THE CYBERSYN PROJECT IN CHILE DURING THE SALVADOR ALLENDE YEARS– AN INNOVATIVE MIX OF TECHNOLOGICAL, ECONOMIC AND POLITICAL DIMENSIONS

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dx.doi.org/10.18374/JIMS-24-1.5

ABSTRACT

The Cybersyn project, initiated in Chile in the 1970s under the government of Salvador Allende, aimed to use cybernetics to optimize the country's supply chains. At the heart of the project was the Opsroom, a futuristic control center in Santiago, designed to enable decision-makers to monitor product flows and make decisions based on data received in real-time. Although the Cybersyn project showed promising capabilities, it encountered numerous technological and political obstacles. The military coup of 1973 put an end to the socialist experiment in Chile and to the Cybersyn project, whose infrastructure was dismantled. Despite its premature termination, the Cybersyn project remains a benchmark in studies of the relationship between technology, economics and politics, and is often cited as a precursor of ERP systems and the Internet of Things (IoT). Its concepts, based on decentralized management and rapid decision-making, continue to inspire contemporary thinking on corporate governance in an increasingly digital world.

Keywords: *Chile, Cybernetics, Cybersyn project, industrial and logistical planning, Opsroom, Salvador Allende, supply chain.*

1. INTRODUCTION

In the early 1970s, the deep-seated aspirations of the Chilean people revealed a strong yearning for change in the face of persistent social inequalities. Salvador Allende's election on September 4, 1970, emerged from a complex socio-economic context, as Chile had long been characterized by oligarchic domination that kept a significant portion of the population in poverty. During this period, the country was heavily reliant on the exploitation of its natural resources, with the profits largely siphoned off by foreign multinationals, which fueled growing discontent among workers and farmers. Mobilizing to demand better living conditions, the extreme tension in the country created an environment where Allende's vision of wealth redistribution through bold reforms gained popular support. His project of democratic socialism promised to overturn the existing economic and social structures (Vidal Molina & Odekerken, 2024). Thus, the collective mobilization for equality and social justice became the driving force behind a peaceful revolution, raising hopes for a better future for generations to come.

Salvador Allende's reforms, which included the nationalization of key industries, were met with rapidly rising inflation and fierce political opposition, both domestically and internationally. Tensions intensified, fueled by the economic interests of those whose privileges were threatened. To address these challenges, Salvador Allende envisioned innovative solutions, including the Cybersyn project (or *proyecto Synco* in Spanish), which represents a futuristic approach to supply chain management. The project leverages advancements in cybernetics to provide an alternative to traditional bureaucracy, creating a real-time communication system between government and business (Espejo, 2014). More than just a technological initiative, the Cybersyn project aimed to reinvent the management of the Chilean economy, making decision-making more responsive and integrating workers more fully into industrial and logistical processes. Through a network of teletypewriters, data on production and consumption could be analyzed instantaneously, enabling decision-makers to make informed decisions.

Although the Cybersyn project was short-lived, ending in 1973 following the bloody military *coup* led by Augusto Pinochet, it encapsulates the aspirations of an era defined by a desire for social justice and technological advancement. This innovative initiative raises essential questions about the role of innovation in a country's social and economic transformation through algorithmic regulation (Loeber, 2018). Reflecting on the lessons learned from this unique experience, we can consider how modern technologies might