

Of HIJOS and Niños

Revisiting Postmemory in Post-Dictatorship Uruguay

CARA LEVEY

Focusing on the case of post-dictatorship Uruguay, this article reconsiders the term “postmemory,” coined by Marianne Hirsch to describe the transmission of memory from Holocaust survivors to their children about events that preceded their birth. It examines two groups: HIJOS, comprised of the offspring of the dictatorship’s victims, who were babies and young children during the dictatorship, and Niños en Cautiverio Político, whose members were imprisoned with their mothers as infants or born in captivity. Analysis of these contrasting organizations elucidates postmemory’s complexity, revealing the broad spectrum of experiences it encompasses and the role of external factors in the construction of memory.

“Children, Never look Back!” and this meant that we must never allow the future to be weighed down by memory. For children have no past, and that is the whole secret of the magical innocence of their smiles.

Milan Kundera, *The Book of Laughter and Forgetting*

INTRODUCTION

Since the onset of the “memory boom” that began in earnest in the mid-1990s in the Southern Cone, a myriad of organizations have appeared in Uruguay with the goal of contesting the cultural and legal impunity that followed the 1973–85 dictatorship.¹ Associations of former political prisoners such as la Asociación de Ex Pres@s Polític@s del Uruguay

(the Association of Former Political Prisoners of Uruguay—known as CRY SOL) and Memoria para armar (Piecing Memory Together) have joined the veteran human rights organizations such as SERPAJ (Peace and Justice Service) which pre-date the dictatorship, and Madres y Familiares de Uruguayos Detenidos-Desaparecidos (Mothers and Relatives of Detained and Disappeared Uruguayans) who came together in response to the forced disappearance of their relatives in Argentina and Uruguay.² The post-dictatorship organizations, the majority of which are comprised of survivors of the dictatorship or the relatives of Uruguay's *detenidos-desaparecidos* (detained-disappeared)³ and other victims, now include a newer generation of actors, who can be viewed as part of a continuum of human rights activism which has enjoyed increasing presence in the public sphere.

This article examines two such groups, made up of individuals who belong to the second generation inasmuch as they are the offspring of the dictatorship's victims. The members of these groups were either small children or babies at the time of the 1973 coup or born during the dictatorship, a generational unit that Ana Ros describes as the "post-dictatorship generation" because they reached adulthood after the dictatorship.⁴ HIJOS (Sons and Daughters), formed in 1996, is comprised of individuals united by their status as sons and daughters of the dictatorship's victims. The group provides a compelling contrast with another group of sons and daughters of victims: Niños en Cautiverio Político (Children in Political Captivity), founded in 2007, a group united by their shared experience of having been incarcerated with their mothers whilst babies or toddlers—a number were even born in captivity.

Analysis of HIJOS and Niños and the diverse ways in which memory and identity are articulated collectively by the generation "after" reveals that treatment of the past varies not only between first- and second-generation actors, but among second-generation actors themselves.⁵ Ros has elucidated the diverse ways in which connections with the past are made by members of the same generation or even those with comparable experiences.⁶ Building on her assertion that the memory of the post-dictatorship generation should be viewed as a mosaic rather than a monolith, I show that postmemory encompasses a spectrum of experiences.

A comparison of the various permutations of second-generation memory in Uruguay facilitates a critical reassessment of postmemory.

Coined by Marianne Hirsch to explain the belated memories of children of Holocaust victims and survivors about events that preceded their birth, postmemory is frequently discussed in relation to the second generation.⁷ However, although Hirsch's work is central to an understanding of memory of events that the subject may not recall or did not even experience, the case of Uruguay suggests that the term postmemory can be extended to the overlapping generation, to which both HIJOS and Niños can be viewed as belonging. Meanwhile, their distinct group positions vis-à-vis the previous generation are not only the result of personal and familial experience but are intertwined with the broader political, judicial and social contexts. Revisiting postmemory's complexity can account for individual and collective mobilization around contrasting experiences at different junctures of the post-dictatorship, and attest to the diverse manifestations of collective memory making that continue to emerge nearly three decades after the dictatorship ended.

In recent years, postmemory has proved an appealing area of study in the Southern Cone, particularly in relation to the 1976–83 Argentine dictatorship. Susana Kaiser's work draws on interviews with members of the next generation, most of whom were not directly associated with the victims of dictatorship-era repression.⁸ In contrast, Michael Lazzara and Gabriela Nouzeilles have adopted what might be described as a "micro" approach to postmemory by focusing on specific memory works by the children of victims of state repression in order to consider their political significance and the extension of affect beyond the children of victims.⁹ This article occupies a space in between these distinct approaches, seeking to move beyond the creative projects undertaken by individuals, to explore group formation and the articulation of an identity related to trauma. I elucidate the distinct ways in which collective and shared notions of memory are constructed, focusing on a country that has occupied a more peripheral position on debates on postmemory.

Some notable exceptions include sociologist Gabriela Fried's work, which examines the intersubjective transmission of memory within Uruguayan families, and, more recently, Ros's monograph which explores Uruguay alongside Chile and Argentina.¹⁰ However, there has been a dearth of in-depth studies on Uruguayan post-dictatorship organizations such as HIJOS and Niños.¹¹ Indeed, there has been limited research that looks comparatively at different second-generation groupings in the

same country. Although Hirsch herself points out that the postmemory phenomenon is relevant beyond the Holocaust,¹² few studies dealing with the Southern Cone problematize the contentious term, a necessary task precisely because of its transference to a different temporal and geographical setting, as well as its complexity. Although Hirsch has acknowledged the contradictions inherent to postmemory, particularly in her most recent work, such nuances are not always afforded sufficient space for discussion in the scholarly literature.¹³ The case of post-dictatorship Uruguay in which generational boundaries and the lived experience of the children of victims are markedly different is used to elucidate postmemory's various contradictions and restore the complexity that Hirsch's original analysis merits.

REVISITING POSTMEMORY AND THE SECOND GENERATION

Hirsch employed the term "postmemory" to describe the "relationship of the second generation of the Holocaust to powerful, often traumatic, experiences that preceded their births but that were nevertheless transmitted to them so deeply as to seem to constitute memories in their own right."¹⁴ The operative word here is "seem" which implies that postmemory constitutes a pseudo or secondary memory that is integral to the bearer's sense of self, but denotes distance from the traumatic events in question. Recollection and recall are not so much the salient features of postmemory as are familial ties and intergenerational transmission of memories. As Hirsch points out, "the term is meant to convey its temporal and qualitative difference from survivor memory, its secondary or second generation memory quality, its basis in displacement, its belatedness."¹⁵ Read in this way, the inclusion of "post" is taken literally: alluding to an "afterwards" and generational difference, in other words, the distance from traumatic events is deemed temporal.

Such "belatedness" reminds us not only that memory is tied strongly to the present but that it is not contingent on an individual's ability to recall or their first-hand experience of traumatic events. As Lazzara explains, memory is "a flexible process of composition and recomposition, of casting and recasting the past in its relation to present circumstances and future expectations."¹⁶ If we consider all memory to be representative, incomplete and fragmented—rather than a facsimile or faithful reproduction of the

past—which is shaped in and by the present, then the memories of the second generation are not merely pseudomemories. In this vein, Beatriz Sarlo has questioned the usefulness of postmemory as a conceptual tool, critiquing Hirsch’s focus on traumatic events that were not experienced by the children themselves and thus, as James Young would argue, constitute a vicarious past.¹⁷ She contends that “all experience of the past is vicarious” in that it is mediated in and by the present. Drawing on contemporary Argentina to elucidate the nebulous boundaries between first- and second-generation memory, she concludes that “it is not so much a question of postmemory, but rather types of memory that cannot be attributed directly to a simple division between the memories of those who witnessed events and the memory of their offspring.”¹⁸ However, as this article shows, it is precisely this contradiction—the blurred boundaries between individual or group memories and experience and those of the previous (witness/protagonist) generation—that is characteristic of “postmemory.”

Meanwhile, memory construction in the present and vicarious witnessing are not unique to postmemory and may pertain to victims, survivors and their families on the one hand and the historian or individual investigating the past in a professional capacity on the other. Sarlo suggests that what distinguishes the former from the latter is not the belatedness of the individual’s position but “the implication of subjectivity in the events portrayed.”¹⁹ Hirsch and Sarlo find common ground in terms of the central role of subjectivity in postmemory, although their arguments are articulated differently. Hirsch has argued that what distinguishes postmemory from memory is generational distance, but what distinguishes it from history is a “deep personal connection.”²⁰ According to Hirsch, the personal connection is significant; it is less about *who* the subject is and temporal generational difference and more about his/her motivation and identification, for example the kinship ties they may share or the affiliative bonds that they may create with the victims of trauma. Such links may exceed blood ties to encompass those who did not experience the dictatorship or have a close association with its victims but feel affected through contact or engagement with a traumatic past, be this through a film or other medium. Hirsch continues: “postmemory is a powerful and very particular form of memory precisely because its connection to its object or source is mediated not through recollection but through an imaginative investment and creation.”²¹ “Post” can be understood

not as a reference to afterwards per se but to the present. Hirsch uses the examples of poststructuralism and postmodernism to justify the use of “post,” arguing that the terms “inscribe both a critical distance and a profound interrelation with modernism and structuralism. ‘Postcolonial’ does not mean the end of the colonial era but its troubling continuity.”²²

Likewise, postmemory can be viewed not as the end of an era of memory but as its continuation and evolution. The notion of continuity, or rather approximation, is particularly relevant for post-dictatorship Uruguay, not only because of the widespread nature of repression and the legacy of extreme violence (disappearance, torture, forced exile), which mean that trauma continues to permeate the present, but also because certain memories have been suppressed and events denied or obscured by official narratives. Testimonies from witnesses and survivors may not seep into public consciousness until sometime after the violence has ended. However, as Hirsch points out, “post” is more than a “temporal delay.”²³ The prefix is necessary because postmemory relates to how the past is mediated, specifically the interchange of subjectivity, imagination, experience and (re)creation in the present which indicates a blurring of first-, second- and subsequent generation memories. Indeed, to draw on Hirsch’s analogy, “postcolonial” refers not only to the legacy of colonialism in the period afterwards and the characteristics shared by the two periods, but to the way in which the “postcolonial” present impacts on the prior colonial period. “Post” therefore is indicative of a bidirectional and perpetually evolving relationship between past and present.

My exploration of HIJOS and Niños seeks to reappraise and elucidate two important aspects of postmemory. First, Hirsch’s focus on generational distance merits further consideration, particularly as it has implications for the two Uruguayan organizations. Hirsch does not stipulate whether postmemory is unique to the generation that followed the protagonist or witness generation, although much of her research focuses on the second generation of the Holocaust. This is not necessarily a limitation, but paves the way for thinking about postmemory’s emergence long after the passing of the witness generation, as well as its application to cases in which there is a notable generational overlap between the victim and subsequent generations. Not all post-dictatorship actors belong to or place themselves in the second generation, an aspect that casts doubt on whether they exhibit what might be called postmemory. Most of the members of HIJOS and

Niños were actually alive during the dictatorship, which points to limitations of the term “second generation” and, potentially, postmemory to capture their relationship to the previous generation. Indeed, Uruguay endured a relatively short dictatorship, with limited generational change in contrast to other more lengthy dictatorships like the Franco regime in Spain (1939–75), the Duvalier dynasty in Haiti (1957–1986) and that of Salazar in Portugal (1932–68).²⁴ This article therefore challenges the assertion that postmemory pertains to a generation removed from the victims and witnesses of historical atrocities.²⁵ Susan Suleiman has sought to address the grey area between victim and vicarious witness with the concept of the 1.5 Generation, situated *in between* the generation of victims and the generation after.²⁶ If, as Suleiman argues, postmemory is more illustrative of the types of memories that emerge from the second generation, rather than cases of generational overlap, a reconsideration of postmemory as an appropriate term for the post-dictatorship generation in Uruguay is needed.

The second aspect of postmemory that merits scrutiny is the relationship between intergenerational and familial transmission of memory on the one hand and the influence of intragenerational and affiliative transmission on the other. Whilst affect and subjectivity may be facilitated in the intimate space of the family because of a personal connection between the subject and the victims of and witnesses to trauma, the impact of societal and wider external factors on the individual cannot be ignored, nor can the way in which individual or personal memory affects collective memory and shapes group identity. Elizabeth Jelin’s seminal work on memory has called for “the need to ‘historicize’ memories, which is to say that the meanings attached to the past change over time and are part of larger, complex social and political scenarios.”²⁷ In her research, Hirsch has identified the affiliative/transgenerational transmission of postmemory as a counterpoint to familial/intergenerational transmission, although her work has tended to focus on the latter.²⁸ However, the boundaries between affiliative and familial are not easy to distinguish; they tend to mask postmemory’s potential for negotiating such divisions. In fact, the formation of HIJOS and Niños, discussed below, reveals a complex and multifaceted process of identity formation at the individual and collective levels, influenced profoundly by what Halbwachs has called “social frameworks”—akin to Jelin’s notion of social and political scenarios—within which individual memory

and understanding of the past is embedded.²⁹ In this sense, familial and affiliative dimensions of memory should be thought of not as opposing concepts but as distinct social frameworks through which postmemory is transmitted. Although the groups under scrutiny here are intimately linked to trauma through their familial ties, their public activities and articulated group identity reveal the interplay between the familial and affiliative, including the wider social, political and judicial contexts. The impact of distinct social frameworks or sociopolitical scenarios accounts for the articulation of collective identity, which not only must be viewed in relation to members' past experiences but also attests to the role of the present in shaping their adult lives in dialogue with past trauma.

I now consider the specific historical junctures in which HIJOS and Niños emerged, before discussing their complex relationship to the dictatorship generation.

HIJOS'S ENTRANCE INTO THE PUBLIC SPHERE: THE PRE-1996 PANORAMA

Like the majority of transitions from authoritarianism in Latin America in the 1980s and 1990s, the consolidation of democracy in Uruguay involved elite negotiations between the commanders of the armed forces and politicians, known as the "Navy Club Pact" in August 1984. The Sanguinetti administration's "cambio en paz" (peaceful change) involved a series of policies to address *some* aspects of repression, such as the large prison population and the reintegration of both returning exiles and workers dismissed unfairly during the dictatorship.³⁰ As an increasing number of denunciations of state repression were lodged with Uruguayan courts, the Sanguinetti administration was faced with the question of whether the perpetrators of dictatorship-era crimes would be punished. In this context, the military became increasingly restless, pressuring the government to resolve the issue of prosecutions.³¹ Following Congress's rejection of a series of bills limiting prosecution, Law No. 15,848 Derogating the Punitive Capacity of the State (the *Caducidad* Law) was passed in December 1986.³² The law protected members of the police and armed forces from prosecution for violations committed prior to March 1985, although it did not apply to civilian figures of the dictatorship. Uruguay embarked on the path of "no truth, no justice," with limited judicial investigation

and no official truth commission like that undertaken in Argentina, and later, Chile.³³

Official attempts to marginalize the issue of dictatorship-era repression were contested by sectors of civil society, notably human rights organizations and the Uruguayan trade union, the PIT-CNT. Human rights organizations such as Madres y Familiares and SERPAJ undertook an independent truth commission report (published in 1989) and spearheaded the campaign to have the *Caducidad* Law annulled. However, the law was upheld in the 1989 referendum (55.95 percent in favor of its continuity and 41.3 percent against). Although the law posed an obstacle to judicial investigation, the very narrow margin revealed that society remained divided on how to address the past. Support for upholding impunity was therefore not overwhelming.³⁴

In the aftermath of the referendum, the issue of past human rights violations retreated from the public sphere for a number of years, when debate was effectively limited to the human rights organizations and those directly affected.³⁵ However, “by the mid-1990s, it had returned to the public agenda in Uruguay and the official policy of silence and impunity became increasingly untenable, mainly as a result of continued civil society activism.”³⁶ Events in Uruguay were undoubtedly influenced by those in neighboring Argentina, where in a 1995 radio interview former colonel Adolfo Scilingo admitted to participating in the notorious death flights, in which prisoners were drugged and thrown from planes into the Río de la Plata. This was followed by Chief of Staff of the Argentine Army General Martín Balza’s public acknowledgement of the armed forces’ role in repression. This had notable repercussions in Uruguay—not least because the majority of disappearances of Uruguayans had taken place in Argentina. In April 1996, Rafael Michelini, the son of one of two Uruguayan senators (Zelmar Michelini and Héctor Gutiérrez) who had been assassinated in Buenos Aires, called the first March of Silence for May 20—the date when the senators’ bodies had been discovered in 1976—urging citizens to demand information about the past and the Uruguayan armed forces to speak out. In early May 1996, before the march, a former Uruguayan military officer, Jorge Tróccoli, admitted that the Uruguayan armed forces had tortured people.³⁷ This sequence of events provided a compelling argument in favor of those who felt that the past remained unresolved over a decade since the *Caducidad* Law had been passed.

GENERATION NEXT: HIJOS AS HEIRS TO THE DICTATORSHIP GENERATION

The mid-1990s therefore constituted a critical juncture in Uruguay—one in which impunity persisted yet was increasingly challenged by an upsurge of societal mobilization. It was against this background that HIJOS emerged in July 1996, inspired by the Argentine organization H.I.J.O.S (Sons and Daughters for Identity and Justice against Forgetting and Silence), which was formed in La Plata in late 1994 and quickly became a nationwide organization.³⁸ Following a visit to Uruguay by a delegation from H.I.J.O.S., a group of sons and daughters of Uruguay's *detenidos-desaparecidos* decided to form an organization under the same name. The acronym "H.I.J.O.S" chosen by the original Argentine organization was significant: "the fact that the initials make up the word for 'sons and daughters' unites ... the political and domestic."³⁹ Hence, its members' familial ties and personal experiences as victims of the dictatorship were not only the *raison d'être* of its creation but were also converted into collective and public action in the face of continuing impunity for dictatorship-era crimes.

Although the Uruguayan group took its cue from its Argentine counterpart, it did not adopt precisely the same name. Daniel Sempol suggests that the decision to name themselves HIJOS marked both approximation to and distancing from their Argentine counterparts.⁴⁰ While their rejection of punctuation, which emphasizes the word *hijos* as a noun rather than an acronym, suggests a focus on the members' status as sons and daughters of victims and survivors, the italicization of the "J" (standing for *Justicia*) highlights the group's main goal: to fight against impunity. Indeed, the internal debates over naming the nascent organization are revealing: some members were concerned that opting for the name "HIJOS" might relieve society as a whole of its responsibility to assume what some members saw as a broader "nosotros generacional" (generational we).⁴¹ Consequently, rejecting a name that stressed the members' genealogy would potentially encourage participation from their peers beyond those with a familial or blood tie to the disappeared and other victims. Nonetheless, the decision to adopt the name HIJOS following these debates reflected its emerging group identity as a second-generation organization, despite its diverse membership.

HIJOS's emergence was the result not only of contemporary societal and political shifts but also of a critical juncture in its members' own personal

lives. The mid- to late 1990s were a time when many of the children of the dictatorship's victims were becoming young adults and approaching the age that their parents had been at the time of disappearance, undergoing changes in their personal lives, attending university or college and leaving the family home. The coming of age seemed to precipitate a search for answers about what had happened to their parents. At the same time, the name HIJOS suggested an awareness of the generational change that had elapsed since the dictatorship, as one member, Valentín Enseñat, made clear in a documentary on the group when he defined HIJOS as "a group of young people made up of the second generation, of what was the protagonist generation of the 1960s and '70s."⁴² Generational distancing is thus a crucial aspect of the organization; through group membership, HIJOS define themselves as the second generation of victims, as opposed to the victims of the human rights violations committed before and during the dictatorship. As Sempol points out, the name HIJOS was selected to depict the "common condition" of the members as sons and daughters of victims.⁴³ Initially bringing together the children of *detenidos-desaparecidos*, HIJOS would come to include different categories of victim, including "children whose parents were murdered, imprisoned, exiled ... taking these four backgrounds as ... the most serious expressions and consequences ... of state repression."⁴⁴ The group therefore represents a coming together of the sons and daughters of the 1960s and 1970s generation through which a common identity and affiliation based on comparable experience are formed. As member Elsa explained in the documentary, "The initial meetings we had in 1996 were geared towards this: to meet people who had gone through something similar to you."⁴⁵

Although the members of the organization were a diverse group, they shared the temporary or permanent absence of one or both parents during their childhood and adolescence.⁴⁶ In the case of children of the *detenidos-desaparecidos*, this absence persisted into adulthood. The group's sharing of accounts, and finding a space of belonging, mark the active and public articulation of individual experience and the construction of a shareable identity and shared memory of the past. Shared memory, according to Michael Rothberg, is "memory that may have been initiated by individuals but that has been mediated through networks of communication, institutions of the state, and the social groupings of civil society,"⁴⁷ not exclusively by familial transmission. Groups such as HIJOS thus reinforced individual

engagement with the past and the ability to place individual experience within a wider social context, at a time when the issue of past repression occupied a prominent place in the public sphere.

For many members, the initial group meetings were the first time that many had been able to share their individual memories and talk openly. This was a notable shift, as being a child of disappeared or political prisoners carried a stigma during the dictatorship and was often silenced and hidden publicly well into the post-dictatorship period.⁴⁸ Indeed, the sense of isolation can be extended to other relatives as “to be a family member of a *desaparecido* meant ‘knowing’ more than others about the full extent of repression. Yet not all Uruguayans were ready to listen.”⁴⁹ In part, this is due to the totalitarian nature and culture of fear characteristic of the Uruguayan dictatorship,⁵⁰ which prohibited or inhibited many from speaking out publicly, as well as Uruguay’s small size, which resulted in the uncomfortable proximity of victims and victimizers and their offspring. During the post-dictatorship period, the children of victims often found themselves in the same classroom as the children of officers later implicated in state repression.⁵¹ Furthermore, the title of the group, which makes no reference to whom the *hijos* belong, and its diverse composition imply that it is united not only by its members’ status as sons and daughters of individuals who suffered during the dictatorship but also by the fact that they are the children of the entire dictatorship generation. HIJOS’s approximation to past repression is both vertical—as sons and daughters of the victims—and horizontal—through affiliation with their peers as a “nosotros generacional.”⁵² Somewhat paradoxically, the approximation to their peers results in a distancing from their parents, whilst approximation to their parents as sons and daughters differentiates them from a number of their peers.

Meanwhile, the relationship between HIJOS and the previous generation is at once political/collective and personal/individual, revealing elements of both continuity and rupture. As a group HIJOS identify themselves as a second generation of politically and socially engaged individuals but adopt a more critical approach towards their parents’ actions. In their own words, they want “to vindicate the disappeared as militants ... as people who pursued their dreams, and made mistakes.”⁵³ HIJOS thus pay homage to their parents as activists but, crucially, aim to “get to know their parents in all their complexity,”⁵⁴ even the less desirable

aspects, rather than view them in simplistic or symbolic terms: as passive victims on the one hand or as heroes on the other. As Sempol points out, the group see themselves as engaged in a different type of struggle, which focuses on innovating and reinvigorating the human rights movement and perspectives on the previous generation's activism—which unfolded in a specific sociopolitical context—but without continuing the armed struggle.⁵⁵ Fried's ethnographic work on HIJOS in the late 1990s revealed that some members expressed reluctance to participate in anything reminiscent of traditional political activism such as many of their parents had undertaken.⁵⁶ Although she points out that this was most likely out of fear, rather than an ideological stance, it is interesting that the result is vindication without replication and revisiting the past without repeating it. Indeed, Javier Miranda, active in HIJOS in 1997, is emphatic: "I am the son of a *desaparecido* and I can't deny that, but I am not a continuity. I don't defend the *desaparecidos*' ideas, but I do defend their right not to have been disappeared just because they thought differently."⁵⁷ Amongst the group's members, a certain amount of critical distance and reflection is evident. As Valentín Enseñat suggests, although it is undeniable that their parents' pasts constitute a crucial aspect of their own, personal histories, there are aspects that cannot be viewed in terms of belonging to the dictatorship's generation's pasts but are forged through a dialogue between the two generations in the present.⁵⁸ HIJOS can thus be viewed as establishing a "new generation in the politics of memory,"⁵⁹ a post-dictatorship generation that represents both approximation with the previous generation (through focus on the protagonist generation and the blood ties encapsulated in the group's name) *and* rupture (through a critical approach to the past and their parents' activism and their positioning as part of a "next" generation as suggested by their name) —a feature reminiscent of Hirsch's discussion on the use of "post" as a signifier of both "critical distance" from and "profound interrelation" with memory.⁶⁰

Moreover, the activities in which HIJOS are involved or have instigated tend to uphold this notion of the "next generation" and the continuity and rupture at play. For example, HIJOS (both in Argentina and Uruguay) have undertaken an innovative type of protest: the *escrache*, in which participants contested the lack of formal justice by occupying urban space, usually near to the home or workplace of a perpetrator of human rights violations benefiting from the impunity of the post-dictatorship period.⁶¹

The *escrache* can be read as a way of bringing the past into the present, and the struggle for punitive justice can be read as an extension of the previous generation's struggle for a more just society, in other words, a form of continuity between the two generations as well as a way of blurring the boundaries between the dictatorship and post-dictatorship periods.⁶² However, other activities are indicative of a more perceptible generational distancing, in which members focus on their roles as second-generation actors, although they maintain close kinship ties with the previous generation. An exhibition organized by HIJOS in 2010 entitled "Sangre de mi Sangre" (Blood of my Blood) displayed photographs of children who had been kidnapped and illegally adopted during the dictatorship. On International Human Rights Day 2011, the group organized an event in conjunction with other human rights organizations at Montevideo's Memorial de los Detenidos Desaparecidos (Memorial to Disappeared Detainees), and flew kites with images of the disappeared parents printed on them.⁶³ These are clear expressions of their public role as HIJOS and indicate that much of their focus is on the experience and identity of their disappeared parents in order to find out who they were and what happened to them. HIJOS clearly situate themselves as part of a second generation—even though they may be viewed temporally as part of the 1.5 generation—both in terms of their critical distancing from the dictatorship generation's activism and protagonism and the group's choice of name. This is a sharp contrast to Niños, who eschew articulation of second-generation identity and engage in a different type of approximation with the past.

THE EMERGENCE OF NIÑOS: SHIFTING IMPUNITY AND MEMORY, 1996–2007

Like HIJOS, Niños came together in a context in which past repression was afforded significantly more space for discussion than in the first part of the post-dictatorship period. Whereas in the 1980s and most of the 1990s the state had been a reluctant partner in addressing the past—with HIJOS appearing when both justice and truth-seeking were tightly controlled—this had changed by the late 1990s and the early twenty-first century, when Niños entered the public sphere.⁶⁴ The period from 1995 to 2007 was characterized by a shift in the government's policy as a result of renewed pressures from civil society. Indeed, throughout the post-dictatorship

period, the Uruguayan human rights community (made up of relatives' organizations, human rights activists and their supporters) played a key role in contesting the "no truth no justice" formula adopted by Uruguay. In spite of continuing impunity, societal pressure and the aid of some sympathetic sectors of the judiciary enabled the human rights community to circumvent the *Caducidad* Law.⁶⁵

Towards the end of the 1990s and into the 2000s, a number of landmark events at domestic and international levels interrupted the silence surrounding the past, giving a boost to the tireless activism of the human rights community and forcing the issue of human rights into the public sphere. In 1998, the arrest of the former Chilean president Pinochet in London indicated that former heads of state were not beyond the reach of international law. In 2000, the "reappearance" in Uruguay of Macarena Gelman (the granddaughter of the renowned Argentine poet Juan Gelman) proved that the kidnapping of minors had happened not only in Argentina. This was followed by another high-profile reappearance, that of Simón Riquelo, who had disappeared in Buenos Aires in July 1976 when he was twenty days old; he was discovered living under a false identity with adoptive parents in the Argentine capital in 2002. In many ways, these watershed moments can be seen as a continuation of the chain of events that began in the mid-1990s, described in the previous section. Not only had discussion of the past begun to occupy an inescapable place in the public sphere, but the Uruguayan government was increasingly forced to respond to the issue.⁶⁶

In the face of public mobilization around the past and continuing pressure from civil society, "the government's behavior began to change."⁶⁷ Prior to 2000, state-led truth-seeking had remained elusive.⁶⁸ It was only in August 2000 that President Batlle (2000–2005) created the COPAZ (Peace Commission), the first official investigation into forced disappearances, partly in response to the debate reignited by Gelman's search for his granddaughter.⁶⁹ However, the commission did not cover political imprisonment, torture and assassinations, nor did the government follow up the recommendations.⁷⁰ The year 2005 proved to be another watershed; with the election of the left-leaning Frente Amplio government under Tabaré Vázquez, which stopped applying the *Caducidad* Law to all denunciations of dictatorship-era crimes.⁷¹ In contrast with its predecessors, the Vázquez administration interpreted the law as inapplicable in cases of economic

crimes, crimes committed by civilians or high-ranking military/police officers, crimes executed outside Uruguay, and kidnapping of minors.⁷² This novel interpretation of the law permitted the unprecedented commencement of judicial proceedings in a number of cases.

Ongoing developments in the political, judicial and societal spheres have been mutually reinforcing. As Burt, Fried and Lessa note, a second societal-led campaign to overturn *Caducidad* began in earnest in 2006, and in the following years a number of new groups of those born during or after the dictatorship came into being. Niños can be seen within this trend, as can other groups like *Iguales y Punto* (a name that roughly translates to All Equal.Period) that emerged in the aftermath of the referendum, articulating new positions in relation to past violence. As the authors argue, the post-2005 context was also an important juncture for HIJOS, who had been less visible from 2004 onwards but enjoyed a resurgence in public activities around the time of the referendum, as the Uruguayan government proved more responsive to the demands of civil society organizations.⁷³ In spite of the success of the referendum campaign, the 2009 ballot returned a verdict in favor of the law. Since then, there have been a number of developments in the judicial and political spheres, culminating in the overturn of the law on October 27, 2011, but, as concluded by the report of UN Independent Expert on Transitional Justice Pablo de Greiff after his 2013 visit to Uruguay, the path to justice remains slow and protracted.⁷⁴

CHILDHOOD IN STASIS? NIÑOS EN CAUTIVERIO POLÍTICO AS THE PROTAGONIST GENERATION

It was in this context of continuing judicial impunity, along with increasing demands for redress and justice, that in 2007 a group of child survivors came together in Montevideo under the name Niños en Cautiverio Político, emerging as a very different organization to HIJOS. Its members are united by their shared experience as part of a group of an estimated 67 babies or very small children who were held with their mothers in prisons and military facilities in the years before and after the 1973 coup that installed the dictatorship.⁷⁵ Indeed, many Uruguayans were imprisoned well before the coup, during the social and political polarization and upsurge in state

repression of the late 1960s and early 1970s, and long-term imprisonment was a key characteristic of the dictatorship period. Niños, like HIJOS, are a diverse group. A number of them, such as Paloma and Micaela, were born in prison after their pregnant mothers were detained; others were imprisoned at ages ranging from ten days to two years old, with the oldest being around four years of age when released. The children spent different lengths of time in prison and had varying experiences; some were released with their mothers, whilst others were sent to live with relatives while their mothers remained in prison. Micaela was released at the age of twenty-one months, but both her parents remained in prison for a further two years; Paloma was born in captivity and was less than a year old when she was released whilst her mother remained in prison for a further eight years.⁷⁶ Although many had been too young to remember their own prison experiences, their release from prison did not mark the end of their exposure to the dictatorship's repression; a number recall habitual visits to their parents in prison at weekends, which undeniably made an impression on them as young children.⁷⁷ Furthermore, they were released into a Uruguayan society still under dictatorship, a country characterized by fear and censorship, in which citizens were categorized A, B or C according to political reliability,⁷⁸ and public discussion about repression was limited, with memories confined to the private sphere.

In March 2007, a small number of these former child prisoners accompanied their mothers to a meeting of female ex-prisoners. They began to share experiences and to meet independently, and came to view themselves as a separate organization with a distinct identity as compared with both their parents and other second-generation groups. The group subsequently began meeting regularly and making contact with others with similar experiences, using, for example, other relatives and victims' organizations to locate women who had been imprisoned together with their children. Paloma recounts her first encounter with the group two months after their inception:

I didn't know whether I wanted to return to the past... I didn't know if I would feel comfortable, and if I didn't feel comfortable, I'd leave. That was the plan. But it was incredible because it was like arriving and finding a place where you belonged; the fact that you could talk without needing to explain anything in order to be understood.⁷⁹

Her experience reveals a similarity with that of HIJOS, whose members came together as part of a process of realization that they had something in common. In spite of the different individual experiences, as Paloma says, “each group has to have something that identifies it, or which brings members together.”⁸⁰ What emerges is not only the common experience of being born in prison or incarcerated as babies or toddlers with their mothers, but “an emotional connection” to each other and to this experience.⁸¹ In other words, Niños’s relationship with past repression is based on approximation with the past through subjectivity, not entirely the result of blood ties, although this subjectivity is undoubtedly influenced in and by the family. Indeed, as Fried has argued, “personal traumatic memories generate a powerful inner motivation to be remembered and expressed, that persists over time.”⁸² However, although the personal and familial experience is key, it is not the only determinant of the form that post-dictatorship memories and identities take.

For example, Niños’s sense of collective identity converged with and also built on a shift in consciousness on an individual level at a critical juncture—a moment of increasing opportunities for truth, reparation and justice vis-à-vis the recent past. This shift in consciousness was the result not only of memories transmitted in the familial sphere or members’ own experiences as small children but also of the interaction between these preexisting factors and external events. For Micaela, in 2007, her consideration of the implications of Law No. 18033—a reparative measure passed the previous year by the Vázquez administration, granting retirement benefits to former political prisoners who had been detained for at least a year⁸³—had a specific impact:

At that point I realized that if interpreted literally, that law covered me, because I was held with my mother ... my mother was taken prisoner when she was three months pregnant, remained there for the rest of her pregnancy; I was born and stayed with her until I was a year and nine months old. I actually realized from that day on that I had been a prisoner... Obviously I knew this, but I had never really incorporated it, and that day I thought: “I was a prisoner. My parents were political prisoners and so was I.”⁸⁴

Micaela’s imprisonment as a child was an aspect of her past that she had grown up with, but the broader context—encountering others in a

similar situation, changes in the legal sphere and press coverage of such changes—were watershed moments in the construction of individual identity. As Paloma added, until this point the group had maintained a relatively low profile and had never considered themselves as victims.⁸⁵ Thus, the formation of Niños was shaped by, and simultaneously shaped, a change of consciousness in its members.

The comparable identity of the group's members is encapsulated in their name, which marks a departure from HIJOS. According to Micaela, “we separate ourselves from our parents ... we don't define ourselves as sons and daughters.” Niños distance themselves from the articulation of a close familial relationship with the dictatorship generation, but engage in approximation to the past through focusing on their own experiences and situate themselves within this generation. Indeed, Micaela states specifically that “we identify *ourselves* as victims.”⁸⁶ The group therefore consider themselves *part of* the protagonist generation. The group's name draws attention to their past selves, implying that they identify themselves as Niños in the present, even though members are now in their thirties and forties. This is another difference from HIJOS, even though members of both groups are of a similar age. Even as an adult, one continues to be someone's *hijo* (son or daughter) but does not remain a child. Whilst HIJOS focus more explicitly on their parents' absence—and emphasize a genealogical relationship with their parents—Niños focus on their own generation as lesser-known victims of the dictatorship. Although Niños's experiences of the dictatorship are closely tied to that of their parents and their political imprisonment was the result of their mothers' imprisonment—in other words, they are the children of victims and survivors—this aspect of the group is considerably more muted than in the case of HIJOS, undoubtedly in part because, in contrast to HIJOS, many of the group members' parents survived. Niños draw attention to the fact that they too, not only their parents, were victims of state terrorism. They thus emphasize the scope of the dictatorship's crimes, in stark contrast to then Major José Niño Gavazzo's claim that “this war isn't a war against children” as he took baby Simón Riquelo from his mother.⁸⁷ The formation and public activities of the organization are thus a counterpoint to the dictatorship's policy of denial and silence around these lesser-known victims.

Whereas HIJOS engage in approximation with the past through reinforcing their kinship tie to the victims, yet imply rupture with the

dictatorship generation in temporal terms, Niños engage in a form of generational approximation, which is also reflected in their activities, many of which place themselves within the protagonist generation. Often drawing on the diverse personal and professional expertise of its members, these range from press conferences to documentaries and exhibitions, such as the one held at the Biblioteca Nacional in 2008 to mark the group's first anniversary, which displayed letters and clothing as well as toys made for the children by their parents whilst in prison.⁸⁸ Although Niños's activities, like those of HIJOS, aim to increase public awareness of the dictatorship period through reexamining the past rather than repeating it, they have also, like their peers, been critics of the legal impunity that has lingered in the post-dictatorship period, even in the more favorable post-2005 context. In 2009, Niños organized a joint event with Amnesty International Uruguay in order to discuss the continuation of the *Caducidad* law. In this way, the group continues to demand justice on behalf of the various victims of the dictatorship (including themselves and their parents).⁸⁹

NIÑOS AND HIJOS IN THE POST-DICTATORSHIP: SYNERGIES AND AFFINITIES

Niños's birth as a post-dictatorship organization can be viewed as part of a continuum with organizations such as Madres y Familiares, who identify themselves as relatives of victims, as well as with previous activism of the children of the dictatorship's victims, like HIJOS. The fact that members of Niños established a distinct organization ten years later clustered around their own status as victims suggests that different experiences yield distinct affiliations and articulation vis-à-vis the past. Not only did Niños come together as an organization in a very different context, but their experiences as children were also very different. In this sense, both groups reveal that formation around an identity is contingent on a mix of both past and present experiences that differ within a generation.

Indeed, Karl Mannheim asserts that the idea of generations may be useful in elucidating experience at a specific historical juncture, but notes that there may exist a number of generational units in any one generation.⁹⁰ This notion helps to account for the coexistence of diverse groups such as HIJOS and Niños, whose members belong to a similar demographic both in age and in their status as the children of victims and reached adulthood

in a similar context, but whose specific dictatorship and post-dictatorship experience shaped a different identity to that of both their parents and their peers. Given the limited ability of many members of HIJOS and Niños to recall the dictatorship period, the present would seem a more determining factor in the construction of distinct group identities. As Alan Spitzer explains, generations should be understood as socially embedded as opposed to temporal or linear. Even though a generation may be exposed to similar forces and belong to the same generation temporally, the groups within the same generation work through their pasts differently, confirming that generational identity—and, by extension, postmemory—is not chronologically predictable or monolithic.⁹¹ Postmemory is socially constructed and thus eludes “sequential logic.”⁹² Susan Suleiman’s discussion of generations following the extreme violence of the Holocaust is pertinent: “Maybe there were no generations in the Holocaust, only individuals, each with his or her unique story. And yet, we intuitively (or just commonsensically) know that there were children there, and that those who survived showed some common experiences that may have influenced their choices and behaviors in later life.”⁹³

Generational subdivisions are therefore vital to an understanding of post-dictatorship activism. Indeed, neither HIJOS nor Niños can be placed entirely within the second generation. The child survivors of Niños can be viewed as part of the Uruguayan 1.5 generation: the generation that straddles the dictatorship and post-dictatorship period. Moreover, since members of HIJOS were also alive during the dictatorship, they can also be viewed as belonging to the 1.5 generation temporally, even though they situate themselves in the next generation. This (dis)location and discrepancy between the generation to which a group belongs temporally and that with which they identify has implications for postmemory, notably because postmemory tends to be viewed as distinct from the memory of survivors and not a characteristic of the 1.5 generation.⁹⁴ With this in mind, in the next section I question whether postmemory adequately describes the relationship between HIJOS/Niños and the post-dictatorial past, in order to reach a more nuanced understanding of the concept.

REVISITING POSTMEMORY AND THE URUGUAYAN 1.5 GENERATION

First, if “postmemory can be distinguished from memory by generational distance” and is constructed by “narratives that preceded” an individual’s birth,⁹⁵ the fact that HIJOS and Niños can be situated in the 1.5 generation has implications for our understanding of the term. For the 1.5 generation, the events in question are pre-adulthood, but not pre-birth. Although many were too young to remember the disappearance of their parents or their own imprisonment, it would be inaccurate to suggest that members of the two groups neither remember nor experienced anything of the dictatorship. The case of post-dictatorship Uruguay therefore does not fit the sense of “remembering the unknown,” employed by Nadine Fresco in her study of post-Vichy France,⁹⁶ but is related to the convergence of lived past and present which itself is at the heart of postmemory.

Furthermore, for the members of these two groups, the legacy of their parents’ disappearances and long-term imprisonment persisted well beyond the parameters of the dictatorship, into adulthood. As Enseñat from HIJOS acknowledges, the atrocities committed under dictatorship may be “events that were not consciously experienced by those who lived through it” but they were “events taking place within a dramatic social and political reality that continue to permeate the present as unfinished business.”⁹⁷ As a key feature of postmemory is its simultaneous distance from and proximity to traumatic stimulus, subsequent generations are acutely aware that they have limited recall of the past, but strive to actively *construct* memory and connect with the past in the present, rather than *reconstructing* the past per se. According to Paloma from Niños, “the construction of memory involves various actors, it is an exercise ... I believe that memory is constructed collectively; the more collective this construction is and the more actors involved, the richer this is.”⁹⁸

This understanding of memory is echoed by Enseñat, who stressed that “reconstructing, remembering, vindicating the past doesn’t have any purpose if we don’t bring it up to date or give it meaning.”⁹⁹ In other words, the two groups regard memory as a tool, reminiscent of what Sempol describes as “reflexive” memory, memory that is not confined to the past but open-ended in nature,¹⁰⁰ which requires effort and can be used to negotiate the boundary between the private and public spheres. They have adopted a critical and reflective perspective on the past, geared at keeping

past repression on the public agenda. The distance between the victim generation and their offspring may thus be ideological and qualitative as opposed to temporal and chronological. Although made up of members of similar ages, both HIJOS and Niños show that memory is not the exclusive domain of those who necessarily “remember” the dictatorship but is a process of construction rather than recall, shaped by a convergence of individual, familial and societal experience. This complex and at times contradictory range of forces is precisely what makes the experience of both groups emblematic of postmemory and, at the same time, why the term is useful in the case of post-dictatorship Uruguay and elsewhere.

Although postmemory remains pertinent to the cases of HIJOS and Niños because of the members’ limited experience and recollection of the dictatorship period, the notion of pre-birth narratives is anomalous when a notable generational change is absent, or when the children were direct victims and witnesses themselves. Many terms employed in relation to the second generation—often interchangeably with postmemory—such as Young’s “received history” or Ronit Lentin’s “inherited memory” imply that the past is transmitted intact to subsequent generations rather than mediated by present experience and the subject’s own experience of the past.¹⁰¹ In the case of HIJOS and Niños, the distinction between intergenerational transmission of memory and the ability of the sons and daughters themselves to recall and piece together the experiences is considerably more blurred. Postmemory should therefore be understood as encompassing a wide range of experiences.

Turning now to the second potential limitation of postmemory—the tendency to focus on the role of familial transmission (i.e. what happened to the generation before)—we have seen that the memories of HIJOS and Niños have been both privately and publicly activated. Although Hirsch’s work has pointed to familial (i.e. intergenerational) and affiliative (i.e. intragenerational) transmissions of memory,¹⁰² the latter tends to be given considerably less attention in studies that employ postmemory as a conceptual tool. There is significant interplay between the familial and affiliative dimensions of memory, which needs to be considered in terms of postmemory work. As Hirsch states, “familial structures facilitate affiliative transmission.”¹⁰³ This is not to say that intergenerational transmission of memory does not play an important role in strengthening a group’s relationship to a traumatic past. Indeed, Carina Perelli has described this

type of phenomenon as *memoria de sangre*, “blood memory,” which she defines as “that memory that arises from an experience of fear, hardship, pain, and loss. So extreme as to turn it into *the* salient fact of the past.”¹⁰⁴ *Memoria de sangre* can be viewed as akin to postmemory in that it evokes both blood spilt through violence and the kinship ties of those who engage with this type of memory. Many of the environments in which the 1.5/second generations were raised reveal exposure to these factors; the affective transmission of their parents’ and relatives’ memories and experiences had a profound impact on these individuals.

However, although HIJOS’s and Perelli’s *memorias de sangre* take their cue from parental experiences and what individuals have learned or deduced from the previous generation, it is not only the familial sphere that accounts for the sense of shared identity in the present. As with postmemory, terms like blood memory tend to focus disproportionately on blood ties in second-generation memory and overlook the social dynamics at play, as exhibited by HIJOS and Niños. Private and personal memories confined to the familial sphere gain some form of wider meaning in response to exogenous events, particularly as the child or adolescent who experienced trauma reaches adulthood, when, as Suleiman describes, “individuals who until then may not have considered their childhood traumas as anything other than personal (if they considered them at all) could see them in a new light: as part of a *collective* experience. Theirs might then be called a ‘delayed’ generational consciousness.”¹⁰⁵

This suggests that individual experience is confined to the private sphere until an individual makes contact with others with a comparable experience and begins to view his/her own experience within a broader historical framework. Coming together as a group and sharing these experiences is, in part, the result of exposure to external factors, ranging from enhanced public discussion and media coverage of the past to legislative changes and a change in the individual’s environment (a new job, enrolling in university etc.). Exposure to external stimuli is described by Mannheim as “fresh contacts” which in turn “play an important part in the life of the individual when he is forced by events to leave his own social group and enter a new one ... it is well known that in all these cases a quite visible and striking transformation of the consciousness of the individual in question takes place.”¹⁰⁶ A case in point is that recounted by Micaela from Niños, cited earlier, who knew she was a former politi-

cal prisoner but did not come to view herself as a victim until adulthood. This is the difference between passive knowledge about oneself on the one hand and self-awareness on the other, which may be belated or delayed, occurring when the individual reaches maturity and is exposed to different external factors. This is a notable feature of the 1.5 generation, because, as Suleiman points out, “the trauma occurred, (or at least, began) before the formation of stable identity that we associate with adulthood, and in some cases before any conscious sense of self.”¹⁰⁷ In the case of Niños, this is particularly resonant because of the individual’s realization that his or her experience is not only shared by others, as is the case with HIJOS, but that he or she is also a victim.

However, the process is bidirectional. With a sense of self-awareness, through fresh contacts, the personal and familial dimensions of postmemory may take on a public, more collective dimension. Fried has shown how intergenerational transmission of information about the dictatorship within affected families was “sustained in the secrecy of everyday relationships of individuals, families and communities” but notes that over time “what had been excluded from public memory paradoxically had retained a profound intersubjective and cultural presence, finally pushing its way into the public.”¹⁰⁸ There is a notable interplay between individual experiences, intergenerational transmission of the past, and external forces, which is ongoing and multidirectional. According to Rothberg, “pursuing memory’s multidirectionality encourages us to think of the public sphere as a malleable discursive space in which groups do not simply articulate established positions but actually come into being through their dialogical interaction with others.”¹⁰⁹ In this sense the coming together of individuals under the groupings HIJOS and Niños may indicate a common sense of identity and yield shareable memory, but the collective does not displace the individual. In fact, it reinforces it. The sense of individual identity is shaped by contact with others and each individual component contributions to the construction of the collective. The case studies discussed point to some of the different ways in which these exogenous influences intersect with past experiences and individual memory.

Although postmemory can be used to highlight the subjective and close (even overlapping) relationship between the post-dictatorship and dictatorship generation, it is not always framed within a strictly familial framework. Alejandra Serpente’s insightful observation that postmemory

can be understood as the space in between the personal and collective can be extended to the space between affiliative and familial aspects of postmemory.¹¹⁰ Although Hirsch's work has been significant in identifying processes of memory transmission concerning the second generation, the division between affiliative and familial dimensions is perhaps less useful than it might first seem because the boundaries between the two spheres are nebulous and it is impossible to identify on precisely which aspect postmemory is contingent. It is perhaps more logical to view the affiliative and familial transmission not in opposition to one another, but as part of the same process: to consider the family as a "social framework" akin to contacts that an individual makes with peers, the media, and so forth. Postmemory is the space in-between in every sense.

A more nuanced and complex definition of postmemory, one that takes into consideration the contradictions and complexity put forward by Hirsch, is thus needed if it is to be applied to other temporal and geographical contexts, particularly to the 1.5 generation of which HIJOS and Niños are two contrasting examples. Although members of both HIJOS and Niños display diverse connections to the past, what is important is their emotional—not necessarily temporal or geographical—proximity to trauma, mediated by a patchwork of experiences and memories stemming from a constellation of sources.

CONCLUSION: WIDENING THE CIRCLE AND THE FUTURE OF POSTMEMORY

This article has demonstrated that the "post" in postmemory is more nebulous than literature on the Holocaust and the Southern Cone has suggested and that it is far from monolithic or linear in nature. Analysis of both Niños and HIJOS reveals that the boundaries between the first and second generation in the case of Uruguay are considerably blurred and that postmemory is therefore not exclusive to the second generation. Moreover, by articulating their experiences collectively in the public sphere—through *escraches*, exhibitions, documentaries and workshops—HIJOS and Niños have played a crucial role in exposing the lesser-known aspects and effects of repression and state terror and in informing Uruguayan society of their pervasive effects in the post-dictatorship period. In both cases, what is potentially traumatic or introspective memory becomes an embodied,

outward-looking memory—in other words, private grief is given a public place—and is as much about the future as it is about the past. In this sense, the memory work of HIJOS and Niños does not only concern investigation into a traumatic past, but “remains an unfinished, ephemeral process”¹¹¹ in perpetual evolution as the distance between the state repression of the 1960s ‘70s and ‘80s and the present grows. The outward-looking and collective nature of the memory construction undertaken by these groups raises questions about whether postmemory could resonate beyond those directly affected and whether the subjectivity inherent in postmemory work could be transferred to other 1.5, second- and third-generation actors. Hirsch has questioned whether postmemory might go beyond the intimate space of the family.¹¹² This article has suggested that this is possible, given the central role of external factors in the transmission of memory, which are often neglected in studies of postmemory.

Indeed, while the term postmemory is often reserved for the offspring of survivors and victims such as HIJOS and Niños, it is not exclusive to them. Thus, in 2009 the community of post-dictatorship groups welcomed a number of newcomers: the group *Memoria en Libertad* (Memory in Freedom), whose members were directly affected by state terrorism as children and adolescents, and *Iguales y Punto*, which is not made up of the offspring of victims but was formed in solidarity with the human rights organizations in their struggle against impunity. In neighboring Argentina, the relatively new *Colectivo de Hijos* (Collective of Sons and Daughters) stress their own victimhood by declaring that they are not “sons and daughters, but orphans,”¹¹³ suggesting that the condition of being a child of the disappeared does not lead to the formation of one monolithic generational unit, but rather to diverse forms of identification and groupings. Meanwhile, some members of H.I.J.O.S are not children of victims but have joined the group because of ideological sympathy and alignment with the organization’s aims of fighting impunity and forgetting.¹¹⁴ In this sense, postmemory resonates beyond the familial sphere. What emerges then, is not one type of postmemory, but a patchwork of different visions and representations of the past from a diverse collection of actors. Rather than compete with each other, they have a cumulative effect: strengthening the presence of the past in the present and attesting to memory’s multidirectionality, as well as postmemory’s complexity.

If we acknowledge that a mixture of subjectivity, positionality and mediation of the past in the present is central to postmemory, potentially anyone may become part of a post-memorializing generation. Through their undertaking of *escraches*, photographic exhibitions and other commemorative activities, HIJOS, Niños and their contemporaries invite participation from broader society, beyond those directly affected: they actively seek an audience. In his work on Argentina, Jens Andermann has speculated on the way that postmemory might be shaped by secondary witnessing beyond those with a biological relationship to victims. Using the case of ESMA, the former clandestine detention center in Buenos Aires, he argues that sociopolitical interventions and interactions in such sites can contribute to the creation of a politics of empathy. In this way, visitors to the site:

turn into active participants of a memory performance akin to what Hirsch calls the work of postmemory: museum-going is turned into an act of secondary witnessing through careful deployment of an iconography both sufficiently familiar to trigger traumatic repetition and at the same time sufficiently open to allow the second-generation viewer and even the accidental tourist to introduce her or his own experience and subjectivity.¹¹⁵

Andermann reminds us that postmemory is not confined to those who experienced trauma themselves. It is for this reason that the recent boom of public memory work through the creation of sites of memory and exhibition of the past violence is so important as the distance from those events increases. These activities go some way towards ensuring that postmemory work is not the exclusive terrain of the second generation or indeed the 1.5 generation, but that emotional connection with the dictatorship's effects and its victims will continue to be made by individuals and groups well beyond the first post-dictatorship (the "hinge") generation. Contrary to Kundera's well-known lines from *The Book of Laughter and Forgetting*, members of the younger generation are not devoid of memory or oblivious to the past—even if this past is not part of their lived experience.

NOTES

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1. On June 27, 1973, President Juan María Bordaberry, backed by the armed forces, dissolved parliament and installed a totalitarian and repressive regime. In contrast to the assassinations and forced disappearances characteristic of its neighbors, in Uruguay state repression was characterized by the widespread and systematic use of prolonged imprisonment and torture. Some 500,000 Uruguayans were exiled; more than 60,000 people were arrested and detained. By the 1970s, Uruguay had the highest per-capita prison population in the world. See Charles Gillespie, *Negociando la democracia* (Montevideo: Fundación de Cultura Universitaria, 1995), 64; and Martin Weinstein, *Uruguay: Democracy at the Crossroads* (Boulder: Westview, 1998). Moreover, around 200 Uruguayans were disappeared in Uruguay, Argentina and elsewhere in the region. There were 26 extra-judicial executions. See Álvaro Rico, *Investigación histórica sobre dictadura y terrorismo de Estado en el Uruguay: 1973–1985* (Montevideo: UDELAR, 2008).

2. It is worth pointing out that this organization is the product of a merger of three separate groups in 1985: *Madres de Uruguayos Desaparecidos en Argentina* (1976), comprised of women whose children had disappeared in Argentina; the *Agrupación de Familiares de Uruguayos Desaparecidos* (AFUDE), formed in 1978 in Paris; and *Familiares de Desaparecidos en Uruguay*, which appeared in 1983. For a detailed overview, see Carlos Demasi and Jaime Yaffé, eds., *Vivos los llevaron... Historia de la lucha de Madres y Familiares de Uruguayos Detenidos Desaparecidos (1976–2005)* (Montevideo: Trilce, 2005), 22–45.

3. The term *detenido-desaparecido* is used throughout the region to describe those who were abducted, imprisoned and then disappeared by state forces during the second half of the twentieth century.

4. Ana Ros, *The Post-Dictatorship Generation in Argentina, Chile, and Uruguay: Collective Memory and Cultural Production* (New York: Palgrave, 2012), 4.

5. In *Politics and the Art of Commemoration: Memorials to Struggle in Latin America and Spain* (London: Routledge, 2012), Katherine Hite notes that the work of the second generation has tended to be more introspective and includes many innovative artistic practices.

6. Ros, *The Post-Dictatorship Generation*, 32.

7. Marianne Hirsch, "Projected Memory: Holocaust Photographs in Personal and Public Fantasy," in Mieke Bal, Jonathan Crewe and Leo Spitzer, eds., *Acts of Memory: Cultural Recall in the Present* (Hanover and London: UPNE, 1999), 3–23.

8. Susana Kaiser, *Postmemories of Terror: A New Generation Copes with the Legacy of the "Dirty War"* (New York: Palgrave, 2006).

9. Michael J. Lazzara "Filming Loss: (Post-)Memory, Subjectivity, and the Performance of Failure in Recent Argentine Documentary Films," *Latin American Perspectives* 36, no. 5 (2009): 147–57; Gabriela Nouzeilles, "Postmemory Cinema and the Future of the Past in Albertina Carri's *Los Rubios*," *Journal of Latin American Cultural Studies* 14, no. 3 (2005): 263–78. As this article was being finalized for publication, a special issue entitled "Revisiting Postmemory: The Intergenerational Transmission of Trauma in Post-Dictatorship Latin American Culture" of the *Journal of Romance Studies* 13, no 3 (2013) was published. A number of the authors briefly reconsider postmemory's complexity and various issues in the case of Argentina.

10. Gabriela Fried Amilivia, "Collective Memories of the Trauma of Forced Disappearance: Reflections on the Case of the Disappeared Political Detainees in the Aftermath of Uruguay's State Terror (1985–2001)," in Francesca Lessa and Vincent Drulliole, eds., *The Memory of State Terrorism in the Southern Cone* (New York: Palgrave, 2011), 157–78; Ros, *The Post-Dictatorship Generation*.

11. Exceptions include Gabriela Fried, "On Remembering and Silencing the Past: The Adult Children of the Disappeared in the Southern Cone of Latin America—A Comparative Study of Argentina and Uruguay," paper submitted to UCLA Comparative Analysis Workshop, 1999, which compares the Uruguayan and Argentine variants of HIJOS/H.I.J.O.S; Diego Sempol, "HIJOS Uruguay: Identidad, protesta social y memoria generacional," in Elizabeth Jelin and Diego Sempol, eds., *El pasado en el futuro: Los movimientos juveniles* (Buenos Aires: Siglo XXI, 2006), 185–219; and Cara Levey "Chronicle of a Childhood in Captivity: Niños en Cautiverio Político and the (Re)Construction of Memory in Contemporary Uruguay," *ACME: An International E-Journal for Critical Geographies* 9, no. 3 (2010): 368–76. I reconsider here some of the material that appeared in that previous article.

12. Marianne Hirsch, "The Generation of Postmemory," *Poetics Today* 29, no. 1 (2008): 103–28.

13. Marianne Hirsch, *The Generation of Postmemory: Visual Culture after the Holocaust* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2012).

14. Hirsch, "The Generation of Postmemory," 107.

15. Hirsch, "Projected Memory," 8.

16. Michael J. Lazzara, *Chile in Transition: The Poetics and Politics of Memory* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2006), 2.

17. James Young, *At Memory's Edge: After-Images of the Holocaust in Contemporary Art and Literature* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2002), 2.

18. Beatriz Sarlo, *Tiempo pasado, cultura de la memoria y giro subjetivo: Una discusión* (Buenos Aires: Siglo XXI, 2005), 129, 157.

19. Ibid. 130.

20. Hirsch, "Projected Memory," 22.

21. Ibid.

22. Hirsch, "The Generation of Postmemory," 106.

23. Ibid.

24. Work on Argentine postmemory undertaken by Lazzara, Nouzeilles and Ros, etc., also considers the overlapping generation: indeed, the Argentine dictatorship was even shorter than those of its Southern Cone neighbors. A reassessment of the conceptual "usefulness" of postmemory in Uruguay is thus instructive for the Southern Cone more generally in which the boundaries between dictatorship and post-dictatorship generations are blurred.

25. Hirsch, "The Generation of Postmemory," 108.

26. Susan Suleiman, "The 1.5 Generation: Thinking about Child Survivors and the Holocaust," *American Imago* 59, no. 3 (2002): 277. Suleiman tentatively proposes the idea of 1.25 generations and others, given the different ages of individuals who were survivors of the Holocaust. However, for the sake of simplicity, I employ 1.5 generation as the overlapping generation, which also incorporates the child survivor.

27. Elizabeth Jelin, *State Repression and the Struggles for Memory* (London: Latin American Bureau, 2003), 33.

28. Hirsch, "The Generation of Postmemory," 114.

29. Maurice Halbwachs, *On Collective Memory*, trans. Lewis A. Coser (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992).

30. Alexandra Barahona de Brito, *Human Rights and Democratization in Latin America: Uruguay and Chile* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997), 132.

31. Francesca Lessa and Cara Levey "Memories of Violence and Changing Landscapes of Impunity in Uruguay, 1985–2011," *Encounters: An International Journal for the Study of Culture and Society*, no. 5 (2012): 155.

32. For the full text of the law, see <http://www.parlamento.gub.uy/leyes/ AccesoTextoLey.asp?Ley=15848&Anchor=> (accessed February 10, 2014).

33. Jo-Marie Burt, Gabriela Fried Amilivia and Francesca Lessa, "Civil Society and the Resurgent Struggle against Impunity in Uruguay (1986–2012)," *International Journal of Transitional Justice* 7, no. 2 (2013): 2.

34. Lessa and Levey, "Memories of Violence," 156.

35. Luis Roniger, "Transitional Justice and Protracted Accountability in Re-Democratized Uruguay (1985–2011)," *Journal of Latin American Studies*, 43, no. 4 (2011): 704; Fried "Collective Memories," 252.
36. Lessa and Levey, "Memories of Violence," 161.
37. Roniger, "Transitional Justice," 706.
38. For more on H.I.J.O.S in Argentina, see Pablo Daniel Bonaldi, "Hijos de desaparecidos: Entre la construcción de la política y la construcción de la memoria," in Elizabeth Jelin and Diego Sempol, eds., *El Pasado en el futuro: Los movimientos juveniles* (Buenos Aires: Siglo XXI, 2006), 143–84
39. Judith Filc, *Entre el parentesco y la política: Familia y dictadura, 1976–1983* (Buenos Aires: Biblos, 1997), 209.
40. Sempol, "HIJOS Uruguay," 187.
41. Ibid.
42. HIJOS Uruguay documentary (2006): http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MSrjAr6_5WY (accessed February 10, 2014).
43. Sempol, "HIJOS Uruguay," 187.
44. HIJOS Uruguay documentary. See also Sempol, "HIJOS Uruguay," 187.
45. HIJOS Uruguay documentary.
46. For a detailed exploration of the divergent experiences of HIJOS members, see Sempol, "Hijos Uruguay." His interviews reveal that members of HIJOS varied in age considerably. Some had been babies or toddlers at the time of disappearance, whilst others were already at school.
47. Michael Rothberg, *Multidirectional Memory: Remembering the Holocaust in the Age of Decolonization* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2009), 15.
48. Sempol, "HIJOS Uruguay," 189.
49. Demasi and Yaffé, *Vivos los llevaron...*, 18.
50. Fried, "On Remembering and Silencing the Past," discusses the ways in which during and after the dictatorship, many Uruguayans shied away from any form of public expression and communal public endeavors.
51. Ros, *The Post-Dictatorship Generation*, 3.
52. Hirsch, "The Generation of Postmemory," 114.
53. HIJOS Uruguay documentary.
54. Sempol, "HIJOS Uruguay," 196–98.
55. Ibid., 198.
56. Fried "On Remembering and Silencing the Past."
57. Sempol, "HIJOS Uruguay," 199. Sempol's work points to the variety of perspectives of members of the group. He finds that those who were older when their parent(s) disappeared tended to focus on their familial relationship with the individual, whereas those who were much younger and remembered very little tended to highlight the political dimension of their relative's absence.

58. Valentín Enseñat “Vivencias y testimonios de la dictadura: La cotidianidad del terrorismo de estado,” paper given at workshop organized by the UDELAR and PIT-CNT, Montevideo, June 25, 2013.

59. Ros, *The Post-Dictatorship Generation*, 29.

60. Hirsch, “The Generation of Postmemory,” 106.

61. For more on the *escrache*, see Cara Levey “Resistance in the Streets of Buenos Aires,” in Ben Bollig and Arturo Casas, eds., *Resistance and Emancipation: Cultural and Poetic Practices* (Oxford: Peter Lang, 2011) 301–18. Diana Taylor, “‘You Are Here’: The DNA of Performance,” *TDR: The Drama Review* 46, no. 1 (2002): 149–69.

62. It is worth noting that *escraches* were discontinued in Uruguay following the election of the Frente Amplio government in 2004, which created increasing opportunities for justice in comparison to previous post-dictatorship governments (Sempol, “HIJOS Uruguay”).

63. See <http://hijosuruguay.blogspot.co.uk/2011/12/dia-de-los-derechos-humanos-en-el.html#!/> (accessed February 11, 2014).

64. Lessa and Levey, “Memories of Violence,” 161.

65. See Burt, Fried and Lessa, “Civil Society,” 316–18 for a detailed overview of the cases excluded from the *Caducidad* Law.

66. See Lessa and Levey, “Memories of Violence,” 161–65, for a detailed discussion. Also Luis Roniger, “La sacralización del consenso nacional y las pugnas por la memoria histórica y la justicia en el Uruguay posdictatorial,” *América Latina Hoy* 61 (2012): 66.

67. Lessa and Levey, “Memories of Violence,” 161.

68. Roniger, “Transitional Justice,” 695.

69. Burt, Fried and Lessa, “Civil Society,” 10.

70. Eugenia Allier, “The Peace Commission: A Consensus on the Recent Past in Uruguay?” *European Review of Latin American and Caribbean Studies* 81 (Oct. 2006): 87–96

71. Lessa and Levey, “Memories of Violence,” 163.

72. Roniger, “La sacralización,” 70.

73. See Burt, Fried and Lessa, “Civil Society,” 319, for more information on the revitalization of civil society. Although HIJOS remained critical of impunity, as Sempol notes, they had turned inwards from 2004 onwards, devising new strategies in the face of political change at a national level (“HIJOS Uruguay,” 219). Post-2009, HIJOS brought a number of cases to the courts, continued to lobby against the *Caducidad* Law and produced the documentary *A Contrareloj* in 2011 to highlight and publicize the ongoing issue of impunity. See <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=N9Rg0MGvhTA> (accessed April 24, 2014).

74. Report available at <http://www.ohchr.org/EN/NewsEvents/Pages/DisplayNews.aspx?NewsID=13852&LangID=E> (accessed February 11, 2014).

75. See <http://www.lr21.com.uy/politica/359111-al-menos-67-ninos-fueron-presos-politicos-en-dictadura-en-uruguay> (accessed February 11, 2014).

76. Ibid.

77. See <http://federaciondebasespatriagrande.blogspot.ie/2010/11/ninos-presos-de-los-militares-en.html>. See also author's interviews with Micaela and Paloma (Niños en Cautiverio Político), Montevideo, May 2009.

78. Gillespie, *Negociando la democracia*, 63–64.

79. Author's interview with Paloma, May 2009.

80. Ibid.

81. Author's interview with Micaela, May 2009.

82. Fried, "Remembering and Silencing the Past."

83. See <http://www.parlamento.gub.uy/leyes/AccesoTextoLey.asp?Ley=18033&Anchor=> (accessed February 11, 2014).

84. Author's interview with Micaela, May 2009.

85. Author's interview with Paloma, May 2009.

86. Author's interview with Micaela, May 2009.

87. <http://www.lr21.com.uy/politica/359111-al-menos-67-ninos-fueron-presos-politicos-en-dictadura-en-uruguay> (accessed April 24, 2014).

88. Publicity material for exhibition, author's interview with Niños.

89. <http://www.primerahora.com.uy/1211-jovenes-que-nacieron-en-cautiverio-politico-apoyan-anulacion-de-la-ley-de-caducidad.html> (accessed April 24, 2014).

90. Karl Mannheim, *Essays on the Sociology of Knowledge* (London: Routledge, 1952), 293.

91. Alan B. Spitzer (1973) "The Historical Problem of Generations," *American Historical Review* 78, no. 5 (1973): 1356.

92. Hirsch, *The Generation of Postmemory*, 5.

93. Suleiman, "The 1.5 Generation," 284.

94. Hirsch, "Projected Memory," 8; Suleiman, "The 1.5 Generation," 277.

95. Hirsch, "The Generation of Postmemory," 107.

96. Nadine Fresco, "Remembering the Unknown," *International Review of Psychoanalysis* 11 (1984): 417–27.

97. Enseñat, "Vivencias y testimonios de la dictadura."

98. Author's interview with Paloma, May 2009.

99. Enseñat, "Vivencias y testimonios de la dictadura."

100. Sempol, "HIJOS Uruguay," 200.

101. James Young "Towards a Received History of the Holocaust," *History and Theory* 36, no. 4 (1997): 21–43; Ronit Lentin, "Post-Memory, Received History, and the Return of the Auschwitz Code," *Eurozine* June 9, 2002, <http://www>.

eurozine.com/articles/2002-09-06-lentin-en.html (accessed February 10, 2014) (originally published in *Mittelweg* 36, no. 4 [2002]).

102. Hirsch, "The Generation of Postmemory," 114.

103. Ibid. 115.

104. Carina Perelli, "*Memoria de Sangre: Fear, Hope and Disenchantment in Argentina*," in Jonathan Boyarin, ed., *Remapping Memory: The Politics of TimeSpace* (Minnesota: University of Minnesota Press, 1994), 40.

105. Suleiman, "The 1.5 Generation," 286.

106. Mannheim, *Essays*, 293.

107. Suleiman, "The 1.5 Generation," 277.

108. Fried, "Private Transmissions," 253.

109. Rothberg, *Multidirectional Memory*, 3.

110. Alejandra Serpente, "The Traces of 'Postmemory' in Second-Generation Chilean and Argentinean Identities," in Lessa and Drulliole, eds., *The Memory of State Terrorism*, 150.

111. Young, *At Memory's Edge*, 2.

112. Hirsch, "The Generation of Postmemory," 107.

113. Although the group is defined nominally as a group of sons and daughters, its members are united by their status as orphans as a result of "the genocide of the State." See http://cultura.elpais.com/cultura/2013/05/07/actualidad/1367914942_203890.html (accessed April 24, 2014).

114. Author's interview with members of H.I.J.O.S Capital, Buenos Aires, August 2008.

115. Jens Andermann, "Returning to the Site of Horror: On the Reclaiming of Clandestine Concentration Camps in Argentina," *Theory, Culture & Society* 29, no. 1 (2012): 81–82.

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