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7

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Editorial

Social Work, Political Project and Human Rights

2023 marked the 50th anniversary of the coup d'état in Chile. September 1973 marked the abrupt end of the "Chilean road to socialism" and, with it, the Movement for the Reconceptualisation of Chilean Social Work, ushering in the civil-military dictatorship. To commemorate this event, the Department of Social Work of the University of Chile invited students, academics and civil servants to reflect on that historical transition, to bring to the new generations the memory of those who witnessed these processes, to know their testimonies, both of the Social Work of the final years of Popular Unity and of the spaces of resistance to military repression, with an important objective: to keep their voices alive, to learn from their fears, their dreams, and to draw lessons to ensure there was no repeat of the serious human rights violations that occurred during the Chilean civil-military dictatorship.

A series of activities including book launches, talks, and video-documentary exhibitions were carried out between April and November 2023 by the *50th Anniversary Commission*. The articles presented in this seventh issue of the journal *Critical Proposals in Social Work* are part of this process and respond to the call we made a year ago to present academic articles that had as an object of study/analysis the history of Social Work, particularly discussions on its theoretical-political positioning, processes of memory and human rights, in the context of the commemoration of the 50th anniversary of the coup d'état of September 1973.

Papers were received that fall within this perspective and include theoretical discussions on the dimensions and scope of human rights, the results of research with a historical perspective, and three testimonies from people who witnessed the events that took place during this period, both in Chile and in other countries in the region.

This issue, coordinated by members of the *50th Anniversary Commission and the Centre for Interdisciplinary Studies in Social Work* (NEITS), sought to position the impor-

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tance of the study of memory in professional history and to offer readers diverse perspectives that are a legacy of the visions of Social Work in those periods, from which to advance proposals for the future.

Thus, the reader will find in this special issue studies and analyses on the ways in which Social Work and the challenges of each period (before and after the coup) approached each other, in which it is possible to identify debates on human rights, links with popular sectors, reparation policies, memory collectives and professional work in contexts of political violence, both in Chile and in other Latin American countries.

The articles by Carla Cubillos and Daniela Aceituno address conceptual and theoretical dimensions of the perspectives and learning from human rights approaches, reparation policies and the scope of transitional justice.

The collaborative work by Véliz, García and Troncoso presents the results of their research on the experience in **Chile** of the Social Work Collective, with emphasis on the reflections and learning of those who were its protagonists. The article by Munizaga, Miranda, Espinoza and Orellana also presents the results of their research. They highlight, as an object of study, the link between the Social Work student body and the popular sectors in the period prior to the coup, based on a particular experience, in this case, at the Catholic University of Valparaíso.

Inés Martínez's article offers a reflection on human rights with an international scope, specifically analysing the experience of Franco's dictatorship and the need to recover the memory and do justice to past events, even when several generations have opted for oblivion in **Spain.**

Political violence, forced disappearance as a strategy of intimidation, the absence of state policies for the reparation of victims and the lack of a cross-cutting human rights perspective are included in Karla Salazar's work on the disappearance of people in **Mexico,** contributing elements with a gender perspective to the debate on human rights. This issue is also addressed in Samboy Spies' article on human trafficking and human smuggling in South Africa, which was originally published in *Social Work/Maatskaplike Werk* and whose translation is presented in this volume.

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Finally, readers are offered three interviews that we have called *"Witnesses of an era"*, which were developed within the framework of the activities organised by the *50th Anniversary Commission* and are intended to offer some personal views and reflections on the events unleashed by the dictatorships in Chile and Argentina.

The articles published in this seventh volume do not aspire to be conclusive about the debate around Social Work, the need to always think and rethink its political project and its inalienable commitment to human rights; rather, they seek to propose analytical perspectives that contribute to the reflection on the different political projects and the dimensions of justice that are deployed in each of these approaches. We invite you to make your own reflections and to debate with the authors on the analytical and conceptual keys that each one offers.

Editorial team: 50th Anniversary Commission, Department of Social Work, University of Chile.

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ARTICLE

Rescue and Promotion of Memories: Reflections from the Investigative Labour of Social Work

Rescate y Promoción de Memorias: Reflexiones desde la labor Investigativa del Trabajo Social

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With deep gratitude,
in remembrance of the victims of enforced disappearance,
political execution, imprisonment and torture,
and in tribute to the survivors, their families and friends
who have generously shared their testimonies with a sense
of urgent dignity and justice.[2]

Abstract

This article identifies and develops the central moments that, from my point of view, occur in the development of a line of research from social work in the field of human rights and memories. This is based on three initiatives: the collection, rescue and dissemination of these memories in which I have been able to collaborate by assuming a coordinating role. These are related to the experiences of the victims of the military civil dictatorship that occurred between 1973 and

Keywords:
Disciplinary heritage; justice; rescuing memories; testimonies; social work; Chile.

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1989, linked to the Paine and Cerro Chena episode (communes located in the southern part of the Metropolitan Region) as well as those who were students and graduates of the Social Service career. From this exercise, we hope to contribute with a reflection that makes it possible to socialise approaches and some learning and challenges of the research work, which allow us to move towards a critical and situated reflection that enriches our professional work in this field of study.

Resumen

En este artículo se identifican y desarrollan los momentos centrales que acontecen en el desarrollo de una línea de investigación, desde el trabajo social, en el ámbito de los derechos humanos y las memorias. Lo anterior, a partir de tres iniciativas de levantamiento, rescate y difusión de ellas, en las que he podido colaborar asumiendo una labor de coordinación. Estas, guardan relación con las vivencias de las víctimas de la dictadura cívico militar, ocurrida entre 1973 y 1989, vinculadas al episodio Paine y Cerro Chena (comunas ubicadas en la zona Sur de la Región Metropolitana), así como también de quienes, en ese tiempo, eran estudiantes y titulados/as de la carrera de Servicio Social. A partir de este ejercicio se espera contribuir con una reflexión que posibilite socializar aproximaciones y algunos aprendizajes y desafíos de la labor investigativa, que nos permitan avanzar hacia una reflexión crítica y situada que enriquezca nuestro quehacer profesional inscrito en este campo de estudio.

Palabras Clave: *Patrimonio disciplinar; justicia; rescate de las memorias; testimonios; Trabajo Social; Chile*

Preliminary considerations

Although it may seem a "settled" discussion within the social sciences, research work is not only the work of a limited group of professions. In fact, social work, as a discipline, has found in research a legitimate and fruitful field of professional action, especially in the field of memories and human rights.

Jelin (2005) argues that in the field of social sciences, despite being relatively recent, the work on memories has been able to show us interpretative challenges and the emergence of new paradigms. However, and as a second element, the rescue of memories, as a research exercise, has not been deeply approached from the training received in social work, both undergraduate and postgraduate.

Considering the above, my professional and teaching practice (linked to these issues) is something that, I would say, rather challenged me to "do something". The same is happening with others who undertake various projects in this area. There is a mixture of their own interests and motivations, but also of certain situations that arise and that they take on, or decide to take on, from an ethic and vocation that (calls) us and summons us.

Research, considering that the "object of study" that one is trying to discover, understand and interpret is linked to memories, social justice and human rights, requires certain approaches, perspectives and particular treatments that are shared in this work from the professional practice. In no way could I claim that this has been an individual work, as it has been developed and deployed within the framework of work teams.

In light of the above, what is offered here is a reflection that arises from what I consider to be the most relevant moments of research practice in the field of memory and human rights. The above, in order to share lessons, questions and challenges that could nurture the work of current and future colleagues in this thematic field, responds to the political intentionality of the profession that is explicitly mentioned in the Code of Professional Ethics (2014) and in the Declaration of the International Federation of Social Workers (IFSW, 2004). This, taking into account the three experiences of the collection, rescue and dissemination of memories, is related to the testimonies of the victims of the civil-military dictatorship that occurred in Chile between 1973 and 1989 who, on the one hand, were students or graduates of the Social Service career and who, on the other hand, belong to the communes of Paine and San Bernardo, both located in the southern area of the Metropolitan Region in Chile.

Specifically, we will address similarities, counterpoints and considerations regarding the initial approach of the research, some ethical and methodological issues to be taken into account in the framework of research practice in this field, and criteria that could guide the definition of memory support, as devices that convey the results of these processes. Each of these aspects could give rise to their own developments, however, and considering that the levels of analysis overlap, it is interesting to appreciate them in a disaggregated way, as they serve as theoretical-practical scripts that accompany the research exercise in a flexible and referential manner.

Experiences of rescuing and promoting the memories that inspire this article: differentiating and common elements

The first approach to this area was thanks to the project called *"Survey, registration and systematisation of information on victims of human rights violations in Paine"*, which was carried out in two stages. The first was carried out between 2012 and 2013, and the second between 2014 and 2015. With funding from the National Institute of Human Rights (INDH) in Chile, I collaborated as a technical counterpart from this body with the team from the Centre for Analysis and Political Research (CAIP) playing a key role, who were awarded a public tender. The central purpose of the initiative was to contribute to the preservation of the individual and collective memory linked to the Paine Memorial[3] . To this end, it was essential to logically synthesise relevant information on the 70 victims remembered in this space, as until then there had been no work of this nature and it was therefore a necessity.

For the development of this study it was essential to have the support of the community of memory, made up of the Agrupación de Familiares de Detenidos Desaparecidos y Ejecutados Políticos de Paine, and the Corporación Paine, Un Lugar para la Memoria. This resulted in a Paine Case Database[4] and a User's Guide to the Paine Case[5], the Memory Archives[6], a Guide to Sites and Places in Paine[7], Microbiographies[8] and a set of Postcards[9].

3 More information on this memory site can be found at https://www.memorialpaine.cl/.

4 The aim of this initiative was to contribute to the preservation of the individual and collective memory linked to the Paine Memorial. To this end, it was essential to be able to record and systematise relevant information on the 70 victims included in the memorial, which led to the construction of a database for this purpose. This database registers, organises and systematises information from various public archives on the violation of human rights during the dictatorship in the town of Paine. In this way, it is of great help in academic, legal and political terms, because by putting this previously scattered and not always accessible body of data on a single medium, it is possible to reread the situation of repression in Paine as a whole, but also with respect to each of the 70 people who were kidnapped and executed by the dictatorship in Chile during the period 1973-1990. See https://bibliotecadigital.indh.cl/handle/123456789/978

5 Guidance document, aimed at social scientists, which explains what it consists of and how to methodologically review the categories and subcategories of the Paine case database. See https://bibliotecadigital.indh.cl/handle/123456789/990

6 Material that seeks to be a memory support that allows each affected family to have information and images of their loved one, in a simple and easily accessible way. It contains explanatory cards that provide some elements of the social and political context in which the Paine case took place, as well as a description of the categories that contain relevant information on vital data, forms of social and political participation, and forms of repression. The folder also contains a card for each of the 70 victims remembered by the Paine Memorial. See https://bibliotecadigital.indh.cl/handle/123456789/977

7 Support that aims to make historical memory visible as a constituent part of the territorial identity of the commune of Paine and thus promote a culture of respect for human rights. Seehttps://bibliotecadigital.indh.cl/handle/123456789/739

8 Their purpose is to disseminate the microhistory of 37 of the 70 disappeared or executed detainees remembered by the Paine Memorial, via the testimonies of their relatives, emphasising their biographical characteristics through a brief account based on the biographical approach that includes specific features of a person such as tastes, speech, nicknames, relationships and chores. These aspects, which are interwoven and articulated together to produce a text, are revived in the form of "memories" thanks to the testimony of people close to the victims. See https://bibliotecadigital.indh.cl/handle/123456789/980

9 The 70 in total constitute a fundamental part of the dissemination material provided, since they are in themselves a cultural product of easy circulation and with a memory of their use in the epistolary tradition that has not yet disappeared, which makes sense for visitors and tourists. The front cover contains the individualised mosaic, the dates of birth and arrest or execution and the age of the victim at the time of arrest or execution, while the reverse side contains details of the memorial as a way of promoting visits. See https://bibliotecadigital.indh.cl/handle/123456789/979

This was a complex project for several reasons: the length of time it took, the sensitivity of dealing and working with sensitive information, the discovery of errors in the official sources based on what was declared by the families, the correction of these flaws in the new media, and also because the link with the community of memory, in whose relationship there were several intervening parties with different interests, had to be taken care of. It was also a challenge for public institutions to build trust and provide binding spaces for participation throughout the process, especially in the stages of design, implementation and generation of the memory supports. With regard to the latter, the multiplicity of outlets for this work is noteworthy, which also reflects the versatility that research results can acquire.

A second experience was developed together with Dr. Paulina Morales Aguilera and a team of assistants, between 2017 and 2020, which gave rise in 2020 to the book *" La resistencia de las memorias. Biographical accounts of the truncated lives of Social Service students and professionals who disappeared and were executed during the dictatorship in Chile (1973-1990)"*. The aim of this work was to contribute with a biographical reconstruction of 16 colleagues linked to the profession, through the testimonies provided by their families, friends and colleagues from the university, political parties and other social organisations. The book includes, by way of introduction, some theoretical and contextual chapters, and also proposes some pedagogical guidelines on how to approach its content in training spaces with students of the career. This initiative was made possible thanks to funding from the Universidad Católica Silva Henríquez (UCSH) and RIL editores. As in the previous case, this initiative also lasted about three years, and to this day constitutes a contribution that did not exist, both for the history of the country and for the guild.

A third experience (ongoing since 2022) is entitled *"Promoting historical memory 50 years after the civil-military coup in Chile: dissemination of testimonies of victims who passed through Cerro Chena, San Bernardo"*, which is also being developed with the support of the Catholic University Silva Henríquez (UCSH). This work gathers the experiences of survivors, relatives of disappeared and executed detainees and relatives of people who survived but are now deceased, and whose cases are little known by the national community. The Cerro Chena Memorial Corporation (CORMECH) was used as a reference point for the testimonies, and it is estimated that almost 25 witnesses will participate. The results of this study will be disseminated through a medium that combines text and photography and that will allow, for the first time, material that makes this case known.

As differentiating elements, we can say that these experiences point to different approaches or angles of memories. While some focus mainly on the repressive event (what happened, how, why, by whom, when, to whom, under what circumstances), others cover more subjective dimensions, in an attempt to place the emphasis on rediscovering the person before they became a victim, with their tastes, feelings, spaces for participation, roles, scenarios, family.

In this type of work, it is important to distinguish who the speaking subject is. In the case of the first and second experiences, it was necessary to turn to the group of people who in some way were most closely linked to the victims on a daily basis, as they were the disappeared and politically executed detainees. Their relatives and friends were invited to give their testimonies. In this case, we were not dealing with a pre-established community of memory, but rather with an attempt to contact people and weave links. The College of Social Workers, through the members of the Human Rights Commission, played a key role. They provided the first lists and contacts available to them. Then, through social networks and by using surnames and geographical and university cross-referencing, we were able to find relatives and friends of the victims.

In the case of the third research project, we have also been able to access testimonies from relatives of the executed, disappeared, deceased and surviving detainees. The latter are elderly people who wanted to share their experiences of a painful time, to be followed later by relatives and friends of the victims.

All three projects were initiatives developed in the context of inter-institutional alliances, linking the public-private sphere, and which tried to consider the communities of memory at all times. In the case of experiences one and three, there was active participation of human rights family groups. In the case of initiative two there was no tacitly constructed community of memory. However, all of them formed a symbolic and reunited community of memory after so many years. It was interesting to witness (author) how different voices, from different life moments, contexts and countries, collaborated with the reconstruction of a person's profile, and how the witnesses were astonished to learn through others and with others unpublished aspects of the history that was being reconstructed.

As *common elements,* a characteristic that stands out in these three initiatives is the possibility of dealing with unpublished memories whose dissemination was a desire on the part of the underlying and participating communities. In this framework, this type

of work is available as inputs that can be progressively nurtured in a field of study that is being done in action, and that others can continue to deepen.

Considering that these initiatives were developed mainly following the guidelines of the biographical approach, they can also be considered as spaces in which a justice of listening takes place. In all three experiences, it can be concluded that, despite the passage of time, it is reparative for the victims to be heard. The "explanations" or "presentations" given at the time were along the lines of reaffirming the human and professional commitment to these issues. The communities of memory and their witnesses appreciated this type of initiative, because they do not always have the professional skills or the funding to carry out these projects that allow them to "write down" their traumatic experience, but also their experience of resistance, which means having a space to validate their history and their human dignity.

The connection that is being formed between researchers/victims and institutions or organisations collaborating with the research is key and is something that was present in all three experiences. It is important to pay conscious attention to this issue in this type of process. Working with victims of institutional violence, in the context of a human rights crisis who have been seeking truth, justice and reparation for years, is a matter of the utmost care. I would say that the most relevant thing in all of this, without generalising, is to try to promote respectful treatment and encourage the involvement of the participants, especially from the perspective of validating the research design, its instruments and results. In terms of methodology and the interview or conversation guidelines, it is crucial to delve into the experiences and reflections that the participants allow and desire, without forcibly overstepping these limits. The challenge here is to critically review what and how we are approaching this area of memories, aiming at open and not closed questions that allow for the development of experiences, trying to avoid any kind of censorship, under-reading, over-interpretation and conditioning, and also being open to reformulation, if necessary.

Another aspect these three projects have in common is that they were carried out within the framework of research teams. Although I was able to contribute to the coordination of the initiatives, they were always the result of discussions and agreements that were discussed along the way between those of us who carried out the task of rescuing memories, driven mainly, although not exclusively, by social workers. Usually, the academy, within its work logic, tends towards intellectual creation in isolation. However, projects of this nature that require well thought-out decisions at different times, and

that have an emotional impact, take on the challenge and the need to accompany each other in the research exercise. It will be interesting to delve, later on, not only into what happens and happens to others, but also into "what happens to us" as researchers/social workers, when we take part in these initiatives.

The duration of these projects is also a common element, so it is important to make academic and institutional timetables more flexible, which are sometimes rigid and incomprehensible, and which do not recognise and do not dialogue with the logics involved in this type of experience. Approximately, this type of initiative takes between 2 and 3 years at least. This is due to the fact that they are not easy projects to implement, in the sense that they are subject to a series of externalities, such as, for example, their financing, the number of available witnesses, the emergence of new participants who cannot be left out – after the "snowball" effect that occurs – the results of the transcription and analysis process, and the generation and dissemination of validated support from start to finish.

The cases of Paine, Cerro Chena (San Bernardo) and the memories of the students and graduates linked to the Social Service career, also have in common the desire to bring, in some way, the experiences and their protagonists to the present. The areas of questions situate the subject that is evoked from the past, and allow the development and understanding of a context, but, at the same time, place it in current scenarios, so that, from there, in some way, it can speak, especially to the new generations who did not live through the dictatorship and to those who are unaware of it or who have chosen to be indifferent.

What has been succinctly presented here has to do with the idea of socialising different elements, not necessarily placed in order of relevance or succession, with respect to the common and differentiating aspects that it has been possible to reflect on based on three research experiences. These are at different levels, some epistemological-theoretical and others more methodological-practical. It is difficult, in this case, to make such a marked distinction between one field or the other, because there are transpositions. What is relevant is to consider these contributions as considerations that can accompany the research practice of our profession in this field, also understanding that each task follows its own trajectory and that, in this sense, can give way to new discoveries and learning.

The emergence of the idea of research in the field of memory and human rights

The research "themes" usually pre-exist the interests of the researchers, as they are linked to their life histories, training, professional and work trajectories, and institutional frameworks in which their practices are inscribed. Something happens at this intersection, which mobilises research action from what happens out there with what resonates internally. It can also happen that the objects of study, while the action is in progress, appear and invite us to develop a contribution within a given field of study. In my case, the three experiences of rescuing memories already referred to have to do with a mixture of both issues. From this perspective, it seems appropriate to insist on the idea that it is not possible to position oneself as a researcher from a kind of neutrality. As Mate (2016) would say, memory, as a subject, is not optional and constitutes a duty, to which I would add, from the research exercise, a repertoire of political and situated action of denunciation and demandability. Here we are not only interested in documenting what happened (a very relevant issue), but also, and above all, in contributing to the tireless path of truth, justice and Never Again.

From this analysis, the emergence of the first questions as a tentative approach to a "phenomenon" is fundamental. In this sense, the field of memories contains a number of elements and perspectives that can be addressed. In the case of the three research experiences that I share here, and as already announced, they had a common denominator linked to the idea of making visible experiences that had not been collected, recounted or circulated until now.

In the case of memories linked to the 70 peasants of Paine, there are several works that have addressed the nature, depth and impact of the repressive events that took place in the context of the civil-military dictatorship. Here, I would like to refer in particular to two works by Ochoa and Maillard, firstly to "Yo soy... mujeres familiares de detenidos desaparecidos y ejecutados de Paine" (2014) and secondly to "Relatos con historia, testimonios de familiares de detenidos desaparecidos y ejecutados de Paine" (2019).

In the case of social workers and students of the Social Service career, victims of the dictatorship, what was known was limited to lists of statements in scarce informative materials, plaques and monoliths, mainly installed in places of memory, universities, the general cemetery (in the Metropolitan Region) and the College of Social Workers. In all these cases, the victim's name, age and location at the time of execution or disa-

ppearance, the centre or centres of political imprisonment and torture through which he or she was imprisoned, and a few biographical details were known. Little or nothing was known about the vital and subjective aspects of the victims, and beyond that. In this sense, it seemed interesting to complement these memories with these dimensions, which provide a comprehensive view of the human being who is being remembered, trying to convey their ideals, spaces of participation, roles, contributions to the field of the discipline, or other social instance. In the case of Cerro Chena, until now there had been no further development of either the human rights violations that took place there or of the more subjective issues relating to the victims, so that, unlike the first two investigations, a more "traditional" memory was approached, as this was considered to be a necessary first area of development.

In the first case study, the emergence of the idea of research was presented more as a request or mandate, the result of the type of work I was doing at the time within an institution. In the other two experiences, however, there was an encounter with a need, from which a kind of call was generated that later became a technique and professional action.

They were also research initiatives that were committed to the processes of human emancipation, hence their exploratory nature, their qualitative and mainly biographical approach and their epistemological underpinning, in dialogue with critical perspectives.

Ethical and methodological considerations for research practice in memorial issues

The "definition" of what is to be researched, how, why, from whom, with whom, and for what purposes, must consider the victims (or participants) and the communities of memory that are in the various spaces and territories. It would not be feasible or ethical for the researcher to carry out an initiative without substantive consideration of them throughout the process. From this perspective, the social worker and the work team are available as facilitators and collaborators in a delicate process that requires considering, with intelligence and respect, the experiences, feelings and knowledge of each one of them, and throughout the entire project. This implies gathering, putting into dialogue and validating the ways and languages that are expressed in this type of exercise. Linked to the above, it may help to "materialise this effort" to incorporate consultation, feedback, validation and access to timely information as intentional actions from the research practice. From a more operational dimension, these safeguards should also

be embodied in the design and implementation of instruments, guidelines, consents, assents and the subsequent analysis plan.

The deployment of fieldwork and engagement with witnesses is also an area that needs attention. From experience, I would say that there are not many substantive differences between carrying out memory recovery processes with survivors or with relatives of victims who are no longer present. Obviously, the "selection" of the subject to be interviewed will be related to the methodological definitions of each project; however, in no way could it be considered that there is a superior or inferior quality of victim in one case or another, or that the "information" provided by one participant over another is "better" or more "valid". For example, when we tried to collect biographical testimonies from the Paine peasants, they were not there to tell their experiences, but their mothers, wives, partners, children and grandchildren were. The same situation occurred with our Social Service colleagues and with the executed, disappeared detainees and deceased survivors who passed through Cerro Chena. In this case, we also turn to the survivors. It is, therefore, equally powerful and fruitful for research on memory and human rights to ponder and value, both individually and jointly, the accounts. All of them have a significance in themselves, as they all reflect, with their own particularities according to each case, the impact of institutional violence, and all of them, in one way or another, offer their memories with courage and solidarity, because they understand that personal and family history also extrapolates to the history of a country. It is not a question, then, of one content being more "useful" or more "contributive" than another. Here, in this sense, we should not give way to saturation logics.

In light of the above, it may also happen that for various reasons witnesses are not available to participate. There are also those who may be in a position to give an interview, but who then decide to appear anonymously or not at all. These situations present in the experiences I have accompanied are also challenging from the point of view of research ethics, since they mean, finally, that the link that is formed with and from the other person implies giving way to respect for the autonomy and the decision of the subjects, adapting the development of the project.

The use and treatment of the information collected in these types of initiatives is another safeguard to consider, especially when accessing the lives of victims. Just as people are invited to participate under certain requirements, those researching these issues must also consider that, although it is possible to have a great deal of sensitive information about the most profound aspects of a person, not everything that the witness provides

is necessarily publishable. An interesting situation that has arisen in this type of work has to do with family members or friends who may not always contribute a vision that gives a new meaning to the person remembered. With the understanding that this type of exercise can lead to open wounds or intimate and family issues that have not been adequately addressed, and valuing the possibility of people expressing themselves freely, but also considering that people have lights and shadows, in no case could we allow ourselves to be a channel or device for visions that defame or affect the honour of a person who was a direct victim of a brutal historical period for the country, and who is not present to "defend" himself/herself. In this type of case, it is important not to lose sight of the purpose of this type of work, which in the words of Lira (2015) is based on loyalty and affection for the victims, to which I add the contribution to the right to truth, justice and reparation for those affected.

Dissemination of memories as a prerequisite for memory rescue work

Initiatives to rescue memories make sense insofar as they enable the research practice to define the medium(s) through which this information will be circulated. Therefore, it is not just a matter of disseminating for the sake of disseminating. Usually, in the field of social sciences, it is of great interest to disseminate the results of research processes. Here, in this field, although this is taken into account, what is really important is to identify and propose (to the counterpart and to the witnesses) a mechanism that in its form and substance is related to the nature of the testimony collected. In this case, it is important to propose different ways of fulfilling the pedagogical intentionality of this type of storytelling. It is not the same to think in any format. In our experience, for the testimonies, and perhaps due to a generational or cultural question, the paper format is very important. However, for the new generations, the use of information technologies can also be good allies that allow content to go viral in a broad and efficient way.

However, regardless of the format, it is essential, for example, to ask oneself what kind of information one wishes to disseminate, why, for what purpose, to what type of audience, with what characteristics, what impact one wishes to achieve, what type of information is likely to be made public, what is important to protect, and what criteria underlie these decisions from a human rights perspective. When these answers emerge from the dialogue that is fostered between the work team, the witnesses and the memory communities, it is very likely that material can be generated that not only in substance but also in form is in line with a human rights logic.

This type of initiative, that of research in this particular field, has the potential to open up new questions and new areas of inquiry. At the same time, they contribute to the pedagogical function and advocacy work that communities and sites of memory have historically carried out in Chile, insofar as they provide resources that are available to carry out this task.

Final reflections

Throughout this article, the concept of "victim" has been used interchangeably. From research in this field, the challenge arises of overcoming this category in its traditional approach in order to understand that in reality we are not dealing with "the defeated", but rather with those who have resisted the dictatorship in some way and have the capacity for political agency (Rubio, 2013).

On the other hand, the testimony is, without a doubt, the articulating axis that makes this type of work possible. Without it, these initiatives could not be carried out. These projects are made with and thanks to people. We can count on research that contributes in the line of systematisation and bibliographic-documentary analysis, but we are well aware that there we find a limited and often erroneous and manipulated source of information. Those of us who work on these issues recognise that the depth of the experiences of rescuing memories lies in the possibility of relying on the stories of the victims and those close to them. Testimony was, is and is being, and that marks a level of depth that is irreplaceable compared to the use of "other sources". Testimony plays a crucial and irreplaceable role, and what is valuable is that despite the passage of time and the deepening of the damage, we still find people available to share their experiences.

In the latter sense, all stories are of equal value. Some are not more relevant or morally more valuable than others. For this reason, it is preferable to speak of "memories" in the plural. The experience of family members or friends must be equally important for those who have survived. This has made it possible to broaden the category of "victims", in the sense of not distinguishing between direct and indirect victims.

The three research experiences that we have gone through offer a continuum "among themselves", as they have allowed us to acquire and transfer learning. A first experience, such as the work of rescuing the memories linked to the Paine case, meant having a school that made it possible to make the first discoveries in this area. It is also interesting

to see that each memory recovery work is unique and that it acquires its own challenges based on its particularities.

Considering the accounts, one is struck by the multi-level impact of human rights violations that continue to be expressed in people's lives today.

As in the case of the project to rescue memories with survivors of Cerro Chena, it is also significant to realise that there are witnesses whose truth is collected from this type of work, and not from any other initiative or entity. This suggests the emergence of a kind of narrative privilege, which it would be interesting to explore in further work.

It is interesting to recognise the contribution that research within this perspective can make by positioning itself as a space for listening to, recognising and validating the experience of others. This is not only an exercise in intellectual contemplation and understanding, but above all in political problematisation, in relation to the various challenges facing the state when it comes to social justice, such as, for example, the strengthening of the teams and the offer of the Programme for Reparation and Comprehensive Care in Health and Human Rights (PRAIS), the creation of a permanent fund to finance this type of work, the creation of a policy for the preservation and maintenance of sites of memory, and the creation of a permanent commission for the qualification of victims, which collects new testimonies and re-qualifies those who wish to request reconsideration. From this approach, it is interesting to visualise the political potential of social research from the discipline, as a device that contributes to this field and gathers new needs.

Finally, I believe that this type of work should be considered as an "open book", because we cannot necessarily affirm that from our role we have been able to capture and include in the "final product" the "official or definitive" version of these memories. Rather, we have had access to a part or to what the witnesses have wanted and have been able to tell in a limited space or moment. For this reason, memoirs are never finished and can always be reworked, revised and rewritten as new participants and researchers become available.

But, in addition to the above, I also have the impression that memory is something of a mosaic. Narratives are fragments that are not always articulated in a linear or "coherent" way. It is also essential to consider that when the story of the person who gives their testimony emerges, it is not totally detached from the gaze of the researcher,

so that, although there is an attempt to recognise the protagonism of the person who can transmit the experience, it is also true and honest to point out that what is finally "re-produced", as Del Valle and Gálvez (2017) would say, are definitions of new meanings of what happened. In that sense, it is research that is done not only from, but also with the other.

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PROPUESTAS CRÍTICAS EN TRABAJO SOCIAL

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ARTÍCULO

Luces y sombras del trabajo social en la dictadura franquista (España, 1939-1975): una historia aún por contar

Lights and Shadows of Social Work in Francoist Dictatorship (Spain, 1939-1975): A Story Yet to Be Told

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Resumen

Las diferencias entre la dictadura franquista (España, 1939-1975) y aquellas que, como la de Chile (1973-1990), asolaron América latina en las últimas décadas del siglo XX, son claras y numerosas. Hace 50 años, durante el golpe de Estado en Chile, la prolongada dictadura española ya estaba inmersa en un proceso de desintegración que culminó con la muerte natural del dictador en 1975 y el inicio de la transición democrática. Sin embargo, ambas dictaduras consolidaron su poder mediante una brutal represión política y han ganado notoriedad internacional en las últimas décadas al desvelarse la práctica de robo de bebés a familias opo-

Palabras Clave: *Trabajo Social; historia; franquismo; España; derechos humanos*

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sitoras. No obstante, en la literatura sobre la historia del trabajo social en España encontramos un gran silencio en torno a estas temáticas y una narrativa centrada de manera casi exclusiva en las "luces" de la trayectoria de la profesión (hitos, logros y aspiraciones). Si bien este enfoque se entiende atendiendo al contexto histórico en el que tuvo que desarrollarse entre muchas dificultades el trabajo social en el país, y desde "el espíritu de la transición", este artículo defenderá que se vuelve fundamental, al día de hoy, volver la vista atrás e investigar también "las sombras" y recovecos de la historia de esta profesión. Explorar estas sombras develará episodios de los que no estaremos orgullosos/as, pero también historias de valiente resistencia. Más importante todavía, ayudará al trabajo social en España a conocerse mejor (incluido su peligroso potencial) y a ocupar su lugar en los procesos de recuperación de la memoria histórica y reconciliación, tanto de puertas adentro como al servicio de la sociedad, de acuerdo con su compromiso ético con los derechos humanos y la justicia social.

Abstract

Keywords:
Social work; history; Francoism; Spain; human rights

The differences between the Francoist dictatorship (Spain, 1939-1975) and the dictatorships that, like the Chilean (1973-1990), devastated Latin America in the second half of the 20th century are evident and numerous. Even in terms of time, when the Coup d'état in Chile took place 50 years ago, the long Spanish dictatorship was already in a process of disintegration in which the natural death of the dictator in 1975 triggered the democratic transition. However, both were established through fierce political repression and have become known worldwide in recent decades for the networks of appropriation of babies from families opposed to the regime for their adoption by families aligned with it. However, in the literature on the history of social work in Spain there is a great "silence" around these topics and there is a clearly predominant narrative focused almost exclusively on the "lights" of the history of the profession (milestones, achievements and aspirations). Although this approach can be understood taking into account the historical context in which the social work profession in the country had to develop among many difficulties, and from "the spirit of the transition", this article will argue that it becomes fundamental nowadays to look back and investigate "the shadows" and recesses of the history of this profession, too. Exploring these shadows will reveal episodes of which we will not be proud, but also stories of brave resistance. More importantly, it will help social work in Spain to better understand itself (including its dangerous potential) and to take its place in the processes of recovery of historical memory and reconciliation, both within the profession and at the service of society, in accordance with its ethical commitment to human rights and social justice

Introducción

Las diferencias entre la dictadura franquista y las dictaduras que, como la de Chile (1973- 1990), asolaron América latina en la segunda mitad del siglo XX son evidentes y numerosas. Incluso a nivel temporal, cuando tuvo lugar hace 50 años el golpe de Estado en Chile, la larga dictadura española se encontraba ya en un proceso de desintegración en el que la muerte natural del dictador en 1975 abrió paso a la transición democrática. Existen grandes diferencias en cuanto a la ideología del régimen (ambos de extrema derecha, pero de corte fascista - nacional católico, en el caso español, y alineada con la doctrina neoliberal, en el caso chileno), las conexiones internacionales, la política social etc. No obstante, ambas dictaduras se afianzaron mediante una feroz represión política, saldándose con numerosas víctimas de prisión política, tortura, desapariciones y exilio político. Ambas dictaduras han pasado además a ser mundialmente conocidas en las últimas décadas por los entramados de robo de bebés a familias contrarias al régimen para su apropiación por parte de familias afines al mismo (Amnistía Internacional, 2021; Comisión Investigadora, 2018).

Otro importante aspecto en común es que, en los dos países, quienes perpetraron la represión han podido evadir la rendición de cuentas por sus crímenes bajo el amparo de leyes de amnistía y pactos de silencio. Si bien estos pactos cumplieron a corto plazo la función de facilitar las transiciones democráticas, sus efectos continúan enrareciendo la convivencia social en ambos países, y generando un clima de 'indefensión, desolación y aislamiento' de las víctimas (Muñoz y Campana, 2023, p. 127), que impide sanar completamente la invisible división de la sociedad entre quienes apoyaron y quienes no apoyaron las dictaduras (entre "vencedores y vencidos") y los traumas colectivos fruto de la violencia de ambas dictaduras.

En el contexto español, como veremos, algunas de estas barreras a la memoria histórica y la reconciliación parecen aún más difíciles de superar, incluso al día de hoy. En ambos países, y aunque no sea una tarea fácil, el trabajo social como profesión de derechos humanos ha tenido y sigue teniendo mucho que decir y aportar en los procesos de recuperación de la memoria histórica y de reconciliación. Sin embargo, la literatura sobre las experiencias y posicionamientos de las trabajadoras sociales en España ante las violaciones de derechos humanos que tuvieron lugar en el país durante la dictadura franquista (1939-1975), en el ámbito de la asistencia social, es prácticamente inexistente. La investigación y reflexión en torno a este "silencio" y lo que hay detrás de él es fundamental, y puede llevarnos a una serie de aprendizajes y conclusiones, algunos de los cuales se comparten a continuación.

Algunos datos claves sobre la dictuadura Franquista

España estuvo gobernada entre 1939 y 1975 por la dictadura franquista. En 1936, un bloque formado por generales del ejército español que contaban con el apoyo de grupos y partidos nacionalistas y altamente conservadores, perpetraron un golpe de Estado al gobierno de la Segunda República española, hecho que desencadenaría una guerra civil de tres años. En 1939, el bando sublevado, autodenominado "bando nacional", ascendió al poder tras ganar la guerra civil, siendo investido el general Francisco Franco como caudillo – jefe supremo- del gobierno dictatorial. Con el establecimiento de la dictadura franquista, el poder y las instituciones del gobierno se repartieron entre los tres pilares del régimen: el Ejército, la Iglesia Católica y el partido único (la Falange) (Moradiellos, 2000).

Como apuntaba en Martínez-Herrero (2023), la guerra civil española fue fuente de división y de fuertes pasiones y reacciones, no solo dentro de la herida sociedad del país, sino también en el contexto internacional. En el contexto internacional, marcado por el avance del fascismo y en el que se fraguaba la Segunda Guerra Mundial, las atrocidades cometidas por ambos bandos durante la guerra civil y sobre "los vencidos", una vez tomado el franquismo el poder, supusieron una antesala de los horrores que traería consigo la Segunda Guerra Mundial.

Desde 1939 hasta los años 60, España se vio inmersa en un oscuro periodo marcado por la devastación y la pobreza, consecuencia de la guerra, la autarquía (aislamiento internacional), la represión política y el adoctrinamiento de la población en torno a la ideología nacional-católica promulgada por el régimen. En gran medida, en el plano ideológico se vivió "una vuelta al pasado" (Sanz-Cintora, 2001, p.12) con la reimposición de valores tradicionales que apuntalaban el nacional catolicismo frente a las corrientes de pensamiento progresista (liberal, democrático, socialista, comunista, etc.) que se encontraban en pleno apogeo durante la Segunda República. Sin embargo, es importante señalar que, además, la represión política incorporó elementos (eugenésicos, pseudocientíficos) del fascismo 'más vanguardista' de la época, si lo podemos llamar así. Como vamos a ver, ambas ideologías, nacional-catolicismo y fascismo, condujeron a abusos y crímenes hacia familias identificadas como enemigas políticas del régimen, así como hacia quienes se desviaran moralmente de él.

A finales de los años 50 los problemas y desequilibrios de la economía española llevaron al gobierno dictatorial a adoptar, no sin reticencias, políticas desarrollistas (enmarcadas en el Plan de Estabilización de 1959) que fomentaron, durante los

años 60, la ruptura con la autarquía económica y cultural de la época anterior, en pro de la estabilización y la liberalización de la economía nacional. Aún continuando la restricción de derechos y libertades, el proceso tuvo como resultado intensos cambios socio-demográficos, destacando las migraciones hacia las ciudades y hacia el extranjero, y posibilitó la entrada de influencias culturales e intelectuales desde el exterior.

Los años 70 marcaron la transición de la dictadura a la democracia en torno a la muerte natural del dictador Francisco Franco en 1975, en medio de un clima de incertidumbres y violencia por parte de distintos grupos, pero en el que también cobraron protagonismo la movilización ciudadana y la esperanza ante el cambio. El desencadenante principal del cambio de sistema político fue la muerte de Franco, y las instituciones del Estado, como los partidos políticos y la Corona, tuvieron papeles clave en la transición. Sin embargo, para entonces la dictadura estaba ya en crisis y había perdido gran parte de su poder y legitimidad desde mediados de los años 60, cuando los movimientos de oposición y las protestas de una gran parte de la sociedad española se extendieron ampliamente y comenzaron a ejercer una gran presión social. Así pues, los esfuerzos y esperanzas de todos estos actores propiciaron el consenso que permitió la aprobación y ratificación de la Constitución española de 1978, mediante la que España quedó constituida en un Estado (aconfesional) social y democrático de Derecho. Este clima de movilización social, ilusión por el futuro y consenso pasó a ser conocido como "el espíritu de la transición".

El espíritu de la transición, con sus muchas bondades, llevó, no obstante, a la opción por una brusca ruptura con lo que quedaba atrás, que se materializó en pactos sociales de silencio y, a nivel legal, en la Ley de Amnistía de 1977. Vigente hasta el día de hoy, esta ley concede amnistía ante "todos los actos de intencionalidad política, cualquiera que fuese su resultado, tipificados como delitos y faltas" cometidos con anterioridad a la promulgación de la ley (Artículo primero). Están comprendidos en la amnistía delitos tales como la rebelión y sedición, expresión de opiniones y los delitos cometidos por autoridades, funcionarios y agentes del orden público con motivo de la investigación y persecución de delitos políticos y los cometidos por funcionarios y agentes del orden público contra el ejercicio de los derechos de las personas.

A pesar de que esta ley fue promulgada con el objetivo de "superar y trascender las divisiones que nos separaron y enfrentaron en el pasado" a los españoles/as (Congreso de los Diputados, 1977, p.973) su controvertida vigencia en el momento histórico ac-

tual supone una gran barrera para la memoria histórica, la justicia para las víctimas y la reconciliación. En el contexto internacional, representa un extraordinario y escandaloso caso de impunidad y de incongruencia con la normativa internacional sobre Derechos Humanos, tal y como han denunciado numerosas organizaciones, incluido el Alto Comisionado de las Naciones Unidas.

Las caras de la violencia Franquista

Al hablar de violencia franquista hablamos de violencia política. El estudio de la violencia política tiene una larga trayectoria y, a día de hoy, no existe un consenso total sobre su definición. Sin embargo, un rasgo definitorio de la misma es su carácter instrumental; la violencia política es ejercida y justificada como un medio para alcanzar unos fines políticos y cambios en los sistemas de gobierno (Herranz-Castillo, 1991). Lawrence (1970, en Herranz-Castillo, 1991, p.430) definía la violencia como "la clase de acciones que resultan, o se pretende que resulten, en serio daño a la vida o a sus condiciones materiales". Además, según Herranz-Castillo (1991), son numerosos los autores/as que vinculan la violencia con la violación de "la personalidad", así como de derechos, deberes y normas sociales establecidas. Como sucede con otros tipos de violencia, la violencia política, explica el autor, no solo se ejerce mediante la fuerza física, sino que puede adoptar formas psicológicas y latentes (miedo generalizado, autocensura, etc.). Lo que resulta característico de la violencia política es que se emplea de manera consciente (aunque no siempre premeditada) "por parte de individuos, instituciones, entidades, grupos o partidos" con el objetivo de alcanzar "el control de los espacios de poder público, la manipulación de las decisiones en todas o parte de las instancias del gobierno, y, en última instancia, la conquista, la conservación o la reforma del Estado"(González-Calleja, 1991, en González-Madrid, 2012, p.2).

González-Madrid (2012) afirma que el Estado dispone de tres recursos principales para imponer su autoridad: la represión, el control social y la coacción legal. Todas ellas se emplearon con vehemencia durante la dictadura franquista, dando lugar a las numerosas caras de la violencia que afligieron a la sociedad española, marcándola, como muchos/as consideramos, hasta el día de hoy.

Si bien no es posible estimar las cifras exactas de las víctimas de la represión franquista, y existen discrepancias entre las propuestas de los expertos/as, no cabe duda que las cifras llevan "muchos ceros a la derecha" (Lafuente, 2013, p.5). Según las cifras

manejadas por la Plataforma por la Comisión de la Verdad (citada en Lafuente, 2013, p.5), el balance de víctimas entre 1936 al 1977 incluiría: "entre 115.000 y 130.000 desaparecidos, 150.000 asesinados, 30.000 niños robados, 2.800 fosas comunes en toda España …. medio millón de exiliados, hasta 300.000 presos políticos solo al comienzo del régimen militar, y un millón de muertos por la guerra.".

González-Madrid (2007) explicaba que el principal instrumento para la represión física por parte del franquismo fue la justicia militar, dentro del marco jurídico de "estado de guerra", cuya declaración se mantuvo desde el inicio de la guerra civil (1933-1936) hasta 1948, bajo el pretexto, en el periodo posbélico, de combatir la guerrilla. No obstante, destaca el autor, aunque la represión física fue organizada "desde arriba" por los militares, solo fue posible gracias a la amplia colaboración ciudadana, fruto del miedo y de un apoyo social suficientemente amplio como para garantizar la consolidación y la larga supervivencia del régimen.

La dictadura franquista estableció además los mecanismos legislativos necesarios para garantizar el expolio económico y la exclusión laboral de "los vencidos", de manera que ser encausado como enemigo/a del régimen tenía como consecuencia "la muerte civil, la ruina del encausado y su familia" (González-Madrid, 2007, p.10). A la represión física (ejecuciones, desapariciones, torturas, encarcelamientos, exilios forzosos, etc.), económica y social, sufrida por hombres y mujeres considerados enemigos del régimen, conocidos como "los rojos", se añadió un expolio aún más cruel si cabe: la apropiación de sus hijos e hijas por parte del Estado.

En Martínez-Herrero (2020; 2023) aporto más detalles sobre los complejos entramados legislativos y de redes de poder que hicieron posible la sustracción, entre 1940 y 1954, más de 30.000 niños y niñas de familias consideradas contrarias al régimen franquista (Amnistía Internacional, 2021).para su adecuada tutela y reeducación en familias adoptivas afines al mismo y en instituciones católicas. Unos entramados que terminarían derivando en redes de robo de bebés en hospitales y casas de maternidad a lo largo de la geografía española, por motivos económicos y de influencia social, que se mantendrían activas hasta finales de los años 80, y cuyo alcance continúa siendo desvelado, entre dificultades, a día de hoy.

Más allá de las cifras, las historias sobre la suerte y los abusos sufridos por muchos de estos niños y niñas, robados por motivos políticos, reflejan las crueles consecuencias tanto para las familias como para los menores víctimas de este crimen de lesa huma-

nidad (tipificado como tal en el derecho internacional y en el artículo 607 del Código Penal español (Ley Orgánica del Código Penal de 1995). Obras como 'Nos Encargamos de Todo' (González-de-Tena, 2014), 'Los Niños perdidos del Franquismo' (Vinyes et al., 2003) o 'Los Niños Republicanos' (Pons-Prades, 2005), nos acercan a los mecanismos que las hicieron posible y a las vivencias de sus protagonistas.

Con este punto nos aproximamos a un tema clave de este artículo: el papel en el franquismo de la asistencia social. Paralelamente a las políticas represivas más violentas, la dictadura franquista desarrolló "una política social y asistencial propia con la intención de aprovechar la tremenda desigualdad social reinante para ampliar su base social y atraerse el favor de la población desafecta" (González-Madrid, 2012, p. 28). En este contexto, el socorro ante la pobreza fue dejado en manos de organizaciones vinculadas a la Iglesia Católica y al partido único del régimen.

Cabe destacar el papel de Auxilio Social, una organización originariamente laica y local (Valladolid), inspirada en iniciativas análogas de la Alemania nazi, que acabó integrándose en la Sección Femenina del partido del régimen, extendiéndose por toda España, y cobrando un particular protagonismo en las funciones de asistencia social, adoctrinamiento y propaganda franquistas. Su gran Oficina Central de Propaganda estuvo encargada de mostrar "la generosidad del franquismo con los vencidos", particularmente con la educación y protección de la infancia, "esperanza de la Nueva España" (Armengou y Belis, 2002).

Mientras que en la Alemania nazi la vinculación de la asistencia social con el proyecto nacional fascista giró en torno al concepto de raza, en el caso español lo hizo en torno a la "pureza del español", que no tenía tanto que ver con unos rasgos físicos como con una identidad nacional, política, social y cultural. Una pureza que solo podía alcanzarse combatiendo el comunismo, la modernidad y la democracia, así como la degeneración mental padecida por quienes militaban tales ideales o recibían su influencia en el seno familiar (González-Duro, 2008). Las actuaciones de Auxilio Social, junto con otras como las de las visitadoras sociales y divulgadoras sanitarias ruarles de la Sección Femenina, conformaron la asistencia social con un cariz más fascistizado del franquismo, presentada como un proyecto nacional organizado y racional que buscaba diferenciarse de la caridad y beneficencia tradicionales.

No obstante, todas estas corrientes coexistieron y realizaron tareas de ayuda a los más necesitados en una España franquista en la que durante décadas fue muy complicado

diferenciar los papeles de expertos, religiosos y religiosas y voluntarios apostólicos, todos ellos/as con nula o escasa formación para las tareas a que se enfrentaban, y altamente influenciados por la doctrina católica imperante (Acero et al., 2010). Es fundamental tener en cuenta que es en este caótico y fuertemente ideologizado contexto, y para dar respuestas al mismo, en el que emergen y se expanden las escuelas de trabajo social en España.

Historia del trabajo social en España

Las luces[2] , o lo que sabemos de la historia del trabajo social[3] en España

Una revisión de la literatura más generalizada sobre la historia del trabajo social en el país, lleva a la conclusión que la misma pone el foco en los avances del trabajo social como disciplina científica y profesión; centrándose en las "luces" y victorias de la lucha de una profesión comprometida con el avance de los derechos y la democracia, pero sin vincular de forma explícita (salvo raras excepciones y algunos interesantes acercamientos) el trabajo social con la represión franquista o explorar en profundidad su posible complicidad.

La historia es la siguiente. De manera prácticamente unánime se vincula el nacimiento del trabajo social, como profesión en el país, con la apertura de lo que se considera la primera Escuela de Trabajo Social: La "Escuela de Asistencia Social para la Mujer" (1932, Barcelona), inspirada en una escuela filial belga y resultado de la convergencia de esfuerzos de distintas corrientes del catolicismo social. Esta escuela enseguida tuvo que cesar su actividad durante la Guerra Civil (1933-36) para retomarla después, bajo el nombre de "Escuela de Formación para el Hogar y Obras Sociales Femeninas". Durante la guerra y la postguerra se produjo en el país una "vuelta al pasado", y a la asistencia caritativa marcada por una estricta moral católica, que a su vez frenó el desarrollo de la nueva profesión (Sanz-Cintora, 2001). Entre 1939 y la primera mitad de 1957 se crearon únicamente tres escuelas más de trabajo social, dos en Madrid (Escuela de Formación Familiar y Social de Madrid, 1939, y Escuela San Vicente de Paúl, 1957) y dos en Barcelona (Escuela de Visitadoras Sociales Psiquiátricas, 1953, y Escuela de Enseñanza Social Masculina,1955). No es hasta los años 60 cuando se produce un *boom* de escuelas y la apertura a visitas de expertos del extranjero con ideas modernizadoras (Reconceptualización latinoamericana y nuevas dinámicas del Vaticano que cambiarán

[2] Los términos 'luces' y 'sombras' son tomados de Barbero y Feu (2016), quienes los emplean en su análisis de los orígenes de la Escuela de Barcelona, fundada en 1932.

[3] LAunque en este artículo se hace referencia de manera general a la profesión del trabajo social, es importante apuntar que la denominación más habitual de la profesión que hoy conocemos como "trabajo social" fue en España "asistencia social" hasta los años 80 (siendo conocidas sus profesionales como asistentes sociales). Los debates que planteaban sustituir esta terminología por los términos "trabajo social" y "trabajador/a social" venían cobrando fuerza desde finales de los años 60, pero el cambio definitivo de denominación se produjo con la incorporación, desde principios de los años 80, de los estudios de trabajo social al ámbito universitario, a través las Escuelas Universitarias de Trabajo Social.

la orientación de Cáritas), que permitió al trabajo social dar sus siguientes pasos firmes hacia la profesionalización (Molina-Sánchez, 1994). Este crecimiento exponencial fue propiciado por la necesidad de hacer frente a las nuevas situaciones sociales (fruto de las migraciones internas y externas) resultado de la introducción de las políticas desarrollistas, mencionadas en el apartado anterior. Tan solo entre finales de 1957 y 1964 se crearon 27 nuevas escuelas de trabajo social, y en 1970 existían ya 42, impulsadas en su mayoría por órdenes y movimientos de la Iglesia Católica (Sanz-Cintora, 2001; De-la-Red y Brezmes, 2009).

Como hemos visto, el periodo que rodeó y siguió a la muerte del dictador (1975) se caracterizó por un contexto de incertidumbre e inestabilidad política, pero también por la ilusión por el futuro y unos esfuerzos de consenso sin precedentes entre el espectro político y desde la sociedad civil, que permitieron el establecimiento de la democracia española. Gil-Parejo (2013, p.141) daba cuenta de cómo el trabajo social no fue ajeno a esta transición:

> *Con el fallecimiento de Franco (…) la sociedad española se prepara para un cambio de régimen después de cerca de 40 años de dictadura. Es el momento de despejar las dudas y las inseguridades. Continuismo, reformismo y revolución serán los ejes en los que se moverá la sociedad española en estos años. Coordinadas ideológicas que tendrán su traducción en el campo del Trabajo Social (…) Tendencias que, a pesar de manifestarse de forma antagónica en muchas ocasiones, fueron complementándose y colaborando en las distintas acciones y reivindicaciones de la profesión: la clasificación de los estudios, el colegio profesional, la defensa de la profesión frente al intrusismo profesional, etc.*

También reflejan las tensiones e ilusiones de la época, por ejemplo, los testimonios de alumnas de las primeras promociones de asistentas sociales en Las Palmas (Escuela Nuestra Señora del Pino de las Palmas, fundada en 1963), dependiente de la jerarquía eclesiástica pero regentada por las religiosas Javerianas, quienes lograron introducir ideas progresistas y transformadoras en la formación de las asistentas sociales (pese a recibir consignas en contra de ello desde sus superiores en la Iglesia). En palabras de una de aquellas primeras alumnas:

> *El ambiente era absolutamente político. Se unieron mis inquietudes políticas con lo que estudiaba, con la gente que conocía, con los grupos cristianos de*

> *aquella época que tuvieron un momento glorioso (…) Te permitía salir de un entorno asfixiante. Fue una época preciosa porque teníamos la ilusión de que algo iba a cambiar (…). (Siendo, 2018, p.16)*

La Constitución Española de 1978 supuso un gran hito en la historia del país, y también en la del trabajo social, ya que con ella quedaban establecidos numerosos derechos sociales y un sistema público de servicios sociales que configuraba, junto con los sistemas de salud, educación y pensiones, los cuatro "pilares" del estado de bienestar español (Domenech, 1990). Los trabajadores y trabajadoras sociales (aún denominados por entonces asistentes sociales) asumirían roles centrales en la puesta en marcha y desarrollo de los servicios sociales públicos.

Los siguientes hitos destacados en la historia más conocida de la profesión vienen marcados por el logro de obtener nivel universitario para los estudios de trabajo social, en 1983, con la introducción de la "Diplomatura en Trabajo Social" (Charfolet, 2009), el reconocimiento, en 1990, por parte del Ministerio de Ciencia, del área de conocimiento de "Trabajo Social y Servicios Sociales", perteneciente al derecho y ciencias sociales (Vázquez, 2004), y la introducción del Grado en Trabajo Social, con el Proceso de Convergencia con Europa, iniciado con la Declaración de Bologna en 1999, que se buscó aprovechar como impulsor de los esfuerzos previos por elevar el estándar y posición de los estudios de trabajo social en España (Martínez-Román y Campanini, 2011).

Tomando en cuenta el contexto sociopolítico y el clima del desarrollo del trabajo social en España es fácil comprender la tendencia al consenso, a mirar hacia adelante y a centrarse en elevar el estatus científico y profesional del trabajo social, que ha caracterizado las narrativas y esfuerzos de la profesión hasta día de hoy. Sin embargo, y sin dejar de valorar esta mirada y sus grandes aportes, considero fundamental reconocer, en este momento histórico, el vacío que existe en torno a los inicios y las sombras de esta historia profesional.

Las sombras, o lo que no sabemos de la historia del trabajo social en España

A pesar del contexto extremadamente complejo y turbulento en el que se desarrolló el trabajo social como profesión en España, encontramos habitualmente una narrativa de la historia de la profesión que la considera, en gran medida, políticamente comprometida con el progreso y la justicia social, y además muy linear (de avance continuo).

Tanto la búsqueda sistemática de literatura académica como la búsqueda libre de literatura gris, u otras fuentes de información online sobre la vinculación del trabajo social con los abusos de la represión franquista, resultan infructuosas. No parecen existir apenas fuentes que apunten de forma explícita a tal conexión o exploren en profundad el papel de las primeras escuelas de trabajo social y las primeras promociones de asistentes sociales durante los años "más oscuros" de la dictadura, ante las prácticas más opresivas de la época en el campo de la asistencia caritativa y la asistencia social, o que analicen la persistencia de continuidades y ramificaciones de las mismas en el tiempo. Algunas excepciones que cabe destacar son el trabajo de Molina-Sánchez (1994) y Barbero y Feu (2016).

Molina-Sánchez (1994) analizó en su libro "Las Enseñanzas del Trabajo Social en España 1932-1983. Estudio socio-educativo", en gran profundidad, el contexto político del surgimiento de las escuelas de trabajo social, así como la afiliación, ideología, misión, organización y evolución de las mismas durante este periodo tan crítico. La autora no entra a explorar las funciones más "represivas" o éticamente cuestionables (al menos desde la óptica de la ética actual del trabajo social) de la actividad de estas escuelas, o las profesionales formadas en estas y expresa hacia el grupo de sus impulsores un "sentimiento de admiración hacia las personas que dedicaron sus esfuerzos en un clima tan hostil y casi siempre de incompetencia" (p.132), sin distinguir entre las distintas escuelas.

Sin embargo, la contextualización política de su obra es pionera y clara, y abre las puertas a seguir "tirando del hilo" y explorar estos aspectos en mayor profundidad. Un interesante aspecto que queda patente es cómo, tanto el profesorado como el alumnado de las escuelas, ha sido en muchas ocasiones religioso, por lo que la separación entre "la iglesia" y las profesionales del trabajo social no ha existido en muchas ocasiones, como tal. Otro punto relevante que aporta este libro es destacar la influencia de las escuelas de trabajo social de las primeras épocas del franquismo, a pesar de su escaso número, ya que muchas de sus alumnas y fundadoras pasarían después a dirigir y liderar las escuelas de trabajo social de las siguientes décadas. Por ejemplo, nueve de las escuelas fundadas entre 1958 y 1964 fueron dirigidas por religiosas formadas en la Escuela de Asistentes Sociales "San Vicente de Paul" de Madrid.

Barbero y Feu (2016), por su parte, han explorado la desconocida colaboración bidireccional entre el régimen franquista y la profesión de la "asistencia social", ahondando en la trayectoria de Raül Roviralta, fundador de la primera escuela de asistencia social del

país (Escuela de Barcelona), quien escribió y dedicó a Franco el primer libro español sobre "asistencia social". Esta obra destacaba positivamente las influencias fascistas del proyecto profesional planteado y su poderosa capacidad para el control del "desorden" social.

También resulta interesante el análisis de tesinas de trabajo social (1938-1983) realizado por Acero et al. (2010), que muestra la compleja transición desde las primeras tesinas, que situaban el origen de los problemas familiares en "la falta de educación religiosa, moral e intelectual de la madre" (p.96) hacia una comprensión de los condicionantes estructurales. Una transición, destacan los autores, claramente no lineal y con enormes diferencias en la ideología de las tesinas a lo largo de todo el periodo analizado.

No obstante, pese a estos acercamientos a "las sombras" de la historia del trabajo social, continúan sin haberse planteado ciertas preguntas incómodas en la investigación en trabajo social. Destacan entre estas las relacionadas con el nivel de conocimiento y complicidad de las trabajadoras sociales, a lo largo de la dictadura, con las políticas de adoctrinamiento, de segregación familiar y de robo de niños y bebés. Resulta interesante considerar que el escaso trabajo realizado sobre memoria histórica y trabajo social en España se encuentre en trabajos de fin de estudios de la última década, y proceda en su mayor parte de las inquietudes e iniciativas de estudiantes de trabajo social, y no de quienes nos dedicamos a la investigación y deberíamos ser capaces de percibir los signos de que la investigación en este campo tiene que ver, y mucho, con una profesión que se debe a la promoción de los derechos humanos y la justicia social. Por el contrario, hasta donde he logrado averiguar, desde el trabajo social no nos hemos posicionado ni "dado por aludidos" ante estas situaciones. Resulta fundamental, considero, tomar conciencia y preguntarnos por qué.

Es muy probable que, en la mayoría de los casos, y sobre todo durante las primeras décadas de la dictadura, estas prácticas fueran ampliamente desconocidas y/o muy difíciles de problematizar para unas asistentes sociales que recibieron la formación extremadamente conservadora de las primeras escuelas. Incluso, aunque muchas de ellas llegaran a desarrollar una conciencia crítica en el contexto posibilitador de periodos posteriores. Resulta llamativo, por ejemplo, que Montserrat Colomer, una pionera trabajadora social catalana, conocida por sus aportaciones teóricas al trabajo social y por su papel como reivindicativa trabajadora social comunitaria, narra en sus memorias (Colomer, 2009) de una forma bastante neutra sus prácticas en el Servicio Social de la Sección Femenina de la Falange (partido único del régimen).

La autora hace referencia, por ejemplo, a su experiencia amarga en un hogar infantil de la Falange, en el que los niños eran tratados con rigidez, espíritu militar, eran educados y disciplinados desde la culpa por sus pecados y recibían comida deficiente (excepto si había visitas oficiales). En aquellas prácticas, explica: "las chicas solo podían mostrar afecto a los niños e intentar entretenerles". Respecto al origen de aquellos niños, Colomer afirma no recordar de dónde procedían, afirmando no obstante que "seguro que eran todos de familias pobres" (p.34). También, menciona su experiencia positiva en un Centro de Alimentación Infantil y en Oficinas del Niño de Auxilio Social, donde trabajaban algunas asistentes sociales, la mayoría con el título de antes de la guerra.

Atando cabos y con toda la información actual en la mano, es más fácil ver cómo muchos de aquellos niños internados en el cruel Hogar Infantil, donde realizó parte de sus prácticas Montserrat Colomer, podían haber sido víctimas de las políticas de segregación familiar y cómo las asistentes sociales de la primera escuela (Escuela de Barcelona, 1932) terminaron trabajando para la Sección Femenina del partido del régimen, desde la cual se otorgaba ayuda a cambio de la adopción de la ideología dominante y se desplegaban las mayores campañas propagandísticas del mismo, enmascarando la violenta represión y el origen de la devastadora pobreza que se extendían por todo el país. Colaboraron, pues, en la tarea de "ganar corazones y mentes" y dar forma al "nuevo español" a nivel nacional.

También, podemos deducir que una parte importante del alumnado y cuerpo profesional del trabajo social de la época, tanto laico como religioso, habrá sido testigo, a lo largo del a dictadura, de los malos tratos y abusos a niños y niñas en instituciones franquistas y católicas. Incluso, habrá quienes hayan sido cómplices o autores de las violaciones más graves de derechos humanos en el contexto dictatorial, como el robo de bebés. Es el caso de Sor María (María Gómez Valbuena), religiosa de las Hijas de la Caridad y trabajadora social del principal hospital de Madrid, entre el inicio de los años 70 y 1984, y una de las personalidades más conocidas por su implicación en adopciones ilegales. Fue llevada a juicio en 2012, pero falleció a los 87 años, antes de concluir el mismo (ABC, 2012). Otras trabajadoras sociales han sido acusadas por delitos similares (RTVE, 2018). Sin embargo, este es un episodio que aún no se ha reconocido ni estudiado como parte de la historia del trabajo social en este país.

Buscando explicación y remedio a los silencios y amnesias sobre el pasado del trabajo social en España, podemos centrarnos en dos circunstancias experimentadas en el campo de la investigación y en las organizaciones profesionales del trabajo social (relacionados entre sí y con el contexto histórico). En primer lugar, la exposición a una narrativa

predominante de la historia del trabajo social en el país centrada, casi exclusivamente, en los hitos y luchas ganadas en el proceso de reconocimiento profesional y avance científico, cuestión planteada en el punto anterior. En segundo lugar, el predominio de una búsqueda de la mejora y el progreso centrada en el futuro y en las influencias procedentes de otros países, pero sin pararnos casi nunca a buscar "dentro" y a "mirar hacia atrás", muy alineada con "el espíritu de la transición".

En estas líneas, ha quedado de manifiesto que las publicaciones, inclusive algunas de las más críticas y contextualizadas sobre la historia del trabajo social en España, sitúan de manera prácticamente unánime el nacimiento del trabajo social en España en el momento de la fundación de la escuela de Barcelona, en 1932, o con posterioridad. Por ejemplo, Molina Sánchez (1994, p.47) afirmaba contundente que "El Trabajo Social Profesional se inicia en Barcelona en 1934 con la primera promoción de profesionales diplomado en la recién creada Escuela de Trabajo Social". También, como la mayoría de las autoras y autores, Molina Sánchez habla del trabajo social como "una nueva profesión surgida en Inglaterra como respuesta a las necesidades planteadas por la sociedad industrial" (p.48). Barbero y Feu (2016, p.18) sitúan el origen aún después, a finales de los años 60 momento en que vuelve a haber influencia externa en la profesión-, afirmando que hasta entonces "no podemos encontrar un cuerpo de practicantes con identidad interna y unos ejercicios socialmente identificados merecedores del adjetivo "profesional".

Bajo estas visiones generalizadas, resulta fácil dejar de lado como ajeno a la profesión del trabajo social todo lo que ocurrió con anterioridad (clasificándolo como antecedentes del trabajo social) o en los periodos en los que las circunstancias forzaron una pausa en el proceso de "profesionalización". También, aferrándose al modelo europeo de la profesión del trabajo social, como profesión oficialmente reconocida, institucionalizada, laica y libera, podemos cerrar los ojos al papel de las "asistentes sociales" en las prácticas ideologizadas e integradas en las instituciones de la iglesia católica y el régimen dictatorial. No obstante, como hemos visto, tales distinciones no se corresponden con lo ocurrido en la compleja realidad del país durante la dictadura, donde la propia formación se encontró fuertemente politizada, inclusive desde distintas ideologías y con cambios de orientación (Estruch y Güel, 1976), el alumnado bien podía ser laico o religioso, y las trabajadoras sociales se integraron y ejercieron sus funciones tanto en organizaciones del régimen y la iglesia católica, como, sobre todo, en periodos posteriores, en iniciativas prodemocráticas y de oposición.

La literatura sobre las historias oscuras del trabajo social en el plano internacional puede aportarnos algunas pistas más.

Historias oscuras del trabajo social a nivel mundial

Las historias "oscuras" del trabajo social no son, por desgracia, algo exclusivo de nuestro país. El trabajo social, por su propia naturaleza y situación de cercanía y poder ante los colectivos más vulnerables a lo largo del mundo, ha demostrado su potencial destructivo cuando ha sido puesto al servicio de regímenes e intereses opresivos y no ha sabido, podido o querido priorizar, frente a las demandas ilegítimas, su compromiso ético con los derechos humanos y la justicia social. Estas historias oscuras tienden a ser desconocidas y/o poco reconocidas por la profesión a nivel internacional, pero cada vez reciben una mayor atención al entender los trabajadores y trabajadoras sociales que la recuperación de la memoria histórica, la reconciliación y el aprendizaje para evitar los errores del pasado pasan necesariamente por este ejercicio de autoconocimiento y autocrítica dentro de la profesión. Chapman y Withers (2019), Ioakimidis y Wyllie (2023), Ferguson et al., (2018) o Martínez-Herrero y Tedam (2023), recopilan muchas de estas historias en las que trabajadores y trabajadoras sociales han sido cómplices de graves violaciones de derechos humanos al servicio de agendas fascistas (Alemania Nazi o España), imperialistas, colonialistas (sustracción de niños y niñas indígenas para su transformación en "ciudadanos blancos" en países como Canadá, Australia o Groenlandia), racistas (Apartheid en Sudáfrica) o eugenésicas (EEUU).

El estudio de estos episodios oscuros de la profesión requiere una mirada amplia, muy centrada en los contextos sociopolíticos en que han tenido lugar y abierta a la complejidad y a una comprensión no lineal. Es decir, una mirada capaz de detectar el origen, los desencadenantes, los avances y retrocesos y las ramificaciones de lo ocurrido, sin ceñirse a categorías rígidas temporales y conceptuales (abierta, por ejemplo, a repensar cuándo comienza el trabajo social a considerarse "una profesión" y a explorar los múltiples roles e identidades del trabajador o trabajadora social: religioso/laico, militante político/a etc). Puede parecer que este análisis tendrá como resultado unos relatos históricos inabarcables y difíciles de interpretar y manejar. No obstante, las investigaciones anteriormente mencionadas demuestran que es posible analizar, comprender y afrontar estas historias.

Ferguson et al., (2018), entre otros, han mostrado cómo en estas historias oscuras, las organizaciones de trabajo social priorizaron sus propios intereses y el avance de su estatus profesional bajo el patrocinio y control de los estados (o instituciones, como las eclesiásticas) antes que su compromiso con la justicia social. Podemos ver, claramente, la analogía con lo ocurrido en el trabajo social en España. También destacan los autores los peligros de la recurrente búsqueda de la despolitización de una profesión que, como

hemos visto, es por naturaleza profundamente política, bajo la bandera del cientificismo (capaz de legitimar teorías darwinistas y eugenésicas sobre cómo alcanzar la pureza de la raza) y el positivismo (que rechaza los juicios de valor moral en la investigación e intervención).

Chapman y Withers (2019) analizan cuidadosamente los contextos sociopolíticos en que estas historias oscuras tienen lugar, pero destacan además la complejidad de la complicidad con estos abusos, mostrando cómo muchas veces sus autores, amparados por la ideología imperante en la profesión o el contexto, creyeron que, al encubrir, posibilitar o cometer estas prácticas estaban contribuyendo a un bien mayor, inclusive para la propia víctima. Este aspecto vuelve a remitirnos a las historias de robo de niños y bebés en España en pro de su propia "salvación" y de la creación de la "nueva España". Todos los autores/as mencionados anteriormente, así como otros trabajos, muestran, sin embargo, cómo también existen ciertos espacios para la resistencia que trabajadores y trabajadoras sociales han sabido emplear valiente y fructuosamente, no sin tener que pagar en ocasiones un alto precio. Estas posibilidades se amplían cuando han recibido una formación de conciencia política, histórica y de derechos humanos en la profesión (ver Rubilar-Donoso, 2018). Esta es una clara diferencia entre el perfil profesional de las trabajadoras sociales latinoamericanas, que opusieron resistencia a las dictaduras de los 80, y las trabajadoras sociales del primer franquismo en España.

CONCLUSIONES: Del enfoque de la transición española al de la recuperación de la memoria histórica desde los derechos humanos

A lo largo de este artículo hemos visto cómo la literatura sobre la historia del trabajo social en España, marcada por la dictadura franquista, se ha centrado en las "luces", es decir, en las luchas ganadas en el camino recorrido por la profesión hasta el día de hoy. Esta parte de la historia es importante y el enfoque se entiende y valora atendiendo al contexto histórico en el que tuvo que desarrollarse, entre muchas dificultades, la profesión del trabajo social en el país. Podemos afirmar que es una historia escrita, en su mayor parte, desde la mirada y el espíritu "de la transición": centrado en el consenso, en construir y en mirar hacia adelante.

Pues bien, reconociendo el valiente e incansable trabajo de tantas y tantos, inclusive su compromiso político, considero clave en este momento dar un paso más y atrevernos, desde un contexto político social que así nos lo facilita, revisar y enriquecer el relato sobre los orígenes y la evolución del trabajo social en España, atendiendo también a sus "sombras" y recovecos, desde un espíritu de recuperación de la memoria histórica enraizado en los derechos humanos. Esta revisión desvelará nuevas luces y sombras,

episodios de los que no estaremos orgullosas, pero también historias de valiente resistencia. Más importante todavía, ayudará al trabajo social en España a conocerse mejor (incluido su peligroso potencial), a sanar, a cerrar etapas y a ocupar su lugar en los procesos de recuperación de la memoria histórica y reconciliación, tanto de puertas adentro como al servicio de la sociedad, de acuerdo con su compromiso ético con los derechos humanos y la justicia social. Si bien se trata de un camino con obstáculos y resistencias (muchas de ellas propias y emocionales), la historia y la investigación nos enseñan que, sin un adecuado esfuerzo colectivo de memoria histórica, los traumas históricos y la impunidad de la violencia política continuarán reproduciéndose, en mayor o menor grado, intergeneracionalmente, e incluso, en el seno de profesiones como el trabajo social.

El ejemplo de las trabajadoras y trabajadores sociales que opusieron resistencia a las dictaduras de Latinoamérica y continúan trabajando abiertamente por la recuperación de la memoria histórica, así como el prisma de los derechos humanos, pueden ayudarnos en gran medida con este ejercicio de autoconocimiento y sanación, facilitando una perspectiva común más objetiva y emocionalmente segura desde la que poder trabajar juntos/as en la reconstrucción de la historia de la profesión en nuestro país. Incorporar estas temáticas en nuestras agendas de investigación y en la formación de los/as futuros profesionales del trabajo social es, por supuesto, un ejercicio político. Sin embargo, no es cuestión de "una España u otra", un partido u otro, sino de una búsqueda justicia para quienes fueron víctimas de violencia política, así como una cuestión de promoción de la verdad, la paz, el bienestar y la cohesión social, no solo para estas personas, sus descendientes y ascendientes (como en el caso de los niños y bebés robados), sino para la sociedad española en su totalidad. Para mí esto no puede estar más alineado con el papel del trabajo social.

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ARTICLE

The Social Work Collective: a reflective approach in times of dictatorship

El Colectivo de Trabajo Social: una apuesta reflexiva en tiempos de dictadura

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Abstract

The Social Work Collective was a professional group that generated an alternative space for reflection and critical action to rethink Social Work in times of civil-military dictatorship. In this article, we want to recover the experience by historical reconstruction to account for a common narrative that allows us to connect with our disciplinary past-present, through the testimonies of those who made

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Social Work; Reflection; Social intervention

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up this Collective. Methodologically, we have approached it through testimonial interviews of its members and the analysis of secondary sources, particularly the personal archives of those involved. We have retrieved the experience of the Collective, giving an account of the scenario from which it emerges, emphasising its collective logic, its written production as a space for reflection and professional communication, as well as the way in which these elements are intertwined from the different professional trajectories. We seek to account for the way in which this group operates, whose ways of being and doing Social Work we have called "the collective of the Collective".

Resumen

El Colectivo de Trabajo Social fue una agrupación profesional que generó un espacio alternativo de reflexión y acción crítica para repensar el Trabajo Social en tiempos de dictadura cívico militar. En este artículo, queremos recuperar la experiencia en clave de reconstrucción histórica para dar cuenta de una narrativa común que nos permita conectar con nuestro pasado-presente disciplinar, a través de testimonios de quienes conformaron este Colectivo. Metodológicamente, nos hemos aproximado a través de entrevistas testimoniales de sus integrantes y el análisis de fuentes secundarias, particularmente el archivo personal de quienes lo conformaron. Rescatamos la experiencia del Colectivo, dando cuenta del escenario desde donde emerge, enfatizando en su lógica colectiva, en su producción escrita en tanto espacio de reflexión y comunicación profesional, así como la forma en que estos elementos se entrelazan desde las diversas trayectorias profesionales. Buscamos dar cuenta de la apuesta de funcionamiento de esta agrupación, cuyas formas de ser y hacer Trabajo Social hemos denominado "lo colectivo del Colectivo".

Palabras Clave:
Trabajo social; reflexión; intervención social

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Presentation

Fifty years after the civil-military coup, as social workers and researchers, we consider it highly relevant to recognise the studies on history and professional memories (Queirolo et al., 2019; Queirolo and Zarate, 2020; Illanes, 2007) that invite us to reflect on the processes of professionalisation in different disciplines, and with this, to problematise particularly the role of women in these spaces. As Queirolo et al. (2019) point out, with the intention "to nourish our 'actualities' with remnants of the past" (p.12).

Particularly, for the case of Social Work in Chile, the works of Aguayo et al. (2018), Aylwin et al. (2004), González (2010) and Vidal (2016), among others, recover milestones, moments and processes on the history and memory of our profession, where the need to recover and revisit the reflections that have been given to this subject in the disciplinary production converges.

In the current context, marked by a neoliberal model of society and relations, as well as by a growing tendency towards negationism of recent history, we are mobilised and activated by "the imperative need to expand the records and debates on the professional memories of Social Work in order to confront the tendency to take the past for granted" (Véliz and García, 2022, p.39).

Within this framework, we would like to share our first reflections on the Social Work Collective, as a professional group that operated between 1981 and 1990. We wanted to delve deeper into this collective whose singularity lies – at least – in the convergence of professional experiences of social intervention outside the state apparatus, the periodic and systematic reflection on its own work, the questioning/ denaturalising gaze in the midst of a context of dictatorial homogenisation, and the concern for writing and documenting the work of Social Work.

These elements allow us to approach these professional experiences with the aim of understanding Social Work in the socio-political situation during the times of the civil-military dictatorship. We also wish to recover the experience in terms of historical reconstruction in order to give an account of a common narrative that allows us to connect with our disciplinary past-present, through the testimonies of those who made up this collective. For us, it represents a way of betting on a strategy of collective recognition of our disciplinary work. As Aylwin et al. (2004) point out, the "utopian dimension contained in memory as a promise, as an inexhaustible path, as a nexus that makes it

possible to link past-present in an innovative way, to re-signify one's own project, in this case that of Chilean Social Work" (p.9).

Methodological elements

Forty years after the formation of the Social Work Collective, we are preparing ourselves for a dialogue with time, its protagonists and collaborators, establishing an alliance for the production of memory that contributes to situating in the present time and projecting possible futures for the processes of Social Work in terms of its training and profession.

This article is part of a project that aims to study memory from a disciplinary/professional framework, understanding it "as a means of thinking and interpreting history, society and cultures through the recording of the experience of the protagonists" (Thompson, 2004 in Cornejo, 2018, p.31). Thus, the aim is to collect the experience of this professional collective, understanding that "exploring memory allows us to enter into past times that are narrated from the present" (Cornejo, 2018, p.32); narratives of professional practice that "is [are] nothing other than a future that is already latent in a present" (Zúñiga, 1997 in Sánchez, 2018, p.187).

Methodologically, we have approached the experience of the Collective through testimonial interviews and the work of secondary sources.

To date, we have conducted individual interviews with five members of the Collective, *the collectives*, a colloquial way of calling them, in order to recover their testimonies. We understand the testimonies as:

> *a personal, relational and historically situated narrative, in which the subjective positions and dispositions of the person giving the testimony, the constructed meanings, their elaborations and difficulties, as well as the listening scenarios and the social contexts of openness, decibility or occlusion that make them possible, take centre stage (Lampasona, 2023, p.4).*

In coherence, a flexible guideline was used that was organised according to the following topics: motivations and purpose of their participation, conceptual approaches from which they positioned themselves, the process of production and dissemination of the journal Apuntes de Trabajo Social, and lessons learned from the experience. In order to comply with ethical safeguards, informed consent forms were used[2].

[2] The research project and its respective instruments were submitted for evaluation to the Ethics Committee of the Universidad Alberto Hurtado.

With regard to the analysis of secondary sources, we have worked with documents from the personal archives of the collectives. In this article, specifically, we incorporate contents and reflections found in the document " Social Work Collective: A meeting space for Social Work in Chile, autumn 1985". Considering this document as a source and its respective analysis requires an integral treatment of it "not only to recover information contained in the document but also the context of its production" (Weber et al., 2021, p.501).

Scenario from which the Social Work Collective emerges

With the coup d'état in 1973, an intellectual process was cut short, mainly in Chilean universities, which fostered political and social debate, recognising their intertwined relationship, as well as the production of knowledge. The ideas under discussion were related to the present and future of the country, its democracy, the reasons for underdevelopment, the social structure and its transformations, the growth model and other issues, as well as the debate on political proposals to address them, which at times were antagonistic and reflected different ways of thinking about the country. Social science academics put their knowledge and analysis at the service of the debate in spaces such as seminars, workshops and colloquiums (Moyano-Barahona and Mella-Polanco, 2017).

Towards the end of the 1970s, the aim was to accompany those who were being hardest hit by the effects of the dictatorship, in the context of the violation of human rights and the installation of the neoliberal model, which did not provide space for the necessary social transformations (Bastías, 2013 in Moyano-Barahona and Mella-Polanco, 2017). In the 1980s, according to Moyano-Barahona and Mella-Polanco (2017), the Chilean intelligentsia, made up of social scientists opposed to the dictatorship, focused on generating knowledge about social issues, poverty, human rights and rethinking Chilean society in the midst of repression and exile, revaluing the collective construction of multi- and interdisciplinary knowledge, which would allow an approach to social problems by rescuing the link with the popular world (Moyano, 2016).

In this context, and as part of the emergence of intellectual spaces linked to praxis, especially with the popular world (Moyano and Pacheco, 2018; Moyano, 2022), the Social Work Collective was born, with the aim of generating discussion, debate and reflection; an imperative exercise in the moments of crisis that the country was experiencing. It became necessary to think of alternatives for a new social order as opposed

to the dictatorship, and this was inextricably linked to the task of re-creating the professional identity in the light of the experiences and learning from the social interventions of those who made it up (Colectivo de Trabajo Social, 1985).

From the testimonies of its participants, it is possible to recognise at least two milestones that would be the prelude to the Collective's commitment, and which would reflect the motivations of its members to question themselves about Social Work, its work and possibilities, in a context in which discussion and reflection were felt as a "threat" to officialdom, to "official" Social Work, which was expressed both in university training spaces and in the practice of the profession.

The milestones recognised as a prelude to the formation of the Collective are spaces for reflection of a group of social workers linked to the Vicaría de la Solidaridad, to the social programmes of SUR, and to the Latin American Faculty of Social Sciences FLACSO. These women had a common past as students and teachers at the Pontificia Universidad Católica de Chile.

The first of these corresponds to a reflection workshop in 1980, the purpose of which was to systematise the experience of "social solidarity work" developed in the Vicariate of Solidarity. *The collectives* indicate

> *We wanted – through the exchange of experience, analysis and discussion – to define our professional identity within the vast and complex field of human rights. We wanted to make a critical reading of practice as social workers. (STS, 1985, p.3).*

The second initiative corresponds to the seminar "Social Work and Urban Problems", organised by SUR and FLACSO, held in August 1981. In this seminar, the linking of social workers in popular urban activities and organisations was discussed; "this group appeared with a wide experience in animation programmes; with a more real perception of the problems of the popular world; to a certain extent with a privileged contact and closeness with popular groups" (CTS, 1985, p.3).

From both spaces, the reflection on the possibilities of Social Work is installed, which for the collectives is expressed in,

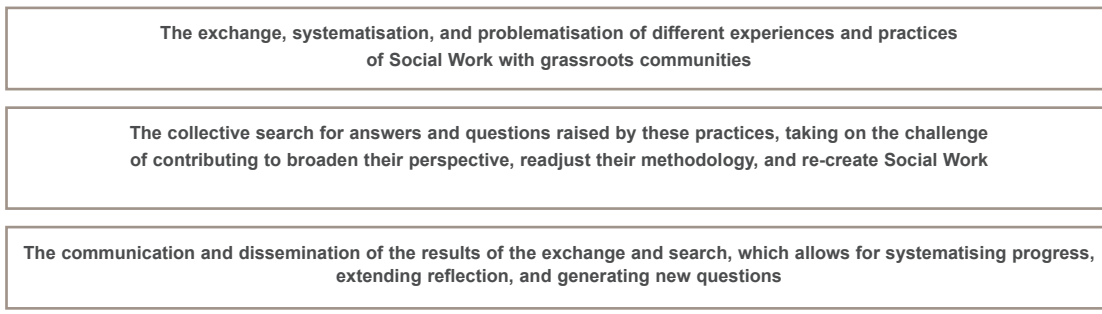
> *a sort of struggle between 'solidarity social work' and 'official social work' (...) the concerns, problems and challenges that arose found resonance in a group of social workers who felt attracted by the idea of creating a space for this process of rethinking social work in the light of the changes produced in the national situation, the new experiences of social work carried out in Chile during the dictatorship; the basic concepts of the process of reconceptualisation of social work experienced in Chile at the beginning of the 1970s. (CTS, 1985, p.4)*

Recovering an experience of collective functioning: Ways of being and doing Social Work.

In November 1981, this group was formed with the aim of "creating a Social Work Collective that would open a space for reflection and support for social action with popular sectors in Chile today" (CTS, 1985, p.4). This is linked to a particular social and political context, as one interviewee recalls, "when the perspective of the dictatorship's validity is institutionalised" (E1), which, added to the professional experience of commitment to dignity and human rights, drives the birth of this collective space.

In the document "Colectivo de Trabajo Social: Un espacio de encuentro para el Trabajo Social en Chile" (1985), three central aspects of its sense of being as a Social Work Collective are detailed:

Figure 1: A commitment to being as a Collective



Source: Own elaboration based on CTS, 1985, p.4.

At the same time, they propose a way of functioning that outlines a way of doing Social Work, marked by a collective logic, network articulation, autonomy in its functioning, an open space with an animating team and an internal organisation based on responsibilities (See figure 2).

Figure 2: The Collective's ways of doing things

Web	UA space that will facilitate the construction of a network of people involved in research and action projects in Social Work with popular groups.
Collective logic	We defined it as a Collective, because it would be built with the contribution of everyone. According to the capacities and rhythms of all those who participate, because it would not be a new institution to add to the already extensive list of existing centres.
Autonomy	An autonomous space, which, although it would maintain relations with various institutions and organisations, would not depend on any of them.
Open space animation team	An open space and, for this reason, the initial group was constituted as an animating team, but always taking care that the different initiatives: seminars, workshops, meetings, etc., meant the active participation of other people.
Responsibilities without hierarchies	There are no hierarchies in the collective. Responsibilities are defined jointly according to the tasks to be undertaken and the areas of greatest interest to each of the members.

Source: Own elaboration based on CTS 1985, p.4-5.

Based on the above, a horizontal and participatory organisation is revealed, which is developed with an open call, reinforced by one interviewee when she comments that "we started with all those who wanted to participate in this Collective. The initiative group – or facilitator – invited everyone who wanted to participate according to their abilities and availability" (E1). We also highlighted other values that are part of what mobilised the functioning of the Collective and contribute to the reflection: respect for others, which included the recognition of people as social actors, their knowledge and cultures; dialogue, "this Freirean idea that no one teaches anyone, but that we all learn from each other" (E3).

Behind each meeting of the Collective there was a "back room" that can be seen as the central focus of their work and a particular way of generating it. They stamped a horizontal seal on their organisation, with roles that were rotated and distributed according to the needs and activities they proposed to carry out:

> *the important thing was the collective, which is a question that marked me, and that is that there was no hierarchy, only responsibilities. You take on this task (...) according to your abilities [and availability] (...) and you give an account of that task to the collective and take on another one, but there was no boss. (E1)*

To this end, they explained that as an initiative group or animating group they dedicated partial and voluntary time to meet weekly, "we had a meeting day, a meeting day and the other activities depended on availability, but it was quite fluid" (E4), where "we discussed what we were going to do, we took initiatives, evaluated activities and gave each other new responsibilities" (E1). This group was made up of Daniela Sánchez, Ana María Medioli, María Teresa Marshall, Ximena Valdés, Paulina Saball and Andrea Rodó. In time, Gloria Vío, María Angélica Morales and Ana María de la Jara joined them (CTS, 1985).

The commitment to revisit the ways of being and doing Social Work implies recovering what characterised the functioning of the Collective. One of these elements refers to the spaces of shared gratuity, as some of the interviewees (E1, E3, E4) point out, based on a commitment to being a collective that would contribute to rethinking Social Work, contributing to society and to the recovery of democracy. One of the interviewees reinforces this aspect by explaining that it is a collective gratuity,

> *in a sense that you give to others as well. You learn and you teach. And you value what you teach, you don't play the fool [or keep it] bottled up... the Collective forced us to take our experiences outside, the important thing was that they were there. (E3)*

The way the Collective functioned implied a humanising way of relating to its members, where their differences and characteristics were respected and supported, allowing moments to express their emotions and experiences as women, mothers, workers, professionals, political activists (E3, E4, E6). The responsibility with "the collective" implied an organisation of life that became meaningful beyond the individual; the interviewees refer to a space of affective intimacy, where things were talked about. One of them explains: "from a personal point of view, it was a very rich space of welcome (...) to feel a welcome there, an appreciation of what I was doing" (E3).

As we pointed out earlier, remembering the way of being and doing Social Work sheds light on the present and contributes to future projection. We highlight the way of commitment, the collective logic and the horizontal functioning, creating a space for collective reflection that is validated beyond the historical moment in which the Collective lived. As one of the interviewees said: "I think that the first thing is this valuing of work, creation and collective thinking that is capable of generating knowledge, of generating academic value, of research, of creation, of putting together new things" (E3).

The journal Notes for Social Work: a space for reflection and communication

According to its purpose and with respect to its ways of doing and thinking about the collective work space, the following lines of action were proposed: Social Work reflection, communications, services to social workers, creation of a network of social workers, contact with people and/or national and foreign groups (CTS, 1985).

In particular, the communications action line was strengthened with the creation of the journal Notes for Social Work.

> *The Collective believes that it is important for social workers to communicate with each other, to communicate their experiences and the conclusions they draw from them (...) For this reason and with the aim of providing a space for social workers to relate their experiences in a concrete way, without subjecting them to rigid schemes of interpretation and to provide elements that illuminate reflection, the Collective publishes the journal 'Notes for Social Work' (CTS, 1985, p.17).*

Although the Collective is recognised for the production and dissemination of its magazine, this paper refers to the strategy of meeting, reflection and production that this publication represented.

On the basis of the work developed, the Collective systematically published the Journal, producing 17 issues during its operation. The relevance of this publication "implied an opening of the 'field of knowledge' and a democratisation of it. At the same time, they provided a foundation, historicity and theory to the actions and demands" (Moyano and Pacheco, 2018, p.4). In a 1984 interview [3] the *collectives* indicated:

[3] In May 1984, Teresa Quiroz, a Chilean social worker who was part of the board of the Latin American Centre for Social Work, CELATS, a professional organization that collaborated in the formation and functioning of the Collective, conducted an interview with its members, entitled "En busca de la identidad. El Colectivo de Trabajo Social de Santiago-Chile", published in magazine Acción Crítica, number 15 .

> *The magazine, for the Collective, is something very important; it is not only a space to publish what we and others produce, but it is an invitation and a challenge as social workers to speak our own language, with all the precariousness we have, we can say what we do, in our own words and not wait for a sociologist or a journalist to come and do it for us, that our practice speaks; the magazine wants to be a space for communication, an organ of social work about our practice. And this means a way of approaching our reality and the socio-political management of the country. (Quiroz, 1984, p.3)*

The magazine as a strategy for reflection and communication was part of a learning process that took place within the collective, linked to self-management for its financing, editing and production.

> *We started out and everything was self-managed with an effort that I can't even tell you about, so we did everything among ourselves, from typing when we started to have a little money. We had this idea of writing and we didn't have much of an idea of how to write in a way that would reach and be accessible, that's why we didn't use academic language, but a very practical language. We wrote texts, we criticised each other's texts and then based on one of them we wrote "temporal, ollas y orden", which was an article published by SUR[4]. (E2)*

On the dissemination and circulation of the magazine, one interviewee comments:

> *We started to distribute it among the people. We put together a database of 250 copies that we sent by post, to social workers, popular educators, people who asked us and students who came from different schools. They asked us from outside [Chile]. It wasn't that much, but for that time, it was an important distribution and people photocopied it when they could. I remember that's when the photocopies started to come out. (E2)*

Another interviewee highlights as a central aspect:

> *to have been able to write, and then to break the myth that we [social workers] were not capable of writing and to have published two books and 17 issues of the Journal (...) not all of them were written by social workers, but there were professionals who were interested in writing in a Social Work journal. (E3*

[4] Javier Martínez, like other SUR professionals, was recognized by the collectives as a collaborator and motivator for the formation of the Collective and particularly for writing about professional experience. The text referred to is published in Proposiciones, 1982, Vol. 7, Ediciones SUR

In addition, the commitment to promote new ways of thinking about professional identity is highlighted.

> *it was obvious that we were going to end up trying to influence others, to promote, (...) to come up with something that would be a possibility to expand and say: here we are and there are other ways of doing things. It wouldn't have been any use if we had all stayed quiet and happy together (E4).*

An example of this is what is stated in the presentation of the third issue of the journal, which states: "We want to go beyond mere reflection and exchange; we want to recover the capacity to 'speak' and propose; we want to contribute from our particular insertion, to the formulation of a project of social and political transformation for our country" (Notes for Social Work, 1983, p.3).

The challenge of writing is illustrated by one of the interviewees between questioning and affirmations referring to the questioning of actions, of those concrete acts carried out in the spaces of intervention:

> *What did they do to make it happen? How did they do it? What did people say? Well, and then came the reflection – which was at one point very shattering and from there we started again – and I think that was a great achievement of the Collective, to go back to the practices of asking what social workers did in certain contexts, in certain situations, and from there to conceptualise, something I don't know if the Collective manages to do, but it manages to at least pick up those practices (E5).*

The main purpose that the Collective sought with the written production was to transmit the professional experience from the profession of Social Work. Referring to this, one of the interviewees said "it was to communicate the experience, the profession, the needs" (E1).

This implied an attitude of attentive vigilance to the social and political events that the country was experiencing, without ceasing to question fundamental issues for their professional being and doing. This questioning and permanent exercise of denaturalising, in a context that demanded precisely the opposite, was part of this other Social Work, as a core element of its professional and disciplinary relevance.

In relation to the above, the Collective advocated a different, alternative Social Work, as a parallel path to that established by the dictatorial regime. The Collective was not linked to the universities or to "the official world at that time... we were looking to recover our identity... to open up to other ways of doing things" (E4).

Intertwining trajectories: Individual and collective trajectories

For the members of the Collective, this space for reflection nourished the social intervention; it was a kind of "inspirational compass" (E4), as one of them points out, becoming a virtuous circle of constant feedback, situated in a scenario of common social intervention where "we all work at the same time in institutions and social work projects with popular sectors, that work is the center of our contribution to common reflection" (CTS, 1985, p.5).

Some were active in different political parties at the time and others were not, but as one of the interviewees says, they all had "a common commitment to Social Work", the main focus being, as another interviewee explains, "the commitment to human dignity, to Human Rights... we shared the idea that democracy was going to be achieved socially, not just politically" (E1).

Along the same lines, the need to participate on different fronts to put an end to the dictatorship was raised, and Social Work had an ideal space to act and contribute to this. The challenge then, as one of the interviewees pointed out, was,

> *To be able to create strength in different parts through Social Work to recover democracy, was to be able to contribute to the recovery of democracy from Social Work...before the military coup there was not such a strong appreciation of democracy as there is today...we came from a generation that had not valued democracy enough; the most important thing for us was change because this unjust society could not continue to exist, with unequal distribution of wealth, with extreme poverty. (E3)*

One of the lines of action defined to materialise the purposes of the Collective was the line of "Reflection of social work" which was

> *oriented towards rediscovering the meaning of Social Work in its practice, and in its relationship with the social actors, with the State, and with the social sciences. This reflection also includes significant themes for a social practice from a transformative perspective, which allow for a deepening of thinking and theories for action (STS, 1985, p.17).*

At the beginning, and according to the Collective in 1985, its members belonged or had belonged to different organisational spheres. The organisations in which they were situated included: the Zones Department of the Vicaría de la Solidaridad, of which Daniela Sánchez had been head, and Ana María Medioli, who at the time was head of the Vicaría's eastern zone; Unidad de Investigación para la Acción of the Latin American Faculty of Social Sciences (FLACSO), where Daniela Sánchez was a researcher; SUR's Urban Programme, in which María Teresa Marshall worked; the Creation, Education and Social Animation collective CREAS, where Ximena Valdés worked; the SUR Women's Programme, where Paulina Saball and Andrea Rodó worked; the company Refimet, in the commune of Tiltil, where Gloria Vío worked; and the Centre for Social Studies (CESOC), where María Angélica Morales worked (CTS, 1985).

From these spaces, they worked as social workers, carrying out social intervention with children, women, communities, relatives of disappeared detainees, among others, which enriched debate and reflection at a time when the country lacked these freedoms.

One of the Collective's areas of reflection was on the subject of intervention, which was also being discussed within political and social groups. The question of whether or not there was a single type of subject ('the popular subject') or whether there were various subjects from different social sectors, was an issue that was strongly debated for some time. As one of the interviewees put it, "the popular subject triumphed, which was Gramsci's theory; the influence of Juan Eduardo García Huidobro, who brought Gramsci to Chile, was another influence we received. We were very permeable and open to dialogue" (E1).

In another aspect, for the Collective the construction of the "subject of their own development" was of singular importance; they believed that it was possible from Social Work to have this view of subjects that promotes their self-determination, where Social Work professionals do not remain in a position of expertise that designates the way in which people should live. This idea is reinforced by one interviewee when she states

"respect for the other was the fundamental principle and this included the recognition of people as actors, among the social actors, the recognition of their knowledge, of their own culture... the idea that nobody teaches anybody" (E1) and the recognition of the strong influence of Popular Education in social intervention.

In relation to the above, in the 1950s and until the mid-1960s, Social Work was strongly influenced by North American concepts and theories oriented towards welfare-dependent countries. As stated by Samperio et al. (2004) "there was a need for 'agents of change' to improve, to modify those aspects that were dysfunctional to the social development guidelines established by the power of the North" (p.5), where the main method implemented by professionals was "Case Work", centered on intervention with individuals and families. Subsequently, work with groups and communities was promoted with clear guidelines from the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) and based on the guidelines of the Alliance for Progress (Samperio et al., 2004). It is precisely the Reconceptualization movement that begins to problematise this panorama of technologisation, proposing a revision of concepts, theories and methodologies adopted by the discipline.

The Reconceptualization movement – which was interrupted in Chile by the dictatorship, as well as in other Latin American countries where it was developing – questioned the traditional methods of intervention; as one interviewee states "I arrived at the School when the traditional methods, in the case of Social Work at the Catholic University, were forbidden for being welfares" (E1). In the same sense, another interviewee refers that "it was a mortal sin at that time to be managers of change... however, it became a virtue in the environments in which I lived and worked" (E4) in the 1980s.

The intervention experience of the members of the Collective allows us to state that there was a "recovery of the meaning of assistance" (E1), as one of them mentions, which opens a space to revisit and redefine the place occupied by the methodologies and professional tools that had been criticised at a historical moment. There was the certain possibility of taking a critical look that was also made in a very complex socio-political context.

Another area of reflection was linked to the notion of the "forgotten subject", developed by Ricardo Zúñiga, one of the Collective's close friends. This author reveals a great difficulty which, at the same time, constitutes a professional challenge in the reflective work and is related to,

> *remember that this intervening subject has the hard task of being aware of his own subjectivity, as a personal actor, with all his history and social position, and also as a member of an institution, of a culture and of the parameters that they determine for his intervention (Zúñiga, 2014, p.15).*

In this sense, the positivist approach previously marked the way of thinking and doing in Social Work, as one of the interviewees comments,

> *reality there and me here, and not a hint of subjectivity, of subjectivism at all. That began to change in the 1980s when Ricardo Zúñiga came to Chile and told us: 'you are forgotten subjects, you are not seen and it is very important that you are seen because that tinges the action'. (E1)*

The challenge, then, becomes doubly complex when integrating into the reflection this "forgotten subject", this professional who intervenes with other subjects as part of the construction of society, which in times of dictatorship becomes urgent.

For the Collective, systematisation has become a strategy for interweaving realities, an exercise that today makes it possible to generate professional memory.

The generation of knowledge from Social Work continued to be an imperative, as stated by one of the interviewees who experienced it as a student before the coup d'état: "there was a story about how to produce knowledge, the issue of systematisation, research, participatory action research, there was a whole Latin American movement about it" (E5). Another interviewee reinforces the relevance given to systematisation when she was a lecturer at the Catholic University, a month before the coup d'état

> *...there was the whole line of systematisation and I actually came in with a lot of interest in working in that line, always with trainees and I worked in the population area. The coup came and everything fell apart, Social Work as well. (E3)*

The wealth of knowledge and reflections on social intervention, systematised and produced by the Collective, enabled one of them to collaborate in the systematisation of intervention experiences in the late 1980s and early 1990s, as she points out: "I collaborated in the systematisation with one of them [another collective] that worked

with families of the executed in the north; I collaborated with another in Melipilla with the effects of the earthquake" (E1). Another member recounts her experience of systematisation in the 1990s in Latin America, in Peru and Ecuador, in charge of training and supervision "...working with the [professional] teams so that they could carry out their systematisation" (E3) and forming part of a systematisation collective. Towards the end of the 1990s, in Chile, she was a university lecturer in systematisation courses.

Beyond the different understandings and ways of systematising, what emerges from it, in terms of the work of the Collective, is the configuration of a strategy that is taken up again as a way of communicating, documenting, circulating information and reflections on what was happening in Chile, in the spaces in which the members of the Collective participated and in a country where there was a systematic violation of human rights. As one of the interviewees said

> *we felt that we had a masterful experience in the trade that we wanted to pass on to the young people, because maybe we were not going to continue [alive], because in 1981 there was not much security that you lived in your little house and they were going to break down your door and take you or your children or your partner into custody. (E1)*

The different personal trajectories are intertwined from a particular and common imprint, at the same time becoming collective trajectories. The way in which they are connected by the subjects who participate in the intervention and in the transmission of these experiences, means the Collective, through reflection and dissemination, manages to revisit them in the perspective of a Social Work that contributes to the processes of democratisation seen as unaffordable on the horizon, with the defense of human rights and the improvement of living conditions being imperative at that time.

Final reflections

The Social Work Collective was a professional group that during the 1980s sought alternatives for critical reflection in order to rethink social work. Mobilised by their work in institutions for the defense of human rights, its members made a commitment to professional identity. Throughout this paper we have tried to go through, in part, the experience of the Collective, giving an account of the scenario from which it emerges, its ways of being and doing Social Work, emphasising its collective functioning, the

journal Notes for Social Work as a space for reflection and professional communication, and how these elements are intertwined in professional trajectories.

The Collective is part of professional history and memory; revisiting its experience is an act of memory, which opens up ways of re-signifying our own professional practices and stakes today, mobilising the past-present link, as Aylwin et al. (2004) point out. The motivation to recover this experience, which materialises in functioning as a collective, brought to the present for analysis, acquires relevance in the face of the negationism of recent history and depoliticisation in the framework of the current neoliberal context, which leads us to individualise relationships, personal and professional experiences in the various dimensions of human endeavour. In a society marked by immediacy, how do we generate strategies of resistance from Social Work? The Collective calls and challenges us to seek collective strategies, to group together and create spaces for joint work, reflection and production of knowledge that are available to everyone, and to sustain them collectively. This implies – at the very least – cultivating reflexivity, a critical view, patience, and a shared sense/horizon of professional articulation.

At the same time, the Collective challenges us to broaden the ways of understanding the generation of knowledge; to recover professional experience, both in content and in the way of understanding Social Work, to link the spaces of professional practice and academic spaces, integrating experience as a source of knowledge. In this way, the journey through the Collective's experience highlights the value of a way of generating and disseminating knowledge that collects, communicates and makes visible the intervention, the daily professional practice of social workers. The audacity and courage of the collectives in this – in the midst of a dictatorial context – leads us to question the current ways of being and doing social work.

Finally, the way in which the Collective structures its way of working makes sense to us today more than ever, because it challenges the individualistic way of producing knowledge in academic work. It invites us to think and materialise our research practices to the point of learning the collective reflexive exercise, which we have called "the collective of the Collective".

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ARTICLE

Territories that deafen cries of forced disappearance: Vulnerability, resilience and social work?

Territorios que ensordecen gritos de desaparición forzada. Vulnerabilidad, resiliencia y ¿Trabajo Social?

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Abstract

The disappearance of people in Mexico, over the course of a little more than fifteen years, has grown in a worrying way; currently there is a register of more than 115,000 missing persons. This phenomenon has serious consequences for the relatives of those who have disappeared, as it generates a psychic disarticulation due to the ambiguous loss and the impossibility of going through the mourning process. This article presents an analysis that arises from the qualitative research

Keywords:
Disappearance; Resilience; Vulnerability; Territories; Social Work

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work[3], developed during the years 2019-2020, with relatives of disappeared persons in the states of Guerrero and Veracruz, which aimed to deepen the resilience alternatives in individuals, groups and collectives during the searches for those who have disappeared under the constant vulnerability of those who live in these territories. The findings discussed here allow us to analyse the various challenges for developing relevant Social Work based on the needs oriented towards the construction of alternatives for resilience in the face of the phenomenon of disappearance, in territories where impunity and serious human rights violations are a constant; in this direction, an analysis is presented based theoretically on the processes of resilience in the face of constant vulnerability, as well as on the pending exercise of Social Work. Various situations that the families of disappeared persons face in territories of violence and impunity are presented, as well as the bases that support the opportunity to develop Social Work aimed at strengthening processes of resilience in cases of enforced disappearance.

Resumen

Palabras Clave:
Desaparición resiliencia; vulnerabilidad; territorios; Trabajo Social

La desaparición de personas en México, desde hace poco más de quince años, ha crecido de forma preocupante, actualmente existe un registro de más de 115 mil personas desaparecidas. Este fenómeno genera consecuencias graves para familiares de quienes han desaparecido, ya que genera una desarticulación psíquica a causa de la pérdida ambigua y la imposibilidad de vivir un proceso de duelo. En este artículo se presenta un análisis que surge del trabajo de investigación cualitativa, desarrollada durante los años 2019-2020, con familiares de personas desaparecidas en los estados de Guerrero y Veracruz, la cual tuvo como objeto profundizar en las alternativas de resiliencia en personas, grupos y colectivos durante las búsquedas de quienes han desaparecido bajo la constante vulnerabilidad de quienes viven en estos territorios. Los hallazgos que aquí se discuten permiten analizar los diversos desafíos para desarrollar un Trabajo Social pertinente y sustentado en las necesidades orientadas a la construcción de alternativas de resiliencia frente al fenómeno de desaparición, en territorios donde la impunidad y las violaciones graves a los derechos humanos es una constante; en esta dirección, se presenta un análisis sustentado teóricamente en los procesos de resiliencia ante la constante vulnerabilidad, así como en el ejercicio pendiente del Trabajo Social. Se exponen diversas situaciones que las familias de personas desaparecidas enfrentan en territorios de violencia e impunidad y las bases que fundamentan la oportunidad de desarrollar un Trabajo Social orientado a potenciar procesos de resiliencia en casos de desaparición forzada.

[3] This study was carried out thanks to the National Autonomous University of Mexico (UNAM), under the support of the Postdoctoral Fellowship Programme at UNAM, where I was a fellow at the Regional Centre for Multidisciplinary Research (CRIM) and advised by Dr. Roberto Castro.

Introduction

In Mexico, the phenomenon of forced disappearances dates back to the 1970s; however, in the last 16 years it has increased dramtically (approximately 94%); as of April 2024 there is a record of 115,694 disappeared persons according to the National Register of Disappeared and Missing Persons (from now on RNPDNO). The violent environment that led to this humanitarian crisis in the country is related to the security policies developed by former President Felipe Calderón, which were seconded by the government of former President Enrique Peña Nieto (Gutiérrez, 2016; Trejo and Ley, 2016), which opted for the militarisation of the country by implementing operations to combat drug trafficking groups. The Mexican state has been overwhelmed, the systematic inefficiency of the institutions in charge has led to the searches for missing persons being driven and developed mainly by collectives and families of missing persons, where the greatest representation is made up of women in territories where vulnerability is a constant in the face of violence and impunity (Almanza et al., 2020).

During the fieldwork carried out for this research, on a day of distribution of missing persons search forms in a town in the north of Veracruz, Mexico, through the V National Brigade for the Search for Missing Persons (organised by various collectives of relatives), a woman was interviewed who had come forward to offer help in solidarity. She was a social worker who had resigned from her job[4], which dealt with cases of disappearances. She gave an interview for the development of this study and commented:

> *...they didn't teach me how to solve these problems, nor did I receive training to solve so much suffering, no, no, you can't carry it! It's not only the relatives who suffer for the disappeared, do you understand me? I don't want to compare; I would never do that! But, when you are on the other side, the families want answers, they want you to give yourself totally, you can't do that. The bosses put pressure on me, they made commitments and then they threw the file at us, one after the other, "file it" they said, then another new official arrived and I had to answer for why things were done like that, they even blamed you [...] You find out things that put you in danger, you live here, you know who is wrong, if you work there you are always under surveillance, they know who your family is and everything, that's why I resigned. But I can't help feeling bad, I feel guilty for not having been able to do my job, from the outside I want to help, that's why I come to*[5].

[4] Her work was carried out in a judicial institution in the region where cases of disappearance are followed up. The specificity of the data is omitted in order to respect anonymity and to guarantee the security of the participants in this study.
[5] There is no identification, as the testimony is only used as a preamble to the study.

Faced with an unstoppable spiral of violence linked to criminal groups related to drug trafficking and security institutions, crimes against humanity, such as the forced disappearance of people, have disrupted the lives of thousands of people. Many professions have been surprised by the lack of disciplinary expertise to address these types of problems, which are located in areas of violence and vulnerability. However, the diverse needs of the victims of this phenomenon cannot be subject to the procrastination of the professions, in particular Social Work. The role of this profession, in this case focused on the accompaniment of people with disappeared relatives, is an unfinished task that is not free of complexities and that has to be developed in territories of impunity and violence. But how can social work be developed under these circumstances? Insisting on conscious accompaniment and the recognition of professional biases become relevant and cannot be overlooked.

Among the consequences that affect the relatives of missing persons we can observe disorders in mental health and physical health, transformations in private and public life, alteration in economic situation and family dynamics (Manríquez et al., 2019; Salazar, 2018; 2022). The disappearance of a family member produces an incessant uncertainty related to the lack of knowledge about the whereabouts of the loved one, knowing whether they are alive or dead; the trauma generated can be aggravated because there is a before and after in the lives of family members where, despite the time elapsed, pain is a feature of the present (Giraldo et al., 2008; Salazar, 2018; 2022).

Cases of enforced disappearance are the violent expression that has the greatest disarticulating power over those who suffer the disappearance of one or more loved ones (Gatti, 2011). The ambiguous loss caused by disappearance in families causes prolonged episodes of stress and confusion about the meaning of life (Manríquez et al., 2019); the high level of ambiguity produced by the phenomenon of disappearance increases psychological distress in the families of missing persons, being greater than for people who suffer the confirmed death of a loved one. This is intensified by the permanence of a context of violence, corruption and impunity (Almanza et al., 2020; Salazar and Castro, 2020). There is also a worsening of the problems generated by gender issues, due to the fact that it is mostly women who carry out the search for missing persons and the actions in search of judicial follow-up (Autor, 2021).

[2] The research project and its respective instruments were submitted for evaluation to the Ethics Committee of the Universidad Alberto Hurtado.

In various territories where impunity and violence are a constant and where the vulnerability of those who have been affected is exacerbated, resilience processes have been identified through different studies carried out with victims of extreme violence[6], which explain the possibility of experiencing recovery alternatives. The accelerated increase of human rights violations in Mexico, coupled with an evident impunity, generates a feeling of vulnerability among the general population, which, under an oxymoron effect, influences the development of various coping strategies that allow interpreting and finding a sense of understanding in the face of this new reality (Castro and Erviti, 2014; Autor, 2022). Similarly, through the studies developed by the Author (2018; 2020a; 2022) and Autor (2020b; 2021), alternatives for generating resilience in women who have suffered violence and the disappearance of one or more family members in Mexico are observed. This article analyses and exposes the needs that arise in the context of disappearance, highlighting the need for Social Work to focus on the generation of resilient alternatives for people who have suffered and continue to suffer the disappearance of their loved ones, considering that they are also searching for their relatives in territories where their vulnerability is a constant.

Vulnerability, Resilience and Social Work? Necessary clarifications

In order to understand the constant vulnerability in which people who have disappeared/missing family members live, it is important to point out the meaning of vulnerability in this work. According to Osorio (2017) and Ochoa and Guzmán (2020), vulnerability refers to the disadvantaged condition in which a person, a community or a system finds itself in the face of increased threats or risks and the lack of necessary resources, or weakening of coping mechanisms, to overcome the damage; from its etymological root it refers to being exposed to a wound. Vulnerability has been used with different connotations, either from addressing the internal characteristics of an individual or social group, or from the risks that exist in different environments (Barahona, 2006; Liedo, 2021).

In much of the world, experiences of vulnerability are closely linked to perceptions of insecurity (Pérez, 2005; Adger, 2006; Kanashiro et al., 2018). According to Perez:

> *...vulnerability refers to the notion of insecurity, whether it manifests itself as a weakness, or exposure to disadvantage, a possibility of harm to the physical, psychological or moral integrity of the person, or even exposure to a rule of law that violates fundamental rights and guarantees. (2005, p.850).*

[6] See studies by Aisenberg and Herrenkohl (2008); Barudy and Marquebreucq (2005); Cyrulnik (2001; 2014); Flores (2007); García and Domínguez (2013): Hoyos (2014); Torralba (2013).

Vulnerability can be perceived in potential victims of criminal violence in a symptomatic way: they make changes in their itineraries, seclude themselves in private spaces and invest resources in protective devices; fear is considerably represented in their daily lives (Bustamante, 2017; González et al., 2013; Hopenhayn, 2001). For direct victims of violent crime, vulnerability can be present even after these experiences, due to the emotional situation they experience, as it causes them to be unable to use the usual psychological resources; the emotional fragility can be a determinant for being vulnerable even to other crimes (Echeburúa et al., 2002; González et al., 2013; Macleod and Duarte, 2019). A characteristic of vulnerability is its changing dynamics, which responds to different temporalities and to the different social contexts in which the daily lives of those who have been violated are framed.

Likewise, resilience is understood as a process that requires the dynamic balance of various internal and external factors that facilitate a development to overcome adversity and overcome traumatic episodes, in such a way that a transformation can be achieved and a life project can be realised (Cyrulnik, 2001; Author, 2020). After having suffered a violent event, a key element to develop resilient processes is to give meaning to a negative experience through the understanding of the event, under an interpretation that allows the development of attitudes that facilitate the individual to emerge from the trauma, which is favoured by social support (Cyrulnik, 2001; Martínez and Peñata, 2023). Support from at least one other person is essential for resilient reconstruction (Torralba, 2013).

Advances in the study of resilience have influenced the relational paradigm, in which the ties that bind people and systems together allow them to move towards a shared trajectory (Gómez and Kotliarenco, 2010). Relational factors respond both to identity and to different contexts and circumstances, so it is necessary to discern and understand strategies according to the logic and situation of people when they have to face difficult situations (Estrella, 2020; García and Domínguez, 2013).

There are some factors that impede resilience: isolation (social interaction is needed for the construction and exchange of stories that allow for the representation of oneself) and culture (the stigmatisation and re-victimisation that develops against victims in some regions or social circles) (Cyrulnick, 2014). Generating processes that facilitate resilience is not a work free of complexity; the trajectory of resilience is far from a linear process, and resilience is inscribed in a temporality that determines its meaning and constantly modifies its form (Pourtouis, 2014).

Studies related to violent acts and environments should favour the exploration of the understanding and promotion of resilience at the individual, group, family and community level; in this way, it can have an impact on motivating the understanding of risk factors and protective factors and use such knowledge for the development of relevant social programmes (Aisenberg and Herrenkohl, 2008). Resilience becomes an opportunity for Social Work, it is a field of action that will allow diverse actions on complex situations related to the phenomenon of enforced disappearance of persons.

Social advocacy actions aimed at the families of missing persons must start from a clear reflection on their scope; such actions can be built from the understanding of the main transformations that the phenomenon causes on families and the knowledge of the main processes that allow them to cope and overcome the various adverse situations that disappearance generates. This positions Social Work professionals in a reality that needs to be addressed in an immediate, rigorous and well-founded manner.

According to Villalba (2003), in a social intervention the resilience approach is closely related to the constructs of risk and protection. From the author's perspective, the focus on strengths should not underestimate the potential of risk, so that, by considering it, coping strategies have a better chance of development and effectiveness. For Bello (2005), it is very important to avoid giving fragmented, residual and disjointed attention to the interests of people with disappeared relatives; on the contrary, the author insists that actions should be sought that are part of the reparation of rights, the guarantee of judicial follow-up and search, the recognition of the diversity of needs that arise with the disappearance, the right and recognition of the political status of the families; In addition, it must be considered that achieving professional accompaniment and social advocacy actions is complex, as within territories where violence and insecurity persist there are tensions and contradictions around emerging demands and needs; in cases of survival there are constant threats and risks, and attention focused on the victims and not on the phenomenon that causes the victimisation has an impact on the permanence of the phenomenon.

Method

The research was conducted using a qualitative paradigm and a phenomenological approach. The selection of participants responded to the rapport achieved with people during the accompaniment in actions of denunciation and search brigades for missing persons between 2019 and 2020. The inclusion criteria responded to a careful selec-

tion based on the object of the study, the ethical rigour[7] with which the research was carried out and the following characteristics: having one or more relatives who have disappeared in the states of Guerrero and Veracruz; belonging to collectives of relatives searching for their missing persons; being of legal age; and agreeing to participate in the study. Thus, there were 24 participants in the research (19 were women), with an age range of 24-75 years. In addition to this selection of participants, and based on the information gathered during the fieldwork, an interview was added of a 37-year-old female social worker who participated in solidarity with the members of collectives formed by relatives of disappeared persons.

The collection of information was carried out through in-depth interviews developed during the fieldwork implemented in 2019 and 2020; they lasted between 60 and 90 minutes, were audio-recorded with the approval of each participant, transcribed and subsequently a content analysis was made considering the phenomenological approach of the study, which involved an analysis of the meanings that the participants give to their experiences linked to the phenomenon of disappearance. MAXQDA version 12 software was used. The main ethical aspects that were considered for the research were: willingness to participate in the study; providing informed consent; taking care of confidentiality and guaranteeing anonymity; prudent treatment of the topic, respecting and taking care of the overflow of emotions of each participant; with regard to the latter, professional guidance and support was provided by colleagues with experience in the mental care of indirect victims of disappearance.

Results and discussion

The findings discussed here are aimed at analysing the different challenges for promoting assertive Social Work based on the construction of alternatives for resilience in the face of the needs linked to the phenomenon of the disappearance of persons in territories characterised by impunity and serious human rights violations. In this way, two main sections have been organised to facilitate an understanding, on the one hand, of the experiences lived by people with disappeared relatives (in a thematic order based on the relevance and intensity with which the participants narrated their experiences) and, on the other, of the bases that argue for the development of Social Work aimed at strengthening resilience processes in cases of forced disappearance in Mexico. In this sense, an analysis is presented on the experiences lived in terms of the emotional impact experienced, the deteriorated health, the priorities re-established, the precarious institutional care, the family transformations and their relational nature with processes

[7] The ethical aspects of this research were discussed and reviewed collegially with the research group overseeing the study at institutional level.

of resilience in which Social Work can have an effective impact from three dimensions: personal, family and territorial.

Cries in the desert: The preamble for the professional action of Social Work in the face of the permanence of vulnerability under territories of violence and impunity

The emotional impact of the disappearance on the participants was acute during the first months; they experienced feelings of fear, anguish, helplessness, despair, hopelessness, anger and rage; in some cases, they were unable to stop crying, sleeping or feeding; the latter has been pointed out as characteristics of those who live through a traumatic experience (Duarte and Olivas, 2020; Echeburúa et al., 2005). The case participants in this study show that disappearance generates similar consequences. The main ones are summarised in the following table:

Table 1. Main consequences of disappearance

Physical illnesses	Mental illnesses	Family impacts	Economic disruption	Social disorders
Diabetes	Depression	Family reconfigurationar	Reduction of income due to disappearance of main supplier or job abandonment	Stigmatisation
High pressure	Anxiety.	Role reversal		Reduction of share capital
Hypertension	-Stress			
Fibromyalgia	Sleep disorders	Family fragmentation	Increased expenses related to legal and search processes	Social isolation
Nervous colitis	Eating disorders	Addictions in family members		Loss of trust in others
		Loss of communication between family members		

Source: Own elaboration

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Attending to physical and mental disorders is not a priority for those looking for their relatives; they let many months, even years, go by before making the decision to attend to their health. Their physical and mental exhaustion has a major impact on their quality of life and their very existence:

> *My priority is to find my daughter; they tell me "control your blood pressure" but how to control it? Months went by before I realised that I had high blood pressure. What I want is to find her, the truth is that I forget to take the pill, they tell me I need tests, the other time I had 180/110, I was looking for her, I don't even feel it high. (P7)*

Among the narratives it was possible to observe that even when they were aware of the deterioration of their health, they showed more concern and occupation for their relatives than for themselves, thus postponing their care and treatment:

> *Yes, I have high blood sugar, but him? They don't complain, you have to pay attention and monitor them, it hurts my heart more, I take insulin and that's it, but him? (P16)*

There are situations that increase vulnerability, which they assume without resistance, putting affection for those who have disappeared first. Most of the participants are the ones who carry out the searches in life and in the field[8] for their relatives. The following account exposes the territories that place them in constant vulnerability, that put their physical and mental integrity at risk and that they have to deal with during the searches:

> *It doesn't matter if you are accompanied by authorities, if you go with other family members or if you go alone, they watch you, they tell you where to look and where not to look, they have power, I have already confronted them, but my partner who was suborned had her house burned down, and I had to take her down a little bit, then I go back, where they told me not to look, there I go back. (P12).*

The territories where the disappearance of family members of participants occurred are characterised by their diversity and complexity; each case is staged by adverse, violent situations of clear vulnerability. For example, in one of the cases the disappearance occurred in the workplace of the disappeared person, which was later the scene of multiple homicides and burned down along with other commercial establishments

[8] This refers to searches for bodies or skeletal remains in places where clandestine graves are presumed to exist.

in the area; another case occurred under an informal curfew imposed by the leading criminal group in the town where access to representatives of security institutions was nil; another case was reported in a town where the ministerial authorities refused to register the report of disappearance when it came to women who disappeared under suspicion of a crime of trafficking.

The common factors identified in the cases of those who participate in this study are: the disappearances occurred in the states of Guerrero and Veracruz; they have not received adequate accompaniment or treatment from the Social Work profession; the attention provided by the institutions is insufficient and/or limited. The latter is represented by participants P1, P3 and P14 who share:

> *...to ask for help, to find hands that could, that could help, to look for justice, to look for protection, it was, it was like shouting in the desert, every time I shouted I saw myself being destroyed in a, in a mountain, a mountain without echo, where you no longer knew who was who (P1).*
>
> *The Social Worker said to me: "look, I am only here to take data, you come with me, you are the ones who bring the missing children", I told her the data while shouting. (P3).*
>
> *She said to me: "I am a social worker, not a psychologist, take your granddaughter to one", I knew she was not a psychologist, I answered her: "my granddaughter is being bullied because her mother is missing, how come she is the one who needs a psychologist? What she needs is for you to do something with those children at school". (P14)*

The above experience reflects the lack of assertiveness in the institutional attention of countless cases; not only are the requests and demands related to the search for their relatives and procedures to achieve justice met with indifference and incompetence, but there is also little attention and initiative to generate appropriate intervention models, in accordance with the particular needs of each case; in addition, the lack of social interventions aimed at generating a social culture sensitive to the phenomenon that avoids stigmatisation, violence and re-victimisation is evident.

In many of the cases there are different actions of intimidation under a territory of impunity, with the knowledge of those who have been in charge of security and justice, as reflected in the following account:

> *Outside the prosecutor's office, who tells us: "Why are you coming? You'd better take care of those who are still with you, stop fucking around" all the employees realised this, including the officials, but they became assholes. (P11)*

The emotional situation of the families is also affected by living under a constant state of alert, fear and vulnerability that the search territories provoke. For Guevara and Chávez (2018), in Mexico there is a complex panorama in which impunity has become structural and, consequently, there is a lack of punishment for these actions, which has an impact on the repetition of serious crimes, especially the disappearance of persons. Among other adversities, it is observed that the judicial follow-up of their cases is subject to constant changes of officials and public servants, which has an impact on an inefficient knowledge of their cases and exposes them to re-victimisation and delays a correct judicial follow-up:

> *They changed my MP again[9], that's three times in two years, and again the same thing! To tell him the whole story, all the details, that's re-victimisation, I told them! They tell me, we are going to integrate your file, and what had already been formed? They didn't have it anymore! There was only the complaint (P6).*

> *Yes, she was the social worker, who tells me "does she help me or not with the information? I only follow instructions, if you have a complaint tell him, he is new, maybe he does listen to you" nobody is responsible, do you know how many times I have been changed from MP? Four times, every time it happens many things are lost from the file. (P8).*

In addition to the procedural complications they face, they also deal with the family transformations that disappearance generates. Family spaces change according to the new roles that are assumed and obligations that are transferred to other family members. In nine of the cases, the participants acquired responsibility for their grandchildren after the disappearance of one or both parents, and this has had an impact on care, upbringing and financial responsibility. There is a return to a life cycle that they thought was already closed, where the care of the children (in the midst of generation gaps) is among their main concerns. In families that are made up of older people, the acquisition of new responsibilities for the maintenance and upbringing of their grandchildren has an impact on the family dynamics and there are complex limitations to generate economic resources to meet their needs.

[9] MP: Public Prosecutor's Office.

In families where one or more members are missing, there are constant feelings of pain, guilt, fear, frustration, among others. Each member, according to the links with the disappeared person and the role assigned within the family space, will have a different way of responding to the event in their daily lives. In any case, it is possible to observe that these families experience ambiguous mourning; according to Cabodevilla (2007), in this case people perceive the person as physically absent, but psychologically present, and these are usually long and difficult processes to close.

The reconfiguration of families after a violent event is far from a mechanical process, as daily life and their sense of coexistence is permeated by various behaviours that refer to feelings of fear, vulnerability, confusion, frustration, among others (Palacio, 2004). In this study it was possible to identify that in the participating families there are reconfigurations that show changes in authority figures, assigned roles, family size and structure, economic responsibility and parenting dynamics.

The phenomenon of disappearance has implications for families that must be analysed from a gender perspective. Although in a family with one or more disappeared members, all members are affected, as months and years go by, it is mostly women who do not give up their search and demand for attention and justice, which has different implications on their lifestyles, state of health and continuous exposure to risk, all of which increases their vulnerability (Autor, 2021).

Strengthening a path in resilience: An opportunity to influence for Social Work

Resilient development occurs through a process of transformation, which challenges linear determinisms assigned to those who experience an adverse situation. Among the primary characteristics of resilience is the capacity to rebuild and resist. It is the individual who expresses his or her capacity for coping, strength and struggle in the face of destruction, i.e. he or she recovers from the pain, despair, anguish, depression and other sequelae of the traumatic event, to emerge stronger (Hoyos, 2014). It is essential to consider that the experience of traumatic experiences has an impact on the increase of tension and anguish in people; the memory of what happened will always be part of their lives and will not be erased from their memory (Sanz, 2014). Care actions should be oriented towards accompanying them under the recognition of latent vulnerability, ambiguous loss and the impossibility of closing a mourning process.

The process of resilience tends to occur in a differentiated manner and each individual may have different reactions to the same event, which responds to the need for more or less time to process the experience. It is also related to variables such as age, personal history or the meaning given to the experience (Quiñonez, 2007). It is important to recognise resilience as a dialectical process and not as a condition or state, which will allow us to understand it as an evolutionary progression that responds to new vulnerabilities, contexts or conditions.

Within social work, three fundamental qualities are required to generate resilience-oriented processes: 1) understanding and accepting reality; 2) believing that life has meaning; and 3) the ability to generate strategies or alternative solutions. The ability to discern the real dimension of the problem and to take proactive actions that allow for the development of mechanisms and strategies to address it are essential elements to promote resilience. Quiñonez (2007) specifies that within the resilient process it is substantial to know the capacity of recognition that the subject achieves of him/herself in three dimensions: cognitive, emotional and attitudinal. In agreement with the author, it is proposed that the practice of Social Work, in territories of violence and impunity, should be oriented towards users recognising not only the different aspects of the problem in its right dimension, but also the opportunity offered by the re-signification of the adversities to be faced. In this regard, the following story is shared:

> *I knew that the rest of my family was in danger after my son's disappearance, that half of my wife's life had been taken away from her and now we had to take care of her other half. We had to organise ourselves so that they wouldn't take more than they had already taken, we had to take care of ourselves and defend ourselves. Our daughter had already reproached us that we had also disappeared with Gerardo, so we had to make agreements as a family, organise new responsibilities, give each other space and support, this, this fucked us up yes, but it has also brought us closer together. (P16)*

Recognising the emotional dimension allows for the experience of a wide range of emotional states that accompany the experience, where alternatives arise that allow manifestations such as support, solidarity, understanding, support, loyalty and strengthening of ties with other people suffering similar situations (Quiñones, 2007). It is fundamental for Social Work management to provide spaces that allow people with missing relatives to share emotions, both in terms of relief and catharsis, as well as emotions that support empathetic actions with their peers that allow them to generate co-resilience[10] . In this regard:

[10] It is understood as the generation of personal resilience through influencing the resilience of another person or persons.

> *It is difficult for people who have not lived through this to understand you, there is no way, they have to be in your shoes to be able to do so, and I don't wish that on anyone else. But you need to cry, shout, get angry, get hugs, it's fucking hard! That's why we unite, that's why we're here, because between us we know what it's like to carry your disappeared on your back, you know, you know that the dates hurt, that the searches are not easy, but you see? Here we understand each other, we don't judge each other, we walk as a family, we gain brothers, sisters, you help, they help you, and that's how we walk (P21).*

The attitudinal dimension, mentioned by Quiñonez (2007), gives rise to the immediate construction of alternatives for the survival of themselves, the people who make up their family nuclei or the people in the environment who are present. It allows them to seek information or help of an instrumental nature in order to construct alternative solutions:

> *...then I looked at my daughter, she was heartbroken, crying, I approached her, I told her: "you are not going to let them take away the rest of your life, you have to embrace your life, nobody here is going to stop looking, but nobody is going to stop living either". Look at her now, she just got her degree, and here she is in the brigade, embracing her life, lifting others up. (p.18)*

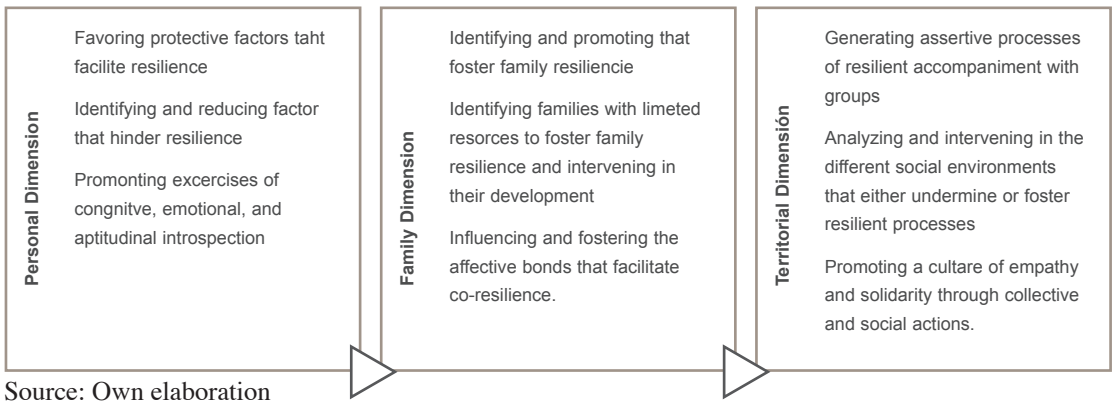
Resilience is not an automatic process; a person can be destroyed by a badly managed adversity. A resilient process allows a development under a management role of the experience away from victimisation, which promotes the possibility of representing and organising the situation one is suffering with strategies and the identification of one's strengths in the face of events. It is forged in situations of adversity, which is why it is necessary to recognise it, and this implies integrating the experience into individual, family, group and community identity. It is woven relationally and through narrative reasoning where there are spaces for listening, and the possibilities for self-restoration and growth are discovered (Cyrulnik, 2001). Resilience gives way to a relational paradigm in which the relational ties that bind people and systems together allow them to move towards a shared trajectory (Gómez and Kotliarenco, 2010). A series of communicational capacities are promoted that allow the sharing of beliefs and narratives, which foster feelings of coherence, collaboration, efficacy and confidence to face difficulties (Quiñonez, 2007).

The resilience that is generated in community has a close relationship with collective intelligence, which is understood as the generative capacity to produce new social practices and protective environments that minimise chaos in the face of adversity and offer environments of trust, so as to generate an interweaving of knowledge oriented towards the use of knowledge for the resolution of problems and collective care (Granada, 2018). Social Work should emphasise in its practice solidarity actions aimed at understanding emotions, strengthening relationships and care, fostering self-esteem and self-concept, the ability to attribute meaning or new meanings to life, self-help and mutual aid, influencing the development of greater group capacities for resilient processes (Villalba, 2006), thus recognising the paths built by collectives made up of relatives of missing persons, favouring their reproduction or permanence.

The relational sense of resilience originates when there is a joint recognition of the possibility of transformation, resistance and growth under adverse conditions, where there is a recognition of culture and context under the expectation of finding resources and strategies that favour processes that prioritise the analysis of group strengths and focus on their empowerment, thus reducing weaknesses. In terms of the phenomenon of disappearance, it involves not only the victims, but also the organisations and institutions that work in its attention and prosecution.

Socially influencing in territories of violence and impunity requires an openness to the professional reconstruction of identity, which allows for self-evaluation, the evaluation of professional praxis and the carrying out of diverse analyses that facilitate the recognition of the general and particular needs that can be addressed in each context, and the possibilities of influencing transformation processes that allow family members a process of reconstruction in resilience in order to give continuity to their life projects. The families affected by the disappearance are a source of knowledge about the different circumstances that afflict them, which is why the accompaniment from Social Work should be proposed, discussed and designed horizontally with the same people who are searching for their disappeared. In this way, the profession would recognise the need to visualise the human condition from the sentiments of those who suffer from humiliation, as a cornerstone for its intervention, linked to social justice and dignity, under an exhaustive search for methods, tools and resources that can have an impact on dynamic, reflexive and ethical interventions (Letelier and Norambuena, 2021). A preamble for action is identified through three dimensions: personal, family and territorial.

Figure 1. Dimensions for resilient social work with relatives of missing persons



Source: Own elaboration

The people who can provide accurate knowledge about the needs and challenges surrounding disappearances are those who are searching for their disappeared; in this sense, in order to elaborate social advocacy actions that facilitate spaces for resilience, it is necessary to walk and build together with them. In this way, it will be possible to work on awareness-raising processes, generate awareness and knowledge, propose and rethink actions of accompaniment and produce solidarity actions that allow for reconstruction through adversity.

Reflections not to conclude

In Mexico there are several structural factors that generate violent territories where impunity and vulnerability are a constant, and resolving them is a complex challenge for the State. In this country, every person is vulnerable to disappearance and people who have already been vulnerable due to the disappearance of a family member continue to be exposed, considering the threats, exposure to other violent acts and re-victimisation. The scarce social policy aimed at victim families and the permanence of conditions that make the territories hostile exacerbate and complicate the various situations they face.

It is recognised that attention to persons with missing relatives, from a social policy perspective, implies profound changes at a structural, legislative and judicial level; nevertheless, there are various possibilities of influencing processes and spaces that facilitate the generation of resilience and co-resilience when interventions characterised by understanding, listening and planned collective actions are generated. Although people with missing relatives experience complex situations and considerable

vulnerability, the social support they receive facilitates processes that help to resolve their emerging needs and influence resilience processes.

One of the limitations of this study is the lack of detailed information regarding professional work with children who are victims of parental disappearance, which allows us to sustain how Social Work is also noticeable by its absence. In this sense, going deeper into the social interventions from Social Work aimed at children under such conditions becomes an invitation, an invitation to continue to follow up this line of research and to promote new studies that generate knowledge with social impact.

Finally, highlighting the impunity and violence that characterises the territories around disappearances will allow us to understand the different contexts that are faced; in this way social mechanisms of solidarity can be activated. The main challenge for Social Work consists of knowing how to walk alongside those who are searching for their disappeared, jointly identifying their needs and resources, assessing the environments for the development of activities and safeguarding, managing spaces for coexistence and listening, carrying out actions that reduce social resistance marked by stigma, to know and influence the knowledge of accompaniment in situations related to field search processes, exhumation processes and identification processes; but above all, it requires a conscious accompaniment of their trajectories, in which they demand to meet their families, truth and justice.

For Social Work to be relevant, the relatives of missing persons must be listened to at all times; given the diversity of their stories, it is necessary not to ignore their needs and to recognise their complexity. Intervening, influencing and acting from a meshing of knowledge built with families and collectives is a latent need. In this sense, Social Work aimed at generating spaces for resilience in the contexts of disappearance in Mexico is a pending debt.

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PROPUESTAS CRÍTICAS EN TRABAJO SOCIAL

CRITICAL PROPOSALS IN SOCIAL WORK

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ARTICLE

The student connections of Social Work at the Catholic University of Valparaíso with the working classes (1967-1973)

Vínculos del estudiantado de Trabajo Social de la Universidad Católica de Valparaíso con las clases populares (1967-1973)

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Abstract

The article reports on the relationship of the Social Work students of the UCV with the popular classes of Valparaíso during the Latin American Reconceptualization Movement. The premise proposes that in the period studied (1967-1973), a process of approximation of the students of Social Work of the UCV with the popular classes took place due to the intensification of the country's socio-poli-

Keywords:
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tical contradictions, outside the university. The objective of the article is to characterise the relationship between UCV's TS students and the popular classes, for which two types of sources were considered: students' theses and an interview with Vicente Faleiros, professor of the School during the period studied. Two periods are identified (1967-1969 and 1970-1973), analysed from three dimensions that account for the elements that condition the relationship, namely: *the political conformation of the student body, its theoretical-methodological positions, and practical-interventive relationships*. The results show that, during the first period, the student body was interested in the answers to the problems of the popular classes, motivating the search for new references to understand reality; important are the *developmentalist* and *marginality theories,* which are coherent with the observed tendency towards a more tutelary role oriented towards greater participation and integration of the popular classes within society. During the second period, the student body was politicised in more radical terms and, from horizontality, sought to develop perspectives of collaboration and co-construction; theoretically influenced by *classical Marxism and dependency theory,* the student body oriented its reflection and action depending on the interests of the popular classes, intensifying the relationship with respect to the first stage. We conclude with a discussion about the study's scope, limits, and projections.

Resumen

El artículo da cuenta de los vínculos del estudiantado de Trabajo Social (TS) de la Universidad Católica de Valparaíso (UCV) con las clases populares de Valparaíso en el contexto del Movimiento de Reconceptualización latinoamericana. La premisa propone que en el período estudiado (1967-1973) tiene lugar un proceso de aproximación del estudiantado de Trabajo Social de la UCV con las clases populares, el cual se fue intensificando acorde al proceso de agudización de las contradicciones del contexto sociopolítico del país, afuera de la Universidad. El objetivo del artículo es caracterizar el vínculo del estudiantado de Trabajo Social de la UCV con las clases populares, para lo cual se consideraron dos tipos de fuentes: tesis de estudiantes y una entrevista con Vicente Faleiros, profesor de dicha Escuela en el período estudiado. Se identifican dos períodos (1967-1969 y 1970-1973) analizados a partir de 3 dimensiones que dan cuenta de los elementos que condicionan el vínculo, a saber: la conformación política del estudiantado, sus posturas teórico-metodológicas y los vínculos práctico-interventivos. Los resultados muestran que durante el primer período se observa a un estudiantado in-

Palabras Clave: *Historia del Trabajo Social chileno; Reconceptualización; Universidad Católica de Valparaíso; Movimiento estudiantil; Clases populares*

teresado en las respuestas a las problemáticas de las clases populares, motivando la búsqueda de nuevas referencias para comprender la realidad; importantes son las *teorías desarrollistas* y de la *marginalidad,* las que son coherentes con la tendencia observada hacia un rol más tutelar, orientado hacia una mayor participación e integración de las clases populares dentro de la sociedad. Durante el segundo período, se identifica un estudiantado politizado en términos más radicales y que desde la horizontalidad buscó desarrollar perspectivas de colaboración y co-construcción; teóricamente influenciado por el *marxismo clásico* y la *teoría de la dependencia,* el estudiantado orientó su reflexión y acción en función de los intereses de las clases populares, intensificando el vínculo respecto de la primera etapa. Finalmente, se identifican ciertos matices y contradicciones dentro de este proceso.

Introduction

The following article focuses on the relationship between Chilean Social Work and the popular classes in a certain period of our history (1967-1973), based on a very specific experience: the School of Social Work at the UCV and the link between its students and the popular movement of the time, circumscribed within the context of what in the historiography of the profession is known as the Reconceptualization Movement. In this sense, we will begin by explaining the theoretical keys from which we will approach the object.

Firstly, the article positions itself from a particular approach: the historical-critical perspective of Social Work (SW) from which – anchored in the critique of political economy and dialectics in Marx – the discipline is understood as a product, while contributing to the reproduction of the social relations of production, in the context of class antagonism, characteristic of the capitalist social order (Iamamoto, 1995). From this point of view, the history of the discipline cannot be understood in a purely endogenous manner, but rather the understanding of its social meaning must be articulated with a reading of the socio-historical determinants that peculiars the ethical-political horizons and the scope of professional reflection and practice (Iamamoto, 1995).

Secondly, understanding that there are different ways of studying professional history, this article is particularly interested in – and, therefore, is a key point of entry into – the discipline's relationship with the popular sectors. It is therefore in dialogue with what is known as the 'New Social History', from which to view change and resistance with a focus on the movement of popular subjects within history (Salazar and Pinto, 1999).

A third key approach, from Benjamin, invites us to *brush history against the grain* (Benjamin, 2008), understanding that it is never a neutral or innocent exercise in terms of the present. The historiographical exercise that we will present below aims, in this sense, to account for a will and its context: to bring the voices of the vanquished into the present (Benjamin, 2008), to account for their unfulfilled expectations and to unsettle/problematise us, as heirs of a history.

From these keys, our proposal aims to characterise the link between the TS student body of the UCV and the popular classes in the period from 1967 to 1973. The premise that guides the paper argues that *the process of rapprochement between the TS-UCV student body and the popular classes gradually but persistently intensified as the contradictions of the socio-political context that permeated the School and the university spaces became more acute*. In this sense, and coherent with the historical-critical perspective adopted as the theoretical approach from which the study was conducted, the sources consulted allow us to observe that a critical perspective was maturing in the disciplinary discussion – within the student body – which became more radical as the class conflicts also became more radical.

As for the analysis of the period under study, it is carried out considering two stages: 1967 to 1969 and 1970 to 1973. In 1967, the University Reform burst onto the scene with force, an issue that is central to understanding the experience of the Valparaíso School (Arancibia, 2017; Faleiros, 2017), which is also consistent with the review of student theses in which the adoption of qualitatively new elements from that year onwards is strongly shown. The second stage begins in 1970, with the triumph of the Popular Unity and the accelerated process of change that this entails, which shows a clear correlate in the adoption of new perspectives in the reflection observed in the theses reviewed. The process, evidently, came to a close in 1973.

The methodology consists of a content analysis based on a review of historiographical sources[2], specifically 20 theses written by students for the title of Social Worker/Assistant between 1967 and 1973[3], out of a total of 96 theses written during the period[4]. This exploratory analysis offers, in this first instance, a descriptive review that aims to provide a research basis for developing new and deeper research questions on this topic. The criteria for inclusion/exclusion in the selection of the corpus have to do with theses that deal with the links between Social Service/Social Work and the popular sectors, as well as the conceptions that the students in training had about themselves and about this link. As a complement to the analysis, an interview conducted in September 2023 with

[2] For an understanding of the weight of this type of source, see Aróstegui (1995).
[3] See the full list at the end of the article under Theses reviewed.
[4] The initial review covered theses from 1964 onwards. It is in 1967 that the emergence of terminology and concepts that reflect new theoretical-political and methodological orientations can be seen most clearly.

Vicente de Paula Faleiros, professor at the School of Social Work at the UCV between 1970 and 1973, was included, which provides elements for understanding the context and the reflections of the student body in that period.

On the basis of the work carried out and the periodisation proposed above, three dimensions can be identified from which it is possible to read and characterise the link between the student body and the popular classes in this period: (a) Political shaping of the university student body in its proposed links and understanding of itself; (b) Theoretical-methodological positions and professional role; (c) Practical-interceptive links.

In terms of structure, the first section of the article provides a brief contextualisation of the most important elements in which the object of study of this article is framed; in the second section, we will present the main findings of the study. We end with conclusions about the scope, limits and possible projections of the results of the study.

Brief contextualisation of historical and disciplinary constraints

The context in which the object of study is situated has been studied by different research and from different perspectives, both in Chile (Arancibia, 2017; Cáceres, 2015; Castañeda and Salamé, 2022; González, 2010; Illanes, 2008; Morales, 2015; Orellana 2017; Panez and Orellana 2016; Ruz 2016; Vidal, 2016), as well as in the Latin American context (Alayón 2005; Da Costa, 2017; Eiras et al, 2022; Iamamoto and Dos Santos, 2020; Iamamoto et al, 2021). In this sense, and starting from a global perspective, the Cold War and its Latin American manifestations (Cuban Revolution/ Alliance for Progress) are undoubtedly elements that will permeate in multiple ways the social struggles in Chile in those years, This was the scenario where the proposals of the Second Vatican Council and Liberation Theology came into play, as well as the alleged 'middle ways' between capitalism and socialism – expressed by the *Revolution in Freedom* of the Frei Montalva government and the *Chilean Way to Socialism,* later with the Popular Unity.

However, and in line with the second key point mentioned above, our focus will be on the rise, prominence, organisational capacity and achievements of the Chilean popular movement of that period, since – as we shall see in the analysis – it is this phenomenon that most strongly pushes for changes that will be experienced in the SC experience of the UCV, both at university level, in general, and at the level of the Social Service/ Social Work, in particular. In this sense, there are two points that we are interested in highlighting.

Firstly, the relevance of actors orbiting in subaltern organisations and social movements that disputed politics at the time and their relevance at the national level. There is a vast historiographical literature that highlights the staging of unprecedented forms of struggle and conquest of the popular movement (Gaudichaud, 2016; Garcés, 27-29 March 2003; Thieleman, 2018; Cury, 2018; Schlotterbeck, 2018). In this sense, it seems important to us to highlight – following Peter Winn's thesis (2013) – the relevance of social movements and class-based organisations, as groups that take an active role in the realisation of the societal project that, already with Allende, embodies the Unidad Popular. The author identifies a Revolution from above – characterised by institutionally, state administration and reformist processes and a temporality ad hoc to the bureaucratic processes of the state – and a Revolution from below, which is positioned as a response both to the *Revolution from above* and also to the failure of Frei's *Revolution in Freedom* (Winn, 2013). It is, therefore, about the protagonist of the movement and the popular classes even beyond their institutional expressions.

The above, and this is the second point, will be of fundamental importance to understand the relationship between this popular movement[5] and the Social Work student body of a UCV that has been, since 1967, in the midst of a University Reform process and whose trajectories create the conditions so that, in 1969, the Schools of Family Education and Social Service (SS) were merged. This is how the School of Social Work and its modernised "school project" was born (Arancibia, 2017)[6]. It is in this context that we place the research findings presented below.

Scenario from which the Social Work Collective emerges

The old world is dying.
The new one is slow to appear.
And in that chiaroscuro the monsters emerge.
- Antonio Gramsci

The analysis of the results and findings presented below is based on the consideration of two stages that allow us to characterise the links proposed by the TS-UCV student body and the popular classes. Thus, a first moment is identified, from 1967 to 1969, in which a germ of change can be seen, subject to contractions and diffuse limits, but which does not leave aside a nuance with intentions of transformation. In a second moment, which we locate between 1970 and 1973, the previous germ takes shape and, being rapidly disseminated, it is possible to recognise its intensification with respect to the interests

[5] Local expressions of this in Valparaíso can be found in Arancibia and Cáceres (2021).
[6] This explains why in some cases we speak of ESS-UCV and in others of ETS-UCV (Social Service and Social Work respectively).

and approaches that the student body proposes with respect to the popular classes, carrying out the transformative and re-orienting objectives from the discipline.

At the same time, the analysis is based on three identified dimensions, which allow us to observe the factors that influenced the link between the student body and the popular classes, both in the first period and in the second:

a. Firstly, it analyses the student body and the political positioning it is acquiring with regard to its own education as university students and, from there, the role it should play in society in general and with the popular classes in particular.

b. Subsequently, the various theoretical-methodological positions of the students with regard to Social Service/Social Work and the role they should play in society and with the working classes are analysed.

c Finally, some experiences – mediated by processes of practice and social intervention – that the student body had with the popular classes are described.

First period (1967-1969): *The dying old world*. Social Service students and their links with the working classes

(a) From restlessness to identity: the shaping of student discourse

The theses published in this period show particularities that make it possible to situate the UCV in terms of its objectives, perspectives and spaces, considering the emerging context of University Reform. On the other hand, the writings allow us to identify common conceptions of the role, aspirations and interests of the SS student at UCV.

Understandings of the type: "I was interested in the human problem and I wanted to do something for the dispossessed, (...) to reach man directly" (Urquiza, 1967, p.4) are common among the theses, allowing us to see clues from the students about their motivation. Regarding the latter, Urquiza (1967) speaks of a *willingness to devote oneself to a higher cause,* while Cárdenas and Leiva (1969) call it the *mystique of service,* both understanding that it is "social values that predominate over other motives of choice" (Urquiza, 1967, p.3).

This provision is addressed by the students to families and disadvantaged groups, understanding that these would be "suffering the effects of maladjustment to a changing society" (Cárdenas and Leiva, 1969, p.2), observing this maladjustment as a *problem* that needed to be *addressed*. These readings reflect clues about the student stance towards the socio-political changes of the context, demanding an *attentive and concerned* student attitude towards the orientation of their role (Cárdenas and Leiva, 1969, p.13).

With regard to the university, a contradiction tends to be perceived that emanates from the student body and is related to the university environment, which, after the Reform, promised to embrace the transforming bases in student spaces, committing them to the environment. This was a tension in which the student body recognised a "lack of pronouncement" on the part of the university (Cárdenas and Leiva, 1969, p.13), which provoked *disquiet and dissatisfaction,* which led to the idea of *mobilisation* (Urquiza, 1967).

Following a questionnaire given to the students, it was possible to recognise that the young people revealed a *passive frustration* (Muller and Varela, 1969). A feeling of remoteness was manifested by the students, about which Centeno (1973) indicated:

> *There is no sense of belonging to a particular social class, that is to say, he is distanced from the plane of reality, and this does not allow him to grasp it in that double dimension of student-social being (p.43-44).*

In this aspect, dissatisfaction is based on a critique that emerges from student discontent due to, it is pointed out, a lack of knowledge of the environment and the ability to relate to it. Thus, from the transverse criticism within the SS, the theses begin to offer new proposals about the role that the university should take and the type of student it should educate, arguing that it should "try to fulfil the basic objectives of the Reform, no longer at the university but at the national level" (Centeno, 1973, p.43-44).

These student discourses around the university claimed that if it became permeable to the Reform, modifying its guidelines and training, the youth would finally "be oriented to assume the responsibility to contribute effectively to the nation" (Muller and Varela, 1969, p.89) which had to do with a *social awakening* in young people through the promotion of values such as dignity, common good and solidarity: "the attitude of neutrality (...) must be replaced by a committed action in favour of *the neglected sectors"* (Álvarez et al., 1969, p.59).

By 1969, the theses already showed a clearer idea of the TS-UCV student figure. From there, they questioned their spaces, making the demands of the Reform their own. Thus, it is possible to see theses that recognised the student body as a *group* that was "more critical, defined and radicalized than the teachers" (Álvarez et al., 1969, p.59) and that, therefore, they should "... drive the movement for the re-orientation of the profession" (Álvarez et al., 1969).

(b) New orientations for engaging with social issues. Professional theories and roles

In this environment, the hegemonic frameworks of analysis were mainly the *Marginality Theory and the developmentalist principle*. Emphasis is placed on technical-methodological ruptures necessary to better contribute to the development of the individual and the economic development of the country (Carrazola et al., 1969; Vera, 1969). The economic development perspective, at times, contradicts the emancipatory perspectives of Reconceptualisation, from which the (still) Social Service is understood as "an agent of professional change whose function is committed to the process of liberation of the people" (Vera, 1969, p.112).

It was proposed that the new professional/agent should have as subject/object the group of people *disadvantaged* by social reality, understood from a marginality that had to be attacked from its causes. In this line, one of the professional roles for the popular classes was to contribute to create "critical conscience about their reality and to allow them to be incorporated into processes of change" (Álvarez et al., 1969, p.31). At times, the professional role towards the popular classes exceeds a merely professional commitment and acquires nuances that combine with the life itself of the social worker, being a "vital attitude that is projected with this commitment" (Álvarez et al., 1969, p.31).

Tensions are observed in relation to professional roles, where the figure of a "professional leader" is identified, which are combined with certain tutelary tendencies and messianic overtones of a professional whose mission is to "guide processes", in the horizon of forming consciences and directing groups in terms of what the professional understands as their wellbeing.

This is identified, for example, in the experience of the Savings Cooperative through the Group Social Service Method (Vera, 1969), or in the work with an organisation of the Aurora de Chile population, through the community organisation and development

method (Ruiz, 1969), where, according to the thesis, the Social Work professional must assume the role of a leader who raises awareness, educates and directs processes.

In this scheme, it is the professional, from a position of creating awareness, who constantly evaluates the actions of the collective and grants opportunities to a group that tends to be understood as *passive* in terms of its capacity to organise and create awareness for itself. With the aim of the above that their actions lead to an adaptation of the subject or the collective to Chilean society:

> *Giving an individual the opportunity to have a share in the consequence of his social welfare will make him become a citizen conscious of his social significance. The individual understands that his co-operation is possible and that it is necessary (Ruiz, 1969, p.36).*

Thus, there are also tensions between d*evelopmentalist and emancipatory perspectives* of Reconceptualisation, which raise disputes and questions. "Can a Latin American social service tend to integrate groups into the social system, if existing social structures are considered to be impeding the normal and full development of the human being?" (Carrazola et al., 1969, p.77).

The questions, in this sense, were not only about theoretical aspects of the discipline, but about the discipline itself, being understood, at times, as a discipline that arose as a product of economic liberalism and with a tendency towards individualism, ineffective in tackling problems in an isolated and individual manner and without its own methodological proposal (Álvarez et al., 1969, p.29). This leads to what is criticised as a position of neutrality towards the collective subject on whom it must orient its action:

> *The social worker has always been the person who has softened relations between employer and worker, has been the conciliatory link and has thus been in favor of those who have maintained and maintain these marginalized sectors of society and has delayed the process of change necessary to overcome this reality (Álvarez et al., 1969, p.30).*

(c) The student body approaches the working classes from new orientations

With regard to the *practical-interceptive dimension* of the link between the Social Service students and the working classes, it is worth mentioning that the main problem

identified by the students was the lack of participation of the marginalised sectors, considered to be one of the causes of their disintegration and an obstacle to organisation (Soto, 1969). In this context, it was up to the student body to encourage the integration of the popular classes into society, promoting their participation in various organisations, so that they could participate in the social and cultural changes that the country was undergoing (Soto, 1969).

These efforts on the part of the student body can be seen in the case of Bustos (1969), who studies a self-construction project of Corporación de Servicios Habitacionales – CORHABIT, indicating that in this system:

> *(...) the participation of sectors that were marginalized is obtained, thus achieving their integration in the general development, first as individuals and, later, as a group within the community. (p.75)*

In terms of the integration of marginalised sectors into society, not only is their participation in organisations considered, but also their inclusion through institutional channels. Bustos (1969) describes the efforts of social workers in the Valparaíso and Aconcagua area in the formation of CORHABIT groups, "fighting tenaciously for their inclusion in the Institution's programming" (p.31).

However, this lack of participation and passivity that did not allow them to organise themselves was considered to be strongly influenced by the poor living conditions of the working classes. Soto (1969) points out:

> *(...) the lack of participation is influenced by the large number of family problems and, in addition, by the lack of knowledge about the real work and meaning of these bodies, which makes them appear very passive, even when they have latent aspirations. (p.102)*

Thus, the theses analyses indicate a student concern for what they considered to be the passivity of the popular sectors in the face of their marginalised situation and their inability to act without the help of someone from outside. This is how they seek to encourage the organisation and participation of these sectors, within a political context in which they seek to build a new democracy of a social nature, whose efforts result in a "process of expanded democratization" (Illanes, 2009, p.65) and which in the subsequent period results in a diversification and strengthening of popular movements (Garcés, 2004).

Second period (1970-1973): The new world was slow to appear. Radicalism and nuances in its links with the new world

(a) Self-understandings: recognition and unification of student power for the school project.

In this second period, and by virtue of the common nuances that emerge among the theses, we can characterise the student body from a transformative discourse incorporating concepts such as *collective action, community, welfare and liberation* (Lorenzo and Del Pilar, 1972; Centeno, 1973).

In the notions about the new role of the university in the formation of the re-oriented student body (Centeno, 1973), according to the students Astorga, Guzmán, Figueroa, Nicloux, Milagros and Villaroel (1970), the Reform is no longer understood as an ongoing project that contradicts the spaces, but rather, by 1970, it is considered to be incorporated into the guidelines of the *new university and within the new concept of student welfare* (Centeno 1973). The TS student body recognised itself as living in a reformed UCV.

Thus, Centeno (1973) focuses on the change that *democratisation* meant for the university structure, understanding that from the concerns raised by the student body in the previous stage, it was possible to redefine the university and the TS student community as a "Working Community, through which (...) it contributes to forming Critical Consciousness and the Will to Change, necessary for the development of society" (Centeno, 1973, p.32-33), abandoning the palliative and the apolitical.

During 1970, Allende's presidential speeches emphasised the dimension of education and the role of the student in the change, and it was the students of TS who took up this call to empower themselves and build *student power,* based on elements such as *democratisation, pluralism* (Centeno, 1973), the opening of the university to marginal sectors, integration, that is, "social solidarity and identification with the historical project of the new society" (Lorenzo and Del Pilar, 1972, p.19). Regarding this second period, the theses suggest that student intensification is related to the motivation for "the approach, by various means, of the fruits of university work to all sectors of the population" (Centeno, 1973, p.33).

In the same year, the School received the arrival of Brazilian academics, among them sociologists and social workers who brought in their repertoire the training from Marxist theoretical frameworks and educational ideals from Paulo Freire (Arancibia 2017). According to the interviewee Vicente de Paula Faleiros, with the arrival of *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (Paulo Freire, 2000) and foreign intellectuals, it was possible:

> *from horizontality, looking for common projects (...) this is why Paulo Freire influenced us a lot in this horizontality of wisdom, knowledge and ideas, considering that we know some things, they know others (Vicente de Paula Faleiros, personal communication. 13 September 2023).*

According to Faleiros, it was the mobilised, militant students who were the protagonists in this period. This is because, as he explains, the students – mostly militants of the MIR, MAPU and PS (Muñoz and Durán, 2019) – had "their own spaces of political formation that were brought to the university and, therefore, incorporated into the spaces of Social Work" (Vicente de Paula Faleiros, personal communication. 13 September 2023), carrying out a *critical politicisation* (Lorenzo and Del Pilar, 1972).

The School begins to educate in a different way and with new theoretical frameworks, aiming directly at the formation of a critical student, promoting Social Education through action and critical reflection of reality, added to a real awareness of a social individual invited to participate actively and directly in the process that the country is going through (Lorenzo and Del Pilar, 1972).

It was understood, then, that the TS-UCV student community tends to deepen a *line of collective action* (Centeno, 1973), since at this stage a "sense of belonging and solidarity with the class to which they belong is openly recognised and students are motivated to participate in the process of changing it" (Centeno, 1973, p.48), making it possible to characterise the new place of the student body as one that is avowedly committed, critical, democratised and politicised (Lorenzo and Del Pilar, 1972; Faleiros 2023).

In the context of a government that legitimises system change and transformation through mobilisation, ST students recognised that they "must work actively in grassroots organizations to bring out the consciousness of the people in order to become the managers of their own history" (Franco et al., 1973, p.69).

(b) Essays on a revolutionary theory-practice of the student body towards the working classes

In this second period, all the elements presented in the previous section are radicalised, among others, by the integration of classical *Marxist theory, dependency theory* and Paulo Freire's *critical pedagogy*[7]. In relation to the Reconceptualization Movement, an integration of the aforementioned theoretical perspectives is identified through a *questioning vocation* of the discipline, even if no explicit mention is made of the Movement.

However, there are certain reflections that can be framed in a similar discursive line, in that they reflect on ideological aspects of the discipline that need to be transformed in order to move towards the creation of an *emancipatory Social Work:* "we opt for a change, starting from the orientation of our work. No more: professionalism, accommodation, maintenance or conformism" (Casanga et al., 1970, p.10).

In this second stage, the theses analysed propose their own analyses: reflections on social and economic reality based on Marxist and dependency theory, an integration of these theories with the interests of Social Work and methodologies such as participant observation and quantitative analyses of surveys (Cárdenas and Leiva, 1969; Delgado et al., 1971).

Social Work, in this period, is explicitly understood within the framework of capitalism, and in the theses there is an interest in nipping in the bud what is identified as one of its functional foundations to the system: *welfare* and, in general, the methods that only address the individual as isolated from society, reducing professional action to the integration of the individual and their groups to the dynamics of capitalist society, without necessarily questioning it (Casanga et al., 1970). Thus, the discipline begins to be understood from its historical dimension and from the contradictions of social reality:

> *The professional action of Social Work must be conceived as a theoretical and systematic construction that will emerge from the analysis of the global context and more specifically from the concrete and real contradictions that the historical moment presents (Delgado et al., 1971, p.130).*

[7] Although Paulo Freire arrived in Chile in 1964 and published Pedagogy of the Oppressed in 1968, he only appeared clearly in the theses from 1970 onwards.

In view of the above, it is identified that the action of Social Work must be oriented, as a proposal for the transformation of capitalist society, towards the protagonists: the *proletariat* and the *popular classes:*

> *The dependent national reality and its contradictions demand a global, radical and rapid change. This is why the field of action of social work is in the groups that have the leading role in the liberation process (Delgado et al., 1971, p.130).*

In these theoretical approaches, it is possible to observe processes of intensification in relation to the period 1967-69, as far as the link between the student body and the popular classes is concerned.

Thus, for example, in an experience in the National Petroleum Company (Empresa Nacional del Petróleo-ENAP- Concón), the students identify an absence of class consciousness that demands, therefore, the centrality of a work of conscientisation of the workers. In relation to the latter, nuances are identified in relation to the tutelary messianism of the first stage (1967-69) – characterised by the conscientisation of a social subject, assumed as passive, with the aim of its integration into society – insofar as this is evidenced in a discourse where the profession contributes to the creation of a revolutionary class consciousness in terms of social liberation, in what we can identify as a revolutionary messianism: "Its work must be oriented towards the praxis of liberation, which is not done by the individual, nor for him, but with him in the concrete conditions of his reality" (Delgado et al., 1971, p.130).

However, just as there are shades of revolutionary messianism, there are also other ways of approaching popular subjects, observing, for example, that from the influence of Paulo Freire, there is a tendency towards an understanding of the other as equal, autonomous and with the capacity for action. From here, and from what is identified as cultural action, Social Work is linked to the popular classes through critical education in which there is the need for a "training of man to make him participate freely and creatively in the process of transformation of the structures in force through a scientific, active, dialogical and critical method" (Casanga et al., 1970, p. 6).

c) The student body knocks on the door of the working classes

In this second period, the theses still show a constant concern for what they call a lack of participation of the popular classes. In the face of this, one of the explanations has

to do with a reading that emphasises the historical trajectory of domination of the excluded sectors, domination that is material, but also ideological, expressing itself in *passivity*. Concha and Flores (1972) explain this:

> *The ideology of the ruling class has been a fundamental impediment to mass popular mobilization in the search for solutions to common problems, because it has led people to a relative passivity. (p.5)*

This is also reported by Franco et al. (1973), who analyse the new health programmes in the population area during the Unidad Popular government. In this experience, the lack of participation of the inhabitants was due, on the one hand, to the fact that they were not aware of the role they had to play in the new health programmes and, also, to practical problems, such as the lack of housing or sewage systems. In other words, limitations that have to do with awareness of their role and, of course, material limitations.

Faced with this situation, the students consider that the action of the Social Worker should be reoriented in order to "contribute through Social Education, understood as a dialectic relationship between the Social Worker and the inhabitant on the basis of vindictive issues" (Franco et al., 1973, p.69). The task: to work with existing organisations, to collaborate in the creation of new ones, in the search for greater democratisation and integration of the popular classes in the field of health through active and real participation in decision-making (Franco et al., 1973).

The importance of organisation and participation in terms of their real and immediate interests as exercises of *popular power* is indicated, which for the student body meant "the hegemony of the working class on a mainly economic, political, social, ideological, etc. basis" (Concha and Flores, 1972, p. 23). In this way, "consciousness-raising" becomes a primary objective for the student body, as it allows for the strengthening of popular organizations, through a joint reflection "that leads to a liberating and humanizing consciousness-raising" (Urzua, 1971, p.35). That is to say, in some theses, the attempt appears no longer to guide the popular classes to their liberation, but that they themselves advance in that direction, giving the students of Social Work the role of reflecting and collaborating, together with the organisations, in the realisation of their class interests.

In this challenge, a distinctive – and crucial – element of the ETS-UCV experience was the close link between the student body and the everyday life of the popular sectors.

This is attested to by Mora and Trujillo (1971), who, based on their practice with a peasant settlement in the Province of Aconcagua, reflect:

> *We believe that the farmer is only known to the extent that a continuous and close relationship is established in the different moments of daily life. This is the main reason why we encourage the stay of three days in our place of practice, being able to spend eight hours a day working and the rest with the families (p.2).*

This is also indicated by Faleiros, for whom "having tea with the population was very different from talking about the population, participating in the anguish of the population... it is not analysing the population, it was sharing" (Vicente de Paula Faleiros, personal communication. 13 September 2023).

Conclusions

By way of conclusion, we will return to the premise that guides the present text: *the process of rapprochement between the TS-UCV student body and the popular classes intensified gradually but persistently as the contradictions of the socio-political context that permeated the School and the university spaces became more acute*. In what elements can we observe this process of intensification between one stage (1967-1969) and the other (1970-1973)?

To answer the above, the first thing we must point out is that we understand the intensification and radicalisation of the link between the student body and the popular classes as a process and that, therefore, the characteristics that are consolidated in a second stage are the result of a process of maturation that comes from previous stages. For the same reason, the analysis does not seek to establish dates, as ephemeris, but as milestones that mark certain trends.

In this sense, and in relation to the first of the dimensions addressed – (a) Political shaping of the university student body in its proposal of links and understanding of itself – it is possible to note the shift from a denial – out of non-conformity – of the role of the student body to a search to contribute to the construction of a new society. In the first period (1967-1969), the theses reviewed put forward key concepts such as "dissatisfaction" with what is considered to be a UCV "disconnected" from social reality, in general, and from the popular classes, in particular, cementing the critique (denying,

by the way) of the supposed "disciplinary neutrality" contained in university action. From there, in a second moment, the theses show a politicised and conscientious *Social Work* student body that recognises that it is capable of observing, from perspectives that are more connected and closer to Chilean reality, elements that were previously diffuse. And, in this impulse, they assume the possibility and responsibility of being part of the "social awakening", of the ongoing process of transformation of Chilean society, which is placed as an "urgency" explained by the commitment to the popular classes, from a critique of welfare and the logic of service, and the search for a collective action founded on the horizontality of knowledge that aims to capture what the popular classes have to say.

Regarding dimension (b) Theoretical-methodological positions and professional role, if in the first stage the need to incorporate Social Work within the Social Sciences is mentioned, in this second stage the incorporation becomes concrete. In this sense, the main changes and intensifications can be summarised in two aspects.

The first of these, which has to do with conceptual references, shows that the use, in a first stage, of theories leading to the integration of the "disadvantaged" in the social structure gives way, in a second stage, to theories aimed at the transformation of that social structure (capitalism). In this sense, the gradual but consistent shift from theories of marginality and developmentalism to classical Marxism and dependency obviously has an impact on the way in which the professional role is conceived.

In this second aspect, it is possible to note trends. Thus, in a first stage, tendencies towards *mentoring* the *disadvantaged* are identified, with the professional even assuming the role of a leader who guides processes. From here, certain *messianic overtones* can be observed in some theses, which can be understood as a need to be part of an *accelerated* transformation process. In a second stage, the link with the popular classes – who begin to be explicitly the object of Social Work – has as its horizon the liberation from what is identified as *capitalism*. What role does Social Work play here? In this respect, the theses show different accents, one of them being the rotation of the *tutelary messianism* of the first stage (that which liberates) towards a *revolutionary messianism,* whose function is to politically conscientise the subjects with whom it is linked. The above shows different appropriations of the influence of Paulo Freire and his proposal – also present in the theses – to understand the other as an equal, autonomous and capable of action, who should be accompanied, with the professional assuming an active role in awareness-raising (critical educator) and training aimed at a co-constructed liberation.

Finally, in the (c) practical-interceptive link, we can see reflected the debates about the ethical-political horizons and theoretical positions of the previous dimensions. In this sense, the transitions – which form part of an organic whole – can be observed in four elements. First, there is a shift from assisting the popular classes in their integration into the social institutional/structural framework to working for the popular classes according to their interests, from which to organise themselves in order to subsequently advance their liberation. In this process, secondly, in line with Freire mentioned above, horizontality in the link is advocated as a north to be followed, seeking the exchange of knowledge. Thirdly, participation is a critical and central element, both in the first and in the second stage; thus, while in the first stage it appears in some theses as a response to the "passivity" of the popular sectors, in the second stage – and very much in line with the historical situation – it takes on a leading role in the framework of Popular Power, which is installed on a new scale from 1970 onwards.

What do the findings and the premise we have discussed in this article tell us?

There are elements that, from the study, we can affirm with propriety and others that can be suggested by the results of the study, but which – from our point of view – would require further research efforts.

With regard to the former, it seems to us that it is indeed possible to affirm the existence of a process of intensification and radicalisation – political, theoretical and interventional – of the link between the Social Work students at the UCV and the popular classes. The challenge is clearly indicated in the review of the sources analysed here, as we have seen above. The process of sharpening class contradictions in Chilean society is reflected in the reflections, debates and social interventions of the discipline in the experience studied here.

It is important to stress the contradictory – never monolithic – nature of the process, in which different theoretical and political positions coexisted. That is to say, in one period there were not only *developmentalist-welfareist* expressions, to mention one example, nor in the following one only *critical-revolutionary ones*. These schemes do not necessarily account for the tensions in which, in some cases, different positions co-existed in search of qualitatively new forms. What is clear is that the debates tended, as the country's political process became more radical, more and more towards the unambiguous declaration of a disciplinary commitment to the interests of the popular classes. This does not mean that there was clarity about how to do it: the co-existence of certain *messianisms* at a time when, inspired by Paulo Freire, there was a search for more horizontal models of relations with the popular classes is evidence of this.

Another aspect to highlight has to do with the degree of involvement in multiple dimensions of the student body with the social struggles of the period. In this sense, the theses reviewed (and also the interview with Faleiros) show that the relationship, which was political, theoretical and interventional, also reached a closeness in *everyday life,* from where spaces were opened up to try – sometimes succeeding, sometimes failing – new forms of linking with the popular classes.

It is precisely with regard to these spaces (whose richness is not necessarily captured in its entirety by an academic work) that we consider that there are other aspects that deserve to be looked at again and, most probably, other sources (oral, for example) should be explored. In this sense, although theses can have an important value for historiographical analysis, they have limitations: they do not account for aspects external to the academic-university process. It would be unfair and erroneous to propose a notion of the student body and its links with the popular classes exclusively on the basis of our analysis of theses. These theses do not necessarily include aspects that seem relevant to us, such as, for example, political militancy – mainly in MAPU and MIR (Faleiros, 2023) – and the participation of the student body in joint organisations with other social actors, in which the student-professional role acquires different characteristics, going beyond the student-professional role of Social Work. In other words, these are elements that are relevant as part of the *historical conjunctures* that Iamamoto (1995) points out and that *peculiars* the characteristics of the discipline in certain periods.

Finally, it is important to return to the dialectical understanding of the discipline, pointing out that the links between the students of Social Work at the UCV and the popular classes of Valparaíso are not part of a historiographical anecdote or a process isolated from the socio-political context of the country. On the other side of this thesis, the links made by the student collective, particularly the intensification of these links with the popular classes, are deeply rooted in the socio-historical determinants of social reality, its actors and movements, and these same elements are directly or indirectly affected by the discipline and the theoretical-practical links that were proposed to the popular classes.

It is for this reason that, understanding historical memory as a political, positioned element, it becomes indispensable to turn to it for the interpretation and understanding of the socio-political processes that have taken place in our country, being able to read and enrich the political debates from multiple historical perspectives.

The link between generations that Benjamin (2008) speaks of, which involves protecting and keeping this memory alive, opens up the possibility of cementing and projecting, through the social imaginaries of past eras, certain objectives related to the construction of a professional and collective identity. We consider this exercise of observation, dialogue and questioning to be relevant not only as a historiographical exercise, but also as a contribution to an acute and questioning reading of our disciplinary present.

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PROPUESTAS CRÍTICAS EN TRABAJO SOCIAL

CRITICAL PROPOSALS IN SOCIAL WORK

FACULTAD DE CIENCIAS SOCIALES

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TRANSLATIONS

Consequences experienced by women survivors of human trafficking in South Africa

Consecuencias experimentadas por las mujeres supervivientes de la trata de personas en Sudáfrica

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Abstract

Trafficking of women for domestic and sexual exploitation has devastating consequences for rescued women survivors in South Africa. Empirical findings reveal that survivors of human trafficking endure and suffer traumatic, intense, and unspeakable physical, sexual, psychological, economic, and social experiences. Women victims of trafficking are denied fundamental human rights, including basic and widely accepted individual freedoms. The article examines qualitative research designed to explore survivors' perceptions of the consequences experienced from trafficking through semi-structured

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individual interviews conducted in women's shelters in the Gauteng province, South Africa. Recommendations are made regarding support for victims.

Introduction and problem statement

Trafficking in women remains a serious challenge in South Africa, despite the government's numerous efforts to stop it. The International Organization for Migration (IOM) (2007:1) states that thousands of abducted women are currently trafficked into the country every year and others are trafficked within the country. Trafficking of women for domestic and sexual exploitation is a flourishing business in the Southern African Development Community (SADC) region (Kerry & CdeBaca 2014:348). This business is thriving as a consequence of the harsh living conditions mostly characterised by poverty, unemployment and a lack of prospects or alternatives in the countries or areas of origin. Reda (2012:18) adds that trafficked women are forced to work for more than 18 hours a day, without rest or pay. Some of the women victims are often raped, beaten and threatened with death. In some cases, they are locked up in a residence to prevent them from escaping the ordeal. This makes it difficult for victims to seek any form of support and instead suffer gross human rights violations in complete isolation with devastating consequences. Trafficked women suffer intense trauma on a physical, sexual, psychological, economic and social level as a consequence of human trafficking (Dixon, 2008:81), which can develop into post-traumatic stress (Kerry & CdeBaca, 2014:33; Reda, 2012:18).

However, research has confirmed that the challenge is that trafficked women know too little about their rights or about the appropriate measures to take in order to protect themselves (Reda, 2012:18; Pearson, 2003:9). Trafficking activities contravene fundamental human rights, denying trafficked women basic and broadly accepted individual freedoms (Dixon, 2008:81). The study was undertaken in Gauteng Province because it is considered as the economic hub of South Africa and the economic power house in Southern African region (United Nations Education, Scientific and Cultural Organization, 2007:10). Consequently the province attracts a lot of economic migrants, including human trafficking syndicates that are involved in exploitation of women victims. The study revealed that women survivors of human trafficking originate from different parts of South Africa as well as from other countries. It is against this background that the researcher embarked on the exploration of the perceptions of women survivors regarding the consequences that they experienced after exposure to human trafficking in South Africa.

Goal and objectives of the research

The goal of the research study was to empirically explore the consequences of human trafficking as experienced by women survivors in South Africa.
The objectives for the study were:

- To describe the consequences of human trafficking that may be experienced by women survivors;
- To explore the perceptions of WSHT regarding the consequences experienced as a result of human trafficking

Research methodology

Qualitative research was deemed as an appropriate research methodology. This approach was chosen to provide a framework for the study to arrive at a more complete and in-depth understanding and analysis of this complex social problem (Fouché & Delport, 2011:66; Bless, Higson-Smith Y Kagee, 2006:44). Applied research was deemed appropriate to explore the consequences experienced by women survivors of human trafficking in South Africa. By using a qualitative research approach, the researcher attempted to gain first-hand knowledge and a holistic understanding of the field through a flexible strategy or problem formulation and data-collection method, which took shape as the investigation proceeded (Fouché & Delport, 2011:65). In this qualitative study a collective case study research design was utilised during which the researcher used semi-structured interviews that were supported by an interview schedule to collect data from the participants. The population of the research study included WSHT residing at three shelters in Gauteng province, namely Mali Martin Polokegong Centre (MMPC), The Potter's House (TPH) and the Beth Shan Centre of the Salvation Army. The study focused on the exploration of the consequences experienced by 12 women survivors of human trafficking.

The most appropriate sampling technique for this qualitative study was the non-probability, purposive and snowball-sampling method, because cases were selected randomly based on the experiences or knowledge of the participants. Furthermore, selection of participants also relied solely on the researcher's judgment (Strydom & Delport, 2011b:232-233)until saturation point was reached (Strydom & Delport, 2011:392). The focus was to explore and understand the perceptions of survivors regarding their experiences after exposure to human trafficking.

The researcher drew upon the ecosystems theory (EST) in conjunction with the person-centred approach (PCA) as the theoretical framework for the study. Hence, the focus was on the interaction between a woman survivor and the broader environment as well as the self of the WSHT with regard to her experiences of the situation (Grobler, Schenck and Mbedzi, 2013:15, 23).

The researcher conducted semi-structured, one-on-one interviews with women survivors of human trafficking who are living in the three selected shelters on the basis of the following selection criteria:

- WSHT who have been in the selected facilities for not less than two weeks;
- WSHT who have been receiving therapy for at least two weeks;
- WSHT of any nationality living in one of the selected facilities. Interpreters were used for those who could not speak English;
- WSHT who were 18 years or older at the time of the study;
- WSHT who consented to participate voluntarily in the study.

The researcher also focused on issues of trustworthiness, confirmability, transferability and credibility, as discussed below.

Trustworthiness: Thomas and Magilvy (2011:151) indicate that data verification helps researchers to ensure the trustworthiness of the findings and establish trust or confidence in the finding of the study. Data were analysed by extracting themes or discovering patterns by looking at frequencies, magnitudes, structures, processes, causes and consequences in the chosen research area (Babbie, 2010:394). In order to ensure the trustworthiness of the proposed study, the researcher focused on awareness of personal bias (Creswell, 2013a:216). The semi-structured interview schedule was developed and tested during the pilot study before utilising it. Constructs were carefully conceptualised and were clear and unambiguous (Neuman, 2011:209).

Confirmability: Kumar (2011:185) refers to confirmability as the degree to which the findings could be confirmed by others. The researcher implemented member checking by soliciting information from participants about their perceptions of the consequences for women survivors of human trafficking.

Peer review was crucial and the researcher participated in postgraduate supervision workshops and interacted with postgraduate colleagues who are familiar with the

research topic in order to ensure confirmability. Most importantly, the researcher had frequent consultations with the supervisor for support and guidance (Schurink, Fouché & De Vos, 2011:421).

Transferability: Transferability refers to the extent to which findings can be applied from a specific situation to another context or to other respondents (Schurink et al., 2011:420). The researcher provided comprehensive and thorough information regarding the description of the research context. This entailed that the observed transactions and processes, and the in-depth discussion of the findings and themes were used as mechanisms to ensure the transferability of data to another context.

Credibility: Credibility is an alternative to internal validity, in which the goal is to demonstrate that the study was conducted in a manner that ensures that the participants were accurately identified and described (Schurink et al., 2011:420). The researcher enhanced data credibility through repeated interviews until data saturation occurred (Creswell, 2014:189). Furthermore, the researcher read and re- read the interview transcripts in order to capture accurate descriptions as well as the concerns of the participants.

Results and discussion

After transcribing and analysing data obtained from one-on-one interviews, the perceptions of the WSHT were explored. The key findings indicated that all the survivors experienced trauma and unbearable consequences as a result of the exposure to human trafficking.

Several themes relatred to the consequences for WSHT emerged when the data were analysed. The researcher used Creswell's qualitative data-analysis spiral process, which encompassed planning for the recording of data, data collection and preliminary analysis, managing or organising data, reading and writing memos, generating categories, themes and patterns, coding data, testing the emergent understandings, searching for alternative explanations and interpretations, as well as writing the report (Creswell, 2014:197-200; Schurink et al., 2011:403-418). In this study, data were described and classified, interpreted and categorised for identification of similarities. Subsequently, data were categorised according to different themes that emerged from one-on-one interview. The emerging themes were reviewed until no further information or themes could be identified or observed.

Table 1
Themes and sub-themes for women survivors of human trafficking as participants (wshtp)

Theme number	Temas	Subtemas
Theme 1:	Understanding the percep- tions of the women survivors who were exposed to the traumatic experiences of human trafficking.	1.1 A strong woman who never gave up, but endured the terrible traumatic experience of human trafficking 1.2 A woman who was cheated or deceived and trapped in a human trafficking ordeal, but has now been rescued 1.3 A woman who has accepted her painful past and is ready to help others talk about their experience
Theme 2:	The challenges experienced by women survivors of human trafficking and how it affects their lives	2.1 Survivors' trust in fellow humans is destroyed or diminished 2.2 Endurance of painful experiences 2.3 Low self-esteem and self-awareness of the women survivors of human trafficking 2.4 Restricted movement and language barrier 2.5 Forced to do stuff against their will 2.6 Lack of knowledge and access to resources 2.7 Feeling of hopelessness.

Theme 1: Understanding the perceptions of the women survivors who were exposed to the traumatic experiences of human trafficking

After data analysis, three sub-themes emerged, as discussed below.

Sub-theme 1.1: A strong woman who never gave up, but endured the terrible traumatic experience of human trafficking

A certain number of the participants expressed their perceptions about a woman survivor of human trafficking as a strong woman who never gave up despite enduring the terrible traumatic experience of the phenomenon. Their views were as follows: WSHTP 2 stated: *"I consider a woman survivor of human trafficking as a strong woman who has endured difficulties. It is a lady who never gave up and survived in good times and in bad times."* WSHTP 4 commented: *"I am a survivor, who experienced a lot of bad things and I am alive because of God's intervention. I am proud of what I am now and I am out of danger."* WSHTP 10 said: *"I was a victim controlled and used by the cruel trafficker, but now I am safe and I see myself as a survivor and not a victim anymore."*

The literature concurs with the empirical findings of this study and asserts that many victims choose to call themselves survivors to acknowledge that they survived a violent crime and are moving forward with their lives (Monarch Services, 2014:7). The women survivors are women who have endured and survived prostitution or other forms of sexual exploitation, forced labour or services, slavery, or practices similar to slavery (American Psychological Association, 2014:3). These are women who managed to leave and survive a trafficking situation and are ready to recover from the experience and continue with their lives (WHO, 2012:4).They consider the traumatic experience as a life lesson. They become confident in solving their problems and can plan for their future and become optimistic about a better future (Sari & Khairunnisa, 2014:159).

Sub-theme 1.2: A woman who was cheated or deceived and trapped in a human trafficking ordeal, but has now been rescued

This sub-theme covers part of the definition of human trafficking by the Palermo Protocol, which states that force, fraud and coercion are key elements of the crime of human trafficking. Fraud refers to false or deceptive offers of employment, education, romance, marriage or a better life and/or debt release (Commission on Domestic & Sexual Violence [CDSV], 2016:1; American Psychological Association, 2014:3). Participants shared their views as follows: WSHTP 7 explained: *"I am a survivor, a poor woman who came to Gauteng under a pretext of a good job prospect, but ended up prostituting in a hotel. It pains me...* (Sobs)." WSHTP 8 stated: *"I was told that we were going for a church conference for 2 weeks. I was promised education in Ireland. However, I was rescued on the way to Dublin."* WSHTP 9 stated: *"I refer to myself as a woman survivor of human trafficking; a woman who was kidnapped, cheated, but now is free."* WSHTP 11: *"I was cheated that I was going to be made a queen, but I was forced to do bad things..."* WSHTP 12 said: *"I was rescued from a trap of sleeping with many men against my will for the benefit of a trafficker."*

The concept is used by many in the social services field to recognise the strength it takes for the woman survivor who was deceived to continue on a journey towards healing in the aftermath of a traumatic experience of human trafficking. The concept is largely intended to honour those women who have suffered, or are suffering, the effects of being trafficked (Monarch Services, 2014:5; CDSV, 2016:5).

Sub-theme 1.3: A woman who has accepted her painful past and is ready to help others talk about their experience

In this sub-theme, some of the participants shared that a woman survivor is one who has accepted her painful past and is now ready to move on with her life. The participants further said that it is a woman who is ready to help others to share their stories. The following are statements made by the participants: WSHTP 1: *"God gave me a second chance ... I understand the painful effects of being a victim of trafficking and I will help others."* WSHTP 5: *"Now I know what happened to me, though painful ... as a woman, I cannot be trafficked again and I cannot allow this to happen to a human being."*

Lynch, Mason and Frost (2015:19) pointed out that women survivors of human trafficking are human beings whose worth and dignity were painfully violated. Therefore, with effective services and supportive assistance, they can thrive despite the painful experience and build fulfilling lives for themselves and their families.

Theme 2: Impact of human trafficking on the WSHT

The findings from the empirical study revealed numerous painful and agonising challenges experienced by WSHT. Consequently, a great number of participants shared their painful and emotional experiences while living in the trafficking environment. Deducing from the responses given during the one-on-one interviews, the following sub-themes unfolded and revealed how trafficking in women affected their lives.

Sub-theme 2.1: Survivors' trust towards fellow humans is diminished

Some of the participants expressed their views on how the trafficking experience destroyed their trust in other people. They indicated that it was difficult for them to trust anyone, including the social service providers, law enforcers or their families after their trafficking experience. The following views were shared by survivors: WSHTP 1: *"I lost trust in my family and I think they would not trust me again. I also lost sense of humour and self-respect. In short, I lost trust in everyone."* WSHTP 2: "(Pause) … *I have also lost trust in my family."* WSHTP 4: *"I lost trust of the people that loved me."* WSHTP 5: *"I need to overcome my bad experiences ... to regain trust and be trusted again*. WSHTP 6: *"I fear for my life, I don't trust anyone, not even the police, I don't sleep at night…* (crying)." WSHTP 11: *"I feel like I am being followed, spotted, my life is in danger, my trust was violated."*

The literature confirms the above empirical findings which revealed that many women survivors harbour a significant distrust of law enforcement because of their previous negative experiences with law enforcement and the criminal justice system (CDSV, 2016:12). Furthermore, WSHT often do not immediately seek help or self-identify as victims of a crime. This is the result of several factors, including lack of trust, self-blame or specific rules made by the traffickers regarding how to behave when talking to law enforcement or social service providers (Monarch Services, 2014:7).

Sub-theme 2.2: Endurance of painful experiences

A great number of the women survivors also shared the painful experiences that they endured while in the trafficking situation and how it still affects them in their current life space. The following are the comments of the participants: WSHTP 4: *"I felt pain … I used to sleep with different men… it was painful …*(sobs)." WSHTP 5: *"It made me feel unknown, that I have been used for things I never imagined. Unbelievable."* WSHTP 7: *"I was forced into prostitution with many men. I was secluded in a hotel in Hillbrow. I was later detained in Lindela for one month…* (pause … crying)." WSHTP 8: *"Apart from the terrible occurrences which I endured due [to] trafficking, I could not see my family for a long time. I could also not study as I used to do."* WSHTP 9 said in a low voice while looking down: *"I miss home… I have lived a life full of misery."* WSHTP 10: *"I am aware that I was rescued from horror! However, I am concerned because I am very far from home. I cannot communicate well with service providers due to language problem. Food is new to me, it is different from my country, but it's ok. I have no money to go home. I was forced to use drugs, was raped many times… I have lost my own humanity."* WSHTP 11: *"I was beaten and left half dead; I was not allowed to go to the hospital. I was raped by many men, including body guards. I am living in fear, hiding. My business is suffering, my parents are receiving threats. I am living a nomadic life; running away from perpetrators. I had to move places from Cape Town to Gauteng, I am horrified. I feel that my life is still in danger, I am emotionally disturbed from rape, I cannot sleep at all. The other thing is that the shelter keeps my phone ... I can't communicate freely to my family."*

The literature concurs with these empirical findings from the research study that women survivors may be trafficked for a few days or weeks, or they may remain in a trafficking situation for years. Either way, WSHT face long-lasting consequences from their exploitation (CDSV, 2016:10). Furthermore, the women survivors who break free from

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their traffickers often find themselves in a situation of great insecurity and vulnerability. They may be physically injured, as well as physically and emotionally traumatised. They may be afraid of retaliation. They are also likely to have only few or no means of livelihood (United Nations, 2014:12). It is evident from the literature that WSHT are beaten into submission and are often denied any type of medical care (Calvo, 2014:16). Therefore, as a result of the traumatic experiences of human trafficking, women survivors display physical reactions such as headaches and stomach pain, sudden sweating and heart disturbance, changes in sleep and appetite, a weakened immune system, and alcohol or drug misuse (Banović & Bjelajac, 2012:95). The woman survivor may experience feelings of isolation, guilt, shame, fear and denial. Hence talking with someone could make her feel less alone (Monarch Services, 2014:4).

Sub-theme 2.3: Low self-esteem and self-awareness of the women survivors of human trafficking

Some of the participants indicated that trafficking experiences affected their self-esteem. They lacked confidence, felt valueless and at times they could not understand themselves. They explained this as follows: WSHTP 2: *"I didn't value myself. I didn't love myself and accept myself because of what I went through."* WSHTP 3: *"I was not safe and was low; my life was in darkness. Now that I am free, I want to go to school and work for myself."* WSHTP 6: *"I am not ready to disclose exactly what happened to me, but it was terrible stuff. I want to stay alone ... sometimes I wonder if I really know myself."*

The literature also reflects the above findings, showing that women bound for forced prostitution often go through systematic rape and physical abuse that destroy their self-esteem and dignity (Human Trafficking, [s.a.]:2). Consequently, abusive coercion, low self-esteem and the need for familial connection are the most common reasons for involvement in prostitution (San Diego District Attorney, 2016:12). Furthermore, the women survivors of human trafficking exhibited higher anxiety levels, lower self-esteem as well as lower impulse control and uncontrollable displays of aggression (Calvo, 2014:13). Therefore, social workers should provide stable mentorship, encourage familial support and help the women survivors to build up their self-esteem, to value and protect their sacred bodies, and to educate them about the realities of trafficking in persons (San Diego District Attorney, 2016:12).

Sub-theme 2.4: Restricted movement and language barrier

Survivors may not know their physical location because they are restricted to one place and may not speak or understand the local language (Kaylor, 2015:4). Under regular surveillance, women did not have any opportunity to discuss personal matters or establish supportive relationships (Zimmerman & Borland, 2009:19). Therefore, more information about human trafficking and available services should be printed in different languages and should be displayed at easily accessible places (FCJ Refugee Centre, 2016:10). The participants commented on this aspect as follows: WSHTP 6: *"Language is a barrier that makes it hard for me to negotiate for my own rights and for other needs."* WSHTP 7: *"I can't speak local language fluently."* WSHTP 10: *"For me language is a problem to understand fully what is going on."* WSHTP 12: *"I am far from home and have no family support, no money and restricted movement and difficult to understand the language. In addition, the court process takes too long and I am not sure about the future."*

Sub-theme 2.5: Forced to do stuff against their will

Women suffer gender-specific forms of harm and consequences of being trafficked such as rape, forced marriage, unwanted or forced pregnancy, forced termination of pregnancy and STDs, including HIV/AIDS (UN Commissioner for Human Rights, 2010:62). Victims are exploited by the service industries in restaurants, bars, strip clubs, nail salons and similar businesses (United Methodist Women, 2015:7). Many victims are forced to work in internet sites for adult services and the commercial sex industry relies heavily on human trafficking victims. Prostitutes, strippers, escorts, workers in massage parlours and brothels, and workers on phone chat lines are often victims. Right now, traffickers in many cities are exploiting workers and sexually abusing women and girls (United Methodist Women, 2015:7). WSHTP 8: *"I was cheated, they took me from Rustenburg, forced me to use drugs and do prostitution when I was in Klerksdorp, with no money."* WSHTP 9: *He would expect me to smoke drugs and service the clients at any time; It was painful ….* (pause) *I had no choice….* (crying). *Every time I feel low, the trafficker will give me more to smoke. When I am high, I could do anything; my brain is not thinking and not functioning well at that moment. I later became so weak and thin. Now I am better."*

Sub-theme 2.6: Lack of knowledge and access to resources

The majority of the participants said that they lacked resources. Others mentioned that they needed money to send home to their children or parents. However, they did not even have money for food or other basic necessities such as medical treatment, much less for transport to go home. They commented as follows: WSHTP 10: "I have no finances to go home or send home, no job and I am in this shelter waiting for my embassy to help me go back home". WSHTP 8: "I have no money. Now I am sick, stomach cramps can be terrible, and they say it's withdrawals from drugs ... and I cannot get proper medical attention…(sobs)." WSHTP 9: "I cannot send money home and I am not free to go out or go shopping. The trafficker used to buy me clothes that were revealing the body, almost walking naked. Food was another challenge, as the trafficker would give me food when he felt like." WSHTP 12: "I am far from home and have no family support and no money. In addition, the court process takes too long."

Research findings revealed that the lack of knowledge about available services and how to access relevant services proves to be a challenge for the WSHT. The survivors sometimes also think that they do not deserve any services because of what has happened to them (FCJ Refugee Centre, 2016:10). The survivors often do not disclose their experiences and needs fully, even where screening systems have been implemented, for a number of reasons. These include trauma, language barriers, fear of authorities, or fear of retribution (CDSV, 2016:12). The WSHT often discover that their new-found freedom is accompanied by long-lasting mental, physical and financial challenges (Maney, Brown, Gregory, Mallick, Simoneschi, Wheby & Wiktor, 2011:11). Furthermore, the women survivors may have difficulties in accessing legal services that they may require to address family law, immigration, public benefits and criminal defence (Solis, 2015:85).

Sub-theme 2.7: Feeling of hopelessness

The participants reported feelings of extreme sadness and hopelessness about the future. Research indicates that these survivors may be suicidal, have cognitive impairment and memory loss, and may become withdrawn. They may also have difficulty concentrating and display aggression and anger (Michigan Commission on Human Trafficking, 2013:16). Hopelessness is a condition in which the survivors suffer from a sense of powerlessness, arising from a traumatic event or persistent failure to succeed. It is thought to be one of the underlying causes of depression (Cherry, 2016:1). The

participants shared on this as follows: WSHTP 11: *"Though I am not sure who to trust, sometimes I feel as if l am not understood by the service providers. It is like my life is stuck and I am not going anywhere, I wish I could disappear … disappear than face all this"*. WSHTP 12: *"I am far from home and have no family support and no money and I am not sure about the future."* Participants perceive that human trafficking has enormous consequences in their lives.

Conclusions

The research study indicates that WSHT endure and survive multiple challenges that result from human trafficking. The findings reveal that WSHT experience unspeakable consequences that are traumatic in nature after being rescued from the ordeal of human trafficking and might require short- or long-term assistance. The consequences are numerous and affect the survivor in all aspects of her life. The consequences are physical, psychological, social, economic, spiritual, legal and educational in nature.

All the participants were in agreement that lack of education and knowledge about issues of human trafficking and skills put them in a vulnerable situation. It was apparent from the participants that when women survivors are rescued, they are in a terrible state both physically and emotionally, that would require comprehensive intervention from a multidisciplinary team. Language was another aspect that the participants considered to be a barrier during intervention. However, the use of interpreters partly alleviated the problem. The problems identified by the participants included financial challenges and social relationships.

The findings also revealed that women continue to be vulnerable despite the current efforts of the government to curb human trafficking. The findings of the study indicated that the participants were not aware of their human rights, which also confirmed a general lack of knowledge about services that would be due to them, resulting in re-traumatisation, the delay of the healing progress or no progress at all. Furthermore, it was apparent during the research study that WSHT were not quite familiar with the Act on the Prevention and Combating of Trafficking in Persons (PACOTIP) Act 7 of 2013. The research findings were derived from participants residing in Gauteng province; however, attempts to ensure the trustworthiness of the study have increased the potential of the conclusions and recommendations to be applicable to WSHT in other provinces of South Africa.

Recommendations

Based on the research findings, the following recommendations are made and grouped according to practice, education, policy and future research.

Practice: It recommended that studies be conducted to explore the needs of WSHT with the aim of empowering them to step forward and speak up of their experiences and the need for healing. Recommendations for practice are noted based on the fact that WSHT need intensive therapy. It is further recommended that this field of practice in social work should be considered a specialised area with clearly defined social work tasks, roles and intervention strategies. Furthermore, recommendations are made stipulating that social workers in this field of service rendering should be encouraged to conduct community awareness programmes in order to prevent trafficking in women.

Education: Recommendations for training and education on the knowledge base and provision of an opportunity for the social workers and other role players in the field of service rendering to WSHT to be trained in the holistic interventions to render an effective service to the survivors of human trafficking.

Policy: Recommendations on the provision of adequate accessible resources to professionals in the field of service rendering to WSHT should be considered as paramount. Finally, it is recommended that the government should allocate more specific funds to support anti-trafficking activities, which include law enforcement, judicial training, victim assistance and protection.

Future research: Recommendations for future research include exploring the needs of WSHT experiencing the mentioned consequences and designing and developing of a holistic social work intervention programme for WSHT in South Africa to enhance the survivors' wellbeing.

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REVIEW

Snippets of professional memory of Chilean Social Work. Patricia Castañeda Meneses and Ana María Salamé Coulon. Cielo Sur Ediciones, Santiago, Chile, 2022. First Edition. ISBN 9789560919823.

María Gabriela Rubilar Donoso

Book available for download at https://repositoriobibliotecas.uv.cl/items/4cb589f8-8c96-4010-956d-c9858f99df27

We wanted to include in the seventh issue of the journal a review of this book which, as its title indicates, is constructed from the "scraps", bits and pieces of arguments, discourses and reflections that the authors have constructed over time. A time which, in retrospect, has allowed them to reflect from different aspects of their work on a period of disciplinary history and the history of the country itself.

From a biographical perspective, and following the contributions of Godard (1996), this book collects snippets of different stories:

The political history of a country, marked by the events of the dictatorship, the transition period and the post-dictatorship, which this book sensitively captures through the notion of generational upheavals (Mannheim, 1993) and which allows us to illustrate the points of connection that unite different generations who were witnesses and protagonists of these events, recognised by the authors as a generational trauma that is restored and repaired through actions of memory such as those recounted in this book and resulting from the work of the authors over several years.

The history of the generations, of some of its most visible hallmarks, and also of the different matrices and approaches that have shaped Chilean Social Work over the last hundred years, since its creation. Perhaps with an emphasis on events from the second half of the last century to the present day, but which, nevertheless, allow us to observe trajectories, recognise changes and transformation processes over time.

The history of a discipline that is challenged by the serious human rights violations that occurred during this long period, and in the face of which it decides to act under an ethical and political imperative that leads it to reconfigure its forms of professional action (as agents of change). Deploying new repertoires and rescuing others that had

been discarded by previous processes, I would like to acknowledge in this compilation of works the vocation and explicit interest of Patricia Castañeda and Ana María Salamé to interact with the professional world, to write texts for multiple audiences, ranging from practising social workers to young first-year students.

The history of training in Social Work, of teaching in the different schools and of the reconfigurations that followed in search of a place that had been forcibly taken away. Hence the constant interpellation of the right to memory in order to be able to address professional trauma. This is, perhaps, the portrait we know best of the work of Castañeda and Salamé, given that both have been trainers of several generations of social workers, and in several of them we recognise the imprint of their imprint. Hence the indissoluble link between legacy and memory.

The history of women and paid work, including their processes of incorporation into the world of productive work and their reconciliation with reproductive spaces. The constant writing and production of knowledge in the academic work of the authors is another aspect of their work, a fact that can be seen in the prolific nature of their writings, which in this book takes on different facets: articles, book chapters and compilations. A separate mention should be made of the history of the university journals of Social Work, journals that the authors have also covered with their own publications, references and suggestions, giving an account of a profession that is taught and practised on a daily basis.

The territorial history of a country that is not reduced to a geopolitical view of the centre or the capital, but also takes place in the regions, the territories of southern Chile and the coast. It is a story that reminds us of the importance of decentralising knowledge, of journeys between physically different territories, and also of the possibilities of bringing distant realities closer together and contributing the specificities that are specific to each one. For me it is impossible not to think of Patricia Castañeda from the "main port"[1] and Ana María from the Wallmapu[2].

The story of an intellectual friendship, of knowing how to work with others, of building relationships that last over time, that allow us to recognise individual hallmarks, but also the value of collective work, of writing with two hands, of critical dialogue. Perhaps this is an element that may not be so evident to the most novice readers of these authors, and who I therefore invite to explore in a reading "between the lines" of this book.

[1] Port of Valparaíso
[2] Araucanía Region

The personal and singular history of its authors, who have bequeathed us a particular way of understanding/performing Social Work that allows us to think about the questions that this book raises. The relevance of professional memory and the construction of an intergenerational bond that allows us to repair the trauma caused, avoid its repetition or a metamorphosis into other forms of violence, whether through the annihilation of cultural identities, collectives or individuals.

In short, this book contributes to the discussion on the professional memory of Chilean Social Work. It includes critical elements on the professional reconfigurations and events that have impacted the history of the discipline. It offers the challenge of rethinking the practices of knowledge production, instruments and work logics for the dissemination of results, while at the same time offering an invitation to work collaboratively and with a long-term perspective.

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INTERVIEW

Witnesses of an era 1

Daniela Sánchez Stürmer's conversation in November 2023 with students and academics from the Department of Social Work at the University of Chile, as part of the activities to commemorate the 50th anniversary of the coup d'état in Chile. .

Can you help us understand how human rights advocacy by churches comes about? In what context is this link forged?

The origins of the Peace Committee

CA few days after the military coup, in October 1973, the Catholic Cardinal Raúl Silva Henríquez, Archbishop of Santiago, together with the Christian Churches, the Orthodox Church and the Jewish Community, created the Pro-Peace Committee to take in people who needed help because of "serious irregular problems" that were occurring in the country.

The Committee was an ecumenical body, chaired by the Catholic bishop Fernando Ariztía and the Lutheran bishop Helmut Frenz, and its executive secretary was Fernando Salas (a Jesuit priest). For a few weeks it functioned in the offices of Cardinal Silva (today Alberto Hurtado University) and soon moved to 2338 Santa Monica Street due to the large number of people attending in relation to the life or death of a family member.

Those who come to ask for help begin to tell us about people detained in the National Stadium, in the Chile Stadium, in regiments, on navy ships. They tell us of torture, of people shot, of relatives who have disappeared from their homes and want to know about them, some want to leave the country, others have been fired from their jobs. The people, mostly women, come in shock, but knowing that there is someone else in the same situation; despite the pain, they regain the strength to continue searching for their relatives.

In the midst of all this, we are the workers of the Committee, who come from different places to "help in the emergency" people who need it more than anyone else. We are young people, believers and non-believers, with a great love for life, for peace and justice, and above all, with a commitment to action for the oppressed, who in this case are those most affected by the repression.

In those early days, the professionals who arrived "to welcome, to defend, to assist and to denounce" organised themselves to be more effective in an emergency task in the face of a great cataclysm, which, like the "bombing of La Moneda", had destroyed our projects for life and society. When we began our work, we had no previous experience of working in repression, nor of the massacre it meant for the population. Our ways of working and theoretical frameworks were not useful for us to diagnose and act in response to needs, but the ethical principles of our work and profession enlightened us, and this is how the Pro Peace Committee's march was organised.

How do you organise yourselves to provide assistance to this spontaneous demand?

IThere were different Units or Departments. The Welfare Department is where the social workers are concentrated, who interview and record the stories and testimonies received and refer the people already interviewed to the Criminal and/or Labour Departments, where they are attended to by lawyers and solicitors. In addition, given the conditions of fear and isolation of the families who are victims of repression, food assistance is provided and they are referred to some doctors who collaborate with the Pro Peace Committee. The organisation of family members was promoted and they were accompanied to visit the detainees in the Chacabuco prison camp and others; and accompaniment was provided to those in prison, through visits and handicrafts that were sent outside Chile in diplomatic pouches.

In the legal units there are defenses of war councils, appeals for legal protection are filed with very little success, because the justice system does not work. At the same time, there were mass dismissals in the public sector and the abolition of trade union, peasant and neighborhood organisations.

The Committee also had other units, one to assist those seeking to leave the country, one to support students expelled from universities, one to coordinate defense and information actions in the regions, and other units for IT support and administration and finance. A team is also formed to provide spiritual assistance to those who request it.
The Pro Peace Committee receives early recognition and international solidarity, not only symbolically, but also with financial support and personalities who come to visit us. They tell us that what we do on a daily basis is to work for the defense and promotion of human rights and this is recognised by the United Nations.

At the end of 1974 the repression became systematic and massive, the torture and disappearances of detainees did not stop; on the contrary, it became institutionalised, and the DINA (National Intelligence Directorate) was already operating. Members of the Peace Committee were arrested, Bishop Frenz was expelled from the country, and finally, Cardinal Silva, under direct pressure from Pinochet, was forced to close the Pro-Peace Committee in December 1975

How do you evaluate that initial experience?

For me it was a privilege to be able to work in the Committee, but it was also a very hard experience and we often went through difficult personal and family moments.

At the same time, it presents us with an experience of humanity, and in my case, of a prophetic Church, bringing together believers and non-believers. An ecumenical experience of churches that responds to the imperatives of justice, truth, solidarity, that seeks paths of dialogue between adversaries and not enemies, as the parable of the Good Samaritan teaches us. An experience that knows about human rights and their universal value.

The defense and promotion of human rights did not end with this closure. Cardinal Silva Henríquez accepted the Committee's mission and created the Vicaria de la Solidaridad under the aegis of the Catholic Church, which began to operate in the Plaza de Armas in Santiago in March 1976.

Can you tell us about the work of the Vicarage of Solidarity as an ethical-political principle and the link with human rights?

The central and best known aspect of the Vicariate's work is the criminal legal defense of individual and political human rights. Today I will refer specifically to its work in the field of second generation rights, Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ESCR), which are the subject of a Department called Zonas, because its professional teams operate on the ground, in the impoverished sectors of the city, in marginalised urban settlements and in rural sectors close to the city.

Why choose this form of human rights advocacy?.

Experience had shown us that when a person's right to life is violated, the socio-economic and cultural rights (ESCR) of that person, of his or her family environment and of the population in general are immediately violated. We said at the time that "they are two sides of the same coin".

The action of this Zonal Department was deployed in the territories, but housing was not its only focus. It was the understanding of poverty in its complexity and of human rights in their interdependence that guided the solidarity work. Between 1975 and 1976, poverty in the villages was aggravated by the application of the military government's economic shock policies. To this is added the fear produced by repression and the official discourse that tells them that individualism leads to success.

It is in this climate that solidarity work takes place. Its actors are a diversity of territorial organisations: soup kitchens, unemployment benefits, craft workshops, youth groups, summer camps, health groups, alcohol rehabilitation groups, groups of relatives of detainees and other initiatives. There were more than 300 soup kitchens at this stage alone, with some 35,000 people participating.

All these organisations were accompanied by professional teams and resources administered by the Zonal Department, which were granted once the organisations demonstrated their willingness to act and presented a consistent solidarity initiative. Institutional accompaniment consisted of training for the specific tasks of each organisation, "popular education", understood as "becoming critically aware of reality", developing forms of democratic participation within each organisation, and coordination at the territorial level to anticipate the return to democracy.

At the same time, the aim is for leaders and participants of grassroots organisations to "develop their own capacities" in order to achieve greater autonomy from the political parties and the official institutions of the dictatorship and the future democracy.

The provision of polyclinics and health equipment in some communes was very important, because it covered the needs of people who did not have access to public hospitals, either because of unemployment or political dissidence.

In this context, skipping stages in which solidarity organisations experienced high and low moments of mobilisation, we arrive at 1988, the plebiscite and the NO campaign.

Can you comment on some lessons learned from the collective memory of Social Work?

In my own words: "The various forms of professional intervention were framed within broad shared orientations, such as: the affirmation of the value of life over death, the open and active denunciation of injustice and repression, and the conviction that the present situation could not go on as it was. Under these conditions, we longed for a more humane, more just, freer, truer and more fraternal and supportive society" (Sánchez, 1990).

We were also learning about the intervention, because the previous theoretical and political frameworks were no longer useful to support the action and we were forced to recreate the look, to relate very directly to the subjects and to the suffering and injustice; but, once we were able to recognise the theoretical insufficiency, we were able to search for new perspectives to act with the required rigorousness.

Thus, we understood how the violation of one right affected all human rights (Precht, 1986) and undertook the task of reconstituting the social fabric and grassroots organisation as a space for participatory and democratic coexistence, together with the development of self-esteem and personal identity in grassroots women's groups.

We also promoted self-management and the development of one's own capacities, in the idea that the exercise of rights entails correlative responsibilities. In both ways, we envisioned a democracy that would be built on the basis of a historical conception of human rights, close to lived experience and with the participation of all citizens, without exclusion.

And your vision of human rights today?

However, the reality has been different. Human rights have now been trivialised; they are invoked from the most opposing positions and have become an ideology that justifies the most adverse points of view that coexist within society. It could be assumed that the social imaginary is dominated by a naturalist (liberal) conception that considers that human rights are inherent to human nature, and therefore prior to the state. On the other hand, there are ideas (real socialisms) that the state has inalienable rights to exercise, even against the freedom of individuals and peoples.

In this presentation, human rights are seen from situated and collectively lived experience. Human rights were understood as social rights and responsibilities, and historically developed as values of the good that human collectivities have formalised at different stages of their history. Human rights are a product of the social, generated by social groups in their struggles to determine, qualify, extend or deepen the right to life of human beings and creation (Garretón, 2000).

Bringing this experience to the present day means combating silence and remembering the profession. Because, if yesterday human rights were systematically violated by the State, today we are not so sure that the rights of all citizens are protected in societies where capitalist market development models are applied, which entail inequalities, lack of respect for citizens, exclusion and violation of socio-economic and cultural rights, together with an obsessive social and political silence on the responsibilities that correspond to each of the human rights proclaimed in the Universal Charter.

Human rights can and should be a socio-historical and political reference point for social coexistence and the well-being of the subjects and actors of the democratisation processes in Latin America. Their study and the updating of human rights thinking could provide valuable criteria and foundations for the design and evaluation of public policies, as well as for collective action and social peace. From this perspective, the re-reading of the historical experience of the defense and promotion of human rights in the recent past allows us to raise a critical reflection with the capacity to confront the inequalities generated by the dominant development model and to unveil the extreme populisms that coexist in the region.

What challenges do you identify?

I believe that as citizens we still have pending tasks: to combat "forgetting" and the dignification of memory; we need to know the truth of the facts and the recognition of the perpetrators; justice must be done and there must be physical and symbolic reparation for the victims and their families.

As professionals, it is especially incumbent upon us to take reparative action; along with the construction of a new memory that overcomes the traumas of the past and warns us of the obstacles that stand in the way of the process of democratisation of society and social coexistence; we need professional memory to project us into a more humane and sustainable future, respectful of human, environmental and technological rights.

We need to distance ourselves from the naturalistic and legalistic conception of human rights; to reaffirm the need for collective action and formal and non-formal education so that "never again" will violations by the state be repeated.

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INTERVIEW

Witnesses of an era 2

Interview with Susana Cazzaniga, September 2023, by Katia Marro and Víctor Orellana for the journal Propuestas Críticas en Trabajo Social, as part of the activities to commemorate the 50th anniversary of the coup d'état in Chile. .

What are its connections with the Chilean process prior to the coup of '73 and, later, with the coup itself on 11 September of that year?

Chile was a mirror in which we looked at ourselves. Particularly in social work, but also in terms of the people who, through their struggles, managed to think that social projects that proposed social justice, rights, and the place of workers in that project were possible.

Chile was very close and for me it still is.

It was a thing of constant reference, so I find it interesting to start this conversation with that image: every 11 September, every time I talk to a Chilean colleague, I remember where I was at that time.

By '73 I was studying Social Work in the city of Santa Fe and was a militant in the Peronist university youth. We had organised a kind of group and we incorporated comrades who, without being directly linked to it (inscribed in a more partisan political militancy), did have social interests and sensitivities.

From the "Agrupación Azul y Blanca" we had carried out a mass vaccination in the city and the surrounding area; we spread out to different places and it was my turn, with a colleague, to go to a place on an island, right on the coast, which was also quite difficult to access. I remember we were both there, we had the radio in a school and suddenly, around midday, we heard the news.

It was such a blow that we looked at each other, turned off the radio, closed what we were doing and went back to Santa Fe. We were so stunned, thinking "this can't be", that what we needed was to meet with others to see what happened. We closed everything, we hitchhiked to the city and there we met, we had a big assembly; those who had more information brought it and discussed it... it was all very confusing.

What we did know was that we had to be at the side of our Chilean brothers, the Chilean sisters; so, immediately after the assemblies, we held marches, communiqués and so on. And to show our solidarity was not just words, but to offer our houses, to offer our homes so that people who had to leave Chile could arrive directly in Argentina, where we would receive them.

So, that 11 September, which is then linked in some way with another emblematic 11 September (the Twin Towers) and, at the same time, with several Septembers in which there were coups in Argentina, in other times. It is these Septembers that always bring back some reminiscences. These are things that are never forgotten. I always have a bond with Chile based on the situation we lived through.

How did you come to Social Work and can you tell us about your experience as a student of Social Work before the coup in Argentina in 1976 and also as a militant?

I began my career in a small city – called Rafaela – in the province of Santa Fe; a very particular city, because it is a very industrial city (agriculture and livestock) that later grew and diversified, and the issue of *work* and *trade unionism* was always present; in other words, a very interesting issue that also gave rise to a lot of militant movement, both in terms of the workers' movement and the youth movement. We already participated in secondary school, perhaps not so clearly in political-party terms, but with ideological and political clarity in general terms. We took part in work in the neighbourhoods, in the slums. We always had activities of that kind, cultural activities, everything was always very mobilised. And when I came to study in Santa Fe, obviously this quickly turned into a more conscious militancy, not because the other militancy was not conscious, but in Santa Fe it was more organic, more committed, with a different kind of political formation.

At that time, Peronist militancy was organised on three fronts: on the neighbourhood front there was the JP *(Peronist youth)*; the JTP *(Peronist working youth)*, who worked in the industries, in the unions, in the factories; and the JUP *(Peronist university youth)*, who were the ones who worked more on the university front.

Within Social Work, our struggle was about the transition to university, about the reforms of the curricula, and there we had a lot of dialogue with Chile. We followed what was happening in Chile and what was happening in Uruguay with the curricula. We were moving towards the idea of a university open to the people, where participation was

really a political participation, not a formal participation as had been the case. So, within the *universities there was a lot of dispute about what kind of university we wanted and in the context of what kind of society*. That was a constant dispute.

In this context, what was the relationship between Social Work and militancy?

We had a fairly formal militancy; we had training schools. Many of the things I learned or read I didn't read in Social Work, but in the party's training school. There we had a large number of subjects that ranged from international political analysis to reading about the Frankfurt School, Gramsci and everything that had to do with the histories of liberation that were being waged at that time in many parts of the world.

Here I come back to Chile, which was present in that sense.

I remember that one of the great discussions we had within the School of Social Work (*at that time School of Social Service)*, was to decide whether our horizon was a liberated homeland, a socialist homeland, national socialism as Peronist... we put the stamp of the national.

So, we asked ourselves, what place was this national socialism going to have in Social Work? And it was a whole discussion: what place was Social Work going to have in a society where, perhaps very innocently, we thought that the problems derived from inequality and the class struggle would not have the magnitude it had had until then?

We were thinking a lot about Chile, what is Chile doing, what is Chilean social work doing now that they have Salvador Allende? And we had reached a conclusion: *Social Work, in the political projects linked to national socialism or socialism, was going to have the place of planning*. In other words, we were going to plan Social Work in interdisciplinary teams, in public policies, social policies (...) it would deal with issues that faced concrete situations; but we were no longer going to be in that more assistance-based part. Why? Because – in our understanding at that time – that was going to be solved, with the salaries as they corresponded, with another life, etc.

So, all that was the discussion; and I say this with great tenderness, looking at it with great pleasure, *because they were extremely honest discussions, discussions that gave us the tools we had at the time*. That's *why today I look at them and say: "they were naïve"*; but they were the ones we had at the time and we carried them forward.

What were the main changes you achieved in that period of Reconceptualisation?

We managed to make a very important change of study, we consulted with a great many careers in other countries – I return, once again, to Chile as a place we looked at a lot, and Uruguay – with whom we had a very similar process. And we managed to make interesting changes in our studies. Changes that worked and were in force for I think two years, because then came the dictatorship.[1]

On the other hand, there was the issue of practices. *We were in a society, at a time in history when our neighbourhoods were highly politicised*, extremely politicised. And the people in the neighbourhoods saw the university students who arrived as people who used them as guinea pigs; it was very difficult to do the internships, because we told them: *"we want to do the internships, to learn"* and they denied us the possibility. There were even situations in which they threw us out rather violently, because they didn't want university students hanging around, precisely because of the previous experiences they had had.

We had to do a whole round and search with colleagues who were working in the neighbourhood, from another place, so that we could enter and do our internships. But it was always very difficult, because we also rejected those practices that were proposed to us, which were practices in children's homes, those practices that we said *"we don't want those practices, we want other things"*.

That was more or less what we were doing, from the school, from the militant spaces, in a situation that was becoming more and more repressive. But that was the point: an environment where *the whole of society was politically aware, even the conservative sectors had political training*.

Generally, when you argued with someone who didn't agree with *your position, you didn't do it with chicanery or empty slogans, but with arguments*. That also seems to me to be very distinctive of the militancy of that time, the arguments.

The slogans in the street, the arguments in the discussion. That's why we studied so hard, because we had to have the tools to be able to face the debates from the most serious places.

[1] The coup d'état in Argentina took place on 24 March, 1976.

Along with that, we had an ethical position, which we discussed a lot: *if you were on the university front, you had to be the best student or one of the best students; if you were on the workers' front, you had to be the best worker and the most supportive; if you were in the neighbourhood, the same thing, the best neighbour. For us, he was the new man. We knew that we were not the new man, but we knew that from that place we could build the new man.*

In other words, not only from the point of view of training, not only from the point of view of conviction, but also from the point of view of how you present yourself as a person today in these features, which were very demanding features; but features that *required you to be credible in what you were saying*.

How does your history as a militant, as a social worker, go through the dictatorship?

Well, we have a large number of disappeared people; the school where I studied has many... classmates who are no longer here. I am alive because when they went to look for me I wasn't there. Thanks to solidarity I was able to survive. It always mobilises us a lot, and that's why we are so much in these commemorations, because in reality any of us survivors could be in those black and white portraits that remind us of those who didn't survive.

In addition to the disappeared and clandestine, we had a great many colleagues in prison and in exile. Both external and internal exile. We recognise internal exile as repression, not because you were in internal exile you are not a victim, that was very difficult for us to understand. For me personally, it was very difficult to understand.

There was a turning point with the Malvinas war, because the situation changed and colleagues began to leave prison, we began to have a more civilian life and we began to meet.

Except for a few comrades who went out very badly, most of us returned to active militancy, which in that case was a militancy that was more focused on human rights.

The task there was, first of all, to respond to the need to meet each other in order to be able to rebuild ourselves as people: there was a lot of accompaniment between us. Each one of us returned in different conditions, and returning to your house, to your home, was complex... sometimes you wondered, *what is my home? I don't have a home*. Those things were strong, because there were families who did not accept the return of the

comrades to their homes (or did it reluctantly); there were others who accompanied. You had to start your own life again. That was my experience and I know there were others like it. There were others who returned to absolute loneliness.

There we immediately took up the banner of reconstructing, of seeing who was missing, who was not there; there you found out about people who had disappeared, you found out about people who you thought were missing and who were alive. So, all of that was a question of searching, of reaching the relatives, of seeing how they were. That was all rather intra-work, wasn't it? It was like trying to heal each other. But this healing was not a healing outside a political framework. We immediately started to join the military and we tackled all the issues together: human rights, the elections – the '83 elections were coming up – and we discussed what we were going to do, how, who to support... all those discussions continued. We are still very strong in that.

And then, in the first years after the end of the dictatorship?

Democracy arrived, but we knew that it wasn't complete, we knew that they were keeping an eye on us. We knew because we had people, good people who were inside the police, who knew us, because we all went back to our places of origin and in the small places everyone knew each other. So, we were favoured by the fact that some policemen would say *"...not ours (...) not hers, I've known her since she was a little girl"*. There were people who took a gamble and said *look, guys, here so-and-so and so-and-so seem to me to be on to you*. Also the bishop, in our case, had a very important position of protection, but there was no activity that we organised that the security services did not come to watch.

The first tasks were to get together and make lists of those who were missing, that was our search. When the CONADEP (National Commission on the Disappearance of Persons) commissions appeared to denounce the comrades, we also participated as social workers, carrying documentation, etc. Of course, we also accompanied the Trial of the Juntas with a lot of mobilisation. Those were the issues there. They were still political activities, but still without much organisation, there was a lot of discussion, where to and how, which were quite complicated issues

For you, in more personal terms, how was your re-encounter with Social Work?

When the coup came and I had to leave, I hadn't finished my thesis, so it was a question of ethics to finish it. When I came to Santa Fe to ask for my file, it was gone. It had been erased, they had taken it out. We had to do a reconstruction, which I always say publicly when I can: I managed to reconstruct my academic record thanks to two colleagues, good people, who started to look for the minutes (of the exams) one by one.

I always recognise them because, when I came back, it's not that everybody hugged you and said *"oh, my dear, what happened to you?*

During the dictatorship, economic neoliberalism, on the one hand, and the terror that was imposed on the other, replaced this solidarity with an attitude of *"well, it must be for a reason, get by as best you can... you decided it, take charge"*.

It was not easy to rebuild our personal lives. *It was easier to rebuild our political lives than our personal lives*. In my case, it was very hard to have to give up my son to be raised by his grandparents for many years. Rebuilding a family relationship, mother and son, was very hard for me.

I can't even tell you how difficult it was, because the first question – beyond the fact that my son is wonderful – that you ask yourself (and that your children ask you) *was why did they have me if they knew that this could happen?* And I can tell you that it is not easy to answer that question, especially for children, because you can discuss it now and you can talk about it at other ages, but at seven years old it is very difficult.

How do you see the challenge of preserving memory in the present time for today's generations?

There is something that is very important and of which we have to be aware: those of us who survived the horrors of the dictatorship sometimes find it hard to understand that, today, we are facing generations that have not experienced anything close to what we did. Imagine that they didn't even live through the 2001 crisis.[2]

[1] In Argentina, in 2001, a series of intense protests took place after years of neoliberal adjustment measures that impoverished the population. The trigger was the "corralito" on 2 December, triggering strikes, a large-scale social explosion, repression by the government (39 people were killed in the protests) and, finally, the resignation and escape by helicopter from the Casa Rosada of the then president Fernando de la Rua.

Those events that for us *are yesterday, are last night in our heads, in our bodies, how do we bring them closer to the new generations who have no idea of similar experiences?* And here there is a question that has always concerned me: *how do we transmit this memory?* Because we all agree that memory has to be kept alive. But *how do we ensure that it doesn't boomerang, that it doesn't freeze?*

Because the accounts of our experiences run the risk of saying "well, they [did it] because they were superheroes" and reproducing this cult of the disappeared. It's one thing to say "fuck, what balls they had", but it's another thing to put them in a place of bronze that installs the idea that you're never going to be able to do it.

I think we have to say the opposite: we were *so common, so human, with our pros and cons, with our darks, with our fears*. Let's say we were afraid... let's say it please! Because that is part of being *"human"* and, moreover, because if we don't say it, we stay in that place where we become impossible to reach.

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INTERVIEW

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Interview with Juan Tito Méndez, in April 2023, by the editor-in-chief of the journal, as part of the activities to commemorate the 50th anniversary of the coup d'état in Chile. .

Tell me, what year did you study at the University of Chile and how did you come to work at this university?

My life as a student and professional is absolutely linked to the University of Chile. I always wanted to be a teacher, initially I wanted to be a primary school teacher, especially because I was passionate about literature, so I wanted to be a Spanish teacher. When I applied to university, I applied for Spanish as my first priority and Social Work as my second. One of my high school classmates entered the School of Social Service at the University of Chile. When I graduated from high school I had to go out to work, but one day I met her and she told me: "you should study Social Work".
I had some doubts and I said to myself "I'm going to apply for both". I chose Spanish and Social Service and in the end I opted for Social Work, Social Service. I made the following reflection: I wanted to study Spanish, but to dedicate myself to literature, I wanted to write. But I started to question myself because I thought "of course, but if I'm a writer I'm isolating myself from my proletarian roots, whereas if I study Social Service I'm going to work for my class and, besides, in my free time I'll be able to write". And that's what made me choose Social Service, which I've always been very proud of.

So, to understand the historical moment, you entered Social Service in which year? After a year of having worked or while you were working?

My first class was on 19 March, 1966. I remember it unforgettably because it was the same day my younger brother was born. At that time, there were about 400 girls and about 12 or 13 boys in the course, from different classes. In my first year there were two of us, and later another boy joined. There were 3 boys and more than 50 girls. I immediately felt very welcome; I felt that I had come home, moreover, because I had a very strong political vocation. I was very close to the Communist Youth, first at the Liceo Darío Salas, and then throughout my career. I only became a militant when I left university, because I had made a promise to my parents that I would "graduate first", as it was very important to them that I was a professional.

Can you tell us what training was like in those years?

The training was very hard, I remember that we had classes all day long, from 8:30 in the morning until 13:00 and from 14:30 until 18:30. Including Saturdays from 9:00 to 14:00 in the afternoon, where we had the assistantships. Every year we had more than twelve subjects, which were annual and with formal exams. It was quite hard.

In addition, I had to experience part of the process of professional reorientation, which here in Chile was done by students, unlike in Argentina and Brazil, where it was led by professors. I especially remember the Second Latin American Congress of Social Work, which was led by students from the University of Concepción. And Manuel Rodríguez, a socialist comrade, was a milestone in the history of social work, because he presented a paper in which he turned social work on its head. Instead of talking about reconceptualisation, we said "no, what social work has to do is change its philosophy". That meant putting an end to paternalism and becoming a real agent of change.

I was in my second year and I remember that these were very active discussions with colleagues from Talca, Temuco, Concepción and Valparaíso, which is why I am emphatic in saying that the process of reconceptualisation in Chile was created and led by the students. Of course, the academics began to join in, some very actively and others not so much, which is why when the coup came, those of us who had started this issue were made to pay the price, and it was very hard.

In 1968 there was the University Reform. We are talking about a process of change in many ways, how did you experience it?

We had to change the schools' management, hold elections, the students were asking for the right to vote and we got it. In fact, a colleague of ours who was doing his internship met Lucía Sepúlveda[1] and invited her to the university to make a presentation for a competition for the chair of social medicine. Later, there was an election for a new head of school and she won, thanks to the massive vote of the students, despite the fact that our vote had less weight than that of the teachers.

This change proposed the active incorporation of students in the training processes, the University Reform and the reconceptualisation of Social Work itself. The majority of students and professors were in favour of all these transformations, but there were also many colleagues and professors who were against it. So, this polarisation is also linked

[1] Who would become the director of the School of Social Service at the University of Chile in 1973.

to the moment of the coup d'état, when we were exonerated, and those same people were the ones who "gave the scythe" to several of us.[2] But, look, we wanted to make a revolution and in a revolution you win or lose. We lost for different reasons.

Were you aware of the implications and risks of this period?

I think we were very voluntarist. We were convinced that the political process was growing towards a socialist revolution that nobody could stop, and we were also very naïve in thinking that Chile was a country with a "republican and democratic" history. In Chile "nothing is going to happen". We saw what was happening in Brazil, Bolivia and Argentina, with the coups d'état, and we thought that "it's not going to happen" in Chile. I think we made mistakes of voluntarism, of naivety, of not measuring the consequences (...). It was like a dwarf defying a giant. And that's what happened to us, because on 11 September we were with a group of comrades in the workplaces, waiting for the instructions that were broadcast on the radios, especially on radio Balmaceda, which was the radio station of the Communist Party.

On the day of the coup d'état, we were waiting for instructions at 321 Condell Street, which was the house where the school was, and suddenly we heard the planes pass by, climbed onto the terrace and saw the bombing of La Moneda. It was terrible, and at that moment we realised who we wanted to fight. Beforehand we had a series of instructions on what to do in the event of a coup d'état, what measures to take, where to go and how to take care of ourselves, in case we had to go underground. The communist party immediately went underground and we stayed there waiting for instructions. Instructions that never came. And the time came when the curfew started at about three o'clock in the afternoon and we asked ourselves: "What do we do"? and the slogan was: take care of yourselves and go home.

What were the days after the coup like?

I left that day with nothing. Then, after about two or three weeks, we were allowed to enter the offices, they gave us an hour's permission to enter and take out our things. At that time, I didn't even take out a book, because I thought that anything could give me away. That day, when I went in, my whole office was upside down and all my books were in a pile on top of the desk (...) It was a very difficult process because the first week after the coup the revolutionary spirit was still very much alive, that we had to prepare ourselves, so it was a matter of waiting..., because at some point we had to go

[2] Expression to indicate that a final blow is struck with the "scythe".

and support that (...) But then came the disenchantment of "no more", and a rather sad but idealised process followed, which was like reconnecting with people who were having a bad time and who you knew. On many occasions I had to visit former comrades who were worse off than me, to contain them, to give them or share support, or simply to see each other, because we were alone.

At that time, I had three fundamental pillars: 1) my wife and my daughter, who had just been born; 2) the university, teaching; and 3) the Party. First, they took away my university, they took away my teaching, and then I was left without a party. However, for a while some of us continued to contact people in support actions, trying to find alternatives, albeit clandestinely. One of them was to go into exile, but I did not want to leave, because I felt that my wife and daughter did not have to pay that cost, as it was not clear whether we would be able to return. Staying was not just a personal decision, but an order from my Party. And I accepted it for the reasons I have mentioned.

But then, many of my references, ex-partisans, left, others died, disappeared, and I was left alone. Suddenly, I looked at myself, and I was in a situation of absolute loneliness, without the university, without my party, clinging only to the protection of my family. Little has been said about these processes, because at the beginning we were still on adrenaline, and then the stupor began, when we started to realise what was happening. Fear, sometimes panic, sometimes poverty.

What was it like when you left university?

It was complex, because in that period there was the added shock of a country where human rights were being violated and people were being killed. These issues are not stories, they are real, I saw many people killed and it affected many of my colleagues and students of Social Service.

We teachers were exonerated in November 1973, but the university made the resignation valid in March, so for four months I had the salary of a full-time lecturer. But from March 1974 it was all over. And as a matter of fighting my own poverty, I became a shopkeeper. And I chose the humblest of trades, a salesman, I sold fish in the street. I would go out at 5:50 in the morning and buy the things I was going to sell, then sell them in the neighbourhood where I went to live later, because I had to move house. I was also a painter, a bricklayer, I worked in everything I could. So, there are other phenomena, also painful, because the stupor, the fear, the panic, sometimes it was a

personal, individual thing; but it was also painful when you realised that some people shunned you, they stopped greeting you, even ex-colleagues or colleagues turned away, as if you had leprosy.

I understand that you were in a very complex position.

Many students started to visit me, saying "teacher, let's get together, tell us about social service". As meetings were forbidden, we would get together in small groups of four or five to be able to talk, to contain, to be able to do some mourning for the colleagues who were killed, disappeared and even committed suicide, because we had to support those who were worse off. At that time, I didn't have the support tools that I later had when I went into psychiatry. These are some of the pains I experienced during that period, when I was left without a university, without a party and my only refuge was my family. At that time, I went through a reconversion and I said to myself "no, here I only dedicate myself and my family". As I always liked studying, I decided to make my life this way.

At the time of the coup d'état I was 26 years old, I was a young person with a family and I soon realised that the dictatorship would be long. I had to change what was my initial project. My main aim was to protect my family, which meant working in whatever I could to survive, and to ensure that my daughter lacked for nothing, because during that period we lived in extreme poverty. In fact, I was unemployed for about four years and that was the darkest period of all, because there was a huge political, economic and social crisis and I was very interested in my wife being able to continue studying.

A friend of ours, a graduate of the Alejandro del Río School, who worked at the El Peral Sanatorium, invited me to do her prenatal replacement, after which I was hired and my work as a therapist began. I worked for 7 years in psychiatry, first at the El Peral hospital, and then in a private clinic, after obtaining a scholarship from the British Council to do a specialisation internship in England.

What about your wife? Tell me, how did the Social Service students experience this process?.

My wife was studying for her degree. She had studied psychology before, she had had some subjects validated, so she had subjects from different years. The first thing that happened was that immediately after the coup d'état, the university was closed. The

University of Chile stopped functioning, salaries were paid in places that were not the usual places, and you didn't know how to continue, and it was like that for a whole semester, until the end of 1973.

The following year, in 1974, some schools were reopened, among them the School of Social Service of the University of Chile, but no longer in Condell Street, but in the Pedagogical building, under the wing of the Faculty of Social Sciences. My wife finished her degree at the University of Chile. In fact, she had to do some internships in the middle of the dictatorship, which means she must have spent at least two and a half years at the University of Chile. Therefore, I did not experience the closure of the school and neither did she, directly.

I think what happened was that there was no entry of new students, and for whatever reason they tried to get rid of all the students who were there, but there was no new entry until the School of Social Service, now transformed, appeared in the IPS (Instituto Profesional de Santiago). That was after the dictatorship's reform of higher education. The School of Social Service must have been a thorn in the side of the coup plotters and the right wing, because it was a very rebellious school, with a strong social and political conscience. As a result, many former colleagues were assassinated or disappeared. They practised revolutionary social work, they lived in the villages, they had a very transforming vision, and so for the university, "that university", it was a problem.

When did you return to teaching at the university?

I took advantage of that period of working in psychiatry to study a lot and train myself. In 1985, I applied for a position in the Gendarmerie, where I worked for 21 years. In the meantime, I continued studying and specialising in criminology. But in 1989, I felt that I could return to the university on my own, because I wanted to teach.

It wasn't easy to go back, I first tried IPS and it didn't go well, then I went to the Instituto Profesional del Pacífico and asked for an interview with the director of the school. And so I started teaching again. At the same time, I worked and continued studying. First I did a diploma course, then a master's degree at the USACH (University of Santiago de Chile), where I stayed teaching for a few years. Later, I started teaching a criminology elective at the Catholic University, a course I held and taught in various places for 14 years. Little by little I added other subjects, such as group methodology, ethics and planning. That was until 2004, when I retired from the Gendarmerie in 2005 and started studying again.

For the last 10 years, I have been teaching professional ethics, methodologies of social work with groups and workshops of Approach to Social Reality, at UTEM (Universidad Tecnológica Metropolitana). I am fascinated by these subjects. I also love teaching first year students. It's like kneading fresh clay and I have worked with clay.

I know some of you may wonder why I am still teaching when I am already retired. For me there are two reasons why I continue to teach. The first is because I like it, I enjoy it, I love it. And the second is because I feel that I am fulfilling a moral commitment that I acquired when I studied, because I didn't pay a penny to study at the University of Chile, education was free. So, when I was invited to UTEM, I said to myself, "it's my duty... It's my duty to give back to society what society gave me". Because of this, I feel I am fulfilling a moral commitment to my society.

Something you would like to contribute to the closing of this interview.

I am an old-fashioned social worker. Operational, even if critical social workers are annoyed when you say you are operational. But I am operational, in the sense that I worked directly with psychiatric patients and families, with prisoners and their families. I had a long career, and I look back and say "well, I didn't do badly after all". I did my life, I did my profession, I'm still doing it and here I am (" singing in the sun like a cicada, after four years underground").

Biography of Juan Tito Méndez (interviewee): Social worker at the University of Chile. He was a professor at the School of Social Service of that university until 1973, he has numerous specialisations and a long career in public management in mental health and prison services. He is currently a professor at the School of Social Work at the Universidad Tecnológica Metropolitana (UTEM).

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