Political Subjectivation, Generation, and Postmemory

Understanding the Activists of the 2011 Chilean Student Movement

by
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Analysis of the life stories of three activists involved in the 2011 student mobilization in Chile reveals a particular articulation of the painful memories of their parents, who had been political radicals before or during the Pinochet dictatorship, that allowed them to build a perspective on their own struggle and develop effective narratives that fueled their activism. The research sheds light on the nature of postmemory and political subjectivation in transitional societies.

El análisis de las historias de vida de tres activistas involucrados en la movilización estudiantil de 2011 en Chile revela una particular articulación de los dolorosos recuerdos de sus padres, quienes fueran radicales políticos antes o durante la dictadura de Pinochet. Esto les permitió construir una perspectiva sobre su propia lucha y desarrollar narrativas efectivas para alimentar su activismo. La investigación se enfoca en la naturaleza de la posmemoria y la subjetivación política en las sociedades en transición.

Keywords: ***C****ollective memory, Political subjectivation, Chile, Social movements*

In 2011, hundreds of thousands of Chilean students from around the country occupied their universities demanding free public education. For eight months they brought the country to a standstill with the biggest mobilization since the end of the Augusto Pinochet dictatorship (1973–1990) that had overthrown the democratically elected socialist government of Salvador Allende (1970–1973) (Aguilera, 2016; Fleet and Guzmán-Concha, 2016; Guzmán-Concha, 2014; Mayol and Azócar, 2011; Ruiz Encina, 2013). The significance of the movement lies not only in its endurance or its massive character but in the cultural and political impact it has had on Chilean society, effectively challenging the hegemony of neoliberal public policy in the country (Donoso, 2014; Ortiz Ruiz, 2019). This paper aims at understanding it by analyzing the political subjectivation of three of the activists involved, especially with regard to memory transmission between generations. It argues that these activists were part of a generation with effective political subjectivation (Wieviorka, 2014) thanks to the development of a coherent postmemory. To understand this process, it will

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describe the theoretical framework that guides the research, present the methodology used, and then summarize the social and political background that explains the 2011 mobilization and engage in a dialogue between this background and the three interviews.

MEMORY AND POLITICAL SUBJECTIVATION: A MATTER OF GENERATION

In the context of his lectures on the oeuvre of Michel Foucault, Gilles Deleuze (2015: 140), asked about the relationship between memory and subjectivation, responded, "The real name of subjectivation is memory." For Deleuze, being a subject was always related to truth and power, and properly analyzing the development of subjectivation required understanding the person's experiences and how they had impacted his or her life. In Foucault's (1982) work, political subjectivation was the process by which people became politically engaged. Social beings became subjects under the influence of discourse and power. To fully understand participation in contentious politics, it was necessary to reveal what made the individual feel compelled to participate through considering personal narratives, emotions, political and social discourses, and especially memory (Piedrahita Echandia, 2015).

There is broad consensus that memory is "socially constructed, inherently plural and contentious" (Zamponi, 2018: 13). Indeed, research on memory has tended to highlight its social character—that past events are not just stored in the minds of those who lived them but symbolic and cultural narratives shared among members of a community and part of their understanding of who they are (Halbwachs, 1992; Jelin, 2002; Kubal and Becerra, 2014; Olick, Vinitzky-Seroussi, and Levy, 2011; Zamponi, 2018). Central to this social conception of memory is the concept of collective memory. Maurice Halbwachs (1992) argued that collective memory was a set of social frameworks developed within a group as a consequence of a shared identity and an attachment to a common past. A key element of collective memory was its contentious character, providing fertile ground for political struggle. Individual memories were socially framed, carrying the values and moral representations of a particular society or group. This framework characterized remembrance as an emotional endeavor articulating identities and political perspectives. A key element of collective memory was the social institutions that (re)produced them. Family, class, party, etc., allowed the construction and development of social links that created a sense of a shared future, allowing the development of common remembrance of the past (Zamponi, 2018). Thus there might be multiple collective memories depending on the groups that made up a society at any given time. An important source of social frameworks was the generation. Mannheim (1972) argued that historical processes were inextricably related to the finiteness of individuals—that people's understanding of reality was always related to the specific events they were exposed to and to the communities and identities they forged over the years. The concept of the generation addressed this issue by highlighting the significance of belonging to a specific cohort for the way individuals processed and interacted with the world (Eyerman, 2005).

As Kubal and Becerra (2014: 865) argue, "collective memory is a powerful cultural resource used to build active movement communities, shape public opinion, and alter institutional action." Since the past is interpreted in different ways according to the experiences of different communities, these differences are inherently contentious, recollection of the past becoming an aspect of the struggle to understand the present. This is especially relevant for societies that are undergoing a transition. Transitions are political periods in which societies that have experienced a social catastrophe rebuild a sense of legitimacy by rearranging their political and social identities. They involve the construction of new relationships between victors and losers, perpetrators and victims, in the hope of building an integrated society (Assman and Shortt, 2012). As historical processes, transitions are deeply contentious in that they involve a reconfiguration of narratives about a painful past. They create scenarios of confrontation between opposing groups with different experiences and political aspirations—differences that are not only expressed in political projects but also constitute a perspective about the past and a program for processing it (Jelin, 2002: 45).

In the case of Chile, the 1988 referendum and the general election in 1990 ended 17 years of dictatorship. The referendum was made possible by the massive mobilizations of 1983–1985. Military rule had coupled oppression and systematic human rights violations with a set of broad neoliberal reforms that changed the country's social and political landscape (Moulian, 1997). The democratic transition was agreed upon between the military junta and a coalition of opposition parties called the Concertación.[1] This agreement secured (1) a political and judicial framework established by the 1980 Constitution (enacted under the dictatorship), (2) a market-driven capitalist economy in expansion, (3) the continuity of Pinochet on the political scene (first as commander-in-chief and then as senator for life), and (4) a stable and bipolar distribution of political forces (Lechner and Güell, 1999). This political framework meant that the newly elected coalition had very little room for change.

A key feature of General Augusto Pinochet's dictatorship was the fear that permeated the whole society, fostering what Lechner (1992) called a "paranoid society" and Jara (2016) a "psychogeography of fear"—the distrust characteristic of societies that suffer the consequences of systematic human rights violations (Barbera, 2009). Even after the 1988 election, the traumatizing effect of political violence endured (Assman and Shortt, 2012; Brockhaus, 2012). The political framework of transition and the amnesty law of 1978 meant that human rights violations were not prosecuted, and this scenario translated into a general demobilization of civil society (Jara Ibarra, 2016), as silence, denial, and oblivion became normalized as responses to the horrors of the past (Moulian, 1997). This meant that, even decades after the referendum, the crimes of the dictatorship remained family secrets, shared among a few but mostly repressed.

METHODOLOGY

This research used life-story interviews to understand the process of political subjectivation. As an interview technique, life stories center the analysis of

social events in individual narratives. In contrast to official historical narratives, life stories focus not on leaders or experts but on those who have lived a historical process from a position of anonymity. They focus on the way individuals change and develop over time and the reasons behind this change. Finally, they focus on the interactions between public and private life (Della Porta, 1992; 2014; Plummer, 2001). The stories shared by the activists were assessed not in terms of their veracity but in terms of their own internal meanings—the emotions and drives that were shared in the interactive context of the interviews. As Davis (2002) argues, stories, as social practices, establish relationships between the teller and the interpretative audience. Thus the intention, order, and character of the stories shared are aspects that were critically assessed.

The interviews were conducted in the city of Santiago in the summer of 2014 with three 2011 activists who were sons or daughters of people involved either in Allende's government or in the resistance against the dictatorship (Kenniston, 1968). Each activist had at least one family member who had suffered human rights violations under Pinochet's dictatorship. The research used nonprobability "snowball sampling," contacting people relevant to the research and asking for the contact details of other relevant subjects (Bryman, 2012). As Ken Plummer (2001) argues, life-story research is interested not in representativeness but in information-richness. The interviews have been identified by pseudonyms to protect the identities of the interviewees.

INTERPRETING VIOLENCE: POSTMEMORY AND POLITICAL SUBJECTIVATION

Laura is a 26-year-old working-class activist from Santiago. Her family's story is shaped both by the silence of her parents about politics and by their experiences of poverty. Both her mother and father were part of Allende's government—her father as a state schoolteacher and her mother as secretary to the Minister of the Economy—and this involvement had devastating consequences during the dictatorship. Shortly after the coup, her mother was imprisoned and her father blacklisted, pushing the family into poverty. However, her family's experiences during the dictatorship were not discussed. Laura (interview, Santiago, 2014) said, "There are many things that I found out on my own . . . for instance, that my mom was imprisoned. I found out about this by listening behind doors, by staying up late and listening to my parents talk, because it was never openly discussed. In general, we don't talk much about politics." This silence was something that puzzled her; it was a presence that constantly surrounded her relationship with her parents, drawing her into her family's past. This is a common feature of the intergenerational transmission of trauma—the silencing of trauma to avoid reliving the pain of the past (Brockhaus, 2012; Frei, 2018; Schwab, 2012). In Chile it was part of a general discourse of transition aimed at blocking sources of conflict in the general spirit of consensus (Moulian, 1997; Richard, 1998). A remarkable feature of Laura's story is its conflation of human rights violations and politics. Political activity was perceived as confrontational and

avoidable, and this perception was founded on the centrality of violence in the political discourse of transition.

However, as a person born after the dictatorship, Laura was exposed to different sources regarding the human rights violations of the regime. From books, documentary films, and other sources she constructed her own perception of the dictatorship. These sources, combined with the little information that she collected from listening behind doors, helped her to create her own perspective. About her mother's imprisonment, for example, she said, "I know that it happened. I don't know exactly what happened, because I don't want to know, you know? I once told my Mom, 'I don't want you to tell me to what happened to you. I know what happened to other women prisoners, but I don't want to know what happened to you' . . . because it is just too hard for me." Her reaction to her mother's experience is significant in terms of the emotional response—a key element in the process of breaking the silence of transition. Her acknowledgment of her mother's experiences breaks the silence of transition; although she does not want to hear the details, she recognizes the violence of those experiences and emotionally engages with it.

As Brockhaus (2012) argues, one of the behaviors that is most helpful in breaking communicative silence is the emotional engagement of the next generation. Those born after the traumatic events critically review those historic events by confronting their parents. In the case of Nazi Germany, this brought about a generational split, preventing members of the younger generation from identifying with their parents' history. In the case of Chile, this confrontation seems to build a bridge between the generations, linking the struggle against the dictatorship and the current struggle for education. In his research on generational narratives in Argentina and Chile, Frei (2017) finds similar discourses in which activists of the student movement in Chile link their struggle with the struggle of their parents.

Although she was never politically indoctrinated by her family, Laura's political participation began in one of the most traditional political parties of the country, the Communist Party.[2] In telling her story regarding her induction into the party, she was careful to assert her ignorance about politics at the time: "I knew very little [about the Communist Party]. I don't come from a Communist family. They are very much to the left politically, but we never discussed politics in my home, so I didn't know much. . . . All that I learned about the Communist Party I did as an activist." However, she described her family's reaction to her political involvement as quite emotional: "We started having political discussions when I joined the party . . . and, of course, my parents were ecstatic that I did. They almost cried when I told them."

In 2013 Chile commemorated the fortieth anniversary of the coup. This was a deeply emotional moment, since the various commemorations opened the way for an "irruption of memories" (Wilde et al., 1998) regarding the dictatorship. This had a profound effect on victims of the regime, who recognized the possibility of openly sharing their own stories of violence, thereby allowing for a process of national mourning. Schwab (2012) mentions a similar process in Germany, where an American TV series recounting the crimes of the Holocaust unleashed an emotional response from a public previously immersed in a

process of silencing and emotionless psychic paralysis. Laura spoke of the anniversary as follows:

> The fortieth commemoration of the coup was a massive event, very emotional as well. The TV broadcast shows regarding the dictatorship. . . . I would watch a show and call my mother, who was watching the same show, and we would cry over the phone together. On the day of the commemoration, I went to my parents' house, and during supper Joseph [Laura's stepfather] started retelling his experience [during the coup]. It was intense. It was like having living history in one person: everything that you read, everything you watched on the TV shows, everything that you discussed with your friends . . . being told by your flesh-and-blood father because it was his experience. It was extremely intense. Also, we had time to ask questions, to go deeper into topics that I was always interested in but couldn't ask about before.

These experiences of mourning and recognition were significant for the development of the current generation's political subjectivation as sons and daughters of victims of the regime. The experiences of their parents remained repressed, constituting a mystery for them. The public events allowed these memories to come forward, unleashing a mourning process that affected not only their families but also the rest of society. As Wieviorka (2014) argues, these processes of mourning are crucial for the development of an effective subjectivation, since they allow people to project the past onto the present.

Javiera, a 23-year-old middle-class activist who came from a long line of left-wing activists, was involved in a similar process of mourning. Her great-aunt had been captured and disappeared by the regime, and her father had been a victim of torture. After his imprisonment he studied filmmaking and joined an independent film production studio, where he met Javiera's mother. In this studio they recorded and broadcast news that denounced the situation in Chile to the international community. After the end of the dictatorship they were divorced, and Javiera went to live with her mother in a small town outside Santiago called Melipilla.

Coming from such a violent and painful background, Javiera was made aware of a significant part of her family's violent past by her mother; her father refrained from talking about the subject completely. The first two family narratives that Javiera received were about the disappearance of her great-aunt and about her parents' film production company. Her father's imprisonment and torture were not mentioned until much later (interview, Santiago, 2014):

> I always knew that my dad worked in the film production company, but it has always been easier for me to talk to my mom about it, as she has always been open with me and has told me everything. . . . Well, I guess not everything. However, she was always very open to talk to me about these issues but my dad not so much. Actually, very recently we are just starting to talk about these issues. He is beginning to tell me everything that he experienced: his return to Chile, my aunt [on her father's side] who participated in the MIR [Movimiento de Izquierda Revolucionaria], [sup] 3 my aunt who was arrested and is still missing. It is as if he had always silenced that part, not because he doesn't want to talk but because it is just too difficult for him. He wants to talk, but he has many things repressed, so it is hard for him to talk about these issues. It is something that he is starting to do now. We started to talk about it two years ago.

What is interesting here is the significance of her father's silence in her storytelling. Although she was aware of her father's circumstances, she decided at first not to mention his silence about the past. This decision highlights the impact on her subjectivation of both this silence and her father's story. This became evident when I asked her about her reaction when she found out about her father's suffering: "I sincerely had no idea about a whole era of my father's life. I just did not know. . . . It was a strong experience, and it was [*long pause*], although it was not pride—pride is not the word, because I was really sad— . . . but it's like . . . it showed me my dad's commitment." On the one hand, she was saddened by her father's suffering, and on the other hand, she was proud of his political commitment to the struggle against the dictatorship. She struggled with this ambivalence, trying to repress the pride but giving it away in denying it. She was deeply committed to this narrative, and it affected her political subjectivation. Also, it revealed a certain glorification of the struggle against the dictatorship. This is a common feature among the sons and daughters of those who were activists during the 1970s and 1980s (Lechner and Güell, 1999). As the events of the dictatorship are mediated through direct storytelling and media, they become part of the storytellers' identities in what Hirsch (2008) calls "postmemories." Javiera's father's imprisonment and torture reflected his commitment, something that she held dear and that allowed her to position herself as an activist in the history of the left.

At some point in the interview Javiera mentioned that she had helped her mother to digitalize videos from the film-production studio, which meant watching them one-by-one. Referring to a documentary produced by her mother, she said,

> It showed all the organization of the women during the dictatorship, how they would organize through soup kitchens, how they would hide people being persecuted, how they had the houses prepared to receive those people . . . and that particular documentary ends when the "No"[4] wins [in the 1988 general election]. It was very powerful. I vividly remember the final speech of one of the female leaders of the slum . . . "Finally as women we have succeeded, we have earned our freedom." . . . It leaves you with a great sense of impotence. I mean, they really had a hope with this [democracy] . . . and now we have the same thing.

This experience became crucial as she learned about the hardships caused by the dictatorship through these videos. Also, the context in which she viewed these statements—a review of her parents' work and experiences—is telling. A relevant aspect of this story is what Davis (2002) refers to as "emplotment"—the process by which narrative explanations construct a plot, investing it with continuity and meaning and projecting a sense of what is going to happen. When Javiera reflected on her mother's recordings of female activists from a slum in Santiago, she highlighted the ability of these women to organize against state terror (with safe-houses for people avoiding persecution, soup kitchens, etc.). Thus the female slum dwellers were the main characters and heroes of this story. She went on to describe their joy after the 1988 referendum and then finished on a sour note with a critical assessment of democratic Chile. This story is important not only because of its content but also because of the social

processes from which it emerged. As Tilly (2002) argues, in analyzing a story from a sociological perspective it is important to focus on the social process that determines the appreciation of it. Javiera's story provides a glimpse of her generation's narrative about the dictatorship. Its plot centers on the sense of impotence that she felt with regard to the democratic governments that followed the dictatorship. She embodied this sense in the expectations of the slum dwellers, expectations that she felt were not met after the 1988 referendum. The social processes that allow the appreciation of this story are based on a cohesive and clear idea about the dictatorship, and the conclusion is based on a judgment of both the democratic transition and the dictatorship. The conditions of possibility for this story to emerge are the postmemories Javiera inherited from her family, as well as the different social and historical processes that are part of the transition to democracy, especially regarding the assessment of the dictatorship and its crimes. Zamponi (2018) points out that social movements' interpretations of the past are interesting in that they reveal the success or failure of mnemonic projects. Javiera's interpretation of history revealed a critical review of the process of transition (Karmy-Bolton, 2018), criticizing its relationship with the dictatorship.

This narrative not only informed her perception of the past but was a source of meaning for the present. According to Halbwachs (1992), the significance of collective memory lies in the social frameworks that are embedded in it; for Javiera the story of her parents' experiences was not just a narrative about their past but a source of meaning that informed her life. Her interpretation linked the struggles of her parents with her own, establishing a connection that challenged the hegemonic discourse of transition. This link was not only due to her experiences with her family but also developed through her experiences of activism. Thus it is possible to see what Wieviorka (2014) calls "effective subjectivation"—the ability to use the past to understand the present and project the future.

Javiera's political background clashed with the environment of transition, where political issues of the past remained silenced. In most schools, political organizations were restricted. Despite this, she managed to find a way to develop her activism. Interestingly, she did it by participating in a cultural activity that directly cited the struggle against Pinochet:

> My interest in politics came from my family and was always there, but when I was about to finish school is when I and my group of friends became politically active. We felt that Melipilla didn't give us much. We didn't have much to do besides hang out in the town center. . . . It was kind of a bubble. Out of this environment, a teacher [from my school] opened a *peña* [a venue devoted to Chilean folk music], which became a meeting point for left-wing people in the town—because Melipilla is an extremely right-wing town. Therefore we started meeting there, and the conversation became increasingly political, and from there on I became increasingly interested in politics.

Established around the 1960, peñas gave birth to Nueva Canción Chilena (New Chilean Song), a mixture of folk music from different parts of South America and the Caribbean. These songs, usually infused with left-wing political messages about working-class struggles, became keystones in the cultural

movement that supported Allende's government. After the coup most of them closed, since they were considered as gathering points for the opposition, but some managed to stay open in the underground as places of cultural resistance to the regime. The peña provided Javiera with physical and cultural support that resonated with her political subjectivity, allowing her the space she needed to develop her activism. This was made possible thanks to the cultural signifiers of the left and their constant reference to the past. The peña works as a place of memory (Jelin, 2002), in which the cultural and political signifiers of the left and its past are expressed in full form, allowing Javiera to draw meaning out of the cultural frames that are produced in this space.

Similarly to Javiera's, the family story of Lautaro, a 23-year-old middle-class student from Santiago, centers around the experiences of his father, a university lecturer from a working-class background who was an active participant in the underground struggle against the dictatorship (interview, Santiago, 2014):

> My dad began his activism in university during the dictatorship. He joined the Socialist Party when it was planning to overthrow Pinochet.[5] My dad was an active member at that time. This brought certain consequences for my family, because my parents were about to have my older brother at the time, while also finishing their undergraduate studies . . . around 1982, at the beginning of the economic crisis. Nevertheless, my dad decided to remain politically active, forcing my mother to find a job.

His narrative focused primarily on the actions of his father, leaving his mother in a secondary role. Jara (2016) identifies this trend as the "Antigone model," the tendency to position women in the secondary role of mourning and searching for the bodies of their male partners. This became clear very early in the interview; whenever I asked about his family history, he insisted on situating his storytelling in the actions of his father.

> I was always interested in my family's history, how my parents met, the things that are important to him [his father]. Besides, I have always seen my father as someone that was very much faithful to his ideas. . . . In my father's library there is a picture of Marx and Engels that my dad took from a book. As a kid I would ask him who those people were, to which he would reply, "They are your uncles." Also, on September 11 he always wakes up and listens to a radio show that narrates the events of that day from beginning to end. All these practices have had a significant impact on my home. It's impossible not to ask where all this interest comes from.

This is a common feature of these activists' narratives: politics and their families' histories are interwoven, creating a strong subjective attachment to activism. The mention of both the ritual of September 11 commemoration and the Marx and Engels picture reflects this clearly: both anecdotes establish the emotional link between Lautaro's left-wing politics and his identification with his father's political activity. Regarding his father's refusal to tell him about his underground actions, he said, "He tells me that when the time comes he will tell me, because of the severity of the things that he experienced—that he lost comrades, that he almost died, apparently, a lot of things that he nowadays has

ethical issues about." Although the underground character of his father's activism was something that Lautaro was very much aware of, his father's refusal to share the details surrounding his experiences was intriguing. According to Lautaro, it was due to the severity of the events and activities that he was involved in. What is interesting, however, is that his father had left open the possibility for Lautaro to know the details of his traumatic experiences. This opportunity captured Lautaro's imagination, establishing a bond between him and his father. Thus, it is possible to see a mnemonic intention in the way in which his father passed this information on to him, creating a bond that was crucial to understanding Lautaro's political subjectivation. These narratives were embedded in a father-and-son relationship that explained their pervasiveness and significance. This context acquires new significance when we examine the origin of Lautaro's activism.

Most of Lautaro's adolescence was spent in a traditional school in the center of Santiago called the Liceo de Aplicación, one of the oldest in the country. Founded in 1892, it was also one of the most prestigious until the introduction of neoliberal policies by Pinochet's military junta.[6] During the dictatorship, its students played a significant role in the resistance against the regime, especially during the 1982–1983 demonstrations (Salazar, 2012), and this had a significant effect on Lautaro's political subjectivation: "The legacy of the Liceo de Aplicación was like that, always to uphold the discussion, to stand your ground, to give your perspective on the areas of struggle." He entered the school after having deliberately failed to gain admittance to an even more traditional school, the Instituto Nacional, that his father had attended. When I asked him why, he said,

> Because it was something that my dad had done. It was his legacy. My dad was the one who constructed an identity around the Instituto Nacional. He wanted me to be the same. He wanted me to move up the social ladder, and that was the first thing that I rejected. And the second thing that I rejected was an almost fascist [identity] logic that both the Instituto Nacional and the Liceo de Aplicación have—so much so that they can't stand each other, if [their students] saw each other on the streets there would be fights. I found that sort of thing almost animalistic.

His sabotaging of the test was an act of rebellion against what he felt was the imposition of his father's trajectory on his own. This turn in his story is interesting considering how much of his family's narrative is based on his father. From the interaction between the demands of his father and the identity logics of the school emerged from a specific trajectory of activism:

> Opposition to those logics is what led me to anarchism, because I came to the conclusion that these sorts of things led to nothing but segregation. This is, of course, something that I developed over time, but it was something that I felt in my gut from the beginning. . . . I became an anarchist in terms of participating in the student organizations, pushing the assembly[7] as the way to participate, and also in terms of accumulating strength through our working-class identity instead of the identity of the school. We saw the school identity as imposed by the school authorities, which helped obscure the real issues—that we had our own working-class identity. Our main criticism was that the school was a place where working-class kids went to leave their class behind.

Through this story he asserted his trajectory as independent of his father's, rebelling against the imposition of the father's story on his own. Both the narrative about his father's experiences during the dictatorship and his attitude toward the selection of the school suggest a great effort by his father to have Lautaro continue his own trajectory. This effort was significant to his political subjectivation but not in the way in which it was intended. Lautaro seems to have rebelled against this imposition, aiming at constructing his own political trajectory, but this trajectory was never completely separated from that of his father.

His family's history and his interactions at school were also involved in the development of his political perspective. His school was full of political organizations, from active cells of the Communist Party to various factions of the MIR and other anarchist organizations. In this context, he and a couple of friends organized a direct-action cell at school that focused its efforts on violent confrontation with the police:

> It was a direct-action collective. We used to gather to discuss, mainly as a group of friends, but we were very much politically committed as well. We would discuss the latest political news . . . but our focus was direct action, almost as a military organization, against the police. We would go out and use the trash cans [to build barricades] and choose the most convenient streets [to fight police], have a strategy to protect the mass mobilization—that was our objective. . . . Our main concern was to protect our classmates, that common identity—to try to reinvigorate our working-class identity on the basis of our camaraderie. Sometimes it worked and sometimes it didn't. Many of the people involved in the movement called us "pistol-heads."

His involvement in a direct-action collective undoubtedly referenced the earlier undercover actions of his father. In these actions, violence and anonymity are the signifiers that link the two trajectories. Lautaro, by his use of violence, seems to have reenacted his father's traumatic experiences. Although the social and political scenarios are different, the link between them is evident. Another interesting feature of this excerpt is the derogatory term "pistol-head," which was commonly used to refer to activists involved in violent actions from the 1970s on. The continual use of this term indicates the transmission of a memory from the 1970s to the present day. At the same time, it connects Lautaro to his father's history, recreating the contradictory character of his subjectivation. In some ways, political violence is the continuation of his father's legacy in his political action.

BY WAY OF CONCLUSION

I have analyzed the political subjectivation of activists involved in Chile's 2011 generation, focusing especially on postmemory. The generation that led the 2011 mobilization represented a rupture with previous generations. Born and raised after the end of the dictatorship, it was involved in two of the most significant mobilizations of the democratic governments, the 2006 Penguin Revolution and the 2011 student protests (Portillo et al., 2012). This cohort

could be understood as a strategic generation (Edmunds and Turner, 2002), one capable of effecting significant change in its environment.

According to Wieviorka (2014), subjectivation is effective when the experience of mourning allows a generation to incorporate the past into the present. The 2011 generation has witnessed an evolution of its collective memory of the dictatorship from the amnesia of the early days to a widespread recognition of the crimes involved. In this process, the experiences of their parents and the interaction of various media have been significant for their construction and development of their own recollections of the past. This postmemory is crucial in the construction of their political subjectivation as they interpret the present in the framework of the past.

NOTES

1. The Concertación was originally made up of the Christian Democrats, the Party for Democracy, the Chilean Socialists, and the Radical Social Democrats.

2. The Communist Party, founded in 1922, is one of Chile's oldest left-wing parties. It was part of Popular Unity, the coalition of parties that elected Allende. During his tenure, it was the most loyal to his agenda, seeking reform through the democratic process and avoiding any reference to violence as the means to secure the socialist project.

3. The Revolutionary Left Party, founded in 1965, was part of the coalition that supported Allende in the 1970 election. During Allende's government, this party pushed to deepen the social and economic reforms and advocated armed struggle to defend the Popular Unity government.

4. In 1988, after years of public demonstrations, the dictatorship was pushed into conducting a plebiscite that would determine whether Pinochet remained in power or made way for a democratic transition of power. The options on the ballot were "Sí" (Yes) and "No." The result favored "No" with 55.99 percent of the votes.

5. During the dictatorship, all left-wing political parties were declared illegal until 1985, when the negotiations for the referendum began. In this context, both the Communist and the Socialist parties worked underground to resist government persecution but also to topple the government by violent means.

6. Following neoliberal precepts, the dictatorship introduced a series of reforms that dramatically changed the educational system in the country. First, it decentralized public education, with public schools to be administered by the local boroughs according to their budgets. Secondly, it introduced vouchers by which schools received funding according to the number of students they were able to enroll, fostering competition between schools (Ruiz-Schneider, 2010).

7. The "assembly" was a gathering of politically active people who acted as a group to make decisions regarding matters of concern (Day, 2005).

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