

# Repression and Memory: Political Violence and Fiction on the 40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Military Coup in Chile<sup>1</sup>

*Memorias de la represión. Violencia política en la ficción televisiva a 40 años del Golpe de Estado en Chile*

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## Abstract

This article discusses the readings of three different audiences who watched Chilean TV fiction series produced in the context of 40 years of the coup d'état. Based upon the analysis of 24 interviews and 6 focus groups conducted on men and women from three different generations — who experienced the coup d'état; who grew up under the dictatorship; and who grew up under democracy-, we answer this research question: What memories of political violence do participants of these three generations make in their reception process of TV series about the Chilean recent past? The results indicate that the lived experience in relation to the dictatorship has a different impact on their readings about the political violence represented in each historical period of time.

**Keywords:** Television fiction, dictatorship, memory, reception.

## Resumen

Este artículo se centra en las lecturas que realizan tres generaciones de telespectadores de las series televisivas ficcionales emitidas en televisión abierta en el marco de la conmemoración de los 40 años del golpe de estado en Chile. A partir del análisis de 24 entrevistas y de 6 grupos focales realizados a hombres y mujeres de tres generaciones distintas -los que vivieron el golpe de Estado; los que crecieron en dictadura y los que crecieron en democracia-, nos preguntamos: ¿Qué memorias sobre la violencia política del pasado reciente de Chile construyen los telespectadores de estas tres generaciones a partir de sus lecturas de las series ficcionales producidas en el contexto de la conmemoración de los 40 años del golpe militar? Los resultados obtenidos señalan que la experiencia vivida en relación con la dictadura impacta diferenciadamente en sus lecturas acerca de la violencia política del periodo representado en las series ficcionales.

**Palabras clave:** Ficción televisiva, dictadura, memoria, recepción.

## 1. Introduction

Media, especially television, fulfill an important role not only as distributors of narrative proposals that organize social concepts, but also as providers of material used to build memories of recent past. The material they provide allows television audiences to situate themselves within their own history, take a stance on the past and develop critical judgment, among other phenomena. Despite the crisis—in particular the economic crisis—that television companies are going through, television still continues to be the most watched media, that generates the most conversation, and that massively distributes realistic information the quickest, and does so using images as the fundamental support material for their transmissions.

This is true of both non-fiction and fictional shows, principally in audiovisual productions depicting past eras. In these programs, the use of archival footage, period-accurate staging, spatial recreation and the use of characters similar to people from the period they are embodying are all elements that contribute to achieving a sense of reality.

This is precisely what we observed in 2013, the year commemorating the 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the military coup in Chile. On that occasion (unlike the commemorative event held on the 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary) in addition to shows on current affairs about the dictatorship broadcast on television<sup>2</sup>—reports, interview programs, special news reports—, there were also fictional series on the military regime, perspectives seen from those opposing Pinochet. We refer to the series that reported the largest audience ratings such as *Los Archivos del Cardenal* (TVN – National Television Channel), *Ecos del Desierto* (Chilevision – a private television station), *No, la serie*<sup>3</sup> (TVN) and a few of the seasons of *Los 80* (Canal 13). These programs consistently blended fiction and reality, putting forward social frameworks for interpreting the dictatorship and the consequences regarding the violation of human rights.

The storylines for these series are the following: *Los 80* (directed by Boris Quercia and Rodrigo Bazaes), running for seven seasons and accompan-

ing the Herreras, a middle-income family living in Santiago Chile whose ordinary lives take place during the eponymous decade; *Los Archivos del Cardenal* (directed by Nicolas Acuña and Juan Ignacio Sabatini) over its two seasons tells the story of the lawyer Ramon Sarrmiento and the social worker Laura Pedregal, both working for the Vicary of Solidarity, an organization founded by the Cardinal Raul Silva Henríquez and whose mission was to provide counseling for the families of victims in the defense of human rights during the Chilean military dictatorship; *Ecos del Desierto* (directed by Andrés Wood), a four-part mini-series telling the story of the lawyer Carmen Hertz and her husband, a missing detainee disappeared by the retinue of General Arellano; and, lastly, *No, la serie*, another four-part miniseries that goes behind the scenes of the well-known production of the *No* campaign that ended with the referendum of 1988, seen from the perspective of the publicist René Saavedra.

The representation of violence in these television series is approached from the perspective of how they are received. This is to say that all the events and incidents depicted in the series are read from the perspective of the television viewers' own experience and knowledge; they are confronted with information of varying nature and informed by the discussions on other media platforms and communication media.

On this note, we must point out that context is also a factor to be taken into consideration especially when dealing with reception studies, given that it contributes toward creating a social climate or *climate of the era* (Jelin, 2001). That climate has an effect on the television viewers' reading or interpretation of the material. The context around the reception of these series was marked by unrest and discontent manifest in society at large, and in students in particular<sup>4</sup>. Sebastian Piñera's conservative government was also approaching the end of his first four-year term and in the upcoming elections two candidates would face off, Michelle Bachelet and Evelyn Matthei<sup>5</sup>, both daughters of generals and in positions opposing each other – one in favor and the other against the military regime.

It is this set of references—media, contextual, of personal experience, prior knowledge, etc.— that feeds memory; it is a fundamentally social cultural construct (Landsberg, 2004). Therefore, indivi-

dual memory has a relation to one or more collective memories born within a generational social framework of interpretation (Halbwachs, 2004). In other words, in the case of television viewers watching these series, they are people of similar age that share the same set of experiences (Leccardi & Feixa, 2011) that are part of, in a broader sense of the term, an “imagined community” (Anderson, 1993).

In this study we considered three adult generations of television viewers watching these series, separating them according to life-experience related to the dictatorship in order to ask and answer the following question: What memories of politically motivated violence in Chile’s recent past do these television viewers create from their own reading of the series in the context of the 40<sup>th</sup> commemorative anniversary of the military coup?

This study is intended to support other research into memory, initially focused on overcoming trauma where the most important element is testimony (Feid, 2010). The study then moved on to a second phase to work on ritual and commemoration —memorials— (Mombello, 2014), and another more contemporary trend involving the study of a third generation of people —the grandchildren of those that experienced the dictatorship firsthand— (Fernandez, 2007; Kaufman, 2007) and the protagonist role of visual representation (Sarlo, 2005) in the mediatization of these experiences (Landsberg, 2004; Baer, 2006; Didi-Huberman, 2004). In the latter, in Chile there have been a few studies on televised fiction (Bossay, 2014; Chamorro, 2014; Cárdenas, 2012; Castillo, Simelio & Ruiz, 2012), but there are very few that have dealt with audiences (Mateos-Pérez & Ochoa, 2019) which is the central research subject in this study.

## 2. Theoretical Framework

Television, as a media device, stemming from significant organization of diverse material (linguistic, sound, iconic among others), builds social discourse (programs) of “exchange between two instances, one of enunciation and the other of reception, where meaning depends on the intentionality established between the two” (Charaudeau, 1997,

p.15). This discourse, understood as spatial-temporal configurations of meaning (Verón, 1988) and independent of the platform they are broadcast on, are organized into a programming lineup (schedule) that attempts to relate to the every-day activities of their audiences.

The relationship between the instance of production and the television viewers is not direct, requiring that it operate on the basis of a tacit agreement or “promise of meaning” which is built and maintained/modified over time depending on use. This tacit agreement is related to the genre of audio-visual discourse which could be considered a tool to building an interpretive sense of belonging in documented television records (Charaudeau, 1997). This is to say, a referential framework that has been established over time and through usage (Soulages, 2005) that has its own range of conventions and practices affecting their production and their consumption (Mittel, 2004).

The study under review here is contained within the framework of audience studies developed in Latin America beginning in the 1990s —research linking English cultural studies in critical theory (Focás, 2014)— which leads us to understand that the reception of televised products is not only related to social class in television viewers (Grossberg, 2009) and their cultural resources — which in countries of the degree of inequality present Chile is also associated with level of education (Contreras & Macías, 2002) — or the genre and their specific needs (Wolton, 2001), it also relates to the contextual and political characteristics in which these processes are inserted (Antezana & Cabalin, 2016).

So, according to the previous, reception is an audience-led process when interacting with the television, that interaction consisting in not just an observance of what is being broadcast, but also the dialogue between proposals and knowledge, emotional imprint and the experiences of each television viewer (Antezana, 2015) forming part of an interpretive community. These communities are understood as “social subjects united in a sphere of common meaning” (Focás, 2014, p.35).

The television viewer, as indicated in the results of television surveys implemented in Chile, is an active subject that in essence looks for programs that provide a distraction and entertain (Santander,

2014). This is effectively one of the aspects of local fictional productions about the recent past being put forward: agile story-, with well-developed characters, inserted in a context and setting that recreates the every-day spaces in which the television viewers themselves move in.

At the level of audience analysis, we opted to situate ourselves on the very edge of where history and communication media dialogue and complement each other, and where memory holds a central position. The reading of these televised fictional works intersects with each television viewer's own prior record and knowledge of the recent past.

Audiovisual fiction, among the varying ways of organizing meaningful materiality, can be configured to constitute the source of a story. More than just dates, places and concretely identifiable names, they also present other situations that can be easily generalized. The previous makes it possible to engage with the receiving audience, who identify and empathize with the story. In the case of the fiction considered in this study, we can sustain that these productions also operate as artefacts of memory that "encapsulate complex historical processes" (Feld, 2004, p.75) and serve in a mediating role in the measure that they "structure, organize and reorganize how the audience understands that reality. Mediatization is the dynamic in which meaning is built within the communication process" (Tufté, 2007, p.90).

In fiction different events are organized into a story in accordance with a framework for specific interpretation; they have a beginning and an end that facilitate understanding of a particular period of history (Antezana & Mateos-Pérez, 2017). As a result, not all the stories nor images of a determined event are part of the media proposals presented here. This leads to different visions of the dictatorship coming into conflict and dispute, making it one of the most controversial aspects of the 40<sup>th</sup> commemoration of the coup d'état of 1973. What stories are told, from what perspective, and what images metonymically distill the meaning of this period in history is part of the dispute over the remembrance of said history.

The problem arises when choosing which facts, and, their respective interpretation when attempting to rationalize and provide plausible justifica-

tion that could be identified with being for the greater good. One cannot forget that social "memory" is not only linked to "factual objectivity", rather they "resonate in the intense emotional response associated with having actually experienced these facts... in their fears and overriding anxiety... in the impossibility of putting the experience in words, in the vacuum of what was lost, in impossible mourning" (Lira, 2020, p. 13). Because it is about versions of the past, they are clearly not singular or unique, although some may consolidate to become hegemonic or emblematic (Stern, 2009) for a particular part of history

Let us talk of "memories" in plural, given that we are referring to social memory and not what is remembered by an individual. In fact, there can be many versions of coexisting collective memories that relate to each other in different ways, either complementing each other or in direct opposition. That explains the lack of homogeneity in social memory, as there can be several interpretations of a single event, and it's these memories that vie for predominance in the series studied herein, especially considering they are narratively built from the perspective of the victims and those opposed to the military regime.

Memories are built from the present and therefore, interpretatively speaking, will vary over time according to new experience, new knowledge and contexts in which they are received. Today matters revolving around the violation of human rights committed during the dictatorship are no longer questioned. In fact, public discussion has transferred to questioning the (il)legitimacy of the coup d'état, and exactly how much should be remembered. It is precisely the questioning by the participants of this study that shows that the violence of the coup "had been on such a massive, generalized scale that it was clearly a systematic policy of the military regime, and not due to the excesses of dishonest officers or sadistic subordinates" (Stern & Winn, 2014, pp. 240 – 241).

Regarding the immediate past depicted in the stories of these series, one should remember that the coup d'état of 1973 abruptly closed a chapter in Chilean history, and marked the beginning of a new period in the hands of the dictatorship. The state of martial law declared by the perpetrators of the coup and its later periodic reinstatement every

six months for the following years, the intervention and in some cases closure of universities and communication media, the prohibition of political function, among other measures that restricted the rights and freedom of Chilean citizens, initiated a period of “extreme and violent repression against sectors of Chilean society considered *subversive*” (Groppo, 2016, p.31).

When referring to the “dictatorship” we are not referring to the dominion of a social class over another, but the exercise of power by a form of government considered “unconstitutional in two senses: one that a) infringes on constitutional order in the moment of taking power and b) is ruled by a dictator exercising power unchecked by discipline nor curtailed by constitutional limits” (Ansaldi & Giordano, 2012, p.411). The greatest achievement of power is order, or rather a sense of security in the offer of order (Lechner, 2006), which instills certainty in what can be done and what should be done.

In history, as a rule “power of any nature has always been required to oblige, persuade, form determined beliefs and states of opinion, guide and mold behavior toward a specific purpose” (Correa, 2011, p.38). It is in this fashion that power can use violence as a means to an end and, at a political level, exercise it legitimately in so far as the effects it produces are within the legal and constitutional framework, or illegitimately in a manner both disproportionate and unforeseeable; its influence is a determinant for the basis of government power and is used in advance to systematically truncate and paralyze all potential opposition.

This was the type of violence used in the dictatorship: a use of coercive force and control over real or potential opposers to weaken their resistance to the will of the authorities, and in so doing establish specific social, political and cultural order. This type of action is also defined as repression, a “set of mechanisms directed at controlling and penalizing “deviant” behavior that splits from ideological, political, social and moral order” (Gonzalez, 2006, p. 554) and is closer to the notion of political violence, understood as a particular form of violence that seeks to quickly impose and manage the actions of a society with the purpose of establishing, maintaining or modifying a certain type of social order (Bonnassiolle, 2015; Jorquera-Álvarez &, 2018).

Galtung distinguishes three forms of violence: direct (physical or psychological), cultural (symbolic) and structural (which refers to the fragmented and unequal distribution among social groups in terms of their basic survival needs, wellbeing, representation and freedom) (Sanchez, 2018). Among the latter we can include experiencing fear, which is not just the response to a simple external threat but also the modeling of attitudes to achieve social conformity, which one can equate to the sense of insecurity felt at the time (including financial insecurity) and also recognized as an invisible form of violence (López, 2018).

### 3. Methodology

Methodologically, we used a strategy that incorporated, at different levels, two of the epistemological pillars of qualitative analysis: social interpretivism and constructivism (Schwandt, 2000). Research design was developing and sequential (Greene, 2007), which is to say that the phases of research took place one after the other with each successive stage feeding the next.

Twenty-four interviews were used to develop six focus groups. Both resources were particularly appropriate for research on reception and memory given that, just as in the case of televised serial fiction, basic structure is built on narrative, in other words, centered on what is created to be told (Martín-Barbero, 1991). In the case of the focus groups these “facilitate the exploration of collective memory and shared reserves of knowledge that may seem trivial and of little import to the individual” (Kamberelis & Dimitriadis, 2015, p. 523).

Intentional sampling considered television viewers as all those that had seen at least one or more of the series mentioned in this study, as well as other aspects such as gender, generation and socio-economic situation<sup>6</sup>. We considered a generation a group of television viewers that shared an age-range and life experience, and that registered a specific viewer rating<sup>7</sup> for the series: (1) the generation that experienced the coup d'état first-hand (which for the field work in 2016 was between 50 and 64 years old with viewer ratings of 16.5 points), who for the purposes of this study are called the

first generation; (2) those that grew up during the dictatorship (which in 2017 was aged between 35 and 49 years old with viewer ratings of 22.6 points), dubbed the second generation, and (3) those that grew up in a democratic society (which in 2018 was aged between 18 and 24 years old with viewer ratings of 12.9 points), referred to in this study as the third generation.

We developed a dialogic form of interpretative interview consisting in a semi-structured conversation designed to uncover the interview subjects' perceptions, discourse, emotion and experiences (Denzin, 2001). The first part of the interview was focused on collecting the interviewee's memories of the event without the use of visual references or prompts other than those recorded at the start of the session (channels, dates programs were broadcasted). The data looked for in these questions were: conditions under which the series or miniseries were watched, their respective memories of each program, the favorite or least preferred characters and the reasons for their preferences. In the second stage of the interview, the interviewees were shown a synopsis of the series they stated they saw to afterward generate a conversation on the historical/political situation of the country depicted in the material, paying special emphasis to: their own personal and family situation at the time and how they identified with the fictional proposal, the 'salient' events in each series/miniseries and the emotions triggered by said productions.

The results of the interviews revealed that when the subjects are asked to remember the series with no audiovisual references, they tend to confuse them, mix them up or mention the previous despite the differences in stories, characters and plotlines. When asked to talk about the recent past, the narrative tends to become an amalgamated version put together using different material to form one single story. It is a puzzle, so to speak, made up of pieces from many different puzzles, where the experience of the person telling the story is first and foremost. This is also true when conversing about the violence of the period.

For the focus groups we used a heterogeneous sample, assuming the discussion would be controversial, of contrasting opinions and in general create tension. There were two focus groups for

each generation, one consisting of men, and the other of women. In both cases participants were from different socio-economic backgrounds. The use of focus groups was deemed necessary to validate the results of the interviews and the building of generational iconographic repertoires. The results of these focus groups ratify and reinforce the information obtained from the interviews.

Political violence was not originally an aspect considered a priori in the design of the experimental instruments used in the study. The category was later added as it emerged in the analysis. Once the interviews and focus groups were completed, the transcripts of the interviews and dialogue from the focus groups underwent thematic analysis. Thematic analysis consists in "identifying, analyzing and reporting patterns (themes) within the data" (Braud & Clarke, 2006, p. 79). There was no theory guiding the analysis by establishing predefined categories. On the contrary, we applied an inductive taxonomic classification, in other words, a system in which to identify data according to emerging categories (Sautu, 2004). This method made it possible to identify and set the most relevant central themes – recurring concepts or groups of ideas that characterize the interviewee's experiences (Bradley, Curry & Devers, 2007). These experiences were then organized into six categories for analysis: the context of reception, esthetic appreciation, referential content, violence and images.

In this study we will cover the results linked to violence, both in general and by generation, with additional categories for direct or structural, and invisible violence. The data used herein will alternate indistinctively between the information taken from the interviews and from the focus groups as the results reflect little difference within each generation; nor will we make any distinction between series except in the few cases where the differences are highlighted by the sample subjects.

#### 4. Analysis

Each generation's reading of the fictional proposals is, in large measure, linked to the audiovisual format of each series/miniseries. In this sense, format does not refer to a specific program but



rather the structured idea driving a project, incorporating management and how it adapts to the culture in the markets it is broadcast in; the previous therefore makes it a commercial proposal (Labrador & Rebeil, 2013). In the case of fictional series, the format determines the narrative structure and way in which history is retold. This conditions what can be depicted in the series as it must respond to a set of requirements inherent to a specific subgenre. The subgenre will necessitate certain elements, favoring them over others and consequently making them much more memorable to the television viewer.

In the case of representing violence, in response to the needs of a commercial proposal and given these series are broadcast to a wider audience, scenes are not as raw, horrifying or as true to history. The violence and horror are toned down and simplified, and melodrama is an integral part of the narrative plot; meaning the story will generally revolve around dramatic climaxes that set the protagonists against the antagonists. The series appeal to sentimentality and emotion, they simplify characters and given that all the series used in this study are built on the perspectives of those opposing the dictatorship, the good guys are those opposing, and the bad guys are those in favor. The villain is punished and the hero rewarded who, after navigating many obstacles, in the end re-establishes order to what it was prior to the disruption.

Characteristics of this type in audiovisual storytelling are usually read in a limited number of ways common to most people. In other words, all the generations of television viewers in this study tend to remember the most dramatic scenes (because of content, staging, shot scale distribution, scoring), many of them related to direct physical violence. For example, they all remember scenes depicting firing squads/executions, torture and repressive measures taken during protests.

Television viewers also perceive structural violence in the series —despite being less evident— in this case related to aspects of violence that in one way or another affect living conditions. For example, many remember the economic crisis of the period and how it affected their daily lives. The first two generations remember periods of scarcity and deprivation, the first have painful memories, the second tend to recreate those conditions anecdota-

ly, remembering them as a time far back in their memories. For the third generation it is contextual data, striking in the sense that it has never typically been part of their own lives.

Invisible or indirect violence is usually perceived as fear, and considered a factor that affects daily living. In the first generation, fear governed what they told their respective children out of a need to protect them; in the second, it's part of the medium they grew up in, generally associated with public spaces and directed at the political classes; and for the third, a sensation they don't identify in their own experiences.

In addition to the differences in perception we have already attributed to each generation, we would include other specific characteristics for each in regards to violence and creating memories.

The first generation, having lived through the military coup and the dictatorship, confront their own individual memories when compared to the audiovisual retelling presented in the series. Direct and invisible violence committed by the State during the dictatorship is recognized as part of what actually happened in Chile; for this generation of viewers the series visually depict actual events and legitimize their own memories of the period. In terms of what is understood today about that period in Chilean history, interpretations indicate that the political violence exacted by the military regime had a high cost in lives and suffering, and that, compared to the results (what is perceived as an imperfect democracy), wasn't worth it. Memory building relies more on self-perception as influenced by the experiences they went through.

The second generation, viewers that grew up during the dictatorship, find explanations in the series they watch, explanations that provide context to their own fragmented memories and experiences of the time. For them, the violence depicted in the series is particularly harsh; although they were aware of what was happening, they had never witnessed it first hand, and when presenting these scenes within the framework of fictional stories and specific characters, viewers of this generation were able to more easily empathize with the pain and suffering of the victims. Some of them could even associate these experiences with others closer to them. Viewers consider the perceived repression

of the time period as a strategy to engender fear, shining a spotlight on painful situations that are better avoided, avoided by confining oneself to private quarters; an attitude of expecting nothing from the state, and dealing with one's own problems individually. They feel they need to take precautions to not dredge up violent situations, where silence, and conformity are part and parcel. Today, living in a democracy, a feeling of defenselessness and insecurity are still present, although now experienced in a new set of "fears". Memory construction is associated with a search for answers that helps them to find their place in history within a greater interpretive framework.

The third generation, viewers that grew up in today's democracy, see other processes during that period that seem to be repeating themselves today. The violence of the dictatorship provides the parameters with which they establish limits, a measuring stick against which they can compare and understand what they are currently going through (linked with mass protests and new political demands) and the associated risks. Despite the previous there is an understanding that current contexts will not reach the magnitude of violence seen in fictional television series. Over-exposure to violent imagery on many varying screens on a daily basis makes the violence seen in the series nothing particularly impactful, making them less fearful when confronting it. The latter due to a greater sense of safety in the spaces they inhabit, because of their age, and because they are more aware of their own rights. However, the series also depict other forms of violence such as exile, which these viewers find even harsher than explicit acts of violence. This is perhaps due to their reading and interpretation being influenced by the life stages they are going through, and the current climate in which civil liberties are of great value. Memory construction is based on the links and explanations they can make/glean from what they experience today, and their own personal relationships to past events.

As we can appreciate from the analysis, the difference between how each generation reads these situations doesn't so much lie in the type of violence perceived, but rather in how they interpret it; the meaning they attribute to it, in other words, the framework of reference they use to understand these events. These references are to a de-

gree determined by the experiences (knowledge, life and depiction in communication media) of each generation. The differences between generations is in how they "read" scenes of violence committed by agents of the dictatorship, how they interpret them and the lessons they extrapolate from them and relate to their own lives. In other words, the violence they perceive acquires meaning in accordance with collective, generational interpretive frameworks.

Gender differences are evident in the way their histories are told more than the subjects they address. Women tend to remember in greater detail and recreate those memories from an emotional appreciation of events, while men tend to be more descriptive and rational. In none of the readings did we perceive any denial of the state-sponsored violence of the time, which could be associated with public debate which has reaffirmed and much argued the case in more recent periods, making it difficult to find statements following alternative lines of thought.

The results prove that fictional series about the recent past effectively operate as artefacts for memory in so long as different generations of television viewers perceive them as plausible and realistic versions of the past. Televised fiction operates as a stimulant that triggers memories (in the case of the two generations that actually experienced the dictatorship), and as an entertaining way to reinforce the knowledge of the dictatorship gained from other instances, and to garner empathy for the characters in these stories and the situations depicted in the series (the younger generation that has learnt from experiences transmitted down to them).

## 5. Conclusions

The state-sponsored political violence committed during the dictatorship, later recreated in series broadcast on free-to-air commemorating the 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the military coup, is of particular interest to Chilean viewers; due to how violence is depicted in scenes that concentrate narrative tension affecting the main protagonists or closely related supporting cast. All those that participated



in the study, from all three generations, remember the direct violence shown in the series; murder, execution, torture, kidnapping, and oppression, despite there being no direct questions about it in our survey. This is due to: the manner in which narrative structures are built (where peaks of dramatic interest are associated with violence); its central importance to the story; and the social climate of the time (commemorative context) in which the series were broadcast (where different stories from the period were distributed in different formats).

The first and second generation remember the violence because they lived through it (although in two different stages of life: as children and youths) affecting them differently; memories created at a younger age inflate the impact on their day-to-day lives, while the older generation can process it and understand it in a more rational and conscious manner. The same is true for feelings of fear, perceived as indirect or invisible violence, which is also confronted in different ways as indicated earlier.

Structural violence is linked to the socioeconomic circumstances of the period. Every generation considers poverty a threat to their lives, although the intensity is not the same. The first generation reminisces with anguish; the second considers it more anecdotal, while the third finds it rare, something that captures their attention, but not something they see on the horizon.

How television viewers react to violence is conditioned by their current life stages, and how they experienced the coup d'état. The first generation is capable of rationalizing and analyzing the violence committed during the military coup from their own perspective which only serves to reinforce prior interpretation; the second generation amplifies the violence and has a highly emotional reaction which can lead to them avoiding scenes that may still cause them pain; and the third generation, distanced from the scenes of violence depicted in the television series, have a more balanced and weighted understanding of it, taking into consideration a greater number of versions and aspects inherent to that past. The transgression on human rights during the social uprising of 2019 in Chile will no doubt constitute new material, feeding and modifying how they

interpret the past, but that will have to be left to future studies.

In terms of format, the fictional proposals considered in this study effectively simplify and stereotype historical representation of recent past. "History" is sacrificed to make it more functional for the audiovisual narrative, therefore series cannot replace history, but, mainly taking into consideration generations with experiences further away from the events depicted in the series, fiction can be a vehicle that: (1) enables inter-generational dialogue (for as long as there are people who actually experienced the violence); (2) public debate and updating of frameworks for interpretation of the facts (taking place in commemorative contexts); (3) an emotional response that engenders empathy for suffering and pain; and, (4) understanding political violence as a form of control exercised by a State power, and everything that it entails.

These aspects by no means guarantee that democracy is indeed the preferred political organization, but it allows them to install images and memories of repression at massive scales which are, thankfully, associated with the dictatorship and understood as "negative" to peaceful coexistence, freedom and human rights.

## Notes

1. This article presents the final results of the research project "Images of Memory: Generational Interpretation of Fictional Television Series on Chile's Recent Past", Regular Fondecyt N°1160050 (2016 – 2020).
2. Fourteen series of this type were shown on broadcast television in commemoration of the 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the coup.
3. *No* initially premiered as a film and, thanks to financing by the National Television Council (Consejo Nacional de Televisión), was later converted into a miniseries and aired on broadcast television.
4. Since 2006 and, with greater intensity in 2011, protests broke out against the deterioration of public education cause in part by the economic model es-

- established during the dictatorship, and later compounded by the following democratic governments during the period known as the “transition to democracy”.
5. Evelyn Matthei Fornet, candidate for the conservative coalition Pacto Alianza, daughter of Air Force General Fernando Matthei a member of the Military Council between 1978 and 1990, and Michele Bachelet Jeria, candidate for the center left coalition Nueva Mayoría, daughter of Air Force General Alberto Bachelet, member of the Unidad Popular government and arrested in 1973, where he later died in prison.
  6. We took into consideration four categories. ABC1 (2,500USD income or more per home, per month); C2 (monthly income between 1,000 and 2,000USD); C3 (homes with monthly income between 600 and 800USD); and DE (Homes with income under 500 USD a month).
  7. People Meter, the viewer rating system used in Chile, allows for a minute-by-minute, individual-to-individual audience analysis.

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- How to cite this article:

**Antezana, L & Cabalin, C.** (2020). Repression and Memory: Political Violence and Fiction on the 40th Anniversary of the Military Coup in Chile. *Comunicación y Medios*, (41), 82-94, doi: 10.5354/0719-1529.2020.55927