

Special issue: *Chile's Popular Unity at 50*

Article

## Scholarship on the Popular Unity in Chile since 2000. Are historians lagging behind?

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### Abstract

This article examines the questioning indicated by some historians at the beginning of the twenty-first century regarding that they would be in debt to the study of the Allende government and the Popular Unity (UP) in Chile (1970–3). Although historians have investigated the diverse issues and problems of that period in varying depth, there are topics that have not been fully addressed: for example, the relationship between socialists, communists and President Allende, and the participation of left-wing women, native people and youth in the referred historical process. However, this work addresses the contributions on the subject made mainly by Chilean authors in books and articles on UP, namely: general studies on the period, works concerning Allende and some of his close collaborators, the economic changes that affected national and international private interests, some of the forces of the Left and Right (parties and movements), popular social sectors, the state coup, the military, culture and the press. A novel aspect in a significant number of these works is the use of interviews with witnesses who played a significant role in, or lived through, the UP period.

**Keywords:** Chile; Popular Unity; Allende; historiography; witnesses

Since the turn of the millennium, Chilean authors have been reproached on more than one occasion for their scant engagement with Chile's recent history, particularly with regard to the Popular Unity government (Unidad Popular, UP). Mario Garcés and Sebastián Leiva levelled this criticism,<sup>1</sup> aimed not only at historians but also at social and political scientists. Julio Pinto Vallejos shared this view, asserting that historians as a whole were falling behind when it came to the study of the UP. In his search for possible explanations, Pinto Vallejos identified a certain sense of guilt on the part of those authors who were ideologically supportive of the Left and for whom it was undoubtedly painful to undertake a detailed analysis of a process that had ended so badly.<sup>2</sup> However, another historian, Jorge Rojas Flores, presented a more positive vision, affirming that 'a lot has been written about the UP in recent decades, thus overcoming the lacuna that existed for many years'.<sup>3</sup> Half a century after the election of Salvador Allende as president and the start of the brief UP government, do the judgements of Garcés, Leiva and Pinto Vallejos still hold up, or can we now confirm Rojas Flores's assessment?

Recent historiography has certainly been driven by the political situation of the past 30 years, ever since the political parties that opposed the dictatorship managed to gain power (although the Communist Party (PC) was excluded for a long time) in the so-called transition to democracy. As we know, this process did not challenge the neoliberal socio-economic model in place since the dictatorship, even if it did put an end to the repressive system installed in 1973 and re-establish basic freedoms. Indeed, the parties of the old Left, especially the Socialist Party (PS), adopted such ideas and abandoned Marxism, while the PC, despite its criticism, offered no coherent alternative model. Added to this was the global context, completely different to that of 1970, in which commemorating and studying the UP was a high-risk exercise. Historians sympathetic to Allende consider that the president was leading an 'impossible mission' to bring together a broad enough bloc to carry out his ambitious reform project.<sup>4</sup> Some believe that the UP never actually constituted a revolutionary experience, remaining instead in the 'national-populist' stage.<sup>5</sup> Others recognise that, in current times, the debate between the reformist and revolutionary paths is no longer relevant, 'but [other topics] are, such as support for or rejection of the neoliberal movement and imperial domination'.<sup>6</sup>

This background helps us to understand the focus of many new publications, as well as remaining gaps in the historiography. There has been a reluctance to undertake the risky enterprise of a general approach, and the same applies to analyses of UP parties' behaviour. In contrast, studies of social actors abound, especially 'those from below' who did not direct the UP process but could reorientate it. It is possible that, by making this choice, scholars are implicitly criticising current leftist leaders, who are more concerned with exercising power than mobilising the masses who continue to be excluded by neoliberal policies. There are also works motivated not by the crisis but by the growing historiographic diversification, incorporating examinations of women, youth and cultural magazines. Finally, it is important to note that the weight of the present does not always determine the subject of historical studies: one example is the absence of new publications on copper policies despite the metal's enormous importance for the Chilean economy and the fact that such policies represented one of the greatest achievements of Allende's government. Notwithstanding its significance, there are also few studies regarding UP policies towards indigenous peoples.

When it comes to sources, the most novel methodological trend in the history of the UP has been the collection of oral histories from protagonists and/or witnesses of the time. Much of the contemporary documentation disappeared after the coup, but Chileans from diverse sectors were willing to share their testimonies following the return to democracy, and this became very useful for historians. Regarding archival sources within Chile, historians have been able to consult materials within Orlando Letelier's personal papers and the Allende Foundation archives. Outside the country, researchers have used other new material, including documentation from the former Soviet Union (USSR), the former German Democratic Republic (GDR) and the United States. In the case of Cuba, an important selection of the country's Foreign Ministry files from 1964 to 1974 has been published, allowing for an account of its relations with Chile during the UP government.<sup>7</sup>

The *corpus* examined in this article is made up of diverse works published since the start of the new millennium. Our analysis centres around publications by historians, although some authors from other

disciplines and the accounts of certain contemporary political actors have also been included. Priority is given to Chilean authors who live in the country, but consideration has also been given to those who live abroad, including several authors of different nationalities. The criteria for the selection of foreign historians was based on the originality of the topic relating to the UP period in addition to how well documented their work is.

Books and journal articles are given equal consideration. Among the former, we focus on the works of sole authors including on occasion studies that extend beyond the 1970–3 period as long as those years received the most attention. Edited volumes, published mainly on anniversaries of the coup (such as in 2003 or 2013) or in 2008 (the centenary of Allende’s birth), are also considered, albeit more selectively, given that by their nature, they are more difficult to categorise. With regard to the latter, for reasons of space, we had to undertake a rigorous selection as a result of the enormous quantity of publications in recent years, both in Chile and abroad. This same criterion led us to exclude theses and memoirs as well as works of fiction, all of which doubtlessly have much to add to the subject of this article.

### **Overviews about the Popular Unity: Very few studies available**

General overviews of the UP era had, until very recently, been barely touched by historians. Perhaps many were hoping that the passage of time would give them a broad enough perspective to address the matter properly. Or possibly the polemic nature of the topic, even after half a century, led many to avoid it. As will be shown at the end of this section, this situation is starting to change.

A detailed study by Marcelo Casals<sup>8</sup> was among the first to address this issue, carrying out a thorough examination of the origins of the UP project from the foundation of the Popular Action Front (Frente de Acción Popular, FRAP) in 1956 to its accession to power in 1970. The author highlights the profound strategic divergence on the Left which deepened in the 1960s, when the Revolutionary Left Movement (Movimiento de Izquierda Revolucionario, MIR) became involved, emphasising the personal contributions of Salvador Allende and his principal adviser, Joan Garcés. According to Casals, the failure of 1973 was almost inevitable given the fundamental differences between the parties and Allende’s isolation as the only individual who really insisted on a unified position and a unique path to socialism, even if this path was never truly defined theoretically.

The first text to offer an overview of the three UP years was written by Luis Corvalán Márquez.<sup>9</sup> The author does not claim that his work is a general history, given that he concentrates exclusively on the actions of the political parties. However, Corvalán’s work has the virtue of analysing in detailed sequence all the events of Allende’s three years in government, as well as offering an interpretation of what the experience was like. For him, the roots of the conflict can be found in the clash between ‘three global projects that battled with each other’: that of the Left, that of the Christian Democrats (Partido Demócrata Cristiano, DC) and that of the Right. These three projects were divided between those who were willing to respect Chilean institutionalism and those who chose rupture. The DC and a part of the Left, the PC, were among the former, whereas a large part of the PS and the MIR opted for the latter. The Right, represented by the National Party (Partido Nacional, PN) and ‘threatened by the emergence of a powerful popular subject’, was ‘protorupturist [*protorupturista*]’ (which the author posits but does not explain).<sup>10</sup> Corvalán concludes that the UP failed because it was unable to recognise that of the two strategies to carry out its project – the ‘gradualist’ and the ‘rupturist’ – only the first, which necessitated a rapprochement with the DC, was viable. This is because that party possessed the necessary legitimacy to be accepted by the majority of the country and it also brought with it the support of the armed forces.<sup>11</sup>

In subsequent years, the publication of other works has helped advance a broader vision. The historian Pedro Milos brought together a body of valuable oral testimonies from leftist political figures of all parties, as well as some Christian Democrats, in a four-volume series,<sup>12</sup> each of which was dedicated to one of the years from 1970 to 1973. These testimonies illuminated details about certain events that had previously been ignored, like the one mentioned by Garretón,<sup>13</sup> who stated that the 1932 Legislative Decree No. 520, which permitted Allende to start expropriating businesses using a ‘legal loophole’, was a discovery by an ‘obscure public official’ from the Ministry of Economy whom no one knew.<sup>14</sup> This gives an idea of the improvisation that characterised the government, particularly on economic matters.

It also explains the reflections of individuals like Jorge Arrate,<sup>15</sup> who claimed that, for the entire period of governance, ‘we were lost . . . the process of constructing a new order as attempted by Allende was a labyrinth for which there was no map’.<sup>16</sup>

Paradoxically, two studies from scholars unsympathetic to the Left provided fruitful ground for the analysis of the UP. The first consisted of an impressive collection of documents from all the UP parties, the MIR and social groups, as well as accounts from Soviet diplomats, all covering the 1969–73 period.<sup>17</sup> The objective, according to the author, an ex-militant of the Popular Unitary Action Movement (Movimiento de Acción Popular Unitario, MAPU) turned fierce anti-Marxist, was to show the contradictions within the UP that he believed were the root cause of its failure. The second, and the only study to cover the three years of the UP in detail, was a lengthy study written by Joaquín Fernandois.<sup>18</sup> Despite its breadth, it is not a complete history per se, given that it concentrates solely on the political conflict of those years. It is based on the assumption that an unsolvable conflict between Marxist and non-Marxist forces existed within Chile, one that originated decades before 1973 and was further inflamed by the Cuban Revolution. The final outcome was therefore predictable and inevitable, and not the result of US influence. While the author brings together impressive written material, he makes little use of oral testimony and none of those that he does incorporate are from the Left. The constant referencing of diplomatic sources gives this book its interesting angle, especially regarding the relations between the UP and the ex-GDR. The latter was not only a source of material support for Allende but also a theoretical reference, given that the GDR was headed by a unified socialist party.

The leftist publishing house, LOM, has played a crucial role in the renewed history of the UP. At the start of the millennium, LOM published two edited volumes by Julio Pinto Vallejos,<sup>19</sup> who wanted to move away from previous works that placed emphasis on the defeat and the errors of the Left in order to paint a more positive picture of the ‘lively and enthusiastic effort to build a more humane, fairer and better society’.<sup>20</sup> He did this by emphasising the actions of social movements, cultural transformations, the Christians for Socialism movement, the relationship between the UP and the military, voluntary work, agrarian reform and mass education. In 2013, LOM published a brief unreferenced essay by US historian Peter Winn, who dedicated almost half the text to an overview of Chilean history before turning, in a long epilogue, to the transition to democracy and the social movements of the twenty-first century.<sup>21</sup> Its main contribution was the identification of ‘the revolution from above’, a gradual project led by the government, and ‘the revolution from below’ which materialised in unplanned worker takeovers, the latter of which Winn obviously sympathised with, arguing that these were ‘officially illegal but socially just’.<sup>22</sup>

Two LOM authors have recently published histories of the entire UP experience. In the first of these, Mario Garcés provides a summary of the three years of leftist government in a largely descriptive account, which includes transcripts of Allende’s speeches as well as images from the period. The tone of the work is very favourable to the UP, albeit with elements of criticism.<sup>23</sup> One of its key features is the attention paid to the presence of social movements whose activity pre-dated the UP but which, once Allende was in power, created a movement ‘from below’ that the government never managed to integrate with its own; this was the ‘social and political tragedy of the UP’.<sup>24</sup> The second, a more ambitious multi-volume project, is the work of Jorge Magasich.<sup>25</sup> The first two volumes have already been published and are dedicated to examining the historical antecedents of the Left and the 70 days between Allende’s electoral victory and his assumption of power, respectively. Again, Magasich is openly supportive of the UP, highlighting that the experience facilitated the ‘irruption of voices from below, with the fascinating sense of a destiny being forged’.<sup>26</sup>

Other writers such as Julio Pinto<sup>27</sup> have focused their research on the tensions and differences among the Left or have taken a critical stance towards the UP, as in the case of the texts by Carlos Cousiño and Joaquín Fernandois.<sup>28</sup> One of the most novel contributions when it comes to overviews of the period can be found in the works of Luis Garrido and Claudio Llanos. While the former aims to broaden our understanding of the UP by exploring how the capitalist world economy affected Allende’s government, the latter asks whether Allende’s government led an anti-capitalist or rather an anti-imperialist project.<sup>29</sup> Other researchers have also attempted to account for the theoretical contributions of the UP, as is the case with works by Pablo Garrido and Paula Vidal.<sup>30</sup>

## **Key figures: Allende ... and not many others**

The role of UP leaders is a largely unexplored field. There has certainly been a recent upsurge of writing on the political life of the President Salvador Allende, a path that no historian dared to tread before. But this has not been the case with other key figures.

A large part of the literature on Allende before the turn of the millennium was made up of the memoirs of his collaborators, novels and other diverse writings. This changed after 2003 with the publication of no fewer than six well-researched biographies. It should be noted, however, that two of these were written by Spanish authors,<sup>31</sup> one came from a journalist and writer<sup>32</sup> and only three were the work of Chilean historians, one of whom does not live in Chile.<sup>33</sup> Although all these authors are sympathetic towards Allende, occasionally writing about him with a tone of admiration, they do not hesitate in criticising the president. Veneros, who takes an original psychological approach, affirms that Allende was an ambiguous leader, 'incapable of exercising strong and decisive leadership over his own'.<sup>34</sup> She attributes this to the president's antagonistic relationship with his father, whose behaviour as head of the family Allende rejected and sought not to reproduce, preferring instead to be excessively permissive. Martínez indicates that Allende had scant information about international politics particularly as it related to the United States, a country that he rarely visited.<sup>35</sup> Amorós, despite his more complimentary view, recognises that the Chilean president was by no means a theorist.<sup>36</sup> Quiroga furthers this in his reference to 'Allende's silences', or his inability to define a theoretical model that explained how the road to socialism would be constructed along a different path to that of the Soviets, Chinese or Cubans.<sup>37</sup> This is a rebuke that Quiroga extends to the Left as a whole. Regarding his relationship with the parties of the UP, Quiroga also highlights their poor or non-existent cooperation with the president in his attempts to establish a common way of thinking within the UP and to possibly form a federated party, ideas that Allende proposed in 1972 that never received a response.<sup>38</sup>

While all these works have broadened our understanding of the president, there is still much to be explored around Allende's relations with the leftist parties during the UP, in particular with his own party, the PS, which gave him so little support. In addition, there are without doubt many sources yet to be consulted, including those in Cuba and interviews not yet given by those close to the president.<sup>39</sup>

Ironically, the one other leader who has been the subject of most study is Miguel Enríquez, head of the MIR. A biography has been written about him,<sup>40</sup> as well as a book that offers plentiful material for the study of his thought.<sup>41</sup> In contrast, there are few analyses of other UP leaders. Noteworthy exceptions are the conversation between Cristian Pérez and Hernán del Canto, Allende's Interior Minister;<sup>42</sup> and the book-length interview with the General Secretary of the PS, Carlos Altamirano, by the renowned historian Gabriel Salazar.<sup>43</sup> Altamirano stresses Allende's conviction that the Chilean political system was sufficiently elastic to allow radical changes by political means, but never by military ones. However, according to Altamirano, Allende erred in not recognising that such radical changes were impossible without a military force to defend them: in the end, the choice was between compromising with the DC and better controlling the expropriation process, and so on, or resolving the military problem of 'our *unarmed struggle*'. To sit on the fence was crazy and futile ... and this was the challenge that confronted Altamirano as well as President Allende. A similar piece was written by the historian Claudio Robles about the figure of Jacques Chonchol.<sup>44</sup> Referring to the various conversations he had with Chonchol between 2013 and 2014, Robles narrates the trajectory of a 'Revolutionary Christian' who played a central role in the formulation and implementation of the agrarian reform project. However, there is still a study to be done on Radomiro Tomic, the DC leader, who tried without success to position himself as a bridge between his party and the UP.

## **The UP's accomplishments**

In its three short years in power, the UP achieved significant reforms even if these did not turn out as expected or were later reversed or completely transformed by the dictatorship. Economic policies, such as the expropriation of private companies and the attempt to establish areas of social property, fall into the first category. Publications on the topic, such as those by Esteban Valenzuela and Jesús Manuel Martínez, tend to offer critical assessments of such reforms, highlighting their failures.<sup>45</sup> Andrés Aguirre

is more interested in breaking down the UP project to examine its impact on different economic groups, thus providing a bounty of facts and figures.<sup>46</sup> Curiously, the nationalisation of copper, undoubtedly the UP's most successful achievement and one which was respected by the dictatorship, is the subject of just one study and focuses on the little-known negotiations with the United States over the failure to pay compensation to North American firms that had been expropriated<sup>47</sup> – dealings that, as the author argues, were 'predestined to fail'.<sup>48</sup>

Agrarian reform has been much more widely studied but mostly through the lens of social history, which is addressed elsewhere in this article. For an overview, it is worth citing the essay written by José Bengoa, an expert who is supportive of the process but ultimately concludes that, by dividing it into cooperatives or other collectives, the land 'was not given to those who worked it' and thus did not meet the peasants' main demands.<sup>49</sup> The reform's application in the Mapuche region has been well documented in a book by three authors who provide an enormous quantity of data, covering not only the Allende years but also the entire period from 1962 to 1975.<sup>50</sup> They detail employers' violent resistance to the expropriations and suggest – albeit in passing – that a segment of the Mapuche community refused to accept that expropriated lands be organised into cooperatives.<sup>51</sup>

The UP also launched notable initiatives in other areas but these were curtailed by the coup. One such initiative was the attempt to establish a new policy towards the Mapuche and this has been analysed in brief studies centring on land reclamation and Law 17.723 of 1972, which aimed to prevent the subdivision of communal lands.<sup>52</sup> Yet, even if the UP wanted to pursue a more comprehensive approach to the 'Mapuche question', they never opted – or else ran out of time – to consider the recognition of this group as a separate nation.

Another accomplishment with positive resonance came in the area of health, where an integrated approach to civilian welfare meant that medicine was no longer regarded exclusively as 'pure science'.<sup>53</sup> With regard to scientific policy, the UP was credited with organising the first conference on the topic held in Chile, during which an effort was made to coordinate university research with the business world and productive sectors.<sup>54</sup> The UP pioneered the attempt to create computer models for economic planning, hoping to win the 'the battle for production' by organising a partnership programme with computer scientists from Great Britain.<sup>55</sup>

Finally, the results are mixed in the cultural sphere. César Alborno tackles this topic with a critical eye:<sup>56</sup> while the UP relied on the support of a great many artists and creatives who generally favoured the idea of promoting culture as a 'militant and belligerent' activity, there were others who issue a call to rise up against 'the danger of orthodoxy ... at the hands of absolutist principles'.<sup>57</sup> This view manifested itself in the varied production of the Quimantú publishing house, to give one example. A study into the filmmaker Helvio Soto examines the dichotomy between developing a 'mass-appeal' cinema and one that privileged the search for new styles but was not necessarily accessible to the wider public.<sup>58</sup>

## **The political parties**

Naturally, political parties were crucial actors within the UP, perhaps so much so that, as Allende's biographers claim, they often undermined their president's leadership. The book by Corvalán Márquez, cited above,<sup>59</sup> entails an in-depth analysis of the parties' behaviours even though it is not a study dedicated to their internal dynamics. This avenue of research has been approached only in a very limited and unequal way by other authors and thus represents an area ripe for further study.

Indeed, as a starting point there is an enormous gap in our understanding of the PS, the party of President Allende. It has been studied through the lens of its transformation after the coup but within these works the UP experience occupies barely a tenth of the content.<sup>60</sup> The turbulent relationship between the PS and Allende, and the later ideological shift within socialism in the 1980s, perhaps explain this situation. The PC went through a similar process, sparking the publication of various works on the party's history during the twentieth century, although these avoid or only briefly touch upon the role it played during the UP.<sup>61</sup>

Paradoxically, the political party that has received the most attention was one of the later constituents of the UP and one that no longer exists – the MAPU – which has been the subject of two monographs.

The first of these moves away from the traditional methodologies for studying political parties that use only written material. Instead, Cristina Moyano chooses to integrate oral testimony and place a high level of importance on subjectivity and cultural factors to tease out the essence of the new party.<sup>62</sup> Like her, Esteban Valenzuela also speaks of ‘Messianism’ but disregards the notion that the youth played a key role in the MAPU’s birth and growth.<sup>63</sup>

There are no specific studies on other UP constituent parties, such as the Radical Party (Partido Radical, PR) and the Christian Left (Izquierda Cristiana). In contrast, there are a great number of publications on the MIR, which may seem surprising but is actually quite logical if one considers that, as with the case of MAPU, it is easier to study an institution that no longer exists. One of these, a synthetic history of the MIR by Igor Goicovic, has the great advantage of offering an ‘objective’ view of the party. This is most clearly expressed in the author’s analysis of the September 1973 overthrow of the UP, which the author suggests was more attributable to the deficiency of the ‘revolutionary vanguard’ that the MIR claimed to be than to UP ‘reformism’.<sup>64</sup> A second work by Sebastián Leiva extends the scope of research to include a ‘small, little-studied organisation’,<sup>65</sup> while a third, a monumental study in four volumes, is the work of an old MIR activist, Carlos Sandoval.<sup>66</sup>

### **Social actors**

Urban dwellers from the poorest sectors of the working class were key actors during the Allende administration. Mario Garcés paints a broad portrait of these *pobladores* (roughly, the urban poor) and their demands for housing – demands that were met by the State via the organisation of new *poblaciones*<sup>67</sup> – while Boris Cofré and Ignacio Rojas examine *pobladores*’ role in land seizures and the organisation of settlements with the help of the revolutionary and traditional Left, respectively.<sup>68</sup> Alejandra Araya, meanwhile, explores the socio-political relations between *pobladores* and the MIR during the process of occupying land and negotiating solutions to housing problems. *Pobladores* affiliated with the MIR formed the Nueva La Habana encampment and organised their own internal structures for justice as well as alternative citizen security systems, while simultaneously cooperating with the police forces in the capture individuals who had committed crimes.<sup>69</sup> The French scholar Franck Gaudichaud has made considerable advances in this regard with his recent study, using an ambitious methodology that brings together aspects of history, sociology and political science to analyse the ‘revolution from below’ carried out by *pobladores* and industrial workers.<sup>70</sup> This same author had previously published a book of personal accounts about the urban working-class movement.<sup>71</sup> The US historian Marian Schlotterbeck has published another study, looking at MIR activism in Concepción that managed to cross class lines, bringing together students with residents of the popular neighbourhoods, especially in activity relating to land seizures.<sup>72</sup>

These most recent publications raise the issue of the relationship between social movements and the direction of the political process as a whole. The implications of this issue can be seen in relation to incidents such as the Concepción Assembly of May 1972 in which 140 social organisations participated, thus representing a challenge for Allende’s government which condemned the event and refused to accept what it saw as the emergence of a ‘dual power’. The *cordones industriales* (industrial belts) that appeared in southern Santiago (as well as in other provincial cities) were formed by workers from various factories in conjunction with local residents, although the coordination between the two sectors was not always clear.<sup>73</sup> What is evident within these works – something that returns to Peter Winn’s pioneering study of the Yarur factory workers in which he shows that it was the workers and not the Allende administration that drove the factory’s expropriation – is that such experiences reveal the emergence of a mass movement outside the UP, encouraged by the MIR but also by sectors of the PS. For Gaudichaud, this movement contradicts the view of Tomás Moulian or Corvalán Márquez that the only option available to the Allende government was deeper reform, because, in Gaudichaud’s view, it was inconceivable that a revolutionary process could be driven ‘from above’, thus sidelining the ‘creative energy of popular power’.<sup>74</sup>

Moreover, Boris Cofré’s study has been very thought-provoking with regard to both the social aspects of the Supply and Price Control Committees (Juntas de Abastecimientos y Control de Precios, JAPs) and their activities. At the peak of the JAP’s operations, these committees not only helped the State distribute basic goods but they also constituted a movement that surpassed left-wing parties by making demands for

food and offering support for the Allende administration.<sup>75</sup> Not all popular sectors were supportive of the UP project, something picked up by Francisco J. Morales, who suggests various reasons for this fact, including the worsening economic situation or family histories of right-wing affiliation.<sup>76</sup>

Among the publications on youth who both supported the UP and opposed it, the work of Jorge Rojas on secondary school students in Santiago stands out. The author discusses the students' politicisation, their experiences of organisation and their polarisation that culminated in the fracturing of the Federation of Secondary School Students (Federación de Estudiantes Secundarios, FESES), with each side supporting the respective political parties and movements embroiled in the contemporary political struggle.<sup>77</sup> The American Chilean scholar, Patrick Barr-Melej, has historicised two youth movements that promoted counter-culture between the late 1960s and 1973: the hippie movement and Siloísmo. In his well-documented book, interviews with key figures offer an internal perspective of these movements while an examination of press sources reveals the societal reaction to such unorthodox expressions of juvenile life (rock, free love, long hair). The challenge that such movements posed to the traditional family model or their pursuit of personal liberation outside of the road to socialism meant that they were rejected by all Chilean political parties.<sup>78</sup>

The experience of the gay community has provoked little interest. One exception is the innovative study by Claudio Acevedo and Eduardo Elgueta that analyses the homophobic discourse of the leftist press during the UP years.<sup>79</sup>

The middle class, a social actor notoriously difficult to define, played an important role in the collapse of the UP. Until very recently the process by which this sector became part of the opposition had not been investigated, but a recent article by Marcelo Casals has filled this gap by examining the sociological, cultural and ideological factors that drove a large group of professionals and small businesspeople who were not initially hostile to Allende to turn against the president.<sup>80</sup> The author suggests that this shift was due to the fact that middle-class groups interpreted UP policies as a rupture in how they had been treated by the State since 1930; the new government was starting to show excessive favouritism towards the working class. The defence of their material interests was also a factor as, for example, when many medical doctors opposed a proposal – that never materialised – to establish a single healthcare system which would have deprived them of their personal incomes. The author also stresses emotional and cultural reasons for this break, including the pejorative tone adopted by the leftist press towards professionals. The piece is very well researched and uses primary sources from the very organisations that became UP opponents (the records of professional bodies and the bulletin of the road haulage association).

The subject of women as social actors has also been neglected, and it is noteworthy that the few publications on this topic have concentrated mostly on those women who supported the anti-UP opposition movement.<sup>81</sup> From these studies it is important to highlight the cultural factors that underscored the hostile attitude of many women towards the Left, namely the perception that the UP project threatened the family unit. The participation of leftist women has only been partially explored within works that cover other periods and that have, for the most part, been written by non-Chilean authors, at least until recently.<sup>82</sup>

In the rural arena, a recent article reconstructs the life of a female MIR activist concerned with agrarian reform who is also part of a Revolutionary Peasants Movement (Movimiento Campesino Revolucionario) unit in Los Andes and Quillota (towns in Valparaíso province). The article focuses on the politics and activism of students in this era, and the contribution of this work rests in its analysis of how social memory about the recent past operates from a triply subaltern perspective: that of a female militant at the local level.<sup>83</sup> Other publications have looked towards rural, regional spaces, examining, for example, the participation of unionised peasants in agrarian reform carried out in San Fernando,<sup>84</sup> or the Mapuche-Huilliche leadership involved in a similar process in Valdivia.<sup>85</sup> Felipe Sánchez studied the legal strategies employed by landowners in Llanquihue who had been affected by the agrarian reform implemented there during the UP government. Faced with the mobilisation of rural workers and subsequent land seizures, these landowners pursued legal channels to get a significant portion of those who participated in such actions imprisoned. This, in turn, obstructed the peasant movement and the expropriation process in the province.<sup>86</sup>

Among the topics that have been neglected in historiography, perhaps the most conspicuous is the political role played by the Catholic Church during the UP period. Both its negative view of the project to create a National Unified School (*Escuela Nacional Unificada*) and its role in facilitating dialogue between the DC (Christian Democrats) and the government are well known. However, more research is needed into the internal political tensions within the Church hierarchy during the UP period.

### **Historiography of the right, a little-explored field**

There has been little written about the Chilean Right. It is possible that the relatively minor academic interest is partly due to rightists' lack of policies on political participation aimed at aggressively expanding national economic activity in order to overcome the poverty of a vast proportion of the citizenry and to engage the entire population in productive employment with fair income distribution. The US historian Margaret Power undertook an in-depth examination of the group of right-wing women who were active participants in the political opposition to the UP, in particular during the March of the Empty Pots and Pans (1971) and in their support for labour strikes in October 1972. Her interviews with key figures reveal the political and economic motivations that turned women from different social groups against Allende's government. Moreover, studies of the DC have not adequately addressed the internal tensions within the organisation during the period, nor have they interrogated the attitudes that led them to establish spaces of political understanding and/or collaboration with the UP without abandoning their partisan base.

Pablo Rubio, however, has explored expressions of union opposition to the Allende administration, especially in relation to the copper strike in 1973 where he examines right-wing influences including that of the *Gremio* Movement founded by Jaime Guzmán. The copper miners' strike evidenced the Right's ability to mobilise the masses, as well as their influence among non-elite social groups.<sup>87</sup> The Galician historian José Díaz, concerned with unravelling the myths surrounding the Fatherland and Liberty National Front (*Frente Nacionalista Patria y Libertad*), has historicised its activity in two books which illuminate much of the group's political thought. *Patria y Libertad* promoted a functional and nationalist democracy as a reaction to Liberalism and Communism, in addition to taking combative action against the UP government and maintaining tense relationships with the PN and the leadership of Guzmán's *Gremialists*.<sup>88</sup> Gabriela Gomes, an Argentine historian, has also analysed far-right youth groups, exploring their political thought and strategies to challenge Allende's government.<sup>89</sup>

### **The political process, the coup and the military**

Various studies interrogate the political process by looking at how it manifested itself in everyday life. One volume on the year 1973 gives a novel perspective (even though the essays are heterogeneous and do not all fit in with the central topic). It explores how the political mood was reflected in mediums such as fashion, football and popular music.<sup>90</sup> The issue of violence during the period is touched upon in the contributions of Francisco Morales, the Greek historian Eugenia Palieraki and by José Díaz and Mario Valdés in their work on Concepción.<sup>91</sup> The controversy surrounding the agrarian reform process has been studied by Felipe Sánchez, Jesús Ángel Redondo, Octavio Avendaño, Tamara Carrasco, Jorge Olea and Joel Díaz and Edgardo Quezada.<sup>92</sup> The same text by José Díaz and Mario Valdés, along with publications by Danny Monsálvez, Pablo Seguel and Claudio Llanos, have also advanced our understanding of 'popular power' and the disputes around the concept and how it should be harnessed.<sup>93</sup>

A few publications deal with the 1973 coup d'état, considering issues such as its scale, the key players and its impact on an international, national and subnational level. The articles of Mario Valdés and Danny Monsálvez about the city of Concepción are among these. However, regional studies of the period are still limited in number and we thus need to advance this research agenda in order to establish a more holistic view of the process. Pablo Rubio's work on the role of the DC before the military coup is significant, as is that of Freddy Timmermann and Gonzalo Rojas.<sup>94</sup> Further, while Olga Ulianova explores Soviet perceptions and analyses of 11 September, Raffaele Nocera delves into the relationship between the Italian Christian Democrats and their Chilean counterparts, and Claudia Tosi looks at the actions of the Italian Embassy in Santiago on 11 September 1973.<sup>95</sup>

Another area of enquiry relates to the armed forces. Cristian Garay, Verónica Valdivia, Jorge Magasich and Danny Monsálvez are among the few historians who have sought to investigate not only the actions of the Armed Forces during the UP government but also the relations between Allende and the military. Whereas Valdivia, in one of her studies, traces the trajectory of a young officer from the 1960s to the coup d'état, in another she analyses Allende's policy towards the armed forces.<sup>96</sup> Monsálvez and Garay have also examined Allende's military policy.<sup>97</sup> A significant development in this area has been the exploration of the groups of uniformed men who condemned the rebellious actions of their superiors and later opposed the coup, especially those from the Chilean Navy. On this topic, the works of Jorge Magasich and Danny Monsálvez stand out.<sup>98</sup> The 1973 coup in its entirety is addressed in the research of Danny Monsálvez, Cristian Garay and Karin Willike, as well as that of Rogelio Núñez.<sup>99</sup>

### **Culture, intellectuals and the press**

Within the historiography, the intellectual history of the UP represents the least explored, or most obscure, research path. The few works that do pick up this topic have looked at journals (César Zamorano and Andrea Mulas<sup>100</sup>); leftist intellectuals (Manuel Fernández, Mariano Zarowsky, Andrea Mulas and Laura Briceño<sup>101</sup>); or social scientists and intellectual networks (Daniela Durán, Eduardo Devés, Yvette Lozoya and Pedro Altamirano<sup>102</sup>). Vidal Molina's study addresses a topic that needs to be further examined: the foreign intellectuals, many of them Brazilians, who came to participate in the UP project.<sup>103</sup> Finally, there are those investigations of the media, in particular the press, many of which aim to assess its role in the polarisation of society. The articles of Antoine Faure, Lucía Miranda and Renata Retamal are examples of these.<sup>104</sup>

### **Conclusion**

If we revisit the question raised at the start of this article, we can see that historians have largely caught up in their study of the UP era. Indeed, the first two decades of the new millennium proved fruitful for the study of the UP government. Our knowledge of this period and the unique experience it offered has been greatly expanded, but progress is unequal and there are still important gaps to fill. Although we are starting to see the publication of general or synthetic histories of the period, it would be heartening to see a group project tease out, once and for all, the relationship between Socialists, Communists and President Allende, as well as the precise role of the Christian Democrats, even if these are 'uncomfortable' topics.<sup>105</sup> Researchers still need to pay more attention to issues like the political participation of leftist women, indigenous populations, secondary school and university students, children and youth movements. They also should further explore tensions within universities and the articulation of the UP programme at the local and provincial level, to name but a few. The social uprising (*estallido social*) that began in October 2019, an uprising has been temporarily paralysed by the pandemic, made it clear that a large part of the population rejects the neoliberal model imposed by the dictatorship. As a result, a higher value is today placed on the UP experience that, even while it had major shortcomings, tried to carry out projects of social justice and give the State powers to regulate the economy. Such goals now have greater meaning and will surely incentivise further study. Certainly, the upcoming 50th anniversary of the coup will also motivate more research into this field that still has so much to offer.

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The authors declare no conflicts of interest with this work.

### **Notes**

<sup>1</sup>Garcés and Leiva, *Perspectivas de análisis de la Unidad Popular*, 3, 21.

<sup>2</sup>Pinto Vallejos, 'Os fantasmas da Unidade popular', 31–42.

<sup>3</sup>Rojas Flores, 'La historiografía reciente', 236–7.

- <sup>4</sup>Moulián, *Conversación interrumpida con Allende*, 73–4.
- <sup>5</sup>Salazar and Pinto, *Historia contemporánea de Chile*, 164.
- <sup>6</sup>Grez Toso, ‘Salvador Allende en la perspectiva histórica del movimiento popular chileno’, 183.
- <sup>7</sup>Pérez, *Chile en los archivos del MINREX Cubano*.
- <sup>8</sup>Casals, *El alba de una revolución*.
- <sup>9</sup>Corvalán Márquez, *Los partidos políticos y el golpe del 11 de septiembre*.
- <sup>10</sup>Corvalán Márquez, *Los partidos políticos y el golpe del 11 de septiembre*, 10–12.
- <sup>11</sup>Corvalán Márquez, *Los partidos políticos y el golpe del 11 de septiembre*, 389.
- <sup>12</sup>Milos, *Memoria a 40 años*.
- <sup>13</sup>Oscar Guillermo Garretón, the head of the MAPU, who was Allende’s Subsecretary for the Economy and one of the most wanted men in Chile after the coup, is today working as a company director.
- <sup>14</sup>Milos, *Memoria a 40 años*, Vol. 2, 115.
- <sup>15</sup>A socialist activist during the UP, the director of the Copper Corporation and Minister for Mining militante, Jorge Arrate later moved away from the Socialist Party and became closer to the PC for whom he became the presidential candidate in 2009.
- <sup>16</sup>Milos, *Memoria a 40 años*, Vol. 4, 205–6.
- <sup>17</sup>Farías, *La izquierda chilena*, 2000.
- <sup>18</sup>Fernandois, *La revolución inconclusa*, 2013.
- <sup>19</sup>Pinto Vallejos, *Cuando hicimos historia*; Pinto Vallejos, *Fiesta y drama*.
- <sup>20</sup>Pinto Vallejos, *Cuando hicimos historia*, 5.
- <sup>21</sup>Winn, *La revolución chilena*.
- <sup>22</sup>Winn, *La revolución chilena*, 61.
- <sup>23</sup>Garcés, *La Unidad popular y la revolución*.
- <sup>24</sup>Garcés, *La Unidad popular y la revolución*, 135.
- <sup>25</sup>Magasich, *Historia de la Unidad popular* (vols 1–3).
- <sup>26</sup>Magasich, *Historia de la Unidad popular*, Vol. 1, Introduction.
- <sup>27</sup>Pinto Vallejos, ‘Hacer la revolución en Chile’.
- <sup>28</sup>Cousiño Valdés, ‘Populismo y radicalismo político’, 189–202; Fernandois, ‘¿Peón o actor?’, 149–71.
- <sup>29</sup>Garrido, ‘Historiografía sobre la Unidad Popular’, 104–24; Llanos, ‘¿Un proyecto global anticapitalista?’, 13–34.
- <sup>30</sup>Garrido: ‘La contribución teórica de la Unidad Popular’, 128–51; Vidal, ‘Unidad Popular y la lucha por la igualdad radical en Chile’, 2014, 74–93.
- <sup>31</sup>Martínez, *Salvador Allende*; Amorós, *Allende*.
- <sup>32</sup>Labarca, *Allende*.
- <sup>33</sup>Veneros, *Allende*; Figueroa Clark, *Salvador Allende*; Quiroga, *La dignidad de América*.
- <sup>34</sup>Veneros, *Allende*, 454.
- <sup>35</sup>Martínez, *Salvador Allende*, 134.
- <sup>36</sup>Amorós, *Allende*, 34.
- <sup>37</sup>Quiroga, *La dignidad de América*, 222.
- <sup>38</sup>Quiroga, *La dignidad de América*, 464.
- <sup>39</sup>Del Pozo, *Allende*, 204–5.
- <sup>40</sup>Amorós, *Miguel Enríquez*.
- <sup>41</sup>Naranjo and Ahumada, *Miguel Enríquez y el proyecto revolucionario en Chile*.
- <sup>42</sup>Pérez, *Memorias militantes*.
- <sup>43</sup>Salazar, *Conversaciones con Carlos Altamirano*. Altamirano passed away on 19 May 2019.
- <sup>44</sup>Robles, *Jacques Chonchol*.
- <sup>45</sup>Valenzuela, *Dios, Marx... y el MAPU*; Martínez, ‘Economía y correlación de fuerzas sociales en la transición’.
- <sup>46</sup>Aguirre, ‘Cambios institucionales y transformaciones en la propiedad’.
- <sup>47</sup>Bonnefoy, ‘Las reservadas negociaciones’.
- <sup>48</sup>Bonnefoy, ‘Las reservadas negociaciones’, 106.

- <sup>49</sup>Bengoa, 'Reforma agraria en Chile', 334.
- <sup>50</sup>Correa et al., *La reforma agraria y las tierras mapuches*.
- <sup>51</sup>Correa et al., *La reforma agraria y las tierras mapuches*, 159.
- <sup>52</sup>Albizú, 'El indigenismo de la UP; Chihuailaf, 'Los mapuches y el gobierno de Salvador Allende'; Samaniego, 'Allende y el pueblo mapuche'.
- <sup>53</sup>Illanes, "'El cuerpo nuestro de cada día'".
- <sup>54</sup>Power, 'The First National Congress of Scientists in Chile'.
- <sup>55</sup>Medina, *Revolución cibernética*.
- <sup>56</sup>Albornoz, 'La cultura en la Unidad Popular'.
- <sup>57</sup>Albornoz, 'La cultura en la Unidad Popular', 151–2.
- <sup>58</sup>Cornejo, 'Filmar a contrapelo'.
- <sup>59</sup>Corvalán Márquez, *Los partidos políticos y el golpe del 11 de septiembre..*
- <sup>60</sup>Ortiz, *El socialismo Chileno de Allende a Bachelet*; Gutiérrez, *Ciudades en las sombras*.
- <sup>61</sup>Álvarez, *Arriba los pobres*; Riquelme, *Rojo atardecer*; Ulianova et al., *1912–2012 El siglo*.
- <sup>62</sup>Moyano, *MAPU o la seducción del poder y la juventud*.
- <sup>63</sup>Valenzuela, *Dios, Marx... y el MAPU*.
- <sup>64</sup>Goicovic, *Movimiento de izquierda revolucionario*.
- <sup>65</sup>Leiva, *Revolución socialista y poder popular*.
- <sup>66</sup>Sandoval, *Historia del Movimiento de izquierda revolucionario*.
- <sup>67</sup>Garcés, 'Los pobladores durante la Unidad Popular'; Garcés, 'El movimiento de pobladores durante la Unidad Popular'.
- <sup>68</sup>Cofré, 'El movimiento de pobladores en el Gran Santiago'; Rojas, 'Campamento Unidad Popular'.
- <sup>69</sup>Araya, "'No éramos del MIR los pobladores'".
- <sup>70</sup>Gaudichaud, *Chili 1970–1973*.
- <sup>71</sup>Gaudichaud, *Poder popular y cordones industriales*.
- <sup>72</sup>Schlotterbeck, *Beyond the Vanguard*, 79.
- <sup>73</sup>Gaudichaud, *Chili 1970–1973*, 128.
- <sup>74</sup>Gaudichaud, *Chili 1970–1973*, 303–4.
- <sup>75</sup>Cofré, 'La lucha por "el pan" y la defensa del "gobierno popular"'.
- <sup>76</sup>Morales, 'Los sectores populares opositores a la vía chilena al socialismo'.
- <sup>77</sup>Rojas Flores, 'Los estudiantes secundarios durante la Unidad Popular'.
- <sup>78</sup>Barr-Melej, *Psychedelic Chile*.
- <sup>79</sup>Acevedo and Elgueta, 'El discurso homofóbico en la prensa izquierdista', 1–12.
- <sup>80</sup>Casals, 'The insurrection of the middle class'.
- <sup>81</sup>Power, *La mujer de derecha*; Toro, 'Las mujeres de derecha'.
- <sup>82</sup>Tinsman, *Partners in Conflict*; Thomas, *Contesting Legitimacy in Chile*; Maravall, *La mujer en la izquierda chilena*.
- <sup>83</sup>Cruz and Fuentes, 'Unidad Campesina del MIR durante la Unidad Popular Chilena'.
- <sup>84</sup>Mira, 'Algunas reflexiones al estudio de las convergencias y divergencias sociopolíticas'.
- <sup>85</sup>Le Bonniec, 'La participación de las comunidades Mapuche-Huilliche'.
- <sup>86</sup>Sánchez, 'Política nacional, conflictos locales'; Sánchez, 'La criminalización de la protesta en el sur austral de Chile'.
- <sup>87</sup>Rubio, 'La huelga en el teniente y la influencia del movimiento gremial'.
- <sup>88</sup>Díaz, *Patria y Libertad. La vanguardia juvenil*; Díaz, *Patria y Libertad. El Nacionalismo frente a la Unidad*.
- <sup>89</sup>Gomes, 'Héroes y demonios'.
- <sup>90</sup>Albornoz et al., *1973: La vida cotidiana*.
- <sup>91</sup>Morales, '¿Una mancha de sangre'; Palieraki, 'Las manifestaciones callejeras'; Díaz and Valdés, 'Confrontación y violencia política'.
- <sup>92</sup>Sánchez, 'Violencia política en la Provincia de Llanquihue'; Olea, 'Latifundio y territorio'; Carrasco, 'Cambio generacional... y radicalización campesina'; Avendaño, 'Reforma agraria y movilización'

campesina en Chile'; Díaz and Quezada, 'Estado, reforma agraria y campesinos'; Redondo, 'Las tomas de fundos en la provincia de Cautín'.

<sup>93</sup>Díaz and Valdés: 'Desencuentros en las izquierdas'; Seguel, 'Prácticas de poder'; Monsálvez, 'La Asamblea del Pueblo en Concepción'; Llanos, '1971–1972 Sublevación en el campo'.

<sup>94</sup>Monsálvez and Valdés, 'El golpe de Estado de 1973'; Rubio, 'Reacciones y respuestas de la Democracia Cristiana'; Rojas: '11 de septiembre de 1973'; Timmermann, 'Golpe tangencial y frontal'.

<sup>95</sup>Ulianova, 'La Unidad Popular y el golpe militar en Chile'; Nocera, '11 de septiembre de 1973'; Tosi, 'El rol de la embajada de Italia'.

<sup>96</sup>Valdivia, "'Todos juntos seremos la historia'"; Valdivia, 'Fuerzas Armadas y política'.

<sup>97</sup>Monsálvez, 'Entre el discurso y la acción'; Magasich, *Los que dijeron No*; Garay, *Entre la espada y la pared*.

<sup>98</sup>Monsálvez, 'Agosto 1973'; Magasich, *Los que dijeron No*.

<sup>99</sup>Monsálvez, 'Extremistas, enemigos, antipatriotas e indeseables', 167–98; Garay and Willicke, 'El Mercurio y el 11 de Septiembre del 73', 318–39; Núñez, 'La prensa española', 185–98.

<sup>100</sup>Mulas, 'Las relaciones político-jurídicas'; Zamorano, 'La revista Corcomán y'.

<sup>101</sup>Fernández, 'Los intelectuales de izquierda'; Zarowsky, 'Reforma y revolución'; Briceño, 'Escritores intelectuales'.

<sup>102</sup>Durán, 'Redes intelectuales y circulación de modelos de desarrollo'; Devés, 'Los científicos económico sociales'; Lozoya, 'Cientistas sociales de izquierda'; Altamirano, 'Intelectuales del cono sur en Chile'.

<sup>103</sup>Vidal, 'Theotonio dos Santos en el Chile de la Unidad Popular'.

<sup>104</sup>Faure, '¿Contribuyeron los medios de comunicación al golpe de Estado?'; Miranda and Retamal, 'Opinión pública en Chile durante la Unidad Popular'.

<sup>105</sup>It has not been possible to include in this article two recently published volumes looking at the UP government as part of the project led by Alejandro San Francisco, *Chile 1960–2010*.

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