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Political Disaffection and the Struggle Against Impunity

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Abstract: The end of the dictatorship in Chile happened in a climate of almost euphoria for the associations of victims and their families. The return of democracy to Chilean society was met with a hope that they would go back to the agenda for social justice laid out by Salvador Allende. 27 years after, the mobilisations of memory still struggle to be heard and have their claims met. Indeed, the groups are still ever present in the fabric of the society, searching for complete truth and effective justice. This paper seeks to shed light on the historical struggle for justice, truth and memory of three Santiago-based associations (Association of families of Detained Disappeared, Association of families of Executed Politically and *Londres 38*, Space for Memory). Using a discursive methodology, I studied five historical conjunctures and came upon the realization that the efforts of the administrations were perceived as a way to close the box of the past, whereas the organizations still pursued their historical goals (i.e., effective justice and complete truth). The ineffectiveness of the consecutive post-dictatorship governments is perceived as a betrayal of the cause the victims and their families have suffered to defend all these years.

Keywords: Chile, Memory, Political Disaffection, Social movements organizations

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Introduction

Remembering the past in one way or another must also be understood as the extension of a political project to a particular, contemporary social and political identity (Young 1993), or even "a modeling of historical matters to suit certain ideological needs" (Boursier 2010: 227). Past events and the way they are addressed within post-conflict countries are contentious matters. Like ghosts, they are seen repeatedly in the present, in conflicts, organizations, cultural and artistic performances, commemorative dates and other cultural and sociopolitical practices. Since the transition to democracy in 1990, Chile has not been immune to this presence of the past while debates related to representations of the past and the struggles over their meaning still erupt in the public sphere. Since the Dirty War era, academics and activists have developed a large corpus of literature linked to the dictatorial period. Within the disciplines of sociology, anthropology, political science and history, research has focused on the politics of memory. As underlined by Barahona de Brito (2010: 360), the "politics of memory" refers to the various ways that political elites, social groups and institutions reinterpret the past and the breakdown of civility and propagate new interpretative narratives about the 'what happened' to legitimize a new political dispensation and develop a new vision of the future for the polity." This approach conceptualizes actors mobilizing the same kind of memory, that is in an homogenous manner. Furthermore, the mobilizations of memory previously studied homogeneously are linked to the victims and survivors of the military juntas as well as their relatives.

While there is a strong body of research covering how societies cope after the transition toward democratic regimes and how as nations they address this difficult past (e.g. Stern 2004, Jelin 2003, Doran 2016 to name only these), new research has shown the necessity to critically conceptualize how we think about actors mobilizing memory in Latin America. Indeed, Tahir's (2015) research in Argentina demonstrates that groups mobilizing memory and the past should not be conceptualized as homogeneous but rather be understood as heterogeneous entities that might have concurring strategies and claims at times and opposite ones at others. This understanding calls to identify the similarities, differences and dissensions between the mobilizations of memory studied in Chile.

After undertaking two sets of fieldwork in Santiago, I came upon the conclusion that the ruptures between the different and competing representations of the past are not the only points of discordance between organizations of memory and elected administrations. This paper, thus, aims to contribute to emerging research in political disaffection in Latin America by documenting and analyzing the ways distrust, mistrust and disapprobation are performed in various spaces of the Chilean capital by memory and human rights organizations.

Background

From the beginning of the dictatorship in 1973, Chileans have regrouped in order to denounce the gross human rights violations committed against a part of the population¹. Under

¹ The following books and articles can provide more information regarding the Chilean dictatorship as well as the general Latin American context : Agosin, Marjorie.2007. Surviving beyond Fear. Women, Children and Human Rights

the military regime, people, especially relatives of detained disappeared, started to organize themselves through association with the Catholic Church (*Vicaría*), which became a symbol of resistance against the dictatorship (Aranda Bustamente 2004)². Gathering and mobilizing individuals affected by the repression, the *Vicaría* became a space to criticize and condemn the regime while at the same time filling the void left by the dismantlement of political parties and unions. The dismantlement of the parties by the military junta has left deep scars that have been exacerbated by the perceived inability of the same political parties to support the struggling families during the dictatorship (Jean 2018). Since the transition to democracy, this sentiment has been linked to the perceived shortcomings of the administrations to punish the perpetrators, create laws and programs to prevent future violations as well as return Chile to a social justice trajectory (Jean 2018). Organizations of memory and human rights are in rupture with the traditional governmental institutions they do not trust, but with which they have to collaborate in order to advance their claims. These organizations see themselves as guarantors of democracy, truth and memory in contemporary Chile. This article argues that the breaking point isn't limited to contrasted memories and their respective legitimacies, but resonate more deeply within the studied groups.

The research from which this article emerges is based on an original theoretical framework grounded at the same time in the sociology of memory, the sociology of social movements and the analysis of discourses. This qualitative research draws on a diverse body of documents, notably national newspapers, statements as well as texts and videos from web platforms of the organizations studied. Arising from the first phase of an ongoing research project on *Mobilizations of Memory in Santiago, Chile*, these documents have been examined and analyzed in order to highlight the representations of memory and sociopolitical dynamics that underline them. Inspired by the method used by Passy and Giugni (2005: 903), this work studies the body of documents collected in order to shed light on "who intervenes (the actors), how (the repertoires of action) and for what purposes (content of the claims)." This technique makes it possible to trace the actors, their repertoire of actions, their representations of the past, the terminology they use and the traces of their interactions with other organizations or opposing representations of the past. From the second phase, I performed informal interviews with representatives of six organizations of memory located in Santiago. The associations were selected because of their relationship with the central concept of this project, that is to say that they are active in the memory processes. The selected associations (1) offer a perspective on different narratives of the past, (2) that highlight different and similar mobilizations about this past within associations and in the public arena, (3) through which we can observe the conflicting configurations and dynamics that influence them.

in Latin America, Ballesteros, Elias Padilla. 2007. "Historia y Memoria de la Violacion de Derechos Humanos", Jelin, E. 2003. *State repression and the labors of memory*, Robben, A.C.G.M. 2010. « Testimonies, Truths, and Transitions of Justice in Argentina and Chile », and Stern, Steve J. 2004. Remembering Pinochet's Chile: On the Eve of London 1998.

² After the closure of the Comité Pro-Paz (Pro-Peace Committee) on January 1, 1976, Cardinal Raul Silva Henríquez created the *Vicaría de la Solidaridad* to support the Chilean population in the face of human rights violations such as enforced disappearances (Bustamente 2004).

The first part of this paper contextualizes my study by presenting the state of studies on post-transitional societies and mobilizations of memory, underscoring its contributions and limits; it also suggests to re-conceptualise memory actors to enable a better understanding of the heterogeneity of these groups. The second part will present the way in which the relation between mobilizations of memory and the administrations in power got fractured and how it is reflected through the discourses and actions undertaken by the organizations. More precisely, this article will present examples from the Chilean case representing how relations between the consecutive governments of *La Concertación* and the human rights and memory organizations became contentious. Finally, in the third part of this text, I will argue that this rupture between the two groups is grounded in political disaffection as well as a rejection of the neoliberal state inherited by the former military regime. This dimension will make it possible to understand the uneasiness of the political representations that appears in the background of the public interventions of the *porteurs de mémoire*.

The implications of this contribution for the literature on organizations of memory in post-conflict countries are the following. Firstly, by centering on the heterogeneity of the mobilizations of memory in Chile, this study will expand the empirical focus of the existing politics of memory literature on organizations of relatives of victims of the dictatorship. Secondly, it will not only problematize the relationship between the associations studied and the elected administration, but also will shed light on the source of discontentment, disapprobation and disaffection. Lastly, this article hopes to contribute the beginning of a conversation about the relationship between groups emerging from civil society and the governments in post-transitional countries.

Politics of memory in the literature: performances, commemoration and memory activism

According to Collins, Hite and Joignant (2013), the concept of politics of memory makes it possible to better highlight the symbolic content of certain policies while taking into account the widening of the claims made by organizations of memory and proposes to go further than the transitional temporal frame that investigates the violations committed during the dictatorship, and then the transition (Hite et al. 2013). This temporal and symbolic opening makes possible the understanding of the existence of several representations, apprehensions and uses of the past between the different generations. It also takes into account ideological and partisan political influences in the interpretation of the past, and highlights representations of the past made by political elites with different agendas (Collins et al. 2013). The politics of memory thus become a sociopolitical project that is not intended merely to recall or memorialize the past, because they also carry an impression of urgency about the future (Bell 2011).

There is an increasingly diverse literature on Chilean memory issues in French, English and Spanish. For the purposes of this research project, the literature review will focus on work dealing with *politics of memory*. This work has been developing along two main lines: commemoration and performance of the past in the public arena, and memory activism. One of the major themes emerging from the studies focusing on the politics of memory is that of

commemorations and performances of the past. According to Hite (2012, 2005, Collins & Hite 2013) and Drulliolo (2011), the commemoration process goes beyond simply recognizing the past. Hite explores the tensions that exist between the different efforts of mobilizing the past in the public space from memorials, while over their existence, they can generate several reactions and, thus, create interest, rejection or indifference (2005 & 2012). In tracing the evolution of politics of commemoration, Hite manages to identify that key issues are now rather 'in representation and appropriation, temporality and visualization, and the design of memory', with many conflicts being in the margins of the creation of these *lieux de mémoire* (Hite 2005, Collins & Hite 2013). Since the main initiatives are of a private nature, memory sites become spaces for commemorations of individual or collective orders, spaces of demands for justice or for (re) affirming political identities (Hite & Collins 2013). This is also emphasized by Drulliolo (2011), Kaiser (2002), Taylor (1997), and Lessa and Levey (2015), adding that these commemorative performances are no longer simply places of reflection, but are at the center of contemporary social issues and attempt to provoke reflection or even change. The way of commemorating the past, on reading these authors, thus becomes a performance tool of the past in the public arena.

A second major avenue within the politics of memory literature is the way it looks at the different manners in which individuals use and view the past that is constantly bursting into the present. The politics of memory thus become a means of studying more concretely social movements working for justice and truth (Hite 2013). As the actors pursue their efforts while investing the public space in order to negotiate how to transmit, represent or evoke the memory (Hite 2013), representations of the past still haunt the present, as Sontag (2004) suggests, because its instrumentalization addresses both past and present problems (i.e. violation of human rights, violence, injustice and impunity). The production of collective memories is thus at the intersection of transitional justice and politics of memory, whereas daily practices allow, according to Brown (2012), to observe what are the local work initiatives of the memory and pursuit of justice and in what ways these are part of broader hierarchical and political contexts.

The multiplicity of representations of the past and their forms in the public space has become, as several of the above-mentioned authors have already pointed out, a source of conflict and struggle over the meaning and the legitimacy of certain actors. This plurality and the mobilizations to which it gave rise have been extensively studied. Nevertheless, some questions remain unresolved. Based on the recent work of Tahir (2015), I argue elsewhere (Jean 2018) that by homogenizing the organizations involved in these struggles, many questions remain unanswered, for example: "[...] can we speak of a homogeneous whole? How do these actors interact? While the issue is linked to state management of the dictatorial past, what is the weight of relations with the government in place? How does this condition the discourse of associations? Do they act together? (Tahir 2015: 14)." Indeed, following Tahir's line of investigation, I questioned the way organizations are studied as a homogeneous group by putting into perspective the various similarities, nuances and discontinuities that exist between them (Jean 2018). The next sections of the present article are thus grounded in the argument that the current state of research on the politics of memory in Chile (and elsewhere) does not allow an understanding of the role of the carriers of the memory as heterogeneous actors, that is to say, having objectives

that are both common and different, similar and opposite strategies, and representations of the past that are similar and distinct in parallel. Moreover, in the scientific writings on the subject, the collective actors appear either in filigree of the discourses of the authors, or as an object of study in the singular, since they are at the center of the contemporary politics of memory. Throughout the following pages, this stance will not only lead to a better understanding of these actors, but shed light on the socio-political dynamics in which they evolve.

Methodological Approach

The research was carried out mainly in Santiago, Chile, the national capital. The choice of this place was not made without reason. Indeed, this city seems to me to be the ideal choice. First of all, it is a high place in terms of memory of the Chilean dictatorship. It is indeed full of sites of memory such as the Museum of Memory and Human Rights (MMDH), London 38, Villa Grimaldi and the General Cemetery. It is also a city marked by great activity on the cultural and political scenes, while there are several places that artistically publicize representations of the dictatorship's past.

There are many associations working around memory and human rights in Santiago. Based on the various works that have been carried out so far in Chile and my own experience in the field as part of my research, 17 associations have emerged from an initial state of affairs. For the purposes of this work, I have chosen seven associations (we will use three of them for this article), focusing on those with memory as their main claim and center of attention. I favored the choice of associations with budgets of different sizes (MMDH, Villa Grimaldi, ANEXPP and London 38). In addition, I have been careful to have associations that emerged at different times, i.e., some being better established, with a certain weight and social credibility (AFDD, ANEXPP and AFEP) and others being younger, with differentiated access and powers (MMDH, Villa Grimaldi, Estadio Nacional and London 38) and, finally, at least one organization had to have a saving memory in order to highlight the adversarial representations of the past (Fundación Presidente Augusto Pinochet- Fundación Pinochet). For this article, we will focus on the AFDD, the AFEP and *Londres 38*.

In 2012, I undertook four interviews with representatives of the AFDD (Association of families of detained disappeared – *Agrupación de familiares de detenidos desaparecidos*) and *Londres 38, Espacio de memoria* (Space for Memory). In 2016, I performed eight informal interviews with coordinators from *Villa Grimaldi, Parque por la Paz* (Peace Park), *Londres 38*, the MMDH (Museum of Memory and Human Rights – *Museo de la Memoria y los Derechos Humanos*) and the AFEP (Association of families of the Politically Executed – *Agrupación de familiares de ejecutados políticos*). These interviews were organized to better understand the way in which these groups were organized and how their discourses have evolved through time supplementing the discourses disseminated in the medias.

Political disaffection in Santiago

The starting point of this ongoing research came during my first stay in the field in 2012. While I was working within the association of families of detained-disappeared (*Agrupación de familiares de detenidos-desaparecidos* – AFDD), a comment made by one of my interviewees, Alicia Juica, revealed her resentment and how several members of the AFDD felt after the coup and still today:

I feel that the only thing that is authentic is that the only ones who make the historical memory and who demand the memory, and who know that their parents did not lose their lives because they were our parents, but because they were part of a militant party of the left that opposed the dictatorship. So I hoped that these same parties of the left would remember, that they would raise the signs, that they would not leave us and that they would not forget the dead. But they do not do it. Institutionally, they do not ... [The only initiatives] come from relatives who are everywhere in Chile, but the day the last one dies, I do not know what will happen with the memory of the detained-disappeared.

The participation in the process of social transformation undertaken by the left after the election of Salvador Allende gave an infinite hope for the future in terms of solidarity, equality and social justice. This was particularly the case for women who had engaged in this movement. The feeling of betrayal was all the more felt when these parties did not meet them, after the coup, to denounce the enforced disappearances suffered by their families. The members of the AFDD felt abandoned by the parties of the left when they had to go out alone in the streets, denounce a brutal dictatorship and suffer daily violence. In fact, during the Allende period, the majority of the members of the AFDD were politically active, either in the initiatives of the Unidad Popular government, or in the Communist, Socialist, MAPU or MIR parties (Jean 2013). In 2012, during our interviews, the women revealed to me that they were no longer politically engaged in the same way. Since the dictatorship, disenchanted by the transition, they have turned to movements working in the margins of politics. This disappointment caused a break in their relationship with the political sphere since they no longer trust it to defend their interests.

J .: And you do not believe in the justice system today? Why and what changes would be necessary for real justice?

A .: Listen, I do not think that ... Before, I thought much less, now, half ... After the dictatorship because during the dictatorship, justice was not there for us ... justice was administered by them. Under *La Concertación*,

they did not leave, they succeeded one another and they put a little more colors, but in reality it was not the majority, there is no political will to do justice in Chile, there is no political will to do the minimum. It suits *La Concertación* to follow the rules of the dictatorship to have power and they have forgotten everything and it is [now] a stone in their shoes.

This criticism made to *La Concertación* that there is no political will to do justice in Chile is generalized. Multiple organizations, with their focus on memory struggles and human rights, consistently do so in their statements. After being elected under the emblem of change and the end of impunity, *La Concertación* seems, according to the organizations, to have lost interest for those for whom the party represented a real return of democracy, certainly, but also a return of the left to power. Instead, the AFDD and other organizations dedicated to the issues of impunity, memory and human rights, seem to be a "stone in the shoes of *La Concertación*" which did not deliver what was expected of them.

As indicated by various researchers (i.e., Jara Ibarra 2014, Doran 2016 & Jean 2018), since the beginning of the transition, the consecutive administrations of *La Concertación* (with the exception of the mandates of the rightist political party *La Alianza* led by Piñera 2010-2014 and 2018 to today) have adopted an attitude of valorization of the memory and the truth while avoiding initiatives of legal and legislative nature, which tacitly supports impunity. Much criticized in the public sphere and the media by the victims of the dictatorship and their relatives, the situation, as explained above, shows a malaise in relation to the representations or even a political disaffection with the administrations in office.

In the field of political science, many concepts refer to political representation and social acceptance, as highlighted by Joignant, Morales and Fuentes (2017), and Torcal and Montero (2006). For this analysis, I will use the concept of discomfort in representations, which translates into three variations, that is to say, mistrust, political disaffection and disapproval (Joignant et al. 2017), the latter supporting my observations in Chile. As Joignant, Morales and Fuentes (2017) point out, "less attention has been paid to countries whose party system has not collapsed, but where there are nevertheless clear symptoms that "something is wrong with democracy". According to the authors (Joignant et al. 2017), in order to understand this situation, we must turn to the indicators of mistrust and disapproval of the institutions in these countries. Concretely, it must be understood that mistrust and disapproval did not give rise to a questioning of the regime. The definition of political disaffection emphasizes this dimension: "a subjective feeling of helplessness, cynicism and lack of confidence in the political process, politicians and democratic institutions, but without questioning the political regime" (Torcal & Montero 2006:pg). The use of this concept allowed me, as Joignant, Morales and Fuentes (2017: 20), to highlight the distance "between citizens and parties that, if supported over time, could contribute to provoking a crisis of representations. "

In the particular case of Chilean social movements of memory and human rights, what is interesting are the critiques these groups addressed to elected administrations or previous governments. The perceived inability of the institutions to treat "interests and demands" (Joignant

et al. 2017) has generated a malaise that has swollen over time and that persists today. According to Nicolás M. Somma (2017), this discontent is attributable not only to this perceived inability, but also to the rigidity of the institutions with which the actors desire to and /or must interact to advance their claims. Since the transition, governments have not been particularly proactive toward the reform of institutions (Somma 2017), including regarding the reform of the legislative framework of the country bequeathed by Pinochet, which is a high point of contention with the associations studied in this research. This topic will be expanded subsequently in this article.

Somma's (2017) work, while focusing its analysis on market issues and citizen relations with the administrations in power, is particularly interesting for understanding the context in which the organizations in this study evolve. This contextualization is necessary to understand the evolution of post-transitional social movements that are fractured and do not meet under the banner of political parties as they had in the past. José Del Pozo (Le Devoir, 2017) notes that this disaffection, taking the form of major manifestations of non-adherence to political parties (Somma, 2017: 56), has accelerated since 2005. Indeed, according to Del Pozo (Le Devoir, 23/1/2017), "[i]f Chileans demonstrate massively in the street, it is because they do not seem to believe that the solution to the problems will come from politicians. It is society that has moved the authorities, who are only reacting to it." From the conclusions of Del Pozo and Somma, it is possible to draw parallels with the memory and human rights mobilizations that work in the same spheres as other types of social movements. The organizations of AFEP, AFDD, UNEXPP, London 38 and to a certain extent those of Villa Grimaldi and Fundación Pinochet, work on the margins of politics, because they no longer believe that change can emerge from governments' initiatives, but that it must be generated by the civil society so that real changes occur.

The summer of 2016: examples of mistrust and denunciation

The mistrust of institutions sometimes leads to wariness and denunciation of their failures. Three recent examples are notable and their symbolic content deserves to be deepened. Historically, the AFEP (association of families of executed politically – *agrupación de familiares de ejecutados políticos*) and the AFDD have worked to denounce the violations committed against their relatives and their members under the dictatorship. In the summer of 2016, following a strategy used during Pinochet's time, these associations wanted to superimpose the authoritarian regime and the democratic government in order to demonstrate that the two were not so far apart. In reaction to the publication of a letter signed by 19 senators³, an AFDD group chained itself to the doors of the Congress headquarters (*El Siglo*, 20/6/2016, ADN Radio, 20/6/2016). The president of the AFDD, Lorena Pizarro, said that this action first was intended to

³ On 17 June 2016, 19 senators sent a letter to President Michelle Bachelet "asking her to take administrative measures to ensure respect for humanitarian law, particularly in the enforcement of prison sentences for convicted prisoners. serious and incurable diseases, without discrimination" (Obrador, *Biobío Chile*, 20/6/2016). This letter encouraged Bachelet to allow "intensive release under probation for humanitarian reasons" (Collins, 2016: 56). The legal argument invoked by the senators on the right pointed to the need to apply humanitarian criminal law. This aspect of the law, not differentiating between ordinary crimes and crimes against humanity, theoretically justified its possible vigor here.

denunciate the "logic of impunity" that exists in Chile, which must be condemned (*El Siglo*, 20/6/2016, ADN Radio, 20 / 6/2016). Second, this action was meant to express loudly and strongly the desire of the AFDD that the Senate support a bill one that would prevent those convicted of human rights violations from having access to more prison benefits (*El Mostrador*, 20/6/2016). Pizarro addressed firm words toward the government, stressing "that it was very hard that they should have recourse" to this type of action as they did in 1979 under the dictatorship (Obrador, *Biobío Chile*, 06/20/2016). Since this action at the doors of the Congress, every Friday, members of the AFDD meet in front of the presidential palace, *La Moneda*, in Santiago and walk to demand the closure of *Punta Peuco* (*El Siglo*, 9/9/2016 , Rollano, *Diario UChile*, 2/7/2016).

Two years later, other organizations have joined the AFDD while they continue to meet in front of the presidential palace to demonstrate their presence on a weekly basis and denounce the slow pace of change, or lack thereof, in matters of justice and contemporary social justice issues. They also use this platform as a way to denounce the carceral conditions in which convicted perpetrators of human rights live. This is an attitude of mistrust given the site where they walk. Faced with the seat of government, the AFDD and the AFEP come to mark their presence both to deputies and members of the administration working in the building, but also to the world. It is important to mention that the chosen space is located in the center of Santiago, where thousands of people pass by the great avenue Libertador Bernardo O'Higgins, nicknamed Alameda by the majority of the inhabitants of Santiago.

A second example of distrust performance addressed to the Bachelet administration was that organized by *Londres 38* and implemented on August 30, 2016, the national day of the detained-disappeared in Chile. Early in the morning, four women, members of the working group of the space for memory, were arrested after throwing red dye in the water basins facing *La Moneda*. In a symbolic way, the organization wanted to "accuse the State, and more particularly the government elected, of complicity with impunity [and denounce, at the same time,] the immobility of the political, legal and judicial generation, making it impossible to know the fate of the missing and their ultimate destination" (*Londres 38*, 30/8/2016).

In its short history, *Londres 38* and its organization has consistently used confrontational practices and imaginative performances to claim not only the memory of activists who have passed through the detention center, but their own legitimacy over the Chilean memorial scene. One has only to think of the invasion of the premises of 38 London Street in 2005, their participation in the 2011 student movements, the use of cardboard figures to represent the missing in the streets of Santiago in 2012-2013, the multiple petitions and letters of denunciation sent by the site, as well as their investments of the public space, to name only these tactics.



Water basin facing *La Moneda*⁴

In the case of this performance, of throwing dye in the water basin facing *La Moneda*, the symbolic content is particularly strong. In the statement posted on the association's webpage, *Londres 38* states that "All truth and all justice" must be uncovered and administered (30/8/2016). The organization highlights the responsibility of members of the current government and their predecessors. The political stagnation of the Bachelet administration is described as a new means of ensuring impunity in Chile while allowing its reproduction over time (*Londres 38*, 30/8/2016). This last dimension refers to contemporary human rights violations. In presenting particular cases, such as forced disappearances in democracy and the deaths of Mapuche chiefs, *Londres 38* (30/8/2016) emphasizes that the inertia of governments, the various mechanisms offering the release of executioners and the absence of legislative reform contributes to the repetition of crimes that are similar to those committed under dictatorship. The use of a red dye to represent the blood is not innocent. It was used on purpose in order to create a strong image of the blood that would end up on the hands of the present ministers, deputies and senators as well as members of previous governments who were slow, according to *London 38*, to act in regards to impunity.

Conclusion

Despite the broad existing literature on politics of memory and the mobilizations they studied, few scholars have problematized the relationship between elected officials and organizations fighting for memory, justice and truth. Doran's studies (2010 & 2016) are paramount to the understanding of how different sectors of the society are trying to come to terms with the dictatorship and its remnants within contemporary Chile. The same can be said of Joignant, Morales and Fuentes' (2017) book which discusses political disaffection in Latin

⁴ <http://www.londres38.cl/1937/w3-article-97781.html>

America. However, outside of these contributions, little has been said about the contentious relations between associations of memory and human rights and how it taints the discussions about past violations, justice, memory, education and social equality in Chile. In this regard, this article is an attempt to open the conversation and to take into consideration how the past still colours public policies, discourses and performances. By studying, both synchronically and diachronically, how the relations were fractured, amended and broken again, and how it is reflected through the associations' undertaken action as well as their discourses which can be found in printed newspapers, published on online platforms for example, we might then understand the rejection of political parties and the neoliberal state they have come to represent since the dictatorship.

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