“A Voice for the Voiceless”

Differing Coverage of the Chilean Dictatorship in Jesuit Magazines Between 1973 and 1976

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SENIOR HONORS THESIS

Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of Requirements of the
College Scholars Program
North Central College

May 15, 2017

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Abstract

During the first three formative years of the Chilean dictatorship (1973-1976), two Jesuit magazines covered social, economic, political, and cultural issues related to the Chilean dictatorship - America, based in the United States, and Mensaje, based in Chile. After reading, coding, and analyzing articles related to the Chilean dictatorship between 1973 and 1976, I determined that America’s and Mensaje’s coverage of the dictatorship were drastically different. America strongly condemned both the junta ruling Chile and the U.S. government’s involvement in the coup. Mensaje focused less on human rights issues and rather focused on issues of the failing economy and hunger, while neglecting to strongly condemn the junta. I argue that Mensaje, as an official publication of the Chilean Jesuits, was limited in their condemnation of the junta due to the widespread censorship of non-government associated press in Chile as well as their desire to protect their role as mediators between the junta and the Chilean people.
Acknowledgments

I would like to express my sincerest gratitude to a number of individuals who contributed immensely to this research. First, to my thesis director, Dr. Kristin Geraty, who stood by me through topic changes, offered brilliant content suggestions, asked difficult questions, and has offered me constant encouragement and support. Thank you for your guidance through my original Richter proposal in 2014 that allowed me to conduct research in Chile, your patience as I changed my topic countless times, and your dedication and care throughout this entire process.

To my second reader, Dr. Alberto Fonseca, who encouraged me to think deeply and critically about my work, reviewed multiple lengthy drafts, and double-checked my Spanish translations. Thank you for consistently being someone I could rely on to aid me with translations and offer a fresh perspective or word of encouragement.

To my librarian, Ms. Nicholson, who aided me in finding my primary sources through the Catholic Theological Union in Chicago, IL. To Dr. William Muck, who loaned me books and walked me through the complicated and confusing history of the U.S. involvement in the Chilean dictatorship. To my loved ones, who accompanied me in finding and scanning hundreds of pages of primary documents and patiently encouraged me, time and time again. Thank you for your endless and unwavering support.

More than anything, this thesis has taught me that no work is ever done truly alone. This research would not have been possible without the guidance and support of numerous individuals, all of whom have had significant impacts on my academic and personal development over the past four years. For that, I am eternally grateful.
I: Introduction

From 1973 until 1990, Chile, the former hallmark of strong Latin American democracies, was terrorized by a brutal military dictatorship. On September 11th, 1973, a military-led coup d'état\(^1\) violently overthrew the democratically elected Marxist president, Salvador Allende, by bombing his presidential palace (La Moneda), and installing a military junta\(^2\) led by his general Augusto Pinochet. The coup and resulting seventeen-year dictatorship have been characterized by scholars as “the biggest economic, social, and political crisis that Chile has had in the twentieth century and possibly in the whole of its independent life.”\(^3\) The coup was immediately marked by death and violence that foreshadowed the following seventeen years, as Allende died during the bombing of La Moneda and his supporters were executed in the streets. Reports of murders, disappearances, and torture surfaced immediately after the coup, and by the time the dictatorship ended with the democratic election of President Patricio Aylwin in 1990, over 3,000 Chileans had been murdered or disappeared and tens of thousands had been brutally tortured.\(^4\)

Thirty years later, the significance of the Chilean dictatorship has not faded. Chileans are still dealing with the repercussions of a seventeen-year military dictatorship and are still involved in the arduous reconciliation and peacebuilding processes. Academics, journalists, and government officials are studying recently declassified CIA documents to determine the level and significance of United States involvement in the coup and dictatorship.\(^5\) Lasting lessons emerged from the dictatorship regarding state sovereignty, covert affairs, human rights, torture, socialism, and most importantly for this paper, the role of Catholicism, specifically the Jesuit denomination, and media coverage of the dictatorship. The majority of Chileans identify as

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\(^1\) As defined by Merriam-Webster, “the violent overthrow or alteration of an existing government by a small group.”

\(^2\) As defined by Merriam-Webster, “a group of persons controlling a government, especially after a revolutionary seizure of power.”

\(^3\) Jorge Larrain, *Changes in Chilean Identity: Thirty Years After the Military Coup*, p. 323.


\(^5\) http://nsarchive.gwu.edu/NSAEBB/NSAEBB8/nsaebb8i.htm
Catholic and the Church has always influenced Chilean society and government affairs. During the dictatorship, the Chilean Catholic Church (hereafter referred to as the Chilean Church) played a complex and often morally ambiguous role. The role of the Chilean Church during the dictatorship evolved over time from a complicit and silent position to a bold opponent of the junta and strong proponent of social justice.

**Argument**

Throughout the dictatorship, two well-known and popular Jesuit weekly magazines reported on the events of the dictatorship, in addition to their usual coverage of international, economic, social, religious, and political issues. *America* is a United States-based magazine that has been in publication since 1909 and provides editorials about faith and culture to Catholics in the United States and around the world.\(^6\) *Mensaje* is a Chilean publication that, as *America* describes it, is a “valuable source of commentary on Chilean politics”\(^7\) and has been doing so since it was founded by an influential Chilean and Jesuit priest, Father Alberto Hurtado, in 1951.\(^8\) Both publications were active during the Chilean dictatorship and published frequent articles about the political, social, economic, and religious implications of Pinochet’s rule. Over the course of the dictatorship, both magazines covered the coup, resulting human rights abuses, and subsequent actions of the junta. However, between 1973 and 1976, *America* and *Mensaje* took drastically different approaches in their coverage of the dictatorship. In order to further investigate these differences, I ask: How and why did *America* and *Mensaje* differ in their coverage of the Chilean dictatorship from 1973 until 1976?

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\(^6\) [www.americamagazine.org](http://www.americamagazine.org)

\(^7\) Tim Reidy, *Mensaje on Chile’s Indigenous People*, http://www.americamagazine.org/content/all-things/mensaje-chiles-indigenous-people.

\(^8\) [http://www.mensaje.cl/quienes-somos.php](http://www.mensaje.cl/quienes-somos.php)
I argue that *America* focuses on issues of human rights abuses, torture, and the involvement of the CIA and explicitly and repeatedly criticizes both the junta and the U.S. government throughout their articles because they had no fear of censorship or retaliation for doing so. Taking a different approach, *Mensaje* analyzed many events through a theological lens but failed to blatantly criticize the junta or the CIA’s involvement, instead choosing to focus on economic issues that resulted from the coup. *Mensaje*’s position during the first three years of the dictatorship closely models that of the Chilean Church and I argue that *Mensaje* (as an official publication of the Jesuits and important media representation of the Chilean Church’s position) sought to avoid censorship and preserve the Church’s role as a mediator between the junta and Chilean society and therefore avoided strongly criticizing the junta during the formative years of the dictatorship.

*Censorship Under Pinochet*

As my primary argument is centered around censorship as one of the primary explanations for the differences between *America* and *Mensaje*, it is necessary to understand the context of censorship during the Chilean dictatorship. Censorship is a trademark of many authoritarian governments and I argue that the rampant censorship perpetrated by Pinochet during the dictatorship explains why *Mensaje* avoided openly criticizing the junta due to their fear of being censored, while *America* was able to speak openly, free of such concerns.

Censorship allows authoritarian governments to control the information available to both citizens and the external world, thus insulating themselves from outside criticism, intervention, and judgment. Censorship in Chile began almost immediately after the coup in September 1973. Newspapers were the focus of state censorship, being “shut down, taken over, or continued
clandestinely.”\textsuperscript{9} According to Kristin Sorensen and her in-depth study of Chilean print media under Pinochet, Chile’s media industry was owned by just a few families who were aligned with Pinochet and thus, the majority of the print media that avoided censorship and continued operating under the dictatorship was state-aligned propaganda for the junta.\textsuperscript{10} Newspapers such as the well-known and influential \textit{El Mercurio} remained in print as they were essentially state-controlled. Pinochet did express some restraint in censoring print media, as he was concerned about preserving his image abroad. Certain publications, such as \textit{Mensaje}, were allowed to continue operating without total censorship. However, “journalists at these media institutions still had to strike a delicate balance between gently pressuring Pinochet’s regime and keeping silent, between overt censorship and self-censorship. Papers would be shut down temporarily, and journalists’ lives were threatened if they stepped out of bounds.”\textsuperscript{11} Clearly, a completely unbiased journalistic viewpoint from within Chile was challenging, if not impossible, to produce during the dictatorship. The majority of news outlets were shut down or taken over by the junta, while those that remained independently operational self-censored\textsuperscript{12} themselves in fear of being censored or shut down completely by the government.

\textit{The Relationship Between the Chilean Church and the Junta}

The second important theory that explains why \textit{Mensaje} and \textit{America} differed so drastically in their coverage of the Chilean dictatorship from 1973-1990 is the role that the Chilean Church sought to preserve with Pinochet’s regime. \textit{Mensaje}, as an official Jesuit

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\textsuperscript{10} Ibid.  
\textsuperscript{12} Self-censorship can be understood as an editor’s careful selection of which content to include in their newspaper or magazine as to avoid censorship by the state.  
\end{flushleft}
publication, mirrored the position of the Chilean Church, which served as a key mediator between Chilean civilians and the junta and was one of the only institutions allowed to continue offering humanitarian aid to oppressed Chileans during the dictatorship. By avoiding presenting Pinochet and his regime in a negative and critical manner, it was more likely that the Chilean Church would be allowed to continue its peacebuilding work in Chile. In order to understand the role of the Church and mission of Mensaje between 1973 and 1976 as it relates to my analysis of Mensaje’s articles, it is important to understand how the role of the Chilean Church developed prior to and throughout the dictatorship.

The Chilean Church had a complex and fluid relationship with the junta over the course of the dictatorship. Prior to the coup, the Church was not officially aligned with any political party and “although the Church was close to the Christian Democrat administration of Eduardo Frei Montalva (1964-1970), it never openly supported any political party and zealously defended its political independence.” The Chilean Church developed throughout the seventeen years of the dictatorship from bishops advocating for a coup to prevent a civil war under Allende, deference to the junta to preserve the ability of the Church as a key stakeholder in reconciliation and reconstruction, and finally, as repression escalated against members of the Church post-1976, the rejection of the junta and Pinochet.

The early months and years of Pinochet’s regime were marked by general cooperation and complicity from the Chilean Church towards the dictatorship. As Stephan Ruderer explains in his article “Between Religion and Politics: The Military Clergy During the Late Twentieth-Century Dictatorships in Argentina and Chile”:

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13 Stephan Ruderer, *Between Religion and Politics: The Military Clergy During the Late Twentieth-Century Dictatorships in Argentina and Chile*, p. 472.
Academic publications referred to the Church’s moral legitimisation of the military government, at least with regard to the first six months of the regime. Several factors may explain this initial cooperation: some stress the personal conviction of many of the bishops that the coup was necessary and their hope that the Church might regain its unity; others point to the prospect of preserving a privileged negotiating position with the new government.\(^{14}\)

Initially, many influential members of the Church hierarchy, such as the bishops, hesitated to speak out against the violence of the coup, as they believed Allende’s government would have inevitably led to a civil war.\(^{15}\) Furthermore, many prominent figures believed the intense repression that characterized the early days of violence and bloodshed following the coup would be a “short-term emergency measure needed to restore social order and economic stability, and accordingly, the leader of the Chilean Catholic Church, Cardinal Silva Henríquez, refrained from public criticism of the regime.”\(^{16}\) The Chilean Church bought into the common belief that the transition from repression to democracy would move swiftly and repressions would not escalate. By refraining from outwardly criticizing the junta, the Chilean Church would be in a more strategic position from which to lead the reconstruction and peacebuilding that would be necessary for Chile to move forward after the dictatorship came to an end. As Benjamin Goldfrank describes it:

> The reasons for the bishops’ reluctance to denounce the regime immediately are several. Many bishops welcomed the coup; they believed the regime would be transitory; they feared that if they reacted too critically, the military would shut

\(^{14}\) Stephan Ruderer, *Between Religion and Politics: The Military Clergy During the Late Twentieth-Century Dictatorships in Argentina and Chile*, p. 474-475.


down their humanitarian work; and initially they thought they could influence the
regime from within.¹⁷

The Church’s complicity and hesitation in responding critically to the actions of the junta was a
strategic move to protect their position as one of the only institutions able to provide
humanitarian aid to Chileans in need under the dictatorship. At that point, the bishops believed
they would be integral in leading Chile through the peacebuilding process and that the process
would begin in a matter of only a few years. However, organizations within Chile and the
international community as a whole were shocked when repressions continued after several
months, and the Church’s stance on the junta changed accordingly as the dictatorship endured.

By 1976, the Church began to separate both ideologically and morally from the junta in
their discourse and actions. During 1976, the junta began to turn on members of the Church,
repressing and arresting clergy members. It was at this point when the Church began to speak out
against the junta and took steps to break their alignment with the junta. As Benjamin Goldfrank
argued in his article “Church, State, and Human Rights in Latin America,” “The episcopy’s
public statements only became unambiguously critical in mid-1976. After intelligence officers
harassed three bishops, the episcopacy threatened excommunication against those who attempted
to harm bishops and those who enact laws ‘against the liberty or rights of the Church.’”¹⁸ In her
article “Civil Religion in Comparative Perspective: Chile Under Pinochet (1973-1989), Marcela
Cristi outlines the evolving positions of the Chilean Church with regard to the junta:

During the period of consolidation of the junta’s power and its methods of repression
(1974-1976) this attitude evolved towards a more open, yet still cautious criticism. But
contrary to the comments of some analysts, it was only when the repression of the regime

¹⁷ Benjamin Goldfrank, "Church, State, and Human Rights in Latin America," p. 41.
¹⁸ Ibid.
“touched the bishops personally and lay elites close to them” (after mid-1976) that Church leaders unambiguously began to condemn human rights violations, and demand a return to a democratic regime.\textsuperscript{19}

Once the junta turned on the Church and detained members of the clergy who were accused of aiding anti-Pinochet forces, the Chilean Church changed its position on the dictatorship. From mid-1976 until the end of the dictatorship, the Chilean Church repeatedly expressed its “moral opposition” to the junta’s control and fought for the protection of the rights of all Chileans.\textsuperscript{20} Organizations such as COPACHI (The Committee of Cooperation for Peace in Chile) provided legal aid to Chileans who were detained illegally, the Church set up soup kitchens and “comedores infantiles” that provided food for hungry children, and continuously fought to preserve and protect the rights of Chilean citizens.\textsuperscript{21}

It is important to note the relationship between Mensaje and the Catholic bishops in Chile. Mensaje was not an official spokesperson for the Catholic Church as a whole but rather was a publication of the Jesuit denomination. Therefore, while Mensaje’s approach in their coverage of the Chilean dictatorship does not officially represent the perspective of the Catholic Church, it was an official Jesuit publication and closely modeled the position of the Catholic Church throughout the dictatorship. Brian Smith’s “Church and Politics in Chile: Challenges to Modern Catholicism” examines a 1975 article in Mensaje detailing the complex relationship between the Catholic bishops, the dictatorship, and the Jesuits publishing Mensaje. Smith writes “...The Permanent Committee of the Episcopal Conference, responding to a request from the editors of Mensaje, issued a strong public endorsement of the magazine. In their statement, the

\textsuperscript{20} Pamela Lowden, \textit{The Ecumenical Committee for Peace in Chile (1973-1975): The Foundation of Moral Opposition to Authoritarian Rule in Chile}, p. 189.
\textsuperscript{21} Benjamin Goldfrank, \textit{Church, State, and Human Rights in Latin America}, p. 41.
bishops said that in recent years *Mensaje* had become ‘more closely linked to the mission of the Church.’

Smith expands on this thought in a footnote, referencing the specific *Mensaje* article, “Carta de los obispos a *Mensaje*” [Translated: “Letter from the Bishops to *Mensaje*”] on December 30, 1975:

In this letter the bishops were sending a message to both the junta and to the editors of *Mensaje*. To the former, they were saying implicitly that if you attack the magazine you are attacking the Church. To the latter, they were gently but clearly chiding the Jesuits for distancing themselves from the hierarchy in 1968 and reminding them to stay close to the bishops if they wanted continued protection against the state.

This letter from the bishops is significant because it establishes that while *Mensaje* was not an official publication of the entire Catholic Church, but rather just the Jesuits in Chile, the Chilean bishops still considered *Mensaje* to represent their position. Therefore, when I analyze various articles from *Mensaje* later in this paper, it can be implied that the position that *Mensaje* took was indicative of the Catholic Church’s position.

**Literature Review**

Extensive research has been done in the area of media coverage in Chile during the time of the dictatorship. Kristin Sorensen’s article, “Chilean Print Media and Human Rights: Mainstream Silence Versus Satirical Subversion,” details how various Chilean print media sources worked within the constraints of junta-led censorship to report on issues of human rights.

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22 Brian Smith, *Church and Politics in Chile: Challenges to Modern Catholicism*, p. 320.
23 Ibid.
abuses. She introduces the concept of “self-censorship” which many media outlets in Chile used, when they were not being automatically censored by Pinochet’s forces. This concept, in which a media source is selective in the content it includes so as to avoid total government censorship, is pertinent in explaining how Mensaje managed to stay in operation throughout the dictatorship. Sorensen includes examples from many different Chilean media sources to support her arguments but does not mention Mensaje at any point, nor does she make any connections to U.S. media.

Brian Smith’s book *Church and Politics in Chile: Challenges to Modern Catholicism* provides crucial insight into the relationship between religion and politics in Chile, especially during the military dictatorship. He also elaborates upon the position of Mensaje during this time. He cites an editorial style that I will elaborate on later in this paper:

...The Jesuit monthly magazine, Mensaje, provided a balanced but critical viewpoint on public events right from the outset. During the initial period after the coup, like the bishops, the journal expressed cautious acceptance of the regime as the only alternative to civil war.”

He continues, describing how throughout 1974 and 1975, Mensaje focused on “describing the devastating impact of the government’s economic policies on the purchasing power and quality of life of workers and other low-income sectors of the population.” I will expand on this argument by supporting it with textual evidence from Mensaje, as well as by arguing that Mensaje addressed economic issues in far greater depth than other human rights issues such as torture, due to their desire to avoid government censorship. Smith’s research on Mensaje looks past the year 1976, which is where my research ends, and states:

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24 Brian Smith, *Church and Politics in Chile: Challenges to Modern Catholicism*, p. 315.
25 Brian Smith, *Church and Politics in Chile: Challenges to Modern Catholicism*, p. 316.
In 1976, Mensaje also stepped up its criticisms of the government as the bishops came to express more open disagreements with the junta. It expanded its coverage of sensitive issues such as the continued inaction of the courts in face of violations of constitutional rights, government censorship of the media, the lack of information on the whereabouts of disappeared persons, and the chronic suppression of workers’ rights and the denial of adequate salaries.\(^{26}\) My research echoes this conclusion and briefly touches on the reasons why Mensaje grew more explicitly critical over time. I did not conduct research on the reactions of the audience to Mensaje’s evolving coverage of the dictatorship but it is important to note that Smith mentions this: “As a result of this expanded critical stance assumed by the journal in recent years, the circulation jumped from 5,000 in 1974 to 11,4000 in 1976 to over 12,000 in 1979.”\(^{27}\) Smith’s research supports my insights that Mensaje was not static nor was it stagnant during the Chilean dictatorship. Rather, the editorial style of the periodical evolved over time to best reflect and accommodate the needs of the Catholic Church and Jesuit denomination.

Other research in the field investigates the complex position of the Chilean Church throughout the dictatorship, as well as its relationship with the junta. However, these scholars do not draw any connections between the position of the Church and how that position was modeled through Mensaje. For example, one oft-cited source throughout my research is Benjamin Goldfrank’s article on “Church, State, and Human Rights in Latin America.” Goldfrank provides a fascinating account, and comparison, of how the Church reacted to Latin American military dictatorships in Argentina, Uruguay, Chile, and Brazil during the 1970s. He studies whether or not the Church denounced the dictatorship in each case and the various reasons for doing so, or

\(^{26}\) Brian Smith. *Church and Politics in Chile: Challenges to Modern Catholicism*, p. 316.
\(^{27}\) Brian Smith, *Church and Politics in Chile: Challenges to Modern Catholicism*, p. 316-317.
neglecting to do so. However, Goldfrank makes no references to how the position of the Church connected to its representation in print media during this time.

Finally, articles such as Mark Falcoff’s “Chile: Pinochet, the Opposition, and the United States,” investigated the extent of the U.S. involvement in Chile during the years of the Cold War. Various scholars have studied declassified CIA files on Secretary of State Henry Kissinger and President Nixon’s correspondence regarding the CIA intervention in Chile, leading up to and during the dictatorship. However, none of the researchers, to the best of my knowledge, comment on the U.S. perception of the CIA intervention through a religious lens, nor do they investigate Chilean coverage of the CIA’s involvement.

I have taken a unique research perspective that investigates the intersection of religion and government through the lens of two thematically similar, yet geographically different, Jesuit magazines. Both the U.S. government and the Chilean junta are involved, as well as issues of censorship and the relationship between the Chilean Catholic Church and the junta. None of the aforementioned scholars have done a comparative analysis of America and Mensaje, especially with the narrow lens of analysis from 1973 to 1976.

Intellectual Significance

This work is deeply personal after having lived in Chile for four and a half months, having learned from professors who lived through the dictatorship, and having seen the lasting effects every day. However, this work holds noteworthy scholarly value as well. While by no means reaching theoretical and conclusive answers about religion, journalism, and Latin American dictatorships, this work will provide information on media coverage of the Chilean dictatorship through a Jesuit lens, which may reveal truths about the perspective of the Jesuit
tradition on issues of social justice and human rights. Furthermore, while research has been conducted on *Mensaje* in comparison to other Latin American news outlets, a comparative analysis has never been done between *America* and *Mensaje*. This research will provide a unique perspective (through the lens of censorship and religion) on a key geopolitical moment, the Chilean dictatorship, from like-minded magazines based in two drastically different countries.
II: Methodology

Why 1973-1976?

While the Chilean dictatorship lasted seventeen years, from 1973-1990, this investigation examines differences in media coverage over the first three years of the dictatorship. The period from September 1973 until December 1976 was not chosen arbitrarily. Several important reasons guided this decision. First, I wanted to analyze articles that captured the moment of the coup and the preliminary reactions of both America and Mensaje. These reactions would either set the tone of the articles to come over the following three years or demonstrate how the position of each magazine changed over the early years of the dictatorship. Second, these three years proved to be significant years for both U.S. foreign and domestic policy:

Indeed, the period between 1973 and 1976 was a time when the guiding framework that had governed the Cold War was brought into question. It was also one of unprecedented postwar U.S. weakness as a result of the Vietnam War, the collapse of the Bretton Woods system, the oil crisis, and Watergate.28

The significance of the U.S. involvement in the coup cannot be overlooked in this investigation, as America and Mensaje approach the topic of U.S. involvement from surprisingly different perspectives. The historical context of U.S. government involvement is necessary, especially during these three years. Finally, 1973-1976 is significant in the Chilean context, both in terms of the junta’s actions and the Church’s reaction. The levels and styles of military repression of Chilean citizens developed over the course of the dictatorship and the first three years are especially crucial. According to Stephan Ruderer, “The main period of repression lasted until 1978 and consisted of a policy of ‘disappearances,’ torture, and the assassination of prominent

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28 Tanya Harmer, Fractious Allies: Chile, the United States, and the Cold War, 1973-76, p. 112.
opponents abroad.”\textsuperscript{29} Therefore, I wish to capture the reaction of both publications during the height of the repression in Chile, especially in analyzing differences in how they approach the issue of human rights violations. The development of the Chilean Church’s position during these first three years is also compelling:

The episcopy’s public statements only became unambiguously critical in mid-1976. After intelligence officers harassed three bishops, the episcopacy threatened excommunication against those who attempted to harm bishops and those who enact laws ‘against the liberty or rights of the Church.’\textsuperscript{30}

The first three years of the dictatorship are therefore essential in understanding how Mensaje’s approach represented the evolution of the Chilean Church’s relationship with the junta, as it quickly shifted from complacency to vehement opposition of the junta in three short years. While the Chilean dictatorship is multi-faceted and has many significant developments, including the implementation of the new Constitution, the vote to end the dictatorship, and the eventual arrest and trial of Pinochet, this investigation will be limited to the first three years, which are significant in their own ways.

\textit{Data Collection}

The process of data collection began by reading through archives of America and Mensaje between 1973 and 1976 and copying all articles in America that related to Chile in any context, such as economic trade deals, human rights violations, and the Chilean Church, and any articles in Mensaje that related to the Chilean dictatorship, coup, government, or resulting socio-economic issues.

\textsuperscript{29} Stephan Ruderer, \textit{Between Religion and Politics: The Military Clergy during the Late Twentieth-Century Dictatorships in Argentina and Chile}, p. 474.
\textsuperscript{30} Benjamin Goldfrank, \textit{Church, State, and Human Rights in Latin America}, p. 41.
I began my data collection by reading through all the articles I had collected. The purpose in doing so was twofold. First, I determined which articles I had gathered were relevant to my research. Some articles mentioned Chile or the junta but had no substantive arguments to analyze. Those articles were disregarded. Second, I compiled a list of themes that repeatedly emerged throughout the articles. I also took notes on each article as they related to the emerging themes so I had something to refer to during my second reading.

During the second reading, I reviewed the list of emergent themes I had compiled during the first reading. I consolidated the list to about 20 different themes, combining similar themes and discarding those that only appeared once or twice. My final list of themes included criticism of CIA involvement in Chile, condemnation of human rights abuses, torture, involvement of international organizations, etc. During my second reading, I marked every instance that a theme was mentioned in an article and made note of it. I also reviewed my notes from my first reading, and took new notes on each article about the style and substance of the article.

After identifying the key themes in all the articles, I finally needed to analyze my data. In order to do so, I used my list of emerging themes and the coded articles. I picked a theme, found all instances in which that theme emerged in both Mensaje and America and made a two-column list of all the references to that theme in a document in order to identify trends in how each publication approached certain themes. For an example of how my data was organized, see Appendix A, which compares how America and Mensaje covered CIA involvement in Chile.

About “America”

In order to fully understand the approach that each publication took in reporting on the Chilean dictatorship, it is useful to understand the basic history, perspective, and audience of
each publication. According to *America*’s website, it has been in continuous weekly publication since 1909, “making it one of the oldest periodicals in the United States today.”31 From *America*’s website:

Our flagship magazine is the leading Catholic journal of opinion in the United States. First published in 1909, *America* magazine is known across the Catholic world for its unique brand of opinion and analysis. From theology and spirituality to politics, international relations, arts and letters, and the economy and social justice, *America*’s coverage spans the globe. We tell the stories that matter most to the church and the world.32

*America* has been the platform for influential U.S. politicians, religious leaders, and scholars who have messages for the American Church.33 Additionally, *America* is lauded by academics as having “a reputation for tough mindedness” and has been noted by many to be a “progressive” periodical.34 *America* describes itself as having “aggressively promoted racial and social justice” in the U.S. during the civil rights movement and took the same approach in its coverage of the Chilean dictatorship, calling upon both the junta and the U.S. government to seek social justice for Chileans.35 In order to have a complete understanding of *America*, its audience should also be mentioned. According to *America*’s Media Kit, in 2015, *America* had 39,000 subscriptions. Twenty-nine percent of readers are clergy while seventy-one percent are part of the laity.36 Seventy-one percent of readers have at least a Bachelor’s degree while an impressive eighteen percent have their Ph.D. *America*’s readers are based all throughout the United States and eighty-four percent are politically active, having voted in the 2012 national election.

31 http://www.americamagazine.org/about-americamedia
32 Ibid.
33 Ibid.
35 http://www.americamagazine.org/about-americamedia
36 According to Merriam-Webster, “the people of a religious faith as distinguished from its clergy.”
About “Mensaje”

Mensaje, founded in 1951, is a leading Jesuit magazine that is published weekly in Chile and comparable to America in many aspects, including its Catholic denomination (Jesuit) and emphasis on covering social, religious, economic, and political issues around the world.37 Brian Smith describes Mensaje as “the most respected Catholic periodical in Chile.”38 According to Mensaje’s website, their mission is:

...to orient the reader to a Christian perspective of reality (national and global), helping them to develop an informed, sound, and mature perspective about debated issues in society. In other words, to contribute to the formation of a conscience capable of discernment.39

Mensaje was founded by Father Alberto Hurtado, a Jesuit priest who is well-known throughout all of Chile for his influential work in promoting social justice and developing humanitarian programs for struggling Chileans. To provide a very basic, preliminary comparison to America, Mensaje’s website also includes information about readership statistics. While Mensaje is very influential within Chile, it only has 6,000 domestic national subscriptions and 3,000 subscriptions distributed through nongovernmental organizations, kiosks, and libraries. Additionally, six radio stations publish content from Mensaje.40 Eighty-seven percent of their readership is from individuals, eighteen percent of whom are religious clergy and the other eighty-two percent of whom are part of the laity, while the remaining thirteen percent is from institutions such as universities or churches.

37 Brian Smith, Church and Politics in Chile: Challenges to Modern Catholicism, p. 315.
38 Brian Smith, Church and Politics in Chile: Challenges to Modern Catholicism, p. 189.
39 [Translated from Spanish, via https://www.mensaje.cl/sobre-nosotros] “...orientar al lector mediante una perspectiva cristiana de la realidad (nacional y mundial), ayudándole a formar un juicio informado, fundado y maduro sobre los temas debatidos en la sociedad. En otras palabras, contribuir a la formación de una conciencia capaz de discernir.”
40 https://www.mensaje.cl/sobre-nosotros/
III: Comparative Analysis of Coverage of the Dictatorship in *Mensaje* and *America*

Throughout my close reading and analysis of articles related to Chile and the Chilean dictatorship in *Mensaje* and *America* between 1973 and 1976, several important themes emerged in which the two publications differed significantly, either in quantity or quality. For certain topics, such as coverage of the CIA intervention in Chile, *America* discussed the topic far more often than *Mensaje* did. An example of this difference in quantity can be seen in Appendix A, which compares the frequency with which *America* discussed the CIA compared to *Mensaje*. A difference such as this suggests that certain themes were deemed more important for one publication and less important for another, or that one publication was unable to discuss a certain issue. Additionally, the quality, or style, in which the publications differ is also significant. Style includes the language used by the author (for example, whether it is harsh or soft), the information presented in the article (for example, whether an article about human rights abuses mentions Chile), and the overall tone of the article (Does it condemn the junta? Is it sarcastic? Does it express reservations but hold back condemnations?). In this section, I will compare the coverage of different topics related to the Chilean dictatorship in both *Mensaje* and *America* by introducing and analyzing articles that represent the position of each magazine on various topics, including: CIA involvement in Chile; hunger; human rights abuses (especially torture); praise for the junta and critiques of Allende, and peace, healing, and recommendations for the junta. First, I will provide context to the themes I am discussing and second, present my analysis of both *Mensaje’s* and *America’s* comparison of each topic. In the following Discussion section, I will present my arguments for why the magazines differed in their coverage of these topics.
Condemnation of CIA Involvement

Thirty years after the dictatorship, there is little question as to whether or not the U.S. government was involved in the Chilean coup and dictatorship. The question that remains, even today, is the precise extent of CIA involvement, as documents detailing the CIA’s full role in the coup have only recently been made available. U.S. involvement in Chile was largely related to the United States’ fear of communism and the Soviet threat in the 1960s and 1970s. As Salvador Allende’s Socialist presidency appeared to be more likely in the 1964 election cycle, the U.S. government was prepared to stop his election. They did so by supporting his opponent, Christian Democrat Eduardo Frei, with approximately $8 million USD in funding, in addition to releasing anti-Communist propaganda throughout Chilean press and radio. Frei was successfully elected, but in the 1970 elections, Allende ran once again, this time against conservative Jorge Alessandri. For these elections, the CIA considered two paths towards a non-Socialist government in Chile, which they deemed ‘Track 1’ and ‘Track 2.’ Track 1 offered support through a “conventional military uprising,” which the CIA deemed impossible at the moment. Track 2 took a more passive approach, which was “somehow to convince the Chilean Congress to confirm Alessandri as the winner of the election. Once elected by the Congress, Alessandri - a party to the plot through intermediaries - was prepared to resign his presidency within a matter of days so that new elections could be held.” The CIA was willing to go to great lengths to avoid and later delegitimize an Allende presidency and although they did not have a direct role in installing Pinochet militarily, they provided encouragement prior to, and monetary and military support after, the immediate coup. U.S. Secretary of State, Henry

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41 Mark Falcoff, *Chile: Pinochet, the Opposition, and the United States*, p. 185.
Kissinger, continually expressed sympathy towards the Pinochet administration and the U.S. was hesitant for the entirety of the dictatorship to fully denounce Pinochet and his actions.

*Mensaje’s Coverage*

The topic of CIA involvement in Chilean politics, both leading up to the coup as well as the support given to Pinochet during the formative years of the dictatorship, can be measured both quantitatively and qualitatively. Over the course of three years’ worth of articles, the CIA was the focus of editorials in *Mensaje* only twice, as compared to ten times in *America.*

This alone is significant, since CIA covert actions were particularly heightened during the years of the Cold War and the subject of quite a bit of international attention. Additionally, both times *Mensaje* mentioned the CIA as the subject of editorials, they condemned the CIA broadly for its interventions in the affairs of foreign nations, but failed to mention any involvement in Chile. This is despite the fact that many Chileans initially suspected CIA involvement in the coup, and their suspicions were confirmed with the 1976 international release of the Church Committee.

In the article “Los sin rostro” [Translated: “The Faceless Ones”], *Mensaje* confirmed various news reports, such as several from the *Wall Street Journal,* that had emerged about the CIA and other foreign organizations that intervened in countries such as Honduras and multiple nations throughout the Middle East.

*Mensaje* strongly condemned nations that conduct covert action in other nations, but never once mentions intervention in Chile. In “El affaire de la CIA” [Translated: “The CIA Affairs”], journalist Gustavo Lagos specifically called out the United States government and their lack of ethics in allowing and promoting covert actions of the CIA.

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44 See Appendix A.


Lagos referenced a 299-page investigatory report from President Ford that cites multiple interventions of the CIA abroad. According to Lagos, “When the leader of a nation needs to declare that the Government will not resort to political assassinations, it is because the principle ethics are suffering a profound crisis.” However, once again, Mensaje failed to connect CIA interventions abroad to the CIA’s integral involvement in Chile’s elections, coup, and dictatorship, the reasons for which will be addressed in a subsequent section of the paper.

**America’s Coverage**

Providing a strong contrast to the commentary from Mensaje, America published the first of many articles condemning the U.S. government’s involvement in the coup just one month after the coup occurred. Their news report, “Is Silence a Crime?” set the tone for America’s coverage of the CIA intervention and the junta in general. According to the article:

Although a number of Americans, including some Catholic missionaries, have been detained by the military, thus far no expression of concern has been heard from Washington over a possible wholesale violation of human rights in Chile. Yet it is clear that the leaders of the junta look to Washington for support. U.S. government spokesmen have denied widespread accusations that the United States deliberately initiated the coup. At the same time, it is admitted that Washington did nothing to prevent the coup or support the Allende experiment. “Sometimes doing nothing can be a policy,” a Washington official observed. And sometimes silence can be a crime.

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On the whole, *America* was aggressively critical of both the Chilean and U.S. governments from 1973-1976, best demonstrated through succinct, biting, and to-the-point comments such as the final line, which clearly reflects the perspective of *America*’s editorial staff on the involvement of the CIA in foreign affairs.

Articles in *America* connected the CIA intervention and involvement in Chile with the work of religious activists fighting for human rights in Chile, illustrating the problems that the CIA intervention has caused even for U.S. citizens. In the news briefing, “Missionaries and the CIA,” *America* reflected upon the impact of the CIA intervention for Catholic missionaries:

The American missionary, who seeks to promote the welfare of the people he serves, rightly feels betrayed by activities like the CIA’s in Chile. Missionaries have no right to expect the U.S. government to aid and abet their efforts in any special way. But they have a right not to have their efforts undercut by their own government, especially when that government operates for purposes and with methods of which most of its citizens would disapprove.49

This article is particularly representative of *America*’s unique style of journalism. Every publication covers a number of relevant news items from around the world. *America*’s editors and journalists report on each issue by introducing the news in full detail but also weaving in a unique perspective on the issue, informed by their culture and identity as a Jesuit magazine. Articles in *America* present a clear position, influenced by the Jesuit perspective, on many topics and authors do not hesitate to make their views known.

A year after *America*’s coverage of the CIA’s impact on missionaries (proving that *America* was dedicated to covering the transgressions of the CIA throughout the formative years

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of the dictatorship), editors called attention to the blatant hypocrisy in Washington’s condemnation of the Chilean junta:

   Relations between the United States and the military junta have just about turned full circle in the course of the past year. With a touch of bitter irony, Washington, which encouraged the overthrow of the late Salvador Allende by a variety of means, now finds itself in the position of castigating, for continued violations of human rights, the very junta it helped create.  

*America*’s continued coverage of the CIA intervention in Chile, beyond just reporting the news of the intervention when it first broke in official reports, proves that this is a topic that is important to the editors. Whether the editors see CIA involvement in Chile as a poor reflection on their government, on Chile’s, or on both remains to be seen. However, it is clear that editors are deeply concerned by CIA involvement abroad and its subsequent implications for human rights.

**Hunger**

   Whereas *Mensaje*’s editors and journalists hesitated in explicitly covering, criticizing, and condemning human rights abuses such as torture and killing of dissenters during the first three years of the dictatorship, the strongest condemnations of the junta come when they discussed hunger and job loss in Chile. Articles in *Mensaje* addressed the topic of hunger twice as much as articles in *America*. Granted, *Mensaje* is a Chilean magazine focused on Chilean topics first before covering international topics while *America* may hold different priorities. However, issues of *America* repeatedly covered topics on human rights and condemned the junta for their abuses of said rights extensively, yet only mentioned hunger in Chile to mourn the lack

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50 *America* editors, “‘With Profound Disgust,’” *America*, 1 November 1975, 267.
of coverage in the mainstream U.S. media. The editors of Mensaje may have felt more comfortable covering and criticizing hunger in Chile because they were able to do so without ever directly confronting the junta. Editors were careful to only criticize the economic situation of Chile rather than blaming Pinochet and the junta explicitly for the pervasive hunger that plagued Chilean citizens.

**Mensaje’s Coverage**

Mensaje journalists began their coverage of hunger under Pinochet by lamenting the lack of coverage and support for issues of hunger. Mensaje explicitly covered the rate of hunger in Chile yet unsurprisingly abstained from criticizing the junta. For example, a year after the coup, Roberto Iglesias Sicardi’s article “¿Hacia dónde vamos?” [Translated: “Where are we going?”] compared attention given to a football game in Chile with the topic of hunger: “It appears that a goal hurts the country more than a 2% unemployment rate, even though this 2% signifies 200,000 families suffering from hunger.”51 The remainder of the article lost the focus on hunger and continued to discuss the economic situation and plan of the junta but nevertheless established the standard that hunger would continue to be a topic of grave importance to Mensaje.

Mensaje’s style is characterized by many analytical editorials that cover a wide range of international topics, often from a perspective of Catholic theology. These editorials frequently cover issues that are relevant in Chile without explicitly mentioning Chile. In the May 1975 issue, Gustavo Lagos wrote an editorial analyzing the development of human rights at an international level and presented a compelling perspective on hunger as a threat to human

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51 Roberto Iglesias Sicardi, “¿Hacia dónde vamos?” Mensaje, 17 June 1974, 422–427. Original Spanish: “Parecería doler más a un país un gol en contra que un 2% de desocupados, aunque ese 2% signifique 200.000 familias sufriendo hambre.”
After a lengthy historical analysis of global human rights, Lagos stated “Hunger that currently affects 500 million people, as we have said, is the denial of the right to food signaled by the Synod, a right that could be seen still more threatened if the food crisis is not stopped in time by a communal action by the States.” This is the first time that Mensaje drew a connection between hunger and human rights, indicating once again that hunger is a key issue for them, rising to the level of a potential human rights abuse. However, even when hunger was assigned this much significance in the eyes of Mensaje’s editors, the junta was still not criticized for being the cause of the hunger.

Finally, at the end of the period of analysis, in November of 1976, Mensaje issued an editorial reflecting on three years of rule by the junta. This was a far more critical article than many in the past, as the Catholics in Chile were nearing the period in which they would begin to denounce the junta. In a powerful statement, the editors argued “...In some, hunger is endemic and in others, it only visits them in the last ten days, when ‘the salary doesn’t reach anymore.’ In these circumstances, it is not an exaggeration to say that nearly two million Chileans are in Chile but they do not live in Chile; they survive.” The final statement included a powerful play on words in Spanish which was lost in translation; however, the sentiment remains the same.

Hunger has so powerfully affected Chileans that they no longer live day to day but rather struggle to survive. The article continued discussing the reinvention of Chile, neglecting to directly criticize the junta but rather offering suggestions on what can be done to decrease hunger, increase employment, and help move the country forward.

52 Gustavo Lagos, “El desarrollo de la conciencia moral y los derechos humanos,” Mensaje, May 1975, 169-176. Original Spanish: “El hambre que afecta actualmente a 500 millones de personas, como lo hemos dicho, es la negación del derecho a la alimentación señalado por el Sínodo, derecho que podría verse aún más amenazado si la crisis alimentaria no es detenida a tiempo por una acción mancomunada de los Estados.”


54 [Spanish original] “En estas circunstancias no es exagerado decir que cerca de dos millones de chilenos están en Chile, pero no viven en Chile; a lo más sobreviven.”
America’s Coverage

While America did not cover hunger in great depth, one article presented comprehensive statistics regarding hunger in Chile and condemned both the junta and the U.S. government for their lack of attention to the issue. In “Silent Hunger in Chile,” Brian Smith addressed the chilling statistics of those hungry in Chile while comparing the abundant media coverage of famine in Asia and Africa to the scarce coverage of hunger in Chile.55 “In Chile, however, while hunger is every day becoming more acute for working-class families, news reports avoid any mention of it, and TV ads present pictures of well-fed and satisfied people that misrepresent the conditions of the vast majority of Chileans.” Smith continued to describe the levels of child malnutrition in families that suffer from unemployment. “Between one-fourth and one-third of the children in poor neighborhoods of Santiago are presently suffering from malnutrition, according to figures available in local health clinics.” Finally, Smith concluded by blaming Pinochet’s regime for both masking the problem of hunger as well as creating the conditions that are causing such grave hunger, and commends church programs in Chile that are attempting to address this issue.

Human Rights Abuses and Torture

Human rights abuses under Pinochet and the junta were rampant throughout the entirety of his rule. The seventeen-year dictatorship was characterized by widespread arbitrary firings, illegal detentions of Pinochet’s political opponents and everyday citizens from the opposition, torture in detention centers, murders, censorship, etc. Torture exemplifies the widespread human rights abuses under Pinochet and is addressed multiple times by both Mensaje and America. Their coverage of torture warrants an entire paper on its own but for the purposes of this project,

it will be addressed under the subject of human rights abuses. Human rights abuses began as early as the moment of the coup in September 1973 when Pinochet’s troops stormed the streets of Santiago and immediately began detaining Allende’s supporters and sympathizers. Liberal and progressive professors were removed from universities, courses with any remotely socialist content were cut, and the press was censored. Torture detention centers were immediately installed up and down the coast of Chile and entire families were taken into custody. Neither Mensaje or America shied away from addressing human rights abuses; they covered various human rights abuses extensively and far more than any other topics related to Chile, however with vastly different approaches and levels of criticism.

**Mensaje’s Coverage**

*Mensaje* was characterized by a very moderate approach in its coverage of the human rights abuses that occurred during the formative years of the dictatorship. Human rights abuses during the dictatorship were discussed with approximately the same frequency as in *America*; however, the approach was drastically different. *Mensaje* journalists often reported on human rights outside of Chile, conveyed the Church’s position on the importance of preserving human rights, and presented information about abuses within Chile. Many of their longer editorial pieces on human rights approached the topic from a theoretical and doctrinal perspective. For example, in May 1975, Gustavo Lagos wrote a piece titled “El desarrollo de la conciencia moral y los derechos humanos” [Translated: “The development of the moral conscience and human rights”] which investigated the historical development of human rights on an international scale, arguing that “Therefore, they [human rights] are not a creation of the State; rather, the State has been created to defend them and maintain them. Human rights are above the State, the law,
those in power.”56 He continued to argue that the right to life is most at risk and mentioned the abuses of torture and false imprisonment in other nations, yet never once mentioned the situation in Chile.

Notably, I gathered no evidence of Mensaje writers ever directly condemning or accusing the junta of perpetrating such abuses. On several occasions, editors disagreed with the position of the junta and expressed those sentiments but by and large, avoided any qualitative judgments or severe criticism of Pinochet’s choices and actions. In one of Mensaje’s earliest responses to the coup, “Gobierno Militar en Chile” [Translated: “Military Government in Chile”], Jaime Ruiz-Tagle addressed the potential human rights implications of the coup, saying “This country, which since the past century, has been valued as an ‘asylum against oppression’ could become - maybe against the wish of authorities - an unbearable place for those who have come to work or study under its flag.”57 While this is a statement against human rights abuses, he also stated “maybe against the wish of authorities” which indicates a softer stance towards the junta, as he believes the junta may not want human rights abuses to take place. Mensaje’s coverage carried on in this note, with responses that were at times lamenting human rights abuses but neglecting to criticize the junta for doing so.

One of Mensaje’s immediate responses to the coup took a level approach in recognizing the violence and bloodshed that characterized the coup and first days of the dictatorship. In the October 1973 issue, Mensaje included the official statement from Cardinal Raúl Silva Henríquez, the Cardinal of Santiago, regarding the coup. Commentaries from the Cardinal, bishops, and

56 Gustavo Lagos, “El desarrollo de la conciencia moral y los derechos humanos,” Mensaje, May 1975, 169-176. Original Spanish: “Por tanto, no son una creación del Estado; por el contrario, el Estado ha sido creado para defenderlos y mantenerlos. Los derechos humanos están por encima del Estado, la ley y los dictados del poder.

57 Jaime Ruiz-Tagle, “Gobierno militar en Chile,” Mensaje, October 1973, 460-463. Original Spanish: “Este país, que desde el siglo pasado se preció de ser un ‘asilo contra la opresión,’ podría convertirse - tal vez contra el deseo de las autoridades - en un lugar insostensible para los que han venido a trabajar o estudiar bajo su bandera.”
Catholic Church were often included in Mensaje, especially regarding issues of great significance for Chileans or the Catholic faith. In “Declaración del Señor Cardenal y del Comité Permanente del Episcopado Chileno” [Translated: “Señor Cardenal and the Permanent Chilean Episcopal Committee’s Declaration”], Cardinal Silva stated, “It pains us immensely the blood that has reddened our streets, our people, and our fabric, the blood of civilians and the blood of soldiers, and the tears of so many women and children.”58 This statement is noteworthy as it did not express concern for only the citizens attacked by Pinochet’s forces, but also demonstrated empathy for Pinochet’s soldiers who perished in the fights that broke out after the coup. It is also significant to note that Cardinal Silva avoided placing any blame on Pinochet and his supporters for orchestrating the coup. In America’s first articles after the coup, journalists issued scathing critiques of the junta, fully condemning and disavowing Pinochet’s actions. Cardinal Silva, the Chilean Church, and Mensaje held slightly more nuanced positions following the early days of the coup, as they sought to avoid censorship and preserve their coveted relationship as mediators between the junta and the oppressed Chileans, explanations which will be furthered covered in the Discussion section.

Mensaje journalists continued their hesitant coverage of human rights abuses under Pinochet in an article that responded to a letter to the editor. The original letter to the editor, “¿Ha cambiado Mensaje?” [Translated: “Has Mensaje changed?”] criticized Mensaje of changing and ignoring both the actions of the junta as well as the fact that their editorial approach had changed.59 The author voiced their opinion that Mensaje writers should speak out more and dispel the growing beliefs that they are complicit with the violence of the junta.

Original Spanish: “Nos duele inmensamente y nos oprime la sangre que ha enrojecido nuestras calles, nuestras poblaciones y nuestras fábricas, sangre de civiles y sangre de soldados, y las lágrimas de tantas mujeres y niños.”
59 “¿Ha cambiado Mensaje?” Mensaje, March-April 1974, 67.
Mensaje’s editorial board in turn responded to the letter in an article from the editors, “¿Rectificando una línea?” [Translated: “Correcting a Line?”]. In this article, the editors defended their position and responded to the claims of the letter to the editor. The editors of Mensaje reiterated that they have never, and will never, condone violence and while they initially supported Allende, they later broke from his party due to the violence of some supporters. They continued, insisting that they remain in favor of a peaceful route to Democratic Socialism and disavow all forms of violence. However, there was no mention of the junta and violence from Pinochet and the editors neglected to explicitly condemn the violence committed by Pinochet’s forces.

Many articles in Mensaje sought to analyze current events through the doctrinal lens of the Catholic Church. On several occasions, topics such as human rights and torture were discussed in connection with Church teachings. The November 1974 article “Evangelización y derechos humanos” [Translated: “Evangelization and Human Rights”] is particularly significant because it presented the Church’s position on human rights all the while avoiding any mention of human rights violations in Chile. This article, an official statement from the Chilean Bishops, was a statement about human rights that were being threatened in 1974, the fact that “no nation is today without blame when it comes to human rights,” and the argument that the Catholic Church will protect the rights of those who are oppressed. Several other articles that discussed human rights and the need to protect human rights around the world issued similar strong statements about the Church’s position as a voice for the voiceless; however, Chile is rarely mentioned in these articles.

60 Mensaje editors, “¿Rectificando una línea?” Mensaje, March–April 1974, 78-80.
The most significant commentary in Mensaje with regard to criticizing the dictatorship for its human rights abuses came towards the end of this period of analysis, in November of 1976. This is the period of transition in which the Chilean Church began to break with the junta and gradually grew more outspoken about the human rights abuses under Pinochet. In “Chile tres años después” [Translated: “Chile, Three Years Later”] the editors discussed the tragedy that Chile is suffering with regard to those whom have died or fled the country for political reasons. They argued that these losses weaken the soul of Chile and that all Chileans deserve the right to voice their opinions without fear and play a vital role in the Chilean democracy. The editors boldly claimed that as Chileans are losing their voices under the dictatorship, the Church must be the one to speak for them. This is the boldest proclamation that Mensaje made with regard to human rights abuses throughout the first three years of the dictatorship and signaled the important shift that was about to occur in Chilean Church and junta relations.

As mentioned earlier, torture was rampant in Chile under Pinochet and while America boldly and explicitly reported on torture under Pinochet, condemning the “576 cases of torture, including beatings, electric shock, sexual assault and the forced witnessing of one’s wife or friends being tortured” on orders from Pinochet, torture was only mentioned in Mensaje a handful of times and never in connection to Chile. Since torture was one of the most abhorrent violations of human rights under Pinochet’s reign of terror, it is significant that Mensaje covered torture in other countries and the Church’s doctrine on torture but avoided mentioning anything regarding torture in Chile. For example, in José Aldunate’s article “La tortura recrudece en América Latina” [Translated: “Torture Intensifies in Latin America’], he presented the Church’s position against torture as an official institution throughout Latin America. He argued that torture

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63 America editors, “Torture in Chile,” America, 28 December 1974, 421-422.
has no place in a government, even an authoritarian government, and that for Christians, torture should be intolerable as it represents systematic repression and prevents successful democracy. While he made a compelling argument, he very cleverly avoided making any mention of Chile explicitly, yet one may infer that Chile is one of the Latin American authoritarian governments guilty of using torture. Similar articles occurred during the first three years of the dictatorship, with the authors from Mensaje all but describing the situation of torture in Chile to the letter without ever once mentioning Chile or Pinochet.

America’s Coverage

As a stark contrast to the approach presented throughout Mensaje, articles in America continually drew attention to human rights abuses and torture in Chile under Pinochet. All of the articles between 1973 and 1976 are of a similar tone and approach, so I will provide one prominent example that models all of America’s coverage of human rights abuses under Pinochet. The authors presented the news about the repressions occurring in Chile and directly called out Pinochet and the junta for perpetrating the abuses, and occasionally the U.S. government for allowing it to continue unchecked. While Mensaje analyzed issues of torture and human rights abuses from the lens of Catholic doctrine, America explicitly identified and criticized the parties behind the abuses. Below is one such example that is representative of America’s dialogue on these issues from 1973 to 1976.

Very early into the dictatorship, in November 1973, America covered the emerging human rights abuses in Chile in their article “‘Law and Order’ in Chile.” In this article, editors summarized “an ever-expanding catalog of summary executions and incidents of police or

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military brutality” as well as the censorship and repression of political parties other than Pinochet’s. The editors made their opinion of the junta well known as they argued:

The challenge the military and their supporters face is to make Chile prosperous again without stifling all opposition or exploiting the poor in favor of the middle class. They have yet to demonstrate either the will or the competence for this double task.

America’s editors clearly and firmly stood opposed to the junta and its role in the rapidly intensifying oppression of the Chilean people. America’s editors and journalists continued in this line of dialogue over the next three years as they fought a losing battle to hold both the junta and the U.S. government accountable for their role in the human rights abuses throughout Chile.

Praise for the Junta and Critiques of Allende’s Government

The starkest contrast in quantitative coverage of an issue between America and Mensaje is when it comes to a critique of Allende’s government or praise, however guarded and veiled it may be, for the junta and Pinochet’s leadership. Several articles over the course of the three years studied in Mensaje offered explicit praise and support towards the junta and criticized Allende, while articles in America made no such statements at any point during the years being analyzed. The praise or support of the junta (often offered through prayers for their wisdom and guidance) that Mensaje journalists offered mirrors the actions and dialogue of the Chilean Church during the early years of the dictatorship, which will be further analyzed in the Discussion section. Their frequently voiced support for the junta (and rejection of the Allende government) may have been strategically presented in order to avoid the rampant censorship of the dictatorship, as well as

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65 America editors, “‘Law and Order’ in Chile,” America, 3 November 1973, 320.
preserve their coveted position as mediators and voices of peace and reconciliation in the midst of bloody, violent, and confusing years for the Chilean people.

**Mensaje’s Coverage**

In his first official homily covered by *Mensaje* after the coup d’etat, Cardenal Silva offered up words of prayer and hope for the junta, conveying the position of the Chilean Church at that point in the dictatorship. Only a week after the coup, Cardenal Silva said, “We have met in this Temple to pray for our Country, complying therefore with an old and unbroken tradition, that year after year, has brought us together to pray for Chile, on the occasion of the anniversary of the first Independent Government of Chile.”

Cardenal Silva took the opportunity to remind Chileans that they must pray that there be neither “conquerors” nor “the conquered” in Chile and that those who have assumed the “nightmarish responsibility” of guiding the country have the full collaboration of the country. While these words are not an explicit endorsement of the junta, the mere call to Chileans to collaborate with and work towards reconciliation with the junta is a far more generous response (especially a mere week after the coup) to the junta than was ever offered by *America*.

1975 marked the development of the new Chilean Constitution that would reign supreme for much of Pinochet’s presidency. *Mensaje* covered the developments of the Constitution and the details of the various amendments in great detail, far more than *America* did. One of the hallmarks of the new Constitution was the dissolution of political parties other than the junta to avoid any pushback to Pinochet’s power. In an article in July of 1975, the *Mensaje* editors

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Original Spanish: “Nos hemos reunido en este Templo a orar por nuestra Patria, cumpliendo así con una vieja y no interrumpida tradición, que año tras año nos ha congregado a orar por Chile, en la ocurrencia del aniversario del primer Gobierno Independiente de la Patria.”
offered their implicit support to the junta when they attempted to explain the positive aspects of the recession of political parties.\textsuperscript{67} Most significant is their statement when they argued that the job the Armed Forces took upon themselves is not easy, a statement that appears to justify some of the junta’s actions in suspending political activities in Chile. Rather than condemning the junta for stalling Chilean democracy for an undetermined period of time, \textit{Mensaje} requested patience, tolerance, and understanding with regard to the significant task that the junta has undertaken. While none of these examples offer clear and explicit support for the junta, the mere lack of condemnation and implicit offer of support towards the junta suggest that \textit{Mensaje} had a carefully crafted approach during these years with regard to their relationship with the junta.

\textit{Peace, Healing, and Recommendations for the Junta}

One final topic in which \textit{America} and \textit{Mensaje} varied significantly in their coverage is when they offered their direct opinions for the junta, either in the form of warnings or suggestions for peace, healing, and reconciliation in Chile. \textit{America} consistently concluded their articles with a sarcastic or critical suggestion of what the junta should be doing differently in Chile. Consistent with their writing style that is witty, sharp, and biting, \textit{America}’s suggestions were more often comments about the extreme steps they believe the junta should take rather than genuine suggestions about rebuilding Chile. On the other hand, \textit{Mensaje} had a greater incentive to continue encouraging the junta and Chileans to work towards peace, healing, and reconciliation in Chile, as it was in their own interests to pursue a Chile with democracy, human rights, and peace fully restored.

**Mensaje’s Coverage**

While *Mensaje*’s first article after the military coup did not explicitly condemn the actions of Pinochet and the Chilean military, the editors were sure to offer their perspective on how democracy could and should be restored in Chile. The article “Pronunciamiento Militar” [Translated: “Military Pronouncement”] was published on September 15, 1973, a mere four days after the military coup. In this article, the editors implored the junta to be honorable, restore the chaos left in the wake of the coup, fulfill their socio-economic promises, collaborate with citizens, and resist the corruption of power in favor of working in a peaceful way towards democracy. Editors devoted several paragraphs at the end of the article to these statements, emphasizing their concrete and specific wishes and suggestions of what the junta should be doing to restore order, peace, and democracy in Chile. For example, “We hope that the Armed Forces, in an honorable and exemplary way, bring order to the chaos that Allende’s government left, that they demonstrate and promote efficient, capable, and disciplined work, that they take the country out of the mess it’s in.” This approach is one that *Mensaje* writers employed in many of their articles. Rather than explicitly criticizing Pinochet and the junta, the journalists focused on what they believe the junta could be doing to improve the situation in Chile, presenting a more positive and hopeful outlook compared to *America*’s bleak outlook and reporting on the situation.

*Mensaje*’s November 1975 issue, two years after the coup, revisited the idea of democracy in Chile, an ideal that they had been promoting regularly. In the article “¿Hacia una futura democracia?” [Translated: “Towards a Future Democracy?”], *Mensaje* editors suggested

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69 Original Spanish: “Lo que esperamos de las Fuerzas Armadas es honradez ejemplificadora y contagiosa, que pongan orden en el caos en que dejó el gobierno de Allende la administración pública, que demuestren y promuevan el trabajo eficiente, capaz, disciplinado, que saquen al país del pantano en que está.”
that installing democracy in Chile would require some to renounce their political and economic privileges in order to create democracy from scratch.\[^{70}\] This was a subtle request to the junta to be aware of the sacrifices required to pursue the democracy they had been promising Chileans ever since the coup. This article tackled the issue of fear and chaos with grace, as one of the many arguments against a path towards democracy in Chile was the instability and chaos that would accompany such a transition. The editors argued, “It is good to remember that there are societies that die from the fear of dying.” Taking steps towards democracy, no matter the cost, puts Chile on the path towards peace and a new future. The majority of the editors’ suggestions and recommendations towards Pinochet and the junta dealt with the restoration of democracy in Chile and how they can tackle such a monumental task and they masterfully, yet gently, offer concrete steps and reflections on how they can do so while avoiding harsh criticisms of the junta.

*Mensaje*’s most powerful article with regard to suggesting how the junta and all Chileans should pursue peace and justice comes at the end of 1976, in the December 1976 editorial, “Un camino para Chile” [Translated: “A Path for Chile”].\[^{71}\] In this article, *Mensaje* editors outlined out the steps that must be taken to restore peace in Chile, in their eyes. The suggestions seemed to offer hope that peace and democracy are on the horizon for Chile. In reality, the only changes on the horizon were the split between the Chilean Church and the junta in the face of a dictatorship that would continue for the next fourteen years. Nevertheless, the article presented constructive and transformative suggestions on how to pursue a peaceful future in Chile. The *Mensaje* editors defined the role of the Church, as they have often done before, as the institution that has the duty of guiding Chile towards peace, using love as its guiding light. For example, a particularly moving paragraph at the end of the article states:

\[^{70}\] *Mensaje* editors, “¿Hacia una futura democracia?” *Mensaje*, November 1976.

The Church will demonstrate the ways to peace. She knows them. It is her assigned task. The Church loves peace, because she loves life. “Life is another name for peace, just as war is another name for death.” Life and peace have the same enemies. Therefore, the Church will not cease from calling for justice, for love, for freedom.72

They argued that three things are needed for peace in Chile: justice, love, and freedom. Love is the only thing that can rebuild a civilization - the editors were careful to specify that violence does not lead to love and peace, which was an implicit critique of the junta and their approach, or facade of an approach, to democracy and peace.

**America’s Coverage**

A typical example of America’s style in providing suggestions as to how the junta should handle politics in Chile comes in a previously referenced article in November of 1973, “‘Law and Order’ in Chile.”73 The news article focused on the current situation of political prisoners and human rights in Chile, as well as the failing economy. America editors concluded this article in their typical style of being slightly sarcastic, offering their perspective on what the junta should do, and making a statement about Pinochet and the junta in general:

> The challenge the military and their supporters face is to make Chile prosperous again without stifling all opposition or exploiting the poor in favor of the middle class. They have yet to demonstrate either the will or the competence for this double task.

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72 Original Spanish: “La Iglesia muestra los caminos de la paz. Ella los conoce. Es su tarea predilecta. La Iglesia ama la paz, porque ama la vida. ‘La vida es el otro nombre de la paz, como la guerra es el otro nombre de la muerte.’ La vida y la paz tienen los mismos enemigos. Por eso la Iglesia no cesará de llamar a la justicia, al amor, a la libertad. Son los caminos de la paz.”

73 America editors, “‘Law and Order’ in Chile,” America, 3 November 1973, 320.
America differs greatly from Mensaje in this regard, as Mensaje editors would have continued the article by offering their suggestions as to how the junta should go about restoring the Chilean economy whereas America editors merely suggested, quite boldly and critically, that they should do so.
IV: Discussion

The stark differences in how *America* and *Mensaje* covered the Chilean dictatorship from 1973 until 1976, both in quantity and quality, can be explained by two primary arguments that stem from the socio-political context of the time: censorship and the Chilean Church’s role as mediator and peacekeeper between the junta and Chilean citizens. Recalling the earlier discussion of censorship and the role of the Chilean Church under Pinochet, censorship was rampant throughout Chile during the dictatorship and the few publications allowed to remain in print often had to “self-censor” themselves or avoid complete censorship from the government. Subsequently, the Chilean Church was rather reserved in its critiques of the junta in the first formative years of the dictatorship as they welcomed the stability of a military dictatorship after the chaotic years under Allende and wished to preserve their ability as one of the only institutions able to provide humanitarian aid. Both of these arguments can be clearly seen as explaining the differences in the articles from *America* and *Mensaje*: CIA involvement in Chile, hunger, human rights abuses, praise for the junta and criticism of Allende, and suggestions about peace, healing, and reconciliation in Chile. To explore these ideas, I will first summarize the relevant issues once again and then frame them according to either the argument of censorship, maintenance of the Church’s relationship with the junta, or both.

*CIA Involvement in Chile*

The differences between *Mensaje* and *America* in their coverage of the CIA’s involvement in the coup that overthrew Allende and installed Pinochet in power for the next seventeen years are striking and curious. As mentioned earlier, *America* covers issues of CIA and U.S. involvement in Chile in great (and scathing) detail, condemning the intervention of the CIA
in Chile, as well as worldwide, in multiple articles. Throughout the first three years of the dictatorship, the only mention of the CIA in Mensaje was related to condemning CIA intervention in other nations’ affairs, but not those of Chile. This irony and lack of coverage can be explored primarily through the lens of censorship.

Censorship

There are two noteworthy facts regarding censorship and Mensaje’s coverage of the CIA intervention. First, censorship was rampant throughout Chile under Pinochet and Mensaje successfully avoided being completely censored. Second, the CIA was involved in the coup that overthrew Allende and brought Pinochet to power, in addition to being the provider of subsequent military support. Censorship and CIA involvement intersected powerfully in the early years leading up to and during the dictatorship. Many newspapers that were not shut down during these early years were placed under the control of the junta and junta-aligned forces. For example, El Mercurio was (and remains) a significant leader in Chilean print media, was aligned with Pinochet, and was supported materially by the CIA to promote anti-Allende propaganda leading up to the elections. The CIA regularly added anti-Communist and anti-Allende propaganda pieces in both print and radio media throughout Chile as a means of delegitimizing the Allende government. Furthermore, if we recall the study of the censorship of Chilean press under Pinochet, the few print media outlets that were left un-censored by Pinochet to bolster his international image had to regularly resort to self-censorship to avoid being shut down.

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74 Victoria Goff, The Chile Solidarity Movement and its Media: An Alternative Take on the Allende and Pinochet Years, p. 100.
“Self-censorship” can be understood as “[striking] a delicate balance between gently pressuring Pinochet’s regime and keeping silent.”

\textit{Mensaje}’s approach towards coverage of the CIA’s involvement in Chile can be understood by the editors’ desire to remain a free and open publication, avoiding complete censorship by Pinochet. The only way for print media to do so under Pinochet was to resort to the aforementioned “self-censorship.” Criticism of the CIA intervention that helped propel Pinochet into power would have been viewed as a critique of the Pinochet government itself, a statement that would call attention to \textit{Mensaje} and put them at risk of being shut down completely. Even though \textit{America} was situated in the actual nation that was conducting the international intervention in foreign affairs, the U.S. enjoyed a rather free and open press, without the rampant censorship that many authoritarian states knew and perpetrated. Therefore, journalists in \textit{America} were free to discuss issues of the CIA’s interventionist policy and criticize both governments involved. It was in \textit{Mensaje} journalists’ best interests to self-censor themselves in the hopes of subtly spreading a message of hope and encouragement to Chilean Christians rather than be subject to complete censorship by Pinochet.

\textit{Hunger}

As a review, \textit{America} rarely covered hunger in Chile. When they did, their coverage of the topic was accompanied by a strongly expressed frustration with both the Pinochet regime’s role in creating the conditions for rampant and extreme hunger in Chile, as well as the failure of the international community to hold the regime accountable and give this issue the attention they believed it deserved. On the other hand, \textit{Mensaje} journalists were at their most critical when

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discussing and analyzing the severe hunger plaguing thousands of Chileans. They discussed the issue of hunger and Chile without reserve as they presented the statistics and stories of those who were unemployed and struggling to put bread on their tables, while refraining from outwardly and harshly criticizing the junta. This is due to the Chilean Church’s valued position as one of the sole providers of humanitarian aid (as portrayed by Mensaje) as well as Mensaje’s continuing desire to report on important social issues while avoiding government censorship.

Role of the Chilean Church

After the coup, the Chilean Church emerged almost immediately as the singular source of humanitarian aid inside of Chile for those who were repressed, whether it be legal aid for the arbitrarily dismissed or providing food and provisions for those who were hungry. Kristin Sorensen explains the powerful role of the Church that enabled them to provide humanitarian aid:

Back in Chile, victims of the repression ... sought refuge within the institutions of the Catholic Church - which within the first two years of the dictatorship had become the only religious institution in Chile that could offer a minimal degree of protection because of its historically powerful position within Chilean society.\(^7\)

As a magazine covering the key social, political, cultural, and religious issues of the time, Mensaje covered the Church’s perspective on, and response to, hunger in Chile in great detail. Mensaje covered hunger repeatedly, with extensive criticism of the conditions creating such hunger, because by doing so, they were able to represent the role of the Church in providing a unique humanitarian response to hunger in Chile. Organizations such as the Committee of

Cooperation for Peace in Chile (COPACHI) were founded by the Church, which “protested against rights violations, provided legal aid, documented abuses, and founded social programs for the poor.” Organizations such as COPACHI, as well as individual churches, united to provide food for the hungry, work for the unemployed, and care for the children of detained parents. *Mensaje* covered these issues in great detail as they related to hunger in Chile, taking great pains to cover the important and unique humanitarian aid the Church was situated to provide (enabled through their complicit relationship with the junta) while avoiding any direct critiques of the junta in order to maintain their ability to provide such humanitarian aid.

**Censorship**

While it is true that *Mensaje* journalists did not shy away from covering the social issue of hunger during the formative years of the dictatorship and occasionally addressed potential underlying economic causes, they avoided directly connecting the junta’s actions and the hunger of thousands of Chileans due to their desire to avoid censorship. In a similar argument as to why *Mensaje* avoided directly criticizing both the CIA and the junta’s allowance of CIA intervention while *America* was free to criticize both parties, if *Mensaje* were to explicitly link the junta’s actions to extreme hunger in Chile, they risked censorship and the loss of their unique role as one of the only operating presses and the Church’s role as a source of humanitarian aid.

**Human Rights Abuses and Torture**

The issue of human rights abuses and torture illustrate the greatest and most complex contrast in coverage between *Mensaje* and *America*. As previously outlined, *America* continually criticized the actions of the junta and their continuous repression and human rights abuses in the

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78 Benjamin Goldfrank, *Church, State, and Human Rights in Latin America*, p. 41.
form of highly critical news reports. On the other hand, *Mensaje* editors discussed the development of human rights and torture (criticizing both the abuse of human rights and widespread torture) in the context of other nations but never within Chile itself. Their failure to do so can be examined in both the context of their fear of censorship, as well as their desire to preserve their unique relationship with the junta, which are intertwined.

**Censorship and the Relationship Between Church and Junta**

During the years of the dictatorship, torture was “essentially forbidden from discussion in media coverage,” and critiques of Pinochet’s human rights abuses were treated the same.\(^79\) If there was one topic which, if *Mensaje* were to cover in the context of a critique of the junta would result in immediate censorship, it would be placing blame and extreme criticism on the junta for the human rights abuses, torture, and repression occurring on their watch. This fear of total censorship by the junta therefore resulted in self-censorship on behalf of *Mensaje*’s editors, as they carefully avoided any explicit criticism of the junta and instead very subtly offered their recommendations for the junta and doctrinal stance against human rights abuses in other countries. This places *Mensaje* in a difficult position during these years. On one side, the Church stood boldly with the side of human rights and everyday Chileans for much of its history, and for much of the dictatorship after mid-1976. Choosing not to explicitly call out the junta on their human rights abuses from 1973 until 1976 may be seen as *Mensaje*’s editors abandoning their values in favor of being complicit with said abuses.

However, I argue that by making difficult sacrifices and not explicitly addressing the failures of the junta, *Mensaje* was able to report on the important humanitarian work the Church

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was allowed to continue doing as well remain an integral “voice for the voiceless” in offering
news and encouragement to everyday Chileans suffering under the junta. When the Chilean
Church later stepped out very critically against the human rights abuses of the dictatorship, this
definitive action destroyed any relationship they had with the junta, thus causing them to lose
their privileged role as mediators between the junta and Chileans.

_Praise for the Junta and Critiques of Allende’s Government_

Repeatedly throughout the early years of the dictatorship, _Mensaje_ articles appeared that
either supported Pinochet in some way or criticized Allende and his government. _America_ had no
reason to support Pinochet or oppose Allende in any way, as they did not have to fear censorship,
nor did they have any relationship with either the U.S. or Chilean government to protect.
However, _Mensaje_ editors, as the public media representation of the Chilean Jesuits, expressed
support of some of Pinochet’s policies primarily in order to maintain the Church’s relationship
with Pinochet and its valued status as a promoter of peace and reconciliation. To criticize
Pinochet’s actions would have irreparably damaged their relationship and affected the Church’s
ability to provide humanitarian aid. By choosing to sympathize with Pinochet and the junta, this
relationship was maintained which clearly required difficult sacrifices for the greater good of the
Chilean people.

_Relationship Between the Church and the Junta_

While the fear of censorship may have played a role in the editors of _Mensaje_’s decision
to occasionally offer guarded praise for the junta throughout their articles, offering such praises
was not paramount to avoiding censorship. I argue that by praising some aspects of the junta’s
work and acknowledging the weight of their responsibilities and tasks at hand, it is more likely that the Chilean Church, via *Mensaje*, was attempting to remain in the good graces of the junta and maintain their position as a source of humanitarian aid and valued mediator between the junta and the oppressed Chilean people. Benjamin Goldfrank’s article “Church, State, and Human Rights in Latin America” detailed the humanitarian work of the Catholic Church during the early years of the junta: “Catholic churches throughout Chile opened their doors to community groups of all types, including soup kitchens, cultural groups, women’s groups, and workshops, and thus provided opposition members safe spaces to meet.”80 The Church was one of the sole institutions providing this sort of humanitarian aid to Chileans, as international aid organizations were often blocked from entering the country. The Chilean Church’s positive and often ambiguous relationship with the junta permitted them to continue operating and providing this sort of aid, a much needed service to thousands of Chileans. If *Mensaje*, the voice of the Church in many aspects, were to turn against the junta and criticize their policies explicitly, the Chilean Church would lose their valued relationship with the junta and there would be no institutions to provide humanitarian aid to Chileans.

**Peace, Healing, and Recommendations for the Junta**

As I previously discussed, *Mensaje* editors were ambitious in continually offering genuine suggestions as to how the junta should pursue a path of peace and justice in Chile that would promote reconciliation and a democratic path forward. While this is a significant difference, the arguments regarding censorship and the privileged relationship between the Chilean Church and the junta are not as easily applied. Instead, the explanation is a rather simple one. *Mensaje* had far more to gain by offering genuine suggestions to the junta about how to

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80 Benjamin Goldfrank, *Church, State, and Human Rights in Latin America*, p. 43.
pursue a peaceful and democratic future, as they were the voice and representative of Catholic Chileans throughout the nation. *Mensaje* was directly impacted by the actions of the junta, as were the majority of its readers. By promoting peaceful and democratic solutions, *Mensaje* was investing in the future of Chile and protecting both their status and the wellbeing of their readers.
V: Conclusion

Restatement of Central Argument

My research analyzes an important intersection between religion, politics, and journalism that are all tied to a key moment in history linking the countries of the two magazines being compared. *America* and *Mensaje* operate from very similar backgrounds with similar mission statements and lenses of viewing, analyzing, and reporting on the world around them. Their paths rarely intersected however, except for their coverage of the Chilean dictatorship at which point they took vastly different approaches in their coverage during its early years.

During the first three years of the dictatorship, September 1973-December 1976, *America* and *Mensaje* varied greatly in their coverage of the Chilean dictatorship, with particular differences in relation to CIA involvement in Chile, hunger and economic issues, human rights abuses, their praise (or lack thereof) for the junta, and their suggestions of how to pursue peace in Chile. These differences can best be understood by the political and religious dynamics connected to the dictatorship in Chile. While *America* was based out of New York and operated under a free press with no direct ties or connections to any Chilean governments, especially the junta, *Mensaje* operated under a vastly different context. *Mensaje* was based in Chile and therefore was impacted by the rampant censorship that occurred under Pinochet. *Mensaje* managed to avoid complete censorship by the government and was able to continue reporting on social issues in Chile and around the world by refraining from explicitly criticizing or placing blame on the junta, at least during the early years of this period. Furthermore, the Chilean Church at the time held a privileged and unique position in relation to the junta. The bishops and church leaders refrained from directly criticizing the junta for the first few years of the dictatorship (this includes via print media such as *Mensaje*) in order to preserve their status and
position as one of the sole institutions providing humanitarian aid to Chileans in need.
Additionally, Church leaders wanted to be an integral part of rebuilding Chile and ushering in peace, democracy, and reconciliation at the end of the dictatorship and did not want to do anything that would jeopardize this position.

**Limitations**

There were natural limitations that impacted the course of the research. First, my research operated within a very specific time frame: September 1973 until December 1976. While I made an informed choice to focus on the formative years of the dictatorship when the relationship between the Church and the junta was ever-changing and repressions were at their highest, there were several different lenses of analysis that could have been used. I could have chosen to still only analyze three years of articles, but rather than analyze the articles over the course of three consecutive years, I could have chosen three specific years that corresponded with key events in the Chilean dictatorship and transition to democracy. For example, I could have analyzed the year of the coup (1973), the year of the election (1988), and the year of Pinochet’s ultimate arrest or death (1998, 2006). Ideally, I would have analyzed articles from the entire seventeen-year dictatorship to gain a comprehensive picture of how both magazines changed in their analysis of the dictatorship. However, the natural time constraints of the thesis project limited such an analysis.

Additionally, there may have been a methodological limitation in that I may not have compiled the complete set of articles related to the dictatorship in both magazines. It is possible that in the process of reviewing both magazines for articles related to the dictatorship, I missed an article or two. However, the body of research that I investigated is vast enough and the results
were consistent throughout all three years of analysis that if a couple of articles were overlooked, my ultimate conclusions would not have been impacted.

**Caution Regarding Judgment of the Magazines**

It would be rather easy to arrive at the conclusion that *Mensaje* was wrong and failed the Chilean people through their decision to not explicitly condemn the junta in the first few years of the Chilean dictatorship. However, jumping to the simplistic and premature conclusion that one magazine is ‘good’ and one is ‘bad,’ or one is ‘right’ and one is ‘wrong,’ is dangerous and overlooks several important considerations. *America* and *Mensaje* operated in drastically different contexts. *America* editors had freedom in criticizing the junta and had nothing to lose. On the other hand, if *Mensaje* editors had boldly and outwardly critiqued the junta as *America* did, *Mensaje* would have likely been shut down and censored and the Chilean Church would have lost their press outlet that reached thousands of subscribers. They would have no longer had the opportunity to share their doctrine and views on certain human rights issues, such as torture or extreme hunger, and they would not have been able to share articles promoting peace, democracy, and reconciliation. *Mensaje* editors made important sacrifices in abstaining from criticizing the junta in the early years of the dictatorship in order to preserve their ability, and consequently the ability of the Chilean Church, to speak in favor of love, peace, and Christianity and serve as key mediators and providers of humanitarian aid for the Chilean people.

**Future Research**

My research has only scratched the surface of this topic and future research is needed. One route would be to analyze a wider breadth of articles, perhaps from all seventeen years of
the dictatorship. This will provide a larger sample size and will likely lead to even more conclusive results. Additionally, the study could be narrowed to focus on just *Mensaje* and analyze how their coverage of the Chilean dictatorship mirrored, or differed from, the changes in the relationship between the junta and the Chilean Church over the course of the dictatorship. This is research that is easily adaptable and has the potential to reveal important truths about the intersections of human rights, religion, journalism, and politics in both Chile and the United States.

**Final Reflections**

Today, Chile has returned to a strong democracy. However, echoes of the dictatorship remain a part of everyday life and Pinochet’s legacy hangs over all of Chile. The current president, Michelle Bachelet, was imprisoned and tortured with her mother during the early years of the dictatorship, and her father died in prison. Many Chileans still feel a lack of closure after Pinochet died, as he and many of his subordinates never stood trial for their crimes against the Chilean people and against humanity. Renowned Chilean journalist Ariel Dorfman calls the death of Pinochet in 2006 the “birth of a new nation” but for many Chileans who suffered under Pinochet’s rule, they grieve the fact that they never saw Pinochet go to trial before he died. Furthermore, even though Michelle Bachelet fought to overturn the amnesty protections that accompanied Pinochet’s infamous 1980 Constitution so that the Chilean government could prosecute his subordinates, truth commissions in Chile have long struggled with whether to prosecute those who committed crimes under Pinochet or to move towards reconciliation. Finally, many Chileans who lived through the dictatorship are still uncomfortable with the

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presence of the military. In 2010, after the military moved into Chilean towns, such as Concepción in central Chile, to provide support during the looting and riots that followed a devastating earthquake, many Chileans reported that their presence, while welcomed to restore order, evoked many memories of the earlier bloody military rule under Pinochet.84

The horrifying events of the Chilean dictatorship call into question issues of truth, reconciliation, international law, and the role of the international community. Religion was deeply woven into the events that took place between 1973 and 1990 as the Chilean Church was forced to grapple with the costs of complying with a brutal military dictatorship in order to provide humanitarian aid to citizens. The Chilean dictatorship was seventeen long, devastating, impossible years and its victims deserve all the honor, respect, and reverence possible. In Santiago, the capital of Chile, El Museo de la Memoria y los Derechos Humanos (The Memory and Human Rights Museum) offers a sobering, yet important, glimpse into how the dictatorship tore a country apart and how brave Chileans rebuilt their democracy and society.85 The people and leaders of Chile are determined to not forget what their country and people experienced for seventeen years.

In one Mensaje article that particularly impacted me, Cardinal Silva Henríquez explicitly defined the role of the Church in moments of oppression and inhumanity: “The Church should be the voice of all, and especially those with no voice.”86 The Spanish translation is particularly beautiful and striking, stating “La Iglesia debe ser la voz de todos y especialmente de los que no tienen voz.” While Pinochet’s legacy may still hover, the legacy and stories of the Chilean people prevail. America and Mensaje play just a small role in the rich history of Chile and for a brief moment in history, gave an eternal voice to the victims of the dictatorship. While they

85 http://ww3.museodelamemoria.cl/
differed greatly in their approach to reporting on the events of the dictatorship, both magazines covered the dictatorship with grace and respect for the victims and did all they could to dar una voz a los sin voz.\(^87\)

\(^{87}\) Translated: “Give a voice to those without a voice.”
VI: Appendix A

A Comparison of the coverage of CIA intervention in Mensaje and America

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mensaje</th>
<th>America</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>7/75 <em>Los sin rostro:</em> Recent news has confirmed that CIA and other organizations intervene in other countries. Says there is a great concern on behalf of international organizations but doesn’t condemn them itself.</td>
<td>10/73 <em>Is Silence a Crime:</em> Critiques DC for lack of concern over detainee of American missionaries in Chile, no concern shown for violation of rights. Junta is looking to DC for support. Allegations that CIA initiated coup, denied by govt. but clearly DC did nothing to prevent coup or support Allende. Condemns this, saying silence is a crime.</td>
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<tr>
<td>8/75 <em>El affaire de la CIA:</em> Actions of CIA have violated US law. Surprised that a large country with respect for laws would be intervening and turning to political assassination. The report sufficiently condemns the CIA. There is no justification for what the CIA did. Ethics of US are suffering because the president had to denounce political assassinations. Strong condemnation of intervention but never mentions Chile.</td>
<td>3/74 <em>Refugees from Chile:</em> US investigates Chilean refugees more than other refugees, A is critical of this because it is discouraging for people threatened with torture and death. Asks why there is such discrimination. DC is hostile towards Allende because of business concerns. Strong critique of refusal of shelter for Allende’s supporters. “Simple humanity and common decency demand no less.”</td>
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<tr>
<td>9/74 <em>U.S. Policy and the CIA Cover Up:</em> Article that breaks the news about specific CIA activities in Chile. Another act of deception that US citizens are tired of. US interference went past eliminating a threat to freedom of press in Chile. Calls out Kissinger for evasion of involvement during Senate confirmation hearings. “In the interests of all concerned, and especially in the interest of the people, who are, in the end, sovereign in this country, Congress should get to the bottom of this matter.”</td>
<td>11/74 <em>Repression Worse in Chile:</em> Some individuals and bishops in US are asking US to stop giving military and financial aid to the junta until “human rights are restored there.” Powerful and sarcastic critique of</td>
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<tr>
<td>11/74</td>
<td>Missionaries and the CIA: Missionaries are asking US to stop covert operations in developing world because they feel the effects. A sides with the missionaries, subtle and sarcastic critique. “The American missionary, who seeks to promote the welfare of the people he serves, rightly feels betrayed by activities like the CIA’s in Chile, which generates suspicion of the United States and its citizens… But they have a right not to have their efforts undercut by their own government, especially when that government operates for purposes and with methods of which most of its citizens would disapprove.”</td>
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<td>1/75</td>
<td>Piety and Wit: US government, not just CIA, was involved in Chilean coup. Lists the negative effects of covert CIA activity abroad. Reflects imperial thinking, more risk than reward, too irresponsible, narrow-visioned, fetishizes stability, reflects an old way of thinking, reduces respect of US, opens US to charges of interference, fuels US Soviet distrust, undermines confidence that US has cease with covert activities. Argues there is both a practical and ethical argument against covert activities abroad.</td>
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<tr>
<td>11/75</td>
<td>With Profound Disgust: DC now criticizes and is punishing the junta, A criticizes this as irony. “With a touch of bitter irony, Washington, which encouraged the overthrow of the late Salvador Allende by a variety of means, now finds itself in the position of castigating, for continued violations of human rights, the very junta it helped create.”</td>
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<td>12/75</td>
<td>Chile and the CIA: CIA supported Allende’s opponents in elections and attempted previous coups. US giving money to wealthy Chileans raises questions of ethics and judgment. Asks if vendetta against Allende was for peace or profits. Subtle critique of violence as a means towards peace in Latin America. “Peace and security in Latin America are likely to come about through social justice, not through military coups. Nor is covert action, from its very nature, a likely instrument to bring about peace.”</td>
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<tr>
<td>1/76</td>
<td>Attitudes Toward Torture: US shows disregard for Americans killed during coup in Chile. Shows surprise at Kissinger’s disinterest in human rights in Chile. Says public pressure is reason for changes in attitude towards rights in Chile. “But this government still shows no great interest in human rights in places like Brazil, Paraguay, Uruguay or Bolivia, whose governments are supported by US policy.”</td>
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<tr>
<td>3/76</td>
<td>Doing Away with Covert Activities: Details various CIA activities abroad, portrayed in a negative light. Disapproves of lack of moral response to CIA director lying about intervention in Chile. Proposes all covert activity abroad be considered immoral and intelligence services should only gather information “American missionaries in Latin America are now reporting back that the CIA is being blamed for many things that go wrong. Secrecy breeds suspicion.” Argues strongly that covert activities have always ended poorly for US reputation.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
VII: References


*America* editors. “‘Law and Order’ in Chile.” *America*, 3 November 1973, pp. 320.


Mensaje editors. “¿Ha cambiado Mensaje?” Mensaje, March-April 1974, pp. 67.

Mensaje editors. “¿Hacia una futura democracia?” Mensaje, November 1976.


Mensaje editors. “¿Rectificando una línea?” Mensaje, March-April 1974, pp. 78-80.


