

Do memory sites influence far-right vote? Evidence from Chile

Francisca Castro¹

Abstract

Chile maintains a comprehensive registry of over 1,000 spaces where human rights violations were committed during Pinochet's dictatorship. This registry includes sites that have been officially designated as memory sites by the state. In this paper, I examine whether proximity to memory sites affects far-right electoral support. Using a difference-in-differences design that compares voting locations near memory sites to those farther away across the 2021 and 2025 presidential elections, I find that proximity to memory sites is associated with a reduction in the far-right *Partido Republicano* vote share of approximately 1.0–1.5 percentage points in the 100m–1km range, with the effect attenuating beyond that. At the same time, proximity is associated with a modest increase in support for the *Partido Nacional Libertario*, a more recently founded far-right party with more populist overtones than authoritarian nostalgia. These findings complicate the notion that official commemoration of past authoritarian violence deters far-right mobilization: memory sites appear to penalize the party most directly tied to the dictatorship while leaving a more populist alternative unscathed.

Keywords: memory sites, human rights violations, far-right voting, electoral behavior, Chile

¹Universidad Carlos III de Madrid francisca.castro@uc3m.es

Since the third wave of democratization, authoritarian successor parties have been key actors, frequently voted into office despite their ties to past nondemocratic regimes (Loxton and Mainwaring, 2018). More recently, far-right parties have gained ground across democracies worldwide. These parties have been much more outspoken in their defense of past dictatorships, even going so far as to deny or justify human rights violations committed by those regimes (Faber, 2023). As many countries are still grappling with reparations for abuses perpetrated during periods of authoritarianism, it becomes relevant to understand the relationship between specific forms of reparations (notably memory sites) and far-right appeal. Memory sites function as markers of locations of state violence that took place during authoritarian regimes and are designed to serve as a democratic response to this legacy (Aguilera and Badilla, 2022). Could these memory sites affect the appeal of political parties that cast doubt on such abuses and question commemorations of victims?

Policies of remembrance are a prominent factor when it comes to far-right parties and their legitimacy (Sierp, 2025). Far-right parties challenge mainstream, institutionalized historical references by manipulating unauthorized and counter-hegemonic versions of the past (Couperus, Tortola, and Rensmann, 2023). The literature has yielded mixed results as to how far-right parties have been affected in this regard. Exposure to reminders of authoritarian abuses might strengthen democratic norms and reduce support for parties associated with that past (Balcells, Palanza, and Voytas, 2022; Ruipérez Núñez and Sauter, 2025). Alternatively, commemorations of past atrocities could polarize communities or have minimal electoral impact if citizens view historical abuses as disconnected from current politics (Aguilera and Badilla, 2022; Sierp, 2025), or even induce a ‘memory satiation effect’ (Hoerner, Jaax, and Rodon, 2019).

An empirical challenge lies in establishing whether any observed relationship reflects the true influence of memory sites rather than selection effects, as these locations are not randomly distributed. For instance, torture centers were strategically placed during dictatorships, often in areas with particular political or geographic characteristics (Bautista et al., 2018) that might independently affect voting patterns and therefore far-right vote share. Moreover, decisions about which sites to preserve and designate as memory centers have themselves been political, which could be linked to existing local attitudes (Malinova, 2021). Lastly, memory sites operate as social and mental landmarks whose influence is not contained by geography (Pirker, Kramer, and Lichtenwagner, 2019).

This research addresses these issues by examining voting patterns in relation to sites of torture and human rights violations during the Pinochet dictatorship (1973-1989) in Chile. These sites, now preserved as museums and memory spaces (*espacios de memoria*), mark locations where thousands were detained, tortured, and disappeared. The government of Gabriel Boric (2022-2026) made substantial efforts to repurpose these sites as memory centers, surpassing previous administrations' initiatives in both scope and visibility.¹ Taking advantage of the quasi-random designation of these sites as places of memory, I explore whether this affects the electoral support of the Partido Republicano, a far-right party founded in 2019 from a division of the traditional right-wing party Unión Demócrata Independiente (UDI). Since its inception, the Partido Republicano has adopted anti-immigration rhetoric, cultural conservatism, and explicitly refuses to condemn (and even recognize) human rights violations that occurred during Pinochet's dictatorship (Rovira Kaltwasser, Salas-Lewin, and Zanotti, 2024). In 2024, the Partido Republicano itself experienced a split, with the formation of the Partido Nacional Libertario, further broadening the spectrum of the Chilean party system to the right. These changes also allow me to test whether proximity to memory sites affects traditional right-wing parties differently from newer far-right parties.

Using geocoded locations of former torture centers and sites where human rights abuses were committed during the dictatorship, I combine proximity measures with precinct-level electoral results to examine whether living near a memory site affected far-right voting in the 2021 and 2025 presidential elections. Chile's electoral system assigns voters to polling places based on their registered residential address, enabling the measurement of exposure to nearby memory sites. I find that voting locations within 100m–1km of a memory site show reductions in Partido Republicano vote share of approximately 1.0–1.5 percentage points relative to locations more than 1km away. At the same time, proximity to memory sites is associated with a modest increase in Partido Nacional Libertario vote share at 100–250m, suggesting that voters near memory sites shift toward a strand of the far-right less explicitly associated with the dictatorship rather than abandoning far-right politics altogether. I argue that memory sites

¹This change was linked to the announcement made in the Government's public account of 2022, which commemorated 50 years of the military coup. Through the except resolution (*resolución exenta*) N°111 published in 2023, the Program of Sites of Memory was officially approved. In 2024, the Government confirmed that 20 Sites of Memory had been newly recuperated in the context of this program. See <https://www.gob.cl/noticias/gobierno-recuperado-entregado-20-sitios-memoria/>.

operate by keeping past abuses locally salient, making voters more attuned to the Partido Republicano's ties to the Pinochet regime. This is consistent with research on Holocaust memorials in Germany that has found dampening effects on AfD support (Hoerner, Jaax, and Rodon, 2019), and extends this literature to a context where far-right parties maintain more direct organizational connections to the authoritarian past.

Context: Memory Sites in Chile

Transitional justice policies recognize the role of physical spaces in confronting authoritarian pasts, encompassing symbolic transitional justice policies that acknowledge victims collectively by establishing spaces of memory, memorials, or museums (Aguilera and Badilla, 2022; Balcells, Palanza, and Voytas, 2022). These policies are part of broader transitional justice frameworks designed to deal with past human rights violations in democratizing societies. Memory sites, i.e., places marking locations of state violence, serve multiple functions in post-authoritarian societies: they provide symbolic reparation to victims, create spaces for public acknowledgment of past abuses, and offer opportunities for societies to reckon with difficult histories (Hite and Collins, 2009). These sites represent contested spaces where power relations and competing narratives about the past are negotiated (Aguilera and Badilla, 2022) and therefore they are not neutral markers. The transformation of former detention and torture centers into memory sites is a particular form of memorialization that confronts visitors with the physical locations where violence occurred, potentially making past abuses more tangible than abstract monuments or museums located elsewhere.

Chile represents a notable case of transitional justice implementation. It has established three truth commissions, provided reparations to victims and their families, and created a national Museum of Memory and Human Rights in 2010 (Aguilera and Badilla, 2022; Batiste, 2024). The 1991 Truth and Reconciliation Commission documented over 3,000 people executed or disappeared during the dictatorship, while the 2004 Commission on Political Imprisonment and Torture officially acknowledged that over 40,000 people were tortured and identified more than 1,100 detention and torture centers across the country (Cornejo et al., 2020). Following these reports, civil society organizations and the state began converting former torture centers into memory sites, including highly emblematic locations such as Villa Grimaldi (1997), Londres 38 (2008), and numerous other locations throughout Chile's regions. These sites originally

emerged from bottom-up activism by victims' organizations demanding recognition, combined with state support that increased substantially after 2004 as the traumatic memory of torture gained official acknowledgment (Aguilera and Badilla, 2022).

The geographical distribution of these memory sites reflects the dictatorship's repressive apparatus, with torture centers strategically located in both urban and rural areas across Chile's regions. Unlike centralized museums that visitors must intentionally seek out, these neighborhood-based sites occupy everyday spaces where residents live, work, and vote. The government of Gabriel Boric intensified efforts to repurpose these locations as memory centers, surpassing previous administrations in both the number of sites restored and the resources dedicated to their maintenance and educational programming. This emphasis on memory site recognition coincides with growing concerns about far-right political mobilization and attacks on human rights memorials during periods of social unrest (Aguilera and Badilla, 2022). Some memory sites have been vandalized or even destroyed, such as the House of Human Rights in Punta Arenas, which was intentionally set on fire in 2020 (Díaz, 2020), revealing persistent divisions over how Chile should remember its authoritarian past.

Understanding whether proximity to memory sites shapes political behavior matters for several reasons. First, it speaks to ongoing debates about the effectiveness of transitional justice beyond the immediate post-transition period. If memory sites reduce support for parties associated with authoritarian legacies decades after a democratic transition, it could suggest that physical memorialization can have lasting political effects. Second, Chile's experience may inform other post-authoritarian societies grappling with how to address their pasts and how to slow down the electoral advances of the far-right. Third, as far-right parties gain ground globally, often by downplaying or justifying historical abuses, examining the factors that constrain their appeal becomes increasingly important. This is key, considering how radical right parties tend to mobilize citizens with dubious democratic credentials, who reject key liberal democratic institutions (Rovira Kaltwasser, Salas-Lewin, and Zanotti, 2024).

The Chilean case offers a particularly relevant test because the far-right parties studied here have direct connections to the dictatorship era. The UDI was founded by dictatorship collaborators, while the leader of the Partido Republicano, and now President of Chile, José Antonio Kast, has expressed admiration for Pinochet and the legacy of the dictatorship, making memory sites especially salient for his government. In fact, just a few weeks after taking office, Kast announced that he would revoke the previous government's decree, which sought

to expropriate Colonia Dignidad (a German enclave in southern Chile, known for having lent its grounds to the dictatorship for torture and imprisonment) to turn it into a memorial site (Bartlett, 2026). This is particularly relevant considering that memory sites have also been used as a tool for activism in Chile (Ferrara, 2025).

Data

I obtained data on memory sites from the Chilean Ministry of Justice’s Subsecretariat of Human Rights, which maintains a comprehensive registry documenting sites related to human rights during the dictatorship. This registry follows the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights’ definition of memory sites (CIDH, 2019) and organizes such sites into three categories: places where human rights violations occurred, places where human rights were defended, and places of commemoration.

I supplemented this registry with data from the National Monuments Council (Consejo de Monumentos Nacionales, CMN), which administers the official protection mechanism for memory sites by designating them as National Monuments. The CMN has declared 70 memory sites as National Monuments: 10 movable sites (archives) and 60 immovable sites (buildings and physical locations). Since 2023, every region in Chile has at least one officially declared memory site. The CMN data includes exact dates when sites received their official monument designation, facilitating the tracking of the timeline of memory site formalization. This designation process forms part of Chile’s broader legal framework for memory sites, grounded in the reports from existing truth commissions, the National Monuments Law, and the institutional structure of human rights policy, including the Subsecretariat of Human Rights and the National Human Rights Plan. See SI Section B.1 for further details.

For this analysis, I focus on the immovable sites: the physical locations of former detention and torture centers, commemorative spaces, and sites of resistance that have been repurposed or designated as memory sites. I geocoded each site’s address using the Google Maps API to obtain precise coordinates, allowing me to calculate geodesic distances between memory sites and voting locations. Of the 1,023 sites in the comprehensive catalog, 101 could not be geocoded automatically due to incomplete or ambiguous address information and were manually geocoded using satellite imagery and local administrative records. The final geocoded dataset covers 1,016 sites with valid coordinates across all 16 regions of Chile.

I compiled precinct-level electoral returns from the Electoral Service (SERVEL) covering all elections in which the Partido Republicano participated since its founding in 2020, spanning the 2021, 2024, and 2025 electoral cycles across presidential, congressional, and local races. For the main analysis, I focus on the first round of the presidential election, where the ideological profile of far-right candidates is most visible to voters and party labels are most salient. Chile’s electoral system assigns voters to polling places based on their registered residential address, which means exposure to nearby memory sites is not subject to residential self-selection into polling locations. I calculated vote shares for the Partido Republicano, the Partido Nacional Libertario (which competed for the first time in 2025 after splitting from the Partido Republicano in 2024), and the UDI, the traditional right-wing party, to test whether proximity to memory sites affects established and emerging far-right parties differently. See SI Table A.2 for vote totals across all election types.

Design

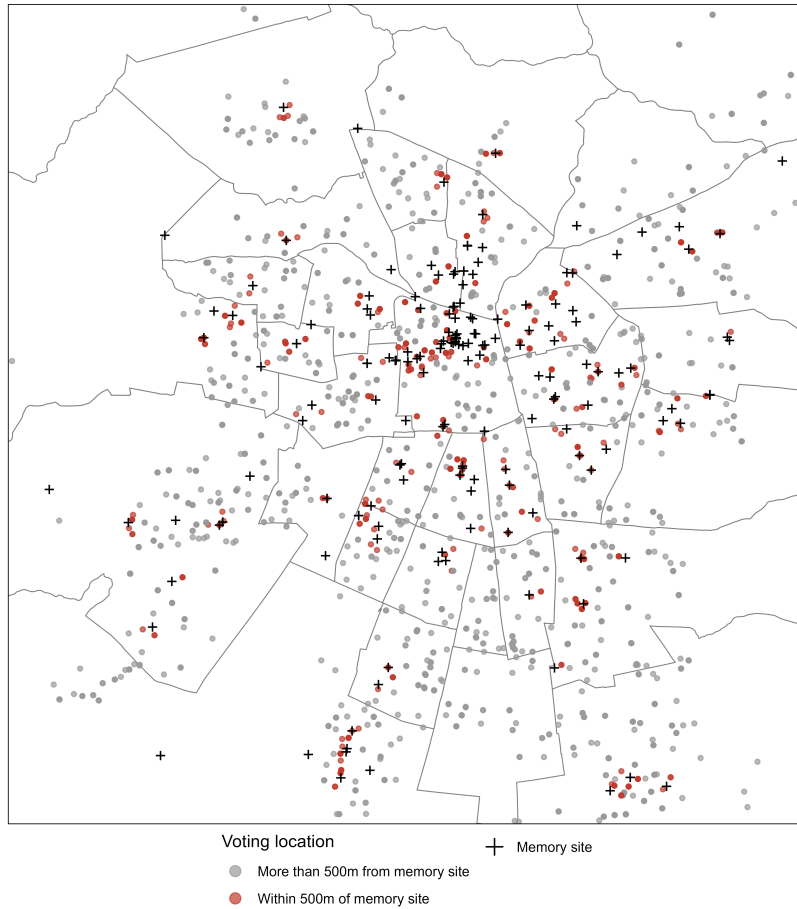
Estimating the effect of memory site proximity on far-right voting presents two main identification challenges. First, the original placement of torture centers during the dictatorship was not random. The military regime strategically located detention facilities based on geographic, political, and logistical considerations that may correlate with present-day political attitudes (Bautista et al., 2018). Second, decisions about which former torture centers to preserve and convert into memory sites were themselves political processes involving local activism, government priorities, and community characteristics. Areas that successfully campaigned for memory site designation might differ in their political orientation from areas where former torture centers were demolished or repurposed for other uses. Simply comparing locations near memory sites to those farther away could therefore reflect pre-existing differences rather than any causal effect of exposure.

My identification strategy exploits geographic variation in proximity to memory sites across the 2021 and 2025 presidential elections. The comprehensive catalog of memory sites registered by the Subsecretariat of Human Rights covers locations across all 16 regions of Chile, providing substantial variation in exposure at the local level. I compare changes in far-right vote share between election cycles for voting locations near memory sites against locations farther away, controlling for location and year fixed effects. The parallel trends assumption is supported by

pre-trends evidence: treated and control locations show similar trajectories in far-right support from 2017 to 2021, prior to the period of analysis, and had nearly identical UDI vote shares in 2017 (Table B.4).

Voting locations are aggregated to 200-meter geographic clusters using a connected-components algorithm: locations are represented as nodes in a graph, edges are drawn between any two locations within 200 meters of each other, and each connected component is treated as a single unit. This handles naming inconsistencies across election years and avoids treating nearby polling places as independent observations. Standard errors are clustered at the municipality level. The main specification uses a binned distance approach, replacing the binary treatment indicator with interactions across four distance bins (0–100m, 100–250m, 250–500m, and 500m–1km) relative to locations more than 1km from any memory site. The 0–100m bin is retained in the full models but excluded from the main figure due to the small number of clusters at that distance (109 out of 1,874 total). The primary outcome variables are vote shares for the Partido Republicano, the Partido Nacional Libertario, and the UDI, all measured in the first round of the presidential election. Figure 1 shows the geographic distribution of memory sites and voting locations in the Province of Santiago, where treatment variation is most dense. For further details on the estimation strategy, see SI Section C.

Figure 1: Memory Sites and Voting Locations in Santiago



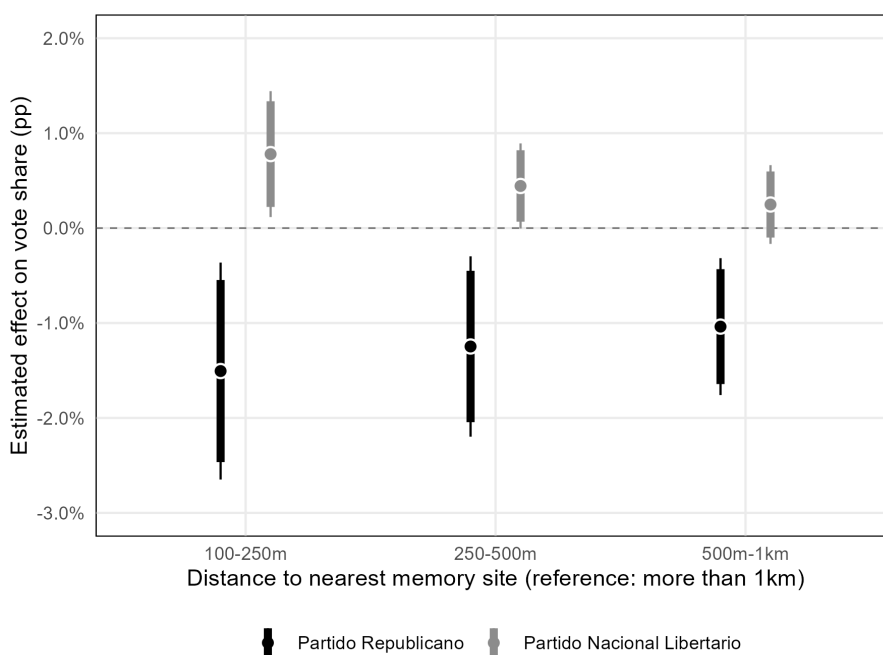
Note: Crosses mark memory sites registered in the Subsecretariat of Human Rights catalog. Municipality boundaries shown for the Province of Santiago.

Results

Figure 2 presents the main results. Each panel shows DiD estimates across three distance bins relative to locations more than 1km from the nearest memory site, for the Partido Republicano (black) and the Partido Nacional Libertario (gray). Proximity to memory sites is associated with a consistent reduction in Partido Republicano vote share. The effect is statistically significant at the 100–250m, 250–500m, and 500m–1km bins, with point estimates ranging from -1.5 to -1.0 percentage points. The largest effect appears at 100–250m, where Partido Republicano’s vote share declined by approximately 1.5 percentage points relative to locations more than 1km away. The effect attenuates with distance and is not statistically significant beyond 1km, consistent with a locally concentrated effect rather than a broad regional one.

At the same time, proximity is associated with an increase in Partido Nacional Libertario vote share of approximately 0.4–0.8 percentage points in the 100–500m range. The Partido Nacional Libertario, founded in 2024 from a split within the Partido Republicano, shares the far-right ideological space but lacks the explicit nostalgic ties to the Pinochet regime that characterize the Partido Republicano, advocating for minimal government intervention, deregulation, and conservative social policies, similar to Javier Milei in Argentina (Argote and Visconti, 2025). Voters near memory sites therefore appear to shift between far-right parties rather than abandon the far-right altogether.

Figure 2: Main Results



Note: Voting locations are aggregated to 200m geographic clusters. Standard errors are clustered at the municipality level. Thick lines show 90% CIs; thin lines show 95% CIs. The reference category is locations more than 1km from the nearest memory site. Full models available in Table D.1.

These results point to memory sites operating as locally concentrated reminders of the dictatorship’s legacy. The distance gradient in Figure 2 is consistent with this: the effect is strongest within 250m and attenuates beyond 1km, the range within which a physical site would plausibly be part of residents’ everyday spatial experience. The main results are robust to alternative geographic clustering thresholds: Table D.2 shows that the Partido Republicano and Partido Nacional Libertario effects hold at 100m and 200m, weaken at 500m, and attenuate at 1km, consistent with the effect operating at the neighborhood rather than the regional level.

Lastly, I also test the effect that memory sites have on traditional right-wing parties,

specifically the UDI. Proximity to memory sites had no detectable effect on UDI vote share, as shown in Table D.1. The point estimate is near zero and in the opposite direction from the Republican coefficient. This is not straightforwardly explained by the UDI’s own ties to the dictatorship, which are substantial: the party was founded by Pinochet collaborators and its 2025 presidential candidate, Evelyn Matthei, is the daughter of Fernando Matthei, commander of the Air Force and member of the military junta.² The null result is better understood as reflecting the UDI’s institutional trajectory over the intervening decades: as a broad-tent right-wing party that has moderated its public stance and distanced itself from explicit nostalgia, the dictatorship link is less electorally central to its identity in 2025 than it is for the Partido Republicano. Voters near memory sites do not shift toward the UDI, which means the votes leaving the Partido Republicano flow toward the Partido Nacional Libertario rather than toward the traditional right.

The pattern also varies across election types. The Republican and Libertario effects replicate in legislative elections: lower chamber races show nearly identical coefficients to the presidential specification, while Senate races show the same direction with attenuated significance, likely reflecting the smaller sample of regions covered in any given senatorial cycle (SI Table D.3). In local elections, by contrast, proximity to memory sites has no detectable effect on either Republican or UDI vote share in mayoral or city council races (SI Table D.4). This contrast points to party-label salience as the operative mechanism: memory sites appear to prime voters to think about the Partido Republicano’s relationship to the dictatorship, but this only translates into votes when the ballot is explicitly organized around party choice rather than local candidate identity.

The main results are robust to alternative specifications. The Partido Republicano and Partido Nacional Libertario effects hold across geographic clustering thresholds of 100m and 200m, weaken at 500m, and attenuate at 1km (SI Table D.2), consistent with a neighborhood-level rather than regional effect. A permutation test reassigning treatment status randomly across clusters 10,000 times yields permutation p -values of 0.014 for both parties, placing the actual estimates in the tails of the placebo distribution (SI Figure E.1). Excluding control clusters within 600m, 700m, and 1km of the nearest memory site leaves the estimates stable, ruling out spillover contamination of the control group as a driver of the main findings (SI

²Matthei ran as the UDI presidential candidate in both 2013 and 2025.

Table E.1).

Conclusion

This paper examines whether proximity to memory sites, taken as physical spaces marking locations of state violence during Chile’s Pinochet dictatorship, affects far-right electoral support. Using a difference-in-differences design that compares voting locations near memory sites to those farther away across the 2021 and 2025 presidential elections, I find that proximity to memory sites is associated with a reduction in Partido Republicano vote share of approximately 1.0–1.5 percentage points within 250m of a site, with the effect attenuating beyond 1km. At the same time, proximity is associated with a modest increase in support for the Partido Nacional Libertario, a newer far-right party without explicit nostalgic ties to the dictatorship, suggesting that memory sites shift support between strands of the far right rather than suppress far-right mobilization overall.

These findings speak to ongoing debates about the political effects of transitional justice beyond the immediate post-transition period. Memory sites appear to operate as locally concentrated reminders of the dictatorship’s legacy, penalizing the party most explicitly associated with that past. This is consistent with research on Holocaust memorials in Germany that found similar dampening effects on far-right support (Hoerner, Jaax, and Rodon, 2019), and extends that literature to a context where far-right parties maintain more direct organizational and rhetorical ties to the authoritarian period (Rovira Kaltwasser, Salas-Lewin, and Zanotti, 2024) and where *pinochetismo* remains an active marker of right-wing identity (Boas, 2016). The effect holds across national races (presidential and legislative) but disappears in local elections, where candidate identity dominates party labels, pointing to label salience rather than a diffuse neighborhood effect as the underlying mechanism.

At the same time, the substitution toward the Partido Nacional Libertario complicates a straightforward interpretation of memory sites as barriers to far-right mobilization. Right-wing populist parties have engaged in forms of memory activism to redefine national narratives along patriotic lines (Faber, 2023), and the growth of the Partido Nacional Libertario near memory sites suggests that voters may be responsive to far-right alternatives that avoid direct association with the dictatorship. Future research could explore whether this substitution effect

strengthens over time as the Partido Nacional Libertario consolidates its identity, and whether the presence of pro-dictatorship memory sites, of which several still exist in Chile, generates a backlash that reinforces rather than deters far-right support (Batiste, 2024).

References

- Aguilera, Carolina, and Manuela Badilla. 2022. "Human rights memorials in turmoil: Antagonistic memories in contemporary Chile." *Political Geography* 98.
- Argote, Pablo, and Giancarlo Visconti. 2025. "Chile 2024: La Resiliencia de la Ideología y el Auge de las Actitudes Anti-Élite." *Revista de Ciencia Política* 45 (2): 187–204.
- Balcells, Laia, Valeria Palanza, and Elsa Voytas. 2022. "Do Transitional Justice Museums Persuade Visitors? Evidence from a Field Experiment." *The Journal of Politics* 84 (1): 496–510.
- Bartlett, John. 2026. *Chile's far-right government rips up plan for memorial at Pinochet torture site*. The Guardian. Accessed: 2026-05-19, April. <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2026/apr/08/chile-torture-paul-schafer-villa-baviera>.
- Batiste, Valentina Infante. 2024. "Pro-dictatorship memorialization in democratic Chile (1990–2020): How is it maintained?" *Memory Studies* 17 (6): 1447–1468.
- Bautista, María Angélica, Felipe González, Luis R Martínez, Pablo Muñoz, and Mounu Prem. 2018. "The geography of repression and support for democracy: Evidence from the Pinochet dictatorship." *Documentos de Trabajo*.
- Boas, Taylor C. 2016. "Pastors for Pinochet: Authoritarian Stereotypes and Voting for Evangelicals in Chile." *Journal of Experimental Political Science* 3 (2): 197–205.
- Comisión Interamericana de Derechos Humanos. 2019. *Principios sobre Políticas Públicas de Memoria en las Américas*. Resolución Resolución 3/2019. Comisión Interamericana de Derechos Humanos (CIDH). <https://www.oas.org/es/cidh/decisiones/pdf/Resolucion-3-19-es.pdf>.
- Cornejo, Marcela, Carolina Rocha, Nicolás Villarroel, Enzo Cáceres, and Anastassia Vivanco. 2020. "Tell me your story about the Chilean dictatorship: When doing memory is taking positions." *Memory Studies* 13 (4): 601–616.
- Couperus, Stefan, Pier Domenico Tortola, and Lars Rensmann. 2023. "Memory politics of the far right in Europe." *European Politics and Society* 24 (4): 435–444.
- Díaz, Nicolás. 2020. "Incendio destruye Casa de los Derechos Humanos en Punta Arenas: PC acusa intencionalidad," February 28, 2020. Accessed June 21, 2024. <https://www.biobiochile.cl/noticias/nacional/region-de-magallanes/2020/02/28/incendio-destruye-casa-de-los-derechos-humanos-en-punta-arenas-pc-acusa-intencionalidad.shtml>.
- Faber, Sebastiaan. 2023. "Populism and the Collective Past: Revisionism or Memory Activism?" In *The Routledge Handbook of Memory Activism*, edited by Yifat Gutman and Jenny Wüstenberg. London: Routledge.
- Ferrara, Anita. 2025. "When the past meets the present: The role of memory sites in time of crisis in Chile." *Memory Studies* 18 (4): 1065–1081.
- Hite, Katherine, and Cath Collins. 2009. "Memorial fragments, monumental silences and reawakenings in 21st-century Chile." *Millennium* 38 (2): 379–400.
- Hoerner, Julian M., Alexander Jaax, and Toni Rodon. 2019. "The long-term impact of the location of concentration camps on radical-right voting in Germany." *Research & Politics* 6 (4).
- Loxton, J., and S. Mainwaring. 2018. *Life after Dictatorship: Authoritarian Successor Parties Worldwide*. Cambridge University Press.
- Malinova, Olga. 2021. "Politics of memory and nationalism." *Nationalities Papers* 49 (6): 997–1007.
- Pirker, Peter, Johannes Kramer, and Mathias Lichtenwagner. 2019. "Transnational Memory Spaces in the Making: World War II and Holocaust Remembrance in Vienna." *International Journal of Politics, Culture, and Society* 32 (4): 439–458.
- Rovira Kaltwasser, Cristóbal, Rocío Salas-Lewin, and Lisa Zanotti. 2024. "Supporting and rejecting the populist radical right: Evidence from contemporary Chile." *Nations and Nationalism* 30 (3): 458–475.

- Ruipérez Núñez, Ana, and Melanie Sauter. 2025. "Can Monuments to Victims Increase Tolerance?" *Journal of Experimental Political Science*, 1–14.
- Sierp, Aline. 2025. "The Politics of Memory: Between History, Identity and Conflict." *Government and Opposition*, 1–20.

Supplementary Information

Do memory sites influence far-right vote?

Evidence from Chile

A	Context	2
A.1	Right and Far-Right Parties in Chile	2
A.2	Electoral System and Elections	4
B	Data	6
B.1	Memory Sites and Council of National Monuments	6
B.2	Geo-coded Data	7
B.3	Electoral Data	8
C	Estimation	9
D	Results	11
D.1	Main Results	11
D.2	Legislative and Local Electoral Results	11
E	Robustness Checks	14
E.1	Permutation Test	14
E.2	Spatial Donut Robustness Check	14

A Context

A.1 Right and Far-Right Parties in Chile

The Unión Demócrata Independiente (UDI) was founded in 1983, first as a political movement, reaching party status in 1988. Since its origins, the UDI has been transparent about its unrestricted support for the military dictatorship of Augusto Pinochet. During 2016, the party had an internal crisis when José Antonio Kast, a member of Congress occupying a seat under the UDI since 2002, quit the party, arguing that it was necessary to confront the political left more aggressively and adopt a more radical-right position (Rovira Kaltwasser, 2020). He subsequently formed Acción Republicana (Republican Action), a political movement that preceded the Partido Republicano.

Right-wing populism in Latin America had long combined conservative and authoritarian tendencies, but radical ideas had rarely been articulated in an openly populist register until Kast ran as an independent presidential candidate in 2017 (Zanotti, Rama, and Tanscheit, 2023). The positions of far-right parties in Latin America can be categorized along three elements: conservatism, iron-fist policies, and religiosity (Borges and Zanotti, 2025). These parties resist changes that disrupt existing societal structures and traditions, favoring stability and gradual reform instead (Borges and Zanotti, 2025).

When Kast ran for Congress as a member of Acción Republicana and won, he began platforming a new party, which was formally founded in 2019: the Partido Republicano de Chile. Kast is a first-generation Chilean born to a German family that had relocated to Chile; his father was a member of the Nazi Party. Several members of the Partido Republicano have ties to the Pinochet regime through their prior affiliation with the UDI. Both the Partido Republicano and the UDI have built their platforms on nostalgia for Pinochet's past (Díaz, Rovira Kaltwasser, and Zanotti, 2023).

The Partido Republicano gained traction during 2020 in the context of the debate over a new constitution, as they were strong defenders of the 1980 constitution drafted under Pinochet's dictatorship. In 2021, Kast ran as a presidential candidate and led his own list of candidates for Congress under a new electoral coalition called the Social Christian Front, which placed fifteen candidates into Congress and one into the Senate. In the elections of May 2023 for the constitutional council, the Partido Republicano had the best electoral outcome of any political party in a national election in Chile since 1965, electing 23 out of the 51 seats of the

Constitutional Council (Altman et al., 2024). Table A.1 shows the far-right vote share across the three presidential elections covered in this analysis.

Table A.1: Far-right vote share in Chilean presidential elections, 2017–2025

Year	Party	Votes	Vote share
2017 (first round)			
2017	UDI (Kast proxy)	522,145	7.9%
2021 (first round)			
2021	Partido Republicano	1,954,607	27.9%
2025 (first round)			
2025	Partido Nacional Libertario	1,799,691	13.9%
2025	Partido Republicano	3,093,700	24.0%

Note: Vote shares computed over valid votes excluding blanks and nulls. In 2017, Kast ran as an independent candidate affiliated with UDI before founding the Republican Party in 2019. In 2025, voting was mandatory, substantially increasing total turnout relative to prior elections.

The party’s so-called patriotic values are closely tied to the official story of Pinochet’s dictatorship. In the 2017 presidential campaign, Kast stated that “If Pinochet were alive, he’d vote for me” (La Tercera, 2017). In 2018, on the commemoration of the 1973 military coup, Kast tweeted that “Chile chose liberty on September 11th. The country we have today is thanks to the men and women who rose to prevent the Marxist revolution in our land.” More recently, Luis Silva, another party leader who received a high vote share in the 2023 constitutional council election, referred to Pinochet on television as “a statesman who built up a broken country” (Munita-Morgan, Navia, and Bo Guzmán, 2025).

The Partido Nacional Libertario was founded in 2024 following a split within the Partido Republicano, with Johannes Kaiser as its leading figure. The party first competed in the November 2025 elections, but only at the national level: it ran candidates for the presidency, the Chamber of Deputies, and the Senate. It did not have candidates in the 2024 local elections (mayors, city council, and regional council), which were held in October, before the party had completed its formal registration process. As a result, the Partido Nacional Libertario votes appear only in the 2025 presidential and legislative results in this analysis. Table A.2 shows the vote totals for both parties across all election types covered in this analysis.

Table A.2: Far-right votes across election types, 2021–2025

Election type	Year	Republican votes	Libertario votes
Presidential (1st round)	2021	1,954,607	–
	2025	3,093,700	1,799,691
Presidential (2nd round)	2021	3,640,606	–
	2025	7,239,404	–
Congress (Lower Chamber)	2021	667,051	–
	2025	1,424,832	679,500
Congress (Senate)	2021	336,532	–
	2025	534,981	171,602
Mayors	2021	58,920	–
	2024	264,583	–
City Council Members	2021	188,592	–
	2024	1,155,206	–
Regional Council Members	2021	371,898	–
	2024	1,395,090	–

Note: Vote totals across local election types (mayors, city council members, regional council members) are not additive as they were cast on the same day by the same voters.

A.2 Electoral System and Elections

The binary organization of Chilean politics around two coalitions that had prevailed since 1990 (Cox, Cubillos, and Le Foulon, 2025) began to erode over the past decade. Political events such as the student movement in 2011, the 2019 social uprising, and the successive failed attempts to change the constitution reshaped the balance of power and gave rise to new political forces on both ends of the ideological spectrum (Argote and Visconti, 2025). The Chilean party system had become increasingly elite-driven and socially uprooted, generating widespread distrust of traditional parties and low animosity toward independent candidates (Bargsted and Maldonado, 2018; Titelman and Sajuria, 2024). The adoption of moderate positions by the two dominant coalitions opened a political space for new far-right and far-left parties to attract voters on both ends of the left-right scale. In the 2017 election, the Frente Amplio emerged as a far-left coalition and José Antonio Kast launched a presidential bid as a far-right candidate (Munita-Morgan, Navia, and Bo Guzmán, 2025).

The introduction of mandatory voting further accelerated these shifts. Reject voters in the constitutional referendum of September 2022, who were mainly drawn from the new electorate brought in by compulsory participation, voted more for the Partido Republicano than for the traditional right and center-right parties in the subsequent constitutional council election (Altman et al., 2024). This pattern points to a broader realignment in which the far right absorbed a portion of the new electorate that traditional parties failed to retain.

The defense of Pinochet's legacy remains a marker of identity for the hard-core right. Right-wing voters' positive reactions to candidates aligned with Pinochet or who favor his regime can be interpreted as in-group identity voting, similar to evangelicals' preference for a fellow believer (Boas, 2016). This identity dimension helps explain the electoral durability of the Partido Republicano beyond a purely programmatic appeal.

B Data

The Subsecretariat of Human Rights registry organizes memory sites into three categories. The first (places where violations occurred) draws primarily from the National Commission on Political Imprisonment and Torture report (*Informe de la Comisión Nacional sobre Prisión Política y Tortura*), which identified detention and torture centers used during the dictatorship. The second represents an initial effort to document locations where individuals and organizations defended and resisted human rights violations, beginning with eight examples in the Metropolitan Region that include testimonial documentation. The third encompasses memorials and monuments reflecting memorialization policies implemented throughout the country. According to the Ministry’s definition, a memory site includes any location where grave human rights violations were committed or suffered, where resistance to such violations took place, or that victims or local communities consider appropriate for commemorating these events and transmitting knowledge about traumatic processes.¹

B.1 Memory Sites and Council of National Monuments

Memory sites were drawn from two sources: the Subsecretariat of Human Rights’ comprehensive catalog, which registers 1,023 sites across the three categories described above, and the National Monuments Council, which provides official recognition through designation as National Monuments. Of the 1,023 sites, 60 have received official recognition: 26 before 2017, 14 between 2017 and 2021, and 20 between 2021 and 2025. The remaining 950 sites are registered in the catalog but have never received official designation. Three sites in the never officially recognized cohort fall under a resistance category and are excluded from the cohort breakdown. Thirteen officially recognized sites lack a category assignment in the source data; these are legitimate sites of detention and memory that were added to the dataset after the initial catalog was compiled and do not have a category field populated. Table B.1 shows the distribution of sites by recognition cohort and category.

¹This definition is stated on their website (<https://memoriahistorica.minjusticia.gob.cl/catastro-sitios-de-memoria/>) which has not been updated since the new government took office. As of May 2026, the previous government’s logo is still on the website.

Table B.1: Memory sites by recognition cohort and category

Recognition cohort	Commemoration	Violations	Not classified	Total
Recognized before 2017	9	13	4	26
Recognized 2017–2021	2	10	2	14
Recognized 2021–2025	4	9	7	20
Never officially recognized	165	782	0	950

Note: Recognition cohorts are defined relative to the three presidential election years used in the analysis. Not classified sites are officially recognized but lack a category assignment in the source data. Three sites in the never officially recognized cohort fall under a resistance category and are excluded from this breakdown.

B.2 Geo-coded Data

Of the 1,023 sites in the comprehensive catalog, 101 could not be geocoded automatically due to incomplete or ambiguous address information and were manually geocoded using satellite imagery and local administrative records. Distances between memory sites and voting locations are computed using the Vincenty ellipsoid formula via the `geosphere` package in R, which accounts for the curvature of the Earth and is appropriate for the geographic scale of Chile. Voting locations in Easter Island and Robinson Crusoe Island are excluded from distance-based analyses since no memory sites are located on these islands, though they are retained in the electoral dataset. The total number of unique voting locations in the analysis is 6,278. Table B.2 shows how many of these locations fall within each distance threshold under alternative treatment definitions, and Table B.3 shows the distribution of distances to the nearest memory site.

Table B.2: Voting locations near memory sites under alternative treatment definitions

Treatment definition	N locations	% of all locations
Comprehensive catalog		
Any site, 500m	1838	29.3
Any site, 1km	3427	54.6
Any site, 2km	4735	75.4
Officially recognized sites only		
Official site, 500m	156	2.5
Official site, 1km	536	8.5

Note: The comprehensive catalog covers all sites registered by the Subsecretariat of Human Rights. Officially recognized sites are those designated by the National Monuments Council.

Table B.3: Distance from voting locations to nearest memory site

	Comprehensive catalog (m)	Official sites only (m)
Mean	3,375	27,856
Median	873	9,823
SD	12,505	38,450
Min	0	0
Max	617,051	623,297

Note: Distances computed using the Vincenty ellipsoid formula. Voting locations in Easter Island and Robinson Crusoe Island are excluded as no memory sites are located on these islands. The minimum distance of zero indicates voting locations that share their address with a memory site.

B.3 Electoral Data

Since the Partido Republicano was founded in 2019, the 2017 presidential first round uses UDI vote share as a pre-treatment proxy for far-right support. Table B.4 shows the balance on this measure across treated and control locations under three treatment definitions. Treated and control locations show very similar mean UDI vote shares across all three definitions, supporting the comparability of the two groups prior to treatment.

Table B.4: Pre-treatment balance: UDI vote share in 2017 by treatment status

Treatment definition	Group	N locations	Mean UDI share 2017	SD
Any site, 500m	Control	1,404	8.2%	3.5%
	Treated	745	8.1%	3.8%
Official site, 500m	Control	2,096	8.2%	3.6%
	Treated	53	7.6%	3.0%
Newly recognized 2021–2025, 500m	Control	2,127	8.2%	3.6%
	Treated	22	7.8%	3.0%

Note: Treated locations are those within 500m of at least one memory site of the relevant type.

C Estimation

I estimate the effect of proximity to memory sites on far-right vote share using a difference-in-differences design that compares voting locations near memory sites to those farther away, before and after the 2021–2025 electoral cycle. The main specification replaces the binary treatment indicator with interactions across four distance bins:

$$y_{it} = \sum_k \beta_k (\text{Bin}_{ki} \times \text{Post}_t) + \alpha_i + \gamma_t + \varepsilon_{it} \quad (1)$$

where Bin_{ki} equals one if cluster i falls within distance bin k from the nearest memory site, with bins defined as 0–100m, 100–250m, 250–500m, and 500m–1km. Locations more than 1km from any memory site serve as the reference category. Each β_k captures the differential change in vote share for clusters at distance k relative to the reference category, from 2021 to 2025. For robustness checks and the legislative and local election tables, I also estimate the simpler binary specification:

$$y_{it} = \beta (\text{Treated}_i \times \text{Post}_t) + \alpha_i + \gamma_t + \varepsilon_{it} \quad (2)$$

where Treated_i equals one if the cluster has at least one memory site within 500m. In both specifications, α_i are cluster fixed effects that absorb all time-invariant characteristics of each location, γ_t are year fixed effects that absorb national electoral trends common to all locations, and standard errors are clustered at the municipality level.

Voting locations are aggregated to 200m geographic clusters to handle naming inconsistencies across election years and avoid treating nearby polling places as independent observations. Treatment is defined using the comprehensive catalog of 1,023 memory sites from the Subsecretariat of Human Rights. The main outcome variables are vote shares for the Partido Republicano, the Partido Nacional Libertario, and the UDI, all measured in the first round of the presidential election.

To assess the parallel trends assumption, I additionally estimate the pre-trends specification:

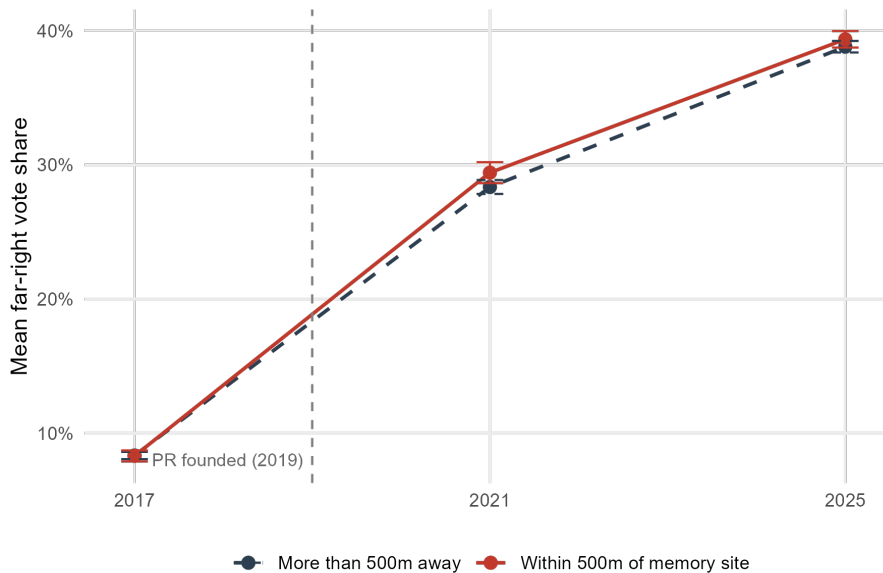
$$y_{it} = \delta (\text{Treated}_i \times \text{Post}_{2021,t}) + \alpha_i + \gamma_t + \varepsilon_{it} \quad (3)$$

where $\text{Post}_{2021,t}$ equals one for the 2021 election, using the 2017 election as the pre-period. Since the Partido Republicano was founded in 2019, the 2017 data point uses UDI vote share as a

proxy for far-right support. If parallel trends holds, δ should be close to zero and insignificant. The estimated coefficient is $\hat{\delta} = 0.009$ ($p = 0.130$), which is not significantly different from zero, supporting the parallel trends assumption.

Figure C.1 plots the mean far-right vote share by treatment status across the three presidential elections. Voting locations are aggregated to 200m geographic clusters following the main specification, and only clusters present in both 2021 and 2025 are included, which means the 2017 data point is based on the subset of those clusters that also had a matching location in 2017 (1,067 out of 1,874 clusters). The pre-trends period (2017 to 2021) shows near-parallel trajectories for treated and control locations, consistent with the regression evidence. The vertical dashed line marks 2019, when the Partido Republicano was founded.

Figure C.1: Parallel Trends Plot



Note: Mean far-right vote share by treatment status across three presidential elections. In 2017, far-right vote share uses UDI vote share as a proxy since the Partido Republicano was founded in 2019. From 2021 onwards, far-right vote share combines Partido Republicano and Partido Nacional Libertario votes. Treated locations are within 500m of at least one memory site in the comprehensive catalog. Error bars show 95% confidence intervals. The vertical dashed line marks 2019, when the Partido Republicano was founded.

D Results

D.1 Main Results

Table D.1: Effect of proximity to memory sites on right-wing vote share, binned distance models, 2021–2025

	Republican	Libertario	UDI
0–100m × Post	−0.002 (0.007)	0.002 (0.003)	−0.004 (0.006)
100–250m × Post	−0.015** (0.006)	0.008** (0.003)	0.007 (0.007)
250–500m × Post	−0.012** (0.005)	0.004* (0.002)	0.009 (0.007)
500m–1km × Post	−0.010*** (0.004)	0.002 (0.002)	0.012** (0.005)
Observations	3748	3748	3748
R ²	0.887	0.963	0.817
Adj. R ²	0.774	0.926	0.633
Cluster FE	Yes	Yes	Yes
Year FE	Yes	Yes	Yes

Notes: * p < 0.1, ** p < 0.05, *** p < 0.01. Cluster-robust standard errors in parentheses, clustered at the municipality level. Reference category is voting locations more than 1km from the nearest memory site.

D.2 Legislative and Local Electoral Results

Table D.3: Effect of proximity to memory sites on right-wing vote share, legislative elections 2021–2025

	Lower Chamber			Senate		
	Republican	Libertario	UDI	Republican	Libertario	UDI
Treated × Post	−0.007** (0.004)	0.004** (0.002)	0.002 (0.005)	−0.006 (0.004)	0.003* (0.002)	0.001 (0.005)
Observations	3720	3720	3720	2640	2640	2640
R ²	0.886	0.963	0.815	0.884	0.963	0.826
Adj. R ²	0.772	0.925	0.630	0.768	0.925	0.651
Cluster FE	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Year FE	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes

Notes: * p < 0.1, ** p < 0.05, *** p < 0.01. Cluster-robust standard errors in parentheses, clustered at the municipality level. Outcome variables are vote shares in lower chamber races (columns 1–3) and Senate races (columns 4–6).

Table D.2: Robustness to alternative clustering thresholds

	Republican				Libertario				UDI			
	100m	200m	500m	1km	100m	200m	500m	1km	100m	200m	500m	1km
Treated \times Post	-0.007* (0.004)	-0.007** (0.004)	-0.006 (0.003)	-0.006 (0.004)	0.004** (0.002)	0.004** (0.002)	0.003* (0.002)	-0.001 (0.002)	0.001 (0.005)	0.002 (0.005)	0.002 (0.006)	-0.005 (0.006)
Observations	3950	3748	2722	1430	3950	3748	2722	1430	3950	3748	2722	1430
Adj. R ²	0.772	0.773	0.794	0.800	0.927	0.926	0.921	0.905	0.628	0.631	0.607	0.596
Cluster FE	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Year FE	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes

Notes: * $p < 0.1$, ** $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.01$. Cluster-robust standard errors in parentheses, clustered at the municipality level. Treatment is defined as having at least one memory site within 500m (comprehensive catalog).

Table D.4: Effect of proximity to memory sites on right-wing vote share, local elections 2021–2024

	Mayors		City Council	
	Republican	UDI	Republican	UDI
Treated \times Post	−0.002 (0.004)	−0.007 (0.009)	−0.003 (0.003)	0.001 (0.003)
Observations	3692	3692	3698	3698
R ²	0.501	0.801	0.809	0.737
Adj. R ²	0.002	0.602	0.617	0.474
Cluster FE	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Year FE	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes

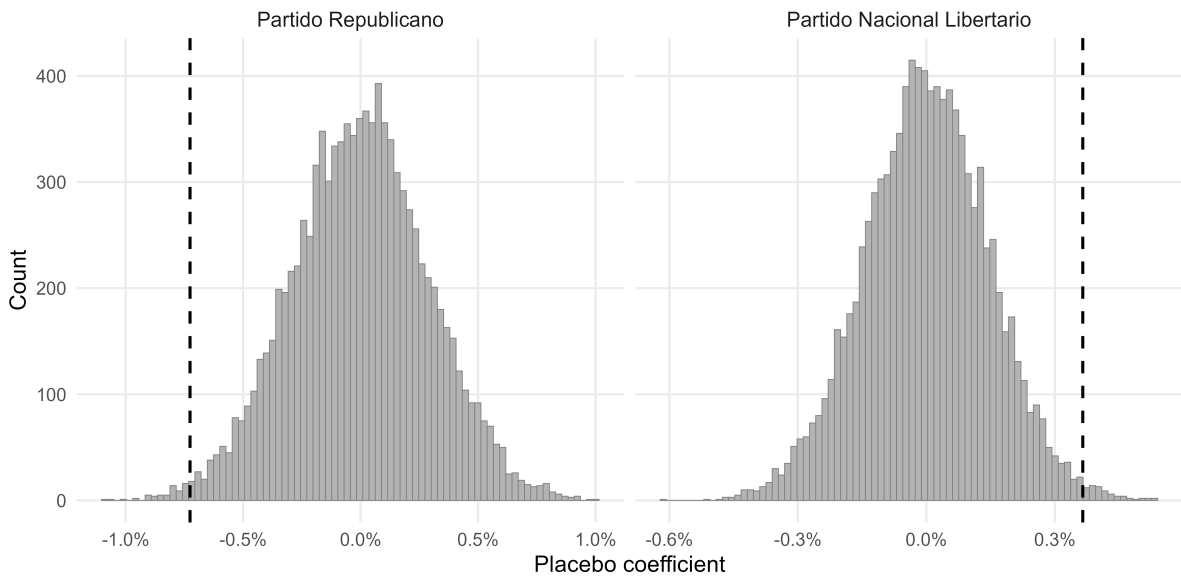
Notes: * $p < 0.1$, ** $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.01$. Cluster-robust standard errors in parentheses, clustered at the municipality level. The Partido Nacional Libertario did not compete in local elections, so only Republican and UDI vote shares are reported.

E Robustness Checks

E.1 Permutation Test

To assess whether the main estimates could arise by chance, I reassign treatment status randomly across the 1,874 voting location clusters 10,000 times, preserving the proportion of treated and control clusters in each permutation. For each permutation, I re-estimate the main DiD specification for the Partido Republicano and the Partido Nacional Libertario and store the resulting coefficients. Figure E.1 plots the distribution of these placebo estimates alongside the actual estimates (dashed lines). The actual Republican estimate falls in the 1.4th percentile of the placebo distribution (permutation $p = 0.014$); the Libertario estimate falls in the 1.4th percentile as well (permutation $p = 0.014$). In both cases, fewer than 2% of randomly assigned treatment vectors produce estimates as large in absolute value as the ones obtained from the true treatment, lending support to the interpretation that the results are not an artifact of the geographic distribution of memory sites.

Figure E.1: Permutation Test



Note: Dashed lines indicate the actual estimates from the main specification.

E.2 Spatial Donut Robustness Check

A potential concern with the main specification is that control clusters sitting just outside the 500m treatment boundary may be exposed to the same memory sites as treated clusters, biasing the estimates toward zero. To address this, I re-estimate the main DiD specification

after excluding control clusters within 600m, 700m, and 1km of the nearest memory site, comparing treated clusters only against those farther away. Table E.1 reports the results. The Partido Republicano effect is stable across all three exclusion thresholds, ranging from -0.009 to -0.011 percentage points, and if anything grows slightly larger as the donut widens. The Partido Nacional Libertario effect is similarly stable at approximately 0.004 – 0.005 percentage points across all three thresholds. These results are inconsistent with spillover contamination of the control group driving the main findings.

Table E.1: Robustness to spatial donut exclusion

	Partido Republicano			Partido N. Libertario		
	600m	700m	1km	600m	700m	1km
Treated \times Post	-0.009^{**} (0.004)	-0.010^{***} (0.004)	-0.011^{***} (0.004)	0.004^{***} (0.002)	0.005^{***} (0.002)	0.005^{**} (0.002)
Observations	3476	3242	2764	3476	3242	2764
Adj. R ²	0.775	0.774	0.776	0.925	0.924	0.920
Cluster FE	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Year FE	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes

Notes: * $p < 0.1$, ** $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.01$. Cluster-robust standard errors in parentheses, clustered at the municipality level. Voting locations clustered at 200m threshold.

References

- Altman, David, Juan Díaz, Eduardo Engel, and Benjamín Peña. 2024. "Citizens' Stability of Electoral Preferences in Chile Since the Social Upheaval." *Journal of Politics in Latin America* 16, no. 1 (April): 50–67.
- Argote, Pablo, and Giancarlo Visconti. 2025. "Chile 2024: La Resiliencia de la Ideología y el Auge de las Actitudes Anti-Élite." *Revista de Ciencia Política* 45 (2): 187–204.
- Bargsted, Matías A., and Luis Maldonado. 2018. "Party Identification in an Encapsulated Party System: The Case of Postauthoritarian Chile." *Journal of Politics in Latin America* 10, no. 1 (April): 29–68.
- Boas, Taylor C. 2016. "Pastors for Pinochet: Authoritarian Stereotypes and Voting for Evangelicals in Chile." *Journal of Experimental Political Science* 3 (2): 197–205.
- Borges, André, and Lisa Zanotti. 2025. "Authoritarian, But Not Nativist: Classifying Far-Right Parties in Latin America." *Political Studies* 73, no. 4 (November): 1569–1591.
- Cox, Loreto, Pedro Cubillos, and Carmen Le Foulon. 2025. "Affective Polarization and Democratic Erosion: Evidence from a Context of Weak Partisanship." *Political Science Research and Methods* (June): 1–8.
- Díaz, Camila, Cristóbal Rovira Kaltwasser, and Lisa Zanotti. 2023. "The arrival of the populist radical right in Chile: José Antonio Kast and the "Partido Republicano"." *Journal of Language and Politics* 22 (3): 342–359.
- La Tercera. 2017. *José Antonio Kast por Pinochet: "Si estuviera vivo votaría por mí"*, November. Accessed May 20, 2026. <https://www.latercera.com/noticia/jose-antonio-kast-pinochet-estuviera-vivo-votaria/>.
- Munita-Morgan, Roberto, Patricio Navia, and Caterina Bo Guzmán. 2025. "Do Sympathisers of Far-Right Parties Support Military Governments and Hold Authoritarian Values? The Case of Chile's Republicanos Party." *Journal of Politics in Latin America* 17, no. 3 (December): 333–357.
- Rovira Kaltwasser, Cristóbal. 2020. "El error de diagnóstico de la derecha chilena y la encrucijada actual." *Estudios Públicos*, no. 158, 31–59.

Titelman, Noam, and Javier Sajuria. 2024. "Why Vote for an Independent? The Relevance of Negative Identity, Independent Identity, and Dealignment in a pro-Independent Political Environment." *Party Politics* 30, no. 6 (November): 997–1013.

Zanotti, Lisa, José Rama, and Talita Tanscheit. 2023. "Assessing the fourth wave of the populist radical right: Jair Bolsonaro's voters in comparative perspective." *Opinião Pública* 29 (1): 1–23.