

Crisis and historical memory: The coup d'état of 1973 in Chile

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Objectives and questions

- Inquire about the shape in that memories of crisis events can be “stored” into the collective memory about history.
 - Particularly the Chilean coup d’état of 1973 and the later military dictatorship.
- Questions:
 - Are there generational differences in the remembering of Chilean dictatorship?
 - The memories about Chilean dictatorship are related to theoretical assumptions about crises?
 - Is it possible to speak about an intergenerational historical memory around the Chilean dictatorship?

Theoretical framework

- Most part of personal memories about our past, refers what happen into a period of “opening to the world” between the adolescence and early adulthood. (Conway & Rubin 2005, Mannheim 1993[1928], Schuman & Scott 1989)
- Memories about life experience is something that is “stored” into the individual psyche as memories, but those refers to shared experiences into a shared social and historical environment (as time, place, and life conditions), and their recall is associated to a communicative social act. (Elder 1995, Halbwachs 2004, Jelin 1998)



Theoretical framework

- Memory as a source of individual and group identity, as well as it is related to human existence and these may result to generational historical memories (Aróstegui 2004, Devriese 1989, Guichard & Henriquez 2011, Lalive d'Épinay et al 2008, Mannheim 1993[1928])
- Crises events in history are strong markers for the collective memory about history at individual and social level. (Jelin 1998, Mazade 2011, Olick & Robbins 1998, Ortega 2011)
- Crises events can introduce ruptures into individual everyday life, having consequences at subjective and collective level. Remembering around those events are mostly defined by individual- quotidian experiences (Jelin 1998, Schuman & Corning 2011, Settersten & Martin 2002)



Research CEVI

Changements et événements au cours de la vie Changes and events across the life course

An international study:

Argentina –Belgium –Brazil -Canada –Chile

China -France – India – Italy –Mexico

Switzerland – Uruguay

International coordination:

S.Cavalli & C. Lalive d'Épinay

(CIG, University of Geneva)



<http://cig.unige.ch/recherches/cevi.html>



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Questionnaire

Analyses based in question 3 about the remembering of socio historical facts...

Let us now consider the main changes and events which occurred in your country and in the world during your life. What are the ones which most struck you?

(You may answer up to four events)

1. Description:

.....
.....

Why did this event strike you ?

.....
.....

Year(s): **Your age at that moment:** **Place of the event:**



Methodology

- Between January and March 2009, in 6 municipalities of Gran Concepción, Chile.
- Sample $N=623$
- Sample non-random, stratified by age and sex
- 5 age groups:
20-24, 35-39, 50-54, 65-69 and 78-86 years old.
- Questionnaires self-administered
- Data collected by sociology students of the University of Concepción.



Results

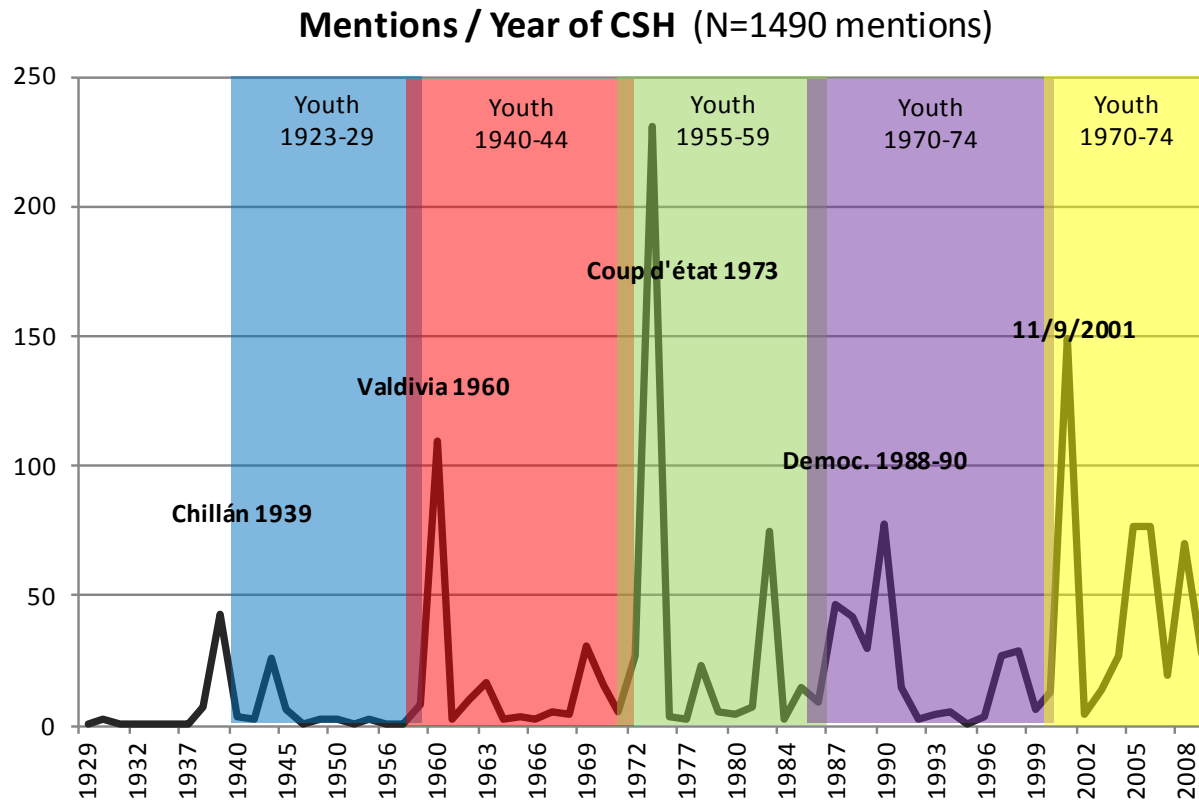


The five socio historical changes most mentioned by individuals for each age group

1985-9 20-24		1970-4 35-39		1955-9 50-54		1940-4 65-69		1923-29 78-86	
	%		%		%		%		%
Attacks 11/9	51,6	Attacks 11/9	29,0	Coup d'état 1973	60,3	Coup d'état 1973	55,7	Coup d'état 1973	54,9
Gov. Bachelet	17,8	Return democracy	24,2	Attacks 11/9	17,5	Earthquake Valdivia 1960	35,2	Earthquake Valdivia 1960	35,2
Football (France 1998)	12,4	Coup d'état 1973	22,6	Earthquake Valdivia 1960	15,9	Dictatorship	14,8	Earthquake Chillan 1939	34,4
Election Obama	10,9	Elections 1989	22,6	Visit Juan Pablo II	11,9	Gouvernement Allende	12,3	WW 2	15,6
Pinochet decease	10,9	Visit Juan Pablo II	10,5	Election Obama	11,9	Attacks 11/9	11,5	Gov. Radicals (1938-52)	9,0



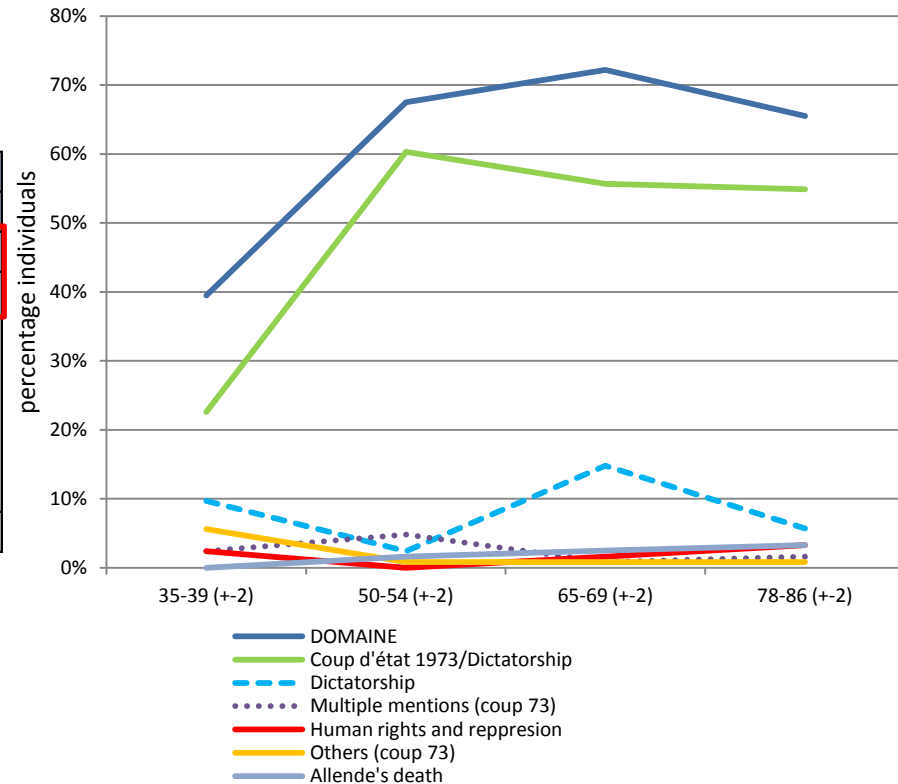
Relation between mentions and historical time



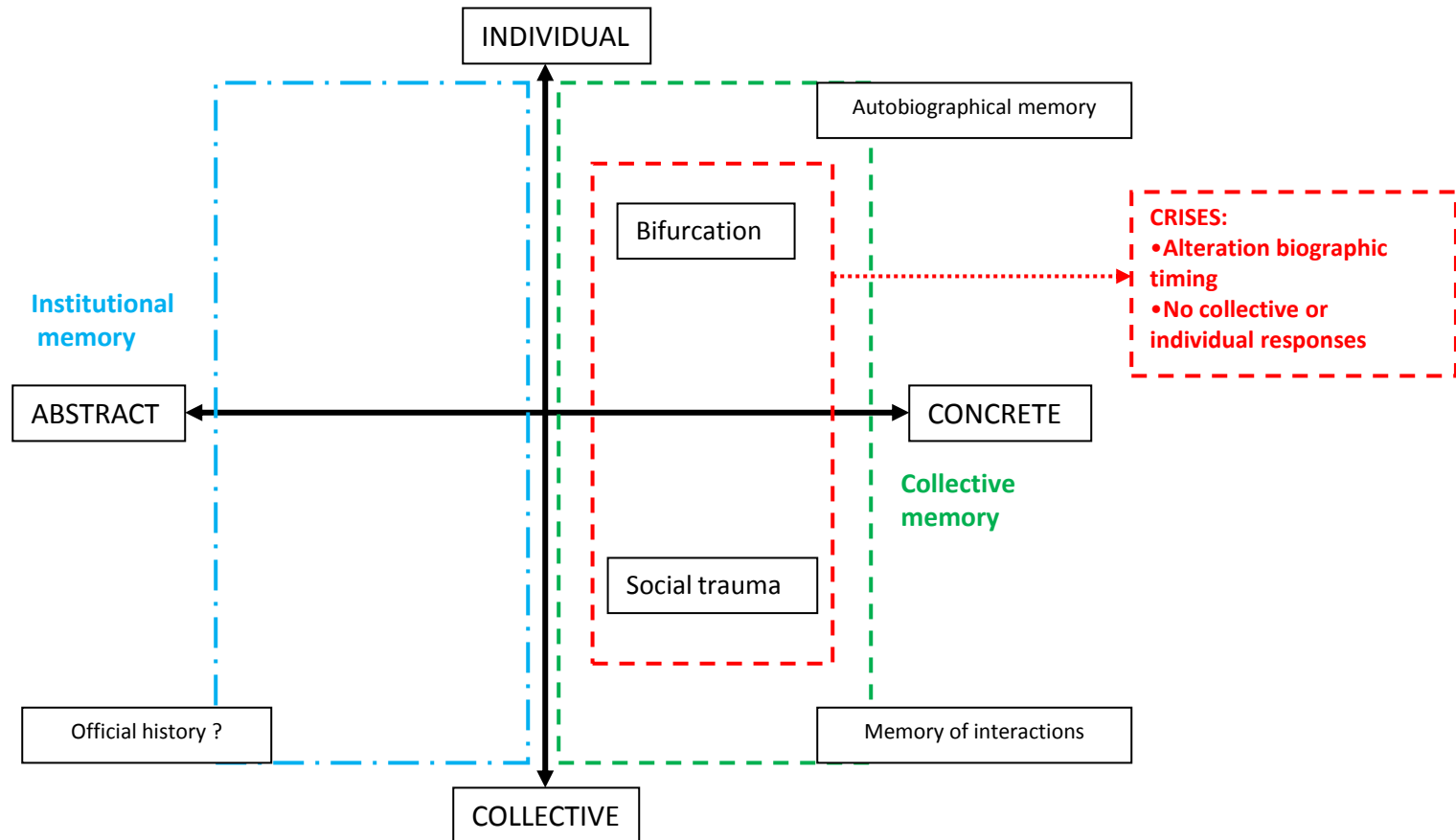
Categories domain Coup d'état/Dictatorship

	35-39 ans		50-54 ans		65-69 ans		78-86 ans	
	% coh	n	% coh	n	% coh	n	% coh	n
<i>DOMAINE C73/DIC</i>	40%	49	68%	85	72%	88	66%	80
Coup d'état 1973	23%	28	60%	76	56%	68	55%	67
Dictatorship	10%	12	2%	3	15%	18	6%	7
Multiple mentions (coup 73)	2%	3	5%	6	1%	1	2%	2
Human rights and repression	2%	3	0%	0	2%	2	3%	4
Others (coup 73)	6%	7	1%	1	1%	1	1%	1
Allende's death	0%	0	2%	2	3%	3	3%	4
N sample cohort	129	53	124	88	126	93	122	85

Individuals that mention Coup d'état 73/Dictatorship

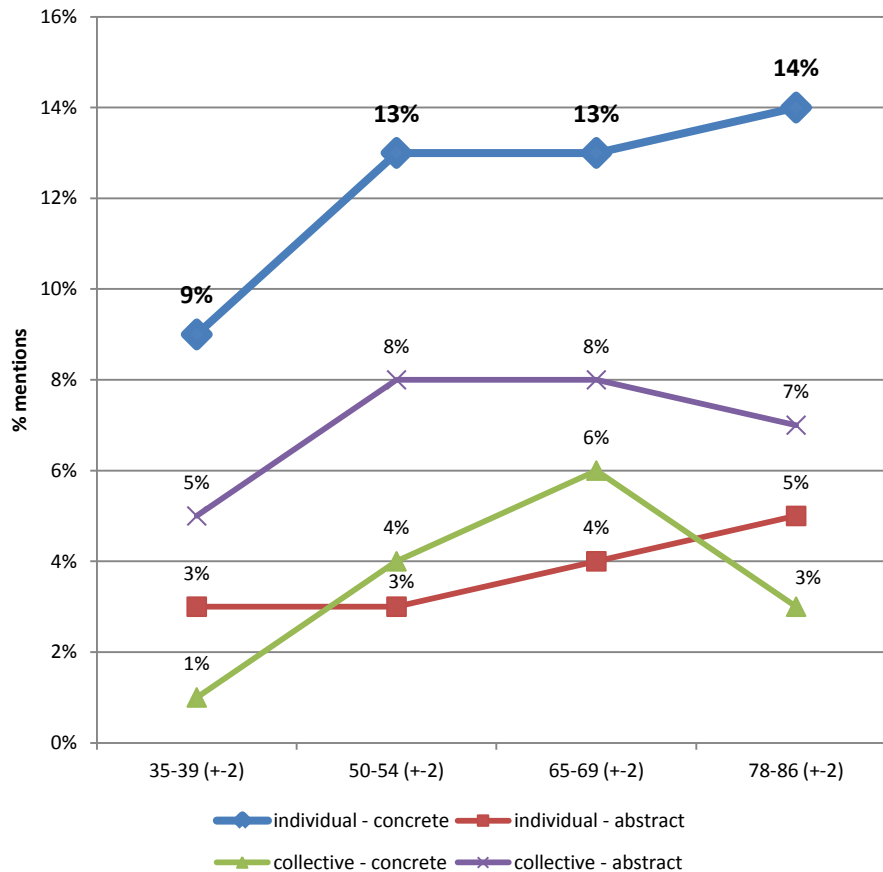


A theoretical analysis model for the reasons to mention SHC



Reasons to mention the Coup d'état in Chile (1)

Reasons DOM coup d'état 73/dictatorship (N =303 ment.)



Individual – Concrete

“My husband was arrested and I was left alone with my children and without employment.” (Woman born in 1939, 70 years old)

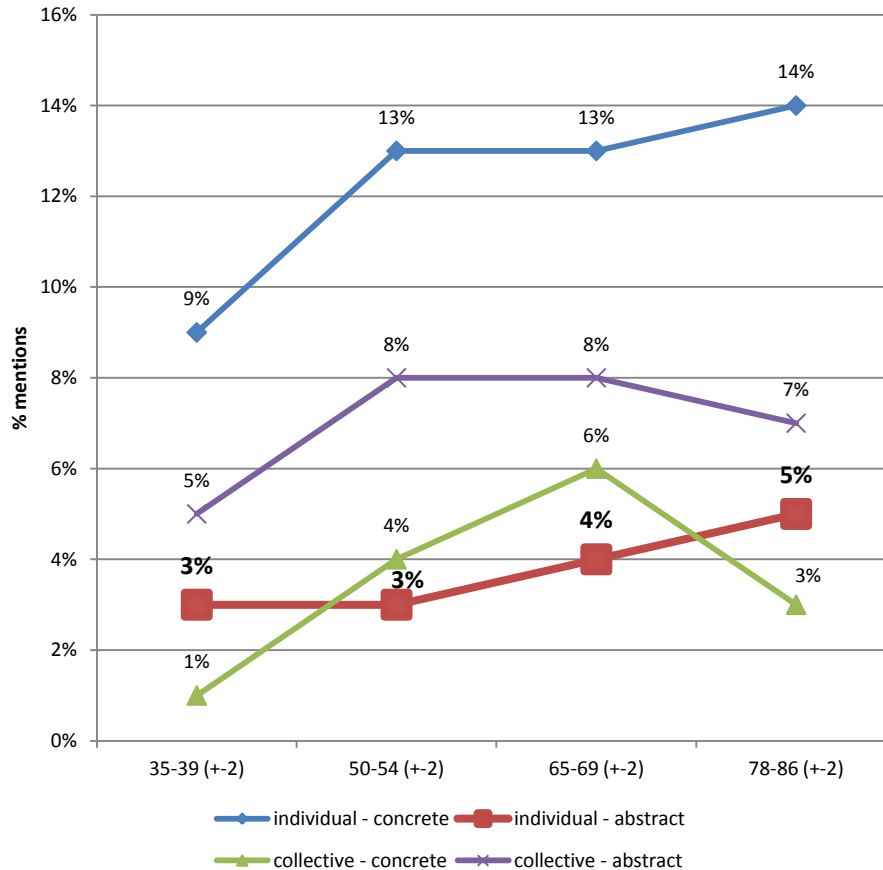
“We had to be enclosed, we listened the armored vehicles out of the house, the machine gun blasts, the only thing that we did was pray” (woman born in 1929, 80 years old)

“Not have shared with my biological father (political exiled)”. (Man born in 1970, 39 years old)

“The soldiers killed many people and here we saw they take people to Quiriquina Island all days.” (Man born in 1940, 69 years old)

Reasons to mention the Coup d'état in Chile (2)

Reasons DOM coup d'état 73/dictatorship (N =303 ment.)



Individual- Abstract

"I've like it by the evident order and tranquility in the life". (Woman born in 1942, 67 years old)

"Because was a dolorous fact, tragic, an outrage to that what I believe, that was democracy, the liberty". (Woman born in 1955, 54 years old)

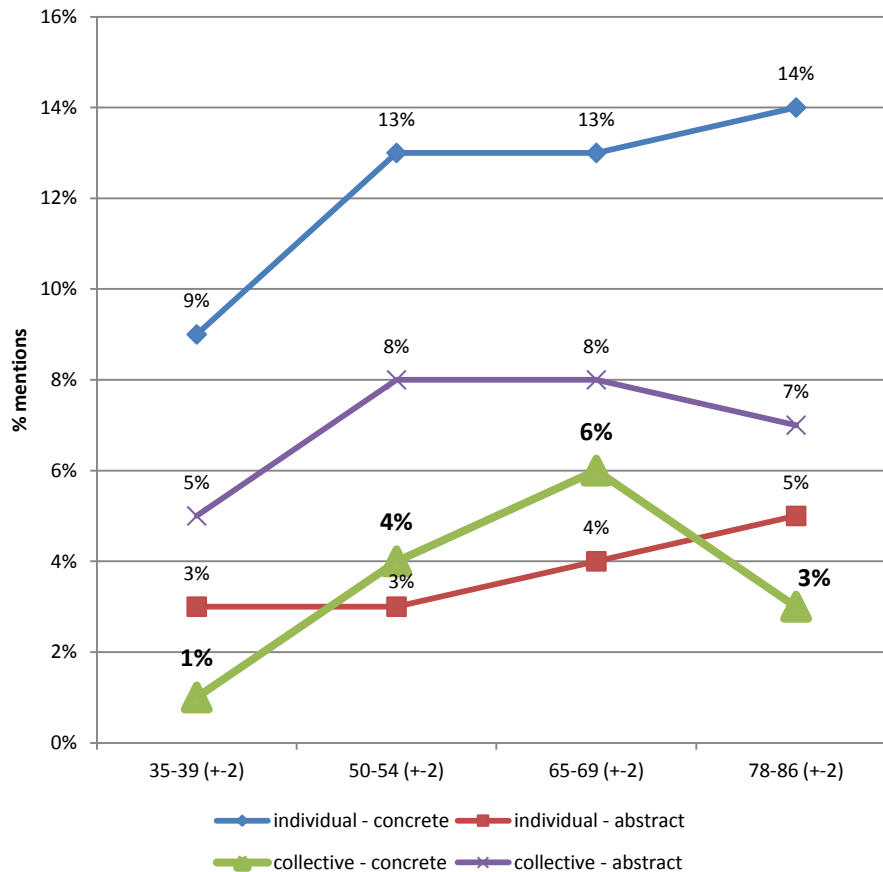
"Was a period of the history that was very hard for the people's life, we haven't liberty" (Man born in 1942, 67 years old)

"Nephew of police captain, and I was sergeant, I had tradition, principles, of course my support was unrestricted [to coup d'état]." (Man born in 1940, 69 years old)



Reasons to mention the Coup d'état in Chile (3)

Reasons DOM coup d'état 73/dictatorship (N =303 ment.)



Collective - Concrete

“By one side the country was ordained, but the fact of they killing people is something that I hope will never happen again.” (Woman born in 1928, 81 years old)

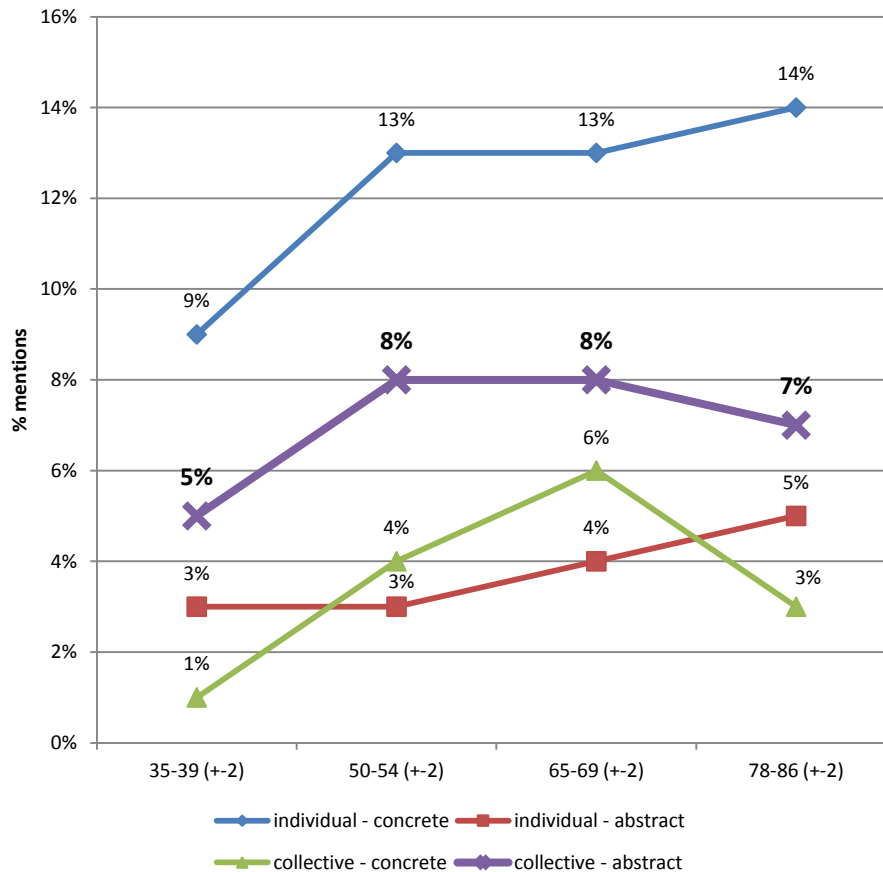
“Was a hard time, above all to can buy to eat, we has suffered hungry.” (Woman born in 1923, 86 years old)

“Is the worst that could happens to a country, was too much injustice, too much murders by think different, by have other ideas”. (Man born 1955, 54 years old)

“Because the “coup” [d'état] comes to finish with all the abuses and hardships of previous government.” (Man born in 1939, 70 years old)

Reasons to mention the Coup d'état in Chile (4)

Reasons DOM coup d'état 73/dictatorship (N =303 ment.)



Collective – Abstract

“Without army’s intervention the country was destroyed completely.” (Woman born in 1943, 66 years old)

“Because it was broke a tradition in Chile. What happened after; I’ve never saw it before.” (Woman born in 1925, 84 years old)

“It was one of the governments where we’ve had more order and tranquilly.” (Man born in 1957, 52 years old)

“It was madness and the people lived with fear that they were killed.” (Man born in 1959, 50 years old)

Conclusions (1)

- Density of memories around Chilean dictatorship is mainly related to the experience with the coup d'état of 1973
 - This defines different densities of memory for the youngest age group. Those are determined by the experience with this initial event.
- Generational differences in memory (in a demographical sense) are minimum due to the force and impact of the event in everyday life of Chileans.
 - This period marks all generations that lived it, independently of the “opening world” period for each age group.

Conclusions (2)

- Reasons to mention this period are strongly related to « crises » assumptions.
 - The most part of mentions about the period, are related to references about individual and concrete experiences.
 - But there is an important number of reasons based in collective –abstract sense, fact that speak us about the component of social trauma related to this period in history.
 - In reference to entire history (collective/abstract), as well as the specifically collective experience *in situ* (collective/concrete).
- The period of the coup d'état and later dictatorship shapes a socio-historical generation related to all of those that has lived it.
 - The socio historical change is mentioned by the most part of people that has lived it., accomplishing our criteria for define a collective memory (around a 50% for each cohort).
 - There is an intergenerational memory related to the period, associated mainly to the idea of a socio historical change that has impact the individuals