The finding of the section “Arquitectura y Reconstrucción” of Concepción’s newspaper El Sur during the 60s, confirms that given their scale and scope, mass media are the main imaginaries producers. Departing from this idea, this research examines how the chronicles presented in those pages generated not only the materialization of the city’s modern architecture, but also the idea of progress related to it.

The future’s changing image is set by the facts that reach the news...
(Gomis, 1991:191)

Published since 1882 in the city of Concepción (Chile), towards the mid-twentieth century El Sur newspaper was the most important means of regional communication. As such, it is a primary source document barely considered by architectural and urban historiography. Towards 1960, after the great earthquake, its media hierarchy was increasing due to the innovations promoted by its director, who included in the paper other aspects of Biobío region’s reality, presenting news related to architectural and urban purposes, ideas, actions and proposals accompanied by a graphical display exhorting prosperity. It is a fact that visual communication is an essential tool for the urban phenomena (Vitta, 1999:244) and this was

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2 Between 1959 and 1965, the period this text addresses, the director was Emilio Filippi Muratto.
not the first time the local press\textsuperscript{3} resorted to these devices; however, the systematic inclusion (since March 1961) of the section "Arquitectura y Reconstrucción"\textsuperscript{4} [Architecture and Reconstruction] was the ideal opportunity to promote another vision of the city’s transformation.

Since this new section was published regularly on Tuesdays, architectural-related images and news were organized between pages 8 and 11. A black band distinguished it, with its name typed in white lettering – a font similar to the bodoni, but thickened and in italics. At first glance, the pieces published in "Arquitectura y Reconstrucción" were merely informative. Usually mixed with construction advertisements, its content – distributed in eight columns – occupied the entire page. In a newspaper ruse, an image filling 3 to 4 columns was displayed just below the issue’s date, sitting over a heading that had nothing to do with what the picture was presenting, but that impacted the reader even if its explanation was developed in adjacent texts.

As in other sections of the newspaper, no bylines were given, neither correspondents nor teams and authors. Most likely, architects themselves sent the examples published, while journalists edited the semantics and decided the right opportunity for printing, although results did not always prove consistent (\textsc{Fig. 1}).

The section’s analysis was developed in accordance with theories that understand journalistic information as resulting from an interpretation of its social milieu (Gomis, 1991:17) and, therefore, “able to bring to the ‘present’ a variety of objects absent right here right now” (Berger; Luckmann, 1984:58). In this sense, and considering that "Arquitectura y Reconstrucción" was issued as a mass medium intended to ordinary citizens, the following words elude a critical approach to its architecture and focus instead on the pieces that reported the most atypical examples to the city of Concepción. Its assessment starts from the content published in these pages, which led the reader into a modern city’s imaginary where different paths were overlapped: architecture in writing, in graphics and, of course, linked to utopia.

\textsuperscript{3} Beyond the scope of this paper; documents reviewed in previous editions of \textit{El Sur} and \textit{La Patria} (published in Concepción between 1923 and 1969).

\textsuperscript{4} The revised material comprises issues of the newspaper \textit{El Sur} published between 1961 and 1964, found in the archive of the Library Luis Ocampo, Universidad de Concepción; this collection is incomplete (a usual situation in other local repositories), causing rare but consistent involuntary omissions in the development of this text.
MODERNITY IN THREE ACTS: URBANISM,
ARCHITECTURE AND CONSTRUCTION CONNECTED
TO LOCAL IMAGINATION

Even if not explicit, it can be assumed that the Cámara Chilena de la Construcción [Chilean Construction Chamber] supported the “Arquitectura y Reconstrucción” section. This fact can be noticed, on the one hand, in the section’s name, the advertising accompanying it and the extension acquired by the new products attached to the main news, consistent with the idea of raising the city after the 1960s earthquake. On the other hand, its content shows that the actors contributing to the development of Chilean cities at the time increased, since after the events of May 1960 – damaging 1/3 of Concepción’s property – the building sector expanded, facing larger-scale private projects that complemented Corvi’s public efforts since 1953, so that both areas found their space in the editorial guideline.

A paragraph on Tuesday January 8, 1963, provides hints on the subject, illuminating the possible cause enabling this publication when under the heading “Reconstruction continues”, it stated: “Concepción, nearly three years after the seismic tragedy that destroyed the city on different points (...) has become a city of modern architectural lines.”5 The piece provided also statistics with demographic rates and investment figures by industries and construction companies. It is clear that the city’s resilient spirit after the 1960s events was the engine behind this market sector’s newly exhibited spirit, encouraging construction – and thus real estate – renewal, something that could be read throughout the four years the section lasted.

Along the period in which it was published, “Arquitectura y Reconstrucción” displays different stages. A first one, openly devoted to construction; the following, strongly linked to architecture, and the final one – featuring extra pages – combining the previous while editing the major unions’ efforts for promoting Concepción and its region’s growth and development. In all of them, the value of the news was hoisted as a filter for “the common sense of an era” (Rojas Mix, 2006:89) and, although today some could be considered obsolete, these were able then to reconcile a novelty’s eccentricity with daily reality, always promoting the growth of construction.

In that sense, technological revelations that presaged the new era can be reviewed, as for example the unsupported pneumatic house (14 March 1961) or where to set the stairway in a modern house (4 April 1961). The section also referred to the benefits of measuring acoustic capabilities prior to construction, the versatility that plastic concrete would bring, the invention of a “gigantic machine” that would accelerate construction (January 23, 1962), the anti-insect screens developed by the local industry (August 7, 1962), and even the advantages of using a conditioning system ran by solar energy (July 24, 1962).

As for urban issues, in different opportunities El Sur echoed Concepción’s master plan. It made the front-page on several occasions and its discussion was also among the news, although included in the pages of the ”Local Chronicles,” slipping away from the section in question. Within the paper, urbanism was a concrete subject but distant from architectural issues which seconded it; so it was included in the Tuesday’s columns only when the project’s scale was justified, and provided it presented the construction industry as a key factor in the city’s progress. So it was showed by the 1961 editions, when Concepción’s Regional Masterplan was explained together with the construction impulse it boosted (June 25), foreshadowing at the
same time the benefits that raising buildings five or more floors tall would bring, making Concepción a "modern and hygienic city," and certainly striving to link the content of the text to the displayed image: a sketch of the future Carriel Sur airport’s restaurant.

This was not the only example where images and texts were disengaged. Later, thanks to the new corvi rules featuring short-term loans, a different piece of news suggested the possibility of remodeling the city’s old neighborhoods including a panoramic view with a giant bridge, highways and residential blocks closer to the corbusian proposal for Marseille than to local reality. According to its editors, this was possible “thanks to the resources offered by corvi… if fitted to an urban remodeling including 70 m² homes” (FIG. 2). Another gesture towards modern and functionalist European urbanism reached its highest on February 19, 1963, when Gropius siedlungen – designed for the early 20th century Germany – was matched with a proposal for the town of San Pedro, presented as Concepción’s ‘satellite city.’

Sporadic interviews with professionals published within the section were the ties between architecture and the urban sphere, as when in 1963 the headline “The advent of Architecture”6 was presented. The page showed the architect Roberto Goycoolea, then an urbanist at the Municipality, who summed up modern architecture through a historical overview, while minor pieces warned about the local masterplan setting guidelines for reconstruction; a large image of a private house7 with a vaulted reinforced concrete shell ceiling was examined in amazement as “the only specimen of its kind in the country.” Furthermore, the architect Osvaldo Cáceres commented on the “beneficial influence [that] the tragedy of 1939 exercised on the city”8 and was genuinely pleased with urban progress since 1940, nostalgic that Concepción suffered from “an urban disorder” since its “...inhabitants took refuge in a concrete city, with no sufficient trees or parks... among buildings without order nor beauty...” while also, loyal to his socialist ideology, argued for the need to "raise the city’s issues on new programmatic bases where all its inhabitants could participate as a community, (...) to undertake its material renewal...."

The new thriving city, growing high and modern, was a permanent element in the discourse of “Arquitectura y Reconstrucción,” spreading to the rest of the newspaper. As for local relevant architectural developments, the hexagonal house on the corner of Victoria and Edmundo Larenas streets was published.9 Meanwhile, August 7, 1962, the project by Alejandro Rodríguez was announced under the text “New example of architectural progress: ‘Barros’ building will be constructed.” However, the proposal would remain only in the realm of ideas, showing a single nine-story housing block intended for the

7 On San Martin street between Castellón and Colo Colo. Although its author was omitted, this was a work by the architect Osvaldo Cáceres. “Arquitectura y Reconstrucción,” El Sur, January 1, 1963, p. 31.
9 The project, published on January 4, 1961, was attributed to Alejandro Rodríguez and Javier Gutiérrez Gutiérrez, and was republished after its completion, on February 5, 1963, this time attributed to Osvaldo Cáceres. See "Building and Reconstruction," in "Arquitectura y Reconstrucción", El Sur, dates cited above.
University of Concepción’s personnel. The building “El Inca,” erected in the corner of Tucapel and Chacabuco streets by the architect Jorge Labarca, was also granted several issues, being able to assemble through them its total construction process. Much of the generation of Chilean architects living in Concepción contributed to the section: together with the already mentioned Rodríguez, Cáceres and Labarca, works and projects by Ricardo Hempel, Roberto Goycoolea or Julio Ramos Lira, among others, were introduced.

However, other proposals that left their imprint on the city and deserved to be news were excluded: the Tucapel building, which made it to the newspaper’s main cover, or the FICUC, which was only published through a photograph on January 1, 1963. And, acknowledging the newspaper’s regional character, Santiago’s ECLAC building didn’t get the space that professional historiography would grant to it later, relegating the news to only two brief reviews (January 22 and April 9, 1963), the latter only to highlight the design of its garden “as the most beautiful one in Chile.”

By contrast, “Arquitectura y Reconstrucción” reported a graphical repertoire of cutting-edge developments highlighted by their projective and formal audacity. This miscellany, which would only reach the level of ideas, was aimed essentially to meet the needs that local society demanded for, there its richness. In this range, the housing proposal published on January 2, 1962 signed by the office Cáceres, García Faure de Cáceres and Gutiérrez Gutiérrez showed a bold gesture for Concepción back then: the authors posited four slabs in the center of a block, settled them on píloas and breaking any previous local architectural tradition, proposed a modern complex uniting a colossal mixed program including two hundred houses, underground parking, green spaces, inner terraces and commercial areas — in a formal reduction, local-scaled version of the Ville Radieuse (Fig. 3).

Another original design would be found in August 7, 1962, when the theatre-circus-cinerama to be built in the corner of Rengo and Freire streets, on a fifty-meters-wide plot, was published. It would accommodate 3,000 people and, among its technical advances, promised a panoramic three-dimensional
cinema and shifting platforms that would facilitate its stage adaptation depending on the type of show. In terms of function, a two-story ring enclosed the theater’s perimeter, which stood out given its height and particular semicircular arched structure, similar to the neighboring Municipal Market. The detailed piece included the financial study for its execution and, although narrated in the first person, its authorship was anonymous; nonetheless, the following day, a highlight published by the same newspaper explained that this monumental work came from a group of neighbors who had offered the project to the rector of the University of Concepción. The intrigue, however, was only partially cleared, given this new piece didn’t expand on anything about the author of such a fantastic project (FIG. 4).

Of course, that was not the only idea for a theater for the people of Concepción; another mixed-character proposal appeared drawn by Ramos Lira for the symphony orchestra’s headquarters. The novelty here lies in the formal and functional combination of a commercial area with a ten-story building containing offices, a conservatory, basements for chamber orchestras, a theater emerging behind the block (with a tortoiseshell-like ceiling) and terraces on Aníbal Pinto street, surrounding the architectural parti in a science-fiction film atmosphere rather than meeting the local rigorous climate.

The force achieved by El Sur given its distribution and readership facilitated the recreation of a local imaginary and, in that sense, could accomplish in the “Arquitectura y Reconstrucción” section the expression of desires and ambitions that society required (De Moraes, 2007). In the special edition issued on the occasion of the earthquake’s 25th anniversary January 24, 1939, the daily printed a logo on every page. It was a graphic gesture reproducing a skyscraper topped by the expression “1/4 of a century into progress,” confirming the achievements of the regional construction, in addition to inciting local prosperity through a geometric, pure and high architecture.

10 “Clarification to the motion of a Theater-Circus”, El Sur, August 8, 1962.
(FIG. 5). Naturally this spirit of a new modern subject was not only present on that one occasion and exceeded the architectural news to achieve also retail promotion, adopted for advertising the skyscraper scenery, a graphic – that although consistent with the spirit of the times – was far from the medium-sized city image that Concepción had back then (FIG. 6).

The two unions that fostered this section strengthened its contents during 1963’s first period. Two major national conventions were in the spotlight: the first, in mid-March 1963 on the occasion of the opening of the Consejo Nacional de la Cámara de la Construcción [Construction Chamber National Council] – including an issue of over twenty page. The second one, two months later, gathered architects in a national meeting. The first special issue, in addition to the assessment by the Chamber’s president Camilo Pérez de Arce highlighting the sector’s regional momentum, shows that the modern spirit was strengthened by headlines accompanying different photographs, among which the construction of the temple dedicated to San José, by Jorge Larrain Latorre was emphasized, emerging as “one of the city’s most beautiful [churches],” and considered “the best in the Southern region.”

The other event promoted was the Convención Nacional de Arquitectos [Architects National Convention], organized by the regional delegation of the Colegio de Arquitectos [Architects Association], then chaired by Osvaldo Cáceres and held in Concepción between 21st and 23rd of May 1963. With advertisements published late in the previous year12, “Arquitectura y Reconstrucción” devoted, thereafter and regularly, a segment informing on the processes prior to the meeting. While contemporary literature has already reviewed the results of this congress, which convened over a hundred professionals and whose guest of honor was none other than the Mexican architect and painter Juan O’Gorman, El Sur had exclusive and simultaneous coverage of the activities, reaching general audiences and installing on the public debate the very architectural discussion circulating back then (Baczko, 1991:31). This becomes noticeable on the February 1962 headline reading “The professional facing his time,” which in the regional president’s words invited – in addition to the architects’ standard constructive responsibilities — to define the moral and social attitudes to remedy the obstacles in housing and planning issues, also concerned about the responsibility that universities could have facing these issues.

The following editions reported five exhibitions13 held (of the masterplan for the area of Concepción and the region; of professional practice throughout the country; of unexecuted projects; of architects’ pictorial work; and of regional building materials, where wood restated its local preeminence) and the awards granted.14

13 The exhibits were developed very close to one another: in the Third Army Division building, in the Intendencia and in the Municipality of Concepción.
14 The winners were three corvi projects for mixed buildings, while the Alberto Risopatrón prize was awarded to Fernando Silva (graduate of the Catholic University) with the project “Central metropolitan transport terminal.” See editions of May 23 and 28.
The largest variety of opinions and proposals appeared on the May 20 issue, where the third section was entirely devoted to the convention. The events exceeded the special section and took the front page, whereas in its columns an intention could be read that would only crystallize six years later: the need for an architecture school in the south. In the same issue, Osvaldo Cáceres severe text entitled “The architect’s work on present times” not only asserted that idea, but also – with still valid words – questioned the quality of education, and recommended structuring an organization among universities which, alongside the Colegio de Arquitectos, could really plan and focus on the teaching of architecture, supporting the urgent need to decentralize it from Santiago.

Thereafter, “Arquitectura y Reconstrucción” continued being published but changed gradually its content, losing the vigor reached in the years immediately after the 1960 earthquake to pursue other tasks related to the construction guild. The progressive disappearance of the section did not mean architectural news were forgotten, but were diluted into the general content and remained so until two decades later, when another section by professionals of that long-awaited southern school of architecture (consummated in UBB), occupied the void under the name of “Arquitectura y Urbanismo” [Architecture and Urbanism].

**MASS CULTURE MODERN PROPHETS**
If we agree that the image of the future is based on the facts that reach the news, then journalism could be assumed as proactive rather than just informative. And if under this light the contents of “Arquitectura y Reconstrucción” are reviewed, its texts and images confirm that temporal lapse in which a second Chilean architectural modernity took place (Eliash and Moreno, 1989). The contents promoted by El Sur in the 60s designed an imaginary of progress and modernity with dissimilar views and – sometimes – somewhat vague in its discourse.
However, this section had the privilege of having a unique opportunity within a mass medium and in an atmosphere scarce of professional publications.\footnote{Arquitectura y Construcción ceased in 1950, Técnica y Construcción appeared in 1960 and Planificación, Vivienda, Ciudad, Región and AUCA in late 1965. Only the Revista de la Construcción – promoted also in the section here discussed – was published starting in June 1962 due to its Construction’s Chamber-related activities.}

In "Arquitectura y Reconstrucción" it can be verified that the imaginary preceded social usage and if it was at first a graphic intention, sooner or later became a material one, but undoubtedly its editions always led to cultural prosperity and the modernity that impacted all readers, ergo local citizens (FIGS. 7, 8). ARQ

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