

# Social work in times of political violence: dictatorships and acts of resistance from the Southern Cone

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## Abstract

The profession of social work developed in Latin America through crises and upheaval after the beginning of 20th century. A wave of dictatorships affecting Latin American countries in the 1970s and 1980s severely impacted on social work education and practice, having consequences in professional and political terms that are still being observed. This chapter aims to contextualise and revisit the period of dictatorships in the Southern Cone, the geographic and cultural region composed of Chile, Argentina and Uruguay – the southernmost area of South America. These three countries experienced dictatorships during overlapping periods, starting in the mid-1970s, and dictators had close reciprocal links, as the Plan Condor and the exile of so many people have demonstrated over the decades. Despite the fact that these countries have diverse experiences in terms of the politics of memory and reparation, a public agenda for recognition of the recent past and its atrocities has already been established. It is precisely that agenda which has also permitted the observation of practices of resistance, abandoning the idea of victims of dictatorship and recognising the capacity of many people, some of them social workers, to contest, subvert and resist the hegemonic order imposed under political violence.

## Keywords

Latin America Dictatorships Social work education and practice Resistance Political violence © Bristol University Press

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