

TESTIMONY AND ARCHIVE

MEMORIA
ABIERTA

• • • Methodology of Memoria Abierta



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INTRODUCTION

Memoria Abierta was created in 2000 with the goal of working toward a social memory that can influence Argentine political culture, contributing to identity construction and strengthening democratic society. To that end we gather, preserve, organize and disseminate the cultural heritage of human rights organizations and other personal and institutional archives linked to state terrorism. We produce testimonies regarding the recent past, and we devote our work to the territorial memory of the period of political violence in Argentina. Driven by our core interest in transmitting memory and making these documents accessible, Memoria Abierta creates educational tools, compiles texts and audiovisual materials, and curates exhibits that portray the events of the past while making connections with current events and circumstances.

Memoria Abierta's Archivo Oral began its work at a time when similar initiatives didn't yet exist in the country or in the region, and there was an urgent need to safeguard, generate, and make core testimonies available to the public. Since its founding, the Archivo Oral has produced an audiovisual documentary repository whose importance has been acknowledged in Argentina as well as internationally. As of 2016, the archive currently holds 900 testimonies that amount to a total of 3000 hours of filming and that are indexed and accessible for public consultation in the Memoria Abierta main office. The catalog is available at: <http://catalogo.memoriaabierta.org.ar/>

By way of personal narratives, these stories attest to the experiences of their subjects as well as the most important events in Argentina's recent past. These are testimonies of family members of victims of state repression; activists; survivors of clandestine detention centers; political prisoners; exiles; intellectuals; artists; professionals; and members of political, union, social, and religious organizations. Each testimony references personal experiences in relation to the main social, political, and ideological processes of the second half of the twentieth century. These narratives go beyond merely presenting a series of memories about important events. Reflection on the narrated experiences, which are brought into the present moment, allows for new instances of ethical and political understanding. Bringing the stories into the present moment sets in motion, each time, a new framing of the story; its nuances express this repositioning, which is inherent in the act of giving testimony.

The construction of the Archivo Oral involves a series of steps that are taken before and after the recording of the testimony. These begin at the moment the names of prospective interviewees are determined and they continue throughout the archiving process of the material produced.

Furthermore, in conjunction with producing testimonies, the Archivo Oral carries out many other activities: conserving and filing the interviews in order to make them accessible for consultation; publishing books and educational materials; editing audiovisual and multimedia projects that are part of Memoria Abierta's different productions; making documentaries; and releasing testimonies to be part of different audiovisual materials.

The Archivo Oral has become a model for the creation of similar spaces in Argentina and other countries. We are thus attentive to requests for guidance and we offer consultation to various institutions.

In the same vein, we have produced collections and interviews in conjunction with Argentine institutions whose goals align with those of Memoria Abierta, such as the Archivo Provincial de la Memoria (Córdoba province), el Museo de la Memoria (Rosario, Santa Fe), la Casa de la Memoria y la Vida (Dirección de Derechos Humanos, Morón Municipality), la Dirección de Derechos Humanos de Mercedes (Buenos Aires Province), the Universidad de General Sarmiento, the Argentine Attorney General's Office and the NGO Andhes (Tucumán province) among others. These testimonies belong to the heritage of Memoria Abierta as well as these institutions.

The pages that follow are an overview of the methodology adopted by Memoria Abierta's Archivo Oral, which also relies on the dialogue and training with professionals from diverse disciplinary fields. This Methodology enumerates the steps we take, makes explicit the basis for our decisions and offers a guide based on the experiences acquired by the Archivo Oral during its fifteen years of existence. As in all of Memoria Abierta's accomplishments, this archive is the result of a collective effort initiated by Dora Schwarzstein and Alejandra Naftal, who comprised and coordinated the first work team in the year 2001¹. The archive also received the ongoing support and guidance of professionals from diverse disciplinary fields who participated in its development, shared in our reflection and supported us as we worked to face challenges and uncertainties that arose. The special contributions of Elizabeth Jelin and Hilda Sabato, members of our Steering Committee, must be acknowledged.

The Archivo Oral, which holds a central place in the transmission of memory and the institutional identity of Memoria Abierta, has succeeded in widely spreading its voices and its images. The contents of the archive are included in educational materials and multimedia displays, traveling exhibits and books we have published. Portions of this archive are also part of numerous other initiatives that took place during this past decade of work and that now constitute tools for documenting and thinking about the recent Argentine past. Though we have been implementing changes in the storage format of the registries and the search criteria of the Archivo Oral, the general methodological principles that guide our work remain the same. This manual is published in response to a sustained demand to share and replicate the experience of Memoria Abierta's Archivo Oral.

Buenos Aires, December 2016

1. The following people have been part of the Archivo Oral work team: Dora Schwarzstein, Vera Carnovale, Federico Lorenz, Roberto Pittaluga, Pablo Palomino, César Mónaco (historians); Alejandra Naftal (museologist); Alejandra Oberti, Claudia Bacci, Daniel Paradedda, Julieta Lampasona (sociologists); Susana Skura (antropologist). Silvina Segundo and Nancy Lucero (producers); Abelardo Cabrera, Virginia Croatto, Alejandro Esther, Omar Esther, Matías Iaccarino, Ignacio Masllorens, Pablo Pintor and Marcelo Rest (camerapeople).

CHAPTER 1

THE ARCHIVE

The construction of the archive must see to it that the collection of testimonies represents different points of view on the recent past as well as its character as a “public issue.” As an act of memory, the construction and the design of the archive are determined by:

- Its connection with the public sector and human rights organizations devoted to the memory of state terrorism from different spheres (unions, education, academia);
- The topic it encompasses. The archive promotes the possibility of “thinking state terrorism” while considering the political, ideological and cultural dimensions of the conflicts that preceded it and sustained it, such as how the human rights movement originated in response to it. It’s not about life stories, but about narrative interviews that have thematic and formal aspects in common;
- The multiplicity of voices, themes and stories that it comprises. The work transcends the presentation of a sequence of stories and experiences. It’s about contributing to the construction of a collective memory that allows for the articulation of those discourses and for reflection on them.

1.1 Design of Objectives and Scope of the Archive

Institutional frameworks define the project and establish its objectives. Means of financing are defined by the institutional profile.

The definition of themes to consider in the interviews, as well as their organization, is based upon the goal of understanding the historical phenomenon and the concept of “state terrorism,” periodizing it and arriving at a conceptual definition based on the construction of a testimonial fabric that encompasses a more extensive temporality than the dictatorship itself. As such, it is necessary to:

- Recreate, through personal stories, part of Argentine history that begins at the end of the 1950's, the political and cultural changes that led to a grassroots movement that challenged the existing social order and fell victim to repression;
- Gather diverse testimonies about repression and resistance during the dictatorship of 1976-1983;
- Incorporate stories of activism, repression and resistance during the time period just before the coup d'état of March 1976;
- Include the period of democratic transition, during which foundational discourses were developed, for later reflection on state terrorism and the decades of the '60s and '70s. Including this period allows for the exploration of meaningful social phenomena that grew out of that moment and continue to be present today;
- The reopening of the legal proceedings, “the truth trials,” the recognition of sites, the recuperation of the true identities of appropriated children, and the identification of bodies buried as NN (Ningún nombre/No Name) add yet another layer of experiences and situations to the themes originally anticipated that we consider relevant to record.

1.2 Selection of Testimony and Means of Recording

The archive is comprised of audiovisual recordings (below is the description of how recordings are filmed) of narrative interview testimonial situations. Audiovisual recording gives access to the full testimony. As such, it shows the relationship between the question and answer – the answer is understood as what is said as well as body language, gestures, movement, silence, changes in tone, volume and rate of speech, etc. There is general concern for any disturbances potentially created by the camera's presence. A trained interviewer works in front of the camera without feeling intimidated, but it's important to look after the interviewee and help them so that they can feel comfortable, so that the presence of the camera becomes natural and does not hinder the development of their testimony. The cameraperson should be silent and non invasive, and should not interfere in the progress of the testimony¹.

The decision to film and make the full version (non transcribed and unedited) of the interview available for public consultation responds to the theoretical and methodological objectives of

2. For the purpose of this manual the following terms are used interchangeably INTERVIEW and TESTIMONY.

the archive. Transcription and editing imply an interpretation, a mediation. Interviews are only edited upon request by the interviewee. Namely, they may wish that a portion of the interview be made unavailable to the public permanently or temporarily (for example, until a trial is concluded).

1.3 Work Team and Consultants

El Archivo Oral de Memoria Abierta, Memoria Abierta's Oral Archive, is a testimonial archive about state terrorism established from the perspective of Human Rights organizations, and created based upon knowledge of the social sciences and history, with an interest in studying Argentina's recent past. The makeup of the work team is comprised of the following:

- Coordinator
- Producer
- Interviewer
- Cameraperson

The complexity of the topic addressed and the objective of developing material that may require a degree of expertise of specialists from different fields, makes it necessary to consult with advisors who support the work and offer diverse perspectives.

1.4 Selection of Prospective Interviewees

The full gamut of interviewees isn't ever finalized, but is modified according to the changing dynamics of society. Upon the creation of the Archivo Oral, much thought was given to the creation of a corpus, for which we delineated abstract types of testimonies to be gathered. We designed a broad range of categories in order to allow for the recording of a diverse set of memories.

Naturally, the categories overlap. An interviewee could, simultaneously, belong to different categories. In fact, that is frequently the case. And they can opt to devote their testimony, or a portion of it, to different subjective positions. An activist, a relative or survivor, for example, can emphasize the point of view of an intellectual or an activist or vice versa.

Then, why think in terms of categories? "In the grand scheme of things, the categories represent positions that have given rise to various versions of the recent past. Mothers, fathers, brothers and sisters, sons and daughters, couples, in short, family members of the detained-disappeared and/or murdered by the repressive forces; survivors of clandestine detention centers; former political prisoners; the exiled; former activists of political and social organizations; human rights activists; intellectuals who've engaged in the subject. All of these are categories with a symbolic responsibility relevant to the constructed memories of post-dictatorial Argentina [**see categories in Appendix 1**]. The most influential interpretations of state terrorism have come from individuals in such positions, all of whom having expressed themselves and acted as spokespeople in a process of construction in conflict. Reciprocally, many of these positions were

consolidated – reinforcing their legitimacy to interpret the past – as their particular memories made an impact, with varying degrees of depth and breadth, in the public sphere. Capturing these visions of the past is a central task of the constitution of the archive” (Carnovale, Lorenz y Pittaluga).

Early on we decided to interview those who were “directly affected” giving priority to the interviewees who were aging or in deteriorating health, almost all leaders or founders of Human Rights organizations. We later expanded the range of interviewees. On one hand, this was due to a need for interviewees to personalize individuals whose testimonies were considered to be of interest for the project. Furthermore, the archive chose to focus on different themes or issues by way of more specific interviews. Thus, the archive began incorporating the experiences of state terrorism from other stakeholders.

The selection of prospective interviewees is determined by different criteria that are considered simultaneously:

- **Relevance:** The full gamut of prospective interviewees is very broad and could appear overwhelming if one considers the scope of the repression. Whether it be in theoretical or ethical terms, it’s unacceptable to establish a hierarchy of experiences or stories, and one of the mandates of the work is the need to restore the collective nature and political dimensions of said stories and experiences. Even so, in methodological terms, for the purposes of producing an archive, there are testimonies about a unique experience that, in light of producing specific material for dissemination, in conjunction with other constituents or archives, or the formation of a collection, become especially relevant;
- **Urgency:** When dealing with interviewees who are elderly or whose health is precarious; when dealing with an interviewee who doesn’t live in the country;
- **Scope:** In forming the archive, Human Rights organizations established that the main objective would be to collect the stories of victims of state terrorism and other relevant protagonists of the political and social world of the time, excluding the voice of the perpetrators. The arguments in support of this decision were based on ethical questions, and on the repeated acceptance of those cruel and illegal acts by members of the military and their civilian accomplices in the media during the decades of the 70’s and 80’s. As the years pass, when significant advances have been made in the search for the truth as well as in the pursuit of justice, that initial delimitation may be reconsidered.

1.5 Appended Documentation

Sometimes the interviewees offer documents they wish to attach to their testimony. Novels, essays, memoirs, scholarly texts, newspaper articles, prior interviews in any medium, dossiers, photographs, mementos, objects and other documentation may be added to the oral story. The existence of this documentation is recorded on the interview form.

CHAPTER 2

HOW TO CONDUCT TESTIMONY

The interviewees explain, in many ways, the elements and motivations that have driven them to give testimony: articulating private memories within social history; telling that which has been yearning to come out but which isn't pertinent in the realm of judicial testimony and is too private for a journalistic interview, that which is not yet in the documentation or in the current bibliography; making space for the body in the story; finding an attentive and careful listener; hearing oneself so as to not forget and also in order to forget a little by confiding in someone else to share that story; responding to other voices; contributing to a collective memory always in the process of being redefined, affording oneself a space to reflect on the repression of the state terrorism, its antecedents and its consequences.

The testimonial process is collaborative. It requires an active presence and a personal commitment to the situation by all who participate in its fulfillment. The interviewer must strike just the right balance between sustaining the interview and being invisible, ensuring the completion of the testimony (listening, caring, guiding, being attentive to the parameters of the testimonial genre).

Testimony is unique and unrepeatable. The same individual can give different testimonies and the

interviewer can respond differently according to his/her interpretation of pertinent content each time and with each interviewee. The same question may elicit varying responses in content and duration or may elicit dissimilar commentaries. The more flexible the interviewer can be in responding to the dynamic that emerges from the testimonial process, the more resources they will have at hand to complete the work.

In order to carry out a testimonial interview it is necessary to clarify what it should not be:

- The narrative interview is not a “conversation”;
- The interview may not become a debate or a discussion;
- The listener is not the bearer of morality or moralizing content;
- The interviewee should not feel forced to respond in order to satisfy the interviewer. Should such behavior be observed, the recording should be paused and this point should be clarified so that the interviewee may focus on themselves, their memories, reflections, sensations that contribute to a social history.

It's also necessary to keep in mind that, as free as the flow of the testimony may be, it provides information about people, situations, places.

2.1 The First Contact

This is the time at which we introduce the project, the archive, the institution and/or the framework in which the testimony will be incorporated, emphasizing the place the story will occupy in the Archivo Oral and defining the characteristics of the testimony that we are going to focus on.

It may seem like a minor issue and one that doesn't present much difficulty, but it must be understood that the first contact with prospective interviewees is an extremely important moment and can have a decisive influence on the progress of their testimony.

The main objective of the first contact:

- Present information about the Archivo Oral. This can be done with varying levels of formality, verbally or with supplemental material. It's useful to have a written booklet that can be given out so the person can calmly read it over at another time;
- Show or explain how and where the testimony will take place;
- Discuss the type of recording that will be done.

The first contact should have the following characteristics:

- The explanation should be clear and exact, but the meeting should not be exhaustive;
- The person we are contacting must be permitted to ask all of the questions that he or she feels necessary;
- It may take place in person or over the phone.

2.2 The First Meeting

This is the time that the interviewee and the interviewer meet in person and define the topics and issues that will be addressed in the testimony. The interviewer is not the only one who asks questions. The interviewee has the opportunity to express concerns or ask questions that have arisen since the initial communication. An intake sheet is to be completed during the first meeting to assist in gathering the necessary information to be used in creating the question list for the interview (**See Appendix 2**).

The first meeting is essential in building rapport and establishing trust and collaboration in moving forward with the testimonial process.

The main objective of the first meeting:

- Agreeing on the general framework of the testimony;
- Learning concrete facts about the interviewee's biography, which aid in researching and creating an appropriate question list for the interview;
- Strengthening interpersonal connection and facilitating interviewee-interviewer communication.

The first meeting should have the following characteristics:

- It is preferably done face-to-face;
- It should be clear that it is not about conducting the interview, but about jointly organizing the preparation for the interview;
- The interviewee begins to define thematic areas, events or people they hope to mention or the issues they'll address more broadly during the interview;
- The many uses for the testimony should be made explicit so that the interviewee can best prepare for how they wish to represent themselves.

Upon concluding the first meeting, different possibilities (locations, scheduling) should be considered for the recording of the testimony.

2.3 Preparation of the Testimony

Once the first meeting has taken place, the interviewer develops the question list derived from the conversation with the interviewee and from research on the topics that will be addressed in the testimony.

2.3.1 Research

The objective of this brief research is to highlight necessary material for the development of the question list about the interviewee's biography, places, events or people mentioned in the first meeting:

- Sometimes the interviewee will provide supportive texts or documents during the first meeting;
- The research is limited and focused on the preparation of the testimony;
- It consists of searching the Archivo Oral and consulting the documentary and audiovisual archive to view relevant testimonies. When necessary, it involves consulting other reference materials produced within and outside of Memoria Abierta (material developed for dissemination, court cases, academic articles, bibliography on the topic, websites).

2.3.2 Guide / Questions: Type and Formulation

The information gathered translates into questions that are organized into the question list. Adjustments should be made to the model questionnaire based on the agreed upon terms discussed in the first meeting.

- The questions should be simple and concise;
- They are open-ended questions. In general, they shouldn't be answered with a mere affirmation or denial;
- Since not all of the interviewees are in the condition to give exact dates and names, the first meeting allows for the characterization of the interviewee's means of storytelling. Therefore, questions may be developed in accordance with the interviewee's way of remembering.

2.3.3 Production

Once the first meeting is over, an assigned date and place for the interview awaits confirmation by the production manager. Given the topics at hand, the memory process begins as soon as the contact with the interviewee is established. Only a short time should elapse between the first meeting and the recording of the testimony. It is the producer's responsibility to find a convenient time for everyone and assure that the interview takes place on the agreed date.

The organization of the testimony consists of the following responsibilities:

- **Date:** Determining and confirming the recording date of the testimony, according to the availability of the interviewee, the interviewer, the cameraperson, and the location;

- **Technical details:** Supply, inspect, and service the equipment;
- **Technicians:** Contact and meet with technicians in case it is necessary to purchase, inspect, or repair equipment;
- **Space:** Check and confirm the availability of the location where the testimony will be recorded;
- **Transportation:** Order the transportation service for the work team and recording equipment.

2.4 The Creation of Documents

For each testimony, two written documents are produced that are not available for public consultation: The interview and interviewee's Technical Form (**Appendix 3**) and the *Legal Permission* or consent form (**Appendix 4**).

The Technical Form contains technical information about the interview (date, place, length, number of sessions, interview identification number, interviewer, cameraperson) and details regarding the interviewee (personal information, contact information, category, if they've testified in court or were interviewed prior).

The Legal Permission is evidence of the interviewee's voluntary participation and the transfer of rights so the interview may be kept, preserved and conserved in the archive. In addition, the interviewee's permission to use their testimony for educational, cultural, and scientific purposes or its exhibition as part of installations, presentations and/or publications. This consent carries the signature of the institution's president, the interviewer, and the interviewee. The legal permission specifies the type of access to the document. Access to the interview may be general, limited, confidential or edited:

- **General:** Publication and/or transcription of this testimony in its entirety is prohibited. Fragments of it may be quoted for educational and scientific purposes in accordance with Article 7 of the Memoria Abierta Archivo Oral Bylaws. The citations must be textual and the source must be provided;
- **Limited:** Publication and/or transcription of this testimony is prohibited. Use of any part of it, or any reference to it, must be explicitly authorized by Memoria Abierta;
- **Confidential:** This testimony is not accessible;
- **Edited:** Upon request of the interviewee a portion of this testimony has been removed from public access.

2.5 The Testimony

The goal of Memoria Abierta's testimonies is to document, study, and interpret the historical processes of the recent past, contributing to the construction of a social memory and promoting its transmission to future generations. The methodology of the narrative interviews is based on life review and structured interviews. The audiovisual recording aids the multidimensional understanding of the message in which form and content are intertwined. The fundamental richness of working with testimonies resides in the fact that they enable us to better understand the experience of their subjects, their personal perspectives and their subjectivity. Furthermore, the first person narrations are essential regarding these issues, as they offer information not documented in other sources which have been destroyed or lost.

There are different types of testimony. For example, testifying before the court regarding an investigation of human rights violations is not the same as giving testimony that will form part of a legacy.

Memoria Abierta's Archivo Oral testimonies take the form of narrative interviews. Often, at some point in the story, the interview format simultaneously becomes both a means and an object of characterization, recollection, and reflection. The interviewees become aware of the ways in which the topics, issues and main points are shaped by the scenarios and moments of enunciation.

2.5.1 The Testimonial Setting

The testimonial setting is carefully prepared. A physical location that provides an appropriate space for the task should be identified. The space should attend to the interviewee's needs of privacy and comfort and offer the most appropriate conditions for a quality recording (quiet, well lit, private).

Before beginning the interview there is an initial moment for the interviewee and interviewer to reconnect and to introduce the cameraperson. An informal chat, a quick coffee, a brief review of what was previously discussed will reduce the anxiety generated by the circumstances of the interview. It is important to create a comfortable work environment at that very first moment. It shouldn't feel too formal or too laid back.

It's best that only the interviewee, the interviewer, and the cameraperson are present. The cameraperson should explicitly state that any companions such as pets can interfere not only with concentration but also with the image and, hence, with the progress of the interview. As the cameraperson sets up the equipment, the interviewer proceeds with filling out the technical form.

Interviewer and cameraperson turn off their cell phones and recommend that the interviewee does the same (cell phone and landline).

Once the equipment is set up and tested, the interviewer checks in with the interviewee, and as soon as everyone is ready the cameraperson announces the start of the filming. The cameraperson awaits the signal from the interviewer and then turns on the camera.

The frame or the focus of the camera implies a decision. Memoria Abierta has defined and maintains a distinctive camera frame that takes the following into account:

- A close-up emphasizes the interviewee over their surroundings and brings the spectator's attention to the facial movements, creating a sense of closeness in the observer;
- If the background reflects some particular aspect of the interviewee and the place where the interview is being filmed (their home, their workplace, etc.), nothing in the surroundings should obscure or distract from the attention to the interviewee. If there are any visible or attractive objects in the background, they should be to the right side of the frame, where they detract less attention from the viewer;
- A more open medium shot allows for the inclusion of body language, the hand movements that accompany their words;
- Whichever camera angle is used, the inclusion of subtitles should always be taken into account. In the case of close-ups, for example, sufficient space must be left beneath the interviewee's face;
- The lighting should be soft, indirect, reflected, diffused and balanced to avoid shadows being cast on the interviewee;
- The interviewer should not be visible though their voice should be heard off camera;
- Directional microphones, particularly lavalier mics, should be used. Both speakers' voices should be recorded at the same level;
- Recording should be done with one camera that is fixed to a tripod throughout the filming. Reframing while the interviewer is speaking may be done once or twice. Occasionally, at the end, we film relevant images of objects, photographs or the interviewer's documents;

Each filming session may last, at most, up to three hours. When necessary, additional sessions may be scheduled with the same time limit.

The recording may be interrupted by the following participants:

- **Cameraperson:** The cameraperson constantly monitors the equipment and the frame. They may interrupt the filming should they detect the need for sound adjustment (microphone function, external sound interference, etc.), issues with the lighting, the camera, or other technical problems;
- **Interviewee:** The interviewee should be aware that they have the right to pause the recording if needed. They may become tired or upset, or may want to inquire about something related to the testimony, etc.;
- **Interviewer:** The interviews are long and the impact of the topics addressed may be difficult. The interviewer may sense that someone present is not able to continue or that it is necessary to interrupt the testimony due to a circumstance beyond the scope of the testimony. Also if the procedures must be reviewed once more, particularly when a prolonged period has elapsed between the first and second meeting;

In all instances, the interviewer must recall or make note of the moment at which the interview was interrupted.

Upon finishing the testimony:

- It's important to be aware of the emotional state of the interviewee. The interviewee does not become less important when the camera is turned off;
- If a name mentioned during the testimony must be clarified or spelled out, notes should be taken and the correct spelling must be confirmed at the end of the meeting;
- Before concluding the meeting, the interviewee should read the consent form and both the interviewer and interviewee should proceed with signing it.

2.5.2 The Interviewer-Interviewee Relationship

A main concern in establishing an optimal relationship between interviewer and interviewee is the distance established between them. The interviewer mustn't comment or make value judgments about what is said by the interviewee. They must not only practice containment of any reactions or statements, but also make a commitment to the interviewee in order to facilitate the interviewee's progress and not hinder it with gestures or comments that can impact their choices. The degree to which the interviewee is willing to publicly share certain aspects of their personal story must be made clear. The interviewer-interviewee relationship should be comprised of the following:

- A balance between trust and distance;
- Once the focus of the testimony is set, the interviewee establishes priorities or makes connections between events, topics or problems addressed: they might mention a socially relevant event or pause regarding some aspect that hadn't yet been considered by the interviewer after the first meeting, which turns out to be meaningful to their story;
- Both establish a shared ethical commitment that transcends the moment of the interview.

2.5.3 How to Ask Questions

There is no one way to carry out the testimonies that may be applied to all cases. The interviewer accompanies the memory work of the interviewee, which can be intense and arduous. The interviewer should be attentive to the uniqueness of the experience that will be told. The questions may be poorly worded or seem naïve or flawed, but if they help spur the interviewee to talk then they are more appropriate than an intervention motivated by a desire to flaunt one's knowledge. It's especially important that the interviewee be the one to put words to their thoughts, memories, and sensations, considering they may be painful or may have been silenced for a long time.

- The interviewer is responsible for marking the beginning and the ending of the testimony. The questions that make up the question list should be subject to the rapport that is established between the interviewee and the interviewer for the purpose of their work together;
- The interviewer should pay attention to the flow of the testimony. The question list that had been developed previously should not interfere with what is heard. If the interviewee addresses the anticipated topics without being prompted by the interviewer, or chooses a different sequence than planned on the question list, it is the interviewer who must adapt and not the other way around;
- Words are not neutral. They bear ideology; they can provoke undesirable effects: wounding, misinterpreting, offending. The interviewer must be attentive to the weight of the terms they use, as well as the tone created by their interventions;
- One needn't always ask a question in order to get an answer. Silence and gestures are very effective resources when used correctly.

2.5.4 Ethical Limitations of Inquiry

The interviewer has an ethical commitment to the interviewee and to the topic being addressed. This commitment is more important than obtaining information and sharing it. Merely obtaining certain information is not all that is important, but also how that information is obtained and what is done with it.

The interviewer must be sure that the interviewee understands what it means to give testimony and the possible ways it may be used and shared. They sign a consent form and it is important that its scope be clear to both.

While the context of the interview implies a joint production, the questions must be framed (and the answers heard) in a way that guarantees the interviewee's expression of stances, perspectives, and dilemmas without altering, distorting, or hindering their testimony.

Not all questions the interviewer hopes to ask while listening to the testimony are pertinent. While being with an interviewee who has survived traumatic situations, the interviewer must keep in mind that the testimony must not become a scenario for revictimization.

With the reopening of the judicial hearings, it is also important to consider that the testimony may not interfere with the work of justice.

CHAPTER 3

STORAGE AND CONSERVATION

3.1 Identifying the Document

Upon inputting the testimony into the archive, the first step in its documentary treatment consists of identification. This is done through the assigning of an alphanumeric Memoria Abierta's Steering Committee unique topographic registration code and a title.

The code is made up of three parts: the first indicates its belonging to the archive, the second the order in which the testimony was received, and the third corresponds with the sessions. This last one is only used in cases where the testimonies have two or more sessions.

Examples:

**Testimony completed in
one session: AO0001**

**Testimony completed in
two or more sessions:
AO0001A; AO0001B**

Document titles should be homogenous and contain the name of the interviewee:

Example: **Testimony of Juan García**

The title as well as the registration code are listed on the label of the format containing the testimony (video tape, DVD, Blu-ray or other) and in the digital archive of the video. The following basic details are also included on the label: date, name of the interviewer, cameraperson and length of the session (each session should correspond with a format and a file).

The topographic registration code, on the other hand, helps find the specific location of the document in accordance with the unit of description table.

As mentioned above, each testimony is accompanied by its corresponding documentation that consists of a Technical Form and Legal Permission. These two documents complete the documentation and should be kept duly archived.

3.2 Technical Conditions for Storage and Preservation

The materials used to record the testimonies, along with diverse factors that can physically alter them, make constant monitoring necessary. As well, technological developments pertaining to the production of audiovisual materials, to the formats in which they are recorded, and the means for conserving them is rapidly changing. Every year there are new methods and standards for storage and preservation.

For this reason, it's important to maintain a dual approach to conservation:

- Preserve the original recording in the best conditions for as long as possible;
- Make backup copies in different formats.

The following considerations must be kept in mind:

- Each time a copy is made the original may deteriorate or become damaged;
- The conditions for preservation must be maintained throughout the passage of time. For instance, it's useless to store material that needs an ideal temperature if that temperature won't be maintained in the future.

3.2.1 Videocassette Recordings

In the case of original formats, the majority of such files have been recorded on video cassettes, DVCam or MiniDV. In order to preserve those materials it is necessary to: Keep the temperature between 18-20 degrees Celsius (64-68 F), the humidity between 35-45% and keep them, within this range, as stable as possible;

- Keep the area free of dust, sunlight, and prevent tampering;
- Use correct furniture and neutral storage containers;
- Keep the cassettes upright;
- Check their condition annually and rewind them every five years.

To prevent tampering with the originals, copies must be made for the viewing of the material for those who work for Memoria Abierta, as well as for those who visit the office to utilize the Public Access service to view the testimonies.

These copies are made on DVD, each one identified by an alphanumeric topographic registration code assigned to each testimony, and an external hard disk that has the testimonies in MPEG format; in this case, the archival material as well as the files that hold them are identified with the registration code.

3.2.2 Recording in Digital Format

Recently, following the technological advances of visual recording, we have incorporated memory cards as a recording format for testimonies. These cards allow up to three hours of continuous recording, similar to the DVCam tapes used earlier; this length allows for the entire recording of an interview since the estimated time limit for each session is three hours.

After the recording is registered, the video files are copied from the card to a computer where they are stored in order to later make the following viewing copies and backup copies:

In high quality:

- Two external hard disks
- One Blu-ray disk
- One backup copy to store at an institution outside the country

In MPEG format:

- A DVD copy for internal use
- An external disk for public access

CHAPTER FOUR

CATALOGUING

4.1 Criteria for Cataloguing

One of the objectives of Memoria Abierta's Archivo Oral is to provide access to the materials it produces and stores. In order to achieve this goal, the archive must have authorization from those individuals who gave their testimony. The archive relies on a number of tools to provide appropriate conditions for consultation.

In this sense, the first issue to note is that the testimonies may only be viewed exclusively at the Memoria Abierta main office or at repositories (as mentioned in the introduction). No one is permitted to remove the material from the archive.

Reference information for the testimonies is organized in a database published on the Memoria Abierta webpage (<http://catalogo.memoriaabierta.org.ar>).

The archive's public access and cataloguing system are described along with the specialists that make up Memoria Abierta's Steering Committee.

The first part of this process was defining a cataloguing system within a database. It was agreed, as a point of departure, to establish two different forms of public

accessibility to the database:

- One that offers the most information possible, available for public access at the Memoria Abierta main office;
- Another, with more limited information, available on the webpage.

The differences between them is due to the descriptive nature of the information. The summary of the testimony may contain information that could be deemed sensitive (personal and family information, place of residence, names and personal information of fellow detainees, prisoners or activists, among others). Thus, when identifying what to publish on the webpage, we prioritized the preservation of personal information. It was agreed, then, to:

- Limit the information on the webpage to the name of the interviewee, the date, the length, location where interview took place, categories and topics addressed by the interview;
- Make available, in the summaries that can be accessed at Memoria Abierta's main office, only those names that are considered significant to the story;
- Provide analytical summaries that highlight the different aspects addressed in the interview, and not an exhaustive index. This summary, along with the Technical Form, offers the necessary information to the researcher likely to use the archive. In this way, those who consult the testimonies access a wealth of discourse, gestural and subjective, of filmed interviews, that would be lost in a consultation organized by an index that, due to its fragmentary nature, stifles the flow of the story and that of memory;
- Highlight, in the summaries, the topics, institutions, names, historic events or dates that become key words for the testimony and can be searched;
- These criteria were combined with **The Methodology for Memoria Abierta's Bibliographic Documentary Description:**

METHODOLOGY FOR MEMORIA ABIERTA'S BIBLIOGRAPHIC DOCUMENTARY DESCRIPTION

Here follows a set of procedures and guidelines that allow for the management, structure, and maintenance of the organization of the databases containing the descriptions of a variety of documents. It fulfills the need to follow a standard methodology for the usage and documentary analysis of the documentary/ bibliographic material about human rights or that are produced or protected by organizations that comprise Memoria Abierta.

Aside from the description of traditional bibliographic materials such as magazine articles, books, book chapters, theses, work presented in scientific events, scientific technical reports, projects and unconventional documents also known as grey literature, this methodology applies to institutional archival documents of many kinds, oral testimonies in audiovisual format and printed and digital photographs.

The standard description format is based on the bibliographic information

system of the Comisión Económica Para América Latina y el Caribe (Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean) known as CEPAL Modified Format, maintaining the conceptual logical structure that allows for the exportation to other formats while conserving the coherence of the description.

The components of Memoria Abierta's Cataloguing Methodology constitute a set of instructions, policies and applications for the organization, description and indexing of the materials and the corresponding database use and management, independent of the software that is used for its systematization.

The components of this methodology are:

- Bibliographic documentary databases (documentary, testimonial, photographic)
- Supplemental databases (of people mentioned, of activism, of clandestine detention centers, of the interviewee's personal information)
- Interviewee record database
- The Memoria Abierta thesaurus

A Technical Form (**see Appendix 3**), detailing the context of the testimony and the interviewee, is completed at the time of the interview. All of these details sit in a database that then organizes them, standardizes them and correlates them with other aspects of the archive.

4.2 Testimony Database

WORK PLAN FOR THE DEFINITION OF THE TESTIMONY DATABASE

- The definition of the physical details (length of interview, number of sessions, etc.), and the content (topics, categories, etc.) to be recovered;
- The cross-checking of the other Memoria Abierta databases (documents, photographs), the CEPAL manual and the standardization tools (rules, thesauri, etc.) with the Archivo Oral's recovery needs for the preparation of a work plan sheet;
- The establishment of modes of usage (web and public consultation at the Memoria Abierta office). All information pertaining to the interview and its summary are available at Memoria Abierta's main office with the exception of whatever has been reserved due to the limitations determined by the interviewee, while only the basic information is available on-line;
- The selection of tools for standardizing the information (in accordance with the characteristics of the information to be processed);
- The creation of the testimony database and interviewee record cards (personal information);
- The creation of the work plan sheet;

- The definition of the type of display for the information posted on the operating interface (ISIS database at Memoria Abierta only available to store the interviews and not to destined users – public access);
- The draft of the task flowchart (roles and interventions of the system operators);
- The training of the operators (members of the Archivo Oral work team);
- The determination of the information to be recovered for public consultation;
- The programming of the interface for public consultation.

ENTRIES THAT COMPRISE THE TESTIMONY DATABASE

- The name of the interviewee
- The sessions needed to complete the testimony and the length of each
- The total length
- Names of the interviewers (may be more than one person per interview depending on the number of sessions)
- Date
- Description of the interviewee
- Analytic summary
- Aspects highlighted in the summary with key words (terms or statements representing concepts, dates, events or relevant institutions in the context of the testimony)
- Categories
- Themes addressed in the testimony

The database has two different means of access:

- The complete information at Memoria Abierta's main office
- Partial information on the webpage

The Archivo Oral's interview registration system consists of two databases:

Interviewee Record Database: Contains interviewee's personal information in accordance with Appendix 3. It presents, in a narrative form, the information from the interviewee record card.

Testimony Database: Records the physical description and content of the testimony. The databases are related by the unique number assigned to each interviewee.

The CEPAL manual is used, with the goal of standardizing the storage of material in Memoria Abierta's different archives, for the description of the testimonies, adapting labels and fields, generating new fields and establishing some unique criteria for the description of the material generated by the Archivo Oral.

In order to read these adaptations, the following observations are made:

- The fields in this manual are described in the order that they appear in the work plan sheet. The corresponding CEPAL number and label is specified, in parentheses, preceded by V;
- The CEPAL format fields that aren't mentioned in this manual are not used;
- For the purposes of the work of the Archivo Oral, describing the entity Testimony is considered an item.

4.3 Fields of the Testimony Database

Number of the interviewee (No equivalence in CEPAL)

Obligatory field. Repeatable. **(In all cases the repeatable fields are separated with a % without spaces before or after).**

- Unique number corresponding to the notation made in the interviewee record database and that refers definitively to the entity person who gave their testimony;
- Links both databases;
- Is automatically registered in accordance with the assigned number by the **Interviewee Record Database**.

Example:

1
2

If the testimony refers to more than one interviewee, the number of each should be noted in different field occurrences.

Example:

3%4

Testimony Number (V03: Physical location of the document)

Topographic catalog number. Repeatable field, alphanumeric.

- Format number (cassette, Blu-ray, DVD and also the video archive) containing the interview session of the testimony. Each session is noted by a repetition of the field;
- The notation to make follows this logic: Initial-0000part.

Example:

AO-0020B

Where AO corresponds to testimonies produced by Archivo Oral and AA corresponds with Audiovisual Archive.

Title of the Testimony (V18: Monographic title)

The standard form of the name is registered in the subject field People Named.

- The title begins with Testimony of...
- The full first and last name of the person is specified.

Examples:

Testimony of Carlos Morelli
Testimony of Celina "Queca" Zeiger de Kofman

People Named (V79: People named (Created))

People named in the description of the interviewee.

- List all people references in the description of the interviewee in the order in which they appear. Apply AACR2 (Anglo American Cataloguing Rules, Second Edition).

Repeatable field.

Steps to follow:

- Consult the personal authorities database;
- In order to add new names, utilize the following resources: *Nunca Más* (Never Again) electronic version and printed version, *Desaparecidos.org*, books from CELS, APDH, Abuelas, Internet, etc.;
- First include the standard name of the interviewee, then the detained disappeared and finally other people named in the description of the interviewee.

Bibliographic Level (V05: Bibliographic level)

Defined by default and its usage is obligatory in accordance with the following notation:

- **Monographic (m):** A monographic bibliographical entry describes a document that may in itself be considered an entity and may be described bibliographically as such (e.g. book, thesis, application);
- **Analytical:** An analytical bibliographical entry describes a bibliographic entity that is part of a larger entity. The bibliographic description of a document filed as analytical may not appear in isolation, thus the document may only be properly described in reference to larger works in which said part is found within (e.g. film clip).

Level of Registry (V06: Level of registry)

Defined by default and its usage is obligatory in accordance with the following notation:

- **m: monographic**
- **am: analytical monographic**

Description of the Interviewee (V68: Notes – analytical, monographic, collection or serial publication)

Description that refers indirectly to the content of the document.

- Include the description of the interviewee in the items filed as analytical and monographic;
- The supplementary information that complements the interview (published books, materials given to Memoria Abierta, interviews of relatives that are also a part of AO) are located in a separate occurrence under the heading Nota (Note):

Date of Testimony (V43: Date of publication – analytical, monographic, collection or serial publication)

Date of the recording of the testimony.

- Include the publication date of a document filed as analytical and monographic.

For the purposes of the testimony registry of the Archivo Oral, the date of the testimony is understood as the publication date of the item.

- Include the complete date whenever possible;
- The format is day, month, and year;
- If the testimony was completed in two or more days, each of the dates is specified.

Examples:

12 August 2001
15 August and 2 September 2001
17 December 2008 and 5 January 2009

City of Testimony (V39: City of publication – analytical, monographic)

City where the testimony was recorded.

For the purposes of the work of the Archivo Oral, the city of the testimony corresponds with the city where the audiovisual recording of the testimony was conducted.

- Include the name of the city where the testimony was recorded on the items filed as analytical and monographic;
- Note the complete name of the city. If the notation of the name itself creates any confusion, add another reference afterwards, separated by a comma.

Example:

Colón, Buenos Aires
Colón, Entre Ríos

Interviewer and Cameraperson (V16: Personal author monographic)

Names and roles of those responsible for the testimony and its filmic recording.

- Format: last name, first name, role.

Example:

**Carnovale, Vera, interviewer
Ester, Alejandro, cameraperson**

Information Format (V63: Information presentation – analytical, monographic; collection or serial publication)

Repeatable field.

Information about the physical format of the analyzed document.

- Include filing medium of the document filed as analytical and monographic.
- If the testimony is recorded in more than one format include each one in different occurrences.

Examples:

**Video%
DVD%
DVCam%
CD rom%
Blu-ray%
Video
archive%
DVCam%
CD rom**

Partial Length (no correspondence with CEPAL even though it may correspond with monographic pages)

Partial length of the testimony. The duration of each session is listed separately. Repeatable field.

- Include the partial lengths of the item filed as monographic or when the monographic entry is required as the source for an analytical monographic entry;
- Always complete;
- Include according to format: 0001-A: 00:00:00
- Format information: Hours: Minutes: Seconds

Example:

001-A: 00:38:05%0001-B: 00:37:45%0001-C: 00:39:00

Total Length of Testimony (V20: Monographic pages)

Total duration of testimony including the length of the sessions.

- Include the total duration of the item filed as monographic or when the monograph is required as the source for an analytical monographic (am) entry;
- Always complete;
- Include in accordance with the format: 00:00:00 Hours: Minutes: Seconds

Examples:

01:29:00
00:55:00

Analytical Summary of the Testimony (V72: Summary)

Repeatable field (each paragraph should be separated by %).

Synopsis of the testimony's content. Compiled by the professional who completed the interview in accordance with the criteria stated in section 4.1 of this chapter.

- The narration is divided by hour of testimony. The first hour is indicated as 0:00 and thus in succession;
- The content of this field may be seen in the Memoria Abierta main office. It is not visible in the version published on the webpage.

The content in this field is denoted by the use of angular brackets <> to enclose words or concepts that are relevant to the Archivo Oral's recovery work. In determining which words to bracket one must consider the relevance of the word or concept within the narration (e.g. institutions or other named groups; events; dates; proper names; concepts).

Category of Interviewee (Created field, no equivalence in CEPAL)

Repeatable field.

Categories defined by the Archivo Oral, with the purpose of grouping the interviewees according to relevant groups of study. An interviewee may be part of one or more categories. **(See Appendix 1)**

- In order to facilitate cataloguing the system provides a predetermined list with a breakdown of subject headings:

Example:

Exiles, "right of option" and deported (Mexico, Brazil)% Couples

- The disaggregated information in parenthesis should be precise and concise. When pertaining to institutional membership, it is not necessary to add information about posts the person occupies in the institution, if they were a founder, etc. or others that go in the description. Evaluate case by case if it's necessary to put, for example, "Familiares de Detenidos y Desaparecidos por Razones Políticas de Córdoba" (Family Members of the Detained and Disappeared for Political Reasons, Córdoba) or if the name of the institution is sufficient information (sometimes it is

necessary to add the geographic location because certain institutions have different trajectories);

- Separate each occurrence, of those that appear in parentheses, with commas. In no instance should there be other parentheses, brackets or braces within another parentheses.

Example: (ESMA, El Banco, Vesubio)

- Whenever possible, only the complete name.

Example: (Centro de Estudios Legales y Sociales)

- When the initials are more well known than the name, only the initials are included.

Examples: (HIJOS)
(IWO)

- If necessary to write initials to complement the name, separate with dashes.

Example: (Asamblea Permanente por los Derechos Humanos – APDH)

Access to the document (V62: Dissemination of information – analytical, monographic, collection or serial publication)

Information about the distribution restrictions of the analyzed document, generally agreed upon by the editors, and that governs the access of the unit of information.

- Include the distribution restrictions for a document filed as analytical and monographic;
- This field indicates the potential for sharing the deposited documents:

General: Prohibits the publication and/or transcription of this testimony. Selections of it may be quoted for educational or scientific purposes in accordance with article 7 of the Memoria Abierta Archivo Oral Guidelines.

Limited: Prohibits the publication and/or transcription of this testimony. Any use of it, in full or in part, and any reference to it, must be explicitly authorized by Memoria Abierta.

Confidential: This testimony is not accessible.

Edited: By request of the interviewee, part of this testimony has been removed from public consultation.

In all cases quotations must be textual, with reference to the source, in the following format: Memoria Abierta, Testimony of "first and last name of interviewee," City, Year.

Temporal Scope From: (V74: Temporal scope: from – analytical and monographic)

Start year or year that corresponds with the content of the analyzed document.

- Include the starting year or the year that pertains to the content of the document filed as analytical and monographic.

Temporal Scope Until: (V75: Temporal scope: until – analytical and monographic)

Last year of the time period covered by the information in the analyzed document.

- Include the last year of the content in the document filed as analytical and monographic.

Editing (No equivalence in CEPAL)

Repeatable field.

Notes on the specifications given by the interviewee to trim the testimony.

- The notation is done by specifying the editing details in each instance using the following format:

Minutes at start of the edit to minutes at end: specification of what is edited

Examples:

00:24:16 to 00:38:20: self-criticism
%00:32:18 to 00:47:30: name of a work colleague

Duplication and Routing Sheet (V901: no equivalence in CEPAL)

Repeatable field (each edit is separated by the % sign without adding spaces).

Copies made of the material, the date the duplicate was made and the destination of the copy.

- Each copy and its corresponding specification is separated by %. Each field occurrence corresponds with a copy and its destination.

Example:

2 copies. 1 July 2005. Destination interviewee%
1 copy. 5 August 2006. Destination archive

Type of Literature (V04: Type of literature)

At the time of the creation of this manual the documents that make up the Archivo Oral registry and its possible future growth will always conform to Non Conventional Documents (V).

- **V (Non Conventional Document):** This category includes documents without a publisher and/or, due to their external characteristics, may not be considered under the categories mentioned earlier. This category includes typewritten documents, applications, brochures, microform, audiovisual materials, letters, etc.

Name of Participating Center: (V07: Name of participating center)

Register the initials of Archivo Oral. Defined by default and its use is mandatory.

Example: **AO**

- The possibility of listing the initials of other institutions or organizations that are part of the catalog or that have provided funding may be considered.

Country of Testimony (V40: Country of publication)

Country where the testimony was recorded. For the purposes of the Archivo Oral the testimony is considered an item.

- This field is utilized to list the country where the testimony filed as analytical and monographic was conducted;
- The country should appear as the ISO country code.

Examples:

**AR
CO
CL**

Editor of the Material (V38: Publisher – monographic, collection or serial publication)

Institution responsible for the publication of a document.

- Include the publisher of a document filed as monographic and in the analytical monographic (am) entry (always containing information concerning the monographic element);
- Include the publisher whenever possible in the same way as institutional authors. Omit the country name for government entities.

In the case of this manual, thus far the publisher is Memoria Abierta (Buenos Aires: Argentina).

Standardized Date ISO (V44: Standardized date in ISO format – analytical, monographic, collection or serial publication)

Publication date of a document noted in standardized form according to ISO format.

- Include the standardized date of publication of a document filed as analytical, monographic, collection or serial publication;
- The standardized publication date is noted in the following order: year, month, day.

Year: The year is written in full in the first four characters. If more than one year appears, the last one mentioned is recorded. If a specific decade cannot be determined then finish with 00

Month: The month is noted in the fifth and sixth characters using digits from 01 to 12. If more than one month appears, the last mentioned is recorded. If month of publication doesn't exist,

the characters are substituted with 00.

Day: The day is noted in the seventh and eight characters using the digits from 01 to 31. If more than one day appears, the last one mentioned is recorded. If day of publication doesn't exist, the characters are substituted with 00.

Examples:

19781013
20050603
19000000

Descriptive Information (V42: Descriptive information – analytical, monographic, collection or serial publication)

Descriptive information about the document's form (illustrations, graphics, maps, etc.).

- Include the descriptive information of a document filed as analytical and monographic;
- In the case of the materials of the Archivo Oral, the information detailed pertains to the characteristics of the recording medium of the interviews;
- When registering more than one type of graphical data, each should be separated by a comma and a space;
- In the case of special materials, include in this field the information that pertains to the physical description;
- Apply AACR2

Examples:

1 Videocassette (70 min.): 35 mm
1 Videocassette: b&w
1 DVCam: col.
2 DVCam: col.

Descriptors of the Thematic Content: (V76: Descriptors: thematic content – analytical, monographic, collection or serial publication)

Terms made up of one or more key words that summarize or define a concept, taken from a thesaurus or controlled vocabulary list utilized for the unit of information. Repeatable field.

- Include the assigned descriptors for a document filed as analytical and monographic in accordance with the information reported in the summary of the testimony.

Thesauri used: Memoria Abierta's thesaurus

Laws

Decrees

Prisons

Acronyms included in the Memoria Abierta thesaurus

Self Descriptors of Thematic Content: (V172: Descriptors: thematic content – analytical, monographic, collection or serial publication)

Terms created for one or more key words that summarize or define a concept particular to these documents and that aren't standardized in the prior item. In the case of the Archivo Oral, these are derived from the analysis of the summaries of the testimonies, extracted from a thesaurus or a controlled vocabulary list utilized by the unit of information.

Repeatable field.

- Include the descriptors assigned for a document filed as analytical and monographic according to the information supplied in the summary of the testimony.

Examples:

**Groups in exile
Armed violence**

Clandestine Detention Centers (V279: Clandestine detention centers. Created field – analytical, monographic, collection or serial publication)

Refers to the clandestine detention centers named in the document.

- Include the clandestine centers named in the document standardized according to authorized lists or databases.

Examples:

**ESMA
CLUB ATLÉTICO
EL OLIMPO**

Document Type (V80: Primary thematic category – analytical and monographic)

Chart of thematic categories determined by the unit of information with the goal of organizing the recordings by type.

- Include the primary thematic subject headings assigned to a document filed as analytical and monographic;
- For the purpose of the Archivo Oral's work, the category TESTIMONIES is currently under consideration.

Primary Countries (V83: Primary countries – analytical, monographic level, collection or serial publication)

Names of the countries or regions that are referred to in the interviewee's description.

- Include in full the names of the primary countries referred to by a document filed as analytical and monographic.

Repeatable field.

Examples:

ARGENTINA
BRAZIL
VENEZUELA
NORTH AMERICA
UNITED STATES
LATIN AMERICA
SPAIN

Administrative Divisions and Regions (V85: Administrative divisions and regions – analytical, monographic, collection or serial publication)

Administrative divisions (within a country) and natural regions (within a country or covering one or more countries) referenced by the analyzed document.

Include the administrative divisions and regions referenced by a document filed as analytical and monographic.

Repeatable field.

Examples:

SOUTHERN REGION
CENTRAL REGION
CUYO REGION
PATAGONIA REGION
AMAZON REGION
BUENOS AIRES (CITY)
BARILOCHE (RIO NEGRO)
CORDOBA
GREATER BUENOS AIRES
PILAR (BUENOS AIRES)
PILAR (SANTA FE)

Institutions, Organizations and Other Named Groups – Initials (V86: Institutions – Initials – analytical, monographic, collection or serial publication)

For the purposes of Memoria Abierta's work, different groups are considered institutions (e.g. Social Movements, Armed Movements, Political Movements).

Repeatable field with subfield according to format: ^s^d

- Include the initials of the institutions mentioned in the interviewee's description;
- Include the initials in the subfield ^s and in ^d the full name.

Examples:

^sERP^dEjército Revolucionario del Pueblo
^sPTR^dPartido Revolucionario de los Trabajadores
^sAPDH^dAsamblea Permanente por los Derechos Humanos

Institutions, Organizations and Other Named Groups (V179: Named institution – Created)

Same as above.

- Include the institutions named in the interviewee's description standardized according to AACR2;
- Armed organizations are standardized: name followed by (the term "political organization" country).

Example: **Montoneros (political organization: Argentina)**

Multimedia (V01:)

Field destined to reference digital materials accessible online or by other means. The name of the archive is specified.

- The type of archive is specified by output format allowing the creation of links across the archive.

Example: **AO-0001**

CHAPTER 5

PUBLIC ACCESS AND CIRCULATION

The goals of the Archivo Oral as a memory archive transcend the generation, collection and appropriate storage of testimonies. Since its creation, Memoria Abierta, as its name indicates, signals both the imperative to gather diverse memories and to forge a path beyond achieving an ultimate goal.

Furthermore, the idea of a space open to public consultation also entails facilitating and being in contact with those memories that are in a permanent state of construction. In order to circulate and facilitate the access to these testimonies, materials in different formats are produced with the intention of sharing, connecting and contextualizing those stories. These materials are not merely an occasional activity, but are one of the archive's tasks.

5.1 Who Consults Memoria Abierta's Archivo Oral?

The archive is open to different kinds of visitors, with their respective objectives: it offers stories to survivors or to family members and friends of people who are

named in the interviews; it's available to students; it supports the work of researchers, journalists, members of local or foreign human rights organizations; and it can also constitute a resource that provides information for judicial proceedings.

5.2 Access to the Documents

There are various ways to gain access to the interviews that comprise the archive. There are basically two modes of access. One is more direct, via public consultation, and the other is more indirect, through their inclusion in pedagogical or distribution materials.

5.2.1 Public Consultation

One may gain access to viewing the testimonies that comprise the Archivo Oral at the Memoria Abierta main office.

Guide to follow:

1. The prospective visitor may search the Memoria Abierta website for the topic and the exact interviews that are of interest to the visitor and obtain contact information should any difficulties arise;
2. Schedule an appointment once the availability of the interviews is confirmed;
3. At the first appointment the visitor completes a search registry form and signs the terms of use agreement pertaining to the requested material;
4. The visitor gains access to a database with more detailed information about the interview, which allows visitors to narrow and broaden their search. The visitor will also receive advice about other documents and archives related to the topic of interest. In the database the visitor can find the following information about the interview contents:
 - The name of the person interviewed
 - The sessions that were necessary to complete the testimony and the length of each one
 - The total duration of the testimony
 - The names of the people who conducted the interview (in some cases, depending on the quantity of sessions, there may be more than one person to an interview)
 - The names of the people who recorded the testimony (may be more than one to an interview, depending on the number of sessions)
 - Date
 - Description of the interviewee
 - Summary
 - Highlighted aspects in the summary with key words (terms or statements regarding concepts, dates, events or relevant institutions in the context of the testimony)

- Categories
- Topics addressed by the testimony
- People or institutions named
- Forms of activism mentioned

Visitors to the archive should understand the guidelines for public consultation and sign a user's agreement that establishes conditions for later use. All interviewees may request a copy of their interview. Copies are not made for visitors to the archive.

5.2.2 Development of Informational and Instructional Documentary Materials

The Archivo Oral creates materials focusing on the research conducted on certain topics gathered in collections of interviews. The materials may have different purposes: pedagogical, research, distribution.

- **Pedagogical Resources:** The Archivo Oral, in concert with the objectives of Memoria Abierta, does not limit the sharing of testimonies to the consultation space, but considers one of its main objectives the development of educational tools that contribute to the intergenerational transmission of Argentina's recent history. These tools may take the form of manuals, textbooks, or interactive disks that may be used by instructors in the framework of their classes and that include contextualized interviews in connection with other types of stories or images;
- **Distribution Material:** In the same vein, it is considered fundamental to develop materials for distribution, such as films or texts available on the Memoria Abierta webpage, for mass media, for exhibition or for participation in national and international meetings;
- **Research Outcomes:** Reflection about particular collections and the development of certain topics have led to the publication of books, articles or papers and the participation in seminars and academic conferences.

In all of these cases, the selection of excerpts from the testimonies as well as their contextualization, must be handled respectfully and in accordance with the commitment to protecting the person who gave their testimony. Upon completing the testimony, the individual interviewed signed an informed consent agreement that establishes its possible uses and limitations [See Appendix 4].

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1 – Interviewee Categories

RATIONALE

We developed these categories for possible interviewees, thinking, on one hand, of a corpus of testimonies that takes into account the multiplicity of voices and experiences of different social agents and, on the other hand, that accounts for the different dimensions and practices in which the repressive politics of state terrorism was articulated. These categories are only tentative and are open to the outcomes of the collection and classification process. It is possible, therefore, that they be reconsidered and reconfigured over the course of the Archivo Oral's construction.

The current set of categories is the fruit of debate and reflection carried out with the Archivo Oral's Steering Committee in July of 2005, which resulted in some changes to the categorization developed in the initial stage of the Archivo Oral in 2001. The changes made address, firstly, the need to include in a balanced way – since we're not dealing with a statistically representative display – the varied experiences and social agents who comprise the whole gamut of the Archivo Oral's interviewees. Secondly, the goal that the Archivo Oral's categories reflect, with the greatest accuracy possible, experiences narrated by the interviewees. And finally, that the changes in categorization are intended to be more inclusive of experiences, perspectives and sociocultural dimensions not specifically covered in the previous categories (so, for example, the third group of categories identify public practices and activities through a chronological cross-section).

It's to be expected that one interviewee will find themselves in more than one category. The categories will be listed in each case in order to facilitate consultation.

All classification complies with the need for a structure to facilitate access to the resources and has, without a doubt, a certain degree of arbitrariness. We have tried to make each category designate particular experiences while also accounting for a diversity of perspectives. This allows one to gain access to varying perspectives on particular events contributed by different individuals.

Notwithstanding the aforementioned, we insist that these categories are not meant to put an end to the debate by establishing decisive ways of classifying the voices of the social agents who make up the Archivo Oral.

Categories defined based on family members' relationships to the detained-disappeared and/or murdered:

Mothers / Fathers: This category includes mothers and fathers of the detained-disappeared and/or murdered, independent of whether they either currently or have ever worked with human rights organizations.

Grandmothers / Grandfathers: This category includes grandmothers and grandfathers whose grandchildren have been taken and/or appropriated, independent of their activism in human rights organizations and whether the identities of their grandchildren have been recovered or not.

Daughters / Sons: This category includes daughters and sons of the detained-disappeared and/or murdered, independent of their activism in human rights organizations. This category also includes those sons and daughters of the detained-disappeared and/or murdered, independent of their activism in human rights

organizations, who've been appropriated or given up for adoption.

Couples: This category includes partners of the detained-disappeared and/or murdered.

Sisters / Brothers: This category includes sisters and brothers of the detained-disappeared and/or murdered, independent of their activism in human rights organizations.

Other Family Members: This category includes all family members of the detained-disappeared and/or murdered not covered in the previous categories.

Categories defined based on personal experiences lived during the period leading up to the coup d'état of March 24, 1976 and during the dictatorship:

Activists: This category includes all who've belonged to militant groups, political parties, unions, student movements, religious groups and social movements targeted by the systematic repression. These individuals don't necessarily belong to other categories. Given the variety of organizations, experiences and political trajectories, the interviewee's different instances of activism are specified in each case.

Survivors of Clandestine Detention Centers: This category includes all who have survived the experience of illegal repression in clandestine detention centers. Given the importance to the public consultation of knowing who was detained in which centers, the different locations of detention are specified in each case.

Political Prisoners: This category includes all individuals who, for political reasons, were imprisoned, by judicial order or under National Executive Power (PEN), before and/or during the military dictatorship. In each case the locations of detention are specified.

Exiled or "Voluntarily" Exiled: This category includes all individuals who left the country as a consequence of the general repression, whether or not they experienced particular personal danger (for example, those who left because of fear, because of direct threats, because of a decision made by the organization they belonged to, because they were considered a potential target of repression, etc.). Included are political prisoners who could apply for "the right of option" program to leave the country.

Other Social Agents: This category includes individuals not covered in any of the previous categories, whether or not they consider themselves directly affected by state terrorism, but whose testimony is marked by it.

Categories defined based on social and public activities before, during and after the dictatorship:

Intellectuals, Artists and Professionals (including educators, journalists, lawyers, writers, etc.): This category includes individuals whose intellectual, artistic, or professional activity is significant during the specified time period as well as in the present. Their inclusion answers to the goal of recording testimonies that are meaningful both in terms of reflection as well as the reconstruction of events and practices linked to the political, social, and cultural history of the country. These individuals acknowledge different types of linkages to the political sphere and may or

may not be included in other categories.

Public Officials (Argentine or Foreign): People who've held public office during the specified time period or in the present day and are somehow linked to the issue of state terrorism and the political life of the recent past.

Members of Political, Union, Social and Religious Organizations: This category includes those individuals who before, during or after the last dictatorship were or are members, independent of the type of relationship, of political, union, social and religious organizations. These individuals may or may not be included in other categories (for example, trade unionists, church members, leaders, members or collaborators of human rights organizations, etc.).

Appendix 2 – First Meeting Intake Sheet

PERSONAL INFORMATION

Name:

Date of first meeting intake:

Date and place of birth:

Place of residence in the '70s:

Place of current residence:

Current occupation:

If he/she has children, birth years:

Education level, place of birth and occupations of parents or caregivers:

Other relevant personal information:

IF HE/SHE HAS DETAINED/DISAPPEARED FAMILY MEMBERS

Name:

Which family member:

When disappeared:

Where and under what circumstances:

If activist

In which organization:

In what capacity:

When:

If they were detained (legally or illegally) prior

Where:

What time period:

IF HE/SHE WAS AN ACTIVIST

In what organization:

In what capacity:

When:

IF HE/SHE WAS DETAINED (LEGALLY OR ILLEGALLY)

Where:

When and for how long:

IF HE/SHE WAS EXILED

Where:

For what time period:

Was he/she politically active or involved in protest during the dictatorship?

Did his/her professional or work activities involve him/her in activism, in the defense of prisoners or in protest of human rights violations?

Did he/she testify in court?

Political/social activities after the dictatorship

Other relevant information

Appendix 3 – Technical Form

INTERVIEW AND INTERVIEWEE INFORMATION

INTERVIEW INFORMATION

Cassette No. Interviewee No. Collection

Date of interview.....Place

City..... Province

Duration Number of sessions

Interviewer Cameraperson

INTERVIEWEE INFORMATION

Last name.....

First name

Address

.....ZIP Code

Telephone Numbers

Email

Date of Birth Place of Birth

Sex Marital Status

Children (list birth years)

.....

Most recent employment

Education level

Education level, employment and place of residence of parents or caregivers

.....

.....

Has he/she been interviewed before? By whom? Where? When? What type/format?

.....
.....
.....

Has he/she testified in court? Was or is he/she a plaintiff in a lawsuit? Which one(s)?

.....
.....

Does he/she remember the case or file number?

Documentation or materials to be included:

.....

CATEGORIES

.....
.....

OBSERVATIONS

.....
.....
.....
.....

Appendix 4 – Legal Permission

Buenos Aires, ____ of _____ 20____

I hereby attest, by way of my testimony, to my voluntary participation in the formation of MEMORIA ABIERTA's Oral History Archive.

I transfer the ownership of this interview to Memoria Abierta for its storage, preservation, and conservation in the archive.

I transfer the following rights to Memoria Abierta: recording rights, transcriptions and contents of the interview for cultural, scientific, and educational purposes.

I grant permission to Memoria Abierta to use the interview in installations, exhibits, presentations and/or publications, in museums, conferences, televised documentaries and/or educational programs, films, galleries, etc., allowing Memoria Abierta the possibility of receiving funds by way of the ticket sales and/or copies, royalties, exchanges, and/or other types of rights, with the express purpose of preserving the material, the cultural heritage and the Archivo Oral's other activities.

Signature of Interviewee:

Printed Name:

Identification Number and Type of Document:

Signature of Interviewer:

Printed Name:

Identification Number and Type of Document:

Signature of Memoria Abierta Associate:

Printed Name:

Identification Number and Type of Document:

Special Restrictions:

TESTIMONY AND ARCHIVE

• • • Methodology of Memoria Abierta

