

Research Article

Returns, Marches and Countermarches: The Agony for Truth and Justice

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Abstract

The present research aims to describe and characterize the actions in the reparation processes of Grandmothers of Plaza de Mayo, and Mothers and Relatives of Disappeared Detainees, in Argentina and Uruguay respectively, in the period from 2005 to 2015, in the face of the effects of political violence and state terrorism. It is proposed to make visible what the organizations' actions have been to influence advances in reparations, with special emphasis on concrete actions in contexts of self-styled "progressive" governments. A qualitative research is proposed, with the substantive use of the technique of documentary analysis and in-depth interviews for data collection, and for the analysis of said data we proceeded through discourse analysis. The results indicate that the central axes linked to comprehensive reparation in each organization are oriented towards: psychosocial reparation, accompaniment in the search process, progress at the legal level, recognition by the State of its responsibility before the crimes committed, the clarification of the truth, especially in the awareness of young people, with an educational paradigm that encourages education for memory. Reparatory mechanisms have manifested themselves in a similar way in the contexts of political progressivism, both in Argentina and Uruguay. However, the Argentine context has established a greater deployment of policies, with a special focus on the restitution of rights, and guarantees of non-repetition, developing an instituting policy promoted by the human rights movement. In the Uruguayan case, although progressivism enabled the creation of new institutions, providing new spaces and a budget to respond to the citizenship and mainly to the victims' relatives, for truth, justice and reparation, these have been poorly satisfactory measures, in where there is still a consolidation of policies, demanded by the human rights movement.

Keywords

Human Rights, Dictatorships, Trauma, Psychosocial, Reparation

1. Introduction

The political violence perpetrated during the decades of the 60's and 70's in the countries of the Southern Cone of Latin America extends its effects to the present day, building subjectivities in our ways of thinking, doing and feeling and determining a profound transformation of history. politics on the continent. Today, in the 21st century, and Authoritarianism

seems to begin to germinate again with the appearance of political sectors, led by figures defending "those times", where the discretionary management of the State apparatus begins to be reconfigured with the annulment of rights and freedoms for citizens. After twenty years, since the arrival of self-proclaimed "progressive" governments in several coun-

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tries in the region, new spaces for dialogue have been established, and claims and demands have begun to be institutionalized in concrete public policies. However, after twenty years, timid progress has been made. In memory, truth and justice have been questioned even by their own electorate. In Uruguay on March 2, 2005, one day after the inauguration, the new president of the Republic, Dr. Tabaré Vázquez, began active cooperation together with the government of the Argentine Republic and its president Dr. Néstor Kirchner, to elucidate the crimes of the last civil-military dictatorship. At the same time, social groups continued their fights for Human Rights (hereinafter, Human Rights), raising among their demands the search for truth, justice and reparation for the victims and the social fabric that was damaged.

Authors such as Lira, E. [9] maintain that reparation serves as a mechanism for the reconstruction of the social fabric, and is based on the recognition that the events actually occurred and that they constituted injustice and abuse. The author maintains that the reparation process “operates through a change in the social and civic attitude of the authorities by assuming responsibility for what happened and its consequences” (p. 17), from economic compensation, psychosocial care, generation of memory spaces, which are just some of the reparatory mechanisms to be assumed by States.

In this sense, exploring the perceptions, expectations and contradictions from the role of social organizations, regarding the process that led to advances in reparation, is essential. Beristain, M. [3] states that “(...) during litigation the expectations of victims and family members can change depending on several factors: a) knowledge of what can be achieved, b) the way in which they work with them, c) their knowledge of other cases” (p. 126).

2. Goals

Describe and characterize the actions of Grandmothers of Plaza de Mayo and Mothers and Relatives of Disappeared Detainees, in the comprehensive reparation processes, in the face of the effects of the political violence of the dictatorships of Argentina and Uruguay, respectively, in the period between years 2005 to 2015.

3. Materials and Methods

The methodological strategy that was considered most appropriate was defined in two moments: a first descriptive moment, building a presentation of the cases under study, and in a second moment an explanatory design. The aim was to provide a response aimed at how organizations manifest themselves through collective action, and what type of organizational frameworks are established in each of them regarding the repair process. For this, methodologically, the qualitative case study turns out to be the most satisfactory.

Grandmothers from Plaza de Mayo (Argentina), and

Mothers and Relatives of Disappeared Detainees (Uruguay), were selected for the case study. The selection criterion focused on the significance of their actions in terms of comprehensive reparation, in their respective countries and especially in national public comprehensive reparation policies. It is understood that the most significant advocacy actions are given by their specific intervention in said public policies.

A review of available documents linked to public policies related to comprehensive reparation was carried out, since the beginning of democracy (1983 in Argentina and 1985 in Uruguay).

A review was made of: decrees, laws, official reports, action plan of each policy, with a total of 46 public policies. From the documents reviewed, a comparative table was prepared, with the type of action, defined in terms of the type of response to the reparation measures, namely: a) restitution; b) compensation; c) satisfaction; d) rehabilitation; e) non-repetition.

Likewise, a review of textual productions (in the selected case the official press releases) of both organizations from 2005 to 2015 was carried out, analyzing the treatment given to the issues related to reparation. The texts were taken from the official websites. A total of 128 documents were processed.

In a second moment, interviews were conducted with qualified informants, members of both social organizations.

4. Results and Discussion

The “consecration of supervised democracy” Waksman, [13], promoted in principle by the Colorado Party, due to the result of the Impunity Law, establishes a new social and political scenario and “contract.” Relatives prepare a Report, where they express and analyze the sad results of the Referendum to annul the Impunity Law. (See Chapter II. 4.1).

The Report, titled “After the Referendum”, begins by stating the following:

On April 16, 1,073,345 citizens voted to ratify Law No. 15,848 and 821,260 voted to annul it. 42.42% of the total voters were defeated by 55.44%. We do not doubt, however, that the values we defended are accepted by the vast majority of Uruguayans, even when the results do not reflect it. Do these results invalidate the decision made? What lessons does the campaign leave us? (Report: After the Referendum. Mothers and Relatives of Disappeared Detainees. [5], p. 1).

Our fight for the truth about all the disappeared, for the restitution of the children's identity and the return to their family, will not have the judicial investigation that it deserved and demanded. It will, as until now, have the support of organizations and people in solidarity with this just cause. Means must be found to keep the memory of what happened alive; so that future generations keep it in mind as an unhealed wound that threatens future repetitions. (Report: After the Referendum. Mothers and Relatives of Disappeared Detainees. [5], p. 4).

In this way, for the first time the need for memory emerges in the organization's discourse. Without a doubt, the citizens' option to "turn the page" began to coexist among its members, despite this the imperative need for truth and justice remained alive; but another dimension was incorporated into this slogan, memory.

"The suppression of the past," states Allier, [1], referring to the beginning of a new decade in 1990, began a new cycle, also called "silence of militant memories" (Rico and Larrobla, [11]). One more landmark in the history that marked post-dictatorship Uruguay. This cycle was characterized by the distancing of the public agenda from the problems related to investigations of human rights violations under State terrorism.

Allier, [1] refers to a psychoanalytic term to characterize this cycle. The predominance of suppression in the social fabric (p. 102). From psychoanalysis, Freud [4], is the one who works on the concept in *The Interpretation of Dreams*.

According to Laplanche and Pontalis, [8], suppression refers to

In a broad sense: psychic operation that tends to make unpleasant or inappropriate content disappear from consciousness: idea, affection, etc. In this sense, repression would be a special type of suppression (...). Suppression would be, on the contrary, a conscious mechanism that would take place at the level of the "second censorship" that Freud places between the conscious and the preconscious; It would be an exclusion outside the field of current consciousness and not the passage from one system (conscious preconscious) to another (unconscious). From the dynamic point of view, moral motivations play a primary role in suppression (p. 442).

The same author Allier, [1] maintains that the past would represent an unpleasant content, where some sectors of society (the Armed Forces themselves, and conservative sectors) would like to interrupt, that is, it would not be forgotten or erased from memory, but rather which, on the contrary, would be "suspended" while the social conditions are not in place for its debate or discussion. In this sense, the referendum operated as a suppressive element in the public sphere.

Under this same line of argument, IE1, in the interview states

Until the year 86 we complain and we go to justice, and the Expiry Law is voted and our possibility of access to justice is cut off. And from the governments they ignore us, they tell us there are no missing people here! So the first job was to resort to a referendum as a way to ensure that the Law had no effect and justice could act. We resorted to a referendum and we were wrong, because rights are not decided by majorities or minorities, we have rights as human beings, therefore, we cannot put a right to a vote. But that mistake allowed us to reach a lot of people with the issue of the missing.(Fragment of personal interview with IE1.).

The onslaught of silencing in the Southern Cone was accompanied by another global event, such as the fall of the

Berlin Wall in 1989, which meant "collective defeat and militant discouragement (...) along with the historical objective of build a socialist utopia against the predominance of the world capitalist system" (Rico and Larrobla, [11]). However, despite the close scenarios that were established, the fight continued. (...) *We lost the plebiscite and a very great demoralization, but we continue working and denouncing, and in 1995 we began with the Marches of Silence.* (Fragment of personal interview with IE1).

Only a river separates us. Rivers have the characteristic of being currents that flow constantly at a rate, determined among other things by the type of climate. Here in the south of Latin America, Argentina and Uruguay are separated by the Rio de la Plata, some maintain that we are "the Rioplatenses". This characteristic makes our ways of feeling and thinking very similar, or almost identical. But, because the need to make this clarification to begin the point that brings us together. The reason is that this period in the history of our democracies has had more similarities than divergences, more encounters than disagreements, more forgettings than memories, and many more silences. This period or cycle, from approximately 1990 to 1995, was "demoralization" (IE1), it was "neither chicha nor lemonade" (AB1), it was the pardons and the bans. However, these "countermarches" in the search for truth and justice marked a turning point for both organizations.

In the case of Relatives, they call with great popular support the so-called *March of Silence*, (first march held on May 20, 1996). The newspaper *La República* in its edition of May 21, 1996, headlined: Who will silence this silence? The most impressive act since the fall of the dictatorship. Nothing could be more moving than 80 thousand souls shedding their immense pain in the middle of the night. From there, support for the most popular mobilization in defense of human rights is established among citizens, with deep respect and sensitivity. Subsequently, new organizations and groups appeared in defense of human rights, such as: HIJOS and Crysol (Association of former political prisoners of Uruguay), among others, and with the arrival of a new millennium in the year 2000, it was proposed by the State Uruguayan creation of a Commission for Peace (Copaz).

And only since 2000, with President Jorge Batlle, the Peace Commission was established. The government recognizes state terrorism and that there are missing persons. Now this Commission for Peace, why is it established? Because Batlle is good? No, it is because Mothers and Relatives continues with the denunciation that has been made.(Excerpt from interview staff with IE1).

Copaz was created by resolution of the Presidency of the Republic, No. 858/2000, to meet the need for "take possible steps to determine the situation of those detained-disappeared during the *de facto* regime, as well as minors disappeared under the same conditions". The Commission functioned within the orbit of the Presidency of the Republic, and was made up of: Monsignor Nicolás Cotugno (chaired), Archbishop

of Montevideo, José D'Elia, former Secretary General of the PIT-CNT Trade Union Central (Inter-Union Plenary of Workers-Convention Workers), Luis Pérez Aguirre, Jesuit priest, founder of the Peace and Justice Service in Uruguay, Dr. José Claudio Williman, lawyer and politician of the National Party, Dr. Gonzalo Fernández, lawyer and politician of the Frente Amplio, and Dr. Carlos Ramela, lawyer and politician of the Colorado Party.

The Commission was in charge of gathering information on the detainees-disappeared, relying on documentary contributions from the Association of Relatives of Detainees-Disappeared, by the Peace and Justice Service (SERPAJ) and by the Institute of Legal and Social Studies of the Uruguay (IELSUR). Likewise, the Abuelas de Plaza de Mayo organization, together with CONADEP, dependent on the Ministry of Justice and Human Rights of the Nation, Argentina, contributed to the task of this commission.

From the Copaz Report, presented on April 10, 2003, to the Presidency of the Republic, some data emerge that need to be mentioned.

For a member of the Familiares interviewees, President Jorge Batlle's decision was the first instance, he was the one who broke the spear, let's say, because he was the first who called and cared. (Fragment of interview with IC2).

Let us remember that 15 years had already passed, where Dr. Julio María Sanguinetti served as president on two occasions, and on one occasion Dr. Luis Alberto Lacalle Herrera. Therefore, the attitude of Dr. Jorge Batlle was surprising and hopeful.

The Copaz final report had a total of 32 pages and 14 annexes. It is striking, being an official report, that it will have a rather "small" number of pages and information. Comparing with official reports, prepared in Argentina and Chile, for example.

On the other hand, the report makes recommendations to the State, among them the need to repair the damages caused, "they involve the illegal actions of people who served under the command and power of the State, they impose an inexcusable obligation to mitigate and repair, to the extent as possible, the damage caused" (Commission for Peace. [6], p. 31).

In this way, the first data presented officially had an impact, with "bitter flavors", but with one more chapter in the socio-historical construction and "official history" of the events. To problematize this, psychoanalysts Ulriksen and Viñar [12] maintain

It is essential that there be many memories and many forgetfulness that are exorcised in the private scene and in the public scene and that babble a controversial human word, not the monolithic and Manichean truth that the dictatorship bequeathed to us as a prevalent word and as a dominant discourse. (...) Restitution of plural memories, where there was the violence of active silencing (p. 24).

Central axes of the organizations in their demands, in relation to reparation.

The selection, categorization and analysis of the 128 press

releases between both organizations made it possible to define the action scenarios and main enunciative axes that both organizations have, placing special emphasis on reparation.

In the Abuelas organization, in their communications they present declarative categories, distributed by thematic areas.

Table 1. Content structure in communications from Abuelas.

Axes/Themes
House for Identity
Culture and Education
Subsidiaries
Genetics
Justice
Memory
Systematic Plan
Network for the Right to Identity
Restitutions

Source: Extracted from: <https://www.abuelas.org.ar/>

Although this organization of information allows these areas to be analyzed in isolation and by date, it is significant as the distribution of their forms in communication responds to Abuelas' own organization chart. In this case, a different communication strategy is presented than the one carried out by Relatives in Uruguay.

On the other hand, the textual productions from Abuelas are in line with the advances achieved from the progressive scenario, in terms of issues linked to justice and the clarification of the truth. In this sense, the organization places special emphasis on monitoring causes linked to the expropriation of identities during the dictatorship, and links it to the reparation process as a mechanism for restitution of rights.

They express their satisfaction with the progress of the case of the Systematic Plan for the Appropriation of Minors, or known as "baby theft" (judicial case initiated in 1996).

(...) a democratic court condemned some of its main perpetrators and explicitly recognized that there was a "systematic and widespread practice of abduction, retention and concealment of minors within the framework of a general plan of annihilation that was deployed over part of the civilian population, with the argument of combating subversion by implementing methods of State terrorism during the years 1976 to 1983" (Extracted from Abuelas Communiqué July 6, [14]).

In line with their previous statement, two years later in 2014 they expressed the following, referring to the same cause:

(...) It should be noted that the sentence confirms the ex-

istence of a "widespread and systematic practice of abduction, retention and concealment of minors", while confirming that "the appropriation of children constitutes a form of forced disappearance and a crime against humanity" and that this crime "continues to be committed until the appropriate children regain their identity.

This ruling, then, implies recognition of the almost 37 years of struggle of our Association. We Grandmothers applaud these criteria that allow us to deepen the search for Memory, Truth and Justice for our missing children and our appropriate grandchildren. (Extracted from Abuelas Comunicado May 14, [15]).

Table 2. How do you understand repair? Synthesis of central axes.

Organization	Central axes in demise of Repair
Grandmothers of Plaza de Mayo	Legal and regulatory progress
	Subjective repair
	Need to install the theme in young people
Mothers and Relatives of Disappeared Detainees	Recognition by the State and clarification of the Truth
	Accompaniment in the search process
	Educational and symbolic measures

Source: Self Made

Table 2 indicates the central axes of the definition of repair in each organization. In this way, it allows us to develop a mapping of actions, which are detailed, defined and described in table 3.

Table 3. Action mapping.

Organization	Manifest actions from the survey
Grandmothers of Plaza de Mayo	Attention Center for the Right to Identity
	Development of sciences: Genetics and Anthropology
	Culture and Education for Identity
	Archive Research
Mothers and Relatives of Disappeared Detainees	We are all Family Members and the challenge of Human Rights Education.
	Complaints at the international level.

Source: self made

From the Familiares organization, the total number of press releases, which were issued from 2005 to 2015, (48) were

analyzed. It was observed that the main characteristic of these communications is the communication from significant dates, namely:

- 1 May 20 – March of Silence
- 2 August 30 – Day of the Disappeared Detainee
- 3 December 10 – Commemoration of Human Rights
- 4 Other dates – Announcements based on specific events

Likewise, it is highlighted that these communications tend, in their vast majority, not only to communicate specific facts, but to sensitize society as a whole about the events of the civil-military dictatorship, and as a result, problematize the validity of State terrorism, as there is no truth or justice.

In Chapter II, section 4.1, the first action by the Uruguayan State to treat and clarify the events that occurred during State terrorism was mentioned. This action was the creation of COPAZ, integrated among other actors by the organization Familiares. In this space, the organization maintained the importance of installing content related to HRE, and they expressed it in the following way

We raised the need, as we did before COPAZ, to include the subject of Human Rights Education in educational programs, especially in courses for the military and police (Extracted from Family Comunicado August 10, [17]).

This statement, although it places special emphasis on supporting HRE content towards the military and police, is also fundamental and necessary for it to be at all educational levels, both at the formal and non-formal education levels.

This component of education towards the Armed Forces was discussed in one of the interviews: (...) as a form of reparation, it is essential for us to educate the armed forces, that this is wrong. (Excerpt from interview staff with IE1).

Likewise, a common axis in most of its communications is that it pays special attention to the need for concrete actions, aimed at reparation mechanisms, based on the clarification of the truth.

We demand concrete actions regarding comprehensive reparation by the State, to the victims that the State itself, agents on their behalf, have flagrantly violated their rights, going so far as to constitute crimes against humanity (Extracted from Family Comunicado May 05 [16]).

However, it took 4 years for the State to institutionalize some of these demands, in the so-called Victim Reparation Law (No. 18,596).

From Relatives, in reference to this progress, they issue a special statement, where they mention basically of the existence of a regulatory framework, as follows

The project constitutes progress on the path of adequate reparation for the victims of State terrorism, and of the so-called "current illegitimate of the State." Comprehensive reparation to all victims of human rights violations that occurred during the last civil-military dictatorship and the previous years has constituted a constant demand from family members. In this sense, we consider that the bill under study constitutes a step forward (Extracted from Familiares Comunicado May 12, [18]).

Without prejudice to the above, Familiares considers that the proposed text does not include all the elements that, according to international standards (UN General Assembly resolution 60/1247) and the historical struggles of social organizations, mean reparation. comprehensive. In effect, the project under consideration omits important reparation measures that should be incorporated into a law that aims to be effectively comprehensive in terms of reparation (Extracted from Familiares Comunicado May 12, [18]).

Both paragraphs reveal, not only the opinion of the organization regarding the Reparation Law, but also express their concern regarding the lack of harmony that the Uruguayan State has, regarding international regulations referring to Human Rights and in particular. to United Nations resolution 60/1247 of 2005, where they express basic guidelines for States on the rights of victims, to impose remedies and obtain reparations.

They maintain that among their challenges is that of accompaniment to the victims. Element that, although it is included within the Reparation Law, as an aspect within mental health support, this should not be considered as the only one, since the accompaniment can go in the direction of other actions carried out collectively. This does not in any way dismiss relevant and necessary mental health support for victims.

One of the main challenges that we as social organizations face is to strengthen our networks, content and support for victims, helping to crack down on concealment and defending the widest dissemination of the truth as a right and as a value (Extracted from Family Comunicado December 10, [19]).

However, three years later (2012), again from Relatives, they take up the topic of comprehensive reparation in a communication, incorporating the need for concrete actions to build memory of the missing, a dimension made explicit in the Law, but with a level less boarding than expected.

We claim the right to comprehensive reparation. The State is obliged to repair the dignity of the victims, with actions that build memory of the disappeared (Extracted from Relatives Comunicado August 30, [20]).

5. Conclusions

The effects of State terrorism, crimes against humanity, genocide, torture and forced disappearance of people, identity theft and the systematic plan to block individual and collective freedoms, challenge our ability to understand. The paralysis of understanding in the face of such abuses against human dignity is difficult to represent.

According to Benegas [2], the experience of genocide puts us before the limits of the word in its ability to transmit and metaphorize. And that is why we find ourselves facing the limit in the transmission of that experience. The social memory of state terrorism defies easy characterizations.

In this sense, it is necessary to rely on the testimonial contributions of Primo Levi, in his book *If this is a man* [10],

where he narrates the experience of being a prisoner in a Nazi concentration and extermination camp, during the Second World War, and explain

(...) no human experience is meaningless or unworthy of analysis, and that, on the contrary, there are fundamental values, although not always positive, that can be deduced from this particular world we are talking about. I would like to consider how the Lager has also been, and notoriously, a gigantic biological and social experience [10] (p. 49).

Abbreviations

COPAZ	Peace Commission
CONADEP	National Commission on the Disappearance of Persons

Author Contributions

Fiorella Nesta is the sole author. The author read and approved the final manuscript.

Conflicts of Interest

The author declares no conflicts of interest.

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