

14. Loreto González (checked)

In my house three of us voted. Those who could vote for the plebiscite were: me, my dad, and my mom, who had already voted in their history as citizens. They had also voted for the previous plebiscite that Pinochet had for the Constitution [of 1980], in which they remembered that the vote was almost transparent. For those who voted yes, they had a single symbol of a Chilean shield or something like that. For those who voted no, it was like a black cloud. So well, my parents had already voted, they had had voting experience. When I turned 18, the first thing I did was register, even though at that time there was a lot of debate about whether or not it was worth registering to vote because one line of thinking was that registering to vote meant validating the format that the dictatorship has proposed, and using this format they would be the winners and that it wasn't going to be of any use. So, in the face of that debate, I remember that in my house there was a lot of talk about what could be done and the first thing I did as soon as I turned 18 was to go and register because I was going to vote anyway. And then there was a whole stage of care that had to be taken once enrolled. There was a lot of discussion about how it was not good to give too much information, that you had to be careful because you had to present the identity card. Therefore the identity card was sacred. Almost from the moment you registered until the moment you voted you had to keep it under lock and key and walk around with a photocopy. That is, if you didn't need it, because we are from the time when one always walked around with your identity card. To this day I do not leave my house without my identity card in hand. Then it was a change of attitude, that you had to protect the identity card, because it was the only document that allowed you to vote. And there was a whole black tale that if the identity card was lost, getting an identity card back was going to take a long time. It was going to be one of the ways that the dictatorship was going to have to prevent [the NO from winning], stealing your identity cards, taking away your identity card. So you had to be very careful. I never had any problems, but there was this whole rumor mill around the identity card. There was another document which was the voting document. It was a registration paper that only served as a reference to know what your polling place was, what your table was and what voter number you were at that table. I remember that my mother and I voted in the same place, at the "Company of Mary" School, which is in Apoquindo with Manquehue, which was relatively close to the house. We voted at parallel tables. I don't remember the numbers on the tables now. So we always went together, and we went to this vote together as well. My dad was head of local for the Concertación [Opposition party coalition]. I do not remember now what the group that was for the NO was called, but let's say, he was the head of the voting polls in Pudahuel, in a not very good area, in an area where there was a regiment. So my dad was away all day and we had to organize things around the house because I had four brothers, that is, we were five siblings. There were four who stayed in the house. So we said, "stay at home quietly, we'll vote and come back." We didn't know how long it was going to take. The polling place was for women only. Then go with just enough, the card, walk or the ticket for the taxi, for the micro, to be able to arrive, no more than that. One entered and there were the polling places guarded by the military. Now they are also guarded by soldiers prior to entry and the exit is much more affable, much kinder. At that time just the idea of entering a place where the military were with weapons guarding, which was very very structured. The entrance over here has to go there. The atmosphere was tense, it was a bit of a certain contained joy, I think, because it was the opportunity to vote, but it was also very tense because I had to do everything very well. There was some doubt, as to whether any mistake could spoil the whole process. So for me it was very shocking to enter this place

full of military. A little nerves, everything. All military. And the civilians who were there were all officials of the dictatorship. But it was.. I remember that it was expeditious, that it was very nice because one came the fact of delivering your card and that they passed you the vote. Entering a place that was effectively a... I voted in a ballot box that, that is, in a space in the polling place where there was a secret space where I could double score. The vote was a proper paper vote, it was not transparent. The processes that were followed were exactly those that had been advertised that they were going to follow, so nothing, it seemed strange to me. I was able to deliver the vote without any problems. It was a calm process within the nerve of the day or the anxiety of the day. And then settle in the house to watch television and listen to the radio. There were no cell phones and all that as there is now. We had no news then. For example, my dad, who was in this other center, polling station. I remember he came home very late. Ten at night, ten thirty at night. And he remembers that there must have already been the first counts. It is not like now that the election is out at seven or eight in the afternoon. Probably at ten o'clock at night we must have had a lower percentage of table, but anyway it was seen that it was not achieving the result. And I think there had already been some... some authorities of the dictatorship who had said: Well, the thing seems to be... It seems that he is not winning. And my mom told me if there is so little information it is because something is happening. And if something is happening is that the vote is not coming out as they wanted it to go. Then my dad remembers that he arrived and I ran away. I told him it looks like we won, it seems. The excitement! And I remember that day was until very late... television, until very late... The latest results very.. that is, the first results are already more final very late. They gave monkey, music, pure crap. It is not like now that there is opinion that.. No, pure crap they gave on television. But overall it was an atmosphere of calm. There were counts, independent counts that had been put together to counter the official count. I had a friend who lived in front of my house, his family, a very right-wing family. Then he had kept a little secret that he was going to make the link. Between very close to our house there was a polling place and he had to go at the moment, since they began to close the table, table by table, scoring results as much as he could. And then with that information, going to a house that had been... An address he had been given to deliver that information. And it was almost to have it written on a piece of paper: both polling place, the number of tables and the final results. Ring the bell, hand over the paper and go out. No, I didn't talk to anyone. And that house was on a street that is in front of a police station. So he said, please, let's go. It scares me a little with the police station. We expected it to be more night so we could go deliver and so our only counterintelligence job was to wait for it to be later, to deliver this paper. And I was learning from others that in that place the information of an area was collected. And he would go to another house where more information was collected and he would go to another house and everything was like that, from people who received at home, took the bicycle, went to another house and delivered the information. And it was a great count. It was a very good system but very well and allowed to make a fronton to this delay of the official television that did not deliver a figure. But the Radio Cooperativa, the Chilean Radio, were the ones that lived delivering the figures of this quick, alternative count. And they took and realized that the situation was fought, that in some parts, even in areas that were more right-wing, it was as he served as an indicator, areas that were very right-wing, neighborhood or areas of Santiago, that was very right-wing, that they were not doing so well. So if that was true there, what would it be like elsewhere?