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Public Opinion, Democracy, and the Armed Forces: Chile before the 1973 Military Coup

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Public Opinion, Democracy, and the Armed Forces: Chile before the 1973 Military Coup

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Abstract

This study aims to evaluate support for a military government and the image of the Chilean Armed Forces in the months leading up to the 1973 military coup, in a context of high political upheaval. To this end, it is based on surveys conducted in 1972 and 1973 that allow for measuring public opinion about the Armed Forces and the military government. The results show that, months before the military coup, approximately 25% of the Chilean population supported a military government. Furthermore, the Armed Forces had broad popular support and were perceived as reliable and politically neutral actors. Although it has been argued that the Armed Forces had an insurrectionary character before the coup, this study concludes that this image was not reflected in Chilean public opinion then.

Keywords: armed forces, public opinion, coups and conflicts, democracy, Chile

Opinión Pública, Democracia y Fuerzas Armadas: Chile antes del Golpe Militar de 1973

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Resumen

Este estudio tiene como objetivo evaluar el apoyo a un gobierno militar y la imagen de las Fuerzas Armadas en Chile en los meses previos al golpe militar de 1973, en un contexto de alta agitación política. Para ello, se basa en encuestas realizadas en 1972 y 1973 que permiten medir la opinión pública sobre las Fuerzas Armadas y el gobierno militar. Los resultados muestran que, meses antes del golpe militar, aproximadamente el 25% de la población chilena apoya un gobierno militar. Además, las Fuerzas Armadas tienen un amplio apoyo popular y son percibidas como actores confiables y políticamente neutrales. Aunque se ha afirmado que las Fuerzas Armadas tenían un carácter insurreccional antes del golpe, este estudio concluye que esta imagen no se reflejaba en la opinión pública chilena en ese momento.

Palabras clave: fuerzas armadas, opinión pública, golpes de estado y conflictos, democracia, Chile

Factors of democracy are generally studied from the conflict between the executive and legislative civil elites within the framework of presidentialism (Valenzuela, 1978; Linz, 1990 & 1994; Shugart & Carey, 1992; Stepan & Skach, 1993; Mainwaring, 1993), the politicization of the military in the context of the Cold War (Stepan, 1973; Pion-Berlin, 2001; Agüero, 2003), social mobilization resulting from modernization processes (O'Donnell, 1973), the coming to power of radical political forces without democratic conviction (Berman, 1998; Mainwaring & Pérez-Liñan, 2013), the economic performance of countries (Lipset, 1959; Dahl, 1971; Rueschemeyer et al., 1992; Przeworski, 2000; Adelman & Fajardo, 2016), and the presence of undemocratic values both in the elite (O'Donnell & Schmitter, 1988; Higley & Pakulski, 2000) as well as among citizens (Lipset, 1959; Inglehart & Welzel, 2005; Hadenius & Teorell, 2005). These factors are useful in explaining actors' stances on the democratic regime and the polarization process that ends with the military uprising. However, this literature ignores the public opinion context in which military coups are launched. We are unaware as to if these military coups occurred in favorable contexts to an authoritarian regime or if there were opposing opinions regarding the democratic commitment of the Armed Forces.

Given the limited dissemination of opinion polls during the 1960s and 1970s in Latin America, and specifically in Chile (Navia & Osorio, 2015), their impact on decision-making was less significant than in contemporary democracies (Booth & Seligson, 2009). Political parties in that era had a stronger social base and served as communication channels with voters (Gil, 1969), fulfilling aggregating demands (Easton, 1957). Additionally, there was a slow and incipient emergence of television (Sinclair, 1998). Therefore, public opinion and survey results were used as input by academics, although with some dissemination in the press (Cordero, 2009). We used a set of surveys performed by the sociologist Eduardo Hamuy from 1957 to the beginning of 1973. The questions posed in these surveys concerned self-identification with political parties, approval of the government, the economic situation, support for a military government, among other topics. They also had to do with specific actors, such as the Armed Forces. While the democratic or insurrectionary character of the Armed Forces was discussed among the elite, there was widespread consensus on the Armed Forces' commitment to

democracy in the public opinion. In addition, there was little support for a possible military government.

Can a democracy fall despite the fact that citizens see it as the only game in town? Is a coup possible in contexts of high public valuation of the Armed Forces? The case of Chile allows us to make progress in answering these questions. The results were striking. At the end of 1972, President Allende called the Armed Forces to form the cabinet. He did so in a context of high political polarization. A large majority of the respondents –more than 70%– estimated that the arrival of the Armed Forces to Allende's cabinet implied a strengthening of the democracy and that, at the same time, it gave more security to individuals and their families. This high valuation of the Armed Forces contrasted with the image of the Allende government which, at the end of 1972 and in the beginnings of 1973, recorded approval levels of below 40%.

Evidence from public opinion, then, was complemented with the thesis that defends the insurrectionary character of the Armed Forces. According to Varas (1987), Varas and Agüero (1988), Arriagada (1986) and Agüero (2003), the Armed Forces developed –in the ideological context of the Cold War– a distant stance from democracy and that was prone to the National Security Doctrine. This distance is linked to a lack of democratic control by the government over the military and to changes in the doctrine of the armed institutions (Agüero, 2017). For Valenzuela (1978), the political elite of the time also put pressure on the Armed Forces, debating between their institutional and insurrectionary character. However, as we note here, the fracture in the elite over the Armed Forces' role did not result in public opinion polarizing around this issue. Even the positive assessment of the Armed Forces was cross sectional considering political and socioeconomic variables.

This article is structured as follows. First, we identify the main theoretical approaches concerning democratic breakdowns and the reasons for their study from public opinion. Second, we exhibit the methodology to be used in this article. Third, we present the case of Chile, describing the process of political polarization that culminated in the 1973 military coup. Fourth, we analyze data from pre-coup opinion surveys, but with particular emphasis on perceptions about democracy and the Armed Forces.

Literature Review

There are many reasons to explain the fall of a democracy. Firstly, the causes are sought in institutional design characteristics and in country economic performance. Democracy collapses due to the tension between the executive and the legislative systems when –in presidential systems– the President does not have the necessary majority in Congress to carry their program forward (Mainwaring, 1993), posing a dilemma of ‘double legitimacy’ (Linz, 1990). This conflict is often resolved by the Armed Forces.

Secondly, the causes of democratic breakdowns are examined based on the political and ideological characteristics of those who accede to the government. The argument is that the low democratic commitment of the elites influences the institutional foundations of the democracy, facilitating the intervention of the Armed Forces (Berman, 1998; Mainwaring & Pérez-Liñán, 2013).

Thirdly, the effects of the import-substitution model on the incorporation processes into the political stage of historically marginalized sectors are studied (O'Donnell, 1973). This incorporation would have generated a revolution of expectations and an increase in social mobilizations expressed in protests. Given that these expectations were not completely fulfilled, citizen discontent –framed in a more organized civil society with a greater ability to pressure the state– contributed to destabilizing democratic governments (Collier & Collier, 1991). This reaction of civil society in light of the depletion of the import-substitution model produced the breakdown of the coalitions that supported the governments (Rueschmeyer et al., 1992).

Fourthly, explanations directly associated with the Armed Forces are presented. The most developed argument is related to the influence of the National Security Doctrine, which would have encouraged the Armed Forces to organize coups (Stepan, 1973; Pion-Berlin, 2001; Agüero, 2003). In Chile, for example, the United States' intervention in destabilizing the Allende government as a result of its revolutionary program is confirmed (Faúndez, 1992). Therefore, the international climate would have also favored democratic breakdowns in Latin America. For the United States, it was difficult to tolerate a Marxist-inspired government during the Cold War (Harmer & Riquelme, 2014).

Although these theoretical perspectives contribute to understanding the institutional, political, and economic factors of democratic breakdowns, they fail to capture one little studied dimension: public opinion. Certainly, studying public opinion in these contexts is a difficult task, as it is not common to find surveys. Fortunately, it is possible to perform a study of these characteristics in Chile, since surveys conducted from 1957 to 1973 are freely available. We suggest two reasons that justify studying public opinion in contexts of political convulsion.

The first reason, according to Easton (1965), is that political culture and, in particular, diffuse support for a democratic regime are key factors in studying institutional breakdowns or collapses. This support corresponds to the legitimacy that people give to democracy. The more traditional literature on this matter (Inglehart, 1988; Almond & Verba, 1963; Booth & Seligson, 2009) assumes that in societies with high levels of civic culture, the values of democracy are reproduced at a greater speed, contributing to regime consolidation (Inglehart, 1997 & 2004; Carlin, 2017). This diffuse support coexists with specific support, resulting in the performance of actors, i.e., the government, parties, or the Armed Forces.

The second reason, according to Zaller (1992), is that public opinion generally reflects conflicts among the elite. This elite is composed of politicians, senior government officials, journalists, and experts. According to Zaller (1992), although we learn from our friends or relatives about public issues, we are often mediated by ideas generated from some type of elite class. This is more relevant when we have a certain selective perception of events. In other words, we cannot be attentive to the entire medial agenda and, often (if not always), we turn to stereotypes or reference frameworks. However, such stereotypes can be deliberately modified according to the elite discourse when elites uphold a clear picture of what should be done, the public tends to see events from that point of view, with the most politically attentive members of the public most likely to adopt the elite position. When elites divide, members of the public tend to follow the elites sharing their general ideological or partisan predisposition, with the most politically attentive members of the public mirroring most sharply the ideological divisions among the elite (Zaller, 1992)

This approach is a meeting point for what Carmines and Stimpson (1989) call issue evolution. In other words, the way in which political processes are

interpreted by actors –the elite– to persuade their respective audiences. Issue evolution involves the adaptation of actors' discourses and agendas to cause changes in citizens' perceptions and preferences (Carmines & Stimpson, 1989; Kindong, 1995). Surely, the more traditional schools, especially the Michigan, recognize certain limitations to this. The central thesis of this approach is that, in reality, political preferences are difficult to change since they are the result of an individual's family socialization environment (Campbell et. al., 1960; Jennings & Niemi, 1968; Converse, 1969; Richardson, 1991; Beck & Jennings 1991; Ventura, 2001), without prejudice to their susceptibility to change in the long term as a result of variations in information levels (Popkin, 1991), or due to the effect of electoral campaigns (Miller & Shanks, 1996).

Such theoretical perspectives apply to the case of Chile, but with some nuances. The literature classifying the Chilean party system before the military coup as a polarized multi-party system is vast (Sartori, 1992; Scully, 1992). Consequently, it would be expected that the core of the conflict in the elite was passed on to citizens. In the particular case of Chile, the role of the Armed Forces was a central topic that divided the elite. In the Allende government, the Armed Forces represented a neutral power. Therefore, Allende incorporated part of its members into the presidential cabinet (Varas, 1987). For others, the Armed Forces had, as an institutional objective, the duty to intervene and overthrow Allende (Valenzuela, 1978; Boeninger, 1998; Barros, 2002; Galleguillos, 2004). More recently, Passmore (2017) examined the experiences of Chilean soldiers during the dictatorship and their impact on identity and collective memory. The author delves into the tension between memory and human rights with recollections of military service marked by patriotism and internal warfare. This reveals the complexity of memory in creating a shared vision, particularly within the armed forces (Passmore, 2016). Thus, the study of public opinion in an environment of political upheaval may help to better understand how conflicts at the elite level result in conflicts at the level of public opinion.

Based on all of the above, it is relevant to understand citizens' perceptions in an environment of political crisis. We were unaware as to if the ideological fractures of the elite were effectively transferred to voters, and whether a key neutral actor such as the Armed Forces created an institutional or 'coup'

image. The case of Chile, then, aids in understanding falls of democracy ‘from below’ –i.e., from the citizens– and not only ‘from above’ –i.e., from the elite.

Chile: Parties, Polarization, and the Armed Forces

The political party system in Chile had an early programmatic formation from 1932 to the democracy breakdown in 1973 (Scully, 1992; Sartori, 1992; Valenzuela, 1995 & 1999; Siavelis, 1997; Navia, 2005), without prejudice to the fact that this was not necessarily an institutionalized party system (Montes et al., 2000). The accelerated industrialization process beginning in the early 1940s led to the consolidation of new social classes and parties that attempted to represent these interests (Rueschmeyer et al., 1992). At the beginning of the 1960s, there was already a system of parties in formation with strong communities from the right, center, and left, forming the so-called ‘thirds’ of Chilean politics (Gil, 1969; Drake, 1978; Torcal & Mainwaring, 2003). A key point in creating this programmatic party system was the foundation of a strong central party, the Christian Democratic Party (PDC). In contrast to other central parties (Liberals and Radicals), the PDC was not a pragmatic party, but a programmatic one. Distancing itself from the left and the right, the PDC generated solid social foundations, which resulted, within the framework of the Alliance for Progress, the Cold War, and the Cuban Revolution, in a strong polarization between the left and right parties (Boeninger, 1998 Cañas, 1997).

This polarization coexisted with the coming to power of a minority coalition that encouraged significant changes, but did not have the necessary majorities in Congress to fulfill its government program. For example, the aim of implementing a system such as the ‘National Unified School’ resulted in severe problems with the Church. In addition, the government systematically appealed to class struggle as a mobilization mechanism, not considering that the parties’ social bases were widely diverse (Valenzuela, 1978). The explosion of expectations in a population marked by inequality and low living standards was added to this (Valenzuela, 2003), which eventually contributed to an environment of discontent and protest.

For Valenzuela (1978), one of the central causes of the political crisis was a result of the ‘emptying’ of the center. Given that the center had historically played a mediating role between the left and the right, the fact of moving from

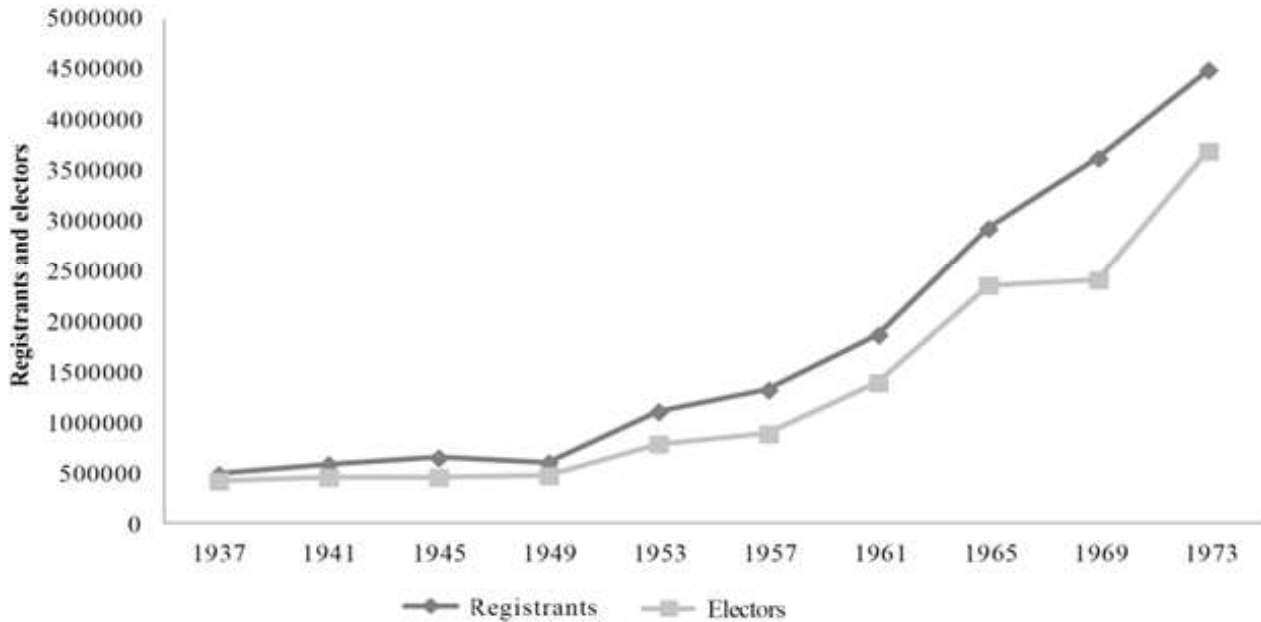
a pragmatic to a programmatic center helped to block agreements and compromises that favored democratic stability. This thesis is strongly discussed by Walker (1999) and Huneus (2003). According to them, Valenzuela (2003) gives an excessive responsibility to the PDC as the protagonist of the polarization, neglecting polarization to the left and to the right. On the left, among other factors, this responded to the Cuban Revolution that led the Socialist Party (PS) to validating armed conflict in order to gain power. On the right, Huneus (2003) emphasizes the low commitment to democratic values. An example of this was the programmatic platform of the National Party founded in 1966, in which an organic democracy based on guilds was defended instead of a representative democracy.

The polarization of the party system is evident when observing the electoral data, but with some variations when observing individual data. According to Navia and Osorio (2015), in the late 1950s, almost half of Chileans did not identify with the left, right, or center. However, as the process of political polarization progressed, public opinion responded in a similar way and with particular emphasis on when the Allende government commenced. People who did not identify with the left-right ideological axis barely bordered 10%. To this, an increase in electoral participation and in identification with political parties was added. Therefore, it would be expected that if the political polarization of the elite became a polarization of public opinion, the same thing would occur with perceptions of the political regime and the Armed Forces.

At the time of the military coup, electoral participation had increased considerably (see Figure 1). This was not only a result of the political polarization process, but also of the institutional reforms that facilitated the incorporation of new voters. Among these reforms, the access in voting for the blind (1969), the reduction of 21 to 18 in voting age (1970), and the access in voting for the illiterate (1970) are included. To this reform plan, effective institutional sanctions were added for those who did not register in electoral registers and for those who did not vote (Cruz-Coke, 1984). Furthermore, at the public opinion level, the party identification percentage averaged 71% in the 1961-1973 period. Identification with the left, center, or right, meanwhile, averaged more than 80% (see Figure 2). All this revealed a politicized and participative citizenship.

Figure 1

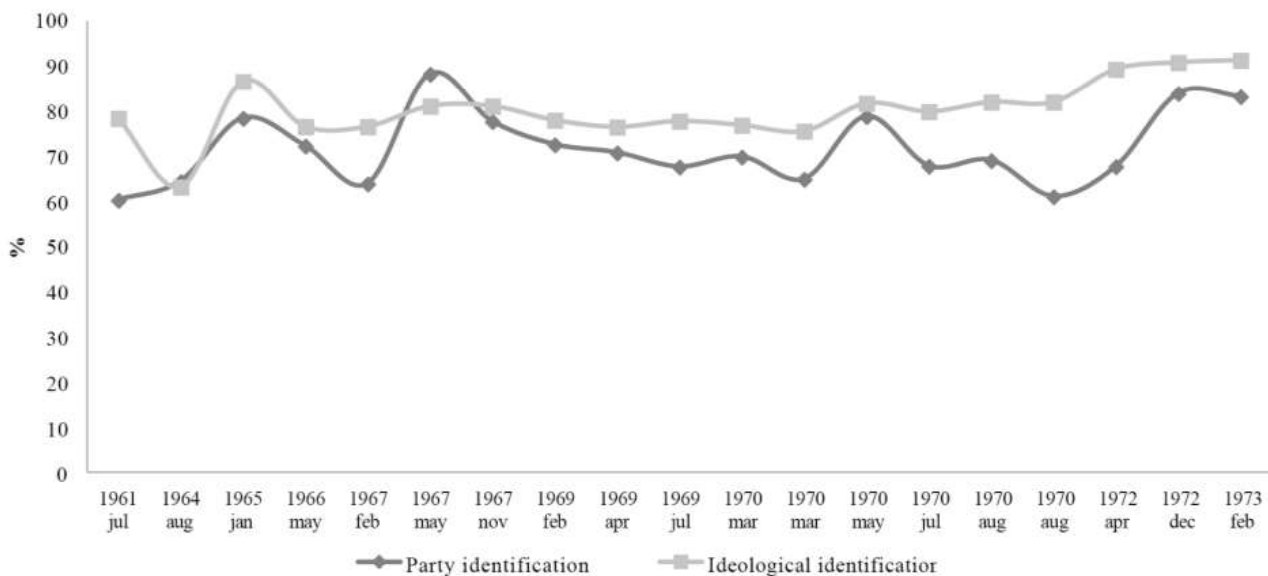
Registrants and electors, parliamentary elections 1937-1973



Note. Prepared by the authors with data from Gil (1969) and Cruz-Coke (1984).

Figure 2

Party identification and ideological identification, 1961-1973



Note. Source: Surveys performed by Eduardo Hamuy, 1961-1973

Regarding the Armed Forces, Agüero (2003) emphasizes the distance and resentment with which they regarded politics and, especially, the relationship with parties.

The magnitude of this fissure reflected, from the Armed Forces, a repudiation of politics, because it was in politics that, from the Armed Forces perspective, their institutional deterioration and inattention was caused, which they experienced regarding the very perception of their importance as an institution. Allende's desire to attract them to his government and to have them participate in it in a way that was unprecedented created precisely the opposite effect of what he intended since it was done from an incorrect assumption. Otherwise, he would have realized that attracting them to the center of politics would only help to unleash tendencies and perspectives that had been accumulating inwardly, inclinations of resentment towards politics and influenced by the ideological context of the Cold War (Agüero, 2003, 254-255).

Consequently, it is not difficult to understand the distance of the Armed Forces even with the democratic regime. Therefore, it seems reasonable to contrast this institutional view of the Armed Forces with perceptions of public opinion.

The relationship between the Armed Forces and the government has its precursor in the event known as 'Tacnazo' in October 1969. A group of officers of the Tacna Army regiment took over barracks as a way of protest, asserting their demand for better working conditions and salary (Monsálvez, 2007). The barrack, commanded by General Roberto Viaux, sought to call the attention of the Eduardo Frei government (1964-1970) to trade union demands. Although this event occurred months before the beginning of the Allende government, it is considered an important milestone in the tense relationship between the Armed Forces and the Government (Agüero et al., 1980).

During the Allende government, the economic situation of the Armed Forces improved. Although the budget for military spending decreased by 5.3% during the Frei administration, the budget grew by 92% during the Allende period. This was in addition to the military assistance from the United States (Valenzuela, 1978).

Allende gave an important role to the Armed Forces in search of greater stability. With an unfavorable congress and after the constitutional accusation against his interior minister, Allende decided to include the three Commander-in-Chiefs of the Armed Forces in different ministries (Rehren, 1998). The incorporation of military officers had two negative effects for his administration. On the one hand, it generated internal problems with certain sectors of his party, the Socialist Party. On the other hand, it isolated generals loyal to Allende from their own institutions, such as General Prats, who lost power and command control (Rehren, 1998).

After the legislative elections of March 1973, Allende removed these military officers from the ministries. He considered that favorable electoral results in this election consolidated his government coalition (Rehren, 1998; Monsálvez, 2007). However, the climate of social upheaval led Allende to call the military back to the cabinet. The event that triggered this decision was the military uprising of June 1973 by colonel Robert Souper. Souper arrived at the Presidential Palace with 16 armed vehicles and more than 80 soldiers. Prats –loyal to Allende– halted the coup attempt and prevented the situation from further consequences. Therefore, Prats assumed the position of Minister of Defense once again (Collier & Sater, 1998).

Data and Method

Subsequently, we explored the Chilean public opinion from two central dimensions. First, the degree of political affection for the democratic regime. As discussed above, there was no strict democratic commitment among the elites from the right-wing parties (Huneus, 2000), while from the left, the armed route to socialism was validated (Faúndez, 1992). Therefore, it is relevant to understand if this type of division around the political regime also occurred at the citizen level. Second, we evaluate perceptions of the Armed Forces. Since President Allende added them to the cabinet, the surveys by Hamuy asked whether this entry posed a risk to democracy and whether it had any effect on people's security. Once again, our aim is to assess whether the controversial role of the Armed Forces in a democratic regime in the light of the debate among the elite resulted in a fracture in public opinion.

We used the Hamuy surveys between 1972 and 1973. Hamuy studied at Columbia University and was a student of Paul Lazarsfeld. In 1957 he began

to conduct public opinion surveys in Chile (Navia & Osorio, 2015; Hamuy et al., 1958; Cordero, 2009). Between 1958 and 1973 he conducted more than 20 surveys in Santiago, Valparaíso and Viña del Mar as part of a pioneering survey program at the University of Chile. With these surveys, various authors studied the political and social climate of the time (Navia & Osorio, 2015; Hamuy et al., 1958; Prothro & Chaparro, 1974; Girard, 1958).

Hamuy used probabilistic samples in three cities. The surveys were conducted face to face without replacements. Although Hamuy did not report the sample error of his surveys, Navia and Osorio (2015) estimated this error around 3% based on the characteristics of the survey and demographic information.

Table 1

Summary of surveys developed by Hamuy (1972-1973)

Date	City	n
1972 APR-JUN	Santiago	881
1972 APR-JUN	Valparaíso	499
1972 APR-JUN	Viña del Mar	420
1972 DEC - 1973 JAN	Santiago	426
1972 DEC - 1973 JAN	Valparaíso	421
1972 DEC - 1973 JAN	Viña del Mar	354
1973 FEB	Santiago	754

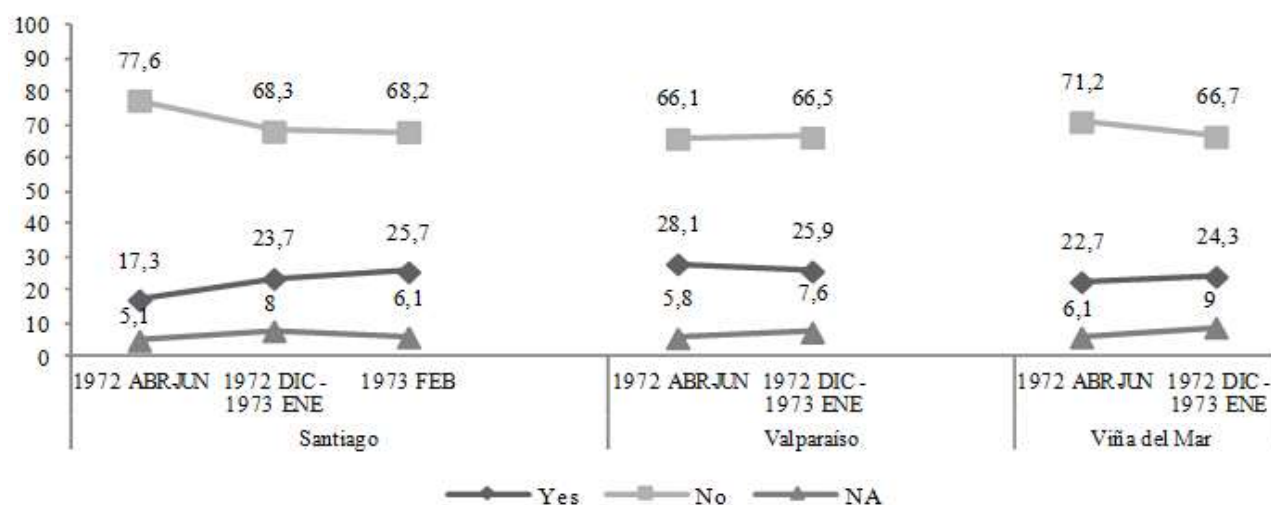
Findings

Hamuy's surveys posed the following question from April 1972 to January 1973: 'Do you believe that a military government is convenient for Chile?' Surveys were conducted in three cities that concentrated about 50% of the electoral register: Santiago, Valparaíso, and Viña del Mar. The results demonstrated that, on average, 24% of surveyed believed a military government was convenient. There were no major differences between one city and another, except for the April 1972 survey in Santiago, in which the support for a military government was only 17.3%. The entry of the Armed

Forces into President Allende's cabinet in November 1972 did not alter these results. Most likely, the mentioned insurrectionary character of the Armed Forces was not present in the public opinion. Or, at least from the perspective of public opinion, the Armed Forces' entry into the cabinet was not interpreted as a threat to democracy.

Figure 3

Support and no support to a military government, 1972-1973

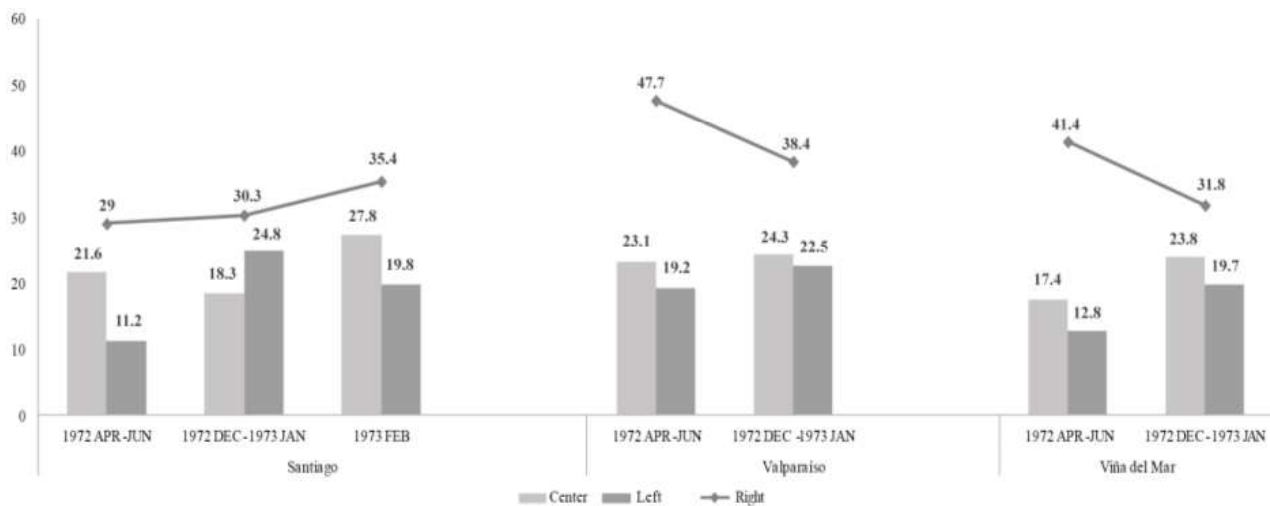


Note. Prepared by the authors with data from Eduardo Hamuy's surveys

There were significant differences when crossing these results according to the respondents' ideological identification in the left-center-right wing. Right-wing voters were much more supportive than left and center-right voters. Therefore, although the support for a military government averaged about 24%, there are obvious variations in its composition. This, to a certain extent, dialogues with the literature referenced above: support for a military intervention –at least according to the public statements of its leaders– was significantly higher among representatives and right-wing voters.

Figure 4

Support to military government by political position, 1972-1973



Note. Prepared by the authors with data from Eduardo Hamuy's surveys

There are also differences by sex. While 32.6% of women believed that a military government was convenient for Chile, only 19.5% of men selected this option (see Figure 5). These differences by sex are supported by Power's (2008) study, who remarks on the role of women, and especially upper-class women, in the collapse of democracy. Women's role in 'cacerolazos' – protests organized against the Allende government– and the explicit call to the military coup by the Armed Forces were emphasized.

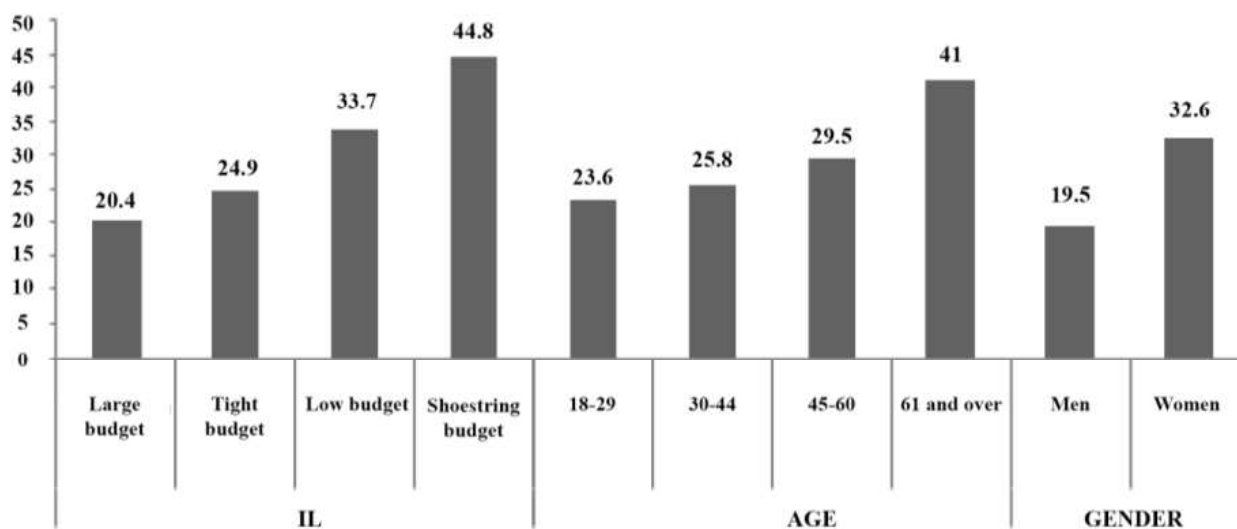
When segmenting by age, we found that 41% of the respondents aged 61 and over were inclined to a military government, while this occurred among only 23.6% of younger people. This point is relevant, considering that people aged 61 and over had experience with previous military governments, such as the government headed by General Carlos Ibañez del Campo in 1927. In fact, the majority already had the right to vote by that date. What was expected, then, was that this traumatic experience would have negatively impacted their predispositions towards a military government. Most likely, the association between a military government and the idea of order was one of the causes that pushed elders aged 61 and over to support this option.

By income level, Figure 5 shows that people with greater economic difficulties supported the military government to a greater extent. However,

this analysis should be taken with caution, since that group represents only 13 cases in the survey. In the inferential analysis, we will correct this shortcoming by adding the two groups with the greatest economic difficulties.

Figure 5

Support to military government by income level, age and gender

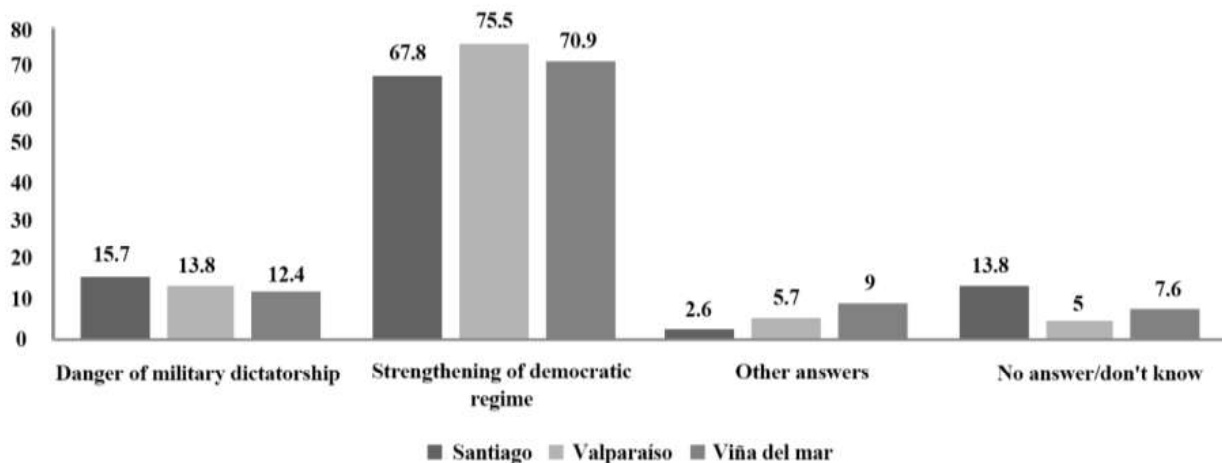


Note. Prepared by the authors with data from Eduardo Hamuy's surveys

Hamuy performed a series of questions about the integration of the military into the cabinet. These questions were only posed in the 1972 survey for Santiago, Valparaiso, and Viña del Mar. Figure 6 shows that about 70% interpreted the entry of the Armed Forces into President Allende's cabinet as a 'strengthening of democracy'. A minority of 14% –averaging the three cities– claimed that the entry of the Armed Forces into President Allende's cabinet involved a 'danger of military dictatorship'. Once again, the Armed Forces were seen almost as a heritage of democracy and, apparently, nothing made them think that they would lead a coup months later.

Figure 6

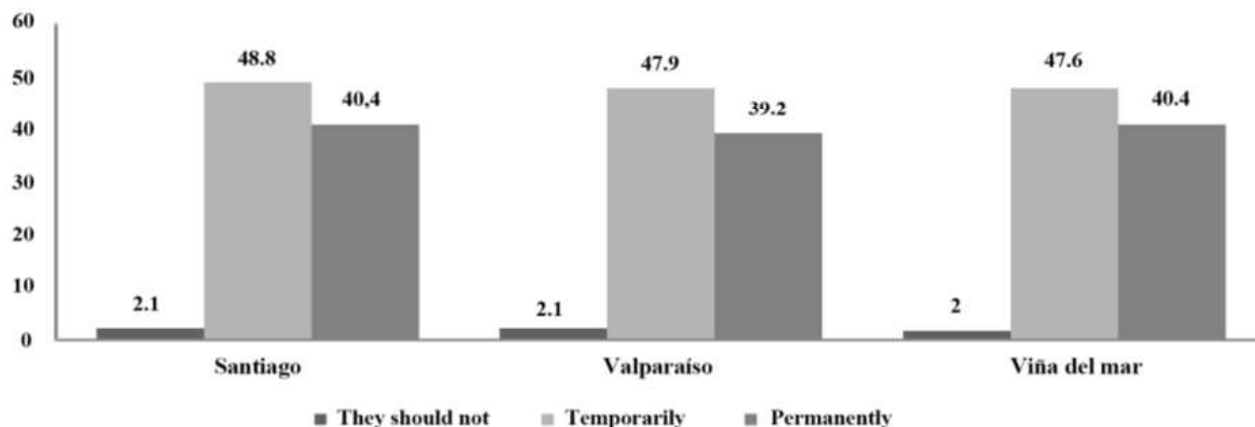
Perceptions about the entry of the Armed Forces into the cabinet



Note. Prepared by the authors with data from Eduardo Hamuy's surveys.

Question: 'In your opinion, the participation of the three branches of the Armed Forces in the cabinet could represent ...'

Regarding the permanence of the Armed Forces in President Allende's cabinet, there was a strong debate both at the level of parties as well as of public opinion. Only 2% declared that the Armed Forces should not be in the cabinet, while almost half believed that they should participate temporarily. 40% considered that the Armed Forces should participate permanently in the cabinet. This shows an evident fracture not only in the elite, but also in public opinion. However, there was consensus that the Armed Forces should participate in the government, but disagreement on the period of permanence. In any case, the fact that 98% of the respondents supported a certain degree of participation of the Armed Forces in the government was a clear sign of their democratic image.

Figure 7*Permanence of the Armed Forces in the cabinet*

Note. Prepared by the authors with data from Eduardo Hamuy's surveys. Question: 'Do you think that the military should not be integrated into the cabinet, should permanently be integrated into the cabinet, or that its presence should be temporary?'

Finally, Hamuy asked about the degree of security felt by the respondent and their families with the presence of the Armed Forces in the cabinet. More than 70% said that they felt safe. That is to say, the Armed Forces had popular support not only for their impact on strengthening democracy, but also for the security guarantees that they reflected for individuals and their families. In other words, the Armed Forces were seen as an institutional support for democracy and as a support for people's individual development.

Figure 8

Presence of the Armed Forces in the cabinet and personal/familiar security



Note. Prepared by the authors with data from Eduardo Hamuy’s surveys. Question: ‘You would say that the presence of the military in the cabinet gives you and your family greater security’

For the inferential analysis, we constructed probit models with the questions related to supporting a military government and the image of the Armed Forces. The independent variables included are sex (1=Male/0=Female), age, subjective income (1=Large budget/ 2=Tight budget /3=Economic hardship), political position (1=Right/0=Rest), religion (1=Catholics/0=Rest), perception about violence in the country (1=It has increased/0=Rest), and perception about food shortages (1=They have increased/0=Rest). Surveys from late 1972 and early 1973 did not include the question about violence, replacing it with the perception of insecurity (1=It has increased/0=Rest). The selection of these variables was given by both the literature that studied the military coup in Chile, and by the questions that the surveys by Hamuy included. Obviously, socioeconomic, political, and sociodemographic variables were relevant. The literature emphasizes the wealthiest classes, right-wing parties and, among them, women as key players in supporting the military coup (Power, 2008).

Table 2 shows the results of the model that took support for a military government as a dependent variable (1=Supports/0=Other options). These results partially support the most popular hypotheses surrounding the groups

that supported the coup. First, there was greater support for the military government among women. Second, such support was substantially higher among right-wing respondents. Third, the null statistical impact of people's subjective income was surprising, since part of the literature referred to above considered that support for the military coup was mainly concentrated among high-income segments.

These results did not vary significantly according to date or place where the survey was conducted, except for the one applied in Santiago in December 1972, in which respondent gender was not a strong predictor. As we note above, support for the military government never reached 30%, which, together with the low number of cases in the surveys, makes it difficult to find support patterns for each alternative (democracy/military government). Nevertheless, the results moved in the expected direction according to the literature, but far from supporting the idea of a society divided around the type of political regime and, even less, that this perception was determined by people's living conditions.

Table 2*Support for a military government, April/June, 1972*

	April/June 1972		December 1972/January 1973		February 1973
	Santiago	Valparaíso	Santiago	Valparaíso	Santiago
Sex (1=Men; 0=Women)	-0.182 † (0.107)	-0.228 † (0.134)	-0.0993 (0.145)	-0.325* (0.146)	-0.344** (0.107)
Age	0.00505 (0.00348)	0.00310 (0.00392)	0.00189 (0.00438)	0.00332 (0.00433)	0.00688 † (0.00353)
Subjective income (1=Large income; 3=Economic hardship)	-0.0560 (0.0818)	-0.146 (0.0939)	0.108 (0.115)	-0.221* (0.112)	0.120 (0.0807)
Political position (1=Right; 0=Rest)	0.440** (0.134)	0.565** (0.160)	0.313 † (0.160)	0.483** (0.164)	0.248* (0.122)
Religion (1=Catholic; 0=Rest)	-0.0540 (0.132)	0.0614 (0.182)	-0.109 (0.175)	0.0925 (0.187)	0.224 † (0.131)
Violence/Insecurity (1=Increased; 0=Rest)	0.214* (0.106)	0.163 (0.128)	-0.275 † (0.144)	0.0148 (0.145)	0.0181 (0.112)
Shortage(1=Increased; 0=Rest)	0.0504 (0.108)	0.284* (0.129)	0.178 (0.204)	0.0178 (0.188)	0.0670 (0.126)

	April/June 1972		December 1972/January 1973		February 1973
	Santiago	Valparaíso	Santiago	Valparaíso	Santiago
Constant	-1.124** (0.248)	-0.708* (0.289)	-0.850* (0.356)	-0.388 (0.314)	-1.363** (0.250)
Observations	870	497	421	417	744

Note. Prepared by the authors with data from Eduardo Hamuy’s surveys

Regarding the image of the Armed Forces, the results were surprising once again. As noted above, the Armed Forces had wide popular support both for their contribution to strengthening democracy as well as for their impact on people’s security. Contrary to the support for a military government, the Armed Forces’ image did not respond to the political position of respondents, being cross-sectional to the ideological scale. The only partially systematic predictor was the respondents’ age. The older the participant, the stronger his or her support for the idea that the presence of the Armed Forces in the cabinet strengthened democracy and, at the same time, provided more security to people. By sex, attention was drawn to the fact that men in Santiago and Valparaiso believed that the presence of the Armed Forces in the cabinet strengthened democracy to a greater extent (See Table 3).

Table 3

Perceptions about the Armed Forces, December 1972/January 1973

	Santiago		Valparaíso	
	Strengthen the democracy	Provide more security	Strengthen the democracy	Provide more security
Sex (1=Men; 0=Women)	0.419** (0.143)	0.155 (0.140)	0.274† (0.147)	0.126 (0.143)
Age	0.00702 (0.00432)	0.00817† (0.00433)	0.00692 (0.00443)	0.0126** (0.00446)
Subjective income (1=Large income; 3=Economic hardship)	-0.522** (0.113)	-0.103 (0.109)	-0.228* (0.115)	-0.174 (0.112)
Political position (1=Right; 0=Rest)	-0.127 (0.155)	0.0633 (0.157)	-0.103 (0.169)	-0.101 (0.169)
Religion (1=Catholic; 0=Rest)	0.171	-0.308†	0.194	0.219

	Santiago		Valparaíso	
	Strengthen the democracy	Provide more security	Strengthen the democracy	Provide more security
Insecurity (1=Yes; 0=Rest)	(0.174) -0.0842 (0.143)	(0.180) -0.0799 (0.141)	(0.182) -0.0301 (0.145)	(0.176) 0.135 (0.142)
Shortage(1=Increased; 0=Rest)	0.189 (0.213)	0.190 (0.210)	0.155 (0.195)	0.222 (0.192)
Constant	1.212** (0.352)	0.668† (0.341)	0.681* (0.317)	0.191 (0.309)
Observations	421	421	417	417

Note. Prepared by the authors with data from Eduardo Hamuy's surveys

By subjective income, the survey in Santiago shows that the positive image of the Armed Forces was higher in the high-income segments. This occurred especially when people were consulted as to whether the Armed Forces strengthened democracy. In order to show these results more clearly, we decided to combine the Santiago and Valparaiso surveys, which facilitated the process since the questionnaires were identical and applied almost simultaneously. In this way, the number of cases analyzed increased, enabling more reliable statistical inferences. One of the most striking features corresponds to the differences according to income and age in support of both statements about the Armed Forces, i.e., that they strengthened democracy and gave people more security.

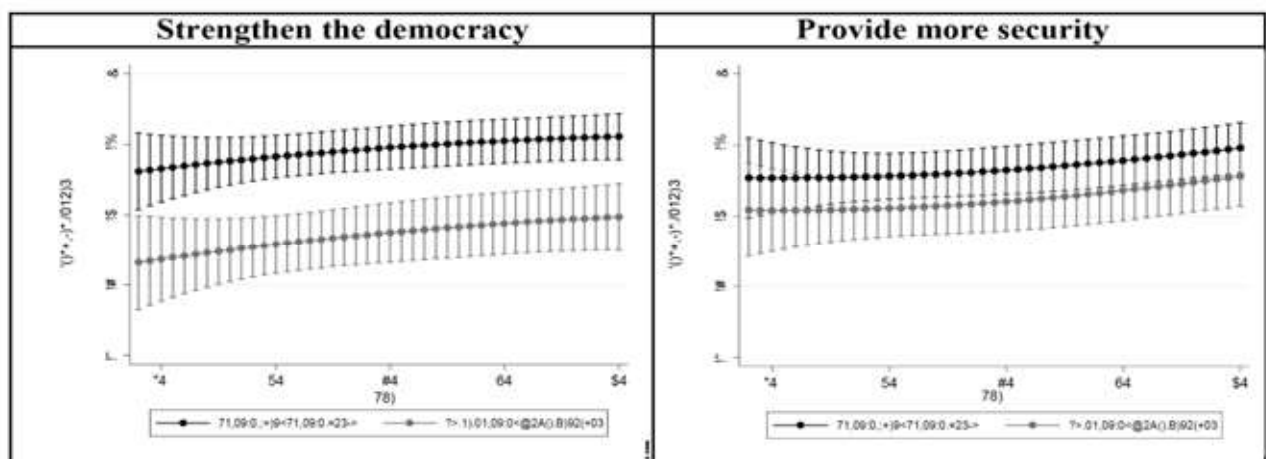
Figures 9 and 10 show the statistical simulations for both statements. Differences were noticed according to income in the question about the Armed Forces and democracy. We compared the group with a 'large income+tight budget' versus the group experiencing 'economic hardship'. Regardless of respondent age, the group with more resources believed that the Armed Forces strengthened the democracy with their entry into the cabinet to a greater extent. This result was not replicated by taking the security that this decision of the Armed Forces implied for individuals and their families as a dependent variable. Consequently, it was rejected that support for the military government was greater in upper classes; however, we argue that the Armed Forces were more associated with democracy among the higher income strata.

Perceptions about the Armed Forces, therefore, had a clear political or ideological transversality in the environment of polarization described by the

referenced literature. Although the 1925 Constitution specified that the armed forces were non-deliberative, their entry into the cabinet - setting aside their neutral political role - did not alter the consensus that existed around them. This contrasts with the analysis of support for a military government, in which there is a clear politicization according to respondent ideological position. Consequently, although some citizens requested a military government, a large majority saw the Armed Forces as an agency committed to democracy and unrelated to a possible institutional breakdown.

Figures 9 and 10

Support probabilities for the Armed Forces as institutions that promote democracy and people’s security



Note. Prepared by the authors with data from the surveys of Eduardo Hamuy

Conclusions

Falls of democracy are usually studied from tensions in the elite and from the Armed Forces as key players. In this article, we showed the state of Chilean public opinion surrounding two key dimensions: support for an eventual military government and the Armed Forces’ image. Although it is true that the elite were tense and polarized in terms of the democracy’s continuity as a political regime, citizens appeared to be widely convinced that a military government was not convenient for the country. In addition, while the elite were divided over whether the Armed Forces would respect the constitutional

itinerary of democracy, citizens believed that the entry of the Armed Forces into President Allende's cabinet was a sign of strengthening democracy.

Chile –as well as most of countries of the region– witnessed military influence in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries with successful coups, failed coups, and several uprisings. In fact, there was an important military attack in October of 1969 against Frei Montalva's government. However, citizens insisted on viewing the Armed Forces as an institution committed to democracy and, up to that point, showed no signs that were seditious or contrary to the regime.

Years later – in September 1973– the military coup that inaugurated one of the bloodiest dictatorships in Latin America was launched and persisted for 17 years. We do not possess surveys that show the change or continuity in Chileans' perceptions about that period. Nonetheless, we were able to describe the setting of public opinion in which the events occurred. It is clear that, at that time, television was not a mass medium, but surprisingly, 90% of respondents in February 1973 said that they read at least one newspaper, and 85% listened to a radio, which is the same figure when asked about willingness to vote. These data help to understand the political environment of the moment, representing citizens who paid attention to contingency and who, in addition, had decided to vote.

What are the lessons that we can extract from the case of Chile? First, political crises and scenarios of ideological polarization can be seen both 'from above' –parties, legislators, presidents, military, businessmen– and 'from below', i.e., from the public opinion. Second, fractures in the elite are not necessarily reflected in the opinion of citizens. Apparently, and at least in the case of Chile, the commitment to democracy was stronger in citizens than in representatives. Third, the historical burden of the Armed Forces to be the protagonist of institutional breakdowns during the twentieth century did not affect their public image reflected in surveys. In other words, a historically disruptive actor was able to generate trust and security among citizens. Fourth, military coups can coexist with citizens committed to democracy and who are trusting with regards to the Armed Forces towards democratic institutions.

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Appendix

Table 4
Summary variables. Surveys of December-January 1972-1973

Variable	Question	Response Categories	Santiago			Valparaíso			Viña del Mar		
			n	Mean	SD	n	Mean	SD	n	Mean	SD
Presence of the Armed Forces in the cabinet and personal/familiar security	You would say that the presence of the military in the cabinet gives you and your family greater security?	1=Yes; 2=No; 9=Other responses; 88=NA	402	1,36	0,48	391	1,2	0,4	335	1,32	0,46
Support for a military government	Do you believe that a military government is convenient for Chile?	1=Yes; 2=No; 9=Other responses; 88=NA	392	1,74	0,44	389	1,72	0,45	322	1,73	0,44
Perceptions about the entry of the Armed Forces into the cabinet	In your opinion, the participation of the three branches of the Armed Forces in the cabinet could represent	1=Danger of military dictatorship; 2=Strengthening of democratic regime; 9=Other responses; 88=NA	356	1,81	0,39	376	1,85	0,36	295	1,85	0,35
Sex	-	1=Men; 2=Women	426	1,62	0,49	421	1,6	0,49	354	1,62	0,48
Age	-		426	40,47	15,5	421	41,83	15,79	354	38,45	15,07
Subjective Income	The salary you receive (and the total of your family), allows you to cover your needs satisfactorily, in which of these situations are you?	1=Large budget; 2=Tight budget; 3=Economic hardship	421	2,41	0,73	417	2,19	0,64	349	2,22	0,68

Political position	Do you feel more close to the right, left or center?	1= Right, 2= Center; 3= Left; 9=Other responses; 88=NA	387	2,15	0,8	388	2,26	0,79	329	2,11	0,79
Religion	Can you tell me what is the religion you profess?	1=Catholic; 2=Protestante; 3=Jewess; 4=Other; 5=No religion	426	1,47	1,18	415	1,6	1,36	351	1,54	1,27
Insecurity	There are those who believe that the current situation of the country is characterized by a climate of insecurity, do you agree or disagree with that opinion?	1=Agree; 2=Disagree; 88=NA	402	1,36	0,48	396	1,37	0,48	335	1,32	0,47
Shortage	What about the shortage of products, have you had noted that there are more less or equally shortage that you do six months?	1=Increased; 2=Same; 3=Dimished; 88=NA	424	1,36	0,68	415	1,43	0,75	351	1,44	0,73

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