

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.<sup>2</sup>*

### 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<sup>3</sup>. 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<sup>4</sup> and a User’s Guide to the Paine Case<sup>5</sup>, the Memory Archives<sup>6</sup>, a Guide to Sites and Places in Paine<sup>7</sup>, Microbiographies<sup>8</sup> and a set of Postcards<sup>9</sup>.

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. See <https://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.

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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-



pearance, 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.

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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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