

REMEMBERING PINOCHET: CHILE'S CONTESTED
MEMORIES OF THE DICTATORSHIP

by

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My thesis will examine how Chileans of different social, ethnic, and political backgrounds remember the Pinochet dictatorship of 1973 to 1990 and how the events and memories of that time period are contested. My paper will also examine secondary memories by looking at how Chileans who were not alive during the Pinochet regime remember the dictatorship. In order to gain a thorough understanding of how Chileans remember the Pinochet regime and how Chile should move towards reconciliation I conducted extensive interviews with a variety of Chileans about these topics and also visited numerous memorial sights within Chile.

This study of Chilean memories is important because the dictatorship continues to be the most controversial and contested period of time in Chile's recent history. Collective memories are points of contestation and struggle between different social and political groups, but are relevant and important for understanding the past and contextualizing the events of the past with current social and political struggles.

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Introduction

As the crisp winter sun slowly peeks over the Andes Mountains, Santiago, Chile begins to wake up. People cram onto the metro and stare at their cell phones on their way to work. Maids and domestic workers make their way towards their boss's homes in Providencia, Business men head towards the city center to offices forty stories above the bustling city. Mothers hurry to get their children ready for school, and thieves look around for the next purse to snatch. Marcelo leaves his ramshackle house near the central train station and drives his granddaughter to school before heading to work. Antonio unlocks the front door of the *Fundación Presidente Pinochet* where he serves as director. Ana greets the first few visitors who trickle through the somber doors of the *Museo de la Memoria y los Derechos Humanos*. Miguel has been at work since three am at the cactus farm that he works at, and his wife Antonia has long since left to take the long bus ride into town where she works as a maid.

An hour west of Santiago the hectic port city of Valparaiso has begun to wake up. The morning fog still hangs over the city which casts an eerie haziness on the barges which float into the port. Up in the hills of Valparaiso the residents of cardboard and corrugated tin houses wake up and begin the daily hustle of selling trinkets to tourists, working at the port, or scrounging for food and scrap metals to keep their families alive. In the resort neighborhood of Reñaca, upscale apartments sit empty and unused, waiting for the weekend when the owners will arrive from Santiago. Silvio looks over his schedule of meetings for the day while having coffee with his wife in their sixteenth story apartment with a view of the shimmering ocean. Like every day for the last fifty years, Maximo arrives to work at the Universidad Católica. Catalina

rushes to her high school to avoid missing her history class where they are in the middle of the unit on the Pinochet dictatorship and its aftermath. An anonymous young man wearing a mask walks to meet his friends holding a fire bomb and kerosene. The day is September 11th, 2013, and by the end of the day forty two people will be fighting for their lives and two hundred and sixty four will be arrested for protesting the events of exactly forty years ago. On September 11th, 1973 at 8:32 AM the Moneda presidential palace in Santiago was attacked by the armed forces of Chile. A few short hours later, President Salvador Allende was dead, and a military junta had assumed power of the country.

After three controversial and chaotic years of Salvador Allende serving as president, General Augusto Pinochet seized power of the Chilean government on September 11th 1973, and ruled the country as a dictator until he was voted out of office in 1990. His seventeen year regime was marked with state sponsored violence, murder, and disappearances, yet he managed to retain a certain degree of popularity. Even today, Chileans cannot agree on what exactly happened during the Pinochet years and whether or not he was beneficial for their country. Although the Pinochet government was indeed repressive and violent, Pinochet implemented reforms that set the stage for what many viewed as great economic development which led to today Chile being considered one of the most economically successful countries in Latin America. Besides the economic changes that occurred during the dictatorship, many Chileans associated Pinochet's rule with Chile's return to order since under the Allende government the country had existed in a state of social and economic chaos. When Pinochet became president, he played off of the public's fear of chaos, disorder,

economic troubles, and socialism to portray himself as the father of a modern Chile, the bringer of progress, and the protector of traditional Chilean family values. While some people viewed Pinochet as being the savior of Chile, many others viewed him as an evil and corrupt dictator who plunged their previously democratic nation into a period of violence and repression. In discussing the dictatorship it is important to understand that nothing about this topic is completely black and white. Chileans cannot agree on whether Pinochet was the worst thing to ever happen to Chile, or the best, and both sides have valid arguments to support their opinions. The Pinochet dictatorship is the most controversial time period in Chile's recent history, and the memories of it continue to be relevant in issues that plague the country today.

Why I Chose this Topic

Most people spend their freshman year of college figuring out how to get along with their roommate in a cramped dorm room, learning that procrastinating term papers is a bad idea, and struggling through early morning lecture classes. I spent the majority of my freshmen year living, studying, and working in Valparaiso, Chile. The decision to study abroad in Chile was an easy one for me: I had grown up seeing pictures of the beautiful nature in Chile in National Geographic, and in high school I became close friends with a Chilean family living in my hometown who spoke constantly about the beauty of their country. When I arrived in Chile, I instantly fell in love with the culture, food, and people. The host family that I lived with treated me like a daughter, my university was full of friendly and intelligent students and professors, and my volunteer job as an English teacher was both challenging and rewarding.

Prior to moving to Chile I had read extensively about the history and culture of the country, and in doing that research I learned about the Allende government and the subsequent Pinochet regime. Before I lived in Chile, I assumed that the Pinochet dictatorship was an event that was in the past and had little or no effect on the average Chilean's daily life. I had only lived in Valparaiso one week when I witnessed my first conversation about the dictatorship. I was at lunch with a friend's family, and half of the family were *Pinochetistas* (Pinochet supporters), and the other half were vehemently anti-Pinochet. What started out as a civil discussion soon turned into a shouting match. Throughout my time in Chile I saw this scene play out countless times; the disagreements were not always as dramatic as that first lunchtime shouting match, but they were always just as passionate. I learned that a huge divide exists between pro-Pinochet Chileans and anti-Pinochet Chileans, and that each side has many variations of opinion. Both sides have valid reasons for their opinions which has created a tricky grey area in Chile today. After living in Chile for six months it became clear to me that although the Pinochet dictatorship ended years ago, it is still an issue that affects Chileans on a daily basis. I began to think critically about what about Pinochet allowed Chileans to have such differing opinions about him. Throughout my college career I have been fascinated with the Pinochet regime and its lasting affects in Chile, and so when it came time to pick a thesis topic I already knew what mine had to be.

Research Methods

This paper will examine how Chileans of different social, economic, and political backgrounds remember the Pinochet dictatorship and how events and memories are contested. Secondary memories will also be examined by looking at how

Chileans who were not alive during the Pinochet regime remember the dictatorship. It is important to learn from the stories and opinions of people who lived through the dictatorship, because those people have invaluable knowledge about the functioning of their country during those tumultuous years, as well as unique insights into the experience of the average Chilean during the Pinochet years. It is also important to listen to and analyze the experiences and opinions of the younger generation of Chileans who did not live through the dictatorship, because many young people have grown up hearing detailed accounts of what happened from their families or have learned about the topic in school and have been able to form strong opinions about what occurred in their country. Both primary and secondary accounts of life under the dictatorship are important in order to gain a more complete understanding of the horrendous things which occurred, as well as understand some of the positive aspects of the Pinochet regime.

A large portion of the information in this paper will be from interviews which I conducted in the summer of 2013 in Chile in the cities of Viña del Mar, Valparaiso, Santiago, and Requinoa. I spent about a month conducting around twenty interviews with a wide variety of people. My goal was to talk to people who represented as many different opinions and experiences as possible, which meant talking to people of varied socio economic statuses as well as political opinions. In talking to such a wide variety of people, I hoped to understand how different sectors of society remember and understand the dictatorship. In looking at primary memories, I asked a series of questions relating to the interviewee's experiences during the dictatorship, as well as their political opinions before, during, and after the dictatorship. For studying

secondary memories, I interviewed a younger generation of Chileans and looked at how their views may have been influenced by media, movies, and music, as well as how they were taught about the dictatorship in schools. For the purpose of the organization of this paper, the groups of people that I interviewed are divided into three groups: pro-Pinochet, anti-Pinochet, and secondary memories. Although these three groups do not even begin to cover the extent of the experiences and opinions surrounding the dictatorship, it was necessary for me to create some sort of workable division of the interviews for organizational purposes. Besides conducting interviews, I looked at how the dictatorship was memorialized through memorial sights. During my time in Chile I was able to visit the Human Rights Museum in Santiago, the President Pinochet Foundation, the Santiago Cemetery, and the Villa Grimaldi detention Center. Looking at these memory sights combined with talking to a wide variety of people allowed me to better understand how Chileans today view the Pinochet dictatorship and why that is more important and relevant than ever.

Difficulties with this Study

As with any study, this one has some areas that could have been better. One key consideration when looking at the results of my study is that these interviews only represent a small fraction of Chileans. The twenty people whom I interviewed cannot begin to represent all of the variations of opinion and experience among all Chileans. It is also important to note that my interviews took place in only four locations: Santiago, Viña del Mar, Valparaiso, and Requinoa. Ideally, I would have been able to interview more Chileans from all over the country to gain a more holistic knowledge of the Chilean experience during the Pinochet regime. Although my interviewee

population is not as extensive as I would like, I still believe that the people whom I interviewed are representative of Chilean opinions about the dictatorship. I worked diligently to find people of many different socioeconomic backgrounds, lifestyles, and professions. I managed to interview people from the capital city, two other main cities, as well as people from a small town. The population that I interviewed were extremely varied in their experiences during the dictatorship and their opinions about what happened, and that variety is indicative of the opinions of all Chileans surrounding these issues.

Another difficulty lies in the use of human subjects and their memories as data. A difficulty with relying on people's memories for research is that memories change over time. According to historian Michael Lazzara, "experience, particularly when it is conveyed as memory, is never pure, never unmediated. Post traumatic memory narratives, instead, are attempts to "materialize" the meanings of the past in the form of actions and expressions."¹ The act of remembering and talking about things that occurred in the past is difficult, and the events of the past have often been diluted by other memories, context, and outside influences. It is often difficult for humans to accurately remember what occurred earlier in the day, let alone events which, in some cases, occurred forty years ago. I will take this into account, and not use one person's testimony as fact; instead I will look at the variety of experiences and opinions and not discredit one person's memory if someone else's is entirely different. Although memory is imperfect, it is an essential part in understanding what occurred during the dictatorship, and more importantly in understanding how the dictatorship is

¹ Lazzara, Michael J. *Chile in Transition: The Poetics and Politics of Memory*. Gainesville, FL: University Press of Florida, 2006. Print. p, 30.

remembered and depicted by Chileans today. Memory is also extremely important for reconciliation, because only through the understanding and acceptance of another person's story, can people eventually learn to move past the social and political divisiveness that has existed in Chile since the Allende government and the subsequent Pinochet regime.

Importance of this Study

This study of Chilean memories is important because the dictatorship continues to be the most controversial and contested time period in Chile's recent history. Collective memories are points of contestation and struggle between different social and political groups, but are relevant and important for understanding the past and contextualizing the past with current social and political struggles. According to historian Steve Stern, "the memory question [in Chile, A.J] is not only a major subject in its own right; its history opens up the underexplored 'hearts and minds' aspect of the dictatorship experience."² In looking at time periods such as the Pinochet dictatorship, it is important to understand not only the official history of what occurred, but also to try and understand the emotions, opinions, and views of average people. The aim of this study is to better understand how Chileans remember the dictatorship, and whether their opinions and memories of Pinochet have changed over time. This study also aims to study the secondary memories of Chileans who did not live through the dictatorship, but still have strong opinions on the events that occurred. These memories shape political and social issues today, as Chilean students protest to change the constitution created by

² Stern, Steve J. *Reckoning with Pinochet: The Memory Question in Democratic Chile, 1989-2006*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2010. Print. P, xxii.

Pinochet, and as right and left wing politicians are publicly in opposition on how to remember the regime.

In looking at a country such as Chile which has gone through an extremely divisive time period such as the Pinochet regime, the question of memory and reconciliation frequently arises. In working towards forgiveness and reconciliation, the question of whether it is beneficial to commemorate a controversial time period in a country's history or to simply work to forget what happened is important. If the Pinochet regime had been a time period that all Chileans believe was bad or good, the question of reconciliation and remembrance would be easy. However that is not the case, the memories of Chileans surrounding the dictatorship are vastly different. Some people loved Pinochet, others hated him, and others could see the positives as well as the negatives of the regime. In a time period as contested as the Pinochet regime, the question of reconciliation and remembrance is very difficult. It is obvious that Chile has not yet achieved reconciliation surrounding this issue, but the issue of how best to move forward is complicated because nobody can agree on whether Pinochet was the devil himself or the savior of Chile. This inevitable variety of opinions has led to Chile being stuck in a difficult gray area in regard to the former regime and efforts for reconciliation. This paper will attempt to address the complicated emotions and memories of a varied group of Chileans and their suggestions for reconciliation and forward movement for their country.

Historical Background

Pre-Allende Chile: 1950-1970

To fully understand the Pinochet dictatorship, it is crucial to understand not only the Allende Presidency of 1970 to 1973, but also the political environment in Chile leading up to the Allende years. Allende was elected president of a troubled and highly divided nation. In the 1950s and 1960s, Chile had grown to depend almost solely on copper exportation for income, and by 1968, copper sales accounted for around 80% of all exports. Because copper was such a huge part of Chile's economy, numerous Chileans depended upon the success of the copper industry to feed their families.³ Amid rising inflation rates, Chile grew to depend on borrowed money from the United States as well as multilateral agencies, and by 1970 when Allende was elected, Chile's debt level was 25% of their \$8 billion gross national product.⁴ Throughout the 1960s the Chilean government began to take more control of the Copper industry, and tried to limit the private sector in the copper industry. In the mid-1960s there was a large wealth gap with the top 10% of Chileans controlling 35% percent of the national income. Also at that time lower income jobs were difficult to find, and the wages were impossible to support a family with.

Prior to Allende, President Eduardo Frei Montalva (1964-1970) of the Christian Democrat party had instituted a couple liberal land reforms. In 1967, the Frei government implemented an agrarian land reform which was meant to garner the support of the lower classes for the Christian Democrat party. This new land reform

³ Mabry, Donald. *Allende: Chile's Rise and Fall*. Historical Text Archive. 2013. Web.

⁴ Mabry, Donald. *Allende: Chile's Rise and Fall*. Historical Text Archive. 2013. Web.

was quite liberal in that it sought to create more Chilean land owners by expropriating large parcels of land owned by the wealthy. The agrarian land reform had three main goals: to increase productivity in the agricultural sector, to create 100,000 new peasant property owners, and to raise rural living standards.⁵ Under Frei's land reform, 12% of Chile's agricultural land was to be expropriated and redistributed.⁶ Frei ordered the land reforms to occur due to pressure from leftists within Chile who demanded action. Although Frei's land reforms were a step to help the poor in Chile, they were not radical enough for many people who wanted more drastic and immediate action. When election time came around, Allende capitalized on Frei's lukewarm policies, and promised Chileans real change and help for the lower classes.

Chile's Socialist Project: President Salvador Allende Gossens

When Salvador Allende Gossens was elected president of Chile, it was on his fourth bid for office. On September 4th, 1970, Allende was elected president of Chile with a mere 36.2% of the votes, making his victory somewhat controversial. In order to win the election, Allende ran as a candidate for *Unidad Popular* which was a political conglomeration of socialists, communists, and dissatisfied Christian Democrats. After his victory was reluctantly declared by Congress, Allende's troubles began in Chile and abroad. In the global context of the Cold War, Chile having a socialist president was unacceptable for the United States. Americans feared a domino effect might occur in the rest of Latin America if Chile was allowed to fall to communism. A mere two days

⁵ Heit, Jason. *Rural Development and the Agrarian Reform Process in Chile*. Saskatchewan, Saskatchewan Economics Journal. 2003. Web.

⁶ Heit, Jason. *Rural Development and the Agrarian Reform Process in Chile*. Saskatchewan, Saskatchewan Economics Journal. 2003. Web.

after Allende's inauguration, President Nixon called the Security Council to figure out how to bring down the new Chilean president. On November 6, 1970 Secretary of State William Rogers stated, "we want to do it right and bring him down."⁷ Within a few weeks of Allende's election, the CIA had fully implemented what was called Project FUBELT to bring down the Allende government.⁸ Nixon told Kissinger in a classified meeting that he had \$10,000,000 available and more if necessary to "make the [Chilean] economy scream."⁹ Nixon sent all of his best men of the CIA to Chile to destabilize the Allende government and to push for a coup. The United States viewed Allende as a threat because having a democratically elected Marxist president in South America would significantly threaten their hemispheric cohesion against communism. The United States felt that letting the Allende government exist was a threat to their control of Latin America which they viewed as their "backyard." During the Cold War, the United States sought to keep Latin America safely capitalist, and a socialist Chile posed a threat to their capitalist sphere of influence. In the context of the global Cold War, allowing Allende to remain president of Chile was not a chance that the United States could afford to take.

Within Chile, Allende had troubles as well. When Allende took office, he inherited a country rife with problems. In 1970, Chile was in a severe economic depression, and around half of children under the age of fifteen were classified as

⁷ Kornbluh, Peter. *The Pinochet File: A Declassified Dossier on Atrocity and Accountability*. New York: New Press, 2003. Print. p, 7

⁸ Kornbluh, Peter. *The Pinochet File: A Declassified Dossier on Atrocity and Accountability*. New York: New Press, 2003. Print. p, 2.

⁹Kornbluh, Peter. *The Pinochet File: A Declassified Dossier on Atrocity and Accountability*. New York: New Press, 2003. Print. p, 2.

malnourished.¹⁰ During Allende's years as president he implemented aggressive land reforms and took steps to prevent poverty, malnutrition, and child mortality. Another important component of Allende's presidency was the nationalization of the copper industry. Under president Frei, Anaconda Copper Company, which owned the two largest mines in Chile, signed an agreement which gave 50% of their mines to the Chilean government. Frei's government worked diligently to ensure that they negotiated fairly with the mining companies to avoid alienating foreign companies, and in particular, the United States. Frei's nationalization negotiations were met with disdain from middle and left wing political groups in Chile who saw it as caving to Yankee imperialism and preferred a more direct approach. On July 16th, 1971 President Allende succeeded in passing a bill which allowed him to nationalize all mines out right and only pay minimal compensation.¹¹ While many Chileans heralded this day as the Day of National Dignity, the United States government saw it differently. At that time the United States controlled around eighty percent of the copper industry, as well as numerous other industries in the country and the United States viewed this nationalization as yet another way that the Allende government was trying to undermine their power in the region, which further motivated the CIA to orchestrate a coup.¹²

Although many Chileans felt national pride at the nationalization of the copper industry, the economy was still almost in ruins. Upon assuming the role of president, Allende repossessed many of Chile's factories in the hopes of working towards a more

¹⁰ Kaufman, Edie. *Crisis in Allende's Chile: New Perspectives*. New York, Praeger Publishers. 1988. P, 266.

¹¹ Collier, Simon and Sater, William F. *A History of Chile: 1808-2002*. Cambridge, Cambridge University Press. 2004. Web.

¹² Kornbluh, Peter. *The Pinochet File: A Declassified Dossier on Atrocity and Accountability*. New York: New Press, 2003. Print. p, 5.

socialist system. To try and improve the lives of the average Chilean, President Allende instituted price freezes as well as mandated wage raises for Chile's workers; this led to people having more money to buy goods but no goods to buy since the newly repossessed factories could not keep up with the higher demands.¹³ Prior to Allende becoming president, the United States had given large sums of money to Chile in aid; however with the election of Allende, the United States blocked all but two small loans to Chile until after the coup. The weakness of the Chilean economy, combined with the lack of previously relied upon help from the United States meant that by the time the coup occurred, Chile was in a state of hyperinflation and social unrest. The inflation rate had soared to 1000% and unemployment was growing daily.¹⁴ Between 1970 and 1972 the percentage of Chilean exports had fallen by 24%, and imports had risen by 26%.¹⁵ By 1972 the daily lives of the average Chilean had not improved under Allende, and the people of Chile were fed up. For Chile's communists, Allende did not make quick or radical enough of changes to the country, and for everyone else his changes seemed ineffective as well as radical. By October of 1972 protests and strikes had broken out across the nation.

Although Chile undoubtedly had numerous problems during the Allende government, many positive changes occurred as well which have caused many Chileans to remember President Allende with fondness. Allende allocated unprecedented amounts of money to create scholarships for Mapuche children to study in Universities

¹³ Kaufman, Edie. *Crisis in Allende's Chile: New Perspectives*. New York, Praeger Publishers. 1988. P, 266.

¹⁴ Bräuchle, Manfred. *Applied Theory: The Reforms in Chile*. Powerpoint Presentation, University of Notre Dame. May 21, 2013. Web.

¹⁵ Kaufman, Edie. *Crisis in Allende's Chile: New Perspectives*. New York, Praeger Publishers. 1988. P, 266-267.

in Santiago which helped to alleviate some of the socio-economic boundaries among Chile's different racial groups. For the average worker, Allende raised wages and in 1971 real wages rose 23% from the previous year.¹⁶ He also worked to create new jobs as well as new housing by implementing massive building projects: in 1971, 76,000 new houses were built, compared to 1970 when only 24,000 were built.¹⁷ Allende also worked to expand public services such as education, health care, maternal care, and illiteracy and delinquency prevention. His agrarian land reforms were also highly popular with many of the lower classes, and helped to create what many viewed as a more equal Chile for all socio-economic groups.

The Pinochet Regime

On June 29th, 1973, tanks surrounded the presidential palace (La Moneda) in an attempted coup d'état. This coup failed, but by that point it had become clear that many Chileans were deeply unsatisfied with the Allende government. Mass protests and strikes continued for the rest of the summer until September 11th. By 8:00 AM the Chilean Navy had secured the port city of Valparaiso, and the armed forces had announced that Allende's Popular Unity government was going to be overthrown.¹⁸ By that point President Allende had heard of the impending coup and made his way to La Moneda, where he began a live broadcast to the Chilean people in which he urged

¹⁶ Larrain, Felipe and Meller, Patricio. *The Socialist-Populist Chilean Experience, 1970-1973*. National Bureau of Economic Research. January 1991. Web.

¹⁷ Larrain, Felipe and Meller, Patricio. *The Socialist-Populist Chilean Experience, 1970-1973*. National Bureau of Economic Research. January 1991. Web.

¹⁸ Kornbluh, Peter. *The Pinochet File: A Declassified Dossier on Atrocity and Accountability*. New York: New Press, 2003. Print. p,112.

“workers and students to come defend your government against the armed forces.”¹⁹ By noon, La Moneda had been bombed, army tanks surrounded the premise, and most of Allende’s guards had been killed. Throughout the fighting, Allende was ordered to surrender, which he repeatedly refused to do. At 2:00 President Salvador Allende was found dead from gunshot wounds in his office. For many years it was unclear whether he committed suicide or was killed, but recently a team of investigators examined his body and determined that he committed suicide.²⁰ At 2:30 another broadcast went out to the Chilean people telling them that the president had surrendered and that the country was now under military control.²¹ For the next 17 years Chile would remain under military rule.

In the days following the coup, drastic changes occurred in Chile. The military junta controlling Chile immediately declared the country to be in a state of siege and froze the constitution, suspended congress, outlawed political parties, and instated a strict curfew; this was all part of what the military government called *Reorganización Nacional* (National Reorganization). In the days following the September 11th coup the military junta began to systematically eliminate “subversives” within Chile; a “subversive” was someone who posed any sort of a threat to the new government, and especially anyone who was a member of a leftist organizationⁱ or who had supported the Allende government. The military junta felt that in order for Chile to move towards progress any opposition to the government must first be eliminated. Directly after the

¹⁹ Kornbluh, Peter. *The Pinochet File: A Declassified Dossier on Atrocity and Accountability*. New York: New Press, 2003. Print. p.113.

²⁰ *Chile: Court Closes Probe into ex-President Allende’s Death*. BBC News. January 7, 2014. Web.

²¹ Kornbluh, Peter. *The Pinochet File: A Declassified Dossier on Atrocity and Accountability*. New York: New Press, 2003. Print. p.113.

coup, a military junta ruled Chile, but it quickly became apparent that Pinochet was the member with the most power, and by June 1974, Pinochet and the other members of the junta signed Decree Law 527 which named Pinochet the “Supreme Chief of the Nation.” He kept that title until a few months later when he assumed the title of “President of the Republic.”²²

In order to deal with people deemed to be subversive, the government began rounding up many of Allende’s former supporters and taking them to various detention and torture facilities around Santiago. A famous example of this is the *Estadio Chile*: this soccer stadium in Santiago housed 12,000 prisoners directly after the coup including well known Chilean Folk singer Victor Jara. Jara, along with many others were tortured and killed in the *Estadio Chile* and many other detention facilities around the country. In June 1974, Pinochet created the DINA which was essentially an intelligence branch of the army controlled directly by Pinochet. Under government decree 521, the DINA had the power to torture, detain, and kill people thought to be subversives at will.²³ Throughout the Pinochet regime the DINA created an environment of terror in Chile. The exact number of people killed and tortured during the Pinochet regime is unknown and changes every couple of months as new evidence and testimonies are discovered. The current agreed upon death toll is 3,065 and around 35,000 political prisoners.²⁴ The number of people arrested by the government exceeds

²² Kornbluh, Peter. *The Pinochet File: A Declassified Dossier on Atrocity and Accountability*. New York: New Press, 2003. Print. P,155.

²³ Kornbluh, Peter. *The Pinochet File: A Declassified Dossier on Atrocity and Accountability*. New York: New Press, 2003. Print. p, 164.

²⁴ *Chile recognizes 9,800 more victims of Pinochet's rule*. BBC News. August 18, 2011. Web.

82,000 and people forced into exile was around 200,000.²⁵ These deaths, disappearances, and repressions led to many Chileans fearing the DINA and resenting the Pinochet regime.

For Chileans who had supported President Allende, September 11th was a day of mourning. Left wing Chileans viewed Allende's death as a tragedy, and the military takeover as a huge step backwards in Chile's progress towards becoming a fully functioning Socialist nation. The military coup was seen as a tragic event because Salvador Allende lost his life, and also because it signaled the beginning of a repressive military rule in a formerly democratic country. Pamela Constable and Arturo Valenzuela's "A Nation of Enemies: Chile under Pinochet," describes the sadness that many Chileans felt after the military coup.

For disciples of Salvador Allende, September 11 was a day of numb mourning. Factory workers lit votive candles, and teary eyed students gathered glumly around radios. Carmen Vivanco, a party leader and provincial governor's wife, tried to remain calm while her world crumbled. "There was gunfire, police, people running...my husband suddenly seemed sick and old. It was the first time I had ever seen him cry."²⁶

On September 12, 1973 Pinochet assured the United States that his government had every interest in preserving human life in Chile. However three days later, Pinochet ordered the start of the "Caravan of Death" led by General Sergio Arellano Stark.²⁷ The "Caravan of Death" consisted of Stark and five other officers traveling throughout Chile to find people who were deemed to be subversive. A subversive could be anyone who

²⁵ Stern, Steve J. *Reckoning with Pinochet: The Memory Question in Democratic Chile, 1989-2006*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2010. Print. P, xxiii.

²⁶ Constable, Pamela, and Arturo Valenzuela. *A Nation of Enemies: Chile Under Pinochet*. New York: Norton, 1991. Print. p,30.

²⁷ Kornbluh, Peter. *The Pinochet File*. P, 155.

had any ties at all to the former Unidad Popular government, or who had any left leaning views: the prisoners included representatives from Allende's Unidad Popular government, mayors, police chiefs, trade unionists, and civic leaders.²⁸ The Pinochet government justified the actions of the "Caravan of Death" as being necessary in order to expedite justice and quickly return Chile to a state of normalcy.²⁹ Although the Pinochet government may have viewed the actions of the "Caravan of Death" as being a necessary part of the national reorganization process, there is no doubt that witnessing the disappearances and deaths caused by the "Caravan of Death" must have instilled terror in many Chileans. These rapid and unexpected disappearances led to many Chileans living in a constant state of fear, and wondering if they or their loved ones could be the next victims of the repressive regime.

A principal reason that many Chileans did not support the regime was that they had supported Allende and the changes that his government was trying to make. Allende was democratically elected president, and the military coup of 1973 was a completely undemocratic and illegal action taken by the military. People who supported Allende were angered and saddened at the sights of part of the Moneda exploding, tanks filing into the city, and people being beaten on the street by armed guards. The military coup was an illegal action taken against a democratically elected government, and to many Chileans that illegal and violent takeover was the principle reason for their dislike of the subsequent Pinochet regime.

Another reason that people did not support the Pinochet regime was the fact that 3,065 people lost their lives at the hands of the regime and these deaths occurred

²⁸ Kornbluh, Peter. P,155.

²⁹ Ibid.

without the victims being allowed access to a lawyer or even a trial: the government suspecting involvement in a leftist cause was enough.³⁰ These deaths, combined with around 40,000 people being victims of torture led to a huge distrust of the government. Many Chileans felt and still feel that the Pinochet regime carried out a gross violation of human rights on a large scale. The disappearance of a spouse, the torture of a child, the beating of an uncle, or the midnight raid of a family home led to many Chileans hating the restrictive military regime.

For some, daily life under the Pinochet regime changed drastically. A strict curfew was implemented immediately following the coup when the military government declared the country to be in a “state of siege” which required drastic and, at times violent, measures. Chilean social life became nearly impossible, as people had to adhere to the strict dusk to dawn curfew or risk being detained or otherwise mistreated by military officers.³¹ Besides the curfew, all political life of any type completely ceased, and even club meetings that were apolitical were banned. Certain types of music deemed to be communistic were banned, especially the popular groups and singers of the 1960s and 1970s *Nueva Canción* movement. Many social programs were cut including food distribution, and other such programs implemented by the Allende government which greatly affected the lives of the poorest Chileans. All of these changes to daily life combined with the pervasive presence of military force and censorship led to many Chileans viewing the regime as being overly repressive and controlling.

³⁰ *Chile recognizes 9,800 more victims of Pinochet's rule.* BBC News. August 18, 2011. Web.

³¹ Ensalaco, Mark. *Chile under Pinochet: Recovering the Truth.* University of Pennsylvania Press, 2000. P, 49.

Although the Pinochet regime is often celebrated for creating “the Chilean Miracle,” the neoliberal policies implemented by Pinochet did not benefit every sector of society. The free market economic changes advocated by the Chicago Boys. While many of these changes greatly benefitted big business and foreign investment, many of the changes were detrimental to the average worker. The new system placed heavy restrictions on unions, made strict rules about striking, and cut social and relief programs that benefitted the lower class.³² By 1982, Chilean businesses had accumulated a large amount of foreign debt, and the unemployment rate rocketed up to 30% which affected the jobs and earning capacity of thousands of Chileans.³³ The economic changes as well as the decreased spending on social programs led to a drastic increase in Chileans living below the poverty line: in 1970 17% of Chilean households were living under the poverty line, but by 1990 that number had increased to 35%.³⁴ These numbers clearly show that although the neoliberal economy implemented by the Pinochet regime may have been the “Chilean Miracle” for some Chileans, it was the Chilean disaster for others.

Although most people think of the human rights violations when they think of the Pinochet regime, there were some lasting effects on the country besides the death toll. In 1980 the Pinochet regime wrote a new constitution for Chile that is still in use today. Another big change under the Pinochet regime was the economic system. Following the coup, Pinochet sought the help of the “Chicago Boys,” a group of economists from the University of Chicago. The Pinochet government gradually

³² Rosenfield, Stephanie. *The Myth of the Chilean Miracle*. Web. April 10, 2014.

³³ Rosenfield, Stephanie. *The Myth of the Chilean Miracle*. Web. April 10, 2014.

³⁴ Ibid.

implemented the changes advised by the Chicago Boys which included dropping real wages, reducing state spending, and reducing and eliminating tariffs.³⁵ Drastic economic changes led to eventual economic successes in certain areas, which some economists tout as the “Chilean Miracle.”³⁶ The economic changes of the Pinochet regime ultimately led to Chile leading the charge of neoliberal economic policies in Latin America, and forever changing the economy and culture of the country. Although the GDP and the overall amount of wealth within Chile increased due to the economic changes of the Pinochet regime, these changes came at a high price. Thousands of Chileans were killed, tortured, arrested, and exiled at the hands of the government under the guise of Pinochet working for a complete national reorganization (*Reorganización Nacional*).

Pinochet: The Father of Modern Chile?

In order to understand why many Chileans supported and continue to support the Pinochet regime, it is important to understand the economic situation, the context of the Cold War, and the influence of the United States. Besides implementing aggressive economic changes to jumpstart the ailing economy, the Pinochet dictatorship also boasted the friendship and support of the United States. While the United States had performed overt and covert activities to weaken the Allende government, they immediately supported and recognized Pinochet’s regime. In the weeks following the coup, the U.S Department of Agriculture granted the Chilean government \$48 million to

³⁵ Constable, Pamela, and Arturo Valenzuela. *A Nation of Enemies: Chile Under Pinochet*. New York: Norton, 1991. Print. p,165.

³⁶ Constable, Pamela, and Arturo Valenzuela. *A Nation of Enemies: Chile Under Pinochet*. New York: Norton, 1991. Print. p,170.

provide food for the population; this led to people viewing Pinochet as a sort of savior since under the Allende government there had been acute food shortages. Pinochet's new policies along with extensive support from the United States helped contribute to Chile's current economic success, which is one of the reasons many Chileans to this day feel that the Pinochet regime was a positive thing for their country.

The United States government viewed Pinochet as a benevolent dictator, which meant that although he ruled by force he was acting in the best interests of the Chilean people. Many Chileans viewed Pinochet as being a very mild dictator who worked for a return to social and political order to Chilean society after the Allende years; not a sociopath like the bloody dictators of Central America. The U.S intelligence agency characterized Pinochet as being:

Quiet; mild-mannered; very businesslike. Very honest, hardworking, dedicated. A devoted, tolerant husband and father; lives very modestly. Drinks Scotch and Pisco Sours; smokes cigarettes; likes parties.³⁷

In the days following the coup, Pinochet held a meeting with the US ambassador to Chile, Nathaniel Davis. At this meeting Pinochet tried to impress upon Davis the importance of the success of his National Reorganization project by stating, "if the Junta government fails, Chile's tragedy (would) be permanent...the Chilean government shares fully concern for human rights, and is doing its best to prevent violations and loss of life."³⁸ At that point the United States believed that the Pinochet government was repressive but only taking the necessary measures to prevent the spread of communism. Many Chileans shared the United States' fear of the spread of

³⁷ Kornbluh, Peter. *The Pinochet File: A Declassified Dossier on Atrocity and Accountability*. New York: New Press, 2003. Print. p,155.

³⁸ Kornbluh, Peter. *The Pinochet File: A Declassified Dossier on Atrocity and Accountability*. New York: New Press, 2003. Print. p, 155.

communism and chaos and looked to the new military government to lead Chile away from the Allende disaster and into the future.

After the September 11th coup, many Chileans reacted to the news with relief or celebration. During the Allende presidency daily life was difficult for many Chileans, and each day brought a new problem. By the time of the coup, “people yearned for peace and order, for a return to daily routine unperturbed by cataclysmic events.”³⁹ Conservative Chileans viewed the coup not only as a return to normalcy and order, but also as an event which saved their country from Communism. The book “A Nation of Enemies: Chile under Pinochet” paints a vivid picture of the joy many Chileans felt at the news that Allende and Unidad Popular had been defeated.

The Supreme Court president sent a congratulatory message to the junta, while conservative Catholic bishops offered prayers of thanksgiving. Well-to-do families popped champagne corks and hung Chilean flags out their windows. At a busy intersection, a middle aged woman in tweeds grabbed a foreigner’s sleeve and blurted in broken English, “We are free now, do you understand? F-R-E-E!”⁴⁰

The “Chilean Miracle”

A point of pride for the Pinochet regime was the improved economy. Pinochet’s economic policies and strict order contrasted sharply with the social and economic chaos of the Allende years, which led many to believe that Pinochet had performed a sort of economic miracle. The reality of the “Chilean miracle” however was that it was not a miracle at all for the majority of Chileans. Under Pinochet, the upper classes grew wealthier while the lower classes grew poorer, and by the late 1980s the top 10% of

³⁹ Constable, Pamela, and Arturo Valenzuela. *A Nation of Enemies: Chile Under Pinochet*. New York, Norton. 1991. Print. p,29

⁴⁰ Constable, Pamela, and Arturo Valenzuela. *A Nation of Enemies: Chile Under Pinochet*. New York, Norton. 1991. Print. p,29-30.

Chileans had increased their share of the national income to 45% as opposed to 35% in the mid-1960s.⁴¹ Historian Gwynn Thomas wrote that estimates show “that by 1986, 30% of Chileans were living in conditions of extreme poverty, as opposed to 10% in 1970.”⁴² Although these numbers show that in fact life worsened for the average Chilean during the Pinochet years, the regime worked hard to emphasize its successes. One success was the improvement in government funded prenatal and neonatal care. The Pinochet government placed Dr. Fernando Monckeberg who was a well-known doctor as the spokesperson of the new government funded programs. Dr. Monckeberg was quoted in *El Mercurio* in 1977 for stating: “In 1967, sixty-seven percent of children below the age of ten presented some grade of malnutrition. Today, this number has been diminished to 16%. In 1972 the infant mortality rate was 71 per 1,000. In 1976, it has decreased to 55 per 1,000.”⁴³ Two years later at a dedication of a center for maternal and infant health Monckeberg stated “I do not know of any country in the world that is making an effort like this...ten years ago...Chile had the highest rate of infant mortality in Latin America. Today malnutrition has been reduced to a bit more than 12%, and infant mortality...is the lowest in Latin America.”⁴⁴

Besides improving neonatal care, Pinochet attempted to tackle the housing shortage issue in Santiago. *Amiga* newspaper described how in 1978, “the President of the Republic and the First Lady...presented four hundred families the keys to their new

⁴¹ Teichmann, Judith. *Social Forces and States: Poverty and Distributional Outcomes in South Korea, Mexico, and Chile*. Stanford University Press. June 13, 2012. Web.

⁴² Gwynn, Thomas, *Contesting Legitimacy in Chile*. Pennsylvania State University Press, University Park Pennsylvania. 2011. Print.

⁴³ *El Mercurio*, December 1977. Found in *Contesting Legitimacy in Chile*, p, 154.

⁴⁴ *Amiga*, June 1978. Found in *Contesting Legitimacy in Chile*, 154.

homes in Nueva Matucana.”⁴⁵ In an interview with the paper one woman who received a house that day told the paper, “You know that before everything was promised and nothing was done. Now, no...because all that Pinochet said, he did and he kept his promise.”⁴⁶ In the late 1970s and early 1980s, newspaper headlines touted the successes of Pinochet’s new housing projects. Some headlines included: “Presentation of Title to Thirty-Seven Thousand Families in the National Stadium: Massive Operation to Grant Titles to Pobladores” and “Testimony of a Poblador: At last I will have my Own House.”⁴⁷ The ceremonies where the new houses were presented to Santiago’s needy were very public and well documented by the Pinochet government. Pinochet’s goal by making these houses was to appear as the savior of both the wealthy and the poor of Chile. Many wealthy Chileans already supported his regime because it was, in their eyes, a huge improvement economically and socially from the Allende years. A challenge for the dictator was gaining the support of the poor, and these new housing projects helped him to do that.

The 1980s in Latin America is referred to as “the lost decade;” a decade of staggering debt, no economic growth, little foreign capital, hyperinflation, and high unemployment.⁴⁸ Chile was the first Latin American country to emerge somewhat triumphantly from the lost decade when General Pinochet implemented a neoliberal economic policy. A neoliberal policy is one that favors free trade, privatization, and minimal government intervention in business, and reduced public expenditure on social services. Chile’s neoliberalism was inspired by Chicago economist Milton Friedman

⁴⁵ Amiga, October 1978. Found in *Contesting Legitimacy in Chile*, 156.

⁴⁶ Ibid.

⁴⁷ Ibid.

⁴⁸ Winn, Peter. *Victims of the Chilean Miracle*. Duke University Press, Durham. 2004. P.3

who believed that the market, not the state, should regulate the economy.⁴⁹

Neoliberalism was implemented by Pinochet because it was seen as the most effective way to fix the economic crisis which had developed during Salvador Allende's government. After the September 11th coup, the Pinochet government began implementing neoliberal policies such as import substitution industrialization.⁵⁰ By 1982, Chile's economy had improved to the point that economist Milton Friedman remarked that Chile was an "economic miracle."⁵¹ Other economists who were further removed from the situation also lauded Chile's success. Harvard economist Robert Barro asserted in *Business Week* that Chile's "outstanding performance derived from the free-market reforms instituted by ... Pinochet."⁵² By the time of the 1988 plebiscite, Chile's economy had undoubtedly improved, and continued to do so through the late 1990s. In 1998, Chile's average per capita income had nearly doubled since 1987, and worker's wages had increased by 50%.⁵³ During the Pinochet years Chile experienced an export boom because the government emphasized the importance of exporting other products besides copper. Suddenly Chile was exporting not only copper but wine, fruits and vegetables, salmon, processed foods, and forestry products. This "non-traditional" export strategy became a keystone of the dictatorship's economic changes.⁵⁴ The export boom undeniably fueled economic growth, except for between 1982 and 1985

⁴⁹ Winn, Peter. *Victims of the Chilean Miracle*, 3.

⁵⁰ Fourcade-Gourinchas and Babb. *The Rebirth of the Liberal Creed: Paths to Neoliberalism in Four Countries*. Princeton University, web.

⁵¹ Friedman, Milton. Found in Cypher, James. *Is Chile a Neoliberal Success?* Dollars and Sense, 2003. Web.

⁵² Barro, Robert. Found in *Is Chile a Neoliberal Success?*

⁵³ Ibid.

⁵⁴ Ibid.

when Chile experienced a recession. After 1982, Chile's economy bounced back as shown by the fact that between 1987 and 1998, per capita income grew by 88%.⁵⁵

Another change in the economic structure of Chile was the increasing importance of the private sector and foreign trade. In 1974, the Pinochet regime created ProChile to assist the private sector in locating and selling to foreign markets.⁵⁶ This government run program monetarily assisted private industries in trading with foreign markets, as well as taught them how to locate and do business with other countries. Programs such as ProChile greatly helped to grow the private sector and foreign markets in Chile. During the recession of the mid 1980s, Pinochet allowed private mining companies to run essentially tax free which allowed the mining industry to prosper.⁵⁷ The people who benefitted from these new economic policies were primarily the upper classes and business owners. As a very pro-business government, Chile attracted foreign companies as well as large private Chilean businesses. For some Chilean businesses and members of the upper classes, the Pinochet years were very comfortable and profitable; unfortunately that was not the case for every sector of society.

Appealing to Women and Families

Through advocating traditional Catholic family values, Pinochet was able to appeal to many Chilean women. During the chaotic years of the Allende government, right and left wing women alike participated in protests which consisted of banging empty pots and pans at a designated hour in the streets. This type of protest showed the

⁵⁵ Ibid.

⁵⁶ Ibid.

⁵⁷ Ibid.

government and the general public that women were unhappy because they had only empty pots without food to feed their families. Empty pot protests appealed to Chilean society's view of women as mothers and as the feeders of their families. By 1972, Chilean women had had enough of the being hungry and multiple women's groups including *Poder Femenino (PF)*, *Housewives Front (FRENDUC)*, and *Solidarity, Order and Liberty (SOL)* organized marches and other protest activities against Allende's government.⁵⁸ In August of 1973 thousands of women of different social classes marched to demand Allende's resignation. They got their wish a few months later when, on September 11th, the military coup ousted Allende, and Pinochet took over. The same women who had marched against Allende now celebrated in the streets that their country had been saved. Shortly after the coup, members of the PF wrote a public letter to the people of Chile which stated:

The Chilean woman, whose suffering, humiliation and heroism kept Chile's hope for liberty alive during the three years of Marxist government, fervently thanks the Armed Forces who, on the anniversary of our national independence, returned freedom to the fatherland. Feminine Power calls on Chilean women to once again demonstrate their unquenchable spirit of sacrifice and to collaborate with the Armed Forces.⁵⁹

This letter shows that some member of PF actively supported the military takeover, and that the government found their support valuable and wanted to broadcast it by publishing it in the newspaper. The Pinochet government viewed women as valuable and visible supporters of the regime, and made public comments about the power and importance of the Chilean family; an ideal that many women held of high

⁵⁸ González-Rivera, Victoria, and Karen Kampwirth. *Radical Women in Latin America: Left and Right*. University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2001.

⁵⁹ *El Mercurio*, September 1974, 2.14

importance. Javino Novoa, a close advisor to Pinochet told Amiga Newspaper, a female orientated paper, that “the government believes that the family nucleus is the base of society.”⁶⁰ Statements by the Pinochet government about the importance of family and family values may have been one of the reasons why some women strongly supported the regime.

After Pinochet came into power his government quickly sought to consolidate the support of Chile’s right wing women. Pinochet’s wife, Lucia Hiriart immediately began the process of organizing volunteer organizations for women as well as creating women’s centers throughout Chile. By the time the plebiscite was held in 1988, around 250,000 women belonged to these organizations and were staunch Pinochet supporters.⁶¹ Like any first lady, Lucia Hiriart worked diligently to promote her husband and appeal to the public, especially the female public. Hiriart was largely successful and became tremendously popular with right wing women. Not only did Hiriart successfully open up women’s centers where lower class women could go for help and wealthy women could volunteer, she also modeled ideal Chilean womanhood. She was the loving mother to five children, she was very fashionable, she devoted much of her time to charitable organizations, and she was publicly supportive of her husband. Because Hiriart and her children were public figures, their presence helped to bring a softer side of General Pinochet to the attention of the Chilean public in the years immediately following the coup, the new regime urged Chilean women to give their

⁶⁰ Novoa, Jovino. Found in Bacchetta and Power. *Right-wing Women: From Conservatives to Extremists Around the World*. New York: Routledge, 2002. Print. 279.

⁶¹ *Right Wing Women: From Conservatives to Extremists around the World*. 275.

jewelry to the government to raise funds for the National Reconstruction project.⁶²

Thousands of devoted women complied and some even gave their own wedding rings stating that their donation “of such great sentimental value symbolized their profound hopes for the recuperation of the fatherland”⁶³ Since the media was all controlled by Pinochet it is impossible to tell how many women actually donated their wedding rings to the government, but it is nonetheless important to note that at least a few women felt the National Reconstruction was a cause worth donating their most prized possessions for.

Pinochet cautioned Chileans against the “global presence of a massive campaign that aims to destroy the family...the dissolution of the family has invariably been one of communism’s preferred tactics.”⁶⁴ The government worked hard to sell the idea that communists were anti-family, and that by supporting the very traditional Pinochet government Chileans could help protect their families from the perverse ideals of communisms. Throughout the regime, Pinochet was careful to maintain a good public image even when the DINA was detaining, torturing, and killing people. Pinochet’s image was that of a strict father leading the misbehaving nation towards a brighter future.

The 1988 Plebiscite: “Chile la Alegria ya Viene”

Although at the beginning of the regime Pinochet boasted the support of the United States, by 1988, Pinochet had come under international pressure to legitimize his

⁶²González-Rivera, Victoria, and Karen Kampwirth. *Radical Women in Latin America: Left and Right*. University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2001. Print. P,12.

⁶³ El Mercurio, 20 September 1973, 20.

⁶⁴ Pinochet. Found in: *Augusto Pinochet Habla del Comunismo en Chile y en Sudamerica*. Youtube. November 27, 2007.

regime, and to do so he agreed to hold a plebiscite. This plebiscite allowed the Chilean public to vote whether to keep Pinochet as their president for the next eight years or to stage elections for a different president in 1990. Upon the announcement of the plebiscite, both sides sprang into action: Pinochet and his supporters began campaigning for him to remain as the head of state, and people who did not support the dictatorship campaigned for a return to democracy.

In order to convince Chilean voters that his regime had helped advance Chile, Pinochet launched a number of campaign commercials which highlighted the positive aspects of his government and personality. Kenneth Hacker, Political Scientist who studies political campaigns states, “research supports the view that candidate image is a complex concept that is made up of substantive (honesty, ability, qualifications, and the like) as well as appearance and performance dimensions.”⁶⁵ In the case of Pinochet and the plebiscite commercials, the challenge was to emphasize Pinochet’s good aspects such as the modernization of Chile, the emphasis on traditional family values, and tough anti-communism while downplaying the negative aspects such as disappearances, curfew, torture, and murder. Throughout the campaign Pinochet and his commercials focused on Chile avoiding the unknown and continuing on the road towards modernization which the Pinochet regime had paved. In a campaign speech Pinochet stated, “we approach the plebiscite with two roads to choose from: to continue along the path we have chosen or to leap into the void.” Pinochet then went on to point out that if Chile continued on its current path then the country would “obtain its goal of becoming a developed country and a model for the rest of South America in the twenty-first

⁶⁵ Hacker, Kenneth. *Presidential Candidate Images*. Rowman and Littlefield Publishers, Lanham. 2004. Print. P, 189.

century.”⁶⁶ Rhetoric such as the speech above, along with dramatic campaign commercials sought to win over Chilean voters with logic, hopes of grandeur, and fear of communism and the unknown.

After the ‘no’ campaign ran a highly successful commercial, the ‘si’ campaign was forced to use more creative measures to garner votes from the Chilean public. The commercial titled “The Song of General Pinochet” is the product of the ‘si’ campaigns efforts to win the election. This commercial features Chileans of all socio-economic classes singing about the successes of Pinochet, and images of the highways, bridges, and modern buildings that Pinochet built during his time in power. During the plebiscite Pinochet also tried to appeal to people by appearing as a benevolent president rather than a military dictator; after his first couple of years in power he discarded his military uniform and took to wearing the presidential sash and civilian clothing.

Unfortunately for the cocky dictator, the citizens against keeping him ran a spirited and highly successful campaign which not only shed light on some of the negative aspects of the Pinochet rule but also got people excited to vote. By October of 1988, the Chilean public spoke: Pinochet had lost the plebiscite. The final results of the plebiscite showed the no votes at 54.7% and the yes votes at 43%.⁶⁷ When Pinochet discovered that he had lost the plebiscite he “spoke of using the extraordinary powers to have the armed forces seize the capital,” but the other members of the military Junta denied his request for use of the armed forces.⁶⁸ After being denied the right to forcibly

⁶⁶ Pinochet, *El Mercurio*, 11 December 1987. Found in: *Radical Women in Latin America*. Gonzalez and Kampwirth. The Pennsylvania State Press, University Park, 2001. P,360.

⁶⁷ Kornbluh, Peter. *The Pinochet File*. P, 425.

⁶⁸ Defense Intelligence Agency, Information Report, “Chilean Junta Meeting the Night of the Plebiscite.” January 1, 1989. Web.

take over the government again, Pinochet allowed elections to continue as planned, and on March 11th, 1990 Patricio Aylwin was sworn in as the next president of Chile.

The Dictator on Trial

Upon the end of his dictatorship, Pinochet remained the commander in chief of the armed forces until 1998, and was then declared “Senator for Life,” and he remained active in the government until 2002 when he retired amid human rights abuse cases. On October 16, 1998, as Pinochet was recovering from back surgery in England, a warrant from Spain was sent for his arrest.⁶⁹ This arrest warrant was unprecedented in history; never before had a former president been arrested outside of his homeland.⁷⁰ Following the arrest warrant, months of legal battles occurred, and finally on March 2nd, 2000 it was decided that Pinochet was not mentally or physically fit to stand trial and would therefore not be forced to go to Spain.⁷¹ The very next day Pinochet departed for Chile, where he was greeted at the airport with a red carpet welcome. Unfortunately for Pinochet, while he had been in London more than seventy judicial cases had been filed against him in Chile and Judge Juan Guzman Tapia had agreed to investigate the charges. On June 5th 2000, Pinochet was stripped of his immunity as “Senator for Life,” and the prosecution was allowed to proceed. To the surprise of Pinochet and his supporters, on December 1st Pinochet was indicted and placed under house arrest. The world community began to take interest in Pinochet’s case, and U.S president Clinton declassified numerous CIA documents holding incriminating evidence against the former dictator. The declassification of these documents ultimately led to many of

⁶⁹ Kornbluh, Peter. *The Pinochet File*. P, 456.

⁷⁰ Kornbluh, Peter. P, 456.

⁷¹ Ibid.

Pinochet's former lieutenants facing arrest and indictment for human rights atrocities.⁷² Pinochet continued to be charged with over 300 different accusations, and he died under house arrest on December 10th 2006. Pinochet's supporters mourned his death, and people who hated him celebrated: President Michelle Bachelet ordered that military institutions fly their flags at half mast, but did not order a national day of mourning or allow Pinochet to have a state funeral. Pinochet's death in many ways marked the end of an era for many Chileans, but the legacy of the dictatorship and the memories of those years live on.

Although the Pinochet government was indeed repressive and violent, Chile gained a greater level of economic prosperity during the dictatorship and today the country has one of the most successful economies in Latin America. In addition many Chileans remember the Allende years as chaotic, and they associate Pinochet's rule with a return to order. Pinochet used the public's fear of chaos, disorder, economic troubles, and communism to sell himself as the father of a modern Chile, the bringer of progress, and the protector of traditional Chilean family values. The next section will examine the stories of Pinochet supporters and explain how a brutal dictator who killed around 3,000 people and tortured another 40,000 was and still is able to retain popularity because of economic policies as well as the pervasive fear of communism in the context of the Cold War.

⁷² Ibid, 482.

“I Love Pinochet”: Interviews with *Pinochetistas*

When discussing the government of Pinochet, everyone has an opinion. At the time of the 1988 plebiscite, a little under 50% of Chile’s population voted yes to keeping Pinochet as the president of Chile for eight more years. Today the number of Pinochet supporters has dwindled slightly: in a poll taken on the fortieth anniversary of the coup, 55% of Chileans describe the Pinochet regime as being “all bad,” 9% describe it as being “all good,” and the rest fall somewhere in the middle of those options.⁷³ In talking to Pinochet supporters it quickly becomes clear that not everyone in Chile suffered under Pinochet’s regime; in fact many people prospered from his policies and continue to enjoy the changes made by Pinochet to this day, while minimizing or ignoring the human rights abuses.

When talking to *Pinochetistas* about their political opinions, the most commonly mentioned topic is the failure and chaos of the Allende government. Regardless of their financial or social situation, supporters of Pinochet all speak passionately against President Allende’s policies, the low quality of life under Allende, and the controversial manner in which he came into power. Graciela and Raul are an elderly couple of modest resources from the small town of Requinoa in the Rancagua province of Chile, they are very pro-Pinochet and speak out harshly against the policies implemented by Allende which caused their lives as farmers to be very difficult. When asked about the Allende government, even tempered Raul suddenly looked angry and nearly spat, “It was very cruel, very bad. Allende should never have been the president of Chile. He

⁷³ O’Brien, Rosalba. *Forty years after the Coup, Pinochet again divides Chile*. Santiago Chile. Reuters. September 8, 2013. Web.

was president of Chile for a small time and it was very bad... lines, hunger, and strikes.”⁷⁴ His wife Graciela quickly agreed with her husband and added, “I have ugly memories from this time. I was sent to school to learn about the glory of Allende, but there were lines for everything. Sugar, bread, flour...”⁷⁵ Raul then went on to discuss the difficulties of living on a farm during the Allende years and he explained the difficulties of getting food for their animals as well as for their children. Since food was not readily available via legal means “we had to go to the black market, at night in secret in order to get food. It was a hard time for the country, for the people. The middle class suffered, but the poor people suffered more. The upper classes had their nice cars and their good food, so they didn’t suffer. It was us common people who suffered. We have two sons and it was very tough for them to go to school hungry.”⁷⁶ As the conversation continued about the Allende years, Graciela mentioned that her daughter passed away in 1972; she was struck by a train when she was riding her horse into town to buy food on the black market for the family; this tragic event only contributed to Raul and Graciela’s hate of the Allende government.⁷⁷

Silvio, a successful business man from Viña del Mar echoed the complaints of Raul and Graciela about the Allende government. When asked about Allende he supplied a well thought out and passionate answer. He explained how Chile had come “closer and closer to a Marxist dictatorship like in Cuba. And little by little the economy began changing. The government created auto inflation. The people were

⁷⁴ Raul. Personal Interview. July 10, 2013.

⁷⁵ Graciela. Personal Interview. July 10, 2013.

⁷⁶ Raul. Personal Interview. July 10, 2013.

⁷⁷ Although the event of Raul and Graciela’s daughter’s death was not directly the fault of the Allende government, it still led them to view that time period very negatively because they experienced the deep emotional pain of losing their daughter as well as the physical pain of being hungry.

walking around with more money in their pockets but they were not able to buy what they really needed. I remember many times there were long lines to buy bread.”⁷⁸ The themes of hunger and food shortages were common complaints among Pinochet supporters. Unlike Raul and Graciela, Silvio was a child when Allende came into power. He explained: “When Allende came into power I was young, 12 years old. But I remember this well. The experience of those years was very traumatic. I was in school at that time, and our education tried to indoctrinate us into Allende’s way of thinking. It was during the years of the Allende government that Chile became divided. It is ludicrous that the minority try to get the majority to think like them. Allende, very intelligently tried to get everyone to think that he was a kind and benevolent person, but in reality he was a sinister person.”⁷⁹

Silvio and his family believed that Allende’s friendly relationship with Fidel Castro was more than just a diplomatic relationship; it was also a friendship in which Allende and Castro worked together to plan an armed communist revolution in Chile. Silvio explained, “He was slowly storing arms for an armed revolution, for a civil war. For example, boats would arrive here, to the port of Valparaiso, from Cuba carrying sacks of sugar. But it wasn’t sugar, it was sugar bags full of weapons. Old people who worked in the port then can tell you that.”⁸⁰ Silvio was not the only one who believed that Allende was plotting an armed revolution, Rodrigo, the current president of the *Fundación President Pinochet* (President Pinochet Foundation) also firmly believed that the Allende government was planning on an armed revolution. Rodrigo clearly

⁷⁸ Silvio. Personal Interview. July 9, 2013.

⁷⁹ Silvio. Personal Interview. July 9, 2013.

⁸⁰ Silvio. Personal Interview. July 9, 2013.

stated that, “a revolution was coming.”⁸¹ Both Rodrigo and Silvio strongly believed that the global climate of the Cold War played a huge role in the situation with Allende, and that Latin America was on the brink of falling to communism. Silvio explained that “communism was taking over the Americas. We had Castro in Cuba, Allende in Chile, the Montoneros in Argentina, and the Shining Path in Peru.”⁸² This continent wide encroachment of communism led many Chileans like Silvio to welcome the military government which was quite obviously anti- communist.

When Pinochet and the armed forces took power from Allende on September 11th, 1973, *Pinochetistas* saw this day as a great victory for Chile. Silvio explained his thoughts on the events of that day: “September 11th 1973 was the day that led to the liberation of Chile from Marxism. Leftists cry over that day because it proves that their changes did not work, but the fact was that the majority of Chile was against Allende. Allende was a dictator by that point, and Chile was no longer a democracy. The country was falling apart...The people of Chile asked for a change, Allende didn’t work, and so September 11th happened.”⁸³ All of the Pinochet supporters interviewed thought of the events of September 11th as being very positive, and expressed no regret at the destruction of a democratically elected government. Raul shared his experiences of the coup and said: “The 11th of September was the day of education for the country....I can tell you that we were here in the country, and we heard the news here. When we heard the news I went to a rodeo, and I stayed there late and I passed the curfew time, me and three other families. And the police just escorted us each directly

⁸¹ Rodrigo. Personal Interview. July 19, 2013.

⁸² Silvio. Personal Interview. July 9, 2013.

⁸³ Silvio. Personal Interview. July 9, 2013.

to our house.”⁸⁴ At that point Graciela chimed in: “and I was happy that they had taken good care of my husband, so I gave the military men who escorted my husband home sandwiches. During that time we were happy for the police so we would have barbeques and wine to thank them for their service.” For the *Pinochetistas* interviewed, the events of September 11th 1973 were unequivocally seen as the military imposing order rather than a coup d’état; this slight change in wording means the difference between the actions being seen as legal or lawless. Pinochet’s supporters realized that Pinochet came into power because of force rather than democracy, but even so they viewed this drastic change as necessary to preserve the future of Chile.

In thinking about Pinochet and his regime, most *Pinochetistas* viewed the man as the savior of modern Chile, and the government as the most influential modernizing force in Chile’s history. When asked about Pinochet, Graciela said warmly, “I adore this gentlemen. I believe he prevented many deaths from occurring, and nobody gives him credit for that. In the time of Allende I lost my daughter, and when Pinochet came around, I thought to myself, he is the vengeance for the death of my daughter, and I adore him for that as though he were my father.”⁸⁵ Her husband Raul took a more pragmatic approach to expressing his sentiments on Pinochet, he stated: “after Pinochet came into power we were able to go shopping again because there were things to buy again! In the years of Allende there was nothing to buy, but with Pinochet there were goods again! Tea, oil, sugar. Everything was back!”⁸⁶ For Graciela, the Pinochet regime was important because it represented a positive change from the painful years of

⁸⁴ Raul. Personal Interview. July 10, 2013.

⁸⁵ Graciela. Personal Interview. July 10, 2013.

⁸⁶ Raul. Personal Interview. July 10, 2013.

Allende, and also because she felt that traditional values were important for Chile's families and society as a whole. For Raul as well, the Pinochet regime was a much needed change from the government of Allende, but he also viewed the economic changes made by Pinochet as being fundamentally important.

While Raul viewed the changes as a base necessity to continue feeding his family, Silvio thought they were necessary for business. When talking to Silvio it quickly became clear that his great success in business stemmed from the economic changes of the Pinochet regime. Silvio explained that at the start of the regime he was “a merchant marine, and then I was in a fruit shipping company starting in 1985. That year we began shipping internationally at a massive level. The economic system of Chile changed during that time and allowed for better business, it changed from public to private.”⁸⁷ The privatizations as well as the neoliberal trade policies allowed for Silvio's company to expand and achieve incredible success; success which he today credits with the changes made during the Pinochet regime. Rodrigo also felt passionately about the benefits of the economic changes and got incredibly excited when explaining his opinions. According to Rodrigo: “Of course the economic changes worked! Chile was one of the poorest countries in Latin America, and now it is the richest.”⁸⁸ This country that is geographically speaking at the end of the world is the head of Latin America. How can this be? Why are we doing better than Argentina? Argentina has all of the benefits that Chile has: cattle, oil, and copper. But Argentinians shop at Chilean stores, we have all of the companies. So when people ask me, ‘why are

⁸⁷ Silvio. Personal Interview. July 9, 2013.

⁸⁸ Although Chile is not technically the richest country in Latin America, it is the only country in Latin America classified by the World Bank as being “developed.”

you *Pinochetista*?' I say look at the Peruvians, the Colombians, and the Argentines. Fifty years ago if you would have asked them if Chile would have a better economy than them and be the leader of Latin America they would have said of course not. It would be like asking if Bolivia will become greater than Chile in 2030. Today Chile is a respected country, a serious country, and all this has to do with President Pinochet. He brought infrastructure to Chile, all these things that people take for granted today”⁸⁹ Rodrigo’s passionate speech seems to sum up clearly why most *Pinochetistas* supported and continue to support Pinochet: because he helped to lead Chile into being one of the most successful countries in Latin America, and created large amounts of infrastructure which benefit the country to this day.

When asked about some of the more negative aspects of the Pinochet regime such as human rights abuses and whether or not his regime was a dictatorship, the Pinochet supporters interviewed produced well thought out responses. In response to the question of whether Pinochet was a dictator or not, the people interviewed had varied responses. Some, such as Rodrigo conceded that he was a dictator, although only technically. Rodrigo explained his views on the matter as such: “If you look do a technical analysis, he was a dictator. But what is the problem with that analysis? Don Augusto was a beloved president. Second he was highly supported. In 1983 when the people voted, 80% wanted him to stay, and when he left office he still had nearly 50% approval, and he had done the hardest transformation that the country has ever seen.”⁹⁰ While Rodrigo and Silvio were willing to admit that the Pinochet regime was a

⁸⁹ Rodrigo. Personal Interview. July 19, 2013.

⁹⁰ Rodrigo. Personal Interview. July 19, 2013.

dictatorship, but a necessary step in modernizing Chile, Raul and Graciela viewed the Pinochet regime as a legitimate government and not a dictatorship.

Undeniably people died at the hands of the government during the Pinochet regime, so I was interested to see how the *Pinochetistas* would respond when asked about the human rights violations. Nobody interviewed tried to deny the deaths of civilians under the regime, but they did try to explain and justify those deaths. Rodrigo stated that, “the number of armed forces men who died during that time were much greater than the number of civilians killed. 3,000 civilians were killed, but double that number of armed forces men were killed.”⁹¹ Of course the civilian death toll is bad, but it was in the context of the cold war. Defeating communism. So when asked, were there human rights abuses? Yes. Did people die? Yes. But another question that must be asked is, what other option was there? Without this control a civil war was coming. A civil war would mean 100,000 dead. 3,000 is a lot, but much less than 100,000 and total anarchy.”⁹² Silvio also spoke of an impending civil war due to the intense polarization of Chilean society during the Allende years, as well as the mounting protests which interrupted every aspect of life. He explained that, “The first few years of Pinochet were stricter, but in general if people wanted to go somewhere, they went. If they wanted to buy something, they bought it. People could do as they pleased, and for me that freedom was the most important thing. Human rights in Chile had been being violated for many years before Pinochet, people just didn’t know about it. In the years of Allende the right of expression and the right to food and quality education were all violated. After Pinochet came around, the communist terrorist groups became

⁹¹ I have not been able to find any data to back up this claim made by Rodrigo.

⁹² Rodrigo. Personal Interview. July 19, 2013.

violent, and they went up against the armed forces. The armed forces had to act, and some people died. It was a war, not a violation of human rights.⁹³” According to Silvio and Rodrigo, the deaths of civilians was a necessary byproduct of the modernization of Chile, and undoubtedly many other *Pinochetistas* viewed and continue to view the deaths as an unavoidable consequence of the chaos of the Allende years and the Cold War.

Before beginning the interviews I was expecting to find that many Chileans both Pinochet supporters and anti-Pinochet, had had political opinions change a bit since the end of the dictatorship. With the Pinochet supporters that was not the case. When asked whether their political opinions had changed since the end of the dictatorship, they all said, definitively, no. Since that question yielded a very black and white answer, I decided to ask about current Chilean opinions and reconciliation efforts. Rodrigo firmly stated, “Chile’s students look at Pinochet in the context of 2010, which is completely different than the context of 1973. Today Capitalism has won. The Soviet Union fell, the United States won, and the Cold War is not a threat. And I say that any person, and this is very powerful what I am going to say. If any person is a little bit educated, they have to be *Pinochetista*.”⁹⁴ He then went on to say that if Chile is looking to make memorials to aid in reconciliation, they cannot just tell one side of the story; there must also be memorials for the military men who died fighting communist forces, and the people who died of hunger during the Allende years. Silvio took a slightly different stance on the matter: he believed that making “statues and monuments....is not helpful. It doesn’t help. If it is a monument about a war with

⁹³ Silvio. Personal Interview. July 9, 2013.

⁹⁴ Rodrigo. Personal Interview. July 19, 2013.

foreigners this is good because it makes us more patriotic, but to memorialize something that divides us this is not helpful.”⁹⁵ Regardless of how they think Chile should work towards a more complete reconciliation between the right and the left wings, all agreed that something needs to change in order for Chile to keep advancing and to maintain its position as one of the most successful countries in Latin America.

⁹⁵ Silvio. Personal Interview. July 19, 2013.

“Pinochet was Evil”: Interviews with Anti-Pinochet Chileans

Among people who did not support the Pinochet regime, there is a lot of division of opinion surrounding the Allende years. Many people who did not like Pinochet viewed Allende as a sort of mystical hero figure, and the most important force of change in modern Chile. Others however saw the protests and economic problems of the Allende years and acknowledged that a change was needed. Among anti-Pinochet people interviewed, the most passionately in favor of the Allende government was Marcelo, an older gentleman who was, and still is, heavily involved in the leftist folk music scene. Marcelo described Allende as, “the most important person in the history of Chile. I met him. It was October 1970 and he had been elected but not yet assumed power. He was giving a speech in a stadium near my house and I collected the signatures of famous people so I wanted his signature. So when I saw Allende, I yelled “President! Look here! Your signature please?” He looked at me and was surrounded by guards and all that. He said: “yeah, come here son!” I gave him my notebook. He gave me a hug. I felt that he was like a father. I remember that with fondness.”⁹⁶ Besides meeting Allende and feeling a sense of celebrity awe towards the president, Marcelo also firmly believed in the politics that Allende represented, and felt that: “apart from being a very charismatic leader Allende was like a father for the people. For the humble people, the people who never had anything.”⁹⁷ Jesús, a Chilean poet currently living in the United States also agreed with Marcelo’s positive views of Allende. He stated: “Allende was a good man who worked diligently for change in Chile. Chile just was

⁹⁶ Marcelo. Personal Interview. July 15, 2013.

⁹⁷ Marcelo. Personal Interview. July 15, 2013.

not ready to accept those changes yet.”⁹⁸ For people like Marcelo and Jesús, the social changes that Allende made in Chile were seen as positive since they allowed people of humble origins to have daily access to sufficient food, and because of the nationalization of many industries which made for more stable jobs for working class Chileans.

The majority of the people who did not support Pinochet stated that the Allende government was failing and that Chile was in chaos at the time of the coup. For them, although they deplored the conditions of the Pinochet regime, they were able to agree that Allende’s government was not functioning for one reason or another. One principal reason that people pointed to for the fall of the Allende government was the influence and intervention of the United States and the Cold War. Carlos, a lawyer from the province of Rancagua explains that: “when the United States got involved, it became impossible for Allende to make those changes he so desired. The United States saw Chile and Allende as another Cuba, another Fidel Castro.”⁹⁹ Maximo, an employee at the Universidad Católica in Valparaiso echoed Carlos’ thoughts when he stated that: “today it is accepted that since September 4th, 1970, the United States and Kissinger began planning against Allende. It had already been decided {sic} [by the United States] that Allende would not be allowed to continue in office.”¹⁰⁰ Later in the interview Maximo discussed how the United States’ paranoia of communism in their back yard, and their feelings of superiority over the rest of the Americas ultimately led to the United States intervening and the Allende government falling. He explained that,

⁹⁸ Jesús. Personal Interview. February 25, 2014.

⁹⁹ Carlos. Personal Interview. July 13, 2013.

¹⁰⁰ Maximo. Personal Interview. July 14, 2013.

“the United States has always supported dictatorships. In the cold war, and today as well.”¹⁰¹

Although both Carlos and Maximo put a lot of blame for the fall of Allende on the United States, Carlos recognized that another contributing factor in the fall of the Allende government was “the climate of tension between 2 sectors of the country. One sector more rich, more bourgeoisie, and the other the miners, the workers. Effectively the changes that Allende made only made this tension and this divide greater, the expropriations, the nationalizations... there was the sensation of antagonism in the country. It got to the point that the tension boiled over with the armed forces realizing that if something didn’t change than people would take to the streets.”¹⁰² Felix, an elderly historian and encyclopedia book writer from Viña del Mar commented that the Allende government was a failure because: “He began to print bills, and raised salaries at the same time. He tried to improve the lives of the poor, to give them money. So the country entered into a period of inflation. There was just too much money in circulation, so the country fell into ruin, and Chile was in a very deplorable condition. There were lines, it was like Cuba, lots of lines. The black market began to appear. But Allende committed an error. He angered the tiger. The tiger is the army. He did this by the economic situation, and by inviting Fidel Castro to visit. The military in Chile is, in general, very Yankee, very conservative, and so they did not like Fidel Castro and Cuba being in Chile. He was just angering the tiger.”¹⁰³ And sure enough, eventually the tiger that Felix described became so enraged that it took down the Allende

¹⁰¹ Maximo. Personal Interview. July 13, 2013.

¹⁰² Carlos. Personal Interview. July 14, 2013.

¹⁰³ Felix. Personal Interview. July 17, 2013.

government; a switch of power that left the Moneda palace in ruins, and President Allende with a bullet through his head.

The subsequent Pinochet military regime saw trying times for many Chileans, especially those who had the misfortune of being arrested and detained, such as Pedro. Today Pedro works raising awareness for human rights issues worldwide, but at the time of the military coup he was seen as a dangerous subversive. Pedro was detained and held for months at a time at numerous detention facilities around Santiago, and eventually after months of starvation and torture was released and ordered into exile in the United States. While visiting the Villa Grimaldi detention facility in Santiago, Pedro recounts: “this gate is where they would bring in new prisoners, shackled and blindfolded. While getting out of the truck they beat us, and that is how I knew what sort of a place I had been taken to. We had no idea where we were because as soon as they arrested people from their homes they blindfolded them and then drove to the various facilities.”¹⁰⁴ Later when standing in a replica of a solitary confinement cell, Pedro explained the cruel practice: “this cell was designed so that a prisoner could not sit down at all because the cell is so small. I was put in here once for I don’t know how long. In this cell they gave me a small cup of water twice a day to keep me alive, but that was it. Other than that I stood up until my legs collapsed, and then the walls kept me up but in horrible pain. They did not let you leave to use the toilet either. Because of my time in this cell I can sleep anywhere, ask my wife.”¹⁰⁵ As my tour of the facility continued, Pedro explained that daily life in the facility was brutal, and torture was routine. “They let us out to use the toilet for only two minutes twice a day and for

¹⁰⁴ Pedro. Personal Interview. August 21, 2013.

¹⁰⁵ Pedro. Personal Interview. August 21, 2013.

watery soup and water twice a day. Other than that we were kept in dark small cells crammed with other people, or we were interrogated. Being interrogated meant torture. The screams of people being tortured could be heard at all hours, and eventually we got used to it. They would submerge us in water almost to the point of drowning, apply electrical shocks to all sensitive parts of the body, rape or sexually mistreat the women, or tie us in uncomfortable positions and leave us there so long that our muscles were destroyed. Anything cruel you can imagine, they did to us here.”¹⁰⁶ Pedro’s stories of his months in the detention facility clearly illustrates the reason that many Chileans despised the Pinochet regime for the human rights violations. People who, like Pedro were imprisoned and tortured, or people who had family members who were detained, tortured, or even killed could not support the regime that practiced such atrocities.

For other Chileans, the Pinochet regime meant hard times in different ways. For Miguel, a cactus farmer from the outskirts of Santiago, the Pinochet regime’s human rights violations were not an issue, but his economic policies were. During the Allende years, Miguel’s family had been poor, but were at least assured basic nutrition on a somewhat regular basis. However when the Pinochet regime halted many of the government food programs of the Allende years, Miguel and his family were left without food. Miguel remembered: “I was a child at the time of the coup, and my mom had to support all three of us kids. In 1974 she lost her job and life got hard for us.”¹⁰⁷ Since his mother had no job, and the food distribution program no longer existed, Miguel’s family suffered greatly. He explained: “What I remember about the Pinochet years was the hunger. Politics don’t mean anything if you are hungry. I remember

¹⁰⁶ Pedro. Personal Interview. August 21, 2014.

¹⁰⁷ Miguel. Personal Interview. July 10, 2014.

sometimes going three days without any real food. At that time I lived in the country and I couldn't go to school because I had to help my mom find food. We would try to find anything to eat: edible leaves, things people had thrown away, roots... Sometimes all we had was a little bit of tea to drink to try and hold back the hunger pains...I just remember the hunger of those years.”¹⁰⁸ Later, when asked about his political leanings Miguel just stated simply: “I am not very political, all I care about is feeding my family.”¹⁰⁹ Miguel's experience and his opinions surrounding the regime is the story of many poor Chileans, especially those who lived in the country side. These victims of the “Chilean Economic Miracle” did not oppose the Pinochet regime on moral grounds or political ones, but rather because they hated to watch their families starve.

For students, the Pinochet regime brought a very different scholastic experience. Directly following the coup, the government shut down the universities for a few days and made drastic staff changes. Any professor or staff member who was thought to have any sort of leftist leaning or tie with the Unidad Popular government was fired, and replaced by a more right wing person. When asked about differences in the education system, Felix simply stated, “A good friend of mine who was a Marxist professor was instantly fired.”¹¹⁰ Maximo who was an employee at the Universidad Católica as well as a student there said that after the University started back up: “I returned to my office and I found it destroyed. I had a big collection of photo archives and they were all destroyed and on the ground and everything that was usable they took, they robbed...After the coup I was expelled from my degree program and I was accused

¹⁰⁸ Miguel. Personal Interview. July 10, 2013.

¹⁰⁹ Ibid.

¹¹⁰ Felix. Personal Interview. July 17, 2013.

of being a dangerous extremist... An anonymous letter gave my name to the government. So I was expelled because of a ridiculous letter. Ridiculous because it had no grounding in truth and nobody looked to see whether it was true or not. It said that I was a dangerous extremist! I was so surprised that they said this about me. Imagine holding that paper that says you are a dangerous extremist in your hand and being so confused.”¹¹¹ Maximo’s story of being expelled from his degree program for it seeming too liberal was not unique, Marcelo also said that many of his friends were expelled from degrees such as creative writing, music, history, and literature because those types of degrees were seen as “leftist.”

The lives of students who were allowed to remain at the university changed dramatically as well. When asked about his time attending college during the dictatorship, Marcelo explained: “We weren’t allowed to talk about politics in classes or between friends. We couldn’t talk about anything. You just studied your classes, you didn’t talk. There was fear. There were disappearances, exiles, deaths. You were scared. While I was in the university I began to be worried that I was being watched. Photos came of me with some political friends from school who had been exiled.”¹¹² The observations of Maximo mirror what Marcelo said about his university experience. Maximo stated: “the lives of students were very restricted. Between classes students had to walk directly to their classrooms, and they were prohibited from talking in groups of more than two people. After class they could not socialize, but instead had to go directly back to their houses. It was prohibited to gather or to eat lunch at the school. There were no public spaces or cafeterias at the university. It was even dangerous for

¹¹¹ Maximo. Personal Interview. July 13, 2013.

¹¹² Marcelo. Personal Interview. July 15, 2013.

two people to talk together. It was seen as suspicious. A guy with long hair was held down and had his hair forcibly cut off, a female student wearing a short skirt got beat up.”¹¹³ The beating or shaming of people who did not seem to follow the conservative values of the right wing dictatorship was prevalent, not just at universities but on the streets as well. Being a “hippy” was a punishable crime and could lead to harassment and detention. The universities at the time of the Pinochet regime mirrored the restrictive and fear inducing nature of daily life for most Chileans.

Every person interviewed had been directly affected by the dictatorship in some way or another. Some people were detained, some had family members or close friends who were tortured or killed, and some witnessed violence in the streets. Felix said that he knew many people who were negatively affected by the dictatorship: “My neighbor was a prisoner for 2 years. I know someone who was exiled, and who moved to Germany. And of course the many others who were killed, they were just shot for being unpatriotic. Of course I had friends that we detained, taken prisoner, but they were all released eventually... I never protested against Pinochet, but that doesn’t mean that I didn’t suffer. I suffered for my country, for my son.”¹¹⁴ Like Felix, Carlos also knew many people who were affected by the violence: “We had relatives in the family who were detained. They were kept as political prisoners in jail. I had a close friend who was detained in Rancagua and I remember trying to send him food in jail. All people who were in opposition to Pinochet knew people or had a relative who was detained at some point. My uncle was detained in Villa Alemana right after the coup, and he was taken to Chacabuco in the north to a concentration camp. He was then transferred to a

¹¹³ Maximo. Personal Interview. July 13, 2013.

¹¹⁴ Felix. Personal Interview. July 17, 2013.

ship which was used as a floating jail for political prisoners...These areas were used to detain people and kill people.”¹¹⁵ Carlos knew that his uncle and his friend were tortured and otherwise abused while they were detained, but at least they survived their detention time. Carlos also talked passionately about protestors who were shot on the spot for being subversive. Especially in the early years of the regime, every person was viewed as a potential subversive even if they were not trying to resist the government. According to Marcelo his family witnessed violence from the government within their own home: “My big family all lived in connecting houses, and one of my uncles had a gun, and after the coup, a neighbor saw him with his gun. On September 12th police came into our house at night when we were all sitting around watching TV together. He said that a neighbor said that we had a gun, and he demanded to see the gun. A police man asked my brother who was 14 to come to him, he asked: “you, where is the gun?” He hit him hard on the back. “Tell me where the gun is!” he began to hit him with his gun on the spine. It hurt him. “Where is the gun?!” Finally they went over to my uncle’s house and found him. They found a book about Allende and the gun, and so they destroyed his house.”¹¹⁶ For people like Marcelo who had their home invaded by armed government personnel, the dictatorship was a time of uncertainty and constant fear. Carlos explained how everyone was witness to some form of injustice and how he saw “people do hunger strikes because their girlfriends or boyfriends were being tortured by the CNI, which was like the DINA.”¹¹⁷ Carlos then went on to explain how Pinochet had dissolved the DINA after the scandal surrounding the Orlando Letelier

¹¹⁵ Carlos. Personal Interview. July 14, 2013.

¹¹⁶ Marcelo. Personal Interview. July 15, 2013.

¹¹⁷ Carlos. Personal Interview. July 14, 2013.

assassination, but quickly created the CNI to carry out the same jobs that he DINA had previously done. Jesús, a poet, explained that the Pinochet dictatorship was “a time of fear. Everything seemed muted and gray, life had no colors; it was like living in a dreary black and white film.”¹¹⁸

Not everyone interviewed was against the Pinochet regime at the time it was occurring. Benito, a salesman from Santiago was in the military during the time of the dictatorship. When asked about his daily duties, he talked about how strict the military was and that every aspect of life was regimented. Despite the usual difficulties of army life, Benito overall had positive things to say about his military experience. He stated that his most prestigious position was being a body guard for a colonel: “We went with him on the street, and the police had to let him pass when he showed them his ID card. I had two guns with me, one on my chest and one on my back to protect just one man. We were authorized to shoot anyone.”¹¹⁹ Luckily he never had to shoot anyone, or saw much action. He also described the strangeness of living on the newly developed military bases. When Pinochet came into power he created numerous new bases throughout the country which could be located anywhere. Benito stated: “It was weird because in front of the military bases, there were normal people living. They were scared because there were now so many military people right near their houses. These bases could be anywhere, in any building.”¹²⁰ Benito left his military experience with an overall positive impression of the Pinochet regime, and it wasn’t until years later that

¹¹⁸ Jesús. Personal Interview. February 25, 2014.

¹¹⁹ Benito. Personal Interview. July 8, 2013.

¹²⁰ Benito. Personal Interview. July 8, 2013.

he began to condemn the actions of the dictator. He conceded that Pinochet did some positive things, but that they were not right because they were “all done by force.”¹²¹

Although political involvement of any kind was completely illegal under the dictatorship, many people still dared to protest and speak out. Maximo, Marcelo, and Carlos were all active participants in efforts to resist the dictatorship. Maximo and Carlos were university students at the time, and they both found different ways to participate. Maximo described how students made up creative ways to protest without getting caught: “In a cool and entertaining manner they made up protests. For example, they distributed umbrellas and at one moment everyone would open up the umbrella even though there wasn’t rain. The tops of the umbrellas had messages and words against the government, but when the police came they just had to close the umbrellas. This was known as the Umbrella Group. It was this type of frivolous protest that happened and it was ingenious because protesting was completely illegal.”¹²² Because the protests that Maximo participated in were passive protests, he was never detained for his actions. Carlos however helped organize overt protests, and was often detained for his resistance. Carlos explained: “Many times I participated in protests, building barricades, or we would organize to protest when Pinochet would visit a certain city, saying that all he wanted was more power...So of course I was detained a few times for my political activities. A couple of times I was detained for helping to organize protests against Pinochet, and we were reprimanded violently by the police.”¹²³ For Carlos,

¹²¹ Ibid.

¹²² Maximo. Personal Interview. July 13, 2013.

¹²³ Carlos. Personal Interview. July 14, 2013.

resisting the government he so detested was worth suffering time in prison and the blows dealt by the police.

Marcelo was also detained for his actions, although his resistance took a very different form than Carlos'. Marcelo was part of a folklore music group and "was detained for being part of the music group. I was recently married and my wife was seven months pregnant, expecting a baby. During the dictatorship we began to sing, songs against the dictator. At our first concert, we performed at a socialist celebration. We began to sing and the police arrived with fifteen or sixteen buses. They began hitting people because the meeting was illegal. By law they couldn't take us for more than 5 days without reason, but during that time we could be tortured or they could move you. If you lived in Santiago, they could send you to the south of Chile and you would have to live there. I was detained for five days...and then I felt followed and I was worried they would take me again. I saw police near my house watching me for two or three months after. At any moment they could have detained me. Of course."¹²⁴ Throughout the dictatorship Marcelo kept singing in his band although more discreetly, and to this day the band performs concerts at various folklore and leftist gatherings. Maximo also felt that continued support for anti-Pinochet demonstrations and events is extremely important. He explained: "I did everything, voting, participating in activities against the dictator, I did it. I worked for all the years of the dictatorship doing work for groups against the dictator. And still I support any protest, marches and what not."¹²⁵ For people like Maximo and Marcelo, the actions of the Pinochet government were intolerable then, and continue to be intolerable today.

¹²⁴ Marcelo. Personal Interview. July 15, 2013.

¹²⁵ Maximo. Personal Interview. July 13, 2013.

The plebiscite of 1988 brought big changes to the lives of Chileans; for the first time in fifteen years they would be allowed to vote. For Carlos who grew up under the dictatorship, the 1988 plebiscite was a completely new experience. He shared: “When the time finally came for us to vote, it felt odd. I had never known voting before.... Now everyone talks about voting as being a basic human right, but growing up it did not seem like it, because I never knew voting.”¹²⁶ When asked about the plebiscite, Felix quickly stated: “I voted for no, of course, I could see that his government was a disaster. I was able to vote without any problem. These elections were totally democratic, totally fair. The ‘no’ won, and Pinochet respected that.”¹²⁷ Carlos also described the elections as being completely democratic: “In 1988 I think it was very beautiful what happened. The government didn’t want a civil war to happen so they allowed the plebiscite... I worked for the no, collecting votes, trying to see how it would all turn out. Finally the government had to accept the inevitable, one of Pinochet’s men at one point during the election entered the Moneda and said: ‘it is clear to me that the no has already won, there is nothing more to be done’ ...This was powerful because Pinochet didn’t commit fraud to try to win despite knowing that he would lose....I think that this election has been one of the most powerful experiences in my life, passing from an extremely restrictive regime into democracy. Into liberty.”¹²⁸ For Carlos the subsequent democracy after the dictatorship was a success, but for Felix, those governments were also failures which created problems that still plague Chile to this day. He sadly stated “In general I don’t have a very favorable opinion of Latin

¹²⁶ Carlos. Personal interview. July 14, 2013.

¹²⁷ Felix. Personal Interview. July 17, 2013.

¹²⁸ Carlos. Personal interview. July 14, 2013.

American democracy. I think that politicians look too much for their own gain, not for the benefit of the country. Also they are a bit ignorant. This is why Latin America is still behind, and Chile is no exception.”¹²⁹ Although Felix had the most negative opinions about the *Concertación* governments, most people interviewed agreed that the governments of Aylwin, Frei, and Lagos did not do enough to free Chile from the pervasive influence of the Pinochet regime but were not completely negative.

After the end of the dictatorship many of the negative aspects of the Pinochet regime began to come to light. Starting in 1991 with the publication of the RETIG commission, Chileans began to become more and more aware of the human rights atrocities that occurred during the dictatorship. Pinochet’s credibility was further shattered when in 2005 his tax evasion of over \$8 million was discovered.¹³⁰ The discovery of all the human rights violations as well as the tax evasion scandal led to many Chileans disliking Pinochet even if they had previously supported him. Marcelo explained how although many of his family members had voted to keep Pinochet in power once “the government stabilized in 1991, these members of my family began to realize the atrocities that the Pinochet government committed and they began to be more central in their political views. However there were still some people in my family who denied the human rights violations, who denied the participation and influence of the United States.”¹³¹ When asked about his political leanings and that of his family, Felix stated that he and his wife were both intellectuals who “favored

¹²⁹ Felix. Personal Interview. July 17, 2013.

¹³⁰ *Pinochet Arrested in Chile on Tax Fraud Charges*. The New York Times. November 23, 2005. Web.

¹³¹ Marcelo. Personal Interview. July 15, 2013.

science and art, the more beautiful things in life, but not politics.”¹³² Although neither Felix or his wife were very political, both voted no in the plebiscite, and have come to dislike the actions of the dictatorship even more today than they did in 1988. When asked about the plebiscite, Carlos expressed disbelief that almost half of Chile had chosen to vote for a government which was so obviously a dictatorship. He stated: “if a regime kills even one person in the cruelest way possible than that is not justice. If a democracy decides to kill someone as punishment for a crime that is different because they have due process of law to come to that agreement, but here the people who died were detained without access to a lawyer, and their fate was decided without a trial, without anything. Nothing!”¹³³ At the time of the plebiscite around half of Chileans voted for Pinochet to remain in power, but today the number of people still supporting the dictator is quite a bit lower.

Carlos firmly believed that, “80% of Chileans consider Pinochet to be a bad person. They cannot deny the human rights issues, and also we know about his economic fraud with the United States.... when people found out about this, people stopped supporting him.”¹³⁴ Carlos also discussed the importance of the Rettig truth commission of 1991 which brought to light many of the atrocities committed by the Pinochet regime.¹³⁵ He also discussed how many *Pinochetistas* had to stop supporting Pinochet because of his tax embezzlement scandal of 2005. When asked how his catholic faith influenced his political opinions, Carlos was quick to point out that soon

¹³² Felix. Personal interview. July 17, 2013.

¹³³ Carlos. Personal Interview. July 14, 2013.

¹³⁴ Carlos. Personal Interview. July 14, 2013.

¹³⁵ Brahm, Eric. *The Chilean Truth and Reconciliation Committee*. Beyond Intractability. July 2005. Web.

after the coup, a church formed the *Vicaria de la Solidaridad* which was designed to help people who were at risk for persecution by Pinochet's government.¹³⁶ He described how this organization made him and many other left wing Catholics feel more connected to the church during the years of government repression. Although Carlos blatantly disliked the Pinochet regime, and was detained and beaten on numerous occasions for his beliefs, he was able to recognize that some positive changes occurred during the Pinochet years. He reluctantly conceded that Pinochet was forward thinking in his infrastructure development and some of his economic policies. Similarly, Benito who now dislikes the Pinochet regime declared that Pinochet "made the Austral highway which is extremely important in Chile today."¹³⁷ Although Benito believed that Pinochet did good things for Chile, he did not support the use of force, violence, and censorship. Some people like Marcelo were unable to see any good that had come out of the Pinochet regime, and when asked about the worst thing the dictator did, Marcelo chuckled and said: "He was born."¹³⁸ Surely many Chileans would agree with Marcelo's opinion and not be able to find any positive things that came from the seventeen year regime.

Chile clearly needs to move towards a more inclusive and reconciliatory attitude towards the events of the dictatorship, but people have differing opinions about how that should occur. When asked about remembering the dictatorship and Chile working to heal from the events that transpired, Carlos shook his head slowly and said: "These events happened over twenty years ago, but the memories are still fresh in my mind. It

¹³⁶ *Un Poco de Historia*. Vicaria de la Solidaridad. March 2011. Web.

¹³⁷ Benito. Personal Interview. July 8, 2013.

¹³⁸ Marcelo. Personal Interview. July 15, 2013.

is fundamental for our country to remember what happened so that we never forget what happened and allow it to happen again. There are people who say that it is sad to remember the atrocities that happened, but I say that it is important. There are today movies about slavery in the United States, this atrocity occurred in your country and you remember it so that history does not repeat.”¹³⁹ Marcelo also firmly advocated remembering the events of the dictatorship. He said: “It was sad but we cannot erase it because it is history. A country without history doesn’t have a future. If we don’t know what happened we might repeat it, and that cannot happen.”¹⁴⁰ Maximo firmly believed that September 11th was a date which divided Chile and continues to do so today. He believed that until a larger portion of Chileans realize that the dictatorship was a negative time in Chile’s past the nation cannot truly move towards peace on the issue. Marcelo advocated for a change of the Chilean constitution because Chile is currently “a false democracy since it still uses Pinochet’s constitution.”¹⁴¹ Jesús also believed that the constitution must be changed before reconciliation can truly occur and that “people must find out the truth so that they can know what happened to their families and heal from their own post-traumatic stress.”¹⁴² When asked about the future of Chile, Felix adopted a more hopeful stance and stated with a smile: “I think that it [Chile] is a little bit divided, but with god’s grace I think that is changing today. Chile is a very patriotic country.”¹⁴³

¹³⁹ Carlos. Personal interview. July 14, 2013.

¹⁴⁰ Marcelo. *Personal interview*. July 15, 2013.

¹⁴¹ Marcelo. *Personal interview*. July 15, 2013.

¹⁴² Jesús. Personal Interview. February 25, 2014.

¹⁴³ Felix. Personal Interview. July 17, 2013.

Hopefully Felix is correct, and in the future all Chileans, people who supported Pinochet and people who didn't, can work together to create a better future for their country.

Secondary Memories: Interviews with Younger Chileans

Although the population of Chileans who lived through the dictatorship is aging, the next generation still has strong opinions about what happened and what the next steps for reconciliation should be. In looking at the student protests which have occurred since 2011, it is obvious that the issues that the students are protesting are the indirect result of the policies of the Pinochet years. In the ongoing protests, the student protestors have requested more state support for public universities as well as the creation of more public universities as none have been created since the time of the dictatorship although the numbers of students have increased dramatically. Prior to the military regime, schools and universities were primarily public, and it was only with the mass privatizations of the Pinochet regime that schools became privatized businesses looking to make a profit off of students' tuition. It became clear that although they are asking for solutions to current problems, the student protestors believed that the issues stem from the Pinochet regime. On the 38th anniversary of the coup in 2011, student protestors staged a large scale destructive and violent protest which ultimately led to one death and many injuries, arrests, and property damage.¹⁴⁴ The very next day Chilean police stormed the communist party headquarters and injured many student protestors who had gathered there for planning. Since then the protests have died down a bit due to the election of leftist president Michelle Bachelet who has promised to try and meet the protestor's demands as well as work towards a more thorough truth and justice commission to investigate the human rights violations of the dictatorship.

¹⁴⁴*Hundreds Arrested in coup Anniversary Protest.* Monsters and Critics. September 12, 2011. Web.

The young people interviewed were either too young at the time of the dictatorship to remember anything, or were born after the plebiscite, but yet they all have strong opinions about the events that their parents and grandparents lived through. Christian, a thirty year old middle school history teacher, told how his father was detained for being a militant communist, “He was taken to the national stadium which was a detention facility. He never talked much about what happened. He suffered like everyone there but he was able to get out of the stadium because my mom knew a policeman who was able to get him out. My mom then destroyed everything in the house that looked communist.”¹⁴⁵ For Christian, the fact that his father suffered at the hands of Pinochet was enough to make him dislike the military regime. That firsthand knowledge of the injustices of the dictatorship was a common theme among young people who disliked the dictatorship. For Camilo, a university student, the Pinochet regime was a negative time in Chile’s history because, “he violated human rights. He tortured people. Look at how he killed Victor Jara for example. I also know people who were tortured and detained.”¹⁴⁶ For young Chileans like Camilo and Christian, knowing someone who was tortured or detained, especially a family member, was the principle reason that they disliked the Pinochet regime.

For Pia, a history and culture instructor for foreign exchange students at a university, the Pinochet years were economically difficult times for her parents. She explained how her father was forced to enlist in the military in 1974 since it was obligatory at that time. According to Pia, “the military service was very rough, the sergeants were always very violent to the recruits, especially the ones who, like my

¹⁴⁵ Christian. Personal Interview. July 17, 2013.

¹⁴⁶ Camilo. Personal Interview. July 9, 2014.

father, had not volunteered but rather had been forced to enlist. He was in the military for two years. He hated those years and always says that he would rather forget those years because it is painful for him to talk about.”¹⁴⁷ After her father’s time in the military he was unable to find a job in the mines because they had all been privatized and he was forced to work odd jobs until 1986. Her mother also suffered because in the Allende years she had been studying at the university, but with the privatization of universities she was forced to stop studying. For Pia’s family, the Pinochet regime was a time of economic difficulty as well as trauma, and today she still carries those feelings with her.

Both Pia and Christian have the responsibility of teaching students about the events of the dictatorship, and despite feeling similarly that the Pinochet regime was a negative thing, they both go about teaching it quite differently. When Christian begins the unit on the dictatorship, he says to his class: “‘ok kids, let’s feel some sadness today.’ I do the same thing when we study the world wars, or any other wars. There are kids who don’t know anything about the dictatorship, but whose parents like Pinochet, so they just think that it was good without knowing what happened. This bugs me. I think the most important thing for me is that my students are able to have questions about the period. I only want that they question the things that occurred.”¹⁴⁸ For Christian it is of the utmost importance that his young students understand that during the years of the dictatorship, 3, 065 people lost their lives and 40,000 were mistreated and tortured. Pia has the responsibility of teaching foreign exchange students about the events of the dictatorship, and she tries to do it in a more objective manner by

¹⁴⁷ Pia. Personal Interview. July 11, 2013.

¹⁴⁸ Christian. Personal Interview. July 17, 2013.

explaining the positive changes Pinochet made as well as the tragic issue of the violation of human rights. She explained that some of Pinochet's economic policies such as privatization of certain companies were positive at the time because they encouraged desperately needed foreign investment. When teaching about the time period of the regime, Pia said that she discusses the economic changes as well as: "the human rights issue. I talk a lot about the torture centers, Villa Grimaldi.... I talk about what the family members of the disappeared want. They don't want vengeance, they just want to know what happened to their loved ones so that way they can grieve, they can leave a flower or whatever they need to do to move on. So the strongest reaction from my international students is always in relation to the issue of human rights, not economic issues."¹⁴⁹ The human rights issues of the Pinochet regime seems to be the aspect that most interests and repels younger Chileans. In general, for them the idea that people were killed without trial and tortured in detention facilities around the country is the most important aspect of the regime.

The generation of Chileans that are thirty and younger have the responsibility to work towards a better peace in their country. Although the dictatorship has been over for twenty three years, Chile is still not reconciled as shown by the protests and events that marked the 40th anniversary of the September 11th coup. University student Camilo explained the situation in Chile perfectly when he stated: "There are many people that still nurse open wounds over what happened. And of course there are people that loved his government, and they want the country to keep advancing the way they thought

¹⁴⁹ Pia. Personal Interview. July 11, 2013.

Pinochet was doing.”¹⁵⁰ Camilo went on to explain that: “People cannot view this time objectively. I think that as long as there are people alive who lived through the dictatorship Chile will not have a true reconciliation.”¹⁵¹ Camilo’s assessment of the slim possibility of reconciliation in the next few decades is grim, but unfortunately it seems accurate. Pia stated that until the neoliberal economic policies implemented by Pinochet are revoked, Chile will not be able to work for a more complete recovery since the current protests are the product of the policies of the dictatorship. Christian also attributed the current protests and social unrest to the policies of the dictatorship when he stated: “right now we are in a social crisis, and this crisis, these protests are the result of things that happened over 20 years ago.”¹⁵² Pia also conceded that in “Chile there is a lot of social segregation in this country. There are very rich people and very poor people, and until everyone has access to a decent education we cannot even talk about reconciliation. It will be a long time until it truly happens.”¹⁵³

The younger generation of Chileans know that reconciliation is important but, in general, do not think that it is possible at this point. Catalina, a high school student stated that, “people cannot agree on this issue. Many of my friends do not really care what happened, but they still have strong opinions because of their parents.”¹⁵⁴ Christian thought that education was the key to reconciliation although the road would be difficult. For teachers like Christian and Pia, teaching students about the events of the dictatorship in a way that fosters understanding and peace in the future is of the

¹⁵⁰ Camilo. Personal Interview. July 9, 2013.

¹⁵¹ Camilo. Personal Interview. July 9, 2013.

¹⁵² Christian. Personal Interview. July 17, 2013.

¹⁵³ Pia. Personal Interview. July 11, 2013.

¹⁵⁴ Catalina. Personal Interview. March 2, 2014.

utmost importance. All young Chileans interviewed thought that the next generation would be the one to work for true reconciliation in Chile. Camilo explained: “Maybe the next generation will be able to view this more rationally. There is still too much emotion surrounding this issue.”¹⁵⁵ Christian advocated a different approach to reconciliation by suggesting: “it is important that future generations know what happened. I think it is important to have education memorial sights, not to stir up conflict but rather the contrary, to work for better peace.”¹⁵⁶ For Christian, Pia, and Catalina, peace and true reconciliation can only come when all Chileans understand what happened and say together, ‘never again.’ For Camilo and many other Chileans, the path to reconciliation is not so clear cut: “We shouldn’t forget what happened, for better or for worse, but also it can cause pain to our country. Honestly I sometimes don’t know if it is good to remember or not.”¹⁵⁷

¹⁵⁵ Camilo. Personal Interview. July 9, 2013.

¹⁵⁶ Christian. Personal Interview. July 17, 2013.

¹⁵⁷ Camilo. Personal Interview. July 9, 2013.

Monuments and Efforts to Memorialize the Regime

Ever since the first presidency of Michelle Bachelet from 2006 to 2010, there has been an explosion of efforts to remember the events of the Pinochet regime. Although efforts by the previous governments occurred, it was under the first Bachelet presidency that the efforts to memorialize the victims of the Pinochet regime were attacked with renewed vigor. Memorials, monuments, and museums honoring the people who died during the dictatorship sprang up from the Atacama Desert, to the glacier carved and wind whipped valleys of Patagonia. President Bachelet took a personal interest in the development of these efforts because her father was killed during the regime, and she herself was detained and tortured. With the dedication of the Human Rights Museum in Santiago in 2010, Chileans were able to walk through the extremely modern and somber museum and learn about the brutalities of the military government as well as pay homage to the people who lost their lives during those years.¹⁵⁸ Today many of the former detention facilities including Villa Grimaldi, where Pedro was held captive, now have memorial exhibits and are open to the public to wander and ponder the atrocities that occurred there not that long ago. In Santiago, the General Cemetery boasts the gigantic grave of Salvador Allende, the grave of folksinger and martyr Victor Jara, as well as a massive wall bearing the names of the people who were killed or who disappeared during the dictatorship. Other smaller scale memorials sprung up in most large cities throughout Chile, and there are numerous monuments dedicated to the memory of the victims of the Pinochet Regime.

¹⁵⁸ *Museo de la Memoria y los Derechos Humanos*. Web.

While in Chile, I was able to visit multiple monuments remembering the events of the regime in Santiago and the greater Valparaiso area. The most striking memorial is undoubtedly the Human Rights Museum in Santiago. This huge building is beautifully designed, and features numerous displays about the events of the dictatorship, as well as a wall of pictures three stories tall commemorating the people who lost their lives. I had the good fortune to visit the museum and memorial with Marcelo and his young granddaughter. Marcelo played in a protest band during the Pinochet years to resist the dictatorship, and saw numerous friends and family members jailed or otherwise mistreated by the military regime. He told me that although his granddaughter is young it is important to him that she learn about this tragic event in Chile's past so that her generation can prevent something like it from happening again. As we walked through the exhibits I watched Marcelo and his granddaughter's reactions. Marcelo was very interested in reading the old newspaper clippings and watching the news footage from the day of the coup, and he told me that he remembers hearing about the coup and knowing at that moment that everything would change and that Chile would enter a period of fear. His granddaughter was most interested in the stories of the children, and she spent a long time looking at the drawings that children had made describing their experiences or feelings about the military regime. She pointed to one that had been drawn by a young child which featured a mom and two kids holding hands outside of a house and on the other side of the drawing there is a man in a jail cell with three guns pointing at his head. The man and his family in front of the house are all crying. Images such as this that clearly illustrate how the military regime affected some families and children are incredibly powerful, and the museum

and memorial does a great job incorporating this sort of display with factual exhibits, memorials, and interactive displays. The purpose of the Human Rights Museum of Santiago is clear: to remember the dead and educate the public about the tragedy that occurred in Chile beginning on September 11th, 1973.

Later on I visited the Villa Grimaldi detention facility which now serves as a memorial to the human rights violations which occurred on the grounds. I had the good fortune of visiting the memorial with Pedro, who had been held at that location for around three months. In our visit, Pedro told us about where the cells used to be, as well as the bathrooms, and the torture chambers. He also recounted his own experiences while being held in the facility, and hearing about the horrors which he and his fellow prisoners experienced was deeply disturbing and moving. Later that day, I went to the General Cemetery of Santiago, also with Pedro, and saw the graves of important figures such as Salvador Allende, Orlando Letelier, and Victor Jara. The grave of Salvador Allende is massive and constantly attracts a group of somber people coming to pay respects to the man whom they see as the most important figure in recent Chilean history. Pedro shed a tear upon seeing Allende's grave, and admitted that he always feels emotional at the sight of the grave of the man who tried so earnestly to change Chile, and who lost his life as a result of that struggle. The most compelling sight in the cemetery though is the hundreds of unmarked crosses dedicated to the people who disappeared during the Pinochet regime. These rusty crosses combined with the gigantic marble wall at the entrance to the cemetery bearing the names of the people who died during the dictatorship serve as a reminder of what happened not that long ago.

In the interest of getting multiple perspectives on memorials and remembrance, I also visited the President Pinochet Foundation which serves as a memorial to the life and accomplishments of Augusto Pinochet. While there I had a lengthy discussion with Rodrigo, the director, about the purpose and goals of the foundation. He explained to me that:

“At the foundation we do three principle things. First it is educational work. We give scholarships to motivated students with complicated financial situations. Second we do social work for the community. We do campaigns for food, for clothes, for health care. The most important is education of people though. We believe that if someone has good education then they can provide well for themselves and their families by getting a quality job. And third is historical work. We receive schools and universities for conferences. We talk about questions that they might have about the Pinochet government, and they can look at the museum that we have here.”¹⁵⁹

While at the foundation I saw displays about the awards received by Pinochet, and numerous personal items and photos. Rodrigo told me that Pinochet does not have monuments throughout Chile for his time as president, nor are there museums which remember the many positive things which Pinochet accomplished, and the Foundation seeks to do that as well as the scholarship and social work previously described. The President Pinochet Foundation is located in a house in the upscale Vitacura district of Santiago. The foundation itself is well organized, informative, and staffed by friendly and knowledgeable people who excitedly answered any question posed to them. The President Pinochet Foundation is one of the principle organizations in Chile seeking to remember Pinochet for the positive things that he accomplished.

In walking around the streets of Valparaiso, the first thing one notices is the extensive and artistic graffiti which decorates nearly every wall, building, or stair in the

¹⁵⁹ Rodrigo. Personal Interview. July 19, 2013.

rambling port city. A lot of this graffiti is merely artistic or gang related, but some is highly political. One very interesting piece of graffiti art is a mural of Allende that is over twenty feet high. It seems as though the ex-President is walking out of the building amidst a burst of colors. Only a block away there is a smaller mural featuring Pinochet's face and the Chilean flag. Scattered throughout the city there are numerous random graffiti which read things like: "Pinochet=Assassin," "Long live Allende," "Fuck Pinochet," and "Long live President Pinochet." These wall writings and murals are not official memorials to the events of the dictatorship, but they still serve as a reminder of what happened, and of people's differing opinions about the time period.

These different memorials all serve as reminders of what happened, and the public opinion about those happenings. Through looking at the Human Rights Museum, and the numerous other memorials to the victims of the dictatorship it becomes obvious that many Chileans are deeply troubled by the human rights violations committed during the dictatorship. However, other organizations such as the President Pinochet Foundation as well as popular street art show that not all Chileans feel resentment towards the military regime. The variety of displays and memorials throughout Chile serve to illustrate the variety of different opinions about the Pinochet regime, and the conflict about those differing ideas that still exists.

The 40th Anniversary of the Coup

Last September 11th marked the fortieth anniversary of the 1973 coup which led to seventeen years of military rule. Memorials of the coup this year clearly illustrate the divide that is still present in Chilean society over how best to move past what happened. Until February 2014, right-wing President Sebastian Piñera held Chile's highest office. At the Chilean government's official memorial of the 1973 coup, President Sebastian Piñera stated: "The past has already been written. We can recall it, we can study it, we can debate it, but we cannot change it. Because of that, we should not remain prisoners or hostages of that past... We should also ask, 'Why do we want to remember?' To relive the same divisions, violence and hate that caused us so much pain in the past, or to the contrary, to light the path to the future?"¹⁶⁰ President Piñera's comments clearly illustrate his and other right-wing Chilean's views on how best to proceed with reconciliation: it is best to move forward and not dwell on what happened. At the conclusion of his speech to the crowd gathered for the memorial he told Chileans, "the best legacy we can leave our children is a country reconciled and at peace."¹⁶¹ Despite urging Chileans to not dwell on the past, he has publicly condemned the human rights violations of the Pinochet regime, and even went so far as to state that there were people of influence who "could have done more" to stop the abuses.¹⁶² Although Piñera and many Chileans condemn the human rights abuses by the Pinochet regime, he also has stated that the violent takeover that occurred was the "predictable outcome...after the

¹⁶⁰ Sebastian Pinera, found in: Castillo, Mariano. *Forty years after the Coup, Divisions remain in Chile*. CNN. September 11, 2013. Web.

¹⁶¹ Sebastian Pinera, found in: Abramovich, Paulina. *Chile Marks 40th Anniversary of Pinochet Coup*. Fox News. September 11, 2013. Web.

¹⁶² Sebastian Pinera, found in: Abramovich, Paulina. *Chile Marks 40th Anniversary of Pinochet Coup*. Fox News. September 11, 2013. Web.

repeated violations of the rule of law” by the Allende government.¹⁶³ This opinion is shared by many people who supported and continue to support Pinochet. As seen in the interviews with Rodrigo, Silvio, Graciela, and Raul, many saw the military takeover as something that was necessary for Chile to move forward past the disastrous Allende government. Although Piñera and his wealthy family undoubtedly benefitted from the economic changes of the Pinochet regime, he urged Chileans to move forward from the fortieth anniversary of the coup towards peace and reconciliation. Piñera’s plea for Chileans to move forward and not allow the past to influence the present fell on somewhat deaf ears, as riots broke out in Santiago, and left-wing political parties held a separate memorial from the official memorial held by President Piñera.

At the left-wing memorial held at the Villa Grimaldi detention center, Michelle Bachelet, who was running for president at the time, spoke and stated that reconciliation is impossible without truth and justice.¹⁶⁴ For Bachelet and many other Chileans, reconciliation is seen as an impossible goal until those who perpetrated the torture, killing, and street brutalities are brought to justice. At the remembrance ceremony she stated to the mourners present that “a dirty wound cannot heal,” meaning that until true justice is brought to the perpetrators of the human rights violations, Chile will not be able to heal from the events of the past.¹⁶⁵ At memorials across the country, mothers who lost their children to the dictatorship echoed Bachelet’s sentiments while holding pictures of their lost children. Currently in Chile there are over 1,000 human rights

¹⁶³ Sebastian Pinera, found in: *Clashes in Chile on Anniversary of 1973 Coup*. BBC. September 11, 2013. Web.

¹⁶⁴ Castillo, Mariano. *Forty years after the Coup, Divisions remain in Chile*. CNN. September 11, 2013. Web.

¹⁶⁵ Michelle Bachelet, found in: *Clashes in Chile on Anniversary of 1973 Coup*. BBC. September 11, 2013. Web.

cases under investigation, and the plea by Bachelet and others on the anniversary of the coup has helped to speed those cases along. In response to the pressures of the fortieth anniversary of the military coup, the Chilean Supreme Court issued an apology stating that they could have done more to protect the rights of citizens following the coup, and has offered a guarantee that something of this nature will never again happen in Chile. This willingness of the Supreme Court to admit some blame is important given the tendency in the past to pretend like the crimes of the dictatorship were the responsibility of only the select few who actually carried out the acts.

Every year since the September 11th, 1973 coup there have been overt or subtle protests every September 11th which range from banging pots and pans to violent street riots. On the fortieth anniversary of the coup, rioters in Santiago caused mayhem by looting stores, throwing rocks through windows, burning cars and buses, and cutting off power for over 200,000 people. They also behaved violently towards police which ultimately led to forty two police officers being injured, and around 264 rioters being arrested.¹⁶⁶ These riots are somewhat of an annual tradition, but 2013 saw more injuries, property damage, and arrests than in past years. Every year in anticipation of riots, the Chilean police force calls in thousands to reinforcements to deal with the riots, looting, and violence. The protests and riots were not just confined to Santiago, but occurred in cities all over Chile, although the most serious and damaging of the riots took place in the capitol.

¹⁶⁶ Fensch, Joel. *Violence plagues Chile in annual riots*. PanAm Post. September 15, 2013. Web.

Conclusion

Although the dictatorship ended over two decades ago, the scars that the Chilean people suffered during that time period have not yet healed. The events of the Pinochet regime such as the violent military coup, the human rights violations, and the implementation of a neoliberal economic system continue to be divisive issues today. Even though these events occurred years ago, they continue to be important in political life and cultural debates. Today in Chile, violent protest still break out every year on the anniversary of the military coup, and since 2011 university students occupy schools to demand a change to the privatized education system implemented by Pinochet. There are still mothers who carry photos of their disappeared sons and daughters hoping to find out what happened to them, and people who suffered in the torture facilities trying to move forward with their lives. There are still many families who benefit greatly from the economic changes made by Pinochet or who look at the modern infrastructure of their country and credit Pinochet. It is clear that Chileans do not agree on what happened and how it should be perceived today, as illustrated by the interviews of various Chileans as well as the recent events of the fortieth anniversary of the coup.

Something that is unclear is how Chile should proceed now: is it better to forget as Camilo suggested, or is remembrance crucial as advocated by Maximo? Through my time spent reading about the events of the dictatorship, watching documentaries, and listening to music, I learned about what occurred; but it was through the interviews that I conducted that I discovered just how contested the events of the dictatorship continue to be today. After analyzing the interviews in the context of my previous knowledge on the events of the Pinochet regime, I have come to the conclusion that most memories

about the dictatorship are extremely contested which is not necessarily something that I anticipate changing in the near future.

In reviewing my interviews with the Pinochet supporters, I found that the majority of people who support the actions taken by Pinochet do so either because they directly benefitted from the neoliberal economic changes made by Pinochet or because they viewed the Allende presidency as being a dark time period in Chile's history. Many of the *Pinochetistas* that I interviewed spoke extensively about the chaos of the Allende presidency, and how Chile would have descended into anarchy had the military not acted and orchestrated the September 11th coup. For Pinochet supporters, the Allende years were marked by protests, food shortages, and the threat of Chile falling to communism. In contrast, the years of Pinochet were seen as orderly, encouraging of traditional values, and economically successful. All *Pinochetistas* that I interviewed spoke of the importance of the Pinochet years in winning the fight against communism, returning Chile to an orderly nation, and improving the economy. Most of the Pinochet supporters belonged to the upper or middle classes of Chilean society and be involved in international business or law. There are, of course, exceptions to this generalization, as illustrated by my interview with Graciela and Raul, an elderly couple of modest means who live in the country. Although exceptions to the idea that *Pinochetistas* are in the upper classes do exist, the principle reason that people supported and continue to support Pinochet was economics and defeating communism, so it only makes sense that people who benefitted directly from those economic changes would be Pinochet's most fervent supporters today.

In looking at the interviews with the Chileans who did not support Pinochet, it is clear that they primarily detested the dictator because of his shady human rights record. Many of the people interviewed had been detained, arrested, beaten, tortured, or had their houses raided during the years of the Pinochet dictatorship. For these people, it is impossible for them to view any of the events of the dictatorship as being positive when they suffered so directly at the hands of the government. Some of the people interviewed were also upset about the coup usurping Allende, a constitutionally elected President. While some of the anti-Pinochet people interviewed conceded that the Allende government was not successful and some sort of change was needed, others viewed Allende as the most important leader in Chile's history and were deeply saddened by the end of his government as well as his death. The majority of the people interviewed that did not like the Pinochet regime were members of the middle and lower classes, and had been directly affected by the human rights violations of the regime, or knew someone who had been affected. It makes perfect sense that people who suffered during the Pinochet years would not speak favorably about that regime, and it also makes sense that many people who did not support Pinochet were members of middle and lower classes, as those groups received few of the benefits of the neoliberal economic changes, and in fact suffered economically as a result of those changes.

A poll of around a thousand Chileans found that public opinion towards Pinochet and the coup has declined over the years. On the fortieth anniversary of the coup only 16% of Chileans said that the military did the correct thing in taking over the government, whereas ten years ago 36% of Chileans said that the military did the

correct thing.¹⁶⁷ This poll shows the shifting opinions of the younger generation, as seen in the interviews with young Chileans. All of the young Chileans that I did extensive interviews with were anti-Pinochet. I did briefly talk with one young man who said that he supported the Pinochet regime and thought that it was a necessary step, but he did not elaborate much on his opinions. Overwhelmingly, the young people that I interviewed thought that the Pinochet regime was a negative time in Chile's past, and they thought that mainly because of the human rights violations that occurred during the regime. Some of them had grown up hearing stories from their parents about the dictatorship, but others did research on their own or learned about what happened at school, but regardless of how they learned about the events of the dictatorship, the vast majority of the young Chileans that I interviewed were adamantly opposed to the Pinochet regime. The socio-economic status of the younger generation interviewed varied, and I tried to get representatives from many different facets of society. Although the people interviewed were from many different walks of life, they in general agreed that Pinochet violated human rights and that the legacy of the regime is largely negative.

In analyzing my interviews, I learned that the divide in opinions among Chileans is slightly more dramatic than I had previously thought. There appears to be resentment among the generation of Chileans who lived through the Pinochet regime: *Pinochetistas* do not understand how people cannot recognize the good that Pinochet did for their country, while anti-Pinochet people are incredulous that Pinochet supporters do not view the loss of lives at the hands of the government as being a tragedy. While the

¹⁶⁷ Castillo, Mariano. *Forty years after the Coup, Divisions remain in Chile*. CNN. September 11, 2013. Web.

generation of Chileans that lived through the dictatorship cannot seem to agree on how the Pinochet years should be remembered, the younger generation seems to have a slightly more cohesive view of the events that occurred. The majority of younger Chileans view the events of the dictatorship as being largely negative, a point of view which has often led to protests and uprisings. While the older generation of Chileans may not actively protest about what occurred, they still passionately disagree with each other which leads to conflicts surrounding remembrance issues as well as politics. The younger generation protests for a change to the constitution created by Pinochet, but they do not fight about what occurred, rather they fight for an end to what they view as outdated policies that were implemented by Pinochet.

The issue of remembering Pinochet is important today in Chile because the older generation is extremely divided on this issue, and the younger generation is actively protesting legislation such as the privatizations of schools and mines that were a product of the Pinochet years. In order to understand the current political divisions and social issues within Chile today, it is essential to first understand the events of the Pinochet regime as well as how they are viewed by different socioeconomic classes and different generations. The older generation of Chileans lived through the events of the dictatorship, and they have very strong opinions about what occurred because they were directly affected. The younger generation of Chileans did not live through the dictatorship, but they often still have strong opinions about what occurred. Since the Pinochet regime is an issue that continues to incite protests and political contention, it is obvious that Chile is not yet in a state of reconciliation. After doing research and analyzing the views of the people that I interviewed, I tend to agree with Camilo, a

university student, who stated that these generations are unable to view the dictatorship objectively, and maybe the next generation will be able to work for true forgiveness and reconciliation. While people who lived through the dictatorship are alive, it is impossible for anyone in Chile to view the events of those years in any way but emotionally. Although it seems unlikely that Chile will reach a full reconciliation anytime soon, that is not necessarily a tragedy. On numerous occasions while living in Chile or conducting my research there, I heard people say things to the effect of: “I am a *Pinochetista*, but my son is a socialist and I still love him,” or “I detest the actions of the Pinochet government, but my brother is a *Pinochetista* and I try not to hold that against him.” Statements such as these show that people are willing to accept loved ones who think differently than they do about this issue, even if they are not willing to move past the events that occurred. So while true reconciliation surrounding the events that occurred during the dictatorship will probably not occur in Chile until the next generation, it seems highly likely that even the generation that was directly affected by the events of the regime will continue to work towards being more tolerant of each other’s contrasting opinions and experiences.

Using memories as historical sources is extremely important because it captures the personal side of an event or time period. In looking at the Pinochet regime, it is essential to pay attention to individual memories and opinions, because the legacy of the regime is constantly contested and revised. The memories of Chileans about the Pinochet regime are highly varied, conflicting, and constantly shifting, and everyone has a different opinion about what happened and how it should be remembered. Because of that, the history of the period tends to be a rather contentious issue that

shapes and is shaped by cultural dynamics, political struggles, and even the education system.

Memory studies are crucial to our understanding of historical events, because history cannot be fully comprehended without the knowledge of how events affected and are remembered by the people that lived through them. We live in a time in which memorializing the past has taken large steps forward, and in which identities and subjectivities can no longer be ignored when studying “what happened.” As this thesis has demonstrated, in the case of Chile, the events of the Allende and Pinochet years are still very much alive among both those who lived during those years as well as well as the younger generation who did not. For Chile, collecting, preserving, and understanding these contrasting memories as well as the forces that created them and may have changed them over time is a necessary step in our efforts to understand the social, cultural, and political fabric of contemporary Chilean society.

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