

The Politics of
Memory in Post-
Authoritarian
Transitions,
Volume One

The Politics of Memory in Post- Authoritarian Transitions, Volume One:

Case Studies

By

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Volume One: Case Studies

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INTRODUCTION

JOANNA MARSZAŁEK-KAWA

The two-volume publication “Remembrance Narratives and the Construction of Political Identities during the Post-Authoritarian Transition” is the result of the research project on the role of remembrance narratives in the process of the reconstruction of the state and society during democratisation. The study includes six different cases – Chile, Estonia, Georgia, Poland, South Africa and Spain – and uses them as a basis for the qualitative-to-quantitative comparative analysis of the use of remembrance during post-authoritarian transitions. The book is the first attempt ever to discuss cases of the transitional politics of memory in various conditions and contexts, as well as to establish a validated model of this phenomenon. It offers evidence that enables readers to understand how the government’s narratives on the past can be used as a powerful tool for the transformation of the state and society and includes a comparative analysis which presents democratisation and the reconstruction of the post-authoritarian national identity from a new perspective. Moreover, it proves that political science is able to answer the question how a government transforms remembrance narratives into pillars of a democratic society, and identify the sources of differences among transitional identity politics and their impact on citizens.

The goal of the books is to present various aspects of relationships between remembrance, national identity and democratisation. Thus, the selection of the research sample offers a diverse perspective on political transformation in various socio-political conditions:

- Chile as an example of transition from an authoritarian regime established after a military coup d’état,
- Estonia as an example of the first wave of post-Soviet democratisations,
- Georgia as an example of the second wave of post-Soviet democratisations, so called ‘colour revolutions’,
- Poland as an example of transition from a communist regime, aimed at fast integration with the West,

- South Africa as an example of post-colonial democracy and, at the same time, transition from a repressive racist regime based on the exclusion of a part of the society and on limiting human rights,
- Spain as an example of transition from an authoritarian regime established after a civil war.

All six countries have different political traditions; they represent different regions and civilizations, and differ in historical background, paths of democratisation, goals of transformation and visions of the post-authoritarian state and society. The selection of the research sample offers a broad perspective and complex insight into a relationship between narratives of memory and the reconstruction of a national identity in the transition period. Therefore, not only does the publication introduce new research evidence, but it also opens a new field of studies on democratisation. It is an innovative attempt to consolidate memory studies with more traditional branches of political studies: comparative politics, identity politics and political transformation. It fills a gap in the contemporary academic literature with a study based on a complex methodology, clear research design and a comparative analysis of six cases of transitional politics. What is the strength of the publication is its innovative and cross-cultural character, which enables readers to understand how governments use remembrance narratives for shaping national identity during transition with reference to various examples and different socio-political conditions.

The study answers a question about similarities and differences in the government's use of narratives of the past in the transition, as well as explaining what their origins and impact on democratisation are. In the first volume, it shows six different national models applied in various countries, while in the second one it presents a general model of the government's transitional politics of memory and its influence on the reconstruction of the state and society. It offers a new perspective on political transformation and a new field for studying democratisation. Its aim is to refresh academic considerations of what makes these processes successful and how a government can mobilise the society during political transition. Moreover, it consolidates different fields of social and political sciences, and it offers an innovative approach to the transitional identity politics. It is also a very first step to establish a validated theory of the government's remembrance policy.

The publication builds the foundation for a new dimension of comparative politics. Both the individual case studies and the comparative analysis show that remembrance is crucial political stock during

democratisation, which can be used for strengthening the process of the reconstruction of the state and society, or, if it is not applied, it may cause long-lasting conflicts and divisions within a society. The study presents the research evidence that proves the hypothesis that interpretations of national history can deeply influence the outcome of the government's attempts to influence political identity. Moreover, it brings new dynamics to the academic discourse on democratisation, offering a new field for investigation. Contemporary political science requires innovation and the successful reconstruction of traditional perspectives. And this publication provides them. It shows that the government's remembrance policy is the essential part of the transitional politics in the six cases under analysis. It presents a model of the relationship between remembrance narratives, identity politics and democratisation, based on a complex comparative analysis. Moreover, it proves that by studying narratives of the past we may understand better how political identity, political culture and political institutions are transformed during democratisation. It shows that it is possible to adapt traditional categories to a new perspective and – then – to present new answers.

The volume includes a full description of the results observed in each case. All chapters are constructed in a similar way, which enables readers to conduct their own comparisons of remembrance policies. All six parts begin with a brief historical sketch of the authoritarian regime, the chosen path to democratisation and the post-authoritarian transition. Then, they include a comparison of authoritarian and democratic political identities, and discuss key components of these identities, main differences between them and a description of the role of memory as their constitutional factor. These introductory parts offer background for the main part of each chapter – the analysis of the government's use of remembrance policy in identity politics during post-authoritarian transitions. The analytical part presents the results of the study with reference to eight research categories established in the research design:

- The role of remembrance narratives as the legitimisation of new elites, including the following aspects: the past as the legitimisation of new elites, their links with the history of the nation, the reconstruction of national symbols and of the pantheon of national heroes, the reconstruction of the landscape of memory (spatial sites of memory), the historical role of new elites in preventing internal conflicts and their leading role in national reconciliation.
- The role of remembrance narratives as the justification of the presence former elites, including: the necessity of the participation

of former elites in the new political order, the presence former elites as the legitimisation of democracy and pluralism, definitions of political pluralism and democratic diversity, the narrative justification for building a new political community and explanations of a limited range of transitional justice.

- The role of remembrance narratives in transitional justice, including: dealing with the past as the legitimisation of the democratic order and the rule of law, transitional justice as punishment and as a source of forgiveness, as well as causes for the limitations of the transitional justice procedures.
- The role of remembrance narratives as the explanation of social costs of change, including: a relationship between the past and present as the justification of social and economic costs of democratisation, the explanation of new attitudes and behaviours required in new conditions, historical sources of social stratification and justifications of a capitalist turn, or programmes of economic reconstruction.
- The role of remembrance narratives as a source of new political standards, including: the need for political change as the result of a historical process, the role of inter-generational cooperation and agreement, new heroes as role models for citizens, balance between tradition and modernisation, as well as new definitions of patriotism and their validation.
- The role of remembrance narratives as the evidence for the presentation of symbolic roles of democratisation, including: the necessity of political transformation, democratisation as a tribute to the victims of authoritarian repressions and to the fallen heroes of the struggle for independence, the pro-democratic selection of narratives, interpretations and national heroes, remembrance as a source of citizens' participation. and a new calendar of national holidays (organisation of time).
- The role of remembrance narratives as the justification of national unity, including: reasons for national unity, reasons for reconciliation and forgiveness, the pluralisation of the landscape of memory, and the reconstruction of the pantheon of national heroes.
- The role of remembrance narratives as an aspect of the state's identity in international politics, including: justifications for international integration and foreign policy, integration as a stage of democratisation, the state's identity in international politics as part of the reclaiming of its proper position in international relations and the introduction of new standards caused by integration.

Chapter one discusses issues connected with the government's transitional remembrance policy in Chile, which began in 1988 – the year marking the end of Augusto Pinochet's authoritarian military regime. In the text, we first of all deal with the issue of the influence of the forms of commemorating the past promoted by the government on the shape of the Chilean society's political identity. Thus, the chapter is a multithreaded analysis of the transitional politics of memory, based on a compromise and values such as truth, justice and reconciliation. We also discuss the work of the National Commission for Truth and Reconciliation, which became the basis for forgiving guilt and for the unification of the nation.

Chapter two concerns the application of remembrance narratives in the process of the development of the Estonian society's new identity in the democratisation period. Apart from presenting the history of transition processes, involving the period of the second national rebirth, the singing revolution, and the second independence, it depicts the way that the Estonian society has gone from the typical attitude of *homo sovieticus* to a modern European community. The fact that the Estonian people settled accounts with the authoritarian regime played an important part in the process of shaping the post-transition identity, which shows that the potential of the government's remembrance policy was used in a proper manner.

Chapter three presents the process of transition from the authoritarian regime in Georgia. The analysis covers the period of the governments of Zviad Gamsakhurdia, Eduard Shevardnadze and Mikhail Saakashvili. We also show a gradual trend towards the development of the civil society in the Republic of Georgia, which, however, was not accompanied by the pursuit for transitional justice. Because of its length and specific character, Georgian transformation may serve as an example of ignoring issues connected with the politics of memory in public discourse. The chapter focuses on the identification of those tools of the government's remembrance policy that were applied during transition.

Chapter four discusses the application of the government's remembrance policy for shaping new political identity during the transition in Poland. It spans the period from the establishment of the first post-communist government of Tadeusz Mazowiecki, through the times of the cabinets of Jan Krzysztof Bielecki, Jan Olszewski and Hanna Suchocka, to the first part of Lech Wałęsa's presidency. Referring to the construction of a democratic society and a turn from communism, the chapter provides an insightful analysis of the use of interpretations of the past for explaining a new political order and for the disintegration of the "Solidarity" camp. It is also a lecture that guides readers through the

marginalised field of Polish transformation – the reconstruction of the vision of society and its links with historical experience and with the interpretation of Poland's history.

Chapter five is devoted to the remembrance policy pursued by Nelson Mandela's cabinet in the Republic of South Africa from the historic election of April 1994 to the time when Thabo Mbeki came to power. It explains how interpretations of the past were used for overcoming the legacy of apartheid, unifying the nation according to the concept of the Rainbow Nation and promoting the policy of reconciliation that the Truth and Reconciliation Commission was the pillar of. The chapter depicts transitional policies in the Republic of South Africa the main component of which were the African National Congress's efforts to create an inclusive, non-racial society, based on the traditional idea of Ubuntu. It also shows that the government's remembrance policy may become a very important factor conducive to the democratisation of an authoritarian state.

Chapter six discusses the politics of memory in Spain after the death of General Francisco Franco and the influence of the state's interpretations of the past upon the new political identity of the Spanish society. The forms of commemoration discussed in the text were shown in the political, social and economic reality of the transition period in Spain, which served as a basis for a thorough analysis of the politics of memory in this country. In the chapter, we put special emphasis on two attitudes promoted in the period of changes, which set a direction for the state's efforts in the field of the memory of the past. The first of them was a turn from the past, based on forgiveness and abandoning revenge. The other one, in turn, focused on future, which became the main pillar of Spanish policy both during the transformation and in the years that followed it.

Each chapter ends with a discussion of the observed results and the verification of the main research hypothesis regarding individual cases. Thus, each case study identifies the degree of the influence of remembrance narratives on the process of identity reconstruction in transitional conditions. They also transform qualitative results into quantitative data, which are used in a comparative analysis, presented in the second volume. Each chapter offers a complex insight into democratisation from an innovative perspective, making it possible for readers to understand relationships between remembrance and national identity during political transitions. And it is a value that previous publications lacked.

To conclude, the monograph is the result of studies conducted within the framework of the research project financed by the National Science Centre in Kraków, Poland (grant no. DEC- 2012/05/E/HS5/02722). The first volume provides a broad overview of transitional remembrance

policies in selected countries, focusing not only on transitional justice, but also discussing some other significant aspects of the use of these narratives in the reconstruction of the state and society. We hope that it will be well received by readers, especially by those interested in the politics of memory during transformations. The second volume presents the applied research methodology, the theoretical framework and the results of the comparative analysis of the six cases.

CHAPTER ONE

THE POLITICS OF MEMORY IN POST-AUTHORITARIAN TRANSITIONS: THE CASE OF CHILE

ANNA RATKE-MAJEWSKA

From Pinochet to systemic transition. A historical overview

The period of bloody authoritarian rule in Chile began with a coup d'état of a military junta led by general August Pinochet Ugarte, which took place on 11 September 1973. The putsch was a response to economic slump and political and social chaos in the country governed by a coalition of left-wing parties, the Popular Unity (*Unidad Popular*, UP), headed by Salvador Allende, who held the office of President in the years 1970-1973. The socialist reforms implemented by the Chilean authorities had led to enormous divisions within the society of Chile. It was the time when paramilitary organisations, both the ones existing before the left-wing government came to power and those established after 1970, intensified their activity. Moreover, the country was beset by strikes, street fighting and acts of sabotage. Not only were government reform programmes unable to pacify social unrest, but they also deepened an increasingly serious conflict with the opposition (see: Bernatowicz, Dobosiewicz, 1973, p. 130 cf.; Ensalaco, 2000, pp. 14-15; Harris, 1999, pp. 13-17; Martner 1988; Valenzuela, 1989, p. 143 cf.).

Therefore, the atmosphere of tension and instability lay at the bottom of the coup d'état. The democratic Chilean government was overthrown by the junta, which was composed of: general Augusto Pinochet Ugarte – the commander-in-chief of the army, general Gustavo Leigh Guzmán – the commander-in-chief of the Air Force, admiral José Toribio Merino Castro – the commander-in-chief of the Navy, and General César Mendoza Durán – a representative of the country-wide police force (*Carabineros de Chile*)

(Barros, 2004, p. 36; Edwards, 2013, p. 14; see also: Ministerio de Educación Pública, Departamento de Educación Extraescolar, 1974). The takeover of power by the army was intended to be a short-term solution to stabilise the situation in Chile, which was emphasised by the putsch members themselves in the decree establishing a governing junta no. 1 of 11 September 1973. In the document, they also declared that the putsch was an obligation of the Chilean military and law enforcement forces, which – having been established for the sake of defending the integrity and historical and cultural identity of the state and the values it represents – stood up to fight a threat posed by Marxist-Leninist ideology. Under the provisions of the decree, the takeover of power was not only an expression of faithfulness to national traditions, to the heritage of the Founding Fathers and to the history of Chile, but it was also the only way to restore order in the country and to ensure its development and progress. The junta was thus perceived as an exponent of the will of the nation, a defender and guardian of the law. The document also included provisions assuring that the principles of the Chilean constitution would be respected (*Acta de constitución...*, 1973).

The views on the coup d'état and on the situation in the Republic of Chile presented in the decree were shared by a large part of the society. It soon became clear, however, that despite declarations that the constitutional order would be complied with, the authorities established as the result of the putsch would not give up their power,¹ and terror used against their opponents would cement social divisions. Marcin Komosa expressed this opinion in the following words: “The coup d'état came as no surprise both for Chileans and for the international public opinion. For many citizens, it meant the end of the period of chaos and anarchy and gave hope for stopping the spiral of violence in the country. Taking into account social attitudes, statements of government members and opposition leaders, as well as the course of the Tanquetazo² in June, the

¹ This intention was clearly articulated in the provisions of the “Declaration of Principles of the Chilean Government” of 11 March 1974, in which the junta announced that its power would not be temporary as the reconstruction of the state requires long-term actions (See: *Declaración de principios del gobierno de Chile. Santiago, 11 marzo de 1974*, 1974).

² *El Tancazo* or *El Tanquetazo* – the name used to refer to the failed coup attempt that took place on 29 June 1973. The aim of the putsch was to capture the presidential palace, arrest President Allende and force him to resign. The rebellion was incited by the 2nd tank regiment in Santiago led by lieutenant colonel Roberto Souper, and its main part was the storming of La Moneda palace by tanks – hence

authors of the Amnesty International report of 1974 wrote: «It could be expected that the military intervention would involve some degree of violence» What was hard to predict, however, was the fact that violence would become institutionalised and that the junta, instead of handing power to constitutional organs, would keep it for the following 17 years. The coup froze social relations and left Chileans with deep trauma. The society became divided into the supporters of the left-wing government, including students, factory workers, peasants and people living in poor districts, on one side, and the representatives of the middle class, who displayed flags and drank champagne on the day of the coup, on the other.” (2005, p. 38)

Beginning from the day of the putsch, Augusto Pinochet focused on increasing the scope of his power and on its institutionalisation. As early as on 11 September, he assumed the leadership of the junta, which was established as a collegial body. Initially, it was planned that this function would be fulfilled by all its members, but a few months after the coup – in June 1974 (under decree no. 527 adopting the Statute of the Government Junta) – Pinochet became the President of the Government Junta of Chile, governing the nation as the “Supreme Chief of the Nation.” Consequently, this document ruled out rotary chairmanship in the junta. Thus, Augusto Pinochet took up the most important position in the country with the absolute executive power. His ambitions were higher, though. On 17 December 1974, he was proclaimed the President of the Republic of Chile (*Aprueba Estatuto de la Junta de Gobierno*, 1974; Chinchón Álvarez, 2007, p. 408; Komosa, 2005, p. 42; see also: Adams, 2010, p. 228; Muñoz, 2008, pp. 60-80; Wirshing, 2009, pp. 19-20). Owing to this, as well as to the junta’s earlier decisions (such as the dissolution of the Congress and of the Constitutional Tribunal, suspending party activities, banning groups, associations and movements appealing to Marxism or operating in contradiction to the principles laid down in decree no. 1 of 11 September 1973, and granting the Government Junta the right to amend the Chilean constitution), Pinochet obtained almost unlimited power in the state (see: *Declara disueltos los partidos...*, 1973; *Declara en receso todos los partidos...*, 1973; *Dicta normas sobre el ejercicio del Poder Constituyente*, 1974; *Disuelve el Congreso Nacional*, 1973; Valencia Avaria, 1986, pp. 269-270).

the name of the event, *el tanque* means “a tank” in Spanish) (For more details see: Corvalán Luis, 2003, pp. 201-204; Magasich Airola, 2008, pp. 424-428).



Illustration 1. The entrance to Londres 38 (Santiago de Chile). The author of the photograph: Anna Ratke-Majewska

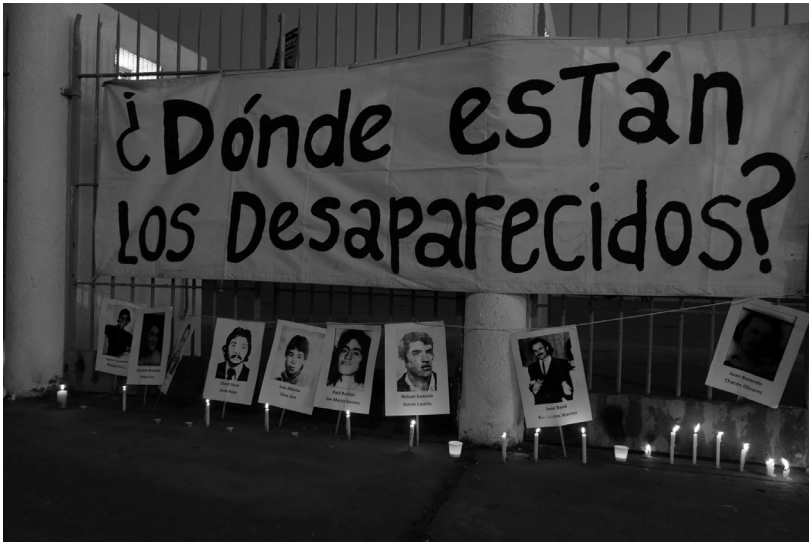


Illustration 4. The National Stadium (*Estadio Nacional*) on the 42nd anniversary of the coup d'état. Santiago de Chile, 11 September 2015. The author of the photograph: Anna Ratke-Majewska

What was another aspect of the process of gaining power in Chile by Augusto Pinochet was the physical elimination of the enemies of the new system and the consistent eradication of all threats to the general's dominance in the country. It was all done by way of terror spread by the political state apparatus obedient to him. The beginning was marked by the date of the coup d'état, after which mass arrests and executions followed. Repression affected not only the activists and supporters of left-wing groups (such as the Popular Unity or the Revolutionary Left Movement – *Movimiento de Izquierda Revolucionaria*, MIR), but also their families and other people suspected of having left-wing views.³ The number of detained people was constantly growing (it was estimated that as many as 50,000 people were arrested in the first days of the coup). As the existing jails did not have room for so many prisoners, they were first kept in

³ In order to justify mass arrests and tortures, in October 1973, the authorities published the *White Book*, which included a fabricated description of the alleged "Plan Z", according to which the Popular Unity hit squads were supposed to incite a national uprising to eliminate the opposition and conduct an autocoup, and, consequently, to establish the Marxist system in Chile (Magasich, 2010; see also: Secretaría General de Gobierno. Republica de Chile, 1973).

public buildings and facilities (including the National Stadium – *Estadio Nacional*, the Chile Stadium – *Estadio Chile*⁴). However, soon special centres adapted to tortures and arrests were established (secret DINA⁵ locations included, among others: the Villa Grimaldi complex, the „Venda Sexy” disco, and the buildings at José Domingo Cañas 1367 and Londres 38 in Santiago). Not only did the number of people killed rise, but also the number of detained and missing people, including women and children (Comité de Defensa de los Derechos del Pueblo, 1990; *Historia; Su historia – Londres 38*; Kornbluh, 2013, pp. 169-170; Komosa, 2005, pp. 40-73; *Recinto DINA – „José Domingo Cañas” N° 1367*).

The aim of Augusto Pinochet was not only to broaden the scope of his power and institutionalise it, but also to transform the political system of Chile permanently so that strong-arm government with principles promoted by the junta would become its inseparable element. On 9 July 1977, during the Chilean Youth Day in Chacarillas, the general delivered a speech, in which he outlined the future political system of the state. Chile was to become an authoritarian democracy, which would replace a degenerated, naïve and ineffectual liberal democracy. In his speech, Pinochet presented an outline of the process of giving power to citizens. He divided it into three stages: restoration (the army was to have full authority then, which would make it possible to conduct necessary changes in the state), transformation (at this stage, which would take four or five years, the army would share power with citizens; Chile would also have a legislature chosen by the military authorities then), and normality or consolidation (where power would be handed over to new constitutional authorities, with a reservation, however, that the military forces would guard new order and national security). Moreover, Augusto Pinochet announced that a new constitution would be adopted by the end of 1980. He kept this promise. On 11 September 1980, a constitutional referendum

⁴ In 2004, the stadium *Estadio Chile* changed its name to *Estadio Víctor Jara*, after the name of the Chilean bard, poet, theatrical director, singer, guitar player and political activist, who was killed in September 1973 in that place (Surdel, 2009).

⁵ DINA (*Dirección de Inteligencia Nacional*) – the National Intelligence Directorate – a specialised intelligence unit, which performed operations against the political opponents of Pinochet’s regime. It was the Chilean secret police entitled to detain individuals and conduct house searches without court warrant and to carry out secret operational activity. It was responsible for numerous violations of human rights, a number of murders, coups, detainments and tortures. In 1977, DINA was disbanded and replaced with a newly established National Information Centre (*Centro Nacional de Información*, CNI. (See: Kornbluh, 2013, pp. 165-181; Komosa, 2005, pp. 48-73; Spyra, 2013, pp. 545-552)).

was held in Chile. 67% of the voters voted for the new law, 30% were against, while the remaining votes were invalid. The new fundamental law entered into force on 11 March 1981. Under the newly adopted constitution, the system of protected and authoritarian democracy was established in Chile. It also introduced limited pluralism, excluding all parties connected with Marxist ideology from political life. Furthermore, it gave privileged status to the military forces, which, even after giving up power, were still entitled to control politicians and to guard the inviolability of the system they had built themselves. To this end, the fundamental law appointed a collegial body – the National Security Council (*Consejo de Seguridad Nacional*), which was composed of the president and commanders-in-chief of the army and police forces. The Council's task was to present opinions on issues concerning the security and foreign policy of the state to all organs of constitutional authority. The system was also to be guarded by senators appointed and chosen from among former commanders-in-chief of the military and police forces, judges of the Supreme Court, Controllers General of the Republic, university presidents and former ministers. What is more, the army was given large autonomy from the state authorities. The president was granted the right to appoint commanders-in-chief for a specific period, but only from among five generals or admirals who held the highest rank, with no possibility of removing them from post before the end of the term of office. The parliament, in turn, was deprived of influence on the military forces. The fundamental law also introduced a very time-consuming and complicated amendment procedure, thanks to which the inviolability of the system was protected. What was important, however, was the fact that it included provisions concerning the way power could be given up by the government junta. An eight-year period of transformation – which was to be ended with a plebiscite in 1988 – was established. It was expected that Augusto Pinochet would remain to be the president and the junta would still have legislative power. What is more, the authors of the constitution assumed that decrees limiting civil rights and freedoms adopted in Chile after 1973, such as those violating the right of assembly, political refugees' right to return to the country, the freedom of press, or the one granting the right to detain people without a court decision for three months, would remain to be a permanent part of the system (Spyra, 2013, pp. 524-525, 540-544; see also: *Constitutions of Selected...*, 2013).

The plebiscite mentioned in the constitution was held as it had been announced. Its results were affected by events and processes which took place in Chile in the 1980s. The factors that influenced them included the condition of the economy, the situation among the ranks of authority,

slightly broadened limits of civil liberties and changing social awareness. At the beginning of the 1980s, Chile plunged into a deep economic crisis. The deterioration of the living standard was at the same time a huge opportunity for the opposition, which was divided and exhausted with repression, having no precise political plans due to being banned for a long time. Although the new constitution allowed the existence of political parties, including those close to the opposition (with the exception of left-wing parties), it was the economic problems that finally spurred the society to act in order to introduce changes. Strikes, social unrest and manifestations made some representatives of the government elites think about the necessity of starting dialogue with the opposition (one of the main proponents of such an attitude was the minister of internal affairs Sergio Onofre Jarpa, who negotiated with opposition politicians for a few months – his activity, however, had no real political significance due to the lack of interest in those talks on the part of Pinochet and junta members). Despite political revival, the government camp was dominated by the opponents of concessions, who were convinced that only their way was right and would guarantee the strength and stability of the state and ensure permanent support for it (especially as the economic condition of Chile improved in the second half of the 1980s). It seemed that Pinochet not only controlled the situation, but he was also bound to succeed. Hence, no wonder that the results of the plebiscite of 5 October 1988 came as a complete surprise to government members and the society. Augusto Pinochet actually lost the poll (Schneider, 2013, pp.101-105; Spyra, 2013, pp. 599-622).

In the first half of the 1980s, the consolidating opposition defied the provisions of the constitution of the Republic, recognising it as an illegal act. In the second half of the same decade, it decided to abandon its efforts and focused on fighting Pinochet with the use of a tool he had created himself. Thus, on 2 February 1988, a united, democratic movement was established. It was called *Concertación de Partidos por el No* (which could be translated as: the Coalition of Parties for NO; the name referred to the answer to the question that was to be asked in the announced plebiscite: whether Augusto Pinochet should remain to hold the office of the president of the Republic up to 1997). The Coalition members were so persuasive that 54.7% of the voters replied “no” (with 43% of people saying “yes”), thus determining the direction of political changes in Chile (*Diálogos de Justicia y Democracia. N°1: El Plebiscito del 5 de octubre de 1988*, 1995; Instituto Nacional Demócrata para Asuntos Internacionales, 1989).

The political transition in Chile was initiated on the basis of the formula established by Pinochet. Many people believe that it began with the adoption of the constitution or with the first talks with opposition politicians. What actually gave rise to transformation, however, was the junta's failure in the plebiscite – it was then that the opposition gained a real chance to express its opinions. When did the political transition in Chile end? Some people indicate 11 March 1990, when the new president – Patricio Aylwin Azócar, who had won the election of 14 December 1989 – assumed the office. Many Chilean researchers, however, undermine the thesis that this date marked the end of the transition in Chile and emphasise that it was Aylwin himself who announced it was over. Opinions differ as to when exactly it happened. Some scholars quote the president's words from August 1991, when he said at a press conference that the country had already entered the stage of democracy. Others find Patricio Aylwin's another declaration more significant – the one he expressed in his speech in the Congress on 21 May 1992. He stressed again that Chile had already become a democratic state, although it still faced a lot of problems (Lazzara, 2007, p. 149; Loveman, Lira, 2000, p. 485; *Mensaje Presidencial del 21 de Mayo de 1992*, 1992; Otano, 2006, pp. 222-223; Velásquez, 2006, p. 204; Wilde, 1999, pp. 473-500).

The pre-transition identity

One of the main aims of the government junta in Chile after the coup d'état was to build a new political identity of the Chilean society. The authorities tried to accomplish it, firstly, by means of the state's interpretation of reality, including the presentation of the future and present day; secondly, through establishing the catalogue of goals that the society should pursue; and, thirdly, with the help of new legislation, which would determine both the shape of the state and its legal order, as well as citizens' rights and obligations that would become an inseparable part of the new identity. All those efforts were crowned by the adoption of the Constitution of the Republic of Chile in 1980. Its objective was to firmly establish the new political identity created by the junta, irrespective of personal changes at the helm of state authority (See: Marszałek-Kawa, Ratke-Majewska, Wawrzyński, 2014, pp. 156-168).

What was to become the foundation of the political identity of the Chilean society was the acceptance of the putsch as an act of heroic combat against evil, an expression of love for the home country, the day of liberation and a deed done by the hand of God (Pinochet, 1979). As the authorities wished to strengthen this image in social awareness, they held

grand celebrations of consecutive anniversaries of the coup in the authoritarian period. Augusto Pinochet was the central figure of those celebrations – perceived as a national hero, whose deeds and conduct began to assume the proportions of a myth. The general – depicted as a symbol of the state, and a defender of its existence and dignity – was at the same time made a great Chilean statesman, ranked equally with distinguished historic leaders and politicians in Chile, such as Bernardo O’Higgins or Diego Portales (See: Jara, 2011, p. 158; Joignant, 2007, pp. 31-63; Wilde, 2013, pp. 60-61).

The creation of Pinochet’s image was thus based on the indisputable concept that he was a liberator, who was fighting evil. That evil was Marxist ideology, the followers of which included any person with leftist views or in any way connected with the left-wing. Such an attitude to the issue of terror exempted the apparatus of repression – which got permission from the authorities to combat the enemies of the state – from moral responsibility for the crimes it had committed. Hence, Pinochet found the UN resolution condemning the constant violation of human rights in Chile (see: *Protection of human rights in Chile*, 1977) to be an act of hostility towards the Chilean state and a sign of weakness of the West when it came to fighting communism. Consequently, he presented himself as the mainstay of the battle against the Communist threat. Jarosław Spyra described this issue in the following words: „The difficulties that Chile went through in the sphere of international relations paradoxically contributed to the strengthening of Pinochet’s power. (...) The president took advantage of the foreign criticism of Chile to bring out nationalist sentiments among some of his compatriots, thus attracting them to the junta’s policy” (Spyra, 2013, s. 583).

The memory of the victims of the military regime was out of the public discourse at the time of its rule. It does not mean, however, that it was not cherished in the private sphere or expressed in an oblique way by artists.⁶ Although it was the individual memory, sustained by cultural and social initiatives, it became the memory of larger communities, feeling a bond with people with the same experiences and emotions, which could not be expressed openly and respected. It must be noted, here, that it was the efforts of human rights protection organisations in Chile that were a particularly important factor determining the pre-transition identity. Their activity, which lay in stark contrast to the rhetoric of the governing elites, influenced social expectations and awareness, which became one of the

⁶ We should mention here the works of such artists as Elías Adasme or Lotta Rosenfeld (See: Hinojosa, 2013; *Lotty Rosenfeld (Santiago, 1943)*).

driving forces of later changes. Among those organisations there were two that deserved special attention: the Cooperation Committee for Peace in Chile, existing in the years 1973-1975 (*Comité de Cooperación para la Paz en Chile*) and the Vicariate of Solidarity (*Vicaría de la Solidaridad*), active from 1976 to 1992 (*Organizaciones en defensa de los derechos humanos*; Richard, 2013, pp. 185-193; Stern, 2013).

It should be added that crucial elements shaping political identity during the declining years of Augusto Pinochet's regime appeared in 1988, shortly before the plebiscite. The opposition, which had gained access to mass media, had an opportunity to address issues ignored by the authorities – the memory of the tortured, murdered and missing after 1973. The media published accounts (not extensive, though) of cruel persecution and terror, while the election leaflets of Pinochet's opponents expressed opposition to repression and tortures. The emphasis on this aspect of Chile's past affected social awareness, making issues of memory a part of the political transition (Comas, 1988; *Plebiscito del 5 de octubre de 1988*).

The development of transition identity

The exercise of power by new political elites

The opposition's victory in the plebiscite meant the beginning of fundamental political changes in Chile. After years of the military regime, the new civil authorities – gathered around democratic institutions elected by voters – assumed power in the country. Moreover, they gained this opportunity thanks to the law created by the junta. The new political elites were thus legitimised both by the past – as they were the continuation of the civil authorities from before the army took over power – and by the decisions of the previous authorities, which enabled this discussion under the provisions of the fundamental law.

However, it did not change the fact that 43% of Chilean citizens had voted for Pinochet. It meant that after 15 years in power, the junta still had huge social support, which could not be neglected. Thus, any changes had to be the result of a compromise between the supporters and opponents of the general. The newly arisen democracy was still fragile, the army enjoyed enormous influence, while Pinochet himself stirred up the atmosphere of distrust to the civil authorities, insinuating in his comments that the new elites were burning with the thirst of revenge and may be aiming to destabilise the situation in the country.

In such circumstances, civilian politicians had to remain extremely cautious in all their moves. Their decisions had to be a trade-off between

the desire for radical changes and the fear of the army, which – once if felt its interests were threatened – could once again violate the democratic order. Therefore, what the *Concertación* saw as its primary objective after 1988 was to take over as much power as possible in order to prevent the democratisation process from being impeded and the junta from regaining the rule in the state. What was crucial for the accomplishment of these goals was – firstly – the cooperation within the framework of the Coalition (which, after the plebiscite, was transformed into the Coalition of Parties for Democracy – *Concentración de Partidos por la Democracia* – and announced it would have one common candidate in the presidential election), and, secondly, the formulation of the strategy of peaceful coexistence with the structures of the leaving military regime.

What constituted a huge test for the unstable balance was the issue of changes to the constitution. The *Concertación* put forward the reform proposal, demanding the removal of controversial provisions putting constraints on democracy. Although the negotiations were far from being smooth, they finally led to the introduction of a number of amendments. They were adopted in yet another plebiscite, which was held on 30 July 1989. 85.7% of the voters were for the revision of the fundamental law as proposed by the new authorities. The amendments concerned, among other things, abandoning the provision which limited political activity for ideological reasons (article 8 banned communist and socialist parties in Chile), simplifying the procedure of introducing changes in the constitution, increasing the size of the Senate, and changing the principles of voting bills. Moreover, the powers of the National Security Council became limited, and the term of office of the president was shortened to four years (Arceneaux, 2001, s. 103-107; *El plebiscito de 1989; Modifica la Constitución Política de la República de Chile*, 1989).

It was neither possible nor desirable to carry out radical changes in the sphere of national symbols and to completely reconstruct the landscape of memory at the turn of the 1980s and 1990s since the elites of the previous regime (still supported by a large part of the society!) were still present in the public and political life. What turned out to be an important element of change as far as symbols and spatial forms of commemoration were concerned was the appearance of Salvador Allende in social space. It served the purpose of the legitimisation of the new civil authorities, but it was also an act of reconciliation with the order rejected by the junta, emphasising the form of the political system this order represented rather than its ideological burden.



Illustration 5. General Secretary (Santiago de Chile) – Salvador Allende’s grave.
The author of the photograph: Anna Ratke-Majewska

In 1990, thanks to the support of President Patricio Aylwin Azócar’s government, the Salvador Allende Foundation (*Fundación Salvador Allende*) was established. It was created at the initiative of the late president’s family and its first task was to organise the official state funeral of the president, who, having committed suicide on the day of the coup d’état, was buried namelessly in Viña del Mar, in the grave of the Grove family he was related to. He lay there for the whole period of Pinochet’s rule. President Patricio Aylwin and Eduardo Frei Ruiz-Tagle

(the son of Eduardo Frei Montalva, the president of Chile from 1964 to 1970) took part in the funeral ceremony, which was held on 4 September 1990 at the General Cemetery in Santiago. Among the guests were representatives of various sides of the political scene, including members of left-wing groups, irrespective of the fact whether they supported the form of the ongoing political transition and the *Concentración*, or whether they were inclined to follow other solutions, often much more serious ones. It is thus evident that, despite the fact that the representatives of the military forces were absent, both the allies and opponents of Salvador Allende participated in the funeral. Therefore, the presence of people having such diverse views was a symbolic gesture of reconciliation, an expression of tribute to a democratic head of state and a man who died in the defence of his values (*El último adiós de Allende*, 2003; *Historia de la Fundación*; Spyra, 2013, pp. 626-627; Stasiński, 2011, pp. 9).

The presence of the representatives of the former regime in the public life

Not only was Augusto Pinochet surprised to lose in the plebiscite, but he also felt embittered. On the night of 5 October 1988, when the result of the referendum was already known to the junta, people surrounding the general felt uncertain on the one hand, but on the other hand, they were also ready to act in case he ordered troops to walk out of barracks. Pinochet accepted the results of the plebiscite, though. It did not mean, however, that he resigned himself to the loss and was willing to leave the public life. He was first of all protected by the constitution, which obliged the military forces to guard the institutions and legal order of the state even after handing over power to civilians. What is more, the number of his supporters confirmed that the representatives of the old regime may still play an important part in the country. Pinochet was aware of that and that is why he often emphasised his role as the guarantor of the lack of social conflicts which might result from too hasty steps in the democratisation process. In an interview from 1989, he said: „I could easily retire. I could be a perpetual senator... But I have people in the army, people, who may be humiliated. I know that when politicians get into trouble, they always set double standards; they usually say «We are not to be blamed. This calls for justice»”⁷ (Correa, Subercaseaux, 1989, p. 141). In this way, the general implied that the new authorities intended to take revenge on those who had supported the regime. Consequently, only

⁷ Translated from Spanish by the author.