizations of pobladores in Las Condes, Santiago de Chile, construct and express popular identity through their collective action in everyday co-present and digital practices on Facebook during the period between October 2019 and December 2021?

The objectives were: 1) to characterize the collective action of popular organizations in Las Condes with a profile on Facebook; 2) to analyze the role of everyday co-present and digital practices in the collective action of popular organizations in Las Condes, and 3) to analyze how discourses on popular identity among organizations of pobladores in Las Condes are manifested, and the ideological discourses, social inequalities, and/or class relations against which they are brought into tension.

First, this article presents a literature review on communicative processes, collective action mediated by information and communication technologies, and identity; it then describes the digital ethnography conducted. Next, the results presented here focus on digital practices in the construction of popular identity. Finally, conclusions and reflections for future research are presented.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Capitalism has undergone various transformations: following the crisis of developmentalist states in Latin America and of the Fordist productive system, neoliberal capitalism became dominant (Ruiz Encina & Boccardo Bosoni, 2020). This transformation has given rise to various conceptualizations for understanding contemporary capitalism in its post-Fordist form, including communicative capitalism, surveillance capitalism, platform capitalism, cognitive capitalism, among others, where the focus is on extracting data from users' activity in ICTs (Rodríguez, 2025).

From a techno-skeptical position, Dean (2005) argues that the communicative capitalism of digital communication converges with the deterioration of democracy through domination of the information flow, the fantasy of political participation, and the everyday exploitation of

users' labor power. Similar consequences follow from the notion of *surveillance capitalism* (Zuboff, 2021, as cited in Rodríguez, 2025), where social control based on extracted data is central. However, some techno-optimistic, though critical, proposals, such as that of Castells (2009), suggest that digital communication enables horizontality, democratization, and mass self-communication, countering the concentrated power of traditional mass media.

From a position that is also critical, but neither techno-skeptical nor techno-optimistic, the notion of *platform capitalism* has been proposed, in which platforms are defined as “digital infrastructures that enable two or more groups to interact” (Srnicek, 2021, p. 45). Platforms favor privileged capital accumulation by positioning themselves between users and becoming the very terrain of interactions and data extraction, with data serving as raw material that can be commodified and worked on (Srnicek, 2021). All of this would be possible because, according to Miller and Horst, 2021, the digital is that which has been translated into or developed in binary code, producing multiple particularities and differences. In this case, it entails the digitalization of relations among social actors.

Along these lines, van Dijck (2016) argues that a culture of connectivity has emerged, entailing a connected and technologized sociality. This technologization is driven by capitalist corporations through mechanisms that standardize use, such as algorithmic governance, ownership regimes, business models and the pre-programmed design of platforms. For example, Facebook has entailed an ideological imperative to *share* private and public life online, attaching a commercial and corporate dimension to connections between people (van Dijck, 2016).

However, the culture of connectivity affects not only users, but also the digital media ecosystem itself, which evolves according to patterns of use (van Dijck, 2016); connected sociality therefore enables agency and emerging spaces of resistance on the platforms' own terrain. In this sense, popular sectors have historically related in different ways to modernization processes, notably through the social appropriation of technology (Neüman, 2008), via popular, alternative (Sáez Baeza, 2018), and counter-hegemonic communication (Paiva, 2008), in opposition to the hegemonic constructions of traditional mass media such as television, the print press, and radio (Castells, 2009).

Likewise, the Internet and connective media have led to the proliferation of social movements on the Internet and of the Internet (Valencia Rincón & García Corredor, 2014), enabling other forms of constructing power and resisting it in the digital public space (Sierra Caballero & Sola-Morales, 2020). To understand how the pobladores of Las Condes confronted this issue within the context of the popular revolt of 2019, this study used two analytical categories from a critical and interdisciplinary perspective grounded in cultural studies: collective action and popular identity.

COLLECTIVE ACTION

Canonical social science approaches, such as those of Touraine and Tarrow, have proposed useful conceptions of collective action dimensions in social movements beyond the classical labor movement, such as mobilizing structures, resource mobilization, framing processes, among others (Bruno, 2016). This theoretical boom derived from the empirical proliferation of diverse social movements considered novel in the final third of the twentieth century because their collective action advanced claims that were more identity-, cultural-, or postmaterial-based (Pleyers, 2018).

Moving into the twenty-first century, the use of ICTs in the collective action of contemporary social movements has proliferated, including computers, the Internet, platforms, digital social networks, and smartphones, and research in this area has proliferated as well (Ortiz Galindo, 2016). This has led to several debates, including those over the various dimensions of collective action, since these technologies have brought changes in terms of co-presence, horizontality, identity, among other elements (Pleyers, 2018).

Regarding co-presence, studies indicate that, although the use of ICTs has increased in social movements after 2010, local co-present action has not been abandoned (Pleyers, 2018). On the contrary, in the cases of the Egyptian Revolution, the Indignados in Spain, and the Occupy Movement in the United States, digital action has reoriented local co-present practices, increasing the occupation of public squares and street protests (Gerbaudo, 2012). Tufekci (2017), drawing on

several cases such as the 2013 protests in Turkey, even argues that digital activism is genuinely politically effective for movements based on co-present action, although they may undergo profound transformations through the use of digital media.

Regarding horizontality, Castells (2009) proposed that power can flow horizontally in these movements thanks to mass self-communication in digital communication. However, although mass self-communication has enabled greater horizontality, forms of soft leadership emerge from below that create emotional choreographies of assembly, staging exercises of power within the movements themselves (Gerbaudo, 2012). In turn, van Dijck (2016) argues that mass self-communication is effective but hierarchical, because on platforms such as Facebook the algorithm rewards notoriety and the exposure of private life.

On the other hand, the relationship between ICT-mediated collective action and the dimension of identity has also been problematized (Priante et al., 2018). Bennett and Segerberg (2012), for their part, proposed the existence of three types of contemporary collective action: 1) a logic of conventional collective action, the oldest, based on formal and defined organizational structures, co-present coordination, and fixed collective identities; 2) a logic of connective action, hegemonic today, based on informal and undefined structures, digital communication, and individual identities; and finally, 3) a hybrid logic, which synthesizes elements of the previous two.

Gerbaudo and Treré (2015), in turn, argue that Bennett and Segerberg's proposal of connective action, which suggests that the political use of ICTs does not necessarily require a collective identity, grants excessive predominance to their individualizing effect, since various movements, such as #YoSoy132 in Mexico, as well as Occupy in the United States and 15M in Spain, among others, show that appeals to collective identities are central. Likewise, Priante et al. (2018), in their systematic review of collective action through ICTs and identity, propose that the categories of collective action and connective action are not mutually exclusive. In this sense, the different types of collective and connective action can coexist as hybrid collective action, corresponding to the third type described by Bennett and Segerberg (2012). The notion of *connective action* is analytically useful for understanding

what is distinctive about constructions of collective identity through connective media, even when digitalization may be partial and action overall may be hybrid.

Studies on the relationship between ICT-mediated collective action and identity, meanwhile, have focused in different ways on different levels of identity: individual, social, and collective; corresponding, respectively, to elements of the self, the relationship between the self and a group, and the constitution of an “us” (Priante et al., 2018).

POPULAR IDENTITY

Popular identity forms part of debates on popular cultures and their historical transformations. Research on popular identity has declined in prevalence and been relegated to certain specific fields and disciplines. Notably, not only studies of social movements have tended to epistemologically obscure the popular and class struggle (Piva, 2020; Viguera, 2009), but studies of popular cultures have as well (Alabarces, 2021). Following Alabarces (2021), structural class conditions under capitalism remain; however, in academic work, the need to critique the romanticization of the popular and of populism has been conflated with relativizing the centrality of social classes.

This makes it useful to state what is meant by *popular* in order to delimit popular identity. As Hall (1984) argues, the popular is not simply what the people say or do, in an essentialist sense, nor what the market defines as popular in terms of mass consumption and popularity; rather, it refers to the complex relationship of social classes with the dominant culture. In other words, the popular is best defined in relation to class struggle in culture (Hall, 1984). Williams (2019), for his part, shows that culture is not fixed within a social formation and is defined by the dynamics of residual, dominant, and emergent elements. As Martín-Barbero (1987) suggested, Williams’s distinction makes it possible to see transformations in popular cultures in their relationship with the mass, for example, in the face of the historical advent of media such as the press and television. It is therefore useful for examining the relationship among organizations, cultural configurations, and popular identity.

Salazar and Pinto (2014) argue that popular identity is an ongoing being-in-common. This is a process that develops from local histories that condense subaltern social positions—that is, a class identity of subjects in a shared context of domination and poverty—oriented toward shared appropriations of themselves, among themselves, and for themselves (Illanes, 1993). This processual dimension of ongoing being-in-common implies that identities may change, since, as Hall (2003) suggests, identities are appropriations of circulating discourses in contexts of power relations; that is, they are better understood as processes of identification.

Neoliberal modernization has entailed the globalization of technology and the dominant culture, which has brought transformations in identities, with individualization predominating (Larraín, 2011). This has weakened traditional identities such as nation and social class, configuring an individualistic and fluid model of identity and affecting popular identity (Salazar, 2002). However, because these transformations are ongoing, identifications with traditional and collective discourses can coexist with identifications with emerging, even individualized, discourses. Due to these changes, a relational approach to identity is needed, one that considers the individual while including a collective, cultural, and historical perspective (Larraín, 2011).

Before the global predominance of digital social networks, Torres Carrillo (2006) showed that the construction of collective identity in popular organizations takes place through associativity, an organizational origin myth, an emancipatory orientation, projects, and ritualizations. Regarding the latter, ritualizations are shared practices that become part of everyday life through repetition over time because they are guided by political meanings aimed at improving society (Torres Carrillo, 2006). ICTs and platforms can be expected to affect these ritualizations, making a focus on everyday practices useful for investigating the popular construction of collective identity in popular organizations in Las Condes.

METHODOLOGY

This article draws on a digital ethnography that we conducted with two popular organizations of pobladores in Las Condes, from the Colón and Fleming sectors in Santiago de Chile: the *Hasta que la dignidad se haga costumbre*. Pobladores de Las Condes collective (HQLD collective) and Coordinadora Fleming (Coordinadora F). Now, the digital is complex and its influence should not be overestimated (Pink et al., 2019); therefore, digital ethnography benefits from the interdisciplinary use of diverse strategies (Palazuelos Rojo et al., 2024). Thus, alongside the need to use historiographic elements to adequately study popular sectors (Iñigo Carrera, 2008), both a social history approach and associated instruments were included.

The method integrated co-present participant observation of the organization that remained active at the time of the study in 2024-2025 (HQLD collective); nonparticipant observation of digital social networks (the Facebook pages of Coordinadora F and HQLD collective); interviews, and qualitative content analysis. As for the instruments, we used field notes (taken on a cell phone and transferred to Excel) and matrices for data collection and analysis (Excel), as well as historiographic instruments: timelines (Miro) and analytical periodization, together with treating their Facebook pages, as digital sources, as a digital historical archive.

The research focused on the period from October 18, 2019, to December 2021. The first date marked the beginning of the 2019 revolt, when the movement was on the rise. The second corresponds to the weeks following the presidential election, when that force was in decline. Facebook was selected as the platform because Coordinadora F does not have an Instagram profile and HQLD collective has more followers on Facebook, which meant greater interactivity with users.

The inclusion of both was based on selecting popular organizations with local-level impact within the period under study, with an active Facebook profile, from different subsectors (Colón and Fleming), and organizationally different (one was structured as a collective, the other as a coordination). Including two organizations prevented us from overemphasizing particular organizational limitations and thus

allowed us to cover empirical material dense enough to capture a shared experience of the pobladores.

Regarding the process, although we have lived in Las Condes for much of our lives, we do not belong to the neighborhoods of these organizations. Our relationship with the pobladores of Las Condes was initially neighborly and later political, but it did not become personal until the pandemic, nor research-oriented until the postpandemic period. Because of our prior immersion in the field and our relative lack of knowledge of their experiences, we chose an ethnographic perspective, also as an ethical consideration, to bring forward and respect their own voices. Even without an initial intention to study them, our professional background in community psychology enabled us to undertake a cautious immersion, which led to systematic participant observation with field notes after the interview informed consent forms had been signed.

We first came to know one of the organizations, the HQLD collective, through Facebook during the pandemic. Around 2021, we volunteered at its communal kitchen, which corresponded to a stage of familiarization in which we established ties with some members. When that project ended, the HQLD collective became a cultural center, which we joined as members, consolidating ties that continue to this day. There we met one of the founders of Coordinadora F, with whom we developed cordial and working relationships, even though we still did not know anyone else from that organization.

Part of the data collection took place during those phases of familiarization and relationship-building; the study was then conducted between 2024-2025. Our prior immersion in one organization and incipient connection with the other led us to include in the research those with whom we had had some co-present interaction. Thus, a phase of participant observation began in the organization that remained active, the HQLD collective, while we gathered information about the other. In this context, we began conducting semistructured interviews, four in total, which were recorded and anonymized: with Ana and Luz (HQLD collective), and Carla and Juan (Coordinadora F). For the transcription, the TurboScribe AI was used first, after which the text it produced was corrected manually.

The material for the content analysis consisted of the field notebook, digital sources, and interview transcripts, and several procedures were carried out. Preliminary analytical reflections were recorded daily in the field notebook. In addition, as reviews of the Facebook archive-pages and the notebook were systematized, codes emerged that reoriented the observation toward the organization's origin, milestones, and achievements; everyday and co-present practices; role in conjunctures (outburst-pandemic-constituent process); everyday interactivity with other actors; communicative and/or political uses of Facebook; expressed values and beliefs; notions of itself as a political organization; explicit and implicit references to collective identity; ideological discourses, inequalities, and class tensions.

Subsequently, the data were reorganized and the content was coded more abstractly and selectively in order to identify what the organizations shared and how they differed. The codes and reflections from this phase made it possible to distinguish everyday, co-present, and digital practices, as well as recurrent forms of identification. Timelines were created for each organization; when cross-referenced with the content coding, they enabled the characterization of shared processes. Given the relationship between the analytical categories—collective action and popular identity—and the empirical material, it was necessary to conceptualize the results by developing explanatory terms that accurately capture the observed digital constructions of popular identities.

RESULTS

Digital practices on Facebook

A shared experience of hybrid collective action across three periods was identified, in which the dynamic uses of the platform were shaped by political opportunities:

1. *Pobladores* as part of the general revolt (October 2019 to March 2020).
2. Inward-looking digital retreat during the pandemic (March 2020 to September 2020).

3. Commemorative co-present reactivation (October 2020 to December 2021).

Digital practices referring to co-present practices

Posts referring to co-present practices stood out. As Ana notes: “when this social media thing came about, it was like the boost the collective got to make itself known and to make all the activities it was doing known”. Thus, communicating what had been done in co-present settings had a political purpose: to make local actions visible through digital public space (Sierra Caballero & Sola-Morales, 2020). It also had the effect of encoding what had been done in co-present practices as binary information, generating multiple particularities and differences both online and offline (Miller & Horst, 2021).

Various types of co-present practices were digitalized: territorial visibility in local public space, associativity rooted in local customs, ritualizations in the form of projects, repertoires of the historical pobladores movement (such as communal kitchens), and symbolic productions of collective memory. These expressed territorial identifications strongly oriented toward a classical sense of the working class (Salazar, 2002), which expresses a historical differentiation within the area; as Luz pointed out: “there are pobladores here, there are people who work, there are people who work for them [the ruling class that lives nearby], the maids, the gardeners, the drivers ... the ones who work for them in the company, there in retail”.

In this sense, popular connective action was manifested: collective action mediated by Facebook’s connected sociality (van Dijck, 2016), which digitalized both practices and a collective identity referring to a popular *us* (Gerbaudo & Treré, 2015). As Ana said: “and we started posting on social media ... basically to show through that space, which was the one we had, what was happening here”.

Ritualized digital practices

Some digital practices were repeated frequently for various purposes, including posting their own content and posting external content. What linked them over time were political interests, both their own and those of their imagined audience, with content oriented toward the

recognition and appropriation of shared class elements (Illanes, 1993). As Figure 1 shows, the HQLD collective selected as its profile photo an image of one of its own banners, which reads “En pie de lucha, hasta que la dignidad se haga costumbre” [“Standing and fighting, until dignity becomes a habit”] and appears as a thumbnail in every post; for its cover photo, meanwhile, it selected an image of neighbors mobilized in a march that it had called to.

FIGURE 1
PROFILE AND COVER PICTURES OF THE HQLD COLLECTIVE



Source: Hasta que la dignidad, se haga costumbre (n.d.).

Here, the construction of popular identity is framed by the repetition of practices enabled by the platform. As van Dijck (2016) notes, the requirement to share content in timeline format is predesigned into Facebook. However, popular identity was constructed not only through predetermined configurations, but through popular creativity in the organizations’ transmission of meanings as users with agency. This configured a popular connective action through repetition, although determined by the standardization of the platform’s format (van Dijck, 2016), at the risk of the commodification of their data (Srnicek, 2021), yet nevertheless expressed in ritualized repetitions with emancipatory meaning (Torres Carrillo, 2006). Thus, a modality of popular identity

was established that was displayed in a temporally fragmented manner but with political articulation.

Collective memory

The organizations also expressed collective memory, no longer necessarily referring to co-present practices or repetitions, but through meanings created and developed digitally, oriented toward a popular identity with historicity that sought effects both online and offline (Miller & Horst, 2021). They encoded popular connectivity through the historical popular articulation of the pobladores' experience with a class experience shared with other movements, as a form of appropriating their own history, among and for themselves (Illanes, 1993). As Figure 2 shows, Coordinadora F highlighted popular historicity as a field of dispute.

FIGURE 2
FACEBOOK POST OF COORDINADORA FLEMING



Source: Coordinadora Fleming (2019).

The digitalization of memory against historical inequalities and dominant discourses shows the continuing relevance of the apparently residual class struggle, which is frequently relegated to the labor movement and work (Viguera, 2009). This evokes the associativity at the

origins of the poblaciones of Las Condes and of the struggle against the dictatorship (Potocnyak Rodríguez, 2009), configuring a popular identification associated with something residual (Williams, 2019). As Luz said about the pandemic: “we had to learn to stand in solidarity after so many years when we were super self-centered and it was [just] us, because that’s what the dictatorship wanted”. However, this also shows critiques of popular identifications that have assimilated elements of the dominant culture (Williams, 2019). These identifications may therefore assimilate neoliberal and global subjective characteristics in the process of negotiating with hegemonic culture.

Popular associativity through interactions

There were several dynamics of interaction on the platform with users and other organizations, which facilitated the construction of digital popular associativity. As Juan said, being present on Facebook had the connective and counter-hegemonic purpose of “reaching not only those who are there in person listening, discussing, making decisions, but also those who are at home, maybe using Facebook, scrolling there, looking for things”.

Associativity, however, was mediated bidirectionally between user-organizations and individual users, expressing mass self-communication in Castells’s terms, but not complete horizontality (van Dijck, 2016). As Gerbaudo (2012) argues, assembly choreographies were configured in which the organizations mobilized emotions and prompted collective actions in co-present territories. Users shared and reposted some of the organizations’ posts on their own profiles and among their contacts, left comments supporting their activities and opinions, and reacted emotionally to the posts, generally by clicking the available “like”, “love”, or “sad” reaction buttons.

Thus, popular identity was configured through digital interpellations at the individual, social, and collective levels (Priante et al., 2018), regarding the need to resist together. These were creatively articulated appropriations of collective identity meanings, through popular identifications containing emergent elements in relation to the classical notion of social class and linked to an intersectional perspective, in order to connect diverse oppressions condensed in the población, such

as segregation, territorial inequality, and structural injustice. As Ana noted: “All the struggles came together there ... accumulated anger, it was accumulated injustice ... it was the students, the women, the workers, the professionals. It was everyone, lots of *pobladores*”.

On the other hand, the platform facilitated popular associativity for the emergence of new possibilities; for example, for Juan, Facebook was the: “only way to keep doing this counter-information, to carry this discourse, which is counter-hegemonic all the time ... the only way to make change, to create new spaces, to do other things, think other things”.

Multimodality

Another practice, implicit up to this point, was the use of different modes of discourse, not only textual ones, but visual, auditory and spatial (O’Halloran, 2012). Although an exhaustive multimodal analysis is beyond the scope of this article, several reflections are pertinent.

In the visual mode, popular identity is expressed through graphics, photographs, or videos, such as crowds in the streets, popular icons, colors that evoke traditional social movements (black, red, green, and purple) and old or emerging political symbols (Mapuche and Chilean flags, raised feminist fist, Perro Matapacos, black Chilean flags, eyes weeping blood in the shape of Chile, and the gesture of covering one eye). Consumer icons also appear, such as Spiderman, the Joker, and Pikachu; these express critical appropriations of the dominant culture (Williams, 2019).

In the auditory mode, the sounds and musicalities of protest and folklore appear, mainly in videos. There are also voice-overs used to call people to or describe actions carried out, denounce injustices, or put forward slogans; messages of critical interpellation in harsher tones, and messages thanking neighbors in softer tones.

In the spatial mode, images show local streets in Las Condes and other parts of the city, for example, Plaza Dignidad (the symbolic center of the city of Santiago, which often represents the boundary between social classes). Video images show movement within protest spaces, while still images show co-present activities or places, both nationally and locally.

Following van Dijck (2016), the technical possibilities of the Facebook platform affect the modes in which discourse is composed; for example, they allow a text to be shared together with an image. Even so, the organizations did not use their Facebook pages according to the platform's business model, but rather as a creative archive of their collective identity within the available format. A form of appropriation for themselves of the material available (Illanes, 1993), although mediated through the consumption of the Internet and the device that supports it.

Within this creativity, graphic humor and memes, popular aesthetics, iconic images, emojis, among other elements, were recurrent; however, textual content remained in use. In short, a heterogeneous discourse of popular identity encoded multimodally. As Figure 3 shows, Coordinadora F shared a video from another organization about solidarity initiatives during protests held in Plaza Dignidad, featuring protest sounds, crowds in public space, critical voices, symbols, among other elements; the organization added a reflective text on positive values of the people

FIGURE 3
VIDEO SHARED BY COORDINADORA FLEMING



Source: Coordinadora Fleming (2020).

and a critique of those who, from an individualist perspective, do not understand that class identity.

Construction of power based on soft and strong leadership

There were practices of political articulation that expressed diverse forms of power-building, both emergent and conventional. The organizations exercised soft leadership through the digital mobilization of emotions such as anger, hope, perceptions of injustice, and overcoming fear; as well as through horizontal participation, guided by a notion of equal power among neighbors but producing effects on others' actions (Gerbaudo, 2012). As Juan noted, Coordinadora F preferred a role as a "spokesperson" for "many voices" that nevertheless amounted to local leadership.

However, conventional power-building practices with strong leadership were also evident, especially in the HQLD collective. Contestation over positions of political representation was expressed, as in the constituent process and municipal and presidential elections, communicated through electoral campaigns in posts –that is, guided by a classical notion of taking power. This form of power-building explicitly expressed popular identity in several posts. For example, two HQLD collective participants were candidates for municipal councilor positions, with slogans oriented toward popular power: "Popular Council Seats", "A pobladora on the municipal council", and "From social mobilization to communal power" (Hasta que la dignidad, se haga costumbre. Pobladores de Las Condes, n.d.).

Alternative communication

Finally, the organizations engaged in alternative communication through their Facebook pages. First, they questioned the monopoly and disinformation of traditional hegemonic mass media, especially television. As Juan said: "it's an official reality ... all the time, the morning shows, the news channels, are creating communication and constructing a reality".

Against this, through counter-hegemonic communication (Paiva, 2008), the organizations challenged dominant discourses, inequalities, injustices, and civil society's established consensus with the dominant

ideology. They posted critiques of news events and critical readings of dominant discourses, reporting on the effects of multiple injustices affecting the pobladores and other popular sectors in Chile, such as precarious informal or self-employed work, unemployment, neighborhood subalternization through gentrification, deteriorated public services, among others.

Communicative actions of the pobladores movement, that are simultaneously political (Kavada, 2016), aimed at prompting users to identify with counter-hegemonic discourses (Williams, 2019). Juan explained: “How do you use Facebook and social media channels to give them another meaning? By doing counter-information, counterculture. That’s where you stand when you post a banner, when you post a message, a discourse”.

CONCLUSIONS

The role of digital practices after the popular revolt of 2019 was important in renewing discourses of popular identity among subaltern classes in twenty-first-century Chile. Platform capitalism expresses the complexity of contemporary class struggle, in which the digital territories provided by companies themselves socially connect groups that resist, negotiate, and form consensus around capitalist ideology, hegemonic discourses, and diverse conditions of oppression.

A field of tensions has emerged from platform capitalism and its culture of connectivity, and the pobladores movement, like other movements, has taken advantage of it. For the pobladores of Las Condes, participating in the popular revolt of 2019 meant not only a resurgence of organized associativity in public space in a conventional form, recalling the local struggle against the dictatorship, but also becoming part of an emerging connectivity guided by a collective sense of class that intersectionally articulates struggles against the neoliberal gentrification of their territory and social segregation.

Digital practices involved an interweaving of communicative and political purposes as two aspects of the same thing: the politicization of communication and the communication of the political (Kavada, 2016). Thus, although the pobladores movement has historically been

characterized by the predominance of territorially dense struggles, it also appeared as a digitalized social movement. However, the digitalization of practices and popular identity produced not only data and digital effects, but also local effects and actions by other actors.

Popular identity was expressed on the capitalist platform Facebook, constructed through technologized sociality, standardized formalization, and its socioeconomic infrastructure (van Dijck, 2016). Even with the risk that companies in the platform ecosystem extract their data for undesired purposes (Srnicsek, 2021; van Dijck, 2016). Nevertheless, a popular identity constructed creatively, finding spaces such as territorial visibility in the digital public space, collective memory, associativity through digital interactions, multimodal encoding, the digital contestation of soft and strong power, and alternative digital communication.

However, the popular connective action of the pobladores addressed not only isolated Facebook users but also contributed to the circulation, within the segmented digital media ecosystem, of a discourse of a popular we, configuring a still underexplored popular-digital field. In turn, digitalized popular identity is an ongoing being-in-common that is neither complete nor definitive, but traversed by other possible identifications in a globalized world and exposed to multiple relations available through connected sociality. This reveals a digitalized, technologized class struggle in which popular sectors can creatively dispute counter-hegemony through digital media (Paiva, 2008), although subject to limitations arising from each platform, effective reception, and conjunctural political opportunities. Other studies of popular connective action could analyze popular identity on other digital social network platforms, including generative AI platforms.

On the other hand, hybrid collective action, with a strong conventional pole and an emerging connective pole, facilitated the construction of a popular identity that was also hybrid, based on heterogeneous identifications. Its heterogeneity consisted of a dynamic between the expression of a residual popular identity (based on historical memory) and an emerging counter-hegemonic popular identity, both articulated in tension against popular identifications that accept the dominant neoliberal discourse (Williams, 2019). Thus, a tension was observed between the organizations and a partial neoliberalization of popular

identity. Whether this could substantively be considered a dominant neoliberal popular identity or not requires further investigation in future research. It was probably in response to this risk that popular organizations in Las Condes contested the field of identity with such force and through so many means.

Platforms, then, can serve as creative, albeit ephemeral, archives for popular sectors, but not everything involved pertains to identity. In this regard, it is crucial to investigate other dimensions of popular connective action as an emerging problem, not exclusive to the pobladores, that can reveal contemporary forms of class struggle. As social structures and inequalities deepen, digitalized social movements proliferate and popular connective action opens up a place for itself in history.

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