

Paulo Abrão & Marcelo D. Torelly

## Dictatorship Victims and Memorialization in Brazil: Concepts and Challenges in the Process of Building the Political Amnesty Memorial

Between 1964 and 1985 Brazil has endured a military dictatorship that perpetrated several crimes against its citizens, such as torture, killing and forced disappearance. The democratic governments established two commissions (in 1995 and 2002) to promote individual reparation for more than 30.000 victims and inaugurated several policies for truth and memory. Despite those efforts, the legacy of past violations is still in the political agenda as an unresolved issue in the Brazilian democracy, especially because an official public assumption of the truth regarding the violations and the location of the remains of the disappeared is still missing. Taking into account the experiences from Argentina, Chile and South Africa and also theoretical concepts such as “memorialization” (BICKFORD), in 2007 the Amnesty Commission of the Brazilian Ministry of Justice starts the process of building a Memorial for all the victims of the Dictatorship.

This presentation aims to (i) present the main individual and collective violations that constitute a difficult heritage for the Brazilian democracy; (ii) present the theoretical approaches and concepts that sustain the idea of using museums and “places of memory” as a toll to repair past atrocities and to reinforce the current democracy; (iii) describe the challenges of building a Memorial for the victims in a context of partially denied truth; (iv) the process of public hearings and audiences that structured the final concept of the Museum and, finally, (v) present the consolidated curatorial map, the overcome challenges and the present difficulties of the project (to be inaugurated in late 2012).

CV

Paulo Abrão is currently the Brazilian National Secretary of Justice and since 2007 is also the President of the Brazilian Amnesty Commission. He holds a PhD in Public Law from the Pontifical Catholic University from Rio de Janeiro and is Professor at the Master of Laws Program from the Brasília Catholic University. During the last ten years he published dozens of articles and books about Transitional Justice and Public Law and has developed researches in several Latin American universities, such as the Vale dos Sinos University (Brazil), the Pontifical Catholic University from Rio Grande do Sul (Brazil) and the University of Chile. He is also a former member of the Brazilian Government Mission for the implementation of the Cape Verde University (Africa) and the Mission about the Brazilian Amnesty Law at the Organization of American States. Since 2008, has held the position of Chairman of the Executive Board for the implementation of the Political Amnesty Memorial in Brazil and since 2009 he has been a Member of the Advisory board of the *“Projeto Memórias Reveladas”* (Revealed Memories Project) from the Brazilian National Archive.

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