



Mourning and memory in Chile

Recent world history contains difficult chapters that are ongoing despite the passage of time, whose pain is still felt by succeeding generations. This phenomenon of collective memory occurs during wars and other social tragedies, resulting in personal loss, pain, and trauma.

Although the concept of memory has been researched by many disciplines, often establishing a significant relationship to the aftermath of violence and death, the subsequent process of mourning has been rarely explored. "Arguments recounting the relationship between mourning and memory provide no details on how this relationship was established, nor do they sufficiently explain the relationship in reference to the processes of forgetting," states Dr. Fedra Cuestas, researcher for the School of Psychology at the Universidad Andrés Bello.

It is due to this lack of information that Dr. Cuestas proposed investigating the union between mourning and memory, especially in regards to distinct collective processes. The aims of this research are to identify losses that can be elicited by collective mourning; distinguish the ways in which memory is acquired and how memory is manifested during mourning; and, finally, understand how different aspects of mourning, such as remembrance, intervene in the framework and endurance of memory.

Collective mourning is also associated with important concepts such as human rights, truth, justice, sentencing, reparation, and reconciliation. "This investigation is a contribution of special relevance to Chile, a country that has endured successive violence throughout its history, events that have added to our collective losses," adds Dr. Cuestas.

Additionally, explains Dr. Fedra Cuestas, this project "contributes to the understanding of the consequences that a painful past can have on the present and how this pain can be felt in the future. Reflections on the different kinds of mourning can aid us in overcoming these past events and influencing the community, helping to create a more democratic society."