

Archive Order: Secrecy and Military Intelligence in Democracy *

[English Version]

Orden de archivo. Secreto e inteligencia militar en democracia

Pedido de arquivo. Sigilo e inteligência militar na democracia

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Argentina

Abstract

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Objective: to identify the processes and practices involved in the definition of objectives, the search and classification of information of a naval intelligence office, and to contribute to the study of intelligence systems in Argentina, based on the analysis of a naval intelligence archive that covers the years (1985 to 2006) and that was confiscated as judicial evidence.

Methodology: anthropological and ethnographic research that includes in its design the analysis of a judicial file, interviews of different actors involved in the process of setting up the case, historical sources,

legislation, regulations of different hierarchies, and the detailed reconstruction of the intelligence file. **Results:** the analysis shows practices attributable to doctrinal

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frameworks corresponding to different time periods, sustained as strategies aimed at disputing areas of power and influence in the field of the State, and consolidating the sector's autonomy. The process of "policing" the sector and the relevance of the notion of "political policing" are discussed. **Conclusions:** the approach to the court case and the analysis of the intelligence file allowed problematizing the relationships and transmission of practices and knowledge within a Navy intelligence office beyond what is established in institutional legal guidelines. It opens the specific inquiry into the bureaucratic framework of the various intelligence agencies that make up the sector and the problem of their increasing automatization.

Keywords: military archives; espionage; political police; anthropology; Argentina.

Resumen

Objetivo: identificar los procesos y prácticas involucrados en la definición de objetivos, la búsqueda y clasificación de información de una oficina de inteligencia naval y aportar al estudio de los sistemas de inteligencia en Argentina, a partir del análisis de un archivo de inteligencia naval que abarca el período (1985-2006) y que fuera confiscado como prueba judicial. **Metodología:** investigación antropológica y etnográfica que incluye en su diseño el análisis de un expediente judicial, entrevistas a diversos actores intervinientes en el proceso de armado de la causa, fuentes históricas, legislación, normativa de diferente jerarquía, y la reconstrucción en detalle del archivo de inteligencia. **Resultados:** el análisis da cuenta de prácticas atribuibles a marcos doctrinarios correspondientes a temporalidades diversas, sostenidas como estrategias dirigidas a disputar ámbitos de poder e influencia en el campo del Estado, y a consolidar una autonomía del sector. Se aborda el proceso de «policiamiento» del sector y la pertinencia de la noción «policía política». **Conclusiones:** el abordaje de la causa judicial y del análisis del archivo de inteligencia permitieron problematizar las relaciones y transmisión de prácticas y saberes al interior de una oficina de inteligencia de la Armada, más allá de lo establecido en los lineamientos legales institucionales. Se abre la indagación específica sobre el entramado burocrático de los diversos organismos de inteligencia que conforman el sector y el problema de su creciente autonomización.

Palabras-clave: archivos militares; espionaje; policía política; antropología; Argentina.

Resumo

Objetivo: identificar os processos e práticas envolvidos na definição dos objetivos, a busca e classificação das informações em um escritório de inteligência naval e contribuir para o estudo dos sistemas de inteligência na Argentina, com base na análise de um arquivo de inteligência naval abrangendo o período 1985-2006, o qual foi confiscado como prova judicial. **Metodologia:** pesquisa antropológica e etnográfica que inclui em sua concepção a análise de um processo judicial, entrevistas com vários atores envolvidos no processo de constituição do caso, fontes históricas, legislação, regulamentos de diferentes hierarquias e a reconstrução detalhada do processo de inteligência. **Resultados:** a análise revela práticas atribuíveis a estruturas doutrinárias correspondentes a diferentes períodos de tempo, sustentadas como estratégias destinadas a disputar áreas de poder e influência no campo do Estado, e a consolidar a autonomia do setor. O processo de «policimento» do setor e a relevância da noção de «policimento político» são abordados. **Conclusões:** a abordagem do processo judicial e a análise do arquivo de inteligência tornaram possível problematizar as relações e a transmissão de práticas e conhecimentos dentro de um escritório de inteligência da Marinha, além do que está estabelecido nas diretrizes jurídicas institucionais. Ela abre o caminho para um inquérito específico sobre a estrutura burocrática das diversas agências de inteligência que compõem o setor e o problema de sua crescente autonomia.

Palavras-chave: arquivos militares; espionagem; polícia política; antropologia; Argentina.

Introduction

This paper presents some relevant aspects of research that began with the access to an intelligence file from the Argentine Navy in 2006. The circumstances were made possible in the framework of a lawsuit filed by a human rights organization, the Center for Legal and Social Studies (CELS), before the federal justice system, for carrying out illegal intelligence activities. Initially, the members of the intelligence office of the Almirante Zar Naval Air Base (Trelew, Chubut province), and finally the chain of command up to the head of the Navy, were charged. The investigator, the author of this article, participated in this case as a collaborator due to her expertise in the military issue, these being the conditions for access to the file and to the archive. The file is still in the custody of the Federal Court of Rawson.

To date, this is the only military intelligence archive to which access has been obtained, since all the so-called "repression archives" declassified in Argentina belong entirely to provincial police forces. They also usually cover the maximum dates 1960 to 1980, with some exceptions, and have been used as evidence in the trials for crimes committed during the military dictatorship of 1976 to 1983. The Trelew archive does not fall institutionally or temporally into this category, which constituted one of the first challenges for the research. This issue will be discussed in more detail in this paper.

The court case «CELS su denuncia»¹ was initiated when the naval intelligence office located in the city of Trelew was accused of illegal practices. Such practices were not in accordance with the principles contained in the National Defense Law (Ley 23554, 1988), the Internal Security Law (Ley 24059, 1991), or the National Intelligence Law (Ley 25520, 2001), which successively laid the foundations of a legislative structure and delimited military roles. This framework had been built based on a strong parliamentary consensus and two fundamental principles, with which a broad sector of the political spectrum tried to dismantle the foundations of the National Security Doctrine in Argentina, established in its Defense Ley 16970 of 1966. The first of these principles contends that the armed forces are part of the national defense system and that, therefore, they are only authorized to confront threats of external origin. The second of these principles delimits internal security and establishes that matters relating to the internal politics of the country may in no case constitute a working hypothesis for intelligence agencies.

1. File. N° 186 - F° 134 - Year 2006- Federal Court of Rawson, Argentina.

After an extensive period in which different sectors of the armed forces and civil society struggled to modify the limits established in the regulations, the present case, known in the media as the "Trelew Espionage," became the spearhead to enact a series of modifications in the military intelligence system concerning the orientation, coordination, direction, planning, and supervision of the activities related to the intelligence production cycle carried out by the intelligence agencies of the Armed Forces (Poczynok, 2017; Calderon, 2016, Muzzopappa, 2018).

In the framework of the court case, the files of that intelligence office were seized, which provided judicial proof of the performance of illegitimate tasks, such as the tracking of politicians and representatives of very different types of organizations (social groups and relatives of victims of State terrorism, among others).

The seized documentation consists of a series of reports, memos and newspaper clippings organized in folders contained in a filing cabinet, minute books, binders, and two computers. The documentation covers a period from 1985 to 2006.

Research with intelligence archives, usually referred to as "repression archives," has had a particular impetus based on the report prepared for UNESCO by the International Council on Archives in 1995² (González-Quintana, 2008). This report highlighted the importance of access to and preservation of the archives produced by different security and intelligence agencies during the repressive periods, in relation to the processes of democratic transition and the guarantee of human rights.

Since the end of the military dictatorships, different sectors, human rights organizations, and social movements have demanded that their governments search for and open police and military archives as part of the conditions to guarantee the processes of democratic transition and even of the democratic systems themselves. In this context, their inclusion in judicial investigations made it possible to expose to the public light the support that intelligence systems constituted for the repressive machinery of past dictatorial regimes.

In Argentina, the archives contemplated in this process of "opening" are, for the most part, police files (from their Investigation or Intelligence departments, known as D2)³ or from the provincial governments' civilian intelligence

2. The report, coordinated by Antonio González Quintana and titled "Gestión de los archivos de los servicios de seguridad," was republished in 2008.

3. These may include: Information Department of the Police of Córdoba, Police Information Department of the Police of the Province of Santiago del Estero, Intelligence Department of the Police of San Juan, Intelligence Department of the Police of the Province of Mendoza, Intelligence Directorate of the Police of the Province of Buenos Aires. The Argentine federal system of government contemplates the existence of

services.⁴ To a large extent, their maximum dates contemplate the period 1960 to 1980; some extend to the 1990s (Dirección de Inteligencia de la Policía de la Provincia de Buenos Aires), and only two go beyond the first decade of the 2000s (Archivo de Prontuarios Policiales de la Policía de Chubut; Departamento de Investigaciones Policiales de Santiago del Estero).

This has meant that most of the research on intelligence systems and practices refers to the dictatorial periods, while there is little research focused on the period beginning in 1983, the year of the reinstatement of the democratic system in Argentina. A notable exception has been the work recently undertaken by the Provincial Commission for Memory of the Province of Buenos Aires, which has made fundamental contributions to the functioning of the intelligence system for judicial cases on illegal intelligence during the post-dictatorial period. This work is also intended to make a contribution in this direction.⁵

Considering the purpose described above, this research, which began in 2006, has investigated the following topics: 1) the historization and development of intelligence agencies in Argentina, taking into account their dynamics as state bureaucracies; 2) the historical configuration of dangers and threats, their relationship with the processes of militarization of security and "policing" of the armed forces, and with the problem of autonomy and civilian control.

This paper highlights how, based on the reconstruction and analysis of an intelligence archive of a "local" delegation, identifying practices and work logics of the naval intelligence system from 1985 to 2006 is possible. Thus, even if the issue of "civilian control" or the "relative autonomy" of the armed forces—which has been extensively addressed by specialists for the Latin American case (Varas and Agüero, 1988; Diamint, 1999), to name but a few classics—is not discussed here, they constitute an unavoidable reference for dialogue in research that has as its frame of reference the daily constitution of state bureaucracies.

police forces under the orbit of the provincial governments. Likewise, each of these archives has received different types of treatment in relation to their preservation and access.

4. Included here are the files of the SICCh (Chubut Information Service) and DGI (General Directorate of Information of the province of Santa Fe). On the state of treatment of intelligence archives in Argentina see Nazar and García-Navarini (2021).

5. The Provincial Commission for Memory of the Province of Buenos Aires (CPM) has had custody of the intelligence archives of the former DIPBA (Dirección de inteligencia de la Policía Bonaerense) since 2001. In this task, the CPM has developed programs that investigate the actions and structures of state and para-state intelligence in Argentina, thus building a unique expertise on this subject and becoming a reference for judicial investigations.

Toward a De-reification of the State

An anthropological inquiry into the question of the state⁶ has been particularly fruitful in contributing to its "de-reification" (Abrams, 1988). The approach proposed here attempts to contribute to those works such as those of Corrigan and Sayer (2007) who, in this direction, took up the challenge of analyzing the processes of historical shaping of the "state" and to unveil the legitimizing argument under which, as shown by Bourdieu (2014), a myriad of offices, agents and bureaucracies that dispute the power of "the state."

In this direction, an anthropological and ethnographic perspective implies giving an account of rationalities, agents, processes, and productions: the file and the record of the judicial case became the two channels of analysis in this ethnographic investigation of the state bureaucracies, which supposed distinguish their dynamics of formation, trajectories and traditions, the networks, alliances and confrontations, as well as the circumstances that surround the agents, such as the "groups" of pressure, interest or belonging, which do not necessarily coincide with those that institutional boundaries demarcate (Muzzopappa, 2018).

Both the record and the file can thus be approached as "artifacts," as part of the apparently banal practices, mechanics of government (Sharma and Gupta, 2006) that constitute the center of the "administrative" tasks of different sectors of these bureaucracies. They can, therefore, be approached as fragments that help understand the role that records play within the state apparatus and how, on a daily basis, they shape it (Goody, 1990; Stoler, 2010).

De-reifying the state also means considering the analysis of such registers beyond the "content" or their "literal" reading and dwelling, both on the producer and on the dynamics, configurations, and categories from which they are produced. This means that the synchronous and microscopic view, which requires the analysis of an intelligence archive, is inserted in a perspective of long-term processes, to consider the historical development of the logics and practices involved, as well as the particular effect of its categories in the ordering of the world and the configuration of danger, threat, and the enemy.

Duty, Belonging and Secrecy

The armed forces can turn out to be, in turn, a particular object of reification. Even when the historical analysis has revealed the heterogeneities and

6. Consistent with the proposed approach, a distinction is made between "state" to refer to the concept that is theoretically analyzed and "State" to designate specific state configurations.

the disputes within it—particularly in the analyzes that address its relationship with the political contest—the truth is that the border or the limit that appears relevant is the one that is established between the “military” and the non-military (or “civilian”). Based on this cleavage, the question of the so-called “civilian-military relations” implies precisely the interest in investigating the relations of subordination or autonomy of the armed forces with respect to “civilian” political power. A good part of these studies were carried out in Latin America based on the study, especially from political science, of problems that included military influence in Latin American political systems (O’Donnell, 1975), passing through “military autonomy” (Varas, 1988) to the debates and proposals regarding “control” or “civilian supremacy” (Diamint, 1999).

The research presented here takes up the relevance of a category such as “corporation” (Durkheim, 1985), which in this framework allows reference to the relationship with the “profession” as a place of establishment of specific moralities (Frederic and Soprano, 2010) and the subjective feelings of belonging and transformation (Muzzopappa, 2005; Badaró, 2009) but in particular, as a mode of mediation of interests, historically situated and changing (O’Donnell, 1975), and of the forms of formation of groups to exert pressure on certain sectors of the State. The notion of “corporation” has thus made it possible to investigate the resources that are mobilized both to establish limits and to promote the internal integration of groups within the state apparatus.

This research stops precisely at the “secret” resource, used to establish and define such a border. This resource, in short, constitutes one of the ways in which the power of the state is erected, marking a limit with the outside.

The invocation of secrecy in the case of intelligence agencies allows us to see, in this case, how the dispute over “state power” (Bourdieu, 2014) occurs amongst the state bureaucracies. Although it is not part of the analysis of this work, it is worth noting that the recourse to secrecy was present not only in the aforementioned documented classifications of the file, but also constituted, within the framework of the legal case, a legal strategy of the accused to prevent supervision by other powers of the State (the Justice and the Executive Branch). The analysis of the dynamics established in this case, around the secret, allows researchers to advance in this “de-reification” of the state and visualize the corporate contours and limits, turning it into an index to reveal the network of relationships and interests that sustain it.

Methodology

An investigation was carried out that included in its design the analysis of the judicial record, interviews with various actors involved in the process of assembling the case, search for historical sources, legislation, and regulations of different hierarchies, being of particular importance the detailed reconstruction of the intelligence file and its comparison with other similar files.

Based on the search records and some photographs of the filing cabinets, a reconstruction of the “original order” of this file was made, which had been disassembled during the seizure process. A first description includes that of filing cabinets, with labeled drawers as described below:

Table 1. Possible file ordering

Supporting files	Divisions	Folders
Gray filing cabinet	Chubut Factors	(Approximately 22, including): Religion; Minorities; drugs; Judicial; Photography; Energy; indigenism; human rights; Civilian Personnel Strike; ports; COAN Address 1/2 “S”; phone control; Guilds; Security plan; General interest; Fishing and Naval Correspondents.
	Diverse publications	
Brown filing cabinet	COOP Synthesis	SintCoop 2003; SintCoop 2004; SintCoop 2005; March 2004; May 2004; AUG; 22AUG
	Newsletter	
	Social Media	
Book of minutes, labeled "Book of naval shipments",		

Supporting files	Divisions	Folders
Bibliography with the label "Remitted-Received Encrypted P.I (Part of Information)"		
Hand-Annotated Notebooks		
Computers	Factors	Airports; Energy; Fishing; Government-Fisheries; ports; Semblances; Newsletter 2006.

The metal filing cabinets contain, in their folders, the material from which the reports prepared in the office were made, according to different documentary types (Summary for the Naval Operations Command -Sint. COOP-, Naval Messages, Encrypted Messages, Information Parts). There are newspaper clippings and printouts of informative Internet pages, not finding other types of files—of the personal file type, for example—even though in the writing of the referred reports these other sources of reference can be identified, particularly in those that specify that no information was found in “Own File.”⁷ Finally, practically all of the reports and memos contained in this archive have an “ESC” classification: Strictly Secret and Confidential.

This description of the archive, which is developed more extensively in other works (Muzzopappa, 2017, 2018), was key to establishing a comparative dimension with other intelligence files, especially with that of the Intelligence Directorate of the Police of the Province of Buenos Aires,⁸ the most complete and extensive archive of police intelligence departments available in Argentina.

The comparative perspective was used to shed light "on regularities, variations, connections and correlations not always expected" (Balbi, 2015) from the contrast of the categories and the classification system of the archives of the Buenos Aires Province Police (DIPPBA) and the Chubut Information Service (SICH).

7. The claim for the existence of this file has been a constant by human rights organizations in Argentina. References such as those found in those reports suggest that, at least until the time the raid was carried out, said file—probably a central intelligence file—existed and was still being used. However, there have been no new results in this regard.

8. This Intelligence Directorate had been dissolved in a police reform in 1998, its records (which extreme dates are 1932 to 1998) were ceded, by law, to the Provincial Commission for the Memory of the Province of Buenos Aires (CPM).

It also takes up a strategy that requires logically bringing together disparate situations, spatially or temporally disconnected, carried out by a diversity of actors, with a heteroclite *corpus* for analysis: laws, decrees, judicial records, and institutional discourses, among others. This perspective is assumed since it is understood here that, for the study of this type of state bureaucracy, it is fruitful to open up to a diversity of spaces, thus avoiding the claim of "primitive isolation," even more so when the objective does not lie in the definition of the characteristics of the groups involved, but in the ways in which they think and constitute themselves in terms of relationships and mobile boundaries with various "others" (Barth, 1976, pp. 9-47).

Regarding the review of the anthropology records, researchers returned to the proposal of Stoler (2010), who understands that the records are constituted as a privileged place for an ethnography of the state, where the interest should focus on the process of conformation of the documentary collections to highlight their role in the state knowledge production process, but also in its condition as a cultural artifact for the production of facts and taxonomies in the making of its bureaucracies.

Finally, based on the archival principles of respect for order and provenance,⁹ a reordering of the documentation was carried out, which had been intervened in the judicial search. This allowed the description and identification of the groupings and categories used by the intelligence office, and to establish links with other intelligence files produced by other agencies (police and provincial intelligence systems) in different historical periods. The archival category of "documentary types" was also used, that is, the identification of documents that, having similar external characters—support, measurements, etc.—and internal—organization and arrangement of information— (Heredia-Herrera 1991, p. 135), give an account of specific administrative procedures.

Results

As has been mentioned, this research has been following various lines of interest. The main results related to the knowledge of the practices of the

9. The principle of origin implies respecting and maintaining the documentation from a united institution, without mixing it with that of other institutions. On the other hand, the consideration of the "original order" implies considering the ordering that the same producing institution gave it. For this, it is very useful to have the so-called organizational diagrams that, in turn, allow understanding the different "documentary types" that each of the instances generates, in their multiple activities. On archival principles see Antonia Herrera Heredia (1991).

intelligence agencies in Argentina, in particular on the post-dictatorial period, 1985 to 2006, and the theoretical problem on the processes of militarization of security, of the role of "political police" and "policing" of the armed forces and their intelligence agencies.

Schema and Categories

The work with the archival perspective made identifying a classificatory scheme possible, that is, a certain type of information retrieval and ordering that allows for investigating the logic from which the archive was created and used. The need for an analysis that would help determine the legitimizing support of such an organizational proposal was also postulated.

This work involved advancing with respect to the question of the trajectory, from which this file had been formed both in terms of the distinction of themes (labels and folders) and the organization criteria of the reports. This reconstruction allowed corroborating that the categories present in the file did not correspond to those stipulated in the current regulations that establish the institutional "missions and functions." In other words, the description of the "factors," as it appeared in the metal filing cabinet label and in the writing of the reports, was not part of the functions delegated to the naval intelligence system by the Navy Intelligence Plan. This lack of coherence, however, did not imply the existence of an institutional separation between the Trelew intelligence office and the rest of the system in carrying out these tasks. On the other hand, the identification of senders and receivers in memos and reports (made from standardized forms that record both the origin of the request and the different destinations to which the response is sent and/or copied) revealed a circulation of institutional type of this information. In other words, the tasks carried out there, far from being part of individual decisions or circumscribed by Trelew staff, had to be analyzed within the framework of institutional logic, even when they were not "legitimate" or "legal."

The Navy, like other forces, submits a good part of its staff to a system of rotation of destinations, which leaves open the question regarding the education and training involved in the use and maintenance of a file. Considering that this requires basic knowledge, it is proposed here that the archive is intervened based on rules that can be understood within the framework of a classificatory habitus that does not need anchoring in the formal registry. That means, these archive organization criteria are not explained by what is dictated in the current regulations, the intelligence plans or the contents supposedly taught in specialties training instances, but also require other variables for their understanding.

Thus, the notion of *habitus* allowed an analysis of the archive and classification practices with relative independence from the external determinations of the immediate present (Bourdieu, 2014), in this case from the doctrinal updates in force at the time.

For this definition the material contained in the drawers of the filing cabinets was of particular interest: labeled “Factores Chubut” and “synthesis COOP” (see Table 1).

The organization in “factors” was identified as part of an extensive tradition regarding the construction of “dangers” and the institutional practices formed around them. Thus, great similarities were found with the organization established for the police intelligence of the Province of Buenos Aires in 1984¹⁰ and previously in the Intelligence Bureau of the government of Santa Fe from 1977 (Águila, 2013) or that of the Ministry of Government of Rio Negro in 1978 (Muzzopappa and Mereb, 2020). They are the “factors”: political, relating to unions, socioeconomic, educational and religious, psychosocial, foreign minority.

To these categories, which accounted for continuities of classification criteria from previous periods, others were added, which had to be analyzed in relation to the configuration of a scenario after the fall of the Berlin Wall. With this objective, the folders “Drugs,” “Human Rights,” and “Indigenism” were identified, which appeared together with the rest of the “factors,” but which resulted in this “novel” trajectory. Then, the influence of the doctrinal changes that occurred throughout the 1990s on the international scene and the disputes over the installation of the paradigm of “new threats” or “asymmetric threats” as part of the functions of the instrument were considered as military defense in Argentina. The considerations contained in the Intelligence Plan, which was part of the material contained in the file, specified the role of the naval intelligence system in analyzing information related to “asymmetric threats.” Thus, the Navy included as its own task the conspiracy of those dangers that include terrorism, drug trafficking, organized crime, arms and people trafficking, among others. It is in this perspective that categories such as “Drugs” and “Indigenism” can be understood.

Although the issue of “Drugs” is recurrent in police intelligence files from previous periods, it is closely associated with the moral characterization of individuals under surveillance due to their links with “subversion” or because of their sexual orientation. While the type of information collected in the folders of the Trelew naval archive, as well as the reports prepared, allow us to account

10. Intelligence Directorate Fund of the Police of the Province of Buenos Aires, Central File and File Division, File 269.

for a delimitation of the drug trafficking phenomenon as a network of illegal trade or transnational crime.

For its part, the "Indigenism" brings together newspaper clippings on different public activities carried out by communities and groups of native peoples, in particular the Mapuche people of the province of Chubut. It is worth clarifying that certain sectors attribute to this people their character of "foreigners" and origins in Chile, with which their claims seem to put territorial sovereignty in check.

Finally, a special mention should be made of the folder labeled "Human Rights," whose origin can be established in the conflictive relationship that the organizations of relatives of disappeared detainees during the 1976-1983 dictatorship in Argentina have had with the armed forces due to his reluctance to provide information on the fate of the victims. In the specific case of this folder, information is compiled regarding the carrying out of public activities and the details of the meetings of the relatives of the "Trelew massacre" that took place, precisely, at the Almirante Zar Naval Air Base in the year 1972.¹¹ Throughout all those years, the Navy had different protection measures for those who were charged as the guilty and meticulously followed the activities of the relatives of the murdered.

That said, it should be noted that despite the apparent disconnection of these "new" categories added to the file, the addition was made preserving the interpretation and classification scheme based on that dichotomous vision where the negative pole, which characterizes individuals, groups and activities that are put under suspicion, continues to be defined by a possible location to the "left" of the political spectrum and by a spurious characterization between politics, crime and morality.

Militarization and Political Police

Regarding the ways of organizing the information circuit, the comparison with the archives of other organizations allowed for considering the organization of the naval intelligence system and specifying the hierarchical place of the Trelew intelligence office. Based on this, it was identified as a file of a "local" delegation, this is the first step in the chain of the information survey and sending circuit, from which information is sent with pre-established criteria

11. In the early morning of August 22, 1972, 19 political prisoners who were arrested at the Almirante Zar Naval Air Base were shot by members of the Argentine Navy. The incident caused great commotion in society and was one of the events that precipitated the end of the dictatorship of General. Onganía. However, it was not until 2006 that the relatives were able to open the judicial case to try the guilty parties.

to a central body, which gathers, in its own file, the reports of the sections or delegations and from which it carries out a new analysis process.

This genealogical investigation of the continuities in the tasks, activities, organization, and characteristics of the classification system of the intelligence agencies allowed verifying, in turn, the persistence of cooperation mechanisms between them. This collaboration, which historically received the name of "Information Community" (Sain, 1997), was for an extensive period of time under the aegis of the armed forces, where the criteria regarding the interrelation and coordination of tasks of the intelligence agencies (Funes, 2008; Águila, 2013; Montero, 2016). Despite the fact that the framework was dismantled with the sanction of the Internal Security (1991) and National Intelligence (2001) laws, the case analyzed showed the informal permanence of these collaboration circuits based on "uses and customs." Due to this historical conformation, the works on the intelligence organisms have highlighted what is called a process of "militarization" throughout the 20th century.

It is worth clarifying that the notion of "militarization" is polysemic and refers to a multiplicity of meanings and levels of application (Muzzopappa, 2017, Hathazy, 2016; Sánchez-Ortega, 2020). Thus, several works highlight the current processes of "militarization" of police forces at the international level defined by the adaptation of special bodies with notorious firepower (Kraska and Kappeler, 1997; Kraska, 2007; Hathazy, 2016). Then, the use of the term "militarization" is widely spread to identify the process of historical formation of police forces based on "military" characteristics, both in terms of the organizational structure and the method of training its members. With "militarized," the process of conformation of a hierarchical system and the importance given to the notions of "body" and "discipline" are usually designated (Sain, 1997; Varela, 2007; Galeano, 2007; Barreneche, 2008; Barry, 2010 cited by Caimari, 2015) because they emulate the characteristics of the armed forces. These works aim to show the deep influence that, particularly the armies, have had on the design of police forces.

Particularly relevant here is the definition of the objectives and training of the security forces or intelligence agencies on strategies based on the identification and persecution of the "political enemy" (Sain, 1997; Águila, 2013; Montero, 2016; Sozzo, 2016; Marengo, 2018; Scocco, 2019) that particularly affected intelligence agencies. Such a process was especially strengthened during the military dictatorships that followed one another in Argentina from 1930 and was accelerated with the implementation of the principles of the National Security Doctrine when training, the hierarchical system and the definition of the objectives of the corps were combined with police and intelligence agencies from the military leadership. In relation to this diagnosis, during the period of

democratic reinstatement, the task of "demilitarizing" politics was assumed, as well as the security and intelligence agencies (Sain, 1997).

Now, based on the similarities and continuities in terms of practices and categories used in police archives and in the Trelew naval archive, it is that this investigation began in the opposite direction, asking about the process of "policing" of military intelligence (Sain, 1997; Kalmanowiecki, 2000; Muzzopappa, 2018). In other words, the question about the historical process of transformation of military intelligence into political "police" is introduced here, taking into account that the identification and nomination of what is suspicious or dangerous, based on categories such as "dissolving element," "subversive," or "activist", among others, requires a proper procedure for the exercise of surveillance and control that is different from the care of the balance of forces between states that was typical of military doctrine until late in the 20th century. This difference is understood as the distinction between high and low police (Brodeur, 2007, L'Heuillet, 2010), *high* police involves the function to "instruct power," to control identity rather than the boundaries of territory. The police model takes the domestic model in its continuous search for the consolidation and perpetuation of an order; the order is the function of the police and is based on an idea of politics that ensures home care, rather than threshold (L'Heuillet, 2010, p.142). The remark that opens from here is, then, how and why Argentine armed forces turn to tasks that are properly belonging to the "police."

Kalmanowiecki (2000) finds, in the 1930s, the time in which this transfer of intelligence practices from the "political police" to the armed forces takes place in Argentina. The care of this internal order, as an idea of politics, becomes the goal of the armed forces in this early period in such a way that, by the time the guiding principles of National Security Doctrine are consolidated, military intelligence will have already built its own path and experience regarding internal danger. At the same time, a logic classification will be forged that will extend throughout the century and will continue even in the post-dictatorial period from 1983.

Trelew's files shows, precisely, both the permanence of some categories—economic, social, union factor, etc.—and the inclusion of others—indigenism, human rights—that support how intelligence activities continued to be raised as "high police." The scheme that supports this logic configures as a particular interest the relationships established by certain subjects, as well as their political and moral characterization, and extends much further back to the period of the cold war to beyond different changes in the political system and legislative reforms. Thus, this characteristic allows to raise, the hypothesis of a confluence of organisms of the sector divided or not necessarily linked to the institutions

to which they belong organically and functionally (armed forces, security, police, provincial governments).

This long-term look from 1985 to 2006 recovers for the analysis of this file, the perspective of the "files of repression" regarding the relevance and relationship of intelligence systems with various state agencies, their specific development, the link and correlation between the classification categories and doctrinal framework, without reducing the analysis to the mere corroboration of continuities and/or breaks. The notion of "political police" makes it possible to understand the logic of the incorporation of categories into the classification system even within the context of doctrinal changes in different times. In this sense, it is possible to observe how a general scheme remains where categories produced in different historical times coexist: those of the period of National Security Doctrine can be distinguished from the perspective of "new threats," typical of the period that begins after the end of the Cold War.

Autonomization of Intelligence

Finally, it is possible to review what was once the "reason of state" when the perspective from which such a "reason" is established does not correspond to the highest state authorities of a democratic system. On the contrary, the analysis shows a process of autonomization of intelligence agencies that has now become a problem of political agenda in relation to the *lawfare* (Romano, 2021).¹²

The participation of the armed forces in internal activities, under the paradigm of "new threats" or "asymmetric threats" implies a scenario that has been well received by certain sectors of the armed forces. And, as it can be seen from their inclusion in Naval Intelligence Plan mentioned here, this framework was included in this institutional file contrary to national directives and legislation. But, beyond autonomy, in democratic periods there is still concern about debate issues that in Argentina are not completely settled. Thus, if during the governments of Néstor Kirchner and Cristina Fernández (2003-2006 and 2006-2015), strengthening the perspective of the armed forces and intelligence agencies for defense was ruled, that should have as their objective the eventual "external state aggression," the management of Mauricio Macri (2015-2019) repealed Decreto 727/2006 again installing the possibility of action of armed forces considering that their action was legitimate in the face of an simply "external aggression." Additionally, it included phenomena such as drug trafficking or terrorism. Nowadays, the government of President Alberto Fernández has ruled in favor of restricting the actions of armed forces and promoted an important advance

12. Just to mention Argentina, after the scandal over the Trelew espionage case referred here, a series of cases were happening that revealed the spurious relationship established between intelligence agents, Justice and different levels of politics. See Romano (2021).

on the control of all the agencies that make up the intelligence system, when the level of autonomy had only increased since the case of Trelew referred here.¹³ Although the goal of this research is not the analysis of such a process, it can be stated that it has also been evidenced there how the function of "secrecy," daily and capillary, is ultimately the first fence against what is perceived as subjugation of other powers and state bureaucracies and a resource for autonomy of the sector.

The inquiry into this file made it possible to extend the deadline with regard to intelligence files, to cover an unexplored period that begins with the democratic restoration. It allows installing the problem of intelligence agencies beyond the dictatorial repressive logic and considers the information released within the framework of the course of the agencies nowadays, their relationship with the force of which it is a specialty, as well as their autonomous action as a sector. Based on this, "secrecy" appears as a strategy rather than as a remark used to exclude possible competitors in the field of the state, access and use of information.

Conclusions

The judicial conflict came up from the suspicion of carrying out "illegitimate" intelligence activities. The research conducted here took this first and fundamental step, beyond the individual accusations made by the Justice, to account for an institutional logic that goes beyond specific members of the Navy. According to historical context, this case managed to seize the intelligence archive and thus deepen the hypothesis about the tasks of military intelligence agencies in Argentina since the return of democracy in 1983 (Muzzopappa, 2018).

This assumption was made possible by deepening the role and function of archives in state bureaucracies. To understand the file as a practice rather than as a mere repository of information, or a count of intangible categories, implies considering that the activities and denominations that crystallize in

13. After years of inactivity, the current composition of Bicameral Commission for Prosecution of Intelligence Agencies and Activities presented a report on "illegal espionage" that took place between 2016 and 2019. According to the conclusions, during this period a device would have been established that dealt with the illegal surveillance of people based on their religious faith, private actions or political opinion, as a form of political extortion. The report is available on the website of the Honorable Congress of the Nation, <https://cutt.ly/kRNzcYc>

folders and reports respond to a logic that is common, it is shared, at least by those who have been trained in the specialization of intelligence. It also implies emphasizing that these logics are not necessarily embodied in specific institutional regulations or plans. It entails the challenge of tracking, identifying, and understanding the mechanisms from which a strictly institutional function is learned and transmitted outside and beyond the legitimate and official training and functioning spaces.

In this sense, considering the "illegality" of the practices does not mean disassociating them from an institutionality. The anthropological and ethnographic approach opens the possibility of knowing a *native perspective* on the modality assumed by relations within the armed forces, beyond a merely legal or institutionalist perspective. The continuity of intelligence practices, as they had been established decades ago, confirmed the permanence of logics despite legislative reforms.

The court case "CELS denounce" re-staged the "military question" and "civil-military relations" during a period considered to be the subordination of armed forces to civilian power; or, as some analysts already suggested, characterized by a subordination that included wide margins of action.

Reviewing the stated information, it is essential to understand that, if an archive can be considered, on the one hand, an objectification of thought schemes and, on the other, as the sediment of state action and functioning (Nazar, 2021, p. 24), it is understood that this reservoir of documentation accounts for the practices of this intelligence office. And that, if these practices are configured in a divergent way to what is established in the regulations and the legal principles in force, the question of the "autonomy" of these systems (Sain, 1997) and the way in which criteria and institutional dynamics are defined, established, and endure reappears.

A process such as the detailed one makes it possible to highlight the difference between the practices of intelligence office and the directives issued constitutionally and legally. This perspective finds a convenient line of inquiry from the perspective of "military autonomy" or regarding the processes of subordination of military and defense policy in Argentina almost into the democratic period. Thus, Poczynok (2017) takes up the distinction between defense policy and civil control proposed to underline how the former—which includes the adequacy of military institutions to the needs defined and perceived by those who legitimately govern the State—since democratic restoration, has been notoriously deficient in relation to what has been achieved at the level of subordination or subjection, as a political actor from the armed forces to civilian

control. In short, a case such as the one mentioned highlights this significant leap in terms of comprehensive defense policy, understanding that in matters such as intelligence activities, among others, the armed forces retained high levels of autonomy by then (Diamint, 2008).

Finally, it was presented as a unique opportunity to track and search the practices and categories of intelligence activities as constitutive of state bureaucracies and strategies for the dispute of "state power" (Bourdieu, 2014). And, even more important, it contributes to defining a problem that over the years has only deepened: the problematic role of intelligence agencies, their composition, formation and democratic control. This debate goes further along the explanatory axis that distinguishes dictatorship/democracy, and has become urgent in several Latin American countries. It requires deepening studies regarding the problem of the autonomy of intelligence agencies and their constitution as a corporation.

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