

The social as a field of struggle

**Social struggles over meaning in
Argentina (1976-2010)**

State-civil society

- Which actors use what concepts under which circumstances and why?
- The state and civil society as contested concepts.
- Situated and shifting.

- The military dictatorship (March 1976)



The fatherland

- The military forced to act in order to save "la patria" (fatherland)
- Re-constitution of "argentineanness".
- Protection of Christian Values and tradition.
- Destruction of the "subversivos"
- Saviours and at the service of the nation.
- (From the Basic Principles for National Reconstitution 1976)

Basic Principles for National Reconstitution

- The war against terrorism.
- Argentinean citizens are not the target of the repression. It is only a minority, that we do not conceptualise as argentineans. (Videla . 18 december 1977. La Prensa).
- The marxist, subversiv terrorist cannot be given the condition of a brother
- .only because they were born in our fatherland. They have lost the honour of calling themselves argentineans. (Fenced. 16 August 1978. La Prensa) .
- Terrorist is not only a person with a gun. Terrorist is anyone that with ideas threaten our Christian civilisation (Comander in Chief Rafael Videla Newspaper La Prensa . December 8.).
- "There is always a reason".

The family

- The family: "*Do you know where your son is; just now?*" (TV film)
- Fathers and mothers: the ideas of the marxist left threaten our families, our flagg, our fatherland and our freedom. We are forced to defend them (Harguindegui. 20 June 1976)
- Women as mothers. "Open letter to a mother" (Magazine Para Ti)

State-civil society

- No boundary between state and civil society
- A critique to the military transformed into an attack to the nation.
- Deshumanisation of categories of citizens.
- The first wave of criticism as anti-argentine.
- Motherhood and non-mothers (political activists as prostitutes ; Mothers of the Plaza as creasy or as mothers of anti-argentineans)

Resistance through the family-nation frame.

- "We are mothers. We search for our sons and daughters"
- Resistance through the nation-religion frame.
- "We are also Christians. We are looking for our sons and daughters."
- "The Falklands are Argentinean. But the disappeared too."

Mothers of the Plaza 1977



Never again (1985)

- The theory of the two evils.
- Two groups (the extreme right and the extreme left)
- Civil society as "innocent"
- The state as regulator
- The National Commission on the Disappearance of Persons (8,960 cases).
- The Law of Due Obedience and full stop law.

The response of human rights activists

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Identifying responsibilities

- There was no war. What happened was a genocide.
- The terrorist **state**
- The genocide **state**
- Memory and Justice.



The “disappeared”

- The right and the responsibility to resist
- From terrorist, to victims and from victims to political activist with visions.



Revolutionising Motherhood

- “The dreams of our sons and daughters”



The 2001 explosion

- Civil society against the state



Argentina's war crimes (2000-

- These two laws were repealed by the National Congress in 2003 and by the Supreme Court of Justice in 2005.
- The reopening of the cases. "Crimes against humanity"
- The accountability of the state.
- A new moral contract? State and civil society



Civil society: place and memory



Summarising

- 1976- Elimination of the boundary between civil society and the state. Emergence of the Fatherland.
- 1977 Resistance through The Mothers.
- 1985 First wave of democratisation: Civil society as threaten by the extremes.
- 1987 Second wave of democratisation: the repressive state
- 2000 Third wave of democratisation: society against the state.
- 2002 Fourth wave of democratisation: civic/militar dictarship.