

The neoliberal turn in Chilean social work: frontline struggles against individualism and fragmentation

El giro neoliberal en el trabajo social chileno: luchas contra el individualismo y la fragmentación desde la primera línea de intervención

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© 2018, © 2018 Informa UK Limited, trading as Taylor & Francis Group. In Chile, the right-wing dictatorship (1973-1990) implemented the first neoliberal 'experiment' in the world, affecting the development of social work in a traumatic way. More than 40 years after the coup, the inheritance from the dictatorship appears to still be blocking discussion and implementation of critical perspectives in social work. The inception of the Social Protection System in 2000 has contributed to reinforcing depoliticised and individually oriented approaches of social workers' interventions. However, practices of resistance to this apparent hegemonic order can also be detected and identified within social work. Drawing upon preliminary findings of an exploratory-sequential study, this article analyses the way in which neoliberal ideology has impacted contemporary Chilean social work and illuminates strategies employed by many in the profession to defy such constraining rationality.