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Collective violence and the culture of peace: researching the social psychology of memory and social reconciliation Introduction to the monograph

Violencia colectiva y cultura de paz:
investigación en psicología social de la memoria
y la reconciliación social

Introducción al monográfico

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This monograph aims to disseminate the results of various research studies carried out in the field of social and community psychology. The studies focus on efforts to build a culture of peace in post-conflict contexts and societies that have suffered collective and socio-political violence, with multiple and persistent human rights violations.

The societies, groups and individuals affected by collective violence often mobilise resources as a means of coping with traumatic experiences. There are many different experiences of social reconciliation throughout the world that are based on recognition of the harm caused to victims and seek to guarantee inclusive memories and bring together different outlooks on conflict. These experiences lay the social and political groundwork for guaranteeing that the violence never happens again (López López & Taylor 2021; Páez *et al.* 2011).

Since the end of the 20th century, many human rights defence mechanisms have been developed throughout Latin America and other continents undergoing transitions from dictatorial regimes to democracy. Two of the most commonly-used transitional justice

mechanisms are truth commissions and trials. For example, following a long period of war and violence, Colombia is now waiting for the results of its truth commission. Processes of transitional justice often pursue instrumental goals such as restitution and compensation, while at the same time having an important symbolic effect, triggering intense emotional and moral reactions among participants and victims, as well as among society in general (Martín-Beristain *et al.* 2010).

In this sense, transitional justice can be viewed as a psychosocial process that seeks to ensure social reconciliation in societies which have been fragmented by collective violence and are now moving towards democracy. Social and intergroup reconciliation is therefore aimed at repairing relationships between different groups and rebuilding the social bonds that have been broken by violence. The objective is to eliminate psychological barriers in order to do away with stereotypes, decrease negative emotions and polarisation and break away from the logic of competitive victimisation in order to enable peaceful and harmonious coexistence through political procedures that do not use violence as a means of social control (Čehajić-Clancy *et al.* 2016; Gibson 2004).

At a collective level, international experiences of transitional justice range from the establishment of truth commissions and the recognition of the suffering caused, to diverse forms of reparation rituals. There are many different kinds of reparation rituals, including institutional apologies, public apologies by perpetrators, reparation-oriented encounters between victims and perpetrators and the erection of monuments commemorating victims, to name but a few. All encompass human rights defence mechanisms and the recognition of the harm caused and are aimed at consolidating social norms that seek to avoid any repetition of the collective violence perpetrated, as well as to restore trust in institutions (Martin-Beristain *et al.* 2010).

At an individual level, victims need to learn to cope with the trauma they have experienced, in order to give their lives purpose once again and recover their trust in others, which has often been destroyed by the human violence perpetrated. Studies on the psychosocial effects of transitional justice rituals have found differences in their collective and individual impact on communities, institutions and individuals. Collective rituals in Rwanda involving perpetrators and victims were found to decrease negative stereotypes between groups in conflict, although they also had a negative emotional effect in terms of re-victimisation, since victims were forced to relive their trauma (Rimé *et al.* 2011). Something similar was observed among indigenous communities in Guatemala (Martín-Beristain *et al.* 2010). Justice and

reparation rituals have also been found to improve social climate and cohesion in the target group, and in this sense may help generate a sense of belonging to an imagined community, transforming the divisive representation of two groups in conflict into a more inclusive one. Nevertheless, collective and individual responses are not always consistent, and different victims may respond differently to memories, recollections or the idea of intergroup forgiveness.

Several countries in Latin America have suffered mass human rights violations by political dictatorships and/or terrorist attacks by military, paramilitary or guerrilla groups, and some (Argentina, Colombia, Brazil and Ecuador, among others) have implemented peace initiatives, such as Truth and Reparation Commissions (TRCs), with varying degrees of success and a range of different effects. This monograph presents a series of studies on the role and psychosocial impact of TRCs in these countries.

The first study focuses on Argentina, with the research team led by Elena Zubieta (University of Buenos Aires, CONICET) exploring the psychosocial impact of the transitional justice mechanisms (Truth Commission, National Commission on the Disappearance of Persons, criminal trials, institutional reforms and reparatory gestures) implemented to redress the harm caused by the military dictatorship (1976-1983). The study analyses the degree to which society approves of the mechanisms implemented, and measures emotional climate, trust in institutions, social sharing, willingness to forgive and willingness to engage in social reconciliation.

The next study analyses the situation in Colombia, a country which has suffered decades of armed conflict and war, with the resulting violence affecting both indigenous communities and urban areas, giving rise to polyvictimisation, with millions of victims and profound damage to the social fabric, all of which has served to undermine trust in social institutions. Following the peace agreement with the guerrilla group known as the FARC-EP, Colombia is now immersed in an intense social debate characterised by sharply opposing views. The article, which is the result of a collaboration agreement between the Pontifical Xaverian University of Bogota and the University of the Basque Country (Angélica Caicedo *et al.*), analyses the social impact of the peace agreement and the role of the TRC through two complementary studies. The first engages in a textual analysis of media discourses during the establishment and consolidation of the peace agreement in 2016, and the second outlines the results of a quantitative analysis based on a survey about the working of the TRC in 2019-2020.

The next study was carried out by researchers from the University of Paraíba (Anderson Mathias *et al.*). Brazil suffered a military

dictatorship from 1964 to 1985. Twenty-seven years after the end of the regime, the National Truth Commission (NTC) was established in 2012, and concluded its work in 2014 with the issuing of a final report. The study presented here analyses social representations of Brazil's dictatorial past and the NTC, as part of the ongoing social conflict about the construction of a shared collective memory that also reflects current debates between different political stances. Consistently with Halbwachs' theory (1950/1968), which posits that memories reconstruct the past by adapting past events to the needs and group attitudes of the present, with collective memory being based on language communication during this process, the results of the study reveal how the ideological and political positions of the present influence the way in which social groups remember, forget or reinterpret the negative events of the past.

The next study focuses on the collective terrorist violence experienced in the Basque Country. Basque society suffered intense terrorist violence from 1960 to 2013. The study examines two community initiatives designed to foster the development of a culture of peace, the recognition of victims' suffering and intergroup forgiveness. The research was carried out by a team at the University of the Basque Country (Basabe *et al.*) and the researcher Miren Harizmendi from the Bakeola Foundation. The paper reports the results of two intervention studies. The first one, entitled Educational Programme with Victim-Educators –Bakeaz blai, was quasi-experimental in nature, with a control group, and involved victims committed to the fight for memory and peace giving talks about their suffering and explaining why they are in favour of intergroup forgiveness. The intervention was unique in that it enabled direct contact with victims and their narratives of forgiveness. The intervention was found to encourage more favourable attitudes to social reconciliation. The second intervention, entitled Citizen Encounters, involved group discussions about memory and recognition between citizens from different municipalities. Both initiatives were unique in that they allowed victims to become educators and aimed to bring together people with very different views of the violent conflict.

The next study was led by Paula Tesche Roa from Andrés Bello University in Concepción, Chile, and focuses on the construction of a collective memory of the Chilean dictatorship (1973-1990) through cultural artefacts such as memorials and monuments built by the Chilean people to commemorate their violent past. As the authors state, these symbolic constructions link territory and memory as a means of configuring different forms of socio-political catastrophe. This

study adopts a different perspective from the other works presented here, exploring the spatial, symbolic and functional dimensions of places dedicated to memory, using a qualitative methodology with diverse documentary sources.

Finally, the study by the research team from Ecuador, led by Carlos Reyes-Valenzuela and made up of researchers from various different universities (Andina Simón Bolívar, Politécnica Salesiana del Ecuador, and Playa Ancha, Chile), explores the influence of gender and its impact on the human rights violations outlined in the report issued by the Ecuadorian Truth Commission. In response to the severe human rights violations carried out by León Febres Cordero's government between 1984 and 1988, in May 2007, Rafael Correa's government established the Truth Commission of Ecuador (TCE), which concluded its work in 2010 after having gathered testimonies from 456 victims, most of whom had suffered various extreme forms of victimisation. A previous study had found high levels of posttraumatic stress (PTS) among the human rights violation victims featured in the TCE report. This study examines the role of gender in relation to the social impact of TRCs, an issue that has received very little attention to date, despite the fact that women are vulnerable to multiple extreme forms of victimisation and gender-based violence in situations of war and armed conflict.

This monograph presents a series of results regarding the effects of reparation rituals and TRCs, combining different methods and analysis strategies, including general population surveys, newspaper and social media content analysis, community intervention assessments and qualitative documentary analysis. In Argentina, the results revealed a medium-to-low level of knowledge regarding the transitional justice measures implemented, along with a generally positive attitude towards them. Official apologies were found to have a low level of effectiveness for improving intergroup trust. In Colombia, social representations of peace varied in accordance with the ideological stance adopted by the newspapers analysed, and the survey revealed that political stance and victimisation were crucial factors in the approval of the initiatives carried out by the Truth Commission and Special Jurisdiction for Peace. In Brazil, the comments analysed in three major newspaper websites reflected the public debate regarding memories of the dictatorship, with some narratives denying the existence of human rights violations. The results reveal that the struggle to maintain the collective memory is still ongoing today. The study carried out in the Basque Country highlighted the importance of victims playing an active role in memory and intergroup forgiveness rituals, through community

initiatives targeted at the general population, which were evaluated systematically for the first time here. In Chile, the results reveal tension between remembering and forgetting, mainly between organisations that seek to establish the truth about what happened and right-wing groups that persist in denying the dictatorship. Finally, the study carried out in Ecuador found gender differences, with men expressing greater approval of the Truth Commission and reporting greater social inhibition of the emotions evoked by the violence suffered. The study also highlights the importance of gender roles for coping with a violent past.

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I

Articles

Artículos

Transitional Justice measures implemented in Argentina: their psychosocial impact

Medidas de Justicia Transicional implementadas en Argentina, su impacto psicosocial

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Summary: 1. Collective Violence and Transitional Justice 2. Transitional Justice in Argentina. 3. Recognitions of crimes and public apologies. 4. Emotional social climate. 5. Method. 6. Participants. 7. Variables and instruments. 8. Data analysis. 9. Results. 10. Conclusions. References.

Abstract: Terrorism carried out by State forces is the most reprehensible action to be taken because the power and resources of a country are used to generate terror. Such power and resources are aimed at reaching certain political goals instead of serving the citizens. Transitional Justice has raised complex debates related to democratisation, human rights and the reconstruction of the State and its institutions after periods of severe social conflict. After the last military dictatorship in Argentina (1976-1983), different transitional justice mechanisms were implemented to cope with the consequences of the State's collective violence: Truth Commission, criminal trials, institutional reforms, as well as reparatory gestures. A descriptive-correlational study of group difference was developed, with a non-experimental

cross-sectional design. It was aimed at analysing the psychosocial impact of transitional justice measures taken in Argentina. The study was conducted on a non-probabilistic sample composed of 576 participants. Findings support the effectiveness of combined Transitional Justice measures, the weakness of recognition of criminal acts and apologies, and significant differences in terms of violence affectation.

Keywords: Argentine dictatorship, collective violence, transitional justice measures, psychosocial impact, violence affectation.

Resumen: El terrorismo de Estado es el más ignominioso porque los poderes y recursos de un país se utilizan para generar terror y obtener ciertos objetivos políticos en lugar de estar al servicio de la ciudadanía. La Justicia Transicional (JT) incluye debates sobre la democratización, los derechos humanos y la reconstrucción del Estado post períodos de extrema conflictividad social. Finalizada la dictadura militar (1976-1983) en Argentina, se implementaron mecanismos de JT para afrontar las consecuencias de la violencia colectiva estatal: Comisión de Verdad, procesos penales, reformas institucionales y gestos reparadores. Se desarrolló un estudio descriptivo-correlacional, de diferencias de grupo, diseño transversal no experimental, con el objetivo de analizar el impacto psicosocial de las medidas de JT, en base a una muestra intencional compuesta por 576 participantes. Los hallazgos respaldan la efectividad de las medidas combinadas de JT, la debilidad del reconocimiento y las disculpas, y diferencias en términos de afectación de la violencia.

Palabras clave: dictadura militar Argentina, violencia colectiva, medidas de justicia transicional, impacto psicosocial, afectación de la violencia.

1. Collective Violence and Transitional Justice¹

Transitional Justice (TJ, hereinafter) entails a wide range of responses to an abusive regime for the purpose of maintaining distance from such abuse and dealing with a past involving harsh social violence (Andrieu 2010). As a field of study, TJ has experienced an important development over the years. It includes complex debates related to democratisation, human rights and the reconstruction of the State and its institutions after periods of extreme social conflict (McEvoy 2007).

Investigating the past in order to bring clarity about what actually happened, on the one hand, and prosecuting those who were responsible for the violence on the other, are key issues to be sorted out in such periods of socio-political changes. Regarding the past, questions are raised as to what, how, where, who, why, and when the violations were committed. As for TJ itself, according to the UN (2004), it is not only aimed at the reparation of severe violations of the most fundamental human rights, but also at reconciling those groups or sectors which were involved.

The effectiveness of TJ depends, to a large extent, on the full integration of the implemented mechanisms due to their intrinsic weakness and insufficiency (Droždek 2010). Executing a single initiative, such as the prosecution of those responsible, material compensations and institutional reforms, to name just a few, weakens TJ's effectiveness when compared to multiple and unified measures which complement each other in a cohesive and synergistic way (de Greiff 2008). Moreover, offering public apologies to victims does not meet the wide variety of needs that should be addressed, such as their rights to achieve truth and justice. Implementing remedial measures like financial compensation can be useful to satisfy immediate subsistence; but if they are not accompanied by a sustained effort to clarify what happened, they could be perceived as a bribery attempt. Conversely, seeking the truth on the abuses can be useless when reparation measures are not applied (de Greiff 2008).

Different actions must be taken to restore the trust: a) prosecutions can be regarded not only as a reinstatement of the lost legality but

¹ Acknowledgment: Main Research Project "Psychosocial and cultural well-being. Memory, representations and associated beliefs". University of Buenos Aires, Secretary of Science and Technology (2014-2017). Postdoctoral fellowship (Juan Bombelli) awarded by the National Research Council of Scientific and Technical Research (CONICET): The psychosocial impact of the Truth Commission in Argentina, CONADEP. From 04/01/14 to 03/31/16.

also as a cessation of impunity; b) historical clarification aims to reveal the crimes, identifying those responsible for them, and establishes a critical stance on what happened; c) reparations entail authentic consideration of the victim's suffering and allow the State to restore the validity of the violated rights; d) institutional reforms imply a review of the institutions' purposes and procedures; and e) last but not least, removing those who executed violence restores the victims' dignity and confidence (de Greiff 2011). When all the previous points are jointly in force, trust is not demanded but earned.

De Greiff (2011) points out that the consolidation of the legal norm in a State of democratic law is achieved only when the recognition to the victims and the reconstruction of trust are accomplished. Following Bakiner (2014), one of the main indicators of the impact of a TJ mechanism, such as the Truth Commissions (TC hereinafter), is delegitimising the perpetrators and their actions, exposing and repudiating them as the authors of violent and undemocratic acts.

If all of the above is valid, TJ can guarantee a sound framework to restore trust and, consequently, the social fabric. This is related to the so-called *culture of peace* (de Rivera 2014). According to the definition developed by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO 1995, in de Rivera 2014), a culture of peace consists of a particular set of values, attitudes and behaviours mostly shared, repelling violence and conflicts. When such values, attitudes and behaviours are embraced, clashes are prevented or solved via dialogue and negotiation.

2. Transitional Justice in Argentina

The systematic violations of the most fundamental human rights perpetrated by the last military dictatorship in Argentina (1976-1983) affected the social fabric as a whole, shattering people's basic self-beliefs, beliefs about others and the world in general. With the recovery of democracy in 1983, different transitional justice mechanisms were put in force in order to deal with the consequences of collective State violence: Truth Commission, criminal prosecutions, institutional reforms, and reparatory gestures.

However, though Bolivia was the first country in establishing TC, it was soon dissolved in view of the impossibility to specify its purpose (Schey, Shelton, and Roth-Arrianza 1997). Therefore, Argentina is considered a pioneer country in establishing the first official transitional commission of investigation. Such commission earned wide recognition

and respect owing to its impartiality and effectiveness in achieving its primary goal: Revealing the truth, this being a matter of debate regarding other countries' commissions (Avruch 2010).

The National Commission on the Disappearance of Persons (CONADEP for its initials in Spanish) was created in Argentina by President Raúl Alfonsín, five days after taking office in December 1983. This commission had multiple purposes: to investigate the fate of missing people during the last dictatorship (1976- 1983), to investigate the violations of fundamental human rights, to find the abducted children, to report any attempt of hiding evidence or information relevant to fact clarification, and to issue a final report regarding the main conclusions of the investigation.

The report, named Never Again (*Nunca más*, in Spanish), collected the information described above and included some final recommendations integrating the suggestions of some human rights organisations (Crenzel 2010). The complete work resulted in more than 50,000 pages handed over to President Alfonsín, after 280 days of hard work (CONADEP 1984). A total of 8,961 missing persons were documented, a number which in the report itself remained open to posterity. The report was sent to the civil courts, not the military, for the complaints to be processed.

President Raúl Alfonsín's decision to confront the abuses of the military dictatorship was not limited to CONADEP's creation. It was only a part of a global plan to review the violent and terrifying past practices in Argentina. In his opening speech at the Legislative Palace, the President preached that he would place in the hands of Justice the important task of avoiding impunity, upholding the ethical principle stating that the end does not justify the means. He also expressed the commitment to this imperative as sustaining his acts of government. Along with CONADEP creation, Alfonsín ordered the prosecution of the commanders of the three military government boards ruling the country between 1976 and 1983, holding them ultimately responsible for the crime committed: murder, unlawful deprivation of liberty, torture, and any other crime that could be proven.

The prosecuting party adopted the strategy previously used in Ireland's court case against the United Kingdom before the European Court of Human Rights (Calcagno 2013). Given the multiplicity of human rights violations, in such a European process thirteen paradigmatic cases had been analysed as representative of an older victimised population. Consequently, the judgment of the Argentinean transition was also conducted through paradigmatic cases. The prosecutors chose those crimes that were best proven, in order to

avoid ambiguity or misrepresentation of the criminal existence. Much of the proof was supplied by CONADEP's vast previous work.

Prosecutor Julio Strassera, based on the undertaken strategy, selected 709 cases. The Chamber dealt with 281 to issue the sentence. Important members of the military boards, general Videla and Massera, were sentenced to life imprisonment; Agosti, to four years and six months in prison; Viola, to 17 years in prison; and Lambruschini, to eight years in prison. The recommendation of the Federal Justice to continue the criminal actions at junior officers' levels created a military collective crack, tightening the bond with the government even further. This led to the controversial enactment of the subsequent Full Stop and Due Obedience laws in December 1986 and April 1987, as a result of uprising attempts against the government.

3. Recognition of the crimes and public apologies

The enormous influence of CONADEP and the Prosecution against the military boards brought the military institution into disrepute in the eyes of the Argentinean society. Sectors linked to the armed forces made a strenuous effort to construct a narrative using the notions of "war", "subversives", or the very unspecific term of "excesses", in order to safeguard their honour and institutional value (Salvi 2015). Even so, the military group initiated a discrediting process, catalysed by the knowledge of the past events and the protests endorsed by Human Rights organisations. Furthermore, the military uprisings and the endorsement of the above-mentioned Full Stop and Due Obedience laws led the population to mistrust the military collective and to hold them responsible for their repressive measures.

In such a social context of discredit, ten years after the process that imprisoned the military, on April 25, 1995, the head of the Army Forces, General Martín Balza, made a public statement in a television programme. This statement was the first institutional "self-criticism" of the Army, and it involved admission of responsibility for the systematic violations of human rights perpetrated during the military dictatorship. General Balza publicly instructed his subordinates to disobey any further immoral order. Without pretense, he stated that the violation of the National Constitution and the execution of immoral orders were criminal acts. According to him, intending to use unfair and immoral means to achieve fair purposes was also a crime. In such a statement, the military expressed that the Armed Forces assumed responsibility for the mistakes made in what he considered a battle between

Argentines and accepted institutional responsibility for the past (Balza 1995).

The message issued by Balza was the first public and official recognition of the Armed Force's responsibility for previous crimes. He sought to prevent further abuses like those committed in the past not only by urging his subordinates to disobey any immoral order and to use discernment, but also by appealing to reconciliation as a process owed to the Argentinean society, which could only be reached through dialogue and respect.

On March 24th, 2004, Commemoration of the 1976 Argentine coup d'état, President Néstor Kirchner participated in three emblematic activities. One of them was held at the National Military College, where Army officer candidates are trained. There, he ordered the college authorities to remove the portraits of the commanders of the former dictatorship, which were hanging on the walls of the hall of honour, featuring the portraits of all former directors of the military training institute. In a brief speech to the cadets and officers, the president stated that nothing was serious enough in society to justify the participation of the Armed Forces in State terrorism. With this removal of the paintings, he indicated his intention of taking a clear position to consolidate the democratic system, banish State terrorism, and contribute to the construction of a new country. He expressed his desire that March 24th be remembered as a living memory of what should never be done again. A few hours later, in the Higher School of Mechanics of the Navy, where the largest detention camp had operated during the dictatorship, the President signed an agreement with the Mayor of Buenos Aires City to evict the Navy from the property and turn it into a *Space of Memory*, for the defence and promotion of Human Rights. In his speech, the President asked for "forgiveness on behalf of the National State for the shame of having kept silent so many atrocities for twenty years of democracy".

Faced with these events, however, many people quickly made their criticisms manifest, especially those related to *Unión Cívica Radical* [UCR], the political party which led Alfonsín to the presidency. The criticisms that came afterwards highlighted that apologies are insufficient mechanisms and that they do not fulfil the process of rectifying and healing the past, but rather pave the way to understanding what happened, which in turn contributes to regaining confidence.

4. Emotional social climate

The emotional climate is a collective affect generated by the interactions among individuals in response to economic, political, and social conditions (de Rivera 2014). Páez *et al.* (1997) define the social emotional climate as a collective state of mind characterised by a predominant affective tone, a certain vision of the social world and the future, and certain tendencies to act according to perceived emotions. If a climate of fear and insecurity prevails, people tend to be suspicious and cautious and they are likely to avoid social contact and to remain confined at home, postponing outings and meetings in public spaces. In a national context plagued with collective violence, the perceived emotional climates may also vary depending on the geographic sectors analysed. As Páez and Liu (2011) show in their study, the physical and socio-political closeness to a place marked by violence explains the intensity of a particular emotional climate, so the closer people are to the zone of conflict, the more negatively they perceive the climate.

Following Martín-Baró (2003), after socio-political terror, the affected people are left with a narrower social life, an undermining of their interpersonal relationships and deterioration in their social coexistence. When thousands of people are threatened by a political regime, the feeling of vulnerability and fear affects the behaviour of the affected human group (Lira and Castillo 1991).

In post-conflict situations, it is interesting to note the role that collective emotions play in the construction of peace or in maintaining situations of tension and violence. People respond emotionally not only to events based on their own experiences, but also to those based on social frameworks of reference. These frameworks provide guidelines for what is expected and appropriate to feel and do.

An empirical study was conducted to analyse the psychosocial impact of the work of CONADEP and other transitional justice measures in Argentina.

The specific goals were as follows:

- to inquire into people's knowledge, approval, and effectiveness of TJ measures;
- to explore the elicitation of emotions associated with the violent past and perception of the social emotional climate;
- to determine whether there were differences in the aforementioned psychosocial variables based on the degree of exposure to violence: direct victim, indirect victim, or unaffected.

5. Method

A descriptive-correlational study of group difference was developed, with a non-experimental cross-sectional design.

6. Participants

The non-probabilistic, intentional sample was composed of 576 participants (39.8% men; 60.2% women; *Mean Age* = 36.68 years old; *SD* = 13.98, range 18-83 years). Besides, 83.7% of the participants lived in Buenos Aires province and 16.3% in the Autonomous City of Buenos Aires.

Nine percent (9,2%) of the total sample identified themselves as *direct victims* (DV) of the dictatorship violence, having been kidnapped, imprisoned without prior trial, tortured, threatened, exiled, removed from office, or other forms of violence; 24.1% considered themselves to be *indirect victims* (IV) and 66.7% to be *unaffected* (UA).

7. Variables and instruments

A self-administered questionnaire was applied integrated by:

7.1. Level of exposure to violence

Two items were included to establish the *level of affectation by violence* and define the categories of direct affectation, indirect affectation and no affectation: "Do you consider yourself a victim of violence by the State or its agents (police, Armed Forces, security agencies, etc.) between 1970 and 1983?" Participants were asked to indicate what type of violence they had gone through, the options being dismissal from office/employment, prison, clandestine detention camp, torture or ill-treatment, exile or relegation, or others. For indirect victimisation, the following question was asked: "Were there victims of violence by the State or its agents (police, Armed Forces or security agencies) among your relatives or close friends between 1970 and 1983?" If so, the type of relationship was requested (father/mother, grandparents, siblings, children, nephew, uncles/aunts, cousins, friend, partner, other), as well as the type of violence suffered (same as previous options in addition to "missing/executed").

7.2. *Impact of transitional justice measures*

Degree of self-perceived information on the period of violence, CONADEP, Prosecution of the Military Boards, Prosecutions for crimes against humanity.

Four questions were asked to evaluate how much the participants knew about the dictatorial period and the three TJ measures mentioned: "How much knowledge do you have about what happened in the period of violence?" (1 = Nothing to 4 = Much). Later, participants were asked about their knowledge of TJ measures through Yes-No questions. In the affirmative cases, the respondents were asked to indicate the degree of knowledge using options ranging from 1 = Very little to 5 = Very much.

The response values were recalculated involving six possibilities, where 1 = No information, to 6 = Lot of information. Subsequently, a new variable encompassing the answers was created. The reliability for the degree of total knowledge of TJ measure was satisfactory (3 items; $\alpha = .89$).

7.3. *Knowledge of institutional apologies*

Participants answered two questions: "Do you know about the statements and apologies made by General Balza and President Kirchner?" (Yes/No), "Do you know about the statements and apologies made by President Kirchner?" (Yes/No).

Approval of TJ measures were evaluated adapted from Gibson (2004), assigning an item to each one of them: "With regard to the performance of the following institutions or events, do you approve of: the actions taken by CONADEP, Prosecution of the Military Boards, Prosecution for crimes against humanity, Full Stop and Due Obedience laws, Pardons, Pardons annulment, Declaration of unconstitutionality of pardons..." (1 = Totally disapprove to 4 = Totally approve).

The scores were grouped into two sets, depending on whether they were the measures aimed at *Truth and Justice* (CONADEP; Prosecution of the Military Boards; Recent Prosecutions for crimes against humanity; Pardons annulment; Unconstitutionality of Full Stop and Due Obedience laws) or the measures that *promoted impunity* (Full Stop and Due Obedience laws; President Menem Pardons to the Military).

7.4. General evaluation and effectiveness of TJ measures

A question was asked to evaluate the general performance: "It is often said that the following institutions and events (CONADEP, Prosecution of the Military Boards; Prosecutions of crimes against humanity) fulfilled important objectives. In your opinion, would you say that their performance was...?" (1 = Very bad to 4 = Very good).

In addition, four questions evaluating the perception of effectiveness asked the participants to what extent they considered the measures attained the following objectives: helped the families of the victims to find out what happened to their loved ones; contributed to creating an inclusive story that incorporated the different national groups into a common narrative; helped to prosecute those guilty of atrocities of human rights violations; prevented human rights violations from happening again at present or in the future (1 = To not extent to 4 = To a great extent).

The average of the 12 items was calculated in a new variable, subsequently grouped to calculate the global efficacy assigned to these three measures, yielding high reliability (12 items; $\alpha = .92$).

7.5. Evaluation of apologies

Four questions adapted from Etxebarria *et al.* (2010) inquired about: a) the sincerity of the apologies made by General Balza and President Kirchner; b) their effectiveness in promoting empathy and intergroup trust (1 = Totally disagree to 4 = Totally agree).

The two items were grouped in a new variable by averaging the scores recorded as an indicator of the overall effectiveness of apologies. Reliability was acceptable (2 items; $\alpha = .74$).

Emotional impact associated with the TJ measures and the period of violence (Echebarría and Páez 1989): participants were asked to respond (1 = To not extent to 7 = To a great extent) to what extent the period of violence and each of the transitional justice mechanisms generated certain emotions (sadness, anger, guilt, shame, fear, joy, pride and hope).

The items were grouped into two large dimensions called *negative emotions* (sadness, anger, guilt, shame and fear) and *positive emotions* (joy, pride and hope). Reliability indices were satisfactory. Negative emotion subscale: $\alpha = .87$ (CONADEP: $\alpha = .75$; Prosecution of the Military Boards: $\alpha = .71$; Prosecution for crimes against humanity: $\alpha = .72$). Positive emotion subscale ($\alpha = .90$) (CONADEP: $\alpha = .81$;

Prosecution of the Military Boards: $\alpha = .84$; Prosecutions for crimes against humanity: $\alpha = .85$). Scales referring to emotional activation with respect to the period of violence yielded poor indices: negative emotions (5 items; $\alpha = .60$) and positive emotions (3 items; $\alpha = .49$).

Social and emotional climate (Páez *et al.* 1997; de Rivera 1992): four questions evaluated the perception of the positive social climate (solidarity and mutual aid and trust in institutions) and negative climate (anger and hostility, sadness and passivity) (1 = Totally disagree to 5 = Totally agree).

The four items were grouped into two dimensions: *positive climate* (solidarity and trust) and *negative climate* (anger and sadness). Reliability was acceptable for the positive climate scale ($\alpha = 0.65$) and satisfactory for the negative climate ($\alpha = 0.76$).

Items selected from the Emotional Climate Scale (de Rivera 1992): Eight items, regrouped into four dimensions, described socio-structural situations and social relationships inducing negative and positive emotions in general: 1) *Security* (e. g. "Do you think that people feel unsafe because the level of violence that exists does not allow people to live in peace") (two items; $\alpha = 0.50$); 2) *Trust* (e.g. "Do the different political, ethnic and religious groups of this country trust each other?") (two items; $\alpha = 0.64$); 3) *Fear* ("People are afraid of meeting publicly to speak, organise or protest peacefully") (two items; $\alpha = 0.77$); 7) *Hopelessness* ("Hopelessness in this country is such that many people want to leave") (two items; $\alpha = 0.68$) (1= Totally disagree to 7= Totally agree).

8. Data analysis

Descriptive statistics analyses were carried out. Cronbach's alpha indices were calculated to assess the reliability of the dimensions used. To analyse the relations between the different variables, one-way ANOVAs were used. The correlation coefficient — Pearson's r — was calculated.

9. Results

9.1. Knowledge and general assessment

Participants declared a relatively high degree of knowledge about what had happened in the past, 62% of the sample reported having a *moderate to a substantial amount of knowledge*.

As for the knowledge on the TJ measures, the results are diverse: 45.8% said they had moderate or enough information about CONADEP and 1.7% reported having a vast knowledge. Regarding the Prosecution of the Military Boards, 33.4% reported having moderate information, followed by those who indicated having enough (22.4%), and those who declared having a great deal of information (1.7%).

Regarding the statements and public apologies of General Balza and former President Néstor Kirchner, the trend towards ignorance was substantial. In the case of Balza's recognition, more than half of the participants stated that they were not aware of it (65.6%), while the other half (51.4%) reported not knowing about President Kirchner's pronouncement.

The more recent prosecutions for crimes against humanity carried out in recent years, registered a higher level of knowledge. Participants said they knew enough (38.4%) and a great deal (25.7%), representing 64.1% of the total.

Table 1

General evaluation of TJ measures and the sincerity of Balzas's and Kirchner's pronouncements

	Mean	SD
In your opinion, would you say that		
CONADEP's action was ...*	3.18	.65
the performance of the Prosecution of the Military Boards was ...*	3.13	.71
that the prosecutions that have been held in recent years to prosecute those responsible for the atrocities committed during the last dictatorship were ...*	3.11	.78
General evaluation of the actions		
Attribution of sincerity to...*	3.14	.59
Balza's recognition**	2.37	.93
Kirchner's apologies **	2.78	1.06

* 1 = Very bad / 4= Very good.

** 1 = Totally agree to 4 = Totally disagree.

When evaluating CONADEP's performance (see Table 2), the general opinion was that its work was remarkable, exceeding the theoretical average. The Prosecution of the Military Boards was also judged as a 'good' historical event regarding its original goal. Most participants (55.6%) considered that the prosecutors' performance was good, in addition to 29.8% who thought it was very good.

As for the recognition of criminal acts and apologies pronounced by General Balza and President Kirchner, participants negatively evaluated a central aspect—their sincerity—in these gestures. The few participants who reported knowing what was stated by the military chief believed that his statement was rather insincere. Those who reported knowing about President Kirchner's apologies evaluated them as relatively sincere, although there was some dispersion in the answers.

When considering the prosecutions for crimes against humanity carried out in recent years, in general terms, the participants evaluated them in a positive way, in keeping with the evaluation related to the prosecution of the former commanders of the dictatorship conducted at the beginning of the democratic period. The implementation of these trials was viewed as quite good whereas only 15.5% of the participants valued their performance as negative.

9.2. *Specific effectiveness of the TJ mechanisms implemented*

CONADEP and its final product, the *Never Again Report*, was by far the measure that received the greatest effectiveness response (see Table 2). Participants considered that it was considerably effective in helping the victims' families to find out what happened to their loved ones and even more effective in helping to prosecute those responsible for human rights violations. To a lesser extent, but with a positive consensus, it was also evaluated as effective in ensuring that such violations would not occur again, either in the present or in the future, and in creating a common narrative for the different groups involved in political violence.

The Prosecution of the Military Boards was also considered effective. Participants stated that it fundamentally contributed to prosecuting those responsible for the massive violations of the rights of so many citizens. It also made it possible to shed light on what happened and contributed to preventing a further return to such generalised violation of rights. Similar to CONADEP's evaluation, the item in which the prosecution was considered a little less effective was that related to its contribution to creating an integrative narrative.

Table 2
Efficacy of the Transitional Justice mechanism

Helped	CONADP		Military Boards Prosecution		Prosecutions for crimes against humanity		Recognition and apologies	
	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD
Helped								
the families of the victims to find out what happened to their loved ones	3.17	.76	2.92	.84	3.00	.83	—	—
to bring those guilty of atrocities of human rights violations to court	3.20	.76	3.13	.79	3.18	.80	—	—
to prevent human rights violations from happening again at present or in the future	2.99	.88	2.89	.92	2.91	.95	—	—
to create an inclusive story that incorporated different national groups into a common narrative	2.92	.85	2.78	.85	2.80	.89	—	—
society to understand the suffering of the affected groups.							2.24	.86
to improve the relationship and promote trust between different groups in conflict							1.90	.76
Mean efficiency	3.07	.65	2.93	.69	2.98	.70	2.07	.72

Note: 1= To not extent / 4= To a great extent.

In line with the poor opinion of the sincerity of the General and the President, the perception about the effectiveness of their recognition of criminal acts and apologies was considered quite low, both in terms of their contribution to understanding the suffering of the victims, that is, an empathic attitude towards those who most suffered, and in terms of their contribution to improving the relations among the involved groups and promoting trust between them. These were the measures that the respondents disapproved of the most, as far as efficacy was concerned.

The prosecutions for crimes against humanity carried out in recent years were valued as quite effective both in helping to prosecute and convict the perpetrators as well as clarifying what happened, providing knowledge to the victims' families. To a lesser extent, the respondents believed that these prosecutions were effective in ensuring that severe human rights violations would not be repeated, and assigned a low rate of effectiveness to the creation of an inclusive narrative.

CONADEP was the measure considered the most effective, followed by the recent prosecutions of crimes against humanity, while the institutional apologies by the Military Boards were perceived as the least effective measures.

9.3. *Approval of transitional measures*

As shown in Table 3, there was high approval of all those transitional measures that promoted the knowledge and prosecution of those responsible for crimes against humanity, along with intense disapproval of those measures that guaranteed impunity and blocked the rights to truth and justice. The mechanisms resulting in the greatest approval were the prosecutions, with a prominent position for the trial against the military dictatorship board, followed by the local Truth Commission, and a negligible lower approval of the measures that led to the resumption of the prosecutions.

CONADEP's work was highly valued, reaching approval of 93.1%. The prosecution against the military board obtained approval of 92.5% and recent prosecutions for crimes against humanity 89.3%. Pardons law annulment was approved by 82.6%, and the declaration of unconstitutionality of the Impunity Laws was welcomed by 81% of the participants.

The Full Stop and Due Obedience laws put in force during Alfonsín's government, triggered by military uprisings, received high disapproval (60.8%), although more than a third of the participants

viewed them favourably. The pardon granted by president Menem, who took office after Alfonsín, to the leaders of the former dictatorship and to some civilians charged with serious crimes committed during the period, also received extensive disapproval (86.8%).

Table 3
Degree of approval of TJ measures

	Mean	SD
CONADEP	3.49	.69
Prosecution against Military Boards	3.61	.72
Laws of Due Obedience and Full Stop	2.09	1.13
Pardons to the military (President Menem)	1.49	.85
Recent prosecutions against military personnel for crimes against humanity	3.51	.83
Pardons Annulment	3.32	1.00
Unconstitutionality of Due Obedience and Full Stop laws	3.24	1.03
Approval of measures for justice and truth	3.44	.68
Approval of measures for impunity	1.81	.90

Note: 1 = Totally disapprove to 4 = Totally approve.

9.4. *Emotional impact associated with the period of violence, CONADEP and Prosecutions*

As can be seen in Table 4, although both positive and negative emotions did not exhibit great intensity, participants stated that when thinking about the period of dictatorial violence they feel more negative than positive emotions. The prevailing emotion was sadness, followed by anger and shame. Some activation of hope was also detected.

A similar trend of emotional evocation was associated with CONADEP, where sadness prevailed, followed to a lesser extent by anger. Also, CONADEP's work raised more hope than anger.

Thinking about the Prosecution against the Military Dictatorship Board, in general, aroused positive emotions to a greater extent than negative ones. In this case, the hope associated with the trial of the *de facto* government leaders became more significant than emotions such as anger, with pride prevailing over sadness. Also, when thinking about the more recent prosecutions of crimes against humanity, positive emotions prevailed over negative ones. Hope stood out, followed by joy and pride.

Table 4
Emotions associated with TJ events and mechanisms

Emotions	Violent Period		CONADEP		Prosecution against the Military Boards		Prosecutions for crimes against humanity	
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD
Negative	3.46	1.13	2.69	1.35	2.39	1.25	2.12	1.15
Sadness	5.41	1.63	3.99	2.26	2.79	2.12	2.43	1.98
Anger	4.42	2.05	3.44	2.24	3.44	2.21	2.99	2.05
Fear	2.64	1.82	2.09	1.67	1.91	1.58	1.68	1.34
Shame	3.52	2.35	2.69	2.14	2.68	2.13	2.39	1.96
Guilty	1.45	1.10	1.41	1.06	1.27	.89	1.27	.88
Positive	1.89	1.07	2.70	1.80	3.28	1.99	3.54	2.03
Joy	1.21	.85	2.17	1.95	3.10	2.26	3.41	2.36
Pride	1.36	1.17	2.57	2.22	3.17	2.38	3.30	2.40
Hope	3.10	2.20	3.54	2.25	3.76	2.24	4.04	1.97

Note: 1 = To no extent to 7 = To a greater extent.

9.5. Perception of the social emotional climate

The prevalence of a negative social climate perception was observed, characterised by hostility and anger among people,

sadness and bad mood. The positive climate indicators seemed to be neutralised since, although the existence of solidarity and mutual aid was perceived —indicators of good social capital—there was low trust in the institutions (see Table 5).

Table 5
Social emotional climate

The climate of this country is one of...	Mean	SD
Negative	3.28	1.01
Anger, hostility, aggressiveness among people	3.49	1.08
Sadness, passivity, bad mood	3.09	1.17
Positive	2.59	.88
Solidarity, mutual aid	2.95	1.06
Trust in the institutions	2.24	1.00

Note: 1 = Totally disagree to 5 = Totally agree.

Participants perceived that those around them felt somewhat insecure (*Mean* = 2.90, *SD* = 1.46) and fearful (*Mean* = 2.74 *SD* = 1.60), noted little trust in the different national groups (*Mean* = 2.50, *SD* = 1.17), which affected joint work and cooperation to achieve national well-being. Consistent with this perception of low confidence, hopelessness punctuation is high (*Mean* = 4.09, *SD* = 1.55).

9.6. *Associations between the knowledge of TJ measures, evaluation of their effectiveness, and social emotional climate*

Introducing exposure to violence as a co-variable, Table 6 shows that greater knowledge and attribution of efficacy to measures associated with a more positive perception of the emotional climate, along with the perception of greater security and —though unless non-significant—, greater trust between groups in society. The lack of knowledge and effectiveness attribution was related to a negative perception of the social emotional climate, more anger, hostility and sadness, and more fear and hopelessness. The same tendency towards a perception of a positive social emotional climate emerged in connection with the familiarity with the official pronouncements and apologies.

Table 6

Relationships between TJ measures knowledge, effectiveness and social emotional climate controlled by exposure to violence

	CONADEP & Prosecutions Knowledge	CONADEP & Prosecutions Effectiveness	Apologies Effectiveness
Knowledge of CONADEP & prosecutions	—	.238**	.220**
Effectiveness of CONADEP & prosecutions	.238**	—	.307**
Effectiveness of apologies	.220**	.307**	—
Positive Climate	.185**	.317**	.342**
Negative Climate	-.155**	-.160**	-.279**
Security	.305**	.215**	.376**
Trust	.047	.240**	.286**
Fear	-.183**	-.142**	-.304**
Hopelessness	-.312**	-.361**	-.464**

Note: ** $p < .01$. Co-variable: *Exposure to violence* (df, 410).

Table 7

Knowledge and evaluation of TJ mechanisms, social emotional climate by degree of knowledge of official recognition and apologies controlled by exposure to violence

	Apologies		F(gl)	P
	No knowledge	Knowledge		
Knowledge of CONADEP & prosecutions	3.28	4.32	125.340(1,566)	.000
Effectiveness of CONADEP & prosecutions	2.87	3.10	14.192(1,518)	.000
Effectiveness of apologies	1.81	2.27	51.268(1,543)	.000
Positive Climate	2.35	2.77	22.587(1,562)	.000
Negative Climate	3.51	3.09	19.633(1,560)	.000
Security	2.51	3.23	25.556(1,483)	.000
Trust	2.34	2.62	6.700(1,564)	.010
Fear	3.12	2.42	24.476(1,564)	.000
Hopelessness	4.66	3.63	54.067(1,555)	.000

Note: Co-variable: *Exposure to violence*.

As shown in Table 7, in controlling by exposure to violence, it is clear that the knowledge of the apologies was associated with the knowledge of other transitional measures, and the attribution of greater effectiveness and higher sincerity to the pronouncements. Along this line, knowledge of the apologies was associated both with the perception of a more positive social emotional climate, characterised by solidarity, trust and security, and with a perception of a lower prevalence of emotions such as anger, fear and hopelessness.

The better evaluation of the effectiveness of mechanisms, intended as reparations, the more positive the evaluation of the social context was, leading to the perception of a lower prevalence of negative climate.

9.7. *Differential profiles according to exposure to violence*

The degree of exposure to violence yielded differential response profiles (see Table 8) concerning the degree of knowledge about the violent period and the TJ measures related to truth clarification and retributive justice. Unequal opinions were also registered in the approval of the achievements of the different measures implemented over time and the global evaluation of the effectiveness of the pronouncements and apologies.

Direct victims, in general, knew more about the period of violence than did the unaffected respondents. Direct victims were the ones who had the greatest knowledge about TJ measures and differed from both indirect victims and unaffected participants. There were also differences between the last two subgroups, where the indirect victims reported higher levels of knowledge than the unaffected ones. In addition, direct victims were distinguished from unaffected respondents in terms of the perceived efficacy of what CONADEP, the prosecutions to the dictatorship's military board and the recent prosecutions for humanity crimes have accomplished. The former group attributed more success to the measures, although such tendency was different for recognition and apologies. Indirect victims and unaffected participants differed in their appreciation of effectiveness, with the former reporting higher levels. Thus, even when the participants held a generally critical stance regarding the efficacy of both pronouncements to promote empathy and understanding of the suffering of those most affected, as well as to foster trust between the groups in conflict, the indirect victim group was the least critical.

Table 8
Variables' means by degree of exposure to violence

	UA	IV	DV	F(df)	P
Knowledge of a violent past	2.58 ^a	3.01 ^b	3.15 ^b	29.73(2,572)	.000
Knowledge of TJ measures	3.59 ^a	4.23 ^b	4.58 ^c	37.435,570	.000
Effectiveness in helping families to know what happened	2.97	3.17	3.16	5.36(2,542)	.005
Effectiveness in helping judge those responsible	3.10 ^a	3.24	3.36 ^b	6.79(2,546)	.001
Effectiveness in the creation of an integrative narrative	2.74 ^a	2.99	3.00 ^b	4.50(2,547)	.012
Effectiveness in preventing repetition of violence in the future	2.87	3.07	3.08	4.10(2,554)	.017
Total Effectiveness	2.93 ^a	3.12	3.15 ^b	6.35(2,521)	.002
Effectiveness of apologies (Mean)	1.99 ^a	2.25 ^b	2.17	7.36(2,547)	.001
TJ Measures Approval - Truth and Justice	3.33 ^a	3.69 ^b	3.50 ^b	13.76(2,510)	.000
TJ Measures Approval -Pro-Impunity		1.55 ^b	1.57 ^b	12.18(2,537)	.000
Negative Emotions, Violent period	3.36 ^a	3.57	3.87 ^b	5.59(2,530)	.004
Positive Emotions, Violent period	1.80 ^a	1.88 ^a	2.49 ^b	9.67(2,525)	.000
Positive Emotions, CONADEP	2.49 ^a	2.95 ^a	3.48 ^b	8.37(2,493)	.000
Positive Emotions, Military Boards Prosecution	3.02 ^a	3.67	4.12 ^b	10.25(2,518)	.000
Negatives Emotions, Crimes against humanity Prosecutions	2.08 ^a	2.06 ^a	2.53 ^b	3.66(2,514)	.026

	UA	IV	DV	F(df)	P
Positive Emotions, Crimes against humanity Prosecutions	3.21 ^a	4.08 ^b	4.23 ^b	14.91(2,518)	.000
Positive Social Emotional Climate	2.48 ^a	2.77	2.94 ^b	10.59(2,565)	.000
Negative Social Emotional Climate	3.40 ^a	3.00 ^b	3.23	7.94(2,564)	.000
Security	2.74 ^a	3.23	3.29 ^b	6.57(2,487)	.001
Hopelessness	4.36 ^a	3.52 ^b	3.70 ^b	17.61(2,559)	.000

UA = Unaffected; IV = Indirect Victims; DV = Direct Victims.

Note: Post hoc Scheffé <0.05.

Regarding the approval of the TJ measures, differences between the indirect victims and the unaffected respondents were verified, with the former group exhibiting higher approval. As for the level of approval of other measures blocking the clarification and prosecution of those responsible for the crimes during the dictatorship, such as the Full Stop and Due Obedience laws and the pardons granted by president Menem, differences were found between the unaffected group and the victims (direct and indirect), where the last two subgroups equally disapproved of the aforementioned measures.

Regarding the dictatorship period, those directly affected by violence showed greater activation of negative and positive emotions, in comparison with the unaffected group. In relation to CONADEP's work and the prosecution of the Military Boards, direct victims experienced a greater intensity in emotions such as pride, hope and joy. No differences were observed in the negative emotions. As for the emotions generated by the recent prosecutions for crimes against humanity, a double contrast was detected: direct victims reported a greater intensity of negative emotions compared with the indirect victims while the direct and indirect victims differed from the unaffected respondents, showing a greater activation of positive emotions.

The perception of the social emotional climate was also sensitive to the degree of victimisation, given that the unaffected perceived a positive climate to a lesser extent than the direct victims and a more negative climate than the indirect victims. Those affected by State terrorism could be expected to show a more pessimistic and hopeless position; however, they reported the opposite. It became clear that the perception of the context was influenced by the restorative effects of the implemented mechanisms. The pattern was similar for insecurity and hopelessness, the unaffected perceived a more negative climate compared to the victims in general.

10. Conclusions

Moderate knowledge about the restorative measures taken in Argentina after the dictatorship is in line with findings of previous studies conducted in different countries (Arnoso *et al.* 2017; Gabisirege and Babalola 2001; Reyes *et al.* 2015; Stein *et al.* 2008). Also, the little information that the population reported having on CONADEP, its work and its final report, corroborates the findings by Arnoso *et al.* (2013).

Beyond the medium-low levels of knowledge about the TJ measures, in general, it is important to highlight the good evaluation that CONADEP and the prosecutions deserve, indicating that the scarce knowledge does not prevent the citizens from valuing or placing expectations on this type of mechanism, as observed by Lundy and McGovern (2008) for the case of Ireland. In addition, CONADEP's performance follows what Hayner (1994) mentions with respect to the positive power that Truth Commissions have when they receive State support and the endorsement of Human Rights Organisations. In addition, when TCs managed to interview a large number of victims and prepared a final report, which was disseminated and accepted by society, and used against those responsible, prompting concrete reparatory actions. The assessment of the local TC allowing victims' relatives to know what happened is a relevant finding. Its effectiveness perception attests to the work of resistance against impunity, silencing and denial presented by TCs in transitional periods (Robben, 2005).

The general lack of knowledge about General Balza and President Kirchner pronouncements added to the generalised disbelief about the sincerity of both and enables some considerations. The little sincerity attributed to what the chief of the armed forces expressed may be due to the general distrust linked to his belonging to the military group. Also, this perception of insincerity can be explained by the non-representativeness of the group for which he tried to speak (Canelo 2010). As Salvi (2012) points out, Balza's self-critical speech did not contribute with valuable information on the fate of the missing persons, and the message was diluted by the Final Point and Due Obedience laws, which blocked the progress of criminal investigations and assignment of responsibilities. This is possibly a warning about the inherent weakness of each TJ measure to deal with the consequences of collective violence, and therefore, the need for articulation with other measures to enhance its effects on the reconstruction of society (Droždek 2010; Páez 2010).

As for President Kirchner, following James (2008), his message as an attempt at an official apology also has some weaknesses. The emotionality that should accompany the message of forgiveness was evidently lacking, and this affected the evaluation of the message transmitted (Andrieu 2009), in particular, when he expressed "the shame of having been silent for more than 20 years of democracy", omitting the actions promoted by President Alfonsín, CONADEP's creation and the Prosecution of the Military Boards.

The findings not only corroborate the results of a previous local investigation (Zubieta, Bombelli and Muratori 2015), but are also similar

to the evaluation of the apologies offered in Chile and Paraguay, where a medium-low level of sincerity was perceived, along with a trend to consider that they have been more effective in understanding the suffering of the affected people than in promoting trust in the social groups involved (Arnosó and Da Costa 2015; Bobowik *et al.* 2017).

In terms of emotions, the prevalence of a negative emotional impact with respect to the dictatorial period, where sadness, anger and even shame predominate, allows us to infer that the representation of the past is associated with serious and cruel events, characterised by human intentionality. However, in the activated pattern of emotions, it is worth highlighting the presence of hope as a promising expectation of confidence and desire of a prosperous future.

Emotions as a collective process show a pessimistic overview of the social situation, characterised by the predominant perception of a negative social emotional climate, corroborating what has been detected over the last few years in previous studies (Muratori and Zubieta 2013; Zubieta, Delfino, and Fernández 2008). Emotions such as anger and hostility dominate the social scene, making people feel insecure. This does not mean that people do not show solidarity with each other, offering help, but sadness and passivity gain ground due to the perception of little trust between social groups, preventing cooperation in the pursuit of common well-being. This is probably associated with the so-called “crack” that is actually widely debated in Argentina, deeply affecting institutional functioning.

Correlations show that both, the knowledge and the consideration of the effectiveness of TJ mechanisms, are linked to three critical axes for community life and peaceful coexistence. The positive association with a more positive and less negative emotional climate accounts for its contribution to social well-being. Páez, Basabe and González (1997) explain that different emotional climates are characterized by specific representations of the social world, the future, and tendencies to action triggered by the perceived emotions. Greater knowledge of what has been done, as well as the evaluation of the effectiveness in this regard, is consistent with higher perception of emotions that facilitate rapprochement with others, reinforcing ties and social capital. In a complementary way, knowledge and a sense of effectiveness are associated with a lower perception of emotions such as anger, sadness, hopelessness and fear, which motivate self-protective behaviors of withdrawal and inhibition of social contact.

The contribution of knowledge and the effectiveness of TJ mechanisms can be highlighted as a trend to reverse fear and insecurity climates typical of dictatorial regimes, stimulating the development of

prosocial behaviors and participation in community life. The evident contribution of these measures is also remarkable in a culture of peace construction (de Rivera 2014). This constructive process, although imperfect and perfectible, draws on what has already been done and presents new challenges linked to ever-changing factors.

Finally, past violence affectation coherently yielded differences. Direct victims showed greater knowledge of both, the violent past and the transitional justice mechanisms gradually implemented upon the return of democracy, as well as a greater emotional affectation.

The best evaluation of CONADEP and prosecutions effectiveness and approval by direct victims are related to their need to know the truth and end impunity. Through transitional measures, they are symbolically restored as citizens. De Greiff (2012; 2014) proposes that the implementation of different transitional tools helps to reverse the implosion of basic beliefs, the feeling of vulnerability, powerlessness and defenselessness generated by the abuse suffered. Recognition would result in the assignment of greater approval and effectiveness.

Beyond the weighting of mechanisms such as TC and prosecutions, some studies reveal that the people who are mostly highly affected by violent actions are less likely to accept institutional apologies and therefore evaluate them in a negative light (Blatz *et al.* 2009; Etxebarria *et al.* 2010; Manzi and Gonzalez 2007). Differences observed between victims and the unaffected group with respect to impunity laws and pardons show that the former group have the most radical position, according to the pain that inhabits them.

As for greater activation of negative than positive emotions when thinking about the dictatorial period, those who were victimized reported higher levels of negative as well as positive emotionality. It is important to highlight the substantive and persistent differentiation between the victims and the unaffected group in the positive emotional impact associated with CONADEP, the prosecution of the Military Board and the subsequent prosecutions of crimes against humanity. The transitional measures implemented in the local context have managed to bring personal benefit to the victims on the emotional level. Institutional mediation in dealing with the repressive past, with its respective milestones, has allowed them to transform their painful experiences in such a way that what is becoming more and more salient is no longer sadness, anger, shame or fear, but joy, pride and hope.

The results of this study contradict the expectation that victims have a less positive perception of the social emotional climate, precisely relative to the reduction of their status and the breakdown

of benevolent basic beliefs about the social world and the future that usually comes coupled with experiences of collective violence (Janoff-Bulman 1992). Even with the salience of a negative emotional climate, the victims in general make a less critical evaluation, perceiving greater solidarity, security and trust in the institutions.

Using an intentional sample, this line of research will further replicate the study by both, analyzing the mediate role of TJ measures in social emotional climate and exploring differences by grouping people in terms of gender, age and religiosity.

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Colombian Transitional Justice: The media discourse of the Peace Agreement and perceptions regarding its institutions

Justicia Transicional en Colombia: el discurso mediático
del Acuerdo de Paz y las percepciones sobre sus instituciones

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Summary: Introduction. 1. We all want peace but not like this: Disagreements on notions of peace 2. Social reconciliation in transitional contexts. 3. Media in the understanding of conflict and peace. 4. Objectives and hypotheses. 5. Study 1. 5.1. Method. 5.2. Design. 5.3. Data analysis. 5.4. Results. 5.5. Conclusions. 6. Study 2. 6.1. Method. 6.2. Participants. 6.3. Procedure. 6.4. Measures. 6.5. Results. 6.6. Conclusions. 7. General discussion. References.

Abstract: Colombia had the longest internal armed conflict in Latin America, and its government reached a peace agreement with the

FARC guerrillas in 2016. This article explores the transitional justice social representations during the signing of the peace agreement (study 1) and their implementation, during 2019-2020 (study 2). The first study analyzes the news related to the institutions created from the peace agreement during 2016. The second study explores different psychosocial variables associated with its two most controversial institutions, the Truth Commission (TC) and the Special Jurisdiction for Peace (JEP) during 2019-2020, after the beginning of its work. The findings revealed that news articles from two principal Colombian newspapers illustrate two anchoring categories of transitional justice with an emphasis on victims, while the political position of the newspaper suggests possible disagreements on what peace entails. Surveys showed that political position and victimization are crucial for the approval and support of the TC and the JEP, as well as correlated with the level of media consumption regarding these institutions.

Keywords: Transitional Justice, Media Analysis, Collective Violence, Peacebuilding.

Resumen: Colombia tuvo el conflicto armado interno más largo en Latinoamérica y alcanzó un acuerdo de paz con la guerrilla de las FARC en 2016. Este artículo explora las concepciones de justicia transicional durante la firma del acuerdo de paz (estudio 1) y su implementación durante 2019-2020 (estudio 2). El primer estudio analiza las noticias relacionadas con las instituciones creadas a partir del acuerdo de paz durante 2016. El segundo estudio explora diferentes variables psicosociales asociadas a sus dos instituciones más controvertidas, la Comisión de la Verdad (CV) y la Justicia Especial para la Paz (JEP) durante 2019-2020, después del inicio de su trabajo. Los resultados revelaron que las noticias ilustran dos categorías de anclaje de la justicia transicional con un enfoque especial en las víctimas, mientras que la posición política de los periódicos sugiere posibles desacuerdos sobre lo que la paz implica. Las encuestas mostraron que la posición política y la victimización son cruciales para la aprobación y el apoyo de la CV y la JEP, así como se correlacionan con el nivel de consumo de los medios de comunicación en relación con estas instituciones.

Palabras clave: Justicia Transicional, Análisis de Medios, Violencia Colectiva, Construcción de Paz.

Introduction

Colombia had a long internal armed conflict that left millions of victims, and currently, it faces a post-peace agreement context with the guerrilla known as Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC-EP for its acronym in Spanish) (Trejos 2013). Generally, the transition from a violent context to one of peaceful coexistence involves disagreements on the most appropriate way to approach the end of violence and achieve a peaceful society (Kelman *et al.* 2018). The referendum results for the peace agreement in 2016, where 51% of voters showed their rejection, are an example of this. In a context of intense public debates on the conflict resolution and the signing of the agreement despite its rejection, knowing the impact of the transitional justice model becomes essential for searching peaceful coexistence and construction of peace cultures (Staub 2012; Arnosó *et al.* 2014).

Transitional justice is used as a broad term to describe the approaches to the transition process from violent conflicts to more peaceful and democratic states while dealing with the past and its aftermath. Its main objectives are to make amends for past wrongs, restore the dignity of victims, and provide justice in a transitional context through a diverse spectrum of mechanisms such as tribunals and truth commissions (Buckley-Zistel *et al.* 2015). Moreover, this model combines restorative and retributive justice to develop sustainable peacebuilding while including citizen participation in the design and implementation of the mechanisms. It has four main aspects related to legal, psychosocial, socioeconomic, and political justice (Lambourne 2009).

Due to the length and massive victimization of the Colombian conflict, the peace agreement addresses possible solutions through transitional justice mechanisms to multiple structural and socioeconomic problems that caused the armed conflict and enabled its perpetuation. However, this peace agreement sparked a public debate regarding its legitimacy, consequences and actors involved due to a referendum in 2016 where most citizens rejected the peace agreement. Several authors have found that this debate has a political origin based on the deep arguments among the country's elites regarding the peace agreement. This political division ended up being a central factor between supporters of the agreement (from more liberal and center-left currents) and its detractors (from the conservative and center-right wing) (Matanock and García-Sánchez 2017; Bohigues, Rivas & García 2021). The rejection of the agreement through its referendum reflected the national debate and animosity among the population (Matanock and García-Sánchez 2017).

One of the most important and controversial points of the agreement is the victim's emphasis, which created a system comprising three institutions: the Special Jurisdiction for Peace (JEP for its acronym in Spanish), the Truth Commission (TC), and the Search Unit for the Disappeared. The system emphasizes measures to guarantee the victims' rights to truth, justice, reparation, and non-repetition (Jurisdicción Especial para la Paz 2019).

The Colombian case is of particular interest to transitional justice studies since it features a peace process rejected by a visible percentage of the population, a division in the political elites caused by it, as well as a current government with a defensive position towards its implementation (Flores and Vargas 2018). In this scenario, disagreements on the conceptions of peace and the appropriate way to address the armed conflict that different political and social sectors have had, have been a challenge for the agreement implementation.

1. **We all want peace but not like this: Disagreements on notions of peace**

Once a society has suffered collective violence, it is likely to assume that the search for peace is, at least in part, a common goal for the affected population. The concept of peace is not always global, nor does it have a shared meaning understood in an obvious way (Galtung 1969). Usually, the transition from a violent context to one of peaceful coexistence involves disagreements about the most appropriate way to approach the end of violence. These discrepancies do not necessarily imply that the groups involved do not want peace but that the conceptions and methods to achieve it differ (Kelman *et al.* 2018). These conceptions of peace are influenced by how the conflict is lived, the group's representations involved, and the current historical moment of the society (Leshem and Halperin 2020). Authors find that lay theories of peace explain differences in citizens' preferences for conflict resolution. In addition, other studies found that the level of moral competence affected the preference between restorative and retributive justice, as well as differences in the beliefs regarding justice depending on the socioeconomic position (Gutiérrez-Romero *et al.* 2020; 2021).

Likewise, lay theories of peace are related to peace expectations. Leshem (2017) finds that identifying to the right-wing of the political spectrum predicts low peace expectations and a preference for less concrete peace definitions that allow more subjective interpretations

and avoid the psychological cost of conceptualizations that recognize the others and their interests.

On the other hand, several authors examined the attitudes and perceptions towards transitional justice mechanisms in Latin America. These studies explored social representations of the past and transitional justice rituals and found that political position is a relevant factor in evaluating the usefulness and achievement of the objectives of transitional justice institutions. In general, people identified with the right-wing, downplaying the importance of the construction of collective memory and the need to speak openly about the events of the conflict. This effect appears in armed conflicts related to right-wing dictatorships or guerrilla involvement (Arnosó *et al.* 2015; Cárdenas *et al.* 2016; Espinosa *et al.* 2016; Mathias *et al.* 2020).

2. Social reconciliation in transitional contexts

Transitional justice aims to provide tools and create spaces for peaceful coexistence and, ultimately, a complete process of social reconciliation. Socio-structural, relational and social identity changes are essential to achieve inter-group reconciliation, both as a process and an outcome. Firstly, it implies a closer relationship between the groups that have been involved in a conflict and seeking a common re-signification of beliefs and objectives. Secondly, it entails achieving the demands of the affected groups through the perceived attainment of justice, truth, and reparation (Rettberg and Ugarriza 2016). Consequently, social reconciliation relates to the psychosocial recovery from the harm suffered through the need's satisfaction of the victims, the perpetrator groups, and the general population (Alzate and Dono 2017).

Reconciliation requires the formation of new social beliefs that describe the multidimensional nature of peace, specifying the conditions and mechanisms for its achievement, realistically outlining the benefits and costs of its attainment, and emphasizing the meaning of living peacefully and the conditions for its maintenance (López-López 2017; López-López *et al.* 2021).

Nowadays, societies that have suffered collective violence express the urgency of creating appropriate spaces for social reconciliation based on recognizing the damage caused, the reintegration process, and creating a peaceful culture with an inclusive memory (Gluecker *et al.* 2021). Countries trying to overcome their history of conflict have created transitional mechanisms such as the TC established in South

Africa, Argentina, or Chile (Velez *et al.* 2020). Similarly, in Colombia, the TC and the JEP were created as part of the peace agreement.

3. Media in the understanding of conflict and peace

Media communication acts as a socialization agent that can contribute towards respect for life and ending violence, although it has also been found to contribute to social conflict (Igartua 2011). However, the study of discourse in conflicts has shown that it can be a fundamental tool in peace culture construction since it allows the visualization of the structures of sociopolitical, and economic reality. The media can grant spaces to issues or actors while making others invisible, influencing the perception and social construction of reality since they are not limited to the description of facts (López-López *et al.* 2014). Consequently, the perception of armed conflicts and transitional processes towards peace may be conditioned by the media's handling of information (López and Sabucedo 2007).

Therefore, in the context of political violence, these communicative agents are essential for disseminating beliefs about conflict and peace. As found in the study on *El Tiempo*, the largest newspaper in Colombia, where warlike or pacifist discourses for conflict resolution were identified (López-López *et al.* 2014). Likewise, Rincon-Unigarro *et al.* (2020) found a change towards peace in the beliefs that promoted the conflict in Colombia during the peace negotiations.

4. Objectives and hypotheses

This study sought to explore the influence of political ideology on the social representations of transitional justice and the population's attitudes towards its institutions. We explored the consensus and dissent of the Colombian population through two methodologies. The first study analyzed news articles published by two major media outlets of different ideological currents during the proposal of the peace agreement, its referendum, and its subsequent signing in 2016. The second study evaluated people's level of knowledge and approval of the institutions, attitudes towards collective memory, social sharing, the perceived emotional climate of the country, institutional trust, and social reconciliation. In both cases, the data were analyzed regarding the political ideology of both the participants and the media.

Thus, we expect that newspapers portray transitional justice differently according to their political positions. *El Tiempo*, as a conservative newspaper, is more likely to emphasize the work of political and armed leaders as the main actors to achieve peace (López-López *et al.* 2014); it will probably exhibit lower expectations of peace and a preference for lesser concrete definitions of peace (Leshem 2017). On the other hand, *El Espectador* from a more liberal current will likely focus on dialogue as an alternative solution to the use of violence (Grajales & Martínez 2020), and by contrast, will exhibit higher expectations of peace, with more complex definitions where the other and their interests are recognized (Leshem 2017).

Moreover, as seen in previous studies of transitional justice in Latin America, we expect that the political position of participants will be related differently to the variables regarding social sharing, attitudes towards remembering the past, and transitional justice institutions. Similarly, we expect knowledge and approval of these institutions to be higher according to the level of victimization and political position, with direct victims and people on the left approving more and knowing more about the institutions. Finally, people on the right-wing will likely agree more with forgetting the violent past, while people on the left-wing will show higher agreement with remembering the past.

5. Study 1

5.1. Method

Study 1 is a textual analysis of news related to the peace agreement and its institutions in Colombia during 2016, published in the two most circulated newspapers in the country. The two leading newspapers with national distribution were selected: *El Tiempo* and *El Espectador*, with different political positions. *El Tiempo* belongs to Luis Carlos Sarmiento Angulo, one of the most economically powerful men and owner of one of the largest banking conglomerates in the country (Forbes 2020). During the last decades, this newspaper remained closely linked to the most conservative political elites in the country, and previous findings showed a preferably warlike discourse emphasizing military triumphs, a competitive perspective of victory and defeat between groups, the leaders of legal and illegal groups, as the only decisive actors, among other warlike features (López-López *et al.* 2014). Recently, this newspaper made public its preference for the current president Ivan Duque during the 2018 elections (Editorial 2018), belonging to a

conservative and right-wing political party characterized by its rejection of the peace agreement (Kajsiu 2019).

On the other hand, *El Espectador* identifies with the defense of liberal ideas since its foundation. Historically, this newspaper is known for its emphasis on critical analysis, evidenced by the various attacks it has suffered from institutional and illegal groups (Alarcón 2020). Although this newspaper also belongs to a private business group, it has successfully maintained its editorial independence, and during the last few years, has shown public support for peace and reconciliation initiatives in the country (El Espectador 2021). Grajales and Martínez (2020) conclude that during the peace process between 2012 and 2016, the newspaper supported the president and legitimized strategies such as dialogue for resolving the armed conflict and negotiations for an alternative solution to the use of violence.

In conclusion, although it is evident that neither of them openly positions themselves in the political currents of the left or right, their coverage and discourse of the armed conflict reveal different preferences regarding conflict resolution. Thus, each newspaper may represent more conservative tendencies whose solution to the conflict is mainly military (*El Tiempo*) and more liberal tendencies that opt for lesser use of confrontational strategies and more spaces for dialogue and negotiation (*El Espectador*).

5.2. Design

We retrieved 300 news articles published during 2016 from the websites of *El Tiempo* (50%) and *El Espectador* (50%). The keywords that led the search were: Peace (n = 100), Truth (n = 100), and Victims (n = 100). These words portray the work of the three institutions created by the Colombian transitional justice system, which in turn are words that can globally represent the transitional process. First, Peace is one of the main aspects of the Special Justice for Peace and one of the words with the most impact in the national debates (e.g., 'peace' agreement, 'peace' negotiations). Second, the keyword Truth is the most significant from the Truth Commission and is part of the public discussions regarding the collective memory process. Finally, the word Victims conveys the work of the Search Unit for the Disappeared and captures the central role of victims in the Colombian process. The keywords and timeframe were the only filters used in the media websites to retrieve the news articles. Table 1 shows the type and size of news articles collected.

Table 1

News type and size, its modalities, and percentages from total sample

Variable	Definition	Modalities	% from Total Sample
News type	Type of news according to its content	News Interview Opinion article Feature story Editorial	73,00% 11,67% 10,67% 3,33% 1,33%
Size	News size in number of words	Quartiles: 1: 0-478,50 2: 479-719,50 3: 720-1212,5 4: 1213-3900	25% 25% 25% 25%

Source: Table by authors.

5.3. Data analysis

The software Alceste for lexical analysis (Reinert 1983, 1990) analyzed the corpus of the texts published by the newspapers. This method reduces the problems of reliability and validity in the text analysis (Klein and Licata 2003; Reinert 1996). Moreover, lexical analysis is valuable when examining collective thinking as its object of study is the analysis of language or discourse as a shared representation rather than the text's semantic meaning (Allum 1998). The lexical analysis of the media allowed us to examine the dissemination of information produced by the government and other institutions to the public.

Alceste performs segmentation of corpus into Elementary Contextual Units (ECUs) and crosses them to create a contingency table. A square-distance matrix is formed from this table, meaning that two ECUs are close if they share some of the words analyzed (Reinert 1996). Ultimately, a descending hierarchical cluster analysis produces classes of ECUs that best differentiate the vocabulary. By doing this, Alceste helps in the text interpretation as it extracts classes of words that co-occur and are best discriminated from each other, allowing researchers to identify the primary lexical universes of the corpus (Reinert 1993). Moreover, Alceste calculates the relation between levels of independent variables and the lexical classes using independence tests. In this study, the independent variables were *Publication source*, *Type of news*, and *Size of articles*.

After introducing the raw data in Alceste, the most significant vocabulary in each class was selected by three criteria: a) an expected value of the word higher than 4, b) proof of association of the Chi-square tested against the class ($X^2 \geq 3.84$ ($p = 0,05$); $df = 1$), and c) the word occurs in the class with a frequency of 50% or more (Camargo and Bousfield 2009). Retrieved data was analyzed in Spanish, and results were translated for publishing purposes by trained researchers.

5.4. Results

The entire corpus had 276497 words, with 20912 unique words. The descending hierarchical analysis divided the corpus into 6781 ECUs, 5277 (77%) were analyzed, and eight kinds of ECUs were extracted from the most significant vocabulary in each class. Figure 1 displays the results of the analysis.

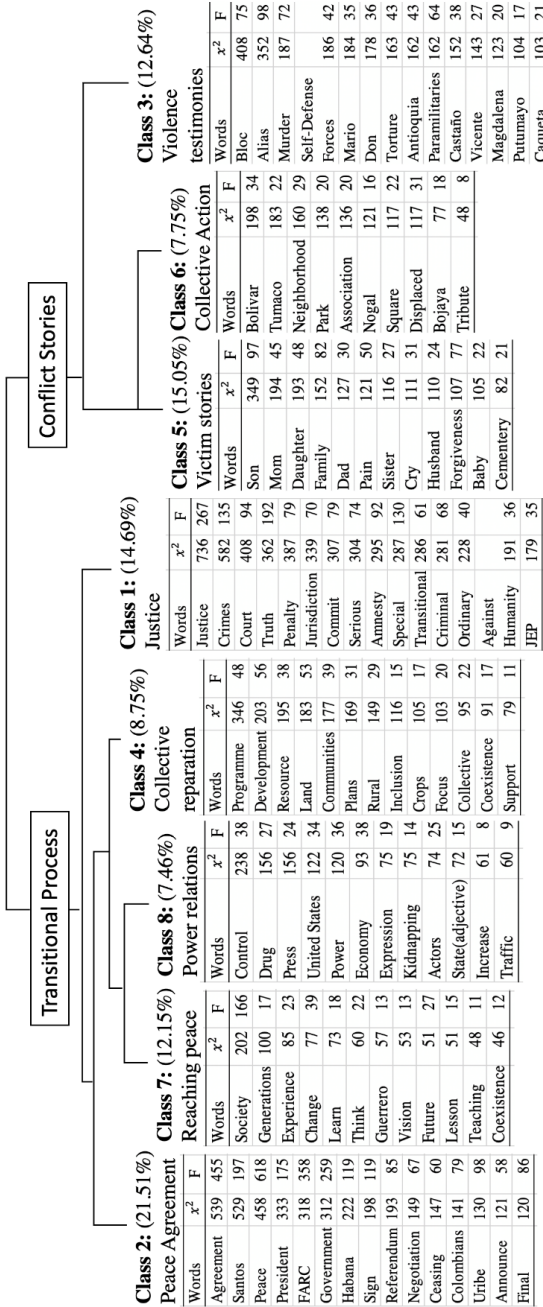
Results showed two main clusters that reveal the most salient issues regarding the peace agreement in 2016. Each cluster shows a branch or theme composed of different classes with a set of typical words and segments (see Fig. 1). The first cluster linked to the aspects of the transitional process (i.e., needed steps or changes to achieve peace) is composed of Classes 2 (Peace Agreement), 7 (Reaching peace), 8 (Power relations), 4 (Collective reparation), and 1 (Justice), while the second cluster related to the stories and events during the armed conflict is composed of Classes 5 (Victim stories), 6 (Place memories) and 3 (Violence testimonies).

The first cluster Transitional Process reveals the main aspects of public concern regarding the peace agreement, more specifically, it gathers the overall objective of peace and three of the primary points in the agreement, the solution to the illicit drug problem, the victim focus which aims for justice, truth and reparation, and the signing and referendum of the peace agreement.

This main cluster begins with Class 2 with a weight of 21.51% and is labeled as 'Peace agreement' as it describes the main events and political steps from the prior negotiations, the referendum, and the signing of the agreement. The independent variables highly associated with this class are small (size: quartile 1 and 2) news articles published by *El Tiempo* (see Fig. 2).

'Peace agreement' refers to former president Juan Manuel Santos and the guerrilla FARC during the negotiations in Havana. It addresses the referendum and agreement signing coverage focusing on the achievement of the ceasefire as a precondition to the peace process.

Figure 1
Hierarchical clustering dendrogram



Note. The hierarchical clustering dendrogram for El Tiempo and El Espectador with the most frequent words and the words with the greatest association $X^2(1), p < 0.001$. The high values of the statistics are due in part to the size of the corpus (and hence a high frequency of ECUs).
Source: Figure by authors.

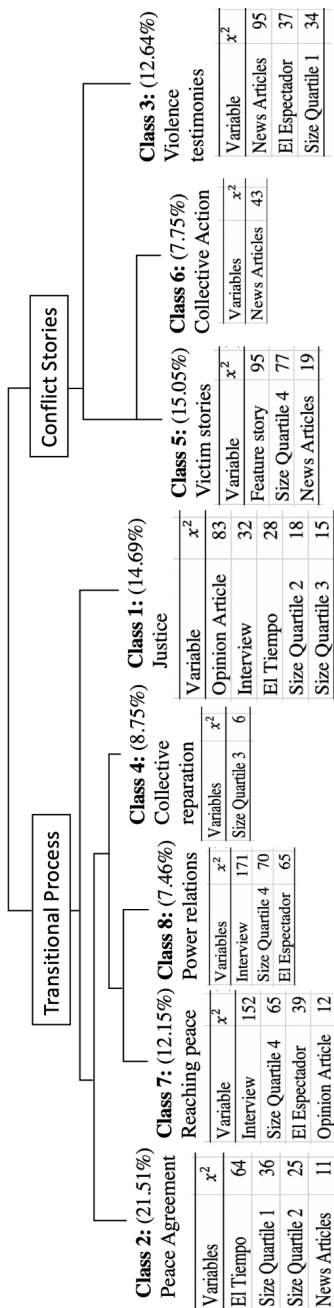
Moreover, this class refrains from extensive analysis (i.e., answers to why?) and instead explains how the peace agreement will unfold practically. As seen in the following most characteristic text segment (ECU): “Both president Juan Manuel Santos and the guerrilla chief, Timochenko, relied on the 6,377,482 Colombians who voted yes for saying that, despite the no majority, they maintain their will for peace” ($\chi^2 = 46$, *El Tiempo*, news article, size quartile 3).

Following the Transitional Process main cluster, the second class emerges, Class 7 with 12.15% and labeled as ‘Reaching peace’. This class describes the needed social transformations and its expectations regarding the future after the agreement that is society must be willing to act: think, learn, change, and teach with the likely aim of peaceful coexistence (significant words of this class, see Fig. 1). It is highly associated with interviews and in lower levels with larger pieces (Size quartile 4), *El Espectador*, and opinion articles (see Fig. 2).

‘Reaching peace’ illustrates other countries’ experiences and peace processes as a strategy to analyze the Colombian agreement. These news articles share lessons learned in similar contexts and discuss the expectations for change in the future. Through more extensive analysis, the armed conflict is presented as a longitudinal and historical process that affects both past and future generations, raising the need to understand the historical past and address the necessary changes in the pursuit of peace: “The past continues to have an enormous impact on the present, shaping it to a large extent. So post-conflict becomes a kind of national mythology, something that people need to believe in, but people are not looking realistically at what the challenges are and how they have been shaped by the past.” ($\chi^2 = 28$, *El Espectador*, interview, size quartile 4).

Related to the second class of the first cluster, the third class, Class 8, with a weight of 7.46%, is called ‘Power relations’ since it describes the new conflict dynamics related to territorial and economic control with the demobilization of the FARC guerrillas and the release of their territories. Like the previous class, it is associated with interviews and long-form articles (size quartile 4) from *El Espectador* (see Fig. 2). ‘Power relations’ discuss drug trafficking, the role of the United States on Colombia’s economic and security relations, state neglect, and the continuation of violence such as kidnappings and threats to freedom of expression. Specifically, it mentioned other armed actors such as paramilitary groups and the use of violence to maintain control over the population: “the demobilization of the guerrilla added to the historical absence of the state and the presence of other illegal groups, gives way to new logics of territorial control” ($\chi^2 = 42$, *El Espectador*, news article, size quartile 3).

Figure 2
Hierarchical clustering dendrogram



Note. Association of independent variables to the lexical classes in the hierarchical clustering dendrogram for El Tiempo and El Espectador. $\chi^2(1), p < 0.001$.

Source: Figure by author.

The third class of the Transitional process cluster, Class 4, with a weight of 8.75%, is called 'Collective reparation' since it describes the support and development programs focused on the victims and their communities to restore their resources and territories. These plans have territorial, gender, and victim assistance approaches.

Moreover, it illustrates the institutional efforts from the peace agreement to materialize support to the vulnerable and rural populations affected by the armed conflict generating conditions of inclusion and reparation that promote peaceful coexistence. As seen in the following text segments (ECU): "it must provide assistance and support to the victims. The FARC is committed to making reparations to the communities they affected, and they will be able to do so by participating in infrastructure reconstruction works, in demining programs, in the substitution of illicit crops" ($X^2 = 60$, *El Tiempo*, news article, size quartile 4).

Finally, the last class of the first cluster (Class 1) is labeled 'Justice', weights 14.69%, and describes the processes of justice, truth, and non-repetition. As well as debates the efficacy of the transitional justice system towards these objectives. It is associated with opinion articles, interviews, and *El Tiempo* (see Fig. 2).

The discourse of this class uses extensive legal language to explain the functioning of transitional justice and the creation of the JEP, its differences with ordinary justice, and the guarantees that it can have against impunity for crimes against humanity. An example: "the magistrates who will form the special peace tribunal will be in charge of investigating, judging and punishing the perpetrators of serious crimes, and will have the responsibility to ensure that there is no impunity" ($X^2 = 70$, *El Tiempo*, news article, size quartile 2).

The second cluster, Conflict Stories, reveals the violent events that occurred during the conflict, their social effects on the victims, the search for the truth through the testimonies of the armed actors, and the memory restoration of the affected regions.

This second cluster begins with class 5, named 'Victim stories' with a weight of 15.05%, and emphasizes the personal and family stories of the victims that portray the violent events with a high emotional charge. This class portrays the horrors experienced, reflects the emotional effects suffered and the search for the forgiveness of some of them. This class is associated with feature stories and long articles (size quartile 4) (See Fig. 2).

This coverage emphasis is human and personal, publishing the first-hand story of the victims, including details about the violent events, their murdered family members, and the pain experienced during the

conflict: "They shot more, but I ran to look for my children; I only thought about the kids. I couldn't stop crying. I found my six children and my husband, but I was missing one of them, and I thought they had killed him" ($X^2 = 77$, *El Espectador*, news article, size quartile 3).

The next class in this cluster is called 'Collective action' with a weight of 7.75% and describes the collective demonstrations related to the memory construction about the armed conflict in the affected places and different squares or meeting points of the country. Their objective is to honor the victims of violent events that have impacted the conflict's history, such as the terrorist attack on El Nopal Club, the massacre in Bojayá in 2002, and the multiple violent events in the Tumaco region. An example of the most representative textual units reinforces the above: "They have been in libraries, galleries and universities in Bogota, Cartagena, Medellin, Bordeaux, France, and Switzerland. They became memory guardians of the war in the Montes de Maria." ($X^2 = 56$, *El Espectador*, news article, size quartile 4).

Finally, class 3 emerges from the second cluster, Conflict Stories, with a weight of 12.64%. It is called 'Violence testimonies' and describes the statements of members of armed groups that have benefited from previous demobilization processes, in which they indicate facts, places, perpetrators, and victims. This class is associated with news articles from *El Espectador* (see Fig. 2).

The last peace process in Colombia was focused on the demobilization of paramilitary-armed groups in 2002, and this class collected the resulting testimonies: "In 2009, in a justice and peace hearing, another paramilitary, Freddy Rendon Herrera, alias El Aleman, testified that Castaño had ordered Don Berna and his gang to assassinate Garzon as a favor to Army officers" ($X^2 = 73$, *El Espectador*, opinion article, size quartile 2).

5.5. Conclusions

The textual analysis of the 2016 news from the first study reflects the complexity and multidimensionality of the peace-building process. In 2016, Colombia was going through a reshaping of the armed conflict, and the actors involved initiated a social reconciliation process through a peace agreement. However, other illegal armed groups such as paramilitaries and drug trafficking networks began to have greater relevance due to the state's inability to address the structural needs of the most affected areas by the conflict (Fundación Paz y Reconciliación 2019). Thus, the news revealed a wide range of issues

related to transitional justice, a concept that provoked debates from the beginning thanks to the large and complex changes proposed in the peace agreement. These topics delve into the public, legal and theoretical debates about a society trying to change its violent relations for peaceful coexistence, in addition to covering the technicalities and explanations about its functioning and objectives.

On the one hand, the first cluster Transitional process indicates that 2016 featured the effort to decipher this new system and gave a frame of reference to the population on a complex and controversial concept, even though there may be differences between the information prioritized by each newspaper. *El Tiempo*, the conservative newspaper, is significantly associated with classes 2 and 1 ('Peace Agreement' and 'Justice'), where the emphasis appears to be on the main events and leaders of this process, as well as the legal consequences of the transitional justice system and the debate regarding possible instances of impunity for crimes against humanity during the search of truth. Meanwhile, the liberal newspaper *El Espectador* is significantly relevant for classes 7 and 8 ('Reaching Peace' and 'Power Relations'), which discuss the social transformations needed for more peaceful coexistence, the consequences of the peace agreement, as well as the changes in conflict dynamics regarding territorial and economic control once the guerrilla FARC demobilized. Moreover, the lexical universe regarding collective reparations seems to have no significant difference between newspapers (see Fig 2).

On the other hand, the second cluster reflects the victims' emphasis of the Colombian peace agreement, through which victims have public spaces to social share what happened. While this cluster focuses on collective action and highly emotional accounts of violence, class 3 ('Violence Testimonies') diverts from this frame as it portrays the voice of ex-combatants from previous peace processes that are testifying to clarify violent events and reach the truth. In addition, this class is the only one from the cluster associated with a newspaper, in this case, *El Espectador*.

6. Study 2

6.1. Method

Study 2 took place in Colombia during the implementation of the peace agreement (2019-2020). A questionnaire (online and on paper) was conducted to determine the perception of the TC and the JEP due to the institution's crucial role in the victims' reparation and the

perpetrator's prosecution. We also explored psychosocial variables associated with the reconciliation process.

6.2. Participants

A cross-sectional descriptive correlational study was designed. The total sample was 1166 people from 22 of the 32 national departments. The age range of the participants was between 18 and 80 years old. 51.1% were university students, and over half of the sample were women. There is a higher percentage of women, participants with a middle level of education and predominantly from the center and left-wing (see Table 2).

Table 2
Demographic Characteristics of the Sample

	Total Sample	Victims	Non-Victims
Age: <i>M(SD)</i>	26.91 (11.07)	28.49 (12.10)	24.72 (9.03)
Gender			
Female	64.2%	65.6%	61.9%
Male	35.8%	34.2%	38.0%
Education			
High	53.0%	51.5%	55.1%
Middle	41.1%	40.6%	41.8%
Low	5.7%	7.5%	3.1%
Political Position			
Left	39.5%	38.2%	41.4%
Center	45.6%	44.7%	46.9%
Right	14.8%	17.1%	11.7%
N	1.166	678	488

Note: N = 1166. The valid percentage (%) is reported. Education: Dichotomized according to three levels (High = University, Middle = Secondary, Technical and Technological, Low = Not in school and Basic Primary). Political position: Categorized on a continuous scale 1-5 (Left = 1 and 2, Center = 3, Right = 4 and 5).

Source: Table by Authors.

6.3. Procedure

An adaptation of the previously used instrument on TC in Latin America (Armoso *et al.* 2014, 2015; Cardenas *et al.* 2016; Espinosa *et al.* 2016) was made to the Colombian context and prepared through Google Forms platform. We also created a paper questionnaire with the same questions for country areas with internet accessibility problems. Subsequently, data collection began between January 2019 and January 2020.

Administration time ranged from 35 to 50 minutes. Trained researchers applied the instrument. For the paper applications, the researcher deposited the data in the virtual database. Convenience sampling was used in all areas. Participation was voluntary, and the data collected were anonymized by numerical keys. All participants read and accepted the informed consent form.

6.4. Measures

Socio-demographic information. Age, gender, and education.

Political Position. Single ad hoc question. "Often when people talk about political issues, they use terms like "right-wing" or "left-wing" to describe their views. How would you define yourself according to these terms?" from 1 = Far Left to 5 = Far Right.

Violence Exposure. Dichotomous question on whether the participant had been a victim of collective violence because of the armed conflict.

Knowledge about the TC and the JEP. How much information they had about the TC and the JEP on a scale from 1 = None to 6 = Very much.

Transitional Justice information source. Eight items related to whether they have seen or heard information about the Commission and the JEP in different media (Radio, Newspapers, TV, social media). A scale from 1 = None to 4 = A lot, from each source and institution.

Approval of the TC and the JEP. Single ad hoc question "Regarding what the TC/JEP is going to do. You: " On a scale of 1 = Strongly disapprove to 4 = Strongly approve.

Attitudes towards remembering. Two items with statements in favor of remembering violent events "When it comes to Colombia's past during the armed conflict, we must learn from the mistakes made to avoid making the same mistakes again" and in favor of forgetting "It is better not to open old wounds by talking about what happened in the past because of the armed conflict" with a scale of 1 = Completely false / 4 = Completely true.

Social Reconciliation. Adaptation of the scale of Wohl and Branscombe (2005) with the question "What would be necessary for reconciliation between the victims and those who caused them harm?" and eight statements related to the aspects necessary for reconciliation (e.g., That the perpetrators sincerely ask for forgiveness), on a scale of 1 = Not at all / 4 = Very much, ($\alpha = .85$).

Social Sharing. Six items adapted from Rimé's (2012) scale related to the JEP, the TC, and the armed conflict (e.g., Have you talked about the TC with other people during the last month?).

Emotional climate. Four items related to the perception of the country's emotional climate on a scale from 1 = Not at all to 4 = Very much. It asks the level of perceived Solidarity, the general level of trust in institutions, the level of perceived anger or hostility, and the perceived sadness or passivity in the country.

Institutional Trust. Through a list of six governmental institutions (legislative branch, executive branch, judicial branch, departmental governments, local governments, political parties) and six non-governmental institutions (trade unions, NGOs, TC, JEP, social leaders, and universities). Participants were asked the level of trust in each one on a scale from 1 = Do not trust to 4 = Very much trust ($\alpha = .85$).

6.5. Results

6.5.1. DESCRIPTIVE ANALYSIS

The mean scores of the scales used, the reliability coefficient and the asymmetry and kurtosis are in Table 3. All coefficients were acceptable. The total sample includes 58.1% of people who reported having been victims of the armed conflict. No differences were found among the victims in terms of gender, educational level, or political position, although there were differences regarding age [$F(1,1164) = 33.809$; $p = .0001$; $\eta^2 = .028$].

Approval levels were found to be higher than the theoretical average for the two transitional justice institutions (see Table 3). 21% of the total sample reported fully supporting both institutions, while only 6.9% for the Commission and 9.8% for the JEP said they did not fully approve them. Regarding the information that people reported having about the two institutions, there is more information about the JEP than about the Commission, even so, in both cases, the scores do not surpass the theoretical average.

Table 3
Descriptive statistics, reliability coefficient (α Cronbach), asymmetry, and kurtosis of the variables

Scales	N° items	α	Minimum	Maximum	Media (SD)	Asymmetry	Kurtosis
TC Approval	1	—	1.0	4.0	2.80 (.85)	-.263	-.596
JEP Approval	1	—	1.0	4.0	2.76 (.90)	-.315	-.656
TC Information	1	—	1.0	4.0	2.07 (.90)	-.436	-.682
JEP Information	1	—	1.0	4.0	2.27 (.90)	-.238	-.723
Social Sharing	5	.78	1.0	3.83	1.81 (.65)	-.540	-.480
Social Reconciliation	8	.83	1.0	4.0	2.87 (.69)	-.629	-.084
Pro Collective Memory	1	—	1.0	4.0	3.27 (.94)	-1.090	.107
Against Collective Memory	1	—	1.0	4.0	2.10 (1.07)	-.498	-1.06
Positive Emotional Climate	2	.68	1.0	4.0	2.08 (.73)	-.443	-.185
Negative Emotional Climate	2	.72	1.0	4.0	2.39 (.79)	-.033	-.597
Government Confidence	6	.89	1.0	4.0	1.62 (.54)	-.898	1.104
Non-Governmental Confidence	6	.85	1.0	4.0	2.40 (.69)	-.073	-.383
Transitional Justice Confidence	2	.90	1.0	4.0	2.36 (.89)	-.093	-.820

Source: Table by authors.

The total sample presents high values in the reconciliation scale, which is related to the aspects necessary to achieve peaceful coexistence. Regarding the perceived emotional climate, participants report medium-low levels of positive emotional climate, with participants on the right-wing having higher scores in comparison with those on the left ($p = .001$; $d = 0.27$) and center-wing ($p = .024$; $d = 0.20$) [$F(2, 1145) = 9.802$; $p = .0001$; $\eta^2 = .017$]. In contrast, negative emotional climate scores are medium-high, with women reporting higher scores [$F(1, 1147) = 6.234$; $p = .013$; $\eta^2 = .005$]. On the other hand, trust in government institutions has the lowest scores of all scales, however, trust in non-governmental institutions is close to the theoretical mean.

6.5.2. DIFFERENCES BY POLITICAL POSITION

Political position differences are present in the sample in several measures used (See Table 4). As per our hypothesis, people identified with the left-wing have higher scores regarding approval and information of transitional justice institutions, while people on the

right-wing agree more with forgetting the past. However, there are no differences in the variable Pro Collective Memory, which refers to attitudes towards remembering the past for the non-repetition of violence.

In addition, we found differences in social sharing, with people on the left-wing reporting a greater need to talk about past violence and transitional justice institutions. Finally, people on the left-wing report higher levels of trust in nongovernmental and transitional justice institutions, while people on the right-wing perceive a more positive emotional climate; all of these differences are significant.

Table 4
Mean comparisons by political position

Scales	Left	Center	Right	F	p	η^2
TC Approval	3.02a (.84)	2.69b(.80)	2.63b(.88)	23.145	.000	.039
JEP Approval	2.99a (.89)	2.63b(.84)	2.64b(.94)	22.730	.000	.038
TC Information	2.12(.88)	2.04(.91)	2.04(.95)	1.207	.299	.002
JEP Information	2.38a(.91)	2.18b(.87)	2.29(.91)	5.863	.003	.010
Social Sharing	1.89a(.66)	1.78b(.62)	1.73b(.65)	5.395	.005	.009
Social Reconciliation	2.92(.68)	2.85(.70)	2.80(.69)	2.156	.116	.004
Pro Collective Memory	3.27(.96)	3.29(.91)	3.24(.96)	.177	.838	.000
Against Collective Memory	1.99b(1.0)	2.12b(1.0)	2.34a(1.1)	6.806	.001	.012
Positive Emotional Climate	1.98a(.69)	2.12b(.71)	2.26c(.81)	10.098	.000	.017
Negative Emotional Climate	2.43(.77)	2.38(.79)	2.31(.84)	1.576	.207	.003
Government Confidence	1.60(.53)	1.61(.53)	1.70(.56)	2.682	.069	.005
Non-Governmental Confidence	2.53a(.74)	2.35b(.63)	2.26b(.67)	13.337	.000	.023
Transitional Justice Confidence	2.53a(.91)	2.27b(.82)	2.24b(.92)	13.004	.000	.022
N	450	520	172			

Note. Different letters indicate statistically significant differences (post-hoc DMS, $p \leq .05$).

Source: Table by Authors.

6.5.3. ANALYSIS BY SOURCE OF INFORMATION

We also explored which sources of information the respondents had seen, heard, or read about the Commission and the JEP. The

political position had differences in the Newspapers and Social Media sources, with people on the Left-wing reporting having received more information than people on the Right and Center-wing (see Table 5).

Table 5
Mean comparisons between political positions regarding source of information

Truth Commission	Left	Center	Right	F	p	η^2
Television	2.03 (.83)	2.09 (.87)	2.16 (.92)	1.538	.215	.003
Radio	1.80 (.87)	1.75 (.88)	1.83 (.94)	0.728	.483	.001
Newspapers	1.89 (.92)	1.77 (.86)	1.69 (.83)	3.969	.019	.007
Social Media	2.19 (1.0)	2.02 (.97)	1.99 (.97)	4.682	.009	.008
JEP						
Television	2.39 (.90)	2.40 (.91)	2.47 (.91)	0.448	.639	.001
Radio	2.04 (.94)	1.97 (.94)	2.01 (.96)	0.735	.480	.001
Newspapers	2.13 (.99)	1.90 (.87)	1.85 (.91)	9.152	.000	.015
Social Media	2.41 (1.0)	2.21 (.96)	2.08 (.94)	8.468	.000	.014

Source: Table by authors.

6.5.4. CORRELATIONAL ANALYSIS

The Pearson correlation between the variables studied is shown in Table 6. The variables directly related to transitional justice institutions (Information, Approval, and Trust) have positive correlations yet have some important differences with other variables. First, information about the TC and the JEP correlates positively with all variables except for the political position and unfavorable attitudes towards collective memory. In contrast, approval of these institutions correlates negatively with a political position, negative emotional climate, and institutional trust. Similarly, trust in the TC and the JEP has negative correlations with political position and “against collective memory” and a positive correlation with the other variables in the study.

Table 6
Descriptive analysis and correlations among target variables

Variables	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17
1 Victimization	1																
2 Political Position	.061*	1															
3 Gender	-.038	-.042	1														
4 TC Information	.080**	-.033	.060*	1													
5 JEP Information	.068*	-.055	.073*	.720**	1												
6 TC Approval	.038	-.167**	.063*	.193**	.230**	1											
7 JEP Approval	.025	-.154**	.078**	.177**	.259**	.775**	1										
8 Pro Collective Memory	.006	.000	.028	.136**	.127**	.282**	.269**	1									
9 Against Collective Memory	.025	.108**	.033	.057	.018	-.048	-.040	.060*	1								
10 TC Trust	.003	-.092**	.087**	.190**	.218**	.455**	.420**	.327**	-.063*	1							
11 JEP Trust	-.006	-.143**	.062*	.182**	.257**	.426**	.476**	.308**	-.076**	.827**	1						
12 Social Sharing	.225**	-.087**	.090**	.274**	.293**	.244**	.247**	.108**	-.070*	.302**	.296**	1					
13 Social Reconciliation	.037	-.059*	.080**	.159**	.168**	.300**	.321**	.418**	.039	.362**	.336**	.243**	1				
14 Positive Emotional Climate	.030	.129**	-.016	.114**	.058*	.002	-.002	.154**	.165**	.175**	.160**	.075*	.157**	1			
15 Negative Emotional Climate	.022	-.051	-.072*	-.019	.014	.107**	.115**	.148**	-.013	.087**	.113**	.114**	.187**	-.051	1		
16 Government Confidence	.003	.058*	.059*	.072*	.119**	.040	.066*	.084**	.053	.360**	.341**	.087**	.103**	.323**	-.026	1	
17 Non-Governmental Confidence	-.012	-.135**	.096**	.168**	.239**	.410**	.399**	.343**	-.075*	.798**	.774**	.318**	.404**	.179**	.139**	.447**	1
M	—	1.75	—	2.07	2.27	2.80	2.76	3.27	2.10	2.38	2.35	1.81	2.87	2.08	2.39	1.62	2.40
SD	—	.69	—	.90	.90	.85	.90	.94	1.07	.91	.94	.65	.69	.73	.79	.54	.69
Range	—	1-3	—	1-4	1-4	1-4	1-4	1-4	1-4	1-4	1-4	1-4	1-4	1-4	1-4	1-4	1-4

Note: Victimization (0 = non-victim, 1 = victim), gender (1 = female, 2 = male), political position (1 = left, 2 = center, 3 = right), * $p \leq .05$; ** $p \leq .001$.

Source: Table by Authors.

Victimization is positively related to information about the two transitional justice institutions, the need for social sharing, and political position. Furthermore, people identified with the left-wing have higher approval levels towards the TC and the JEP, a greater need for social sharing, a higher agreement with the need for reconciliation between victims and perpetrators, and a greater trust in non-governmental institutions. On the other hand, people on the right-wing have attitudes against collective memory, perceive a better emotional climate in the country, and trust government institutions more.

Regarding social sharing, it has a positive correlation with all the variables except with political position and “against collective memory” to which it correlates negatively. The same pattern occurs in social reconciliation. Finally, the negative emotional climate correlates negatively with gender and positively correlates with approval and trust towards the TC and the JEP.

6.6. Conclusions

The results suggest that victims are also the population group with the greatest need to talk about the armed conflict and the transitional justice institutions. Previous experiences show that making victims visible fosters favorable attitudes towards reconciliation in the general population (Mathias *et al.* 2020). Consequently, the results also indicate that victims are more informed and supportive of these institutions and more approving of their work. Similar to studies on the 2016 referendum, which found that populations in conflict zones show higher support for the peace process in general compared to other sectors of the population (Tellez 2018).

In Colombia, the political orientation is critical to understanding how people read the context and the country’s situation, even more so, considering that the current government does not support the peace agreement or the transitional justice institutions (Flores and Vargas 2018). An example of this is the substantial differences exposed in all the variables analyzed in study 2 regarding the political position. Like other Latin American countries (Mathias *et al.* 2020), left-leaning people have more approval, information, and support towards the TC and JEP. They also report a greater need for social sharing and less agreement with an attitude of forgetfulness towards the country’s violent past. They also report seeing more information about these institutions in all media. Interestingly, right-leaning people agree more with attitudes towards forgetting what happened during the conflict

and perceive a more positive emotional climate. This finding could be understood as a tendency to downplay the importance of the armed conflict memory and the need to talk openly about the facts of the conflict, consistent with contexts with guerrilla involvement (Mathias *et al.* 2020).

The armed conflict memory requires public and narrative spaces to discuss what happened and attempt to explain the how and why of the war as a collective effort in society (Martín-Beristain *et al.* 2010; Velez *et al.* 2020). Hence, our findings show social sharing (i.e., the need to talk about the conflict and transitional justice) is fundamental for the approval and confidence of the TC and JEP and memory construction. It is also related to institutional trust and emotional climate (positive and negative). Interestingly, people that trust non-governmental institutions also trust the TC and the JEP, have a higher need for social sharing, and a higher agreement with reconciliation processes. These results suggest that even when transitional justice institutions emerge from state policies, they appear as highly independent in their functions and objectives, which could also explain why low levels of trust in governmental institutions do not affect confidence in the JEP and the TC. However, this relationship between variables relates to a political position, with people on the left-wing having the highest levels of trust in non-governmental institutions.

7. General discussion

The search for social restructuring and peaceful coexistence through institutions that address the problem of war from its complexity is not only relevant but urgent and necessary for a country that seeks to confront a violent past (Bar-Tal 2011; Martín-Beristain *et al.* 2010). This article explored transitional justice conceptions in Colombia during two specific moments: the consolidation of the peace agreement during 2016 (study 1) and its subsequent implementation during 2019-2020 (study 2). The studies conducted help make social representations of transitional justice and attitudes towards its institutions visible through two primary sources of information.

Firstly, from the media, which have shown to be crucial for the structuring of opinions in favor or against peace culture building processes (López-López *et al.* 2014; López-López *et al.* 2021) and which are a fundamental piece in the representation of reality and in the perceptions that the general population constructs concerning the war and the transition process (Igartua 2011). Secondly, through

a broad sample collected throughout the country that evaluates the general population conceptions regarding approval, trust, and level of information on transitional justice institutions, in addition to inquiring about psychosocial variables that are relevant to understand the impact of these models in Latin America (Arnosó *et al.* 2015; Velez *et al.* 2020).

The findings of both studies support the idea that political position is a relevant factor in the way transitional justice acts in Colombia. This political variable seems to influence the narrative regarding peace and armed conflict. The left-wing or more liberal political positions have more favorable attitudes towards transitional institutions and more complex and multidimensional descriptions of the peace agreement.

In contrast, more conservative or right-wing positions show more instrumental descriptions of the transition process and agree more with not discussing the past as the appropriate way to approach the end of the conflict. Also, the results show that there is an interesting difference between how the country is perceived. On the one hand, the more liberal newspaper tends to have news that describes the social reality of the country and analyze the conflict and the consequences of the current historical moment; likewise, people on the left show a greater need to talk about the armed conflict and a less positive emotional climate. On the other hand, the more conservative newspaper opts for more instrumental news about the developments of the peace agreement and delves into the legal processes related to impunity and crimes against humanity; similarly, people on the right have less need to talk about the past, approve and know less about the institutions of transitional justice.

Thus, in the conservative newspaper *El Tiempo*, the lexical analysis shows that transitional justice is anchored in legal justice, emphasizing the work of political and armed leaders as the main actors in the peace process. In other words, the discourse focuses on reducing the culture of impunity and accountability (Lambourne 2009), specifically on the effectiveness and guarantees of the new justice system concerning crimes against humanity. Hence, there is no recognition of the other, the FARC guerrillas or their interests, as necessarily a socio-political subject, but rather a concern for the consequences of their acts and the legal processes they must face in the process of reinsertion into civilian life.

Likewise, previous studies in conflict contexts such as the Israel-Palestinian conflict (Leshem 2017) found that people on the right-wing political position preferred more abstract definitions of peace to avoid the psychological cost of recognizing the other.

Meanwhile, the liberal newspaper *El Espectador* anchored transitional justice in psychosocial and political aspects of the conflict and the expectations for the future after the peace agreement. Peace is portrayed as a longitudinal process that requires social changes to be achieved and includes the various actors in the conflict and their power relations. This discourse is an effort to recognize the different groups as socio-political actors that should be included in the transitional process to achieve peaceful coexistence. Therefore, sharing the testimonies of illegal armed groups from previous peace processes contributes to the search for truth and the construction of collective memory, even though the socio-emotional cost of this social sharing may be high.

This involvement of the media in memory reconstruction processes has been of vital importance in other countries that have implemented transitional justice models. Such as the case of Rwanda, where media encouraged contact between groups and the reduction of negative stereotypes in the medium and long term, even if there is a short-term impact on the emotional climate and well-being of group members (Paluck 2009).

Similarly, the differences in the political position of the participants in study 2 also reflect two different approaches to the transitional justice model. In Colombia, right-wing political parties have been the primary opponents of the agreement (Kajsiu 2019), affecting people's perceptions due to their political position. Thus, it makes sense that the profile of a person with right-wing political tendencies in Colombia is more skeptical about these institutions (approving less of their work and having less information about them), prefers not to talk about the past, and perceives the country with a more positive emotional climate. In other words, the intense debates that the country experienced since 2016 about the peace agreement reflected in the newspapers seem to linger in the perceptions of the general population and linked in both cases to a specific political vision where each group understands the end of the conflict and peacebuilding from different anchoring categories.

Finally, we acknowledge that this paper has significant limitations. The two studies conducted were not carried out consecutively (2016-2019). Even though the methodologies used are complementary, they are not comparable as they use two different sources (Newspapers and surveys). In future studies, an analysis of data from the same period could provide a more specific perspective of this object. However, the current findings contribute to building a global understanding of transitional justice in Colombia. On the other hand, the selected newspapers do not represent the totality of the debates during 2016

regarding the peace agreement. Since they are national newspapers with the largest audience, they do not reflect the discourses outside the mainstream. However, they can provide a general context of the transitional justice concepts and their treatment in public debates.

In conclusion, social reconciliation relies on acknowledging the damage caused, and on the shared memory of the violent past in which the groups (e.g., former armed groups, victims) involved feel included and represented (Gluecker *et al.* 2021). This process, which uses transitional justice as one of its fundamental tools, can be affected when individuals and groups devalue what occurred and prefer to silence and make the damage and pain of other groups invisible. Hence, the influence of political position in the social representations and attitudes towards transitional justice may create different understandings of peace, which in turn can disseminate both a discourse that contributes to the collective construction of more peaceful societies or narratives that evade the recognition of the other, the violent past and the need to social share what happened.

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Social representations of Brazilian Truth Commission on news comments

Representaciones sociales de la Comisión de la Verdad de Brasil
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Summary: Introduction. 1. Truth commissions: overcoming a violent past. 2. Social representations of history. 3. Public opinion, online interaction, and misinformation. 4. Method. 4.1. Procedure and sample. 4.2. Data analysis. 5. Results. 6. Discussion. 7. Conclusions. References.

Abstract: The study investigated the social representations of the Brazilian Truth Commission from the news comments about its final report released in December 2014. Method: Comments ($N = 322$) were collected in the three major newspapers websites in Brazil: "Folha de São Paulo", "O Globo" and "O Estado de São Paulo" during the 48 hours following the report's publication. They were submitted to a lexical analysis on the software Radicalized discourses justifying the violations and narratives denying the

existence of a dictatorship were observed. Discussion: Results were in line with social media theories about online behavior, but they do not corroborate previous research on the social representations of the military regime and Truth Commissions in South America.

Keywords: collective memory, social representations of history, social media, transitional justice, truth commissions.

Resumen: El estudio investigó las representaciones sociales de la Comisión de la Verdad de Brasil a partir de los comentarios de las noticias sobre su informe final publicado en diciembre de 2014. Método: Se recogieron comentarios (N = 322) en los sitios web de los tres principales periódicos de Brasil: "Folha de São Paulo", "O Globo" y "O Estado de São Paulo" durante las 48 horas siguientes a la publicación del informe. Los comentarios se sometieron a un análisis léxico en el software Alceste. Resultados: Surgieron tres clases, todas ellas críticas a la Comisión de la Verdad. Se observaron discursos radicalizados que justifican las violaciones y narrativas que niegan la existencia de una dictadura. Discusión: Los resultados estuvieron en línea con las teorías sobre el comportamiento en línea, pero no corroboran las investigaciones sobre las representaciones sociales del régimen militar y de las comisiones de la verdad en Sudamérica.

Palabras clave: memoria colectiva, representaciones sociales de la historia, redes sociales, justicia transicional, comisiones de la verdad.

Introduction

Many countries in Latin America were ruled by authoritarian military regimes in the second half of the 20th century, such as Brazil (from 1964 to 1985). These regimes were a consequence of Cold War conflicts between leftist socialists or communists and rightist conservatives (Agassiz 2007, 177). The transition to a democratic government in Brazil was based on an amnesty law, which prevented the investigation of the human rights violations perpetrated. Only 27 years after, in 2012, a Truth Commission —TC— was created with the aim of revealing the truth about the dictatorial regime. However, since the publication of its final report, revisionist far-right responses increased in acceptance in Brazil, resulting in the election of Jair Bolsonaro (a congressman who denies the existence of a dictatorship or human rights violations during this period) for president in October 2018 with 55.1% of the votes.

Although history textbooks still represent the military regime negatively (Bezerra 2017, 9), revisionist books representing it more positively have become popular (Calil 2014, 1) and support for democracy has dropped in Brazil (Corporación Latinobarómetro 2020). Considering that the increase of revisionism seems to start right after the release of the Truth Commission's final report, it is important to analyze its impact at that time. In this regard, we intend to analyze the spontaneous discourse employed by Internet users in news comments about the final report by means of the social representations theory approach.

1. Truth commissions: overcoming a violent past

Truth Commissions are transitional justice procedures that have been carried out in more than 50 countries. Their main functions are: to reveal the truth about a violent past; to contribute to creating an integrative history that considers the different narratives about the past; to prevent new conflicts from arising and, sometimes, to promote justice for the victims (Hayner 2011, 8). In Brazil, its main goal was "to examine and clarify the serious human rights violations (...) aiming at accomplishing the right to memory and historical truth and to promote a national reconciliation" (Comissão Nacional da Verdade 2014, 15). Its work was not aimed at prosecuting the perpetrators. The final report, released in December 2014, concluded that the military regime in Brazil was directly responsible for 434 murders and disappearances,

1843 torture cases, and the restriction of the citizens' political rights (Comissão Nacional da Verdade 2014, 17).

South American authoritarian regimes have been proved to have had an impact on people's personal lives (Concha *et al.* 2009, 55; Oddone and Lynch 2008, 134; Paredes and Oberti 2015, 153). Previous studies about the TCs' impact in South America show that they are perceived as effective when there is sympathy for the victims, institutional trust, and a positive social climate (Arnosó *et al.* 2015, 291; Cárdenas *et al.* 2016, 433). Opinions about the TCs can also be related to changes in the representations of history, being the context of the country an important variable in creating integrative narratives about the past (Arnosó *et al.* 2015, 292). Many variables can be relevant to the elaboration of different representations about the past such as the degree of knowledge about the past held by those who did not live through it (Haye *et al.* 2013, 77), the current political discourse (Reyes *et al.* 2013, 167) or the representations of other aspects of the past such as the human rights violations (Arnosó and Pérez-Sales 2013, 55).

2. Social representations of history

A useful approach to study these kinds of phenomena is the Social Representations Theory (Moscovici 2012, 27). The social representations can be defined as:

“a system of values, ideas and practices with a twofold function; first, to establish an order which will enable individuals to orient themselves in their material and social world and to master it; and secondly to enable communication to take place among the members of a community by providing them with a code for social exchange and a code for naming and classifying unambiguously the various aspects of their world and their individual and group history.” (Moscovici 2009, 21)

Social representations are constructed through communication, sometimes challenging the official history (Ahonen 1997, 49). On the individual level, unknown phenomena or themes, such as the Truth Commission in Brazil, engender a need to assign them some meaning. This occurs through two processes: anchoring and objectification. Through anchoring, the unknown idea is categorized within the existing models. For instance, representations of the TC could be anchored on the representations about the president who carried it

out. The objectification process aims at transforming a concept that is initially abstract into an image, something easy to be remembered and diffused (e.g. Che Guevara as a symbol of communism in Latin America) (Moscovici 2009, 61). On the other hand, at the social level, the different social representations of a topic tend to reach a consensus, although many times the hegemonic representation can coexist with minority representations (Sá *et al.* 2009, 166).

Social representations theory aims at analyzing how scientific theories are assimilated and changed by common sense (Moscovici 2012, 101). History, like any other discipline, does not escape these transformations. It is often questioned and distorted to achieve political goals and it drives political behavior (Bar-Tal 2007, 1436; Liu and Hilton 2005, 540) being often used to justify and legitimate current demands and attitudes (Bobowik *et al.* 2014, 11; Liu, *et al.* 2014, 60). Building a widely accepted representation of the past has been proved to be very important to maintain a peaceful society or for the reconciliation of groups once in conflict (Bar-Tal and Halperin 2011, 120).

The establishment of democratic governments or their interruption have been shown as essential elements to represent a nation's past (Bombelli *et al.* 2013, 78; Fernández *et al.* 2013, 116; Huang *et al.* 2004, 158; Nencini 2011, 116). In Brazil, the social representations of the authoritarian government of Getúlio Vargas (1937-1945) show the progressive oblivion of this regime and the tendency not to consider him as a dictator; in addition, the connection of this phenomenon with lower levels of education and political participation (Naiff *et al.* 2008, 115). Regarding the military regime, its representation varies according to age, political positioning, and educational level as well. Although the overall representation is critical (e.g. stressing the human rights violations), some young people may represent it in a more abstract, and sometimes, distorted way (e.g. they sometimes point out a nonexistent war) (Sá *et al.* 2009, 164). On the other hand, elders show ambivalent opinions. A representation of the military regime as a controlled good time has a significant presence in this group, alongside a critical representation, though it is also present as a minority representation among young people. Right-wing positionings and low educational levels also seem to be related to a more positive view of the past regime (Sá *et al.* 2009, 165-167). During the years after the end of the military regime, right-wing political parties seemed to have adopted the strategy of distancing themselves from it (Madeira and Tarouco 2010, 6). However, the rising of Jair Bolsonaro might be evidence that this position could be changing in Brazil. It can be considered as part of similar right-wing political movements

around the world such as Donald Trump in the United States, Marine Le Pen in France, Viktor Orbán in Hungary, or Rodrigo Duterte in The Philippines. Many reasons have been considered to explain the rising of these movements (Muis and Immerzeel 2017, 912). The strongest evidence comes from cultural and economic issues (Georgiadou *et al.* 2018, 110; Inglehart and Norris 2016, 13). An explanation to the rising of the far right that is gaining support is the influence of social media and online interactions to give voice to radicals and put them into contact (Engesser *et al.* 2017, 5). Therefore, studying these interactions seems to be very important to understand these movements, especially when trying to construct an agreed and solid version of the past to avoid future conflicts.

3. Public opinion, online interaction, and misinformation

Communication processes are the basis for constructing knowledge about the social world, and different kinds of communication can result in different ways of representing an object (Moscovici 2012, 86). In this regard, the Internet can be a space of rumors, fake news, or conspiracy theories (Tornberg 2018, 2). It can bolster political trends and changes in public opinion (Bovet *et al.* 2018, 5). Comments in news websites represent an opportunity to analyze opinions about a social issue, especially if they are polemic. The tendency to give opinions online seems to be related to more participation in political activities outside the virtual environment (Boulianne 2015, 534). However, online comments can be biased by, for instance, gender (Mitchelstein 2011, 2019). Although comments cannot be considered as representatives of the general population's opinions, they can represent the opinions held by large segments of society, and they can influence readers (Henrich and Holmes 2013, 1). In this regard, people deeply engaged with a topic tend to think that public opinion is on their side when they mostly read comments congruent with their point of view (Lee 2012, 39).

Additionally, exposition to radicalized comments can lead to an increase in radicalization (Anderson *et al.* 2014, 381; Santana 2014, 27). People tend to express more their opinion when they think that the public opinion is on their side, and they tend to withhold it when they think the opposite (Liu and Fahmy 2011, 52). Some psychosocial processes can support misinformation online and offline. At least two cognitive biases could be related to these processes: priming and confirmation bias. The first confuse familiarity with truth making information that is widely spread and repeated seem trustful; the last

refers to the tendency to continue to believe in the same things, ignoring new information opposing one own belief (Kahneman 2011, 15).

In the Brazilian case, the TC was carried out to construct an integrative narrative about the past and to prevent new conflicts from arising. Constructing a shared representation of history has been shown as a crucial step towards the maintenance of peace and democratic rule. Considering that news comments could generate political engagement and change public opinion, we aimed at analyzing how the news about the Brazilian TC report release was commented online.

Although this is an exploratory study, we can posit the following hypothesis:

- H1: positive discourses regarding the TC will be prevalent because TCs are positively evaluated in South America (Mathias *et al.* 2020, 8) as well as in Brazil where most of the people represent the dictatorship negatively (Sá *et al.* 2009, 164).
- H2: criticism against the TC, although a minority, will also be found due to minority positive social representations regarding the dictatorship are still found in Brazil (Sá *et al.* 2009, 165) and the online environment favors the expression of polemic minority opinions (Tornberg 2018, 2).

4. Method

4.1. Procedure and sample

We conducted exploratory documentary research from the collection of comments about the news covering the release of the Brazilian TC report. We made the collection on two newspapers websites ("*Folha de São Paulo*" and "*O Globo*") and another newspaper *Facebook* page ("*O Estado de São Paulo*"). These are the most read newspapers with national coverage in Brazil, summing up 15 million followers on *Facebook* (Associação Brasileira de Jornais 2018). Anonymous comments were possible on the two websites. On *Facebook*, it is difficult (although it is not impossible) to comment anonymously. That would require having to create an anonymous profile. Most of the comments analyzed on *Facebook* were from non-anonymous profiles.

We collected the comments during the 48 hours following the news release. The news had similar content, mentioning the results of the TC work, remembering its goals, and they mentioned the president's discourse remembering the victims and the importance of revealing the truth in order not to repeat the violations. She also

affirmed to reject any revenge (she was a victim of the military regime, being tortured by government agents).

The news elicited 322 comments on the three newspapers (*Folha de São Paulo*, $N = 82$; *O Globo*, $N = 66$; *O Estado de São Paulo*, $N = 174$) during the 48 hours following. We discarded repeated comments, the ones that only tagged other people, as well as the comments not related to the subject.

4.2. Data analysis

We transcribed the comments into a textual *corpus* which we submitted to an analysis using the software Alceste. This software conducts a statistical lexical analysis that seeks to identify repetitive language patterns, looking for the organization of the discourse (Kalampalikis and Moscovici 2005, 15) allowing the analysis of its content. First, the text is decomposed into groups of words or phrases called elementary contextual units. Then, the clusters obtained through a Descendant Hierarchical Analysis provide a visualization of the social representations about the topic (Veloz *et al.* 1999, 488).

5. Results

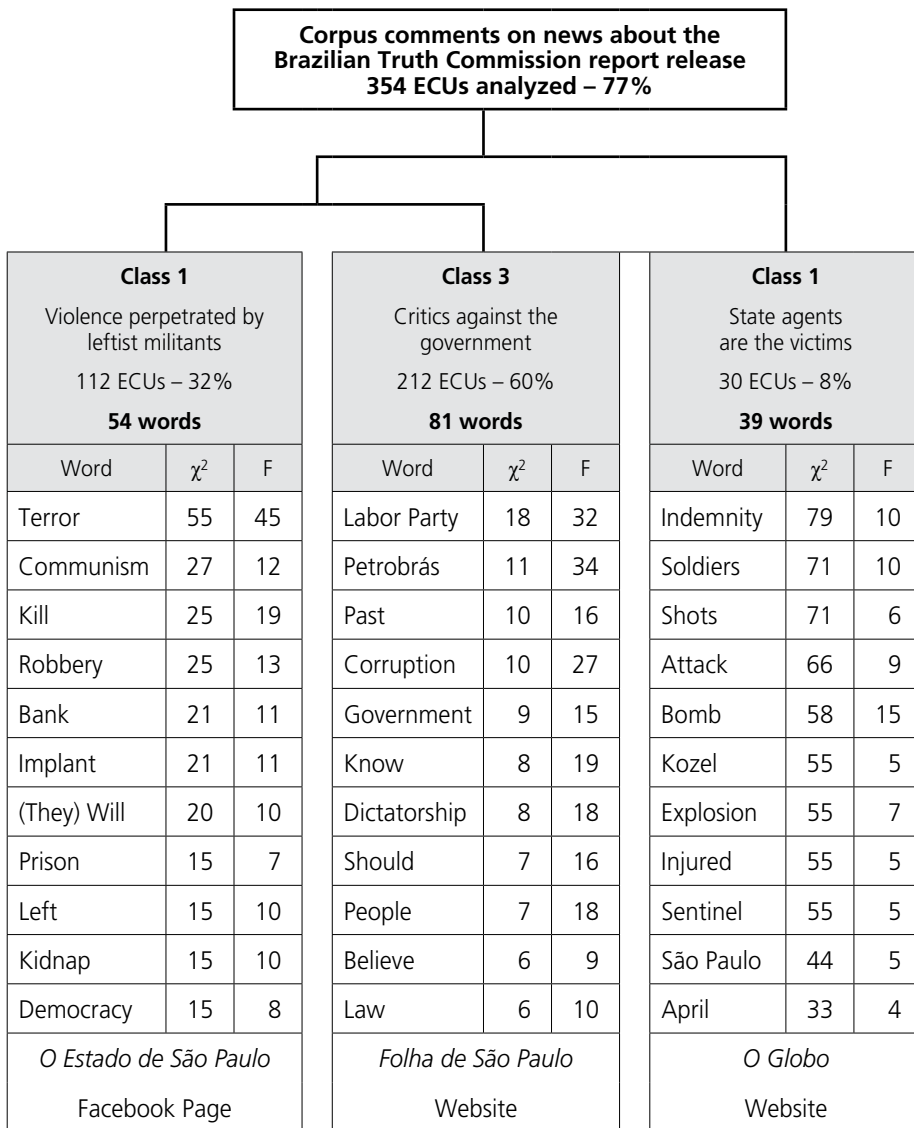
Once the *corpus* was analyzed, 456 Elementary Context Units (ECUs) emerged. From the ECUs obtained, 77% was retained by the software to analyze, corresponding to 9799 words, from which 2,823 were different forms. The analysis considered the words with frequency bigger than the mean of occurrences by word ($M = 3.47$) and the Chi-Square (measuring the link between element and class) above 3.84 ($df = 1$, $p \geq 0.05$).

The Descendant Hierarchical Analysis structured the *corpus* in three classes (Figure 1). In the first step, the *corpus* was split into two *sub-corpora*, the group comprised of classes 1 and 3 on the left side as opposed to class 2 on the right side. In the second step, the second *sub-corpus* was divided in two, dividing classes 1 and 3.

Analyzing the thematic contexts shown in Figure 1, we can infer that the conjunct of classes revealed by Descendant Hierarchical Analysis feature Internet users' shared knowledge about the TC, showing that each class holds particularities that comprise the social representations about this subject. The classes' features are, next, described and discussed.

Figure 1

Classes emerged from the Descendant Hierarchical Analysis on the comments on news about the Brazilian Truth Commission report release



Source: Elaborated by the authors from the output given by the software Alceste.

The class 1, named *Violence perpetrated by leftist militants*, was generated from 112 ECUs, corresponding to 32% of total ECUs. It covered radical words such as terror ($\chi^2 = 55$), communism ($\chi^2 = 27$), kill ($\chi^2 = 25$), robbery ($\chi^2 = 25$), bank ($\chi^2 = 21$), implant ($\chi^2 = 21$), (they) will ($\chi^2 = 20$), prison ($\chi^2 = 15$), left ($\chi^2 = 15$), kidnap ($\chi^2 = 15$) and democracy ($\chi^2 = 15$). This classes represented mainly comments from Facebook users on "O Estado de São Paulo" page. The most representative examples of this class discourses are:

"(...) (They) were subversive of the public order, terrorists who practiced robberies against banks, houses, shipping companies and quarters, they kidnapped and tortured ambassadors, they killed many people, and also they sentenced many fellows."

(Comment 159;
O Estado de São Paulo; $\chi^2 = 26$)

"(...) When will they point out the crimes of terrorism and kidnapping made by the Commies?"

(Comment 263;
O Estado de São Paulo; $\chi^2 = 22$)

"(...) Dilma was a terrorist, bank robber, kidnapper of authorities and maybe murderer in the trials that terrorists of VAR-Palmares made in their apparatus, the terrorists, inebriated by the communism."

(Comment 185;
O Estado de São Paulo; $\chi^2 = 19$)

"(...) Do they remember a certain murderer, a bank robber who exploded bombs around and today continues to implant terror in Brazilian? Shame on, Brazil!"

(Comment 149;
O Estado de São Paulo; $\chi^2 = 13$)

In this class, TC is perceived as linked to the leftist organizations that existed during the regime, being partial because of that. Although the news about the TC report release described its goal as the investigation of the human rights violations committed by the military government, this class presents the alleged crimes committed by leftist organizations. These organizations are evaluated as terrorists and users claim that their crimes should also have been investigated. It was observed that the kidnapping of the American ambassador Charles Elbrick had a substantial impact on the discourse against the leftist

organizations, as well as murders attributed to them. President Dilma Rousseff was also related to these organizations and crimes, suggesting she has no right or lacks moral virtue to conduct an investigation about this period, although she denies these crimes (Folha de São Paulo 2009) and she was only convicted of subversion by the military regime.

Related to class 1, class 3 "*Criticism against the government*" comprised 212 ECUs (60% of total ECUs). The word radicals that represent this class were: PT (Labor Party – Party of the President Rousseff) ($\chi^2 = 18$), Petrobrás (State-owned oil company – Object of a corruption scandal) ($\chi^2 = 11$), past ($\chi^2 = 10$), corruption ($\chi^2 = 10$), government ($\chi^2 = 9$), know ($\chi^2 = 8$), dictatorship ($\chi^2 = 8$), should ($\chi^2 = 7$), people ($\chi^2 = 7$), believe ($\chi^2 = 6$), law ($\chi^2 = 6$), politics ($\chi^2 = 6$), Petrobrás Scandal ($\chi^2 = 6$). This class represents mainly the comments on the "*Folha de São Paulo*" website. Comments in this class were focused on the current problems, mainly the corruption scandal which came out during this year. Some comments only expressed their dissatisfaction with the government, meanwhile, others expressed their suspects that the TC would be an attempt to divert attention from the corruption scandals, although it was implemented in 2012 and the publication date was defined beforehand. Thus, the focus in this class is the present, sometimes comparing it with Rousseff and the leftist organization's past, which comprise its link with Class 1. The most representative examples of this class are:

(...) The Truth Commission is not above the Brazilian constitution; she has to be impartial and observe that in the past there were exaggerations by both sides and each side has an explanation according to their conveniences and moments.

(Comment 233;

O Estado de São Paulo; $\chi^2 = 16$)

(...) The only thing people want to know is the truth about Celso Daniel's (a Labor Party politician murdered) death, Lula's (Brazilian ex-president, also from Labor Party) family patrimony, and especially about the Petrobrás scandal, this robbery that was promoted by the criminal organization Labor Party during its 12 years of government.

(Comment 68;

O Globo; $\chi^2 = 12$)

(...) I want to know about the Truth Commission of Petrobrás Scandal and about the dirty money that elects this woman.

(Comment 71;

O Globo; $\chi^2 = 12$)

(...) Funny, every time Dilma touched in her speech is on Globo (Television Broadcast), why do not they show the people asking her to get out?

(Comment 310;
O Estado de São Paulo; $\chi^2 = 12$)

(...) Ms. Dilma knows how to be false the way she did in her campaign promises, Ms. Dilma cultivates the hate the way she did against their opponents in the last elections. What hypocrisy! However, nobody believes in your bullshits and lies Ms. Dilma.

(Comment 4;
Folha de São Paulo; $\chi^2 = 10$)

The last class, which was named "*State agents are the victims*" comprised 30 UCEs (8%) and represented mainly the comments of "*O Globo*" website. The content included the word radicals: indemnity ($\chi^2 = 79$), soldiers ($\chi^2 = 71$), shots ($\chi^2 = 71$), attack ($\chi^2 = 66$), bomb ($\chi^2 = 58$), Kozel (state agent dead in an attack organized by leftist organizations, allegedly, as users say, with the participation of President Rousseff) ($\chi^2 = 55$), explosion ($\chi^2 = 55$), injured ($\chi^2 = 55$), sentinel ($\chi^2 = 55$), São Paulo ($\chi^2 = 44$), April ($\chi^2 = 33$). The most representative examples of this class are:

(...) This cry is a hoax, crocodile tears, or is she crying by Kozel, dead on an attack with her participation?

(Comment 50;
Folha de São Paulo; $\chi^2 = 81$)

(...) April 15th, 1968, bomb-throwing against the old army headquarter in São Paulo, Conselheiro Crispiano street, with two causalities, April 20th, 1968, another bomb attack against the newspaper *O Estado de São Paulo*.

(Comment 175;
O Estado de São Paulo; $\chi^2 = 71$)

(...) Antonio's family never received any indemnity or tear of this failed crocodile.

(Comment 103;
O Globo; $\chi^2 = 70$)

As in the other classes, the main motif is the critics against the TC. However, in this class, the critics are more focused on the president's

role during the regime as a member of a leftist organization than in the TC's work. If in class 1 the focus was on the violence committed by the leftist organizations, in class 3 is clearer the defense of state agents. They are described as victims of attacks perpetrated by these organizations. Soldier Mario Kozel is frequently remembered as one of these victims, and President Rouseff is associated with this attack, although she denies it and was never officially accused of it, even by the dictatorship. Thus, their tears are seen as false, because she is apologizing as a chief of state for the crimes committed by the state against citizens but, in the evaluation of these users, she should apologize for the crimes committed by the leftist organizations. Another sensible question was the indemnity received by President Rouseff. Users' comments argued that the families of state agents dead in attacks organized by leftist organizations should also receive indemnities.

6. Discussion

Contrary to H1, which stated that positive discourses about the Brazilian Truth Commission would prevail on the Internet comments, the first aspect that immediately stands out in the results is the criticism towards the Truth Commission presented in the three classes. Comments were, in general, extremely negative about the TC and they differed only about the aspect criticized. Some of the critics indirectly justified the human rights violations committed by the military regime. In this regard, it is important to bear in mind that a third of Brazilians do not fully support democracy, and a fifth support the use of torture by state agents (Datafolha 2014).

Ideological identification seems to play an essential role in the social representations about the TC and the past. The negative evaluations about President Rouseff, Labor Party, and leftists seem to anchor the negative social representations about the TC work and its report. These negative evaluations seem to be radicalized since the corruption scandals that came out in 2014. They seem to objectify Rouseff and the leftist militants as bandits or terrorists, Labor party as corrupt and, because so, torture against them or their supporters may be justified according to some users. The negative representations of the leftists seem to be anchoring a positive social representation of the military regime. The positive view about the regime that was the minority in 2005 (Sá *et al.* 2009, 165) seems to be increasing in acceptance.

Some explanations for the difference in the social representations about the military regime between 2005 and 2014 can be drawn. Firstly, Internet users may comprise a different population than the general one (Mitchelstein 2011, 2019). In the scope of this study, it is challenging to establish if the opinions shared represent what the overall population thinks. Although Internet use is growing in Brazil, only 55% of households had permanent access to the Internet in 2014 (IBGE 2015). Moreover, access to the Internet was higher in wealthier households (90%) than in the poorer (29%) (IBGE 2015). If we consider that Labor Party was more popular among the poor (G1 2014) it can help to explain the results. Accordingly, a poll on *Folha de São Paulo's* Website showed that only 22% of the readers voted for Dilma Rousseff in the 2014 elections (compared with 38% of all voters who had voted for her) (Folha de São Paulo 2015). However, even if the comments do not represent the overall population opinion they may represent the opinions of those who have more participation in political activities offline (Boulianne 2015, 534).

Moreover, the first comments may have influenced those who agree to express their opinion (Lee 2012, 39) even increasing the radicalization of the discourse (Anderson *et al.* 2014, 381) and those who disagree to withhold it (Liu and Fahmy 2011, 52). Indeed, the three classes referred to the previous comments on each of the three newspapers analyzed indicating some resonance of the first comments.

Finally, the results may be explained by a change in the social representations about the military regime since 2005. The social representations of history are especially sensitive to current social demands (Liu *et al.* 2014, 60). Moreover, the generational change is going on 50 years after the coup that established the military regime in Brazil. Therefore, those who lived this event as adults are giving place to the new generation who are learning about the past from elders' narratives or the history books. The generational change is the time when the different memories should converge to a consensual social representation of the past (Assmann 2008, 111). However, the political climate in Brazil in 2014 was radicalized, and one of its central figures (President Dilma Rousseff) was also a significant figure during the military regime period. Thus, the current negative opinions and beliefs about President Dilma Rousseff and the leftism might be anchoring the social representations about the past. Political positioning partially anchored social representation about the military regime in 2005 (Sá *et al.* 2009, 166), however, in 2014 it seems that radicalization about the political situation was affecting the overall representation of the regime.

History provides a coherent and legitimated narrative that is taught in schools to the next generations. What should be taught is an object of tensions and discussions. The TC, which has one of its goals to create an integrative narrative that includes all sides of the conflict (Comissão Nacional da Verdade 2014, 15) may have failed on this objective. The long-time passed between the end of the military regime, and the TC implementation might have influenced how people represented the TC compared with other countries such as Argentina and Chile. In these countries, the TC was part of the same movement that put an end to the dictatorship (Hayner 2011, 45), and thus, they were implemented in a context of social support. The opposite occurred in Brazil, where the TC released its report in a context of radicalization of the political positions and high rejection of both, President Rousseff and leftism. In this context, putting the authoritarian past on the agenda might have had a counter-productive effect. The comments did not recognize as truth what the TC revealed. They questioned even the consensual aspects of the regime, such as that it was a negative period with many human rights violations (Sá *et al.* 2009, 164). Some comments even questioned if there was a dictatorship.

7. Conclusions

The opinions expressed about the TC report did not reflect its content but previous social representations about the TC, the government, the president, and the military regime. For instance, even if the TC report has more than 3000 pages, people were giving opinions about it seconds after its release. This phenomenon is in accordance with the cognitive bias of ignoring or distorting the information that goes against one's beliefs (Kahneman 2011, 15). Indeed, in the three classes, the words "Truth Commission" or "report" were not present among the ten more mentioned words.

Thereby, it seems that the TC did not accomplish its goals among the public who are motivated to speak out online. Although its report reveals many violations committed by the military regime, these findings were not recognized as truth. Thus, the TC seems not to have helped to build an integrative history; rather, it seems to have boosted revisionism on the consensual elements of the social representations of the past. Therefore, it is difficult to believe that the TC has helped to prevent new conflicts from arising.

Finally, we have to take into account the limits of this study. Firstly, the results probably do not represent the social representation of the

overall population. As discussed, Internet users probably comprise a different population than the general one. Thus, it would be interesting to investigate the social representations of history in a representative sample, also aiming at comparing it with the previous research to analyze changes. Moreover, we collected the comments in a radicalized context, so, it would be important to investigate the Truth Commission evaluation as well as the social representations about the past in a quieter political time to better evaluate their effects in a long-term perspective.

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Collective violence and construction of peace culture in the Basque Country: two experiences of memory, recognition and forgiveness

Violencia colectiva y construcción de cultura de paz
en el País Vasco:
dos experiencias de memoria, reconocimiento y perdón

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Summary: Introduction. 1. Collective violence in Post-Conflict contexts: the case of the Basque Country. 2. Forgiveness in the context of intergroup conflict: Intergroup forgiveness. 3. Study 1. 3.1. Method. 3.1.1. Participants. 3.1.2. Procedure. 3.1.3. Measures. 3.1.4. Data analysis. 3.2. Results. 3.2.1. Means comparisons between groups pre and post intervention. 3.2.2. Empathy towards perpetrators and victims. 3.2.3. Self-transcendent emotions and negative emotions. 3.2.4. Mediation effects on intergroup forgiveness through self-transcendent emotions and empathy. 3.3. Conclusions. 4. Study 2. 4.1. Method. 4.1.1. Participants. 4.1.2. Procedure. 4.1.3. Measures. 4.2. Results. 4.3. Conclusions. 5. Discussion. References.

Abstract: Post-conflict societies must confront the past and build a culture of peace. Two interventions are presented here in the context of the Basque Country after the cessation of violence. The first, an intervention with the participation of victims of terrorism, where participants ($N = 280$ $M_{age} = 19.83$ $SD = 1.29$) were assigned to intervention and control groups. Results showed that participation in the programme produced more favourable attitudes towards intergroup forgiveness, intergroup empathy, and the mediating effect of self-transcending emotions. Second, the Citizenship Processes programme of memory and recognition ($N = 31$ $M_{age} = 19.48$ $SD = 3.91$). Results showed an increase in forgiveness, intergroup empathy and a change in outgroup emotions from before to after the intervention. The impact of both programmes was medium-high and the relevance of combining narratives that avoid competitive victimisation and promote peaceful intergroup attitudes is discussed.

Keywords: Collective Violence, Peace Intervention, Intergroup Forgiveness, Empathy, Self-Transcendent Emotions.

Resumen: Las sociedades postconflicto deben hacer frente al pasado y construir una cultura de paz. Se presentan dos intervenciones en el contexto del País Vasco después del cese de la violencia. La primera, una intervención con la participación de víctimas del terrorismo, donde los participantes ($N = 280$ $M_{edad} = 19.83$ $DE = 1.29$) fueron asignados a grupos de intervención y control. Los resultados mostraron que la participación en el programa produjo actitudes más favorables hacia el perdón intergrupar, la empatía intergrupar, y el efecto mediador de las emociones auto-trascendentes. La segunda, el programa Procesos Ciudadanos de memoria y reconocimiento ($N = 31$ $M_{edad} = 19.48$ $DE = 3.91$). Los resultados mostraron un aumento en el perdón, la empatía intergrupar y un cambio en las emociones exgrupales de antes a después de la intervención. El impacto de ambos programas fue medio alto y se discute la relevancia de combinar las narrativas que eviten la victimización competitiva y promueva actitudes intergrupales pacíficas.

Palabras clave: Violencia colectiva, intervención para la Paz, perdón intergrupar, empatía, emociones transcendentales.

Introduction¹

In societies that have experienced intense events of collective violence (e.g. armed conflicts, wars, terrorist attacks, and other multiple acts of violence), different initiatives for social reconciliation have been encouraged, such as those based on respect and recognition of the victims. After a violent past, people from these contexts face the challenge of how to rebuild social bonds and restoring social trust between groups and individuals. Victims and perpetrators must confront the past, but also the society, as a whole must acknowledge the past and participate in building a culture of peace. In this line, several studies have shown that collective narratives that engage in intergroup violence emphasise the suffering of one's group and demand revenge, thus exacerbating conflict (Páez and Liu 2012). Conversely, when perceptions of ingroup victimisation decrease, the possibility of intergroup forgiveness increases (Shnabel Halabi and Noor 2013). Therefore, acknowledging the shared suffering of all conflict parties and mutual forgiveness can facilitate peaceful coexistence in contexts with groups in conflict (Salomon 2004; Vollhardt 2015). While this is indeed a challenging task, different interventions have been proposed centred on the recognition of victimisation, the inclusion of all groups and victims, the humanisation of the other through dialogue and contact, and the promotion of an attitude of mutual care and a hopeful vision for the future (Staub 2012; Wohl, Hornsey and Bennett 2012).

However, the general population's attitudes and emotions about the conflict—which are framed by the collective trauma due to sustained violence over long periods—often differ from the needs for forgiveness and reconciliation of the direct victims of the conflict (Martín-Beristain *et al.* 2010a), whose stories must be incorporated into the collective memory to acknowledge the recognition of the harm caused. It is, therefore, crucial to explore the impact of victims' testimonies on the general population as they play the role of making victims visible in their need to share their experiences and build collective memories; in addition, they can become tools for the recon-

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ciliation of fractured societies (Martín-Beristain and Páez 2000; Martín-Beristain *et al.* 2010a).

This article explores the impact of different types of victim testimonies in the Basque Country, wherein in 2018 the terrorist group ETA announced its total disbandment after more than five decades of attacks.

1. Collective violence in post-conflict contexts: The case of the Basque Country

In 1996, World Health Organisation WHO defined three broad categories of violence: self-inflicted, interpersonal, and collective" (Krug *et al.* 2002, 1084). Collective violence consists of the instrumental use of violence by individuals organised in groups that violently attack others (i.e. both the general population as well as those from other groups) as a way of achieving certain political, economic or social objectives. It includes all aggressions and extortions resulting from war, terrorism, ethnic, religious or similar conflicts, gang and mafia organisations, and other organised collectives against other groups, civilian or military (Larizgoitia *et al.* 2011a). Regarding people who suffer from these forms of violence, a distinction can be made between "primary victims" (i.e. those who were the object of collective violence and first-degree relatives of people killed by acts of collective violence), and "secondary victims" (i.e. those who witnessed or learned about violent events from third parties).

The Basque Country is a politically autonomous region within Spain. Since the end of Franco's dictatorship and the establishment of democracy, various armed groups have emerged, being the most enduring the nationalist group ETA (originally formed as a political party in 1958), as well as other opposing groups (e.g. the Anti-Terrorist Liberation Group GAL, the Basque-Spanish Battalion [Batallón Vasco-Español, Triple A]). As a consequence of their activities, the Basque society suffered numerous violent actions. They included continuous threats against individuals and groups; assassinations and kidnappings; bomb attacks against people; demonstrations and street clashes, as well as cases of police torture. For the period 1960-2013, there are reported 3600 terrorist attacks and 836 deaths caused by ETA, 73 deaths associated with extreme right-wing and "counter-terrorism" groups and 5500 reports of police torture (Carmena *et al.* 2013; Gobierno de España 2011).

In October 2011, ETA declared the definitive cessation of its armed violence and in 2018 it announced its total dissolution, with a selective

request for forgiveness that has not satisfied any of the associations and victims of terrorism. Since 2007, the autonomous government of the Basque Country (i.e. Eusko Jaurlaritza) has promoted various institutional initiatives for the recognition and memory of the victims of terrorism. Various pacifist entities, victims' organisations and civil society organisations have also developed initiatives for the recognition of the damage caused and the construction of culture of peace (Gobierno Vasco 2021a, Gobierno Vasco 2021b, Ruiz and Salazar, 2014).

As it could be expected, collective violence has also had a psychological and health impact. A study with victims in the Basque Country showed the effects on health and social relations many years after the trauma (Larizgoitia *et al.* 2011a, 2011b). In this report, several interviews were conducted with 36 primary victims—19 suffered the murder of a close relative, 10 survived attacks and other actions, 7 were subjected to repeated threats and extortion—and a population-based survey ($N = 2000$). The study reported that the odds of perceiving worse physical and emotional health were 4 to 7 times higher among primary victims than among the general population; in addition, they perceived more loneliness and stigma and valued their social support and emotional climate more negatively (Larizgoitia *et al.* 2011b). While all forms of violence (e.g. physical, psychological) have had a significant effect and, at the same time, there has been an ongoing need to work for reconciliation, efforts that promote recognition of victims and a better co-existence are not always fruitful. Particularly, only a few studies have analysed attitudes towards forgiveness and reconciliation in the Basque Country. In one experiment, results indicated that people recognised the importance of forgiveness and reconciliation, yet trust in the institutional apologies offered was low. For this reason, the apologies reinforced support for victim reparation and perceptions of control, but they did not affect the attitudes towards forgiveness with perpetrators (Bobowik *et al.* 2010).

2. **Forgiveness in the context of intergroup conflict: Intergroup forgiveness**

Forgiveness, both interpersonal and intergroup, is a subject of great complexity. For a review of studies that have approached forgiveness from different philosophical, anthropological, clinical, developmental or social psychology perspectives, it is noticeable the work of Fehr

et al. (2010). The specific case of intergroup forgiveness, however, has been relatively little studied because it is often understood that only those directly affected can participate (Mullet *et al.* 2011), and, when it comes to collective traumatic harm (such as the Holocaust or the genocide in Rwanda), it is perceived as an offence to the survivors (Staub and Perlman 2001, 197).

Nevertheless, an increasing number of studies have analysed mutual forgiveness as a facilitating factor for peaceful coexistence in contexts with groups in conflict (Páez *et al.* 2011; Salomon 2004; Staub and Pearlman, 2001; Vollhardt 2015). Intergroup Forgiveness (Noor *et al.* 2008) is conceived as a response to forgo negative emotions, thoughts and actions (e.g. intergroup revenge) in the face of the wrongdoing, and may entail clarity over each group's responsibility for the conflict, generosity in absolving the outgroup from the "total blame", and closure of the past hostile intergroup relationship (Bobowik *et al.* 2018).

A line of research has analysed the public rituals of institutional apologies for the violent past (Bobowik *et al.* 2019; Páez 2010) or the colonial past (Lastrego and Licata, 2010), supporting Gibson's (2004) original approach. In particular, that apologies will be effective when they help create historical narratives that capture the atrocities and suffering of all parties in conflict. In the same vein, a meta-analysis on interpersonal forgiveness (Fehr *et al.* 2010, 896) argued that "victims' prosocial motivational transformations occur via (a) mitigating cognitions regarding transgressions and their perpetrators, (b) positive (rather than negative) affect, and (c) relational and socio-moral constraints on forgiveness".

Regarding the facilitating and inhibiting factors of intergroup forgiveness, there is the meta-analytic review of Van Tongeren and colleagues (2014), which included 43 studies from 20 nationalities and diverse conflicts –65% intra- and 35% inter-state. As a whole, this article considered nine types of factors, including those affective (i.e. empathy, negative emotions, collective guilt), positive cognitive (i.e. trust and amends), negative (i.e. perceived victimhood), and constraints (i.e. strong in-group identification, common, superordinate group identification, and intergroup contact), concluding that there was a moderate relationship between the affective, cognitive and constraining components with intergroup forgiveness. Pooled effect sizes were $r = 0.37$ for empathy and $r = 0.49$ for collective guilt, finding stronger effects for transgressions between countries (i.e. interstate transgressions) than within-countries (i.e. intrastate transgressions) (e.g. for empathy $r = 0.55$ versus 0.31). The effect was larger for trust ($r = 0.42$) than for perceived victimisation ($r = -0.28$) and was also

moderated by type of offence, especially in the case of victimisation which ranged from $r = -0.45$ for interstate to $r = -0.23$ for intrastate offences. Finally, the effects were $r = -0.32$ for in-group identification, $r = 0.29$ for common in-group identification, and $r = 0.31$ for intergroup contact.

Among the correlates of intergroup forgiveness, there are emotions and affective states. Some examples include negative emotions towards outgroups (e.g. anger, rage) (Tam *et al.* 2007) and collective guilt (Wohl *et al.* 2012; Wohl and Branscombe 2005). Likewise, empathy has been associated with intergroup forgiveness in different socio-political contexts (Noor *et al.* 2008; Noor *et al.* 2015) and given the different perceptions of conflicting parties—which can affect individuals' emotional responses—perspective-taking is necessary for rapprochement between conflicting groups (Noor *et al.* 2008). In this vein, it can be argued that intergroup forgiveness is possible when individuals perceive and express other-oriented emotions (Van Tongeren *et al.* 2014), when negative outgroup-based emotions are inhibited or diminished (Tam *et al.* 2007; Wohl and Branscombe 2005; Wohl *et al.* 2012), and when reparation rituals express sadness or guilt (Rimé *et al.* 2011). In this vein, it has been recently proposed that Self-Transcendent Emotions (STEs) may play a positive role in the response to suffering and harm caused by collective violence. STEs include awe, (moral) elevation, gratitude, compassion, or feeling moved by love, and inspire moral models, focusing attention toward the needs and concerns of others while promoting a bonding with other people and social groups (Haidt 2003; Pizarro *et al.* 2021; Stellar *et al.* 2017; Van Cappellen and Rimé 2014).

Considering all of the above, we present two studies with two community interventions concerning the violent past in the Basque Country aimed at creating a culture of peace. The objective was to evaluate the use of humanizing narratives of victims, who take an active role in the social recognition of suffering and moral reparation, to contribute to social reconciliation (study 1), and to promote empathy and peace attitudes towards active participation in a process of encounter and dialogue (study 2).

These interventions incorporate inclusive narratives, which make visible the atrocities committed by terrorism, with an inclusive vision that considers the violence perpetrated by different groups in conflict. To this end, some of the previously reviewed correlates of intergroup forgiveness (e.g. such as empathy and outgroup emotions, both negative and positive) are considered. In addition, it is expected that the narratives of victim educators (see below) act as moral role models that inspire STEs and promote empathy and intergroup forgiveness.

3. Study 1

This study analysed an intervention conducted in the Basque Country with a face-to-face intervention of different victims of collective violence, known as “victim-educators”. The intervention—called *Bakeaz Blai*, a pedagogic program with victims as educators—aimed at creating humanising narratives, thereby breaking away from competitive victimisation.

As a hypothesis, we expected that, in comparison with a condition where participants were exposed exclusively to statistical information about political violence in the Basque Country, participation in the intervention with victims as educators would increase the agreement with personal and intergroup forgiveness. These effects were expected to be present in all types of victims, including those who suffered from attacks perpetrated by ETA as well as those committed by State Security Forces and actions by para-police groups opposed to ETA (H1). Furthermore, we expected these effects to be mediated by two variables: STEs activated during the intervention and by empathy towards victims and perpetrators (H2). In addition, we postulated a sequential mediation through increased STEs and thus increased empathy.

3.1. Method

3.1.1. PARTICIPANTS

Two hundred and eighty university students (69% women, $M_{age} = 19.89$ $SD = 2.99$) participated in a quasi-experimental design. The participants were assigned into the control-information group (G0) ($N = 55$, 71% women, $M_{age} = 19.82$ $SD = 1.27$) and eight intervention groups ($N = 225$, 70% women, $M_{age} = 19.91$ $SD = 3.28$) that were composed by Social Work ($N = 89$) and Teacher Training students ($N = 136$) (four groups respectively).

No significant differences were found between intervention and control groups in terms of gender [$F_{(1, 279)} = 0.010$, $p = .921$] or age [$F_{(1, 279)} = 0.038$, $p = .845$]. The prevalence of victimization in participants was 52% of people that knows someone close affected by political violence, and no significant difference was found between intervention and control groups ($\chi^2 = 1.437$, $p = .231$).

3.1.2. PROCEDURE

The *Bakeaz Blai* programme was created and implemented during the period 2011–2012 with secondary school students, young people from leisure time groups, and teachers ($N = 130$ students and 6 teachers; and 8 leisure time groups $N = 45$ people) (Ruiz and Salazar 2014). For this research, the intervention was adapted to the university context and designed to be scientifically evaluated, having been implemented in 2018/2019. This corresponds to the first and only intervention directly involving victim-educators in the university setting. The initiative was the result of the first pilot experience between the organizing educational entity (i.e. *Bakeaz Blai*) and the university research team. Both parties agreed to be part of a systematic evaluation process and two faculties and a second-year course were selected, respectively. The interventions groups were exposed to the narratives with four different victims (3 men and 1 woman) of violence perpetrated by ETA, and State Security Forces. Victim educators fulfilled three conditions in their narratives: 1) they are above partisan struggle, 2) they defend the respect for the dignity and the right to life of all people, including perpetrators, and 3) they are advocates of promoting a culture of peace and social reconciliation (Ruiz and Salazar 2014). The victims advocate favourable attitudes towards peace and are members of various reconciliation and forgiveness initiatives in the Basque Country.

The intervention for all groups included two sessions, each lasting two hours. In the first, the groups—guided by two experts—aimed at reflection, awareness and sharing around concepts related to confrontation and political violence, such as conflict, hatred, forgiveness, the image of the enemy, stereotypes, human rights, etc. They were used to foster reflection and an exchange of ideas regarding concepts linked to confrontation and political violence. In the second session, during the first hour, the victims gave accounts of their personal experience as victims-survivors of political violence (i.e. victimisation) who support forgiveness and social reconciliation. In the second hour, a colloquium was organized where participants could share doubts and impressions with the invited person.

Interventions in all groups were standardised and guided by the same two experts to ensure homogenous implementation. Participants in the control-information group were exposed to an online presentation based only on statistical information about political violence in the Basque country. This presentation informed about the number of deaths and injured people in terrorist attacks, victims of torture and others, and all the information was extracted from reports

of public institutions (Carmena *et al.* 2013; Gobierno España 2011). The questionnaires were completed before and after each intervention (one week after the intervention). All participants received information about the research project and signed an informed consent form. The research ethics committee of the university approved the intervention.

3.1.3. MEASURES

Forgiveness. Forgiveness was measured through four items adapted from the scale developed by Wohl and Branscombe (2005) to measure Intergroup Forgiveness (e.g. Victims need to forgive the harm caused to them by political violence; The victims must forgive those responsible for the political violence) (reliability was $\alpha = .833, .851$, for pre- and post-intervention measures), and Personal Forgiveness (e.g. I forgive those responsible for political violence; I can forgive actions of those who have caused harm) (reliability was $\alpha = .792, .895$, for both applications). The scale ranged from 1 = Totally disagree to 7 = Totally agree.

Intergroup empathy (adapted from Noor *et al.* 2008). We used 2 items measuring empathy towards perpetrators (e.g. When I think about those responsible for the violence, I understand that they may also have suffered and When I think of the perpetrators of violence, even in cases where I do not identify politically with them, I try to think comprehensively why they did it). Reliability index were for perpetrators $\alpha = .760, .757$ in pre- and post-intervention measures, respectively. An item measured Empathy towards victims (e.g. When I hear the story of people who have suffered from political violence, even in cases where I do not identify politically with them, I try to see the situation from his/her perspective). Items were rated on a 7-point response scale ranging from 1 = Not at all to 7 = Very much.

Emotions. Emotions were measured using the Modified Differential Emotions Scale (mDES, Fredrickson, 2009). Five positive self-transcendent emotions were assessed: Gratitude, Hope, Elevation, Love-Trust, and Serenity-Peace (e.g. During exposure to victims narrative: What is the most inspired, uplifted, or elevated you felt?), along with 4 negative emotions: Anger, Shame, Guilt, and Sadness (e.g. What is the most angry, irritated, or annoyed you felt?), with items rated on a 5-point response scale ranging from 0 = Not at all to 4 = Extremely. Reliability index were $\alpha = .829$ and $\alpha = .629$ respectively. These emotions were measured immediately after the intervention.

Victimisation. An ad-hoc question was created (e.g. Did someone close to you experience political violence: Threatened, Extorted, Exiled,

Arrested, Imprisoned, Injured, Tortured, Murdered?) coded with 1 = Yes, 0 = None.

3.1.4. DATA ANALYSES

The statistical analyses were performed using SPSS 22.0 (IBM Corp., 2017). ANOVA tests (i.e. ANCOVAs) were conducted to determine differences among groups, accompanied by respective effect sizes (i.e. *d* test and eta square for ANOVAs). Mediation analyses were performed to contrast direct and indirect effects of the intervention versus control-informational condition (a dummy variable was created assigning 0 value to the control condition and a value of 1 to the intervention group) using Hayes' (2013) PROCESS macro for SPSS (v3.3). The bootstrapping estimation method based on 10,000 repetitions was estimated, and all mediator variables were centred (Hayes 2013). The level of significance used was $p \leq .05$. To control for the effect of competitive victimization narratives, victims were grouped into ETA victims and victims of state violence.

3.2. Results

3.2.1. MEANS COMPARISONS BETWEEN GROUPS PRE AND POST INTERVENTION

Significant interaction effect was found for intergroup forgiveness between control, and two intervention groups ($F_{(2, 277)} = 10.82$, $p < .001$, $\eta^2 = .072$); effect sizes were $d = 0.765$ in Social Work and $d = 0.833$ for Teacher Training students, and no significant differences were found for the control group ($d = -0.117$). ANCOVA analysis revealed higher levels of forgiveness-related attitudes adjusted for pre-test measure for the intervention group ($M = 4.479$, $SE = 0.090$, 95% CI [4.303, 4.656]) compared to control ($M = 3.941$, $SE = 0.185$, 95% CI [3.576, 4.306]). With respect to the types of victims, all of them produced significant ($ps > .05$) effect sizes, having the narratives of ETA victims a large effect ($d = 0.866$) and Victims of State violence a medium one ($d = 0.507$).

In addition, there were significant statistical differences for personal forgiveness measure. Interaction effect between three groups ($F_{(2, 277)} = 13.46$, $p < .0001$, $\eta^2 = .089$) showed a significant increase in attitudes for interventions groups, Social Work students $d = 0.401$ and pre-service teachers students $d = 0.255$, by contrast personal forgiveness was decreased in control group $d = -0.464$. The effect

sizes were similar and low for narratives of ETA victims $d = 0.308$ and State violence $d = 0.276$.

3.2.2. EMPATHY TOWARDS PERPETRATORS AND VICTIMS

We found a significant interaction effect ($F_{(2, 277)} = 3.37, p < .04, \eta^2 = .024$) for Empathy towards perpetrators, with a statistically significant increase in the intervention group of students of Social Work ($d = 3,114$), a lower pre-to-post change among Teacher Training students ($d = 0.310$), and in the control group ($d = 0.131$). ANCOVA analysis revealed higher levels of Empathy towards Perpetrators adjusted for pre-test measure for the intervention group ($M = 3.850, SE = 0.089, 95\% \text{ CI } [3.675, 4.026]$) compared to control ($M = 3.085, SE = 0.183, 95\% \text{ CI } [2.724, 3.445]$).

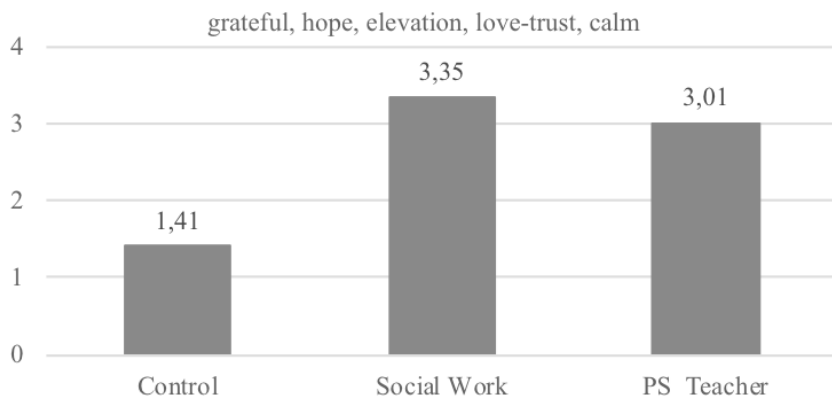
In the case of Empathy towards victims, there were a significant interaction effect ($F_{(2, 277)} = 3.96, p < .02, \eta^2 = .028$), with no pre-to-post changes for Social Work intervention group ($d = 0.003$) and Pre-Service teachers students ($d = 0.025$), while a decreased level for control group ($d = -0.30$). Empathy scores towards victims were high at the beginning, with mean scores above 5; therefore, the intervention did not produce a significant increase. In the case of the control group exposed to statistical information, a reverse effect was observed with a slight decrease in Empathy. In contrast, Empathy towards perpetrators was low at baseline (mean scores around 3, on a scale of 1 to 7), and an increase was produced by the intervention, especially in the Social Work students group. Considering the type of victims, there was a significant interaction effect ($F_{(1, 277)} = 3.20, p < .04, \eta^2 = .023$), with the greatest pre-to-post change in the narratives from ETA victims ($d = 0.47$) compared to the victims of State Violence ($d = 0.26$).

3.2.3. SELF-TRANSCENDENT EMOTIONS AND NEGATIVE EMOTIONS

Intervention groups reported higher mean values in STEs compared to those of the control group with a high effect size ($F_{(2, 279)} = 236.25, p < .0001, \eta^2 = .63$) (see Figure 1).

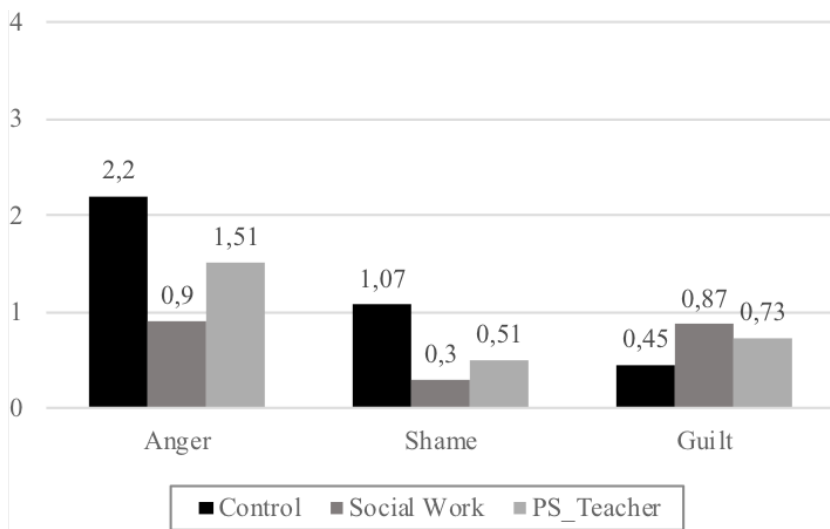
Anger and Shame were more intensively reported in the control group than in intervention groups, and the strongest effect was Anger ($F_{Anger(2, 277)} = 20.18, p < .0001, \eta^2 = .127$; $F_{Shame(2, 277)} = 12.76, p < .0001, \eta^2 = .084$). Conversely, Guilt was higher in the intervention groups ($F_{Guilt(2, 277)} = 3.08, p < .05, \eta^2 = .022$) (Figure 2).

Figure 1
Means of Self-Transcendent Emotions by Conditions



Source: Own elaboration.

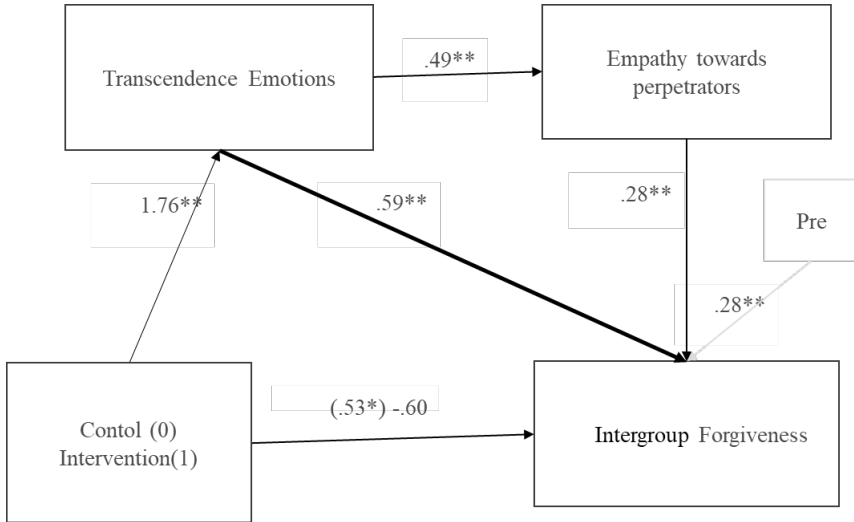
Figure 2
Means of negative emotions by conditions



Source: Own elaboration.

Figure 3

Mediation effects on intergroup forgiveness through self-transcendent emotions and empathy towards perpetrators



Non standardized regression coefficients are presented. In brackets: total effects
 $^{**} p < .001$; $^* p < .01$. $N = 280$

Group->TE > IF Indirect effect $B = .72$, $SE = .17$ $CI[1.07, .45]$

Group->TE > EP > IF Indirect effect $B = .17$, $SE = .06$ $CI[.30, .06]$

Source: Own elaboration.

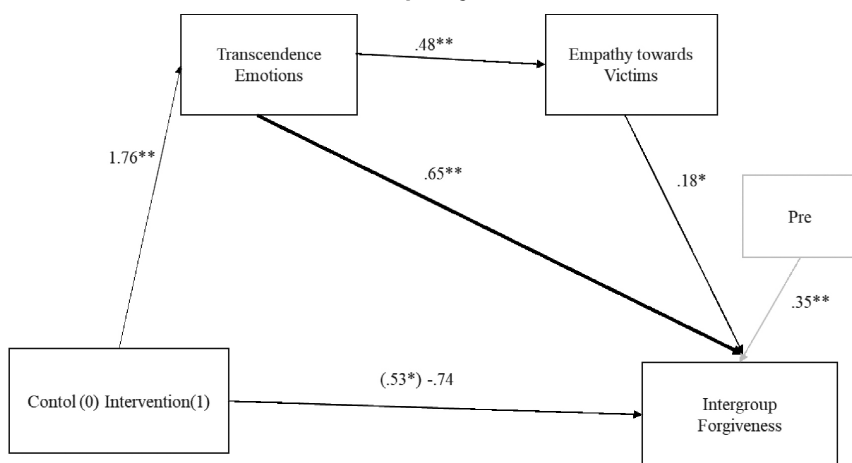
3.2.4. MEDIATION EFFECTS ON INTERGROUP FORGIVENESS THROUGH SELF-TRANSCENDENT EMOTIONS AND EMPATHY

Participation in the intervention compared to control, more strongly elicited STEs and Empathy toward perpetrators among participants and both increased intergroup forgiveness, controlling for previous attitudes toward forgiveness. Two indirect statistical significant effects were contrasted: one of them using STEs on forgiveness and the other, through Empathy. The effect of STEs was stronger than that of Empathy (direct and standardized effects were $b = .59$ and indirect $.71$ and $b = .28$ and indirect $b = .17$, for STEs and Empathy, respectively). The effects of the two mediated variables explained the total effect of the intervention (i.e. full mediation) (see Figure 3). On the other hand, direct and indirect effects on intergroup forgiveness were contrasted

for empathy towards victims, with a full mediation too, and stronger effects of STEs than Empathy on Intergroup Forgiveness (for STEs, direct standardized effects $b = .65$ and indirect $.79$; for Empathy, $b = .18$ and indirect $b = .10$) (see Figure 4).

Figure 4

Mediation effects on intergroup forgiveness through self-transcendent emotions and empathy towards victims



Group->TE->IF Indirect effect $B = .79$, $SE = .17$ $CI[.45, .95]$

Group->TE->EP->IF Indirect effect $B = .10$, $SE = .05$ $CI[.02, .18]$

Source: Own elaboration.

3.3. Conclusions

The *Bakeaz Blai* intervention based on narratives of victims of violence perpetrated by ETA and State Forces was not only oriented to show victims' experiences, but also to promote peace, forgiveness, and social reconciliation together with breaking competitive victimization. This quasi-experimental design with university students of social sciences showed that, compared to the exposure of statistical data about the conflict, victim's narratives increased favourable attitudes towards forgiveness (i.e. personal and intergroup) among participants (H1), and these effects were found controlling for earlier levels pre-

intervention attitudes. In addition, the intervention effects were not explained to exposure to victimization experiences in participants because the level of victimization was similar in the intervention and control groups.

Of great interest is the fact that the intervention had a stronger effect on intergroup forgiveness than in personal forgiveness—effect sizes were higher in the case of intergroup variable—and people were more favourable to accept a more distal position (e.g. Victims need to forgive the harm that was caused by political violence) than a more personal commitment (e.g. I can forgive actions of those who have caused harm). On the other hand, narratives of ETA victims had a stronger influence compared to those from victims of state violence, an aspect that is considered to be further explored in future studies because only four victims participated in this study.

The intervention had also an impact on empathy towards both victims and perpetrators. However, empathy towards victims was already high before the interventions, while the opposite was true for perpetrators. This may be why the intervention did not succeed at increasing positive attitudes that were held by participants before the intervention. In the case of perpetrators, conversely, the intervention increased empathy towards them. In this sense, it should be highlighted that the empathy measure consisted of a cognitive component to take the perspective of the other person, which is a powerful element that can influence prosocial motivations (Hoffman 1984). In particular, because several studies and meta-analyses have shown notable effects of empathy on interpersonal (e.g. Fehr *et al.* 2010) and inter-group forgiveness (e.g. Van Tongeren *et al.* 2014).

Exposition to victims' narrative elicited an emotional experience composed by STEs so that sharing victim's humanizing narratives did inspire behavioural models for forgiveness and cooperation to others, congruently with research about these emotions regarding connection with others (Campos *et al.* 2013; Van Cappellen and Rimé 2014) and prosocial behaviour (e.g. Haidt 2003; Pizarro *et al.* 2021; Stellar *et al.* 2017). These emotions have proven to be the most influential mediating variables in this study.

In relations with negative emotions, exposition to negative and statistical information (i.e. victimization events, with neither an explaining frame nor a humanizing context) provoked higher anger and shame in participants of the control condition, while the intervention participants reported more guilt. Exposition to traumatic and negative events need to be understood to make sense of the experience, and to be shared and discussed: "The more an event provokes an

emotion, the more it elicits social sharing" (Rimé *et al.* 2011, 695). This psychological need to make sense of a traumatic experience is not possible when only negative statistical information is received. Under those conditions, people experience especially anger as seen in the present study. On the other hand, guilt (i.e. for the atrocities suffered by others) is conceived as an important predictor of intergroup forgiveness (Van Tongere *et al.* 2014), although it is depending on the level of categorization. For instance, in the case of the Holocaust when Germans were perceived as outgroup members, victimized group members indicated greater collective guilt and were less willing to forgive contemporary (Wohl and Branscombe 2005).

Complementary, the results showed a strong relationship between STEs and empathy, the latter encompasses other-oriented emotions such as compassion and warmth (Van Tongeren *et al.* 2014), and STEs (Pizarro *et al.* 2019). Empathy was positively increased by experiencing emotions during the intervention such as gratitude, hope, elevation, love-trust, or calm, showing that these emotions contribute to perspective-taking and an opening to others views. Supporting hypothesis models proposed and contrasted in this study showed that the participation had a positive effect on intergroup forgiveness through primarily STEs and secondary empathy to victims and also perpetrators (H2). In addition, these mediation variables fully explained the relation between the intervention and criterion variable.

4. Study 2

This second study analysed a community intervention carried out in the Basque Country. The intervention is denominated "Citizen processes of encounter and dialogue on memory and recognition" (Bakeola 2021). These are group dynamics aimed at volunteers from community organisations and NGOs, having been applied in many groups. However, there is only one systematic evaluation, which is presented in this paper. The general objective is to work on attitudes towards forgiveness and reconciliation and to promote strategies to confront the culture of peace individually and collectively.

The following hypotheses were tested: Participation in peace intervention will be increase attitudes toward intergroup forgiveness and empathy (H1), decrease negative outgroup emotions and increase positive outgroup emotions (H2). At the same time, the effect of the intervention on intergroup forgiveness will be mediated through increased outgroup empathy (H3). In addition, the change in outgroup

emotions, with the increase in positive emotions and the decrease in negative emotions, will correlate positively with the increase in intergroup forgiveness.

4.1. Method

This is a single-group quasi-experimental design with pre- and post-treatment measures.

4.1.1. PARTICIPANTS

The sample was composed of 31 young participants, volunteer members of a social organization of leisure activities for young people ($M_{age} = 19.48$ $SD = 3.91$, 18 to 37 years old, 75% women; 25 women and 6 men).

4.1.2. PROCEDURE

This intervention was designed by Bakeola (2021), an organization dedicated to peace education. A group of volunteers was invited to evaluate the intervention at the beginning of the program, given the organization's interest in evaluating its results. For this purpose, the participants enrolled at that time were recruited.

The participants were divided randomly into 3 groups. The intervention consisted of 5 sessions (of one and a half hours), applying group dynamics techniques, and distributed as follows:

First session: Framing and approach (presentation of the group). Adjustment of expectations. Explanation of the process and the methodology.

Second session: The past (historical and emotional time spiral). Emotional time spiral where each participant integrates the events that have most affected them, and that has been a turning point.

Third session: The past and the present (violations and consequences of violence). Analysis of the consequences of political violence: Making visible human rights violations and their consequences.

Fourth session: The past and the present (Glencree local; falling off the blindfolds) (based on Glencree experience) (Euskal Telebista 2013). Experiences of positioning in the face of human rights violations.

Fifth session: The present and the future (the drawers and the final evaluation). An imaginative exercise is carried out on what we want to tell the next generations, on what attitudes are necessary.

The questionnaires were completed before and after each intervention –in the last session. All participants received information about the research project and signed an informed consent form. The data recorded were encoded and anonymized to ensure anonymity.

4.1.3. MEASURES

Forgiveness. The same scale was applied as in study 1 (see above). Intergroup reliability index were $\alpha = .871$, $.856$ pre and post measures, and for personal forgiveness $\alpha = .871$, $.856$ pre and post respectively.

Intergroup empathy. The same scale was applied as in study 1 (see above). Empathy towards perpetrators and victims were composed of two items respectively, and the reliability index was $\alpha = .884/663$, $.882/893$ pre and post Perpetrators empathy and victims, respectively.

Intergroup emotions. A scale about emotions experienced toward outgroup was applied (ad hoc) (e.g. *To what extent do you experience the following feelings towards people who think radically differently than you on this subject: anger, hate, respect and empathy*).

Processual variable: quality of the Participation (Zumeta et al. 2016). Participants answered satisfaction with participation in the intervention (1 item).

All scales applied ranged from 1 (not at all) to 7 (very much).

4.2. Results

Comparing pre- and post-intervention measures in criterion variables, intergroup forgiveness was increased after the intervention ($M = 3.55$, $SD = 1.37$, $M = 4.27$, $SD = 1.71$; $F_{(1, 30)} = 7.786$, $p < .01$, $\eta^2 = .21$). Nevertheless, no statistical significant differences were found on personal forgiveness ($F_{(1, 30)} = 0.813$, $p < .374$). Empathy, on the other side, increased in both variables; in Empathy towards perpetrators ($M = 3.75$, $SD = 1.68$, $M = 5.05$, $SD = 1.37$; $F_{(1, 30)} = 17.518$, $p < .0001$, $\eta^2 = .37$) and towards victims ($M = 4.98$, $SD = 1.52$, $M = 5.58$, $SD = 1.29$; $F_{(1, 30)} = 7.02$, $p < .013$, $\eta^2 = .19$).

With regard to intergroup emotions towards people who think radically differently than oneself, we found decreased levels in Anger ($M = 4.65$, $SD = 1.85$, $M = 3.48$, $SD = 1.76$; $F_{(1, 30)} = 17.86$, $p < .001$, $\eta^2 = .37$) and Hate ($M = 3.65$, $SD = 2.18$, $M = 2.94$, $SD = 1.75$, $F_{(1, 30)} = 8.30$, $p < .007$, $\eta^2 = .22$), and increased levels in Respect ($M = 4.10$, $SD = 1.92$, $M = 5.16$, $SD = 1.63$; $F_{(1, 30)} = 13.53$, $p < .001$,

$\eta^2 = .31$) and Empathy ($M = 3.23$, $SD = 1.60$, $M = 4.55$, $SD = 1.67$; $F_{(1, 30)} = 13.03$, $p < .001$, $\eta^2 = .30$) after the intervention.

A mediational model was tested using outgroup Empathy as a mediator variable in the relation between quality of the participation (i.e. satisfaction) and intergroup forgiveness. No significant effects were found (all $p > .05$). In detail, the direct effect of satisfaction with participation on forgiveness was $B = .238$ ($SE = .241$, $p = .33$, 95%CI [-0.172, 0.649]), and the indirect effect through empathy towards victims was $B = .025$ ($SE = .113$, 95%CI [-0.137, 0.213]) and toward perpetrators was $B = .021$ ($SE = .118$, 95%CI [-0.136, 0.231]).

Two indexes for change in outgroup emotions were created, resulting from the differences between post- and pre-intervention measures of negative (i.e. Anger and Hate) and positive (i.e. Respect and Empathy) emotions. Correlations coefficients between outgroup emotions and intergroup forgiveness and empathy at post-intervention were all statistical significant. Particularly, positive and negative outgroup emotions correlated with intergroup ($r_{(31)} = .54$, $p < .002$, and $r_{(31)} = -.41$, $p < .02$, respectively) and personal forgiveness ($r_{(31)} = .71$, $p < .0001$, and $r_{(31)} = -.45$, $p < .02$, respectively), and with Empathy towards perpetrators ($r_{(31)} = .58$, $p < .001$, and $r_{(31)} = -.56$, $p < .001$, respectively) and victims ($r_{(31)} = .61$, $p < .0001$, and $r_{(31)} = -.64$, $p < .0001$, respectively).

Subsequently, partial correlations were estimated, showing that the increase in positive outgroup emotions (i.e. Respect and Empathy) correlated positively with Empathy towards victims controlling for the previous score on empathy ($r_{(28)} = .42$, $p < .02$). The partial correlation between decreased negative outgroup emotions and Empathy towards victims was marginally statistically significant ($r_{(28)} = -.30$, $p < .10$). Concerning Empathy toward perpetrators, and for outgroup forgiveness partial correlations were not statistically significant ($ps > .10$).

4.3. Conclusions

A community intervention was carried out in the Basque Country, with a program created and implemented in various groups of voluntary people from Non-Governmental Organizations and public institutions (Bakeola 2021). Nevertheless, no systematic evaluation of peace attitudinal variables has been evaluated and published. This work is therefore the first systematic evaluation to be carried out to date.

The intervention was based on a programme of sessions in which the involvement of the participants was encouraged. It started by

adjusting expectations in the initial sessions, integrating personal experiences, reviewing the traumatic events experienced and making visible the collective violence experienced by all victims. In addition, it had as a central principle the analysis regarding human rights violations and ended with the commitment to the construction of collective memory and its intergenerational transmission.

The results have shown, as in the previous study (see study 1), that the group intervention helps to change attitudes, and particularly, it can promote intergroup attitudes that favour perspective-taking and empathy, as well as intergroup forgiveness (H1). The intervention provoked an increase in empathy towards victims, which was already high before the intervention. Perspective-taking towards perpetrators was low at the beginning and increases slightly after the intervention. Attitudes in favour of intergroup forgiveness also changed with the intervention, although attitudes towards personal forgiveness did not change. This suggests that, after being exposed to narratives depicting victimisation and the need for social reconciliation, it is more difficult to assume forgiveness for oneself than for others in general. Further, we did not find support for the mediation model according to which the effect of the quality of the intervention on intergroup forgiveness would have been mediated through increased outgroup empathy.

On the other hand, a significant change was observed after the intervention in intergroup emotions, with an increase in empathy and respect for groups that hold another point of view, and a decrease in intense negative emotions such as anger and hate (H2). It was also found that the change in intergroup emotions was associated with intergroup forgiveness and empathy, suggesting that a change in intergroup emotions may improve intergroup relations, understanding of other viewpoints and the search for a peaceful solution that allows for intergroup forgiveness.

However, the data did not support the mediation model hypothesis or demonstrate that change in intergroup variables is a predictor of intergroup forgiveness (H3). Finally, it has to be mentioned that the design employed has important limitations, one of them being the small sample size of 31 participants, which affects statistical power. In addition, the applied design is a single-group design, which does not allow for causal inference. Future research that expands the sample size and increases rigorous assessments of the intervening variables may improve and refine these results.

5. Discussion

This research explored the impact of victims' narratives about the traumatic impact of political violence in the Basque country, being the first attempt at systematically evaluating the possible benefits of these programs. While the construction of a common collective memory of the violent past through inclusive memories are needed to promote more positive intergroup relations in the present, excessive memory of suffering can have ambivalent consequences for intergroup relations, endangering coexistence (Bobowik *et al.* 2014). Collective narratives that emphasize ingroup suffering, collective victimhood and revenge, may fuel the conflict (Páez and Liu 2012). On the contrary, if collective narratives are framed on shared suffering and mutual forgiveness for the harm—such as those presented in these studies—, they can facilitate peaceful coexistence (Salomon 2004; Vollhardt 2015).

As research has shown, perspective-taking and/or empathic emotions among conflicting parties or groups and their divergent perceptions are a strong predictor of intergroup forgiveness (Noor *et al.* 2008, 2015; Van Tongeren *et al.* 2014). Also, reducing the intense negative emotions between groups will facilitate social sharing and dialogue (Tam *et al.* 2007; Wohl and Branscombe 2005; Wohl *et al.* 2012). However, as observed in the Truth and Reconciliation Gacaca trials after the genocide in Rwanda, the psychosocial impact was ambivalent, so participation in rituals enhanced social the social cohesion of both victim and prisoner participants, but also a confrontation with perpetrators triggered reliving past traumas, and renew feelings of sadness, anger and fear (Staub 2012). These results highlight that the effects of transitional justice rituals are not equivalent to the societal and individual level, and for victims and perpetrators.

This research had the objective of advancing in the systematic evaluation of intervention programs in a culture of peace in Post-conflict Settings (Basque country), based on contact and dialogue, and through testimonies in a supportive context—i.e. preparing participants to active listening to educators victim's narratives, empathizing with the other, taking the other's perspective, sharing emotions and suffering, and humanizing the other (Staub 2012). The social sharing dialogue with educational victims enhance an experience of common humanity, self-transcendent emotions (e.g. awe, inspiration, gratitude, compassion, or feeling moved by love), inspire moral models and inclusive caring, and thus promote prosocial tendencies (empathy and intergroup forgiveness).

Both interventions proposed here (*Educational programme: Bakeaz Blai* and *Citizen processes of encounter and dialogue on memory and recognition*) have proven positive effects in participants. They increased forgiveness, but more intergroup (large effect sizes) than interpersonal forgiveness (medium or low effect sizes), as well as empathy, in line with others studies on intergroup forgiveness (e.g. Van Tongeren *et al.* 2014). In the case of educator victims, STEs arising from the contact with victims narratives promote prosocial tendencies (empathy and intergroup forgiveness) through mediational effects. However, there was no effect in the case of the second intervention and it is thought that limitations related to the design, the absence of a comparison control group and small sample size could account for the absence of this finding. In the case of the second intervention, a change in outgroup emotions was achieved, with greater respect and empathy and less anger and hate towards the outgroup and divergent views on the conflict.

On the other hand, the condition based exclusively on statistical information about victimization provoked higher levels of anger and shame and lower guilt than in the intervention condition. This highlights the motivational need to understand traumatic events and to make sense of the experience, and socially share emotional experiences (Rimé *et al.* 2011). These results centre the attention on the discussion of the effects of the information transmitted in the mass media and through social networks, in which terrorist attacks—and other forms of political violence—are presented without contextualising the facts, without humanising, or giving meaning to the atrocities presented.

There are several international experiences around community initiatives to confront the violent past (e.g. López López and Taylor 2021). The intergroup reparation rituals have demonstrated ambivalent effects on victims, with an increase in negative emotions during and after rituals participation, as well as a positive effect such as empowering communities in Guatemala (Martín-Beristain *et al.* 2010b) or reducing negative outgroup stereotypes in Rwanda (Rimé *et al.* 2011). Meta-analytical evidence showed that intergroup forgiveness was associated with intergroup contact, empathy and an inclusive identity that breaks down boundaries between groups (Van Tongeren *et al.* 2014). Nevertheless, there is not abundant evidence supporting the effects of active victim's participation in community settings. In this sense, this study is an innovative proposal that evidences the moral role of victim's educators. Its commitment to the transmission to younger generations of the violent past, and at the same time to the education of young people to peaceful coexistence.

Complementary, the results also highlight a dynamic intervention based on a confrontation to victimization and perspective-taking (outgroup empathy) based on an exposition and analysis of the several narratives victims ("Gleencre" was the first meeting between victims of the different groups of perpetrators in the Basque Country who wanted to share their experiences of victimization). Both narratives incorporate learning and psychological growth, which accompanies the suffering of remembering a sense of justice and reparation. At this moment and more than 10 years after the cessation of ETA violence, there is a strong public debate in Spain and the Basque Country about the recognition of all victims (of ETA as well as of police forces). We believe that these community proposals can support the community psychosocial work in favour of the culture of peace and the recognition of the damage caused. We hope that these results confirm the importance of a) the implementation of peace and coexistence community interventions, b) their evaluation with scientific methods that can prove their validity, and c) the promotion of emotional and moral examples and the relevance of outgroup empathy, as mechanisms to promote peaceful attitudes in post-conflict societies. All of this, in the context of the transmission of traumatic narratives of collective violence to younger generations. Finally, the need for further research on prevention and reconciliation interventions in post-conflict settings is emphasised and called for.

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Catástrofe sociopolítica y dictadura chilena (1973-1990): lugares y memoria en Concepción, región del Biobío, Chile

Sociopolitical catastrophe and Chilean dictatorship (1973-1990):
places and memory in Concepción, Biobío region, Chile

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Sumario: Introducción. 1. Memorias colectivas de la catástrofe en Concepción. 2. Metodología. 3. Resultados. 3.1. Piedra recordatoria a la Vicaría de la Solidaridad del Arzobispado de Concepción. 3.2. Memorial del 23 de agosto, Vega Monumental. 3.3. Memorial del Cementerio General de Concepción. 3.4. Memorial de los Detenidos Desaparecidos y Ejecutados Políticos de la Región del Biobío. Conclusiones. Referencias bibliográficas.

Resumen: Este estudio indaga, desde el enfoque de la historia reciente, en la dictadura chilena (1973-1990), entendida como catástrofe sociopolítica en cuatro lugares de la ciudad de Concepción: piedra recordatoria a la «Vicaría de la Solidaridad Penquista» del Arzobispado de Concepción, el memorial «23 de agosto», el memorial del Cementerio General y el memorial «Detenidos Desaparecidos y Ejecutados Políticos de la Región del Biobío». El supuesto es que la relación entre territorio y memoria permite configurar diferentes formas de catástrofe sociopolítica. Se investigan las dimensiones espaciales,

simbólicas y funcionales de los lugares, buscando explorar las complejidades y singularidades de los significados y prácticas que ha producido la dictadura como catástrofe sociopolítica. La metodología es de tipo cualitativo y utiliza una estrategia documental. Se revisaron fuentes primarias de relatos ya publicados, fuentes secundarias, que comprenden archivos, de tipo académico y de medios de comunicación y documentos en formato visual.

Palabras clave: Catástrofe sociopolítica, dictadura chilena, lugares y memoria en Concepción, región del Biobío.

Abstract: From the perspective of recent history, this article investigates the Chilean dictatorship (1973-1990) understood as a sociopolitical catastrophe in four places in the city of Concepción: the memorial stone to the «Vicaría de la Solidaridad Penquista» of the Archbishopric of Concepción, the memorial «August 23», the memorial of the Central Cemetery and the memorial «Detained-Disappeared and Executed for Political reasons of the Biobío region». The assumption is that the relationship between territory and memory makes it possible to configure different forms of socio-political catastrophe. The spatial, symbolic and functional dimensions of places are investigated, intending to explore the complexities and singularities of the meanings and practices that the dictatorship has produced as a socio-political catastrophe. The methodology used is qualitative and employs a documentary strategy. The study relies on primary sources of reports already published, secondary sources, including archives, academic and media documents, and documents in visual format.

Keywords: sociopolitical catastrophe, Chilean dictatorship, places of memory in Concepción, Biobío region.

Introducción

Este estudio tiene por principal objetivo describir y explorar, desde el enfoque de la historia reciente, los lugares vinculados con la dictadura chilena (1973-1990) en la ciudad de Concepción, región del Biobío, Chile. La perspectiva de la historia reciente, tal como señalan Franco y Levin (2007), tiene por particularidad proponer el estudio de un régimen de historicidad en el que coexiste el pasado y el presente, ya sea, en el encuentro en vida entre el investigador y los actores que fueron protagonistas en una época pasada, en la presencia de una memoria social activa sobre ese momento histórico y finalmente, en la contemporaneidad entre lo vivido por el investigador y el pasado que estudia.

Otra característica de esta perspectiva, es la investigación del pasado «traumático» asociado con crisis sociales y políticas extremas¹, vividas desde la experiencia de quienes los padecen como rupturas y discontinuidades. Respecto a la nominación de «lo reciente», este campo de investigación está a sujeto periodizaciones flexibles, pues son los mismos actores vivos quienes califican a este pasado como próximo. En relación al nexo entre la historia reciente y las memorias, Franco y Levin (2007) afirman que esta perspectiva se enmarca en un deber ético de restituir las historias invisibilizadas o hechas desaparecer por regímenes como las dictaduras y una función política asociada con producir en forma crítica el pasado reciente.

Al respecto, este enfoque solidariza con la temática en estudio de este artículo, a saber, la dictadura militar chilena (1973-1990), y busca, en lo general, relevar las memorias sobre este período, considerado como un quiebre en la historia reciente del país, asunto que permite su identificación con la noción de catástrofe sociopolítica. También, y a propósito del deber ético y la función política, es de interés, en lo específico, abordar cuatro lugares vinculados con la memoria de la dictadura en la ciudad de Concepción para describir explorar las complejidades y singularidades de los significados y prácticas que ha producido la dictadura como catástrofe sociopolítica. Considerando las relaciones entre memorias a propósito de los lugares e historias locales sobre la dictadura, se establece el supuesto de que la relación entre territorio y memoria permite configurar diferentes formas de catástrofe sociopolítica. Esto es así, pues las características del territorio, asociadas con la represión y la violencia de la dictadura,

¹ Tales como: guerras, masacres, genocidios, dictaduras, etc.

determinan relaciones sociales que pueden estar centradas en los quiebres sociales y políticos o, por el contrario, construyan nuevos sentidos que reestablezcan una continuidad histórica. Desde los espacios en estudio, a saber, la piedra recordatoria a la «Vicaría de la Solidaridad Penquista» del Arzobispado de Concepción, el memorial «23 de agosto», el memorial del Cementerio General y el memorial «Detenidos Desaparecidos y Ejecutados Políticos de la Región del Biobío», se investigan las dimensiones espaciales, materiales, simbólicas y funcionales (Nora 1992).

De esta forma, en primer lugar, el artículo introduce algunos antecedentes relevantes sobre la dictadura en Chile y en la ciudad de Concepción. Luego aborda las memorias colectivas asociadas con la dictadura entendida como catástrofe y finalmente, se realiza una descripción de los lugares de memoria, sus significados y prácticas, así como de las dimensiones asociadas con ellos, para concluir sobre las formas de catástrofe sociopolítica que se escenifica en cada lugar de memoria.

Los antecedentes históricos, consignados por la Comisión Nacional de verdad y reconciliación (1996), más conocido como *Informe Rettig*, y la Comisión Nacional sobre prisión política y tortura (2011), *Informe Valech*, y posteriores considerando las rectificaciones en años en cuanto a cifras, señalan a nivel país un total de 38.254 personas afectadas directamente por la dictadura. De ellas, el *Informe Rettig*, califica a 3.216 personas como víctimas de la desaparición forzada o ejecución política. Por otra parte, el *Informe Valech*, considera un total de 33.221 personas detenidas, de las cuales más de un 94% sufrieron torturas. Siendo las detenciones tan masivas, desde el día siguiente del golpe de Estado, se acondicionaron recintos de detención alternativos a las instalaciones militares o policiales, como hospitales, gimnasios, centros educativos, estadios, etc. Al respecto, el *Informe Valech* consignó 1.132 lugares destinados a la represión y tortura en todo el país², que estaban a cargo de Carabineros, Policía de Investigaciones, la Armada o el Ejército de Chile. Considerando que hubo centros clandestinos, como residencias particulares, y una política de negación, ocultamiento o desaparición de los lugares que perdura hasta la actualidad, se puede suponer que éstos fueron muchos más³.

² El listado completo se encuentra en el *Informe Valech* y se clasifica por regiones del país.

³ Un ejemplo de ello en Concepción, es el Cuartel Bahamondes, centro de detención y tortura de la Central Nacional de Investigaciones (CNI) que funcionó durante la dictadura entre 1980 y 1984. Fue demolido, se cambió la numeración del

En el caso de la región del Biobío, los centros de reclusión más masivos fueron, el Estadio Regional, la isla Quiriquina y la Cárcel Pública de la ciudad. De estos lugares, solo el Estadio tiene una placa que indica que el lugar fue centro de detención y tortura, pues la isla está en posesión de la armada y la cárcel fue demolida.

No obstante que en la región hubo 159 centros de detención y tortura (Informe de la Comisión Nacional sobre Prisión Política y Tortura 2004), que es una de las regiones con más hitos de memoria y una de las primeras en instalar memoriales (Aguilera, Cook y Dávila 2007), solo un lugar, el ex «Fuerte el Morro» ha sido declarado monumento histórico y sitio de memoria por la Ley 17. 288⁴ (Consejo de Monumentos Nacionales 2015). A pesar de que los lugares de memoria tanto en la región, y especialmente en la ciudad de Concepción, han constituido históricamente espacios para la realización de conmemoraciones, la mayoría de estos encuentros responden a iniciativas de las organizaciones y/o agrupaciones de derechos humanos y convocan a sus integrantes o personas directamente vinculados con ellos. Otro antecedente relevante es que en una investigación realizada en la ciudad (Tesche *et al.* 2018) sobre lugares de memoria y emociones (Frederickson 2009) mostró que, las emociones dominantes asociadas con los lugares de memoria son de tipo negativas, y corresponden a rabia, miedo y tristeza. Esto es concordante con los relatos que se comunican en las conmemoraciones realizadas en los lugares las que, en su mayoría, se centran en una narrativa de la derrota y que exaltan la pérdida y/o la muerte de las víctimas. Considerando los aportes de Pipper *et al.* (2013a, 2013b, 2015a y 2015b) y Reyes, Cruz y Aguirre (2016), en este estudio, se propone orientar los sentidos de la dictadura hacia el de catástrofe sociopolítica (Jelin 2002; Kaës 2006 y Gatti 2006) atendiendo los sentidos propuestos por Thom (2000) y Rojas (2012) en el contexto de la historia del país (Lira 2013) y la región (Tesche y Villagrán 2017). Estos sentidos permiten reconsiderar los significados de la dictadura. Así, por una parte, las catástrofes, como la dictadura, interrumpen la continuidad y el orden histórico democrático y provocan un daño cultural (Páez 2003) y moral (Agamben 2006) e

lugar, no se conserva un registro de quienes estuvieron detenidos y contó con extremas medidas de seguridad. Actualmente, el edificio residencial que se ubica en su lugar es propiedad privada.

⁴ Esto no significa la tenencia legal del sitio por la organización que lo gestionó, a saber, la Corporación Mutualista Bautista van Schouwen Vasey, ni la habilita para restaurarlo; señalarlo en su condición de centro de detención y tortura; resguardarlo ante amenazas ambientales (frío y humedad), sociales (vandalización), o estructurales, pues su deterioro es inminente.

ideológico (Villoro 2016) a largo plazo (Reyes, Cruz y Aguirre, 2016), dificultándose su transmisión al asociarse a una política de olvido (Páez *et al.* 2001) e interrumpiendo los procesos de memoria (Garretón 2003). No obstante, las catástrofes sociopolíticas también tienen otro tipo de efectos sociales, tales como: la expresión de solidaridad, el compañerismo y el apoyo social entre los sobrevivientes (Tesche y González 2019), así como poner en valor emociones positivas que apunten a fines sociales.

1. Memorias colectivas de la catástrofe en Concepción

Como es sabido, el estudio de las memorias desde lo colectivo fue un aporte original de Hallbawchs (2004), quien considera a las memorias como los recuerdos y los olvidos del pasado que son reconstruidos en función de los grupos sociales a los que pertenecen los sujetos. Para que las memorias puedan proyectarse al futuro estos recuerdos y olvidos requieren de un «hacer» o «trabajos de memoria» (Jelin 2002). Esta actividad, solidariza con la propuesta de Vázquez (2001), para quien las memorias se entienden como acción social «la memoria es una práctica que contribuye (...) a producir inteligibilidades sobre el pasado que nutren la acción social. Hacer memoria, además, favorece la creación de espacios de relación que posibilitan vínculos a partir de los recuerdos compartidos» (305). Es decir, las memorias son producto y productoras de relaciones entre los sujetos y, por lo tanto, participan de significados y prácticas humanas mediadas por el lenguaje en una perspectiva histórica. Para que se realice un trabajo de memoria, ya sea como producción de significados o prácticas, este debe ser original y creativo en función de los problemas y necesidades actuales (Piper *et al.* 2013). Esto implica la producción de nuevos sentidos que comprende un proceso que Vázquez (2018) denomina resignificación y que define como la «práctica social de transformar o reorientar el significado y/o el valor del acontecimiento, situación, lugar, acción, etc. haciendo que adquiera características diferentes en función de un contexto o imaginario social» (423).

Una forma privilegiada para realizar este proceso de resignificación respecto a las memorias colectivas sobre la catástrofe son los lugares de memoria (Santos 2019), pues pueden escenificar una ruptura o quiebre de la continuidad histórica o, al revés, reestablecerla en función de valores y principios sociales más trascendentes. Los lugares de memoria se entienden en este estudio como un «espacio privilegiado de disputa por la construcción de memorias colectivas en

las sociedades latinoamericanas afectadas por dictaduras o conflictos armados internos» (Schindel 2009: 65). En este sentido, un lugar de memoria, si bien puede o no estar reconocido por el Estado, tiene como singularidad su vinculación con la dictadura entendida como catástrofe, es decir, la producción o no de procesos de memorialización que resignifiquen sentidos del pasado, para producir nuevos significados en función del presente. Al respecto, es necesario diferenciar un lugar de memoria de aquellos donde acontecen o no procesos de memorialización, que implican «un impulso activo y una voluntad de incidencia política y a diferencia de la memoria —acto que puede ser privado— integra lo que Arendt denomina «el ámbito de la acción»: iniciativas que ponen algo en movimiento en la esfera pública y cuyos efectos, impredecibles e irreversibles, crean las condiciones para la historia futura» (Schindel 2009: 67). Por una parte, esto implica la participación de actores que no solo están vinculados con lugares, sino también con la difusión y transmisión de mensajes políticos especialmente a generaciones más jóvenes. Por otra parte, se reconocen en estos esfuerzos de memorialización distintos trabajos de memoria (Jelin 2002) que comprenden desde lugares donde han ocurrido acontecimientos violentos, iniciativas como monolitos, memoriales, marcas o estrategias locales, etc. En este sentido, se siguen clasificaciones como la de Messina (2019) o la misma Schindel (2009), que más allá de valorar un espacio respecto a otro, muestran el estado de sus memorias en vinculación con los procesos de memorialización sobre la dictadura como catástrofe. De esta manera, es fundamental considerar que las batallas de la memoria (Jelin 2002, 2004) consisten en pugnas entre diversos relatos que buscan consolidarse, encontrándose entre ellos los que persisten en promover el olvido o el consenso, pero también aquellos que promueven la resistencia desde el pasado con perspectivas futuras.

En este estudio, se atiende a la propuesta de Nora (1992) sobre los lugares, que los diferencia analizando, la dimensión simbólica, que comprende los significados sociales y culturales, la dimensión material, que permite el análisis formal y finalmente, la dimensión espacial de los lugares considerando los sentidos sociales respecto a las espacialidades y dimensión funcional relativa a los usos creativos o productivos.

Desde la perspectiva de las catástrofes y su relación con el territorio, se constata que, en Concepción, en los últimos 50 años, se han producido una gran diversidad de objetos de memoria (Jelin 2002) los que, sin embargo, son desconocidos para la sociedad en general, evidencian tensiones entre el recuerdo y el olvido que dificultan la transmisión y tienen escasa valoración por parte del Estado. Estos an-

tededentes (Tesche *et al.* 2018) dan cuenta de: la necesidad de poner en valor los aspectos simbólicos y no solo los restos materiales; la urgencia de visibilizar la violencia represiva de la dictadura y las historias políticas, sociales, culturales, características de los proyectos políticos de la época; la necesidad de promover significados y prácticas desde memorias vivas (Rabe 2011) con énfasis en el presente, especialmente para las generaciones más jóvenes; la importancia de la creación de lugares que valoren la dimensión antropológica de los habitantes en términos espaciales; la obligación de fomentar el conocimiento y las prácticas vinculadas con los derechos ciudadanos y la necesidad de testimoniar la vida y no solo el daño o la muerte.

2. Metodología

La metodología es de tipo cualitativo y utiliza una estrategia documental (Canales 2006; Ruíz Olabuénaga e Ispizua 1989) que busca describir, y analizar datos relevantes que informan sobre el origen y desarrollo de los lugares de memoria en Concepción desde su inauguración hasta la fecha. La muestra comprende fuentes primarias escritas ya publicadas y fuentes secundarias documentales, escritas y visuales históricas, académicas y de medios de comunicación. La técnica de producción de la información consiste en una primera revisión de testimonios y entrevistas, datos visuales, fotografías, imágenes y mapas; audiovisuales, como videos o documentales; archivos históricos, de prensa, y documentos sobre los cuatro lugares de memoria seleccionados. El criterio de selección de las fuentes es la presencia de contenido temático vinculado con las memorias colectivas de la catástrofe de la dictadura en términos de las dimensiones de los lugares de memoria y los acontecimientos ligados a ellos. Se realizó un análisis de contenidos (Cáceres 2003; Ruíz Olabuénaga 2003), que contempla definición de las unidades de análisis escritas y visuales, establecimiento de reglas de análisis y códigos de clasificación, desarrollo de categorías sostenidas en las distinciones conceptuales de las dimensiones de los lugares e integración final de los hallazgos. Respecto a cada dimensión de los lugares de memoria, se identificó su relación con acontecimientos, hitos y fechas significativas.

3. Resultados

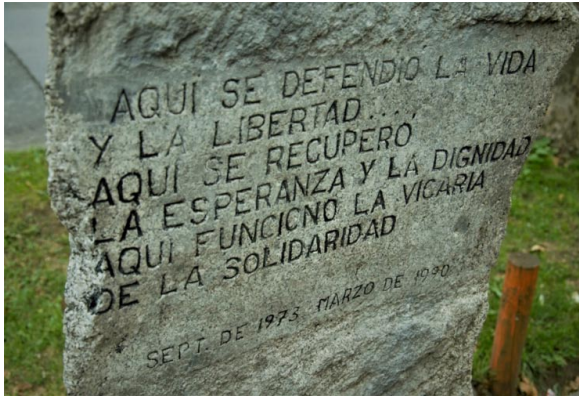
3.1. *Piedra recordatoria a la Vicaría de la Solidaridad del Arzobispado de Concepción*

Desde la dimensión material, corresponde a un monolito, de medianas proporciones, ubicado en la acera de la vía pública, en un sector transitado de la ciudad, y está compuesto por una piedra en la que se encuentra la siguiente inscripción: «Aquí se defendió la vida y la libertad... aquí se recuperó la esperanza y la dignidad... aquí funcionó la Vicaría de la Solidaridad». Inaugurado en el año 1996, se encuentra en mal estado de conservación: las letras inscritas están borrosas y la piedra ha sido dañada por la humedad, la falta de limpieza y rayados sobre su superficie. Desde la clasificación de Schindel (2009), el lugar es de tipo testimonial pues, a pesar de que no rememora una violación a los derechos humanos ocurrida en el lugar, valora el significado afectivo que tuvo para la comunidad de Concepción la Vicaría de la Solidaridad. Esta fue una organización nacional gestada por la Iglesia Católica que prestó apoyo social, jurídico y laboral a los afectados por las violaciones de los derechos humanos durante la dictadura. Se trataba de una gran casona, ubicada en una esquina entre las calles Ainavillo y Barros Arana, con acceso por ambas vías, que desde 1976 hasta 1992, año en el que fue demolida, realizó tareas de administración, atención profesional a los afectados, almacenamiento de archivos y acciones de apoyo hacia personas y organizaciones víctimas de la represión política, entre ellas la Agrupación de Familiares Detenidos Desaparecidos (AFDD). Tal como se señala en un documento que registra el trabajo de la Vicaría, esta dependencia y sus trabajadores fueron objeto de diversos y constantes ofensivas en dictadura (Arzobispado de Concepción 1988).

A pesar de su valor testimonial, desde la perspectiva de Messina (2019), el monolito corresponde a una marca que irrumpe en el espacio público para traer al presente un fragmento de las historias de las luchas sociales de la dictadura. En este sentido, su principal valor es de tipo simbólico pues retoma el valor de principios como la vida, la libertad, la esperanza y la dignidad, para ser transmitidos públicamente.

Imagen 1

Piedra Recordatoria Vicaría de la Solidaridad



Fuente: elaboración propia.

El monolito, se encuentra descentralizado respecto a otros objetos de memoria, estén estos asociados con la Iglesia o la dictadura, y especialmente en relación con su funcionalidad. Respecto a los destinatarios, no considera que actualmente la Vicaría y sus funciones pueden ser desconocidas para las generaciones más jóvenes y tampoco menciona la defensa a los derechos humanos que realizó esta organización. Además, la única mención asociada con la dictadura es el período temporal en que ocurrió, a saber, la inscripción «septiembre 1973 marzo 1990». Por otra parte, respecto a su funcionalidad se plantean múltiples interrogantes en asociación con la catástrofe. En primer lugar, cabe preguntarse por la transmisión de memoria de un lugar desaparecido y la función que este objeto tiene en su lugar. El monolito no logra retomar los principios de la Iglesia, para difundirlos mediante acciones de memoria que desde el recuerdo potencien nuevos sentidos y prácticas creativas en el presente. De esta forma, no logra constituirse en un lugar de memoria. Por otra parte, hace surgir la interrogante de porqué la Iglesia ha desempeñado en la actualidad un papel periférico respecto a las violaciones a los derechos humanos ocurridas en octubre de 2019 durante la revuelta popular en el país⁵.

⁵ El día 18 de octubre de 2019 en Santiago de Chile, a raíz del alza del pasaje del metro, los estudiantes secundarios salieron a protestar en forma masiva. Las manifestaciones se extendieron desde el día 19 de octubre a todo el país cuando miles de personas realizaron movilizaciones y protestas sociales. La represión del Estado

Recientemente se han realizado manifestaciones en la Catedral de la ciudad, que interpelan al actual arzobispo por su falta de apoyo ante las detenciones masivas de jóvenes desde esa fecha. Tal como se señala en el comunicado que realizaron los pobladores, la última manifestación tuvo por objetivo «traer al presente la memoria de una iglesia popular que pusiera como centro la dignidad humana enraizada profundamente en el hacer y vivir de nuestros pueblos y que ya muy poco queda de ella pues hasta el momento se han mantenido como cómplices de la violencia estatal y de la violación de los derechos humanos» (Diario Digital Revolución 2021).

3.2. *Memorial del 23 de agosto, Vega Monumental*

Este memorial, espacialmente está ubicado en el «Paseo de la Memoria Miguel Enríquez» en el que se encuentran diversos murales de organizaciones políticas, fue inaugurado en agosto de 1998 por familiares y agrupaciones populares de Concepción. Al resultar averiado por el terremoto el año 2010, fue restaurado por la Corporación Mutualista Bautista van Schouwen Vasey (2021) ese mismo año. Actualmente, forma parte de un circuito de la memoria gestionado por esta misma organización que rinde homenaje a miembros del Movimiento de Izquierda Revolucionaria (MIR). Desde una dimensión material, consiste en un monolito de piedra de pequeñas dimensiones con un mensaje de homenaje e inscripción de nombres. Espacialmente, se emplaza en un lugar muy transitado, pues se ubica en la «Vega» lugar de comercio de productos y alimentos locales. En este mismo lugar fue asesinado el año 1984, Mario Lagos de 34 años, encargado militar del Teatro de Operaciones Sur (TOS) y miembro del MIR y uno de los pocos sobrevivientes de la guerrilla de Neltume⁶, y además fue herido Nelson Herrera, de 30 años de edad, también miembro del MIR y

comenzó ese mismo día mediante la figura de «Estado de excepción», «toque de queda» y vigilancia extrema a toda la población. Además, ocurrieron graves atropellos a los derechos humanos como torturas, violaciones, secuestros, asesinatos y mutilaciones. Se desconocen las cifras oficiales, pero basta considerar que hubo alrededor de 500 jóvenes con traumatismos oculares con pérdida de visión en uno o ambos ojos.

⁶ La guerrilla de Neltume fue una acción político-militar de resistencia desarrollada por el MIR durante la dictadura cívico-militar chilena. Esta se emplazó en la selva cordillerana al interior de la ciudad de Valdivia durante el año 1981, aconteció en el contexto de la denominada «Operación Retorno» y tenía por finalidad instalar un foco guerrillero en la zona. Este intento de resistencia armada terminó bajo el cerco de una desproporcionada fuerza militar con la muerte en combate, enfermedades y prisión

encargado político militar del TOS, para posteriormente ser asesinado en un sector rural en las afueras de la ciudad. No obstante, en este monolito se registran, además de sus nombres, los nombres de siete miristas ejecutados en Concepción, Los Ángeles y Valdivia, en el contexto de la «Operación Alfa Carbón» perpetrada por agentes de la Central Nacional de Informaciones (CNI) los días 23 y 24 de agosto de 1984.

Imagen 2
Memorial del 23 de agosto



Fuente: elaboración propia.

Respecto al tipo de espacio que representa, y considerando la clasificación de Schindel (2009), se puede afirmar que corresponde a un memorial, en tanto lugar de conmemoración que busca mantener activa la memoria del MIR mediante el homenaje a los asesinados de este movimiento. Según la clasificación de Messina (2019) corresponde a un sitio auténtico, porque el lugar fue escenario del crimen y sirve como conmemoración de la muerte de los militantes. El memorial no corresponde a un sitio emblemático, sino de tipo ordinario, pues condensa sentidos que son conocidos principalmente por exintegrantes del MIR y organizaciones actuales vinculadas a las memorias y derechos

y ejecución de la mayoría de los guerrilleros que participaron (Comité memoria de Neltume 2003).

humanos. En este sentido, porta un relato fragmentado al presentar un mensaje sobre una historia particular, la operación represiva denominada «Alfa Carbón» y de un partido político determinado. Además, es un lugar instituyente, dado que la identificación del lugar y la realización del memorial fue llevada a cabo, como se señaló, por organizaciones barriales.

Una problemática asociada con este memorial es que se erige desde las memorias entendidas como las batallas (Jelin 2002) de la generación de sobrevivientes, que se debaten entre perpetuar la resistencia y las experiencias de derrota del MIR, como la del año 1984. Según afirma Patricia Zalaquett, exmirista y esposa de uno de los asesinados: «el 23 de agosto significó el último gran golpe del cual el MIR no se pudo recuperar (...) ese golpe significó no solo siete muertos, sino muchos detenidos, secuestros, allanamientos...en un montón de zonas...en todos lados» (Corporación Mutualista Bautista van Schouwen Vasey 2021).

Este memorial rescata las memorias generacionales (Assmann 2011) pues porta el mensaje de privilegiar el compañerismo y la horizontalidad en el trabajo político más que la jerarquía y la toma de decisiones centralizadas. Los nombres inscritos en el memorial son de dirigentes del MIR que tenían mucha participación en sectores populares y que relevaban en su vida cotidiana los valores de solidaridad, mutualismo y colaboración. De esta forma, mantener sus memorias vivas (Rabe 2011) significa mantener la conciencia de resistencia política popular. Así, desde una perspectiva simbólica, es la vida y este espíritu de lucha el que se busca transmitir mediante la inscripción del siguiente mensaje: «La muerte no pudo con tu sonrisa/ que latiendo en la ausencia/ conserva la memoria/ más allá de cualquier bandera/ el cielo llora la estúpida soberbia/ que no pudo comprender/ tanto amor por la vida».

Desde una dimensión funcional, este memorial busca promover, en el presente y a futuro, la colectividad y la asociación entre las distintas personas y organizaciones que solidarizan con la promoción de las memorias y los derechos humanos. Las conmemoraciones que se realizan en sus proximidades mantienen el sentido de resistencia ante la catástrofe en el presente, mediante la denuncia en la actualidad, de la impunidad y la vulneración del derecho a la verdad. Se busca reafirmar la comprensión del proceso histórico que generó la impunidad, entendida como una nueva forma de funcionamiento del Estado que se instaló con el propósito de eliminar al «enemigo interno» para refundar el país, asunto que se conecta en el presente con la situación de vulneración de derechos durante la revuelta social de octubre.

Sin embargo, el memorial también plantea interrogantes en cuanto a aquello que es objeto de homenaje. Por una parte, se conmemoran

memorias heroicas y ejemplares, de hombres que murieron asesinados por la lucha ante la dictadura. Se trata de memorias que, si bien buscan, mediante los homenajes, el reconocimiento social de un revolucionario y de un complejo proyecto de cambio social, tienden a centrarse en las personas y no en sus proyectos políticos e ideologías. Por otra parte, retomando la pregunta de Jelin (2017: 267) «¿Qué es lo que hay que recordar?», se considera que una parte del relato que se realiza en el memorial debe poner en evidencia los silenciamientos respecto a la resistencia política, así como también, promover la reflexión sobre las posibilidades de lucha ante la democracia actual en la que también se han vulnerado los derechos humanos en la región⁷.

Finalmente, se puede afirmar que existen dificultades para la transmisión de las memorias. Una de ellas, es la que señala Vidaurrázaga (2019) que considera pertinente validar a otros actores y formas de narrar los proyectos políticos que no sean desde la autoridad que identifica experiencia militante y verdad.

3.3. *Memorial del Cementerio General de Concepción*

Desde una perspectiva espacial, el memorial se ubica en un sector periférico del Cementerio General de Concepción el que, a su vez, se encuentra en una zona alejada de la ciudad, bordeando el río Biobío. Desde su materialidad, consiste en una plataforma compuesta por cinco columnas planas de hormigón dispuestas en filas, jardineras y una explanada con asientos. En cuatro de sus columnas se registraron los nombres de 118 detenidos desaparecidos y ejecutados políticos, en la quinta se rinde homenaje a todas las víctimas de violaciones de derechos humanos a través de dos estrofas del poema «Siempre» de Pablo Neruda. Fue inaugurado el año 2015, financiado por la Ilustre Municipalidad de Concepción y por la Corporación Social y Cultural de Concepción-SEMCO, a cargo del cementerio, y diseñado por estudiantes de arquitectura de la Universidad de Concepción.

⁷ Tal como se ha señalado en investigaciones previas: «Según el Instituto Nacional de Derechos Humanos Biobío (INDH), se han recibido 734 denuncias y presentado 160 acciones judiciales (información actualizada al 21-01-2020), que corresponden a los delitos de torturas, apremios ilegítimos, violencia innecesaria, homicidio frustrado, lesiones graves, homicidio y recursos de amparo. Otros datos preocupantes, cuyas estadísticas son imprecisas, son los reportes de violencia sexual ejercida contra menores de edad (niñas y niños)» (Tesche y González 2020: 27)

Imagen 3

Memorial del Cementerio General de Concepción



Fuente: elaboración propia.

Según la clasificación de Messina (2019), el memorial corresponde a un sitio emblemático del pasado reciente y despliega diversos sentidos que pueden ser abordados especialmente desde lo simbólico. En primer lugar, se encuentra el mensaje poético de Pablo Neruda, representado por dos estrofas de la sección «La arena traicionada» del poemario *Canto General*. Este asunto cobra relevancia, tanto por el poema como por el autor. El poema se centra, en el fenómeno social de las muertes injustas, teniendo como hecho paradigmático la matanza ocurrida en el año 1948 en la plaza Bulnes de Santiago, donde murieron sindicalistas del salitre que reivindicaban mejores condiciones laborales. Esto se liga de manera directa con el compromiso político del poeta, militante del Partido Comunista (PC) quien asume este dolor como propio y que solidariza con las víctimas compartiendo sus sufrimientos. El hecho de que una de las columnas del memorial, este completamente dedicada a los versos del poeta comunista, no es casual, especialmente si se atiende a que cada 11 de septiembre (fecha del golpe de Estado), es el PC quien realiza una romería a este lugar.

Por otra parte, también desde la dimensión simbólica, este memorial es una expresión de tensiones entre o batallas por las memorias (Jelin

2002, 2004). Al respecto, se puede señalar que éstas surgieron desde el mismo día de la inauguración del memorial, pues faltaron nombres de personas, que coincidentemente pertenecían al MIR. Las organizaciones que gestionaron este memorial, fueron la Agrupación de Familiares Detenidos Desaparecidos (AFDD), integrada principalmente por personas del PC, y la Agrupación de ex presos políticos, quienes señalaron que esta ausencia se debía a falta de comunicación entre las organizaciones y entre ellas y el Estado quien financió la construcción del memorial. Sin embargo, la Corporación Mutualista Bautista van Schouwen, integrada por ex miristas considera que esta omisión fue intencional. Durante la misma ceremonia el alcalde de la ciudad, señaló que los nombres serían inscritos a la brevedad (Diario Resumen 2015). A pesar de ello, a la fecha esto aún no se ha concretado, lo que sigue generando tensiones entre las organizaciones de diversas orientaciones políticas.

Otro aspecto simbólico relevante es que, al estar ubicado en un cementerio, el memorial responde a una necesidad de un lugar donde realizar un duelo, asunto especialmente relevante en el caso de los desaparecidos. Sin embargo, ello tiene el riesgo de identificar la desaparición con la muerte común, lo que simbólicamente implica no solo una negación de la violación de derechos humanos y la falta de justicia y verdad ante la desaparición. Esto es evidente, al presentar todos los nombres en las placas, diferenciados solo entre ejecutados y desaparecidos, homogeneizando la condición de todas las víctimas. Por otra parte, se puede interrogar por la condición política de todos los inscritos en las placas, la que no es señalada ni diferenciada.

Respecto a la funcionalidad, como se señaló, todos los años el PC realiza una romería, que destaca por su masividad y representación. El memorial es utilizado como punto de llegada de un extenso recorrido, al final del que se realizan discursos donde se conmemora a las víctimas en general y se realizan actos artísticos.

3.4. *Memorial de los Detenidos Desaparecidos y Ejecutados Políticos de la Región del Biobío*

Este memorial, inaugurado el año 2014, también se ubica en un sector periférico de la ciudad. Se encuentra en un terreno descampado que está entre un centro comercial o *mall* de compras y una población que resultó de una toma ilegal de terrenos que actualmente está siendo desalojada. Así, el memorial está en un espacio que divide la monumentalidad del *mall* asociada al consumo y un sector marcado por la pobreza y la necesidad. El lugar exacto donde se encuentra corresponde a la antigua Estación

Central de Ferrocarriles, que actualmente se encuentra desmantelada, es decir, en el sector suroeste de la ciudad, en las cercanías de la rivera del río Biobío. Al estar colindante con la línea férrea se impide el tránsito libre hacia y desde sectores más céntricos de Concepción.

Desde una perspectiva material, se trata de una obra imponente que consiste en una plataforma compuesta por bloques de hormigón, donde se representa a una paloma herida junto a tres portales que apuntan a hacia la Facultad de Medicina de la Universidad de Concepción, los Tribunales de Justicia y el propio Memorial. Estos portales permiten el paso de la «luz de la vida», posibilitando también el tránsito de los visitantes a través de ellos. En el centro se sitúan dos bloques de piedra con la leyenda «Saldrás de cualquier lugar a recibirme y abrazarme y recuperaré en ese abrazo todos los soles que me han robado», junto con los listados de víctimas por año. En total, fueron incluidas 294 personas, de los cuales 168 detenidos desaparecidos, 28 víctimas con restos encontrados y 98 ejecutados políticos. Además, incluye una fuente de agua y bancos para que las personas puedan sentarse y reflexionar.

Imagen 4

Memorial de los Detenidos Desaparecidos y Ejecutados Políticos de la región del Biobío



Fuente: elaboración propia.

El memorial fue impulsado por la AFDD de Concepción con el apoyo de las autoridades de gobierno. El hecho de que hay sido financiado con recursos del Estado, ha significado que las autoridades de turno participen de las actividades realizadas en el lugar y que sea conocido como memorial del «Bicentenario de la independencia de Chile», hecho que ocurrió durante el gobierno de Bachelet. Desde una perspectiva simbólica, el ser conocido con este nombre omite la principal motivación para su realización, a saber, conmemorar a las víctimas de violaciones a los derechos humanos.

Desde una perspectiva simbólica, el memorial también ha enfrentado desde su inauguración diversas tensiones. Por una parte, estando ya terminado, el terremoto de 2010 en la ciudad postergó su inauguración y generó el conflicto de tener que ser entregado a la comunidad durante el gobierno de Piñera⁸, asunto que fue rechazado por la AFDD y postergó su inauguración hasta fines de su mandato, es decir, octubre de 2014. Además, y al igual que en el memorial del Cementerio General, se generaron debates por el número de víctimas registradas, cuyo número era inferior al que correspondía. También desde una perspectiva simbólica, el memorial ha sufrido la condena explícita de la derecha chilena mediante su vandalización el año 2020. En la madrugada del primero de enero de ese año, se encontraron en el lugar diversos rayados alusivos al antiguo movimiento fascista «Patria y Libertad» que operó activamente durante la Unidad Popular para desestabilizar el gobierno de Allende. El memorial fue severamente dañado con pintura y por acciones que, con cuchillos, intentaron el borrado de los nombres inscritos. Además, se encontraron fecas de animales esparcidas por todo el lugar, lo que evidenciaba la intención de daño con alevosía. Este hecho motivó una declaración de prensa de la AFDD en lugar y la solicitud a la Municipalidad de una acción de limpieza.

Desde una perspectiva funcional, el memorial ha sido el centro de diversos homenajes en fechas simbólicas, como el día del detenido desaparecido, el día de los derechos humanos, entre otros. A los actos asiste la AFDD, aunque sin identificarse a un grupo político en particular y funcionarios del gobierno, en especial el alcalde o sus representantes, cuyos discursos tienden a centrarse en la condición de víctimas de los desaparecidos o ejecutados, más que en sus militancias o resistencias y no condenan de forma explícita el terrorismo de Estado de la dictadura.

⁸ El primer gobierno de Sebastián Piñera se desarrolló entre marzo del 2010 y marzo del 2014, y representa a las fuerzas políticas de orientación de derecha, las que en su mayoría apoyaron el golpe de Estado y la dictadura chilena, contando entre sus militantes a ex agentes del Estado de ese período.

4. Conclusiones

En el presente artículo se describieron y analizaron desde la perspectiva de la historia reciente y las memorias colectivas cuatro lugares de la comuna de Concepción: piedra recordatoria a la «Vicaría de la Solidaridad Penquista» del Arzobispado de Concepción, el memorial «23 de agosto», el memorial del Cementerio General y el memorial «Detenidos Desaparecidos y Ejecutados Políticos de la Región del Biobío». El análisis consideró las dimensiones simbólicas, materiales y funcionales de estos lugares de memoria. La noción de catástrofe sociopolítica, plantea un enfoque de la dictadura cívico-militar que permite comprender tanto sus efectos dinámicos durante ese período como sus manifestaciones actuales a propósito de los lugares de memoria y la relación con su territorio.

Desde una perspectiva espacial, tres de los cuatro lugares en estudio son poco visibles por sus condiciones de acceso y bajo tránsito de personas.

Desde una perspectiva material, se constata que los lugares que han recibido financiamiento del Estado, son más monumentales y con una propuesta más compleja en cuanto a los mensajes que comunican a los destinatarios. Desde una perspectiva simbólica en todos los lugares se revelan tensiones entre recuerdo y olvido, las que se vinculan con instituciones, como el Estado y la Iglesia; las organizaciones políticas que buscan establecer criterios de verdad y, con los grupos de derecha que persisten en el negacionismo, expresado en los actos de vandalización. Finalmente, respecto a la funcionalidad, se constata que, en todos los lugares, a excepción de la piedra recordatoria de la Vicaría de la Solidaridad, se realizan actos conmemorativos y homenajes, lo que da cuenta de su actividad y relevancia para las organizaciones, familiares y grupos políticos.

Sin embargo, los cuatro lugares plantean distintos problemas y modalidades en que se despliegan las memorias. De este modo, la piedra conmemorativa de la Vicaría de la solidaridad da cuenta de la precariedad de la memorialización de una institución vinculada con la Iglesia, que tuvo una gran relevancia durante la dictadura mediante la defensa de los derechos humanos y que actualmente se presenta desvinculada de motivación de origen, del territorio y de las necesidades y problemas del presente. El memorial «23 de agosto», si bien destaca los actos heroicos de los militantes caídos y presenta una mayor conexión con el territorio, no releva el proyecto social y político de las víctimas en conexión con las vulneraciones de derechos que están aconteciendo en la actualidad. El memorial del Cementerio General de la ciudad tanto

en sus dimensiones funcionales como simbólicas pone en evidencia tensiones y quiebres políticos históricos entre las organizaciones de memoria y derechos humanos, como entre éstas y el Estado. Lo mismo se observa en el memorial de los Detenidos Desaparecidos y Ejecutados Políticos de la región del Biobío, donde la permanencia de la catástrofe se evidencia en haber sido objeto de vandalización reciente.

Estos resultados, en relación con la noción de catástrofe destacan la disyunción violenta del lazo social durante la dictadura que continúa operando a nivel organizacional, institucional, política y cultural. Los hallazgos hacen presente la necesidad de promover y gestionar lugares de memoria con una vinculación territorial, que destaquen valores sociales y políticos, y que se encuentren abiertos a nuevas significaciones en la actualidad.

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Género, ideología política-religiosa y expresión emocional en víctimas reportadas en el Informe de la Comisión de la Verdad de Ecuador: un análisis exploratorio

Gender and political-religious ideology in victims reported in the Ecuador Truth Commission Report: an exploratory analysis

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Sumario: 1. Justicia Transicional y funciones de la Comisiones de Verdad. 2. Justicia transicional en Ecuador y el Informe de la Comisión de la Verdad. 3. Género y Justicia Transicional. 4. La ideología política-religiosa en las Comisiones de Verdad en América Latina. 5. Expresión e intercambio emocional en víctimas posterior a conflictos. 6. Objetivos y presentación del estudio. 7. Método. 7.1. Participantes. 7.2. Medidas. 7.3. Procedimiento. 7.4. Análisis de datos. 8. Resultados. 9. Conclusión. 10. Limitaciones y futuros estudios. Bibliografía.

Resumen: El presente estudio explora las diferencias por género en aspectos relacionados con la ideología político-religiosa y la expresión emocional en personas que son reportadas en el Informe de la Comisión de

la Verdad de Ecuador (ICVE), que recopiló la información de vulneraciones de derechos humanos en el periodo 1983-2008. Participaron 64 víctimas directas, evaluando la percepción por ideología política-religiosa, la valoración del trabajo de la Comisión, la afectividad y la compartición social de las emociones. Los resultados identifican diferencias estadísticamente significativas entre hombres y mujeres en las variables de edad, ideología, evaluación del ICVE e inhibición social (todas las $p < .05$). Se discuten las implicancias que promovería un análisis de género en fases posteriores al trabajo de Comisiones de Verdad en América Latina.

Palabras clave: género, ideología, personas reportadas, derechos humanos, Comisión de Verdad Ecuador

Abstract: The present study explores gender differences in aspects related to political-religious ideology and emotional expression in people reported in the Report of the Truth Commission of Ecuador (ICVE), which compiled information on human rights violations in the period 1983-2008. Sixty-four direct victims participated, evaluating perception by political-religious ideology, assessment of the work of the Commission, affectivity and social sharing of emotions. The results identify statistically significant differences between men and women in the variables of age, ideology, evaluation of the ICVE and social inhibition (all $p < .05$). The implications of a gender analysis in subsequent phases of Truth Commission work in Latin America are discussed.

Keywords: gender, ideology, reported persons, human rights, Truth Commission Ecuador.

1. Justicia Transicional y funciones de la Comisiones de Verdad

Diversas sociedades latinoamericanas presentaron regímenes dictatoriales y autoritarios en las décadas setenta y ochenta, que configuraron innumerables violaciones de derechos humanos a la población civil. Esto ocurre en el marco de la Doctrina de Seguridad Nacional, en la cual el ejercicio del poder del Estado se plantea desde el concepto de guerra interna que prevé la destrucción de las fuerzas insurgentes y la neutralización del aparato político subversivo. Una vez que se interrumpen estos procesos de violencia estatal, se generan diversos mecanismos que impliquen la implementación de procesos de democratización, que permita una cohesión ante la fragmentación y estigmatización presentada en los periodos de violencia y una búsqueda de un estado de derecho (Arnosó *et al.* 2014; Cárdenas *et al.* 2013a).

Uno de estos mecanismos corresponde a la «justicia transicional», la cual es entendida como «procesos interrelacionados de enjuiciamiento y rendición de cuentas, difusión de la verdad, indemnizaciones y reforma institucional» (Lopera 2011: 5). Dentro de los mecanismos propios de la justicia transicional se encuentran las Comisiones de la Verdad, que se orientan a la consolidación de normas y la cohesión social, posibilitando, de este modo, garantizar la no repetición de futuras violencias y recuperar la confianza institucional (Beristain *et al.* 2010). Esto plantea que las funciones de las Comisiones de la Verdad se orientan al esclarecimiento de la verdad; en el reconocimiento de las violaciones de derechos humanos de las personas afectadas; contribuir a una memoria colectiva inclusiva orientada al futuro y en prevenir nuevas violencias y la búsqueda de justicia (Cárdenas *et al.* 2013b). A pesar de esto, se han encontrado limitaciones en el alcance de los Informes de las Comisiones de Verdad respecto a la reparación de las víctimas, a partir de las expectativas generadas en sus testimonios (Mathias *et al.* 2021; Resolución sobre impunidad, N° 2005/81 de la Comisión de Derechos Humanos de Naciones Unidas), la falta de cumplimiento de las recomendaciones, los cuales presentan un efecto negativo que permita una reconstrucción de la confianza social y profundiza las secuelas de las violaciones de derechos humanos cometidas en el pasado (Reyes-Valenzuela *et al.* 2021). De este modo, es relevante que los trabajos de las Comisiones de la Verdad sean percibidos en la búsqueda y comprensión de la verdad y en parte de una tarea mayor que incluye la responsabilidad por las violaciones a derechos humanos cometidas (Oficina Alto Comisionado de Derechos Humanos 2006).

2. Justicia transicional en Ecuador y el Informe de la Comisión de la Verdad

En Ecuador, el periodo de violencia sigue la tendencia de la referida Doctrina de Seguridad Nacional, la que resulta impuesta en el gobierno de León Febres Cordero entre los años 1984 y 1988, en la cual se establece una idea de enemigo interno. A partir de ese periodo, a pesar de que se producen otros gobiernos posteriores, la DSN seguía operando en las instituciones militares y policiales (Reyes-Valenzuela *et al.* 2015).

Con posterioridad, el trabajo y posterior Informe de la Comisión de la Verdad de Ecuador (Monge *et al.* 2010) buscó dignificar a las víctimas de graves violaciones de los derechos humanos y delitos de lesa humanidad ocurridos entre el año 1983 y 2008, en hechos que fueron de responsabilidad directa del Estado. Una vez finalizado el trabajo y presentado el Informe de la Comisión de la Verdad en el 2010, se identificaron 118 casos y 459 víctimas de graves violaciones a los derechos humanos. Este informe elaboró 155 recomendaciones, en la cual se impulsa una articulación con las instancias competentes del Estado, orientada al esclarecimiento de la verdad, investigación, juzgamiento y sanción de responsables, la reparación integral a víctimas y reformas institucionales para prevenir la repetición, como medidas interdependientes (Monge *et al.* 2010; Reyes-Valenzuela *et al.* 2015 y 2018).

Ahora bien, se ha reconocido que el trabajo de las Comisiones de la Verdad presenta impactos dispares en el reconocimiento y valoración de sus aportaciones (Mathias *et al.* 2020) dada la complejidad de la implementación «mecanismos de justicia restaurativa» orientados a la judicialización y al derecho a la reparación de las víctimas, que en Ecuador no ha sido una excepción¹. Esto revela que, en las sociedades especialmente latinoamericanas que transitan hacia la paz, los dispositivos institucionales presentan diversas limitaciones y las obligaciones de los Estados resultan omitidas o se han generado respuestas excepcionales.

3. Género y Justicia Transicional

La discusión sobre la categoría género puede situarse desde dos planteamientos: a) el género representa un aspecto inherente

¹ Para más detalles sobre el estado de cumplimiento de las medidas del Informe, véase CIDH (2015), Aguirre *et al.* (2019) y Solís-Chiriboga (2018).

de las relaciones sociales que se basan en las diferencias que distinguen los sexos; b) el género conforma una forma primaria de relaciones significantes de poder (Wallach 2008). Esto sugiere que las representaciones de género estarán mediatizadas por distintos patrones políticos, económicos, sociales y culturales, los cuales tienen en común una posición de privilegio y de dominio de lo masculino sobre lo femenino. Esto configura que estas diferencias sean vistas en términos de jerarquía dicotómica, en las cuales los hombres presentan un dominio en el ámbito público y las mujeres en el privado (Rosaldo *et al.* 1974), lo que generaría diversas implicaciones que explican la desigualdad sexual. No obstante, posteriores desarrollos sostienen que más que una esfera pública o privada, debiera centrarse en la producción y la reproducción (MacCormack 2000) y, en particular, del significado que las actividades de las mujeres asumen en interacciones sociales (Rosaldo 1980). Luego, tales diferencias han promovido que se establezcan patrones que justifican la sumisión, que hombres y mujeres experimenten tipos de violencia disímiles y la continuación de un modelo patriarcal amparado por los Estados, el cual no solo se orienta a lo masculino que ostenta el poder, sino, además, porque está garantizando ciertas relaciones sociales que supone relaciones de subordinación (Valobra 2015).

En relación a la categoría de género en los procesos de Justicia Transicional, se ha identificado que este marco de subordinación de lo femenino respecto de lo masculino, está presente antes, durante y con posterioridad a los periodos y hechos configurativos de violencia. Este patrón de género no ha sido abordado en los Informes de las Comisiones de Verdad en América Latina, salvo algunas excepciones (e.g., Guatemala, Perú, Ecuador y recientemente, Colombia), los cuales se han mantenido neutros al género, lo que ha sido identificado como *sesgos de género* (Mendia 2012), al reconocer que la mayoría de las víctimas está conformada por hombres. En el caso del ICVE, de las 459 personas documentadas, un 16 % fueron mujeres. A pesar de esto, Mendia Azkue refiere los efectos de tales sesgos, puesto que los crímenes cometidos contra mujeres:

Tienden a quedar aún más impunes que los cometidos contra hombres y las vulneraciones de sus derechos suelen estar subrepresentadas en los procesos de búsqueda de la verdad, y su acceso a la justicia y a medidas de reconocimiento y reparación se ve limitado por barreras culturales, psicosociales, políticas y económicas propias de la organización patriarcal de las sociedades. (Mendia 2012, 33)

Brevemente, en relación al periodo previo a la violencia, se ha identificado que el contexto refuerza la estructura patriarcal y, a nivel social, los roles son socializados y ejercidos bajo esta desigualdad en hombres y mujeres. Luego, en la etapa durante el conflicto, desde los Estados, al citado refuerzo de lo patriarcal, se suma una *represión sexual*, que consiste en una anulación de lo femenino y se utilizan mecanismos represivos que arremeten directamente contra la feminidad (Abad 2009). Esto sugiere que la violencia ejercida contra hombres y mujeres dependerá de los objetivos y los métodos, que variarán según el género (Jelin 2001). De acuerdo a Wood (2009) esta violencia por género presenta variaciones, dado que, en algunos conflictos, por ejemplo, se expresará directamente en una violencia sexual que aumenta prácticas sexuales previas o, en otros, se gestarán patrones previamente inexistentes. A pesar de esto, cabe resaltar que no necesariamente en todos los conflictos los grupos recurren a la violencia sexual². En el ICVE, en específico, se incorpora un apartado referido a la violencia sexual y enfoque de género, en el que se identifica que, si bien estas violencias no obedecieron a una política de Estado, sí se configuraron como prácticas extendidas y que fueron justificadas en el discurso de la DSN (Monge *et al.* 2010). Se detectó que el 19% del total de las víctimas declararon alguna forma de violencia sexual, de las cuales del total de mujeres víctimas ocurrió en un 34.8% y en los hombres un 4.9%. (Monge *et al.* 2010). Con esto, se confirma que el uso de la violencia sexual se reconoce como una violencia de género, que afecta mayoritariamente a mujeres, que va acompañado de comportamientos específicos y que produce consecuencias tales como el embarazo (Mantilla 2010). En este punto, la violencia sexual documentada se orientó a la sociedad de individuos y grupos que amenazaban la preservación de las concepciones tradicionales de familia, de religión, de la propiedad privada y del orden machista constituido (Monge *et al.* 2010).

Posteriormente, en el periodo después del conflicto, los Informes de las Comisiones de la Verdad que sí han reconocido la categoría de género, han establecido diferencias en relación a las violencias, en particular, a la ya señalada violencia sexual y respecto a las medidas de reparación integral. Por otro lado, también se han encontrado formas diferenciadas por género para elaborar la memoria de hechos dramáticos, en los cuales las mujeres tienden a recordar eventos con

² Para una revisión más amplia sobre el uso y no de la violencia sexual en contextos de guerra, véase Elisabeth J. Wood (2009).

más detalles, con mayor referencia a aspectos privados y a relaciones personalizadas, en tanto los hombres suelen ser más sintéticos en sus narrativas, en una lógica racional y política (Leydesdorff *et al.* 2017).

De este modo, resulta relevante explorar las diferencias por género que se producen después de los conflictos, en algunos casos, a partir de los trabajos de las Comisiones de la Verdad. En este punto, los trabajos de Mendia Azkue resultan de interés para evidenciar las diferencias por género en el trabajo de las Comisiones de Verdad (Mendia 2012 y 2020). Como la propia autora lo señala, las medidas de justicia transicional implementadas en diversos países, lo que incluye América Latina, son de carácter oficial y no están basadas en análisis que incluyan la perspectiva de género, a pesar de que se reconoce las posibilidades que ofrecen las Comisiones de Verdad del acceso a una justicia de género (Mendia 2020). No obstante, se constata que los avances en el acceso a la justicia se han venido produciendo a partir de la lucha colectiva y organizada de las propias mujeres, en distintos espacios de reivindicaciones, ya sea políticos, organizacionales o sociales (Mendia *et al.* 2017).

4. La ideología política-religiosa en las Comisiones de Verdad en América Latina

El concepto de ideología, producto de su extenso e intenso debate histórico-teórico, ha adquirido características polisémicas a raíz de las diversas tradiciones epistemológicas en Ciencias Sociales que la han analizado (Manzi 2009). Su uso se ha movido entre perspectivas generales y estrechas, y entre enfoques centrados en los procesos de dominación social e institucional y la delimitación del campo político y del Estado (Eagleton 1997).

La ideología pasa a orientar la forma en la que los miembros de una comunidad política organizan sus mediaciones cognitivas y afectivas (Brussino y Acuña 2015). Es un esquema cognitivo que se organiza con base en múltiples dimensiones de contenido, y que su estudio presenta dificultades de operacionalización. Frente a ello, Brussino *et al.* (2011) desarrollan un análisis de posicionamiento actitudinal sobre temas sociales y políticos determinados que son parte de los debates públicos. Este concepto se refiere al modo en que se articulan diversas actitudes, creencias y valores relativamente estables con lo cual los sujetos se posicionan ante el mundo político y/o social en un grupo social determinado (Carvacho y Haye 2008). Por ello, es relevante complejizar el estudio de la ideología a partir de su relación con los procesos de

valoración social, entendiendo los valores como instrumentos que las y los ciudadanos usan para organizar su conocimiento sobre ámbitos como lo político o religioso y definir sus preferencias.

La ideología política se ha venido tratando como categoría que permite entender las afiliaciones políticas de las/los ciudadanos, sea esta hacia partidos políticos o autodenominaciones como independientes (Brussino y Rabbia 2007). En este sentido, la producción de evidencias empíricas en el análisis de las Comisiones de la Verdad en América Latina, se ha concentrado en situar la ideología en el ámbito de percepciones y valores asociados al posicionamiento en el espectro político, esto es: de izquierda, centro y derecha, aunque estas relaciones no han sido ampliamente trabajadas en las Comisiones de la Verdad. Arnosó *et al.* (2015), para el caso chileno, muestran que cuanto mayor es el nivel de afectación por la violencia colectiva, más a la izquierda se ubica la población. Zubieta *et al.* (2015) en Argentina, indagaron en las posiciones subjetivas hacia el pasado y vieron que hay una firme apuesta por una memoria aleccionadora, que permita aprender de lo sucedido. De este modo:

Controlando los efectos sobre la varianza de la edad y el posicionamiento ideológico, solamente se encuentran diferencias significativas en función del grado de victimización al considerar la actitud de ocultamiento sobre lo sucedido. Al respecto, son las víctimas directas quienes más se resisten a no revisar el pasado y hay una baja disposición al perdón, independientemente del grado de victimización de los participantes. (Zubieta *et al.* 2015, 112)

Respecto a la ideología religiosa, se ha identificado que la religiosidad corresponde a un concepto multidimensional, puesto que se asocia a un sistema de creencias, actitudes y prácticas en actividades religiosas (Garssen y de Jager 2007). Estas acciones podrían desencadenar conductas de afrontamiento para abordar situaciones y conflictos personales, familiares o sociales, aunque el presentar una fuerte identificación religiosa no necesariamente se relaciona a participar en tipos de afrontamiento religioso (Block 2006). En este punto, tales afrontamientos religiosos suelen aparecer en personas que han vivido situaciones de alto estrés o trauma, que permitiría redefinir los hechos (Pargament *et al.* 1998).

Por otro lado, se ha planteado que las personas que pertenecen a un grupo social se vinculan a creencias religiosas que proyectan sus ideologías políticas (Cuevas y Dawson 2021). Estos autores identificaron una correlación positiva entre la religiosidad y los valores conservadores, la resistencia al cambio y la tradición. En este caso,

fundamentalmente, la religión occidental «proporciona una base para mantener el orden social y las normas imperantes, al tiempo que desalienta cuestionamiento, la innovación y el autodescubrimiento» (Cuevas y Dawson 2021, 14). Esto sugiere que personas con una ideología religiosa podrían adherirse a orientaciones políticas que privilegien tales valores, especialmente, asociados con valores de seguridad, conformidad y tradición (Purko *et al.* 2011).

En relación a estudios que aborden la religiosidad y las Comisiones de Verdad, se ha referido que la religiosidad reforzaría la voluntad de las víctimas en perdonar (Arnosó *et al.* 2015; Cárdenas *et al.* 2016), puesto que tales creencias propician el perdón intergrupalo (Cárdenas *et al.* 2015). No obstante, no se dispone de información que identifique las diferencias en ideología religiosa por género en las víctimas informadas en los diversos trabajos de Comisiones de Verdad en América Latina.

5. Expresión e intercambio emocional en víctimas posterior a conflictos

Las experiencias emocionales resultan un proceso clave para la expresión e intercambio social, que se asocia no solo a experiencias, sino que responde a un lenguaje socialmente compartido (Rimé 2009). Tales procesos posibilitan reconstruir creencias de las personas a través de la transmisión de sentimientos compartidos y que promueven la construcción de una atmósfera emocional colectiva (Páez *et al.* 2007). En este punto, tiene interés en cómo las personas comparten sus múltiples experiencias emocionales, lo que favorece el reconocimiento y la comunicación de las emociones, en particular, en contextos en el que las personas no se sentirán juzgadas o malinterpretadas y, por el contrario, ayudará a una cohesión grupal, al fortalecimiento de los vínculos sociales y revelaría, de igual modo, la resistencia de una comunidad (Rimé 2009).

En este punto, cuando se han vivido experiencias asociadas a violaciones a derechos humanos como las experimentadas por víctimas que aparecen en los informes de Comisiones de la Verdad, la expresión emocional se identifica como un fin de los propios procesos de Justicia Transicional (Karstedt 2015) puesto que se orienta a una contención y expresión emocional en los testimonios y se espera que se presenten cambios en los climas emocionales posteriores (Páez *et al.* 2007). Complementariamente, los espacios de testimonios que se producen también ocasionan un alto impacto emocional vinculado a recuerdos

en muchos casos traumáticos, lo que propicia síntomas de depresión y/o estrés post traumático (Broneus 2008; Hamber 2007). Justamente, el compartir emociones muy negativas, como las experimentadas por víctimas, no necesariamente serán valoradas como algo aversivo, sino que responden a necesidades de las propias personas para compartir recuerdos, imágenes y narraciones que serán facilitadas por vías emocionales (Rimé *et al.* 1991) para la liberación y/o comprensión (Rimé *et al.* 2011). Por el contrario, también es esperable que las víctimas suelen inhibir su expresión emocional, en contextos donde se valora la armonía social (Fernández *et al.* 2000), o que no se hayan generado las condiciones políticas, sociales o judiciales para propiciar la búsqueda de la verdad, la judicialización de los responsables o la voluntad de reparar a las víctimas (González *et al.* 2013; Karstedt 2015).

6. Objetivos y presentación del estudio

A partir de lo anterior, el presente texto busca explorar el género y la ideología político-religiosa en hombres y mujeres que presentaron vulneraciones a los derechos humanos que fueron reportadas en el ICVE. Esto se fundamenta, primeramente, porque diversos estudios plantean que se producen diferencias antes, durante y después de los conflictos por género (Mendia 2020; Mendia *et al.* 2017), en la cual la investigación se sitúa en un periodo posterior a la emisión de tal Informe y no en el periodo de violencia informado (1983-2008), sino con posterioridad. En segundo lugar, se ha planteado que la ideología política es clave para mantener acciones reivindicativas y de memoria (Zubieta *et al.* 2015), a la vez que la ideología religiosa, favorecería el afrontamiento y el perdón (Arnosó *et al.* 2015; Cárdenas *et al.* 2015). Finalmente, se complementarán los resultados en relación a la valoración de las personas reportadas del trabajo de la ICVE (Arnosó *et al.* 2015; Páez *et al.* 2015) y las dinámicas de expresión e intercambio emocional de las personas reportadas en el ICVE (Cárdenas *et al.* 2014; Karstedt 2015).

De este modo, se busca explorar el género en relación a las siguientes variables: aspectos socio-demográficos (edad, actividad laboral, entre otros), ideología (ideología política y religiosa), valoración del ICVE y expresión emocional (compartir emocional y afectividad).

7. Método

7.1. Participantes

La muestra estuvo conformada por 64 participantes, víctimas directas que aparecen en el ICVE, 45 hombres (70.3%) y 19 mujeres (29.7%). La media de edad en hombres es 52.20 años ($DT = 10.25$) y en mujeres es de 43.47 ($DT = 14.02$). Respecto al lugar de residencia, el 53.1% ($N = 34$) vive en la provincia de Guayas, el 17.2% ($N = 11$) en Pichincha, el 12.5% ($N = 8$) en Sucumbíos, un 10.9% ($N = 7$) en Azuay y un 6.3% ($N = 4$), en Manabí. Un 52.5% ($N = 32$) de la muestra está trabajando.

Desde el punto de vista ideológico, el 56.7% ($N = 34$) considera la religión algo bastante-muy importante y respecto a ideología política, el 51.8% ($N = 29$) se considera de izquierda, un 18.8% ($N = 12$) de centro y un 23.4% ($N = 15$), de derecha.

7.2. Medidas

Los datos fueron recolectados a través de un instrumento de evaluación de índole autoadministrable, compuesto por las siguientes escalas:

- *Datos socio-demográficos y personales*. Se preguntó aspectos tales como sexo, edad, lugar de residencia y situación laboral.
- *Ideología política*. Incluyó una pregunta sobre el posicionamiento político de la persona («en asuntos políticos la gente habla frecuentemente de izquierda y derecha ¿Dónde situarías tus ideas en la siguiente escala, independientemente que te interese o no por la política?») en una escala de siete puntos que van desde la «extrema izquierda» (1) hasta la «extrema derecha» (7).
- *Interés en la religión*. Incluyó una pregunta sobre el interés en la religión, en una escala de cuatro puntos que va desde «Nada» (1) hasta «Mucho» (4).
- *Tipos de Vulneraciones*. Se incluyó un ítem para que los participantes identificaran qué tipo(s) de vulneración(es) presentaron directamente de acuerdo a la tipología que estableció el Informe de la CVE.
- *Actitud ante las Comisiones* (Gibson 2004). Evalúa el grado de aprobación de las actividades de las comisiones, en cuatro

funciones identificadas ($\alpha = .79$). Las opciones de respuesta van desde «Nada» (1) hasta «Mucho» (4).

- *Compartir Social de las Emociones* (Rimé 2012). Se evalúa la frecuencia y necesidad de hablar o inhibir socialmente respecto de las vulneraciones y hechos traumáticos, ya sea a través del compartir emocional ($\alpha = .87$), o la inhibición emocional ($\alpha = .78$). Las opciones de respuesta van desde «Nada» (1) hasta «Mucho» (4).

7.3. Procedimiento

Este estudio consta de análisis adicionales de estudios publicados anteriormente. Primeramente, se realizó una validación del cuestionario en Ecuador, a través de cuatro jueces expertos. Dos evaluaron los contenidos contemplados y dos la redacción de los ítems. Luego, se estableció contacto con el «Comité de Víctimas de delitos de lesa humanidad y graves violaciones de Derechos Humanos en Ecuador» que aparece en el ICVE, a quienes se les explicó el objetivo del estudio. A través de su gestión, se pudo establecer el contacto con víctimas en diversas provincias del país. Con las víctimas que tuvieron una exposición directa a la violencia, las encuestas fueron realizadas por encuestadores expertos. El tiempo de duración de las respuestas a la encuesta varió entre 45 y 70 minutos, dependiendo de los comentarios y observaciones que realizaban mientras contestaban las preguntas. Los contactos con las víctimas directas se realizaron a través de visitas domiciliarias o en reuniones en espacio grupal.

El estudio se realizó en un periodo de tiempo donde se estaba discutiendo la Ley de Reparación de Víctimas en Ecuador (finales de 2013). Primero, se efectuó un contacto telefónico donde se informaba la persona que había facilitado sus datos, se describían los objetivos del estudio y del origen de la iniciativa. Con posterioridad, se acordaba un punto de contacto, ya sea en su propio domicilio o en un lugar externo. Una vez que se entraba en contacto con el participante, se les explicaba nuevamente el objetivo del estudio y, dependiendo del caso, leían o se les leía la hoja de consentimiento informado y firmaban su autorización. En algunos casos, las víctimas observaron con recelo el objetivo de la investigación en el contacto inicial, por lo que fue necesario explicar en detalle la iniciativa académica que motivaba el estudio. Se aclararon los alcances y las expectativas respecto a los posibles productos esperados del estudio. La participación fue voluntaria y los participantes fueron identificados mediante claves

numéricas, lo que permitió el anonimato en el tratamiento y uso de los datos.

7.4. *Análisis de datos*

El análisis de los datos se realizó mediante el paquete estadístico SPSS 25. Para calcular las diferencias por género, se realizaron análisis de contrastes sobre medias y análisis basados en pruebas chi cuadrado, en el que se consideró relevante abordar las diferencias estadísticamente significativas ($p > .05$) y las estimaciones marginales, cerca de esta significación. Por último, se incluyó el cálculo del tamaño de efecto, a través de la d de Cohen, que fue calculado con el paquete GPower 3.1.9.4, en las cuales valores inferiores a .20, señalan la no existencia de efecto; entre .21 a .49 evidencian un pequeño efecto; valores entre .50 a .70 indican un moderado efecto y valores mayores a .80 señalan un efecto grande (Cohen 1998).

8. **Resultados**

Los resultados obtenidos por género de las variables en estudio, se presentan en la Tabla 1. Se presentan diferencias estadísticamente significativas en edad, orientación a la religión, ideología, la función de la historia integradora de la Evaluación del ICVE y la inhibición social de las emociones. Estos resultados revelan que los hombres, mayores en edad, estarían presentando una aceptación del ICVE, orientados ideológicamente más hacia el centro y la religión. Por el contrario, las participantes mujeres son más jóvenes, no presentan una orientación religiosa, pero sí más hacia una ideología de izquierda y su aceptación del trabajo y de las funciones del ICVE son menores. Tomados en conjunto con los resultados previos, los participantes hombres presentarían una ideología que podría asociarse a mayor conservadurismo político y religioso, que les posibilitaría aceptar y presentar una mejor evaluación del trabajo de la Comisión de la Verdad. En cambio, las mujeres presentan un sistema ideológico más abierto hacia la búsqueda de acciones de reconocimiento y demandas hacia el Estado, lo que se identificaría en menor adscripción religiosa y una orientación de izquierda.

Respecto a la variable de tipos de vulneraciones, se utilizó en el análisis la identificación de cuatro delitos establecidos por el ICVE, esto es, privación ilegal de libertad, atentado contra el derecho a la vida,

tortura o malos tratos y violencia sexual. Se realizaron análisis basados en pruebas chi cuadrado y no se obtuvieron diferencias estadísticamente significativas ($p > .05$) al comparar si era una víctima con una o varias vulneraciones y al contrastar los cuatro delitos por género. En este punto, a nivel descriptivo, las frecuencias de los delitos son más altas en hombres que en mujeres, a excepción de la violencia sexual, que presentaron idéntica frecuencia. Esto sugiere que, efectivamente, los delitos se producen más en hombres que en mujeres, lo que concuerda con lo planteado por el ICVE, no obstante, no se producen diferencias estadísticamente significativas, lo que puede estar relacionado con el número de la muestra y que las respuestas de los participantes no hayan informado de todos los delitos experimentados.

Tabla 1

Comparaciones sobre medias por género de las variables de estudio

Variables en estudio	Hombres (N = 45)		Mujeres (N = 19)		t	Tamaño del efecto d
	M	DT	M	DT		
Edad	52.20	10.25	43.47	14.02	2.449*	.71
Actividad laboral	.45	.50	.68	.47	-1.691	.47
Importancia en religión	3.12	1.14	2.42	1.21	2.164*	.59
Ideología política	3.80	1.58	2.73	.96	2.690**	.81
Evaluación ICVE	3.13	.81	2.79	.78	1.558	.42
Función Verdad	2.61	1.10	2.21	.85	1.416	.40
Función Historia integradora	2.64	.90	2.16	.83	2.004*	.55
Función Justicia	2.51	1.05	1.95	1.02	1.965‡	.54
Función Garantías	2.76	1.15	2.22	1.01	1.825‡	.50
Compartir social emociones	2.43	.72	2.17	.78	1.281	.34
Inhibir social emociones	1.73	.73	1.35	.47	2.069*	.61
Afectividad positiva	13.69	4.78	11.37	5.20	1.727‡	.46
Afectividad negativa	17.61	7.27	19.00	7.77	-.654	.18

Nota: ‡ = marginal, * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$.

Fuente: elaboración propia.

En la variable de compartir social de las emociones, se encontraron diferencias estadísticamente significativas por género, en el cual los

hombres suelen inhibir más su expresión emocional que las mujeres y se obtiene una diferencia marginal en la afectividad positiva, siendo de igual modo más alta en hombres que en mujeres. Por otro lado, aunque no significativo, las mujeres presentarían mayor afectividad negativa, la cual podría relacionarse con las posibilidades que los contextos políticos, sociales y culturales permitirían a víctimas expresar sus emociones.

9. Conclusión

El presente estudio explora el género en un contexto posterior al ICVE, evidenciando que surgen diferencias entre hombres y mujeres que no solo se explican antes o durante las violaciones a derechos humanos en conflictos políticos como los informados por las Comisiones de la Verdad. Se encuentran patrones diferenciados que, en ningún caso pretenden ser generalizables, de comportamientos y valores que asumen hombres y mujeres que han sido víctimas directas y que aparecen en el Informe.

Tales patrones sitúan percepciones ideológicas distintivas: mujeres que presentan una orientación política de izquierda y con baja orientación a la religión y, por el contrario, en hombres se observa una ideología política de centro y mayor orientación religiosa. Complementario a estos hallazgos, se encuentra que los hombres presentan una percepción de aprobación del trabajo de la Comisión y que esta es menor en mujeres, lo que se pone de manifiesto en las diferencias estadísticamente significativas en la función de historia integradora y marginalmente significativas en las de justicia y garantías. Además, la inhibición social de las emociones es mayor en hombres, lo que revelaría que éstos tienden a guardar las emociones que presentan del periodo informado.

Estos resultados, preliminares y exploratorios, ponen de manifiesto que estas diferencias entre hombres y mujeres no resultan eventuales, sino que responden a las históricas diferencias asociadas a la categoría género y que, retomando a Wallach Scott, están posicionadas en relaciones de poder, las cuales están presentes antes, durante y, como es en este caso, después de los hechos de violencia. En este punto, cabría la interrogante de si los resultados aquí presentados tienen relación con dinámicas sociales que involucran a hombres y mujeres posterior a hechos de violencia que puedan implicar un potencial efecto transformador de aquellas experiencias por género (Sarkin y Ackermann 2019) y de las posibles modificaciones duraderas en sociedades posconflictos (Gyimah 2009).

Por otro lado, estos perfiles diferenciados podrían responder a tres aspectos: Primero, los impactos de las violaciones a derechos humanos y las diferencias de género que plantearían la asunción de la categoría personal y social de víctima. En segundo lugar, el papel de la ideología, en el cual se distingue, por un lado, la movilización, activismo político y demandas al Estado y, por otro lado, una orientación hacia un cierto conservadurismo religioso y aceptación de las acciones estatales. Tercero, las expectativas que pudo haber generado el ICVE y, por ende, las posibilidades de acceder a una reparación integral.

En relación al primer patrón, se ha planteado que, durante los conflictos, se producen patrones diferenciados por género de vulneraciones de derechos humanos (Abad 2009; Jelin 2001; Mantilla 2010; Mendia 2012 y 2020; Mendia *et al.* 2017). En el caso de Ecuador, el ICVE identificó que la violencia sexual tenía relación con imaginarios sociales y culturales conservadores, especialmente esperados para las mujeres (Monge *et al.* 2010). A pesar de esto, los presentes resultados no evidenciaron diferencias en alguno de los delitos identificados por la Comisión, sino que presentaría mayor relación a diversos factores sociales que inciden en cómo hombres y mujeres elaboran y dan un significado a la categoría de víctima. En este punto, estudios en violencia de género hacia hombres, identifica que los factores socioculturales y el estigma social impuesto a los hombres, limita la visibilización y aceptación propia y social de los hombres como víctimas (Rojas-Solís *et al.* 2019). Esto permitiría explicar, asimismo, la inhibición social de las emociones que presentan hombres víctimas, en el cual se exige a los hombres mantener una imagen de masculinidad controlada y plana de las emociones ante sí mismo o los demás (Folguera 2014). En el caso de las mujeres, se presentan, de igual modo, imaginarios asociados a la categoría de víctima en la cual se producen estereotipos y estigmas, pero se tiende a asociar social y culturalmente la condición de víctima a mujeres, al justificar una posición subalterna, al ser consideradas débiles y vulnerables y a quien los hombres deben proteger dentro del binomio patriarcal mujer-hombre (Hiner 2009). Así, la categoría víctima aparece vinculada inherentemente a las mujeres, construye imaginarios y da forma a relaciones sociales que van desde la compasión al rechazo, originadas igualmente desde una posición de poder (Truñó i Salvado 2010).

En segundo lugar, respecto al papel encontrado en este estudio de hombres y mujeres en relación a la ideología política y religiosa, es posible identificar en las mujeres una posición política de izquierda y menor orientación religiosa, posiblemente, estos resultados van en línea con la consideración que las personas de ideología de izquierda

despliegan valores asociados a una dimensión de apertura al cambio, a la benevolencia y a manifestaciones y rituales políticos como estrategia de afrontamiento interpersonal ante eventos altamente estresantes (Calderón y Espinosa 2006). En tanto, los hombres, se orientarían a un conservadurismo religioso y político, más relacionado con valores de seguridad, conformidad y tradición (Calderón y Espinosa 2006).

Finalmente, como tercer aspecto, se refiere a la valoración del ICVE, que plantea diferencias entre los participantes hombres y mujeres de este estudio: en los hombres, se observaría una mayor aceptación del trabajo de la Comisión y, probablemente también, de una mayor aceptación por generar un conocimiento de la verdad de los hechos, de promover una historia integradora y de identificar los responsables de violaciones de derechos humanos y de que el ICVE ayudará a garantizar la no repetición de los hechos de vulneración. Esta evaluación positiva ha sido identificada en la gran mayoría de los países de América Latina que han presentado Comisiones de Verdad (Mathias *et al.* 2020), aunque no se cuenta con información diferenciada por género. Tal aceptación en los hombres, podría vincularse a los resultados obtenidos en la ideología político-religiosa, que podría favorecer un sistema de creencias que acepte las condiciones políticas y sociales en que se ha venido trabajando y elaborando las violencias informadas por el ICVE o que, como se ha encontrado en algunos estudios, tal ideología podría favorecer el perdón (Arnosó *et al.* 2015), aspecto que claramente requiere ser explorado en futuros estudios.

En las mujeres, es posible afirmar que hay un perfil de mujeres más jóvenes, que también es concordante con que las agrupaciones de familiares y de víctimas se encuentra liderado por mujeres. En muchos casos, podría asumirse que estos liderazgos además intervienen en otros temas, asociados al género (por ejemplo, violencia de género, acosos, entre otros) que posibilitan una acción que, en ningún caso, aparece como aceptadora, tanto del trabajo de la Comisión, como de las acciones de reparación estatal. Por el contrario, en las víctimas hombres, posiblemente se asocie a una retirada de la esfera pública, asumiendo en un plano privado, una menor incidencia y mayor orientación a aceptar las acciones estatales que se han venido generando posterior al 2010.

Tomados en conjunto, es relevante retomar la discusión de si tales diferencias en los patrones por género podrían relacionarse a la generación de condiciones políticas y sociales que permitan potencialmente reducir y trabajar los prejuicios y violencias basadas en género y de establecer un punto de partida para la reestructuración de la sociedad ecuatoriana en la búsqueda de la verdad (Sarkin y

Ackermann 2019). El ICVE enfatiza en las 155 recomendaciones, la adopción de un enfoque de derechos humanos en las medidas orientadas a la rehabilitación (en salud psicosocial, educación y trabajo), satisfacción y, particularmente, en las garantías de no repetición, con diversas iniciativas que involucren otros enfoques, en el que se incluye género. Esto último se evidencia en las medidas dirigidas al fortalecimiento del Poder Judicial, que se orientan a la capacitación interdisciplinaria en funcionarios, operadores de justicia y miembros de Policía y Fuerzas Armadas. El Estado ecuatoriano ha venido presentando acciones que se orientan a la igualdad, dada la ratificación de la Convención sobre la eliminación de todas las formas de discriminación contra la mujer (CEDAW) y la Estrategia de Montevideo³ que ha posibilitado reconocimientos constitucionales de la igualdad y no discriminación, a la vez que se creó una instancia específica (Consejo Nacional para la Igualdad de Género) que ha venido diseñando una normativa técnica para transversalizar el enfoque de género en el Estado ecuatoriano⁴. No obstante, se requiere de mecanismos que posibiliten que tal política pública sea conocida, a la vez que incorpore distintos actores sociales y medidas de seguimiento, acorde a los enfoques de derechos humanos y género requerido (Abramovich 2006). Tal como han señalado Sarkin y Ackermann: «el acceso y las desigualdades de género siguen desempeñando un papel fundamental a la hora de determinar el efecto que tienen estas políticas y mejoras, así como su capacidad de respuesta a los intereses de las mujeres» (Sarkin y Ackermann 2019, 513). Esto demanda que, reconociendo que pueden adoptarse diversas formas para debatir la capacidad y eficacia de los instrumentos de justicia transicional que distinga el género, se requiere de acciones que garanticen que la vida de hombres y mujeres no se vea nuevamente afectada por dispositivos y acciones estatales que promueven vulneraciones de derechos humanos.

En este último punto, los presentes hallazgos confirman que la categoría género es clave para entender las formas en que funciona el orden patriarcal, en cómo se expresan las violencias hacia hombres y

³ La Estrategia de Montevideo fue aprobada en la XIII Conferencia Regional sobre la Mujer de América Latina y el Caribe (2016). Corresponde a un instrumento político y técnico que busca guiar la implementación de la Agenda Regional de Género y la Agenda 2030 para el Desarrollo Sostenible, desde una perspectiva de la igualdad de género, la autonomía y los derechos humanos de las mujeres.

⁴ Véase Informe Nacional sobre el Avance en la Aplicación de la Estrategia de Montevideo para la implementación de la Agenda Regional de Género en el marco del Desarrollo Sostenible hacia 2030, de 2018 y de una propuesta de Norma Técnica para Transversalizar el Enfoque de Género en el Sector Público, 2021.

mujeres antes, durante y después de los conflictos. De esta manera, el género contribuiría a buscar mecanismos para superar tales inequidades y violencias, a través de estudios en derechos humanos que superen un androcentrismo, a reconsiderar la noción de sujetos de derechos en base a que la noción de lo humano no se obtiene desde fuera, sino que está en disputa. Por último, resulta un reto para los derechos humanos la contribución a la construcción de sociedades equitativas, atendiendo a analizar y evidenciar los mecanismos y las relaciones de poder (Salgado 2013).

10. Limitaciones y futuros estudios

Los resultados del presente estudio deben tomarse con precaución. Como se señaló, conforma un estudio exploratorio que no pretende generalizarse al total de las víctimas que aparecen en el ICVE y, además, el estudio dató del año 2013, en un punto donde se discutía la aplicación de la ley de reparación en el país. Posiblemente, una vez que se han venido generando algunas acciones estatales en el último periodo, podría generar algunos cambios a los planteados aquí.

Otra limitación lo constituye en que aquí no se incluye un análisis de los tipos de violencia experimentadas por las víctimas y los actuales perfiles de género identificados: en este punto, se consideró que el análisis de las vulneraciones podría explicar las diferencias antes y durante el conflicto, pero tal relación no queda tan clara en un contexto posterior. Se requieren futuros estudios que ayuden a clarificar la relación género de las víctimas y contextos posteriores a la violencia.

De esta manera, se considera relevante que futuros estudios aborden investigaciones en género y justicia transicional, previas, durante y especialmente, posteriores al conflicto en un contexto latinoamericano. Esto podría alentar nuevas líneas de investigación, que permitan explorar las diferencias por género que no han presentado un enfoque en diversos informes de Comisiones de Verdad en la región, incluir otros grupos de diversidad sexo-genérica afectados en los periodos de violencia y revelar qué diferencias está planteando una reparación estatal que reconozca el género.

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II

Book reviews

Críticas bibliográficas

López-López, Wilson, and Laura Taylor, eds. 2021. *Transitioning to Peace: Promoting Global Social Justice and Non-violence*. Cham: Springer. Peace Psychology Book Series. 328 p.

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Frequently, the transition to peace seems impossible for groups affected by collective violence. The search for a peaceful society, where the memory, the victims' suffering, and the perpetrators' responsibilities coexist, requires titanic efforts in multiple dimensions that may seem unattainable. These efforts are the focus of the book "Transitioning to Peace: Promoting Global Social Justice and Non-Violence" edited by two distinguished scholars in the social and political psychology field with contributions from over twenty researchers from all continents.

This book is part of the Peace Psychology Book Series edited by Daniel Christie, which over the last few years has had a significant number of volumes analyzing psychology's approaches to the search for peace. The editors of this book are Wilson López-López, professor at the Pontifical Xavierian University, who has a long tradition of research on collective violence, armed conflict, and peacebuilding for more than 20 years, and Laura Taylor, assistant professor at University College Dublin, who has a long career of 15 years and extensive experience in protracted conflicts, especially in various processes involving children, youth and families affected by violence.

Based on a multidimensional perspective of peace, the book explores the implications and difficulties faced by societies that have experienced large-scale collective violence. It addresses macro and micro social aspects, from diverse methodologies that complement a profound vision that promotes a systematic understanding of peacemaking processes. On many occasions, the fatalism and hopelessness of the context are added to a political, economic, and cultural structure to justify, support, and legitimize the use of violence. Likewise, in its content, we find a critical and reflective approach to transitional justice models while advocating for community developments and the practices of diverse vulnerable groups that contribute to a sustainable peace that responds to the specific needs of a population.

In this way, through four major sections, the authors guide us through high-impact research that seeks to intertwine in a back-and-forth vision between the multicultural analysis of important models of transitional justice, and processes and experiences at the local level

that demonstrates the importance of communities in the construction of their forms of peace. In this regard, this book is divided into four sections that seek to address: 1. The implementation of transitional justice mechanisms in several countries, especially the analysis of truth commissions and their role in the construction of memory; 2. The social movements and collective actions that are framed in the transitions to peace, focusing on the need to engage societies in transitional processes; 3. The specific community processes that have contributed to peace in several countries, especially with victims' groups or citizen initiatives; and finally 4. The educational initiatives to promote peace processes in younger populations.

The first section focuses on transitional justice and the processes of reparation and memory. It is characterized by covering a large number of contexts of collective violence where not only transitional models are analyzed, but also the variables immersed in the reconstruction process, i.e., memory, forgiveness, and reconciliation. Beyond this, the authors strive to propose a critical view, where they also discuss impunity, forgetting, and victimization narratives that may be present in these models. In addition, the lack of justice in terms of recognition of the wrongdoing appears as a limiting factor in the search for more peaceful societies.

Throughout five chapters, authors with a significant academic background synthesize complex experiences and evaluations of societies where transitional justice mechanisms were implemented or in societies in conflict. In these contexts, it is vital to create favorable environments for the construction of a historical memory that does not promote competitive victimization or narratives that make the other invisible as an active political subject and that recognize the suffering of victims as essential psychosocial needs for rebuilding the social fabric.

These first chapters offer very useful information at the local level for countries undergoing transition processes or seeking to consolidate models with these objectives. The crosscutting premise of this section is to reflect deeply and carefully on societies that have experienced traumatic events, alerting us to the shadow of impunity that can be part of reconciliation processes, and to the danger of forgetting as a tool for peacebuilding.

The complexity that involves countries in transition cannot be solved only with reparations and acknowledgments of responsibility, but also through a memory in which it is never possible to forget those past events were a violation of Human Rights. This implies that these violations had devastating consequences on social and political coexistence and that the experiences of those who lived through them

must constitute the first foundations for installing a political system that removes the injustices and inequities produced by these events.

Consequently, at a global level, this section also makes it possible to emphasize that correlational and longitudinal evidence on transitional justice mechanisms indicates positive effects on the reconstruction of social ties, institutional trust, and the reduction of negative stereotypes towards exogroups. However, this does not mean that there are no negative implications and that such effects depend to a large extent on whether truth-seeking is accompanied by justice processes that satisfy the victims.

The second section of the book concerns social movements and collective action. The authors make an effort to emphasize that peacebuilding engages society as a whole. This is a very significant contribution to the literature on societies making transitions from war to peace. It makes it necessary for us to understand that the collective actions framed in the claim and search for more just and peaceful societies are fundamental to understanding societies as a whole.

Thus, this section is essential if we take into account that there is a consensus that transition processes should have a high degree of citizen participation and democratization of the social reality. Studying collective actions helps us to evaluate a non-legal and unofficial aspect of transitions, where the involvement of citizens is an essential input to understand that peacebuilding necessarily involves the recognition of the diverse groups and needs of the population.

Accordingly, the chapters in this section address the tension between the State's response to a collective action by the population demanding to be heard and the consequences that this response has on the groups that are mobilizing. It also delves into the changes in the group members and the perceptions of the in-group concerning essential aspects such as solidarity, discrimination, peaceful expression, plurality, and justice. It also addresses discourses as a critical issue in the creation of identities and narratives that can enable peaceful outcomes as well as increased radicalization, competitive victimization, and extreme responses.

The usefulness of the results presented in these studies is evident. On the one hand, the discussion on the support for equity policies and collective actions through contact between groups with disparity of power is very interesting. On the other hand, the critical vision that the authors give when they talk about the need to take into account the historical path of societies that make possible the collective actions of the present. It is exciting to see the approaches gathered in this section throughout all the chapters and the multiple methodologies

that account for local processes in contexts so diverse, complex, and challenging as Chile, Sudan, and Colombia. This section appropriately captures the efforts of groups to exert constant pressure to change a system that they feel does not represent their interests. It also exemplifies the contributions of psychology in a multidisciplinary field that is indispensable for understanding social change and contributing to the achievement of non-violent societies.

Following this same approach of analyzing these transition processes holistically, the third section of the book focuses on looking at a bottom-up perspective. A major concern in the transitions societies that have experienced collective violence is that the processes are usually viewed only from the top-down, that is, it is understood that almost exclusively the leaders, institutions, and power groups must make changes and decisions. In this section, it is argued that transition and peace-building processes are stabilized and maintained by the communities and that their initiatives are important to give stability and sustainability to a peace-focused project.

The authors of this section adopt a more reflective and experiential approach focused on communities affected by collective violence and are forced to create coping strategies in Rwanda and Colombia. These two contexts exemplify the efforts of communities to create spaces for the preservation of memory and the defense of Human Rights that are inputs for peacebuilding in societies in transition. It analyzes the role of local associations in the search for rapprochement between groups, forgiveness, and reconciliation, as well as the processes of subsistence and progress that the authors have witnessed. This section shows the closer and more human face of suffering, but also the strength of the affected communities and their willingness to build spaces for peace.

The last section of this book focuses on the future. Thus, it includes chapters dedicated to peace education in countries in transition focusing on children and youth. It presents a critique of how young people have been treated in peace processes and the lack of structural transformations in education systems. It highlights the threatening and challenging conditions that young people live in these contexts and their acts of peacebuilding that transform the conflict. Consequently, it explains a new approach to historical memory from the pedagogy, opting for interactive methodologies that increase empathy towards the victims and the commitment of young people with the past to achieve a future in peace.

In this section, the findings of important research groups that have found the role of children and youth as an active input for peacebuilding are also shared. On the one hand, Chapter 16 presents

important findings regarding universal and unique patterns of peacebuilding among children in various countries. They focus mainly on prosocial behaviors among groups, for which they use Laura Taylor's peacebuilding model. On the other hand, Chapter 17 presents case studies in different countries around the world in which programs focused on early childhood have positive effects on children and their families and, in the long term, on peacebuilding.

In sum, this book invites us to talk about a central theme in transitions: peace and Human Rights are two indissolubly linked terms. Moreover, peace means compromising life above all other conditions. The content of the four sections is a call for attention to efforts to heal—physically, psychologically, culturally, and socially—to create stable structures that prevent future violence and guarantee peace, life, and the defense of Human Rights. Throughout the text, the recognition of the complexity of peace is a latent guideline that recognizes and encourages multidisciplinary perspectives. These perspectives must consider the problem of peacebuilding from innovative academic approaches and mixed methodologies that respond to the magnitude of this task. Finally, it is an invitation for the scientific community to contribute locally and globally to understand and fulfill the specific needs of societies mistreated by violence.

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The book is part of the Psychology in Latin America series of the American Psychological Association (APA) edited by Judith Gibbons and Patricio Cumsille. The book presents a series of chapters written by Latin American researchers from Argentina, Colombia, Chile, El Salvador and Peru on different topics relevant to political psychology in Latin America. The problem of human rights violations and how to confront them, socio-political conflicts and the building of a culture of democracy and peace are transversal axes of the chapters of this book.

The first chapter, Citizens and democracy: political legitimacy processes in Latin American democracies by Silvina Brussino and Daniela Alonso, analyzes the role of citizens in the legitimacy processes of political systems in the region, describing the theoretical and empirical contributions of Latin American political psychologists. The authors show that explicit support for democracy coexists with a growing discontent regarding the functioning of this political system. Quantitative and qualitative studies confirm that there is support for the democratic system in general, but at the same time, there is little trust in governments and institutions. The perception that corruption is widespread and is a possible factor eroding trust in institutions. Although qualitative studies also show that this perception of widespread corruption of politicians is associated with a justification of transgressions by citizens who see their acts of "petty corruption" as an appropriate response to this context of ineffectiveness of the institutions. Interpersonal trust in general and in institutions is very low -ranging at first between 4 and 20%, for example. This low social capital is accompanied by low political participation. On the other hand, people who mobilize in street protests are characterized by sharing democratic values more strongly, although at the same time they feel more distrust towards the government and institutions, than people who do not mobilize.

The second chapter, Emotions and protests: contributions to political psychology from Latin American research, by Rodrigo Asún and colleagues, analyzes processes associated with the emergence of social movements, and the reasons that lead individuals to participate in political protests. The main findings show that in the same mobilization

event, different groups of people may experience different emotional constellations at different times. For example, an analysis of the content of twitter messages around a student protest for democratic rights in Mexico showed that anger and indignation predominated at the beginning, pride, distrust and sadness in a second phase, and fear, sadness and hope in the final phase. In a quantitative study (which are in the minority in a context where descriptive qualitative studies predominate), the authors analyzed the emotions felt by the inhabitants of an area in a regionalist protest in Chiloe, Chile. They found through latent class analysis three types of constellation of emotions: 17% of "proud" who felt only positive emotions, in particular pride. 27% of "concerned" who felt negative emotions such as worry, anger, sadness and positive emotions such as pride. These two constellations were associated with participation in the protests. A 60% of the indifferent reported low levels of all types of emotions and did not participate. In general, studies have highlighted the importance of positive emotions, such as hope, for mobilization.

The third chapter is a psychopolitical approach to social inequality in Latin America by Débora Imhoff. Latin America is characterized by great inequality also extended to skin color and ethnicity: Afro-Latin Americans and Indigenous people are more likely to be poor and less likely to finish school or get a formal job. In Latin America, inequality is structural and historical in nature. Thus, despite the decline in inequality observed in recent decades, Latin America remains one of the most unequal regions in the world. The text systematizes the main findings of psycho-political research on social inequality in Latin America, first presenting studies on social inequality perception, which is generally high, although the different indicators are not so strongly associated with each other. Secondly, research oriented to operationalize in the cultural context scales of system justification approach. Meritocracy and a positive view of the economic system decrease the perception of inequality. Third, the research shows that RWA and SDO are psychopolitical variables that contribute to justification of inequality. Finally, suggestions for approaching the problem aimed at those members of civil society and public policy makers interested in contributing to the reduction of social inequality in the region are proposed.

In the fourth chapter, Youth civic engagement: challenges for social cohesion in Latin America, B. Paula Luengo and colleagues examine how civic engagement can support social cohesion. Three studies developed in the Chilean context show how young people learn and exercise their citizenship and how civic engagement can support social cohesion in the school context. The authors conclude that in order to

improve civic and political commitment of youth, it is essential to have educational programs that seek to promote citizenship capable of strengthening social cohesion.

Chapter five by Camila Salazar-Fernández and José L. Saiz examines the Bias against Indigenous Chileans in a Conflictive Context. This chapter focuses on biases against the Mapuche, Chile's largest indigenous minority group, who face high levels of social exclusion and poverty and are involved in a chronic and asymmetrical conflict with the Chilean state and forestry companies. A systematic review of the literature allows the authors to apply the BIAS stereotype map of Fiske *et al.* to the case of the Mapuche. A stereotype of low warmth and low competence (hostile, barbaric) is related to a contemptuous biased view of Mapuche, with negative emotions and rejection. While the explicit measure has found a medium low rejection, the implicit measures have found a high level of the rejection of the Mapuche. This stereotype and bias reinforce the conflict between the Mapuche and the Chilean state and non-indigenous groups. A low competence and high warmth (charming little Indian) stereotype is related to a paternalistic bias and view of Mapuche and emotions like pity and compassion, which are reported at medium high level by non-Indigenous Chileans. This stereotype does not increase, but rather maintains the conflict, because it encourages partial and vertical measures, which do not take into account the demands and autonomy of the Mapuche. Although less predominant, there is also a vision of the Mapuche as highly competitive and low in warmth, as a group that takes advantage of the state's social assistance, related to envy. This stereotype and emotion fuels the conflict, because it leads to the rejection of the "unjustified and exaggerated" aid given by the state to the Mapuche. Finally, some evidence shows, that some groups (university students, educated youth) share a positive stereotype of high competence and high warmth towards the Mapuche (Mapuche as national ancestors, brave warriors and patriotic citizens) and absence of negative bias. This stereotype decreases conflict and helps to recognize the Mapuche as legitimate and equal actors. The authors highlight that intergroup biases in conflictive contexts are psychosocial barriers that maintain or increase the conflict, preventing progress toward peaceful coexistence. They emphasize that these barriers can be overcome through interventions aimed at reducing adherence to bias to enable groups in a society to initiate and continue negotiations, reach agreements, and engage in reconciliation.

Chapter sixth, Psychology of Peace: Findings and Challenges for the Multi-dimensional Transformation of Violent Social Practices, by

Wilson López-López and colleagues, examines the topic of conflict and reconciliation in Latin American political psychology. The authors emphasize that peace building includes different dimensions such as socio-economic (decrease of inequality), socio-political (reinforcing democracy and facilitating social coexistence), socio-legal (avoiding impunity, reinforcing the legal system and restorative actions), socio-cultural (rejection of violence, social exclusion, and increase of tolerance, gender equality and child rearing), socio-environmental (ecological sustainability). These social transformations are not sufficient if they are not accompanied by structural transformations. Studies that have examined the psychosocial dimension of peace in the context of the Colombian armed conflict are reviewed. With more than 8 million victims registered since 1985, the armed conflict is a central element in Colombian society. This collective experience has led to a loss of empathy, a strong differentiation between them and us, and the justification of the use of violence. Studies conducted in the general population found that some social beliefs, such as the need for security, patriotism and the delegitimization of the adversary are barriers to peace. The meaning attributed to forgiveness and reconciliation includes the rejection of negative emotions, forgetting the offense, guarantees of non-repetition and retribution. Finally, willingness to forgive is low, as is usual in others Latin American studies. 18% of the Colombian population has been a victim of the conflict. Studies with them have shown that in addition to the aforementioned attributes, victims add to the meaning of forgiveness and reconciliation the non-repetition of violence, restoration and apologies, as well as improved well-being. With respect to ex-combatants, studies report that most feel high levels of reconciliation with those who attacked them in the past. This feeling is lower among ex-guerrillas than among paramilitaries, particularly if they are not integrated into reinsertion experiences and networks. It remains to be seen how the victims experience this satisfactory reconciliation of ex-combatants. This psychosocial perspective is intended as a contribution to peace building both in Colombia and in other places where collective violence has been relevant in society.

In chapter seven, A. Espinosa and colleagues examine The Relationship between Political Ideology and National Identification in Latin America, through a meta-analytic synthesis. A meta-analysis examined the nature of the relationships between national identity, on the one hand, and right-wing authoritarianism (RWA) and social dominance orientation (SDO), on the other, in samples from 11 Latin American countries. The results show that RWA is positively associated

with the degree of national identification, $r=0.16$, suggesting that conservative authoritarian beliefs and values fuel national cohesion. The fixed model shows that the positive associations between RWA and degree of national identification are heterogeneous. The percentage of indigenous/afro-descendent participants significantly moderated the strength of the positive association between RWA and national identification. Significant positive associations between RWA and national identification can be observed in 'white mestizo' countries, such as Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica and Venezuela, but not in countries with a higher Afro-Latin American or indigenous populations, such as Bolivia, Brazil, and Mexico. In the first nations, where the imagined community is relatively "Euro-American" (or white mestizo) authoritarianism enhances national identification. These national narratives minimize the presence and contribution of indigenous and Afro-Latin American populations, while emphasizing that of the Spanish and mestizo population.

The relationship between SDO and degree of national identification using a fixed model indicates a negative association with a small effect size, $r = -.084$. Meta-regression using the proportional percentage of indigenous/Afro-American participants shows that the higher the proportion of nonmestizo/white the population, the more negative the association between SDO and degree of national identification. The negative association between SDO and degree of national identification is significant in countries such as Bolivia, Brazil, Ecuador, Mexico and Peru and non-significant in the "whiter/mestizo" nations. Globally, the results suggest that SDO is related to lower levels of national identification in nations with higher diversity and greater social distance between ethnic groups such as Bolivia, Brazil, Ecuador, Mexico and Peru. In these nations, the high social salience of low-status indigenous and Afro-Americans has a negative impact on the relative status of national category among citizens, thereby facilitating a process of social distancing in young adults belonging to the middle and upper classes.

In chapter 8, Political Communication and Ideology, Idaly Barreto and Iván Felipe Medina-Arboleda address the issue of political communication. The authors present two studies on presidential speeches from five Latin American countries. The first study focuses on the microanalysis of discourse with the purpose of identifying the belief systems exhibited in the presidential speeches. The second study analyzes the macro-level contexts of the speeches in terms of economic and political indicators for each country. The last two chapters reflect on a topic that has had an important development in

Latin America: collective memory studies. Chapter nine, *Memory as a Political Action: Reflections From Postdictatorial Chile* by María José Reyes and colleagues, presents an ethnographic case study to shed light on the construction and transmission of memories in La Legua, an urban-peripheral community characterized by historical resistance to the Chilean dictatorship and by serious ongoing problems with social violence. The authors problematize one of the assumptions of Latin American political psychology: that social memory is a practice of resistance in itself. They also discuss the uses of memory in state policies, which generate the configuration of a single official memory and identity that does not correspond to the multiple identifications and collective memories of the members of the members of this community. In Chapter ten, *Arguing for a Liberation Psychology*, Mauricio Gaborit discusses the nature of liberation psychology and draws attention to some of its most outstanding contributions. He presents research on historical memory in postwar El Salvador that explores the psychosocial importance of the memory of collective trauma and the role it plays in mental health.

To close the book, the Conclusion synthesizes the cross-cutting themes addressed in this work, identifies the book's main limitations, and proposes some future directions for Latin American political psychology.

The book is highly recommended for those interested in socio-political problems in general and of Latin America in particular, as well as for people interested in confronting and overcoming conflicts and inequalities, particularly human rights violations. The price is very affordable, and the APA distributes it very efficiently and quickly by regular mail.¹ We highly recommend the purchase and reading of this text.

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¹ It can be purchased at the following link: <https://www.apa.org/pubs/books/political-psychology-latin-america>

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