

Collective Memory and Democratic Mobilization: Insights from Chile's Constitutional Revolution (2019-2023)

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Abstract

This article investigates the enduring impact of historical-political tragedies on current political behavior, focusing on Chile's "Estallido Social" protests (2019-2020) and the Constituent Plebiscite (2020-2023). Utilizing social media data to analyze political memory, the study contends that protests serve as a strategic engagement tool in municipalities with vivid recollections of past violence, such as Chile's era of institutional violence under Pinochet. LS analyses indicate that Chilean municipalities with pre-1970 military bases experienced heightened protest activity but showed reduced involvement in constitutional voting, without a clear lean towards any political coalition. The 2SLS estimations link this phenomenon to the long-term effects of political victimization during Pinochet's regime and the social media remembrance on the 1973 coup violence. The evidence suggests that while collective memories on political violence may encourage active protest participation, it can also weaken the relationship between

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voters and political elites, influencing voting behavior.

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1. Introduction

Ay policía que vida elegiste vos /
verduguear a la gente es tu
vocación / matar a la gente pobre
es tu profesión / y así brindarle a
los ricos la protección / ya vas a
ver / las balas que vos tiraste van
a volver.

Chilean Protest song

Unknown composer, inspired by

Dany Lescano y su Flor de Piedra

Does collective memory in democracies influence whether people make demands in the streets or through the voting booth? How can we assess such memory intensity? In this paper, I test empirical mechanisms similar to theoretical contributions such as Ticchi et al. (2013) and Acemoglu and Jackson
5 (2015) to understand how the popular remembrance of historical events can affect present political engagement and accountability. I use data on social media remembrance as a demand-side measure to assess the impact of collective memories of historical state violence in Chile. Chile is a suitable case to test
10 these impacts, as it has experienced extreme political repression in the past and recent social unrest: between 1973 and 1989, the country was ruled by a violent military regime that victimized almost 40,000 people; it underwent a process of democratization in 1988, but retained some institutional features from the dictatorship, such as the police organization and the core of the 1980 Consti-
15 tution; and its people have participated in one of the largest waves of protests

in the Global South according to the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace (Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 2021), which pressured the right-wing president Sebastian Piñera and the Chilean national congress to initiate a new constituent process.

20 This investigation is indebted to a long discussion on historical persistence on politics and economics (see Cirone and Pepinsky (2022) for a comprehensive review). Despite the challenges in empirically assessing the measure in a direct manner, the growing literature on the political economy of development is increasingly focusing on collective memory as a significant variable in explaining
25 political engagement. This approach combines theories of political emotions and institutional persistence. Collective memory is a concept traditionally rooted in sociology, introduced by Maurice Halbwachs. It refers to the body of information and values shared by a social group about events that are remembered by their members. Unlike personal memory that fades away when the individ-
30 uals who experienced it die, in historical-collective memory, these past events are remembered directly by those who lived through them or indirectly through documents, oral traditions, and ceremonies. In this case, collective memory becomes a social institution that is passed down through generations (Halbwachs, 2020)

35 Although there have been efforts to explore the persistence of memory within victims' families (Nikolova et al., 2022; Bautista, 2016, 2013), as well as the 'supply-side' sources of memories, such as public monuments (Ochsner and Roessel, 2017), the literature on the persistence of political behavior can benefit from the addition of a collective, 'consumer-side' indicator. This indicator would mea-
40 sure the extent to which the general populace indeed continues to remember a historical political event. Such an indicator could provide quantitative evidence on whether the public still comprehends the underlying reasons behind the values they perpetuate.

Memories can drive sentiments towards politics. A general sentiment of
45 unfair treatment by governments (Passarelli and Tabellini, 2017) and the relative deprivation of not achieving expected social goals (Gurr, 2015) can lead to

social unrest. However, these emotions can be sparked by current policies and can interact with the persistence of past institutional features. Past historical events can have an impact on present social practices. For example, previous
50 instances of racial violence can diminish contemporary electoral engagement (Williams, 2021) and foster increased social mistrust (Nunn and Wantchekon, 2011). Similar findings have been observed regarding the level of surveillance and repression during past authoritarian regimes (Nikolova et al., 2022; Lichter et al., 2021). Other effects of past political repression is maintenance of political
55 dynasty and persistent higher levels of voting on the opposition left (Boucher, 2023).

Besides, a noticeable topic in political behavior is the interaction on the decision of voting and protesting. Universal suffrage mechanisms are a key feature of democratic societies. Elections are a means for politicians to be held
60 accountable to the people. Since the seminal work of Meltzer and Richard (Meltzer and Richard, 1981), literature on the economics of democracy has emphasized the incentives that elections give politicians to redistribute income to the poor. For example, making voting technologies more accessible can make politicians more likely to invest in public healthcare (Fujiwara, 2015). However,
65 freedom of association, speech, and other individual rights are also important for accountability, as they allow people to denounce irregularities and hold public officials accountable to social demands (O'Donnell, 1998).

Protest can also be a powerful way to assert civil, political, and economic rights. Traditional literature on the economics and politics of social unrest
70 suggests that the fear of revolutions motivates elites to grant these rights to the people (Acemoglu and Robinson, 2000). However, the incentives for political leaders are stronger when a significant proportion of moderate activists join the protests (Lohmann, 1993). The emotions expressed in protests can have electoral repercussions, but politicians' responses also depend on the noisiness
75 of social demands (Arruda et al., 2021).

To summarize, elections are a way for politicians to be held accountable to the people. However, the recognition of civil, political, and economic rights can

also be influenced by an engaged society outside of elections. The use of freedom of association and speech can allow collective social organizations to form, leading to diagonal accountability. Therefore, we have two types of accountability with different languages from the people to the government (Lührmann et al., 2020). Part of literature often describes the two mechanisms as complementary since people can protest when they are dissatisfied with the electoral options (Kim and Jung, 2020; Bernhagen and Marsh, 2007; Verba and Nie, 1987).

Even if institutional reforms take place to have regime change, some institutions can remain embedded in exclusionary culture or policy (Robinson, 2000), leading to social dissatisfaction. Focused political collective memories can also create ambiguous attitudes towards democracy. On the one hand, elites can manipulate them (in a supply-side approach) to maintain their power (Ochsner and Roesel, 2017; Belmonte and Rochlitz, 2020); on the other hand, memories can also fuel demands against elites outside of democracy (Ticchi et al., 2013). In democratic contexts, Çidam (2021) argues that protests can lead to social experimentation within the democratic process, contributing to institutional robustness. On the other hand, it is possible to argue that the lack of democratic experimentation can lead to political entrenchment and reduction of electoral accountability, as discussed in Chile (Luna and Altman, 2011; Funk and Velasco, 2020).

In this paper, I investigate the link between social memory of Chilean dictatorship repression and contemporary engagement into the National constitutional revolution. After a thorough process of theory-building and causal tracing analysis (Beach and Pedersen, 2016), this paper proposes hypotheses about how presence of repression centers of Pinochet's regime could influence different forms of political engagement: protests or voting. To test these hypotheses, I perform cross-section regressions from 290 municipalities ("comunas"), with the number of demonstrations, participation, and voting in the Constituent Plebiscite as dependent variables, and the presence of military bases before 1970 as the primary independent variable. The regressions were estimated using least squares, both weighted by population. To address the issue of historical

repression and political engagement being influenced by the same older electoral
110 safe-seats, this investigation followed Bautista et al. (2021) in using the place-
ment of military bases before 1970 as a strategic variable of political repression
during the Pinochet Era (see the discussion in Section 3). To assess the per-
sistence of memory into contemporary political behavior, this work proposes a
mechanism analysis based on data of Twitter users remembering the violence
115 of 1973 coup.

The estimates show that areas with repression centers had more protests but
lower participation in the Constituent Plebiscite thirty years after. No results
were found for how the population voted. 2SLS estimates suggest that the rate
of political victimization and contemporary remembrance in social media are
120 relevant mechanisms behind this effect. Based on the hypotheses developed
in the case study, the results suggest that the memory of past institutional
violence leads to political mobilization through protests, especially in response
to present repression. However, little can be said about engagement in the
voting system. Qualitative discussion traces back how violence can explain the
125 behavior of Chilean citizens and provides complementary evidence compared
with autobiographical memory (Bautista, 2016).

In the next section, the Chilean case study is assessed to underlie this anal-
ysis.

2. Case Study

130 2.1. *Antecedents: the Pinochet regime repression*

In 1973, General Augusto Pinochet overthrew the civil government of Sal-
vador Allende. The Allende government, a coalition of left-wing parties (Unidad
Popular), won the elections in 1969 and had a plan to implement Marxian so-
cialism. The implementation of strong price controls and redistributive policies
135 led to severe economic instability and political polarization (Dornbusch and
Edwards, 1990). Once Pinochet took power, the military junta engaged in me-
dia censorship (González and Prem, 2018) and an anti-communist witch hunt

against former politicians in the Allende government, trade unions, and the opposition in general. In the first months, the majority of repression was carried out by the armed forces and police officers (Carabineros) and, along other places, the old military bases created in democratic era for national security were used as repression centers (Bautista et al., 2021). In 1974, repression was centralized under a single agency (Dirección de Inteligencia Nacional - DINA). Under external pressure due to human rights violations, DINA was replaced by another agency, supposedly “more supervised,” in 1977 (Central Nacional de Informaciones - CNI) (Policzer, 2009). According to official records, 3,216 people were killed or forcibly disappeared and 38,254 people were imprisoned for political reasons during the dictatorship period, and 94% of these prisoners were tortured (Comisión Valtech, 2004; Comisión Rettig, 1996).

Pinochet and the military concentrated political power, establishing a new constitution in 1980. This constitution extended Pinochet’s mandate and privatized the public pension system in Chile, minimized government intervention in the economy, and biased the electoral system towards right-wing parties (Bautista et al., 2021). The repression also led to civil resistance, which was a concern for the junta (Esberg, 2021). Along with economic crises in the 1980s, social organizations organized strikes and protests calling for democratization, which was also supported by international pressure. In 1988, a plebiscite on the continuation of Pinochet’s government took place. The immediate rejection of political violence was significant in the ‘No’ vote against the dictatorship: The campaign for the ‘No’ vote won with 55% of the votes, and this ‘Concertación’ coalition won the elections in the following mandate and the subsequent elections until 2005 (Bautista et al., 2021; González and Prem, 2018).

The Chilean democratization process was seen as incomplete. Pinochet remained the head of the armed forces until 1998 and had a lifetime seat in Congress until 2002, the year he resigned due to corruption and human rights charges (Bautista et al., 2021). Stern (2010) argue that after the redemocratization, Chilean society faced tensions of memories of the victims by organized social groups which collided with initiatives of forgetting by Pinochetistas. De-

spite several constitutional reforms to improve the electoral system, the core
170 of the 1980 constitution remained, leading to debates about its undemocratic
nature (Garretón, 1999).

2.1.1. *Old military bases as repression centers*

Inspired by Bautista et al. (2021), this study explores the role of military
base placements before the Allende government in Chilean politics.

175 The authors contend that these placements, prior to 1970, were driven by
national security concerns related to historical territorial disputes or technolog-
ical/logistical progress. They find that, during the democratic period before
Allende, there was no significant correlation between the establishment of mili-
tary bases and the political leanings (right-wing or left-wing) of city inhabitants.
180 Furthermore, their correlational analysis indicates no clear association between
the presence of military bases and various factors such as voter turnout, elec-
toral outcomes in the 1970-'73 elections, education levels, or migration during
the dictatorship. Appendix B.15 and B.16 reproduces Bautista et al. (2021)
table.

185 However, Pinochet's regime repurposed these bases as centers for detain-
ing and torturing dissidents, thereby linking them strongly to victimization.
Bautista et al. (2021) appendixes also present tests for monotonicity require-
ments of this relationship. To sum up, the existence of older military bases
emerges as a relevant factor influencing political repression and shaping contem-
190 porary memory, guiding further discussions on contemporary political behavior.

2.2. *Estallido Social and the Chilean Constituent*

The trigger for the social unrest in Chile from 2019 to 2020 was the adjust-
ment of transport fares in Santiago. On October 1, 2019, the Public Transport
Expert Panel increased the bus fare by 10 pesos and the peak-time metro fare
195 by 30 pesos. The new fares were to be enforced on October 6 (Panel de Expertos
del Transporte Público Ley N° 20.378, 2019).

The initial organized protests in Santiago started on October 7, with high school students jumping turnstiles in metro stations (Emol, 2019). The first significant incident occurred a week later with a student's arrest for vandalism at Pedro de Valdivia Station (Vega, 2019).

Tensions escalated with a call for a massive protest on October 18 (Rivera and Ruyt, 2019). A pivotal moment came on October 16, marked by heightened online interest following the clashes with Carabineros at Santa Ana station, leading to four arrests (Google, 2019; 24Horas.cl, 2019). The situation worsened with Metro service suspensions, vandalism at Plaza de Armas station (Arias, 2019), and looting at San Joaquin station on October 17, resulting in 133 student arrests (CNN Chile, 2019b; Al Jazeera, 2019).

On October 18th, #ChileDespertó (Chile woke up). The protests gained even larger scale, and protesters fully occupied downtown Santiago - this event was also known as the "Santiagazo." The electricity company Enel's headquarters was damaged by fire - the electricity fare was also a complaint, but the accusation of arson was not yet solved (Lara, 2019). Large-scale clashes with the Carabineros also occurred: protesters were subjected to water jets and tear gas in many parts of the city. At night, residents of Santiago organized a massive "cacerolazo" (pot-banging protest) in their homes in support of the demonstrations in the streets (Rollano, 2019).

In response to the protests, Minister of Public Security Andrés Chadwick announced in a press conference that the National Security Act would be used (CNN Chile, 2019a). Just after midnight, President Sebastián Piñera declared a state of emergency in Santiago and nearby cities, authorizing the armed forces to maintain order. The armed forces chief subsequently imposed curfews in the areas under the state of emergency. Despite these measures, protests continued in Santiago and rapidly spread to other regions - for instance, barricades were erected by protesters in the streets, and police barracks were attacked in Concepción (Stuardo, 2019). Piñera extended the state of emergency to nearly all regional capitals in Chile. This declaration of a state of emergency and the imposition of curfews were unprecedented since the end of Pinochet's regime (Dulci

and Sadivia, 2021). However, he also proposed suspending the fare increases and convening a meeting with leaders from various sectors to discuss solutions
230 to the high cost of living and the “safety of the family” (Prensa Presidencia, 2019b).

On October 20th, President Piñera met with leaders of the Deputies Chamber, Supreme Court, and Senate, where Senate President Jaime Quintana proposed restarting the process to draft a new constitution (Leal, 2019). On the
235 same day, an extraordinary session of parliament suspended the Metro fare readjustment (Senado, 2019). Meanwhile, protests intensified, with peaceful protesters supporting students - they claimed “it was not for the 30 pesos (of the readjustment) but 30 years (of democracy)” (Maciel, 2019). However, there were also instances of arson, looting, and violent clashes, with police using shots,
240 tear gas, and water jets, and the first deaths were recorded. During this period, the formation of “cabildos abiertos,” or open and decentralized assemblies self-composed to discuss social issues and solutions, was also observed. Examples of themes discussed in these assemblies included the new constitution, drug legalization, and local networks for service provision (Observatorio de Metodos
245 Deliberativos, 2019). Finally, on October 21st, social movement leaders organized themselves to formally advocate for a new constitution (Flores, 2019).

Contrary to general claims, President Piñera proposed minor social policy reforms, termed the “New Social Agenda” (Prensa Presidencia, 2019a), which were perceived as overly modest, even among Piñera’s allies (La Tercera, 2019).
250 Three days later, “La Marcha Más Grande De Todas” (the greatest march of them all) took place (El Desconcierto, 2019), with an estimated 1,000,000-1,500,000 people in Santiago, 50,000 in Concepción, and a similar number in Valparaíso. On October 27th, 100,000 people peacefully marched between Viña Del Mar and Valparaíso, but faced police repression (teleSUR, 2019). Both
255 protests also called for the impeachment of President Piñera and against private pensions, high costs of living, and a lack of public services. Under pressure, Sebastián Piñera declared the end of the state of emergency and the presence of armed forces on the streets (Gobierno de Chile, 2019). Piñera also invited his

ministers to resign, which was accepted by eight ministers, including Minister
260 Andrés Chadwick (Deutsche Welle, 2019).

Even after the end of the state of emergency, protests continued in smaller
numbers, often led by organized social groups. On November 4th, trade unions
called for a general strike for a new constitution - on this day, 20,000 people par-
ticipated, and the protest was marked by some of the most violent incidents of
265 the period (Europa Press, 2019). On the following days, the headquarters of the
right-wing party Unión Demócrata Independiente and the memorial of Jaime
Guzmán, mentor of Pinochet's 1980 constitution, were vandalized (Ahumada
and Vera, 2019). Due to allegations of human rights violations, the Ministry of
Public Security announced on November 9th that the government would reform
270 the police (infobae, 2019).

2.2.1. The beginning of the Constituent initiative

On November 7th, the Chilean Municipality Association approved a call for
a citizen consultation on a new constitution (Asociación Chilena de Municipal-
idades, 2019). On November 12th, President Piñera announced three National
275 Agreements in response to the protests: for peace, for justice, and for a new con-
stitution (Prensa Presidencia, 2019c). On November 15th, the government and
opposition agreed to a constitutional plebiscite. The constitutional amendment
proposal was passed by the national congress and followed by its promulgation
on December 24th (Ministerio Secretaría General De La Presidencia, 2019).
280 The amendment outlined that the plebiscite would determine whether to initi-
ate a constituent process and decide its nature: a mixed convention of newly
elected constituents and current congress members, or a fully elected popular
convention. It also mandated gender parity and a set quota for indigenous
representation in the convention.

285 The plebiscite was scheduled for March 24th, 2020, but was postponed to
October 25th, 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic. According to the Chilean
electoral service (<https://www.servel.cl>), more than 7.5 million people partici-
pated in the plebiscite on that day - an all time record. The option to “approve”

the constituent process won with 78.2% of the votes, and the choice of a fully
290 popular convention won with 79.1%

At the beginning of 2020, there were sporadic protests: student demonstra-
tions on January 6-7 against the national university admission exam (Urrejola,
2020); rallies following the death of a football fan at the hands of the Police on
January 28 (Cooperativa.cl, 2020); and objections to the Viña del Mar Music
295 Festival in February (Carreras, 2020). After a COVID-19 state of emergency
was declared on March 18, protests subsided, except for October 18, which
marked the “estallido” anniversary with 30,000 protesters, clashes, 580 arrests,
and two church burnings in Santiago (Ulloa, 2020). The “estallido” led to over
3,700,000 people participating in protests until November 10, 2019 (Cooper-
300 ativa.cl, 2019), resulting in 34 confirmed deaths, 12,500 hospitalizations, and
reports of 5,558 victims of institutional violence until October 2020 (Amnesty
International, 2020).

According to the electoral service (<https://www.servel.cl>), almost 6.2 million
people voted for the composition of the constitutional convention on May 15-
305 16th 2021. The Vamos por Chile coalition (right-wing) gained 37 seats, the
Lista del Apruebo (center-left) gained 25 seats, Apruebo Dignidad (left) gained
28 seats, and independents gained 48 seats. The new constitution was written
and voted on by the convention in 2022, and then a new popular plebiscite took
place to confirm the replacement of the old constitution.

310 2.3. Hypotheses formulation

Considering the “Estallido social,” hypotheses can be formulated to guide
our analysis of the persistence of memory of the victims of the Pinochet regime in
Chilean political engagement. Funk and Velasco (2020) argue that the *Estallido*
Social happened due to a meltdown of institutional trust and hopelessness.
315 However, even the authors acknowledge that initial conditions matter in this
situational crisis. Here, it is possible to hypothesize that collective memory can
play a special role in these conditions.

Our first hypothesis is about protests. As mentioned in the background

on Chilean democracy, people in the country used strikes and protests during
320 the Pinochet government to put pressure on democratization when the electoral
process was tainted by fraud. The tendency to protest may be more pronounced
in areas where the iron fist of repression was more heavily felt. As Ticchi et al.
(2013) argue, collective memory can be a significant driver of resistance against
authoritarianism. However, one can also argue that this memory of repression
325 can persist even after democratization is achieved and drive protests, as seen in
the *Estallido Social*.

Hypothesis 1: Memories on Pinochet regime’s victims led to more political
claims through protests.

A second hypothesis concerns the demand for electoral participation. Even
330 at the end of Pinochet’s regime, the democratic governments remained based on
the 1980 constitution, with only minor revisions since then. This has sparked
criticism of its undemocratic nature. People who were affected by authoritarian
repression may be more vocal in this criticism. The demand for a new consti-
tution emerged in large protests, such as *La Marcha más grande de todas*. The
335 vandalism of the Jaime Guzmán memorial can be seen as a protest against the
constitution he contributed to. The creation of a new constitution became the
main concession the Piñera government offered in response to the 2019-2020
protests.

Hypothesis 2a: Memories on Pinochet regime’s victims led to more voting
340 participation.

Velasco (2021) argues that the rejection of neoliberal policies is unlikely
to explain the *Estallido Social*: leaders of anti-liberal movements, such as the
Communist Party, the Teacher’s Union, and ‘No + AFP’ (anti-privatized pen-
sion movement) failed to get a seat in the convention. A notable characteristic
345 of Chilean democracy is that the hybrid constitutional features inherited from
Pinochet lead to dissatisfaction with political parties. Specifically, there is gen-
eral social complaint that parties are increasingly disconnected from civil society

(Luna and Altman, 2011). Sensitivity to flawed participation may also be higher where participation was more violently suppressed in the past. Velasco argues
350 that the root of the Chilean constitutional revolution was the demand for more participatory democracy. This demand is something that the formation of *cabil-dos populares* for public discussion during the protests might be seen as evidence of.

Hypothesis 2b: Memories on Pinochet regime’s victims led to more claims
355 to more voting accountability of politicians.

3. Quantitative Data and Methodology

This section describes the specification, data, and methodology of the estimations used to test the hypotheses discussed in subsection 2.3.

The econometric specification is inspired by Bautista et al. (2021) on the
360 effects of Pinochet repression on the plebiscite of 1988 that voted for the end of the Chilean Military regime. Thus, the general equation is as follows:

$$poli = f(repre, Controls, FE), \quad (1)$$

, where poli is the political mobilization variable for protests and constituent plebiscite, repre is the variable for political repression from the Pinochet era, and the presence of Controls related to demography, geography, and politics
365 pre-Pinochet. FE is the province level dummy ³.

Considering hypotheses 1, 2a, and 2b, our general initial hypothesis is that of dictatorship memory and institutional persistence: localities that were more affected by the Military regime’s repression protested more in the Estallido Social. In addition, they engaged more in voting for a new Constitution to
370 replace the last one designed by the Pinochet government.

³The results are also robust to control for region fixed effects instead.

To test these quantitative hypotheses, I have constructed a database of 290 municipalities (*Comunas*)⁴. See Appendix A for a detailed description of the data and its sources and Table A.14 for the descriptive statistics. Least squares is useful to evaluate the conditional mean between the results of the protests or plebiscite and the presence of repression centers, as our methodology is inspired by Bautista et al. (2021). As discussed in Subsection 2.1.1, this study examines the influence of pre-1970 military bases as a primary independent variable on political repression, subsequently affecting contemporary memories and behaviors. The authors also argue that, when controlled by the 1970 election results, the use of military presence fixes the influence of the political orientation of a locality prior to Pinochet and gives a net effect of existence of past repression centers on contemporary variables of political attitudes. However, they also argue that weighting the estimates for the population is strategic for analyzing socio-political action because it gives more focus and equal treatment to individual behavior, irrespective of the size of the municipality.

To further investigate the mechanisms behind the effects of repression centers and contemporary democratic demands, I analyzed indicators of political victimization during Pinochet's regime, such as the number of victims or residents who were victims per 10,000 inhabitants. Besides, a measure of contemporary social memory using social media users remembering the '73 coup is also assessed. Using 2SLS, I estimated the victimization rates and the intensity of contemporary remembrance as independent variables and the presence of military bases prior to 1970 as the instrumental variable. This allowed us to test if the recollection of higher casualties plays a significant role in explaining the effects.

⁴Nowadays, Chile has 346 comunas. This city-level approach has an advantage over higher granularity data to assess the effects of *social* memory as it reduces the interference of other centers of memory diffusion within the same municipality, such as schools.

4. Econometric results

In this section, we can assess the empirical effects on the social mobilization influenced by the local memory of political repression in the Pinochet era.

4.1. Protests and Constituent Plebiscite Turnout

400 Table 1 indicates that localities with pre-1970 military bases had higher levels of protest during the “*Estallido Social*”. The decomposition in Table 1 shows that the effects were significant for both peaceful protests and violent riots, in similar proportions. The results are in line with the expectation that the memory of Pinochet’s victims made residents more aware of state repression
405 and led to more protests.

The LS estimates suggest that the presence of military bases in a municipality, on average, resulted in nearly one more protest per 10,000 inhabitants during the *Estallido Social*, about 30 years later. Additionally, areas with pre-1970 military bases had similar proportion of increased violent riots and pacific
410 protests.

4.2. Constituent approval

However, the data in Table 2 shows that in areas with pre-1970 military bases, voter participation in the constituent plebiscite was lower. The first column of Table 2 presents this result, which shows that if a municipality had a
415 military base built prior to 1970, it experienced, on average, a decrease of more than 5% in its rate of participation in the 2020 plebiscite.

We can also examine the impact of repression centers on constituent approval. Table 2 also presents the regression results for the percentage of constituent approval (second column) and the percentage of full popular convention
420 given the constituent approval (third column). The data shows that there is little evidence that areas near the repression centers of the Chilean military regime voted more for the constituent or a more “radical” assembly composition.

Table 1: LS Estimates: Protests/10k Habs - (Decomposition)

	Pacific	Riots	Total
<i>Pre-70 Bases</i>	0.580*** (0.201)	0.563*** (0.200)	1.143*** (0.396)
LS Adjusted R ²	0.787	0.683	0.750
LS F-statistic	35.428	21.082	28.903
p-value (LS F-statistic)	0.000	0.000	0.000
State Dummies	x	x	x
Controls	x	x	x
N. Obs.	290	290	290

Notes: Marginal significance levels: (***) denotes 0.01, (**) denotes 0.05, and (*) denotes 0.10. All regressions have control for distance to Santiago and regional capital, 2017 population and rural share, and vote shares for Allende and Alessandri in 1970. Weights: 2017 population. Coefficient in bold, cluster-robust (at comuna level) standard errors in parentheses.

Table 2: LS Estimates: (Approval of Constituent)

	Turnout	Approval	Popular Convention
<i>Pre-70 Bases</i>	-5.389*** (0.957)	1.624 (2.375)	1.314 (2.197)
LS Adjusted R ²	0.838	0.725	0.667
LS F-statistic	49.133	25.568	19.636
p-value (LS F-statistic)	0.000	0.000	0.000
State Dummies	x	x	x
Controls	x	x	x
N. Obs.	290	290	290

Notes: Marginal significance levels: (***) denotes 0.01, (**) denotes 0.05, and (*) denotes 0.10. All regressions have control for distance to Santiago and regional capital, 2017 population and rural share, and vote shares for Allende and Alessandri in 1970. Weights: 2017 population. Coefficient in bold, cluster-robust (at comuna level) standard errors in parentheses.

4.3. Results of Elections on the Constitutional Convention composition

Now, we can examine the impact of the presence of Pinochet repression
425 centers on the elections of constituent assembly members. As shown in Table 3,
the presence of pre-1970 constructed military bases resulted in even lower voter
turnout than in the case of constituent approval: municipalities with these
bases had an average participation rate that was nearly 8% lower than in other
municipalities.

430 Second, third and forth columns of Table 3 present the results of voting
for the coalitions Vamos Por Chile (right and center-right parties), Lista del
Apruebo (center-left), and Apruebo Dignidad (left). It can be concluded that
there is little differences about the voting preference of municipalities that have
been more affected by past authoritarian repression. In areas where there were
435 old repression centers, there was no electoral punishment for the right-wing
coalition aligned with the president, nor was there a preference for left-wing
opposition coalitions.

4.4. Almost a backlash? Results of 2021 Presidential Elections

By the end of 2021, the impact of the *Estallido Social* was noticeable in
440 the Chilean presidential elections. One of the favorite candidates was the far-
right Jose Antonio Kast. As president of the Chilean Republican Party in 2019,
he was one of the most vocal proponents of the Emergency State against the
Estallido Social (Olivares, 2019). In 2021, Kast claimed the legacy of Pinochet
in his electoral run. He was the son of a Nazi soldier and the brother of a
445 former Pinochet minister (Bell, n.d.), and he argued that “If Pinochet were
alive, he would vote for him” (Slattery, 2021). During the *Estallido Social*, he
also claimed that it represented that “Violence was winning the peace”. Law
and order would be his main electoral platform (Montero, Felipe Díaz, 2021),
not only against social unrest but also against immigrants (Bell, n.d.). In the
450 first round on November 21, Kast was the front-runner, obtaining 27.9% of
the votes, while in second place, the left-wing Gabriel Boric (former student
activist and representing the Apruebo Dignidad coalition) gained 25.8%. This

Table 3: LS Estimates: (Composition of Convention)

	Turnout	Vamos	Lista	Dignidad
<i>Pre-70 Bases</i>	-7.830*** (1.135)	-1.195 (2.141)	1.433 (1.216)	-4.356 (3.885)
LS Adjusted R ²	0.747	0.729	0.453	0.413
LS F-statistic	28.488	26.128	8.707	7.570
p-value (LS F-statistic)	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000
State Dummies	x	x	x	x
Controls	x	x	x	x
N. Obs.	290	290	290	290

Notes: Marginal significance levels: (***) denotes 0.01, (**) denotes 0.05, and (*) denotes 0.10. All regressions have control for distance to Santiago and regional capital, 2017 population and rural share, and vote shares for Allende and Alessandri in 1970. Weights: 2017 population. Coefficient in bold, cluster-robust (at comuna level) standard errors in parentheses.

result was seen by political analysts as a risk of a political backlash from the *Estallido Social* (Cisternas, 2021). In the second round, Gabriel Boric pursued
455 a conciliatory tone with welfare state proposals (The Economist, 2021). On December 19, Boric won against Kast with 55.87% to 44.13%, in a record of voting participation (8,363,910 votes - 55.64% turnout).

An important robustness check is to determine if the lack of electoral participation due to the memories of past repression centers remains even when faced
460 with a Pinochet-aligned candidate. Table 4 presents the estimates for the first-round turnout and voting for the two leading candidates in columns 1 to 3. The fourth and fifth columns present the results for the second-round turnout and voting for José Kast. The results are consistent with previous findings: a significant and negative effect on electoral turnout in municipalities with military
465 bases; and, no increased effort to vote for Boric or against Kast.

Table 4: LS Estimates: Votes (2021 1º and 2º Presidential Voting)

	Turnout (1ºV)	Kast (1ºV)	Boric (1ºV)	Turnout (2ºV)	Kast (2ºV)
<i>Pre-70 Bases</i>	-5.743*** (1.144)	-0.215 (1.689)	-0.246 (1.605)	-4.108** (1.644)	-0.812 (2.382)
LS Adjusted R ²	0.711	0.789	0.826	0.626	0.771
LS F-statistic	23.957	35.781	45.385	16.606	32.305
p-value (LS F-statistic)	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000
State Dummies	x	x	x	x	x
Controls	x	x	x	x	x
N. Obs.	290	290	290	290	290

Notes: Marginal significance levels: (***) denotes 0.01, (**) denotes 0.05, and (*) denotes 0.10. All regressions have control for distance to Santiago and regional capital, province fixed effects, 2017 population and rural share, and vote shares for Allende and Alessandri in 1970. Weights: 2017 population. Coefficient in bold, cluster-robust (at comuna level) standard errors in parentheses.

4.5. *The constitutional wave crashes: the rejection of the first constitutional draft*

In the 2022 Chilean constitutional referendum, citizens were asked if they approved of the new draft constitution proposed by the Constitutional Assembly
470 elected in 2021. This new draft was the result of negotiations among various political and social groups and aimed to address issues such as economic inequality, lack of indigenous representation, and concentration of power - considered by the Assembly to be a social legacy of Pinochet's constitution (Bartlett, 2022).

The referendum took place on September 4th, 2022, with mandatory voting.
475 The results of the vote were decisive, with 61.89% of voters rejecting the draft constitution, according to SERVEL.

This outcome was a major blow to President Gabriel Boric's government which had supported it. It was also a victory for the country's opposition coalition and social movements, who had campaigned against the draft. Internal
480 actors that may have contributed to the rejection of the draft included unpopularity of Assembly politicians, opposition to the Plurinational state design, and skepticism about the economic sustainability of social programmatic guidelines (Titelman, 2022; Sazo, 2023; Stuenkel, 2022). Moreover, external factors such as unpopularity of Boric's campaign (Gonzalez-Ocantos and Melendez, 2023), fake
485 news (Stuenkel, 2022), and disagreements about the concessions made by different elites in the 2019 agreement on the nature of the Constitutional initiative (García-Huidobro, 2023) are also factors appointed in the literature as crucial to the rejection. Public opinion surveys prior to the referendum suggested rejection of the draft would increase political polarization, but could also lead to
490 increased employment, lower inflation, more organized migration policies, and economic growth (Criteria, 2022).

The failure of the draft constitution has left Chile at a crossroads, with some calling for new negotiations and discussions to find a way forward. A minority have suggested amending the current constitution, but social actors
495 overall have called for a completely new constitution to be written from scratch (POLGA-HECIMOVICH, 2022).

Table 5: LS Estimates: 1st Exit Plebiscite

	Turnout	Approval
<i>Pre-70 Bases</i>	-3.266*** (0.878)	-0.948 (1.955)
LS Adjusted R ²	0.828	0.801
LS F-statistic	45.920	38.536
p-value (LS F-statistic)	0.000	0.000
State Dummies	x	x
Controls	x	x
N. Obs.	290	290

Notes: Marginal significance levels: (***) denotes 0.01, (**) denotes 0.05, and (*) denotes 0.10. All regressions have control for distance to Santiago and regional capital, 2017 population and rural share, and vote shares for Allende and Alessandri in 1970. Weights: 2017 population. Coefficient in bold, cluster-robust (at comuna level) standard errors in parentheses.

The impact of the presence of military bases on the outcome of the exit plebiscite is analyzed in Table 5. As seen in previous tables, municipalities that had military bases prior to 1970 did not exhibit a higher voter turnout in favor
500 of the proposed constitution. Despite the requirement of mandatory voting, the decreased voter turnout still had a significant effect.

4.6. Second constitutional initiative, the rise of far-right, and the second text rejection

After the first rejection of the constitutional draft, the national congress
505 proposed a “Agreement for Chile” in December 2022, in which consisted on a second initiative to build a new a new constitutional text in 2023. The new constitutional front should be composed of various groups with distinct roles

and methods of selection. Firstly, the main body consisted on a council of 50 members who were chosen through a public voting process. These elected members worked alongside a specially appointed Expert Commission, comprising 24 individuals selected by the already established National Congress. The primary task of this institution was to draft a preliminary proposal, that would be then discussed and approved by the council. In addition to these groups, there was a Technical Committee of Admissibility. This Committee played a role as an arbitrator in cases where there were queries or concerns regarding the potential violation of existing regulations by the proposed norms. This structure based on a blend of democratic selection and expert appointment was intended to build a more cohesive norm-setting of the constitutional text (Cámara de Diputados y Senado, 2023).

On May 7, 2023, Chilean citizens headed to the polls to elect their councilors. The election adopted proportional representation, open lists, a quota for female candidates, and an additional seat for indigenous people (Cámara de Diputados y Senado, 2023).

While the results of the 2021 convention election indicated a dominance of left-wing politics, the 2023 council election results showed a shift to the right. The seats were predominantly won by just three coalitions. The largest share was held by the Partido Republicano (Republican Party), a populist, far-right party influenced by Pinochet supporters, securing 34.34% of the vote and 23 seats. In second and third place were Unidad por Chile (Unity for Chile) - a coalition of left-wing and incumbent center-left parties, with 27.73% and 16 seats - and Chile Seguro (Safe Chile), a coalition of traditional right-wing and center-right parties, gaining 20.42% and 11 seats, respectively. Altman et al. (2023) argue that the divergence in results compared to the composition of the constitutional convention is related to the introduction of compulsory voting. This may have brought in right-wing voters who were dissatisfied with the constitutional process and had abstained in past elections.

The conservative draft approved by the council maintained a minimalistic state approach on social policies and indigenous recognition, while proposed

stricter regulations on abortion and immigration and weaker gender quotas (Be-
540 navides, 2023). A constitutional referendum was held in Chile on December 17,
2023. The electorate rejected this proposed constitution, with 55.76% voting
against it, according to the Chilean Electoral Service.

Did Pinochet's era of repression influence this process? Tables 6 and 7
present the results. One can see that in areas with former military bases, voter
545 turnout was lower. Additionally, we still have no evidence that these munici-
palities showed reduced support for the establishment right or far-right, nor an
increase in votes for the left. So, where did these votes go? This election was
notable for a high rate of invalid votes (null and blank), at 21.43%. The last
regression analysis in Table 6 indicates that regions with former military bases
550 had a higher incidence of invalid votes, suggesting a broader rejection of the
electoral choices. Table 7 reveals a similar pattern to the initial plebiscite: de-
creased participation and no significant shift towards rejecting the conservative
constitutional draft.

Table 6: LS Estimates: (Composition of Consejo)

	Turnout	Unidad	Seguro	Republicano	Nulos
<i>Pre-70 Bases</i>	-3.628*** (0.863)	-0.461 (1.669)	-1.804 (1.152)	1.734 (1.333)	2.337*** (0.695)
LS Adjusted R ²	0.862	0.802	0.736	0.723	0.815
LS F-statistic	59.169	38.664	26.964	25.321	42.161
p-value (LS F-statistic)	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000
State Dummies	x	x	x	x	x
Controls	x	x	x	x	x
N. Obs.	290	290	290	290	290

Notes: Marginal significance levels: (***) denotes 0.01, (**) denotes 0.05, and (*) denotes 0.10. All regressions have control for distance to Santiago and regional capital, province fixed effects, 2017 population and rural share, and vote shares for Allende and Alessandri in 1970. Weights: 2017 population. Coefficient in bold, cluster-robust (at comuna level) standard errors in parentheses.

Table 7: LS Estimates: (2nd Exit Plebiscite)

	Turnout	Against
<i>Pre-70 Bases</i>	-3.660*** (0.897)	0.649 (1.974)
LS Adjusted R ²	0.880	0.728
LS F-statistic	69.288	25.920
p-value (LS F-statistic)	0.000	0.000
State Dummies	x	x
Controls	x	x
N. Obs.	290	290

Notes: Marginal significance levels: (***) denotes 0.01, (**) denotes 0.05, and (*) denotes 0.10. All regressions have control for distance to Santiago and regional capital, 2017 population and rural share, and vote shares for Allende and Alessandri in 1970. Weights: 2017 population. Coefficient in bold, cluster-robust (at comuna level) standard errors in parentheses.

5. Mechanism analysis

5.1. Victimization as a mechanism

But what makes the military bases constructed before 1970 relevant to the local divergence in political engagement? In this section we investigate how the memories of political victims may be one mechanism that explains contemporary political behavior. As previously stated, the construction of these military bases prior to the Allende regime was not connected to the political stance of the central government, but the Pinochet regime used them as repression centers.

Table 8 presents the impact of pre-70 military bases on two measures of political victimization during the Chilean military dictatorship: the number of

victims in a locality per 10,000 inhabitants, and the number of residents who
565 were victims per 10,000 inhabitants. Both results suggest that the presence of
military bases was indeed associated with higher victimization. Municipalities
with military bases built before 1970 had 2.5 more victims and 1.8 more victim-
ized residents per 10,000 inhabitants.⁵ These estimates form the first stage of
the 2SLS regressions that follow.

570 In table 9, I re-estimate the regressions concerning the protests in 2019-2020
and the electoral behavior during the constitutional reform initiative and pres-
idential elections⁶. Now, these are 2SLS estimates in which the victimization
rate is the independent variable and the presence of pre-70 bases is the instru-
mental variable. The estimates go in line with the found about military bases:
575 the higher was the relative number of victims or victimized residents, the higher
was the relative number of protests, but no more effort to punish the incumbent
right and even lower electoral participation during the constituent process and
even in the presidential run against a Pinochetista. The results suggests that
memories of victimization during the Pinochet Regime is a relevant mechanism
580 behind the political behavior in Chilean municipalities with military bases.

⁵This result aligns with the findings of Bautista et al. (2021). The authors also discovered
that the presence of military bases did not have an impact on unemployment, migration, or
investment in public goods during the dictatorship.

⁶The complete estimates are available on request

Table 8: LS Estimates : Effect of Presence of pre-70 bases on Pinochet victimization

	Victims	Victim residents
<i>Military Base</i>	2.662*** (0.470)	1.728*** (0.378)
LS Adjusted R ²	0.692	0.597
F-statistic	21.859	14.749
Prob (F-statistic)	0.000	0.000
State Dummies	x	x
Controls	x	x
N. Obs.	289	289

Notes: Marginal significance levels: (***) denotes 0.01, (**) denotes 0.05, and (*) denotes 0.10. All regressions have control for distance to Santiago and regional capital, province fixed effects, 2017 population and rural share, and vote shares for Allende and Alessandri in 1970. Weights: 2017 population. Coefficient in bold, cluster-robust (at comuna level) standard errors in parentheses.

5.2. Contemporary memory, past victimization and present political engagement

To delve deeper, can we explore the correlation between past repression centers and current political engagement through the lens of contemporary social memory? Measuring the role of social memory, which is defined as the collective recollection of past events, can be challenging. Nevertheless, recent studies suggest that social media platforms, such as Twitter, can provide valuable resources for analyzing social memory, as exposed by Sumikawa et al. (2018)⁷. Twitter was the forth most used social media in Chile in 2019, according to the agency StatCounter (StatCounter, 2019).

An approach to studying the connection between past political victimization and social memory involves identifying trending topics related to historical events and collecting tweets about them. For example, on the anniversary of the military coup on September 11th, 2019, prior to the Estallido, trending topics in Chile associated with the event were identified. Among these topics, the top five related to the remembrance of violence were selected⁸. The more vocal terms included “Golpe de Estado”, “Allende Vive”, and “#NiPerdonNiOlvido”. These terms were aggregated as Twitter I. Additionally, two moderated terms “Allende” and “#11Septiembre1973,” were added, which were aggregated as Twitter II. Considering all the terms, a sample of 26,238 tweets from 16,223 accounts that used one of these topics was gathered, utilizing the web scraping tool exportdata.io.

To measure social memory, it was determined where the users who tweeted the selected terms were located, focusing on the least ambiguous reference to a single Chilean comuna. This resulted in a total sample of 2,623 users. The num-

⁷However, it is important to acknowledge the limitations of this approach. Twitter users may not be representative of the broader population, so the findings should be interpreted with caution. For example, there might be a potential bias towards younger users on the platform. Despite this limitation, it is worth considering the *persistence* of social memory through new generations.

⁸The topic “Pinochet”, for instance, was largely used by Pinochetistas, so the results might be more ambiguous.

Table 9: Mechanism Analysis: 2SLS estimates - Victimization

Dependent Variables	Independent Variables			
	Victims/10k Inhab.		Victim Resid./10k Inhab	
Total Protests	0.429***	(0.156)	0.661***	(0.226)
Pacific Protests	0.218***	(0.080)	0.336***	(0.117)
Violent Riots	0.211***	(0.077)	0.326***	(0.112)
Turnout (Const. Initiative)	-2.024***	(0.336)	-3.117***	(0.718)
Approval (Const. Initiative)	0.611	(0.836)	0.941	(1.335)
Const. Convention	0.494	(0.780)	0.761	(1.235)
Turnout (Composition)	-2.940***	(0.476)	-4.529***	(1.010)
Vamos	-0.449	(0.761)	-0.692	(1.207)
Lista	0.659	(0.561)	0.833	(0.911)
Dignidad	-1.636	(1.477)	-2.521	(2.395)
Turnout (1st Pres. Round)	-2.157***	(0.351)	-3.323***	(0.787)
Boric (1st Pres. Round)	-0.092	(0.610)	-0.142	(0.935)
Kast (1st Pres. Round)	-0.082	(0.627)	-0.126	(0.973)
Turnout (2nd Pres. Round)	-1.543**	(0.637)	-2.377**	(1.074)
Kast (2nd Pres. Round)	-0.306	(0.871)	-0.472	(1.370)
Turnout (1st Exit Plebs.)	-1.226***	(0.404)	-1.889***	(0.588)
Approval (1st Exit Plebs.)	-0.355	(0.761)	-0.547	(1.152)
Turnout (Consejo)	-1.363***	(0.402)	-2.099***	(0.582)
Unidad	-0.172	(0.640)	-0.266	(0.976)
Seguro	-0.678*	(0.389)	-1.045	(0.650)
Republicano	0.651	(0.539)	1.004	(0.801)
Nulos	0.878***	(0.170)	1.352***	(0.364)
Turnout (2nd Exit Plebs.)	-1.374***	(0.443)	-2.117***	(0.635)
Against (2nd Exit Plebs.)	0.245	(0.722)	0.377	(1.133)

Notes: Marginal significance levels: (***) denotes 0.01, (**) denotes 0.05, and (*) denotes 0.10. All regressions have control for distance to Santiago and regional capital, 2017 population and rural share, and vote shares for Allende and Alessandri in 1970. Weights: 2017 population. Coefficient in bold, cluster-robust (at comuna level) standard errors in parentheses.

605 ber of users remembering the coup per 10,000 inhabitants in each municipality was calculated, creating a measure of social memory. This measure was employed to examine the relationship between past political victimization, social memory, and current political engagement.

Several regression analyses were conducted to explore this relationship. In one analysis, a linear regression was estimated using the least squares method to examine the connection between the presence of military bases and the number of Twitter users remembering the '73 coup. The results presented in Table 10⁹ indicated that municipalities with pre-1970 military bases had more remembrance of the coup on Twitter, with up to 4.6 more accounts per ten thousand inhabitants than municipalities without these bases.

Another analysis utilized a 2SLS regression to investigate the correlation between past victimhood and Twitter users remembering the '73 coup, using pre-1970 military bases as an instrument. The results, shown in Table 11, indicate that the more political victims of Pinochet there were in a given municipality, the more remembrance of the coup there was on Twitter. Specifically, one victim per 10k inhabitants was related up to 1.7 accounts remembering the '73 coup, and one victim resident per 10k inhabitants was related to 2.6 accounts remembering the '73 coup.

Lastly, I utilized 2SLS regressions to analyze the relationship between Twitter users' remembrance of the coup and political engagement in the Constitutional revolution. The results in Table 12 suggest that there is a positive effect between remembrance of the coup on Twitter and protests, less participation in the Constitutional process, and no increased effort to punish the incumbent right.

630 But is collective memory truly the determining factor driving political behavior in the presence of past repression centers? We need to remember that two of the main complaints were economic hardship and the lack of public goods, especially when the protests claims became generalized (El Desconcierto, 2019;

⁹The complete estimates are also available on request

Table 10: LS Estimates: effect of repression centers on memories in social media

	Twitter I	Twitter II
<i>Military Base</i>	2.063*** (0.546)	4.649*** (1.249)
OLS Adjusted R ²	0.848	0.848
OLS F-statistic	53.037	53.020
p-value (OLS F-statistic)	0.000	0.000
State Dummies	x	x
Controls	x	x
N. Obs.	290	290

Notes: Twitter I = Number of Users that tweeted in 11th september 2019 “Allende vive”, “Golpe de Estado” and/or “NiPerdónNiOlvido” per 10k inhabitants. Twitter II = Number of Users that tweeted in 11th september 2019 “Allende vive”, “Golpe de Estado”, “NiPerdónNiOlvido”, “Allende” and/or “11septiembre1973” per 10k inhabitants. Marginal significance levels: (***) denotes 0.01, (**) denotes 0.05, and (*) denotes 0.10. All regressions have control for distance to Santiago and regional capital, province fixed effects, 2017 population and rural share, and vote shares for Allende and Alessandri in 1970. Weights: 2017 population. Coefficient in bold, cluster-robust (at comuna level) standard errors in parentheses.

Table 11: 2SLS estimates (Presence of pre-70 bases as instrument)

	<i>Twitter I</i>	<i>Twitter I</i>	<i>Twitter II</i>	<i>Twitter II</i>
Victims	0.775*** (0.203)		1.746*** (0.463)	
Victim residents		1.194*** (0.261)		2.689*** (0.589)
IV F-statistic	69.619	35.586	69.619	35.586
State Dummies	x	x	x	x
Controls	x	x	x	x
N. Obs.	289	289	289	289

Notes: Twitter I = Number of Users that tweeted in 11th september 2019 “Allende vive”, “Golpe de Estado” and/or “NiPerdónNiOlvido” per 10k inhabitants. Twitter II = Number of Users that tweeted in 11th september 2019 “Allende vive”, “Golpe de Estado”, “NiPerdónNiOlvido”, “Allende” and/or “11septiembre1973” per 10k inhabitants. Marginal significance levels: (***) denotes 0.01, (**) denotes 0.05, and (*) denotes 0.10. All regressions have control for distance to Santiago and regional capital, province fixed effects, 2017 population and rural share, and vote shares for Allende and Alessandri in 1970. Weights: 2017 population. Coefficient in bold, cluster-robust (at comuna level) standard errors in parentheses. IV F-statistic is the Cragg-Donald weak instrument test.

Table 12: Mechanism Analysis: 2SLS estimates - Remembrance

Dependent Variables	Independent Variables			
	Twitter I		Twitter II	
Total Protests	0.554***	(0.169)	0.246***	(0.076)
Pacific Protests	0.281***	(0.084)	0.125***	(0.038)
Violent Riots	0.273***	(0.087)	0.121***	(0.039)
Turnout (Const. Initiative)	-2.612***	(0.825)	-1.159***	(0.367)
Approval (Const. Initiative)	0.787	(1.215)	0.349	(0.540)
Const. Convention	0.637	(1.115)	0.283	(0.496)
Turnout (Composition)	-3.794***	(1.141)	-1.684***	(0.507)
Vamos	-0.579	(1.072)	-0.257	(0.476)
Lista	0.699	(0.781)	0.310	(0.345)
Dignidad	-2.111	(1.970)	-0.937	(0.880)
Turnout (1st Pres. Round)	-2.783***	(0.943)	-1.235***	(0.420)
Boric (1st Pres. Round)	-0.104	(0.823)	-0.053	(0.343)
Kast (1st Pres. Round)	-0.119	(0.774)	-0.046	(0.366)
Turnout (2nd Pres. Round)	-1.991**	(0.962)	-0.884**	(0.425)
Kast (2nd Pres. Round)	-0.394	(1.193)	-0.175	(0.530)
Turnout (1st Exit Plebs.)	-1.583***	(0.301)	-0.703***	(0.132)
Approval (1st Exit Plebs.)	0.460	(0.932)	-0.204	(0.413)
Turnout (Consejo)	-1.758***	(0.342)	-0.780***	(0.150)
Unidad	-0.224	(0.801)	-0.099	(0.355)
Seguro	-0.874	(0.632)	-0.388	(0.280)
Republicano	0.840	(0.648)	0.373	(0.286)
Nulos	1.132**	(0.452)	0.503**	(0.201)
Turnout (2nd Exit Plebs.)	-1.774***	(0.324)	-0.787***	(0.142)
Against (2nd Exit Plebs.)	0.314	(0.982)	0.140	(0.436)

Notes: Twitter I = Number of Users tweeting in 11th september 2019 “Allende vive”, “Golpe de Estado” and/or “NiPerdónNiOlvido” per 10k inhabitants. Twitter II = Number of Users twitting “Allende vive”, “Golpe de Estado”, “NiPerdónNiOlvido”, “Allende” and/or “11septiembre1973” per 10k inhabitants. Significance levels: (***) denotes 0.01, (**) 0.05, and (*) 0.10. Controls: distance to Santiago and regional capital, province fixed effects, 2017 population and rural share, vote shares for Allende and Alessandri in 1970. Weights: 2017 population. Coefficient in bold, clustered (column) standard errors in paren-

Table 13: Alternative Mechanism Analysis: LS estimates

	Unemp	Inv Edu/Alumno	Inv Health/Inhab
<i>Military Base</i>	-0.447 (0.855)	-10.707 (8.674)	-0.233 (0.185)
OLS Adjusted R ²	0.056	0.192	0.144
OLS F-statistic	1.534	3.194	2.311
p-value (OLS F-statistic)	0.041	0.000	0.000
State Dummies	x	x	x
Controls	x	x	x
N. Obs.	278	287	273

Notes: Marginal significance levels: (***) denotes 0.01, (**) denotes 0.05, and (*) denotes 0.10. All regressions have control for distance to Santiago and regional capital, province fixed effects, 2017 population and rural share, and vote shares for Allende and Alessandri in 1970. Weights: 2017 population. Coefficient in bold, cluster-robust (at comuna level) standard errors in parentheses.

teleSUR, 2019). One could argue that the existence of military bases can result
 635 in divergent policy implementation and varying levels of investment in public
 goods across different municipalities. This becomes particularly relevant when
 political repression gives rise to a dynasty of local politicians who support dicta-
 torship (González et al., 2021) or when descendants of the repressed individuals
 are involved (Boucher, 2023). Following Bautista et al. (2021), I also explored
 640 alternative mechanisms that could influence political behavior. The results,
 presented in Table 13, indicate that there is no significant divergence among
 municipalities in terms of public good investment (such as healthcare or educa-
 tion) or unemployment.

Overall, the findings of this study suggest that social memory plays a likely
 645 role in contemporary political engagement. Additionally, Twitter can be a use-
 ful tool for measuring social memory and providing valuable insights into the

correlation between past political victimization and present-day political engagement.

6. Discussion

650 The overall evidence suggests that the memory of Pinochet's repression did not generalize into increased electoral turnout or pressure for more electoral accountability. In areas where there was more repression, there was no greater participation in constitutional change or increased tendency to vote for or against incumbent coalitions.

655 This result aligns with the findings of two pieces of literature. First, Bautista et al. (2021) argues that the effects of past Pinochet repression on votes for the Concertación decreased with each electoral run, so it can be inferred that it had little influence on voting for the right-wing coalition of parties that were not historically affiliated with the Concertación. Second, according to a public
660 opinion survey conducted by CERC (2013) 40 years after the military coup of 1973, there was a significant increase in the percentage of people who rejected the necessity of military coups, from 48% in 2003 to 68% in 2013. However, 41% of the people interviewed in 2013 attributed the responsibility for the 1973 coup to Pinochet himself, 6% to the military, and only 2% to the right (compared
665 to 34%, 7%, and 4%, respectively, in 2003). Despite the surge in the share of people claiming the necessity of the '73 Coup in 2023 after the elections, MORI and CERC (2023) indicate that this is due to short run volatility and is concentrated on people that lived close to the Pinochet era. This suggests that the spread to the society as a whole of collective memories is following an
670 increasing detachment of most actors and institutions from the military regime by the public opinion.

Since municipalities with more victims saw more protests, what influenced people affected by Pinochet's repression to take to the streets, other than increased political participation, more public services, or punishment for the incumbent party? The literature on protests discusses the backfire of police re-
675

pression of unarmed protests and emphasizes the role of communication infrastructure in the scalability of protests (see Sutton et al. (2014)). Here, we can infer that past memories of institutional violence may be a driving factor.

There was a late, small but existent effort to convict former army chiefs and reform the armed forces to eliminate the remnants of Pinochet's organization (Dreisbach, 2015), but little was done to the police. Despite pressure on the incumbent government to reform the Carabineros due to human rights violations during the 2019 protests, the initiatives remained paralyzed (Torres, 2021) by them; only the Constitutional Convention in 2021 pushed forward the reform initiative to end the militarization of the police system and went overwhelmed by the other proposals (Agencia Aton, 2021).

State violence was present in almost all the *Estallido Social* incidents; the mobilization increased when the first clashes between students and Carabineros occurred, and it spread throughout the country following the imposition of the emergency state. It began to scale down when the president revoked this decree.

According to Stern (2010), the process of political memory in Chile involves competing selective memories. This is likely due to the fact that supporters of Pinochet remain influential, making it difficult to hold the political leaders of the dictatorship accountable for their victims. As a result, Chilean society experiences oscillation between periods of caution and periods of conflict. Our empirical findings suggest that the selective memories of Pinochet's victims may lead Chilean society to resist violence in general, but are unable to connect this contemporary violence to specific actors or institutions that were preserved from the dictatorship.

Following the discussion in Boucher (2023), political repression can have psychological implications such as the fear of political persecution (Young, 2019) or polarization towards out-groups (Nugent, 2020). In our case, the findings do not suggest that Pinochet's repression led to a culture of fear regarding state violence or the right-wing, for two reasons: Firstly, people demonstrated the courage to participate in street protests. Secondly, the Chilean voting process is confidential and claimed to be fair (Freedom House, 2022), which makes it

unlikely that voters from the opposition would face retaliation. This lack of fear suggests that Chilean collective memory diverges from the autobiographical memory found in Bautista (2016).

710 On the other hand, both quantitative and qualitative analyses indicate that memories of past repression may contribute to polarization against political actors, perceiving them as an “out-group class.” This finding aligns with the literature on the uprooting of both right-wing and left-wing political factions in Chile (Luna and Altman, 2011). Fierro (2024) argues that it was the po-
715 litically unengaged who determined the outcomes of both constitutional draft rejections. The results presented here suggest that the enduring memory of political violence is a significant factor driving this disengagement.

To summarize, the cultural aspect that persisted in the *Estallido Social* was the revolt against state violence itself, following the police confrontation against
720 early protesters who were against the adjustment of subway fares in Santiago. Sensitivity to state violence motivated people affected by past victims’ memories to protest (hypothesis 1). However, it did not motivate people to go to the voting booth to demand more accountability through more participatory institutions or punish unresponsive incumbent parties (hypotheses 2a and 2b).

725 7. Conclusion

In this work, I investigated the persistence of collective memory of past institutional violence in present political engagement in democracies. The case of Chile provides an extreme example of a situation where the legacy of a military regime was often cited as a latent driver of street protests that led to a plebiscite
730 for constitutional change.

The findings suggest that municipalities with more pre-1970 military bases saw higher levels of protests during the Estallido Social, but also had lower participation in the plebiscite and in electing constituent members. There was also no punishment of the incumbent coalition or preference for the opposition.
735 The mechanism analysis also suggests that victimization during the Pinochet

era could be a significant factor in shaping political behavior.

In the case of Chile, other factors could drive the specific demand for a new constitution, such as general emotions of broken expectations and institutional mistrust, as theorized by Funk and Velasco (2020) and as studied by Passarelli and Tabellini (2017) and (Gurr, 2015). However, for the scope of the collective memory of victims of Pinochet, our evidence suggests that this Chilean cultural legacy leads affected people to make their claims through protests in the streets rather than voting in the booth.

Overall, violent management of armed forces is a particularly sensitive topic for collective memory and public opinion in democratic societies. The evidence presented in this paper suggests that not holding the perpetrators of past political violence accountable can reduce the efficacy of electoral accountability in the present. A significant implication is that proper institutional reform combined with investigations of human rights violations by authoritarian regimes are essential for social peace in democratizing countries (Jelin, 2007).

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Appendix A. List of Variables, Sources and Descriptive Statistics

995 To test quantitative hypotheses in this paper, a database on 289 municipal-
ities (*Comunas*) was constructed with the following variables:

1. Dependent Variables

- (a) Protests: number of pacific protests, interventions and riots in Chile
between October 18th, 2019 and March 15th 2020¹⁰ per 10,000 in-
1000 habitants. The number of protests was obtained at ACLED database
(Raleigh et al., 2010), and the number of inhabitants was obtained
at the 2017 Chilean Census;
- (b) Approval Turnout: rate of participation of the new constituent plebiscite,
obtained at the Servicio Electoral de Chile (<https://www.servel.cl>);
- 1005 (c) Apruebo: rate of approval of the constituent plebiscite, obtained at
the Servicio Electoral de Chile (<https://www.servel.cl>);
- (d) Popular convention: rate of voting for the full popular convention as
the composition of the constituent (given Apruebo), obtained at the
Servicio Electoral de Chile (<https://www.servel.cl>);
- 1010 (e) Constitutional Convention composition Turnout: rate of participa-
tion of elections of the Constitutional Convention members, obtained
at the Servicio Electoral de Chile (<https://www.servel.cl>);
- (f) Vamos por Chile: Percentage of voting for candidates of Piñera
aligned right-Wing coalition Vamos por Chile, obtained at the Ser-
1015 vicio Electoral de Chile (<https://www.servel.cl>);
- (g) Lista del Apruebo: Percentage of voting for candidates of opposi-
tion center-left coalition Lista del Apruebo, obtained at the Servicio
Electoral de Chile (<https://www.servel.cl>);
- (h) Apruebo Dignidad: Percentage of voting for candidates of opposition
1020 left coalition Apruebo Dignidad, obtained at the Servicio Electoral
de Chile (<https://www.servel.cl>)

¹⁰Period between the *Santiagoazo* and the declaration of emergency state for the COVID-19 pandemic.

- (i) Turnout 1st Round: Rate of participation on first round of 2021 presidential election, obtained at the Servicio Electoral de Chile (<https://www.servel.cl>)
- (j) Boric 1st Round: Percentage of voting for Gabriel Boric on first round of 2021 presidential election, obtained at the Servicio Electoral de Chile (<https://www.servel.cl>);
- (k) Kast 1st Round: Percentage of voting for Jose Augusto Kast on first round of 2021 presidential election, obtained at the Servicio Electoral de Chile (<https://www.servel.cl>);
- (l) Turnout 2nd Round: Rate of participation on second round of 2021 presidential election, obtained at the Servicio Electoral de Chile (<https://www.servel.cl>)
- (m) Boric 2nd Round: Percentage of voting for Gabriel Boric on second round of 2021 presidential election, obtained at the Servicio Electoral de Chile (<https://www.servel.cl>);
- (n) Kast 2nd Round: Percentage of voting for Jose Augusto Kast on second round of 2021 presidential election, obtained at the Servicio Electoral de Chile (<https://www.servel.cl>);
- (o) 1st Exit Plebiscite Turnout: Rate of participation on the First Constitutional Text Approval, obtained at the Servicio Electoral de Chile (<https://www.servel.cl>)
- (p) 1st Exit Plebiscite Constitutional Text Approval: Percentage of voting for the First Constitutional Text Approval, obtained at the Servicio Electoral de Chile (<https://www.servel.cl>)
- (q) Constitutional Council composition Turnout: rate of participation of elections of the Constitutional Council members, obtained at the Servicio Electoral de Chile (<https://www.servel.cl>);
- (r) Unidad: Percentage of voting for candidates of left-Wing coalition Unidad por Chile, obtained at the Servicio Electoral de Chile (<https://www.servel.cl>);
- (s) Seguro: Percentage of voting for candidates of establishment right-wing coalition Chile Seguro, obtained at the Servicio Electoral de Chile (<https://www.servel.cl>)

- (t) Republicano: Percentage of voting for candidates of Populist/Pinochetista coalition Partido Republicano, obtained at the Servicio Electoral de Chile (<https://www.servel.cl>)
- 1055 (u) Nulos: Percentage of non valid voting (nulls and blank) at the Constitutional Council composition election, obtained at the Servicio Electoral de Chile (<https://www.servel.cl>)
- (v) 2nd Exit Plebiscite Turnout: Rate of participation on the Second Constitutional Text Approval, obtained at the Servicio Electoral de Chile (<https://www.servel.cl>)
- 1060 (w) 2nd Exit Plebiscite Constitutional Text Approval: Percentage of voting for the Second Constitutional Text Approval, obtained at the Servicio Electoral de Chile (<https://www.servel.cl>)
- (x) Unemp/hab: Percentage of number of people filed as in search of an job relative to the population in 2017, obtained at the National System of Municipal Information (<http://datos.sinim.gov.cl>)
- 1065 (y) Inv Edu/alumno: Ratio of investment, in Chilean Pesos, on education by the number of students in Primary, Elementary and High School in 2017, obtained at the National System of Municipal Information (<http://datos.sinim.gov.cl>)
- 1070 (z) Inv Health/Inhab: Ratio of investment, in Chilean Pesos, on public health by the number of inhabitants in 2017, obtained at the National System of Municipal Information (<http://datos.sinim.gov.cl>)

2. Main Independent Variables

- 1075 (a) Pre-70 Bases: Dummy variable if the municipality had a military base placed before 1970 (the beginning of the Allende government), condensed by Bautista et al. (2021);
- (b) Victims/10k Inhab: number (by 10,000 inhabitants) of victimizations placed by the Pinochet regime in a municipality, condensed by Bautista et al. (2021);
- 1080 (c) Victims Residents/10k Inhab: number (by 10,000 inhabitants) of residents victimized by Pinochet Regime in a municipality, condensed

by Bautista et al. (2021);

(d) Twitter I: Number of Users that tweeted in 11th september 2019
1085 “Allende vive”, “Golpe de Estado” and/or “NiPerdónNiOlvido” per
10k inhabitants. Data scrapped at exportdata.io and calculated by
the author.

(e) Twitter II: Number of Users that tweeted “Allende vive”, “Golpe de
Estado”, “NiPerdónNiOlvido”, “Allende” and/or “11septiembre1973”
1090 per 10k inhabitants. Data scrapped at exportdata.io and calculated
by the author.

3. Weight (Inverse standard deviation)

(a) Pop: population, obtained at the Chilean census 2017;

4. Controls

1095 (a) Dist-RegCap: distance to regional capital, condensed by Bautista
et al. (2021);

(b) Dist-Stgo: distance to Santiago, condensed by Bautista et al. (2021);

(c) Province FE: Fixed effects for the historical province division during
the Pinochet era, Bautista et al. (2021);

1100 (d) Pop: population, obtained at the Chilean census 2017;

(e) Rural: Rural share, obtained at the Chilean census 2017;

(f) Share-Allende-1970: the share of votes for Salvador Allende (winner)
in 1970, condensed by Bautista et al. (2021)

(g) Share-Alessandri-1970 the share of votes for Jorge Alessandri (the
1105 second place) in 1970, condensed by Bautista et al. (2021)

Table A.14: Descriptive Statistics

	Mean	S.D.	Max.	Min.
Dependent Variables				
All protests	1.263	6.815	124.611	0.000
Pacific Protests	0.867	6.748	124.611	0.000
Violent Riots	0.396	0.732	5.198	0.000
Turnout (Constituent initiative)	43.791	67.980	11.340	10.556
Approval (Constituent initiative)	76.270	9.871	91.770	25.940
Approval (Popular Convention)	76.676	7.291	88.600	37.200
Turnout (Assembly composition)	47.728	9.024	73.730	1.650
Vote Share for Vamos por Chile	21.503	9.209	63.820	5.790
Vote Share for Lista del Apruebo	16.687	7.956	54.200	15.035
Vote Share for Apruebo Dignidad	15.887	8.551	50.820	1.600
Turnout (2021 Presidential 1st Votation)	44.310	6.693	69.270	19.070
Votes Share for Kast (2021 1st Voting)	30.405	9.900	72.340	11.570
Vote Share for Boric (2021 1st Voting)	20.884	7.146	45.430	1.880
Turnout (2021 Presidential 2nd Votation)	52.399	8.634	72.850	14.070
Vote Share for Kast (2021 2nd Voting)	48.429	12.477	94.690	24.570
Turnout (1st Exit Plebiscite)	84.649	9.365	94.550	32.750
Vote Share for Text Approval (1st Exit Plebiscite)	32.311	9.461	58.230	5.300
Turnout (Consejo)	80.059	11.827	93.240	28.180
Vote Share for Unidad por Chile	23.114	9.129	22.264	46.005
Vote Share for Chile Seguro	22.246	7.113	50.128	5.455
Vote Share for Partido Republicano	37.532	9.118	80.000	11.336
Non Valid (null and blank) Vote share	23.055	4.594	37.791	4.606
Turnout (2nd Exit Plebiscite)	83.931	9.597	93.880	29.510
Vote Share for Text Rejection (2nd Exit Plebiscite)	52.344	8.875	69.210	17.330
Unemp	3.751	2.999	22.001	0.000
Inv Edu/Stud	77.920	508.160	5821.486	0.000
Inv Health/Inhab	0.204	0.958	10.943	0.000
Independent Variables				
Victims/10k Habs	2.449	8.534	132.721	0.000
Victim Residents/10k Habs	1.500	3.127	30.041	0.000
Twitter I Accounts/10k inhabs	0.173	0.781	13.696	0.000
Twitter II Accounts/10k inhabs	0.481	1.826	31.595	0.000
Distance to Santiago	5.355	1.706	8.235	0.000
Distance to Regional Capital	3.755	1.442	8.256	0.000
2017 Population	50791.920	78691.930	568106.000	138.000
Rural Share	36.314	28.988	100.000	0.000
Vote Share for Allende (1970)	35.153	13.279	76.778	4.167
Vote Share for Alessandri (1970)	34.718	9.726	68.421	7.798

Appendix B. Bautista et al. (2021) tests

Table B.15: Bautista et al. (2021) - Differences by Military Presence before the Dictatorship

	Avg. w/o military	Projection on military presence		
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
Political characteristics				
Vote share Salvador Allende in 1970	37.76 (12.13)	-1.73 (1.91)	-1.64 (2.16)	—
Vote share Jorge Alessandri in 1970	33.42 (9.46)	1.97 (1.81)	3.03 (1.9)	—
Turnout 1970	29.17 (44.13)	4.95* (2.49)	2.35 (3.13)	1.02 (2.58)
Vote share UP municipal election in 1971	51.35 (12.48)	-1.36 (2.34)	-1.71 (2.74)	0.68 (1.17)
UP mayor indicator 1971	0.39 (0.49)	-0.16 (0.10)	-0.13 (0.10)	0.01 (0.11)
Vote share UP legislative election 1973	45.64 (11.54)	-3.75* (1.82)	-3.60 (2.27)	-0.96 (0.61)
Geographic characteristics				
ln distance to Santiago	4.28 (1.98)	1.27** (0.43)	0.16 (0.11)	-
ln distance to regional capital	3.13 (1.28)	-0.95* (0.46)	-1.39** (0.34)	-
Landlocked indicator	0.76 (0.43)	-0.25* (0.11)	-0.09 (0.07)	0.07 (0.07)
Demographic characteristics				
Population (Pop.) in 1970	0.96 (1.05)	0.18 (0.26)	0.44* (0.19)	—
Houses per capita in 1970	0.2 (0.04)	0.01 (0.00)	-0.00 (0.00)	-0.01* (0.01)

Table B.15 continued from previous page

Community organizations 1970	4.91 (14.29)	7.13* (2.84)	6.29* (2.71)	1.56 (2.45)
Churches per capita 1962	0.07 (0.08)	-0.00 (0.01)	-0.02* (0.01)	-0.01 (0.01)
Pop. share w/12+ years of education 1970	0.02 (0.03)	0.01 (0.01)	0.02 (0.01)	0.00 (0.01)
Pop. density 1970	27.3 (47.89)	-21.51* (10.31)	-7.50 (6.72)	-7.96 (7.41)
Pop. share rural 1970	0.32 (0.33)	-0.19** (0.05)	-0.24** (0.04)	—
Pop. share economically active 1970	0.29 (0.03)	0.01 (0.01)	0.01 (0.01)	0.01 (0.01)
Pop. share female 1970	0.51 (0.03)	0.01 (0.01)	0.02** (0.01)	0.00 (0.00)
Pop. share w/TV ownership 1987	0.85 (0.13)	-0.01 (0.02)	0.04* (0.02)	-0.01 (0.02)
Policy characteristics				
Agr. land share expropriated before 1973	0.23 (0.25)	0.07 (0.05)	0.02 (0.03)	-0.05 (0.04)
Exposure to trade liberalization	0.20 (0.18)	0.02 (0.06)	0.01 (0.02)	-0.02 (0.03)
N	240	276	276	276

Note: Source: Bautista et al. (2021). Standard deviation in parenthesis in column 1. Robust standard errors in parenthesis in columns 2–4. Columns 3–4 include province fixed effects. Column 4 further controls for distance to Santiago and regional capital, 1970 population and rural share, vote shares for Allende and Alessandri in 1970. Weights: 1970 population. Marginal significance levels: (**) denotes 0.01, and (*) denotes 0.05.

Table B.16: Old Military Bases and Migration (Bautista et al., 2021)

	Not in birth county	Not in 1977 county
<i>Military Base</i>	-0.01 (0.02)	-0.02 (0.01)
OLS R ²	0.592	0.715
Province Dummies	x	x
Controls	x	x
N. Obs.	276	276

Source: Bautista et al. (2021). All regressions include province fixed effects and control for distance to Santiago and regional capital, 1970 population and rural share, vote shares for Allende and Alessandri in 1970. Weights: 1970 population. Robust standard errors in parenthesis; Marginal significance levels: (**) denotes 0.01, and (*) denotes 0.05.