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Separation and National Identity: A Narrative Account of Chilean Exiles Living in Saskatchewan

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ABSTRACT

The study is a narrative account of Chilean men who came to Canada after the September 11th, 1973 overthrow of government. In-depth interviews are used to reflect the life stories of 12 political exiles living in Saskatoon and Regina, Saskatchewan. This study expands the theme of belonging by analyzing how exiles negotiate identity to their country 25 years after their imposed departure. The accounts reveal how different groups of exiles draw on a view of their past as to reinforce links to the homeland. The question of identity is examined through the changing nature of exile political discourse and how that discourse provides meaning and shape to the host and home country. The study therefore asks how Chilean men in Canada remember their country, make sense of their political experiences, and give meaning to the question of belonging in the light of changing circumstances in their lives.

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Chapter 1

Introduction

The late Edward Said, who draws from the experience of the Palestinian Diaspora, describes the process of exile as “a condition of terminal loss…”, as a period of limbo where one lives in “a discontinuous state of being”. Exiles he declares “are cut off from their roots, their land, their past…[Exiles] feel, therefore, an urgent need to reconstitute their broken lives…” (Said, 1984: 159-61). What Said interprets as the exile’s social trauma is rooted in the disruption of space and time, the dislocation of home and family, and, in essence, the total alienation from one’s social environment. In the case of Chilean exiles, the experience of living through the brutality of a military overthrow of government, along with being forcefully uprooted from their home, would certainly qualify them under Said’s depiction. Consequently, for exiles who arrived in Canada after the coup d'état in 1973, the option of having to participate fully in their host setting was unattractive to the degree that doing so would be akin to forfeiting any hope of return, or in symbolic terms, an act of “turning their backs” on their lives in Chile (Martinez, 1992:52).

Like many other exile groups, Chileans were described as immigrants who were not ready to assimilate or fully accept the situation of being permanently grounded in an alien environment. For instance, Bolzman in his study of Chilean exiles living in Switzerland concludes that assimilation to the host environment “appears to be a minority phenomenon, rather what is sought is to preserve ethnic identity and the links with the country of origin” (Bolzman, 1994:331). As a consequence, the group’s bond to Chile and the longing to return to their people provided exiles with a sense of reluctance when settling into their new homes.

In Canada, exiles considered their stay initially as a short-term commitment, as a wait that would not manifest beyond a couple of years. This stage of migration to a new society has been described by the literature as a stage of waiting with “suitcases packed”, a stage where the situation in the new setting is seen as something temporary, and sooner, rather than later, the political situation in Chile would change, the military regime would collapse, and return would become a reality (Bolzman, 1994:326-27). However, as the dictatorship in Chile solidified its hold of the country with repression and fear, living in exile became a long-term projection, a form of “perpetual exile” that transformed itself into an “ideal future” (DeSantis 2001:14). This drawn out process of being in exile, of waiting for the right to return is by any account an emotional and painful journey. The social condition of the individual is tested, and within the context of adjusting to unfamiliar cultural surroundings the identity of the person is in question. For the exile then, the search is about the predicament of belonging – the process of finding the self.

1.1 Statement of the Problem to be Investigated

The objective of this study is to expand on the theme of belonging by analyzing how exiles negotiate identity to their country 25 years after their imposed departure. The analysis is based on the life stories of 12 men who live in Saskatoon and Regina, Saskatchewan. The question of identity will be examined through the changing nature of exile political discourse and how that discourse provides meaning and shape to the host and home country. I give particular attention to three areas: their involvement in a period of national mobilization and social participation, including the overthrow of government on September 11th, 1973; landing and the initial period of settlement, and finally; the phase involving post-exile and return. Two narrative

accounts of Chilean exiles living in Saskatoon frame the analysis of this thesis. These two narrative accounts are highlighted in order demonstrate how Chile and Canada, how host and home nation is expressed and understood. The accounts reveal how different groups of exiles draw on a view of their past as to reinforce links to the homeland. Along with these narrative accounts I use the remainder of the 10 interviews to contextualize their stories, that is, to give them historical significance and relevance.

The Chileans interviewed in this thesis are representative of a politically fragmented group of people who came to Saskatchewan between 1973 and the end of 1979. The study explains how attachment to Chile - of what Chile means to them yesterday and today - has played a significant role in how they view their future and prospects of return. For the exile the construction of the home country is largely shaped by their participation as political actors during the time of the Salvador Allende years (Bolzman, 1994; Wright & Onete, 1998). The construction of Canada in this sense is constantly reconfigured according to the dynamics taking shape in the home country as well as the dynamics taking shape in the exiles personal lives. The study therefore reflects these dynamics, by asking how Chilean men in Canada remember their country, make sense of their political experiences, and give meaning to the question of belonging in the light of changing circumstances in their lives.

I argue in this thesis that Chilean exiles in Saskatoon are constantly navigating between both identities and cultures in two countries. There is a constant search of who they are and what they have become as political and social actors in their post-exile years and a constant search for the meaning of home. I argue that the construction of the homeland - the primary basis of exile expression and identification - is contradictory and varied. My argument therefore addresses the shortcomings of essentialist perspectives that tend to look at “third world” people’s identity from

a one-dimensional stance. The assumption in this case being that Latin American identities come from being associated to one particular place, one particular culture or a particular experience (Escobar, 2000). This general categorization of identity tends to ignore the diversity implicit in the voices of exile discourse. Perspectives such as these lead to a claim that exile discourse is unstable or abnormal or at worst contradictory because of inability to find solace with the past or the trauma left behind (Grinberg and Grinberg, 1989). The limitation of this perspective is that it fails to account for the complexities and true experience *of exile*. By giving voice to these experiences I will provide a more detailed interpretation to how the identification to the homeland is articulated in exile.

1.2 Rationale, Significance and Need for the Study

The primary reason for such a study is that the phenomenon of exile often goes unnoticed in the public perception. Exiles are often assessed together, and rarely distinguished from other immigrant groups. As a result, issues concerning flight and settlement have a general undertone of labeling the refugee experience under a synopsis that entails a human movement from a place of origin to a host nation, as a path where one escapes chaos to find an open non-hostile democratic system. This general oversimplification is often at odds with the literature that tackles the reality faced by refugees both in their route to a new country and in their post-settlement experience (Baker, 1990; Rockhill & Tomic, 1994; Razek, 1998; Braver, 2002). For example, issues concerning racial and ethnic discrimination, social inequality, exclusion and the subjective impact of dominant cultural standards have all been well researched and argued as acting as impediments to the full participation of different immigrant groups, in particular immigrant women and people of colour (Li, 1995; Bolaria & Li, 1988).

Second, several studies concerning refugee communities describe the importance of strong social and political orientations to the home country as factors playing a major function in the societal incorporation of refugees, or in their decision to participate in the wider social arena (Valtonen, 1998; Wahlbeck, 1998; Israel, 2000). It is argued that because of these ties, refugees are seldom able to participate fully in the host country or to assimilate culturally as a result of the continued influence in what they see as the homeland. I hope to add to the literature by inserting a historical and spatial component to the process of displacement and the constitution of identity.

Third, there is a gap in the literature that does not take into consideration the experiences of exile and settlement of Latin American political refugees in Canada. In contrast much work has been done in the United States (U.S) partly because of their large Latino population and the existence of strong historical, political and geographical linkage between the U.S and Latin America (Stack & Warren, 1990; Poyo, 1991; Drouillard, 1997). Nevertheless, the study is important for a variety of reasons. I am dealing with a sample of one of the largest Latin American populations in Canada and certainly one of the most significant groups of political refugees to ever arrive in Canada (Llambais-Wolfe**,** 1993; Escobar, 2000).

Their significance stems from their involvement in a politically charged historical passage of time and in the continuing human rights situation of Chile (Wright, 1998; Dorfman 1999; Gomez-Barris, 2005). Likewise, this experience cannot be separated from the significance of a politically engaged culture that captivated the world's attention in the 1970's. Therefore, their insight regarding the effects of settlement and integration as political exiles can serve as a useful study in the way we think of, and treat political refugees fleeing identical circumstances.

Finally, I hope to add theoretical substance to the experience of exile which entails the search for community and belonging. By giving a clearer understanding to how home is

represented, how it is carried from “one territorial site to another”, it is argued that return, or the potential to re-migrate to their home country, is always seen as a possible outing to a sense of loss and alienation felt by the immigrant in the host setting (Peteet, 1996). Therefore, as long as the creation and re-creation of the homeland remains grounded in the makeup of their ethnic/cultural/political identity, assimilation or full integration into Canadian society should be looked with some reservation.

Methodology and Research Design

This next section deals with the methodology involved in the investigation of this study. There is a brief discussion of the rationale of the methodology followed by a more detailed account of the collection of primary data by means of in-depth open-ended interviews. Finally, the organization of chapters used in the thesis is discussed.

1.3 Rationale for Qualitative Methodology

In the essay “Remembering Survival,” Lawrence Langer speaks about the testimonies/narratives of Holocaust survivors as a projection of the past that invades the present by “casting a long and permanent shadow over the future” (Langer, 1994:71). Langer offers us a way of imagining the victims through an exploration of narrative accounts which reveal to us the sense of being overcome by experiences that have never left the psyche. Introducing one of the survivors as Peter C. he writes:

> Ordinarily we would expect the process of remembering, through a recovery of images and episodes, to animate the past. But survivors who re-encounter holocaust reality through testimony often discover as Peter C. tries to explain, a disjunction between ‘consciously remembering’ in order to reveal to us what they already know, and the sense of being possessed by moments and events that have never left them. (Langer, 1994:72)

In this thesis I speak to the victims of one the great tragedies to unfold in Latin American history. It is for this reason that I chose to use a narrative analysis in the hope to record and document their testimonies. Narratives are chronological accounts of events usually with a beginning, ending and a plot. The role of the interviewer is to administer the story bringing the respondent back to his or her account of events. Exile to a large degree is a narrative account and like Langer's Peter C. it becomes a story and re-creation of raw lived experiences (Bouvard, 1985). Within these constructed and re-constructed historical narratives, people carry forward their history, their multiple identities and deploy them to future generations (Rubchak, 1993; Peteet 1996). As such, narratives gather people around them. A narrative promotes empathy across different locations and mobilizes collective action and social change (Rubchak 1993; Peteet, 1998; Rodriguez, 2004; Gomez-Barris, 2005). Narratives as well sustain a group's identity to particular place, event, power struggle and/or relation. The construction of narratives comes from sites of memory that spatially constituted in the physical and non-material realm (Hoelscher, 2004). Therefore, the stories people tell about themselves reflect their experience as they see it and wish to have others see it. According to Paul Ricoeur (1984), narrative is a way of expressing this development over time. A narrative methodology in this thesis re-constructs a part of history and the personalities involved in that history. The implications of helping make sense of identity are great. We apprehend identity in this case in relation to a time and place. Identity therefore is not separate to "what has happened", and to how "what has happened" is remembered. One's identity then is influenced with how the individual perceives himself relative to past events or actions and their consequences, as well as with how events or actions are interpreted by forces outside the individual.

In exile a temporal distance is created between the experience one has just come out of, the relations one has left behind, and the acculturation that plays a part in the transformation of one's new life. Narrative interpretation offers room for the articulation of such expression to make sense of the distance created in exile. Speaking on narrative analysis, Riesman (2003) notes, "storytelling is what we do with research and clinical material, and what informants do with us. The approach does not assume objectivity, but, instead privileges positionality and subjectivity" (2003:03). Madan Sarup, discussing the dynamics of identity and narratives, contends, "When asked about our identity, we start thinking about our life-story: we construct an identity at the same time as we tell our life-story" (Sarup, 1996:15). Therefore, I favor a narrative analysis on precisely those bases; in a sense I want to capture that moment. I want to tell a story of a group of people that the literature rarely takes into consideration, at least at the level of the Canadian context. Exile as a notion has been documented and written about to large extent but not well understood on the basis of particular Latin American political/cultural groupings. Research in this qualitative sense has fallen short. In this thesis I provide insight into how, in exile, people construct their personal experiences between the past and the present, or as Bowman (2002) asserts between the "here-and-now" and the "then-and-there" (2003:457). At the same time I show how events and the way they have been represented shape the discourse surrounding the identity of belonging and nationhood.

In sum, analyzing interviews through narrative is of interest to the outline of this thesis, not only from a point of view that explains identity, but, as well, from the sites of contention of which these interviews takes place. For instance, the interviews take place in the context of a Chilean human rights story that is unfolding in a period in which there is a re-emergence of the political left in South America and in the stage pertaining to post-exile. The people interviewed

in some cases have been living in Canada for over a quarter of a century; most have been back to Chile several times; while others have been reluctant to go back since their departure. It should be noted that the military regime is no longer in power; however the armed forces still commands enormous influence into the dynamics of the country's political scenery. For example**,** although Chilean political authorities have diminished the armed forces' institutional powers, Pinochet nevertheless secured advantages for conservative forces that were highly receptive to military prerogatives[1].

I do not contend for a moment that these stories are ideal types for all Chileans living in exile or for that matter in Saskatchewan; rather it is an approach that will give us insight into how cultural & historical space are mediated by particular memories of experiences and how it plays a role, if not a fundamental one in the understanding identity and belonging (McClaurin-Allen 1990; Nettles, 2003)

1.4 Unstructured Interviews

Participants were located through (a) the utilization of the snowball sampling method, (b) my affiliation with the Chilean exile community, and (c) through contacts with various cultural, political and social organizations that form part of the Chilean community or that have worked with Chilean exiles or immigrants. For example, one participant was located through the help and assistance from members of the Open Door Society, and four interviewees through my personal contacts. The four who made up my personal contacts directed me to other Chileans who might be of interest to the study. Consequently the remainder of the participants was located

[1]Wendy Hunter writes, "The Pinochet Charter [The constitution of 1980 and the 1989 Organic Law of the Armed Forces] impeded changes by establishing barriers to amending the constitution that would be nearly impossible to overcome, given especially the artificial strength of the political right. Thus by conferring constitutional guarantees on the armed forces and passing legislation to boost representation of conservative politicians, the outgoing authoritarian regime covered its bases well" (1997: 459). See Wendy Hunter. Continuity or Change? Civil-Military Relations in Democratic Argentina, Chile, and Peru. *Political Science Quarterly*, 1997. v.112 (3), 453-475.

through referrals and my own encounters with members of the community through actively participating or attending events of a cultural and political nature.

Twelve participants living in Saskatoon, with the exception of one who lives in Regina, were chosen for the interviews. The interviews were conducted in an open ended, in-depth and informal manner. The interviews lasted anywhere from 1-3 hours at one time, with 3 out of the 12 respondents being interviewed more than once. Because of the open nature of the interviews, I was cautious in interrupting the flow of conversation, allowing as much room and space for the respondent to complete the answer unless he radically strayed outside the intended frame of questions pertinent to this study. For example, one participant had repeatedly strayed off topic by talking about Chilean food recipes. In this case I would interrupt and ask another set of questions that followed the chronological order based on the events that transpired in his life. Nevertheless as a student to sociological research I was hesitant to switch topics never knowing what information might be practical or useful to the course of this thesis. Because of this, I took my time with each respondent allowing the flow of conversation to take place like two friends speaking comfortably with each other. The point is that I listened to their stories I tried not to interrupt or navigate their narratives to something I wanted to hear or have them respond to, unless it was absolutely necessary. Because of the qualitative nature of the research, an open-ended approach to the interviews was seen as conducive to the nature of the study. All interviews were recorded, transcribed and edited in Spanish by the author. I also translated all interviews into English. The interviews themselves were detailed, and at time conducted on the arrangement of several appointments. Interviews took place between December 2003 and June 2005.

Primary among their experiences in childhood for a roughly half of those interviewed was the experience of living in conditions of extreme poverty and exploitation, something not

uncommon among the working class in Chile, or for that matter most of the working class in Latin America (Weaver, 2000). This was especially prevalent for exiles that were raised outside of urban areas; on *latifundias* – a parcel of land worked on by peasant-farmers but owned by the *latifundista* (land owner) – some described their entry from childhood to exploited labor as early as 10 years of age and in some cases younger. For other respondents interviewed, the situation of living through an oppressive experience of indentured servitude did not shape their childhood, although the effects of witnessing extreme economic deprivation did have a consequence on the nature of their political development. Others spoke of the impact of the Catholic Church, the experience of belonging to the middle class and feeling relatively privileged compared to the great majority of Chileans living in poverty. For many of the more militant exiles, in particular the Communist party members, exploitation often occurred through generations either by country's middle or upper classes who they described as "insulated" from the margins of poverty, or if the respondent lived in the rural countryside by large landowning elites known as *latifundistas*. In the rural areas, cases of extreme poverty always accompanied a death of family member either to horrendous labor conditions or to lack of basic health requirements. Many of the participants who were self-described *campesinos* often spoke of losing one or two siblings in the course of their childhood and adolescence. Others spoke of having to leave home early to find work in large cities like Santiago or Valparaiso.

The insights surrounding the events of September11th, 1973 were particularly moving for some respondents. It offered an occasion for many participants to openly reminisce about the event surrounding September 11^{th,} 1973, which meant recalling the fall of their leader Salvador Allende, the distress of repression and fear through violence, and the experience of flight and dislocation. Often the participants would recall that these events seemed to happen in a hurry, as

if changes taking place at home or work had rapid movements, many remarked that the whole process was like living in a dream. Respondents also offered insight as witnesses to a human rights tragedy taking place, as people living on the run or in a state of constant fear. The freshness and recurrence of their memory with respect to what had happened during the period of flight was notable. For example, almost all exiles retained specific information of the individuals (e.g. people who had died or disappeared at the hands of the military) time and place in which events took shape, and their situation for being in Canada. In this thesis, I had to take into consideration that many of the participants are survivors of unbelievable torture and cruelty, a brutality rarely known to the outside observer. It perhaps telling of some the interviews that the nature of September 11^{th,} 1973, of what occurred during and after this date continues to consume many Chileans.

Respondents were also asked questions about the nature of their flight and exile. Many felt that they would return back to Chile in a couple years at the most. Many felt relieved of leaving Chile, as well as guilty, or somehow responsible for the tragedy that was to unfold. A majority of the participants had traveled alone later reuniting with their wives and children after a couple years. Four of my participants had left with family. Marcos a laborer and union activist in Chile recalled leaving with 5 children and his wife:

> I: When you left did you think you were gone forever?
>
> Well I said to myself that this was a phase that this would not go on for another 5 years…I said, 'these Fascists would not last another 5 years!' I thought that in 5 years things would change. Well that's was my faulty mathematics (laughs) so to speak and here we are 26 years later…
>
> I: You came to Saskatoon with family

> Yes also with 5 children, my one son who was 14 years of age, my other was 13, one was 9, 5 and 2 years of age.

Others like Luis recall leaving his partner of 4 years in airport never to see her again. The tragedy of being deported from your country for political reasons was a salient aspect in the makeup of exile identity. Thus conversation to this end included how they managed to overcome some of the initial difficulties associated with adjustment and how their lives developed from the period of their landing.

Respondents were also asked to describe their emotional reaction upon entering their new environment, including hopes for the future and thoughts of return. Involved in these conversations was the role of civil society acting as a facilitator in accommodating refugees. Insight was also offered to the role of NGOs, government agencies, political parties and labour unions. Politicians, in particular those from the New Democratic Party (NDP), were often referred to as helping in their transition into Canadian society as well as providing the entry into the Canadian network of people working in solidarity with the victims of the dictatorship. Benjamin for example, although not a Canadian citizen, had pictures of Jim Madden the NDP candidate for his constituency pasted on his door when I went to visit him again after the interviewing was finished.

Perhaps the most crucial part of the interview process were questions related to the idea of going back to Chile. Out of the 12 participants only one had never returned to Chile while 4 had returned once and the rest more than twice in their lifetime. Questions surrounding return often brought a new wave of emotions. Many times participants would become emotional when remembering what they had lost and gone back to. Out of the 12 participants four had tried unsuccessfully to go back and live. Stories of failed business ventures, encounters of age

discrimination and racism were experiences that led many of them to rethink their move to Chile. Others talked of inadequate access to healthcare, education, employment and social services. Return therefore followed two kinds of routes. First the participant after a number of years of living in exile spoke of moving back indefinitely. Once there, many tried to fashion out a life from the new society but encountered a host of difficulties both structural and direct. This led many who had decided to go back to Chile indefinitely to return back to the host nation after attempting to live in their former homeland. The second route is where the exile returns but only temporarily, either to reunite with family and/or because of "necessity" to return; as such the exile decision to return is ambiguous. In both these routes with respect to return, all the participants described feeling a sense of otherness and marginality, a sense of what Julie Peteet (1996) refers to a "continuing displacement" in the homeland (1996:9).

1.5 Characteristics of Respondent

Before any of the interviews took place I visited each individual and explained the process and function of the study. My intention during these meetings was to create a sense of confidence with respect to how I would "use their words", as well as to familiarize the participants to what would be occurring during the part when the interviews would be taped and recorded. Given the extensive human rights violation occurring throughout the country all respondents describe a situation of leaving Chile in order to safeguard their lives or because they were ordered or warned to leave the country.

Just over half of the participants interviewed suffered forms of state sanctioned human right abuses ranging from illegal prison sentences to suffering serious acts of torture. Party militants or self-described militants were the most vulnerable to persecution and imprisonment.

Torture frequently involved an intimate and intense relationship between the individual and several others – usually their captor(s). It should be noted that torture in Latin America during the "Condor years" was used or justified by the state as instrument used in defense of the country (Kornbluh, 2003). The dictatorship in this respect warranted the use of torture as means of maintaining "peace" and social control. The participants in this study often recalled that torture was used as way of gaining access to the community, to infiltrate political parties or clandestine activities considered subversive. The victims were not only the tortured but mothers, fathers, children, spouses and relatives who in their own right campaigned for the release of their loved ones or endured the outcome of their trials[2]. Torture and the massive violence, including mass murder and disappearances inflicted after the overthrow therefore had an enduring collective effect on many communities and families, something only made public after the demise of the regime.

Many of the participants who were tortured spoke of having their case exposed and documented usually by family members, in particular their wives who communicated information to non-governmental organizations working in the area of human rights or to the Roman Catholic Church who played a pivotal role in the release of thousands of Chilean political prisoners (Crooks, 2005). As a result, many of these cases were made public by NGO's or the Catholic Church in the interest of alleviating human rights violations or appealing for the release of prisoners. The trauma of being arbitrarily imprisoned, tortured and threatened with death becomes a difficult psychological and emotional test in the capacity to cope in the future. The

[2] In their work with victims of torture in London, John Schlapobersky and Helen Bamber speaking on the long term of effects of torture victims note, "Amongst the most insidious consequences is the injury that torture victims suffer in their capacity for relationships…many of those we see have suffered extensive physical trauma. In these and in all other cases of torture, there is massive psychic trauma which if unattended, will almost certainly be compounded rather than be alleviated in time." (1988:209-10). In Bamber & Schlapobersky. *Rehabilitation Work with Victims of Torture in London* in Diana Miserez (ed) Refugees the Trauma of Exile. Based on a workshop at Vitznau, Switzerland. Martinus Nijhoff Publishers. 1988, p.206-222.

context of displacement and the task of starting a new life in a foreign environment for many participants was a significant and crucial part of the interviews. It allowed many of the victims of torture to talk openly about what had happened to them and an opportunity to ask about the present situation of Chile's human rights process.

In selecting the participant of the interview process, the interviewees had to be (a) politically involved in the situation in Chile or exiled as result of political or ideological affiliations with the ousted Unidad Popular (UP) government, and (b) resettled in Canada from 1973-1989. I had also made an attempt to find participants that would fill a third condition; that is, I was looking for exiles that had returned or attempted to return to Chile. Because of the small sample population to work from and because of the predominant relationship that male exiles had with the political institutions in Chile, they were the only respondents included in the sample. The voices of two women originally interviewed were left out for three reasons. First, I did not have enough cases to capture their experiences as housewives, mothers, political actors and exiles. Second, one of the original women participants had moved to away before she had given any final remarks about the final draft of her transcripts, and third I had son-mother relationship with the second woman participant. I correctly assumed that this would affect the way I represented woman's voices in general. Although I had known some of the male participants in this study I had no family relationship with any of them nor had I ever been close with any of the respondents. In this sense there was space between interviewee and interviewer that I think benefited the interview process because it allowed me to field questions from a standpoint of an someone researching the subject and as well from the standpoint of "being one of them", of understanding their experience as Chileans in Canada.

1.6 Social and Economic Background of Respondents

Each participant came from diverse political situations and socio-economic circumstances. Out of the twelve participants interviewed, four were employed as professionals, two as service or factory workers, five as custodians or laborers and one was retired. Interviews were done on a one on one basis. In Chile, roughly half of the participants were teachers, students, or young professionals. As professionals, two participants were employed by the Allende government to initiate land reform, while one was employed as a civil servant. The other participants can be described as laborers, union activists, self-described *campesinoes* and community workers. All interviews were recorded in the homes and apartments of the exiles except in the case of three interviews which were held at the University of Saskatchewan. All these men are first generation Chilean exiles, who had escaped or been removed by the military from Chile during the time of the dictatorship. They also represent a group that has been described by the literature as the first wave of exiles that had come during the period between September 11, 1973 and the end of 1979. The age of the respondents range from 44 to 73 years of age. At the time of their exile, ages ranged between 26 to 40 years of age.

In Chile, respondents came from both rural and urban centers. Out of the twelve respondents eight were married and four were single men. Three of the four had been divorced from their wives and at the time of the interviews were living alone. Furthermore, the exiles also represented different political parties. Four maintained their political independence in Chile, six were members of the Communist party of Chile and two were members of the Socialist party of Chile. All of the exiles however stated that they were Left-leaning and had been involved indirectly and directly with the Unidad Popular (UP) government.

I do not want to imply that by Left-leaning all exiles had a particular uniform ideology based on Marxist or Socialist principles and as such were in agreement with what had happened in Chile during and after the overthrow of government. For example, the Communist Party noted the role of U.S imperialism, the intervention of the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) and Right-Wing militias in bringing down the UP. Their harshest criticism however was reserved for what they considered the opportunists, meaning socialist, members of MIR, and the Catholic Left who they blamed of instigating the military overthrow (Constable& Valenzuela, 1991). Initially the Communist tactic after the overthrow was to create a broad coalition to oust the dictatorship and restore representative democracy. In 1980, justified by the increase in government repression the Communist Party called on a popular rebellion in all fronts. On the other hand the Socialist Party, who had once advanced the legitimacy of "revolutionary violence" as early as of 1967, was decimated in their organizational capacity to act as an effective opposition to the dictatorship (Constable& Valenzuela, 1991). In 1986, after overcoming the internal cleavages that had plagued the party since 1973, the Socialist Party adopted a new political path that rejected the vanguard approach and the dictatorship of the proletariat. They managed to facilitate a coalition with the Christian Democrats and spearheaded the development of abroad coalition to challenge the dictatorship in a 1989 plebiscite. After the defeat of the UP, the battle to restore Chilean democracy, therefore, took on many political agendas in and outside the insular attitudes found in Chilean party politics[3].

[3] The third element in Chile's Left has been called by Brian Loveman (1993) the "invisible Left". These groups constituted nongovernmental organizations who acted as a source of political expression for the Left. These organizations included community kitchens, alternative media sources, workshops producing artisan products and community groups formed to support families affected by the dictatorship. Loveman explains, "The nongovernmental organizations helped shape a new political agenda for the Left that included a new emphasis on human rights, the basic needs of the poor, the role of women in society and politics, and the environmental deterioration that resulted from neoliberlism's intensification on pressures on natural resources and human habitat…these discoveries combined with the experience of leftist leaders in Chile in exile, altered the intellectual foundations of the Chilean Left"(1993:32-33). See Brian Loveman, 'The Political Left in Chile' in Barry Car and

1.7 Secondary Data Gathered for Thesis

Secondary data gathered for this study is based on an investigation of exile and the emotional and cognitive state of post migration, after settling in Canada. Primary consideration was also given to areas concerning the historical and political formation of Latin America with attention prioritizing the period concerned the political formation of the Popular Unity government. An analysis of Chile in the period preceding the overthrow of government is well documented. Literature after this period could be broken down under five possible areas: literature concerning human rights; literature concerning the role of the Catholic Church; literature on the writing and experiences of exiles; Chilean political/economic formation and the history of Chilean political parties.

Because the study concerns itself with the predicament of exile, other literature outside of the experience Chile dealing with the trauma of flight, adjustment and as such the formation of identity was used as themes in this thesis. The notion of identity is central to the discussion as it seeks to bring forth a description of what is at question for the political immigrant with regard to settlement and migration. After analyzing research previously conducted in the area I came across a variety of differences and similarities between and among exile groups. These differences were made most relevant in novels and personal depictions of exile.

Other data gathered for this thesis came from conference material researching political and historical junctures in Chile. The intent was to gain a better understanding of Chilean social relations. I gathered data from public events and social visiting. I attended films and the commemoration of the 30th anniversary of the coup. I also spoke to many members of the community on many occasions and meetings. The information obtained from these meetings

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Steve Ellner (eds). *The Latin American Left: From the Fall of Allende to Perestroika*. Boulder. Westview Press. 1993

helped contribute to my overall comprehension of some of the dynamics integral in the local Chilean community. I also utilized federal government statistics with respect to the number of refugees residing in Canada and provinces.

1.8 Terms used for Thesis

The departure of thousands of Chileans who suffered persecution from the military dictatorship started in 1973. Departure took many different forms. In some cases departure meant escaping to neighboring Argentina. Usually these trips were organized in secret, using forged documents and in some cases buying-off border guards was the only chance many of the participants had of escaping. Other participants left Chile directly from jail or had their prison sentences commuted to exile. Other exiles interviewed escaped Chile through legal channels using their passports. In these interviews many participants talked about being blacklisted, fired from work on false grounds, incarcerated, tortured and ostracized from their communities after serving jail time. Monica Escobar (2000) in her study of Chilean immigrant women in Canada remarks:

> Chileans who arrived in Canada, even those carrying the legal status of 'immigrant', were often identified formally by the two labels, refugees and exiles. 'Refugee' has a legally defined status and offers the person so designated with the right of sanctuary in some country. It is the UNHCR Refugees [United Nations High Commission for Refugees] that is the body responsible at the international level for mediating and supervising the situation of millions of refugees seeking sanctuary…Exile on the other hand does not fall into a legally defined category. The term refers to the punishment these people are subjected to being prohibited from returning to ones *patria* or country of birth (Escobar, 2000: 9-10).

Post-exile in this thesis for refers to the opportunity to go back to Chile after the transition from military to civilian rule in March of 1990. When I spoke to many of the

participants I would ask them if they still felt they were in exile although they had they possibility of returning. Many had answered yes that they felt that they were still living as condemned men outside of their natural environment. Ricardo, a participant in this study, explains that he never thought he would live in any other country other than Chile:

> I never thought I would live the rest of my life here. Before, I had the question of how I would bring all my family back to Chile. I struggled with this a long time. In Chile I didn't have a profession, how was I going to feed my family I thought. I still feel nostalgic I guess not so much for the *empanadas* or things like that but because I had something in Chile, I led party meetings, I was key figure in my community.

Exile in this thesis then is a subjective term it is a social condition in which the subject feels a sense of otherness and alienation both in the country of origin and in the host environment. In this thesis I use the term refugees, exile or post-exile in order to highlight particular circumstances of the subject's situation.

1.9 Personal Interest to Research

On a personal note I would like to briefly reflect on an experience that moved me to consider work on this project. In 1999-2000 I traveled to Puerto Montt, Chile to witness an election between the Socialist Candidate Ricardo Lagos and the conservative opposition candidate Juaquin Lavin. I observed the campaign from both sides with great interest. However what interested me the most could be best understood in the living room of my parent's home. In the afternoon on Election Day there was an enormous excitement and hope that Ricardo Lagos, a Socialist, chosen to run as leader of the *concertacion* (coalition of political party's that had been in power since the end of the dictatorship) could possibly do for the country what previous governments had failed to do: raise the standard of living and alleviate the gap among the poor

and the rich. There was a sense of cynicism among some old exiles - ex-party militants - who decided to convene at my parent's home. These were my father's friends who, like him had returned to Chile to reconstitute their lives in their former homelands. As the night wore on, the discussion as always, turned political. The argument began with a proclamation that the values that had once galvanized the working class and poor were no longer considered practical even by the new Socialist who had endorsed an economic model imposed during the Pinochet years. Human rights and justice issues had a taken a back seat to the motive of profit and wealth. It was a system, they argued, that was institutionalized under a farcical Constitution put in place by the dictatorship in 1980. Whether Lagos was elected or not it would not make a difference; the pressures for Chileans to spend and consume would continue while the disparity between the classes would widen.

My cousin Marcos argued that Chile had to stay competitive, spirited and aggressive; people were not ready to deal with issues of human rights and the question of who was to blame would only pit Chilean against Chilean. Thus I was drawn into the Chilean post-dictatorship political culture in a house full of old exiles. On Election Day, while watching the results with my family and friends, former exiles seemed indifferent and after Lagos won and people poured into the streets; I decided instead to sit down with the old ones, *los viejos* to exchange ideas and listen. To them no real change was going to take place: the country would not change - too damage had been done. What they witnessed that day was outside of their experience. A way of life had been created and reshaped while they were gone. There were large malls, giant shopping centers, the infrastructure built specifically to target consumers, to encourage consumption and material worth. A story was told by my father that I thought was interesting. A man well known as a taxi driver had one day walked into a local supermarket. There he decided to fill his cart

with the most expensive items. After walking up and down the aisles several times with his cart, he decided to leave without the full cart of food. It was all for show, the people at the table exclaimed. The country, like the taxi driver, was living in a dream constructed specifically to keep people docile and easily manageable as a workforce. Others at the table, like many participants in this study, had also spoke of exiles who after 20 some years in exile had returned "flashing their gold", speaking in English and making themselves larger than what reality determined.

For the exiles then (those who had come from Sweden, Cuba, Argentina…etc) things had indeed changed. That night after everyone had left, after the table had been cleared, my parents alone started to remember the host nation, *su Canada*, *su amigos*, that they had left behind, "Do you remember Hugo, I wonder how he is doing?"; "la casita (our house) I wonder what it looks like today?"; "do you remember Inez it was something back then". I myself wondered how I could make sense of this trauma, this dislocation where exiles as DeSantis so adamantly put it were "caught between two worlds…precariously balanced between feeling both loyal and unfaithful, love and hate, fear and insecurity" (DeSantis, 2001:03). The methodology used in this thesis then is a personal and academic attempt to understand these push and pull forces by allowing the exiles "to be heard and understood in their own terms" (DeSantis, 2001:04). It is an attempt to understand identity through the discourse of exile and a fixed frame of space.

1.10 Organization of Thesis

My thesis is almost entirely qualitative; the notable exception is Chapter 2 where I map out the number of Chilean exiles in Canada and abroad. Chapter 3 set out the issue of Chilean identity and belonging with the broader issues that deal with nationalism, exiles and Diaspora.

Chapter 4 deals with life history of Eduardo, a student at the time of the coup. His story reveals to us the intricacies of reestablishing his life in Canada as a student and professional. Moreover, Eduardo's life story is used to bring out a more complex version of the profile of exiles. Eduardo in this sense was not politically involved in Canada. His narrative reveals why he decided to fashion his life in a more solitary way then his counterparts who at the time of their arrival sought to re-establish their political roots. Chapter 5 deals with the story of Benjamin a communist party member, who has never renounced his views or ideology. Benjamin's narrative is important because it offers a similar as well as a competing vision of how Chile and Canada is constructed. Both these narratives reveal to us how social groups negotiate a public space in exile for their particular circumstances. Furthermore, analysis of these interviews reveal many salient themes: the quality of life in Saskatchewan; ways in which individuals representative of cultural communities become atomized in the host country; the sense of urgency to return; and the cultural shock of returning to the original homeland.

The final chapter sums up the main points of the thesis. I reflect on the significance of both the dynamics of living in post-exile and the construction of home in exile. I offer an analysis where I argue that identity to Chile and Canada has to be understood on a more fluid level that takes into consideration the transnational experience of exile. I argue that we should understand exile experience through a new theoretical framework that allows us to capture the complexities and contradictions of their circumstances.

Chapter 2

The Political Background of Chile 1970-73

In the post-war period after 1945, Latin America resembled a region of emerging political tendencies expressed in the mobilization of progressive and often marginalized groups. Many social movements emerged in this period through armed revolution (as was the case of Cuba in 1959 and the Sandinista revolution in Nicaragua in 1979) or through revolts that took the shape of peasant and popular insurgencies in El Salvador and Guatemala during the 1980s. The use of systemic violence by police states such as in El Salvador – considered an emerging democracy in the West - underlined the conditions in which groups rooted in Left-wing principles had to operate from (Chomsky, 1993). Business elements sympathetic to the interest of U.S. elites formed the center of political legitimacy and power. For example, arbitrary arrest, torture, disappearance, and political killings were everyday realities for Guatemalans and Salvadorians during decades of U.S. financed military dictatorships (Chomsky, 1993). In the South America regimes of nationalist independent tendencies or popular organizations that lay the basis for meaningful reform, such as the advocating for the diversification of production for domestic needs, or, who were simply responsive to the pressure of the common majority, were either overthrown or in many cases vilified or driven underground and isolated from the political spectrum (Henfrey & Sorj, 1977; Chomsky, 1993; Wright, 2001). As former secretary of Chile's Socialist Party points out, "the Latin American scenario resembled a pressure cooker about to explode" (Altamirano, 1999:33).

Chile offered the region a different scenario; a socialist revolution would be exercised through democratic means. In other words socialism would be elected through the very

"bourgeoisie" system that theoretically was set up for the Left to fail. In the period leading up to the 1970 elections, Chile offered the world an interesting case: it was one of the oldest constitutional democracies in the Western Hemisphere; it had a lively and active political culture, one of the largest organized labor movements to be found in the region and a strong tendency for the populace to vote for candidates whose vision of a strong Chile was a strong nationalist agenda (Loveman, 1979).

2.1 Allende and the Popular Unity 1970

When the popular movements came to power in Chile, Allende had declared that the people would follow him into the Presidential Palace, La Moneda. On September 4, 1970, Salvador Allende won by a minority government receiving just a little over 36% of the popular vote[4]. It was the first time a Marxist candidate with an open platform of turning Chile into a socialist state had won a political election for the presidency of the republic. The main objective of the Popular Unity[5] coalition was to set favorable conditions for the construction of Socialism in Chile's economic, political and cultural structures (Llambias-Wolf, 1998; Wright, 2001).

In the opening sentence of its economic platform the UP alliance expressed the following development strategy: "The central objective of the united popular forces is to replace the current economic structure, ending the power of the national and foreign monopoly capitalists and large

[4] Allende received 1,075,616 or 36% of the popular vote, as opposed to the conservative candidate Alessandri (PM) who received 1,036,278 or 35.3 %. Tomic representing the Christian Democrats receiving 824,849 or 28.1 percent of the popular vote. In Jose Manuel Vergara &Florencia Varas *Coup! Allende's Last Days* (Stein & Day, New York. 1971):pg 22.

[5] The *Unidad Poplular* (UP) was an alliance of 5 major political parties of the left: the dominant Socialist Party and Communist Party; the Movimiento de Accion Popular Unitaria (MAPU) which were members of the former Christian Democratic Party (PDC); the Radical Party, the Independent Popular Action Party Wright and Onate (ed). *Flight from Chile: Voices of Exile* .(University of New Mexico Press) 1998.

landowners, in order to initiate the construction of socialism" (Zammit ed, 1973)[6]. The platform was exceptionally radical for Latin America in terms of an open state policy. The UP's public mandate challenged established positions of private power and capital by proposing a redistribution of the country's wealth and the creation of a more expansive social agenda that would aid the country's 4 million poor (Roxborough & Obrien & Roddick, 1977).

Although these proposals were not new in Latin America, the Unidad Popular (UP) was the first legitimate political organization competing in a free election to push this agenda through using the existing political institutions of the country[7]. However, Chile's democratic institutions imposed certain institutional limitations. The UP would realize that these limitations would effect how they would govern in the coming years.

This was evident in two of Allende's most popular proposals involving massive land distribution through the expropriation of millions of hectares of latifundias, and the nationalization of Chile's copper mines producing close to 80% of the countries exports (Sideri ed., 1976). From the outset Allende's policies ran into a number of problems both in and out of the country.

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[6] An English translation of the Popular Unity program appears in J.A. Zammitt (ed)., The Chilean Road to Socialism (Brighton: Institute of Development Studies, University of Sussex, 1973) pp.255-64.

[7] In 1939 an alliance named the Popular Front made up of parties on the left and the centre left and replicating what had happened in France and Spain with respect to their own "Popular Front", came to power on a populist pitch of nationalization and the economic transformation of power. Skidmore and Smith explain that their "Economic Policy concentrated on an expanded economic role for the national government" (1997:128). The Front who may have been elected on the popular sentiments echoed by the working class also had the support of a large sector of the middle class. It was the first time these two groups joined a coalition in order to defeat the traditional liberal/conservative parties that had held the control of Chilean power since its independence in 1810. The popular movements had deep roots in working class struggles that go back to the early 1900s. See Skidmore & Smith, *Modern Latin America 4th edition.*(Oxford University Press, New York)1997:125.

2.2 The U.S. Involvement

The nationalization of foreign copper firms, which were owned by two U.S. companies, Kennecott and Anaconda, exacerbated a tense situation with the United States. President Richard Nixon throughout Allende's tenure used a foreign economic approach of financial strangulation; politically Nixon's course of action concerned itself with isolating the regime (Kornbluh, 2003; Church Report: U.S. Department of State). The U.S. rhetoric, however, was different. A consolatory tone was taken, and open gestures were made in the name of Chile; the U.S. administration expressed "an unwavering willingness on our part to take the extra step". The fear in Washington was not the nationalization of the copper industry; these proposals had been tabled before by previous Chilean presidents. The unthinkable act was that Chile under Allende's UP decided to pursue an agenda of national economic independence that exposed American hegemony in the region. In January, 1971 National Security Advisor Henry Kissinger assisted in the establishment of a Council of International Economic Policy Planners (CIEP) in order to oversee US-international economic relations (Kornbluh, 2003). The CIEP was a vehicle in protecting U.S. investment overseas and shaping "foreign policy consideration…and diplomatic commitments abroad"[8]. As such, the council had direct influence over recommending positions the U.S. government would take on loan requests from transnational lending agencies. Treasury officials, as well from the World Bank and the Inter-Continental Development Bank, were all directly answerable to U.S. Secretary of Treasury John Connolly (Petras & Morley, 1975).

Therefore, when the Chilean government began to present a challenge to the system of private ownership of resources and the means of production the consequences were felt by U.S.,

[8] United States Congres House Committee on Banking and Currency, Subcommittee on International Trade, to Establish a Council on International Economic Policy, 92 Congress., 2nd session., May 31, 1972:03.

refusal to negotiate debt and credits were frozen as the U.S. exercised its veto right within multilateral banking institutions (Petras & Morley, 1975; Wright, 2001). The great concern in Washington hinged on the danger that Allende's example could be repeated elsewhere in the region and in southern Europe, or in places of similar existing political tendencies (Chomsky 1998). The recently declassified records from the U.S. State Department describes in some detail the role of the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) and the U.S. state planners in producing a climate of economic instability and augmenting the political and class divisions during the brief tenure of the Unidad Popular government (Petras, 1978; Peter Kornbluh, 2003). Furthermore, the U.S. was complicit in offering material as well as tacit support for the new regime, although well known cases of human rights abuses were made public, Peter Kornbluh (2003) states that "despite the carnage, U.S. officials described the scene with soaring rhetoric… [t]hree weeks after the coup, the Nixon administration authorized $24 million in commodity credits to buy wheat -- credits that had been denied to Allende's government. The United States provided a second $24 million in commodity credits to Chile for feed corn, and planned to transfer two destroyers to the Chilean navy. The aid flowed, although Assistant Secretary of State Jack Kubisch reported to Kissinger that junta leader Pinochet had ruled out 'any time table for turning Chile back to the civilians'" Kornbluh continues,

> As part of those efforts, the CIA helped the junta write a 'white book' justifying the coup. The CIA financed advisors who helped the military prepare a new economic plan for the country. The CIA paid for military spokesmen to travel around the world to promote the new regime. And, the CIA used its own media assets to cast the junta in a positive light. (Kornbluh, 2003:167).

The U.S. involvement can be summarized as a two two-track strategy in order to undermine the UP's credibility as a government. At the overt level, the U.S pressured multilateral banking institutions such as the World Bank to refuse loans and credits. At the same time increasing aid to the Chilean armed forces. At the covert level, the CIA worked to destabilize the UP by funding opposition political groups such as *Patria y Libertad* (a far right-wing political group) while smearing the regimes socialist policies by using the media as source of anti-communist propaganda (Sigmund, 1977; Petras 1999; Verdugo 2001: Church Report: U.S. Department of State). The idea, therefore, was to create an atmosphere of insecurity among the populace which would generate overwhelming disapproval of the regime and thus create an environment where an overthrow of government had the potential to take place[9].

2.3 The Opposition at Home

Allende also faced problems at home; seizures of factories and medium sized enterprise by workers and those loyal to the UP advanced the polarization historically felt between the classes. Throughout the countryside peasant occupation of estates set in motion armed clashes between paramilitaries organized by landowners and peasant militias asserting their collective right to occupy idle lands (Loveman, 1993). In the major urban centers, in particular Santiago and Valparaiso, ideological battles ensued between armed groups demonstrating in pro and anti-government marches. By the end of 1972, seizures and takeovers began to take its toll on the

[9] "Allende's fight to succeed as president was an uphill battle from the beginning. Perhaps the most fundamental difficulty was that the UP controlled only one branch of government. Having a cooperative congress would have made a great difference, but the passage of time diminished the prospects of a achieving a congressional majority in 1973. The judiciary presented many problems …its lack of sympathy with UP objectives was especially significant given the refusal of congress to pass the government bills; being forced to enact its program by stretching existing laws and powers and constrained by the primacy of capitalist definitions of property in a transition to socialism, the UP was constantly frustrated at the judiciary's ability to slow or halt its progress" (2001:139) In Thomas C. Wright *Latin America in the Era of the Cuban Revolution* (Preager, Westport Connecticut) 2001.

government and its ability to control civil unrest. Petras (1978), for example argues that the seizure of private enterprise had gone further than the government had anticipated, that the government was unprepared to deal with factory takeovers by the working class in one sense, because they did not want to risk alienating their own base of support - the Chilean proletariat. In another sense the UP did not want to look weak or vulnerable to the opposition by giving the impression as being a government that cracked down on its own supporters (Petras, 1999). In short, the seizure of medium-sized and smaller enterprises, along with the propaganda of the opposition and the historical class relations in Chile, galvanized the overall anti-Allende sentiments of the extreme right and their call for a military intervention.

2.4 Popular Unity Coalition

In terms of his own party, Allende had troubles holding his Popular Unity coalition together. There were deep divisions within the UP coalition, and with Allende's own Socialist party over strategy and tactics for implementing the socialist platform he was elected on. Within the UP the largest and most influential party was the Socialist Party. The Socialist Party (PS) was composed of different political and ideological factions. The dominant political line of the Socialist emphasized a forward and rapid transition towards the creation and establishment of a socialist state. The party argued that this must be done before the political right would be able to attack (Loveman, 1993). The idea was to stimulate the masses in order to create a true people's revolution.

The second most important political party was the Communist Party of Chile (PCC). This wing of the UP alliance, along with Allende Socialists, advocated phasing in socialism through legal channels. This group preferred a solution that rested on the premise of consolidating political gains through state control and redistributing income without provoking an armed

reaction. By August 1973, the coup d'état appeared unavoidable. The right –wing opposition forces were too well entrenched and the UP too inexperienced to handle the imminent political and economic crisis. The UP government's ideological differences rendered them vulnerable to local and international opponents, and by the end of a 4 week truck owners strike in 1972, the governments appointed members of the armed forces were put into the cabinet. As Wright and Onate state "this marked the beginning of the armed forces overt politicalization" (1998:4).

2.5 The Coup d'état, Pinochet and Exile

The overthrow of Unidad Popular government on Tuesday September 11, 1973 marked the end of Salvador Allende's life and the end to Chile's experiment with socialism. Immediately after the overthrow, the country was put on a state of alert, political parties and unions were prohibited, the senate and the parliament were dissolved. Imprisonment, torture and the abolishing of civil rights followed, as well as national sweeps of suspected "subversives" and those deemed a danger to the military regime. As thousands were taken into detention camps or herded in stadiums and as rumors spread of comrades being tortured and 'disappeared', people started fleeing the country or going into hiding. Fear became the key ingredient in the regime's arsenal allowing it to suppress any resistance that might even have a pretense of taking shape (Roniger, 1997; Kornbluh, 2003). The coup in turn by the scope of many Latin American specialists was not a surprise. However, what was surprise was the quality and extent of the violence used in getting rid of political opponents.

To begin with, the toppled government officials of the Unidad Popular (UP) were among the first to be rounded-up by the armed forces. All party members and even those associated with the left were held under suspicion. With the left deposed and shattered, any organizational

capacity which involved the popular grassroots sectors were dismantled (Petras, 1978; Constable and Valenzuala, 1991; Koonings, 1999; Verdugo, 2001). The popular sectors themselves were unable to mount an effective opposition to the putsch. The student movements, labor unions and peasant committees were left fractionalized and unprepared for the capacity of facing a seriously armed military force.

The unreserved vindictiveness initiated by the armed forces was most revealing in the way they handled their political hostages. Herds of mostly young men and women who had involved themselves in what Petras (1999) refers to as "Chile's socialist experience" were detained, tortured and made to "disappear". Over 3000 Chileans were murdered and over 30 000 victims would be tortured. These acts were not done without some refinements.[10] The initial goal for the armed forces after they took power was primarily to disarm and suppress any supportive capacity that the U.P had – which meant applying violent measures towards any UP supporters and their cohorts. The design was to aggressively undermine any acts of rebellion that might take place immediately following the coup.

As such, working class initiatives that had any political quality or collective ideological tendencies such as communal syndicates, campesino (peasant) councils and urban settlements (campamentos) were viciously repressed and terrorized (Constable and Valenzuala, 1991; Petras, 1999, Oppenheim, 2002). A member of the Revolutionary Leftist Movement (MIR) who had worked in New Havana (a communal) mobilizing one of the largest urban communal encampments describes the brutality of what occurred:

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[10] In order for acts of torture and murder to take place on civilians, various elements of the armed forces had to be disciplined internally. Sorting out the weak and undetermined soldiers of "la patria" was an essential part of entrenching the ideological and disciplinary formation of the regime. Patricia Verdugo (2001) who investigated the disappearance of soldiers and 75 victims writes that, "in their words…Chilean Military officers – educated in the traditions of a humanistic and democratic society – were forced into fratricidal violence" in *Chile, Pinochet, and the Caravan of Death*. [Originally in Spanish as *Caso Arellano: Los Zarpazos del Puma*. Santiago. ChileAmerica CESOC, 1989.]. (Miami, Florida. North-South Center Press) 2001:111

> Within hours of the coup the military began random attacks on New Havana which continued right up till I left Chile. They simply [went in] took the first 16 men they found and shot them…in the main square…women were raped in front of their men, and children beaten in front of their parents. Almost every home they went into was sacked. It was as if the two struggles for new homes and socialism were both being destroyed together. Every morning there'd be fresh bodies at the entrance of the streets between New Havana and the neighboring campamento. They were clearly left there deliberately, to terrify people (Henfrey & Sorj, 1977:147).

After dismantling any and all sources of the UP's political and social leadership, coercively demoralizing the left, and recentralizing economic power in the hands of established elites, the dictatorship gradually took control of the country's executive, legislative and judicial branches (Oppenheim, 2002; Kornbluh, 2003). Public institutions including the universities, medical facilities, libraries and media outlets were put under the administrative tutelage of the new owners of Chile (Roniger, 1997). Individuals that were either once supportive of the UP or unsupportive of the dictatorship were filtered out and replaced with personal sympathetic to the new regime. In accordance with the new national security doctrine, all those who posed a danger to the concerns and welfare of the Chilean state were rooted out and detained; others who were lucky were blacklisted and purged from the country (Kay, 1987; Wright & Onate, 1998). The left became, and later remained, dispersed. The political situation was in the hands of the regime, and the host countries awaited the arrival of close to half a million Chileans (Wright & Onate, 1998). As a result, it was under this duress and historical juncture that the process involving exile began.

Military rule

From an institutional framework the Pinochet military regime secured control under a political and economic framework. First from 1973-1980 it was a military regime under the command of a five man junta directed and presided over by Augusto Pinochet Ugarte. In 1977,

after having repressed all leftist political opponents, the regime dissolved all political parties. Pinochet at the same time announced his intentions to institutionalize the armed forces and preside over a phasing in of civilian rule in a “protected democracy” (Arrigada, 1988). This period is also marked by the most destructive phase of the dictatorship.

In order to legitimize the regime’s authority a new constitution was drafted in 1980 and voted on proclaiming Augusto Pinochet Ugarte as Chile’s constitutional president. Under the new rules of the constitution, 1988 would be the date in which the regime would call a plebiscite to endorse a candidate (nominated by the commander of the armed forces) for the period 1990-98. If the candidate was rejected in the plebiscite, then a multiparty election would have to be held. From 1973-1982 Milton Friedman’s neo-liberalism was applied by the country’s economic advisors known as the “Chicago boys” (Loveman, 1979). In response to massive protests in 1983 and to the failure of the neo-liberal reforms, the regime adopted a policy of state protectionism in order to contain the explosion of social and economic demands being made by “marginal groups” (Silva, 1988). It was during this time that civilians also began to reorganize themselves politically as to mount a serious challenge to the regime’s authority. In 1989 Pinochet lost the plebiscite and the transition from a dictatorship to civilian rule took shape. Since March 11th, 1990, Chile has since been governed by a coalition made up of different political parties who have continually stressed the need to be more efficient and modern in all aspects. Real economic success has become the measure in which the coalition measures achievement. Success in this sense is tied with the economic model that favors the stability of markets, increase in foreign investment, growth of exports and financial equilibrium (Silva, 1988). The coalition has also

proclaimed to have dealt with the human rights issues through a variety of commissions set up to look into the past[11].

2.6 Number of Incoming Population

According to a number of sources both primary and secondary, the estimated numbers of people who left Chile between 1973 to1988 varies from 200, 000 to 500,000 (Kay, 1987; Vasquez & Maria Araujo, 1990; Jaime Llambias-Wolf, 1998). Jaime Llambias-Wolf (1998) looks at the available data with respect to returnees and concludes that nearly 2 percent of Chile's total population left from 1973-1988. Chile at the time of the overthrow had a population roughly 11 million people. The July 2003 estimate indicates that today the population figure stands at 15,498,930 people[12]. Out of the majority of Chileans who left the country as exiles, an estimated 40-45 percent established themselves in Latin America mainly in Venezuela and Mexico. Another 30-35 percent in Western Europe lives mainly in Spain, France and Italy, while 10 to 15 percent came to North America, mainly Canada (Llambais-Wolff, 1998).

According to the 2001census in Canada, there are an estimated 33,000 Chileans who live in this country making them one of the largest Latin American communities in Canada next to from the Guyanese and Mexican population in Canada. By the end of 1992 there was a total of 24,208 Chileans living in Canada. The great majority in 1992 lived in Ontario (36.7%) and

[11] In February 1991, an eight-member National Commission for Truth and Reconciliation established in 1990 by then-President Patricio Aylwin released its report. Popularly known as the Rettig Report, it established that around 3,000 people were killed or disappeared during the dictatorship between September 11, 1973 and March 11, 1990. The Valech Report (officially The National Commission on Political Imprisonment and Torture Report) published November 29, 2004 detailed abuses committed by the dictatorship between 1973 and1990. The report was based on testimony given to the commission by 35,868 people, of which approximately 28,000 were regarded as legitimate. A further 8,000 cases were studied over the next six months. On June 1, 2005, a second report included 1,201 new cases, 86 of which were children younger than 12 years old, including unborn children, which makes a total of 29,000 cases of torture and abuse. Among the methods of torture described by the witnesses of the commission include: repeated beatings, humiliations, mock executions by firing squad, application of electricity, bodily hangings and sexual assault to name a few.

[12] Source: 2004 World Fact Book

Quebec (32.7%); Saskatchewan had (3.1 %) total Chilean population or 745 Chileans out of the 24,208 people in 1992. The Chilean incoming population can be broken down under 3 phases: 1973-1978; 1978-1982 and 1987-1992 (Wei Wei Da, 2002). For the purpose of this thesis we will recognize two waves: 1973-1978 and 1978-1988.

The first phase took place from October 1973 to1978. During this phase 8,302 Chilean entered Canada. According to Statistics Canada, over 2000 Chileans entered Canada during this period under the legal definition of refugees set by the Canadian government. Magocsi (1999) estimates that over 10,000 Chileans became permanent residents during 1974-1978. Wei Wei Da (2002:02) breaks down the number of permanent residents as follows: 2, 104 in 1974, 3, 127 in 1975, 2,776 in 1976, 2,249 in 1977 and 2,023 in 1978 (2002:02). One has to consider that not all Chileans entered Canada under refugee status; there were also those who were sponsored by family already residing in Canada. Furthermore, many Chileans did not come directly to Canada from Chile. Many Chileans who were exiled came from places of their first asylum, in particular Mexico and Argentina. Argentina is significant because the number of refugee claimants from countries of first permanent residence rose after March 1976 when the government was overthrown. Therefore, many Chileans whose first place of asylum was Argentina came under the same pressures to leave that country as was the case in 1973 from their own country of origin.

The second wave of Chileans took place from 1979-1988. The conditions underlying this wave was the consistent repression felt by opponents of the dictatorship. According to Amnesty International (1983) the human rights abuses soared to their highest level since the coup in the early 1980s. Political assassinations, kidnappings and disappearances were widespread, as well as the problem of poverty, inflation and unemployment (Silva, 1988). An economic recession

took hold of the country from 1979-1982. In this period Magosi (1999: 349-350) estimates that the number of Chileans coming directly from Chile is as follows: 3538 from 1978-80; 2927 from 1981-83; 1845 from 1984-86; and 2441 from 1987 – 88.

2.7 Number of Chileans in the Province of Saskatchewan

Saskatchewan had 617 Chileans living in the province in 2001. According to the 2001 census, the five major cities in which Chileans reside in Saskatchewan are as follows: 230 in Regina; 240 in Saskatoon; 75 in Prince Albert; 20 in Swift Current and 15 Chileans in Moose Jaw. The 5 major cities that Chileans reside in Canada are as follows: Toronto 7,260; Montreal 6,895; Vancouver 2,080; Edmonton 1,910 and Calgary 1,695. Chileans constitute the largest South American group in Saskatchewan and the 3rd largest from the Latin American group in Canada. Out of a total of 1335 South Americans living in Saskatchewan in 2001, 46 percent are from Chile; 16 percent from Brazil; 13 percent from Guyana; 9 percent from Colombia; 4 percent from Uruguay; another 4 percent from Venezuela and 3 percent are from Argentina[13].

Law-Decrees and Returnees

The 1925 Chilean constitution did not allow exile – in fact it was not permitted or granted as a right to be exercised by any head of state. In 1973, after the overthrow, the military government started to expel Chileans without any due process. In 1978 the military issued Law-decree no.788, declaring that all laws that came after the overthrow, which could be deemed unconstitutional, were automatically granted constitutional rights (Constable & Valenzuela, 1991). That decree gave the military government the right to expel any Chilean who they deemed a threat to the security of the nation.

[13] Source: Statistics Canada, *2001 Census of Canada*. Public use Microdata File on Individuals.

With regards to return, the military issued decree no.2191 that allowed return for people expelled by the junta but only under the auspices of the Minister of Interior; as such it was rare that military granted the right of return to anybody (Constable& Valenzuela, 1991). It was until 1982 that the regime began to accept returnees. The regime would announce the names and publish them in the hope of gaining support from their human rights detractors (Constable& Valenzuela, 1991). After 17 years in exile in 1988, all exiles were allowed to comeback to the country.

2.8 Characteristics of Returnees

Precise figures of Chileans, who have returned from Canada, or even from any other provinces, are difficult to ascertain. The National Bureau of Return does keep specific data in such regards; however it classifies returnees using different terms and definitions. Nevertheless, according to Llambias-Wolf who conducted research on returnees based on the *Oficina Nacional de Returno* (National Bureau of Return) as of February 1992, a total of 15,363 people registered with the National Bureau. Out of that number of files according to Llambias -Wolf, 86.79 percent came back with their families as opposed to only 13.21 percent who classified themselves as single; as well 67 percent were married, 17 percent were single. The age distribution is as follows: 60 percent of total returnees were 30-49 years of age; and less than 10.4 percent were less than 30 years of age. Further, Llambias-Wolf shows those who decided to come back 68 percent were registered as professionals, as opposed to only 15% who declared themselves laborers. Finally only 8.46 percent (395) returned from North America as opposed to 46.56 percent (2175) and 42.24 percent (1973) returning from Europe and Latin America respectively.

Chapter 3

Literature Review

Literature concerning flight and displacement is large and varied, but for this thesis I will concentrate on literature that has consequences as to the shape of my analysis.

3.1 Literature on Chilean Exiles

The narrative of autobiography, poetry and fiction offers a scope or arguably the clearest reflection of the essence of the exile experience. One finds in the works of Franz Kafka, Fyodor Dostoevesky and James Baldwin the conflicting and interacting forces of subjectivity that exile permeates. The Chilean poet Pablo Neruda, writing about the impressions of exile, provides us with a glimpse of this subjectivity in the sense that exile forever changes the perception and lifeworld of the individual affected:

> …We breathe air through a wound.
> To live is a necessary obligation.
> So, a spirit without roots is an injustice.
> It rejects the beauty that is offered it.
> It searches for its own unfortunate country
> And only there knows martyrdom or quiet. (Neruda, 1964)

The interpretation of exile then, when spoken through the text of autobiographies, poems and fiction presents us with a window of the internal struggle replicated everywhere by people forcefully removed and displaced as a result of there political views or dissidence. However, as in many other cases, one in which the territorial ground of the exile has been cut in two, finding theoretical meaning with respect to the differences that exist among exiles becomes hard to

locate especially when the contextual discourse of exile is generalized. For example, the context surrounding their displacement, the struggle to define their identity and their outlook towards the future, is rarely put into a framework that serves to relay an understanding of the differences existing between and within certain ethnic/national groups.

Therefore the approach I take does not rely on rationalistic structures that tend to confine and distort human behavior to positivist paradigms. Universal claims based on criteria of objectivity and neutrality often fail to lend voice to subject that are often overlooked or categorized as one in the same. In this sense structural frameworks based on rational principles fails to call attention or challenge the dominant views that are seen as fixed or absolute truths. Michel Foucault for example speaks of “regimes of truth” and the internalization of that truth through the “historized” passage of “discursive practices” (Wilkins, 1999). In this sense the “Third World” is often created as an image, or representation of having qualities that transcend the way we see and determine people’s ability to think and act. Immigrants who represent the Third World are depicted through a multiplicity of frameworks. Every frame of reference predetermines the *persona* built in the character of the individual.

In Canada, the political nature and condition of the state acts like any state in positions of authority and legitimacy. It acts in tension with various actors, and also has the capacity of influence and control; but for Foucault, “govermentablity”, and in essence the rise of the modern nation state, limits capacity for self creation and diversity - because it intrinsically acts on pre-constructed markers of categorization not only generating compliance and control but in turn denying possible meaning for agency (Haugaard, 2002). For the Third World immigrant the categorization of the “developing world” as an unstable and “backward” part of the globe, by designation alone, reflects established “regimes of truths”. The implication therefore crafts the

immigrant as inadequate to enter and integrate into the wider Canadian context. In this sense a narrative account acts to provide a more complicated understanding of the lives of refugees, exiles, *Chileanos,* from a standpoint of telling their stories and giving voice to their experiences.

Within the framework of understanding the identity of the Chilean exile, most research on the subject of Chilean refugees has pointed to the political and cultural feature of nationhood – widely held as one of the most salient aspect that determine social life among exiles (Kay 1981;Araujo,1990; Bolzman,1993; Zarazosa, 1998, Escobar, 2000). For Bolzman, in his study of Chilean refugees living in Switzerland, identity is a "category of practice", that is, a practice of "structure", which is "built up in interaction with the environment" (Bolzman 1993:323). Identity has both a "structural and a situational dimension"; and in the case of the exile, Bolzman notes, any changes in identity due to the process of adaptation to a "new critical situation" is not made without taking into consideration "elements of the past" (Bolzman 1993:324). Therefore, assimilation for the exile is not a concern, as long as the patterns of identity are still being shaped by the political dimension of the home country and their selective interpretation of the past (Bolzman, 1993; Barsky, 2000). This assessment coincides with my research to the extent that the past is still being reinvented and reshaped to present circumstances.

Diana Kay's (1981) *Chileans in Exile: Private Struggles, Public Lives* is a study of 19 exile couples in western Scotland, in which the author argues that in exile, there was a re-ordering of gender roles and relationships, which heightened the incidence of divorce among couples. She notes that divisions in traditional Chilean family structure occurred from a culmination of the socially progressive policies implanted by Allende's Unidad Popular (United Popular) government, and the experience of being exiled. Kay contends that the UP government brought transformation to the public and private realm (Kay, 1981), a transformation that was

later augmented by being *in exile*. Thus women who have traditionally been in the house, playing the role of the maintainer of the extended family network, had their traditional positions altered in exile as the structure of the family changed, and as change occurred to their role of private housewife.

Men who had been in the public realm through their commitment in the political arena saw that arena reduce in social size, but otherwise maintained a close proximity to the public sphere through working with human rights groups in the attempt to undermine the dictatorship from abroad. The author concludes that with both public and private spheres reshaped by exile, men and women engaged in a struggle in prioritizing the political and family relations of arrangements. Kay's (1981) analysis delves into the identity of the exile by examining the role of women and men in the public and private realm during their years in exile. Kay provides the sociological background in which such analysis of identity can take place, especially regarding the role of gender.

3.2 Dynamics of Exile Groups

Chilean exiles in many cases had a political commitment in working with the Allende government (1970-73) through the machinery of political parties (Petras 1978; Kay, 1991). Llambais-Wolff (1993) indicates that purpose of the democratically elected Popular Unity was to undertake a "political objective [that] was to transform the country's economic, political and social structures in order to set favorable conditions for the establishment of socialism in Chile" (1993:580).

Under the Unidad Popular coalition there were several political parties that represented various factions among the Chilean working and middle class. It was not surprising then that

many of the party affiliations that Chileans had at home were re-established in exile. Zarazoza asserts that the Chilean exile community did not exist apart from the "leftist" political parties they were actively involved in, and had a relation to, in Chile. Zarazoza claims that political parties acted as the "only institutions that counted in exile" (Zarazosa, 1988:56). Therefore, when political institutions that existed in exile changed their political directions in correlation to the context of a changing political climate in Chile, major implications followed for the actors involved in these institutions, including changes in the social role of their political identity (Zarazoza, 1998:194). Amongst the more well known parties in exile were Socialist and Communist parties. In this thesis I use the narratives of individuals who were considered militants of their respective political parties.

In addition to the exiles political orientations it has been pointed out that Chilean exiles, to a large degree, are representative one of the major working class movements in the latter half of the 20th Century in Latin America. James Petras (1978) suggests that the Chilean left "was concentrated almost exclusively on the organization of industrial workers and landless peasants", and that the social struggle that emerged in Chile at the height of the overthrow of government was a result of major class cleavages (1978:210). Thus, according to Petras (1978), the working class not only became increasingly conscious of their class position but "curiously the initiative…was [also] taken by the property owning classes and their allies in the professional associations" (1978:221). The presence of a working class struggle that emerged in Chile through decades of political participation from various progressive social fronts is important for understanding not only the relationship with the homeland and host country, but also the relationship with exiled political institutions and the nature of their bond to the actor.

Jo Anne Maglipon (1999) in her research of working class political exiles places them as, "activists and ideologues, trade unionists and journalists, religious and cultural workers" (1999: 240). Monica Escobar (2000) in her research of Chilean exile women living in the greater Toronto area disputes the theory that Chilean exiles all came from the same social class standing or working class orientation. She argues that the Canadian government was more apt to allow certain refugees into Canada that "were seen as fitting better and coming closer to the type of immigrant Canada has historically wanted" (2000:38). As a result many Chilean exiles coming into Canada were "mainly urban, politicalized, middle class and highly educated" (Escobar 2000:38). Rockhill and Tomic (1992) further note that exiles from South America were accepted more readily by the Canadian public that other Third World immigrants from Central America who were darker skinned and prone to racial discrimination. Chileans, like immigrants coming from Argentina and Paraguay, were not considered to be at disadvantage because of their skin color. My own research suggest that racism towards Chilean exiles was more pronounced because of language difficulties and less so because of their racial characteristics. It should be noted that one participant Ricardo, the most dark-skinned of all the men interviewed, highlighted immediately into our interview the fact that he had come from European origin, perhaps telling of the stigma that he has faced deemed as inferior because of his racial makeup. Eduardo, in contrast, whose narrative forms the basis of the next chapter, indicated that discrimination for him came about on the basis of where he came from and had little to do with how he looked. His narrative indicates that Canadian racial practice and stereotypical outlooks towards the Third World tended to devalue education outside of North America and Europe. Therefore, among the Chileans who were interviewed in the course of this thesis are people who represented various socio-economic backgrounds, levels of education and associations to political parties. Chapter 4

and 5 captures this diversity by examining exiles relative to the social and economic makeup of their present-day identities. All those interviewed suffered expatriation, and, in the course of being in exile, were involved in a political movement with strong working class ties, which came to power 1970 as a coalition of left-wing political factions and parties.

3.3 Commitment to the Homeland: The Myth of Return

The question of return migration is explored by sociologists and historians on a number of social fronts, such as cultural and identity definition, ideological motivation, and the challenge of resettlement along gender lines (Bolzman, 1993; Llambias-Wolf, 1993; Wright, 1998). Most work in the area of return migration among exiles challenges the perception by scholars that full incorporation of immigrants into a new society, in particular "developed" societies, is a matter of time, which thereby makes permanent stay more desirable. Moreover, it challenges the belief that a developed economic and political setting found in an industrialized nation is conducive with social and cultural autonomy. Thus, return migration to the country of origin is rarely looked at as something that is feasible – in particular with the case of immigrants from "Third World". The assumptions here are two: first a position is presented that evaluates the immigrant as hopeless and in distress, coming to a western democracy like Canada the immigrant find composure and peace; and second that return back to homeland would not be as personally rewarding to the immigrant, as it would be living in a more "developed" country e.g. Canada. At best this worldview is too general and insensitive and at worst it borders on jingoism.

The Swiss sociologist Claudio Bolzman (1993) underscores the fact that the process of immigrant adaptation as an anticipated consequence of time or personal expediency is not always the case when other factors are taken into consideration, among them, the socio-historical context of what immigrants leave behind in their country of origin, social constraint in the host

society, and the social status and treatment of Third World refugees (1993:330). Bolzman explains that assimilation is largely dependent on how the host society perceives the exile group, and, as importantly, how the exile group perceives itself relevant to their new surrounding. Llambias-Wolf (1993) argues that return for many exiles had as much to do with subjective factors as it did with objective factors. For instance, subjective dimensions such as images about the country, that is, the perception of coming back to a romanticized version of what they had left behind, were coupled with the objective dimensions influencing return such as the arrival of democracy, political commitment to homeland, and re-integration with extended family members (p. 584). As the duration of exile is prolonged many exiles renegotiated their relationship with their home and host location on the basis of new situations arising out of their daily life situations.

What is consistent in both Bolzamn's (1993) & Llambias –Wolf's (1993) research is how the exiles define new cultural boundaries in the host setting on a reliance of sentiments that make up the "structure" of identity. Thus, the sense of belonging for an exile is a difficult undertaking because it is attuned with what is internal to him, which resides in an ongoing struggle to cope with past. The dimension linked to the idea of return, therefore, forms part of this struggle of finding a place in-between what is considered ideal, and that which fosters a sense of belonging to a community and culture. The lack of finding what is ideal and the lack of community is also experienced when exiles decided to return, as explained by historians Thomas C. Wright and Rody Onate (1998) who assert that a return to Chile for many exiles lead to "identity shock and disillusionment", which in turn influenced many exiles to "re-emigrate to their host countries or seek refuge somewhere else" (1998:76). Wright and Onate therefore offer a qualitative narrative to the above issue by interviewing 33 Chileans who fled or were forced

into exile. In the course of their interviews with Chilean exiles – the group is characterized as a diverse group of people who were literally dispersed throughout the globe. Consistent in the narratives of their experiences are the difficulties of initial adjustment including, discrimination, learning the language and finding employment. The issue of seeking a return to their home country is also touched upon and described by the participants as necessary and eventual.

Israel (1998) in his work tackles this issue of return by implying that return migration among South African war resisters borders on ideology and image. Speaking of South African war resisters residing in Britain, Israel alludes to the "ideology" of return as being reflective of the exiles' identity formation, and moreover as being reflective of the "symbolic importance" that is attached with the notion of return.

> In the case of many South African exiles, their life in Briton had been underpinned by an ideology of return which interpreted migration as a temporary state to be terminated by an eventual return to South Africa. The idea of return gave some meaning to the idea in exile. Not to return for some [exiles] became in conceivable even among those who did not go back to settle when the opportunity first arose…and yet return can never simply be a return even though it may be ideologically structured as one. (Israel, 2000:36).

Therefore, return represented a reattachment with the issues of the past, a reattachment with the history of the imagined homeland, but also a fulfillment of an ideological construction that became an every day discourse in the exile community. For Chileans the discourse revolved around the expression of committing to a return, which Israel (2000) argues becomes more than a romantic notion of the homeland as it becomes an ideology fixed on the construction and defense of the homeland. I would add that this ideology of the homeland in not static or motionless – that ideology itself becomes developed and fashioned by the political and social changes in one's life

and in the political changes taking place in the home country. Moreover, ideology works in both ways as to enhance the prospect of return to the home country and the prospects for settlement in the host country.

For exiles, the construction of a social reality that is present in the ideology of what the homeland serves to represent also supplies a practical coping mechanism in alleviating the issues of displacement and isolation. One can always look to the homeland as alternative to the anomie experienced in exile. My participants often spoke of fashioning a life in both countries if it was feasible in the future. In particular single men who were divorced or separated spoke of Chile with fondness. I tend to agree with Israel that the negotiation of return through the ideological construction of the past served both as a function towards ethnic cohesion and the building of social networks with other refugee and exile groups (Israel, 2000). Although it should be added that the building of social networks among Chilean exiles were mitigated by political and class cleavages. Nevertheless the social construction of the past serves to reinforce a political commitment to the country or origin and group solidarity.

In a similar study of Israeli immigrants, Toren (1980) draws attention to motivation of return. Data from Toren's research indicate that commitment to patriotic values and family ties was seen as the key stimulus that motivated a return to Israel among Jewish immigrants living abroad. The author uses the push and pull factors in his analysis concludes that "patriotic values was the most potent motivation of Israelis to return from abroad. These findings also indicate that Israelis return mainly because of ideological pull rather than any another countries push" (1980:51). The symbolic and emotional belonging to a culture, people and history is what Toren argues are motivating factors underlying return to Israel. Return then is a major factor. Return helps us understand how exiles see their homeland in the absence of a dictatorship. It helps us

understand what sentiments emerge about homeland and place during this pivotal point in time. Therefore, in this thesis the way exiles speak of their nation, its people, culture and history, the way it is constructed and developed outside of their homeland 30 years after the overthrow of their government frames the analysis of this research.

3.4 Positioning the Research Question: Nation and Nationalism

The rise in nationalist struggles has been most apparent after the break up of the Soviet bloc in Eastern Europe and in the Middle East. One can think of the search for a homeland among the Kurdish populations in Turkey and northern Iraq, the displacement of Palestinians and occupation of the Gaza, West bank and East Jerusalem, the displacement of Albanians groups in Kosovo. But how are nations and nationalism interconnected to the subject of this study?

For one thing the word nation is used to refer to the whole people of a country, often in complete contrast with some group in it. It is often used to refer to the nation-state. The assumption being that local populations, tribes, religious groups, ethnicities are represented and included within the nation-state. Nationalism refers to the idea of a chosen people, the emphasis of commonality and history, and an attachment to customs and tradition (Sarup, 1996). Nationalism in this sense precedes nation. Anderson (1991) argues that the idea of belonging to a community has existed since time immemorial yet the idea of a nation as a geographical unit is a relatively new occurrence[14]. Anderson proposes that we think of nation and nationalism as

[14] Chomsky articulates this point in an interview in *Language and Politics*, he states, "The state system is a very artificial system. In its modern form it developed in Europe, and you can see how artificial it is by just looking at Eroupean history for the last hundreds of years, a history of massacre, violence, terror, destruction, most of which has to do with trying to impose a state system to which it has very little relations. As Europe expanded over the rest of the world, pretty much the same thing happened – you look at Africa, India, Asia, any place you go, they got these boundaries which are a result of colouring different colours on the map that usually have to do with European colonization. They cut across all kinds of communities and interests and they bring people together who have nothing to do with each other. The result is constant warfare and struggle and oppression and so on. Furthermore within each of these artificial systems, imposed unsually by force, you have some kind of usually very sharply skewed distribution of power internally. The concentration of power inside usually takes over the state for its good.

mental constructions, as "imagined communities". He states that nationalism is a "cultural artifact" – once created it is a driving ideological or political force in ones life (1991). Further he shows that the re/construction of a national community appears when original cultural conceptions have lost their validity leaving space for new beliefs. Madan Sarup (1996) adds that "it must be remembered that nationalism is not the awakening of nations to self consciousness; it invents nations where they do not exist" (1996:181). Lisa Drouillard (1997) in her study of Cubans living Miami offers a perspective on how a sense of nationalism "invents nations" for many Cuban-Americans. The discourse of military valor and a shared history of collective sacrifice she argues "are critical pillars upon which nationalist movements among immigrant communities are built"; in this sense, the "political appropriation" of the imagined homeland become projects which Cuban *little Havana* nationalist share in their intent to reclaim the homeland (1997: 17).

For Anderson the rise of nation and nationalism came about as a result of the introduction of the printing press and the rise of capitalism in Western Europe making the distribution of print more readily available, replacing more traditional languages such as Latin. Therefore the creation of "imagined communities" became possible to what he calls "print capitalism". Capitalist entrepreneurs printed their books and media in a common vernacular in order to maximize the circulation. As a result people who understood each through various interrelated local dialects became capable of understanding each and the common discourse of Nationalism emerged. Anderson argues that the first European nation states were formed around this discourse. In this sense the imagined community became the mental affinity related to place and homeland. In

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It suppresses other people, suppresses people outside, etc. So we're stuck with this state system, for a while, at least. But we shouldn't expect it to permanent. In fact if it's a permanent condition, it isn't going to last very long because it's a lethal system. Its a miracle that it has survive as long as it did…from every point of view the state system looks artificial in the sense that it is unrelated to human needs and imposed by certain interest and power distribution" (p. 745). In Noam Chomsky *Language and Politics* edited by Carlos P. Ortero (Black Rose Books, U.S) 1988

other words nationalism becomes a source of understanding the world and forming solidarity**.** Bhabha (1994), in turn, questions the unitary notion of a nation by arguing that people in either hegemonic or subordinate positions see nation in very different ways. Therfore our sense of nationhood is discursively constructed from the position of power that we occupy. Bhabha notes that people live their national affiliation either as subjects or objects (Bhabha, 1994). Thus narratives of nation-hood are often in conflict with one another. Calhoun (1997) argues that nationalism is an ideology put forward by the state or social movement in order to mobilize their populations and legitimize social control.

In Chile the task of nationalism has always been to mobilize and/or to regulate people within the nation's sphere of control. Groups that were excluded from nation-states or were in positions of subordinations often placed different values on what the nation meant to them, often reshaping and challenging the assumed national imageries put forth by the ruling elites. These attempts from below resulted in mass social movements challenging the predominate visions of the state. These social movements demanded a greater expansion of those national boundaries and renegotiation of the relationship between members of the nation to allow for more inclusion – economically and politically. In 1970, Allende was elected on a nationalist platform that called for the reorganization of power and reallocation of the country's resources. His election allowed for the incorporation of a historically excluded group of people the prospect to reshape the Chilean "imagined community". The thesis in this sense allows us to look at how exiles who were involved in a project of nationalist proportions relate to their country while in Canada. How do they see Chile today in a post-dictatorship period? How do they relate to their country? Do they see themselves as being attached to a common history, a common people and a common future?

3.5 Bakhtin's Dialogism

DeSantis (2001) argues that for exiles what changed in their lives forever was the push from the country, the forceful removal from their home. The push is this sense is not only the physical and internal separation of the body/mind, but the start of a dialogical process – a dialectic that, for exiles, is defined between the dichotomy of origin and adoption. He argues that most research on exile discourse has a one-dimensional element to it. These works in turn have been unable to supply or have ignored altogether a satisfactory interpretation of the prevalence of contradictions and dialectical tensions found in exile literature. My narrative analysis of Benjamin and Eduardo captures that tension. It captures "the simultaneous and contradicting presence of the centrifugal and centripetal forces inherent in the communication experience" (2001:2). DeSantis (2001) maps out 4 recurring motifs negotiated in exile: the way the exiles (1) evaluate their emotional state; (2) identify socially; (3) view their country; and (4) view their future. Using Bakhtin's outline of dialogical ontology, DeSantis asserts,

> Like exiles, Bakhtin reminds us that we are caught up in an endless tug of war between the centripetal and centrifugal forces in our lives. This binary struggle however seems more acutely punctuated in the lives of exiles. By the very nature of being exiled, the centripetal and centrifugal forces that many non-exiled citizens ignore are accentuated so dramatically that many exiles feel compelled to address them. It is suggested that we begin to listen to exiles' stories through a new theoretical frame that allows them to be understood on their own terms (DeSantis, 2001:15).

DeSantis looks at the dialogical complexity of push and pull and argues that the origin of the exile experience is not so much an emotional dysfunction originating from the individual as much as it is a process of negotiation through the experience of dislocation (DeSantis, 2001). On

the one hand the exile is caught between old world he left behind and the tacit acceptance of the new world. The disengagement from fully accepting their situation in the host arena is not seen from the standpoint of someone who cannot assimilate; Bahktin dialogism is not divided into either/or categories, but understood and accepted as a "dualistic force that operates with each other" (2001:5). What Desantis tries to do is understand the complexities of exile using Bakhtin's dialogism to give meaning to the push and pull dynamics inherent in the exile experience. The study borrows from Bakhtin's dialogism and argues that exiles occupy a space in between Canada and Chile that simultaneously reject and accept aspects of the old and new countries. In the narrative accounts of these 2 men who represent two groups of exiles an understanding of identity to place and homeland emerges that correspond to Bakhtin's dialogical outline.

Chapter 4

Findings

Eduardo's Story: the Tale of a Student

The story presented below is taken from a taped interview held on January 12th 2004. Eduardo's life as a student and professional in Chile and Canada forms the major area of analysis in this chapter. To frame my analysis I have also included transcriptions from other participants who have had similar experiences as students and professionals in Canada and Chile. However, my intent is not to generalize the experiences of all students and young professionals exiled from Chile. I acknowledge that many of the exiles' conditions were often contingent on the location of settlement, the nature of departure and the exiles' capacity to adjust to the dominant language, and culture in their place of relocation. Nevertheless Eduardo's experience sheds light of how many exiles educated in Chile coped with the new situation in their adopted nation.

The aim of this chapter concerns itself with two areas: how Chilean exiles, the majority students or young professionals, have fashioned a sense space for themselves in Saskatchewan; and how as professionals many living in post-exile reevaluate their situation in the context of new political and social circumstances in Chile. Eduardo provides details into an aspect of the Chilean exile history very different from the norm. Eduardo was not a political prisoner in Chile, and he did not involve himself directly with any political party while attending the University of Concepcion. Eduardo's narrative is important on many levels. It not only provides us with understanding of how young professionals coped with finding work and going back to university

in a foreign land, but also how they came to view Chile and Canada from these lived experiences.

After his graduation from the University of Concepcion in 1971, Eduardo began working for the Popular Unity government as an administrator of land reform. After fleeing from Chile in 1975, he arrived in Saskatchewan as former employee of the Allende government. From the outset of his exile, Eduardo chose to segregate himself from the Chilean political community. His energy in the first years was concentrated in developing a foundation for his family and saving enough to go to university. Eduardo hoped to eventually return to Chile. At the time of his departure in 1975, Eduardo had no children. After two years in Canada he managed to bring over his partner. Eduardo's life story indicates the barriers faced by refugees in pursuing an education and trying to reestablish themselves after traumatic life experiences.

4.2 Meeting Eduardo[15]

I came to know Eduardo through various people in the community who were interviewed for this thesis. After having conducted interviews with other Chileans, I asked if they were able to refer me to other people in the Saskatoon or Regina area, and Eduardo's name almost always came up. Among the most well respected member of the Saskatoon Chilean community, Eduardo holds a Master's and PhD in Plant Sciences from the University of Saskatchewan. Our first contact was rather casual, and as in most cases with Chileans, he was generous, inviting me over to his house for dinner. There I met his wife Maria and some of their friends. As we converged around the dining table, we talked for hours about our experiences and outlook on

[15] As in the case of all my participants in this study I have used pseudonyms. Eduardo therefore is not the real name of the participant.

what was taking place in Latin America. Our common interests lead us to converse and laugh about many popular items among Chileans including politics, sports and personalities.

Later that evening Eduardo inquired about the nature of the study and asked why I was interested in doing research on Chileans in Saskatchewan. I told him that I thought it was important from a personal and academic point of view to understand how exiles view themselves relative to Chile and Canada in particular in a post-Pinochet and 9-11 eras. Although I did not approach him with a question of whether he would like to be interviewed, he did mention to me that if I ever wanted to talk, feel free to call or stop by. Around 4 months after our initial encounter I called him and asked if he would like to be interviewed, and he gladly agreed. We had one interview that was taped and later transcribed. The interview lasted 120 minutes.

Background on Universities in Chile

Student politics in Chile were often a reflection of the wider societal class and ideological divisions that existed in society. It was not until the Frei government took office in 1964 that students began to win reforms which allowed them to take part in the university administration. Under Frei's Popular Unity government, universities took a more proactive and social role in addressing and sensitizing themselves to social issues. As Henfrey and Sonj (1977) describe the Chilean university scene progressive student bodies would be a key to the popularity of the Allende government.

> Like all South American Universities, Chile's in 1970 reelected the ruling class's dependence on European and North American ideologies and culture. They bore little relations to local requirements either technical or social. The medical schools for example were as much concerned with heart transplant as with infant mortality. Student movements have nevertheless been a radical force in Latin America. Questioning first the dominance of

> traditional oligarchies, they became strongly nationalist in the 1940s and 50s. After the Cuban revolution this nationalism grew increasingly leftwing. In the 1970s their support for Allende was strong, in the expectations that the universities would be deeply involved in the changes promised by the PU.

By the time of the overthrow of government in 1973, progressive student movements had situated themselves in the country's academies and student collective bodies. These bodies would come to represent a massive constituency of support and power for political parties. It was in this era that Eduardo would find himself witnessing a movement happening before his eyes.

4.3 Eduardo's Story: The School Experience

Eduardo was born February 1946 and grew up in Chillan, a small city located in the central valley of Chile. Brought up into a working class family, he is the second youngest of three siblings. His family experienced great hardship on account of their financial circumstances and it became necessary for his mother to find employment in order to put her three children through school. Subsequently, Eduardo credits his educational development to the resiliency of his mother:

> My father was a son of a miner. My mother worked many years as a child in the countryside helping her mother, and then she came to Santiago and then left to Chillan with us. I went to elementary and then secondary school (high school). Our childhood was not one in which you would describe as prestigious. My mother worked all her life as a cobbler and with that she was able raise myself, my brother and sister who incidentally lives in Italy. My brother was also exiled in Italy then returned to Chile.

Eduardo's admiration for his mother and for the care she took in guiding his life is evident throughout our conversation: "my mother always stayed loyal to us, I owe many things to her, I am who I am today because of her". Throughout the course of our interview, Eduardo frequently

refers to his own family in references to events that would shape the course of his life: his wife who struggled with him; his daughter with whom he attended university; and his brother who was exiled to Italy. The picture I developed of Eduardo is of a dedicated family man who values a united, traditional family. Perhaps this is telling of his mother's strong work ethic, Chile's Roman Catholic influence, and the way he was raised.

Eduardo also spoke about the priority his mother placed on education and the role this had in forming his identity and future profession:

> With respect to our youth, I can tell you that those years were marked by growing up in a working class environment, with all the suffering that was attached to that. Living under those conditions I was lucky enough to receive very good marks in school. My mother strongly encouraged me to go to school because she had a desire for us to go to university. So in the first year in *secundaria* (High School) I received good marks and as such was able to be awarded a scholarship, so I was able to finish my studies. I finished high school and wrote the academic aptitude test. I received good marks and traveled to Concepcion to study. It was possible to go to Concepcion because at that time the government was under the governance of the Christian Democrats (CD). The CD started a program were students who could not finance themselves were able to receive scholarships.

Many parents of modest origin looked at schooling as one of the only routes for their children to escape their class location. Escobar (2000) states that it was not only the difficulty of finding resources but also the difficulty of access to those resources:

> Although education in Chile was regarded as the only way to progress socially and economically, a large percentage of children from the lower classes were unable to overcome the barriers that prevented from such pursuit. It was not a problem of distance but also a question of low vacancy rates. Public secondary schools carried long waiting resulting in people having to wait for years before being able to obtain space for their child. It was not until the 1960s, when universal education was passed into law that schools became more accessible for the population at large. (Escobar, 2000: 150).

Thus many parents who invested in their children's future, like Eduardo's mother, viewed

academic aptitude tests - equivalent to the SAT in the United States - with some anxiety. The grade received by a student was an indication of the family's future mobility. If a student received poor grades in the examination, the general sense was that this family deserved their misfortune. This exacerbated the existing stigma and sense of defeat already present because of one's poverty: "they would post your mark with last name and student number in the local newspapers," reflected Eduardo, "it was a big deal to receive a good grade, it either added to the shame of the family or offered grounds to sing praises about how wonderful your son was."

Artemio, another participant interviewed, and at the time also a student in Chile, adds to the significance of Eduardo's school experience. Brought up in a middle class family and educated in a private monastery where his father taught math classes, Artemio ended up graduating and attending university in 1969. Offering an analysis of class relations in Chile, Artemio speaks of the negative connotations attached to the image of the Chilean *roto*, a derogatory term referring to a person's broken appearance and vulgar habits:

> In Chile like many countries there is drive for social status because there exists many opportunities in class rank - in a sense nobody want to be poor. In a society that exists in capitalism, who wants to be poor and in Chile to be poor or associated with being poor signifies that you're "un perderor"[16]or "un roto." The population bought into the message that to be poor was an expression of your cognitive inability to succeed. The large majority were striving to be in the middle class. So that was the discourse - the dominate one - that has prevailed in Chile and is still I think to greater extent very much apart of Chilean society today.

Despite the structural and social obstacles to succeed, Eduardo graduated, received good marks in the national aptitude test, and entered university with a scholarship to study agriculture in 1961. At the University of Concepcion, Eduardo's political education became more refined: caught up in a time that brought Salvador Allende to power, Eduardo started to question the

[16] A failure

dominant ideologies that justified power relations as necessary among the social classes:

> It was a time of incredible excitement, we started to criticize the existing social order enough so that we were able to elect our people to the student body; in those times Luciano Cruz was attending the University of Concepcion, he was elected as student president. Later he became the National Director of the MIR[17]. So in the fervor of those first years of university I implicated myself in student politics.

In the aftermath of the overthrow, the University of Concepcion was branded as a breeding ground for student radicalism. As a result, the University would be viciously targeted by the military. This was not only the case in Concepcion, but throughout Chile. In the initial days when the state of siege was imposed, universities all over the country were cordoned off, occupied, or ransacked in order to weed out suspected militants. Student organizations that united behind the Unidad Popular's socialist revolution were especially vulnerable. Nevertheless, that period left an indelible mark on Eduardo's political development. Luis, a student of journalism at the time of the coup, offers a similar analysis of the historical change ensuing in his country during this era:

> Back then when I was finishing secondary school in Chile (high School) everything was about politics including the fact that it became a badge of honor to disagree and debate the teacher. We all knew which one was to the Right and which one was to the Left. Therefore, in that context, everything was very fast and had movement. I had the opportunity to know some great thinkers; Brazilian thinkers, who arrived to Chile as exiles during their dictatorship…
>
> I: How was the situation in Chile before Allende?
>
> Well the reality was that it was a process. This was a period at the height of the Cold War. In that context different political developments started to take shape in Chile. The Christian Democrats (CD) took power in 1964. I took part and volunteered with the CD – with the church. But soon I realized that the CD was not the answer to Chile's internal problems. When I was 14, I left the CD… but I still worked with the Church. In the 60s what we saw was the development of many armed struggles in Latin America - leftist movements becoming more in demand among the popular sectors. There was a real contingency and interests in all these

[17] Moviemento Izquirdista Revolucionario – Leftist Revolutionary Movement. A left-wing political party that viewed armed revolutionary struggle as a basis of creating socialism in a society.

> movements; Che Guevara dies in 67, the Communist party had Pablo Neruda as a candidate, there was a series of situations were the unity of the left started to take shape; the country started to become more radical and as such Unidad Popular (UP) was born.

In a time of unprecedented buildup of popular involvement from the grassroots, Eduardo not only took an interest, but actively participated in the future of his country. Eduardo was aware of, and identified with, what was occurring outside of Chile. Like Luis, Eduardo's education and professional aspirations would not only be influenced by the development of progressive social movements, armed struggles, and revolutions, but also by the people coming into Chile as academics, thinkers, and activists.

The University of Concepcion was one of the most prestigious schools in Chile and had a reputation for attracting economists from Brazil who were exiled to Chile after the March 1964 overthrow of the Left wing president João Goulart. Intrigued by the Brazilian migration to Chile, Eduardo learned of the land reform that was being initiated during the time of Goulart:

> In the University of Concepcion there were a couple of economist who came to work. The started to teach a couple of classes in my subject including land reform and what had happened in Brazil and what was possible in Chile. This gave me the motivation to go work at a cooperative that helped implement land reform with the objective of assisting the Allende government. So after I graduated I went to la *Zona de Linares* (province in Chile) and from there I went to work in San Javier. In San Javier I worked as director of production for a time and after a while there was involved in the cooperative handling of land reform. The Minster of Agriculture appointed me director of that area in San Javier. So as a boss my position became more political than technical, supervising agricultural production I gave a lot of leeway to the council of *campensinos* (peasant farmers) who were basically a syndicate of *campesinos* who were looking for ways of handling their own affairs.
>
> R: What was the reaction among the land owners?
>
> Well because we acted as functionaries of the CORA[18] in that zone, obviously nobody from the middle to upper class agreed with what we were doing. What we were doing essentially was expropriating their lands.

[18] CORA - Corporacion de Reforma Agraria (Agrarian Reform Corportaion)

Consequently, after Allende was elected and assumed the presidency in Nov. 1970, Eduardo expressed a strong desire to work in the initiation of reforms proposed by the Unidad Popular. Eduardo understood that at the time the struggle in Chile rested between the propertied and the exploited classes. To Eduardo, Chile's road to socialism was a necessary step which would enhance Chile as a nation by advancing the interests of all sectors of its society: "The country belonged to everyone not just few," asserted Eduardo.

Naturally, the conservative Right, using the language of nationalism, saw itself as defending Chile's interests. In the most political sectors of the nation, two separate and distinct ways to identify with the nation emerged. Therefore, *la patria*, the vision of a grand Chile, stood in sharp contrast to one another. As Luis points out, for Chileans, everything became political: no one could sit on the fence; everything became a matter of left and right. The dominant economic classes of Chile saw themselves confronted and challenged by the subordinate working and middle classes from a position of political power. For the Left there was an urgency to act and get involved. Among numerous students graduating from universities, Eduardo found the opportunity to get involved, finding work in San Javier administering land reform.

Working with Unidad Popular

As Eduardo makes clear in the above passage, Allende's reforms - which were enhancements of President Frei earlier agrarian reforms - posed a direct threat of expropriation to many land owners. Armed militias were financed and organized to halt expropriation and deter peasant solidarity. From witnessing assaults on peasants to direct threats to his own life, Eduardo faced a great deal of risk in his job. He talked at great length about his involvement and the dangers involved in this project:

> When I traveled from San Javier to Chillan in June of 73, - one week before a truck with 50 people from *Patria y Libertad*[19] were ambushing vehicles that were full of campesinos on there way back from reunions. Well, I should have been in one of those vehicles, but I had postponed my travel 'till the week after. Unfortunately, what happened in this incident was that some companeros were jumped and beaten by this gang of thugs. These guys were beaten unconscious except for one who managed to escape and crawl and get help. The next day we were watching TV and heard of what had happened in San Javier. They showed a jeep totally ripped to pieces and a companero in the hospital hanging on to his life. What was happening under those situations was that the Right and the owners of Fundos[20] recruited what could be termed as 'lumpens'…that is people who they would give food, wine…etc and they in turn would do what they were told.

Unlike many of Eduardo's old friends and colleagues, who he referred to during the course of the interview with the prefix "compadre" (a word commonly used in Allende's time suggesting close companion or comrade), Eduardo never joined any of the leftist political parties in Chile**:** "I was sympathetic to the Socialist Party but never a militant. I maintained my independence, but I was very much committed to what was happening." For Eduardo it became a moral choice: working in struggle and identifying with the nation's poor or backing a particular political position. "We decided to back Allende because we recognized and affirmed the right of the proletariat, who, mind you, were our fathers, aunts, brothers and grandparents."

The Overthrow

Three months prior to the military overthrow in September 1973 Eduardo took a work transfer from San Javier to Chillan. When the coup came, this decision saved his life. On September 11th 1973 Eduardo remembers hearing the rumors of an impending collapsed of the Popular Unity government.

I: On the day of the overthrow where were you?

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[19] Fatherland & Freedom – Fascist Right Wing group in Chile
[20] Large tracts of land traditionally owned by country's elites

I was in Chillan

I: What was your reaction?

Well I knew something was about to happen but we did no know when. There were rumors about a coup but we were unsure when it was going to take place. Therefore, when I was in Chillan on the 11th of September, in the morning I was in my office when I encountered a *companero* from San Javier who had come the night before, he told me shit brother I came here because they informed me that today was the day of the coup' and exactly at around 9 or 10 in the morning the *golpe* (coup) was taking shape. After that, as you know, came the debacle where everybody was going down. There was a reunion that morning in *la CORA* with zone directors and some measures were taken of what we were to do. However in the evening we knew there was nothing one could do, the military were far too superior. In the first place anything that one wanted to do they could not, because no one had arms. It was possible to defend yourself but nobody had arms. There were some *companeros* in the *Zona de Chillan* (Zone of Chillan) who took to the mountains and assaulted some Carabineros[21]. They took their weapons and they went to the mountains. The military tracked them down with all their apparatus – helicopters, arms - they killed all of them. It was not even a fight.

The coup, when it did come, had a demoralizing effect on many exiles. Many were detained; others saw friends and family disappear many (including Eduardo) lost their job and any financial ability to maintain themselves and their family. In his narrative Eduardo speaks of the uncertainty of the situation that forced him and many others like him to flee Chile and seek exile:

It was dangerous in those times, yes….it's a good thing I got out, but the noose was tightening…you see the military started to operate very efficiently-like a pyramid. The concept of a pyramid is that at the top you have Salvador Allende, and from there his ministers, party members and they just follow the list to the bottom. On the 11th of September they started at the very top of the pyramid, and as time passed they kept climbing down through the pyramid…so like I was saying, they went down the pyramid. And many people were jailed, detained or found dead.

I: Did you lose many companeros (comrades)?

The majority of *los cravros of Altyiro - el barri*o[22] they murdered them.

[21] Chilean state police
[22] Los cavros of Altyiro – in this passage the respondent refers to "the boys from his neighbourhood Altyiro".

> Therefore it is hard…. those things …and the youth of the barrios, you know, you grow up with them, fight along with them, they are like brothers…there are many people who disappeared the majority of the people that I knew …those who didn't die left the country…

In this passage it is clear to see that Eduardo, who after 33 years living outside the country, desires to remain closely linked to his original homeland, to the imagined Chilean community, and to his sense of space that he shared with his old friends and colleagues. Eduardo affectionately speaks about his old neighborhood Altyiro, "the brothers" with whom he struggled, matured, and developed long lasting friendships. For Eduardo, like many who came from the working class neighborhoods, the experience of establishing nurturing human relations in a given location was a core issue.

Chillan, with a population of 150, 000, is like many urban centers in Chile. Delineated along class boundaries, spatial order is divided between concentrations of various economic groupings. Although the sense of marginality and exclusion was very real to working class people, so was the sense of solidarity built over generations in the barrios where Eduardo was raised. Like the universities, these working class barrios would later be violently purged, resulting in the detention and loss of many of politicized sectors of Chile. Many of the other participants that I interviewed point out that September 11th 1973 resulted in more than just a loss of friends and community, but also a transformation of how Chile as a nation became remembered by them.

Almost overnight the country transformed itself from an open democracy to a dictatorship. The emotions that emerged from Eduardo's story are fear, loss and betrayal:

> During the initial phase of the coup one could not even trust their neighbors, to the extent that even those on the left were turning on their own comrades and renouncing their political allegiance in exchange for their own safety, you couldn't confide in anybody….at any minute people would turn you over, they would have said, 'hey listen that compadre (comrade) nobody has arrested him yet…do

something about it' and they would inform on you.

4.4 "The Noose Was Tightening"

As one of the first Chilean exiles to arrive in Saskatoon, Eduardo's experience was not unlike many exiles. He was never actually detained or named on the *bandos* (radio). However, as he referred to it, "the noose was tightening." The pressure became too great; the military police had already designated his brother as a threat to national security, and it was just a matter a time before they came for him. Finally Eduardo was left with no choice but to go into hiding or seek exile. After having lost his job and trying desperately to find work, he acquired a visa and left for Canada in Nov. of 1975. As his brother was exiled to Italy, Eduardo came to Canada alone:

> When I was about to leave Chile they asked me, 'where would I like to go'…I asked for a city with a university… a really good university with a good Agriculture program…and they sent me to Saskatoon and they had very good reason because here in Saskatoon is the centre of Agriculture. I arrived to Saskatoon in November of 1975. There must have been a group of 20 who came a month before I arrived – they were the first group. Those before me came directly from jails or torture dungeons in Chile. They lived another experience distinct from mine.

To most exiles interviewed, Canada in the 1970s was relatively unknown. Marcos who had learned some English through his university years attending La Catolica, a major Catholic University in Santiago, had very little knowledge of Canada other than its geographical location. In Chile, there was no established Canadian presence or community. Canada as well had no Canadian embassy in Chile, no formal presence other than a consulate linked to the Canadian embassy in Argentina (Escobar, 2000). Therefore, for Chileans even young professionals and students, Canada was not a place they chose or wanted to come to. The destination of Chileans rather was directed to other Latin American country's in particular Cuba, Brazil and Argentina, as compared to a small proportion traveling to North America (Arrate, 1988). Those who arrived

in Canada from Chile or from their first place of asylum in Argentina were relieved to find a country that offered state protection and greater security. Luis who at the time of his arrival expressed his concern over the difficulty of relating to an English speaking culture, a culture unlike the Latin culture he was close and familiar with: "It was difficult. I think I knew it was difficult when I started to work as a janitor cleaning a shop for welders. They would laugh at me I am certain they would be laughing at me, I understood nothing, but I kept smiling pretending to know what they were talking about when I in reality I understood very little"

Eduardo described his landing in 1975 as being overwhelmed with the pace and speed of a new environment foreign in every respect. Without any knowledge of Canada, and the prospect of returning immediately, Eduardo made no attempt to settle, nor was he given any time to do so. Two days after his arrival in Saskatoon Eduardo began his new career as a laborer. With his degree in agriculture acquired at the University of Concepcion, Eduardo assumed that the transition to enter the same profession in Canada would be relatively easy: "doors would open for me" he thought.

Nineteen years later he would enroll in University of Saskatchewan. By this time Eduardo left a job in which he had worked his way from being a laborer to a carpenter, and finally a foreman. By sheer hard work and determination he had accumulated enough money to bring his wife over from Chile, build a house and save enough capital to enroll in graduate studies:

> I went to work for *Stylerite Homes* and what they needed there was what they call here a 'labourer.' In Chile it's called 'Jondallero.' They needed somebody who knew how to work with a shovel and broom. I had to maintain a very clean space (laughs)…therefore I worked for three months cleaning … my job was to clean and take out garbage. That was my *pega*[23]….One day the painter's assistant was sick, the carpenter told the boss that he could not work without an assistant and since I was there they handed me a hammer to help him out. John who was the carpenter

[23] Pega is slang for niche or area of work that one performs well.

> was the same age that I am today. Back then I was 28 years of age. Therefore I started to work with John and since he was carpenter I had to do the labor intensive jobs for him. And in that time since I was young and strong and all that I started to help him out with a great amount of energy. There was nothing I would not do! I worked for a week and when his assistant returned after a week John told the boss that he preferred my help 'I want to stay with Eduardo (laughs)!!' he said. Therefore I stayed working with him and he taught me a lot of things. He taught me how to construct a wooden ladder, install fireplaces and what more in this company I also learned to work with cement. The foreman was a German he was very well rounded for this type of work Therefore, I had to help John and as a carpenter's assistant I prepared the format before they initiate anything with cement. But later I would stay and help out placing the cement and finalizing the last phase of the installments…
>
> I: What was your final wage?
>
> I was up to 10 dollars an hour by 1988 and when John retired I took over for John… (laughs). So I was the carpenter for the team and we went on working on building apartments, and houses. I learned how to paint, drywall, work with wood… listen if you give me the plans I can build you a house. Well time passed, by 86 the foreman of the company retired and when he retired, Eduardo became the foreman… (laughs). I was very much disciplined because they were very good to me and I worked hard and because I responded well with them they responded well with me. Well as time passed my senora[24] would ask me if I was willing to stay there. She would say 'as a man with so many years in University and your working under those conditions? You have to return to University'!!

After 19 years of being involved in the labor force, building houses and working his way from laborer to foreman, Eduardo with encouragement from his family, decided to go back to university. His experience of going back after so many years outside of university circles was as he describes it "a challenge." Eduardo entered directly into a Master's program after passing an entry exam and taking extra courses. As well, he had to relearn a new language, a language that was unlike the one he utilized working as a carpenter:

> They did make me write an exam, I started to prepare for this exam for 2 months. I started to read material on agriculture. But remember the English I had learned in construction had nothing to do with language that is used in academics … (laughs). So they designed an exam, 5 professors from the department

[24] Many Chilean men refer to their wife or female acquaintance as Senora (Misses).

> interrogated me and I passed. However I was told to 'brush up' and take an extra 5 classes because agriculture is different than the one you find in Chile. I ran through every person in that department as a potential supervisor.

Not having the full grasp of the English language, being a former carpenter and someone educated in Latin America, much of the faculty in Eduardo's area of interest was not up to the task of taking him on as a potential student. When he did find a supervisor, he was not offered funding until his second year.

After receiving his Master's, Eduardo went on to complete a PhD in Plant Science. Artemio, who also returned to university (six years after having landed), found that barriers that existed in the academic setting were as much a question of ideology as they were a matter speech:

> I studied English at home in my time off. I committed myself to English at home. Then I did a 3 month course – but I more or less educated myself in English. When my partner came over that year I received a job as a fabricator of contact lenses. And it was there that we started to talk to the owner who was doctor and had a lot of sympathy for us. One day I had told them that I was interested in leaning English because I was interested in going to university. He had asked me what I needed and I told him. So we went to learn English in the day and worked at night. So I started at the level of grade 10, received a GED, and then did an English course at the University of Regina. There I understood that I did not need a grade 12 but that I could enter as an adult. There I finished English. It was there that I failed that course. The instructor did not permit the fact I could hold different political opinions. At that time -1980- saw the campaign of Carter v Reagan. She was pro-Reagan. I committed the error of giving an example that Reagan was a reactionary… she never forgave me.
>
> I: You opened your mouth
>
> Yes I made the error of opening my mouth (laughs). And she gave me less than a 50% as a mark. She knew that I wrote and spoke better than some other students. When I told the other professors what had occurred they told me that they were astonished of how this would happen in Canada. As you know these things happen. Intolerance exists everywhere. Therefore, I had to repeat and pay again. And to pay that type of money was an incredible burden especially with what I was making. But nevertheless the priority for me was to study and excel in what I was interested in and return to Chile as soon as possible.

In exile, studying seemed to fit the context of the situation at least for some participants. By familiarizing their political goals and studies at the same time, many students hoped to return to Chile to put into practice the knowledge they had acquired through a Western university degree. Furthermore, studying prevented further integrating with Canadian society. Most hoped by the time their span in university ended, the regime at home would be no more; they would be able to return to Chile and put into practice their degree.

4.5 Exclusion in the Chilean Community

For Eduardo, the idea of Chile as an image of the past has not disappeared. The initial idea of returning, however, became contradictory as soon as Eduardo moved on to fashion his life in Canada, build a family, and focus on his career. Although committed to eventually going back to live in Chile when the dictatorship ended, Eduardo found solace in removing himself completely from the Chilean community. As mentioned, many exiles interviewed, Eduardo was not aligned with any Chilean political party or any one ideology. In this sense he does not fit the conventional image of Chilean exiles with their ties to political parties or campaign against the dictatorship. This was often seen as grounds for one's exclusion in the Chilean community, in particular during the early stages for many exiles stay in Canada. Eduardo explains his reasons:

> I did not officially belong to any political party - I was not a militant of any political party - you feel marginalized because you know the socialists would get together with other socialist, and the communists with other communists….therefore what was produced was not a solid community. It was always a work which happened to give way to infighting among groups. I have always been to the Left but I know that if one enters as a militant to a political party one becomes very regionalized or committed to one form of ideology. With that you have rivalry and confinement. You lose the idea of unity.

Some of the participants interviewed also expressed their desire to remove themselves

politically from the community. Living in the margins of Canadian culture, many exiles recount feelings of depression, loss of roots, and difficulty relating to either Canada or to the Chilean community. Unlike Eduardo, however, their voluntary removal from the community did not involve a dedication to a particular program, like school or work. Marcos put in this way: "I wandered around for a bit after I came. I was completely alone. I did some work here and there but with no real commitment. I was totally down; there was not one night that I did not think of Chile and of returning." Luis, who landed in Canada in 1976 after having fled Argentina, like Eduardo, returned to university after 10 years of fashioning a life in Toronto, taking odd jobs, and living under the motivation of one day returning. His reasons for not involving himself with any particular party had little to do with activism, loss of commitment, or outright despair. Rather:

> Well there was a lot of infighting and rivalry among different political parties – families got together others did not. I mean I just stayed to myself. It was really difficult to do too many things. I mean I even stayed away from other Latin American groups who came to university and formed political groups. Look when the Berlin Wall fell it was like a house of cards falling upon Socialism - people became disillusioned, others went on with their life and some broke with Marxism. It became despicable to even name or sound it out!

4.6 Return

After Eduardo graduated with his PhD in crop science, he entered his profession working in the field of research and development. He decided to return to Chile for the first time in 1995, followed by another trip in 1998. As Eduardo sees it, modern Chile is distinct from the country he originally left. In a hemisphere that has increasingly become more globalized and interconnected, Eduardo still longs for the old Chile he left behind. It is also evident that he feels disdain for the new Chile, which is unknown to his lived experiences and altered beyond any

historical recognition.

During the interview Eduardo recalled nostalgically the collective action of the many people who were involved in building Socialism, the projects that were started at the local level, and the sense of community in building a better Chile that motivated them from the grassroots. However, Eduardo did not feel integrated with modern Chile's people or the sense of place he had hoped to return to. Instead he found a Chile distorted by the emergence of a hyper-capitalism that championed consumerism and individuality. A stark contrast to the collective identity of solidarity he emerged from:

> If you go to Chile you'll find McDonald's, Pizza Hut…you'll find yourself with a Home Depot across your neighborhood, you find all the big multinationals that you would have here and labor is cheap, they pay them a miserable wage. The government wants to produce a viable economy with a lot of foreign investment but in reality its money that's comes into Chile but from one day to the next they can pull that money out.

After 17 years of dictatorship and radical economic reforms Chile has become a very different country. Eduardo's visits to Chile have made him conscious of the changes Chile has endured, and he finds it difficult to understand the new Chile that is so unlike the country he left behind.

For Eduardo it became less a question of whether he would like to return, and more a question of feasibility. To him Chilean culture is still there, and the mountains, the ocean and the landscape still exist, but the people themselves have altered to an extent that he has difficulty identifying with his fellow compatriots. Given these changes Eduardo finds the task of creating a viable project in Chile potentially meaningless. For him the disillusion he has with Chile is also reflected in the way he sees members of the community. Politically, many Chileans have accepted the neo-liberal program which Eduardo sees as unrepresentative of many of the principles that they were to expect to live by:

> What really pains me Raul, is that there are people who are were once true to their convictions and have totally turned around. When one is Left and thinks in that form or if someone is true to their principles and has come out of what occurred in Chile in 73 and all of a sudden turns over one morning and say, 'well maybe this line is getting tired and maybe neo-liberalism is a good thing...,' but without making any real political analysis of what is happening. So it pains me because I think that the people who backed Allende maybe did not have real political principles …what I am getting at is that they sold out to powerful interests and have relegated those that don't have these interests as being of little attention. The government of Chile at this moment really has no say over education, sports, has little regulation over health…but they want to privatize that as well.

4.7 Conclusion

This chapter aims at recounting the personal experiences of many of those students who, as youths, were integral to the progressive elements of Chile. Allendes' popularity in fact depended clearly on the support of this sector. Subsequently, they formed part of a larger political movement in Canada. This movement was organized primarily to bring publicity to human rights occurrences in Chile, to build support to topple the Pinochet regime, and to facilitate the integration of new refugees into Canadian society. In this chapter I analyzed, through the eyes of Eduardo, how the political discourse in exile changed, how the national imagination of what Chile is, and how exiles' identity as Chileans has become contested on a deeper, more personal level.

After having lived in Canada for a good portion of his life, Eduardo for now has resigned to the idea of staking a claim in Saskatchewan. Although his decision of whether to go back to Chile or not has yet to be determined, Eduardo, for the meantime, is content with building a life here. Eduardo's story suggests that the notion of home is subjected to changes in one's environment and in the country of origin. In this respect Canada offers Eduardo the certain conditions to fulfill his and his family's needs, but as a result of his exile Canada lacks the

potential in fulfilling other needs. In the next Chapter, I will deal with these issues by reflecting on the experiences of militants and party activists.

Chapter 5

> *Radically cut from their past yet helpless before a present ruled by violence of the world economic order, without serious grasp on the future, they rushed to redefine their self-image, in a mythic reconstruction of their histories, traditions, symbols and heroes…* (Burgi-Golub, 1997:434)

The Militants

In this Chapter I explore questions of nationhood through the eyes of party militants – that is, people who were directly involved in the Unidad Popular government and who at the time of these interviews were still aligned with their political parties. The people introduced in this chapter represent the first wave of Chilean refugees coming into Canada from 1973 to 1978. In total over half of the participants in this thesis (8 out of the 12) landed in Canada during this period. Many exiles that fled Chile, in particular this first wave had been victims of serious human rights abuses. Many of my participants recounted their experience of being placed in concentration camps while others described their conditions in secret detention centers set up around the country.

In some depth I examine the life-history of Benjamin, a party militant of Chile's Communist Party who, after being captured by the armed forces, survived a year in a torture cell before being smuggled out of the country and exiled to Saskatoon. Benjamin's life-story adds an interesting perspective to the debate surrounding the re-negotiation of Chilean national identity in exile. His story not only focuses on his search for a sense of justice twenty-seven years after his arrival in Canada, but also raises questions of place and belonging. Included in the discussion

are the transcripts of four other participants who belong to the same political party, and whose experiences as militants living post-exile reflect Benjamin's. Many of the participants who took part in the making of this chapter detailed their lives in exile as a state of disconnection to worlds: the original homeland and the host country. Many of these men also felt that it was impractical to return to Chile, yet at the same time emphasized that they had a broken connection to their host environment. Outside of Benjamin, all the men included in this group were products of divorces. Three out of the five men interviewed were living alone. These finding supports similar studies exploring migrant dislocation, identity, and loss (Isreal; 2002; Livingston, 2004)

In short, of the 4 participants include in this chapter, one escaped to Argentina, one through Chile to Saskatoon, and two were taken directly from prison on to a plane and exiled. In other words, their prison sentences were commuted into exile. All the people interviewed in this chapter considered themselves *militantes* or militants of their respective political parties when they arrived in Canada.

5.1 Meeting Benjamin

On September 11th 2003 at the St. Thomas Moore theatre in Saskatoon I had the chance to watch a program coordinated by members of the Chilean exile community in remembrance of Allende's death 30 years ago. Among the attendees I recognized Benjamin, "*el Viejo*" (the old one) from past social functions we had both attended. He was sitting in the front of the theatre looking traditionally Chilean wearing a beret and a poncho. I intentionally took a seat beside him, and it did not take long for Benjamin to break the silence: "my personal opinion is that we should have these commemorations every year or at least something to lend more moral and political support for our brothers and sisters fighting in all parts of the world." After the program

Benjamin and I sat for a while and talked. He told me he had met my father and mother - he had flown in the same aircraft transporting 120 Chilean refugees from Diego Portales International Airport in Santiago into Vancouver, Canada on July 15, 1978. They had all landed in Vancouver and later dispersed to different cities, some arriving in Edmonton, others to Winnipeg and some to Saskatoon. It was the last time he had ever heard of them until that day in theatre. I told him that at his convenience we should meet up again. Three months later on January 17th 2004 we had our first of three interviews; in total all three interviews lasted 7 hours.

5.2 Mate at Benjamin's Home

Benjamin has lived in the same place in Saskatoon for over two years. Three years ago, while he figured out his latest transition, he stayed with a young Chilean couple who offered to put him up for a while. Benjamin has never married. He has lived alone his whole adulthood**.** Instead his whole life has been devoted to Chile's Communist Party. Sipping on mate (an Argentine herbal tea) downstairs in his one bedroom basement suite**,** he invites me in while he arranged the table for our interview. He tells me with a smile that although it appears that he's a hermit he is not necessarily one of them. His place looks amazingly like any living room one would find in the southern Chilean countryside. Even the wood stove and the faucets look like they had come out of my own grandmother's house. Stacked in all parts of this little basement suite are newspapers and books relating to the coup, Chile, neo-liberalism, and Marxism…etc. Everything is in Spanish, even the autographed picture of Fidel.

When I ask him if he reads anything in English, Eduardo laughs, "I don't even speak the language!" I ask why and what prevents him from not learning it especially since he has been here almost 30 years. "I don't know; I really never had a use for it I guess, especially in my work. I mean I know very little, enough to get by and punch a clock. English is not something I

really need when I work in the community." Benjamin worked in a plant assembling auto parts for the past 23 years. Five years ago he retired due to an injury in his back**,** an injury he told me was originally sustained during his time in the Chilean "gulags", the prison camps set up around the country after the overthrow. At 72 years of age Benjamin's personal life takes on the social**;** he is active in the community organizing, constantly addressing different groups**,** raising issues of human justice**,** assisting in Saskatoon's Folkfest, dances or any events that bring together members of Saskatchewan's Latin Community. I asked him what his life was like. How he grew up? What made him commit his life to a party even twenty-seven years after having landed, after so many had decided to disregard politics all together and move on with their lives? He looked at me and answered "have you ever heard the song *Vientos del Pueblo*?[25]"

5.3 El que tiene la vos[26]

Benjamin was born into absolute poverty. At seven years of age he lost his father to illness. The third youngest of eleven brothers and sisters, he was sent out into the fields to work at the age of twelve. Beside his siblings he farmed the soil in *los fundos* for four years before migrating to the city to play professional soccer. In *los fundos* he worked for four pesos a day, from sun up to sun down. "I think it was inhumane exploitation, I mean they exploited children, they exploited old people, we were obliged to work in order to survive, the clothes we received we had to pay quotas on them we were always owing or in debt to *los patrones*."

In Chile during the 1940s and 1950s every third Chilean worked the land. Traditionally, land in Chile had been dominated by *latifundistas* or large land owners who Benjamin refers to as the *Patrones*. These properties were often characterized by servile labor relations and low

[25] Vientos del Pueblo refers to an old Victor Jara song titled "Winds of the People"
[26] El que tiene la vos is Spanish for "he who came with the voice"

productivity. In the 1960s, over eighty-five per cent of Chile's land belonged to members of the same families - an estimated seven per cent of all holdings (Sorj, 1977). The people who had worked the land had been living on the land for generations, and a great majority like Benjamin's father, suffered and died from malnutrition and deplorable working conditions. In addition to inadequate housing, unemployment, and illiteracy, peasant-farmers were often forced to search for work in the city; a world many knew little of. Unable to read and write till the age of 32, Benjamin left to the city after being recruited to play professional soccer. He describes his experience:

> We had to travel all over although I did not want to go. In one of those opportunities they recruited me to play in a professional league in Italy. They allowed me travel overseas and I was there playing for awhile. I got to know many things without knowing how to read and write. And since I was underage to travel I needed authorization from my mother who herself was illiterate. Therefore, we had to sign papers with our fingerprints. That was my outing to the world. Well in one of those moments I don't know why I longed to go back to the country it was very difficult without knowing how to read and write.

Three years after Benjamin returned to Chile his family was displaced from the same land their father and grandfathers had worked on for over 60 years. The family found work in another fundo named *el cuanaquo* near the capital of Santiago. For four years they worked in el cuanaquo, and then they moved to the city. In Santiago Benjamin found work with *Via Sur,* a bus line that traveled to areas of the south. In 1964 Benjamin was fired for participating in a strike that left the public transportation systems paralyzed. From there Benjamin was drawn to the Communist party: "we were arguing for better wages better working conditions, there were many members of the party with whom I worked with that organized that strike."

One day Benjamin was invited to hear a speech from a party militant. “This was the time when I joined the party, it was very exciting. I started to see things that I knew were there but had no way of explaining them. I became involved in many activities from organizing strikes to recruiting members of *el campo* (the country). This was a time when there was mass mobilization from the countryside.” Sergio, another party militant, who lived half his life in a *latifundia,* recalls his introduction to political consciousness as a way of walking around with new eyes:

> In that particular area where I worked, there were no syndicates, not even an organizing committee for campesinoes because it was a population that was very isolated from the rest of the world; from most political channels of communication. People were easily misled they thought that was it! There was nothing else. Some did have radios but everyone did not know how to read a publication. There was nothing, I mean the voice of *el patron* was the voice of power. That was the earth in which I grew up in.
>
> I : Can you describe the social movements in the country-side?
>
> Well that actually started to take shape in the decade of the 1960s, syndicates started to form and what you saw was a real interest in the politics of the country. One has to remember that politics in Chile had always been a scary game to get into. You had to do it in clandestine fashion. The owners would not allow for any organizations such as *terria de peticion*. This was a petition that would give us some benefits and that was done because there was no salary or anything available for us to sustain ourselves. There was no other resource so sometimes collectively we had to do this to receive something….It was a fight because the bourgeois class fought any type of collective arrangement.
>
> I. When did you start to make a conscious effort of these events?
>
> Well that happened when someone arrived at that *fundo* with what they say has *la vos* (the voice). Well that person helped you realize the conditions you living under. I was taught that I had a right, a right to eat, a right to education, a right to health and before I knew nothing of these rights. He encouraged us to struggle to obtain some sort of benefits. First through organizing and then encouraging you to act. The effort of these people we started to take collective action against our condition.

The massive inequality mixed with a period of national mobilization fermented into a source of protest and takeovers among *campesinos.* Backed by the Socialist and Communist parties the mobilization of peasant farmers throughout Chile's countryside became a central theme among political parties vying for the presidency in 1964. The Frei government, who won the election in that year, legislated reform that, was openly committed to the expansion of rural capitalism by formally recognized rural unions and allowing for the expropriation of bigger underproductive estates (Loveman, 1993). By the time Salvadore Allende was elected in 1970 there had already been massive strikes all over the nation's rural sector. The Frei governments reforms had only partially fulfilled a program that the government had hoped would alleviate the poor socio-economic conditions that existed in the countryside. Benjamin speaks about that era: "Because of us the world was watching and we knew that our fight was real. Our fight was the defense of the poorest people of our region. I mean you have to remember many lives were lost in order for Allende to come to power, these things did not happen overnight."

In 1970 the first Marxist president to be freely elected in a democracy would galvanize the "poorest people" of the region. In Chile the most arable land was in the hands of a few families and for the last quarter of a century multinationals had been profiting from Chile's immense natural resources while the a majority of the population went hungry. Allende with the assistance of people like Benjamin came to power: "for us the question was to rectify the internal problems plaguing our country, more education, more social programming greater involvement for the people to direct and organize the social revolution." The reaction on September 11th 1973 pitted Allende with a small group of armed men and women against the nation's military. For twelve hours they battled. At approximately 3:30 pm that Tuesday**,** the military**,** who had sworn to protect the constitution, carried Allende's corpse out of the Presidential Palace, *La Moneda*.

On that Tuesday Benjamin's involvement in creating a better, more equal Chile would became nothing more than a dream.

5.4 Benjamin's September 11th

Like many other groups of refugees who have escaped from an environment of violence and terror, certain events are marked as constituting a collective experience of struggle and redefinition; these experiences become central to the exiles natural and social world. Speaking on the significance of surviving "*two 9-11's in a lifetime*" Macerena Gomez-Barris writes:

> Chileans who survived September 11, 1973 and the subsequent collective violence, including our parents and grandparents, were accustomed to waking up on its anniversary with a mixture of dread, sadness, disassociation and the unshakable experience of horror in their minds and bodies…Chilean exiles have described to me the particularly quality of grayness they feel, and the flood of memories that come to them each year as if September 11, 1973 were permanently etched in their Psychological Calendar.

For many of the participants in this study, September 11th marks the most important date in their lives. In all the interviews I conducted, September 11th is the rupture that splits the participant's biographies between involvement and exclusion. For Benjamin it was the beginning of his real exile. While volunteering with the campesinos in the south of Chile, Benjamin heard through the radio the fall of his president, "it was like a blow to the stomach." I asked him to explain to me why it was so hard, why the date brought back such anguish:

> Well before the situation that produced the state of siege – during the time of Allende – I think were by far the most beautiful one thousand days of my life. I mean you had no idea what was happening beside you. For example I had no idea that in a neighborhood close to where I lived, the missus of Victor Jara was teaching ballet to children and mind you, she had a large school of people. You did not notice because we were busy with our own projects. Well it was a thousand days of hard work – a great deal of hard work but the work was satisfying, it fulfilled you with something I don't know, a sense of spirit.

> It was something… I tell you Raul… I mean it gave you pleasure in creating for example a day care programs or organizing literacy programs. The youth were amazing in the arts, theatre, a real political culture of life! Well, after the overthrow darkness came, a total 100% retreat of everything that was accomplished, you had to do this way, or it meant that you had no right to live.

When darkness did come with the fall of his president, the fall of everything they had worked so hard to achieve, Benjamin became a hunted man. For two years he eluded his captures by taking on a fake name, and working in secret to support himself. In clandestine working with his political party Benjamin struggled with what to do next. On October 12, 1975, he was captured by the Chilean secret police: La DINA. Benjamin describes being dragged from work, blindfolded and beaten in front of his collogues:

> I was detained without any charges being laid. I never had a problem with the law; I had no problems with anybody. Just because I was the president of a workers cooperative I was arrested. I was arrested under that basis, but they had no problem that I worked as an accountant in the municipality. What they found so appalling was that I was an active member of the Communist Party.

As a member of the one of the most despised political parties among Chile's ruling elites Benjamin immediately found himself targeted for interrogation and torture. He moved from one cell to another never knowing where he was or where he was going. He was released twenty-two months later**,** literally torn apart from the damage his captors had inflicted to him. He recalls having to leave prison the same way he came in: blindfolded. "I was in very bad shape, after going through a process of seeing no light….After [they] let us go nothing could function in my body. I was immobilized from the waist down. They took me to my house, they sat me down on the sofa and the lights were on and you couldn't imagine the pain on the eyes."

Four months after freeing Benjamin his torturers came back looking for him and his friend, "*un compadre*" named Ricardo Bebe. Benjamin would escape, his friend would not be

that lucky**:** "He disappeared forever, years later I think three or four years ago they found his remains in a military base in Colina." For his part Benjamin was fortunate; he was moved in secret to a hideout by members of his party. In time he was nursed back to health and able to regain sensation in his legs, however the damage to his overall senses had already been done. In July of 1978, with the help of friends and family, Benjamin applied for refugee status in the Embassy of the Dominican Republic.

From interviewing the most politicized Chilean men, the ones who were most involved in public affairs, it became apparent in the interviews that prison was synonymous with violence; once they were captured they were tortured. Among exiles, the degree of personal suffering related to imprisonment became very much an issue in the interviews. Sergio a *campesino* who became involved with the Communist party at the age 16, was arrested three months after the coup in the city of Linares. Sergio was crammed in a jail built for four with thirteen other people. Tortured on and off, he was released eighteen months later in Nov. 1975. During our interview Sergio was open about his arrest and ordeal, but his suffering was obvious as his voice would lower to almost a whisper when talking about what was left behind of his ordeal:

> I carry it with me to this day. They would come and get you in the middle of the night. Awaken everybody or in the morning when they would read out a list to take people to the *fincas*. You know what the *fincas* are? It's where they would torture you and make you disappear. Imagine Raul with your eyes you saw a soldier walking with a list, checking them off, calling out names never knowing when it was your turn next. This friend was the psychological part. Well when they started reading the names of who came next you knew they weren't going take you to room to give you a scolding, you knew that everybody that came back was not the same. You knew this by just looking at those who had come back. Well, you can imagine I came back like baked bread. They applied all types of torture, electricity, beatings, that lasted what it seemed like a century, they would hit you with this device at the soles of your feet and yell 'prey now you communist mother of a whore.' With that language the *senores* would conduct their interviews. This was the new democracy, the new generation, it was terrible…I still suffer the trauma you

> know. When I see a policeman, when I see a military person it's like someone putting a bucket of cold water over my head.

When I speak of Chilean national identity in exile I take into consideration the importance of September 11th 1973. I realize that this date is not only indicative of the participants' experiences of witnessing an overthrow of government, but also a date in which the movement from civilian into exile is set in motion. In essence the "other September 11th" marks an alteration in the collective memories of my participants, a shift in how they would come to evaluate their compatriots and just as importantly, themselves. For Benjamin September 11th 1973 would mark his real exile as a Chilean. He would move from social actor to socially displaced in the public arena, and he would be branded a threat and become a hunted man, perceived as a danger to national security. He would never be confident of his own compatriots again. When Benjamin was on the plane leaving a country that he would not return till 1992, he did not know what to expect, or what would be waiting for him: "all I knew is that it was cold up there and that they had a good standard of living".

When Benjamin came to Canada in 1978 he was put to work a month after his landing. He had worked 12 hours on the first day washing dishes, sweeping floors and taking out garbage. One day after work he went home and passed out. The *senora* (miss-unmarried woman) he was staying with called for help. In the hospital they were amazed to find that Benjamin was walking around with broken limbs. In the following six years after his landing he would undergo nine surgeries to the stomach and three on his face: "Why? Why was this done?" That is the question I want to ask". Benjamin will never forget his September 11th. As he plays with his fingers, his eyes light up. He ponders for a while and stares at the wall. He tells me to shut off the tape.

5.5 Starting Over Again in Canada

More than a quarter of million people left Chile in the 1970s and 1980s. Some estimates put the number at half a million leaving the country for either political and/or economic reasons (Wright and Onete, 1998). Chileans, unlike the Cuban immigrants, were dispersed to over ninety different countries. They did not settle permanently in one specific nation or make any city their destination of choice (Escobar, 2000). In 1978 alone there were some three hundred Chileans living Saskatchewan, and over eight thousand in Canada. There were an additional two thousand five hundred applications processed from Argentina (Llambias-Wolf, 1998).

In his study of Chilean arrivals, Wei Wei Da (2002) argues that the Canadian governments were reluctant to allow the Chilean refugees in at first, given their political background and Canada's close relations with the United States. Non-governmental groups and worldwide condemnation of Chile's regime resulted in the Trudeau government changing its approach to incoming Chilean refugees (Rockhill and Tomic 1992; Wei Wei Da, 2002).

When Benjamin arrived he was 40 years old. He was injured and unable to properly walk or hear from his left ear. When he left Chile he was alone and in despair. I asked what he felt about living in a new society so remote from the one he had just left:

> I had a whole life made in Chile, I had a family, I had employment, I had everything; everything that was needed was there for me! I found myself with a culture completely different than our own. Completely different that what I used to; because in Chile we would go out and speak to our neighbors, we would go as a group to the theatres. We would have other friendships in Canada. It's sad because it's more silent. There were those personalities you know that group you would run into the cafés or you saw at a football game. In Canada we had a TV but we could not understand it. We had one major obstacle and that was language.

Pedro, a party militant who had come to Saskatoon with two children in 1977 described being pushed into a system totally unprepared for it:

> In the airport I was first received from different organizations, people from manpower, there were also some Chileans there. I came on a weekend and the office where you had to do all the paper work was open on a Monday. So what they did was they took me to a hotel room. In the Holiday Inn they had already pushed the system on you. You enter a room with carpet, color television, everything in order, cars driving everywhere. It was like entering another world and here [in Chile] we were fighting for such elementary things, like the right to education, health, and here they are fighting to obtain two cars.

Uprooted from a whole life in Chile, departure brings emotional last good-byes from friends and families who in some cases would never been seen again. For others, like Julio, departure meant leaving relationships he had built over the previous years in jail: "When I was detained I came face to face with hundreds of my former comrades and friends who kept the same political circles. When I was exiled all I could think about were the comrades I was leaving behind in that jungle."

Many of the participants I interviewed were inexpressive to Canada opening its doors. Ruben, for example, who left through Argentina after passing his second medical exam to get into Canada, describes running into Canadian immigration authorities and being examined like an "animal" to see if he would be fit to work. Others, like Sergio were adamant explaining their impression that Canada offered only a sanctuary, not a home. Sergio elaborated that any costs that the Canadian State endured for their arrival and initial shelter was returned in kind.

> I. When you came to Canada did you find many Chileans?
>
> There was many, for example after the day I arrived they came to see me. The day I landed I was approached by a man in manpower who put me a hotel. Well, after that week of the hotel we started to rent an apartment, so in all honesty with respect to the Canadian government I have incurred little cost to them. And the cost that I have incurred I have paid back. My airfare to Canada I repaid as well as all my family's airfares.

It was in this new cultural and social context that Benjamin would involve himself in organizing to topple the regime from the outside. He committed himself day and night, after

work and on the weekends, to raising awareness of the ongoing human rights struggle in Chile. To him it was a moral obligation to undermine the very regime that had destroyed Chile and her people. In 1978, two years after his arrival, Benjamin helped organize the Chilean Association which was founded by Saskatoon's Communist party members in exile. The association relied heavily on outside support, donations and informal and voluntary networks to organize drives, petitions, and solidarity projects in Pinochet's Chile.

In 1982, after the inclusion of non-Chileans, the Association would be renamed the Chilean-Canadian Association. A year later the Socialist party militants founded the Salvador Allende School, which is a Spanish Community education project that to this day has branches as far as Toronto and Montréal (Galvina, 2004). Although many participants spoke of feeling isolated and removed from their natural environment, Benjamin explained that the initial reaction among most Chilean was to return as soon as it was feasible. The Association then provided not only the political outlet for many of the most militant party members to continue their work in exile, but also acted as a social outlet. Pedro explained to me that the Association provided a base for finding political work for many in exile:

> This type of organization helped you maintain your sanity. It was like you were close to home – working politically from afar. Mentally and emotionally it kept you very close with your country and the Chilean pueblo. Once we regrouped we did a lot a work in the area of solidarity. For examples we worked with women who had their husbands and sons disappear, we assisted with syndicates working in clandestine, we worked with the Catholic Church. Personally I did this for 15 years, not only me but many Chileans. My point of view was we were going to return soon. I maintained that position for more than 10 years.

In exile the party, in this case any political work done from the association, became a key element of maintaining any relationship to the home country. Moreover it solidified the identity of the exile to his home country through a familiarity with solidarity, community, and language.

Nevertheless the association as Pedro recalls would be given to infighting and personal rivalries. “I think everyone was jockeying initially to be the main voice. No one new each other and what we knew of each other was limited to what he or she said.” Benjamin had a more positive view, and one could argue it is a view reflective of the party line. “Everything was coordinated from the top. We had to be accountable to the wishes of the council.” Often in Chile, people worked intimately in party formats. Most comrades or *compadres* had been friends, and they were familiar to one another, or had formed part of a larger network of people in the neighborhood in which they grew up. In exile, being marginalized from the party would often signal ones reservations about the leadership or the unfamiliarity with the people they worked with.

I should note that Canada appeared somewhat different when many exiles began to interact with activist’s movements like the United Church, trade unions and other grassroots movements dealing with justice and poverty issues. Many of the exiles who considered themselves militants of their respective party’s reflected various images of Canada both projected by how they were formally introduced by the state and how they were treated by various sectors of civil society.

Throughout the interviews many of the participants as well stressed the point that they are political, that they came here for political not economic reasons. Participants explained that they had no choice in leaving Chile, and if they had, they would never have wanted to come here. Pedro, who has worked at the University of Saskatchewan as a caretaker for the last 20 years, described his ordeal**:** “instead of calling me by my name, which is Pedro, they [co-workers] would call you Mexican. You have to understand when they call you Mexican or they tell you if ‘you don’t like the country go back to where you came from’ you reply ‘hey, hold on I never asked to come here. I would have returned but I could not.” Furthermore, participants spoke of

feeling unaccustomed to having strangers help them and look at them as if they were docile or weak.

Sergio became so frustrated over the fact that he could not clearly express his feelings in English. After unsuccessfully attempting to enter into dialogue about his feelings with co-workers, he disengaged from such efforts and subsequently turned inwards. Sergio recalls that, "some of the gringos[27] would have absolutely no idea. They thought we were running away from Fidel Castro. Others thought we were Mexicans, they had no concept of Latin Americans or class struggle." Therefore, departure was an emotionally charged atmosphere. There was a sense among the exiles that they had to defend their positions not only against the backdrop of racial discourse and attitudes but against the backdrop of questions from their own compatriots.

The nature of flight, whether it was political or economic, brought back feelings of betrayal and guilt over abandoning the struggle to which they supposed to be fully committed. For example, if you were a militant you were supposed to have more of an incentive, if not a priority to stay. Some political parties, like MIR, had strict guidelines on the subject of exile. Other parties like the Communist one saw exile as temporary and in some cases encouraged exile for some members as a way of creating resistance from the outside. Indeed there was a loss of power involved for all players, and for the most political ones there was a shift from being involved overtly in the public domain to being deprived of that involvement in the most profound ways. In her study of the public/private domain of Chilean exiles, Kay (1987) describe how a lack of activity brought many exiles to the point of despair: "[exiles] were cut off from their life projects, condemned to a day to day, hand to mouth existence. The sudden closure of their political goals and collective projects brought a feeling of closure to their personal lives" (Kay, 1987:60). I asked Benjamin and the militants of this group if they still felt as if they did

[27] Taboo term for English speaking foreigners

not belong in this society some 30 years after they had landed, and if they still felt a degree of social deprivation that had carried over from their initial landing in this country.

5.6 The Desire to Reclaim

As years went by Chilean exiles revised their earlier construction of the country they had left behind. In light of new experiences, their attachments to their old and current homelands went through some radical changes. After having served a prolonged period of absence from Chile, many of my participants had gone back to "test the waters" so to speak. Prior to returning for the first time many participants had felt a great deal of desire and aspirations. Yet, these emotions were often augmented by an idealized version of the former homeland they had left behind. The participants in this study spoke of the desperation and the underlying motivations of wanting to return as a commitment. Luis recalls, "I think that the idea was to save and go back by any means. I think many Chileans suffered because they felt guilty over leaving behind people that they had promised to be with. In some way many of us blamed ourselves for what occurred. 'look how beautiful it was oh it failed lets leave! Lets get out here!' well at least for me and many other I suppose the idea of returning was moral, because it was the right thing to do."

On three occasions Benjamin traveled back to his home country, the last of which was in Jan. 2005. Benjamin had returned to attend the funeral of Chilean Communist Party leader Gladys Marin in Santiago. I asked him how he found the people when he went back to Chile, and he answered with dismay about what had happened to the fabric of popular movements: "people are completely different-almost alien to how I know them. Today there is no social struggle but just a massive form of consumerism". He has yet to decide if he would like to live the remainder of his life in Canada; however, as he puts it, "one thing is for certain, if I die in this

country I die with my heart in Chile." Others like Sergio, who only returned once in 1995 to see his mother buried, have a very pragmatic view of return. The reasons spelled out in my exchange with Sergio are many.

I. Have you thought of ever going back to live?

> Have I thought of ever going to live…I always have those thoughts. The situation here is that I have yet to get accustomed to the weather and that's one thing. I mean winters are very long here. That's not saying anything of the people and the culture. It makes one long for their country to the point of driving someone to depression. Well, those things are plans or dreams that in practice are very hard to make a reality. For one thing the cost of living is high in Chile and salaries low. So to go back and make changes to one's former life would need a lot of sacrifice and support. In Chile I have nothing.

I. Do you find yourself exiled in Chile?

> Well it's like being a traveler or a stranger in your own country.

I. How did people treat you?

> Look, people I talked with: former friends and family members, good. But that happens when someone is a recent arrival. Now if I were to stay there a little longer, things might have been different. The longer you spend here one is forced to work. I mean if you have no money how the hell are you going to survive in Chile. Nobody is going to help you. What I can tell you is that people do treat returnees with disdain because to them we had it easy or are all 'successful' and they were not in that position to 'succeed ' like us.

I. Have many people returned to Chile?

> Yes. Here in Saskatoon there have been three or four families. These are the people who had the opportunity to work in Chile to return to their former jobs. Others returned because they felt they needed to be exonerated. In my case sometimes one feels very frustrated like there is nothing for me in this society.

For all the participants in this thesis that decided to return, at least temporarily, all came back disillusioned with what they found in their former country. Often this led to reassessment of their ties to Chile, and to their decision to settle in Canada. The view of Chile for them had changed radically from the country that they had left behind. For members of this group, their

direct contact with trauma and violence, their experience of terror and displacement only accentuated their alienation from their former homelands. This is particularly true when they found a society that had created a new space in which to memorialize its history. Pedro put in this way, "it was like the dictatorship had wiped everything under the rug." Benjamin, for example, was dismayed over how little young people contributed to the discussion of what had occurred. "People didn't want anything to with the past. The dictatorships greatest miracle was not the so called economic one, but to convince people that this was not worth discussing."

Many who had gone back witnessed former comrades that had switched allegiances. There was even a case where Benjamin saw a former cell-mate, who was tortured and imprisoned with him on the street campaigning for the Right-Wing. Many militants like Benjamin and Simon became cynical of how past human rights abuses would be handled by the *concertacion.* When I asked Simon, a former Communist party member and victim of torture, what he thought of the 2004 jail sentence handed down to former head of the DINA[28] Manuel Contreras and of the indictment made against Pinochet, he replied,

> It's a farce, it's a complete farce. If they wanted to do something to Pinochet they would have done something when he came back from Europe. The problem here is that for people on the Right Pinochet has become an annoying little rock in their shoes. All those trials they are all farces. Do you know how many *milicos*, tortured, murdered and stole and are still serving in their units or free to do whatever they want? Did you know what was left of his victims?

For Benjamin like Simon and many present and former militants, it did not matter that a civilian government had taken over the presidency - this was of little significance. To him the

[28] In May of 2002, Contreras, former head on Pinochet National security Directorate (DINA) was convicted as the mastermind of the1974 abduction and disappearance of Socialist Party leader Victor Olea Alegria. Contreras was also convicted by an Argentinean court in connection with the assassination of former Chilean Army Chief Carlos Prats and his wife in Buenos Aries in 1974. An extradition request made by the courts in Argentina was denied by Chile. On January 28th, 2005 he was convicted of the disappearance of MIR member Miguel Angel Sandoval in 1975. On May 13th 2005, Contreras submitted a 32-page document that claimed to list the whereabouts of about 580 people who disappeared during Pinochet's rule. For more information see Patrice McSherry's, *Predatory States: Operation Condor and Covert War in Latin America,* Rowman and Littlefield, 2005.

whole Pinochet machinery from the military appointees to civilian posts, the 1980 constitution to the neo-liberal economic structure, all remained firmly in place (Morales, 2002).

5.6 Canada after 25 years in Exile: Eduardo and Benjamin

How is the sense of home and belonging revealed to us after 25 years in exile? How do both these men articulate their place and belonging to home and nation? Stories of meeting with immigrant and manpower officials, of "being pushed into the system" reveal that the introduction of immigrants into Canadian society for many Chilean escaping a period persecution and violence was inadequate and insensitive. When they first arrived, many of the encounters in Canada made them feel unwelcome. As stated above Ruben had described his entry into Canada as being examined by immigration authorities "like an animal". For Chileans entering Canada their physical characteristics often differed with the white majority. Although most Chileans do not consider themselves dark skinned, they were often mistaken as Aboriginals, or categorized as one in the same as Mexicans. In Saskatchewan the differences were almost acute, especially in small towns where people from different cultures and parts of the world were few. Simon who came to Canada in 1976, married a white women after some 12 years in exile. Simon responded as follows,

> I: Did you find yourself discriminated in Canada?
>
> Well as opposed to Chile the type of discrimination is different. What that tells you is that yes, there is discrimination and a great deal of racism but very much hidden….very in the closet, very polite.
>
> I: As a refugee did you encounter discrimination?
>
> Yes definitely there has always been in Canada. Look people are jumping to the conclusion that because of September 11th there is discrimination. But

> one has to realize that this country has a history of discrimination. The remedy for us was to understand it and be strong. I have an experience, for example, with my wife who is Canadian, she took me to her home town before we were married. The people were scared of touching me. I would say 'hi how are you' and they would say 'hi' but they would stay motionless and hesitate about touching me. I remember some of those towns have strong a German heritage. After a while they got used to the fact that I was from *over there somewhere*. Here too people would ask me where I was from I would tell them Chile and they would respond 'is that Mexico'? After a while I became tired and said yes, yes, they are neighbors (laughs). I think today think have changed. There is more information, more diversity and respect for differences. I mean second generation Chileans who themselves have produced sons and daughters have entered the system – education and otherwise. There is much more education today. People have an idea of how to read a map. Before forget about it.

Ruban in turn explains this way,

> When you open your mouth people immediately know that you are different and you know automatically that you are different as well. You are not considered a Canadian. People often ask where I come from I tell them I am Latino or from Chile. And you know they are already putting you into a category.

In these accounts, both Ruben and Simon because of accent and skin colour become categorized racially. The word 'they' and 'people' refers to white people who speak correct English. In this sense Chileans as refugees are relegated to minority status. It can be said that language and how it is spoken, the struggles with it, has played a key role in shaping the character of the Chilean identity and their sense of belonging in Canada even 25 years after their flight. For Benjamin in particular language has constituted a barrier in his attempt to build a life in Canada and to accept this country as his home. Their exposure to the dominant discourse reproduced by people's behavior, mannerisms and passing comments, left many of these men devalued and underappreciated. His Spanish binds him to his imagined Latino community in Canada and to the imagined community in Chile.

Most Chileans today do not involve themselves in party politics. Gatherings are more informal where political lines are less distinct. Luis who had founded the soccer team Arauco explained to me that soccer had become an out for many Chileans, an out to a divisive political atmosphere that had burdened many friendships: “look in soccer we all played as a team. At first some of the players would not play with others because some would say ‘no this guy comes from this line of thought’ others would try to enforce a dogma on the team. But we would have none of it. Today it is a very successful team with players representing many nationalities in Canada.”

While Benjamin has made his place in Canada working as a committed and active member of the community, his and other men’s experiences express different struggles of exclusion, racism and discrimination. In these struggles they have developed different strategies to cope with these barriers. For Benjamin he developed a strong identification with being a Communist party member. His experience of torture and absolute horror has never left him; in that respect the possibility of him ever returning completely to his home nation might in forever be lost. For Benjamin the search for home is not just at the level of a nation, or external community; it also encompasses the internal dynamics of the self. It becomes important for him to (re)claim a sense of self that incorporates and values the dynamics of his experience in community, social struggle and political movements. For Eduardo and other middle-class Chilean men, leaving the country typically happened early in their careers. Because of the nature of this journey, he was able to finally go back to school 19 years after his departure from his country, a country where he enjoyed a professional rank and the esteem of his colleagues.

Because of the dire economic and political situation within Chile after the coup, many expected that their exile would not be long, and that the regime in this sense would weaken and return would be feasible after a couple of years in exile. As time wore on both these men found

different avenues to commute their exile; for Benjamin, leaving Chile forged an identity to the movement they were both involved in and linked him to others with similar backgrounds and status. In the case of Eduardo, he isolated himself from the community in many ways. His energy instead was diverted to helping save enough money to go back to school and put his daughter through school. In both narrative accounts we see how home is both a place of mind and body. Therefore identifying with that imagined community involves not just the search for a physical structure or land but also the resources (financial, emotional, and spiritual) needed to sustain and support one's self and one's family. The search for nation-hood is also the search to find a place that gives meaning to personal identity and/or helps one to become who one wants to be.

5.7 Conclusion

To live in exile is a debilitating affair – it is something that is born both out of alienation and distinction. Yet for the most part, the politically engaged, rendered dangerous in their country, find room to devote their public lives to political obligations. In this chapter I looked at how exiles that had come out of a movement that had engaged a nation deliberate about their membership and belonging for a national community. The nation in this sense was seen as part of a project, a creation of building a better Chile for all. In exile many of the politically involved were scattered and disillusioned, and the subsequent revival of party networks became a daunting task. Upon returning to Chile many militants found a much different reality, one where their value and worth was not considered as important as it once. In post exile many of the participants who had returned found themselves cynical with what they saw. They did not share many of the same values of their compatriots and often were thought of as living in past. Many were ambiguous as to their situation as it pertained to living in Chile. In this sense Canada offered

stability and comfort. I asked Benjamin if he thought that Canada could ever be called a home to him, and he replied, “Raul how can I call this home when I cannot really act naturally?”

Chapter 6

Analysis

This Chapter focuses on detailing the representation of identity embedded in the Chilean exile discourse as discussed in the narratives of Chapter 4 and 5. Exiles were submerged into a population that which was different than the ones from their original homes. This effected what they claimed as their own identity and the discourse of surrounding identity. In this sense the study has attempted to examine the impact of exile on a group of 12 Chilean men living in post-exile circumstances in Saskatchewan. In the interviews respondents were required to provide a chronological account of their experiences in their country of origin, the departure from their country, their resettlement experience in Canada, subsequent major developments in their lives, their return visit and their current outlook on the future. I used a narrative account to tell the story of two men who as exiles had very different paths and who came from different social groups. Nonetheless, they shared similar outlooks with respect to Chile and Canada and the prospects of return.

The interest here lies in how the conceptualization of identity to homeland is understood by the exile. As the research shows the conceptualization of identity serves to functions as a disadvantage for some exiles. Other forms of discourse serve to counter the effects of long-term displacement and alienation. Identity in this thesis entailed looking at how exiles give meaning and shape to the homeland or what Anderson describes as their “imagined community”. National identity in this thesis is used as an operational term. That is national identity refers to a particular type of identity. Identity then is determined by the speaker’s subjective interpretation of

themselves and their experiences and his belonging to a particular group recognized as “nation” or “country” (Mortimer, 1999).

The study argued that nation as interpreted through exile is in contradiction to the dominant discourse that situates exile/immigrant identity to one particular formation or “traditional monological analysis [that] forces simplistic templates which great false unities. Locked in a Classical paradigm, monological thinking denies the possibility of contradicting ideas existing simultaneously” (DeSantis, 2001:15). Following DeSantis’ outline of Bakhtin’s push and pull model, I will map out some of the similarities and differences among the 2 groups in this study. DeSantis (2001) maps out 4 recurring motifs negotiated in exile discourse. In this section I will map out four ways in which Chilean exile identity is expressed: (1) connection to the history of his homeland (2) the way the exile identify socially; (3) view of country; and (4) aspects for the future.

6.1 Connection to the Homeland: Differences and Similarities

Both groups had a strong sense of political engagement to their country of origin, a political engagement that in many cases lasted into post-exile years, (after the change from military to civilian rule on March 11, 1990). In other words they had a relationship to Chile and saw their eventual return as a political obligation to carry on with the commitment that they had been involved in during the Salvador Allende years. Exiles talked about their involvement as something that was shared and collective in nature. The project of constructing a better Chile was preceded by a historical materialization of social struggle and practice. Like Sergio remarked, “Allende was not elected on a coincidence, like any social movement, the election had precedence”.

September 11, 1973 for all the exiles represented a rupture in the development of that dream. Allende and the political work done under the Popular Unity government in this sense became larger than life during the pinnacle of the exiles years. It is not surprising then that even in post-exile the character of the Chileans in this study would be shaped by the historical elements that produced the overthrow of government. Gomez Barris speaking on testimonies of Chilean exiles in the United States (2005) comments that "longing, mourning and political critique would be predominant ways of feeling and acting in the social world" (2005: 99). Hartman who writes of the enduring cost of political violence remarks that for many victims the inability to forget "threatens to remain an open grave, an open wound in consciousness" (Hartmen, 1994:5). This way of feeling and acting indeed has not left the psyche and mentality of the exiles living 30 plus after the overthrow of government. The narratives of the participants show a complexity and a tension that is imbedded in a trauma of national proportions. Ariel Dorfman, recalling the feeling of defeat three days after the overthrow, conveys what many participants in this study felt during this time: "As I walk I can feel hope been sucked out of me as if I were bleeding it, I can feel all the rage in Chile filling me and there is nothing outside of me or inside me to counter that, not even tears. I can't find a tear inside me to cry for my dead president and my dying land and my dry heart: I am hollow, adrift, someone who does not know who is or what to do with his life" (Dorfman, 1999:186).

It is only fitting then that all the men interviewed regarded the election of Allende, the creation of the Undid Popular, the creation of a new cultural movement that activated the popular sectors in Chile as an experience that became the pinnacle of their lives. Identity in this sense is tied to the political and social discourse surrounding the events of social revolution, political ingression, dislocation and flight. It is evident that even 30 plus years after the coup d'état, after

the overwhelming trauma of displacement and torture and persecution, many of the men interviewed maintain sentiments of solidarity and an intimacy to their country that is mirrored by the political entity that they had once occupied. Using Bakhtin's dialogism, DeSantis reminds us that, "to truly think dialogically about ones future means to realize that the past always informs the future. That one's two communities will always converse in the memory of experience. And that the centripetal and centrifugal forces will continue to shape the exile's reality no matters where they call home" (DeSantis, 2001:14).

6.2 The Way Exiles Identify Socially: Similarities and Differences

Language is the key determinant of social expression. All the men interviewed had achieved a basic knowledge of English. Even Benjamin had said he knew "enough to get by". Nevertheless, the men felt uncomfortable in the new language due to their heavy accent (Baker, 1994). Many were unable move up economically because of the difficulties in communicating in English. Exiles who were professionals at home who had come to Canada with a university degree spoke of having to learn a different English when entering University. Often a poor command of the English language was rational enough for abuse and discrimination. Moreover, exiles themselves, in particular the militants, initially regarded English as a language spoken by the imperialist. Although most of the militants sought to learn English, many internalized their feeling of deficiency in English and in turn stopped asserting themselves in learning the language. Almost all my respondents had assumed that English would take a matter of months to master when they initially arrived in Canada. But as seen in the findings, many had struggled with English, even through their university years.

For many exiles, speaking English with an accent compounded the difficulties of communicating with figures of authority, whether it was a teller at a bank, or in the case of young professional making a case with respect to his academic credentials in Chile. Therefore, even gaining mastery of the language over time the exiles never felt completely confident.

Differences in Spanish among the two Groups

Spanish among the professionals or middle class Chilean exiles did not present any problems. The skill level of Spanish is often representation of your class rank in Chile (Escobar, 000). Among the more formally educated exiles the competency of the speaker with respect to how they produced expression was a symbolic part of their cultural and social capital (Bourdieu, 1991). Buchanan (1979) who studies the differences of language usage among the Haitian communities in New York City describes the symbolic and cultural distinction of language uses not only issue of status and identity but as well a question of leadership and representation among cultural and ethnic communities (Buchanan, 1979:309). In Canada the lack of common interpretation of history and displacement became a vehicle for division among political parties and the community at large. Adopting the English language signified for many with militant backgrounds, that some Chileans had given up on going home. They in turn were not considered legitimate exiles or in worse cases they were considered “sell outs”. Militants in this sense had shaped their Spanish to match their political discourse. In this sense words like “proletariat”, “revolution”, “bourgeois”, “movement”, “fascism”, “oppression”…etc were consistently alluded to throughout our conversation(s). In contrast professionals and students although very open and clear with what had happened in Chile were more pronounced in the way they described their relationships at home and at work.

6.3 Chile and Canada: Comparisons and Similarities

There are differences in the way both Canada and Chile are expressed between the two groups. The significant difference between the two is the way Canada and Chile are constructed. Chilean identity is predominant; it is by far the most claimed and elaborated. With the militants in this study Chile is proclaimed in ideological declarations or has connections to the political historical makeup of the country. Among all exiles however declarations of their Chilean identity are elaborated directly such as “I am Chilean” or “we Chileans” or through ownership such as “my Chile”. These declarations are obvious indicators of identity. In this sense Chile as a country was treated as a matter of fact, as a determination of who the exiles are as people and where they come from as political refugees. Expressions of Canadian identity were less frequent, in particular for militants. In all cases expressions such as “us Canadians” or ‘we Canadians” were nonexistent. In both cases the subjects had no problem identifying with Chileans or as Chileans. However the same could not be said of their relationship with Canada. Luis gives us an indication of such expression:

> I. Do you consider yourself Chilean or Canadian?
>
> I consider myself a Chilean first a Canadian second. I mean to be Canadian you have to be born here. You have to accept this culture. This could be our idiosyncrasies but in the end we will always be Chileans….one can not say this in all cases. It’s half and half. There are youths who have lost their Chilean identity, they have lost their language and have adopted a Canadian identity.

Here Luis offers a distinction of how he sees himself belonging to Canada. He accepts the fact that he is a Canadian second but reminds me that to be fully Canadian grow up being part of

Canadian culture. Many Chileans in particular the ones who had shed their old party alliances and had not gone back to Chile offered a similar analysis. They identity with Canada as a nation but were less willing to identify with Canada as a cultural constitution of themselves. The participants had told me that as a way of protecting the marked class divisions in their homelands – when return was made a possibility - they would distinguish themselves as Canadian citizens, calling themselves Canadians or exclaiming their identification "as Canadian". This might be an indication of alienation that many refugees and immigrants suffer in the host country.

6.4 Similarities during the Process of Return

The collective impression that had given rise to that time before the coup was surpassed by a community and nation that continued to evolve under a dictatorship and climate of fear. Luis Roniger who writes of the impact of military rule in the southern countries gives us some indication into how this occurred, "the Chilean version of National Security aimed to exclude leftists from participating in politics, the economy, culture and public spheres. This implied not only the personal persecution of leftist activists but also the dismantling of the institutions perceived by the military rulers as likely to become a basis for the reemergence of contentious ideas ad action"(1997:239). Thus return to Chile after 20 or 25 years found a nation still riveted by the effects of a dictatorship.

For militants, the changes had a profound effect. Sergio came back and witnessed people jealously guarding their jobs from the encroachment of returnees. Pedro found a deeply apolitical mass of people afraid to confront a legacy that had left thousands of people dead and maimed. Many of the professionals interviewed never contemplated that Chileans would be so consumed with a culture that privileged consumption, which trivialized poverty and inequality, which

reduced a once active, engaged Chile to the discipline and obedience of the market. This change so unlike the country they had left was never expected.

I think what was most hurtful and most painful for many of the participants who went back, who traveled in some cases with their families to live – albeit a short time - was that Chile, its people conformed to the official line of leaving history alone. Chileans did not want to be incarcerated by that moment in time. To bring it up in Chile became a social taboo, Allende, la Unidad Popular, Pinochet, Marxism had run its course. Katherine Hite (1996) who examines the changing nature of the Chilean political left describes the transformation and impact on the political forces of the country,

> In spite of the impressive electoral and political gains since the 1989 national elections, which marked the end of the dictatorship, today's Chilean left continues to be plagued by shared memories of the chaos and drama surrounding the Allende years and by the penetrating reach of the repression that followed. The left also faces the challenger of framing positions within a dominant political culture which emphasizes the will of the individual rather than the collectivity and within a universal context in which socialist models have, for the most part collapsed (1996:302).

The Chile that the participants encountered constituted a formidable obstacle. Friends were older, members of their family had been buried during the coup, brothers and sister had married and moved away, party members were now fighting to replace each other. The deep impact of military rule and the application of neo-liberal policy reshaped the basic image of Chile's collective identity. Luis who attempted to return and live in his country of origin captures this alteration, "Chile has changed indeed. The people I knew are no longer where they used to live. People are new and faces are new. When I went back I was like one of those strange little birds that the whole world stared at. Everybody knew that I came from the outside."

Consequently**,** all the participants who had gone back and tried to forge a place in the new Chile resigned to the idea of coming back to Canada, to Saskatchewan, which in this case offered more of a socialist model, a more open and considerate system that provided health care and access to education for their families than what they hoped to expect from a Chile. Return for many participants implied a continuing process of working out their relationships to both countries.

6.5 Conclusion

The brutality and social stigma that the country still suffers are a result of what Eduardo claimed as a whole "history being swept under the rugs" is still very much an issue for many Chileans. As a second generation son of an exile, I can say that the story of flight and the political reasons behind flight is an account engrained in you. You become moved by the history and the sentiments to what Chile as a country represents.

It is this sentiment and longing to return to ones country that was always present in the sadness and dignity of my parents…an intermixed of nationalism, of sacrifice, of party. Because of this, culture and history in our home became an almost defensive reaction to the challenge of trying to fit into a foreign environment. The solace of memory and the pain of finding Chile between the old and the new world coupled with the impact of forced integration crafted the condition of alienation widely felt among most Chilean exiles. After 20 years in exile my father would start to pronounce more openly his longing to go back, to return and reclaim. The endurance of what he was going through was obvious to me even at the age of 12 while I watched him, in his stillness as he stared for hours through the kitchen window, almost mesmerized in his own thoughts. Exile for him becomes a series of reclaiming moments, of

finding union with a memory abducted from time. In 1996 he would think of his return not only as a nostalgic reunion but as way of healing “the personal and social wounds” of the past. (DeSantis, 2001:14). When my family left they had left the two sons born in Chile in Canada and the two other sons born in Canada in Chile. Like many Chileans who returned they devoted their energies to rebuild in what they considered a much different Chile. As the years wore on they longed for Canada, for its space and solitude, its beauty and its people. DeSantis speaks of this as being caught in two worlds as living always in the absence of a real home.

In exile I would add that there are three worlds, the one left behind, the host nation and the one the exiles returns to. The findings in this thesis then point to the key role of social/political expression that formed the exile’s identity. Further it was shown attachment to the original homeland can remain strong even after an absence of decades. Therefore, a continued settlement in Canada for many exiles did not imply a ‘belonging’ to that country. Instead through interaction and discourse many exiles define how they themselves belong to Chile and Canada. Bakhtin’s dialogism looks at this discourse, and accepts it as centripetal and centrifugal forces existing in exiles lives and determination to settle (Bakhtin, 1981). This study has shown that Chilean discourse about home and belonging is contradictory and diverse in itself. This, however, does not imply that these are signs of emotional instability or irrational thinking, but, on the contrary, ways in which exiles act to adjust to new conflicts and dynamics existing in the everyday struggles of their lives.

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APPENDIX 1

Glossary of Terms used in Thesis

Concertacion - is an alliance of center-left political parties in Chile, founded in 1988. The coalition has, in various forms, held the Chilean presidency since military rule ended in 1990, the elected presidents being Patricio Aylwin, Eduardo Frei, Ricardo Lagos and the current President, Michelle Bachelet

Coup d'état or **coup** - is the sudden overthrow of a government through unconstitutional means by a part of the state establishment, usually the armed forces.

Exile - a form of punishment or a self-imposed leaving of ones homeland. It means to be away from one's home (i.e. city, state or country) while either being explicitly refused permission to return and/or being threatened by prison or death upon return.

Free Market - is an economic system in which the production and distribution of goods and services takes place through the mechanism of free markets guided by a free price system rather than by the state in a planned economy.

Hegemony - is the dominance of one group over other groups, with or without the threat of force, to the extent that, for instance, the dominant party can dictate the terms of trade to its advantage; more broadly, cultural perspectives become skewed to favor the dominant group. Hegemony controls the ways that ideas become "naturalized" in a process that informs notions of common sense.

Left-Wing - In politics, **left-wing**, **the political left** or simply **the left** are terms that refer to the segment of the political spectrum typically associated with any of several strains of, to varying extents, socialism, anarchism, communism, social democracy, and progressivism and defined in contradistinction to its polar opposite, the right.

Neoliberalism - is an economic ideology centered upon the values of unregulated trade and markets, and the expanded business horizons provided by the end of the Cold War, or globalization. It argues that free markets, free trade, and the unrestricted flow of capital will produce the greatest social, political and economic good. This form advocates minimal government spending, minimal taxation, minimal regulations, and minimal direct involvement in the economy

Unidad Popular (UP) - was the coalition of Chilean political parties that coalesced behind the successful candidacy of Salvador Allende for the 1970 Chilean presidential election. The coalition consisted of socialists, communists, radicals, and dissident Christian Democrats.

Source: Wikipedia

APPENDIX 2

Draft of Consent Form

Purpose: This interview has been designed in order to conduct research among Chilean exiles and their experience in Saskatchewan with the intended academic purpose of completion of a Master's thesis with Department of Sociology at the University of Saskatchewan. The prime concentration of this research will deal in the area of refugee and migration studies as it pertains to exiles from Chile. The data collected from the interview will be analyzed and reported in the future in the form of a Master's Thesis. Our intention is to improve upon the research done in this area and for future consideration of further research that aims to better facilitate an understanding of the predicament of exile, principally as it pertains to the individual identity and social patterns of incorporation. Therefore, this particular questionnaire is important in two respects; 1) to obtain knowledge on what you the participant have experienced living in social exile, and; 2) to obtain knowledge on what you the participant feel should have been the most important factors leading to your decision to stay or migrate back to Chile. For the purpose of transcription and clarity, your response to the questions asked in the interview process will be audio taped and recorded. The time commitment required for completion of the interview is within the range of 2 hours.

Confidentiality: The findings will be distributed with the utmost confidentiality. However, as researcher(s) we are legally and ethically obliged to disclose any information in the event of an emergency situation, any criminal matter or if we receive an authorized court order from a judge. As a participant, you will have the opportunity to review all transcripts in relation to your participation in the interview process. You will have the opportunity to add, alter or delete any or all section(s) of the transcript. You will also have the opportunity to review the transcript prior to its inclusion in the final data analysis.

Potential Risks: Questions presented in the interview may allude to specific events in the course of your transition from Chile to Canada. Therefore, the recollection of these events may be personally painful and may cause distress. You have the right to stop the interview process at any time or not answer any questions that may hinder on your ability to continue the interview. By being aware of the potential risks involved you may ask for counselor or a family member to be present or referred to you during the course of the interview, in which case the interview will be suspended for a maximum of 7 days in order to facilitate the proper arrangements. You may also decide to participate in the interview during another time that is both satisfactory for yourself and the researcher; however, you should be aware that the time limit with respect to collection of data is limited to 30 days.

Right to Withdraw: You may withdraw from this interview at any time whether or not you feel stressed, emotional constrained or unable to proceed; however, if you decide to withdraw from this questionnaire, any information that you have provided will not be used and subsequently destroyed. You also as a participant have the right to stop or switch off the tape recorder at any time**.** Once this study is complete you will be notified of the final document and presented with report based on the data collected from the interview.

Questions: If you have any new information that you would like to add to the interview after the interview process is complete please feel free to contact the number(s) listed at the end of this study or if you have any questions to the nature of the interview, study and/or research method you are free to contact the researcher at the number provided at the conclusion of this study. This research has been reviewed and approved on ethical grounds by the University of Saskatchewan Behavioral Research Ethics Board on Oct 15/03. If you have any questions as to your right as a research participant, you may contact the Office of Research Services at 966-2084.

Consent to Participate: I _____ have read and understood the description of the interview process provided above. I have also been provided with opportunity to withdraw and/or ask questions prior to answering any questions in this study. I consent to participate in the study described above, with the understanding that this study will only be used to collect information based on my experience as a political exile. A copy of this consent has been giving to me for my records.

_____
(Signature of Participant)

Date _____

_____
(Signature of Researcher)

Date _____

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APPENDIX 3

Interview Protocol

Interview no. **Interview date:**
Time Start: **Time Finish:**
Interview location: **Referred by:**
Age: **Place of residence:**
Name: **Gender:**

I. Personal background and political identity

1. Could you tell me a little about yourself?
2. What do you do for a living?
3. Tell me about your family?
4. What was your first place of asylum?
5. What was your lifestyle like in asylum?
6. What brought you to Canada (date)?
7. What circumstances led to you to settle in Saskatchewan?
8. What was your occupation in Chile?
9. What was education like in Chile?
10. Do you consider yourself a political person?
11. What was your lifestyle like before you got involved in the political sphere in Chile?
12. Has the meaning to your political philosophy changed? If so what manifestations brought these changes?
13. Were you involved in a political party in Chile? What position did you have in this party? Are you still active in the party?

II. Pathway to becoming an exile

14. Now I want to go back and talk to you a little about the experience of flight. Would you be able to tell me about what circumstances led to your flight? Was there any external support in helping you to leave Chile? Were you under a great deal of pressure or threat to leave the country? Was the same true in the case of your first place of asylum?
15. When I mention the word exile what does it mean to you? Do you still consider yourself a political exile?
16. Would you say there was a great deal of people who left Chile under the very same circumstances that you were under?

III Living in exile in Canada

17. When you arrived in Canada what stands out as being significantly different? Who was the first to help you out during the first weeks of your initial landing in Canada?

18. What was your first place of employment in Canada? How long did it take you to find employment in Canada? How many different types of "jobs" have you worked before finding steady employment?
19. Did you go to school in Canada? Where? At what level and for what reasons?
20. Do you become involved in any sort of political activism in Canada or for that matter in Saskatchewan? Are you still occupied in any sort of community involvement or activism?
21. What was some of the barriers you faced when you arrived and decided to live in Canada (language, cultural, racial)? Is the same true of Saskatchewan? Have you ever faced any sort of discrimination in Saskatchewan? Did have any impact on your life?
22. Do you think Saskatchewan, Canada is an accepting place of different cultures? If no why not?
23. What are your relations with the Chilean community? What is your relation with the community here in Saskatchewan? Does a Chilean community still exist? Under what function and what involvement are you still part of the Chilean community?
24. Do you consider yourself more or less a Canadian or a Chilean?
25. Are you a citizen of Canada?
26. At home do you speak English or Spanish?

IV <u>The decision to return and attitudes towards the future</u>

27. Do you experience a longing to go back to your country? Is that still in you – to go back to Chile?
28. Have you been back to Chile? If so what is different and why?
29. Have you lived in Chile? For how long?
30. What was you initial reaction when you first returned home? How long did this reaction last for?
31. When did you decide to go back? What year (date)?
32. What was your primary reason of going back?
33. Were you employed when you returned to Chile?
34. When you initially went back to Chile did you decide to live there or just travel?
35. (If applicable) What made want to return to Canada? Why?
36. (If applicable) Do you think there will be a time in the future when you will go back to Chile to live?
37. Do you know of any of your exiled friends that have gone back and decided to live or return back to Chile?
38. What do you see yourself doing in the next 3-5 years?
39. (If applicable) Looking back at the reasons for leaving your country what has been your something that stands out in your mind that you can tell about the experience of exile?

Do you have any questions for me or anything that you might want to mention before we conclude with this interview?