Place, youth and memory as resistance
An ethnographic case study of discussions about impunity at Londres 38, espacio de memorias

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Abstract

"You don’t talk about politics or football around the dining table” is a Chilean expression that well describes how the dictatorship (1973–1990) is attached to the societal soul, with people’s diversified relationships to its legacy. For the outside world, Chile is a thriving democracy that got out of Pinochet’s iron grip, but for many Chileans, the transition to democracy has excluded demands for justice and a real influence. How is it to be born into democracy and grow up in a society where the struggle for memory is a struggle for the future? Where you did not live the terrible years but live with its consequences? This study is interested in how the younger generation breaks a generational silence and actively participates in politicizing memory. With a political-ethnographic approach and a customized discourse analytical tool, these processes are captured through an extensive case study of the memory site Londres 38, espacio de memorias. In conversations about impunity with the memory site’s young representatives and the school and university class’s diversified reflections on the subject during participating visits, present research shows how the place becomes a democratic deliberative platform, in contrast to prevailing power relations, giving voice and perspective to a new generation.

Key words

Chile, Impunity, Collective Memory, Ethnography, Discourse Analysis
A tribute to my grandmother Eugenia Toro Narea

&

In loving memory of my grandfather José Nazar Riquelme
Acknowledgements

Special thanks to the people at Londres 38,
your actions and words live within me.

To my family being expanded.
All meetings that made way and meaning.
The lost piece of the puzzle that found home through the struggle.
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1. Introduction

*The memories under construction nourish the rights under construction. Perhaps that dialogue today is fundamental for another project: democracy in construction.*

(Stern, 2011:119, my translation)

Memory sites are, more than for the Chileans themselves, useful international places to collectively raise awareness and pay attention to the crimes against humanity going on within the country’s own borders and those that the country is contributing to on a global level. Hite (2016:219) believes that memorial sites force reflection on responsibility and how we as visitors position ourselves politically in relation to the place. According to Klep (2012:267), processes of reconciliation begin in public spaces where people’s stories meet and work to construct a future beyond the country’s social conflicts. Following this line of thinking, a closer look at the Chilean transition from dictatorship to democracy generates an ambivalent understanding of justice.

As the world’s first neoliberal experiment, economic reforms that premiered the free market was introduced under Pinochet’s dictatorship (Harvey, 2005:5–7). This was followed by a transition negotiated between the political elite without major institutional changes (Jelin, 2002:101). Cornejo et al. (2018:2-3) highlights how the Chilean state’s policy on memory has gone hand in hand with a political and economic heritage from the dictatorship that has included parts of civil society in both the transition and official construction of memory but excluded others. As White points out, civil society is not a homogeneous actor, but consist of different interests and power influence (1994:385).

Important markers concerning reconciliation are the Chilean state’s reports “National Commission of Truth and Reconciliation” in 1990 and “National Commission on Political Imprisonment and Torture” in 2003, breaking the silence and creating an official recognition for the victims of the dictatorship. However, these omitted many voices and information on repressive practices that was committed under the dictatorship and hence would make visible diversified experiences and a still current struggle over memory (Cornejo et al. 2018:2; Stern, 2011:107–110). By excluding information, Esparza critically states that the culture of silence that allowed crimes against humanity during the dictatorship lives on and protects the perpetrators, complicating the possibility of reconciliation (2007:140). This visualizes structural limitations that critics of reconciliation emphasizes, portraying transitional justice as a “political strategy of nation-building by political elites” (Klep, 2012:260). According to
Elgueta Pinto (2018:5), the state has privatized the conflict; symbolic efforts have been directed at the families directly affected alongside with the commandment *no repetición* (no repetition).

This paper is situated in a wider context of work with the collective memory, as a product of the dictatorship’s legacies in the South cone of Latin America (Jelin, 2002). In Chile, memory transmission from former political prisoners to the second generation is found in recent research to create “memory entrepreneurs” who take on their parents’ struggles (Palma et al. 2018:3). This begs the question: What can we expect of today’s youth, born into democracy? In accordance with economist and justice philosopher Sen (2000:3-4) democratic institutions are a must to ensure peace and people’s equal access to politics. Similarly, it is important from a democratic perspective that groups, who are not represented in either the political or legislative body, may participate with their perspectives and interests in open arenas (Young, 2000).

As a result of *no repetición*, Stern asks whether the work with memory paradoxically loses its explosive power since the new generation has already learned that the crimes against human rights during the dictatorship were despicable and therefore does not see the benefit of memory as a tool for change in the present (2011:114-115). Additionally, Piper-Shafir et al. (2018:456) underline the memorial sites’ ambitions to “impact democratic social relations”, but that academic attention of these sites’ construction of the collective memory is rarely targeted towards visitors’ experiences of the place. For these reasons, this study investigates and contribute to a broader debate in what is actualized in the initial quotation: if and in what way democratic rights are enhanced through the younger generations participation in creating memory.

Particularly interesting from a political science perspective is how sites can be a catalyst for social action; one from which actors perceive a special meaning and react to its inherent social relations, while at the same time being moulded and transformed as subjects by the place itself: the “dialectics of structure and agency”, as Theborn (2006:512) expresses it. Subsequently, this minor field study takes place in the heart of Santiago de Chile, at Londres 38, *espacio de memorias* (memory space), whom intend to open up for a more just society demanding the state for human rights (Ochoa & Maillard, 2011:109).

1.1 Purpose and research questions

The present research tries to clarify how place-specific work with the memory, by taking a challenging stance against the current system and its power structures, can be an enabling and progressive tool for younger generations. I argue that this increased understanding is captured
by raising and analysing the young employees’ vision and approach to impunity in relation to the young visitors’ interaction with the site and their diversified reflections on the subject. Hence, this case study captures how political positions are made available and embraced through Londres 38, navigating from the following main research questions:

1) What contradictions emerge in employee’s representations of impunity at Londres 38?
2) What aspects of impunity occur in the interaction between employees and young school and university students during participating visits in Londres 38?
3) What positions do the students take in relation to impunity during participative visits?

1.2 Disposition
The study is structured as follows. Firstly, perspective on previous research acknowledging the context in which the field study takes place; elaborating on the roles of memory sites vis a vis the Chilean state and situating Londres 38, its approach and visions. After that, a rigorous methodological framework is developed where the ethnographic approach and considerations in relation to accessing a complex field with diverse perspectives is presented. Next, the application of a discursive analytical tool and theoretical underpinnings is described in the analytical framework, which is used on the following analysis of the empirical findings, presented in three overall themes that’s been mapped. Consequently, the results are summarized in a conclusion, and the analysis is discussed in concluding remarks linked to the research problem as depicted in the introduction.

2. Perspective on previous research

Below, this study is contextualized in relation to previous research that concerns the memory’s function and political use, memory sites and the Chilean state’s corresponding policy. After this, Londres 38 is described and their work is situated in relation to presented perspectives.
2.1 Memory in construction and a diversified political landscape

Memory is understood as a social reconstruction of the past, a social action that influences and affects the political position of actors today (Cornejo et al, 2018:3–4); a collective and relational construction characterized by the fact that interpretations meet, which help to explain the present and visualize power relations (Piper-Shafir, 2018:458). The memory should thus be regarded as under continuous conflict (Klep, 2012:271) and is reflected in the study’s theoretical analysis tools.

Moreover, contradictions on the meaning of memory are many; Some emphasize the dictatorship as necessary; others only want to go on and a third see the memory as a tool for making visible and changing lasting inequalities (Jelin, 2002:28–29). Cornejo et al (2018:13) show with the help of life stories, how diversified relationships with the memory of dictatorship continue to coexist in Chile and create new political demands. The life stories show that the family’s history and experience in relation to the dictatorship is often decisive for which positions that individuals occupy today. Piper-Shafir et al. (2018:456) analyzes the visits intersection between sites ‘representation of memory and visitors’ interpretations and feelings. They show that visitors who have no relation to the dictatorship, with the help of the place, can familiarize themselves with the victims’ situation, thereby making connections to how their families or the rest of society were affected (Piper-Shafir et al, 2018:463).

Memory sites have historically been an important marker in the struggle for memory and have been established from the struggles of social movements (Jelin, 2002:38–39). Across Chile, and especially in Santiago, memorial sites have been reclaimed and inaugurated (Hite, 2016:218). Piper-Shifer et al. (2018:459, 464) mention previous research on the importance of places in the fragmented landscape around memory, which show how individuals’ processes of political subjectivity are challenged and shaped in the physical movement memory sites allow in relation to history and the rest of society. The place can create feelings that are capable of changing the perceptions of memory and thereby materialize new positions.

However, it is pointed out that the state’s selective support for memorial sites has tended to smooth over history, without really addressing it (Hite & Collins, 2009:380–381). The authors argue that the state has represented the dictatorship as something static, with a story about the victims but without any clear perpetrators. Something they believe has created a distance to the Chilean people since a more meaningful official rendition of why, who and with which political visions the dictatorship was staged, is lacking (Hite & Collins, 2009:382–383). They argue that
memorial sites face the challenge of creating a narrative that unites the fragmented political landscape (Hite & Collins, 2009:385).

With the MMDH (Spanish initials for Museum of Memory and Human Rights), established by former President Michelle Bachelet in 2010, the state’s official memory was further consolidated. Cornejo et al. (2018:2) claim that the museum silences alternative understandings that other memorial sites try to convey. Based on MMDH, Lazzara (2011:76–77) critically writes that work with memory requires more complexity; not refer to the dictatorship as merely military dictatorship but civil–military dictatorship to make the participation of civil society visible; pay attention to the government before coup d’etat and its policies; show the perpetrators’ faces and the authoritarian monopoly of violence that continues; the consequences of neoliberalism, the class society and the injustices minorities live with; but above all the difficulty of moving on without the possibility of reflecting on these vital conditions.

Hite and Collins (2009:386) refers to Londres 38 and explains that subcultures have emerged, with younger generations who, in the treatment of the collective memory, identify themselves with like-minded political projects. Stern (2011:115) emphasizes that these democratization processes must involve younger generations in order to create a constructive political project that actually takes into account all generations and their different experiences. This study therefore understands Londres 38 in a socially open wound and a diversified political debate, investigating what importance the place can have for healing, or rather, influencing the future.

2.2 Londres 38, espacio de memorias

During the dictatorship’s first year Londres 38 worked as a center of repression and extermination and operated under DINA (Spanish initials for the National Intelligence Direction) whom detained people organized in left-wing parties and used the house as a strategic center for torture and connection to other horrific destinies (Ochoa & Maillard, 2011:22). Today, Londres 38 is established as a memorial site and is organized by the collectives who fought for its existence (Londres 38a). Now, as a memory site amongst others¹, what is special about Londres 38’s approach to explore the collective memory?

In her contextualization of Londres 38 in relation to other memorial sites and its processes along with the Chilean state, Elgueta Pinto (2018:13–14) states that the purpose of the

¹ See Aguilera (2015) for a contribution on the heterogeneity of memorial expressions and commemorations in Santiago de Chile.
participating visits is to challenge the state’s reconciliation policy. One of these critical expressions is the campaign *Toda la verdad, toda la justicia* (All the truth, all justice) where the politics of reconciliation is alleged to have created an institutionalized impunity and the campaign requires that incomplete information from all truth commissions be made public, accompanied by legal requirements, including that today’s criminalization of social protests should cease (Londres 38b, 2016:2–3).

Ochoa (2017:36) argues that Londres 38 adds a new dimension to the memorial landscape, as the emphasis is not placed on the detained as victims but as bearer of a political struggle. The identity of the memorial is strongly influenced by the continuity of the struggle and the political left, based on the visions of social change the place symbolizes. Londres 38 postulates that they, through deliberative conversations, encourage participants to position themselves in relation to the memory, creating new experiences and discourses (Londres 38c, 2018:13-14). Andermann and Arnold-de Simine (2012:5-6) argue that focus on dialogue allows museums to deal with current social issues and critical discussions about these, and following Lazarra (2011:61–62, 77) Londres 38 is the complete opposite of MMDH because of visitor’s active participation in the construction of meaning.

In their principles as a collective organization, it is announced that the intergenerational dialogue is sought (Londres 38d, 2009). Furthermore, the youth is regarded as both influenced by and co-creators of history (Londres 38c, 2018:17). In Piper-Shafir et al. (2018:464) observations of participatory visits with persons unrelated to the dictatorship, they arrive at that the visitors, through an emotional encounter with history and the victims’ experiences, position themselves against crimes against humanity, but that more complex and critical analyzes are absent, as Londres 38 itself, Lazarra (2011) and Elgueta Pinto (2018) point out. This study should be read in relation to these results, with the difference that the site is analyzed on the basis of how the work with the memory is linked to reflections and positioning on the current political system; investigated through the younger generation’s reflections about impunity.

### 3. Methodological framework

The ethnographer’s approach allows creative ways to construct method based on the purpose and context to be understood. Methodological combination of political ethnography with a
discourse perspective, described in more detail and presented separately in the analytical framework, provides the conditions for this paper’s original contribution.

**3.1 Approach as political ethnographer**

The nature of the field study facilitated to meet the criteria that characterize political ethnography, namely, to seek deep contextual understanding and the people’s perspectives whose surroundings one is analysing and trying to understand (Gustafsson & Johannesson, 2016:13-14). Political ethnography is primarily an “approach to scientific knowledge production” rather than a method *per se* and can advantageously be used to visualize power relations through everyday dynamics (Gustafsson & Johannesson, 2016:16-17).

However, the results were not anything imagined from the beginning and the entry as a political ethnographer allowed to rethink and come to new understandings. With the aim of *immersion*, the investigation worked its way from observations and informal chats about impunity with people in different contexts and surroundings (Gustafsson & Johannesson, 2016:16-17). It led to investigating the processes of political subjectivities in Londres 38, a favourable situation-specific entrance in order to be able to draw attention to how power relations are challenged by an informal actor and thus broaden the understanding of who conducts politics (Gustafsson & Johannesson, 2016: 22–23).

**3.1.1 Entering a diversified field of political memory**

Before, and during, access was granted to Londres 38 interviews and meetings was held with academics, activists, former prisoners in centres of torture, gathering perspectives and a more fully nuanced vision of the different aspects and experiences related to the dictatorship and politics of memory in present Chile. However, recognizing that the study increasingly took the form of a case study of Londres 38, large parts of the data collection were delimited thereafter. The failure does not work as an analysis basis but has nevertheless had its merits for the study.

What appeared to be an extremely legal issue on the surface, turned out to be a much more complex social issue. Impunity highlights the country’s “transversal power arrangements”, as an activist put it. A former political prisoner explained his experience that sectors of the population are socially, economically and culturally isolated since the dictatorship and that this “internal exile” testify how impunity affects people differently. This was something that was recurring in the conversations and which a doctoral student in history summed up as “the field of memory has become very diversified”. This would later facilitate the understanding of how people in groups, during the participating visits, adhered to the theme. It also gave perspectives
on experiences of taboo and a theoretical understanding of the younger generations’ attitude in interaction with Londres 38.

3.1.2 Purposive data collection
Based on the challenges mentioned above purposive data collection has facilitated the work process. The choice to investigate Londres 38 is motivated, in accordance with “typical case sampling”, by the fact that the memory site gives the opportunity to understand and exemplify a specific phenomenon, namely how political subjectivities are created in relation to the prevailing power relations, captured by the younger generation and how they relate to and challenge impunity through the site. Based on this ambition, different analysis units have been strategically chosen to respond to the respective research question (Bryman, 2012:419-420). Consequently, employee’s at Londres 38 have been interviewed in order to reconnect to primarily the first but also the second research question; participating visitors are analyzed to respond to the second and third research question; and the site itself represents an analysis unit in all research issues with the aim of linking to the phenomenon being investigated.

Based on the distribution of the types of participating visits observed, six school and four university classes, the sample is representative according to Londres 38’s own statistics on participating visitors’ profile. These fall within the category “young” (15–29 years) and are the most frequent type of visitor (Londres 38e, 2019). In this study, young people are defined as the younger generation and include those who are considered to lie inside or around this age range. Access to audio files routinely recorded during the visits has facilitated good sound quality, transcription and approval to record by large groups of people.

3.2 Research design
The design of the study and the data that has been collected and interpreted is based on an ethnographic case study of Londres 38, espacio de memorias in central Santiago, Chile, from late March 2019 to early May 2019. In total, seven semi-structured interviews were conducted, and 10 participating visits attended with an average of about 25 people. All quotations in section 5, “Results and analysis”, are based on the following collection of empirical material.

Londres 38’s participating visits have elements of jointly engendering the memory. Suitable for the purpose, the design is in line with this approach and can be used to capture identities and identifications with the starting points of the discourse analysis, where the subjects are seen as contributing in creating meaning (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2015:199). By taking part in participatory visits, asking questions to and see how the participants interact within the site
base, it is argued that the focus group interview methodology is reflected. The leader of the participating visits was always looking to create dialogue and invited both me and the visitors to intervene with questions or thoughts during the visits. Importantly, the collective interview form is characterized by the fact that new knowledge is produced in the dynamics that arise in discussions between participants, which is resembled by how various issues and themes was dealt with, creating a space for sharing opinions, differing experiences and perspectives on an otherwise taboo subject (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2015, 191). After the visits there were also opportunities to sit down and discuss with participants. This informal strategy gave a chance to better understand the participants’ reflections and capture underlying contradictions (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2015:143–144).

In line with qualitative research, the interviews with the employees at Londres 38 were semi-structured and provided scope for flexibility, spontaneous follow-up questions and ample personal views (Bryman, 2012: 470). Regular presence and participative observations made it possible to construct interviews according to the analysis tool for a systematic and theoretically informed approach. Among other things, conceptual questions about impunity were made as they, like the objective of the discourse analysis, can make visible unproblematized assumptions. Questions that could distinguish contrasts, reminiscent of antagonism introduced in the analysis tool, intended to shed light on processes of social contradictions. The purpose of these conversations was motivated by the philosophical understanding of discourse as “relational constituent” (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2015:193, 273-275): the employees’ representations of impunity should reasonably be influenced by its visitors but also affect the visitors in the social interaction participating visit entails. Similar, the employees are considered to affect each other as well. They consist of four ordinaries, only one born during the dictatorship (who did not act as a facilitator in any of the participating visits attended), and three new young trainees who just started when the investigation was initiated. Although Londres 38 is an organization bigger than the specific place, the ones that act in and represent it are of main interest and the selections’ overwhelmingly young majority is beneficial for the purpose of this study.

I have mostly taken an active role during participating observation and positioned myself as an equal participant, but sometimes also adopted a more restrained, pondering role (Bryman, 2012: 446). Field notes were adjusted according to the intensity of my participation. To the extent possible, key words and short sentences have been recorded in order to make a more vivid description immediately after a session. This approach could be classified as somewhere in between briefly reporting memory notes and more complete field notes (Bryman, 2012: 450).
In the ranking of the empirical material, where the material’s interrelationships and status in the analysis must be considered (Gustafsson & Johannesson, 2016: 36), the field notes taken in participatory observations works as a complement to the transcribed semi-structured interviews and participative visits.

**3.2.1 Mapping themes – first and second order constructions**

The analysis was performed in several stages and with different purposes. Both in order to map the material, its overall patterns and themes, and in an attempt to create an interaction between theory and empirical data. *Mapping* is understood as active attempts to systematize the material to reach the core of the context and an “insider perspective” (Vera-Larrucea, 2016:119). The decisive factor in not letting my own theoretical interpretations of observations and interviews with informants solely dictate the direction of the study was, in line with Larsson, analyzing “first and second order constructions”. The first order includes the actions, concepts, views, beliefs that can be observed in the *empirical material*. The second order is the *theoretical understanding* of these social practices, with theories explaining the relationships observed in the empirical material (Larsson, 2016:134–135). Hence, a constant movement between data and theory, that embodies the abductive approach of political ethnographers (Gustafsson & Johannesson, 2016:37). Bearing in mind that the thematicization has shifted between different purposes; partly to contemplate patterns in the material and partly to make theoretical connections, this abductive strategy has facilitated the overview of the results in relation to the research questions but has also helped to be self-critical to theoretical hypotheses and to informants’ individual comments.

**3.3 In search of scientific criteria**

The purpose of this rigorous methodological section is transparency and an ambition to show the reflexivity of the work process. Reflexivity in this setting means both an awareness of how I, as a political ethnographer, am involved in constructing the environment and its social aspects, thus also the knowledge produced; as well as reflections on possible bias, methodological considerations and an understanding of the diversity of the context (Bryman, 2012:393–394). In other words, renounce claims to describe an objective reality (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2014:277). Instead, it is emphasized how the process of participating observations and interviews affects how reality *becomes* and what dimensions this holds; how people perceive me and my presence, the research purpose and whether any power relations play into
our social construction (Gustafsson & Johannesson, 2016: 20–21). Since the family on my dad’s side came to Sweden as political refugees from the dictatorship in Chile, it has been a challenge to constantly be aware of what ways my presence and subjectivity influence the study. However, the trust and close relationships that my positioning created is deemed to be one of the study’s strengths.

Furthermore, my Spanish skills are good enough to carry out interviews without an interpreter, creating a natural flow in the discussions. However, valuable help has been offered to transcribe both interviews and the participating visits, which facilitated the overview and my own translations into English. In addition, the possibility of discussing the relevance of interpretations has been given on several occasions, which can be regarded as a form of internal reliability (Bryman, 2012:390). This opportunity has created a dialogic intersubjectivity, namely that my subjectivity has both been criticized and validated relationally with and by encounters in Londres 38 (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2014:293). However, the study entails a risk of bias, since other perspectives describing the social world fall away. Above all, the many people observed in participating visits have not confirmed or criticized the interpretations that form the basis of the conclusions.

The detailed description of the analysis tool further down, and its implications for the study, was a reflexive action with the aim of transparency and avoiding biases (Gustafsson & Johannesson, 2016:153–154). Neither choice of method nor methodological starting points intend to generalize the study’s results to other contexts (Bryman, 2012:390). However, it is argued that the entrance as a political ethnographer has made it possible to meet the criteria for qualitative research and highlight phenomena at the macro level (Gustafsson & Johannesson, 2016:24). By analyzing how political subjectivities are created, it is possible to draw modest conclusions about social contradictions and how people possibly can relate to and position themselves in relation to impunity through a memory site. It is not possible, due to the length of the field study, to capture any social transformation. However, experiences expressed within this space makes for a unique understanding of contextual work with the memory as a tool for societal change. In accordance with the criterion transferability, this contribution is placed in relation to previously presented research and is hopefully rewarding and of importance for Londres 38 and other organization’s future work (Bryman, 2012:392–393).

Method triangulation - the combination of participatory observations, field notes and semi-structured interviews - strengthens the internal validity and is strategically used to check that the interpretations are reasonable (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2014:299). This can be argued to increase the credibility of my interpretations (Bryman, 2012:390). Validation is considered a
social practice active in all parts of the research process (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2014:297) and, in thus study, found especially in the reasonableness of theory and research questions, the adaptation of the method in relation to the purpose and the study’s recurring element of revaluations. It can thus also be argued that the study reflects the phenomenon that was intended to be investigated (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2014:296).

3.3.1 Ethical considerations
Critics have pointed out that the researcher’s interest in how discourses are formed in the conversation, rather than what is actually said, avoids representing informants with justice (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2014:197). Strategies to circumvent this ethical dilemma have been attempts to build a rewarding relationship with informants (Gustafsson & Johannesson, 2016:32) in order to represent the perspectives of the people observed fairly and as truthfully as possible (Bryman, 2012:393).

As discussed, my open positioning was a disarming moment in the researcher-informant relationship. By explaining the purpose of my presence and interest in Londres 38’s work, it was experienced to reduce visitors’ feeling of being observed. At times, it almost felt as if my position was the deciding factor for participants to engage in dialogue with me. As Bourke writes: “Identities come into play via our perceptions, not only of others, but of the ways in which we expect others will perceive us” (Bourke, 2014:1). This thought of analysis resembles the theoretical concept of positionality which is presented in the next section. It also highlights the “self as a research instrument” and the understanding that my subjectivity depends on my social position which affects both my observations in the field and also how I reproduce these in this paper. However, one’s position is relational and ever changing and by reflecting on my positionality in relation to Londres 38, employees and visitors, conditions for objectivity in relation to my subjectivity and the possibility that those who are examined are fairly represented, increases (Bourke, 2014:2-3).

4. Analytical framework
An analytical framework that let us investigate how Londres 38’s vision is upheld, created and materialize in the encounters is needed and the papers’ theoretically informed method of analysis contributes in a unique way to decipher the themes that was mapped. Parts of Laclau and Mouffe’s discourse analysis is used since it is especially well suited for analysing how
political identities arise and dissolve (Howarth, 1998:284), and their central theoretical concepts are understood to be useful as analytical tools (Bergström & Boreus, 2012:365). With a post-structuralist understanding, discourse refers to all social phenomena and practices (Bergström & Boreus, 2012:357). Discourses are considered as political constructs, and power is included in the analysis since society is ultimately a political creation; a struggle between the discourses that are constituted and the ones seeking to construct society differently (Howarth, 1998:275).

Antagonism, dislocation and political subjectivity lay the theoretical basis of which Anthia’s understanding of positionality and narratives further develops and tweaks the theoretical underpinnings to fit the study’s context. First, the theoretical basis of the concepts is presented, then how they are transformed into tools and used on the empirical data.

### 4.1 Antagonism – struggle for meaning

Inspired by Marxism, Laclau and Mouffe use antagonism to shed light on how struggles and conflicts are constantly ongoing, with discourses and its meaning as the primary unit of analysis (Bergström & Boreus, 2012:369). Social antagonisms affect how identities are formed; they sometimes constitute sometimes deconstructs identities. The social reality is constantly being created and recreated in this discursive struggle, which is made visible in challenging antagonisms (Howarth, 1998:275-276). Since identity here is understood as the subject positions people identify with, and these are not durable but rather under constant transformation, antagonisms are understood to create new spaces and opportunities to identify with within the discourse (Bergström & Boreus, 2012:371). In conversation with Anthias (2002:496), identity and identification are thus situational, and the analysis should be directed towards the places where these contradictory processes are created.

Consequently, antagonism is captured by especially prominent patterns of struggle for meaning and commonly occurring elements in these. People’s discourses, or narratives as will be referred to in the results and analysis, are created relationally within the cultural environment in which human encounters occur, and form through political contradictions, both locations and dislocations (Anthias, 2002:500). Thus, by locating antagonism in the stories told by real people, finding dislocations is facilitated.
4.2 Processes of political subjectivity

In the political-theoretical debate about agency, one understanding is that actors' identifications are limited to existing subject positions; assuming positions as subjects in relation to definite structures and categorizations. This deterministic and essentialist understanding of the subject and its decisiveness vis-à-vis structures is opposed by Laclau and Mouffe. Instead, Laclau uses the concept of political subjectivity that breaks up predetermined categories and ways to identify. Political subjectivity highlights how subjects act, and people’s ability to create social change, because of the fragility that discursive structures holds (Howarth, 1998:278-279; Howarth, 2000:108).

Laclau’s conceptualization of political subjectivity is made possible by dislocations, which is described as a discursive contest against the current order. With dislocation, the understanding of discourse is widened to further layers of social processes, such as bureaucracy and globalization, which are unable to symbolize individuals or groups’ alternative discourses and their identifications. The dislocation creates space for subjects to challenge this lack of representation (Howarth, 2000:111), and not only the discursive structures but also the subject’s identifications are disturbed. The temporary exposures of the structures force the subject to take a stand on political discourses, express alternative representations, and adopt new identities to reconstruct the structures; these are the processes that create political subjectivities (Howarth, 1998:278-279). Moreover, this approach focuses on the actions of real people (Bergström & Boreus, 2012:372) and actions can be observed, but how?

Following Anthias, the subject moves between his social position (outcome of structures) and his own social positioning (processes of social practices). In my reading of Laclau and Mouffe’s description of identities as processes and Laclau’s theory of political subjectivity, it can be deduced to positionality, which Anthia describes as the borderland between structure and agency; where individuals and groups are identified by each other in their social positions, but also undergo processes of self-identification based on these, thus occupy a social positioning. It follows that processes of identification, positionalities, are based on site-bound social practices that take place relationally at interpersonal, organizational and representation levels (Anthias, 2002:501–502).

To approach these social actions that dislocations provide space for, where positionalities emerge and make visible processes of political subjectivity, Anthia’s understanding of narratives comes in handy. Narratives are seen as social practices, and “as actively participating in the very construction of subject positionalities” (Anthias, 2002:501). This means that the
narratives which can be observed in Londres 38, can make visible how people negotiate their social position and position themselves in the specific context in which the encounter takes place. At the same time, the narrative is constituted by the context which is generated by the various narratives that meet (idem).

4.3 Recapitulating analytical framework

To summarize, before moving on to the study’s findings, the main points of this both methodological and theoretical framework will be stated. For clarity, I have chosen to convey the framework as a cycle to illustrate my interpretation of how the analytical tools are interrelated.

Relational cycle of political subjectivity

The concepts presented do not have a hierarchical relationship. On the contrary, the concepts are considered to have a relational relationship, which shows how the subject and the collective identifications negotiated are carried out in the borderland between structure and agency. Together, these processes of narrative, antagonism, dislocations and positionalities that are prominent in the material form an understanding of how political subjectivity becomes. In my understanding and application of Laclau, Mouffe and Anthias, these phenomena and social practices describe how processes of political subjectivity are created; through contradictions, alternative representations and perhaps above all the place in its context and the people who contribute to the place’s being.

Moreover, to use this analytical framework on the empirical material, the analysis tool has been operationalized through a question battery that embodies the concepts of antagonism and dislocation, respectively, while the concepts of narrative and positionality serve as theoretical
complements to explain processes of political subjectivity. Below questions are directed to the empirical material and together represent and correspond to the study’s research questions and purpose.

**Antagonism:**
- What characterizes challenging narratives about impunity?
- What are the central (prominent or latent) contradictions?
- Which identity markers become special objects in the struggle for meaning?

**Dislocation:**
- What social, discursive processes are questioned?
- What alternative representations are expressed?
- Which identifications are manifested by these dislocations?

## 5. Results and analysis

In this part of the study, the employees at Londres 38 and its visitors are presented as representatives and participants respectively. This is motivated by the methodological and theoretical considerations to reproduce interviewees as representatives of Londres 38, as a political organization, and to visualize their own subjectivity in relation to it. Similarly, visitors are referred to as participants to emphasize that they are subjects with agency in relation to Londres 38 and its representatives.

The section is arranged along the general themes that have been mapped (5.1, 5.2 & 5.3). Theme 5.1 responds to the first research question and analyzes the representatives; 5.2 also has the representatives as the starting point and focuses on the second research question; 5.3 corresponds to both the second and third research question navigating from the visitor’s interactions. Each theme is independent from one another which means that three different analysis have been performed. Most importantly, the analysis tool is used consistently and in the same way in each, however, theoretically the themes are explained as relationally bound.
5.1 Impunity as an incomplete transition from dictatorship to democracy

This section presents the representatives’ overall and recurrent antagonistic statements and representations of impunity where memory becomes an understanding of how impunity figures in the Chilean society and, simultaneously, a strategy from which justice is formulated as a stop of the State’s terror and the economic-political system. These ideas of an incomplete transition are later presented in relation to participating visits and participants’ own approach.

5.1.1 Memory for change and as opposed to the Chilean state

- The exercise of memory that we do here at Londres 38, is not transposed under the figure of not forgetting, but rather for a constant social practice to reveal the mantle of impunity.

In the quotation above, there is a consistent antagonism; the memory of the dictatorship should not be limited or delimited in time but should be regarded as a contradiction which lives on in impunity and should be constantly observed. Representatives’ narrative opposes what they describe as the state’s official memory\(^2\). As one explains:” What has been done in Chile is first to forget, and if you remember, to remove all political project that was behind.” They argue that by merely reproducing how people became victims of the dictatorship’s violence, and not mentioning the progressive political project these people staged, the struggle for social change that memory can work to re-politicize is depoliticized. The perspective that prevails in the representatives’ questioning is a position on the political role of memory in society opposed to the state’s policies of forgetting\(^3\) and serves as an identity marker in the fight for meaning:

- Because it is a necessity for the present and for the future, memory is a substantial base of identity to define who we are, who we want to be [...] and in the structural as a society as well.

The memory is described in alternative terms as a tool” to understand reality and also connect with the experiences of struggle that have sought to transform reality”. Furthermore, the representatives position themselves in relation to other memorial sites and museums. These antagonistic contradictions can be understood to further strengthen the importance of the site’s meaning in the struggle over memory, which is illustrated in the extract below:

- We do not carry a reflection of ‘Oh! The poor victims.’ Here is a memorial that has the militancy of the comrades, why they were murdered, which are the same murders of today [...] art should be for action, it cannot be contemplative art.

\(^2\) Explained similar to how Hite and Collins (2009:380–381) reported it.

\(^3\) The narrative resembles what Elgueta Pinto (2018) and Stern (2013) describes as no repetición.
The narrative opens up for identity markers based on the specific place where the purpose of memory is to change. In questioning the state’s official memory and how other memory sites relate to it, an alternative representation is manifested as resistance, in accordance with how one of the interviewees expresses: “inevitably that repressive and oppressive continuity has an answer that is also the continuity of the struggle.” The resistance is based on the notion that history is not a linear process and that memory can be used to position oneself today: “These issues will be repeated, there is no guarantee of non-repetition.” The representation of impunity emerges in a transformative project in contrast to the Chilean state where processes of identification is made visible in the representatives’ questioning and ambitions with the memory. This is understood to lay the foundation for the interactions that are initiated in the participating visits and is made concrete in demands for justice below.

5.1.2 Justice: beyond the legacy of State terror and the economic-political system

- Impunity is a veil that allows torturers, civilians as military personnel, to have no punishment. There is no justice.

Characteristic of the antagonistic narrative on impunity is how laws and the constitution are described to allow horrible acts to go unpunished and continue to enable and protect a repressive monopoly of violence and the people who establish it. The state appears as the guardian of injustice and is questioned as being responsible for” crimes that have been perpetrated to this day, in democracy”. Impunity is described by one of the informants as “a social problem insofar as you legitimize the practices of authority” because the perpetrators “have not been socially touched by any kind of sanction”. In the representatives’ statements, the need for reflection on today’s violence monopoly and its origin, asserts itself:

- You can be oppressed, and you do not get anything with complaining because that’s just the way things are. In that sense, impunity perpetuates the current social mode, it is like a message in our unconscious.

The effects of impunity are described as living subconsciously in the Chilean societal body, and by highlighting this contradiction, a unifying identity marker takes shape where the struggle for meaning asserts itself: “We do not only have to wait for a judge or for the state to do some kind of justice”, as is often expressed. By questioning the repressive practices of the violence monopoly, its institutionalized processes are understood to be challenged and create space for alternative representations. This is exemplified in one of the representatives’ reference to a participating visit we both attended at: “People realize, you shared a visit with me when there was a guy who was so angry because the police repress the marches, that is a vestige of the
dictatorship and perpetuates impunity.” The antagonism culminates in an alternative and widening representation of impunity:

- They generated terror and managed to establish a regime and a society that today can be seen to be deeply unequal, deeply unjust and where their legal logics can continue to work.

This clear positioning can be seen as an identity marker where impunity is associated with a repressive monopoly of violence and economic inequality, and this lack of justice lays the foundation for identifications that oppose this logic. Contradictory to what is, justice becomes visible in further challenging narratives on impunity,

- There is also impunity in health and there is impunity in the retirement system and in education as well; that is the same in the economic system of today, the neoliberalism.

The representatives argue that the legacy of the dictatorship lives on in essential parts of a political system that gives birth to unequal economic conditions today. A representative express that one begins to understand how” those oppressions have to do with the systems incorporated in the dictatorship”, and that these lessons come from looking at history,

- Today we are no longer in dictatorship but in democracy, but if we look at which families come from the large economic groups, and what roles these families had during the dictatorship, we can begin to recognize each other and our neighbors.

This quote describes the reflexive challenge the Chilean society is considered to be facing. This is partly expressed by the fact that many civilians who participated in the dictatorship are not recognized and are part of the political elite:” Their history of what they did during that time is unknown, so that is also part of the impunity.” Second, the dictatorship left behind” individualism, which is fueled by neoliberalism, which fuels impunity because individualism prevents you from getting involved with other people”. They argue that impunity is maintained by people not meeting nor getting redress, and that it benefits the prevailing power relations:

- Impunity grants and allows neoliberalism to continue functioning, if you do not have anyone to accuse, this issue continues to permeate society.

This narrative is understood as if further layers of discourse are disrupted; questioning the functioning of the economic-political system creates an alternative representation that manifests identifications in contrast to neoliberalism.

5.2 Impunity as a reasoning journey: facts, feelings and resistance

What will hereinafter be referred to as the Journey, consists of three stations where Londres 38 is portrayed as la Casa (the House), and consists of a process that symbolizes how facts, feelings
and resistance travel through the visitor getting to know la Casa, becoming part of it, and carry it further out into society. The representatives here are the primary analysis unit and the Journey illustrates their perceptions of the participants; especially how their own positions and standpoints grow, is negotiated and strengthened in relation to the participants. The challenging and alternative narratives of the representatives are analyzed on the basis of their experiences of participating visits, which reflects aspects of impunity raised during these, and are presented as blocks of merged quotes representative for each of the mapped “stations”.

5.2.1 The Journey into la Casa
The representatives were asked to talk of what they think about the participating visits and whether they, with the help of the visits, challenge the representation of impunity they presented. Their experiences are that there is one before and one after the visit and that la Casa, the information and the dialogue do not leave anyone untouched. Advantageously, extracts from the conversations show how the representatives experience the visitor’s interaction with their representation of impunity:

I believe that if one visualizes that there is still impunity for crimes during the dictatorship, but also in today’s repression, a reaction is generated in people which change their sense of impunity […] at least I’ve seen it in the young, it activates something […] they begin to realize that this is no longer an individual issue, but a theme of the social body […] only by sharing this information is opening up a critical reflection on the present that challenges the regime, which generates a dialogue with the visitors based on their reflections and opinions.

They believe that la Casa becomes a platform for reflexive and critical dialogue by presenting information and together discussing its social meaning. With the analysis tool, their own identity markers are understood to be confirmed in meeting with participants, thereby reinforcing the importance of the political project for the representatives. This is in line with the theoretical understanding that narratives are created relationally, through the dialogue that takes place in a certain context. Thus, it is possible to interpret the perceptions of the representatives testify to the relational positionalities that are created at the interpersonal level by the processes of identification generated by the encounters with the participants.

5.2.2 The Journey inside la Casa
After getting to know la Casa’s history and current significance, it is time to become part of it; a process characterized by the visitors’ own participation and emotional investment. The function of the participating visits is described below:

This space is a contribution to question the past and the present, which is generated especially when there is dialogue in the visits and it is not only the facilitator who speaks
When the people who visit are the ones that are involved in the dialogue, a reaction is generated that changes the feelings of the people […] The truth that people bring can be molded by the conversation and begin to dissolve and become less rigid.

It is described as that the relationship that is created in la Casa enables other approaches, where the interaction can provide the visitors with a new understanding of the significance of memory in today’s political system. New perspectives are described to be negociated between the individual and the group, which in accordance with the analysis tool can be understood as that new identifications are released. In the representatives’ representations, the dialogue appears as a tool the visitor uses to get to know herself and her story through the place. Thus, a methodological awareness emerges over their own positionality as pedagogues and how the visitors can choose to relate to it. The social positions (and positioning) that the representatives think are activated through the interaction with the alternative representation of impunity, become especially visible in their perception of the visitors’ feelings of rage:

What usually happens to visitors is that this generates rage, and wanting to fight in some cases, or to assume this not only has to do with the past, but also has to do with the present […] At the end of the visit, as if that rage, the mobilizing rage, is transferred to a practice. People leave wanting to make barricades as impunity generates mobility so that these people can become indignant.

Based on the antagonisms and contradictions that have been marked driving the representatives’ own identities and identifications to what the political project Londres 38 means to them, the work with memory can be interpreted to convey and produce emotions with the ambition to create a will to change among the participants. In line with the theoretical understanding of narratives as constructed between the participants and representative, the rage can be understood to symbolize a self-identification to the project based on the participants’ reactions.

5.2.3 The Journey from la Casa

La Casa is said to resonate with the participants and create new memories that influence beyond the visit:

Londres 38 is like a resonance box where different sounds accumulate with memories that resonate outwards. Although the house had not existed, we could have talked about crimes against humanity, but the house encourages various dialogues […] visitors are encouraged to involve their own memories in the house […] and in turn how the house also generates, it is like a resonance box towards other memories and makes its experiences […] but that those memories also have to go hand in hand with that indignation, that from here they cannot leave the same as they entered.

The resonance box is a recurrent element; the visitors have through their meeting with la Casa challenged themselves and each other, they have listened to and told their own memories, which creates a sensitivity and understanding of la Casa’s symbolism in today’s political system. The
analysis tool would explain this as that the representatives imagine how identities are in transformation and that new identifications arise through the dislocation la Casa causes. La Casa’s function beyond the visit is said to depend on the individual but that it probably is a portal for further conversations:

They want to return or comment on this memory outside, because they understand that what happened inside the house also happened outside the house, and it still happens today [...] more than anything, it is an invitation to the person who comes here to challenge the impunity he faces [...] London 38 opens spaces of greater freedom for the circulation of ideas, of dialogues, but what is sought here is that this is not encapsulated.

The representatives find that la Casa either confirms or becomes an eye-opener that symbolizes and makes visible what is happening in the participants’ lives, outside. If knowledge is relational, it is possible to understand how the representatives act as political subjects in relation to the visitors, each other and la Casa. It allows their antagonistic and alternative representations of memory, impunity and ultimately the political system to be expressed, shaped and created in the meetings that la Casa enable. Representatives’ identifications are thus manifested in the encounters and their perceptions can, to some extent, be regarded as reflecting the common struggle for meaning and processes of political subjectivity.

5.3 La Casa’s significance in meeting with the younger generation

The Journey depicted in the previous section is reflected in observations of school and university classes and is presented to the reader through the participants’ curiosity and quest to understand their history, their opinions expressed as a result of dialogues, and narratives of resistance with the new generation portrayed as protagonists. With the goal of reproducing a representative and transparent picture of the visits, it is marked which group expresses what, since participation and the level of knowledge were observed to vary over mainly ages. Above all, active resistance is more common for the older students, even though there were exceptions among the younger school pupils. The participants’ statements are presented in varying and realistic forms adjusted for the reader to have a closer insight.

5.3.1 What’s in our stories?

In the initial meeting with la Casa, the participants are usually struck by the memorial stones that are located as cobblestones at the entrance:

Representative: What have you noticed about this memorial?
Participant: The age of the people who were here.
Representative: Why did you notice age?
**Participant 2:** Because most of them were young, also children, pregnant women and most of them were from left-wing political parties.

**Representative:** Did someone else notice something else or the same in another way?

**Participant 3:** At the entrance it was written that two pregnant women were tortured here.

**Representative:** Yes, tortured and also detained and made disappear.

**Participant 4:** That one cannot belong to a political party because you have the fear that something can happen to you. To express what you think in politics can kill you.

The dialogue is from a university class and actualizes the feelings and thoughts that are initiated through meeting with la Casa. Strong feelings and astonishment are common to the groups that have been observed, where la Casa’s history is interpreted as a first entry to the critical reflections later on in the visits. The bodily placement in the room was also noted to create conditions for deliberative talks. In a field note it is highlighted how “Everyone is invited to sit down on the floor in Sala de detención [Detention room], a phenomenon that seems to break with the expectation of coming to a memorial museum”. Once in Sala de detención the memorial stones are used by the representatives to mark the political project:

- There appear different militancy’s which is something that the project of London 38 wants to vindicate, thinking that the people who disappeared from here, were more or less the ages that we have and had a strong political project, for which, they were made disappear.

This was observed to create and manifest a connection around the age which opens up for identifications with the project, often resulting in comments where standpoints and attitudes prevail, as illustrated by comments such as ”it is too powerful”, ”this character of organization about political memory is super important” or ”it could have been us, because I think that even if it had been in another time I would have been in the same”. Through participation, the social positions available and individuals positioning are revealed. Self-identification to the site and its contemporary project emerges from how the specific way of working with memory is highlighted and confirmed in relation to thoughts about one’s own political activism.

Another way that the visitors get to know la Casa and is understood to make room for resonance, is curious searching in their own history through commonly occurring factual issues.

Below, a conversation sequence from a dialogue with a school class is shown. Each question was in reality followed by a longer response from the representative, with two significant responses retained in order to convey the prominent pattern of the interaction:

**Participant:** How many disappeared, and dead were there in the country?

**Participant 2:** Is there a list of people who went through London 38?

**Participant 3:** Is it known what places were used for what in the building?

**Representative:** We have a campaign called ”Toda la verdad, toda la justicia” where figures of repression in dictatorship appear as you asked for but there also appear cases related to the repression in democracy; what we have to live in this present…

**Participant 4:** Are there testimonies of the tortured, record, with name and surname?

**Participant 5:** And the pregnant girls, what happened with the children?
Participant 4: What happened to the perpetrators, are there some testimonies of repentant or someone who tells the truth?

Representative: There are around 700 people who have been prosecuted for violations of human rights. Of those 700, only 117 have some kind of conviction.

The above shows how faculty issues open up for dialogue and the representative’s representation of impunity. Conversely, it is also possible to understand how the representative’s description of the campaign, furthermore, opens up and gives room for the visitors’ curious questions. In accordance with the analysis tool, this can be understood to represent narratives as relational constituents. Factual issues may seem non-reflexive, but the sequence shows how the recurring curiosity creates a dialogue that allows school students to understand what it was like for those who were there and relate what happened during dictatorship to how the work with memory is relevant today. Accordingly, conditions for positionalities are created in this curiosity, questioning parts of their stories.

5.3.2 Silence, and dialogue as giving birth to positions

Dialogue often provides participants with new perspectives or reinforces their experiences and opinions that existed from before. Observations of the younger school classes show that the representatives’ approach stimulate critical thinking, as illustrated by the dialogue below:

Representative: How was the society that those (the detained in Londres 38) people wanted?
Participant: Equal.
Representative: How is the society in which we live today?
Participant 2: It’s the same for everyone, with a little more equality.
Representative: With a little more equality in relation to the dictatorship?
Participant 2: With more rights.

(Representative explain neoliberalism before it is realized in a discussion about the pension system)

Representative: Retirements should be a right of the people but AFPs is like doing something private.
Participant 3: That's like they take a certain percentage of money from people who retire and save them.
Participant 4: And they rob them.
Representative: They install the AFP, that retirement system, in the dictatorship. Do you remember the student movement and why they were fighting?
Participant 5: For a free education.
Representative: When do you start paying for attending the university?
Participants: In the dictatorship.
Representative: So, the society in which we live today that has the AFPs, the education system and the constitution too, do you know when it was written?
Participants: In the dictatorship
Representative: In the dictatorship. So, how much does the society in which we live today have to do with the dictatorship?
Participants: Everything.
Representative: Everything, or at least a lot…
Through the symbolism of the place, that those who were held prisoners fought for a more “equal” society, the youth is guided through contemporary social issues to comment, reflect on and interact with the antagonistic approach expressed by the representative. At the moment it was noted that “most are silent but the emotions they radiate seem to say that this is a new way of understanding their contemporary”. When some participants at the end of the conversation claim that the legacy of the dictatorship affects “everything” in today’s society, it can in accordance with the analysis tool be understood that they question, or even position themselves and seek new (or manifest already existing) identifications, in the dislocation arising from the resonance of the site. As narratives are formulated by subjects in their context and in interaction with those who establish it, the group’s collective participation is considered to enable and influence each other’s genesis in the context, slowly breaking the silence. Processes of political subjectivity can thus be interpreted to arise in the dynamics between participants, the symbolism of the place and in relation to the representative’s pedagogy.

Conversations with individuals and smaller groups in connection to participating visits, revealed how many young people perceived their opinions as unimportant. This can be illustrated by a dialogue that came from asking a school class if they had any new thoughts about the dictatorship in the meeting with Londres 38,

**Participant:** Ever since I can remember people talking to me about the dictatorship, I have heard different opinions [...] and I did not live at that time, so I cannot give an opinion...

**Representative:** … It is good to inform oneself, to converse with people, to counteract opinions and build an opinion and express it too.

**Representative 2:** … We live the heritage and all the politics that were implemented during the dictatorship until today.

**Participant:** Yeah, many things were left, like fingerprints so to speak.

The youth in this example do not share her views at first but express, after perspective and encouragement from two representatives, a position before the group, and agree that the dictatorship has left a legacy. The questioning allows the youth to position herself in relation to what appears to be a new identification, regarded as a product of what the representatives’ term as resonance box; through dialogue on a recurring latent contradiction against the Chilean state’s official memory, reflecting the representatives’ identity marker.

### 5.3.3 The new generation’s resistance – justifying and re-signify *la Casa*

This last sub-theme is formed along a university class’ conversation sequence that captures representative patterns for the more active visits. The dialogue, argued to reflect the focus group’s methodology, start by asking an open question where my own positionality becomes clear in relation to *la Casa* and the participants:
**Researcher:** As we’re from the same generation, what would you say, what is your vision of truth and justice?

**Participant:** … let them suffer for what they did, it cannot go unpunished because there are many people who are suffering, then justice and truth is that the people who made these atrocities pay.

**Participant 2:** … as a young person it hurts at least to be here and to know that they are even better than many of us, then imagine the people who are relatives or who were arrested and tortured [...] at least I get angry from that position.

**Participant 3:** I hope with the word truth that the demand of the people becomes legitimate because the majority of the policies that are generated with respect to the interests that may arise from the civil society, are not necessarily the democracy of the people.

“Everyone is involved, as if those who are silent lend their lungs to the speaker”, was noted in connection with these expressions of anger and need for redress. Here, the young generation appears to be active, and the student’s commentaries questions and resemble the political system in accordance with the representatives’ antagonistic representation of impunity. The social conflicts that are illuminated between victims and perpetrators, the people and those with power, share the representatives’ narratives which make positionalities visible: in the interactions of the meeting, the memory of the house is actualized and reconstructed. From the demands of justice, the need for a common vision for our younger generation is formulated:

I believe that it is our responsibility for the generations of now, both yours and ours, to do justice and make it visible [...] and not to leave aside that we are integral beings, and that this will transcend much more than economic interest and political interest, and for that a collective organization and a common sense about justice, truth, transparency and legitimacy is necessary.

Here, the representatives’ identity marker appears and is confirmed by the participant’s antagonistic approach to what has previously been described as “the state’s official memory”. Furthermore, the alternative representation of the economic and political systems’ relation to impunity is expressed. Identifications are manifested in the responsibility placed in the hands of our generation to challenge the prevailing logic by organizing ourselves around a common vision. The quotation refers partly to me, and to the other participants, which highlights both my position in the room and the positions that are taken. The house enables self-identification in relation to the group and to a common political project, where narratives appear as social actions in the participant’s invitation to organize themselves. Below, another participant associates with the conversation, and shows how knowledge and meaning are established relationally between the participants:

Well, just as the comrades pointed out, this inequality is so great that exists in the country politically and economically; some people can escape so much of what is currently called justice […] When we are talking about the truth, to recognize as the comrade said, also
the levels of social injustice and at the same time to be able to express all these things that for so long remained silent that, as the other comrade also said, that we are silenced. We are the product of so much pain from generations that experienced the loss of family members. So, we make a lot of mention of telling things about what happened and of assuming a reality so hard so that in the end it does not continue to happen, as it says here on the paper, that acts of violence continue to occur. If we are not able to recognize a past, we cannot continue moving towards a future.

In addition to filling in and relating to the comments of the others, which in itself illustrates the political subjectivity that can be interpreted as being embodied in the meeting, pain is claimed to live on in families as a result of their experiences having been silenced. The participant believes that today’s repressive violence monopoly is linked to the unprocessed injustices of the past, referring to Londres 38’s campaign. The memory must therefore be raised and used to prevent this repression, counteracting no repetición. The analysis manifests identity markers to la Casa’s political project and is permeated by a resistance which resonates with both the representative and the teacher:

**Representative:** In some aspects’ the dictatorship did not do its job well because there are people who want to continue reflecting and question the country that we find ourselves in.

**Teacher:** … we are enriched from the different opinions and comments and I think that this should impel us to think how we do to continue resisting.

The dialogue exemplifies the processes of political subjectivity that can be observed in the more active and questioning participative visits. Resistance is expressed and can be regarded as a form of resonance box: reflections and actions that continue beyond la Casa. This narrative is argued to, through processes of identification, re-signify and justify la Casa’s existence, and together with the representatives’ perceptions, resemble the younger generations positioning against the current political system, being a place for new visions.

6. Conclusion

The study’s interest in examining the younger generation’s conversations about impunity as a way of understanding the importance of the memory site in a politically fragmented landscape has provided valuable insights into how the current political system is challenged and new visions are formulated. The research problem embodied in Sterns (2011:114–115) concern on memory’s use for younger generations and Piper-Shafirs et al. (2018:456) invitation to investigate the visitors’ experiences of the site shows how Londres 38 promotes democratic
relations by allowing the diversified experiences that young people bear to be expressed and listened to, in contrast to how society outside is perceived.

The contradictions in the representatives’ representations of impunity, as requested in the first research question, have been identified as an overarching narrative of an incomplete transition from dictatorship to democracy. With clarity, a social conflict appears in the positioning of the representatives against the state’s official policy on memory, comparable to what Hite and Collins (2009:382–383) points out, which requires a response: memory as both tool and identity marker for change. Change means justice, which the state is questioned to withhold and reproduce in the power structures within which the repression of the monopoly of violence and the economic-political system operate. Today’s impunity is an extension of neoliberalism which prevents people from moving forward, maintaining differences and making it difficult for human encounters. Similar to how Hite & Collins (2009:385) envisions a fragmented landscape in need of a unifying narrative, the representatives believe that the Chilean society is facing a reflexive challenge corresponding to Lazzara’s (2011:76–77) criticism of MMDH.

Perceptions of the participating visits tell a lot about how the representatives’ own political beliefs are negotiated and created in the meetings, relating to the second research question since the narrative around memory as an institutionalized impunity resonates with the visitor. In line with Elgueta Pinto (2018:13-14), the interactions were interpreted to challenge the state’s reconciliation policy as participants curiosity often resulted in questioning, which is understood in light of what Hite and Collins (2009:382–383) mentions as the absence of a more meaningful official rendition of the dictatorship. Statements, supported by an encouraging pedagogy, paved the way for interactions around the aspects of impunity represented at Londres 38, which can be understood in relation to how Andermann and Arnold-de Simine (2012:5–6) describe the function of the dialogue for critical reflections. The interactions open up for relational processes of political subjectivity in the comments of today’s political system and contemporary social issues associated with the heritage of the dictatorship. These critical conversations distinguish from Piper-Shifer et al. (2018: 459, 464) research results.

The analysis shows how the young participants occupy positions, however, far from definite, in relation to impunity during participating visits, as the third research question asks. Through participation, self-identification to the site and its symbolism emerges where social positioning is reflected in comments reflecting how Ochoa (2017:36) describes Londres 38’s

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4 Described in the campaign “Toda la verdad, toda la justicia” (Londres 38c, 2016:2–3).
identity as a continuation of the political struggle. The one’s who first disclaim their opinion are through representatives’ understanding of the youth as co-creators of history (Londres 38c, 2018:17) and the group’s collective bargaining, encouraged to break the silence that was observed to accompany the participating visits and interpreted to be a product of the contradictory memory landscape (Jelin, 2002:28–29) which continue to coexist in the Chilean society and influence people’s approach to the dictatorship (Cornejo et al. 2018:13). Family background is not recognized in this study, but the result suggests that diversified experiences meet and are processed by encouraging young people to use their voice and listen to others.

Active visits capture how Theborn (2006:512) believes that places can be a catalyst for social action as the participants explicitly mention silence as a social phenomenon; a narrative that challenges the state’s official memory limited to no repetición (Elgueta Pinto, 2018:5), visualizing the pain and the injustices that allegedly live on. Interactions create positionalities as young people themselves formulate demands for justice in contrast to the silence described to permeate society. They feel a sense of responsibility in line with what Hite (2016:219) prescribes and want to organize themselves around a common vision as opposed to today’s power relations; including changes of impunity’s consequences. Through the younger generation’s positioning against the current political system and the state’s failure of representing society’s pain, Londres 38 becomes a relational platform for new visions, which Stern (2011:115) advocates as crucial for a democratization process.

6.1 Concluding remarks
An ambivalent understanding of transitional justice (Klep, 2012:260) arise when impunity is described as institutionalized and linked to today’s power structures, almost 30 years after democratization. The culture of silence that lives on (Esparza, 2007:140) makes sense in the participants’ reflections, which highlights the complexity of the reconciliation and the importance of public places for people’s stories to meet and build a future beyond social conflicts (Klep, 2012:267). In my interpretations of both representatives of Londres 38 and its young visitors, the interactions show a continuing ongoing struggle for memory (Cornejo et al. 2018:2) which is not symbolized by the state’s official representations or policies. Bearing this in mind and inspired by Young (2000), the place provides space for and satisfy the younger generation with a much-needed arena to participate with their perspectives and listen to the perspectives of others and make their voice heard about social phenomena which has been expressed to influence interpersonal relationships.
For peace and equal access to politics in a wider sense, according to how Sen (2000:3–4) describes the necessity of democratic institutions, it is argued that the political subjectivity constructed in Londres 38 fills a social void, reinforcing democratic rights and political self-reliance to participate in social life as an active citizen. Londres 38 widens the horizon of the political and gives a hint of the importance of memorial sites, embracing young people and their alternative societal visions in a diversified political landscape that otherwise works silencing.

These conclusions also open up to future research problems: How can memorial sites bring about a society in movement and use the memory for reflexive actions beyond the direct atrocity of the dictatorship? How can an exclusive memory reproduction be discouraged and broadened to include more? The study’s knowledge gap opens for further research that focuses on the analysis of how factors such as class, gender and ethnicity are represented and/or participate in the construction of memory. Above all, attention was paid to how participation can stimulate young people and have some emancipatory elements, as the pedagogue Freire (1996:164) delves into in his “liberating pedagogy”. An interesting intersection to investigate is how memorial sites can be seen as arenas for social work with young people; where the role of pedagogy through memory can work to support and together identify the problems that cause repression in today’s society, to create strategies to tackle these (Carroll & Minkler, 2000:24).
7. Bibliography


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