WHEN SUPPORT FOR PINOCHET HAS NOT

“DESAPARECIDO”

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Introduction

In September 2013, I enjoyed an “afternoon tea” with a seemingly normal Chilean family. We laughed, ate cake, and lazed around in the backyard watching two of the younger boys kick around a soccer ball. When someone wanted a coffee, I volunteered to go inside and fill up a mug. Reaching into the kitchen cabinet, I pulled out a random mug, glanced down, and gasped. The mug was plastered with a photo of General Augusto Pinochet surrounded by hearts and a cursive “Mi Héro" (“My hero”) printed around the edge. My American history books had taught me that General Pinochet was a universally reviled dictator who had violently come to power in Chile and committed thousands of human rights crimes over a 17-year reign. How could anyone call him “my hero”? Over the course of five months in Chile, I learned that support for Pinochet, including his coup and military rule, was actually an enduring phenomenon vigorously endorsed by a small, but strong, section of Chilean society. Many of these supporters acknowledged that human rights crimes had been perpetrated but considered them morally justified.

In this paper I will seek to examine how this loyalty to the dictatorship or “pinochetismo” has endured or diminished following mechanisms of transitional justice. I begin with a description of the enduring Pinochet loyalty in Chilean society and examine the historical context that produced the justifications for military rule. Historical context is salient because Chile’s distinctive pre-coup situation and pacted transition have hampered the effectiveness of traditional strategies for justice and reconciliation. I then analyze truth commissions, prosecutions, and public commemorations and conclude that denial of guilt continued after each of these processes, however it diminished substantially following the prosecutions of the late
1990s. Support for Pinochet, measured by both public opinion polls and political actions, has declined significantly since the return to democracy in 1990 but this is due in large part to surprising events such as a Pinochet corruption scandal and the student mobilizations of 2011. In other words, pinochetismo persists but may be eradicated slowly and in unexpected ways.

**Indicators of pinochetismo**

Vehement justifications for the coup, role of General Pinochet, and oppressive military government are not just exemplified by coffee mugs. A 2013 newspaper investigation found that 113 major Chilean businessmen, and the municipality of Vitacura, had donated millions to the Pinochet Foundation, a foundation dedicated to defending the legacy of Pinochet. In 2012 the Pinochet Foundation and the September 11th Corporation (which honors the day of the coup d’état) staged a national screening of the documentary *Pinochet* glorifying the General’s rule. At the screening, the president of the Union of Retired Officials of the National Defense (UNOFAR) declared that, “Pinochet’s image has been defamed, and they have tried to destroy his image. But I will reiterate, he was the best president in Chile and he is the one who made Chile go from being a mediocre country to the jewel of America.”

This sentiment is shared by Twitter users who refer to Pinochet as "tata" (daddy) and the tens of thousands who have liked the Pinochet Foundation’s Facebook page.

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1 Support for Pinochet and pinochetismo are used interchangeably to refer to support for the 1973 coup and the military government led by General Pinochet.
A 2010 national opinion poll found that 12.09% of the population believed that a coup by the armed forces would be justified and the legislator Guillermo Teillier has repeatedly remarked that the Congress is full of legislators who “idolize Pinochet” and defend the 1973 coup. On the 40\textsuperscript{th} anniversary of the coup, that saw thousands imprisoned and hundreds killed, Chilean President Sebastián Piñera claimed that the coup was a “predictable outcome” caused by the President Salvador Allende’s “violations of the rule of law.” Government officials have not only justified the violent coup. In 2012 the government mandated that school textbooks refer to the Pinochet’s 17-year authoritarian dictatorship as simply a “military government.” All of these examples show ongoing, conflicting historical narratives in Chilean society. Before examining if the justifications or denials of guilt have diminished due to mechanisms of transitional justice, we must first understand the context and impacts of Chile’s history.

**Background**

*Before Pinochet*

On September 11\textsuperscript{th}, 1973 Chilean armed forces launched one of the most violent military coups in Latin American history, overthrowing the democratically elected President Salvador Allende and ushering in a 17-year military dictatorship. The presidential palace was bombed, tanks rolled through the streets of the Capitol, and in less than two months more than 40,000 “political enemies” were rounded up and

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9 “The military coup of September 11, 1973 was one of the most violent in Latin American history, demonstrating the depth of the political polarization and class conflict in Chilean society.” See Kenneth Roberts, *Deepening Democracy*. (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1998) p.94
imprisoned in the National Stadium. Death squads and torture centers quickly disintegrated the Allende supporters and forced many to go into hiding or exile. The 1973 coup shocked the world, largely because Chile had enjoyed a strong democratic tradition and a reputation as one of the most stable countries in Latin America. However a detailed analysis of the political, economic, and social situation leading up the coup illustrates one of the primary reasons for a contested historical narrative. Chilean society was fragmented and in chaos, and thus General Pinochet actions are frequently justified as “inevitable.”

The Chilean political system was deeply fractured in 1973. Salvador Allende, representing the Unidad Popular (Popular Unity), a coalition of left wing, socialist, and communist parties, only won 36.6% of the national vote in the 1970 presidential election and required a deeply divided Congress to confirm his presidency. Allende’s narrow political victory was quickly thrashed by a series of economic crises. A major drop in food production occurred after the Allende administration took over essentially all major estates and redistributed the land in tiny plots to resident workers. At the same time a decline in the international price of copper, which represented over 80% of Chile’s GDP, precipitated unemployment, a shortage of government revenue, and massive deficit spending. Price controls led to shortages and inflation rates increased by 300% between 1972 and 1973. Massive labor strikes in 1972 and 1973 over hyperinflation and wages merely served to illustrate the severity of the economic situation in Chile.

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11 In 143 years, Chile experienced only thirteen months of unconstitutional rule under some form of junta. See Darren Hawins. *International Human Rights and Authoritarian Rule in Chile.* (Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska Press, 2002) p.67


14 Ibid., p.346.
In addition to political fragmentation and an economic crisis, Chile was also faced with widespread social unrest. In August of 1973, thousands of Chileans gathered to protest the rising costs and shortages of food and fuel. The economic situation made the Christian Democrats, a major political party of the center, and much of the middle class leave the Undidad Popular coalition and join the economic elites and political Right opposed to Allende. The Allende government lost considerable legitimacy when the Chilean Supreme Court declared its socialist land redistribution program unconstitutional and the Chamber of Deputies passed a resolution calling on the armed forces to maintain order. A far left guerrilla movement, the MIR, responded to threats from the Right by building up arsenals in local towns across the country. Chilean society became increasingly polarized, with divisions publically accentuated by political groups and the branches of government.

There are many contested interpretations of the political, economic, and social situation leading up the coup. Carlos Hunees, a professor and executive director of CERC (Centro de Estudios de la Realidad Contemporánea or “Center for the Study of Contemporary Reality”), has famously argued that the “civil war” story is a myth. He posits that Chile’s polarization in 1973 is overemphasized, compared to the fragmentation at other points in Chilean history, and caricatured to make military intervention appear justified and inevitable. However, as seen in the continued justifications for human rights abuses, many Pinochet supports claim that Pinochet saved Chile from imminent collapse. This “heroic memory and countermemory” is woven through historical accounts of Chile’s pre-coup situation.

15 Roberts, p.93
16 Carlos Huneues, Chile Un País Dividido. (Santiago: Catalonia, 2003). p.42
The Pinochet Years

Augosto Pinochet, the General of the armed forces, ruled Chile on behalf of a military junta from 1973-1990. A report by the Valech Commission found that there were more than 40,000 recorded victims of human rights violations during this period in Chile. 3,216 people have been officially recognized as desaparecidos (“disappeared”) or murdered and 38,254 people are recognized as survivors of political imprisonment and/or torture. The vast majority of the human rights violations occurred on September 11th or during the brutal repression of dissidents in the months following the coup. It’s estimated that by 1974 at least 15,000 Chilean refugees had fled to Argentina and 1,500 to Peru. During the dictatorship, human rights violations were widely denied by the press, opposition parties were banned, and thousands of dissidents sought political asylum in foreign countries. Despite these human rights violations, the economic growth and stability during the Pinochet years remain key justifications for Pinochet loyalty.

While suppressing dissent, Pinochet simultaneously embarked on transforming the Chilean economy into a privatized, neoliberal system. Major foreign loans and investments from companies such as Dow Chemical flowed into Chile. Exports and GDP increased and the country set out to tackle inflation. After 1983, the Pinochet government added aggressive export promotion to its neoliberal policies and the Chile economy finally enjoyed stable growth. Between 1983 and 1993 Chile’s GDP grew at an average rate of 7.5 per cent annually. The changes in Chile’s economy garnered

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19 “Cifras de victimas y sobrevivientes de violaciones masivas a los ddhh oficialmente reconocidas por el Estado chileno” Universidad Diego Portales, Last modified August, 2013.
21 Agustín’s Newspaper (Documentary)
22 Angell, P.8
23 Angell, p.191
the name “the Miracle of Chile”\textsuperscript{24} and, despite increases in unemployment and cuts to social services, privatization was widely praised by the World Bank.\textsuperscript{25} The neoliberal economics of the dictatorship have remained largely intact since the transition to democracy and are a critical factor in understanding positive perceptions of the military rule.

In addition to brutal repression and economic growth, the Pinochet years were marked by attempts to establish legitimacy and a pacted, peaceful transition back to democracy. In 1980, Pinochet introduced a new “constitution” as a national referendum. The new constitution was approved by more than 2/3 of the voters (however there are widespread claims of election fraud and voter intimidation)\textsuperscript{26} and made Pinochet officially “President” of the republic for an 8-year term. The 1980 Constitution gave the President broad powers but ordered a transition from a military junta to a civil legislative body by 1988. The plan allowed Pinochet to maintain power under the auspices of constitutional legitimacy. However, to the surprise of some, Pinochet lost the national plebiscite in 1988 and Chile began an early transition to democracy. Almost 56\% of the voters said “No” to extending Pinochet’s rule by eight years while 44\% said “Yes.” Nowhere else has a brutal dictatorship ended as a result of a peaceful national vote. Pinochet’s decision to rely on a plebiscite played to Chilean values for stability and order and allowed him to orchestrate his own exit. The historical portrait of pre-coup and post-coup Chile elucidates the factors behind

\textsuperscript{24} Milton Friedman, “Economic Freedom, Human Freedom, Political Freedom,” Address at California State University Hayward. November 1, 1991. \url{http://www.cbe.csueastbay.edu/~sbesc/frlect.html}
\textsuperscript{26} Collier, p.364.
Pinochet’s broad support and his powerful influence over the choice of transitional justice mechanisms during the democratic transition.\textsuperscript{27}

**Transitional Justice Mechanisms**

We move now to critically assess the effectiveness of truth commissions, prosecutions, and public commemorations at diminishing *pinochetismo*.

*Truth Commissions*

The 1990 National Truth and Reconciliation Commission was implemented in an environment saturated with supporters of the 1973 coup and dictatorship. In the 1988 plebiscite, which saw high turnout and oversight by international observers, 44% of Chile voted to keep General Pinochet in power. Many members of the public refused to discuss the crimes committed by the armed forces and DINA/CNI (the secret police) and their silence became a form of denial. The 1990 truth commission instituted by President Patricio Aylwin was able to document some of the dictatorship’s human rights violations, but failed to convince Pinochet supporters that these crimes were unjustified, sparked a violent backlash, and ended in the silencing of discussion.

Chile’s Truth and Reconciliation Commission (CNVR) was founded with the limited goal of investigating and documenting the murders or disappearances of persons from September 11, 1973 to March 11, 1990. The commission was denied subpoena powers by the Right in the legislature and thus its eight commissioners relied heavily on investigations done by major human rights organizations and left-wing political parties.\textsuperscript{28} There was no official military evidence presented and the

\textsuperscript{27} In 1990 Pinochet remained Commander-in-Chief of the armed forces and enjoyed support from the investor class, landowners, and privileged families, and even much of the lower middle class and poor. For details see Ana Ros. *The Post-Dictatorship Generation in Argentina, Chile, and Uruguay* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012) p.109.

\textsuperscript{28} Cath Collins, Katherine Hite & Alfredo Joignant. *The Politics of Memory in Chile.* (Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2013) P.20
testimony given by witnesses and relatives all occurred behind closed doors. After nine months, an 1800 page report was completed and released to the general public. This Rettig report, named after the chair of the commission, did not name specific perpetrators but acknowledged over 2000 victims and recommended a series of reparations for victims’ families.29 The report began with a very narrow mandate and powers but was able to produce a “meticulous recognition of the most heinous abuses…with a solid, defensible methodological grounding.”30

Unfortunately the Rettig report did not succeed in convincing perpetrators that the crimes were unjustified and some continued to deny that human rights violations had occurred. Augusto Pinochet released a long statement voicing his “fundamental disagreement” with the Rettig report and insisting that that the army has “saved the freedom and sovereignty of the homeland.”31 The army declared that the report had, “neither legal nor historical validity.”32 Even the Supreme Court, in upholding a 1978 Amnesty law that prevented prosecutions of Pinochet and other officials, unanimously declared the Rettig report “an absurd critique…tinged with political passions.”33 It became extraordinarily difficult, however, to deny that human rights violations had occurred after the publicized exhumation of clandestine mass graves at Pisagua and Paine. Historian Steve Stern argues that Pinochet’s supporters then turned to justifying the crimes as “regrettable, yet necessary excesses it is best to leave in the

30 Collins, Hite, & Joignant, p.17
33 Ibid.
past in order to progress.” The Alywin government’s approach to acknowledging past atrocities failed to motivate a *mea culpa* from the real perpetrators.

The Truth and Reconciliation Commission also produced a violent response from the radical left that silenced discussion and allowed the far right to perpetuate a story of heroic victimhood. Jaime Guzmán, one of Pinochet’s closest advisors and collaborators during the dictatorship, was assassinated on April 1, 1991. Guzmán was a member of Congress, founder of the UDI conservative political party, and an outspoken loyalist to Pinochet. His death, just three weeks after the release of the Commission’s report and at the hands of the far-left guerrilla group FPMR, is still memorialized and allowed the Right to shift attention and blame to the Left. After Guzmán’s death, public talk of reconciliation stopped. The violence produced by the Rettig report proved counterproductive to having Pinochet-regime officials acknowledge guilt.

The CNVR of 1990 was not the only truth commission held in Chile. In 2004, a second truth commission was established to identify and make monetary reparations to Chileans who had suffered political imprisonment and torture during the dictatorship. The commission, led by Sergio Valech, officially acknowledged, for the first time, more than 38,000 victims of torture or political imprisonment. However the commission was created more than a decade after the return to democracy and a series of events including Pinochet’s arrest, financial scandals, and the trials of several military officers. It is thus impossible to interpret public responses to the Valech

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36 Hayner, p.49
Prosecutions

At the start of the transition, criminal prosecution of the leaders and perpetrators of human rights violations were severely hampered by a 1978 Amnesty Law and the continued power and influence of the armed forces. However towards the end of the 1990s, Pinochet’s associates has largely retired from the branches of power, international norms were pressing for criminal accountability, and a few judges had began reinterpreting the Amnesty Law and initiating prosecutions. By 1997 there were more than 200 cases in the courts dealing with cases of the disappeared. An intrepid judge even began investigating Pinochet’s involvement in the infamous Caravan of Death. All of this occurred prior to the arrest of Pinochet in London and has since culminated with the Chilean Supreme Court’s revocation of Pinochet’s parliamentary immunity and the arrests and convictions of hundreds of officers. The watershed of prosecutions and the debate surrounding Pinochet’s arrest have been influential in diminishing pinochetismo. However, the positive effects of prosecutions are not independent from prior personnel changes within the military and the judicial branch.

The first major step in prosecuting past officials, came from discovering a legal loophole in the Amnesty laws. Unsolved disappearances could be designated as

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37 It is interesting to note that general attention to human rights, in addition to admissions of guilt, shifted appreciatively in the 1990s. “While in March 1989 some 22.7 percent of Chileans identified human rights as one of the three most important issues facing Chilean society… By 1998, the percentage of those citing human rights had dropped to 7 percent.” [Peter M. Siavelis The President and Congress in Postauthoritarian Chile. (University Park, PA: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2000). p.88]

38 “The Caravan of Death” refers to the execution squad that went from prison to prison executing at least 75 political prisoners in the months following the 1973 coup.

“aggravated kidnappings” which would make the crimes ongoing and thus prosecutable. This logic was used to prosecute five senior military officers in 1997 and opened the dockets to hundreds of other cases.\textsuperscript{40} However there were still significant legal hurdles to prosecuting the commander behind the killings or kidnappings. Pinochet possessed parliamentary immunity in Chile, which could only be revoked with powerful evidence of guilt, and there were still strong supporters of Pinochet in Congress and the courts.

The most dramatic prosecution step thus occurred outside of Chile. British authorities arrested Augosto Pinochet in October of 1998 during his visit to London for medical treatment. The international arrest warrant came from a Spanish judge who claimed that Pinochet’s involvement in the torture of Spanish citizens was a crime against humanity subject to universal jurisdiction. Spain’s attempts to extradite Pinochet to Madrid to stand trial showed a shift in international norms and sparked intense international political and academic debate. Inside Chile, “[h]is arrest forced conversations and arguments among political and not-so-political citizens, between parents and children, in public and in private.”\textsuperscript{41} Fistfights erupted in Chile’s Congress during the traditionally somber State of the Union address in 1999\textsuperscript{42} and the public finally began to discuss and debate assumptions about the violent coup. Pinochet’s prosecution, although never completed, was much more successful than a truth commission in sparking public debate and a reevaluation of the justifications for the violent coup.

The impact of taking prosecutorial action against the figurehead of the dictatorship has been explored by Alan Angell and reflected in public opinion polls.

\textsuperscript{40} Angell, p.152
\textsuperscript{41} Collins, Hite, & Joignant, p.19
\textsuperscript{42} Siavelis, p.107
Alan Angell summarizes how Chile had gone to great lengths in documenting and acknowledging past human rights abuses but prior to the arrest of Pinochet, Chile had failed to discuss whether perpetration of these crimes was justified. Opinions on guilt could not be shifted until a debate about the justifications. Alan remarks, “What marked Chilean politics after 1990 until the arrest of Pinochet was the absence of debate between the two sides over the coup, its causes and consequences… Witness the brusque dismissal of the Rettig report by the Armed Forces, its political allies and even the Supreme Court. They were right and justified, and the government was wrong. Full stop.”43 The viable threat of international prosecution and intense media focus ended this lack of dialogue. People were forced to reexamine the past and for the first time 63% of Chileans admitted that Pinochet was guilty of ordering the death of dissidents in Chile.44 Between January of 1999 and April of 1999 this figure rose to 69%.45 The critical examination of Pinochet’s actions was made possible by a highly politicized trial.

It is important to note that the prosecutions and their impacts were dependent on drastic changes in the personnel of the courts and military. In 1997, the Supreme Court increased from 17 to 21 members and there was mandatory retirement for judges over the age of 75. These changes meant that only four of the 17 Pinochet appointees remained in place when the Supreme Court affirmed a lower court ruling that stripped Pinochet of his parliamentary immunity.46 In addition to changes in the composition of the courts, the military also saw the retirement of all generals closely tied to Pinochet and the dictatorship. Generational changes and the new General

43 Angell, p.4
46 Angell, p.153
Ricardo Izurieta’s deference to democratic norms drastically reduced the threat of a second military coup or intervention. The military went from visible demonstrations in the streets at the threat of prosecutions, to begrudgingly participating in the Mesa de Diálogo (Forum for Dialogue) with human rights organizations and accepting the arrest of Pinochet. The evolution to “talks not tanks” suggests that the military had already gradually distanced itself from the dictatorship by 1998.

Public Commemorations

Official commemoration of the violence and victims under Pinochet has also been rife with political divisions but has been relatively unsuccessful at diminishing pinochetismo. While prosecutions could maintain a veneer of political impartiality, public memorials have been closely tied to the political agenda of presidential administrations and thus easily dismissed by Pinochet supporters as “left-wing propaganda.” Moreover the increasing advocacy by human rights groups for memorials has sparked a strong counter-movement by Pinochet supporters commemorating and glorifying the coup and members of the dictatorship. All of these factors combine to create increased polarization rather than “societal soul-searching.”

The politicization of official memorials and acts of commemoration has been particularly marked in the creation of the Villa Grimaldi, Salvador Allende Memorial, and Museum of Memory and Human Rights. In 1997, victims groups successfully advocated to turn Villa Grimaldi, the former clandestine torture center, into a historical monument or “Peace Park.” President Michelle Bachelet, a member of the

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48 Angel also argues that Pinochet lost authority and credibility with the military after becoming a member of the Senate because of his vocal contempt for politicians. Pinochet appeared to abandon the military and contradict his own values. (Angell, p.148)
socialist party and former torture victim at Grimaldi, paid a much-publicized visit to Villa Grimaldi one week after the Chilean Supreme refused to recognize the full Inter-American Human Rights Court’s ruling that Chile’s amnesty law was illegal.\textsuperscript{50} An even more explicit connection between political agendas and official commemorations was made at the start of the democratic transition. In 1991, leaders of the Socialist party and the center-left Party for Democracy (PPD), faced a fragmented left still seeking public acknowledgment of past human rights violations. Politicians sought to address this civilian discontent and maintain a unified coalition by proposing legislation to place Ex-President Allende’s remains in the prestigious\textsuperscript{51} General Cemetery of Santiago under a public memorial.\textsuperscript{52} Official commemoration not only can change the political historical narratives, it can also set the legacy of a future president. President Lagos made a visit to Paine’s memorial to the disappeared his last official act in office and President Bachelet rushed to finish the construction of the Museum of Memory and Human Rights before her term expired. Commemoration has allowed the government to symbolically acknowledge victims and survivors and given politicians the moral high ground as defenders of human rights. However the highly politicized nature of the process has hampered efforts for genuine discussion and reexamination of the past.

Official commemoration has unfortunately also sparked a counter movement by Pinochet supporters that glorify the coup and heroize participants in the dictatorship. The right-wing Independent Democratic Party (UDI) created a major memorial to Jaime Guzmán, the Senator and Pinochet loyalist killed by leftist radicals

\textsuperscript{50} Bachelet also paid a visit to Villa Grimaldi in 2013 when running for reelection against Evelyn Mattehi- the daughter of an Air Force General under Pinochet. See Serrano.
\textsuperscript{51} All but two deceased presidents of Chile are buried in the General Cemetery of Santiago. Burying Allende in this cemetery restores his legitimacy as a president and places him at the level of national hero.
\textsuperscript{52} Hite and Collins, p.392-3
after the publication of the Rettig report, and placed it in the center of Santiago. The memorial, which sits across from the United States Embassy, is a large water pool with rows of sculpted human forms and a sleek underground meeting room. More than 2,000 Pinochet loyalists came to the inauguration of the memorial in 2008. President Bachelet did not come and was criticized for refusing to honor an assassinated Senator.\textsuperscript{53} Pinochet loyalists also fought vehemently to keep a major Santiago street named \textit{Avenida de la 11 de Septiembre} (“September 11\textsuperscript{th} Avenue”) in order to commemorate the day Chile was liberated from “Marxist oppression.”\textsuperscript{54} The funeral of Augusto Pinochet was perhaps the most contested form of public commemoration.\textsuperscript{55} The right wing fought hard to give Pinochet a state funeral and official internment in the General Cemetery.\textsuperscript{56} Although they failed, the presidential sash, one of the most essential symbols of the Chilean presidential office, was draped of Pinochet’s coffin and more than 20,000 people turned out to support the dead dictator.\textsuperscript{57} Memorials, monuments, and official acts all have the ability to spark counterdemonstrations that allow perpetrators or supporters of human rights abuses to be glorified.

Truth commissions, prosecutions, and public commemorations have all been applied in Chile yet the historical narrative remains divided. Truth commissions documented the violence of the coup and the dictatorship but failed to address the

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\item \textsuperscript{53} Bárbara Covarrubias, “Coloma: Bachelet confirma asistencia a inauguración de memorial de Jaime Guzmán” \textit{El Mercurio}, October 10, 2008. \url{http://www.emol.com/noticias/nacional/2008/10/10/325526/coloma-bachelet-confirme-asiistencia-a-inauguracion-de-memorial-de-jaime-guzman.html}
\item \textsuperscript{54} Rocío Montes, “Chile cambia el nombre de la Avenida 11 de septiembre” \textit{El País}, July 2, 2013. \url{http://internacional.elpais.com/internacional/2013/07/02/actualidad/1372788557_061277.html}
\item \textsuperscript{56} Iván Moreira, an UDI legislator, declared that if mere allegations were preventing the proper homage to Pinochet he would make allegations against all Concertación presidents so that they also wouldn't be able to receive an official funeral. See Joignant p.169
\item \textsuperscript{57} “Pinochet’s Funeral Draws 60,000” \textit{CBC News}, December 12, 2006. \url{http://www.cbc.ca/news/world/pinochet-s-funeral-draws-60-000-1_624317}
\end{itemize}
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justifications or denials of guilt. Prosecutions sparked public debate about the innocence of perpetrators but were a slow watershed process that relied on personnel changes within the courts and the armed forces. These internal changes mean that diminished support for Pinochet could be both a cause and effect of prosecutions. The third strategy commonly used after atrocities, official acts of commemoration or memorialization, was the most counterproductive to eliminating pinochetismo. It was highly partisan and prompted Pinochet supporters to simply make counter-monuments. Chile has a unique history compared to other transitioning or transitioned democracies therefore decreasing support for Pinochet has required a combination of both transitional justice mechanisms and surprise events.

**Alternative Methods**

Despite the failure of transitional justice mechanisms, support for and justification of Pinochet has diminished. It has diminished thanks to two unanticipated events that strike at the overlooked and most powerful sources of ongoing support: the perceived integrity of Pinochet and the economic consequences of his rule.

Pinochet’s personal corruption came to light thanks to the United States Senate. The American Patriot Act, passed in the wake of 9/11, included several anti-money laundering provisions. In 2003 the Subcommittee on Investigations was asked to investigate the effectiveness of these provisions. This extensive investigation led to the discovery that Augusto Pinochet had constructed a web of at least 125 U.S. bank and securities accounts, many under false names, to move millions of dollars. Follow-up work revealed that Pinochet was hiding over $27 million USD in secret

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58 Hite & Collins note that in Chile, “The reluctance to take strong positions of repudiation or blame is in stark contrast to the actions of recent Argentine presidents in the same arena.” Hite & Collins, p.397

accounts and tax havens. Shattering the perceptions of a selfless, austere General was crucial to reevaluations of the coup and the regime. The Chilean dictatorship was one of the most personalized of all police regimes in South America\textsuperscript{60} and thus Pinochet’s reputation was bedrock to the regime’s legitimacy.\textsuperscript{61} In the year following revelations about Pinochet’s financial holdings, hundreds of prosecutions against the military government were sped up and Pinochet lost countless key supporters. Senator Hernán Larraín of the UDI, the Pinochet loyal party of the Right, announced that he “would not put hands in the fire” to defend Pinochet.\textsuperscript{62} The Supreme Court reversed its decision upholding Pinochet’s immunity, retired army generals could not be enticed to defend Pinochet, and in 2006 his daughter Inés fled the country.\textsuperscript{63} Investigations into the financial records of those most tied to the military government were extremely effective in discrediting the regime. It additionally avoided being dismissed as a leftist political tactic because a foreign government, motivated by unrelated goals, implemented the investigation.

The second unplanned event that successfully caused a reevaluation of the past was the Student Movement of 2011. In 2011, High School and University students from across the country went on a massive 7-month strike.\textsuperscript{64} Universities were shut down, hundreds of thousands of students marched in the streets, and the movement’s demands became the daily front-page news. The Chilean students were demanding that the government restore free higher education. Pinochet’s neoliberal macroeconomic policies had privatized education and abolished the free universal

\textsuperscript{60}Steve Stern “Forward” in The Politics of Memory in Chile: From Pinochet to Bachelet, ed. Collins, Hite, and Joignant (Boulder CO, Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2013). p.xiv
\textsuperscript{62}Ibid.
\textsuperscript{63}Ibid.
\textsuperscript{64}Note that the student movement continues although strikes have become shorter and more sporadic.
education introduced by President Allende. As a consequence, Chile currently has the second most expensive private university system of any OCED country and Chilean families typically shoulder at least 85% of the cost. Social mobilization put the spotlight on these drawbacks and allowed Chile to finally question an economic model that had led to high GDP growth. Carlos Huneeus explains how questioning neoliberalism strikes at the heart of the dictatorship’s legacy. He states that the authoritarian government had two faces: “one characterized by political coercion and the other by the promotion of economic freedom.” Human rights groups had long criticized the political coercion of the regime but the Chilean student movement was the first to criticize the economic reforms. The impact of the mobilization is seen by a survey conducted in 2013. The results indicated that by 2013, 56% of Chilean society viewed the dictatorship years as “bad” and only 8% viewed the era as “good.” This contrasted sharply with results taken a decade before where one third of Chileans remembered the coup as salvation from Marxism, and 29% remembered the dictatorship as “good” or “very good.”

**Conclusion**

This paper has shown the many processes used to diminish loyalty and justifications for perpetrators of human rights violations in Chile. *Pinochetismo* persists in Chilean society but a gradual, if sometimes halting, process has produced significant public and political shifts. Space constraints prevent this paper from delving into the entire evolution of memory or reconciliation and justice in Chile and

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68 Ibid.
the dogged efforts of human rights organizations and victims advocacy groups. Instead it focuses a critical lens on three mechanisms of transitional justice and their impacts on the supporters of the coup and regime. The analysis shows that all three mechanisms were constrained by historical and political context and varied substantially in their impacts. The Truth Commissions prevented collective amnesia but did not convince supporters that the crimes were wrong. Prosecutions, on the other hand, brought questions of guilt into the public spotlight and were able to foster a watershed of condemnations and criminal investigations. The efficacy of prosecutions compared to truth commissions reflected the cautious and contentious expansion of democracy and gradual reduction of Pinochet supporters on the benches of justice and in the ranks of the Military. Despite these gradual advances, public commemorations could not prevent citizen backlash and a transformation of the morality debate into a political debate. The highly symbolic properties of memorials or museums were used as political tools that allowed perpetrators to dismiss human rights as a political ploy and highlight their own “martyrs.” Despite the flaws or drawbacks of truth commissions, prosecutions, and public commemorations, pinochetismo has still declined. Since the 1988, plebiscite Chilean society has begun to acknowledge that the 1973 coup was not necessary and that the Pinochet’s military rule was brutally repressive, corrupt, and not beneficial to all of society or even the economy. The main instigators of change have come through unplanned avenues, one from a foreign Senate and the other from a bottom-up social movement, and together illustrate the power of not relying on politicized or intentional policy proscriptions. Chile should be left to wrestle with competing historical narratives as current trends of declining pinochetismo continue and new generations adopt different norms. The minority view, which supports the dictatorship of the past, has diminished to the point
where it is no longer a threat to stability. It may vanish, although we can’t predict when or how, but for now we’re left with coffee cups.

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