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THE INFLUENCE OF THE DICTATORSHIP AND THE EMERGENCE OF THE COMMON

LA INFLUENCIA DE LA DICTADURA Y LA EMERGENCIA DE LO COMÚN

ESTUDIOS

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Abstract

This article discusses the influence of the Pinochet dictatorship on the understanding of the commons in Chile, especially in terms of its social and civic expression. Following the course of the critical hermeneutics, the analysis focuses on two aspects of this influence: a) the legal aspect, which allows one type of social association while criminalizing another, and b) the economic aspect, which permeates the (self-)understanding of the individual as a subject who, in order to be free, must ensure that there is no external resistance to his or her actions. The results show the importance of interpretation and interpellation provided by the hermeneutic approach and the role of civil society in dynamizing social action and understanding the common.

Keywords: Hermeneutics, political, dictatorship, common, civil society.

Resumen

En el artículo se discute sobre la influencia que la dictadura de Pinochet ha ejercido en la comprensión de lo común en Chile, particularmente, en el sentido de su expresión social y cívica. Siguiendo el curso de la hermenéutica crítica, el análisis se centra en dos aspectos de esta influencia: a) el aspecto legal, que permite un tipo de vinculación social mientras criminaliza otro, y b) el aspecto económico, que permea la (auto)comprensión del individuo como sujeto que, para ser libre, debe asegurar que no exista resistencia externa a sus acciones. Los hallazgos dan cuenta de la importancia de la interpretación e interpelación que brinda el enfoque hermenéutico y del rol de la sociedad civil en la dinamización de la acción social y comprensión de lo común.

Palabras clave: Hermenéutica, lo político, dictadura, lo común, sociedad civil.

1. Introduction

Gadamer states that “what we expect depends on the degree of knowledge we possess”, where “all of this confusion, astonishment, and incompatibility in understanding always invites us to move forward, towards a deeper knowledge” (Gadamer, 1998, pp. 181-182)¹. What drives us to acquire new knowledge is not what we do not understand, but rather the gap between what we do and do not understand. In our constant search for comprehension, one source of motivation for new understanding is the evidence of how stagnant our knowledge of a particular situation or phenomenon may be. Whether on the journey to ourselves—in the deep intimacy of the true self—or in interaction with other individuals, we human beings are compelled to grasp, describe, assimilate, question, and reproduce what is happening as we move towards greater understanding. Nevertheless, a vital circumstance such as the experience of dictatorship does not seem to be a static phenomenon that can be known and understood only in its historicity. Certainly, the Pinochet dictatorship is a thing of the past in terms of time, but it continues to be identified, even in the presence of questions about its constant memory. Hence, we individuals can “make the non-actual evident through our language, so that another can also see it” (Gadamer, 1998, p. 145), which is an act based on understanding. Thus, this arti-

¹ This quotation and the following ones, whose bibliographic reference is in Spanish, have been translated into English by me. I am grateful to the editor for his corrections and suggestions in the English version of the text.

cle examines the influence of the Pinochet dictatorship, specifically how it affected citizen practices and the configuration of the commons.

The work follows the course of the hermeneutic approach so that in describing, understanding and interpellating influence, our research aims to understand and interpret social phenomena in relation to the context in which they occur. As a methodological approach, hermeneutics traces a comprehensive path. Hermeneutics, as a methodological approach, traces a comprehensive path in which the hermeneutic exercise is an act of subordination to the phenomenon we are studying—the Pinochet dictatorship and its influence on the understanding of the common—and not of domination in the sense of a greater appreciation of the event than its interpretation. What we are looking for, then, is the combination of the general and the individual, a fusion of horizons fostered by understanding (Gadamer, 1991).

2. A critical starting point

The political, the techno-economic, and the cultural order make up society, according to Daniel Bell (Bell, 1996). The cultural order corresponds to that in which the meanings of human existence are expressed in an imaginative way, and the political order is the field of justice and social powers; its measure of value is representation and participation. On the other hand, the techno-economic order, which is governed by the value of utility and efficiency, transfers its potential for organizing the production and all other aspects of society. Consequently, a criterion of efficiency—that is, how valuable it is to carry out this or that action—begins to regulate both the formation of agreements (political order) and self-realization (cultural order). Furthermore, trust as a social value, unaffected by the comparison to a benefit that is understood beforehand, remains another aspect of change. A key component of an approach is the exposition of the effects that the techno-economic order's dominance over the political and cultural orders has on the structure of contemporary societies, particularly regarding the abandonment of the citizen to “sacrifice himself” for the common good. If we accept the definition of the common good as the good that requires both its existence and enjoyment by a collective ‘we’, then it becomes paradoxical. This ‘we’ refers not only to two or more individuals in an I-thou relationship, but also to the intersubjectivity that is created in the relationship (Gracia and Reyes, 2022). Therefore, “sacrifice” is antagonistic to the existence and enjoyment of the common good.

Helmut Dubiel will argue from critical theory that what has happened is a crisis of legitimacy rather than ungovernability, as Bell notes. In other words, people desire self-determination, and it is governments that have failed to fulfill this demand. The person can undoubtedly choose to participate in as many facets of (civil) society as suit their requirements and interests. The problem occurs when he is left alone during this procedure and realizes how his choices are constrained by people who, it is presumed, should be able to give him assurance. This, translated into the political and social scenario that interests us, would imply that demands could be met to a certain extent, but in an asymmetrical transactional relationship, in which the government defines the conditions, and the individual assumes them. I talk about a particularized imposition of the common, heir to a conception of social relations forged in dictatorship, and characterized, for example, by a vague declaration of social, economic, and cultural rights, which contrasts with an authoritarian description of the executive and judicial powers (Gargarella, 2020).

The conception of the public sphere as a setting for dialogic interaction is weakened by such a definition of the common, whether we speak of its definition in terms of the practices of individuals and the diversity and complexity of democratic interactions, as if we do it following Habermas, in terms of a historically and contextually founded bourgeois civil society. Regarding the latter, even today the opposition to the common can be noted in certain arguments raised in the rejection of the first constitutional draft project, leaving doubt as to whether these arguments have ideologies as their source or, as Habermas would say, take as reference the contextual framework of events and facts that inform how people relate to each other. Whatever the case, the truth is that three months before the legal period began to be carried out on the Approval and Rejection campaigns for the first constitutional draft, the September 2022 plebiscite, messages against the proposal for a fifth withdrawal of pension funds were already circulating on social networks. In Chile, mandatory pension savings are managed by private for-profit companies called Pension Fund Administrators, which are regulated by Decree Law 3500 of November 1980. Legally, the withdrawal of pension funds allowed workers to withdraw 10% of the existing funds in their individual capitalization accounts (Law 21248). This meant that people could use their own savings—at least 10%—and reduce the impact of transactions carried out by Pension Fund Administrators on such funds. Thus, the withdrawal of pension funds was conceived as a measure to open the lock placed by Pinochet on pension funds. However, the campaign carried out, both on social networks and in newspapers by representatives of the Rejection option, buried any option of approving the initiative for a fifth withdrawal of these funds and, in the process, tipped the scale in favor of the Rejection to the add to these messages many

others that distorted the proposed measures in matters of special public interest, such as health, housing and education (Segovia and Toro, 2022)². Now, what is the connection between these facts and the conception of the commons? We have succinctly seen that the common good is understood as all that good which, both for its existence and for its enjoyment, requires a common “we”. Based on this definition, it does not seem appropriate to present a list of common goods, but rather to provide some examples that, in no case, represent the universalist pretension that such a way of understanding the common good has. In any case, setting out a list of common goods would be no different from placing a lock on the definition of the common good. Therefore, the connection between the facts described and the conception of the common good must begin with the democratic demand made by the people to recover or preserve their capacity for political decision-making. Proposing the development of a democratic will that attends to the formation of an identity understood as a cultural condition would give rise, in accordance with the way the common good has been posited here, to a new flowering of public life that encourages the individual to participate in it without sacrificing the effect of close (personal, family) ties. This is a step away from the politeness that is often cited as the norm for what happens in the private sphere and bourgeois civil society.

However, by considering the cultural order, with its ideas and symbolisms, such a design can make certain disparities invisible. In terms of idiosyncrasy and worldview, this would not necessarily indicate a problem, but, given the political character of the issue, it is crucial to define the line between decision-making capacity and incapacity. In this sense, we citizens can only forget our prepolitical inclinations by moving forward and rocking under the questionable illusion of being impacted in the same way by the same processes if we learn to think of ourselves as members of a nation-state (Honneth, 2014). Moreover, as members of a state made up of diverse nations, it would bring with, in addition to the inherent moral and legal complexities³, new decision-making opportunities based not only on a modern conception of politics, but also on the forgotten Aristotelian ethical-political connection (Miller, 2022) or on the environmental interdependence that goes hand in hand with economic interdependence (Gentes and Policzer, 2024).

2 Two examples of this campaign are the headline “Workers will no longer be owners of their pension savings” (*Las Últimas Noticias*, March 31, 2022) and the viralization of content published on Instagram and Facebook pages prior to the legal campaign period.

3 In “The political constitution is more than the text” [forthcoming] I address the role of *epikeia* as a subtype of practical wisdom in the new Chilean constitution.

Since democracy is no longer the elitist position defended by Bell, and since the greatest demand for rights and individual freedom is not only in the field of aesthetics or appearances, but also in that of democratization, it is necessary to understand the course of the transformations that are taking place in today's societies, and for our interest, Chilean society. In this case, as Dubiel puts it, the rapid expansion of political activities related to citizen initiatives and social movements, as well as citizen responses to conventional political behavior, represent the "offensive articulation of demands for equal rights in movements for citizens' rights [...] [which] only to an ideologically clouded point of view may appear to be symptoms of an aesthetic subversion. But, quite the contrary, all of these phenomena refer to a radicalized process of differentiation of moral positions" (1993, p. 39). It is precisely this differentiation of moral positions which is another aspect of the common as a precondition for heterogeneity.

3. The common, the Common Good and responsibilities

There are certain conditions of life in society that make it possible for human groups, associations, and societies, and each of their members, to achieve the fullest and easiest development of life. The problem arises when the common good, understood as one of these conditions of life, is interpreted in the light of an economic discourse, in the sense that it has become a good that, being originally social, begins to form part of a macro-process of production of goods and services (Albareda and Sison, 2020; Sanchis-Palacios, Campos-Climent and Ejarque-Catalá, 2020). In this sense, the common good continues to be social -it continues to be a good that contributes to the full development of our condition as human beings; However, since it is permeated by the economic discourse, it tends to be governed by a criterion of utility or efficiency.

Nonetheless, the condition of the common good as a concept of social interaction implies that for it to exist there must be a "we", not just an "I" and a "you" engaged in some collective activity, but experiencing an interdependent relationship (Taylor, 1997). There is a way to understand the common good by comparing it to other kinds of goods, such as the individual and the collective goods. For example, an individual good owes its existence and enjoyment to the fact that it belongs to the individual alone —my cell phone, my money, or my home. On the other hand, the public good is good relative to a group of people and is characterized by: (a) no one can be excluded from benefiting from it —for example, no one can be excluded

from enjoying a park or using a road; (b) its consumption by some individuals does not reduce the benefit that other individuals can obtain—for example, benefiting from public lighting; and (c) it is provided by a public action—in the case of a road or public lighting as public goods, the public action is the payment of taxes (Gracia and Reyes, 2022). Therefore, we can say, in a certain sense, that a public good could be a common good. However, there is a difference: if an individual pays taxes that are then used to maintain a public good, that individual does not join others to carry out this action [of paying taxes], so his act remains an individual one. This is an individual action derived from a public result. With this distinction alone we see that a public good is not necessarily a common good.

As for the collective good, we see that what characterizes it is its instrumental character, since collective action, such as participating in a protest march or attending a sporting event, is a means to a personal end and not the ascertainment of interdependence thanks to which such action—march or sporting event—exists. That is to say, the action of several individuals gathered can be seen as common, but it will be so only if for it to exist and be enjoyed there is a prior “we”. Thus, the satisfaction of an individual need—only individual, as an end and not associated with the satisfaction of a common need—is key to understanding this issue. The versus is found in a need that is shared and that owes its satisfaction to an act shared by individuals, as would be the need for education and the cultivation of humans or the enjoyment of decent health (Chen, Evans and Cash, 1999).

Returning to Bell’s characterization of society, we must keep in mind that the framework given by the technoeconomic order is not absolute. Even before the publication of *The Cultural Contradictions of Capitalism*, there was already an appeal for companies to assume responsibility for the impacts of their decisions and actions on society. Moreover, we can also find the socially responsible response from some companies before Bell explained his reasons. What I mean is that the question about the main role of companies in an economic system is not a recent issue. Enrique Bour presents, for example, a comparison of two points of view: one that supports social responsibility, in which companies are supposed to take care of people, and the other which emphasizes the importance of maintaining a company’s place in the economy considering, at the same time, its legitimate search for profitability (Bour, 2012). Furthermore, although the emergence of common tensions sparks debates around capitalism and the liberal economy, questioning them, it must also

recognize the need for the economic aspect as a guarantee of the existence and enjoyment of goods based on a “we”⁴.

Companies can be “hot” institutions, that is, organizations that are close to citizens and the community, establishing direct dealings with them (Martínez, 2006). It is true that in the examples relating to assuming social responsibilities, there is always doubt regarding the ultimate motivation that companies have to act this way, making it complex to achieve a balance between morally actionable economic activity and potentially profitable ethics⁵. However, companies can and should play a role in enabling the common good. It is an error to exclude them, even when the “we” that is formed is between an individual subject and an artificial subject⁶.

Even if we consider the various analyses of corporate social responsibility and the ongoing debates, there would be no contradiction; any business that acknowledges its responsibility for the effects of its actions on the community and the environment is doing it to remain viable. Responsibility, then, is not merely altruism but rather a collection of tactics, social dynamics, openness, and moral justifications that help a corporation survive in a particular socioeconomic setting (Hühn, 2023).

The starting point of this assumption is that any company that adopts a socially responsible position takes as a reference point what happens in society in terms of the objectives and values that characterize it tends to be overlooked in the treatment of this responsibility (Bowen, 2013, p. 6). Given the ideals and goals that direct its actions, a business will be socially responsible in a particular and different way from another company, depending on the society in which it is embedded. But given the requirements of the common, the company is called to be a part of the aforementioned “we” where the very idea of responsibility is inherently positive since it entails meeting needs and being open about how these needs are met. This assumes that the social responsibility of the company, rules of the market and goals and ideals of society are in harmony (Hühn, 2023). Despite this connection, the goals and ideals associated with the commons are often not considered when attempting to control commercial and economic activities.

4 I thank the external peer reviewers for highlighting this point. Any subsequent development of the idea and any possible flaws that may exist in the argument are solely my responsibility.

5 For more information, see Cortina (1994), Sen (2001) and Banerjii and Duflo (2019)

6 The Friedman-Freeman debate revolves around the essential purpose of a company and the responsibilities that it must assume towards its stakeholders, turning out to be a controversy that still strains the relationship between economy, politics, and society, and no less important, that it maintains the meaning of ethics in the business field. (Hühn, 2023). To delve deeper into both positions, see Friedman (1970) and Freeman (2012).

4. The legal aspect of influence

In a little historical digression, we observe that party and governmental politics, which were vulnerable to the impact of American economic and political expansionism, were not strengthened until the formation of a kind of citizenship that rejected the status quo supported by transitional democracy (Aguilera, 2012; De la Maza, 2004). In response, a right wing that continued to display imperialist pretensions and attempted to unilaterally dominate all cultural diversity and pluralism was strengthened. However, the conflictual nature of social relations is only made dysfunctional by using order as the sole justification. Unaffected by ideological affinities, it so happens that one of the ideals arising from civil society is to highlight the limitations of politics with the hope that they will be acknowledged and changed. The background of the current wave of social movements also responds to the impulse of a mass converted to citizenship that has been expressing itself since the mid-20th century as a popular appropriation of politics: labor pressure, the seizure of property by homeless people, student movements, the challenge to the principle of authority, and community organization transcended the governments of the second and third worlds, even if they do not originate from civil society as such (Salazar and Pinto, 1999, p. 112 et seq). Only Augusto Pinochet's military dictatorship was able to curb popular inclination while maintaining the fundamentals of social criticism. In this setting, citizen movements initially formed in opposition to dictatorial measures with a revolutionary goal (1980-1989), and subsequently as advocates for the dynamization of democracy in the face of the political class's complacency after the fall of the dictatorship (2005-2012)⁷.

The only constitutionally viable alternative presented by the opposition was the creation of a State that would look inward rather than outward, be introverted, democratic, and developmentalist, and whose growth would involve the participation of all citizens. This was the path taken by the dictatorial regime because it was the path of imposing a constitutional text made in its own image and likeness (Salazar, 2012). However, we do know that this prospect was nothing more than a popular wish and, in the best-case scenario, a theoretical goal that found its maximum applicability in the changes made to the Fundamental Charter under democracy. Thus, the military regime's capacity to assure the model's future by placing the

⁷ It happened that while "the arbitrariness of the neoliberal military dictatorship expanded, fertilized, and enhanced all the autonomist propensities that made up the apparently extinct 'popular power', later and as an effect of the end of the dictatorship, the political class responsible for consolidating democracy only ended up consolidating its own conservatism and thus legitimizing the imposed neoliberal model" (Salazar, 2012, p. 40 et seq).

center of gravity outside of the people and communities and inside of a State that lives in the nation and emerges from it to defend them must be acknowledged. But who are they being shielded from? Their own self.

Using articles N.º 1, N.º 3, N.º 5, and N.º 7 of the 1980 Constitution as a guide, it is determined that the citizen subject “is not and will never be a political animal” and that “what the State intends, in essence [...] is that Chileans live their daily lives in peace, obedient to the laws, without engaging in politics for themselves” (Salazar, 2012, p. 97 et seq). As for the rights guaranteed by the constitution, “any attempt to promote a social (citizen) movement by its own (sovereign) way outside the party system” —i.e., along the lines of the previous socialist project, in which “popular sovereignty expressed in a plebiscite consultation” is the “foundation of all power” —is regarded as being wholly illegal⁸.

Thus, for example, Article 19, paragraph 15 of the Political Constitution of 1980, assures all persons: “The right to associate without prior permission”. However, while political parties are allowed, they “may not intervene in activities unrelated to their own, nor have any privilege or monopoly of citizen participation” —that is, they may not monopolize citizen political activity. On the other hand, and despite the right to associate, “associations, movements, organizations or groups of persons that pursue or carry out activities proper to political parties without conforming to the norms [that define them —constitutional organization—] are illicit...”. That is to say, the citizen had two choices: engage in politics outside of political parties at the risk of punishment under the terms of the Constitution or join a political party as the only means of doing so while accepting the restrictions imposed by the Constitution. It is important to note that the Constitution designates any illegal activities as terrorism⁹.

Augusto Pinochet, on the other hand, prevented the growth of the communities encouraged by the Salvador Allende government and which was revived with the return to democracy —albeit from a different perspective, responding to a need for local participation experienced by the people themselves to address the vulnerabilities experienced for decades— with a prohibition that was applied not only in terms of the dictatorial violence that characterized the regime. It is possible to claim

8 [...] “no universal value deserves that name if it is not reducible to the national, regional and even to the local conditions of existence of each family” (Allende, 1971).

9 See Art. N.º 9, Art. N.º 17, paragraph 3º and Art. N.º 19, paragraph 15º, in Government of Chile. *Constitución Política de la República de Chile*. Santiago de Chile: Editorial Jurídica de Chile, 1980. The quotation of the text corresponds to Salazar, 2012, p. 104.

that the motivation for the renewal of life in democracy is the same as that which Salvador Allende's government hoped to develop, but we distinguish the difference by noting that in the "Chilean road to socialism," such development is encouraged by the State and with a framework that is both negative and positive, that is, that it causes people, groups, and communities (both) to emerge with their deficiencies, incapacities, problems, symptoms, difficulties, etc. (Martínez, 2006; Honneth, 2011).

Allende's political program therefore viewed community life as the foundation of any social and economic model and as the expression of a desire for "[a] Chile in which the creative capacity of each man and each woman finds how to flourish, not against others but in favor of a better life for all", unlike what occurred with the return to democracy, where it re-emerged as a form of protest and questioning the work of the State (Allende, 1971). However, the 1980 Political Constitution adds to the right to participate, the loss of legal recognition of community organizations, substituting it with the formation of so-called intermediate groups, which are nothing more than the legal authorization for any person to gather with others in order to further their own interests¹⁰.

The wide range of possibilities offered by the category of intermediate groups (local organizations, ecclesiastical, media, unions, federations, etc.), added to the restrictions on political participation, means that the action protected by the State is almost exclusively of an economic nature, even more so considering the explicitness of the model when it states that "the Constitution guarantees all persons [...] the non-arbitrary discrimination in the treatment to be given by the State and its agencies in economic matters, the freedom to acquire ownership [...] and the right of ownership in its various forms over all kinds of tangible or intangible property (Art. 19, paragraphs 22, 23 and 24). If it were not for what has already been mentioned regarding the right to free association and the rule that "the position of union leader shall be incompatible with membership in a political party", this would not seem unconstitutionally odd. As the case may be, "the law shall establish the appropriate sanctions be applied to union leaders who intervene in partisan political activities and to political party leaders who interfere in the functioning of union organizations and other intermediate groups that the law itself indicates" (Art. 23).

10 Article 1 states that "The State recognizes and protects the intermediate groups through which society is organized and structured and guarantees them adequate autonomy to fulfill their own specific purposes". With time it will become more evident that these intermediate groups are the ones that, inserted and in line with the neoliberal economic model, effectively organize and structure society, but in a way contrary to what is democratically aspired, even in terms of a State of justice (Gobierno de Chile, 1980).

Contrary to popular belief, these groups are not removed from politics at the risk of preventing political equality, as it is precisely this equality that must be avoided. The equality that is left is then that which results from the State's non-interference in matters other than the political, making "the social" into a particularized realm, and where the intermediary bodies operate more as defenders of the constitutional model than as protestors.¹¹ In other words, the territorial communal structure, which is still in place despite the last three decades of democratic experience, is not recognized by law or given any authority. For example, "the overlap of functions with other ministries and state agencies, the lack of clarity in financing mechanisms and in the awarding of competitive funds, and the difficulties to advance in the CSOs' participation in government policies and programs" are just a few of the vices Civil Society Organizations fall into when looking for spaces for citizen promotion (Díaz de Valdés, 2016).

5. The voices of civil society

As a result of what was discussed in the previous section, CSOs have diversified due to their fragmentation, and formal membership is becoming increasingly challenging under conditions of disorganization and lack of attribution criteria. It is true that there are political movements and groups that try to bring together opinions that do not always have the common as their standard, but these are initiatives that work under the premise that a stronger message can be transmitted by combining several voices, without sufficient evidence to support the defended points of view and democratic representativeness.

One of the main efforts to save this situation was *The Voices of Civil Society* study, which aimed to promote dialogue between CSOs. Various organizations were able to express and discuss their work, contributions, and the limits they faced in their particular areas of action during this meeting, which had wide and massive attendance. Some findings were indeed in line with the existence and enjoyment of the common, highlighting the appreciation of NGOs for their voluntarism, the fact that they are foundations, non-profit non-governmental organizations, with a solidarity approach and a supportive role, and the objectives they pursue in social, educational, labor, poverty, and inclusion issues (Centro UC Políticas Públicas & Fundación Chile+Hoy, 2016).

¹¹ Fifteen days after the Coup, the Constitutional Reform Commission sent the Military Junta a memorandum in which social power was defined as "the faculty of the intermediate bodies between man and the State to develop with legitimate autonomy in order to obtain their specific purposes, in accordance with the principle of subsidiarity" (Junta Militar de Gobierno, 1973).

However, due to the influence of the dictatorship described above, CSOs have both extrinsic and inherent limitations in pursuing these objectives. On the one hand, the government's administrative management and the private sector's lack of knowledge about what CSOs contribution to society would be to blame for the lack of financing, which is pointed out as the main challenge. In this sense, organizations consider that the lack of financial resources puts their mission at greater risk because the social programs offered by the state, to which CSOs can apply, are insufficient. The outsourcing to which organizations are subjected consolidates their loss of political and social influence, and they become specialized to the point of becoming experts in the various social programs provided by the State; programs that seek to satisfy significant needs, but perhaps not the most urgent or common ones.

On the other hand, the CSO sees their work limited by their own lack of professionalization and insufficient inter-organizational coordination, entering into a dynamic of successes and vulnerabilities, identity crises, and rebirths. There would be particularism here that clouds all efforts to build a "we" at a civic level. And although the amateurism and atomization perceived by organizations are related to external factors, they are intrinsically understood in this analysis because it is the decision-making capacity itself that plays a leading role in overcoming shortcomings. Then, according to the CSO Map, in Chile there were 319,819 formally constituted organizations as of 2020, with an average of 12.2 organizations per thousand inhabitants nationwide. Eighty percent of these organizations were grassroots social groups such as neighborhood associations, sports teams, cultural institutions, women's groups, senior citizen organizations and similar ones with a local, functional, and territorial focus. However, the Community Organizations Law of 1989 which gave rise to these organizations, conceived them as fragmented by giving primacy to the right to vote over the right to participate. Consequently, people can only act and participate in civic life by being represented by organizations, except for voting in presidential, parliamentary, and municipal electoral processes, all of which are binding. By way of illustration, let us consider the Civil Society Councils (COSOC), citizen participation mechanisms created by the State that "must be formed in a diverse, representative and pluralistic manner by members of non-profit associations related to the jurisdiction of the respective body" and are "of an advisory nature" (Law 20500).

This proves the claim that although Chile has CSOs, there isn't a true civil society in the political sense. There would be a paradox when it says that CSOs carry out the crucial work of maintaining the core of neighborhood and community life, while they delegate this duty to others. The CSOs put forth a lot of effort, but their influence is lacking, and they have the least influence within the framework of the numerous

institutions that constitutes the nation. Their activities are still rather fragmented, with each organization concentrating on its own goals and finding it difficult to interact with other groups meaningfully. Their interests frequently take a back seat to internal group issues, the agendas of decision-makers, or government policies, which results in greater depoliticization. Few people have the freedom to create their own agendas (Letelier and Tapia, 2020). As a result, Chilean society begins to take on characteristics of atomistic collectivism; as a result, the social is no longer defined by the sum of its members, but rather by the collection of microcommunities that relate to one another in accordance with their group affiliation. A proposal for the rebuilding of society must undoubtedly acknowledge the importance of a sense of shared experience at the local level and, initially, without regard to the socioeconomic factors specific to each group. Once the dynamics of the intra- and extra-group are known, socioeconomic variables are significant in the study, and their late inclusion is explained. Our goal is not to suggest that these factors are less significant or meaningful, but rather that their distinct presentation enables a better comprehension of the structure of group interactions. According to David Harvey, cities have always been areas of uneven geographic development where differences proliferate and intensify in negative and even pathological ways that ineluctably sow the seeds of social unrest. This is because cities serve as contrasts between various groups and scenarios of action (Harvey, 2008).

Nonetheless, having constitutional authority alone is insufficient for CSOs. The desire for organization within this system of ideas is initially apparent, but its fulfillment leads to an atomized system of ideas. The fragmented organization and the realization of their lack of political influence prompt CSOs to seek new opportunities for the articulation and collaboration.

It appears that giving CSOs accountability is negatively correlated with acknowledging their political influence, a reality that academics, lawmakers, and politicians are aware of, but which the average person is unaware of (Letelier, 2018). In this regard, there is an assignment of responsibility [by the government] to improve life in the neighborhoods [...], but the necessary power to be able to effectively modify life is not there. That is the power that is restricted (Letelier and Tapia, 2020).

As a result, CSOs sees their actions conditioned by the same public policies that have given hope to the citizenry, generating in the latter a sort of clientelism and in the former, internal conflicts regarding their definition and capacity for self-management. Letelier believes that these organizations have reached their lowest point due to their fragmentation, depoliticization, and disempowerment, and it is

this phenomenon that creates the pressure they need to act. What is intuited is that this new linkage is required and should be implemented as quickly as feasible.

So, when does this new process that aims to combat atomism and depoliticization of the populace get started? In the context of social mobilizations and the emergence of new collectives and political parties that seek to specifically pick up the demands of these mobilizations and of the social sentiment of the previous decade, the latter's defeat and what has been dubbed "repoliticization" can be understood. Overcoming atomism is more difficult to understand because it encompasses more than just the social upheaval of October 2019. It also refers to processes of individual and group self-affirmation and identification that, because they are not multidimensionally analyzed, lead us to believe that everything that occurs is the result of a sum of causes and effects. Instead, a strategy that addresses the causes of a social outburst, and how it changes the social context so that the populace can interpret events both positively and negatively is suggested in this scenario (Martínez, 2006, 11 et seq). Then, a situation develops in which political action does not solely react to partisan political designs, but rather to citizen phenomena that dissociate themselves from the former while simultaneously configuring a new model of governance (Albala and Tricot-Salomon, 2020).

6. Conclusions

Both in the working hypothesis and in the analysis developed, the proposal deepens the understanding of the theoretical and practical conditions through which a past event continues to be present in Chilean society. Thus, in our case, the key question was how to explain a process of ethical-political discernment and decision at the societal level without explaining the antagonistic meaning of a dictatorial regime. Certainly, we have presented the dictatorship of Augusto Pinochet as a period in the history of Chile that is a reference in the creation of the current political, economic, and social conditions. However, the emergence of the common and the understanding of the role of civil society cannot be reduced to an opposition to such events, but rather a source for new analyses of democratic relations. Moreover, it is true that the definition of civil society varies according to the place and time in which it is used, as is the case in the characterizations of Central and Eastern Europe, the USSR, or Latin America (Peck, 2015). And despite the historical review of civil society in Chile, the contributions and conceptual perspectives of the authors reviewed, it is complicated to reach a consensus on the phenomenon of civil society and

its relationship with the common. However, the polysemic meaning of this term groups together the different ways in which the citizen opposes the institutionalized. Although the forms of opposition may vary slightly in each situation, they all agree on the importance of changing circumstances through an exercise of power different from that found in regimes. It is the intimate immersion of the human being in language and in the world. It is important to emphasize that in situations where the state is the sole protagonist or the market system has absolute control over other aspects of life, the common is destined to fail. Achieving a balance of power leads to the strengthening of civic networks. Nevertheless, it is not possible to claim that during the military dictatorship all social actions of individuals were protected by a civilian label.

Military terrorism alone denied any possibility of citizen self-government and influence. At the same time, what we know today as “citizen power” was expressed in almost the same terms as the authoritarianism of Augusto Pinochet: As an armed response to military force with the consent of the popular citizenry, where the only difference between one side or the other was being perceived as part of the cause or effect of the crisis. What, then, remains for current and future analysis? The legacy of an event is not lost by the disempowerment of the event itself, but by the characteristics (progressive or conservative) of the generations that preceded it. In this regard, the concept of community, which runs the risk of being reduced to a kind of synonym for communism, implies, within the framework of the common, another issue: One that belongs to the political rather than to politics. Here it is emphasized that politics must consider the common good in an ethical way—as a character, as a way of being— so that the irreducibility of the good allows the prioritization of objectives and decision-making according to social circumstances. Otherwise, the common good may lose its meaning and logic as an intrinsic and source of understanding; without this binding characteristic, it is impossible to imagine a situation in which the common good is the principle without the guarantee of effective public action. Therefore, considering political action, as part of the range of human expression, implies that the individual who is a citizen does not cease to be a person; rather, he/she is a person who acts as a citizen and participates in a specific way in the interaction with other citizens in the public sphere. In this case, that intimate immersion of the human being in language and in the world described by Gadamer would occur (1998, p. 148).

7. References

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