

“No State Apparatus Goes to Bed Genocidal Then Wakes Up Democratic”

Fascist Ideology and Transgender Politics
in Post-dictatorship Argentina

Cole Rizki

On March 24, 1976, the Argentine military staged a coup d'état and established a fascist dictatorship that perpetrated genocide for seven years.¹ Following an inauguration ceremony, the military junta dissolved the National Congress, removed all members of the Supreme Court, and suspended political and union activity.² Composed of de facto president Army General Jorge Rafael Videla, Navy Admiral Emilio Eduardo Massera, and Air Force Brigadier General Orlando Ramón Agosti, the junta unveiled its sinister “Process of National Reorganization” to “eradicate subversion and promote national economic development.”³ For the next seven years, the authoritarian regime decimated radical leftist movements it deemed subversive threats to the nation while denying all responsibility for mass murder of civilians. Armed and paramilitary forces kidnapped, tortured, and exterminated thirty thousand subjects accused of political subversion.⁴ People were disappeared: dragged off the street in broad daylight by *grupos de tarea*, heavily armed gangs of plainclothes officers and military personnel.⁵ If there was any doubt as to the military’s nefarious plan, in a nationally televised press conference held in 1979, dictator Jorge Rafael Videla declared: “The disappeared is a mystery . . . he has no identity, he’s neither dead nor alive, he’s disappeared.”⁶ Videla’s shocking statement inaugurated “the

Radical History Review

Issue 138 (October 2020) DOI 10.1215/01636545-8359271

© 2020 by MARHO: The Radical Historians’ Organization, Inc.

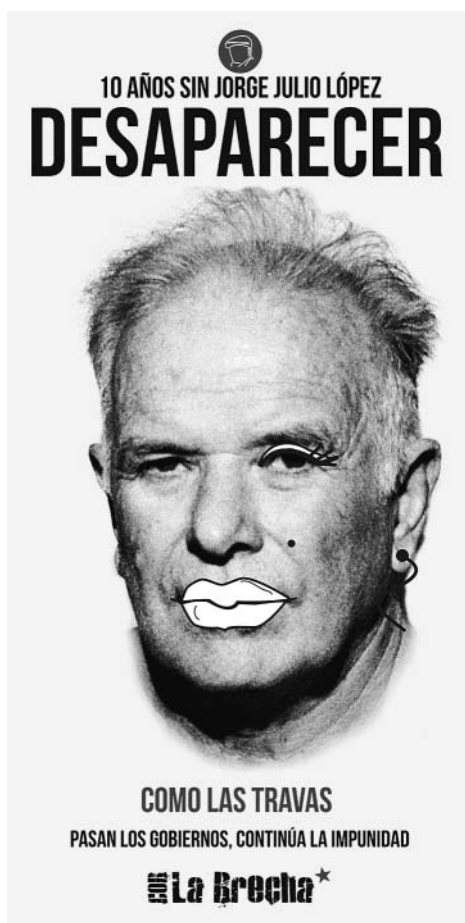


Figure 1. The Mothers of the Plaza de Mayo's final march under dictatorship in the Plaza de Mayo on December 8, 1983. Photograph by Mónica Hasenberg-Brennan Quaretti. Image courtesy of the Hasenberg-Quaretti archive.

disappeared” as an identity category that, paradoxically, denied identity and with it the legal, social, and biological coordinates of personhood on which human rights depend. With no public accountability, the military sowed terror, *terrorismo de estado* that targeted the population, espousing a politics of death that aimed to eradicate radical left political projects.⁷

In 1977, in the midst of dictatorship, the Mothers of the Plaza de Mayo emerged with formidable force, protesting their adult children’s disappearance (fig. 1).⁸ Enlarging their missing sons’ and daughters’ black-and-white national identity document photographs, the Mothers lifted these images high above their heads, circling the Plaza de Mayo every Thursday, marching in front of the executive mansion to demand justice. The Mothers’ use of black-and-white photos of their children cemented photography of the disappeared as an iconic activist genre. By mobilizing the state’s own archival imagery, the Mothers demanded that the government take responsibility for its murderous actions. With democratic transition in 1983 following the botched Falklands/Malvinas War, the Mothers continued to march, denouncing government impunity, and they do so to this day, still calling for justice. In consequence, black-and-white headshots have become highly legible to a national viewing public as signifiers for military dictatorship, disappearance, and activist resistance to state terror.⁹

Figure 2. “López como las travas.” 2016. Digital image courtesy of La Brecha La Plata.



More than thirty years later, in September 2016, a polemic image (fig. 2) of disappeared activist and trial witness Jorge Julio López appeared online as part of a contemporary Argentine activist intervention titled Campaña DESAPARECER. Feminist activists photoshopped this black-and-white portrait of López, layering his facial features with lush, feminized lips and one stylized eyelid framed by long, fake lashes. An earring dangles from his ear while one mole à la Marilyn Monroe further accentuates the image’s ludic feminine aesthetic. Yet this disappeared subject, who did not identify as trans, is not only feminized. The image’s text and bold iconography portray him as a *trava* or a *travesti*: a Latin American social category similar but not identical to transgender. The late, internationally renowned Argentine travesti activist Lohana Berkins glosses this distinction, writing that, as an English-language signifier and imported identity category, “the word transgender comes from theoretical work developed within the North American academy.”¹⁰

In contrast, *travesti*, as a Spanish-language signifier, is a “vernacular subject positionality” specific to Latin America.¹¹ Travesti subjects often espouse multiple

social and political self-identifications such as indigenous and/or Afro-descendant, migrant, lower-class, and femme, though neither male nor female.¹² As Berkins elaborates: “The term ‘travesti’ has been and continues to be used [by the public] as a synonym for AIDS-ridden, criminal, scandalous, infectious, and marginal subject[s].”¹³ Such negative associations render this photoshopped image of a disappeared person all the more audacious.

Yet what do travesti subjects have to do with the disappeared? This image condenses a series of unlikely relationships between political subversion, travesti identification, and disappearance as a fascist technology of power employed most heavily during Argentina’s most recent military dictatorship (1976–83). By creating a composite image layering a travesti silhouette over a disappeared subject, this activist intervention raises a number of provocative questions concerning the targets of historic technologies of state violence: What are the boundaries of disappearance, and who counts as a disappeared subject? How might contemporary political actors stake claims to national belonging by mobilizing histories of fascism and historic anti-fascist visual culture?

This article forms part of an emerging body of scholarship on the sex/gender politics of authoritarian regimes in Latin America, turning specific attention to Argentine trans and travesti politics and rights claims as these articulate with legacies of authoritarianism.¹⁴ Drawing on intelligence archive surveillance documents from the Intelligence Office of the Buenos Aires Provincial Police (DIPPBA), the artist-activist intervention Campaña DESAPARECER, and travesti and transgender testimony, this article argues that enduring social and political legacies of interwar fascism not only persist into the years of the *proceso*, but they also continue to animate and mediate post-dictatorship transgender politics.

The Origins of Fascist Ideology in Argentina

According to historian Federico Finchelstein, “Fascism provided the background for the principles and practices of the violence that the Argentine government unleashed against a group of its citizens in the 1970s” during dictatorship.¹⁵ Like its European counterparts, fascist ideology in Argentina is grounded in anti-Semitism, xenophobia, and racism.¹⁶ Yet Finchelstein and others, including Sandra McGee Deutsch and Alberto Spektorowski, persuasively argue that while “there was a great deal of appropriation, reformulation, and distortion in the Argentine reception of fascism . . . this reception was already ‘prepared’ by local illiberal ideologies that had predated it”—specifically, Argentine *nacionalista* ideology as it emerged in the 1920s and evolved, incorporating elements of fascist ideology throughout the 1930s and 1940s.¹⁷

Argentine *nacionalista* ideology was staunchly invested in rigid gender distinctions. As Deutsch notes, *nacionalistas* “defined themselves as masculine, which they saw as synonymous with strength. In doing so, they distinguished themselves from women, whom they regarded as inherently weak.”¹⁸ The *nacionalistas* were

concerned about “perversion and loss of manhood.”¹⁹ They considered themselves “a community of virile men”—“strong, faithful and zealous” and certainly neither “sensual nor effeminate.”²⁰ Common to fascism and shared by neighboring far-right *integralista* ideology in Brazil, such a rigid emphasis on both normative gender roles and sexual practice was deeply embedded within Argentine *nacionalista* ideology.²¹ For *nacionalistas*, “the enemy was construed in terms of very traditional gender roles and fascist notions of so-called abnormal sexuality.”²² Nonnormatively sexed and gendered subjects, including travestis, represented an internal, degenerate threat to reigning Catholic sexual mores that exalted heterosexuality and racial purity as founding pillars of fascist ideology in Argentina.

The intrinsic belief that nonnormatively sexed and gendered subjects jeopardized the integrity of the state, cemented in the reactionary mixture of fascist and Catholic ideology that emerged during the *nacionalista* period, continued into subsequent permutations of fascist ideology in Argentina with its culmination in Argentina’s military dictatorship of 1976–83. For example, the far-right movement Tacuara, which followed Juan Domingo Perón’s populist government (1946–55), espoused many of the ideas that *nacionalismo* championed.²³ The same is true for secret service and intelligence forces, including the Intelligence Office of the Buenos Aires Provincial Police (DIPPBA), which I will discuss shortly.²⁴ In the early 1970s, after Perón’s death, the paramilitary organization Alianza Anticomunista Argentina (or the Triple A) was born; many members of Tacuara were also participants in the Triple A, suggesting ideological continuity between the two organizations. The Triple A’s ideology was likewise rooted in *nacionalismo* and, in addition to espousing extreme anti-Semitism, “advocated for the concentration and physical extermination of gays and lesbians. [It] considered homosexuality to be part of an imaginary Marxist plan against Argentina. [It] also regarded gays as agents of the CIA.”²⁵ An absurd statement in and of itself, here the hyperbolic collapse of Marxism with homosexuality as a threat to the nation is even more unlikely given leftist activist movements’ entrenched homophobia during this time period.²⁶ In the 1970s, for example, in response to right-wing accusations that the Montoneros and the Peronist Youth were “homosexuals and drug addicts,” the Peronist Left developed and widely used the chant “we aren’t fags, we’re not drug addicts: we’re soldiers of Perón and Montoneros,” thereby disavowing any association with “homosexuality” and “drug addiction.”²⁷ Nevertheless, by linking homosexuality with Marxism and the CIA, the Right insisted that nonnormative sex and gender form part and parcel of both imperial espionage and subversive Marxist plans to restructure Argentine social and political norms. The Triple A capitalized on the homophobia of both the Right and the Left in order to paint Marxism as degenerate while simultaneously implying that nonnormative sex and gender practices were politically subversive and represented threats to be eliminated. Such murderous convictions about nonnormative sexual and gender practices extended into the

dictatorship when the state hired Triple A assassins, incorporating them into its brutal repressive apparatus.²⁸

The Argentine military dictatorship's origins were rooted in this particular Argentine bent of fascism informed by heteronormative and homo- and transphobic nacionalista ideology, which understood subversion as a threat grounded in part in nonnormative sex and gender practices. Yet the sex/gender politics of "subversion," as a target of state violence, remained relevant to the state beyond fascist dictatorship, as recently declassified state intelligence force archives suggest. The Intelligence Office of the Buenos Aires Provincial Police (DIPPBA) archive evinces traces of both normative and nonnormative gender and sexual practices in its surveillance reporting, highlighting how the sex/gender politics of who counts as a subversive target of state surveillance remained relevant to security forces across dictatorship and democracy.

DIPPBA: The Sex/Gender Politics of Surveillance

From 1956 to 1998, the Intelligence Office of the Buenos Aires Provincial Police (DIPPBA) collected intelligence information used to effect persecution across the population. Spanning nearly half a century, this intelligence archive contains over 4 million pages of detailed reporting of espionage that targeted individuals, political parties, student groups, the armed forces, and religious groups, among others. In addition to ubiquitous written intelligence reports, the archive also contains hundreds of hours of video and audio surveillance—750 VHS tapes and 160 audiocassettes—as well as countless photographs surveilling individuals, protests, and other potentially subversive activities.²⁹

The initial priority of the DIPPBA during the 1950s and 1960s responded to national and international imperatives to surveil communist and union activity.³⁰ Nationally, the *Revolución Libertadora*—the military coup ending Juan Domingo Perón's presidency in 1955—aimed to eradicate Peronism, a political belief system deeply embraced by unionized workers and the popular class.³¹ During this time period, the DIPPBA thus heavily surveilled union activity.³² With the emergence of the Cold War, Argentine security forces continued to focus on internal enemies: "subversive" ideological agents such as communists whose belief system was deemed threatening to Argentina's dominant social, political, and economic order. During the 1976–83 dictatorship, the DIPPBA's central purpose was to track subversive subjects and civil associations, gathering intelligence that led to disappearances.

While the DIPPBA's stated primary aim during dictatorship was to surveil political "subversion," the DIPPBA also by default surveilled the sexual and gender practices of subversive subjects as part of its espionage activities. As historian Ana Cecilia Solari Paz and author Cristián Oscar Jilberto Prieto Carrasco, of the *Comisión Provincial por la Memoria* (CPM), which houses the DIPPBA archive,

demonstrate, part of gathering intelligence on “subversive subjects” required expanding on particular “puntos” or items of interest, which included a “personal life report.”³³ One such intelligence document from 1981 elaborated priorities for surveilling targets’ private lives:

The personal life report should consist of the following aspects: 1) nuclear family: civil status, names of wife, children, and everyone’s occupation . . . 3) conduct: public and private; 4) functional: personal and professional aptitudes and conduct; 5) ethics: moral and religious (values) and customs; 6) ideological: tendency (manifest or detectable) ideology (expressed or demonstrable).³⁴

Intelligence reports and memos such as this one suggest that, in addition to surveilling subjects’ expressly political activities, the DIPPBA was concerned with the “private life” and “morality” of its suspects, evincing ongoing nacionalista ideological concerns with normative gender and sexual behaviors under the guise of “nuclear family,” “conduct,” and “ethics.” By virtue of “the personal life report,” the DIPPBA’s espionage reporting reiteratively mapped heterosexual reproduction through the elaboration and surveillance of nuclear kinship networks to wipe out entire lineages of subversive subjects. Such family surveillance was thus largely undertaken to eliminate the heterosexual reproduction of subversion through its familial transmission. The surveillance of normative sexual and gender practices implicitly policed nonnormative sexual and gender practices, even while this was not the military’s primary concern during dictatorship.

Despite Argentina’s transition to democracy in 1983, the DIPPBA remained fully operational, continuing its surveillance activities across Buenos Aires Province for another sixteen years until its dissolution. However, democratic imperatives prevented the DIPPBA from explicitly targeting political subversion. While the label *factor subversivo* had to disappear from the filing structure of the DIPPBA archive, the DIPPBA continued to use the language of “subversive delinquent” within its written reports, redefining subversion in part through the lens of nonnormative sex/gender practices.³⁵

The advent of the HIV/AIDS crisis in 1982, just one year prior to Argentina’s democratic transition, provided one such opportunity. Intelligence forces stepped in ostensibly to track the epidemic’s incidence and evolution, generating over six hundred pages of intelligence reporting on the crisis well into the 1980s and mid-1990s. Rather than the heterosexual reproduction of subversive political ideology through its familial transmission, the nonnormative sexual and criminal reproduction of deadly viral loads became a threat endangering national public health. The DIPPBA surveilled HIV/AIDS patients, collected HIV/AIDS organizations’ pamphlets on everything from medical precautions to safer sex practices and even newspaper clippings from major Argentine newspapers on evolving cases. In a report

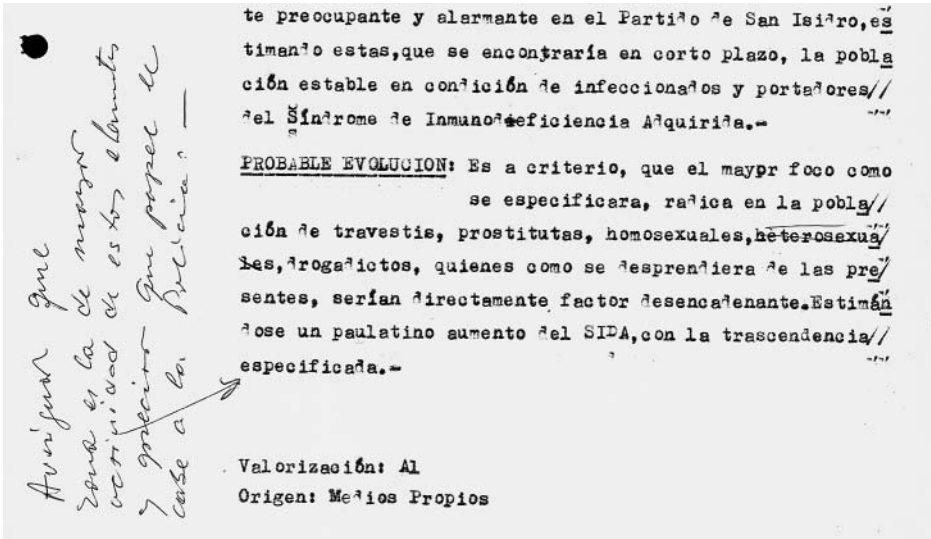


Figure 3. Detail of “Asunto: Producir información.” October 3, 1988. CPM-Fondo DIPPBA, División Central de Documentación, Registro y Archivo, Mesa Referencia, Legajo N° 18.398, Tomo 1.

documenting the surge in HIV/AIDS cases in San Isidro municipality in the late 1980s (fig. 3), an unnamed intelligence officer’s handwriting reveals the DIPPBA’s espionage priorities.

The officer’s typed notes track the HIV/AIDS epidemic’s “Probable Development,” stating that, “It is thought that the greatest focus [of the AIDS epidemic] . . . lies in the travesti, prostitute, homosexual, ~~heterosexual~~, and drug addict populations.”³⁶ Significantly, the word *heterosexual* appears in the above report but is crossed out with blue pen. In the margins, the handwritten text reads: “Check which zone has the greatest activity of these elements and evaluate what role falls to the police.” Heterosexuality, as an identity category, is quite literally stricken from the archive, while other social sectors’ activities and movements require police surveillance in order to assess “what role” the police will take as the epidemic unfolds. Striking heterosexuality has the further effect of canceling out its relationship not only to HIV infection (a common prejudice in the early days of the HIV/AIDS crisis) but also to perverse subjects, rendering travestis, prostitutes, homosexuals, and drug addicts the proper targets of surveillance. Though cancelled out, heterosexuality importantly remains visible, reflecting the importance this category has in relation to the others; indeed, in superseding all other listed categories, heterosexuality here regulates how these categories ought to be understood. Through sleight of hand, heterosexuality becomes a privileged site of reproductive normativity, whereas nonnormative sexual and criminal practices are rendered the reproductive locus of an epidemic.

The DIPPBA's interest in surveilling sex and gender went beyond the HIV/AIDS epidemic. Indeed, between 1983 and 1998 a number of intelligence files appear in the DIPPBA archive mentioning travesti subjects, detailing cases including homicide,³⁷ sex work,³⁸ and other crimes such as narco trafficking³⁹ or kidnapping.⁴⁰ At the same time, in this period we also witness the onset of formally organized travesti and trans activism, such as the Travesti Association of Argentina (ATA) and the Association for the Fight for Travesti and Transexual Identity (ALITT).⁴¹ Travesti political activities did not go wholly unnoticed by the DIPPBA, which at times saw the organizing of nonnormative sex and gendered subjects as a threat to civil order, underscoring the ways in which sexuality and gender continued to matter to projects of surveillance in democracy. Interestingly, it is precisely in the Mothers' activism as it resists forms of illiberal state violence that travesti and trans activism finds some of its inspiration. Travesti activist Berkins states in an interview with Mothers of the Plaza de Mayo Association president Hebe de Bonafini that, from the Mothers' influence, travestis recognized that they had to become political subjects by organizing collectively instead of seeking recognition on an individual basis.⁴² Travesti activists such as Berkins embraced and politicized travesti identification in part by drawing on an emergent conception of human rights developed by the Mothers, even as travesti activists were not always recognized as such by leftist activists, including the Mothers writ large, as Berkins reminds.⁴³

Nascent travesti activism thus began to stake political demands in the early 1990s, and intelligence office files appear surveilling travesti subjects' explicitly political demands that could lead to further organizing. In one file titled "Solicitud de Personería Jurídica," dated October 26, 1994, an unnamed intelligence officer from Mar del Plata sent a report to the DIPPBA summarizing five newspaper articles concerning travesti activists.⁴⁴ The report describes the growth of an emerging travesti organization, the Mar del Plata Travesti Organization, and details travesti demands for *personería jurídica*—a juridical category that would confer legal status on the organization. Citing the newspaper articles, the unnamed officer writes that upward of "60 travestis" live in Mar del Plata. "They [travestis] denounce police activity that they *consider* discriminatory, [noting] how much they *feel* pursued. . . . Likewise, distinct news outlets made reference to the discrimination that travestis *suffer*, echoing travesti denunciations, in which travestis indicate that the situation is very serious" (emphasis mine). As is clear from the report, the officer characterizes the travestis' demands as a matter of perception and feeling rather than fact, while the passive grammatical construction—"the discrimination travestis *suffer*"—erases the perpetrator: police officers. The travestis further "denounce physical aggression," accusing the Buenos Aires Police of excessive force. The report ends with the officer's evaluations, which indicate why this report might further matter to the DIPPBA:

In conclusion, it is thought that given the emphasis placed on protest by the members of this group, that they will persist with their stance towards gaining legal status, in order to obtain equality in living and working conditions. Such a situation could provoke greater frictions between residents and “travestis” which would result in a greater number of police reports, without discounting that something of greater magnitude could come to pass due to any of the involved sectors.⁴⁵

As the report’s language makes clear, such activist demands not only denounced police violence but were also perceived by the police force as a threat to civil obedience warranting surveillance.⁴⁶ Such monitoring of political organizations suggests an expanded target of surveillance that, at times, includes travestis as social agents whose political demands for “equality” might implicate the police forces in contemporary human rights abuses. Yet such human rights abuses during democracy also serve to underscore the violence that becomes possible in the context of a liberal state, which aims to assign “state violence” to an illiberal past.

Campaña DESAPARECER and State Violence under Liberalism

Examining artist-activist interventions and archives similarly reveals the shifting (if distinct) politics of sex/gender in activist responses to state terror and its afterlife. The artist-activist intervention Campaña DESAPARECER organized for the tenth anniversary of Jorge Julio López’s disappearance highlights such transformations by giving visual form to the fantasy of liberal democracy as free from state violence. Indeed, Jorge Julio López—the subject whose face appears in the image at the start of this article (fig. 2)—was disappeared twice: once in 1976 and again in 2006. His final disappearance remains unsolved, and Campaña DESAPARECER emerged in response one decade later, as I will discuss shortly.

On October 27, 1976, Jorge Julio López was disappeared in Los Hornos, kidnapped during the dictatorship in the middle of the night by a task force composed of members of the armed forces, security forces, and paramilitary groups under the command of Miguel Osvaldo Etchecolatz, police commissioner general and general director of investigations of the Buenos Aires Provincial Police.⁴⁷ Jorge Julio López was an *albañil*, or bricklayer, and member of the “Juan Pablo Maestre”⁴⁸ unit affiliated with the radical left activist group Peronist Youth, once located on the corner of 68th and 142nd Streets in La Plata’s Los Hornos neighborhood.⁴⁹ After that night, López was officially disappeared. Over the next year, he passed through multiple clandestine detention centers under the La Plata Group’s control within the Clandestine Detention Centers (CCD) circuit subzone 1-1 including el Pozo de Arana, the Fifth and Eighth Comisariías, and the Unidad 9.⁵⁰ La Plata Group’s territory contained 43 percent of all operational CCDs in Argentina, rendering La Plata and its outskirts a particular hotbed of repression.⁵¹

In 1977, for unknown reasons, López's disappearance was "legalized." He was officially labeled a political prisoner and his family informed of his whereabouts. On June 25, 1979, he was suddenly released.⁵² Following his release, López kept to himself. Until dictatorship ended in 1983, it remained a veritable death sentence to discuss any aspect of one's disappearance, in the extremely rare circumstance that one resurfaced alive. López soon joined the group Ex-Detenidos Desaparecidos, or Formerly Detained and Disappeared Persons, formed in 1984. Yet it was not until 2006 that he would have the opportunity to testify in a trial against his torturer Etchecolatz in an attempt to find justice where none had been served. In September 2006, in Case 2251/06, Etchecolatz was sentenced for the illegal privation of liberty of Jorge Julio López and Nilda Emma Eloy; the murder of Diana Esmeralda Teruggi de Mariani; and the kidnappings, torture, and murder of Ambrosio Francisco De Marco, Patricia Graciela Dell'Orto, Elena Arce Sahores, Nora Livia Formiga, and Margarita Delgado, who all remain disappeared.⁵³ The day of Etchecolatz's sentencing, September 19, 2006, student, labor, and political organizations filled La Plata's central plaza, Plaza Moreno, where Etchecolatz's sentencing and verdict were projected onto a giant screen.⁵⁴ The courtroom was so packed that not even the trial lawyers could get through to take their places.⁵⁵

Yet as Judge Carlos Alberto Rozanski read Etchecolatz's verdict aloud, Jorge Julio López was not in the courtroom. Indeed, López failed to meet plaintiff Nilda Eloy at 9:00 that morning as they had promised one another; he was nowhere to be seen.⁵⁶ As the days passed, it became clear that on September 18, 2006, the then seventy-seven-year-old López was disappeared for a second time, twenty-three years after dictatorship ended and in *plena democracia*. His body has never resurfaced and the investigation remains open, if stalled. López's accusations along with Eloy's had resulted in Etchecolatz's arrest: Etchecolatz had personally tortured López in La Plata's Eighth Comisaría.⁵⁷ López's crucial testimony at the Tribunal Oral Federal 1 of La Plata in one of the first trials to open against *genocidas* identified at least sixty-two military and police officials who had tortured, detained, kidnapped, and disappeared people.⁵⁸

Perversely, as journalist Adriana Meyer remarked on the tenth anniversary of López's disappearance, López's second and final disappearance "reinstalled the collective perception that one could disappear in democracy."⁵⁹ Indeed, López remains the only former survivor—a previously disappeared person—now disappeared for a second time after providing testimony in one of the nation's most high-profile trials.⁶⁰ López's disappearance violently called into question the boundary between liberal and illiberal state formations and their attendant ideologies, underscoring material and ideological continuities between the two.⁶¹

Immediately following López's second and final disappearance in 2006, stenciled images of López were graffitied in public spaces across the nation. In La Plata, the response was particularly sharp. Activist groups quickly painted an enormous

bust of López on the bricks forming Plaza Moreno, La Plata's central plaza. Interventions like these certainly have an impact—especially those staged in such a central location as Plaza Moreno—but in 2016, after ten years of the same collective demand, some activists felt that the call for López's “¡aparición con vida!” or “appearance alive” had lost its initial punch. In particular, activists from the united political front La Brecha decided to take action. La Brecha's chapters exist in eleven Argentine provinces and, as an umbrella, the political front includes organizations such as Marabunta, a socialist feminist organization; FOL (Frente de Organizaciones en Lucha), a territorial and *piquetero*⁶² organization; and Hagamos lo Imposible, a youth and cultural organization. Acting in concert under the banner “La Brecha,” these organizations are able to make collective demands with increased presence and political heft. In an interview with La Brecha La Plata members, the communications team explained that the local chapter is intimately linked to the *piquetero* movements and has strong representation in ten La Plata neighborhoods with deep ties to union and neighborhood activist groups, or *activismos barriales*, in largely marginalized and popular-class neighborhoods.⁶³ La Brecha's local communications team is predominantly concerned with generating the visual aesthetics for large-scale protests and marches such as those that occur each year in the city to mark López's second disappearance and for massive marches that occur annually, such as the national March 24 protest marking the coup d'état. The team disseminates the images nationally through La Brecha's broad provincial network of chapters located throughout Argentina.

La Brecha's interventions are designed to *hacer ruido*, or “make noise,” within a human rights environment dominated, in part, by the Madres, Abuelas, and HIJOS.⁶⁴ These trail-blazing activist movements remain absolutely vital to human rights struggles in Argentina. Nevertheless, their predominance at times limits the potential of activist visual culture such as photography of the disappeared by fixing the disappeared as a stock group of subjects targeted during dictatorship. As a result, visual culture images of the disappeared have come to form a static archive whose meaning has calcified.⁶⁵ La Brecha thus attempts to disrupt this activist imagery's meanings in part by introducing new subjects and resignifying disappearance. As one member⁶⁶ explained, La Brecha's image-making process is, in response, “like a search to destabilize” some of these more iconic activist images.⁶⁷ By drawing on a historic visual archive of national icons and genres such as photography of the disappeared, La Brecha destabilizes meaning by creating unexpected equivalencies between social sectors that call into question crystallized social, historical, and activist relations, as with the Campaña DESAPARECER. In 2016, for the tenth anniversary marking Jorge Julio López's disappearance, La Brecha thus turned its attention to López's image, employing these same disruptive tactics.

Indeed, after ten years, Jorge Julio López's image was at risk of banalization. So La Brecha did something unthinkable: they digitally altered photographer Helen



Figure 4. “Campana DESAPARECER.” 2016. Courtesy of La Brecha La Plata’s Communications Team.

Zout’s iconic portrait of Jorge Julio López, photoshopping his image with stereotypical visual marks (fig. 4) that immediately call to mind multiple marginalized collectives such as indigenous subjects, at-risk adolescents from popular-class neighborhoods, and travesti subjects as with the image of “López como las travas” (fig. 2) with which I began this article.

Here, La Brecha plays with not only the subject but also the conventions of portraiture of the disappeared. In these six images, moving from left to right, López’s portrait appears variously layered with hats, hair, and other visual signifiers including lush lips and mole, a *trarilongko* or indigenous Mapuche ceremonial headband, and a keffiyeh, a mass-produced Palestinian headscarf worn by Argentine *piqueterxs* to protect themselves during protest.⁶⁸ In each case, López appears represented as a particular collective subject—sex-trafficked women, marginalized adolescents targeted by police violence, travestis, indigenous subjects, and *piqueterxs*. In layering López’s portrait with several marginalized collectivities, this intervention frames multiple social issues as intersecting and suggests that contemporary practices of state violence and oppression are continuous across social sectors in democracy.

In highlighting the reemergence of disappearance by mobilizing López’s image, La Brecha further challenges the figuration of democracy as nonviolent to its citizenry. La Brecha’s activist intervention thus productively puts pressure on the juxtaposition of “fascist” versus “democratic” by spawning open-ended provocations that underscore the violence that liberalism itself generates. As La Brecha wryly reminds in an interview: “No state apparatus goes to bed genocidal then wakes up democratic.”⁶⁹ Indeed, the mobilization and alteration of these historic visual archives draw attention to the fantasy of liberal democracy as panacea rather than perpetrator of state violence. Returning to “López like the travestis” (fig. 2), in which López’s headshot appears layered over with a travesti silhouette, *Campana*

DESAPARECER raises a series of questions directly related to travesti identity: Are travesti subjects experiencing illiberal forms of state violence presently?⁹ Can travesti subjects be considered “disappeared” during dictatorship?

Testimony: Trans and Travesti Experiences of State Terror

Since 2012, following the passage of Argentina’s Gender Identity Law, travestis and trans women such as Valeria del Mar Ramírez have begun to come forward, articulating their experiences of detention during dictatorship as disappearance.⁷⁰ Indeed, as Valeria Canal, one of Ramírez’s lawyers, has stated, the Gender Identity Law is in part what facilitated Ramírez’s decision: “Now, as Valeria, she has come forward, because the person who was a kidnapping and torture victim was not [name assigned at birth] but instead Valeria. Now with her new DNI [national identity document] and her rectified birth certificate she decided to present herself as a complainant.”⁷¹ Without her rectified DNI, Ramírez would have had to discuss intimate details of her detention and torture as if she were a masculine subject, addressed with masculine pronouns and a masculine name assigned at birth. Testifying under such circumstances would have further perpetuated the sexual and gender violence her torturers physically and psychologically inflicted. With her new DNI in hand, however, Ramírez became the first travesti witness in Argentina in a trial prosecuting crimes against humanity when she testified concerning crimes committed in the Pozo de Banfield concentration camp,⁷² where she was detained in both 1976 and 1977.⁷³

As Ramírez recounts in her official judicial testimony signed by her lawyers María Valeria Canal and Carlos Federico Gaitán Hairabedian, it was not uncommon for her to be detained; police operatives from the Monte Grande and Avellaneda Brigadas de Moralidad, or Morality Brigades, typically arrested Ramírez and transferred her to the *comisarias* or police headquarters. However, on one night between 1976 and 1977, the Buenos Aires Police detained Ramírez along with other travestis and trans women including Romina, la Hormiga, la Sonia, and la Mono. Police officers registered their fingerprints and asked them to wait in an office. Rather than release them or take them to a comisaría as was typical, the police officers transferred them to the clandestine torture and detention center El Pozo de Banfield, where Ramírez first spent two days. She describes her detention in which she was repeatedly raped by multiple guards: “Each one of us was in a cell that measured 1 × 2 meters, with a cement bench, a lightbulb, and the only ventilation was the slot in the door for food. They made me have sexual relations with the guards and my food and ability to use the bathroom depended on it.”⁷⁴ In September 1977, she was transferred and detained again in el Pozo de Banfield where she was held fourteen days and suffered the same torture: “The same uniformed man of robust build perpetuated abuses and rape as before . . . multiple guards raped me almost every day, up

to four times in a single day. I was made to perform oral sex through the food slot in the door, I was anally raped without a condom by a young police officer. I was systematically physically and psychologically tortured.”⁷⁵

Ramírez’s testimony and multiple detentions make clear that the extreme sexual and psychological torture she suffered was systematic. Of the travesti and trans women detained in El Pozo de Banfield with Ramírez, Ramírez is the only survivor. According to Ramírez, security forces targeted, kidnapped, and tortured her because of her gender identity:

At that time, they arrested you just for being a travesti. If you were walking on the road at night practicing prostitution or if you were in the bakery buying bread it was all the same, you always had to hide from the police. . . . We lived by night. If we went out during the day there was no way to hide ourselves. We even knew that we shouldn’t go on paved roads where the patrol cars and Ford Falcons circulated. Always like that, in hiding, getting together in our friends’ houses, helping one another between ourselves so that others could be who they are without shame. We passed information to one another if someone was detained in a police station. We told each other if there was a police raid. We helped each other hide. That was our activism. We fought for our identity in spite of the police and a society that didn’t understand us.⁷⁶

Her testimony draws parallels between her experience and those of other non-trans and non-travesti activists: “We lived by night. If we went out during the day there was no way to hide ourselves. . . . We told each other if there was a police raid. We helped each other hide.” Her emphasis on a networked response to such terror suggests the systemic persecution that she and other trans women and travestis faced during dictatorship. Reflecting on the reason for her constant detentions, Ramírez stated: “I was always Valeria and ‘being Valeria’ caused me to experience persecution, discrimination, abuses, rapes, and it also led me to be kidnapped and tortured in a clandestine detention center.”⁷⁷

A historic ruling on May 17, 2018, corroborates Ramírez’s allegations. On that day, Carolina Boetti of Rosario, Santa Fe Province, became the first trans woman in Argentina to successfully draw on the same legal apparatus that grants pensions to victims of dictatorship under Santa Fe’s Provincial Law 13,298 (2012) to receive economic reparations. The 2012 law extends a monthly pension to people who were illegally detained between March 24, 1976, and December 10, 1983, “due to political, union, or student reasons.”⁷⁸ Previously, trans women and travestis were unable to access the pension, because gender identity was not considered a primary reason for detention.⁷⁹ Yet, for the first time, in 2018, Argentine judges in Santa Fe Province reinterpreted the 2012 law by recognizing that, in trans woman Carolina Boetti’s case, she was “illegally detained and persecuted” during dictatorship “because of her gender identity,” ruling in her favor.⁸⁰ While this ruling is currently

effective only at the provincial level, such a move opens the door for trans women and travestis detained during dictatorship to receive national economic reparations under the same legislation currently in place for non-trans and non-travesti *desaparecidas/os*. By granting Boetti economic reparations, the judges implicitly ruled that trans and travesti gender identification was (and is) political; that gender identification can be considered a primary cause for detention; and that travestis and trans women can be considered *desaparecidas*. The ruling set a new legal precedent and, in response, Boetti stated: “I’m very happy because justice was served. My story is that of many trans women who suffered dictatorship, where we were detained and were victims of violence and aberrations. This monthly pension is a historic reparation. . . . Never again.”⁸¹ Boetti stresses that this moment is historic, and she ends with “Nunca más” or “Never again”—the refrain often repeated in reference to genocide. In granting Boetti reparations, perhaps most importantly, the state claimed responsibility for her detention, recognizing the continuities in detention during dictatorship due to “political, union, or student reasons” and “gender identity.”

Conclusion

Taken together, the DIPPBA archival documents, La Brecha’s Campaña DESAPARECER, and trans women’s and travestis’ testimony all ask us to contend with questions about the targets of dictatorship—a dictatorship undergirded by Argentina’s fascist nacionalista ideology whose expression takes as its most extreme form torture and extermination in the Argentine concentration camps. Yet, as these trans and travesti testimonies make clear, illiberal state violence targeted a range of marginalized subjects during dictatorship. The sex/gender politics of surveillance and glimmers of sex and gender practices evinced by traces in the DIPPBA archive further suggest the latent import of sex/gender to security forces.

Similarly, La Brecha’s visual activism gives visual form to the reemergence of disappearance and contemporary forms of state violence targeting a number of minoritarian subjects. La Brecha’s Campaña DESAPARECER cites the Mothers’ historic visual culture archive to mobilize photography of the disappeared, layering photographer Helen Zout’s headshot of López with representations of other collectives to suggest that Argentine history is a palimpsest. Like La Brecha’s image composition itself, palimpsests overlay past with present. Yet the past juts up, texturing the present to produce unexpected meanings that might alter historical interpretation, productively challenging the targets of fascist state violence during dictatorship. In so doing, this activist intervention troubles the boundaries of fascist nacionalista ideology, state violence, and its subjects.

At the same time, reparations, testimony, and activist interventions such as La Brecha’s highlight how activists are mobilizing the past in the present to mediate contemporary political demands. That is, in democracy, the persistent afterlife of

fascism creates conditions of possibility for activists to mobilize the language of anti-fascism and shared memories of fascist violence—namely dictatorship, genocide, and disappearance—in the service of contemporary rights claims. Activists are working against and working with the memory and afterlife of fascism as a shifting ideology and set of material practices that persist into the present. As testimonies of trans women and travestis such as Valeria del Mar Ramírez and Carolina Boetti suggest, trans subjectivity is contoured in the present by historic forms of state violence. As these testimonies further demand, we must continue to grapple with illiberal state violence and such violence’s deadly imbrications with the politics of sex and gender. Rather than memorialize anti-fascist responses to such violence in order to remember a distant illiberal past, we must identify the ways in which liberalism itself perpetuates violent state practices in order to contest them. Such a move will require mobilizing a broad coalitional politics rooted in the shared material and symbolic stakes of our ongoing collective struggles to combat the enduring legacies of fascism.

Cole Rizki is assistant professor of Spanish at the University of Virginia. He is a coeditor of the *TSQ: Transgender Studies Quarterly* special issue “Trans Studies en las Américas,” and his work appears in journals such as *TSQ*, *GLQ*, and the *Journal of Visual Culture*, among others. His research focuses on transgender politics and cultural production throughout the Americas.

Notes

I thank my colleagues Chase Gregory, Ella Fratantuono, Carolyn Laubender, Michael Becker, Robyn Wiegman, Erica Rand, and Antonio Viego for their critical generosity and rigorous commentary on drafts of this essay. Two anonymous reviewers’ insights and this issue’s guest editors greatly improved the quality of this manuscript. Special thanks to historian Ana Cecilia Solari Paz and author Cristián Oscar Jilberto Prieto Carrasco of the Comisión Provincial por la Memoria for their archival assistance; to the activists of La Brecha for their bold interventions; and to the trans women and travesti activists whose fierce activism continues to rewrite history.

1. While the Argentine case does not meet the United Nation’s criteria for genocide, Argentine Federal Court decisions and activists name the violence perpetrated during this period (1976–83) as such. I therefore use the term *genocide* throughout in recognition of national politics and activist epistemologies. See Rozanski, *Etchecolatz*, *Miguel Osvaldo*; Feierstein, *El genocidio como práctica social*. All translations from Spanish are mine unless otherwise noted.
2. *La opinión*, “Gobierna la junta militar”; Radio Nacional Argentina, “Comunicado Número 1°”; *Boletín oficial número 23.372*.
3. “Acta fijando el propósito y los objetivos básicos para el proceso de reorganización nacional”; Radio Nacional Argentina, “Comunicado Número 1°.”
4. For the authoritative National Commission on the Disappearance of Persons (CONADEP) report on state terror published in 1984, see CONADEP, *Nunca más*. While CONADEP lists only 8,960 disappearances, the commission acknowledges that

“we have reason to believe that the true figure is much higher. Many families were reluctant to report a disappearance for fear of reprisals. Some still hesitate, fearing a resurgence of these evil forces” (CONADEP, *Nunca más*, 447, 5). Prominent human rights groups estimate thirty thousand people were disappeared, and I use thirty thousand throughout in recognition of activist claims.

5. According to the CONADEP report, the armed forces created 340 Clandestine Torture, Detention, and Extermination Centers (CCDTyE) throughout the country to murder its citizens (CONADEP, *Nunca más*, 447). Of those detained, 86.6 percent were taken from their homes and off the streets (CONADEP, *Nunca más*, 11). Of the disappeared, 81.39 percent were between the ages of sixteen and thirty-five, while 70 percent of the total disappeared were men and 30 percent women. An estimated 3 percent of these women were pregnant at time of disappearance (CONADEP, *Nunca más*, 285–86).
6. Jinkis, “Ni muerto ni vivo.” Videla uses the masculine form *desaparecido*, where the masculine folds both men and women into his statement.
7. Prior to the coup and throughout the early 1970s, radical leftist activist groups such as the left-wing Peronist Montoneros and the Marxist-Leninist People’s Revolutionary Army (ERP) had formed, and these groups set out to undertake an armed revolution. The Montoneros and ERP targeted government and police officials, killing at least eight hundred prior to the 1976 coup. CONADEP, *Nunca más*, xii. These targeted assaults included the assassination of former Argentine president Pedro Eugenio Aramburu, whom the Montoneros kidnapped and executed on June 1, 1970. Catela, “Juicio y muerte a Aramburu.” As Marguerite Feitlowitz notes, armed leftists, while active in the early 1970s, had largely been eliminated prior to the 1976 coup, and their numbers were widely exaggerated by the armed forces. Feitlowitz, *Lexicon of Terror*, 313.
8. For an authoritative account of the Mothers of the Plaza de Mayo, see Ulises Gorini’s two-volume history: *La rebelión de las madres; La otra lucha*. See also publications by the Mothers including Hebe de Bonafini’s speeches: de Bonafini, *Seguir parlando*. It is of note that, over internal conflicts, the Mothers split into two lines in January 1986: Línea Fundadora and Asociación. For an overview of major distinctions between the Mothers’ activisms, see Rosenblatt, “Politics of Grief.”
9. For an excellent account of the Mothers’ use of visual culture, including portraiture of the disappeared, see Longoni, “Photographs and Silhouettes.”
10. Berkins, “Travestis.”
11. Cornejo, “*Travesti* Dreams Outside in the Ethnographic Machine,” 457.
12. Guimaraes García, *La roy*, 56; Rizki, “Latin/x American Trans Studies,” 149. For superb recent scholarship on travesti social and political formations, see Cornejo, “*Travesti* Dreams Outside in the Ethnographic Machine”; Di Pietro, “Decolonizing *Travesti* Space in Buenos Aires”; and Sabsay, *Fronteras sexuales*. The latter two works focus on Argentine travesti politics, identifications, and activisms.
13. Berkins, “Travestis.” *Travesti* is a highly politicized term. As Berkins elaborates, in the 1990s, as travesti activism emerged in Argentina, travesti activists “decided to give new meaning to the word *travesti* and link it with political struggle, resistance, dignity, and happiness.” In this way, *travesti* has been reclaimed as a potent site of political possibility. For foundational studies on Argentine travesti identity, see Berkins, *Cumbia, copeteo y lágrimas*; Programa de Género y Diversidad Sexual and Bachillerato Popular Mocha Celis, *La revolución de las mariposas*.

14. See Cowan, *Securing Sex*; Manzano, *Age of Youth in Argentina*; Manzano, "Sex, Gender, and the Making of the 'Enemy Within'"; Green, "(Homo)sexuality, Human Rights, and Revolution"; Insausti, "Los cuatrocientos homosexuales desaparecidos"; Figari, "Queer Argie"; Carvajal, "Image Politics and Disturbing Temporalities"; Rizki, "Familiar Grammars of Loss and Belonging"; and Hiner and Garrido, "Antitrans State Terrorism." The latter four articles in particular pay nuanced attention to trans and travesti experiences of authoritarianism and the politics of visibility in Argentina and Chile.
15. Finchelstein, *Ideological Origins of the Dirty War*, 1.
16. Finchelstein, *Ideological Origins of the Dirty War*, 7.
17. Finchelstein, *Ideological Origins of the Dirty War*, 7; Finchelstein, *Transatlantic Fascism*, 8; Spektorowski, *Origins of Argentina's Revolution of the Right*; Deutsch, *Las derechas*; Finchelstein, *Fascismo, liturgia e imaginario*.
18. Deutsch, *Las derechas*, 4.
19. Deutsch, "Contra 'el gran desorden sexual,'" 133.
20. Deutsch, "Contra 'el gran desorden sexual,'" 133, 134.
21. Deutsch, *Las derechas*. See in particular chap. 11, "Brazil: A Revolution of the Heart and Soul," 282–89. On the cross-fertilization of integralista, fascist, and nacionalista ideology more broadly, see Bertonha and Bohoslavsky, *Circule por la derecha*.
22. Finchelstein, *Ideological Origins of the Dirty War*, 58.
23. On continuities between Tacuara and nacionalismo see Lvovich, *El nacionalismo de derecha*.
24. Finchelstein, *Ideological Origins of the Dirty War*, 111–12.
25. Finchelstein, *Ideological Origins of the Dirty War*, 115.
26. As a paradigmatic example, Nuestro Mundo, the first homosexual organization in Argentina, understood sex and gender as both political and intrinsic to radical left political projects. In attempting to align with dominant left political parties, Marxist activisms, and the Peronist Left alike, however, the group was consistently rejected due to pervasive homophobia. See Insausti, "Los cuatrocientos homosexuales desaparecidos," 66.
27. Insausti, "Los cuatrocientos homosexuales desaparecidos," 66.
28. Finchelstein, *Ideological Origins of the Dirty War*, 120.
29. "Guía de archivos y fondos documentales." The archive was declassified in 2003 and is now open to the public and family members who use the archive to search for information surrounding their loved ones' disappearance and last known whereabouts. The archive is also actively used as evidence for trials prosecuting crimes against humanity.
30. "Comisión Provincial por la Memoria."
31. While it is outside the scope of this article to provide a detailed account of Peronist political ideology, for a selection of foundational work, see Di Tella and Lucchini, *América Latina*; Germani, *Authoritarianism, Fascism, and National Populism*, in which Germani compares the conditions of Latin American authoritarianism and European fascism. For reflections on Peronism, see chap. 5 of Germani's text: "Political Traditions and Social Mobilization at the Root of a National Populist Movement: Argentine Peronism." See also Brennan, *Peronism and Argentina*; James, *Resistance and Integration*. For a consideration of Peronism's populist and fascist undercurrents see chap. 4, "Peronist Populism and Fascism," in Finchelstein, *Ideological Origins of the Dirty War*.
32. "Comisión Provincial por la Memoria."
33. Solari Paz and Prieto Carrasco, "Cuerpos disidentes," 2.

34. CPM-Fondo DIPPBA, División Central de Documentación, Registro y Archivo, Mesa Doctrina, Legajo N° 207. I thank Solari Paz and Prieto Carrasco for directing me to this document.
35. Comisión por la Memoria, *Historia institucional de la DIPPBA*, 19.
36. I thank Solari Paz and Prieto Carrasco for directing me to this document.
37. See CPM-Fondo DIPPBA, División Central de Documentación, Registro y Archivo, Mesa “D(s),” Carpeta Varios, Legajo N° 28.139; CPM-Fondo DIPPBA, División Central de Documentación, Registro y Archivo, Mesa “D(s),” Carpeta Varios, Legajo N° 35.337; and CPM-Fondo DIPPBA, División Central de Documentación, Registro y Archivo, Mesa “D(s),” Carpeta Varios, Legajo N° 35.850.
38. See for example CPM-Fondo DIPPBA, División Central de Documentación, Registro y Archivo, Mesa “D(s),” Carpeta Varios, Legajo N° 30.594 and CPM-Fondo DIPPBA, División Central de Documentación, Registro y Archivo, Mesa “D(s),” Carpeta Varios, Legajo N° 31.213.
39. CPM-Fondo DIPPBA, División Central de Documentación, Registro y Archivo, Mesa “D(s),” Legajo N° 31.119.
40. CPM-Fondo DIPPBA, División Central de Documentación, Registro y Archivo, Mesa “D(s),” Legajo N° 35.333.
41. Fernández, *Cuerpos desobedientes*, 116–17; Berkins, “Un itinerario político del travestismo,” 129–31; Berkins, *La gesta del nombre propio*; Guimaraes García, *La roy*, 25.
42. Lohana Berkins (travesti activist, Buenos Aires), interview by Hebe de Bonafini.
43. As she states on another occasion, although travesti activism was influenced by the Mothers’ demands, this influence and understanding was uneven. Berkins, “Un itinerario político del travestismo,” 132. This hostility was not unique to the Mothers. The entrenched homophobia of leftist activist movements during the 1970s through the 1990s such as the Juventud Peronista, to which López belonged before his first disappearance, also led such groups to be openly hostile toward nonnormatively sexed and gendered subjects. After dictatorship during the consolidation of democracy, leftist hostility endured. As James N. Green notes, across Latin America following authoritarianism, “when public debates occurred, representatives of leftist groups argued that personal or sexual questions remained secondary considerations in the process of defeating dictatorships . . . and in the efforts to expand democracy” (Green, “(Homo)sexuality, Human Rights, and Revolution in Latin America,” 143).
44. CPM-Fondo DIPPBA, División Central de Documentación, Registro y Archivo, Mesa “D(e),” Factor Social, Año 1994, Legajo N° 824. The city of Mar del Plata is located in Buenos Aires Province and fell under the DIPPBA’s jurisdiction.
45. Quotes around *travesti* appear in the original report.
46. While the policing of nonnormative sexual and gender practices is hardly uncommon and exists across fascist and post-fascist states as well as those that were never fascist, my point here is to draw attention to the particular national histories and ideological constructions that might subtend or fuel such policing practices.
47. Brienza, “Variaciones sobre López,” 35.
48. The group named their collective “Juan Pablo Maestre” after a member of Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias (Armed Revolutionary Forces) who was shot and killed in July 1971 after leaving his partner Mirta Missetich’s parents’ house located in Buenos Aires’s Belgrano neighborhood. Asuaje, “Lo que el pueblo tiene que saber,” 17.
49. Asuaje, “Lo que el pueblo tiene que saber,” 21.

50. Brienza, "Variaciones sobre López," 35.
51. Brienza, "Variaciones sobre López," 35.
52. Brienza, "Variaciones sobre López," 35.
53. Rozanski, *Etchecolatz, Miguel Osvaldo*, 92–93.
54. Graziano, *En el cielo nos vemos*, 41.
55. Graziano, *En el cielo nos vemos*, 41.
56. Rosende and Pertot, *Los días sin López*, 23.
57. Brienza, "Variaciones sobre López," 37–38.
58. Brienza, "Variaciones sobre López," 37.
59. Meyer, "Diez años sin López."
60. Meyer, "Otro aniversario sin Jorge Julio López."
61. While the phrase "disappeared in democracy" cropped up around López's disappearance, López's is not the only high-profile case of disappearance to occur. Most recently, on August 1, 2017, Santiago Maldonado, a twenty-eight-year-old tattoo artist and anarchist, was disappeared from the indigenous Mapuche community Pu Lof en Resistencia in the Cushamen Department of Chubut Province, Argentina. Maldonado had joined a Mapuche road blockade demanding the release of Mapuche activist and leader Facundo Jones Huala, wanted by the Chilean government on terrorism charges. Politi and Londoño, "Police and Protestors Clash." After breaking up the blockade, Argentina's National Gendarmerie stormed and terrorized the adjacent community, and Maldonado was disappeared during the ensuing military raid. Barreiro, "La desaparición de un joven." Maldonado's disappearance resulted in massive protests and similarly served as a flashpoint, making clear the persistent reemergence of disappearance in democracy.
62. The identity category *piquetero* emerged to describe protestors from the popular class forming part of the Argentine unemployed movements that reached their height in the early 2000s, after the 2001 economic crisis that sent over half of the country's population spiraling beneath the poverty line. Borland and Sutton, "Quotidian Disruption and Women's Activism," 701.
63. La Brecha Communications Team, Skype interview by author, May 5, 2018.
64. Founded in 1995, HIJOS or Sons and Daughters for Identity and Justice Against Forgetting and Silence emerged when, through DNA testing, the Grandmothers (Abuelas de Plaza de Mayo) recuperated them from military or complicit families who had kidnapped them at birth. HIJOS activism is defined by its *escraches*, or ludic public protests, that occurred largely during the 1990s, aiming to *escrachar* or publicly identify and shame those involved with dictatorship. Taylor, "You Are Here."
65. La Brecha Communications Team, interview.
66. I withhold La Brecha's Communications Team members' names out of privacy concerns.
67. La Brecha Communications Team, Skype interview by author, May 5, 2018.
68. The *x* is used to modify *piqueteros*, signaling that non-trans, travesti, and trans subjects all participate in this movement. Well-known travesti activist Diana Sacayán, for example, participated tirelessly in *piquetero* movements before her 2015 murder in an unrelated hate crime.
69. La Brecha Communications Team, Skype interview by author, May 5, 2018.
70. *Identidad de Género 2012*, Ley Público Núm. 26.743 (2012). Travesti and trans people living in Argentina are presently able to change their name and gender markers on all documents through free bureaucratic procedures without pathologizing diagnoses or invasive surgical or hormonal requirements. Further, in reframing "gender identity" as a

universal right to which all persons should have access free of diagnoses, bureaucratic hurdles, or unwanted medical-psychiatric management and interference, the Argentine Gender Identity Law remains one of the most progressive national gender identity laws to date. For more on the politics of the Gender Identity Law, see de Mauro Rucovsky, “The Travesti Critique of the Gender Identity Law in Argentina.”

71. I have intentionally chosen to use “[name assigned at birth]” out of respect for Ramírez even though the newspaper article includes her name assigned at birth. Meyer, “Ser Valeria me llevó a ser secuestrada.”
72. Sociologist Pilar Calveiro, among others, has argued persuasively for the use of the term *concentration camp* in reference to the 340 clandestine detention, torture, and extermination centers operational in Argentina during dictatorship due to the systematized logic of killing employed in such spaces. See Calveiro, *Poder y desaparición*.
73. Meyer, “Ser Valeria me llevó a ser secuestrada.”
74. Meyer, “Ser Valeria me llevó a ser secuestrada.”
75. Meyer, “Ser Valeria me llevó a ser secuestrada.”
76. Meyer, “Ser Valeria me llevó a ser secuestrada.”
77. Meyer, “Ser Valeria me llevó a ser secuestrada.”
78. *Pensión para presos políticos, gremiales o estudiantiles (1976–1983)*.
79. It is of note that even leftist activists do not always agree that resources should be shared with travestis and trans subjects also detained during dictatorship. Máximo and Prieto, “¿Dónde está la memoria LGBTI?” Thus, although the Santa Fe Province government awarded Carolina Boetti reparations, this was not a move without controversy.
80. Agencia Presentes, “Por primera vez, el Estado repara a una trans sobreviviente de la dictadura.”
81. Agencia Presentes, “Por primera vez, el Estado repara a una trans sobreviviente de la dictadura.”

References

- “Acta fijando el propósito y los objetivos básicos para el proceso de reorganización nacional.”
Reproduced in “Para el Proceso de Reorganización Nacional: Propósitos y objetivos básicos.” *La Opinión*, March 24, 1976.
- Agencia Presentes. “Por primera vez, el Estado repara a una trans sobreviviente de la dictadura.” *Agencia Presentes*, May 18, 2018. agenciapresentes.org/2018/05/18/por-primera-vez-el-estado-repara-a-una-trans-sobreviviente-de-la-dictadura.
- Asuaje, Jorge Pastor. “Lo que el pueblo tiene que saber.” In *Jorge Julio López: Memoria escrita*, edited by Jorge Caterbetti, 13–32. Buenos Aires: Marea Editorial, 2012.
- Barreiro, Ramiro. 2017. “La desaparición de un joven durante un conflicto con mapuches moviliza a Argentina.” *El país*, August 8, 2017. elpais.com/internacional/2017/08/07/argentina/1502124830_768290.html.
- Berkins, Lohana, ed. *Cumbia, copeteo y lágrimas: Informe nacional sobre la situación de las travestis, transexuales y transgéneros*. 2nd ed. Buenos Aires: Ediciones Madres de Plaza de Mayo, 2015.
- Berkins, Lohana. *La gesta del nombre propio. Informe sobre la situación de la comunidad travesti en la Argentina*. Buenos Aires: Ediciones Madres de Plaza de Mayo, 2005.
- Berkins, Lohana. Interview by Hebe de Bonafini, Auditorio Juana Azurduy, June 11, 2012. YouTube video, posted by Madres de Plaza de Mayo, June 18, 2012. www.youtube.com/watch?v=wk1W2ug7otE.

- Berkins, Lohana. "Travestis: Una identidad política." Paper presented at the conference "VIII Jornadas Nacionales de Historia de las Mujeres/III Congreso Iberoamericano de Estudios de Género Diferencia/Desigualdad: Construimos en la diversidad," Villa Giardino, Córdoba, Argentina, October 25–28, 2006. hemisphericinstitute.org/en/emisferica-42/4-2-review-essays/lohana-berkins.html#_edn2 (accessed September 15, 2019).
- Berkins, Lohana. "Un itinerario político del travestismo." In *Sexualidades migrantes: Género y transgénero*, edited by Diana Maffía, 127–37. Buenos Aires: Scarlett, 2003.
- Bertonha, João Fábio, and Ernesto Lázaro Bohoslavsky, eds. *Circule por la derecha: Percepciones, redes y contactos entre las derechas sudamericanas, 1917–1973*. Buenos Aires: Ediciones UNGS, Universidad Nacional de General Sarmiento, 2016.
- Boletín oficial número 23.372*. March 26, 1976. www.infoleg.gob.ar/?page_id=216&id=23372 (accessed November 19, 2019).
- Borland, Elizabeth, and Barbara Sutton. "Quotidian Disruption and Women's Activism in Times of Crisis, Argentina 2002–2003." *Gender and Society* 21, no. 5 (October 2007): 700–722.
- Brennan, James P., ed. *Peronism and Argentina*. Wilmington, DE: SR Books, 1998.
- Brienza, Hernán. "Variaciones sobre López." In *Jorge Julio López: Memoria escrita*, edited by Jorge Caterbetti, 33–40. Buenos Aires: Marea, 2012.
- Calveiro, Pilar. *Poder y desaparición: Los campos de concentración en Argentina*. Buenos Aires: Colihue, 1998.
- Carvajal, Fernanda. "Image Politics and Disturbing Temporalities: On 'Sex Change' Operations in the Early Chilean Dictatorship." *TSQ* 5, no. 4 (2018): 621–37.
- Catela, Sonia. "Juicio y muerte a Aramburu." *Página/12*, September 15, 2017. www.pagina12.com.ar/62881-juicio-y-muerte-a-aramburu.
- "Comisión Provincial por la Memoria." Archival Finding Aid and Description. www.comisionporlamemoria.org/archivos/archivo/cuadroclasificacion/ (accessed June 18, 2019).
- Comisión Provincial por la Memoria. *Historia institucional de la DIPPBA: La inteligencia policial a través de sus documentos*. www.comisionporlamemoria.org/archivos/archivo/historia-institucional-dippba/historia-institucional-dippba.pdf (accessed September 1, 2019).
- CONADEP (Comisión Nacional sobre la Desaparición de Personas). *Nunca más: The Report of the Argentine National Commission on the Disappeared* (English translation). New York: Farrar, Straus, Giroux, 1986.
- Cornejo, Giancarlo. "Travesti Dreams Outside in the Ethnographic Machine." *GLQ* 25, no. 3 (2019): 457–82.
- Cowan, Benjamin. *Securing Sex: Morality and Repression in the Making of Cold War Brazil*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2016.
- De Bonafini, Hebe. *Seguir pariendo: Discursos de Hebe de Bonafini 1983–2012*. Buenos Aires: Ediciones Madres de Plaza de Mayo, 2013.
- De Mauro Rucovsky, Martín. "The Travesti Critique of the Gender Identity Law in Argentina." *TSQ* 6, no. 2 (2019): 223–38.
- Deutsch, Sandra McGee. "Contra 'el gran desorden sexual': Los nacionalistas y la sexualidad, 1919–1940." *Sociohistórica*, no. 17–18 (2005): 127–50. www.sociohistorica.fahce.unlp.edu.ar/article/view/SHn17-18a05.
- Deutsch, Sandra McGee. *Las Derechas: The Extreme Right in Argentina, Brazil, and Chile, 1890–1939*. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1999.

- Di Pietro, Pedro José Javier. "Decolonizing *Travesti* Space in Buenos Aires: Race, Sexuality, and Sideways Relationality." *Gender, Place & Culture: A Journal of Feminist Geography* 23, no. 5 (2016): 677–93.
- Di Tella, Torcuato Salvador, and Cristina Lucchini, eds. *América Latina. Sociedad y estado, conceptos teóricos y transformaciones históricas*. Buenos Aires: Editorial Biblos, 2008.
- Feierstein, Daniel. *El genocidio como práctica social: Entre el nazismo y la experiencia argentina*. Buenos Aires: Fondo de Cultura Económica de Argentina, 2007.
- Feitlowitz, Marguerite. *A Lexicon of Terror: Argentina and the Legacies of Torture*. 2nd ed. New York: Oxford University Press, 2011.
- Fernández, Josefina. *Cuerpos desobedientes: Travestismo e identidad de género*. Buenos Aires: Edhasa, 2004.
- Figari, Carlos. "Queer Argie." *American Quarterly* 66, no. 3 (2014): 621–31.
- Finkelstein, Federico. *Fascismo, liturgia e imaginario: El mito del General Uriburu y la Argentina nacionalista*. Buenos Aires: Fondo de Cultura Económica, 2002.
- Finkelstein, Federico. *The Ideological Origins of the Dirty War: Fascism, Populism, and Dictatorship in Twentieth Century Argentina*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014.
- Finkelstein, Federico. *Transatlantic Fascism: Ideology, Violence, and the Sacred in Argentina and Italy, 1919–1945*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2010.
- Germani, Gino. *Authoritarianism, Fascism, and National Populism*. New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction Books, 1978.
- Gorini, Ulises. *La otra lucha, 1983–1986*, vol. 2 of *Historia de las Madres de Plaza de Mayo*. La Plata: Editorial de la Universidad Nacional de La Plata, 2017.
- Gorini, Ulises. *La rebelión de las madres, 1976–1983*, vol. 1 of *Historia de las Madres de Plaza de Mayo*. La Plata: Editorial de la Universidad Nacional de La Plata, 2017.
- Graziano, Miguel. *En el cielo nos vemos: La historia de Jorge Julio López*. Buenos Aires, Argentina: Peña Lillo, Ediciones Continente, 2013.
- Green, James N. "(Homo)sexuality, Human Rights, and Revolution in Latin America." In *Human Rights and Revolutions*, edited by Jeffrey N. Wasserstrom et al., 139–53. Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield, 2007.
- "Guía de archivos y fondos documentales." Andar, August 6, 2013. www.andaragencia.org/guia-de-archivos-y-fondos-documentales.
- Guimaraes García, Florencia. *La roy: Revolución de una trava*. Buenos Aires: Puntos Suspensivos Ediciones, 2017.
- Hiner, Hillary, and Juan Carlos Garrido. "Antitrans State Terrorism: Trans and Travesti Women, Human Rights, and Recent History in Chile." *TSQ* 6, no. 2 (2019): 194–209.
- Identidad de Género*, 2012, Ley Público No. 26.743 (2012). servicios.infoleg.gob.ar/infolegInternet/anexos/195000-199999/197860/norma.htm.
- Insausti, Santiago Joaquín. "Los cuatrocientos homosexuales desaparecidos: Memorias de la represión estatal a las sexualidades disidentes en Argentina." In *Deseo y represión: Sexualidad, género y Estado en la historia Argentina reciente*, edited by Débora D'Antonio, 63–82. Buenos Aires: Imago Mundi, 2015.
- James, Daniel. *Resistance and Integration: Peronism and the Argentine Working Class, 1946–1976*. London: Cambridge University Press, 1988.
- Jinkis, Jorge. "Ni muerto ni vivo." *Página/12*, August 3, 2006. www.pagina12.com.ar/diario/psicologia/9-70866-2006-08-03.html.
- La opinión*. "Gobierna la junta militar." March 24, 1976.

- Longoni, Ana. "Photographs and Silhouettes: Visual Politics in the Human Rights Movement of Argentina." *Afterall: A Journal of Art, Context, and Enquiry* 25, no. 1 (2010): 5–17.
- Lvovich, Daniel. *El nacionalismo de derecha: Desde sus orígenes a Tacuara*. Buenos Aires: Capital Intelectual, 2006.
- Manzano, Valeria. *The Age of Youth in Argentina: Culture, Politics, and Sexuality from Perón to Videla*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2014.
- Manzano, Valeria. "Sex, Gender, and the Making of the 'Enemy Within' in Cold War Argentina." *Journal of Latin American Studies* 47, no. 1 (2015): 1–29.
- Máximo, Matías, and Cristián Prieto. "¿Dónde está la memoria LGBTI?" *Página/12*, March 18, 2016. www.pagina12.com.ar/diario/suplementos/soy/subnotas/4447-595-2016-03-18.html.
- Meyer, Adriana. "Diez años sin López." *Página/12*, September 18, 2016. www.pagina12.com.ar/diario/elpais/1-309682-2016-09-18.html.
- Meyer, Adriana. "Otro aniversario sin Jorge Julio López." *Página/12*, September 19, 2014. www.pagina12.com.ar/diario/elpais/1-255650-2014-09-19.html.
- Meyer, Adriana. "Ser Valeria me llevó a ser secuestrada." *Página/12*, January 8, 2013. www.pagina12.com.ar/diario/elpais/1-211380-2013-01-08.html.
- Pensión para presos políticos, gremiales o estudiantiles (1976–1983)*, Ley Provincial No. 13.298/2012 (2012). www.santafe.gov.ar/normativa/item.php?id=109765&cod=485d49d7501754d378b4c841bdae459c.
- Politi, Daniel, and Ernesto Londoño. 2017. "Police and Protesters Clash over Disappearance of Argentine Activist." *New York Times*, September 2, 2017. www.nytimes.com/2017/09/02/world/americas/argentina-protests-santiago-maldonado.html.
- Programa de Género y Diversidad Sexual del Ministerio Público de la Defensa de la Ciudad Autónoma de Buenos Aires and Bachillerato Popular Mocha Celis, eds. *La revolución de las mariposas: A diez años de "La gesta del nombre propio"*. Buenos Aires, Argentina: Ministerio Público de la Defensa de la Ciudad Autónoma de Buenos Aires, 2017. www.mpdefensa.gov.ar/biblioteca/pdf/la_revolucion_de_las_mariposas.pdf.
- Radio Nacional Argentina, "Comunicado Número 1° de la Junta de Comandantes de las Fuerzas Armadas." March 24, 1976. Transcribed and reprinted by Secretaría de Estado de Prensa y Difusión. In *De memoria: Testimonios, textos y otras fuentes sobre el terrorismo de Estado en Argentina*. Disc 2, "1976," "Folder "b," File "bo10.jpg." Edited by Memoria Abierta, la Secretaría de Educación, and la Subsecretaría de Derechos Humanos del Gobierno de la Ciudad de Buenos Aires, 2005.
- Rizki, Cole. "Latin/x American Trans Studies: Toward a Travesti-Trans Analytic." In "Trans Studies en las Américas," edited by Claudia Sofía Garriga-López, Denilson Lopes, Cole Rizki, and Juana María Rodríguez. Special issue, *TSQ* 6, no. 2 (2019): 145–55.
- Rizki, Cole. "Familiar Grammars of Loss and Belonging: Curating Trans Kinship in Post-dictatorship Argentina." *Journal of Visual Culture* 19, no. 2 (2020): 197–211.
- Rosenblatt, Adam. "The Politics of Grief." In *Digging for the Disappeared: Forensic Science after Atrocity*, 83–122. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2015.
- Rosende, Luciana, and Werner Pertot. *Los días sin López: El testigo desaparecido en democracia*. Buenos Aires: Planeta, 2013.
- Rozanski, Carlos Alberto. *Etchecolatz, Miguel Osvaldo*. Case 2251/06. Federal Criminal Tribunal Número 1, La Plata, Argentina. September 19, 2006.
- Sabsay, Leticia. *Fronteras sexuales: Espacio urbano, cuerpos y ciudadanía*. Buenos Aires: Paidós, 2011.

- Solari Paz, Ana Cecilia, and Cristián Oscar Jilberto Prieto Carrasco. "Cuerpos disidentes en la mira de la Dirección de Inteligencia de La Policía de La Provincia de Buenos Aires (DIPPBA)." Paper presented at the conference "IX Seminario Internacional Políticas de la Memoria," Centro Cultural Haroldo Conti, Buenos Aires, Argentina, November 3, 2016.
- Spektorowski, Alberto. *The Origins of Argentina's Revolution of the Right*. Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 2003.
- Taylor, Diana. "'You Are Here': H.I.J.O.S. and the DNA of Performance." In *The Archive and the Repertoire: Performing Cultural Memory in the Americas*, 161–89. Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2003.