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Ximena Tocornal Montt

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The 11th of September 1973, the Chilean military overthrew the socialist government of Salvador Allende. The

military installed a government headed by General Augusto Pinochet, which became known for tactics of political repression including assassination, torture and exile. They remained in power until 1990. Since then, Chile has had five democratically elected presidents, none of whom has been able to avoid dealing with the legacy of the past. Among Chileans, there is no consensus regarding how to name, describe or explain the events leading up to and during the military regime. The most frequent explanations for the lack of consensus about the truth of what happened in Chile have been based on an appeal to memory processes, shaping a debate about the past as well as about legitimate sources of knowledge of the past. This research explores in detail the discursive and rhetorical devices by which the debate is explainable as the result of a systematic and methodical use of the language of polarisation.

About the Author Academic of the Institute of Public Affairs, University of Chile. She obtained her PhD in Social Psychology at Loughborough University, UK. She investigates how societies deal with violence. In particular, how Chileans collectively remember the 70s and 80s, a highly controversial period of local history filled of stories of violence.