Remembering and Forgetting Salvador Allende:
An Examination of Institutional Memories in Post-Authoritarian Chile

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April 2016
Acknowledgements

This thesis was made possible by the mentorship and guidance of Moramay López-Alonso whose Introduction to Modern Latin America course (Spring 2013) first inspired me to pursue Southern Cone history with a focus on the dictatorial regimes of the 1960s and 70s and their redemocratization in the late 80s and early 90s. As my professor, throughout the years, Dr. López-Alonso has persistently challenged my limited and westernized understanding of Latin American history. As my Mellon Mays mentor and thesis advisor, Dr. López-Alonso has always addressed my concerns with care and given me the confidence to approach my research as a capable scholar. Whether it was working through my labyrinth of sources, writing frustrations, thesis intimidations, or new methodologies, Dr. López-Alonso approached my concerns honestly and reassuringly, allowing me to delve deeper into my true research interests. I would not be the scholar I am today without her continual support of my research endeavors, and for that, I am eternally grateful.

I am also thankful for Jose Aranda and Leslie-Swindt-Bayer whose Latin American Studies capstone and Modern Latin American Politics courses, respectively, encouraged me to narrow in on my research question. Their careful readings and feedback of earlier iterations of my work allowed my project to evolve into the thesis it is today. Moreover, I would like to thank Melissa Weininger and Astrid Oesmann who allowed me to special register for their Spring 2016 course on Holocaust Memory in Modern Germany, as the course’s focus on the institutional memorializations of Germany’s past has greatly facilitated my own thinking and writing on the Chilean case in a post-dictatorial society. Of course, my acknowledgement of professors would be incomplete without the mentioning of Lisa Balabanlilar who has acted as my personal cheerleader in moments of serious self-doubt. Dr. Balabanlilar’s genuine curiosity and validation of my work encouraged me to continue writing and work though my insecurities as a scholar.
I would also like to thank the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, the Houston Endowment, and the History Department for financially funding my research. I am also extremely grateful for Boris Martínez, Claudia Zaldivar, and Ricardo Brodsky, the directors of the Fundación Salvador Allende, the Museo de la Solidaridad Salvador Allende, and the Museo de la Memoria y los Derechos Humanos for their willingness to facilitate my research—by readily accommodating their schedules to interview with me, allowing me to take photographs within their institutions, tracking down materials for me, and making their librarians and archives as accessible to me as possible during my short stay in Chile. This thesis would not have been possible without the material gathered during my two visits to Santiago in the fall of 2014 and 2015. I would also like to thank my Chilean host family for sharing their own memories of the dictatorship with me and opening their home to me as if I were one of their own.

Special thanks are in order to the Mellon Mays Undergraduate Research cohort at Rice University. I could always count on their words of encouragement to view myself as the capable scholar I am and looked forward to their constructive feedback during Tuesday dinners in thinking through my chapter arguments. I am equally grateful for my fellow cohort of honors thesis writers whose words of praise and encouragement as well as shared struggles provided me with a necessary community for completing my thesis.

Lastly, I would like to highlight two peers—Justin Hicks and Cathleen Calderon—for constantly keeping me accountable to my work, restoring my sanity in times of need, allowing me to go on and on about my project, and reading through my multiple drafts. To my sisters whose encouraging texts motivated me to continue writing when the rest of the world was asleep, to my parents for always supporting my academic endeavors, and to anyone else who has gone by unmentioned, thank you for your support. You probably know more about Allende now than you thought was ever possible.
All translations in this thesis are by the author unless otherwise stated.
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Introduction | Placing Allende within Memory Scholarship

Memory scholarship has long existed within the social sciences but has only recently emerged as a field of study within historical discourse in the aftermath of the Holocaust. Because of the magnitude of the state-sponsored violence which resulted in the death of more than eleven million people, rebuilding Germany post-WWII became an international effort led by the Allied Forces through the establishment of the United Nations. Achieving transitional justice—defined as “the full range of processes and mechanisms associated with a society’s attempt to come to terms with a legacy of large-scale past abuses, in order to ensure accountability, serve justice and achieve reconciliation”¹—would be a necessary step to responding to the societal and psychological repercussions of this historical moment and taking the measures necessary to ensure that an event of this nature would never be repeated. These measures include: criminal prosecutions, truth commissions, reparations programs, governmental reforms, and processes of memorialization through the creation of memorials, museums, and institutions. The emergence of the latter have contributed to the wealth of Holocaust memory and post-memory scholarship that continues to both inform and challenge the function and impact of memory displayed as history in the public institutions of post-authoritarian societies today.

In March 1990—forty-five years since the creation of the United Nations, an intergovernmental organization created to “maintain international peace and security… [and] achieve international co-operation in solving international problems of an economic, social, cultural, or humanitarian character, and in promoting and encouraging respect for human rights”²—Chile, a country, which so highly valued its democratic exceptionalism in comparison with its

Latin American counterparts, began its long road towards redemocratization after seventeen years of political oppression under the dictatorship of Augusto Pinochet (1973-1990). While the military coup orchestrated by Pinochet, then Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces, was not completely unforeseen given the political crisis faced under the Salvador Allende administration (1970-1973) led by the world’s first democratically elected socialist president, it signaled a crucial turning point in the country’s history—a break with its long-standing tradition of democracy, which it had historically maintained, even in the wake of political controversy.

The function of this thesis is to analyze how three Chilean institutions: the Museo de Solidaridad Salvador Allende (MSSA), the Fundación Salvador Allende (FSA), and the Museo de la Memoria y los Derechos Humanos (MMDDHH) have presented the historical memory of Salvador Allende and his administration in post-authoritarian Chile. What material have these institutions selected to create a master narrative of Salvador Allende, and what political, social, and cultural factors help explain the institutional decisions that informed the form this memory has taken? Moreover, what is the relationship between politics, memory, and history within these historical memorial sites that informs the narrative of Salvador Allende displayed within these institutions?

Using the image of Allende as a comparative thread, I will provide a close analysis of this historical figure as presented in the Museo de Solidaridad Salvador Allende, the Fundación Salvador Allende, and the Museo de la Memoria y los Derechos Humanos. While I cannot speak for Chile as a whole, I hope to offer my analysis of how these competing and in some ways complementary narratives of Allende developed following redemocratization in Chile by examining the contexts in which these museums were created, the material they have chosen to display within their institutions, the visions of Allende which their institutions promote, and its reception in the broader public. Because of his international significance as the first
democratically elected socialist president, while scholarship on the Allende administration exists, his martyrization and the recounting of the succeeding atrocities committed by the Pinochet regime often overshadow its existence within these institutions.

This project is three-part: in addition to an individual analysis of the three Chilean institutions I have chosen to examine, I have also chosen to look at Allende within three thematic frames—Allende as an international figure, Allende as a martyr, and Allende within the human rights context. While more than one of these themes can be present within each museum, I argue, that there are multiple factors at play here contributing to the prominence of one of these themes within each of these institutions. While existing scholarship might address the process of memorialization as a means to battling with the memory question which has risen since the country’s return to democracy, substantive work has yet to be done on the function of these institutions in preserving and officiating a historical memory of Salvador Allende that historically represents both his vision and political contributions to Chile as president (1970-1973).

Utilizing the material collected from the Museo de la Solidaridad Salvador Allende, Fundación Salvador Allende, and the Museo de la Memoria y los Derechos Humanos archives—which includes truth commission reports, governmental publications, oral and written testimonies, interviews, letters, newspaper clippings, institutional publications, visitor logs, statistical data, and other sources—this thesis examines the varying and changing representations of Salvador Allende within these three institutions. At each stage of Chile’s transition—be it towards a socialist democracy (1970), authoritarian rule (1973-1990), a national plebiscite (1988), redemocratization (1990), Pinochet’s arrest (1998) and his eventual death (2006), Allende’s memory within these institutions has undoubtedly been challenged, framed, and transformed by these events.
Chapter one provides a brief explanation of the deeply rooted and complex social and political factors which brought Salvador Allende Gossens to the presidency in 1970 and to his demise in 1973, all of which are necessary in understanding the late-president’s historical significance and institutional importance today. In order to understand the purpose of studying Allende’s historic memory within the three institutions I have chosen, the reader must first and foremost understand Allende as a humanitarian and politician within the context of Cold War and Latin American history.

Because the histories of the Museo de la Solidaridad Salvador Allende and the Fundación Salvador Allende are so intricately intertwined and are today housed in the same building, chapter two of my thesis will examine the construction of Allende’s memory in both institutions through the lens of Allende as a symbol of solidarity and Allende as a political martyr and symbol of democracy, respectively. Keeping in mind that the memory of Allende is still in the making, it is especially important to note who is responsible for remembering Allende’s administration within these institutions. Whereas it is the Chilean pueblo whose memories of Allende inspired the creation of the Museo de la Solidaridad Salvador Allende and Museo de la Memoria y los Derechos Humanos, it is Allende’s immediate family and surviving cabinet members who have controlled the historic memory of Salvador Allende to remember him favorably within the Fundación Salvador Allende. Logically, in a foundation dedicated to preserving the political ideologies of Salvador Allende, I would argue at the expense of forgetting or at the very least overlooking their political reality throughout his administration, Allende’s legacy is centered around his unrealistic vision for Chile at a moment in time where democratic socialism was simply not going to be a feasible option the United States or the Chilean oligarchy, would allow in the midst of the Cold War. While there is blame to be certainly placed on those responsible for prematurely and autocratically ending Allende’s
administration, the *Fundación Salvador Allende* memory-makers place little responsibility on Allende’s administration for his own demise; for all historical purposes, this is problematic and reinforces a hero-worshipping narrative, which undermines the possibility of any real analysis of the Allende administration in practice.

Finally, in the third chapter I will examine the historical memory of Allende as presented by the *Museo de la Memoria y los Derechos Humanos* through the lens of human rights. As explained in chapter one, beginning with the attack on *La Moneda*, throughout Pinochet’s regime (1973-1990) thousands of Chilean citizens, either associated with or sympathizers of the *Unidad Popular*, Allende’s party coalition, suffered massive human rights violations, including but not limited to detainment, torture, exile, disappearance, and death. Within this historical narrative, Allende represents the beginning of these human rights violations and remains a symbol for democracy, justice, and hope for the future. Although the museum was created during Chile’s bicentennial as tribute to the victims of Pinochet’s dictatorship, as an institution, the museum has a greater purpose of serving as a pedagogical space intended to educate its more youthful public of the country’s most recent history in hopes that this history will “*Nunca Más*” or “Never Again” be repeated. Though the museum’s museology raises questions of political allegiance among Chilean conservatives, it is almost impossible to discuss such a politically divisive history without doing so.

Unlike other Latin American countries whose dictatorships ended in bloodshed, the return to democracy came with the 1988 Chilean national plebiscite in which 56 percent voted “NO” to eight more years of Pinochet. While the plebiscite determined the end of Pinochet’s rule as president of the country, it did not signify Pinochet’s exit from the political scene. Chile’s economic success as well as the institutional mechanisms Pinochet put in place to protect himself from prosecution, made processing human rights abuses much more challenging in dealing with
memory. Pinochet’s removal from power was gradual and his approval within the Chilean right challenged the process of healing for Chilean society as a whole. It is these contexts in which these museums are created and this context in which Allende’s memory re-emerges post-Pinochet, this context in which his memory remains contested, and this context in which the institutional decisions to illustrate, martyrize, and/or depoliticize Allende’s memory is justified. Dubbed as “Latin America’s example of ‘the German problem,’”³ by historian Steve Stern, the accomplishments and setbacks Chile continues to face in achieving transitional justice are a reminder of the complexities of memory and memory scholarship within a historical context—that of remembering (and forgetting) with an agenda. In his trilogy The Memory Box of Pinochet’s Chile, Stern uses the metaphor of the Chilean memory box to “picture memory as competing selective remembrances to give meaning to, and find legitimacy within, a devastating community experience.”⁴ Abandoning the memory versus forgetting dichotomy, Stern uses a more selective set of memory frameworks—heroic memory, dissident memory, indifferent memory, and emblematic memory, to name a few—to display the cultural, social, and political dynamics at play in constructing Pinochet’s legacy of human rights atrocities. While Stern’s approach offers us a comprehensive analysis of the Pinochet era, the memory struggles it unleashed, and its legacy for Chilean democracy, little attention is given to President Salvador Allende’s role within this contested memory. Furthermore, the focus of Stern’s comprehensive study, while insightful in tracing the shifts in memory through the Pinochet era and onwards and outlining the multifaceted history of this time period through various social lenses, is examined through an individual and not institutional perspective.

In his book *The Texture of Memory*, James Young writes the following, “Memory is never shaped in a vacuum. The motives of memory are never pure.” For the purposes of this study, historical memory, as I engage with it, refers to the ways in which an institution comprised of a collective of individuals forges and identifies itself with particular narratives regarding historical periods or events. The role of the historian is not to unquestionably accept memory as history but rather use it to write the history of memory all the while observing and explaining our contestations with the history these institutions has chosen to communicate and the competing narratives it has chosen to forget. While I would agree with Stern that there exist memory frameworks beyond the remembering versus forgetting dichotomy, I would pushback on his idea that this framework is limiting when examining institutional memory. On the contrary, I believe this dichotomy fundamental to understanding the sub-memories functioning within these spaces—symbolic memories, generational memories, political memories. As historians, we must make sense of the institutional use of certain memories and the rejection of others in order to understand why historical periods, or in this case, a historical figure, are repeatedly presented to the Chilean public in a limiting light.

My project aims to use the histories outlined by Stern, and other historians such as Lessie Jo Frazier (*Salt in the Sand*), Alexander Wilde (“Irruptions of Memory: Expressive Politics in Chile’s Transition to Democracy”), and Peter Winn (“Salvador Allende: His Political Life ... and Afterlife”), and the processes of memorialization as observed by James Young in the Holocaust memorials surveyed in his study, to examine the historical memory of Salvador Allende as

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depicted within three Chilean institutions created in response to the repressed memory of Allende during the Pinochet regime. I am in debt to the directors at the Fundacion Salvador Allende, the Museo de la Solidaridad Salvador Allende, and Museo de Memoria y los Derechos Humanos for their willingness to assist me with my research. While some of their archives have been digitized and are accessible online, during my research trip to Santiago I have accessed art pieces, letters, press notes, newspaper articles, interview transcripts, and discourses that when pieced together, narrate the histories of these museums throughout select periods of their existence.

There is an abundance of scholarship on Allende, Pinochet, and the historical periods they commanded, but few historians, to my knowledge, have undertaken the task of examining the kinds of memories these institutions have played a role in creating, officiating, and disseminating Allende’s memory at the national and international level. While Adam Lunn’s The Impacts of the Museo de la Memoria y los Derechos Humanos in Santiago, Chile (2013) is a step forward in examining the function of memory in the creation and use of these spaces, in a country that demands truth and deserves answers, this work is not enough. Perhaps its historical newness has deterred social historians of Chile from producing scholarship dedicated to the topic of institutional memory seeing as only twenty five years have passed since the creation of the Fundación Salvador Allende; ten since the re-inauguration of the Museo de la Solidaridad Salvador Allende; and five since the creation of the Museo de la Memoria. The motives for their creation, the lived histories of many of their board members, and the memories they portray; however, can be traced back to Chile 1970, the year of Salvador Allende’s election, and a year that marked a radical change in the trajectory of Chilean democracy.
In this chapter I will be examining the deeply rooted and complex social and political factors which brought Salvador Allende Gossens to the presidency in 1970 and to his demise in 1973, all of which are necessary in understanding the late-president’s historical significance and institutional importance today. The case of Chile cannot be understood without first placing it within the Latin American and Cold War context.

In regards to its history of caudillismo, or dictatorial strongmen, Chile had long been widely accepted as the Latin American exception within the literature. Whereas Argentina, Brazil, and Mexico had historically opted for military strongmen to restore peace in the face of political crises, Chile’s military had remained relatively apolitical and respectful of the institution of democracy throughout the early twentieth century. Like any Latin American country, social and economic inequality were topics of concern, but in these matters, democracy prevailed. As per the United States, by the mid-twentieth century the superpower enjoyed investments valued at over $1.5 billion in the country.7

In the aftermath of the 1959 Cuban Revolution, the United States could not afford a rise by the Latin American left—especially not one legitimized by democratic means. Moreover, U.S. conglomerates would not accept the nationalization of their investments. That is why when Salvador Allende, after devoting over forty years of his life to addressing the social injustices within his country as a senator, deputy, and cabinet minister under Chile’s socialist party, became a serious contender for president in the 1964 presidential elections, the United States funneled “some $4 million into Chile to help get Frei elected, including $2.6 million in direct funds to underwrite more than half of his campaign budget... [and] a massive $3 million anti-

Allende propaganda campaign” to ensure that Allende’s “peaceful road to socialism” would not prevail.  

After losing the presidential candidacy for a third time in 1964, Allende, determined to win, ran again in 1970. This time, despite the United States’ efforts to prevent him from winning, on September 4, 1970, the medical doctor turned politician was able to garner enough support to win with a plurality of 36.3 percent. Despite never having a simple majority of support for his socialist experiment, nevertheless, Allende had become the world’s first democratically elected socialist president and by the United States’ standards a threat greater than Castro in Cuba, for his power had been legitimized by the people.

**Defining Chile’s Political Climate in the Late 60s and Early 70s**

In order to understand the greater historical significance of the 1970 presidential elections, which recognized Dr. Salvador Allende Gossens as the world’s first socialist president to come to power through democratic means, one must first understand the political circumstances that brought him there—mainly the country’s need for an agrarian reform of their centuries old hacienda or estate system and his promise for a rural revolution through the nationalization of copper, banks, and other large industries. Secondly, the economic and social forces that culminated in his military overthrow— the low productivity of land and labor, accelerating inflation, food deficits, and the increasing heterogenization of the Unidad Popular which weakened his political platform and further impeded Allende from constitutionally transforming his revolutionary rhetoric into a social and political reality in Chile. Low

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agricultural production rates unable to support the population growth and urbanization of mid-twentieth century Chile played a pivotal role in the country’s industrial stagnation, increasing inflation, and inability to balance its payments.

Frustrated by the false hopes of land reform instilled by previous governments, the Chilean peasantry determined that after three unsuccessful presidential campaigns, perhaps it was time to give Dr. Salvador Allende and the newly formed Unidad Popular coalition a chance. Despite the United States’ covert attempts to influence the outcome of the 1970 elections in favor of someone less politically leftist, former President Jorge Alessandri was defeated in the first round of elections by less than two percent of the total votes. While this seemed a significant win for the Unidad Popular, whose political agenda was focused on “divesting the traditional elites of their power”\(^\text{10}\) through the rapid expropriations of the latifundistas and the nationalization of foreign-owned copper mines, doing so proved to be more difficult than anticipated, as the opposition controlled both houses of the legislature and the judiciary.

Furthermore, despite being associated with the Chilean Left, the varying parties of the Unidad Popular — comprised of the Socialist Party, the Communist Party, the Radical Party, the Social Democratic Party, the Independent Popular Action, and the Popular Unitary Action Movement or MAPU — fell on various levels of this ideological spectrum creating political gridlock within their own coalition. Over time this gridlock made it increasingly difficult to reach a consensus of how their political ideologies would be implemented, to what extent, and via what routes.

Though Salvador Allende held many public positions, he was first and foremost a medical doctor by training, but what made him such an appealing figure was his charisma and

\(^{10}\) Patricio Silva. *In the Name of Reason: Technocrats and Politics in Chile.* (University Park: Penn State Press, 2008), 132.
genuine care for his pueblo. Allende’s vision to lead Chile down a socialist path towards
democracy ultimately deviated from his political rhetoric for multiple reasons. He allowed
pressures exerted by the peasantry to significantly influence the pace, scope, and strategy of his
own vision for social reform within the realms of democracy; he promoted a major redistribution
of income without considering its economic response; he failed to induce the labor discipline
necessary to meet the increased need for production to satisfy the growing demand of
agricultural consumption.

Immediately following his inauguration into office, driven by his vision of social justice
for rural Chile, in November of 1970, Allende announced the coalition’s “Twenty Points” of the
agrarian program, which planned to carry out what Frei’s administration failed to do. This
program looked to: 1) put an end to the latifundio\textsuperscript{11} 2) politically unify the Chilean peasantry and
extend the economic and social benefits of land expropriations to their poorest strata, 3) and
transform them into a politically conscious and active base of support for his government.\textsuperscript{12}

Despite Allende’s vision to abide by the Chilean constitution on his democratic road
towards socialism, many parties within the Unidad Popular coalition had more revolutionary
plans in mind that did not always coincide with Allende’s vision for maintaining legality
throughout this process. Beginning in the Mapuche Indian region of the Chilean South, hundreds
of peasants demanded for the immediate expropriation of land via farm seizures or tomas.
Sympathetic to peasant frustrations—they did not call him compañero presidente for just any
reason—Allende responded with an acceleration of the expropriation process failing to castigate

\textsuperscript{11} The Latin American latifundio was a large estate system utilized by early Spanish colonizers that
imposed a social and racial hierarchy that allowed Spanish elite to prosper at the expense of the
peasantry. Even after the Latin American independence movements, in the case of Chile, the legacy of
the latifundio system remained in place benefitting the pockets of a few Chilean elite while exploiting
the Chilean peasantry.

\textsuperscript{12} Peter Winn and Cristobal Kay, “Agrarian Reform and Rural Revolution in Allende's Chile” Journal of
the illegal confiscations of lands by the Mapuche and other Chilean radicals. By July of 1971, more properties had been expropriated than in Frei’s six years as president. By mid-1972, Allende had fulfilled his promise of ending the *latifundio* system, but the expropriation of land only marked the beginning phases of Allende’s socialist vision for Chile.

In accordance with Allende’s vision of social justice for rural Chile, the real minimum rural wage rose by 75 percent between 1971-1972, and agricultural prices increased by more than rural consumption costs. Furthermore, peasants received low interest rates provided by state bank credits, rural price control boards were created to protect the rights of the peasantry, and housing, health, and education in rural Chile became a top priority expressed in Allende’s public discourses. In addition to the expropriation of land, the Allende administration also nationalized its banking system as well as its main source of foreign exchange—copper—within this same time frame. While these goals seemed logical goals towards achieving social justice for the Chilean *pueblo*, the rate and manner in which Allende—under the pressures of party members under his own coalition, opposition of the Christian Democrats, and the limitations of his own economy—chose to do so highlighted his inexperience as a politician and unrealistic goals for Chile as a humanitarian. It would seem Allende served best as an opposition candidate than president of the Republic of Chile.

Organizing the reformed sector (i.e. reorganizing and redefining the role of the Chilean peasantry within the newly expropriated lands) proved to be a difficult task. The major parties within the *Unidad Popular* could not agree on an alternative organizational system for the newly expropriated properties. The socialist were convinced mass mobilizations and an increase in

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class-consciousness were key to the development of a socialist agriculture. The communist however believed the complexity of the proposed socialist system of agrarian organization surpassed the peasantry’s mental capacity and was not practical; therefore, they proposed a simpler form of co-operative. And lastly, MAPU supported the creation of either a state farm or self-governing non-profit communal corporation. The result was the creation of the Centro de la Reforma Agraria or Center of the Agrarian Reform (CERA), which intended to make all peasants of the co-operative equal partners. “Many peasants [however] tended to distrust the CERA as an unfamiliar bureaucratic imposition,” 15 and it proved less than successful leaving once again Allende’s political agenda for organizing the reform sector undefined—nothing more than rhetoric. Afraid to further contribute to the polarization within his own coalition, Allende, the people-pleaser, failed to delegate specified responsibilities or assign financial resources in his establishment of regional and national peasant councils and instead allowed peasant unions to mobilize peasant support. This lack of discipline expressed by the Allende administration only exacerbated the economic and social problems already faced by the country.

While the expropriation of land marked the end of an oppressive centuries old agrarian system, Allende’s administration’s irresponsiveness to the social and financial implications of his policies led to the country’s dramatically induced economic turmoil. In an effort to redistribute income among the poorer strata, members of the co-operative were provided a standard daily wage in advance, regardless of the labor they invested in the common lands. Consequently, peasants chose to concentrate their works on their private plots thus inevitably leading to a dramatic decline in the production output necessary to meet the increased demand of production. The result was an alarming inflation of capital that ultimately counteracted Allende’s vision for

income redistribution and led to a scarcity of even the most basic needs. This in turn called for a need for food imports, which were paid for with the $400 million in foreign exchange reserves, a demand that would have exhausted foreign exchange resources within one to two years.\textsuperscript{16} Despite his rhetoric to build a government led by and intended for the Chilean \textit{pueblo}, Allende failed to create a sustainable economic model that could support his socialist vision for Chile. This reality was successful in solidifying his opposition and prematurely ending his government. Ironically, it also immortalized him as a public figure.

By his third year in office, inflation had reached one percent a day, bank notes continued being printed with little monetary value, foreign exchange reserves were exhausted, and people could be found waiting seven hours at a time just to purchase bread.\textsuperscript{17} While Richard Nixon’s plan to “make [Chile’s] economy scream”\textsuperscript{18} and the United States’ role in overthrowing Allende should not be minimalized; opposition forces played an equally pivotal role in destabilizing Allende’s government. Unhappy with Allende’s politics, the Chilean right chose autocracy over democracy, and thus Chile joined its Latin American neighbors in combating democratic conflict with dirty war politics debunking the idea that the Chilean social road to democracy, though difficult, was immune to the autocratic ways of its neighbors in settling political disputes.

On September 11, 1973, just two and a half weeks after being appointed as the new Commander-in-Chief of the Chilean Army, General Augusto Pinochet led a full-on military coup against the government of President Salvador Allende. Armed with United States subsided weaponry, and backed by opposition forces, Pinochet opened fire on \textit{la Moneda}, the presidential palace, and moreover Chilean democracy. Two days after the coup, Pinochet named himself the

\textsuperscript{17} Rosenstein-Rodan, 12.
\textsuperscript{18} Peter Kornbluh, \textit{The Pinochet File: A Declassified Dossier on Atrocity and Accountability} (New York: The New Press), 35.
new leader of Chile, dissolved Congress and all democratic institutions, abolished elections, made strikes illegal, and imposed the strict censorship of books, the press, and school curriculums. Thousands of leftists who were associated with or had sympathy for Allende’s political vision were arrested, detained, tortured, and in some instances killed and buried in unmarked graveyards.

While many lost their lives before having the opportunity to flee the country, many other Chileans sought political refuge in other parts of Latin America and Europe at large. Their role in exile contributed to an increase in international solidarity for democratic socialism and resistance to United States imperialistic Cold War policies. It was the Chileans in exile who continued to raise international attention to the Chilean case and keep the memory of Salvador Allende alive when those at home were threatened from doing so. In a country of 10 million persons in 1973, an estimated 3,000 Chileans were killed or disappeared by governmental officials, and another 100,000, conservatively, were detained and tortured. 19

Following the 1988 Chilean national plebiscite, in which 56 percent of voters nationwide voted “NO” to General Augusto Pinochet’s proposal to serve as de facto president for eight more years, after seventeen years of repression, plans to begin the transition to democracy began in March 1990.20 As with any newly redemocratized nation, addressing the human rights problem experienced under the dictatorship became not only a necessity but also a means for measuring how far along the democracy scale the country was in.

In its first eight years, redemocratization at the state level was less than satisfactory. Despite his departure as President of the Government Junta of Chile, Pinochet’s replacement of the Chilean constitution in 1981 assured his continued political influence as a self-appointed

19 Stern, Remembering Pinochet’s Chile, xx.
20 For more information see Tribunal Calificador de Elecciones de Chile. «Plebiscito de 1988 - Resultados». www.tribunalcalificador.cl.
senator for life, favored an overrepresentation of the second-majority party—mainly the conservative right-wing Unión Demócrata Independiente (UDI)—and reinforced amnesty laws that protected all persons involved in the detainment, torture, and disappearance of political enemies of the state between 1973 and 1978—the most repressive years of the military regime.

Even so, backed by the Chilean government, human rights activist, NGOs, and other social actors, truth commission reports were created and the emergence of public memorials in the form of historic sites, monuments, and museums began taking place, many in the country’s capital of Santiago, Chile.

Had Allende finished his term as president, his legacy may have been that of an inept president whose wishful policies and poorly organized government brought more harm than good to the Chilean republic. Ironically enough, in prematurely ending his presidency, Pinochet inadvertently contributed to Allende’s memorialization as a symbol for democracy recognized by many countries in solidarity with his road to democratic socialism. In a sense, the September 1973 coup d’état that brought an end to the Allende administration gave the president an opportunity to remind Chileans of the good intentions he had for the socialist development of the republic. And while his administration was ultimately unprepared to establish a stable and constitutional system of implementing socialism through democratic means, his final address to his pueblo left many moved by the sacrifices he and his administration made on that fateful day in the name of democracy.

To this day, Allende is institutionally remembered more by his final remarks than by the economic turmoil his governmental experiment with socialization caused and the role his own administration played in the politicization of the Armed Forces who decided a coup was the only answer to resolving the circumstances Chile found itself in.
On the morning of September 11, 1973, when news of the coup reached Allende, the president came before Chileans with the following words:

Compañeros, permanezcan atentos a las informaciones en sus sitios de trabajo, que el compañero Presidente no abandonará a su pueblo ni su sitio de trabajo. Permaneceré aquí en La Moneda inclusive a costa de mi propia vida... Trabajadores de mi Patria: quiero agradecerles la lealtad que siempre tuvieron, la confianza que depositaron en un hombre que sólo fue intérprete de grandes anhelos de justicia, que empeñó su palabra en que respetaría la Constitución y la ley, y así lo hizo. En este momento definitivo, el último en que yo pueda dirigirme a ustedes, quiero que aprovechen la lección: el capital foráneo, el imperialismo, unidos a la reacción, creó el clima para que las Fuerzas Armadas rompieran su tradición...

Friends, remain attentive to the news in your workplaces, that the president will not abandon his people nor his post. I will remain here in la Moneda even if it costs me my life… Workers of my homeland, I want to thank you all for the loyalty you always displayed, the confidence you deposited in a man that was only an interpreter of great dreams of justice, a man that stuck true to his word that he would respect the constitution and the law, and did so. In this definitive moment, the last thing I will relate to you all, I want you all to learn from this lesson: foreign capital, imperialism, united in reaction, created the climate so that the Armed Forces would break our tradition [of democracy]…

His use of words such as “compañeros,” “su pueblo,” and “trabajadores de mi Patria,” to address the marginal populations of the country are what made him such a charismatic and relatable figure. Unlike other presidents of Chile’s past, Salvador Allende represented the opinion of the masses—not the elite—so much that he allowed them to influence his policies

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even when they were not always the most practical. While he could not always control their actions, Allende strived for a different kind of social revolution, one that did not violate constitutional laws or human rights. This was evident in his rhetoric and ultimately became his legacy. Finally, in his hour of death, Allende blamed imperialism and the politicization of the Armed Forces as the perpetrators that led to the fall of Chilean democracy. In reality Chilean democracy was in danger well before the coup of 1973.

In his final hours of death, Allende again uses his rhetorical legitimacy to memorialize his sacrifice in hopes that one day Chile would resemble the better society he envisioned for the workers and noble men of his country.

Trabajadores de mi Patria, tengo fe en Chile y su destino. Superarán otros hombres este momento gris y amargo en el que la traición pretende imponerse. Sigan ustedes sabiendo que, mucho más temprano que tarde, de nuevo se abrirán las grandes alamedas por donde pase el hombre libre, para construir una sociedad mejor. ¡Viva Chile! ¡Viva el pueblo! ¡Vivan los trabajadores! Estas son mis últimas palabras y tengo la certeza de que mi sacrificio no será en vano, tengo la certeza de que, por lo menos, será una lección moral que castigará la felonía, la cobardía y la traición.

Workers of my nation, I have faith in Chile and its destiny. Other men will come to power in this dark and bitter time in which betrayal pretends to impose itself. Continue knowing that sooner than later, the great streets in which free men pass will open again to construct a better society. Long live Chile! Long live the people! Long live the workers! These are my last words and I have faith that my sacrifice will not be in vain, I have faith that, at the very least, this shall be a moral lesson that will castigate the felons, the cowards, and the betrayers.  

Allende died a heroic death, but he also bequeathed to the masters a rhetoric equivalent of a declaration of future democratic Chile. In doing so, not only did he manage to exit the political scene before having to answer to the grievances of the opposition, he did so in a manner that

22 Ibid.
does not hold him accountable for his own contributions to the fall of Chilean democracy.

These are the contexts in which these institutions were created. Despite Allende’s inability to lessen the gap between the marginally poor and the conservatively rich, democratically socialize Chilean politics, and successfully nationalize Chile’s economy, Allende’s legacy, as depicted in the Fundación Salvador Allende, the Museo de la Solidaridad Salvador Allende, and the Museo de la Memoria y los Derechos Humanos, is that of a people’s president whose ideals, whether practical or not, instill hope in the future democracies of Chile. It is Allende’s ideology and not the realities of his administration that continue to be remembered within these institutions and inform their museology today. Furthermore, despite having only 36.3 percent of the public’s support at the time of his presidential inauguration in 1970, Allende’s vision for a better Chile—a socialist discourse that did not always correspond with the politics of his government—has long survived the violent overthrow of his government and remained a relevant rhetoric memorialized by institutions such as the Fundación Salvador Allende, the Museo de la Solidaridad Salvador Allende, and the Museo de la Memoria y los Derechos Humanos.

These institutions are key contributors to the reconstruction of a collective memory in post-authoritarian Chile that has successfully challenged the official narrative remembered by Pinochet and his sympathizers. This collective memory however, which, thus far, tends to overemphasize Allende’s tragic death in the name of democracy and not his tragic failure to reform Chile during the three years of his presidency, is potentially problematic because it draws attention away from the unstable and borderline unconstitutional atmosphere Allende’s administration, while exacerbated by outside forces, created for itself. Understandably, that task is not a priority for the Museo de la Memoria y los Derechos Humanos who argues that partaking in a discussion of the contested Allende years (1970-1973) would lead its conservative
opposition to justify the violation of human rights which occurred following the fall of his government. Fortunately, these living institutions are not the only memory-makers that occupy these changing spaces. As these institutions move further away from 1973 and younger generations of Chileans that neither lived the coup nor remember the dictatorship engage within these spaces, their contested memories of Salvador Allende have the ability to reshape Allende’s historical memory and transform the institutional discourse.
Chapter 2 | The House on Calle República
Inside the Museo de la Solidaridad Salvador Allende & the Fundación Salvador Allende

“Allende is someone that with time, instead of diminishing is magnified, regardless of whether you are for him or not.”
- Carlos Reyes, Author of Los Años de Allende

In this chapter I will be examining how the Museo de la Solidaridad Salvador Allende and Fundación Salvador Allende—the historically rooted and more partisan of the three institutions respectively— came to be housed in calle República. Because the histories of the Museo de la Solidaridad Salvador Allende and the Fundación Salvador Allende are so intricately intertwined and are today housed in the same building, chapter two of my thesis will examine the construction of Allende’s memory in both institutions through the lens of Allende as a symbol of solidarity and Allende as a political martyr and symbol of democracy, respectively. While they now function as two separate institutions within a shared space, this chapter highlights the important role the two institutions have played in preserving, shaping, and reshaping, a positive image of Allende that reinforces his political vision of democratic socialism for Chile all the while overlooking the political realities of this vision.

The History of the Museo de la Solidaridad Salvador Allende

Museo de la Solidaridad Chile (1971-1973)

One cannot understand the creation of the Museo de la Solidaridad without first understanding the political context in which it was established. Born out of the visionary impetus of a handful of left-leaning influential artists and intellectuals alike, unlike the Fundación Salvador Allende and the Museo de la Memoria y los Derechos Humanos, which were created after the redemocratization of Chilean society, plans to create the now Museo de la Solidaridad Salvador Allende, originally named the Museo de la Solidaridad Chile, were launched in March
1971 when Spanish art critic José María Moreno Galván and Italian artist and writer Carlo Levi held a meeting in Santiago, Chile, to “promote the donation of works among European artistic communities that would enable the Chilean government to form a museum for the people of Chile through the supportive mobilization of sympathetic artists” in solidarity with Salvador Allende’s Unidad Popular coalition.23

In this meeting, named Operación Verdad or Operation Truth, it was established that the committee would be comprised of only foreigners; thus, the Comité Internacional de Solidaridad Artística con Chile (CISAC) or International Committee of Artistic Solidarity with Chile was born with the well-renowned Brazilian art critic Mario Pedrosa, who was living in exile in Chile at the time, as its presiding executive member.24 Shortly afterwards, in a letter dated January 1972, the newly formed CISAC reached out to the President of the Republic, Salvador Allende, requesting the government’s collaboration in promoting this artistic initiative which was intended to serve the pueblo of Chile as a “base for the creation of a Museum of Modern and Experimental Art.”25

Allende understood the importance of art as a means to generating international support for his political revolution and furthermore was a firm believer in the accessibility of art outside of Chile’s exclusive circles of elite. In fact, as part of the 40th measure of his programme of government, “which aimed to create a National Institute of Arts and Culture and colleges of art

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24 Virginia Vidal, “Museo de la Solidaridad no tiene precententes,” El Siglo (Santiago, Chile), April 12, 1972.

in all the country’s provinces,”26 Allende launched a *Tren de la Cultura* or the People’s Train of Culture in February 1971 to bring culture closer to the *pueblo* who otherwise had no access to it.

![Figure 1](http://www.verkami.com/projects/8733-el-tren-popular-de-la-cultura)

With Allende, the *pueblo* would have art. That is why when approached by Mario Pedrosa and Daniel Trelles, Allende jumped on the opportunity to disseminate art to Chile’s marginal populations by means of a solidarity museum. In an open letter to the artist of the world in solidarity with the creation of the museum’s collection, Allende penned the following words:

*Los artistas del mundo han sabido interpretar ese sentido profundo del estilo chileno de lucha por la liberación nacional y, en un gesto único en la trayectoria cultural, han decidido, espontáneamente, obsequiar este magnífica colección de obras maestras para el disfrute de ciudadanos de un lejano país que, de otro modo, dificilmente tendrían acceso a ellas. ¿Cómo no sentir, al par que una encendida emoción y una profunda gratitud, que hemos contraído un solemne compromiso, la obligación de corresponder a esa solidaridad?*

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The artists of the world have understood how to interpret the profound meaning of the Chilean style of the battle for national liberation, and have in a gesture unique to the history of culture, decided spontaneously to donate this magnificent collection of masterworks to the people of a far-off country who would otherwise have no access to them. How can we not feel, at the same time as a burning emotion and a deep gratitude that we have entered into a solemn commitment and the obligation to live-up to that solidarity?27

Equally visionary, despite the growing internal opposition within his own coalition, Allende understood the cultural example such a project could set on the trajectory of Latin American art as a whole and facilitated the institutional conditions necessary to seeing this project through. In corroboration with the Instituto de Arte Latinoamericano (IAL) de la Universidad de Chile or Institute of Latin-American Art at the University of Chile, which functioned as the legal entity of the collection until it was founded, the Executive Committee of the CISAC had the full support of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Chile throughout Allende’s short-lived presidency.

On May 17, 1972, the first collection of the Museo de la Solidaridad Chile (1971-1973), consisting of more than one hundred works, was opened to the pueblo at the Museo de Arte Contemporáneo or Museum of Contemporary Art in Quinta Normal setting the scene as a state-owned but autonomous model for modern and experimental art in South America representative of the political transformations of its time. At the heart of this exhibition, and the museum’s mission, were brotherhood, art, and politics—values that today continue to serve as a testament to the influence Allende’s political vision commanded among the international art community.

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In its most simplistic sense, the Museo de la Solidaridad Chile came to be as a “result of a complex network of intellectual, political, and artistic relationships that wore together the history of a revolutionary social movement with an international art museum, and gathered together a group of intellectuals and artists who felt inspired and moved by these ideas.”\textsuperscript{28} The Solidarity Collection—“articulated around the political, supportive, and fraternal gesture of intellectuals and artists in support of the ‘Chilean Path to Socialism’ between the years 1972 and 1973”\textsuperscript{29}—is comprised of more than 1,500 works from Mexico, Cuba, Argentina, Uruguay, France, Spain, Italy, Poland, Romania, Britain, and the United States, among others.

The real test of solidarity however came during Chile’s darker days under the authoritarian regime of Augusto Pinochet, which threatened the very existence of Allende’s experimental cultural model for the Chilean masses.

\textit{Museo de la Resistencia (1976-1990)}

As the North American member of the International Committee dedicated to the establishment of the Museo de Solidaridad Chile, renowned art critic and close friend of Mario Pedrosa, Dore Ashton reminds contemporaries “the existence of the Museo de la Solidaridad today is something of a miracle, and one that must be vigilantly guarded.”\textsuperscript{30}

Immediately following the September 1973 military coup, the military government issued a series of decrees restricting civil liberties and banning political parties. The museum was


disbanded, and Mario Pedrosa was once again forced into exile—this time in Mexico where he continued to organize works for the museum.

Just one month after the coup, Fernando Gamboa’s letter to Dore Ashton highlights the danger Allende’s supporters’ faced under the newly established military government as well as Pedrosa’s personal commitment to salvaging the Solidarity Collection:

On the several occasions which we [Gamboa and Pedrosa] talked, his [Pedrosa] basic worry, and it must be said in his honor, was the safety of the Solidarity Collection before the safety of his own life. Once he understood the terrible violence before him, he realized that to save the collection he had to first save himself. This is how he arrived to the Mexican Embassy to ask for political asylum. Please be assured that I trust he will be in Mexico soon.31

“While the coup indeed dismembered the Museum, the solidarity networks remained active,”32 and with the help of Galván, Pedrosa set out to recover the already donated works and re-establish the museum outside of Chile. Fortunately for the Chilean people, the Faculty of Arts department of the Universidad de Chile gathered and stored a significant portion of the collection for the remainder of the dictatorship. Other works, such is the case with the British and Japanese donations, experienced delays in shipping and remained in the hands of their respective embassies safe from destruction.33 Another 300 works were stored in the warehouse of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) headquarters in Geneva,

32 Carla Macchiavello, “A Flag is a Weave,” 308.
Switzerland, and yet another 300 works had been placed in storage at the *Museo Nacional de Bellas Artes* or National Museum of Fine Arts by members of the military.\(^3^4\)

As early as November 6, 1974, in a general assembly meeting held by the United Nations, the organization expressed “su más profunda preocupación por el hecho de que se siga recibiendo información sobre constantes y abiertas violaciones de los derechos humanos básicos y libertades fundamentales en Chile”/ “a most profound preoccupation due to its continued reception of information regarding the constant and open violations of basic human rights and fundamental liberties in Chile.”\(^3^5\) Notwithstanding, human rights abuses continued to be carried out by the state under the *Dirección de Inteligencia Nacional* (DINA) or National Intelligence Directorate. Established in November 1973, the human rights violations committed by this secret police—the Chilean equivalent of the Nazi *Gestapo*\(^3^6\) — created a rise in the international condemnation of Pinochet’s regime.

Nearly three years after the military coup, the first expositions abroad began emerging in late 1976, the first of which took place in Paris in June when a mural in solidarity with the Chilean *pueblo* was exhibited in *Parque La Courneuve*. The following month, the “*Camino de Santiago de Chile*”/ “Walk of Santiago, Chile” was opened in Havana, Cuba; donations included *molas*\(^3^7\) made from the Kunda Indians of Panama to the *Museo de la Resistencia*. In September and October of the same year, expositions were also exhibited in Caracas and Valencia, Venezuela, and Bogotá, Colombia.

\(^3^4\) Mario Pedrosa to José María Moreno Galván. October 1973, Courtesy of the MSSA Archive.


\(^3^7\) In Dulegaya, the Kuna’s native language, "mola" means "shirt" or "clothing" and forms part of the traditional outfit of the Kuna women.
Shortly afterwards, under the direction of Mario Pedrosa, José Balmes, Pedro Miras, Miguel Rojas Mix, and Miria Contreras, theConformación Secretariado Internacional del Museo de la Solidaridad or Conformation International Secretariat for the Museo de la Solidaridad was created. Committees in solidarity with the Museo de la Resistencia’s mission were established in Canada, Colombia, Costa Rica, Cuba, Spain, the United States, France, Finland, Iraq, Italy, Mexico, Panama, Sweden, Venezuela, Bulgaria, Mongolia, Poland, Yugoslavia, and the Soviet Union, and by 1977 committees were also created in Hungary, Czechoslovakia, and East Germany—many curating temporary exhibitions in solidarity with Allende’s socialist vision for Chile that were shown in their respective countries.

Nearly a decade after the attacks on la Moneda, the Museo de Arte Contemporaneo de Santiago or Museum of Contemporary Art, Santiago, was reinaugurated in November 1982—the exposition of its collection incorporated works from the Museo de la Solidaridad Chile without an explication of their origins. In May 1985, works from the Museo de la Solidaridad Chile collection were once again displayed without an explanation of their origins, this time as part of an international exposition of contemporary plastic organized by the Faculty of Arts of the Universidad de Chile and the Instituto Cultural de Las Condes or the Cultural Institute of Las Condes. 38

With the rising visibility of human rights organizations such as the Committee of Cooperation for the Peace of Chile (1973), the Vicariate of Solidarity (1976), the Chilean Commission of Human Rights (1978), and the Foundation of Protection of Children Injured by States of Emergency (1979), by the early 1980s, public dissent of Pinochet’s repressive government was steadily increasing. Political parties began reoccupying public spaces creating

38 Dates of expositions exhibited in solidarity with the Museo de la Solidaridad Chile correspond to the Museo de la Resistencia period (1976-1990) and have been taken from the timeline exhibited in the entrance of the Museo de la Solidaridad Salvador Allende.
instances of collaboration and reflection with the purpose of recuperating democracy, and numerous sectors of society—workers, professionals, students, and laymen alike—organized to protest the military regime, often being met with further repression and moreover, death.

In order to generate the appearance of popular support, the regime called for a constitutional referendum of the 1925 Chilean Constitution. This referendum, held on the seventh anniversary of the military coup, necessitated a two-thirds vote in order to replace the 1925 constitution with one drafted by the military government. The results were as followed:

| “Yes” votes | 65.71% |
| Blank votes | 1.33% |
| “No” votes  | 30.19% |
| Invalid votes | 2.77% |

With the blank votes counted as “Yes” votes, the military government received slightly over the necessary simple majority, or 67.04 percent of the total votes casted to be precise, to replace the 1925 Chilean Constitution. The 1980 constitution, “described as a ‘dual constitution’ that contained ‘transitional’ as well as ‘permanent’ articles,” ensured Augusto Pinochet’s position as President of the Republic of Chile for eight more years and increased his presidential powers with the military government serving as the constituency and legislature. Come 1988, the military government then had the constitutional responsibility of appointing a presidential candidate, which would be approved by means of a plebiscite. Despite the opposition force’s contentions with the validity of the election results which was headed by ex-senator Patricio

39 Results as supplied by the Colegio Escrutador Nacional or National Election Observer Association.
Aylwin—who would later become the first democratically elected president of Chile following redemocratization in 1990—the 1980 constitution was placed into effect on March 11, 1981.41

Concurrently, throughout Latin America, countries were entering an extended state of economic retardation earning this period the name “La Década Perdida” or “The Lost Decade.”42 This economic state of unrest, when accompanied by a lack of democracy, led to the mobilization of the masses and a demand for redemocratization. Argentina was the redemocratized in 1983 followed by Brazil in 1985. Meanwhile in Chile, 1982, the country experienced its worst economic crisis since 1930; its GDP had fallen to a mere 14.3 percent and unemployment rose to a staggering 23.7 percent.43 In May 1983, Chileans took to the streets organizing a series of mass demonstrations against Pinochet’s government—many ending in the disappearance of hundreds of persons. Theses scenes were ironically reminiscent of the final days under Allende—chaotic.

As the plebiscite date outlined in the 1980 Constitution approached, in February 1988, thirteen center-left opposition groups came together to form the Concertación de Partidos por el NO or Coalition of Parties for NO.44 On October 5, 1988, after seventeen years under Pinochet, 56 percent of Chileans voted “NO” to eight more years under the military dictator marking the country’s transition towards democracy.

41 As a result, Pinochet was constitutionally granted eight more years of rule as president and would subsequently serve as Commander-in-Chief of the Chilean Army until March 1998 and as well as a senator-for-life until his death on December 10, 2006.
44 Following the NO victory, the coalition changed its name to Concertación de Partidos por la Democracia or Coalition of Parties for Democracy. With the exception of the Sebastian Piñera administration (2010-2014), this coalition has won every presidential election in Chile from 1990 to its dissolution in 2013, making it the primary coalition responsible in shaping Chile’s national historic memory post-Pinochet.
Once officially redemocratized in March 1990, the Fundación Salvador Allende would play a pivotal role in reestablishing the Museo de la Solidaridad in post-authoritarian Chile, changing its name to the Museo de la Solidaridad Salvador Allende as tribute to the late-president and his vision of the museum as a cultural model for the Chilean pueblo. Given the foundation’s fundamental role in facilitating the reestablishment of the Museo de la Solidaridad following redemocratization, the museum’s existence from 1990 to present day will be further examined within the context of the Fundación Salvador Allende.

Fundación Salvador Allende

The historic memory of President Salvador Allende as presented by the Fundación Salvador Allende stands out among the institutional narratives of the Museo de la Solidaridad Salvador Allende and the Museo de la Memoria y los Derechos Humanos for its personal and political ties to the late president. Unlike the Museo de la Solidaridad Salvador Allende or the Museo de la Memoria y los Derechos Humanos, the Fundación Salvador Allende is a foundation, not a museum. Moreover, while the foundation receives state funding upon applying for it, it is not state-sponsored, but rather a private institution founded shortly after the country’s redemocratization in 1990 by Allende’s widow Hortensia Bussi de Allende, his two surviving daughters Carmen Paz and Isabel Allende, and his grandson Gonzalo Meza Allende, in an effort to recover and preserve the memory of their beloved Chicho45 after seventeen years of censorship and oppression.46 And while bordering hagiographic, during its short existence, the

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45 Chicho is an endearing nickname that many persons close to Allende use to refer to him.
46 Other members of the board include Osvaldo Puccio Huidobro, President of the FSA, Minister Secretary General of the Government of Chile under the Ricardo Lagos administration and son of Luis Osvaldo Puccio Giesen, personal secretary of Salvador Allende; Enrique Correa Ríos, Vice President of the FSA, Minister Secretary General of the Government of Chile under the Patricio Aylwin administration, and active member of the MAPU party during Allende’s administration; Cristóbal
Fundación Salvador Allende has played a critical role in “disseminating the ideas and work of President Salvador Allende [and] promoting and developing the humanistic and democratic values that inspired his thought, his political action, and his labor as a leader.”

From organizing Salvador Allende’s official presidential funeral and overseeing the construction of his mausoleum in Santiago’s General Cemetery and initiating the recuperation of the Museo de la Solidaridad’s resistance collection abroad to partnering with various human rights organizations to declassify incriminating governmental documents and publishing and promoting works central to preserving Allende’s memory as a faithful servant to the Chilean people, the Fundación Salvador Allende is undoubtedly a key agent in reinstating Allende’s image within the public sphere of a post-authoritarian Chile. Though a contested figure, Allende’s inescapable presence—now a symbol of democracy, solidarity, and human rights—is key to initiating conversation of Chile’s history at home and abroad.

A Proper Funeral

Before it came to be housed on calle República, where it has operated for the past fifteen years, the Fundación Salvador Allende was administered in the home of the ex-president, located at Guardia Vieja 392. Its inaugural function, no easy task in a politically divided country: the realization of an official, presidential funeral for the ex-president to be held on September 4, 1990. Regardless of the political circumstances which culminated in his death, one matter remained nonnegotiable, at least for the family, and that is that as President of the Republic of Chile from 1970-1973, Dr. Salvador Allende Gossens deserved a proper presidential burial.

Pascal Cheetham, Secretary of the FSA, and Undersecretary of Labor of Chile under the Ricardo Lagos administration; and Pedro Felipe Ramírez, Treasurer of the FSA and Deputy Minister of Construction and Housing and Urban Development under Allende. Their political and personal ties to Allende, undeniably an influential factor in the museum’s institutional narrative.

Augusto Pinochet, though no longer president of the Republic of Chile, remained in the political sphere impeding the country’s transition to democracy as Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces. In an interview to *El Mercurio*, he expressed the view that “el entierro de Allende es una utalización política. Nada mas. Y [que] las Fuerzas Armadas no van a participar.” / “the burial of Allende is a political act. Nothing more. And [that] the Armed Forces would not participate.” 48 Allende’s supporters responded as such: “Si toda familia tiene el derecho inalienable a honrar a sus muertos y, en el caso de un hombre público, lo tiene también el pueblo, cuando se trata de un Presidente de la República, dicho homenaje constituye además un deber hacia la majestad de su investidura.” / “If every family has the unalienable right to honor its dead, in the case of a public man, the pueblo also has that right when dealing with a President of the Republic, said memorialization constitutes moreover a duty towards the majesty of his investiture.” 49 Moreover, in a call to the pueblo to honor Allende, the pueblo reasoned, “Tenemos derecho a erigir un monumento a la memoria de quien diera su vida por Chile, su democracia y su pueblo trabajadora, el compañero Salvador Allende. Es hora de ejercer este derecho.” / “We have the right to erect a monument in memory of he who gave his life for Chile, his democracy, and his working pueblo—the compañero Salvador Allende. It is time to exercise this right.” 50

Aware of the resistance he would face as a result of the institutional powers in place to protect the transgressors of human rights violations during Pinochet’s reign and determined nonetheless to achieve transitional justice during his time in office, President of the Republic Patricio Aylwin understood the official funeral as “un acto de reconocimiento a lo que significó en el escenario democrático la personalidad de Salvador Allende” / “an act of recognition of the

significance Salvador Allende’s personality had on the democratic scene” and a means to facilitating the national reconciliatory process necessary in redemocratizing.

Though he met his death September 11, 1973, the foundation’s decision to hold his funeral September 4, 1990, was a symbolic gesture to remember Allende on “un día de significación nacional, porque recuerda las justas cívicas en que el pueblo elegía a sus mandatorios”/“a day of national significance because it reminds the civic justices that the pueblo elects its officials” once again reinforcing an association of Allende’s image with that of democratic values.

Among those in attendance: President of the Republic of Chile Patricio Aylwin; Nobel Prize recipient Gabriel Garcia Márquez; Prime Minister of France Michel Rocard; Madame Danielle Mitterand, wife of French President Francois Mitterrand; the Minister of Culture of Cuba Armando Hart; Julio María Sanguinetti, Raúl Alfonsín, and Luis Echeverría, ex-presidents of Uruguay, Argentina, and Mexico, respectively, among others. Additionally, international figures such as Willy Brandt, former chancellor of Germany; Mario Soares, President of the Republic of Portugal; and Misael Pastrana Borrero, former president of Colombia were among those invited to the ceremony. Despite not being able to attend the funeral, these leaders extended their words of solidarity to the Fundación Salvador Allende and to the pueblo of Chile for newfound peace under the newly redemocratized nation.

Due to the uncontrollable circumstances at the time, Allende’s body had been buried during a rapid night ceremony attended only by widow and made unidentifiable to the Chilean pueblo. For seventeen years, Allende’s remains resided in a Grove family tomb located at the

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52 “Desde todo el mundo viene personalidades.” N.d. n.p.
54 Por la Paz de Chile” Funeral official del ex Presidente de la República de Chile, Salvador Allende Gossens (Santiago, Chile: Fundación Salvador Allende, 1990), 96-119.
Santa Inés de Viña del Mar Cemetery, but on September 3, 1990, his remains were exhumed and transported to Santiago, Chile, where they would be placed in their current place of rest the following day—a white marbled mausoleum with an area of six square meters and three and a half meters deep located in Santiago’s General Cemetery.54

The comisión Pro Monumento al Presidente Salvador Allende or Commission for the Monument of Salvador Allende called all Chileans—“la clase obrera y del pueblo, de las mujeres y de los jóvenes, de todos los que aspiran a un país distinto, sin explotación, sin represión, sin injusticias” / “the working class and the pueblo, women and youth, and all those who aspire for a distinct country, free of exploitation, free of repression, free of injustices”—to participate in Allende’s funeral—“un anhelo histórico que inicia la reivindicación pública de su [Allende] memoria”/ a historical longing that initiates the public re-vindication of his [Allende] memory.55

A grand first gesture towards reconciliation, the foundation’s organization of the ex-president’s official funeral was fundamental to reintroducing Salvador Allende’s figure into the nation’s historical narrative by projecting their institutional remembrance of him—a democratic visionary, a fighter for social justice, a martyr, and a voice for the Chilean pueblo—onto the public sphere. Today this memory continues to be sustained though its center of documentation.

Creating a Center of Documentation

Throughout the nineties, following the successful execution of the late-president’s official funeral, the Fundación Salvador Allende “comenzó a rescatar la memoria de Salvador

54 Maura Brescia, “Mausoleo del ex president Salvador Allende se inaugurará el 4 de septiembre,” La Epoca Aug. 9 1990.
Allende a través de objetos personales, objetos que estuvieron en la Moneda... rescatar a su obra política...”/ “began to rescue the memory of Salvador Allende by means of collecting his personal items, objects that survived the Moneda attack... rescue his political works...”\textsuperscript{56} Its creation—a culmination of works donated by the Allende family, family friends, nations in solidarity with the Allende administration, and those of the Chilean \textit{pueblo}— is a testament to the resistance of the Chilean people and the will they displayed to keep Allende’s memory alive throughout the dictatorship in Chile and abroad.

The dictatorship tried to erase his presence by censoring the figure of Allende in the media and pillaging his heritage... Undoubtedly, national and global memories did not forget him. That is why the FSA has a Documentation Centre which houses his speeches, private and official photographs, the personal library of the president and his widow, audiovisual archive of the time, and documents that bring us closer to the parliamentary work and activities in the professional and familial life of Salvador Allende.\textsuperscript{57}

The institutional memory of Allende then, though largely dictated by the board members of the foundation—lies within the hand of the Chilean \textit{pueblo}. As active memory agents in reconstructing Allende’s image in a post-authoritarian society, it is the voice of the people, their lived experiences, and their artifacts, which have re-legitimized Allende’s figure and reinforced his political vision. The work of the \textit{Fundación} in once again making Allende a speakable name and image synonymous with democratic values and human rights; however, cannot be undermined. The foundation’s vested interest in creating this archive reinforces the notion that Allende’s political, social, and cultural vision for Chile was not reserved for a select few but rather a timeless message intended for the country’s marginalized masses.

\textsuperscript{56} Boris Martinez, \textit{Interview with the Director of the Fundación Salvador Allende}, Fundación Salvador Allende, Dec. 14, 2015.
\textsuperscript{57} Fundación Salvador Allende, “Historia de la Fundación,” http://www.fundacionsalvadorallende.cl/la-fundacion/historia-de-la-fundacion/
Throughout its existence the foundation has begun to digitize its collection and make it accessible on the web through its partnerships with organizations such as Wikimedia Chile and Londres 38 as well as an increased utilization of social media. The Biblioteca Virtual Salvador Allende Gossens, or Salvador Allende Virtual Library, spearheaded by Allende’s grandson Gonzalo Meza Allende in 2008 and realized by his friend Felipe Henríquez Ordenes in 2010 following his death, is just one example of this. Today, more than five hundred of the foundation’s audiovisual and photographic material has been made accessible to audiences worldwide.58 With the passage of time, and as the climate of terror associated with speaking of Allende and the succeeding dictatorship dissipates, the foundation’s collection continues to grow facilitating in the growing scholarship of Allende literature and enriching the works of scholars such as Steve Stern and community members alike.

Reinauguration of the Museo de la Solidaridad Salvador Allende

Perhaps one of the Fundación’s greatest contributions in recuperating Allende’s cultural legacy to the pueblo of Chile is its role in reinstating the Museo de la Solidaridad Salvador Allende. The third of the Fundación’s inaugural milestones, with the redemocratization of Chilean society in March 1990, the Fundación began the arduous process of recuperating the Museo de Resistencia collections dispersed primarily throughout Spain, France, and Mexico.59 In September of 1991, the Museo de la Solidaridad Salvador Allende made its debut inside the Museo National de Bellas Artes. The Universidad de Chile leased its portion of the Colección Solidaridad to the Chilean government that following May, and within that same month, backed

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58 This figure is based on an article published in 2013. See Mellissa Gutierrez, “Biblioteca virtual Salvador Allende: el proyecto que inició el hijo de Isabel Allende antes de morir,” The Clinica Online June 17, 2013.
by a decree issued under the Patricio Aylwin administration, the Republic of Chile loaned the works of the *Colección de Solidaridad (1972-1973)* to the *Fundación Salvador Allende*. Within the year, Carmen Waugh was selected as the director of the *Museo de la Solidaridad* and both the museum and the *Fundación* were moved to a house on *calle Virginia Opazo*.

In 2004, the *Fundación* came into possession of an imposing structure located on *calle República*. This building, which served as the main headquarters for the *Central Nacional de Informaciones*—an intelligence agency created after the dissolution of Pinochet’s secret police force in 1977 with the primary function of identifying, torturing, and executing political prisoners of the state — was transformed into the central home of Allende’s memory, and as such, it is an emblematic gesture of the pain of transition and the road towards reconciliation. In order to ensure that the memory of the state-sponsored repression is neither denied nor forgotten, the *Fundación* made the institutional decision to preserve one of the rooms of the house where intelligence was gathered. The following year the *Fundación* returned the *Colección Resistencia* to the Chilean people, as was originally envisioned by Allende. It was then that the *Fundación Arte y Solidaridad* or Art and Solidarity Foundation was created to oversee the legal and administrative functions of the *Museo de la Solidaridad Salvador Allende*.

On September 28, 2005, in a ceremony held at the house on *calle República*, President Ricardo Lagos inaugurates both the *Fundación* and the *Museo de la Solidaridad*; from this day forward the two institutions operate separately under a shared space. With the exception of the Allende room located on the first floor and maintained by the *Fundación*, the *Museo de la Solidaridad*...
Solidaridad occupies the first two floors of the building leaving the Fundación to operate within the building’s basement.

Despite its name, perhaps what sets the Museo de la Solidaridad Salvador Allende apart from the Fundación Salvador Allende is that though an integral figure in the creation of this cultural institution, Allende is not its central figure—“el museo como tal no existe. Existe solo en nombre. Lo que existe es la Fundación Arte y Solidaridad. En el fondo, el nombre Museo de la Solidaridad Salvador Allende es como nombre fantasía. Es un nombre histórico”/“the museum as such does not exist. It exists only in name. What does exist is the Fundación Arte y Solidaridad. Essentially, the name Museo de la Solidaridad Salvador Allende is a fictitious name.”62 Instead, the eight curatorial lines in which the museum has committed itself to in accordance with its institutional mission and vision are: (1) the MSSA collection (2) its archive

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(3) highlighting the collection artists (4) pedagogical exhibitions (5) its contemporary nucleus (6) international exhibitions (7) contemporary practices and (8) traveling exhibitions.63

Because of the museum’s spatial constraints, works displayed as part of the museum’s solidarity and resistance collections, located on the first floor, are alternated annually; contemporary works, located on the second floor, are rotated every trimester. Allende remains most visible within the collection he directly inspired and ever-present as an advocate for fraternity, art, and politics—thematic values which continue to influence conversations within today’s socio-political sphere.

A recent study conducted by the Fundación Arte y Solidaridad surveying 1805 visitors between the months of January 2015 and November 2015 revealed that of the persons visiting the museum, 37.1 percent fell within the ages of 19 and 25, otherwise known as the generation of post-memory as all individuals would have been born at or after the period of redemocratization. Contrastingly, 48.1 percent or nearly half of all visitors were between the ages of 26 and 59, the youngest of whom would have been born at the end of the dictatorship, the oldest of whom would have been teenagers during Allende’s administration.

Envisioned as a cultural gift to the Chilean pueblo, it is amazing that in the age of technology 52 percent of all visitors surveyed learned about the museum through word of mouth ringing true to Allende’s timeless motivations for the collection itself—fraternity and solidarity. Regarding their motivations to visit, 78.1 percent of visitors had a personal interest in interacting with the space while 28.1 percent came to the museum as a result of study. And while it is unsurprising, and somewhat misleading, that Salvador Allende was listed as the primary motive for coming to the museum given its name, among the three other motivations listed for their visit

were the solidarity, resistance, and contemporary expositions, the history of the museum itself, and a curiosity for seeing the house in all of its symbolic glory. 64

While an awareness of Allende draws people in, for the Museo de la Solidaridad, the preservation of Allende’s memory extends only so far as an acknowledgement and appreciation for the contributions he played in establishing what is now considered “one of the most important museums of modern art in Latin America, with one of the most representative collections of historical epoch, with 2,650 works, a figure that increases with the donation of new contemporary artists of historical significance,” 65 with a stronger focus on promoting Allende’s vision of enacting social change through art and culture.

In the Mausoleum the Martyr Lives On

In contrast to the Museo de la Solidaridad’s more objective remembrance of Allende, the Fundación’s institutional remembrance of Allende both promotes and allows itself to be blindly shaped by the Chilean pueblo’s romanticized recollection and reinvention of the Allende years. Charged with the task of maintaining Allende’s mausoleum orderly, since its inauguration in September of 1990, the Fundación has collected hundreds upon hundreds of letters left at Allende’s grave—many of which express elements of uncritical hero worship detrimental to realizing an honest analysis of Allende’s administration and its implications in today’s socio-political culture.

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65 “Museo de la Solidaridad Salavador Allende” http://www.arte-sur.org/museums/museo-de-la-solidaridad-salvador-allende/
Figure 4 How egocentric is the individual who only thinks in himself. How small I feel in comparison to your grand gesture of giving your own life for our pueblo. Thank you compañero presidente because it is in you that I got to know the new man, the hero, the martyr. But principally because I got to know your VISION.

Source: Proyecto Libro Mausoleo Cartas en JPG (0001-0229), Courtesy of the Fundación Salvador Allende

If not the quintessential example of uncritical hero worship, the language utilized in the letter displayed in Figure 4, presumably written by a member of Chile’s communist party given the hammer and sickle symbol drawn to the right of the writing, describe Allende as both a hero and a martyr. Moreover, though only human, in diminishing herself at the presence of Allende, Claudia has transformed Allende into a god-like figure—the equivalent of Jesus. Allende so loved the Chilean pueblo that he gave his life to them.

Figure 5 Uncle Allende... We Milla, Gaby, and Mela want to ask you... How did it feel the moment the bomb hit the Moneda? ... I would like response ... in a dream. Thank you. Allende lives in our memory and our dreams!

Source: Proyecto Libro Mausoleo Cartas en JPG (0001-0229), Courtesy of the Fundación Salvador Allende

Figure 6 Sweet Allende G. You were like a hero when you were president. Thank you for having been a great president. There will never be a president quite like you. Chile loves Argentina. Long live Salvador Allende. I am ten years old.
The uses of the terms “compañero presidente,” “tío Allende,” and “querido Allende,” indicate a familial closeness with Allende. Moreover, in Figure 5, Milla, Gaby, and Mela’s request for Allende to speak to them through dream reveal the extent the role myth-making has had in the preservation of Allende’s memory among sectors of the Chilean pueblo. And while we are unsure of the ages many of these writers are, at age 10, Figure 6 epitomizes the skewing effects uncritical hero worship has on the post-dictatorial generations that accept institutional narratives as is.

![Figure 7](image1.png) Prophetic was your name. Pride of our history. Lover of eternal justice is your memory.

![Figure 8](image2.png) Some day the assassins will pay. Pinochet. Faithful followers.

**Source:** Proyecto Libro Mausoleo Cartas en JPG (0001-0229), Courtesy of the Fundación Salvador Allende

While Boris Martinez, the director of the Fundación is of the opinion that “*una persona muerta no deber ser visto como nivel divino*” / “a dead person should not be viewed at a divine level,”* in lieu of the 40th anniversary of Allende’s death, the Fundación’s decision to publish these letters into a book titled ALLENDE…¡VIVE! memoria viva del pueblo en mausoleo de Recoleta [ALLENDE… LIVES! Living Memory of the pueblo in the Mausoleum of Recoleta].

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further promoted its institutionally-driven hagiographic remembrance of Allende. During an interview in December 2015, approaching the foundation’s twenty-fifth anniversary, Boris reflects on the following:

_Haciendo un análisis para atrás yo creo que hemos tenido hitos y grandes fracasos en la Fundación…El proyecto mausoleo nos permito ver como la gente se acerca a la figura de Salvador Allende. Hay mucho de verlo como un héroe, como un santo… hay otras que lo ven como un familiar, como abuelo, padre, otras de político… Pero creo que hay que mostrar a Allende en una manera más cotidiana. Fue humano también no solamente como político, presidente, relacionado a la política o el golpe._

Conducting an analysis in hindsight, I believe that we have had great successes and failures in the Fundación… The mausoleum project permitted us to see how the people approached Allende’s figure. There are many [people] that envision him as a hero, a saint… there are others who see him as a family member, like a grandfather, father, and others as a politician… But I also believe that we must demonstrate Allende in a more regular manner. He was also human, not simply a politician, president, or figure to be associated with the military coup. 67

Filled with resentment for the human rights violations committed under Pinochet, and rightfully so, many persons victimized under Pinochet’s regime continue to find comfort in Allende’s unrealized vision for Chile and forgiving, or intentionally forgetful, of the gravity of the political and social climate lived under the Allende years. This memory, however critical to those who utilized this image of Allende to sustain themselves through the dictatorial years, when projected unto a post-authoritarian public, poses serious threats to accurately depicting the historical memory of Allende.

67 Ibid.
Publications, Promotions, and Public Events

In addition to sustaining its archive, the Fundación promotes the historic memory of Salvador Allende through the institutional publication of works in its archive by publicizing works that correspond to its mission of sharing the democratic and humanistic values that inspired Allende’s political vision, and capitalizing on the symbolic power anniversaries provoke among his avid followership.

Two works worth highlighting for their contributions to reconstructing Allende’s post-memory are the recently published graphic novel of Carlos Reyes and Rodrigo Elegueta titled Los Años de Allende [The Allende Years] and Marcia Tambutti Allende’s winner of the 2015 Cannes Film Festival Best Documentary Allende, Mi Abuelo Allende [Allende, My Grandfather Allende].

Los Años de Allende illustrates the political events, actors, and factors that played a pivotal role in the fall of the Allende administration at the hands of the Armed Forces, as understood through the eyes of the novel’s protagonist—a North American reporter. Though not directly correlated, the works of Reyes and Elegueta resemble the cultural post-memory work of Pulitzer Prize winner Art Speiglmen’s graphic novels Maus I and Maus II.68 A critical and theoretical work on memory, photography, and transmission, Los Años de Allende complicates the historical memory of Allende while still acknowledging his mythically proportioned figure allowing its post-generational readership to conceptualize the context in which his contested memory was created. And like Maus I & II, a popularly assigned reading among students, Los

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68 The term post-memory was actually termed by scholar Miriam Hirsh after reading Art Speiglmen’s Maus I and Maus II, a memory work of comics which paved the way for graphic novels as legitimate works of high culture. For more information See Marianne Hirsch, “The Generation of Postmemory” Poetics Today (2008): 103-128.
Años de Allende has the capacity to demystify Allende’s mythical memory among Chile’s younger generation.

Perhaps the strongest contribution towards taking the first steps of re-envisioning Allende’s memory within the Fundación Salvador Allende and the nation at large is the award-winning documentary of Marcia Tambutti Allende, daughter of Isabel Allende and granddaughter of Salvador Allende. Frustrated by her family’s silence regarding Allende’s figure outside of his political charge, Marci seeks to “dibuja[r] un retrato familiar que aborda las complejidades de las pérdidas irreparables y el papel de la memoria en tres generaciones de una familia icónica”/“illustrate a family portrait that addresses the complexities of the irreparable losses and the role of memory in three generations of an [her] iconic family.” Her vision: “to portray the man beyond the myth of Allende.”

Since the Fundación Salvador Allende’s inception, the Allende family has worked tirelessly to transform the personal and national loss of Allende into a legacy. As member of the Socialist Party, President of the Chilean Senate, and founder of the Fundación Salvador Allende, Isabel Allende has played an important role in constructing her father’s mythic legacy. But in her construction of the foundation’s institutional narrative of Allende the politician, Allende the martyr, and Allende the democratic visionary, the intimate memories of Allende have been compartmentalized and tucked away. Marci’s investigative work forces the family to go beyond Allende the political martyr in search for something more intimate, more transparent, and more relatable.

As the foundation celebrates its twenty-fifth anniversary, Boris reflects:

70 “Marcia Tambutti Quería Contar la Historia del Hombre, No del Mito de Allende.” Cine Chile http://www.cinemachile.cl/en/marcia-tambutti-queria-contar-la-historia-del-hombre-no-del-mito-de-allende/
La opinión de el grupo más joven de la FSA y el trabajo que hecho Marci… [es que] Salvador Allende fue un ser humano con defectos y virtudes.. y eso lo hace mucho mas cercano a la gente también. Eso es el trabajo que queremos desarrollar con la gente joven. No esta imagen distante, alejada, blanco y negro, Salvador Allende como santito… Pero que finalmente es tan alejado.

The opinion of the younger group [of workers] at the FSA and Marci’s work… [is that] Salvador Allende was a human being with defects and virtues… and that is what makes him much more relatable to the people too. That is the work that we want to develop among our younger generations. Not this distant, remote, black and white Salvador Allende depicted as a saint… But in the end that [vision is still] so remote.71

For now, commemoration events are held at la Moneda every September 11th since 1990, with the exception of the Sebastian Piñera administration, in which Allende’s faithful followers attend with great fervor, sometimes clothed in the traditional Unidad Popular trabajadores uniform chanting popular campaign phrases such as “El pueblo unido, jamás será vencido” [The pueblo united, will never be defeated!] and “Se siente, Se siente, Allende está presente!” [We feel it, we feel it, Allende is present!] continue to place precedence on Allende’s rhetorical legitimacy with no regard for the political realities experienced under his administration.

Still, while at face value the Fundación appears to promote a consistently uncritical memory of Allende, it is important to note the monumental role the Fundación’s directorate72 has played in shaping the ex-president’s historical memory in a post-authoritarian society.

72 Members of the Board include Osvaldo Puccio Huidobro, President of the FSA, Minister Secretary General of the Government of Chile under the Ricardo Lagos administration, and son of Luis Osvaldo Puccio Giesen, personal secretary of Salvador Allende; Enrique Correa Ríos, Vice President of the FSA, Minister Secretary General of the Government of Chile under the Patricio Aylwin administration, and active member of the MAPU party during Allende’s administration; Cristóbal Pascal Cheetham, Secretary of the FSA, and Undersecretary of Labor of Chile under the Ricardo Lagos administration; Pedro Felipe Ramírez, Treasurer of the FSA and Deputy Minister of Construction and Housing and Urban Development under Allende.
“This is a memory that is always in construction.”

Ricardo Brodsky, Executive Director of the MMDDHH, Interview, Dec. 21, 2015

In this chapter I will examine the historical memory of Allende as presented by the Museo de la Memoria y los Derechos Humanos within the human rights context. As explained in chapter one, beginning with the attack on la Moneda, throughout Pinochet’s regime (1973-1990) thousands of Chilean citizens, all either associated with or sympathizers of the Unidad Popular, Allende’s party coalition, suffered massive human rights violations, including but not limited to detainment, torture, exile, disappearance, and death. Throughout this chapter I will discuss the actors and events that brought this museum into being, the ethical and aesthetic approach that has informed the museum’s museology, the public’s reception to this space, and their own role in shaping the institutional memory of Allende by acting as active agents of memory.

Unlike the Museo de la Solidaridad Salvador Allende and the Fundación Salvador Allende—whose missions are central to preserving the ideas outlined in Salvador Allende’s via chilena al socialismo—while Allende plays a symbolic role in one of the museum’s opening exhibitions, the Museo de la Memoria y los Derechos Humanos is “first and foremost an act of moral reparation to the victims of the human rights abuses committed by agents of the state between September 11, 1973 and March 11, 1990.” Following the 1988 Chilean national plebiscite, after seventeen years of considerable and systematic human rights violations committed by the Chilean state under the authoritarian government of Augusto Pinochet, the country began its transition to democracy in March of 1990 with the election of Christian Democrat Patricio Aylwin. As with any newly redemocratized nation, addressing the human
As one of the last Latin American countries to redemocratize, Chile could look unto its neighbors already in transition to see what approaches towards achieving transitional justice were working and which ones were not as successful or received significant pushback. Tasked with the responsibility of leading this politically divided and emotionally damaged nation towards democracy—a month after assuming power, preparations were made to establish the Chilean National Commission on Truth and Reconciliation, more commonly known as the Rettig Report.

While the release of this report was a significant step towards achieving transitional justice, and despite the fact that Pinochet was no longer president of Chile, the revisions his government made to the Chilean constitution in 1980 essentially made him and his men untouchable. Under the 1978 *Amnesty Law—Decree Law 2191*, Article 1 granted:

> Amnistía a todas las personas que, en calidad de autores, cómplices o encubridores hayan incurrido en hechos delictuosos, durante la vigencia de la situación de Estado de Sitio, comprendida entre el 11 de Septiembre de 1973 y el 10 de Marzo de 1978, siempre que no se encuentren actualmente sometidas a proceso o condenadas.

Amnesty to all perpetrators or accomplices guilty of criminal acts committed during the siege of the state, beginning the 11th of September 1973 and extending to March 10, 1978. Crimes committed during this time period cannot be tried or convicted. 74

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Furthermore, as self-appointed Senator-for-Life and Commander-in-Chief of the Chilean Army until 1998, Pinochet continued to hold power well into redemocratization, often delaying or posing a threat to the country’s ability to fully address the human rights violations committed under his rule.

The Rettig Report indicated that most of the forced disappearances, killings, torture, and kidnappings, took place during the first four years of the dictatorship— and therefore protected under the 1978 Amnesty Law—were carried out by the Dirección de Inteligencia Nacional (DINA), or the Chilean Secret police. Housed in what is now the Museo de la Solidaridad Salvador Allende and Fundación Salvador Allende, in 1977 this organization was renamed the Central Nacional de Informaciones (CNI).

In 2004, under the Ricardo Lagos administration, The National Commission on Political Imprisonment and Torture Report, or Valech Report, released further information regarding the number of political prisoners—approximately 38,000 individuals—who had suffered some form of torture during the Pinochet years.

While the 1978 Amnesty Law essentially prevented the government from prosecuting the individuals responsible for the systematic political repression of 40,000 Chileans, these truth commission reports later provided the political support for the construction of memorials under the Concertación period.75 Such was the case of the Museo de la Memoria y los Derechos Humanos.

In her annual address to the Chilean National Congress, on May 21, 2007, Michelle Bachelet, President of the Chilean Republic, offered the following words:

*La ética de los derechos humanos y la democracia es el legado que esta generación de*

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75 The Concertación period refers to the twenty year period in which the Coalition of Parties for Democracy, a coalition of center-left political parties, led the transition to democracy until the election of Sebastián Piñera, a member of the right-wing Coalition for Change was elected in 2011.
chilenos, mi propia generación, debe dejar a las generaciones futuras... En base a esta convicción, desarrollamos una política de derechos humanos que se basa principalmente en la educación y en el rescate de la memoria, como forma de proyectar estos dolorosos hechos al futuro y a las nuevas generaciones, y en la institucionalización de su protección, respeto y promoción... Haremos realidad la creación del Instituto de Derechos Humanos y fundaremos el primer Museo Nacional de la Memoria.

The ethics of human rights and democracy is the legacy that this generation of Chileans, my generation, should leave to future generations... Based on this conviction, we must develop a human rights policy that is based principally in the education and the remembrance of memory as a form of projecting these painful acts to the future and to new generations, and in the institutionalization of its protection, respect, and promotion... Let us make reality the creation of the Institute of Human Rights, we shall found the first National Museum of Memory.76

Three years after its conception, on January 11, 2010, the Museo de Memoria opened its doors to the Chilean public with the following mission:

Dar a conocer las violaciones sistemáticas de los derechos humanos por parte del Estado de Chile entre los años 1973-1990, para que a través de la reflexión ética sobre la memoria, la solidaridad y la importancia de los derechos humanos, se fortalezca la voluntad nacional para que Nunca Más se repitan hechos que afecten la dignidad del ser humano.

To make known the systematic human rights violations by the Chilean state between 1973 and 1990 so that ethical reflection about memory, solidarity and importance of human rights so that the nation would be voluntarily strengthened so that Never Again will these events that attack human dignity be repeated.77

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Translation as it appears on the museum English Speakers web section.
Like many of the 190 other memorials in Chile, the Museo de la Memoria was created as a place for remembrance and healing, but unlike those memorials which were created in spaces previously occupied by the state to carry out human rights violations against perceived political enemies, the Museo de la Memoria is more than a memorial site—it is an internationally recognized historical museum whose changing memory extends beyond the world of victims to take on the difficult but necessary task of educating Chile’s present and future generations of their history as objectively as possible.

Museology

A model museum for the rest of Latin America, in its developmental stages, the Museo de la Memoria looked to existing institutions such as the Museum of Apartheid in South Africa, the Holocaust Museum in Washington D.C., and the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Museum in Geneva, Switzerland, among others, to develop its own museology. Fundamental to the museum’s historical narrative is its collections—a collection so vital to Chile’s history that UNESCO declared it part of the Memory of the World in 2003. This collection, which is based on documents gathered in the Casa de la Memoria or House of Memory, documents gathered from human rights organizations in Chile and abroad, documents donated from victim’s groups and relatives, personal collections, and collections from government and state institutions is stored in the museum’s Documentation Center located on the museum’s Level -2. While some documents have restricted access according to privacy rules and governmental laws, such as the

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78 Villa Grimaldi Peace Park, Londres 38, the Fundación Salvador Allende, and the Museo de la Solidaridad Salvador Allende are just several of many examples.
79 Lorena Ferraro L, “El espacio que reivindicará memoria del Chile torturado.” La Nacion (Santiago, Chile), June 17, 2x009.
case with the Valech Report, the collection is open to all persons interested in human rights violations in Chile and its impact on people and society.

Chronologically the museum’s permanent exhibition covers only the period between September 11, 1973, which marked the end of democratic rule in Chile and March 11, 1990, which signaled the country’s official return to democratic rule. Thematically, the museum’s permanent exhibitions are organized across three levels: (Level -1) human rights, a universal challenge (Level 1) September 11, 1973, the end of the rule of law, international condemnation, repression and torture, the suffering of children, (Level 2) the demand for truth and justice, absence and memory, the struggle for freedom, the return of hope, and the end of the dictatorship.

![Figure 9](image_url) **Figure 9** Blueprint of the Museo de la Memoria y los Derechos Humanos permanent exhibitions

**Source:** *Catálogo Museo de la Memoria y los Derechos Humanos*, ed. Museo de la Memoria y los Derechos Humanos (Santiago, Chile: Ograma Impresores, 2011), 139.

Whereas the Fundación Salvador Allende’s commitment to diffusing Allende’s political agenda is entirely intentional and the historical narrative of the Museo de la Solidaridad

_Salvador Allende_ is fundamentally politicized, though abstract, the _Museo de la Memoria y los_
Derechos Humanos museology—both chronological and thematic—is most careful with entertaining Allende as a larger-than-life figure. Granted, unlike the Fundación and Museo de la Solidaridad, with the exception of the Once de septiembre hall, Allende is neither the central figure nor the inspiration behind the space, but rather one of many significant actors essential to remembering and understanding but never justifying Chile’s fall from democracy nor the human rights violations that ensued following his overthrow (1973-1990).

Located in Barrio Yungay, Santiago, Chile, a cultural neighborhood that has historically attracted artists, intellectuals, theatres, churches, and other museums alike, the museum is blocks from the Library of Santiago, the Contemporary Art Museum, and the Matacuna 100 Cultural Center. While historian Steve Stern uses the term “memory box” as a metaphor to illustrate the struggles Chileans faced in understanding Pinochet’s Chile, the museum is quite literally a glass and steel memory box clad in pre-patinated copper and crisscrossed by metal bars. As with the Fundación Salvador Allende, symbolism is a powerful tool used to evoke memory. The building is transparent yet fragile as are the testimonies of human rights violations and the history outlining life under Pinochet’s rule. The sunlight cast within the museum’s permanent exhibition offers rays of hope for Chilean democracy amidst the traumatic history of state terror and human rights violations on display.

![Figure 10 Exterior view of the Museo de la Memoria taken from Plaza de la Memoria](source: Photograph taken from the Museo de la Memoria webpage.)
Nationalized during Allende’s government and a key player in today’s economy, the architectural decision to include copper in the museum’s design can be interpreted as a tribute to the late president. This however, would only be recognizable by those familiar with the Allende years—certainly the living victims of the dictatorship. It is unlikely, however, that Chileans belonging to the younger generations, unless otherwise informed, would understand the structure’s symbolic power at first glance.

Architecture

The museum’s architecture alone is a memorial in and of itself. The museological aspect aside, the Museo de la Memoria speaks the international architectural language of loss and trauma, portrayed through architectural renderings of absences and voids characteristic of many counter-monuments. The term counter-monuments, coined by Holocaust memory scholar James Young, is defined as a “brazen, painfully self-conscious memorial spaces conceived to challenge the very premises of their being,” often aiming to remember what many would rather forget. At the center of this traumatic memory, inevitably, is an unfillable void that can neither be fully explained or replaced—for the Museo de la Memoria y los Derechos Humanos that void would be the September 11th coup d’état best represented through the death of Salvador Allende which marked the abrupt end to his democratically elected socialist government. Central to the counter-monument is its open-endedness. It intentions are not in imposing a singular view, rather its purpose is to spark conversation among its viewers, who then serve as active agents in memorializing the subject at hand—in this case the victims of the dictatorship, beginning with Allende.

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While Allende may only make a brief appearance in the museum’s opening exhibition, his overwhelming absence within a historical frame he was intended to play a role in can be felt throughout the remainder of the exhibition. As an isolated case, architecturally, the Museo de la Memoria is a transparent memory box sustained by two concrete pillars that are engraved with the Universal Declaration of Human Rights established by the United Nations on one side and the museum’s pedagogical philosophy on the other side which reads:

*El Museo es una escuela: El artista aprende a comunicarse; el público aprende a hacer conexiones.* / The Museum is a school: The artist learns to communicate; the public learns to make connections.

As a collective, it is part of a series of counter-memorials which have sprung up in response to systematic human rights violations committed under the dictatorial governments of the twentieth century. Its strength lies not only in the museum’s museology, but also the memory its architecture evokes.

And yet, as a counter-memorial and pedagogical institution, the museum is often in conflict with itself in clearly defining what should be open for interpretation and what must be taught. People cannot understand the meaning of what they do not know, and while a ‘historical’ museum, the museum’s historical narrative begins with the death of Allende and not his government. This is one criticism that the museum has faced throughout its short existence—a criticism that for the time being the museum is unwilling to compromise on.

**Why Context of the Allende Years Will Have to Wait**

Solidarity is a common theme that seems to permeate all discussions addressing the human rights question that continues to shadow democracy in Chile today. But with the
museum’s time frame legally\(^{81}\) limited to covering only the period succeeding the attack on the Moneda palace on September 11, 1973, and ending with the election of Patricio Alywin on March 11, 1990, the question begs, solidarity for whom?

In Chile there exists two main memory camps—that of Allende’s Chilean left, and that of the Pinochet-supporting Chilean right. Those who remember Allende fondly remember him not so much for the policies implemented during his administration that, while exacerbated by external factors, led to industrial stagnation, alarming inflation, and a shortage of foodstuff, but rather for the political vision he represented—that of justice and equal opportunity for the common man—*el pueblo de Chile*.\(^{82}\) For the more conservative Chilean right, the memory of Allende’s administration is characterized by fear—a fear of communism, a fear of the nationalization of land and resources, a fear of social change—fears many believed could only be addressed with the military overthrow of Allende’s government. While time and evidence, as revealed by the truth commission reports and the findings of massive unmarked graves, has made it increasingly difficult for even the most radical *Pinochetistas* to continue to deny the human rights violations committed under the dictatorship—today, a portion of the Chilean public continue to justify the actions taken by the Chilean state as necessary in eliminating the threat of communism in the country, restructuring the Chilean economy in neoliberal terms that favor the Chilean upper-class, and “saving” Chile.

In her inaugural address of the museum, Bachelet—member of the Chilean Socialist party, President of the Chilean Republic, and former political prisoner who also lost her father as

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\(^{81}\) Under Repertorio N° 450-2010 Fundación Museo de la Memoria y los Derechos Humanos Acta y Estatutos, signed on January 7, 2010, the objective to rescue and preserve the memory of human rights violations is restricted to the dictatorship period, and therefore excludes any acts of violence committed under the Allende administration.

\(^{82}\) While *el pueblo de Chile* translated represented the Chilean people, for Allende it represented so much more. Often interchangeably used with *trabajadores de mi patria* [workers for my country], the socially charged phrases represented
a result of the human rights violations committed under Pinochet—states that in addition to honoring the memory of the victims of the dictatorship, the museum would serve the dual purpose of forcing the country to confront its history.

_Nadie puede negar, desconocer, minimizar, o banalizar la tragedia de las violaciones a los derechos humanos en Chile; de que la memoria la vamos recuperando con el aporte de múltiples vestigios relatos, para que cada cual haga su propia lectura del pasado y reflexione sobre la necesidad de mejorar nuestra convivencia, para que nunca más se repita una tragedia semejante en nuestra patria._

No one can deny, disown, minimalize, or trivialize the tragedy of the human rights violations in Chile; that we are recuperating memory with the support of multiple vestiges so that everyone can make their own conclusions of the past and reflect over the necessity of bettering our society, so that a tragedy such as this one will never again occur in our country.83

For Bachelet, part of the museum’s strength is that it “considers the diversity of the memories present in Chile.”84 Not surprisingly, the decision to leave the Allende years out of the museum’s permanent exhibition received early backlash from Chilean conservatives who demanded this historical context necessary in truthfully understanding the events that led Chile to part with democracy. Most recently, North American historians Peter Winn and Steve Stern have also criticized the lack of historical context in the museum’s exhibition.

In an opinion column published in Chile’s most popular conservative newspaper _El Mercurio_ , right-wing politician and economist Luis Larraín stated, “By limiting the museum’s exhibitions to the period between September 11, 1973 and March 11, 1990, the museum has

83 Lorena Ferraro L, “El espacio que reivindicará memoria del Chile torturado.” _La Nacion_ (Santiago, Chile), June 17, 2009.
opted for a selective memory.”

In late June 2012, an intense polemic among Chilean intellectuals, human rights activists, and other social actors began in the editorial section of *El Mercurio*. Among some of the participants were winner of the 1992 Chilean National History Award and historian Sergio Villalobos, Ex-Secretary of the Executive of the Vicariate of Solidarity Enrique Palet C., Javiera Parada, daughter of José Manuel Parada, a member of the Chilean communist party working for the Vicariate of Solidarity at the time of his beheading in 1985 by agents of the Carabineros Communications Directorate (DICOMAR), Director of the Directorate of Libraries, Archives and Museums (DIBAM) Magdalena Kreb, university professors Dr. Víctor Farías and Gonzalo Bustamente, and lawyer and politician José Antonio Viera-Gallo. All contestations with the museum lie in an absence of an exhibit that highlights the political climate of the Allende years.

It was Villalobos who sparked the debate when he criticized the museum’s historical legitimacy stating the following:

*Desde el punto de vista de la historia, la existencia del museo representa el deseo de falsificar el pasado, en cuanto se enfoca en un acontecimiento singular, separado del resto de nuestra historia y, por lo tanto, incomprehensible. En el mencionado "museo", para poder entenderlo, falta la política y la situación social de… la destrucción de la ética pública, los abusos, engaños y desmanes del gobierno de la Unidad Popular…*

From the point of view of history, the museum’s existence represents a desire to falsify the past, while focusing on a single event, separated from the rest of our history, and therefore incomprehensible. In the mentioned “museum,” in order to understand it, it is missing the political and social situation... the destruction of public ethics, the abuses, deceptions and abuses of the Unidad Popular government.

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86 Sergio Villalobos, "Desde el punto de vista de la historia, la existencia del museo representa el deseo de falsificar el pasado" *El Mercurio* (Santiago, Chile), June 22, 2012.
While the museum may be culpable of depoliticizing the context in which Allende’s government fell, the fact remains that there was a military coup orchestrated against Allende’s government and followership, and accusing the museum of falsifying this past reinforces the conservative notion that this rupture in democracy, though difficult, was necessary and justified. Furthermore, in making the case that the museum only “recordar nada más que lo que les conviene...”/“remembers what is convenient for it...” 87 the historian not only demeans the mission of museum— “to allow dignity for victims and their families, stimulate reflection and debate and to promote respect and tolerance in order that these events never happen again” 88— he essentially derides the degree of pain and trauma experienced by the victims and associates re-remembering as “convenient” to furthering the museum’s so-called Leftist agenda. There is nothing “easy” or “convenient” about asking victims to recall the events between September 1973 and March 1990 that forever changed their lives. To suggest otherwise— to demand a focus on the political in order to validate this memory museum as a historical institution— only reinforces the museum’s decision to refrain from entering into discussions surrounding the contested memory of Allende’s administration. Moreover, to “sugiero una reformulación del contenido y del nombre: Museo de Fracaso, el de la Unidad Popular y el de ahora,”/ “suggest the reformulation of the content and the name: Museum of Failure, of the Unidad Popular and of today” 89 suggests that this historian, perhaps motivated by a history that is most convenient to his own political beliefs, places more importance on the context surrounding the events than the detrimental consequences such events invoked for Allende’s followership—the ultimate victims of Pinochet’s reign.

87 Ibid.
89 Sergio Villalobos, “Desde el punto de vista de la historia, la existencia del museo representa el deseo de falsificar el pasado” El Mercurio (Santiago, Chile), June 22, 2012.
We do not expect nor do we ask that Holocaust memorials weigh the Nazi party’s rise to power and their implementation of racial laws as more important than remembering the victims that died under the Nazi regime. Furthermore, we do not seek an explanation for the victim’s political, racial, or sexual beliefs and orientation before honoring them. To make such a request would imply that to some degree the victims had reason to find themselves in such unfortunate situations. As such, Pinochet’s victims should neither apologize for their political affiliations with the left nor should their victimization be brought into question as a result of a lack of historical context predating 1973 within the museum.

In response to Villalobos’ demand for a political contextualization of the events leading up to the September coup, Palet retorts that the museum was not created to satisfy those who seek justification for the grave violation of human rights that occurred in the country from 1973-1990 by explaining why the coup took place in the first place. That narrative was long ago adopted by the military government and does not reflect the democratic values that a respect for human rights triumphs all. As such, there is a moral need to, at least momentarily, refrain from entering discussions about the political and social circumstances that led to a seventeen-year dictatorship.

Unfortunately, the gradual process towards redemocratization underlines the political price paid for the acceptance of democratic institutions—mainly that of having to overlook certain retributions for the greater goal of achieving the greatest possible form of democracy. Despite the priority placed on addressing the human rights issues since redemocratization, for reasons out of the government’s control, the road towards reparation has been a gradual one. Repeatedly, institutional politics set in place by Pinochet and fostered by his followership have made it difficult for those seeking justice and answers. While the museum may not be the answer, it is a step towards achieving such an answer. In the same way agents of the Chilean
right have bought themselves time from taking responsibility for their actions, the institutions responsible for officiating this difficult memory, merit the time necessary to narrative this history in its entirety without fear that doing so would somehow detract from their mission of ensuring that these violations are neither justified, or ever repeated. Until that moment arrives, the museum will continue to serve its moral, not political objective of promoting public awareness of the massive, systematic, and prolonged violations of human rights, which took place during September 11, 1973 and March 11, 1990.

A Spatial Organization of the Museum

The Museo de la Memoria y los Derechos Humanos is a hybrid between a traditional and experiential museum. “These new experiential museums are focused more on teaching and creating an experience for the visitor than they are on the more traditional museological functions of collection and displaying; rather than simply telling the story of the past, experiential museums seek to make the visitor ‘experience’ it.”\(^\text{90}\) Between the museum’s dark glass walls, resembling both the darkness and transparency of the museum’s collected memories, below average room temperatures utilized to create a degree of the great discomfort experienced by victims, letters, artifacts, interactive kiosks, video testimonies, and more, the Museo de la Memoria stands out among its visitor for its ability to draw you in. Furthermore, its incorporation of technology to facilitate visual learners makes it much more interactive and appealing among its younger visitors. And with 61.5 percent of its visitors between the age of 15 and 29, all of whom belong to the generation of post-memory, it makes sense that the museum work its hardest to best serve this generation of memory-makers essentially born into democracy.

Part of the ever-growing trend of what some have called “dark tourism,” in addition to the museum’s Chilean visitors, the museum’s mission and difficult museology attract a large number of international visitors interested in learning about the country’s dark history. Aside from the relatability factor that many Latin Americans feel towards Chile’s memory and human rights museum, there is a degree of fetishization that accompanies exhibits of this nature and encourages visitors to revisit the space. In an investigation conducted between November 2013 and May of 2014 in which 707 persons were surveyed, 96 percent of persons said they would return to the museum, reflecting its overall positive reception among the public.92

Central to the museum’s mission is the respect and value it places on human rights so that these violations are ‘Never Again’ repeated. While the permanent exhibition is focused on the human rights violations that occurred in Chile under the military government of Augusto Pinochet from 1973 to 1990, the material exhibited within the museum’s main entrance (located on Level -1) places the Chilean case within an international context demonstrating to the museumgoer human rights as a universal challenge.

Photographs arranged in the shape of a world map illustrate some of the human rights violations experienced worldwide as a result of dictatorial regimes, civil wars, or armed conflicts. Directly below the map there is information regarding the more than 30 countries that have established truth and reconciliation commissions in an effort to address the atrocities that occurred under their state and move forward as a society.

91 Dark tourism, also sometimes called thanatourism, refers to the tourism to sites of grief, death, and suffering and has been receiving increased scholarly attention in recent years. See J. John Lennon and Malcolm Foley, Dark Tourism, (New York: Cengage Learning EMEA, 2000).
92 Museo de la Memoria y los Derechos Humanos, Estudio de Públicos: Unidad de Audiencias (Santiago, Chile: DIBAM, 2014), 58.
Also showcased on this floor are the truth commission reports of 1990, 1996, and 2004, which are the National Commission of Truth and Reconciliation or Rettig Report, the National Corporation of Reparation and Reconciliation, and the National Commission on Political Imprisonment and Torture or Valech Report, respectively, which the museum recognizes as the “essential referents of their permanent exhibition and of their patrimony.”93

Figure 11: Photograph of the exhibition on Human Rights, Universal Challenge

Figure 12: Pictured above are some of the memorials highlighted in the Area of Memorials

Figure 13: The only explanation of the political context leading to the 1973 coup available in the museum.

Figure 14: Staircase leading to the Once de septiembre room with a photo from one of many campaigns in support of Allende

Source: Photographs taken by Monica Melendez

93 Text inscribed in Level -2 of the museum.
Located directly across this showcase is the Area of Memorials, which contains 83 photographs of the more than 190 memorials built throughout Chile in remembrance of the victims of the dictatorship. At the center of this area, a rustic cross from Patio 29 of the General Cemetery of Santiago, one of the memorials highlighted, is on display. It was here that victims of forced disappearances under the dictatorship were buried in a sea of unmarked graves.

Finally, tucked away in the corner closest to the bathrooms, one can flip through “Chapter 2: Political Context” of the Rettig Report to understand the origin of the political polarization in Chile as well as the “Final Phase of the Polarization and the Crisis,” as concluded by the commission board. This is the extent of political context museumgoers receive, should they be invested enough to read through the report before taking the stairs towards the museum’s main exhibition—the September 11th hall.

While subtle to the less informed visitor, the photos displayed to the right of the stairs leading up the September 11th hall are characteristic of the Chilean pueblo that supported Allende’s government paying homage to many of Allende’s supporters, who because of their ties with leftist ideology, were considered enemies of the state. Though appearing hopeful, the death of Allende’s political agenda Venceremos is foreshadowed by the sounds of Allende delivering his final words in the wake of the military attack on la Moneda palace. Footage of the palace being bombed plays in the background. Newspaper headlines of the event have been digitized and are on loop. Also in the area is a video triptych and timeline of the coup d’état, minute by minute. Contrastingly there is a large screen displaying the current façade of la Moneda in its

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94 “Colecciones,” in Catálogo Museo de la Memoria y los Derechos Humanos, ed. Museo de la Memoria y los Derechos Humanos (Santiago, Chile: Ograma Impresores, 2011), 46.
95 Informe de la Comision Nacional de Verdad y Reconcilación, (Santiago, Andros Impresores, 1996), 30.
96 The political slogan, meaning “We Shall Overcome” also became Salvador Allende’s campaign song in 1970 sung by famous Chilean folklore and political activist Victor Jara who was assassinated just four days after the military coup in the National Stadium.
modern day state of normality. Plinths with touchscreens of related footage i.e. interviews with the survivors of Allende’s cabinet, the military government’s first address to the Chilean public, etc., can be found in the center of the exhibit. Also interesting to note is Allende’s incinerated typewrite on display in the room—a donation made possible by the Fundación Salvador Allende.

Source: Photographs taken by Monica Melendez

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97 “Colecciones,” in Catálogo Museo de la Memoria y los Derechos Humanos, ed. Museo de la Memoria y los Derechos Humanos (Santiago, Chile: Ograma Impresores, 2011), 54.
In one of the videos on display, when asked about September 11th, Former Minster of Health under Allende and one of the few members of the late president’s administration to survive the 1973 attack on la Moneda, says the following: “era el principio de un infierno”/“it was the beginning of hell.” While the former Minister of Health understands that the political situation Chile found itself was the responsibility of both parties, “otros [Pinochet] cometieron brutalidades”/“others [Pinochet] committed brutalities.” Some neighbors danced cueca98 on the street while throwing flour in people’s faces saying, “¡ahora come pan!”/“now eat bread!” in reference to the food shortages exacerbated under the Allende administration which left many starving. And yet another woman interviewed reflects, “la matanza de ese hombre [Allende]… cuando uno dice su nombre debe de ponerse de pie”/“the killing of that man [Allende]… when one says his name, they should stand up.” These are the images visitors will associate with the untimely end of the Allende administration.

Throughout the remainder of the permanent exhibition Allende’s image, at least plainly, is absent replicating the censorship suffered under the dictatorship and making Allende only an actor in the history of Chile, but certainly not a central figure. For those unfamiliar with Allende, his image is only associated with his murder. For the victims and their families Allende remains a symbol of democracy. For the Chilean right, Allende remains a threat to this very institution. Had the museum’s mission been a political mission, their depiction of Allende could be perceived as incomplete as there are neither references to his successes or failures of his administration within the museum’s museology. Were it purely historical, his image would be misleading as it lacks an in-depth analysis of said failures and successes throughout his administration. Because its mission is ethical and the goal of the museum is to ensure a respect of

98 In Chile the cueca has held the status of national dance since September 18, 1979.
human rights values within democratic societies, Allende though a very relevant symbol, cannot be the focus of the museum’s historical narrative. With or without context, whether the victims politicized or not, the fact remains that people died under the Chilean state’s rule. Documents, objects, letters, and other material from the collection support this irrefutably. The historical memory of Allende remains unquestionably politicized and the image of Allende contested even among coalition lines.

The *Museo de la Memoria* is different from other memorials in the sense that it is not just a space for mourning and reflection. And unlike the *Fundación Salvador Allende* and the *Museo de la Solidaridad Salvador Allende* its function extends beyond providing a space intended to uphold Allende’s political memory. It is historical in the sense that it uses primary documents to outline the events that took place between 1973-1990 without offering an interpretation of said documents. Naturally, the organizations that come together to take a stand against the human rights violations are of left-nature. But in a history still so contested within a politically divided nation, it distances itself from aligning itself with political ties. Asking the museum to enter into the Allende years is idealistic. Within the left faction itself, the memory of Allende differs.

It is for these reasons that while necessary, the museum makes a compelling argument that an exhibit outlining the historical context of the Allende years will have to wait. In an interview with Executive Director of the *Museo de la Memoria*, Ricardo Brodsky reiterates the museum’s decision for leaving out, for the time being, the context of the Allende years:

No doubt all political processes are placed in a certain context. And it is important, I think, for the Chilean society to understand this context, but that is a task that corresponds to political parties, universities… because it is difficult to understand why things occur. The discourse that questions the museum is looking to justify it as a product of the political crisis… that a military coup was necessary and that a hard hand was necessary to end with the revolutionary ideas [of Allende] … What happens is that it is
super difficult to enter into that period because the Chilean society is very divided regarding the significance of that period. Actually, the governing coalition the Concertación is also very divided regarding that respective period. So, from my point of view, as an institution, it is very difficult to enter into that period. I think this museum, in due time, will have to enter in discussions of context. But it is still not the time. And there are still many alive actors that would look to justify their actions.99

For now despite being recognized as a history museum, the display of the commission report’s chapter outlining the context for the political crisis of 1973 will have to suffice. While context is necessary, especially for the younger generations which never lived the dictatorship, so is the mission of the museum—a mission which, at this moment, cannot be jeopardized by right-wing conservatives looking to justify the Armed Forces’ decision to overthrow Allende’s government, establish a military government, and eliminate the Chilean left on account of their political ideologies. Historical context is absolutely necessary in understanding the history in its entirety, but never at the expense of justifying the death, disappearance, political exile, and torture of thousands of people by the Chilean state.

On the other hand, in contested spaces such as these, there is never an ideal or good time to address politically divisive issues, and at some point, if the museum wants to continue to call itself a historical museum with the pedagogical purpose to reach out to all generations of Chileans, its permanent exhibition will have to reflect that.

El conocimiento de la crisis de 1973 se hace entonces indispensable, tanto para entender la gestación de las posteriores violaciones de esos derechos que hemos debido investigar, como para prevenir que ellas se repitan. Esto, en ningún caso, como ya se ha dicho, puede ni debe entenderse en el sentido de que la crisis de 1973 justifique ni excuse, en ninguna medida, tales violaciones.

99 Ricardo Brodsky, Interview with the Executive Director of the Museo de la Memoria y los Derechos Humanos, Museo de la Memoria y los Derechos Humanos, Dec. 21, 2015.
Knowledge of the 1973 crisis is then essential, both to understand the gestation of the subsequent violations of those rights that we [the commission] have investigated, so as to prevent them from ever reoccurring. This, in any case, as already said, cannot be understood in the sense that the 1973 crisis justify or excuse, to any degree, such violations.\(^{100}\)

If the Rettig Report, which is fundamental to the creation of the *Museo de la Memoria* permanent exhibition, reports that recognizing the crisis of 1973 is indispensable to understanding the human rights violations that occurred under the Pinochet regime then the question begs why the decree that established the museum limited the scope of this report’s conclusions simply to its findings between the dictatorship and not the necessary context of the violations which would include the political climate experienced under the Allende administration. The museum certainly does not esteem Allende’s government in mythical terms—the problem here is that the museum does not address the political climate during Allende’s government at all, so that the only image the public receives of Allende is the footage displayed of the attack on la Moneda as his final speech plays in the background.

**The Public’s Role in Memory-Making**

Michelle Bachelet, president of the Republic of Chile, ex-political prisoner, and a Board of Directors member, created the *Museo* at the time of Chile’s bicentennial with the means of being a museum of memory to remind Chileans of their history. To date, the museum is the

largest state-led memorialization project in Chile. While the museum is a private foundation, the Ministry of Education is responsible for funding nearly 95 percent of the museum’s expenses.\textsuperscript{101}

As a museum of memory and post-memory among the generation of post-memory, which “describes the relationships of the second generation to powerful, often traumatic, experiences that preceded their births but that were nevertheless transmitted to them so deeply as to seem to constitute memories in their own right,”\textsuperscript{102} public perception is key in shaping this living museum.

\textit{Mala Memoria}

A great example of this is the temporary exhibition of \textit{Mala Memoria I & II} or \textit{Bad Memory I & II}—a nationwide illustration contest sponsored by the museum in an effort to promote the Chilean public in taking part in the necessary task of memory-making. Its mission is for artist to:

\begin{quote}
reproduzcan un hecho histórico que les parezca relevante para continuar construyendo la gran memoria que se debe preservar. La idea de este proyecto es incentivar a que los jóvenes creen sus propias ilustraciones y así continuar fortaleciendo la voluntad nacional para que Nunca Más se repitan hechos que afecten la dignidad del ser humano.
\end{quote}

Figure 20: The temporary exhibition \textit{Mala Memoria II} is located in the Plaza de Memoria, just outside of the museum. \textbf{Source:} Photograph taken by Monica Melendez

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\end{flushleft}
reproduce a historic period that appears relevant to the continuation of constructing the great memory which must be preserved. The idea behind this project is to incentivize the youth to create their own illustrations and in this way continue to fortify the national will so that Never Again are these acts, which affect the dignity of humans, to be repeated.103

These second generation memory-markers are “the hinge generation in which received, transferred knowledge of events is being transmuted into history, or into myth.”104 Their role in understanding their nation’s history and in helping shape the museum’s historical narrative cannot be understated.

Illustrated above are just three of the twenty-four winning entries. Many of the illustrations depict the human rights abusers as rats, others highlight the violence characteristic of this period, and yet others highlight the irreparable loss experienced during this time period.

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Contributions to the Collections

Another perhaps obvious but important role to note that the public plays in shaping the museum’s historical memory of Allende and beyond is the personal contributions organizations and individuals alike make to the museum’s archival collection—the backbone in creating the museum’s museology. The museum’s collections “represent the stories that make up the historical memory, in their diversity and particularity.” Comprised of 141,256 records, 39,791 pictures, 6,925 posts, 4,012 audiovisuals, 3,301 iconography, 1,759 objects, and 407 arpilleras, an essential part of the basis of the museum’s collections are donated by various human rights organizations in Chile and the world, organizations of victims and relatives, and personal collections. Perhaps the most important contribution to the collection comes in the form of oral testimonies. As the generation of survivors ages, it has become increasingly important for the museum to preserve their memories. In an interview with the Director of the Center of Audiovisual Documentation, Miguel Carrasco stressed the role individual donations have on building the museum’s audiovisual collection.

The museum functions on the basis of donations. This is especially true of our audiovisual collection. We have approximately two thousand donators. With every donator we sign a contract with them, and this contract has restrictions on what we can and cannot do with their material…Much of the material that we have here is exclusive to the museum.

106 Arpilleras are brightly colored patchwork quilts stitched by groups of women during the military dictatorship partially in act of resistance to the dictatorship, but also as a means to cope with the violence and state-terrorism that characterized this time period.
108 Miguel Carrasco, Interview with the Director of the Center of Audiovisual Documentation, Museo de la Memoria y los Derechos Humanos, Dec. 22. 2015.
Included in this collection is also Salvador Allende’s last interview conducted by French reporter Josy Dubié, released just days after the military coup. In it we see two sides of Allende—the political visionary, as depicted within the Fundación and Museo de la Solidaridad, and the more realistic politician aware of the political situation at hand and its dark consequences. When asked of the possibility of a civil war, Allende foretells the following:

*El enfrentamiento de clases cada día se hace más importante. Una minoría ha tenido el poder más de 150 años. El imperialismo que controlaba económicamente al país ha reaccionado porque sus intereses han sido tocados. Chile recibe un agresión nacional e internacional. Por desgracia es una posibilidad, que el gobierno combate y combatirá. Yo lo he dicho en todo los tonos… no hay nada caos más profundo que una guerra civil…donde la politización llegaría a tal nivel que el país sería dividido en dos sectores… Es una posibilidad pero las Fuerzas Armadas respetarán la constitución. Los trabajadores no quieren guerra civil.*

The confrontation of classes each day becomes more important. A minority has held power for over 150 years. Imperialism that controlled the country economically has reacted because their interests have been touched. Chile receives a national and international aggression. Unfortunately it is a possibility that the government combat and will fight against. I have said it in all tones … there is no greater chaos than civil war… where the politicization will reach such a level that the country would become divided into two sectors … It is a possibility but the Armed Forces respect the constitution. The workers do not want a civil war.109

Unfortunately for Allende and Chilean democracy, as predicted in his final interview, his socialist experiment indeed ended in a civil war between the state and his supporters and a politically destabilizing environment, whose effects continued to be felt today within Chilean

society. His memory; however, lives on beyond his primary memory-holders and is today a symbol of democracy and human rights within the Museo de la Memoria.

Public Reception

As a museum of memory and human rights, the Museo de la Memoria plays an important function in creating safe spaces for dialogue and reflection of its difficult material. Furthermore, as a living museum, where the museum’s historical narrative is constantly being shaped by the changing memory of its public, the museum values feedback. The commentaries written in the museum’s 2015 comments book can be divided into three main categories: praises, contestations with the lack of historical context, and complaints about the freezing temperatures.

While a great majority of the visitors to the museum are secondary school and university students, among its international audience, the museum receives the most visitors from persons from Brazil, Argentina, and Colombia, followed by the United States, France, and Germany.\textsuperscript{110} It can be assumed that the comment below, made from an Australian visitor to the museum, is coming from a previous place of ignorance of Chile’s history—as a result, the historical information presented is neither questioned nor insufficient for the visitor but overwhelming and fulfilling of its mission of “Never Again.”

Thank you for creating an amazing and interactive yet detailed memory of the past here. It’s hard as a visitor seeing Chile today in this beautiful trip, to imagine that this went on not so long ago. I have developed even more deep respect for Chile and the people here for remember those that suffered. So they have not suffered for no reason or are forgotten.\textsuperscript{111}

\textsuperscript{110} Rodrigo Cabellos, Interview with the Overseer of Audience Statistics, Museo de la Memoria y los Derechos Humanos, Dec.18, 2015.

\textsuperscript{111} Valerie, “Libro de comentarios” (Museo de la Memoria comment book, Australia, May 26, 2015).
The material resonates with many visitors from Latin America, mainly because they too experienced dictatorial regimes within their own countries during this time period—Argentina, Brazil, and Uruguay to name a few. A model for redemocratization, despite its later transition date, Chile’s process of memorialization through projects such as this one, continue to inspire other Latin American countries to take part in this movement of memorials and counter-memorials as a response to the construction of the historical memory of their respective dictatorships in their post-authoritarian state. The desire to have a museum like this in their own countries is a testament to the Chilean state’s overall successful response to the human rights question.

Entering the Museo de la Memoria y los Derechos Humanos is like entering another state of consciousness. It is necessary for every democracy to count on a space like this to maintain the memory of the dictatorial years, so that this tragedy not repeat itself, how I would love for Brazil to have a museum like this.  112

And of course, as a place of healing for the victims, though the museum forgoes any historical context predating the 1973 military coup, the memory of Allende remains an important aspect of the museum’s permanent exhibition. This memory is provoked by the Venceremos photograph leading up the 11 de septiembre room. The worth of his political vision is reinforced in his final words to Chile which can be heard in the background, and the memory of the succeeding atrocities unleashed on his followers triggered by his heroic death. Written in the comments book

112 Marcelo Pinto, “Libro de comentarios” (Museo de la Memoria comment book, Brazil, July 1, 2015).
is the following phrase, “¡El pueblo unido Jamás será vencido! /The people united will never be defeated!” 113 And while insignificant to those that may not have lived during this time, this phrase was one of Allende’s popular campaign slogans that today, continue to keep Allende’s memory and mysticism alive.

On the other side of the spectrum, are those infuriated by the lack of historical context within the museum’s permanent exhibition challenging the museum’s ambiguous narrative, which makes no reference to the chaotic environment lived under the Allende administration.

"Memorial de la tortura" Indignación y rabia es lo único que se siente al entrar a un memorial despolitzado en donde NO SE EXPLICA EL CONTEXTO POLÍTICO! Una vergüenza ¿DÓNDE ESTÁN LOS TORTURADORES EN ESTE SHOW MORBOSO?

“Memorial of torture” Indignation and rage is all I feel entering this depoliticized memorial where THE POLITICAL CONTEXT IS NOT EXPLAINED! An embarrassment. WHERE ARE THE TORTURERS IN THIS MORBID SHOW?114

Sugerencia: La memoria no solo empieza desde el 73 en adelante. También es memoria la hambruna y terrorismo y muertes del gobierno de Allende. /Suggestion: Memory does not begin with 73 and beyond. There is also memory of famine and terrorism and deaths from Allende’s government.115

113 “Libro de comentarios” (Museo de la Memoria comment book, Chile, Feb. 28, 2015).
Nothing to say, I did not like it, very politically charged, confrontational, like this we will never forget and never rise ahead.

Lastly, while there were frequented comments on the museum’s temperature requesting that the museum “POR FAVOR BAJEN EL AIRE ACONDICIONADO /PLEASE LOWER THE AIR CONDITIONING,” seeing as this is part of creating an uncomfortable environment that begs self-reflection of the difficult and unideal situations the victims found themselves in, the uncomfortably cold temperatures remain.

Allende’s Institutional Memory within the Museo de la Memoria

It would be unrealistic to expect a completely depoliticized remembrance of Allende within any institution when his contributions to Chilean society, deemed good or bad, were political by nature. The Museo de la Memoria’s strategy to depoliticizing his figure, is simple—only mention Allende in the context of the start of the human rights violations committed under the dictatorship—after all, that is the museum’s primary mission. Though a central historical figure, Allende’s role in destabilizing Chilean society is not necessary in making known the human rights violations that occurred between September 1973 and March 1990. Highlighting his political vision does not change the human rights violations committed under Pinochet, nor does it justify them.

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When asked about Allende’s role within the Museo de la Memoria, Brodsky said the following:

In general we try not to enter the game of Allende as a religious or saintly figure. Me, personally, I do not prefer that. I prefer to see Allende as a politician of his time, full of contradictions. The UP was, despite everything, a political event that failed. He did not know how to maintain the ultra-left. He did not know how to negotiate with the resistance… In reality it is a discourse that there should be more of. It does not benefit us [in Chile] to view him as a mythological figure.¹¹⁸

Perhaps this will become even more true as Chile moves farther away from 1973, and any associations with Allende are not as immediate. In the meantime, the museum will continue to stand by its legal and moral obligation to remembering the victims of the dictatorship, beginning but not ending with President Salvador Allende. Within this historical narrative, he remains just one of many actors in Chile’s dark history, one of many victims to perish at the hands of Pinochet’s regime.

¹¹⁸ Ricardo Brodsky, *Interview with the Executive Director of the Museo de la Memoria y los Derechos Humanos*, Museo de la Memoria y los Derechos Humanos, Dec. 21, 2015.
Conclusion

Embedded within the politics of transition and redemocratization are the state, curatorial, and civic responsibilities to remember truthfully and purposefully—a task easier said than done in a politically divided country working towards reconciling with the massive human rights violations committed at the hands of their state. This thesis, a case study of the changing representations of Allende’s historic memory driven by institutions such as the Museo de la Solidaridad Salvador Allende, the Fundación Salvador Allende, and the Museo de la Memoria y los Derechos Humanos, sheds light on the theoretical frameworks of memory operating within these spaces as a means to remembering in a way that promotes a socio-political advancement in Chile’s post-authoritarian culture. And though an extensive field of scholarship on Salvador Allende exists, a more focused examination of his historical memory within state-sponsored and state-initiated museums and foundations are a relatively new project given their institutional newness. Though the case of the Museo de la Solidaridad is an anomaly, having first been founded in 1972 and reestablished in 1990, at five and twenty-five years old, respectively, the Museo de la Memoria and the Fundación Salvador Allende are a direct product of the nation’s attempt to reconciling with its past.

This work is but a small contribution to the growing field of applied memory studies in the recently redemocratized countries of Latin America. As more testimonies are shared, more documents unclassified, and other truths are made known, the different interventions in which this memory is institutionally constructed and publically reshaped will continue to evolve. While Allende’s memory among his followership will almost certainly continue to uphold elements of martyrization given the nature of his death, with the passage of time, it is becoming more characteristic of the generation of post-memory to go beyond the myth of Allende in search of a more humanizing remembrance of the late president.
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