

Chilean voluntary repatriation, 1978-2002: how voluntary, how gendered and how classed?

Helia López Zarzosa (2011)

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***Chilean Voluntary Repatriation, 1978-2002:
How Voluntary, How Gendered and How Classed?***

Helia López Zarzosa

August 2011

**Thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements
of the award of Doctor of Philosophy**

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to the late Helia Zarzosa Toledo, my mother

Abstract

This evidence-based study is about Chilean voluntary repatriation as a political process rooted in the political history of Chile and in the wider context of the end of the Cold War. It considers the two main socio-political scenarios of the Pinochet dictatorship (1973-1990) and transitional democracy (1990-) but also brings the interim years of 1988-1990 to the fore. It focuses on the voluntary, class and gender dimensions of voluntary repatriation, arguing that decisions to return are not the product of individual choices or factors as argued in most of the literature, but influenced by a complex interplay of structures operating at the macro and micro levels. Chilean hegemonic institutions such as political parties, the Catholic Church and the family as well as patriotism along with class and gender shaped these decisions. Return discourses such as *El Derecho a vivir en la patria*, later replaced by *Chile Somos Todos*, were rooted in such matrix.

In explaining voluntary repatriation, this study introduces a new concept to the field: the notion of *returnism* as a political narrative of nationhood and return-control mechanism that successfully interwove both micro and macro levels in the *exilio-retorno* compression. A key finding is that the very hegemonic structures that were in place before and during exile were not only reproduced and strengthened during the dictatorship but were also used against it and termed here the *like with like* argument.

Through the socio-political developments that took place both in Chile and exile, this study analyses the experiences of returnees. For this purpose, secondary concepts are introduced. The analysis explains why some returnees 'succeeded' and others 'failed' to find a place in Chilean society and shows paradoxically that voluntary repatriation was more sustainable under dictatorship. Overall, class and gender positioning are determinant in the 'end of the refugee cycle'.

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I remain solely responsible for any remaining inaccuracies, misspellings and grammatical errors.

ACRONYMS – ABREVIATIONS

- AFDD:** *Agrupación de Familiares de Detenidos Desaparecidos/ Association of Relatives of the Disappeared*
- AFPP:** *Agrupación de Familiares de Presos Políticos/Association of Relatives of Political Prisoners.*
- BRC:** British Refugee Council
- CAF:** *Comité Anti-Fascista/ Anti-Fascist Committee*
- CCHDH:** *Comisión Chilena de Derechos Humanos/Chilean Commission of Human Rights*
- CCHR-UK:** Chile Committee for Human Rights – UK
- CCPP:** *Comisiones Permanentes de Refugiados/Permanent Commission of Guatemalan Refugees in Mexico*
- CEAR:** *Comisión Especial para la Atención de Refugiados, Repatriados y Desplazados (Guatemala)*
Special Commission for the Care of Refugees, Returnees and Displaced
- CEAS:** *Comité Ecueménico de Acción Social, Argentina*
- CESPO:** *Centro de Estudios Poblacionales/*
- CIDE:** *Centro de Investigación y Desarrollo de la Investigación/ Centre for Research and Development in Education.*
- CIIR:** Catholic Institute for International Relations/now Progressio.
- CIMAL:** *Centro de Información Migratoria para América Latina/ Information Centre on Latin American Migration.*
- CIME/ICEM:** *Comite Intergubernamental para las Migraciones Europeas/ Intergovernmental Committee for European Migration. In 1980, the denomination European was dropped and ICEM became ICM (Intergovernmental Committee for Migration).*
- CHD:** *Chile Democrático/ Democratic Chile*
- CHD-UK:** *Chile Democrático -UK*
- CNI:** *Central Nacional de Informaciones /National Intelligence Central*
- CNR:** *Comisión Nacional de Repatriación del Uruguay/Uruguay's National Commission for Repatriation*
- CNVR:** *Comisión Nacional de Verdad y Reconciliación/Truth and Reconciliation National Commission*
- CNREA:** *Comisión Nacional para el Retorno de Argentinos en el Exterior/National Commission for the Return of Argentinians Abroad*
- CODEJU:** *Comisión Nacional Pro-Derechos Juveniles/ National Commission for the Rights of Youth*
- CODEPU:** *Comité de Defensa del Pueblo/ Committee for the Defence of the Rights of People.*
- COLAT:** *Colectivo Latinoamericano /Latin American Collective of Psycho-social Work (Belgium)*
- COPROREX:** *Comité Pro-Retorno de Exiliados/Pro-Retun of Exiles Committee*
- CSC:** Chile Solidarity Campaign, UK
- DC:** *Democracia Cristiana/ Christian Democracy [PDC]*
- DINA:** *Dirección Nacional de Inteligencia/National Intelligence Directorate*
- DR:** Direct repression

FASIC: *Fundación de Ayuda Social de las Iglesias Cristianas*/ Foundation of Christian Churches for Social Aid.

FLACSO: *Facultad Latinoamericana de Ciencias Sociales*/Latin American Faculty of Social Sciences

FONASA: *Fondo Nacional de Salud* /National Health Fund

FPMR: *Frente Patriótico Manuel Rodríguez*/ Manuel Rodríguez Patriotic Front (PC's armed wing).

FRP: *Programa de Reunificación Familiar*/Family Reunification Programme (FASIC-UNHCR)

FTDA: *France Terre d'Asile*

IC: *Izquierda Cristiana*/Christian Left

ICARA II: Second International Conference on Assistance to Refugees in Africa

ICM: Intergovernmental Committee for Migration

ICRC: International Committee of the Red Cross

IMR: International Migration Review

IOM: International Organization for Migration/ This current denomination was officially adopted in November 1989.

INCAMI: *Instituto Católico Chileno de Migración* /Chilean Catholic Institute for Migration

IR: Indirect repression

IRELA: *Instituto de Relaciones Europeo-Latinoamericanas* (Madrid)/ Institute for European-Latin American Relations

ISAPRE: *Instituciones de Salud Previsional* (private competitive insurance market)

JWG: Joint Working Group – London

LAC: Latin American and Caribbean Countries

LARAP: Latin American Reintegration Assistance Programme

MAPU: *Movimiento de Acción Popular*/United Popular Action Movement

MAPU-OC: *MAPU Obrero-Campesino*/Worker-Peasant MAPU

MECE: *Mejoramiento de la Calidad y Equidad de la Educación* (Ministry of Education National Program)

MIR: *Movimiento de Izquierda Revolucionaria*/Movement of the Revolutionary Left

NCCR:, National Coordinating Committee for Repatriation (South Africa).

NED: National Endowment for Democracy

NSDS: National Security Doctrine State

OAS: Organisation of American States/*OEA: Organización de Estados Americanos*

ODA: Overseas Development Administration (U.K.)

ONR: *Oficina Nacional de Retorno*/National Bureau of Return

PC: *Partido Comunista de Chile*/Communist Party of Chile

PAIS: *Partido Amplio de Izquierda Socialista* (November 1988- March 1990).

PDC: *Partido Demócrata Cristiano*/Christian Democratic Party

PEM: Programa de Empleo Mínimo/Minimum Employment Programme.

PIDEE: Protección de la Infancia Dañada por los Estados de Emergencia/Foundation for the Protection to

Infancy Damaged by Periods of Emergency

POJH: Programa para Jefes de Hogar/Employment Programme for Household Heads.

PR: *Partido Radical/Radical Party*

PRAL: Programa de Retorno y Apoyo Laboral/Return Programme and Employment Support.

PS: *Partido Socialista de Chile/Socialist Party of Chile*

REAB: Reintegration and Emigration for Asylum-Seekers in Belgium [IOM]

REAG: Reintegration and Emigration for Asylum-Seekers in Germany [IOM]

RECHA: Rückkehrer-Fachkräfte-Programm für Chileninnen und Chilenen (RF-Programm)

RM: Return migration

RN: Renovación Nacional/National Renovation Party

RSP: Refugee Studies Program, University of Oxford (now **RSC:** Refugee Studies Centre)

SARP: South African Repatriation Program

SEREMI: *Secretaría Regional Ministerial/ Regional Office of Ministries*

SERNAM: *Servicio Nacional de la Mujer/Women's National Bureau*

SICAR: *Servicio de Inteligencia de Carabineros/Police Intelligence Service*

SIDA: Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency

SIFA: *Servicio de Inteligencia de la Fuerza Aérea/Air Force Intelligence Service*

SIM: Servicio de Inteligencia Militar/Army Intelligence Service

SIN: *Servicio de Inteligencia Naval/Naval Intelligence Service*

SM: Sociala Missionen - Sweden

SNS: *Servicio Nacional de Salud/ National Health Service*

SSL: Bodleian Social Science Library, University of Oxford

TVN: *Televisión Nacional de Chile/Chilean National Television Channel*

UDHR48: 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights

UF: *Unidad de Fomento*

UNHCR: United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees

UNRRA: United Nations Relief and Reconstruction Agency

VRp: Voluntary Repatriation

WUS: World University Service/SUM-Chile: *Servicio Universitario Mundial*

ZAV: *Zentralstelle für Arbeitsvermittlung/Oficina Central de Colocaciones*

GLOSSARY

Aforo: customs inspections

Allegado/a/: The term *allegados* has no equivalent in English. It refers to a person or a family living out of necessity with family or a close friend without paying rent. It was and still is a common experience among poor people but it soon extended to most returnees.

Arpilleras/: textile crafts made from scraps by poor and unemployed women from the *poblaciones* whose *arpilleras* were a means of economic survival under the newly established harsh neoliberalism. Some of these women had disappeared relatives and used materials from their disappeared loved ones clothes. The *arpilleras* depicted Chilean NSDS's repressive history. *Arpilleras* workshops were established by the Catholic Church's *Vicaría de la Solidaridad* that sold them both in Chile and abroad.

Cabro/a: kid, child, youngster

Carbonada: A stew of vegetables and meat.

Carabineros: Chile's national police force (also referred to as '*Pacos*')

Caracazo: was the name given to a wave of violent protests, looting and riots and ensuing massacre that occurred in February 1989 in Venezuela's capital Caracas. The Caracazo was related to the consequences of the neoliberal policies imposed by the government of Carlos Andrés Pérez.

Compañero/a: it commonly refers to a comrade/person/people associated to a national project of the Left and extended to romantic relationships.

Cordones Industriales/Industrial Cordons: were local associations of workers in neighbouring factories that developed in response to the Right's boycotts and sabotage. They were officially recognised by the UP but mainly promoted by PS, IC, MAPU and MIR's activists. Cordons were a keystone of popular power.

Cueca: Chilean national dance. The NSDS re-conquered the *cueca* linking this national symbol of identity to its own nationalist agenda. On 18th September 1979 Pinochet announced a decree that made the *cueca* the official dance of Chile. Yet, the *cueca sola* danced alone by the female relatives of the disappeared was a potent political counter-dance. The *cueca* has several *patas* (rounds of dance).

Empanada/s: are half-moon shaped baked (or fried) meat and vegetable pasties. The Chileanness of the *empanada* is questionable. *Empanadas* figured highly in the UP's project narrative it was 'The road to Socialism with a taste of *empanadas* and red wine'. In exile, the *empanada* became the symbol of political displacement and eaten both during National Day celebrations (18th September) and at political and solidarity activities where they were sold for fund-raising.

Exonerado/s: referred to citizens made redundant by the NSDS on political grounds because their loyalty to military rule was dubious or because of cuts in government spending or a combination thereof.

Gringo/a: a blue-eyed, fair-skinned person usually of Anglo-Saxon origin that is exotic to Latin American culture. It usually denotes a certain naivety. It can be extended to other white Europeans.

'Huacho': an illegitimate child usually from the poorest sectors of Chilean society. 'Huacho' is a notion that emerged out of an identity forged during the Conquest.

Hombre Nuevo: ('New Man') was a concept developed under *Guevarismo* which saw the individual as strongly motivated by a personal ethic rooted in solidarity and common good without the need for material incentives. It was widely championed by the revolutionary Left.

Hueón/huevona (Hueón/a): a fluid Chileanism with a variety of meanings. Depending on the context, it can be derogatory (ass-hole) as well as a friendly term similar to the word mate in English. Sometimes, instead of starting with an H, a G is used (*guevón/gueón*). *Huevá/guevá* is used as shit or stuff. In general huevón and its derivatives is a rude Chileanism.

Maricón/es: a derogatory term that feminises men in order to belittle them and could be translated as faggot or gay.

Marraqueta: is a type of bread in Chile and used as a metaphor for money or financial means.

NN: refers to anonymous people, mainly poor. NN usually 'identifies' dead people who have not been recognised and thrown into anonymous graves.

Pituto: refers to influential contacts at any level of the hegemonic institutions of the country i.e. family, Party, Church, and Freemasons networks who have connections and are instrumental in securing a contract, a service, getting employment or rendering a favour. By using a *pituto*, a person can bypass official procedures and officials, particularly the time-consuming bureaucracy.

Introduction

Though acknowledged in international circles as the best solution to refugee displacement, voluntary repatriation in Chile was an entirely new political phenomenon.

This thesis explores the process of Chilean voluntary repatriation that started during the Pinochet regime and continued during the democratic transition. The pertinent question therefore is why write a thesis on this subject, and why use gender and class as analytical variables?

Part of the answer to the first question lies in the fact that since the military coup of 11 September 1973 much has been written about Chile. There is a wealth of literature analysing Chile's process of democratisation under the Pinochet dictatorship. Chile has been one of political scientists' *cause célèbre* since Allende's *Chilean Road to Socialism* national project. The brutal coup d'état and ensuing persecution, repression and violation of human rights have attracted enormous scholarly attention. Many of the actors involved in overturning the dictatorship i.e., the political parties, the Catholic Church, the women's movement, exile political elites, the popular sectors, and to a much lesser extent, exile politics have been analysed.

What is puzzling however, is the neglect of voluntary repatriation as part of Chile's process of democratisation and posterior State policies for political legitimacy. Considering that most of the actors mentioned above engaged in one form or another in the process of voluntary repatriation, their role remains unacknowledged. Through considering these roles emerges the main argument of this study in that certain already existing mobilising hegemonic structures must be in place prior to return decisions. This is precisely what this thesis is about.

This study contends that voluntary repatriation is deeply engrained in the political process intending to change the conditions that created refugees. Seeing voluntary repatriation in such a manner, and not solely as a political process *per se*, allows the inclusion of other variables in the analysis. It is precisely this approach to voluntary repatriation that will permit gender and class into this process. Hence, it departs from the narrow understanding of 'politics'. It both highlights the role of those actors who have been historically present and relevant within Chilean politics as well as the 'invisible' ones. The aim is to provide a plausible explanation for the voluntary repatriation of Chilean refugees/exiles.

Examining voluntary repatriation as a process in two opposing political periods is especially interesting because they constitute two entirely different return scenarios that would allow comparison of both the actors involved in the process and returnees' experiences and their meanings of the process.

This thesis is structured around seven chapters and one final conclusion. Chapter One discusses the historical context in which the policy of voluntary repatriation emerged as well as the evolution of the

concept itself. It also introduces a conceptual-analytical tool for the purposes of exploration and analysis. The second chapter offers a reflexive methodological account of the author in 'her own voice'. This exercise is of paramount importance as the author's life has been consumed as a pre-exile, refugee, returnee and failed returnee. Chapter Three provides the structural reasons for Chilean refugeehood giving a primordial role to the State as creator of refugees and as violator of human rights and specifically the right to return. Chapter Four moves to exile and examines the experiences of refugees/exiles and their impact in return decisions. Out of this chapter's analysis emerges an incipient typology of returns. The longer Chapter Five provides a detailed examination of a field that is currently attracting scholarly attention: the experiences of returnees at 'home'. The chapter furthers current interests as from the analysis emerge the different dimensions of the so-called 'returnee identity'. Chapter Six's backdrop is the exhilarating period of the electoral demise of the Pinochet regime. It tests the argument of this study. Chapter Seven examines, albeit in a much shorter manner, the role of the State in promoting and facilitating voluntary repatriation as well as returnees' experiences. The concluding Chapter summarises the findings and discusses them.

This study contributes to the existing body of knowledge on voluntary repatriation that has normally excluded important social markers such as gender and class. Extensive archival research as well as intensive and prolonged fieldwork plus my own experience as a refugee and returnee allowed insights into the adopted political, ideological and moral values promoting voluntary repatriation. It is from this particular situation that this study has developed new concepts and findings. These have not been imposed on the analysis but rather are offered as new knowledge to be critically assessed.

CHAPTER ONE

What is 'voluntary' repatriation? The policy, the concept, the discourse, theoretical explanations and an alternative analytical conceptual framework

Introduction

This chapter is structured around the central focus of this thesis – voluntary repatriation (henceforth VRp). The study of VRp is now an established area of knowledge mainly developed by Western scholars and policymaking. Among the disciplines identified as dominant contributors are anthropology, international and refugee law (legal and policy issues), and social and clinical psychology. Important contributions have also been made by human geography and to a lesser extent by sociology and social work (Allen and Morsink 1994; Allen 1996; Black and Koser 1999; Markowitz and Stefansson 2004). However, contributions by political scientists and historians are lacking (Long 2008a). Studies on Chilean VRp followed this path, something particularly felt for the purposes of this study. Only a handful of studies dedicate some attention to political exile. Most work has been monopolised by clinical psychology, social psychology and psychiatry with the exception of a few anthropological studies. Paradoxically, even though VRp during democracy was considerably more numerous, most of the studies found were carried out during the Pinochet dictatorship and few have been translated into English. One problem with this literature is that, despite mental health practitioners' assertions that their work with returnees was not 'clinical' but psychosocial and deeply rooted in a social situation arising from a political one, the all-encompassing disciplinary context was 'mental health'. Therefore, representations of returnees under the dictatorship were the sole creation of Chilean scholars and practitioners thus arguably influencing the manner in which they were portrayed both in the literature at the time and their ultimate public image. The few anthropological studies found (Haefner 1984), tend to locate their analysis within the now problematised conceptual frameworks of acculturation and adaptation. More recent anthropological studies have considered gender, yet again, these have insufficient analytical value. Accounts of exiles' experiences published during democracy add information on individual experiences but without any analytical purpose. Of more scholarly value is the literature on literary analysis on exile and return (e.g. Kaminsky 1999).

A serious general problem with VRp literature is its classless and genderless tendency. This omission does little to advance our understanding of returnees' impelling forces for both their repatriation and post-return experiences. Therefore, the chapter begins by clarifying the reasons for the absence of gender and class as analytical variables in the study of VRp. It follows with a brief historical overview of the implementation of the policy of VRp since 1945 and continues with the discussion of the concept 'voluntary repatriation' and its deconstructed contextualisation so as to approach the case under study. This is followed by an assessment of the literature surveyed and finally concludes with the formulation of a conceptual framework that provides the tools that will assist in the analysis of

Chilean VRp. In sum, this chapter will set the policy, legal, theoretical and conceptual framework that will serve as a referent for the rest of this study.

A note on the absence of reference to gender and class in voluntary repatriation studies

Before entering the chapter it is necessary to warn the reader who will be surprised not to find the gender and class dimensions to VRp promised in the title of this thesis. Indeed, this contradicts the secondary purpose of this study. The reason for this absence lies in the fact that what is found in repatriation literature hardly mentions social differentiation. This in turn derives from the meta-discursive postulate upon which the refugee regime depends, that of the dominant category 'refugee'. In this discourse the individual 'refugee' is genderless, classless, raceless and ageless. This essentialist notion of the 'refugee' has been now problematised (Al-Ali and Koser 2000). Awareness that refugees do not represent homogeneous populations and of the complexities that this approach presents both for theory-building and policymaking has been voiced by prominent refugee scholars (Voutira and Harrell-Bond 2000). When VRp emerged as a policy – between the mid 1980s and 1990s – the tendency was to consider a 'neutral' and homogeneous refugee and prospective returnee population.

One of these differentiations – that of gender – has now been established in the refugee regime. This has been the result of the hard work done by feminist advocates and academics in the late 1980s and early 1990s (Indra 1987, 1989; Greatbatch 1989), who felt a strong imperative to incorporate gender issues into their work. According to one of the most authoritative and powerful voices involved in this challenge, 'generalised references to 'refugees' obscure more than illuminate. They obscure the ways in which gender may play a major role in how refugees are created, and how distinct the refugee situation can be for women and men' (Indra 1987:3).

The emphasis of most recent gender work done by these scholars focuses heavily on two main issues: discrimination in achieving refugee status because of sex and gender persecution and sexual violence against refugee women in flight and resettlement (Greatbatch 1989; Crawley, 1999, 2001; Kneebone 2005). The myriad studies and powerful advocacy on these gender issues has led to gender-related normative change within the international refugee and humanitarian regimes (Kuttner 2002), and some positive results have been achieved (Johnstone 2006). In addition, diaspora approaches to the refugee situation have also contributed to the interest in gender in refugee situations (Unterhalter 2000). Closely linked to this work, gender analysis in repatriation began to emerge in the early 2000s (Einhorn 2000b; Ackerman 2002). These studies focus mainly on the individual experiences of the returnees. In this thesis, however, the analysis of the gendered nature of the returnee experience will not solely focus on the experiences of individual men and women returnees but also on the gendered nature of the factors, agents and constituencies promoting refugees' VRp; there lies the gendering of the process as such. Commentators have suggested that past studies on repatriation have solely focused on the macro aspects of repatriation neglecting the life experiences of returnees back 'home' (Allen and Morsink 1994; Black and Koser 1999; Bakewel 1996). The response to this analytical

neglect has been a turn to a focus on returnees' experiences of homecomings (Markowitz and Stefansson 2004) and of the issue of 'home' and its meanings to the extent that it has been scrutinised (Warner 1994; Malkki 1992, 1995) because it attaches VRp to peoples' original places of abode. Yet, by criticising these attachments, critics neglect the important macro determinants of repatriation such as the role of the State (both host and home), the church, political parties (henceforth Parties), NGOs, the family, and the ideological factors involved in VRp. This study will attempt to redress such analytical imbalance by articulating the micro and macro dimensions of VRp claiming that it is a gendered and classed process and that there is a bigger political picture involved 'from above' and 'from below'.

Class as an analytical category in refugee analysis is almost non-existent throughout the history of refugee studies. Even sociological work on non-camp refugee populations (Israel 1996) has neglected the class issue and how this structural factor shapes different experiences of exile, prospects of return and indeed post-return experiences. Some later attempts have been made to include socio-economic background into forced migration studies (Phillips 2004). The trend to omit class from the analysis responds to the postmodern influence in refugee studies that has focused on matters of people, identity and place (see Kibreab 1999 for a debate). The usual differentiation found in the literature is that of the different sending contexts, between rural and urban refugees and their likelihood of repatriation.

The next section examines how the evolving concept of VRp is found in the literature which, as the reader will notice, is predominantly class and gender blind.

1.1 What is *voluntary* repatriation?

“no refugees or displaced persons who have finally and definitely, in complete freedom, and after receiving full knowledge of the facts, including adequate information from the governments of their countries of origin, expressed valid objections to returning to their countries of origin[...] shall be compelled to return to their country of origin” [UN doc. A/Res/8(I) (1946) in Zieck 1997:429]

Despite this initial UN resolution relating to refugees' voluntary decision to return, mass returns occurred in Europe in 1945 with about 6 million DPs (displaced people) repatriating to the countries of origin, mainly coming from the Western occupation zones in Germany (Salomon 1991). Proudfoot (1957:228) described that 'during the months of May and June alone, 5.25 million people were repatriated at a daily rate exceeding 80,000 persons, and in the space of just six months (March to August) nine-tenths of the European repatriation was completed.' For those who were not repatriated between 1945 and 1947, the emphasis was on integration into other countries mainly the USA, Canada, Australia or other Western countries. It was a momentum of 'euphoria' during which repatriation was seen as the beginning of the end of 'the refugee problem'. Indeed, the issue of 'voluntariness' was debatable from the genesis of the return movements as DPs were in many cases forced to repatriate by Western authorities and UNRRA despite their resistance as in the case of Ukrainian refugees (Boshyk 1988).

These experiences lead to a pressing question: when did 'voluntary' repatriation emerge as a policy and more so as the preferred solution to refugee situations? The following section looks at the evolving historical context shaping the policy.

1.1.1 The policy: its historical context

Although historically repatriation emerged not as a direct response to displacement but as part of the formation of nation-states long before the Cold War, particularly in Europe (Long 2008a), VRp as a policy has a shorter historical evolution. The focus of this study rests on VRp as a contemporary international policy strictly related to the over-politicisation of forced displacement and of the 'refugee' at the historical juncture of the beginning of the end of the Cold War. Immediately following the end of World War II, the principle of VRp was focused on the prevention of repatriation by protecting refugees against the ideologically opposite state claims on their citizens. Thus the principle emerged as an important protection scheme, enabling and legitimizing the refusal to return to one's country of origin under the principle of *non-refoulement*.

Nevertheless, VRp was set aside from 1947 until the 1970s as a result of the tense political atmosphere of the period. According to Allen and Morsink (1994:2) it was 'because discussion about it at international meetings was bound up with the far-reaching political implications of the creation of the state of Israel (and ensuing Palestinian right to return), and of the Cold War.' During this time the debate around return of refugees became a sensitive one. Tensions were clearly influenced by political ideologies from both sides of the Iron Curtain. Both the granting of asylum and repatriation were ruled by Cold War politics. Keely's (1996:1058) discussion of refugee policy in Western industrial countries, especially the United States, shows the contrasting differences in repatriation policy assisting between what he terms "victims" of communism and Third World refugees. In his important contribution to the role of the State in the formation of refugees, he argues that Western refugee policy 'focussed on escapees from communism. Refugees were used for ideological purposes – people risked their lives when they voted with their feet... the United States led in encouraging and resettling escapees from communism, through a policy of supporting first asylum and a standing promise to resettle people leaving countries with communist governments.' The politicisation of refugees was, at the time of the Cold War, full blown. In a convincing definition, Toft (2001:4) refers to Cold War refugees as 'diamond' refugees due to their intrinsic value 'to the US and its allies' whereby 'they were few in numbers, relatively highly skilled and educated and, valuable as intelligence and propaganda resources.' In sum, post- Second World War and particularly Cold War refugees were expected to settle permanently in exile in Europe or America. Not only was the political scenario favourable for Cold War refugees, but also the booming post-war reconstruction period. Kibreab (1996:54) noted that the favourable factor at that time was the 'unprecedented economic growth that facilitated conditions of absorption of displaced populations.'

The 1970s

The 1970s paved the ground for a shift in the solution to the refugee situation. Two developments can be identified in this decade. First, the emergence of human rights as a discourse that could be easily applicable to the refugee realm, something that Coles (1989) eloquently advocated in his sharp critique of the ruling exile bias and UNHCR's refusal to endorse VRp. Secondly, the ever growing 'concerning' factors related to the nature of the 'new' refugees arriving in the West. These developments however shifted the focus from resettlement to VRp but still not as a policy. On the one hand, what Coles (1989) called the 'exile bias', that is, the policy of indiscriminately offering refugee status to large national groups irrespective of the merits of individual claims in Europe and the US up until the 1970s, was discontinued. According to Loescher (1993:22), there was awareness that the latter 'frequently attracts large illegal migrant flows and invites abuse of refugee and asylum procedures.' As a result, 'many Westerners began to question whether all such people had valid claims to refugee status.' Barriers started to be raised and these reached Chilean asylum seekers. In 1985, fifty-two of them were expelled from Switzerland with the argument that some of them 'had been charged with criminal offences in Switzerland' (see *Refugees* 1985:38).

Conversely, the expanding number of Third World refugees, particularly in Africa, that according to Harrell-Bond (1986:188) 'led some of the governments which fund UNHCR to promote repatriation as a 'solution'... Hence, in the course of the 1970s, 'the United Nations General Assembly identified return as the solution to refugee problems in certain circumstances, notably where the principle of self-determination was involved' (Allen and Morsink 1994:3). Noteworthy, by this time a severe economic recession was affecting the capitalist system and a political crisis leading to the upsurge of totalitarian dictatorships and subsequent formation of refugee populations was occurring in some parts of the world, i.e., Latin America. As a result, some mass return occurred. Between 1975 and 1977 there were repatriations to Nigeria, Bangladesh, Sudan, Angola, Mozambique and Guinea-Bissau. This trend continued with the returns to Zaire in 1978, to Cambodia in 1979 and to Zimbabwe in 1980 (see Rogge and Akol 1989). In this favourable return scenario, VRp was finally forced onto the agenda at international gatherings. As we shall see in this study, Chileans also started to return by 1978 (see Appendix 4).

The 1980s

Although return migration was an already existing migratory experience, particularly in Europe, it was not until the mid 1980s that both return migration (henceforth RM) and repatriation entered the international political agenda. A new era had commenced, that of the re-politicisation of refugees together with labour migrants for whom their 'desire to return home' should be encouraged. During the Seventh Seminar on Social and Economic Aspects of Return Migration arranged by the Intergovernmental Committee for Migration (ICM) in 1985, Anita Gradin, the Swedish Minister of

Migration Affairs and Equality Between Women and Men, declared her 'happiness' at the increased attention on RM and on the future OECD conference about the issue to take place in 1986. On that occasion she stated that:

“[T]hose of us who also follow the work of the UNHCR know that voluntary repatriation of refugees is generally considered the ideal solution to the refugee problem, whenever conditions allow. The subject was more thoroughly discussed at a Round Table in San Remo last year. The resulting conclusions... have been well received by the members of the Executive Committee of the UNHCR”. (Gradin 1985:19).

Clearly, the emphasis on RM and repatriation has the effect of reinforcing one another and blurring even more the dichotomy migrant/refugee. Analytically however, a closer look is needed before any spurious generalisation or alignment of these two return migratory experiences is made.

1.2 Voluntary repatriation: its formulation as the best solution to the 'refugee problem'

By the 1980s, the promotion of VRp had become *the* international priority. This time, in 'safety' and 'dignity' (Bradley 2007). The solution to the refugee problem and displacement was to be expressed 'not in terms solely of the right to choose freely whether or not to return, the traditional formula', argued Coles but also 'in the form of the human right to return in safety and dignity – a right to be asserted and implemented' (Coles 1989:162 in Allen and Morsink 1994:3), something that, as we shall see below, High Commissioner Hocké will fully endorse from 1986 onwards. This would be a crucial and far-reaching turning point in the evolution of the policy. The Cold War scenario was disintegrating. The East/West ideological confrontation between the USSR-led bloc and the US-led bloc was coming to an end and with it came the need to persuade refugees to return 'home'. Simultaneously, two powerful discourses were gathering momentum particularly in those regions where totalitarian and refugee producing regimes ruled: the influential liberal Western human rights doctrine and the political discourse of democracy. Under such ideologico-political context the policy of repatriation, as the right to return, encountered propitious grounds. This key internationally-prompted matrix, human rights (particularly the right to return) and democratisation, has been ignored in recent research on VRp (Long 2008a, b). Chilean VRp therefore constitutes an interesting scenario to explore such developments.

Nonetheless, it was not until the Round Table on Voluntary Repatriation in San Remo, Italy in July 1985 convened by UNHCR in co-operation with the International Institute of Humanitarian Law, that VRp was reaffirmed (see Coles 1985). It was then that 'government ministers, jurists and officials of Governments and intergovernmental organisations who were experts in refugee matters' (UNHCR Executive Committee 1985:2) expressed the view that 'voluntary repatriation was, in principle, the best solution to a refugee problem, and that it was desirable and opportune to emphasise the importance of this solution and to develop international co-operation in effecting it' (*ibid*). It was clear that by 1985 the language of VRp was shifting from 'protection' to 'solution', that is, UNHCR's mandate 'bedrock' principle of protection of refugees was giving way to humanitarian operations in the 'field' (Loescher 2001a). In its 36th Session that year UNHCR's Executive Committee adopted a

definitive conclusion on VRp, encouraging the High Commissioner to seek opportunities to promote VRp; it literally stated that: '(a) The basic rights of persons to return voluntarily to the country of origin is reaffirmed and it is urged that international co-operation be aimed at achieving this solution and should be further developed' (Goodwin-Gill 1989:289).

The reasons for the shift and 'desirability' in policy, that is, from settlement and integration to third countries of permanent asylum to that of VRp was threefold. Firstly, the global refugee problem was reaching critical levels on three different continents simultaneously, particularly in developing countries. According to UNHCR (2005:36) by 1981, 'the refugee problem has become particularly acute due to the increasing number of large-scale influx situations in different areas of the world and especially in developing countries. The asylum seekers forming part of these large-scale influxes...are compelled to seek refuge outside that country' [of origin].¹ To illustrate this point, the Horn of Africa alone (Djibouti, Ethiopia, Somalia and Sudan) accommodated 1.5 million refugees in the late 1980s (World Refugee Survey 1988). In total, 'the global refugee total tripled from 3 million in 1977 to over 10 million in 1982' (Loescher 2001a:202) Secondly, the changing profile of the 'refugee' subject under new imperatives and conditions unconstrained by the politics of the Cold War. In Toft's view (2001:6) 'the end of the Cold War had changed every variable of the refugee equation. Instead of trickles of skilled, educated, and enterprising refugees, OECD countries would soon be bracing to receive floods of people of all ages, skills and backgrounds.' One case that illustrates the perception of a new type of refugee is the 1980 Mariel boatlift refugees from Cuba to the US – where 124,779 Cubans left the island in desperation. From the "golden" political refugees of the early 1960s receiving special dispensations and sponsorship from the US government, the *Marielitos*, who were racially and socio-economically different to the former, were considered "undesirables", causing a 'moral epidemic' and given the unfavourable label of "Cuban-Haitian entrant –status pending" instead of refugee status (Aguirre et al. 1997). The Cold War scenario was changing: The era of unrestricted admission and preferential treatment of Cubans based strictly on political considerations had disappeared. The turning point was summarised by Amaro and Portes (1972:13) who noted that 'increasingly, the emigration ceases to be a political action and becomes an economic action.' They affirmed that 'although *de jure* the new groups consider themselves political refugees, *de facto* they increasingly came to resemble the classic immigrants whose origins are in the lower social classes in their country of origin seeking better economic opportunities in the receiving country.' From then on large flows of political/economic refugees, asylum seekers and undocumented workers have caused widespread fears of a mass influx of impoverished people, particularly from the global south, that would threaten economic and political stability in developed countries. Many events followed, particularly the Haitian crisis of 1994 when asylum seekers were later repatriated from the US. In Toft's (2001) critical paper she suggests that these type of refugees are perceived as 'locusts' reinforcing Richmond's (1994:xv) reminder that a generous policy towards refugees was a Cold War luxury. Thirdly, donor governments were expressing concern about the increasing levels of funding required for emergency relief. Loescher (2001a:41) observed that 'the UNHCR's protracted care and

¹ General Assessment for Conclusion No. 22 Protection of Asylum-Seekers in Situations of Large-Scale Influx.

maintenance programs caused annual UNHCR expenditures to explode from approximately \$76 million in 1975 to more than \$500 million in 1980.’ This was the time when millions of encamped refugees were stranded and donor governments suffering from ‘compassion fatigue’ were pressuring UNHCR to find solutions to the global refugee problem.

Against this backdrop, repatriation turned ‘from a possible solution in principle to a feasible one in practice’ (Amore 2002:164). To some refugee scholars, the shift and desirability in the policy of VRp lies mainly on the third factor. Zetter (1999a:59) for example, put the emphasis on the budgetary factor affecting the ‘humanitarian industry’ that led it to promote VRp as a ‘high-profile activity.’ ‘Quite simply’, he argued, ‘repatriation has been promoted by the international community and host countries to relieve the costs which protracted large-scale forced displacements impose.’

Because of the pressing refugee problems, the 1980s witnessed a radical shift in the management of the refugee problem. The preferred resettlement policy of the period following the Second World War – whereby host countries of the West encouraged permanency, integration and assimilation, that is, *protection* – was replaced by a policy of VRp as the preferred and ‘natural’ *solution* to the refugee problem in the 1980s. The policy and the solution were ‘naturalised’ with a powerful discourse. One of its most prominent proponents was Jean-Pierre Hocké, UNHCR’s High Commissioner (1986-1989). Anecdotally, he ‘popularised the language of return in conditions of safety and dignity. From 1986 to 1989, Hocké discussed repatriation in 100% of his addresses and connected return with the notion of dignity in more than two thirds of his speeches’ (Bradley 2007:4). Soon the notion of ‘safety’ was added. Undoubtedly, the notions of ‘dignity’ and ‘safety’ were clearly associated to human rights conditions in the refugees’ countries of origin. High Commissioner Hocké was praised by Coles (1989:399) because he was able to liberate UNHCR’s Regional Bureaux ‘from the dead hand of the old Protection and Assistance Division’ that was stuck in global responsibility, when what was required was ‘in-depth regional experience and expertise’ in charge of ‘solutions’. Aside from sidelining protection, High Commissioner Hocké, for whom repatriation was the ‘only viable alternative’ (Loescher 2001: 251), developed a VRp narrative that emphasised homeland, territoriality and belonging. In the 1988 editorial of a special issue of *Refugees* he wrote:

“The point can never be too strongly stressed: refugee movements are a contemporary scourge which spare no continent... [T]he most natural solution is still voluntary repatriation, for it enables refugees to rediscover their social and cultural roots, which give them the comforting feeling of belonging to their country of origin. It is gratifying to note that conditions in refugees’ countries of origin often change to such an extent that repatriation becomes possible. In 1988 this was the case in Ethiopia, Uganda and El Salvador... We enter 1989 with a renewed hope that more refugees will be granted their wish to return to their homeland.” (:5)

With all the emphasis on VRp, some success was achieved, yet those repatriations taking place before 1990 and under High Commissioner Hocké such as those in the Horn of Africa, Central America and Sri Lanka were far from ‘voluntary’. Coercion was not unusual. For example, Ethiopian refugees were threatened with the re-examination of their refugee status if they did not return voluntarily. Salvadorean encamped refugees in Honduras were devoid of protection and felt obliged to return.

Similarly, the return of Tamil refugees to Sri Lanka from India where the government withdrew food rations and stipends and also the announcement that any Tamil who would not register for repatriation would be treated as an illegal alien and deported (Loescher 2001a). Notwithstanding the furore that these 'voluntary' repatriations had caused among NGOs assisting refugees, these repatriations set the precedent of using the political apertures that were taking place during the Cold War's twilight and the emphasis on democratisation and the strengthening of international human rights norms and institutions.

The euphoria that characterised the end of the Cold War and Communist threat led to the false assumptions that the new democratic States would uphold human rights. Free from the politics of the Cold War, UNHCR declared the 1990s the 'Decade of Repatriation'. Accordingly, more than nine million refugees returned home between 1991 and 1996 (UNHCR 2006:130). This period coincided with the most numerous return of Chilean refugees from around the world. Amidst repatriation programmes' difficulties and reflections within UNHCR on the use of durable solutions, the trend in VRp has continued and between 2002 and 2004 more than 5 million refugees returned home (UNHCR 2006:19).

1.2.1 The concept and its discontents

The central concept at the heart of this thesis is 'voluntary repatriation'. Does the term VRp raise conceptual difficulties? Indeed, the difficulties lie not only with the definition of VRp *per se* but with both the contemporary use of the notion 'return' as in 'return migration' and recent empirical evidence such as that arising from Guatemala in which refugees themselves differentiated between 'repatriation' and 'return', which is an interesting theoretical conceptual puzzle usually interpreted as an issue of agency on the part of the refugees, something to be discussed in Chapter Six.

The concept VRp itself has generally been taken for granted and rarely analysed or contextually deconstructed. Among the critical voices, Zetter (1988b:102) has correctly argued that the 'concept of 'voluntary' has been uncritically absorbed in the vocabulary.' This uncritical use of the term can contribute to the perception of the naturalness of the motivations for return that, once the concept has been naturalised it can easily permeate refugees minds, host and home governments and the secondary constituencies involved in its implementation. As this study will demonstrate, this blind acceptance of the term has helped to create domestic repatriation discourses, constituencies promoting return both at 'home' and in exile, and reinforce political agendas in which VRp as 'return' occupies an important role. This in turn can have critical gender and class repercussions.

We begin with the arguments related to the *voluntary* nature of the concept. At the outset of his Background Study on Voluntary Repatriation, Coles (1985:1) stated that it was 'necessary to define the phrase "voluntary repatriation..."' After attempting to define it as 'repatriation which is voluntary', he acknowledged that such a narrow and simplistic definition could be open to criticisms.

In his view, 'the element of voluntariness' in repatriation 'must be in relation to a situation both in the country of origin as well as in relation to a situation in the country of asylum' (*ibid*). Certainly, it has been precisely the notion of voluntariness within the concept that has been widely contested particularly from studies on the issue of returning 'home' (Warner 1994; Al-Ali and Koser 2002; Long and Oxfeld 2004; Hammond 2004).

One of the arguments is that 'voluntary repatriation of refugees would, *prima facie*, appear to be a contradiction in terms, as refugees are by definition unwilling and/or unable to return' (Feitsma 1989:299). However, in the mid 1980s this unwillingness and inability to return changed radically when repatriation was to be 'promoted' and 'facilitated'. The associated terms of 'promotion' and 'facilitation' of VRp, so critically assessed by Chimni (1993), as the most desirable durable solution to the refugee problem, challenged once more the *voluntary* nature of the policy and hence of the concept itself. These additional terms have created a great deal of confusion giving the concept an arbitrariness that has provided the grounds for criticism and debate. Empirical evidence has demonstrated that repatriation has been either promoted or encouraged (Harrell-Bond 1986). It is not only the promotion of voluntary repatriation that would seem to be a contradiction in terms (Harrell-Bond 1989), but the concept itself. Under pressuring circumstances, UNHCR has been promoting and encouraging people to return and/or caught in the dilemma to return people to their countries of origin. The line between encouragement and promotion of VRp and pressure to repatriate may not always be a clear one, hence the boundaries between voluntary/involuntary repatriation have become blurred. This has been the case of African VRp where it is clear that it has been a widely used option for African refugees (Rogge and Akol 1989), demonstrating the empirical difficulty of separating the two. Moreover, the voluntary nature of repatriation is brought into sharp focus when repatriation is assisted in situations under conflict (Larkin et al. 1991) or during conflict (Cuny et al. 1992), whereby refugees for a myriad of factors 'felt the need' to repatriate to their home countries even under the same conditions that expelled them, to more recent repatriations such as the case of Afghan nationals in 2003 (Blitz et al. 2005). These inconsistencies in the voluntary nature of VRp as a policy, have undermined the voluntary nature of repatriation programmes which have been subjected to criticisms and objections.

According to Bakewell (1996:8) it is not at all clear 'at which level of analysis refugee's actions are supposed to be voluntary' and that the common shared understanding of voluntary, 'indicating some degree of choice on the part of the refugees, can be undermined as it becomes a label for activities to make them more palatable.' The degree of choice in determining whether to repatriate is also debatable, as individual decisions to return are usually subsumed in the process of negotiating refugees' return. Most repatriation programmes have been the outcome of tripartite agreements, involving refugees' organisations in exile, UNHCR and the government of the host country. Empirical findings have shown the nature and effect of this triangulation (Basok 1990; Stepputat 1999).

In addition, there may be political interests behind the decision of refugees to return 'voluntarily'. Rogge (1994:46) has rightly brought our attention to the question of the degree of voluntariness arguing that 'governments of countries of origin may want refugees to return for political reasons, governments of countries of asylum may want refugees to leave to reduce the costs or localised tensions, the international agencies want to be seen to be effecting durable solutions and in the process the will and perceptions of the refugees are often relegated to secondary considerations.' It appears that the geopolitical, economic and social scenario of the refugee crisis impinges on the 'valuation' of the 'refugees' and the voluntariness of their repatriation is inextricably linked to the dynamics of that scenario. The evolving international political context and the budgetary pressures experienced by the donor countries have undoubtedly fostered the 'voluntary' feature constructed for the concept.

Certainly, UNHCR was aware of the problematic issue of *voluntariness*. In its mandate, the ethical basis of repatriation rules out any type of coercion. This was considered by UNHCR (1996:11) as implying an 'absence of any physical, psychological, or material pressure.' More importantly, it acknowledged that *voluntariness* is 'however, often clouded by the fact that for many refugees a decision to return is dictated by a combination of pressures due to political factors, security problems or material needs.' What is missing in UNHCR's account is the role played by the subtle and the not so subtle pressures that can also frame the decision to return. According to Rogge and Akol (1989:197) this question 'remains a very delicate issue.' However, it is one of importance that deserves analytical exploration. Indeed, it is precisely the 'delicate issue' or 'issues' underpinning the degree of *voluntariness* of Chilean VRp that this thesis is about. Consistent with this aim, the central question that this study attempts to answer is why Chilean refugees have returned to their country and how 'voluntary' that decision came to be. Though a 'delicate issue', return decision-making is a central issue when explaining 'voluntary' repatriation because, unlike flight that presupposes a forced action to migrate, hence, '*forced migration*', voluntary return rules out any pressure. As a human action it is usually presented as a 'choice' whereby the exile/refugee is not pulled, pushed or bullied into return. In this study, decision-making is not only seen as a 'choice' but as a process and also as a social action.

1.3 The discourse: the plea to return 'home'

The preceding discussion suggests that within the primacy of VRp as the best and durable solution, the most commonly held assumption is that all refugees *desire* to return 'home'. With the precedent of RM in Europe during the 1960s where migration was perceived or expected to be temporary and transitional from both shores of the Mediterranean (Kubat 1981; King 1986; Cassarino 2000), host governments in the 1980s replicated this discourse in their treatment of refugees. They assumed that refugees' exile was temporary and that eventually all would be able to go home. Refugees are said to suffer from 'nostalgia for home', a longing for 'home', the so-called homecoming-nostalgia model. However, this generalisation has become problematic in situations of protracted exile because not all refugees continue to identify with a particular notion of home and many stay put (Kibreab 2003a).

Yet, this narrative should not be dismissed. On the contrary, it should be considered seriously particularly when powerful political, ideological and emotional notions such as *patria* are articulated in VRp discourses by all the actors involved. Ultimately, repatriation derives from the idea of 'patria', which 'implies that an individual's primary identity, rights and obligations derives from membership of a 'nation' (Ranger 1994:289). In the Latin American countries it always referred to a territorial identity that coincided with a single nation (Anderson 1991). Such an apparently simplistic argument should be explored as the notion of *patria*, despite having a feminine article in Spanish [*la*], its Latin etymology *pater* reminds us that it is a masculine term and as Kaminsky (1999:30-4) noted, it is 'a masculine invention' as well as being an abstract concept constructed by the Chilean creole bourgeoisie (Fernández 1996). Furthermore, the notion of *patria* blurs any social, religious, ethnic, class, gender and cultural differentiation, it generally homogenises people living in a territory even in times of conflicting political or ideological national projects.

Let's now return to High Commissioner Hocké's (1988:5) statement regarding VRp as the most natural solution. In his discourse two elements need to be underscored: the emphasis on VRp and the territorialisation of refugees. Characterising refugees as a contemporary scourge and rendering this scourge as a menace to all continents, does not in itself represent a discourse. What makes his argument discursive is its attachment to notions of 'belonging' and 'homeland'. In exploring these notions, this study has two concerns. One is empirical and the other theoretical. Empirically, the interest is in how notions of belonging and homeland have entered the discourse and the role that these notions play in the development of collateral discourses that impinge on refugees' decision to repatriate. Theoretically, it is the engagement in explanations of VRp that side-step the practical reasons for return, but are more related to what Mr Hocké expressed in his statement regarding the 'territorialisation of refugees'. In his discourse the terms 'homeland' and 'belonging' constitute the ideological foundations for the return of refugees. Furthering the argument posed above, these notions are critical in any discussion of VRp. It attaches people to 'places', to territories and embodies complex meanings that need some general specification as they are of theoretical importance for this study.

Certainly, the mid 1990s were charged with heated debates around these issues particularly between two camps: the ubiquitous anti-sedentarist view heralded by Malkki (1995) and the work of Eritrean scholar Gaim Kibreab (1999) who cautions us about the political danger of concluding that displaced people's identities are deterritorialised. Though this debate is beyond the scope of this chapter, the arguments cannot be dismissed.

1.4 The parameters of voluntary repatriation in the literature and this study's stand

Recent years have witnessed an increasing level of scholarly interest in the field of repatriation. Indeed, once VRp had been elevated as the preferred durable solution and mass repatriations became established, a great deal was starting to be known about the role of macro agencies involved in VRp.

Yet, not much was known about the fate of those refugees who had returned 'home'. In his 1985 report, Coles (1985:4) noted that 'although voluntary repatriation has been proclaimed as, in principle, the most desirable solution to a refugee situation, it has so far not been examined in any depth by experts or scholars.' Soon after, Jeff Crisp embarked on a thorough review of the existing literature on repatriation. He was able to demonstrate otherwise and concluded that the problem was that existing literature on repatriation solely focused on its legal, political and logistical implications while there was not 'any serious attempt to investigate the experiences of the returnees themselves' (Allen and Morsink 1994:2). Since then, the literature on refugees post-return experiences has burgeoned (Allen and Morsink 1994; Black and Koser 1999; Hammond 2004; Long and Oxfeld 2004; Markowitz and Stefansson 2004; to name a few).

If one of the concerns has been the scholarly visibility of returnees, a more substantial problem has haunted the general field of forced migration. Not only has Refugee Studies been a debatable sphere of knowledge (Malkii 1995; Israel 1999), but there is also a lack of adequate theory or links with established social theory to explain forced migration. Nevertheless, there have been important and influential contributions such as those from Kunz (1973, 1981), Zolberg et al. (1989) and Richmond (1988, 1993) who have provided conceptualisation and typologies of different kinds in the fields of 'voluntary' and 'involuntary' migration.

A more pessimistic view has been that of Black (2001:65-66) who in his evaluation of 'Fifty Years of Refugee Studies', argued that 'it may be also necessary to take more seriously the warning of Bascom (1998:65-6) that there is no 'theory of refugees' and accept that, as such, there is not going to be.' For Bascom (1994), refugee migration must be placed in the larger context of migration theory. Black (2001:66) then suggested – as had Suhrke did in 1994 – that 'the search for theoretical grounding of refugee studies may be better achieved by situating studies of particular refugee (and other forced migrant) groups in the theories of cognate areas (and major disciplines)' and proposed the by now widely cited narrative of transnationalism. Indeed, this is an ongoing debate that has now moved to the field of repatriation. According to Pilkington and Flynn (1999), repatriation movements have been rarely subjected to theorisation and conceptualization. Similarly, Bakewell (1996:14) argued that 'very few researchers have made explicit attempt to develop theory to capture some of the complexities of repatriation and that few of the available studies on repatriation attempt to place it within any theoretical framework.'

Hence, the study of repatriation 'is pulled in one direction by the need for links with established social theory – with theories of migration in contexts of political and economic change in general, and of return migration in particular – and in another, by attempts to define its own parameters' (Simon and Preston 1993:48). The first option is an attractive one because the numerous studies found provide substantial frameworks for explaining return. This is more so with the recent broadening of the RM spectrum (Cassarino 2004). Reasons and factors for returning in the case of labour migrants abound. The work of Cerase (1974), King (1980, 1986, 2000), Bovenkerk (1974), Kubat (1981) and Gmelch

(1980) have provided rich insights into the ways migrants' return occurs. This seductive trend has later attracted the attention of scholars dealing with refugees (Gasarasi 1990; Blitz 2005; Hanafi 2006). Although this study will consider these important contributions, it is puzzled by the obvious questions: Is labour migrants' RM the same as refugees' VRp? Do they respond to the same parameters? Can we use the same models for refugees' return? These questions take us back to the politicised migrant/refugee, economic/political, voluntary/involuntary debate. However, in today's globalised world labels have been remade (Zetter 2007) and this adds more complexities. Simultaneously, the blurred distinction between migrants, asylum-seekers and refugees has been articulated by the so-called 'security' agenda hence, no distinction is made between these categories and they are all considered threats against national sovereignty. Conversely, forced migration as a conceptual way out of the narrow focus of the 1951 Refugee Convention has also encountered challenges (Wilde 2001).

Though this uncertain conceptual and political scenario is outside the scope of this study, it is one that impels to focus on the regimes behind these migrant categories. This study concurs with Karatani (2005) in that it is precisely the regimes behind them that have constructed and separated them. Conversely, though return incentives policies have been formulated (Rogers 1981; Debart 1985) and RM policies increasingly implemented (Rogers 1996; IOM 2004), refugee and migration return policies differ somehow, particularly because the former legally regulate the lives of refugees via the refugee status, its cessation clause, and 'durable solutions' ultimately resulting in that return is framed in legal terms and can be mandated. Additionally, policies related to the 'refugee experience' are distinctive although both regimes rely on the 'improvement' of conditions in the home country (political or economic) for migrants to return, currently, the refugee regime promotes, facilitates and impels refugees' voluntary return subsequent the elimination of the factors that prompted their displacement. This study claims that as the boundaries between forced and voluntary migration have been lifted, these theoretical and conceptual complexities remain unaddressed. This is a major reason why this study will examine Chilean VRp within its own parameters. It argues that the refugee/exile predicament *per se* produces its own dynamics and narratives so we can take a humble stand by drawing from those very same dynamics while simultaneously following the flow of political and social developments in a particular context and situating research subjects within it. This stand can be seen as a kind of 'middle range' approach to understand the dynamics of VRp. For this purpose, the study proposes a conceptual framework that will assist in the analysis of Chilean VRp. Yet, before embarking on such a task, the next section outlines the most pertinent theoretical and explanatory paths that in the course of this study would be assessed in the light of its empirical evidence.

1.4.1 Why do refugees return home?

This is this study's main question. The purpose of this section is to explore the most appropriate explanations for this question. The literature surveyed provides explanations for particular situations, that is, VRp carried out either under the same situation that expelled refugees or after the resolution of

such situations. No attempt to encompass both situations was found in the literature. This was particularly problematic as Chilean VRp took place during both scenarios. The following approaches provide some idea of VRp during conflict.

'Space' theory

Following several case studies on repatriation under/during conflict (Larkin et al. 1991; Cuny et al. 1992) a 'space theory' was proposed. In this approach, VRp occurs when refugees themselves perceive 'space' for return that is, some form of physical protection, moral and material support in their countries of origin even though the hostile conditions are still in force. In this situation "the refugees are the main actors...they are the main decision-makers and participate in determining the means of their movement and the conditions under which they are received" (Stein and Cuny 1991:16), that is, refugees are provided with agency of their own VRp. It is also argued that as time passes, the available space for repatriation is likely to increase:

At home, the locus of the conflict may change; the levels of violence may decrease; political or economic changes may occur. The border may become more porous as a result of internal changes in the homeland... Gradually more and more people will begin to leave. They are generally people who are on the periphery of the mainstream refugee community or those who feel they no longer "belong"... Repatriations during this period may expand the political space at home, although not significantly' (Cuny et al. 1992:21).

Paradoxically, this theory seems to be in contradiction with the principle of return in 'safety' and 'dignity'. However, the proponents of 'space theory' argue that regarding refugee decision-making, they view refugees 'as individuals who make "rational" choices among unsatisfactory options, and who strive for an outcome that achieves relative security and some degree of control over their lives' (Larkin et al. 1991:7). This basic assumption is drawn from studies of micro-level migration decisions in which decision-makers are at least to some degree intentional in their choices to migrate (De Jong and Gardner 1981). As an explanation for social action, rational choice theory was *in vogue* in the 1980s and used in myriad studies. Rational choice theory appeared rigorous and scientific. Larkin *et al's* application of rational theory to the context of VRp sees refugees as individuals with purposeful choices who actively engage in VRp in order to get some benefits or because they see an 'opening' or temporary situation of which they can take advantage. This is the classic assumption of rational choice theory, 'it operates with a utilitarian-economic concept of rationality *qua* utility optimization through consistent cost benefit calculations' (Zafirovski 1999:47). Yet, Bascom (1994) appropriately speaks of the difficulty of devising a cost-benefit framework from refugees themselves. Unsurprisingly, the rational choice application to VRp under conflict has been subjected to intensive critique. The grounds for such critique were based on the risks involved in its use as a solution to the refugee problem and so the 'space for return' paradigm could constitute the theoretical underpinning for policies that could actually harm the refugees. Concerns about its scientific and ethical value as well as the danger for refugees, were fully expressed by Opondo (1992:5) in a paper presented in a Day-Workshop held in May 1992 where he strongly argued against the voluntariness and rational choice in the decision to repatriate under conflict. He stated that:

(Refugees) are choosing between two situations and will somehow opt for what they perceive to be more satisfactory. This means that the choice to return home during conflict is based on their perception that although the conflict continues at home, the conditions there are better than the conditions under which they have been granted refuge. Now, would we still say that this is voluntary, with 'voluntary' taken to mean that they have freely decided to leave the relatively better conditions in their places of asylum to go back and live under conditions which necessitated their fleeing?

What is at stake in this controversial, though rather interesting theoretical proposition for the purposes of this study, is the tension between the agency of refugees and the structures behind their decision to repatriate voluntarily. For Opondo (*ibid*) the 'conditions in the place of refuge must be worse in some way before refugees can decide to go back to their country of origin during conflict... Somebody somewhere must be responsible for the poor asylum conditions, and this somebody willy-nilly is forcing refugees to repatriate even though the conflict continues.' However, Opondo does not provide a theoretical reflection on this tension nor does he propose an alternative explanation. In sum, this theory loses the connection between '*voluntariness*' and rationality. Without disregarding its practical implications, the 'space theory', though only focusing on factors that interact and drive the repatriation process, is certainly a challenging and seductive theoretical proposition for explaining VRp in times of conflict. Though highly controversial and now a defunct theory, this study will resuscitate it particularly when exploring VRp under the Pinochet dictatorship. The objective is to review its validity and also corroborate Hindess's (1988:3) argument for the need for a more complex view of actor's rationality because he 'disputes both the assumption of actors' rationality and the paradigmatic status assigned to it.' Attached to the decision to return under conflict is the issue of information. Because, arguably, repatriation under conflict is mostly refugee-induced, the decision to return according to Cuny et al. (1992) is the result of the refugees' own assessment of their situation based on the information that is available to them, however incomplete it may be.

Repatriation information system

The 'information' paradigm follows in the steps of 'space' theory in trying to understand VRp in a cost-benefit framework. Information about conditions at home has been important in the repatriation process of Central American refugees (Larkin et al. 1991; Basok 1990) and these supplied the empirical impetus for this paradigm. Koser (1993), tested his 'repatriation information system' during fieldwork amongst Mozambican refugees in Malawi. It starts from the premise that, given the voluntary nature of repatriation, it can be more directly compared to RM. Koser (1993:173) proposed that 'repatriation can be better understood if repatriates are viewed as a special type of return migrants... as a migrant is not escaping an environment of personal danger'. This is therefore self-repatriation. He suggested that self-repatriation 'may be understood as the outcome of a subjective comparison by refugees of conditions in exile *vis-à-vis* conditions at home' (*ibid*:171). He highlights the importance of information refugees have about their home areas in self-repatriation contexts. In this view information seems to be determinant for the repatriation decision. Koser proposed a research model for examining the interaction between the two contexts. This model has five components: 'home conditions about which information is transmitted; agents who collect, mediate and pass on that

information to a refugee; the refugee who receives the information; flows of information that connect these three components, and a series of inputs that relate the model to the external environment and cause the components to change through time' (*ibid*:174). Indeed, this is a basic formulation, yet, it is not clear *who* is providing that information, with *what* purposes and on *which* grounds. Certainly, these are key points to consider when including information as an explanatory variable for VRp, something to be discussed later. To provide his model with sounder grounds he adopted the 'space theory' framework and allowed the refugee to return in terms of 'a rational decision made by individual refugees ...where he/she can play a central role in ending the (*migration*) cycle' (:172-175).

The theory is that repatriates, like return migrants, go home as a result of a balanced decision depending on their personal aspirations, and information available on wider structural conditions. Central to that decision is knowledge of conditions at home (1993:174)

Even in the context of rational choice theory, information before repatriation seemed an unconvincing explanatory model and so in a later publication Koser (1997:9) acknowledged that repatriation is a complex process and that factors like sex, age and background also influence how information about home conditions is evaluated by refugees. Koser then included other factors that would influence the return home such as 'pre-flight and flight experience, nature of settlement in exile, length of time spent in exile, level of socio- economic development achieved by refugees in exile and the extent to which common ethnicity is shared with the host population'. Despite Koser's efforts, his paradigm did not serve to fully explain the VRp of his research subjects. Information did not necessarily figure highly in the repatriation decision-making of many Mozambican refugees. He therefore correctly concluded that 'the focus on just one of the multivariate factors involved in the process (*of repatriation*) cannot hope to provide a comprehensive explanation' (:14). While admitting this, he also acknowledged that 'the specific focus on information has been shown to have advantages of an empirical, conceptual and policy-oriented nature' (:16). Koser's candid acknowledgement is important. It leaves open the possibility for the broader applicability of his model and to assess the extent to which information can provide an insight into the repatriation process.

1.4.2 Factors influencing the decision to return 'home'

Myriad factors explaining repatriation are found in the literature with varying degrees of emphasis. In order to systematise them, seven variables have been identified: length of time spent in exile, integration and acculturation in the host country, pressure exerted by authorities to repatriate, political change in home areas, information that refugees have about home areas, the impact of experiences in host countries and safety at home. A useful approach for grouping these variables and for analytical purposes only, is by articulating them in the two spatial ends of the refugee situation: the host country vis-à-vis the home country. In doing so, the confusing number of variables provided by the literature turns into a clearer return scenario that positions the refugee within what Zetter (1994) calls the 'dilemma of return'; that is, to 'choose' between staying or returning.

Among the factors informing the repatriation decision in the host country, Zetter (1994:311) included the fragmentation of the familiar social networks the refugees faced due to their flight, the break up of the village community that disturbed the socio-economic status of the refugees, the distinctive labels the refugees acquired, the prejudice and discrimination the refugees encountered and the stigma which some refugees experienced. With Kunz's (1981) refugee typology in mind, Rogge (1994:32) added factors such as length of time in exile, degrees of integration and process, pressures exerted by authorities for the refugees to return and the key issue of information refugees have about their home areas. In a study on Southern Sudanese refugees, Akol (1987) identified another three important factors: nature of settlement, level of socio-economic development achieved by refugees and the presence of common ethnic ties with members in the host society.

The most compelling factors influencing repatriation from a home country perspective ('pull' factors) relate to the measure of physical disruption and the extent to which the political conditions that led to the flight of refugees had changed (Rogge 1994:32). Kibreab (1996) has stated that myriad reasons apply for repatriation decisions that are not only related to the refugee situation but also with the responses of the refugees to the political changes that have taken place at home and whether these changes allow refugees to return in conditions of safety and dignity and more importantly, the home government refugee policy and the role of international agencies. This framework only applies for post-conflict situations. However, as discussed, studies on Central America (Larkin et al. 1991:12) and Africa and Asia (Cuny et al. 1992:15), have shown that most VRp occur during conflict, 'without a decisive political event such as national independence, without any change in the regime or the conditions that originally caused the conflict'. Theorising as factors provide a wide sense of valid issues regarding the decision to repatriate, yet, in those studies these factors, albeit correlated, appear to act independently of each other. This study therefore suggests that what is needed is a theoretical/conceptual thread that could span both scenarios.

Certainly, as a result of these studies we now count with a set of repatriation variables at work both in the host countries and the country of origin that many times are termed 'push' and 'pull' factors (e.g. Watson 1996). The scope of these variables made us aware of the complexities involved in the process of repatriation decisions thus indicating that repatriation is not just the result of one or more of these variables. The problem with the factor-induced VRp model is that most explanations suggest that VRp is the result of the influence of single or multiple variables and so they explain it as a 'reaction' rather than an 'action', as the result of outside influences, rather than as a conduct in which refugees actively engage. This is an important milestone in this study's journey for a theoretical framework explaining VRp: the outside influences and refugees' engagement. Among the former, the role of international law is paramount.

1.4.3 The role of international human rights law: the right to return

The right to return refers to the right of an individual to go back to a country from which he/she fled or was forced to flee and it represents a fundamental restoration of lost rights. Of the three durable solutions, 'only voluntary repatriation represents a right (the right to return) accorded to the individual and a corresponding binding obligation (the duty to readmit) on the part of the 'country of origin from which the refugee flow was generated' (Boling 2001:43).

Previously in this chapter, Coles (1989) argued that VRp could also be implemented in the form of the human right to return in safety and dignity. Although according to Takahashi (1997:611), Coles' idea was that 'the emphasis should be not on the exercise of any such 'right to return'', but on eradicating the circumstances which caused flight this indicated a major conceptual shift culminating in policy change. By 1988, UNHCR developed seven VRp principles 'both to protect refugees as well as to foster this solution' (Stainsby 1988:33). The first principle was that 'refugees have the right to return voluntarily to their country of origin' (*ibid*:33). This means that the concept presupposes that the refugees concerned may at any given moment exercise the human right to return to their country of origin regardless of a change in the situation that led to their flight.

The second part of the first principle states that 'this right, recognized in international law, is normally respected by countries of origin' (*ibid*:33). In other words, the solution of 'voluntary repatriation has become a way to exercise this right' (Zieck 1997:123), and that the right to return as a concept was to be derived from a body of authoritative human rights law. In this manner, VRp became institutionalised and entered the realm of the legalistic discourse of human rights in the form of the right of return as the solution to the refugee problem. By now, VRp is not only the best solution to the refugee problem but it is also a right. The entitlement of refugees to return to their country of origin in security and dignity had been already fully recognised in international law and more precisely as a human right.

The right to return is inextricably linked to the right to self-determination of peoples, a principle recognised in the Charter of the United Nations, article 1 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights². Hence, according to Ingles (1962:14), this article 'may very well be regarded as the right of personal self-determination, a corollary of the right of self-determination of peoples.' The right to return in the form of personal self-determination of refugees will provide the legal and political strength to the policy of VRp from above.

The UNHCR *Handbook Voluntary Repatriation: International Protection* (1996:7) stated that:

'In international human rights law, the basic principle underlying voluntary repatriation is the right to return to one's own country. As a corollary of this right, states are duty-bound to admit their nationals and cannot compel any other state to keep them through measures such as denationalization.'

² General Comment N°12: The right to self-determination of peoples (Art.1): 13/03/84 (Twenty-first session, 1984). Office Of The High Commissioner For Human Rights. www.unhcr.ch/tbs/doc.nsf/385c2add1632f4

Also, the individually-held right of return is found in a vast array of international and regional human rights treaties. Article 13(2) of the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights (henceforth UDHR48), declared that ‘Everyone has the right to leave any country, including *his* own, and to return to *his* country’ (United Nations 1948). In addition, the right to return is also defined in several other conventions. Article 12 (4) of the 1966 International Convention on Civil and Political Rights stated ‘No one shall be arbitrarily deprived of the right to enter *his* own country.’ The regional Declaration – The American Declaration of the Rights and Duties of *Man* (Bogotá, Colombia 1948) – states in Article VIII ‘Every person has the right to fix *his* residence within the territory of the state of which *he* is a national, to move about freely within such territory, and not to leave it except by *his* own will’ (own emphasis). Further, the right to return is also anchored in humanitarian law. Humanitarian law is the body of law regulating what States are permitted to do during war. ‘Under humanitarian law, there is a general right of return which applies to all displaced persons generally, *irrespective* of how they came to be displaced during the period of conflict’ (Boling 2001:28).

Critics have argued that this legal framework constitutes a ‘discourse of altruism’ of the Western powers that is, ‘international law does not evolve in a vacuum but reflects the structures and processes which constitute the international system. This means that the dominant actors in the system are able to write their interests into law...Refugee law is no exception to this thesis’ (Chimni 1990:1). However, this powerful international legal *corpus* supporting the right to return would be central in the formulation of the Chilean VRp discourse *El Derecho a Vivir en la Patria* (The Right to Live in one’s own Homeland) to be discussed in Chapter Five.

1.4.4 Ideologies of return

The desire to return ‘home’ seems to be present for every departing migrant even though not all manage to return (Gaillard 1994). In the myriad studies on areas such as diaspora and RM the idea of returning ‘home’ entertained both by migrants and refugees is ubiquitous. Among the reasons and explanations regarding the wish to return, the realm of ideas and beliefs have played an important role. In migration studies the desire to return has been advanced as ‘return illusion’ (Hoffman-Nowotny 1978), ‘ideology of return’ (Philpott 1973), or ‘myth of return’ (Dahaya 1973). As an illusion, return presupposes that with the passage of time permanent settlement in the country of origin will occur. The ‘ideology’ and ‘myth’ of return appear to be more convincing theoretical arguments in need of some analytical attention. Most migration studies have shown that migration is often initially perceived as temporary and more so when migration is involuntary. Then, the wish to return can manifest itself in the form of an ideology or as a myth. Both ideology and myth of return are dynamic concepts that can regress, evolve, or become static. To avoid analytical confusion, and for the sake of theoretical clarity, this study claims that ‘ideology of return’ and ‘myth of return’ are not homologous terms though they both constitute a return impetus regardless of its physical materialisation. This claim is based on Zetter’s (1999b:6) insightful work on the myth of return. After his careful analysis,

he arrived at the conclusion that 'What is mythologized is not return *per se*, but home. Thus it might be more accurate to recast the myth of return as the myth of 'home' or the myth of return home... What is mythologized, is what has been left behind and what, it is hoped, return will accomplish – the belief that 'home' both as material and symbolic entity, can be restored as it was before exile.' Regarding ties with the homeland, according to Al-Rasheed (1994), the myth can have varied intensity and is not entertained by all refugees, it can either be encouraged or discouraged. More importantly, Al-Rasheed transgresses the boundaries of myth by recognising that it can be an aspiration. Similarly, Cohen and Gold (1997:376-377) suggest that the myth of return can range from 'vague' to 'pathological obsession' and play individual as well as collective roles of national identity, notions of 'homeland', nationalism' and 'community'. Concurring with Dahya (1973), Cohen and Gold (1997) insist that, despite being mythical, it is a pragmatic solution to the dilemma of being part of two, often conflicting, social and cultural contexts. However, when nationalistic ideas such as 'homeland' are articulated, these arguments suggest that what these authors are describing is more ideological rather than fictitious discourse. What interests this study's journey is the power of return ideologies when they become politically liberationist, that is, when they materialise return.

Liberation ideology

Although 'politics' has been a critical feature in refugee repatriation, particularly the role of political movements i.e., in Central America (Larkin et al. 1991), their ideological role was not examined. Seeing refugees as 'freedom fighters' during the Cold War, their ideological role was taken for granted. Hence, the lack of research in this area of VRp can be illustrated by the fact that only two studies related to political ideologies of return could be found in the literature namely those of Makanya (1994) and Israel (2000). In these studies, ideologies have surpassed the boundaries of the cognitive. Both scholars provide explanations for return that are closer to this study's interest. In her study of the return of Zimbabweans in the early 1980s, Makanya (1994:113-119) acknowledges the crucial role played by Parties with a strong liberation ideology in the desire to return to their country. Parties sustained and inculcated an ideology into the refugee population, that is, 'to keep the hope of going home alive and rekindle it even when times were difficult.' Part of the liberation ideology 'was to clarify why the war was being fought and what it was expected to achieve...' and that 'the focus of the teachings was to show how the people had been dispossessed of their birth-right and had been denied basic human rights by a system of government in Rhodesia' (*ibid*). In her view, this ideology of return played a vital role both in the return of refugees and in the Lancaster House Agreement that stated that repatriation of refugees 'would be carried out as quickly as possible especially for the adults in order to enable them to take part in the elections.' Regarding the impact of a created ideology instilling discipline and determination on refugees that in turn contributes to the solution of their predicament, Makanya argues for the agency of refugees in repatriation. Although she links 'return ideology' to a political purpose, she fails to theorise liberation ideology as a political narrative.

Similarly, in his work on South African exiles living in London, Israel (1999) observed how identities and ideologies of exile intersected. He described how these exiles invented and maintained identities and supporting ideologies of exile and how the development of the identity also fulfilled an ideological function. Central to such identity are the constructs of ideologies of exit, displacement and of return. He argues that 'the reason why migrants might wish to return are not simply dependent on the way they have been received by a host country, nor are they simple reactions to changes in the home society. Instead, voluntary return is also affected by the way migrants understand their position in host and home societies. In the case of many South African exiles, their life in Britain 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' (Israel 2000:36). For South African exiles 'the idea of return gave some meaning to the time in exile' (*ibid*). One of the categories of exiles further studied by Israel was the South African War Resisters (COSAWR), a small but rather unusual group dedicated to resisting conscription – for whom return was perceived as a strong commitment, as a patriotic duty. Indeed, for both authors the 'ideology of return' has evolved into a political commitment.

Both Israel and Mayanya's work are important advances during this exploratory journey. However, they did not further their analysis into a cohesive analytical formulation. Moreover, their theoretical reflections remained at the genderless and classless micro-level and did not engage in a dialogue with the powers of the macro structural level. The next section examines the different approaches of the existing literature on Chilean return. This is an important exercise because it will highlight the efforts made by Chilean and Latin American scholars.

1.5 Chilean voluntary repatriation in the literature

In examining the overall process of Chilean VRp no attempt has been made for an independent conceptualisation, in theoretically significant ways, of the determinants of Chilean exiles/refugees repatriation. This section highlights the gaps in the understanding of Chilean VRp. Among the studies encountered, Rebolledo (2004) timidly alluded to Gmelch's (1980) RM paradigm hence, limiting her explanation to the 'voluntary' nature of Chilean exiles' decision to return. Viflar (1990) and Gaillard (1992) appealed to psychoanalysis to explain the end of exile and its strong emotional components. Among the best known works in English are those of Llambias-Wolff (1993) and Amore (2002). These authors saw Chilean VRp exclusively as a self-repatriation exercise under dictatorship (1973-1990) and from 1990 onwards as 'voluntary assisted repatriation.' Unlike Llambias-Wolff's, Amore's work is contextualised within the broader framework of international community policies. It situated Chilean VRp within the dynamics of the refugee regime and the shifting repatriation policies between the 1980s and early 1990s. She claims that the Chilean case illustrates how governments, international organisations and NGOs began to get involved in repatriation movements, turning the 'voluntary independent return' into 'voluntary assisted repatriation'. Amore's discussion constitutes an advance when compared to the literature encountered. She mentions "El Retorno" as planned and carried out

by some Chilean refugees (:156). The notion of *'el retorno'* is ubiquitous in the literature yet, it is used rather loosely and there is no definition for it. In this study's view *el retorno* has no explanatory power. Furthermore, three problems arise with Amore's approach. Firstly, she insists on the 'voluntary' nature of Chilean VRp for both periods. Secondly, these are seen as completely separated repatriation scenarios and thirdly, self-repatriation is endorsed uncritically. Such a position is debatable however, given that in his article on Rwandan refugees 'self-repatriating' from Zaire, Pottier (1999:142) warned us about the need to probe the mechanisms that trigger such 'self-repatriations' and more importantly, he asks whether 'refugees returned voluntarily or because of an extraordinary coincidence of extraordinary events?' This is an important question. Unlike the case of encamped Rwandan refugees, this study insists that Chilean exiles were dispersed around the world in more than fifty countries. The pertinent question therefore is why and how did they 'self-repatriate'?

Social worker Kadem Villamar (1984), who had worked with refugees in Chile and Venezuela under the care of UNHCR, identified 'subjective' and 'objective' factors for return under the dictatorship. Her argument influenced Santini's (1986) and Llambias-Wolff's (1993) work. For Villamar, (1984:7-8) the subjective factors were present from the moment of departure and showed Chileans' emotional ties with the patria. The objective reasons are a combination of push and pull factors such as exile grievances and loss of fear. Among the latter were changes in the concrete situation such as amnesty decrees. Both set of factors are mediated by having sufficient economic means to make a new start. This means that class was instrumental in repatriating. Villamar also acknowledged that in her study 72 per cent of her sample was constituted by women. They had returned either because of separation or their husband's return restrictions. However important these findings for VRp under the dictatorship are, these are seen as facts and not discussed as gendered and classed processes with significant short and long-term implications. A further weakness lies in the binary presentation of repatriation factors (objective/subjective) as if they are not part of the same process and causally linked. Though Villamar's study presents some important insights of Chilean VRp under dictatorship, these are solely contextualised for the first decade hence cannot be stretched to cover the transition to the democratic period.

Santini's (1986) paper deals with the psychological problems associated with the decision to return of a group of Chileans in Holland in the mid 1980s. This was the result of clinical practice with Latin American refugees run by SPD-LAV.³ The objectives of this particular experience were manifold and the general aim was to 'lower the level of anguish' regarding the possible loss of the life established in the host country and the anxieties and perceptions of return under dictatorship. Though an important contribution to this neglected and under-examined stage of the return process, a major problem was encountered as it was framed within a Western clinical approach to refugees. It starts from the premise that 'many of the exiled have more probability to be psychologically disturbed than other people' (*ibid* :2). A related study was carried out in 1984 by a team of Southern Cone Latin American professionals in Sweden (Mella 1984 et al.) Though the working variables were useful to study proclivities to

³ Social Psychiatry Service operating nationally since 1976 and financed by the Ministry of Health in Holland.

return, the methodology was flawed. Because of the high susceptibility of their 'research universe' (Southern Cone refugees in Sweden) to issues on return and the reluctance of political exiles to give their opinions about personal and political experiences, Mella et al. consulted them using representative cases of third persons of the exiled community. In sum, it was an opinion-based study.

Another way of approaching the issue of Chilean return has been the construction of typologies. Vásquez and Araujo (1990) for example, provided a staged exile life that depending on the directions of refugees' identities might lead to its end or continuation. Bolzman (1993b; 1996) in Switzerland makes a similar point, emphasising four stages to explain possible return whereby the last stage is constituted by the 'end of exile' that is possible 'when the factors of political violence, the root causes of exile, have ended' (1993b:121). Bolzman's argument fails both to explain return under dictatorship and to acknowledge the macro factors involved. Portes (1997) is right when cautioning us that typologies are not theories that can explain phenomena. Though these typologies are useful in demonstrating the diversity of factors and reasons behind the 'decision' to return and constitute a useful analytical departure, they are not based on an explanatory framework. Neither 'staging' nor 'typologising' provides an encompassing perspective on how to explain the complexities of VRp during two different political periods. In sum, while these studies provide some understanding of the reasons why Chileans repatriated, there is still the need to contextualise those reasons in a theoretical sense and, as this study suggests, with – to borrow Bascom's (1998) term – an 'endogenous' formulation. The reason for adopting such an approach lies in the determination not to use any established theoretical model that might end up being normative theorising and thus making moral claims and justifying these theoretical and/or prescribed models of what VRp should be rather than being descriptive and explanatory of what it actually was. This is the more important because, unlike flight which is assumed to be forced, return is supposed to be 'voluntary', that is, refugees are not coerced to repatriate, something that the reviewed literature on Chilean VRp reaffirms. Still, this study's purpose is to be both reflexive and critical of such assumption.

This study has now reached the point of providing its own analytical tools to theorise VRp in its own parameters. This is the result of the dissatisfaction with the inadequate contextualisation of Chilean VRp in the above surveyed literature. When discussed, VRp is seen as a generalised phenomena in which refugees and returnees are socially, politically and ethnically homogenised.

More importantly, return took place during a process of democratisation and so this study sees VRp as a continuous process that goes from dictatorship to democratic transition, hence the need to formulate an analytical and conceptual framework and a firm argument that would run smoothly during these apparently dissimilar stages. None of the paradigms discussed above offer such possibility, they are too static. The next section's formulation will guide this study's analysis.

1.5.1 *Returnism* and hegemony

The aim of this section is to develop an approach sensitive to the political and social process of VRp under two distinct political scenarios and seen as a continuity. Considering that this is a case study the aim is not to lapse into particularism but to be a source of insights. Though this study will not be thoroughly engaged with a particular theoretical perspective, the following conceptual framework constitutes a theorising effort grounded on VRp's own parameters arising from empirical findings, the literature surveyed, the extensive documentation reviewed and lastly the author's own experiences. The proposed conceptual framework aims at building a more nuanced and historicised understanding of VRp as in this case took place in two different political periods that is, dictatorship and transitional democracy. Starting from the premise that VRp is a process, the formulation proposed here is dynamic and versatile; it can follow the political and historical evolution of VRp and move from the macro to the micro levels of analysis. This is to reassure the reader that in the formulation presented below there are just illuminatory paths.

This study therefore suggests that, in the process of VRp, formulations of return are synchronically articulated in two dynamics. These dynamics are dialectically interrelated and mutually reinforced. Both dynamics act in a framework of power and entertain the same ideas about return. One dynamic works at the macro level, the other at the micro level and both discursively naturalise and legitimise the idea of return. The dialectical interaction of both dynamics constitutes a political return narrative that does not solely emanate from the individual motivation to return, but rather is constituted as a political process, as an ideology of nationhood regardless of the scale of such commitment. As such, it requires the workings of institutional hegemonic structures that are to be sustained, reproduced, defended and recreated. These structures can operate in co-existing antagonistic political contexts, even though they appear to subvert or oppose one another. In fact, their tensions and contradictions result in the continuation of a particular social and cultural order. What is required, if a continuation of these hegemonic structures is to be rendered secure, is the existence or appearance of a cultural, political, intellectual and moral leadership that would persuade people that return constitutes an essential part of the 'natural order of things'. This is the narrative that in this study is termed *returnism* and one in which the presence of power was not obvious.

The macro-level in which *returnism* operates is constituted by the intersection of structural forces such as class and gender regimes, international refugee and human rights regimes heralding the right to return, opposition political parties and concomitant political agendas, religious institutions' influence on moral and political constructions of return, national and international NGOs and refugee associations. Each of these constituencies holds return power and as such have 'the capability of achieving outcomes' (Giddens 1982:38).

The driving force of *returnism* 'from below', that is, the micro-level, is the individual idea of return where refugees/exiles themselves contribute to the reproduction and encouragement of return

narratives. Return is the intended conclusion of migration/exile/refugeehood. More than a myth or an aspiration, it is a conviction, a determination that is present at the outset of forced/voluntary migration (*emigrar para voltar/migrate to return*, Brettell 1979, 2003) that in this study will be termed *foundational return decision*. This concept refers to the original unquestioned decision to return that usually is taken at the time of departure. Though with time and distance it can turn into an 'ideology' or a 'myth of return', the aim of *returnism* is to keep the *foundational decision* active and avoid any mythologising. It is no exaggeration to say that both migrants and refugees keep self-disciplining themselves when constantly reminding themselves that 'they will return home'. Theoretically, this means that the determination or conviction to return is firmly grounded in the *temporariness* of forced/voluntary migration. Hence, *returnism* as a political return narrative is grounded in the controlling idea of the *temporariness* of refugeehood/exile.

To illustrate this concept it can be safely claimed that at the moment of departure, refugees and their families who were left behind do not expect that the power that expelled them would last long thus their return would be expected within a reasonable period of time. *Temporariness* is nothing other than the transient nature of exile that at the micro-level is most fully expressed when individual refugees/exiles metaphorically consider their time abroad as a 'pause' (Arrate 2007), as a 'break' (Salinas, 2000), as 'forced holidays' (Amaro and Portes 1972), a 'posada' (Stepputat 1994) or as a 'truce' in the case of Chilean female combatants (Vidaurrázaga 2005). When exile's *temporariness* is presented metaphorically what it usually means is a period of rest and recuperation after imprisonment, to retrain academically or in some job skills that would be useful on their return to the country of origin, or as in the case of labour migration, to secure enough savings with either the determination or hope to return. In the case of forced migration, *temporariness* is based on the assumption that the conditions that impelled flight would be ephemeral. It becomes the hallmark of this level particularly during early exile and constitutes an encounter point that bridges exile and return. Once *temporariness* ends in return, the compression exile-return (*exilio-retorno*) emerges thus mirroring the protection-solution paradigm. Still, in the dynamics of *returnism* different forms of *temporariness* converge.

'Political *temporariness*' is grounded in the belief that the regime that had expelled refugees/exiles will be temporary, exile would be short-lived and experienced with the hope that return would be soon. Refugees' lives, particularly during the first years of exile are metaphorically depicted as 'living with packed suitcases' or as Tabori (1972) put it a 'suitcase life'. The idea is, as Pérez (1996) put it, that 'the suitcases shouldn't grow roots'. The 'suitcase' metaphor sometimes is replaced by the 'foot' metaphor whereby exiles live 'with one foot in the host country and the other in the home country'. While both metaphors describe the limited expected time in exile, the latter has a transnational dimension. Legally, *temporariness* is related to the refugee status whereby 'refugees are still received as temporary guests who need temporary haven. They are expected to return to their 'homes' subsequent to the elimination of the factors that prompted their displacement' (OAU Convention in Kibreab 2003a:25). Indeed, the refugee status is not intended to be permanent. In legal terms,

'paragraph 6 of the Statute of UNHCR and Article 1C of the 1951 Convention provide for the cessation of refugee status' (Goodwin-Gill 1989:256). Lately, the notion of 'temporary protection' developed most systematically as a means of solving the 'refugee problem' (the Yugoslav case in the early 1990s for example), has strengthened the notion of 'legal temporariness'. Even labour migrants in countries such as West Germany and Sweden have been officially termed 'guestworkers' and as Connor (1986:22) put it, this is 'an apt choice since good guests never outstay their welcome'. Socially, *temporariness* is reinforced by an exile that entails a disruption in the individual social world and by the difficulties of the 'refugee experience' that will instead be termed the 'uneasiness of exile' as the former has been mainly associated with traumatised 'dependent' encamped refugees (Stein 1981). Return, therefore is supposed to end such disruption. In some cases a fourth type of temporariness should be considered, 'legal-administrative' *temporariness*. Many home governments raise return barriers and so administrative *temporariness* refers to the time between flight and the lifting of administrative barriers imposed by the expelling State. Once one of the most restrictive types of *temporariness* disappear, the refugee/exile is no longer in need of protection. While the myth also considers 'exile as a temporary phase' (Al-Rasheed 1994:210), this study contends that it is the nature of exile's temporariness that matters. Though *returnism* shares a number of notions with the myth, it is not just a myth of return, but a political narrative of return and so it not solely 'deeply rooted in refugees' minds' as Al-Rasheed (*ibid*) put it, but rather, is an ideology of nationhood tied to nation-building. Hence, the core ideas that run parallel in both the macro and micro levels are notions of national belonging, place, territoriality, *patria*, nostalgia, gender and family ideologies. Constructing *returnism* in such manner, it departs from the 'myth of return'.

However, the formulation of *returnism* had fallen on hard times as it entails a 'sedentarist' narrative. Most liberal scholars trying to find ways of understanding and of explaining VRp would scream in horror at such a proposition. In a post-modern era, *returnism* will encounter loud anti-'sedentarist' voices (Malkki 1992; Warner 1994) and diaspora narratives (Cohen 1997). So, how can *returnism* maintain a standing balance in such difficult times and continue being a strategic driving force for VRp? In this formulation it follows three strategies. In the first place, it has to fight *temporariness* in all its manifestations in order to prevent what Klimt (1989, 2000) termed 'permanent temporariness.' Secondly, it has to use a 'soft' nationalist narrative and agenda yet still an appealing one and *patria* seems to be the adequate tool. Patriotism, *patria* and rootedness refer to 'love of country' something that Tuan (1976:11-13) termed 'geopiety' that is, the emotional attachment to one's native land, the place of one's birth, the hearth in which one was nurtured, the domicile of the deified souls of departed ancestors and of the gods.' According to Breuilly (1996:148), patriotism is closely linked to nationalism and hardly distinguished analytically; the former tends to become 'a term of praise and the latter a term of abuse.' Indeed, *returnism* tends to work better by praising the *patria*. Thirdly, it has to be versatile and malleable enough to be able to 'metamorphose' at distinct political and historical times and to move from the public to the private spheres and penetrate deeply into these spheres so as to maintain its persistence and persuasive mobilising return capacities. Finally and paradoxically, to be politically effective it has to contest the dominant *status quo* with the latter's own structural

foundations. Most critical accounts of hegemonic discourses are concerned with producing radical counter-hegemonic narratives that could be deployed from transnational spaces. Adamson (2002:156) for example, argued that transnational communities can use the political space of these communities 'as a site for the mobilization of identities, discourses and narratives that either challenge or reinforce official hegemonic discourse of the home state regime.' Yet, this exclusionary alternative (for/against) rules out any possibility of oppositional discourses structured *around* similar or equal foundations of the official hegemonic discourse, that is, it both challenges while simultaneously reinforces official hegemonic discourses' foundations. Precisely, *returnism* is a contesting narrative that uses the very same hegemonic foundations of the official discourse. In this study this will be termed the *like with like* argument.

But *returnism* does not operate in a vacuum, it requires a 'social field'. The lack of State protection and repression against part of the population turns them either into *refugees/exiles* or *stayees*. The former flee whereas the latter, despite experiencing lack of State protection and of being exposed to repression, dismissal and/or unemployment, remain within the territorial boundaries of the nation-state. Those loyal to the expelling regime would be termed *nationals* while not excluding the existence of a 'neutral' sector of the population. The social field in which refugees/exiles live is the *exterior*, stayees live in the *interior*. This divide differs from the usage of these terms by Parties to refer to their leaderships and militants resisting inside Chile (interior) and their rearguard outside the country (exterior). These terms have been adopted and referred to as the 'interior-exterior axis' by scholars studying Chilean exile (Fairley 1987; Eastmond 1989). However, to identify this axis solely with Partisan activities is rather reductionist. In this study *exterior* refers to the segment of Chilean society expelled by the State occupying a space outside the territorial boundaries of the national State and *interior* to the space occupied by stayees within those boundaries.

Though the *interior* coexists with the 'core society', they constitute two politically and ideologically separate societies. Yet, the cultural and social structural foundations of both remain the same and it is argued here that this sustains the survival of the *interior*. Though the *exterior* and the *interior* are territorialised in host and home countries respectively, they operate from the periphery of both states thus constituting a singular space. Because both sections have been forcibly displaced from the core society by the State, the trans-State social field will be termed 'peripheral society'. The literature on transnationalism uses the term 'community(ies)' but it normally struggles with social differentiation and heterogeneity within them. In her comments about diaspora and its transnational nature, Anthias (1998:563) was right in arguing against the assumption that 'there is a natural and unproblematic 'organic' community of people without division or difference, dedicated to the same political project(s)' in a sort of what she termed 'primordial bonding.' Issues of gender and class according to Anthias are missing. Terming the social field in which *returnism* operates 'peripheral society' provides the freedom to include class, gender, political differences and stratification as these travel unexamined into exile and take some time to be redefined, or challenged.

Van Hear (2002:221) also uses the term ‘community’ yet he makes an important point. He conceives ‘transnationalism’ as ‘the connections between those at home and those abroad, and among different sections of those abroad when they are dispersed’, these are the refugees/exiles and stayees. However, this study is at odds with the term ‘community’ in transnational contexts. It has been argued that what exists in refugee/exile communities is a conglomerate of collectivities which political and ideological allegiances, class stratification, gender structures and race ghettoisation impede to conceptualise them as ‘community(ies)’ (López Zarzosa 1991). Thus the concept ‘society’ allows for the inclusion of heterogeneity in a classed, gendered, politicised and racialised social field. Figure 1 (below) provides a visualisation of *returnism*’s social field.

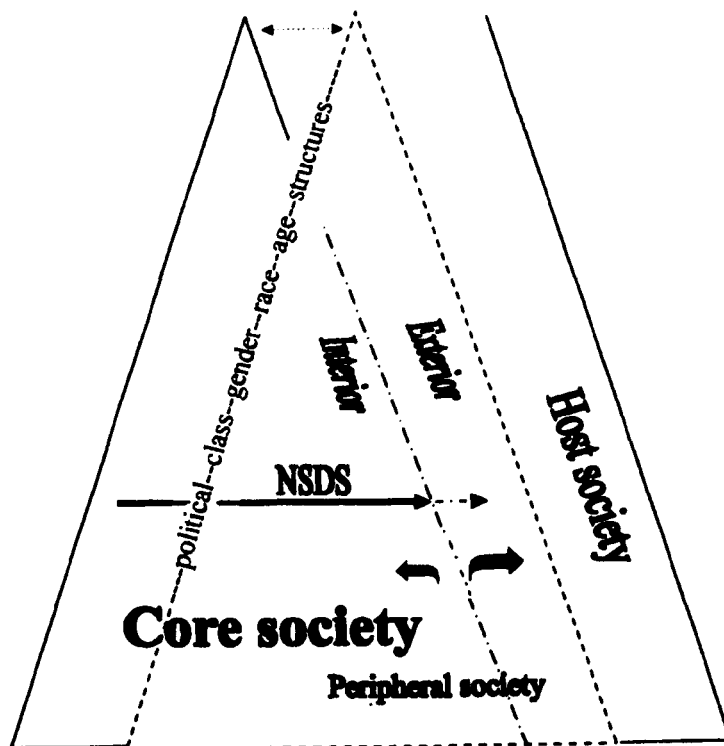


Figure 1

This analytical conceptual framework would enable us to move through the different areas to be explored. Its explanatory potential will aid in our understanding of the different dimensions and dynamics of Chilean VRp.

Conclusion

This chapter has set the rules for this study's analysis. It contextualised the wider macro VRp context during which Chilean exiles started to return. During this time a fundamental policy shift took place. VRp was now considered the preferred solution to the 'refugee problem' and to the problems of refugees. VRp not only was heralded as the right of refugees to return to their country of origin but also as a discourse. One of this chapter's discontents was with the singled focussed explanations and paradigms addressing VRp. Chilean VRp happened in two distinct political periods and this study is focussing on both. In order to have a more comprehensive understanding of such repatriation this chapter developed a conceptual tool that would allow travel with Chilean refugees/exiles from the time of flight to their return either during dictatorship or after its demise. The next chapter will reveal in the author's voice the epistemological and methodological approach to this study.

CHAPTER TWO

Methodological considerations: researching ex-peers from within and afar, an insider/outsider approach

Introduction

The accounts in this chapter are not solely centred on the practicalities of choosing the 'right' method to suit this project. More importantly, it discusses my epistemological concerns, my position as a researcher and the power relations involved in the research process. I want to make transparent not only the methodological strategy chosen for this study, but also to show that despite this long, troubled and fragmented journey in which I have travelled together with many of my research subjects, it provides the opportunity to depart from them. Through this I have gained the necessary analytical distance that has enabled me to look at my own and their experiences more critically and reflexively. Hence, the discussion and knowledge that this thesis is producing constitutes an enormous moral responsibility for me. I take up this challenge by disclosing the practicalities, epistemological and ontological concerns involved in doing research on ex-peers. In doing so, I am adopting an analytical rather than a descriptive reflexivity and these are first-person accounts.

2.1 An autobiographical note: why do I still want to research voluntary repatriation?

The subject matter of this thesis is closely associated with my own biography and development as a practitioner and researcher on issues concerning refugees and repatriated people. The problem explored here has come about through my own involvement with refugees and returnees and also with my lived experiences as a refugee and returnee and not solely as an existential reality. I can even be identified as a returnee by two bureaucratic documents. The first one was a certificate that qualified me as a political exile for the effects of Law 19.128 of 7th February 1992. This certificate numbered 632 and dated 29 April 1992, was essential for customs exemptions. Yet, my *real* bureaucratic returnee status was given by 'returnee ID' number: 02850 issued May 5th 1992 in Concepción, Chile. Both documents were issued by the National Return Bureau (ONR). I was one of the 1,768 people who returned that year (see Appendix 4), and of the 3 million refugees who had gone back to their countries of origin. As a welcoming present my mother gave me a 'patriotic' tea towel hand-painted with national icons such as tricolour ribbons, guitars and vine leaves; in between these icons shines a rainbow and the caption underneath read *La Alegría Llegó* (Happiness has Arrived). At that time, I did not fully understand the meaning of the phrase; Chapter Six and Seven will unravel the meaning of my mother's present.

While a refugee, I worked twice for *Chile Democrático-UK* (CD), the National Organisation of Chilean Exiles in the UK at its headquarters in London. First, as Women Officer I was in charge of the coordination of the activities organised by CD's Women's Committee. Later, I worked as CD's Education Officer taking care of the educational activities organized by CD's Education Committee.

Between 1983 and 1988 I was the organiser of *Niño Luchín Saturday School* (López Zarzosa 1991; 2006) and then from 1989 to 1991, I was the director of the Latin American Children's Theatre Company (LACHTCO) working with children from refugee and immigrant Latin American families in London. Between 1983 and 1985 I presided over the Chilean Women in Exile's North London Committee.

My life as a refugee lasted fifteen years and my return to Chile almost four (López Zarzosa 1998). I returned to Chile early in 1992, the year that Professor Sadako Ogata, UNHCR Commissioner, had declared the "Year of Voluntary Repatriation" and when the causes that prompted my flight had changed. During my life as a returnee I used my year-long WUS return grant to work on educational issues concerning children of returnee families. I first worked for the official partnership PIDEE-ONR in Concepción for seven months. This work comprised of Saturday activities for the children of returnee families to 'introduce them to the real Chile.' It was a creative activity for schoolchildren similar to the ones at the Saturday School I organised in London. It involved language classes and other activities which I complemented with theatre. During that short period of time, the children and myself wrote a play which they entitled *La familia infeliz* (The unhappy family), that was performed for PIDEE tutors and parents. Some parents were puzzled about the title of the play and asked me for the reasons for it. The answer was "ask your children." The PIDEE-ONR agreement ended on November 30, 1992, severing in this manner both a badly needed service and my impetus for working with this particular group of children. That left me with some months of the WUS grant that I had to use purposefully. PIDEE's experience illuminated me with what to do: an empirical research on school adaptation of children from returnee families. In order to continue receiving the grant a sponsor was required. I approached the VIII Region Sub-Secretariat of the Ministry of Education (*Subsecretaría de Educación*) for whom there would be no costs involved. Though that was a completely alien environment for me, the presence of a welcoming cousin there made things easier to present a research proposal. Though there were 'returnee-friendly' schools (mainly in Santiago) and some awareness of children's difficulties at school, at that time there was little scholarly knowledge on 'returnee' children's school adaptation yet many classrooms in Chile had at least one of them experiencing problems. The proposal was accepted and I started the fieldwork interviewing 'returnee' secondary school students. I realised that my time with the Ministry of Education was running out and that the preliminary findings should to be known by the educational authorities and teachers. Through my cousin I persuaded the authorities to organise a seminar on this pressing issue now that return (1993) was on the increase. The seminar *El Retorno y los Problemas de los Menores en el Sistema Educativo Chileno* took place in June 1993. I opened the seminar with a lengthy paper. Though return in Chile, had started in 1978 (and in a few cases earlier, see Appendix 4), I was surprised when, after the morning session, I was approached by the press with the statement/question, *so, in your opinion the returnee children have school problems, how come?* (see *El Sur* 1993:12).

I completed the study in the spring of 1994. Because I was determined to make this issue known I presented its final findings at the 5th Chilean Congress of Sociology at the University of Concepción in December 1994. My idea was to publish it through the Ministry of Education so it could serve as a

reflexive policy-related 'handbook' for teachers. Despite enormous efforts this was impossible. I then approached Claudio González, FASIC's Executive Secretary in Santiago who, without any objection volunteered immediately to publish it (López Zarzosa 1995). What saddened me most was that a useful 'tool' for understanding the complex socio-educational adaptation of 'returnee' children and to reflect on an open authoritarian and discriminatory school system, caught no attention whatsoever and even Ministry of Education's MECE Program Coordinator, Cristián Cox had no time to read it, he responded 'I will keep your work for calmer times...'⁴ Soon after FASIC published the study in November 1995, I re-migrated to the U.K as a 'failed returnee' leaving my teenage eldest daughter behind because, as she put it, *no quiero andar pa'llá y pa'cá* ('I don't want to be backwards and forwards'). This physical and spatial separation from her and the whole experience of failed return shook me to the core, even more so than leaving for exile. I embarked on both a journey of failed return and of 'transnational motherhood' (Hondagneu-Sotelo and Avila 1997). I had returned with the firm purpose of living in Chile again, of regaining my 'roots', of contributing to the democratic transition, and a plethora of expectations around family and possible educational contributions for marginalised children such as those of the indigenous communities in the region. My experience at the Saturday School was so rich that I wanted to make good use of it. I took my American-English husband who left his job to join me in this 'dream', my two daughters, my three rescue cats and almost the entire contents of my household and selling the London house in the midst of a housing crisis. I, *quemé las naves* (burned the bridges), yet after arduous intents I could not find a niche or a space in Chile. Hence, the 'decision' to leave Chile in democracy, was extremely difficult. With my failed return I transgressed the 'optimum' durable solution of VRp. My post-return experiences made my VRp 'non-sustainable'. My only consolation after my *regreso*, was that FASIC's Executive Secretary sent copies of my study to many peer libraries and documentation centres abroad. I am extremely grateful to him. On my *regreso* I left one copy at RSP (today RSC).

Because I had lost my refugee status, I had to have an interview at the British Consulate in Santiago and pay a fee of round £120. Only because my husband was a British subject and he had secured a job in London and a bank account, was I able to enter Britain again. Part of that experience and a hint of the reasons for my return to the UK were 'voiced' in a *Refugee Studies Journal* article in the section 'Refugee Voices' (1998). Indeed, the research scenario of this thesis assumes that I am *familiar* – it can be argued 'over-familiar' – with the refugee/returnee subject to the point of being saturated by these overwhelming experiences. Although it is not unusual for sociologists to research a setting of which they have had some first-hand experience, my own involvement and periods of immersion 'in the field' might be considered 'contamination' and present the risk of being biased. However, I still have arguments to support my claim for researching Chilean VRp.

The reasons for my commitment are threefold. First, VRp is still a topical issue and more so recently with the fortification of Europe and because as seen earlier, VRp as *the* solution to the refugee problem has evolved from being the most desirable to the 'most noble' of the solutions. Second, the complex nexus pre-exile-exile-return-failed-return has played an integral part within my own life story as it has

⁴ Letter dated 1 August 1995 (personal archives).

for many of my respondents. The reasons for this 'abnormal' cycle still remain unresearched. More than half of my adult life has been shared within those stages. Third, the fact that even being so immersed 'in the field', common sense or everyday experiences do not provide rigorous explanations for social phenomena. Even being a sociologist, my experience as a returnee could not reveal 'the strange in the familiar' nor could it 'place individuality in social context' (Marvasti 2004:2). I was so busy trying to cope and 'integrate' that my 'sociological eye' vanished. Although simple assumptions of strangeness and familiarity have been problematised because 'we can no longer assume that the familiar is quite so familiar, nor can we take for granted what will count as strange' (Atkinson et al. 2003:28), 'familiarity' in return contexts is more complex. The purpose of this study is to find the 'strange' in the 'familiar' and dig deep down into the less superficial and obvious forces acting upon us as refugees with a desire to return and going as far as immersing the context of this study in the gendered political and social history of Chile. It was precisely this experience as an individual and my position within it that compelled me to look for the phenomena outside the individual experience and look for the macro framework. I wanted to know *why* and *how* we returned and if these causes and processes impinged on the failure or success of return. In short, it has been a journey of discovery and indeed, a very sorrowful one.

With time, my own experiences as returnee and even as a refugee are starting to become more distant. The reflections, theorisation and painful memories of a failed return transformed my experiences into valuable research questions that had to be furthered with more information. I started to look for documents, exile journals such as *Chile-América*, and the renowned cultural-political *Araucaria de Chile*, articles in magazines addressing the exile-return issue both in Chile and in exile, exile documents and pamphlets, studies done in Chile, theses, reports, manuals for repatriation, Parties' call for return, ONR's documents and statistics. In sum, *everything* related to the issue *exilio-retorno* interested me. My avid interest in knowing why we returned and why I (and many others), failed was uncontrollable. Only physical and emotional distance from the familiar and scientific rigour would accomplish the understanding of the complexities of the political and social phenomena of VRp. I concluded that, as a researcher, I could take on the 'discipline of making the familiar strange' (Holliday 2002:13), and draw on my own biographical experiences only as a departure for studying fellow partners.

2.2 Epistemological concerns: an analytical reflexive account

Alcoff and Potter (1993:2) have pointed out that 'epistemological issues are most relevant to understand the research undertaken.' Starting from this premise, I require to make clear the epistemological framework that will make sense to what in this study is counting as 'knowledge', how I became a 'knower' and what is this thesis' purpose for the pursuit of knowledge. Reflexivity offered me the possibility to recognise myself as a scholar intimately involved in the generation of knowledge rather than simply a recorder and reporter of what is seen outside myself (Litton and McBride 2000). Such a self-aware stance fosters a critical approach to epistemology. Thus, I start by addressing the epistemological concerns of being a troubled feminist from the global South doing research on men and women who from being refugees/exiles turned into returnees.

My position as a researcher has posed two main epistemological concerns. One relates to an abstract issue and the second to a more practical one. The first one is a theoretical dilemma concerning my feminist position and the stance of this study. At the micro level, this thesis is about the factors, ideas, reasons and motivations behind the decision to repatriate taken by exiled men and women and at the macro level how institutional, gendered, classed and political the process came to be. This would assess the voluntary nature of the return 'decision' in a less 'voluntaristic' manner. Epistemologically, it would have been a more straightforward issue had I connected this research to returnee women's voices and more so to one particular historical period (either dictatorship or democracy or to explore exile and return as separate stages). However, such approach would have proved to be too essentialist and particularistic. Solely focussing on women would have followed the much criticised sex-role theory which views gender as a static attribute, not as a fluid practice and does not see women and men as social categories and as the product of structural hierarchy. Feminist scholarship has replaced the analytical category 'women' by that of gender. However, as Morgan (1981:94) in his discussion of male rationality in the sociological inquiry within universities, has argued that "where gender is 'taken into account' it is usually in relation to women" and that 'we know more about wives and mothers than about husbands and fathers; if the former are obscured from our vision by being too far in the background, the latter are obscured from our vision by being... too much in the foreground.' Additionally, masculinities and femininities have been ignored both in the process of exiling and returning.

Things have moved on rapidly and in addressing this point, Indra (1999:2) sustained that '...neither in talk, research, analysis, policy, nor programming can 'gender' be equated solely with women, nor solely with women's activities, beliefs, goals, or needs.' Indeed, this is in sharp contrast with much of earlier feminist research overwhelmed by the presence of what Delamont (2003:164) terms *sciolisms* that is, the superficial mantra of 'feminist research is by women, on women, for women' and the 'binary opposition qualitative/quantitative.' In this study, the reader will find women and men's voices, masculinities and femininities, and qualitative data that are sometimes supported by numerical data. The gendered dimension of this study of Chilean VRp will follow Indra's (1999:6) conceptualisation of gender in that:

'it is not the study of women, *per se*, but of *gender*: of societally and culturally constructed notions of women and men, and how these notions structure human societies, including their histories, ideologies, economies, politics and religion. This way of seeing gender as a fundamental organizing principle of everyday life highlights the point that gender matters greatly even in empirical situations where there are only men or only women, and where nothing is ever spoken of women or men, maleness or femaleness'.

However, my dilemma is related to the engagement with a theoretical school within feminism. Some have argued that feminism as social science is dead because of postmodernism. While I do consider that view extreme and concur with Jackson (2001) when she blames feminist theorists themselves, my dilemma is inextricably linked to the fragmentation of my/feminist self as the result of a forced migrant life. Pre-exile, exit, refugeehood, resettlement, repatriation, returneehood, remigration and re-settlement have had enormous repercussions in the way I can associate myself with feminist theory.

While I was a refugee, I identified with socialist feminism. However, with time, this strand of feminism was displaced by a dominant 'cultural turn' that consider it 'unconvincing' and dismissing it 'as a source of past errors' (Jackson 2001:284). Simultaneously, what Chakraborty (2004) calls 'feminism of colour', was consuming its time opposing 'hegemonic white feminism' and insisting on 'difference'. Similarly to South African exiled Annmarie Wolpe (1994), I felt that white hegemonic feminism was 'almost moribund' but unlike her whose 'home' was in the ANC, I had left my political organisation (López Zarzosa 1998).

At the same time as sociology began to change (Delamont 2003), my refugee life was under the constant surveillance of return. During that impasse in which I detached myself from feminist practice and theory, I could neither identify with the *en vogue* post-feminism which, as a theoretical diversion, may have gained useful insights into the human condition but it also became a side-track to the feminist struggle for equality. While conciliatory voices were calling for a new kind of feminist politics based on dialogue (Yuval-Davis 1993), I was *in my journey* 'home' experiencing all the disruptions of what that means. I became detached from feminism altogether although, my deepest apprehension was with so-called 'cultural turn' in which 'feminist perspectives that focus on social structures, relations and practices have been sidelined' (Jackson 2001:283). Indeed, this seductive intellectual and theoretical stance became almost hegemonic at the time of my theoretical and epistemological 'wondering', yet I was not persuaded by it. The main reason for this was the worrying fact that postmodern feminism was 'emptying the concept of gender of its social import as a hierarchical division between women and men' (*ibid*: 285). In addition, class as an analytical variable was dismissed from the research agenda altogether. Paradoxically, having a fragmented life, I could not identify with the postmodern advancements of 'multiple locations', and 'multiple consciousness'. By then, I was neither in exile nor at 'home'. On my *regreso*⁵ I encountered more convincing strands of feminism such as 'materialist feminism' (Jackson 2001) which in some form will inform this study.

In this protracted, troubled and lonely journey this thesis has been a cathartic epistemological exercise where my personal experience was a valid analytical departure (López Zarzosa 1998) that, in this case, as Reinhartz (1983:176) noted, has provided 'an opportunity for catharsis or self-discovery' for both researcher and subjects and a 'research product likely to provide resources or answers to pressing problems in living'. I have great expectations for this project because I am determined to find the empirical reasons for my failed return.

As I went along, I have encountered the stimulating work of migrant/refugee feminist scholars such as, Koffman, Einhorn, Indra, El-Bushra and others cited in this study. Also, the remarkable work done by feminist and anti-racist scholars such as Anthias and Yuval-Davis encouraged me to pursue this project. Feminist 'voices' and actions from the 'global South' particularly from Latin America, have been inspiring yet elitist. Notwithstanding, Chilean feminism has had different faces according to the political

⁵ I use the Spanish word *regreso* for the migratory experience of re-emigration. *Regreso* means a journey informed by the experiences of pre-exile, exile and failed return.

moment in which it was situated. Paradoxically, it was more inclusive during dictatorship than during democracy when Parties regained their hegemonic role. As we shall see, this situation had far reaching consequences for returnee women. However, despite all these grievances, my unease with theoretical feminism does not mean that I have abandoned my feminist values and convictions nor that I have minimised the relevance of important developments in feminist work, but rather to demonstrate that my gendered approach to the study of VRp is the result of a serious critical endeavour and not a taken for granted starting point. The outcome has been the determination to research VRp within a class and gender-aware framework by paying attention to women and men's accounts that are embedded in wider political, gendered and classed power structures. In general, this research will benefit from the vast and illuminating contribution of proxy research such as RM and specifically, the above mentioned female scholars who have brilliantly contributed to the myriad issues related to gender, gender and migration, RM and nationalism.

A second epistemological concern is related to a more practical issue, that of the tensions between my biography and my role as researcher.

2.3 Researching ex-peers: some methodological considerations on being an “insider” and an “outsider”

There is no doubt that my biography seems to pose questions regarding my positionality as a researcher. In the past, the dominant view was that the ‘native’ culture of the researcher would influence the collected data, hence questioning the objective position of the researcher. In this sense, my background, that of being a ‘native’ or at best an “insider”, seems to question the principle of objectivity and ‘value-free’ research and highlights the epistemological implications of studying one’s ‘own’ society. Objectivity understood as ‘an attitude to knowledge that is free from bias’ (Bruce and Yearly 2006:217) has been mainly challenged by Marxist and radical feminist scholars on the grounds that it reflects a male bias in that objectivity and rationality are associated with men while emotionality and feelings are linked with women (Morgan 1981). Objectivity is also related to the much questioned issue of the dangers of “going native” (Miller 1952 in Atkinson et al. 2003) and between the social position of ‘insider’ and ‘outsider’. ‘Doing research in your own society’ exacerbates those tensions. The assumption is that social scientists do study their own societies and there is nothing new about it. However, conducting a study among people with whom you *share* a *collective* trajectory and not just nationality and a territorial origin, or language, is not only different but is also a difficult task. My research positioning of being an ‘insider-outsider’ posed some methodological challenges. The values of ‘pragmatism’ and ‘practicality’ recommended by most literature on research methods and heralded as a way to maintain emotional and intellectual distance seemed so unaware of the real meaning of dealing with issues one has experienced. While critical ethnography has acknowledged the ‘dissatisfaction with the requirement to repress the researcher’s visceral emotions, identities, and positionality’ (Groves 2003:104), it too ‘looks to ritualistic performances of the other as a gateway to understanding culture’ (*ibid*:108). My emotional involvement throughout this project has been critical, particularly during

fieldwork, but more so during data processing. The former took part in Chile, the latter while back in the UK. The time/space distance between those two stages became irreconcilable while the insider/outsider distance vanished. This was quite relevant while I was transcribing the interviews and more so with the accounts of disadvantaged refugees/returnees. By listening to those 'voices', particularly those of desperate returnees who either impoverished or as single mothers had endured harsh times in exile and more so on return and whose deep emotions were discharged during the reconstruction of those experiences, my insider/outsider positioning was challenged. This was the case when, while transcribing the accounts I could mirror my own experiences as a refugee/returnee and I became quite emotional. I realised that this did not happen in the same manner while I was conducting the interviews particularly when disadvantaged returnees were expressing their feelings openly and on many occasions they were told through a veil of tears. What impacted me most however, was to see working-class men crying, sometimes inconsolably to the point that I had to pause the interview and allow for a moment of difficult comforting.

I also explicitly avoided asking about imprisonment and torture. Yet, the opening question: 'Tell me, why did you leave Chile?' was often at odds with this objective. Fourteen respondents had been imprisoned and tortured, some of them brutally. Hence, when asking the opening question of the interview, they immediately pointed to imprisonment and torture and some dwelled on it. I let them talk. Rape was a common practice during torture and sometimes 'complemented' by the use of trained animals particularly with women. Though she did not provide much information about the extent to which she was tortured, when recalling her painful past experiences, Ana not only cried inconsolably but also developed a serious bout of nervous cough that she called *la tos de los milicos* (a cough associated with the military) that *when I remember those things I get la tos de los milicos*. Without being sensationally dramatic, I was surprised not to have become more involved and not to have crossed the thin boundaries between being insider/outsider when you *share so much* with some of your respondents. To overcome this 'weakness' in research, I first tried to avoid blending the autobiographical with the research, though my experiences as pre-exiled, exiled, returnee and failed returnee appears as a bibliographical reference (López Zarzosa 1998). I also purposefully avoided 'situating' myself in the narrative of this study. Disagreeing with feminist refugee scholar Helene Moussa (1993) regarding *her* voice in the text and her dilemma of being both 'faithful' and critical to her women interviewees' accounts, I decided to be unheard. I am here in the study but invisible. The study itself will show how faithful and critical one as forced migrant researcher can be. To think and situate oneself away from one's own social experience and to develop a more profound understanding of VRp, what is indeed needed is a bit of 'sociological imagination' (Wright Mills 1970). Therefore, I allowed respondents' voices and the documental data to speak and not to let my experience interfere with this study's narrative. Secondly, I resorted to the limited literature on Chilean exile and return, produced in Chile particularly by Chilean returnee scholars. Because of the scarcity of internationally contextualised literature of the Chilean case, I intend to further those studies. My respondents' rich experiences compelled me to return to the multidisciplinary literature that enlightens this study. I have adopted this

methodological stance to 'freeze' my own experiences. Allowing other researchers' work to participate further my own; the aim being to produce new knowledge about VRp.

In a collection of essays of Arab anthropologist women doing research in the Arab world, edited by Altorki and El-Solh (1988), the classic advantages and disadvantages of being an 'indigenous' researcher are carefully discussed. Among the advantages are those of being able to attach meanings to patterns, of being part of the same cognitive world, the sharing of a similar body of knowledge and above all the sharing of the language. On the other hand, there are disadvantages such as the potential for value conflict where language ceases to be a 'safety barrier', the impossibility of social and emotional distance, the political and ethical identification of the researcher's with his/her 'own community', in sum, the ability to maintain a detached involvement with those studied. These issues are most relevant regarding the study of one's own community. Yet, the question is how 'own' is the society, the community, the culture for the researcher. In the introduction, Altorki and El-Solh (1988:15-16), discuss the interaction between the acquisition of data and the definition of the researcher's status and role. They concluded that the knowledge 'however partial, that researchers can be expected to have of their own wider society, constitutes a particular asset in the sense that they may require relatively fewer clues to grasp how the participants view their own culture'. While I concur with those views, it appears that there are degrees of insiderness and indigenesness in studying your 'own' community and that these are essentially dynamic particularly in the context of 'indigenous' researchers who 'step in and out' of their migratory boundaries (Torres 2003). Precisely, because during this protracted study I have been 'stepping in and out of 'returneehood', (and of 'failed returneehood'), one way of detaching myself from my insider/outsider researcher status is by carefully seeing my respondents as 'research peers'.⁶

2.4 Chilean refugees as research peers

With some exceptions (Kay 1982; del Pozo 1992; Díaz 1993; Bolzman 1996; Eastmond 1989, 1993; Vásquez and Araujo 1990), and following the influential work of Grinberg and Grinberg (1989), Chileans refugees have been studied mainly as victims of Pinochet regime's State repressive apparatus. This approach was in force during the 1970s and 1980s, and embedded in a period in which, according to Preston (1999:20), 'research on involuntary war-related migration refugees concentrated on the parameters of flight and on the study of asylum and resettlement.' During this period the emphasis was on Chilean refugees as uprooted exiles impeded from returning and with a degree of mental health problems (see WUS-Chile 1979, WUS-UK 1981). The psychological interpretation of displacement commonly held by refugee studies and other social scientists viewed refugees as a 'high-risk group as

⁶ Ana, was suspicious of refugee researchers. She had a shocking experience in the US with a researcher who 'willingly' tried to 'help' her at the most vulnerable and desperate time of her refugeehood. After being evicted from her 'indoor-job' and having nowhere to go, a female researcher offered her and her son accommodation for a month until she could find a new place. The researcher was doing a study on 'narrative photography' of refugees. *What she wanted was to take pictures of me and my son and I had to tell her my story as a refugee. This happened after Letelier's assassination in Washington [21/09/1976] and I could not risk telling anyone about my life knowing that DINA was killing even in the USA; we were terrified. Because I said 'NO' she chucked us out. Can you imagine?*

far as mental health is concerned, due to the fact that they have been forced to emigrate' (Brick et al. 1988, cited in Malkki 1995:509). This has led to the portrayal of refugees as 'victims' and more so in the case of women. Certainly, the contributions that these disciplines have made to the study of refugees need to be considered. Even Chilean scholars have studied fellow refugees as victims of physical torture and their work has focused on the areas of social psychology (Muñoz 1981); cultural psychology (Riquelme 1987) and mental health and human rights (WUS-Chile 1979; WUS-UK 1981). Muñoz's (1981) work suggests the presence of an 'exile syndrome'. However, the generalisation of victimhood so commonly found in forced migration studies has some shortcomings. In his study of South African exile in the United Kingdom, Israel (1996) has rightly argued that the portrayal of exile as a syndrome pathologises the problems that exiles face. This dominant approach has not faded and has reached studies on refugee youth where 'despite promising developments in psychosocial approaches sensitive to social context, psychosocial programmes generally reflect a positivist paradigm' (Chatty et al. 2005:397). In the case of Chilean refugees, it could be further argued that during their first years of exile, the mid 1970s, they were psychiatrylised. In Britain, for example, a broader scenario in the mental health field regarding ethnic minorities had definitively contributed to this approach (Fernando 2002). Indeed, not all Chilean refugees have endured detention, imprisonment and torture and their responses vary; this was the case of most women.

Eastmond (1998: 178) has observed that 'research models also shape the construction of images of forced migrants as refugees or war victims and inform discourses and practices of the receiving society'. Clearly, and of greater importance, is that sweeping generalisations of the 'refugee experience' result in worrying stereotypes that would travel and inform discourses and practices in the *interior* and beyond it. There is a danger in this approach. In later chapters we shall see that the dominant pathologisation and psychiatrylisation of the migrant subject has prevailed in the perceptions and study of returnees. Reviewing the literature on return in Chile, it was clear that the existence of an 'exile syndrome' was replicated by a 'return syndrome'. I encountered this view during my return and fieldwork. Paradoxically, it was quite common among stayees to refer to returnees as *retornados-trastornados* (*returnee-insane*).

A second problem with such generalisations is that they obscured important aspects of life in exile such as political participation and transnational ties with the homeland. The domination of psychological, psychiatric and anthropological approaches to the Chilean 'exile question', produced limited explanations of the social world of refugees and have seldom placed returnees in the wider political and VRp geopolitical context. This thesis suggests that reductionist views of refugees may be the result of the lack of application of what Harrell-Bond (1988:2) called 'coherent and integrated research strategies which incorporate the knowledge, methods, theories and concepts of a number of disciplines.' This has been the case of Chilean refugee women, who have been studied in a more multidisciplinary manner.

2.5 Chilean women in exile

As we shall see later, Chilean women arrived in exile as part of the reunification program and only a minority as refugees themselves. The approach of women as 'dependent' has been strongly contested in later migration and forced migration studies. However, as will be discussed here, most Chilean women acquired refugee status by relation to a male relative. Leading studies have been conducted both by 'North' and 'South' female scholars, the latter being mainly Chilean exiles. Among the work published in English the most known are those of Diana Kay and Marita Eastmond. Among the Chilean scholars in exile, Myria Silva-Labarca, in Italy, Ana Vásquez in France, Patricia Vera in Holland and Claudio Bolzman in Switzerland, have dedicated efforts to provide Chilean refugee women a place in exile. Basically, the point of commonality of North and South scholars is the overgeneralisation that exile has liberated oppressed victimised refugee women. It can be argued that those studies were embedded in the then dominant current of thought that had informed feminist work: the 'optimist' Western feminist theoretical frameworks in which gender (as women) was seen as the sole analytical variable to the detriment of other social structures of difference i.e. race and class. Such theoretical framework does not provide an explanation for the reasons of the return of Chilean refugee women. An obvious question arises at this point posing us a theoretical dilemma: if the 'exile as emancipation' thesis was so convincing, why did refugee women return to Chile even during dictatorship and more so during democracy? What motivated them to return? Hence, how can we answer these questions and explain such conflicting realities?

One way to find a theoretical path to answer those questions is by de-homogenising exile experiences. Suffice to note here the need to consider additional structural variables such as social class. As mentioned above, postmodern arguments have dismissed class altogether. However, I argue that class is a key component of social relations and particularly so in class-driven Chilean society. Barr-Melej (2001:5) offers a most insightful examination of the emergence and role of the middle-class in Chile and, he is right in arguing that 'no other identity marker proved more compelling among Chileans and more pervasive in their political culture than the idea of class.' By intersecting the variables gender and class I attempt to redress earlier optimistic feminist approaches that would not fully respond to the questions posed above because, despite the 'exile as emancipation' argument, men along with women and their children did return to Chile since 1978.

2.6 Researching Chilean returnees and voluntary repatriation

Returnees are said to be a 'hidden' population and more difficult to study than refugees because once they cross the border into their homeland, returnees are usually dispersed populations (Allen and Morsink 1994:2). In the case of Chile, returnees were almost invisible during the dictatorship whereas the exile/return issue was high on the opposition's political agenda. Indeed, this is a paradoxical situation that deserves attention. With the restoration of democracy, 'return' and *los retornados* became a public issue. The visibility of returnees, however, was to be short lived. The *retornados* became visible

only for four years. Certainly, this period coincided not only with increased return to Chile that was accompanied by a boom in international repatriation literature, since UNHCR declared the 1990s 'the repatriation decade' but also with the creation of the ONR, the National Bureau of Return (1990-1994).

According to Preston (1999), studies on repatriation have accounted for orientations towards and preparations for return, the process of return and post-arrival integration and reconstruction. Nevertheless, the problem when studying returnees does not solely relate to the temporality of repatriation but also with the discipline and theoretical framework with which to study them. As with the case of refugee studies, the controversy with the field of repatriation and the return migrant subject was replicated. Marx (1990:191) suggested that repatriation should be firmly placed in the well-established domain of migration studies. Still, there is a danger in this approach: it removes the 'sensitivity' of the topic. It detaches refugees' repatriation context from the VRp scenario in which they are embedded, that is, the refugee regime and its discourses, thus annulling the important macro level of analysis that rules VRp. Consequently, this thesis will explore VRp at both levels by drawing from the contributions that have been made by the disciplines that have engaged in the study of migration/return and exile/repatriation, i.e. human geography, anthropology, refugee law, refugee studies, political science, history and sociology. Sociological studies of migration have burgeoned in the last two decades redressing a notorious poorly developed part of the sociological enterprise, particularly in Britain (Miles 1990). Feminist migration scholars have fundamentally contributed to this shift with studies on female migration to Europe (e.g. Phizacklea, Morokvasic, and Kofman). However, studies on the intersection of gender, class and RM are minimal; most of them are found in North American literature. I have to note that literature in languages other than English, Spanish and French could not be reviewed. In addition, despite the growing scholarly interest and empirical studies on repatriation – currently under the heading return 'home' – there are next to no studies on VRp and its gendered and classed dimensions. The homogenisation of the 'returnee' mirrors that of the 'refugee' in the past. Now, if we narrow this argument down to the gender and class literature on Chilean VRp, the scenario becomes gloomier (except for Rebolledo 2004). Though valuable as data, most literature on returnee women experiences is testimonial (e.g. Celedón and Opazo 1987).

To cope with this gap in the literature, this study is drawing from the international literature on gender and VRp, RM and the empirical research found on its gendered and classed aspects with the cautionary note that most work on RM is associated with working-class migrants who in the past were mostly male while in the current period, proclaimed as the 'age of migration' (Castles and Miller 2003), migration has become feminised with the consequent booming gender and migration literature. The value in this literature resides in the fact that working-class Chilean exile women's experiences mirror that of migrants.

2.7 Selecting the research participants: the universe and the sample

My biographical exilic experiences confirmed to me that Chilean returnees were not a homogeneous universe. They differ in terms of gender, class, age, political affiliation, life before and during exile as well as countries of resettlement. Because this study is about return decision and what underpinned it, it was important to explore if these differentiations had an impact on it or if there was something else. Thus, I carefully sampled the returnee population as representative as possible, that is, a sample that reflected the universe heterogeneity so as to be able to generalise from this study's findings.

During my life as a returnee I realised that apart from the returnee population there was a number of people involved with the problematic of returnees who were not returnees themselves but who had a wealth of knowledge about *exilio-retorno*. Research participants in this study therefore fell into two groups. The first and bigger group is constituted by the returnees themselves. It consists of a total of forty five returnees, twenty eight women (62%) and seventeen men (38%) (see Appendix 1). This gender difference responds to the fact that more women were available and willing for interview than men. Yet, at the time of selecting informants some women refused to be interviewed arguing that "exile is an overcome stage" (*una etapa superada*) as they had returned years ago. As Appendix 1 shows, this study's sample returned to Chile between 1978 and 2002 and the migration criteria to select these respondents was based on an exile of at least three years. I had three target groups in mind. The first was to be constituted of exiles who had returned to Chile during dictatorship, (1978-1987) the second by those who had returned during the *interim* period (1988-1989) and a third one constituted by those who returned after 1990 when transitional democracy had started. The reasons for selecting these groups of respondents according to different political moments were twofold. First, I wanted to assess the impact of their refugee's experiences on their decision to repatriate under these distinct VRp periods and the attached discourses and constituencies involved. Secondly, to compare their experiences so as to have a final explanation for their post-return experiences.

The second group accounts for those who were involved directly or indirectly in the management of the process of resettlement and VRp either in Britain or in Chile; these are defined as the 'managerial' category and was constituted by seven people (see Appendix 1). None of them were returnees and are referred to with their real names. In general, most managerial respondents gave me between thirty and fifty minutes of their time, the exception, as we shall see below, was Father Caro. Because I wanted to have a balanced view of the VRP process and exiles' agency in it, I tried to interview exiles who participated in the actual process. I approached three people from the UK Pro-Return Committee (*Comisión Nacional de Retorno a Chile-UK*) who had not returned. Only one person agreed. I sensed a feeling of guilt at the time of being asked for an interview. One of them repeated the story of a failed returnee woman who 'had followed the instructions of the *Comisión Nacional de Retorno*' but blamed her for her disastrous return experience so she refused to be interviewed. Victor Hugo Villalobos, however, was keen to be interviewed but emphatically asked for a copy of the tape. He said *I have encountered people who re-migrated and I don't feel any sense of guilt because, thank goodness, for*

those who re-migrated it didn't mean a radical upheaval, for example, not being able to enter England again or being unable to find a house. So in that sense we were very careful so as to minimise their failure in Chile or if the conditions in Chile were untenable then his/her re-migration would have much less of an impact, we put a lot of emphasis on that. Similarly, of the two returnee respondents who had participated in Pro-Return Committees in exile, Mariela and Carmen, only Carmen provided some accounts.

Regarding their country of exile, I decided to consider those who spent their exile in Western countries as well as those who resettled in the 'global' South and so my sampled returnee population (45) had at one point resettled in Latin America, Africa, Asia, West and Eastern Europe (see Appendix 1). This extraordinary fact made this study the more interesting as similarities and differences could be examined. Certainly, in the case of Chilean returnees it is difficult to have rigid criteria in this respect. During their time in exile, many refugees moved within the *peripheral society* and in many sites of the *exterior*, that is, many of them migrated from a first resettlement country to a second and even to a third or fourth one. In my sample, twenty-four respondents had spent their exile in more than one country. In terms of period of return, twenty-three returned under dictatorship (51.1%) and six of them during the *interim* period that started with the *decreed* end of exile in September 1988 and until March 1990. A third group of twenty-two respondents (48.9%) returned after regime-change, that is, from March 1990 onwards. Three working-class respondents have engaged in circular RM (see Appendix 1).

Regarding their location in the Chilean class structure, I have differentiated my respondents into three groups amongst the sample – elite returnees, upper-middle and middle-class returnees and lower-middle and working-class returnees. The distinction refers to hierarchy in the Chilean political and class stratification as well as respondents' social background at the time of return. In this manner, the impact of exile on their original social location will illuminate paths to return and their final position in the Chilean class stratification. Of the five elite returnees, two of them (male) had formed part of the intelligentsia in exile and had been ministers during the Allende government. One other (male) was a high profile representative of exile politics in Latin America. The other two elite returnees were in public office at the time of the interviews. During the *Concertación* coalition government (1990-2010), they moved even higher in the elite governmental structure. Their social extraction usually corresponds to the second category in this sample. When referring to elite returnees these are given a full pseudonym, name and surname whereas other respondents are given first name only. Among the upper-middle and middle-class respondents there are lawyers, academics, scientists, medical doctors, entrepreneurs, actors, and NGO workers. All of them had been to university in Chile (completed or truncated by the coup), and some had pursued postgraduate studies while in exile. Contrary to most studies on repatriation from Africa and Central America that focus on poor and peasant returnees, in this study, poor and lower-middle and working-class respondents are in the minority. They are represented here by six women and three men, including in this category an originally upper middle-class woman who through the journeys of marriage, exile and return became impoverished. This mirrors my previous research on returnee families (López Zarzosa 1995) where I found that few of the families were of

lower-middle and of working-class origin. There are two hypothetical possibilities. Either Chilean VRp is a middle-class phenomena or my sample is biased. Hence, this study attempts to explore this recurrent empirical finding even further.

2.8 Methodology used in this study

This is an explanatory study. It attempts to explain the patterns related to the process of VRp by identifying the plausible relationships between the different factors, motivations and structures that have shaped Chilean VRp. The methodological approach used in this thesis is mostly qualitative. The main reason for this responds to the 'big' question posed in this inquiry: *why did Chilean exiles/refugee men and women return 'home'?* The 'why' part of this question deserves an exploration of the inducing factors of Chilean VRp and this implies gathering the maximum amount of knowledge, documentation and historical and political events prior to the decision to repatriate, that is, refugees' historical, social and political embeddedness prior to flight, exile experiences and their ties with 'home'. The main reason for such a complex exploration relates to the ubiquitous arguments that the 'return decision is a difficult one' (Toledo 1995), the result of 'an individual' decision (Rebolledo 2004) or a community-induced one (Amore 2002). The complexities involved in answering this apparently simple question can only be approached with a qualitative framework of research. This approach also applies better to the social setting of Chilean VRp. Returnees as a category are an invisible population (Allen and Morsink 1994), and to use a reliable quantitative approach would have proved more costly and less valid for the purposes of this study. Furthermore, during the dictatorship quantitative data as public information was secret, hence, the data that appears in this study for this period has been collected or published by international agencies, opposition magazines, NGOs, return lobbies, and human rights' organisations. Given this fieldwork scenario, the deep and meaningful insights of the complex political and social underpinnings of motivations and factors determining repatriation decision-making could only be obtained by an in-depth analysis of the data collected, both oral and written. Grounding my research on this data and multiple secondary sources, a qualitative methodology offered me the possibility to formulate theoretical considerations and a conceptual proposition for understanding and explaining Chilean VRp.

Basically, this thesis follows two levels of analysis: a macro and a micro level. The purpose for this analytical approach is to provide a synthetic response to the main research question, so that both levels will speak to each other in what Cicourel (1981) termed 'micro-macro integration' where several levels of complexity converge. To obtain a plausible explanation of the reasons that prompted Chilean exiles to return there is a need for a nuanced and detailed analysis of the complex interplay of the diverse and often juxtaposed ideas and social structures involved in the process of VRp that are at work in both levels. Motivations, reasons, factors, and ideas immersed in political and social developments prompting the return of exiles will be explored with this framework in mind. Methodologically, this strategy will examine a wide range of key macro factors as well as the multiplicity of micro factors that are found in the 'refugee experience'. At the macro level, this thesis will focus on shifting international

refugee/migration system, the evolving political scenario in Chile and the role played by host and home states. On the specific issue of *exilio-retorno*, this study will explore the role played by international agencies and NGOs operating both in Chile and abroad, the role of exile politics and the Chilean Political Parties, the Catholic Church and the pro-return committees both at home and in exile. These myriad factors will be analysed under the umbrella of VRp narratives deployed during dictatorship and transitional democracy with the assistance of the conceptual 'thread' of *returnism*.

At the micro level this study attempts to look for the nature of individual motivations for return and interact those experiences with the macro analysis. In this study therefore, the conceptual and the empirical will be inextricably linked.

2.8.1 Fieldwork: collecting the evidence, Chile 1999 -2004

My epistemological stance determined the way I gathered my material. My interest was to research Chilean VRp within a class and gender-aware framework. Hence, I pay attention to women and men's accounts and situate them in a wider gendered and classed research realm.

I have already noted that returnees are a difficult population to be studied. My experience as a returnee and as a researcher informed me of the importance of broadening the fieldwork map both geographically and socially. With this premise in mind this study's fieldwork was carried out in the capital of Chile, Santiago where most of the returnees resided and in the cities of Concepción and Osorno. The main reason for this approach lies in my knowledge that returnees outside the capital city have less access to resources and assistance. Concepción is my town of origin and of my returneehood, hence I knew returnees who were living there. I chose the southern city of Osorno because I was informed that there would be a regional conference of the victims of the dictatorship there and among them would be some returnees, it was a propitious fieldwork opportunity.

My fieldwork was carried out between December 1999 and November 2004 in a country that was supposed to be my 'home'. This involved going back to family responsibilities. Fieldwork therefore was shared with manifold roles: mother, daughter, sister, and researcher as well as maintaining transnational mothering ties with my youngest daughter in the UK. These opposing roles interfered, sometimes tyrannically, with that of being a researcher. Indeed, one of the factors that militated against this study was 'transnational motherhood'.

In a previous section I discussed the topic of 'doing research in your own community'. However, fieldwork in Chile proved to me that that 'community' did not exist. There were loose research subjects who had entered the gender and class stratification and needed to be found individually. The high visibility of returnees that I experienced during my return (March 1992-November 1995) had vanished. Since the closure of the ONR on 20th August 1994, and the coming into effect of the Cessation of Refugee Status Clause on 28th March 1994 (IOM N°31/94, see Fitzpatrick and Bonoan 2003:502-504),

'returnees' are an almost invisible population, despite the fact that many exiles returned after this date. The reasons for the intermittent visibility of returnees will be uncovered in this thesis. The only 'returnees' who are somewhat 'visible' and could be approached for research purposes are those members of the Committee of Returnees from Exile (*Comité de Retornados del Exilio – Chile*) established in 1995. These are the returnees who, according to their own definition, 'are amongst the most unfortunate and forgotten by the neo-liberal system, who did not have the chance to apply for the famous loans for the returnees given by the *Banco del Estado* (State Bank) due to our lack of material assets.'⁷ In other words, they are the poorest of the returnee population and the majority of them returned from Argentina and ex-Eastern bloc countries. Because of their visibility, some foreign researchers I encountered while doing this research, targeted this organisation. I also had the possibility to have a recorded encounter with some members of another organisation of 'poor returnees', the *Corporación de Retornados*, an organisation almost exclusively dedicated to deal with the problems of debt with the State Bank. Middle and upper-class returnees who were not found in the acknowledged political sphere prior, during, or after exile (such as those whose accounts appear in Wright and Oñate 1998), are the 'hidden' returnee population and almost inaccessible to the outsider researcher. I was fortunate to have gained access to some in these groups. This constitutes a telling indicator that deserves an explanation. What had happened? Why suddenly a veil of silence started to cover return more than exile given that, in the past they were so inextricably linked as *exilio-retorno*? Was it a matter of time only? Who silenced it? Why? and for what purposes? By understanding Chilean VRp as a process, this study attempts to explain the reasons for that silence, a silence which has been mentioned by other researchers (Rebolledo 2004) but *never* explored *nor* explained.

The political background of my fieldwork coincided with Pinochet's arrest in London (16 October 1998), ensuing extradition proceedings, his return to Chile in March 2000 and the political repercussions of his release and ultimate unsuccessful 'trials' in Chile. Pinochet's arrest was a bombshell both internationally and domestically. This unprecedented legal-historical event had important repercussions during my fieldwork in Chile. My research partners felt freer to talk about it and about themselves and their experiences as victims of his regime. This was in stark contrast to the time I experienced during my failed return when there was total silence about the dictatorship (López Zarzosa 1998) and even more so on exile; only the *retornados* mattered. Consequently, some of my respondents talked more than expected about it and aired their views on the case thereby lengthening the interviews. A few of them even asked me about my participation in the extradition campaign as they had either seen or heard me on television or radio. Conversely, my fieldwork and posterior complementary documentation-searching also coincided with the '9/11' events and their outcome. I noticed that previously unrestricted data and documentation in Chile, at IOM/CIMAL for example, was more difficult to obtain and there were more administrative barriers to overcome. The same applied to documentation about ONR kept at the Ministry of Justice. It was fortunate that, despite moving from continent to continent during my *exilio-retorno-regreso* journey and discarding some documentation during those journeys, I kept some from my life as an exile and as a returnee.

⁷ See their website www.retornadosdelexilio.galeon.com

In this study, the reader will find two main sources of information: one oral and one documentary. The need to have two sources of evidence corresponds to the macro-micro analytical interest and the limits of either as evidence. Being so immersed in this problematic, I strongly feel the need for accuracy, precision and depth.

2.8.2. The interview: first-hand accounts and complementary accounts

To obtain information about the particular experiences of returnees I used in-depth interviews (from which the reader will find respondents' own words in brackets), participant observation and a 'failed' questionnaire (see Appendix 2). Certainly, I need to provide a methodological explanation for this failure. During the conference "*Encuentro Metropolitano de Retornados del Exilio*" organised by the *Comité de Retornados del Exilio* in November 2002, I distributed to 35 participants an open-ended questionnaire I had designed before going to Chile. However, only 20 were returned to me. Four of these were incomplete, and the rest were answered unsatisfactorily. Even though the President of the Association acted as my guarantor and endorsed me at the opening of the conference, this was a puzzling experience. He presented me as 'a *compañera retornada* who was doing research about the case of the returnees and in need of their cooperation.' Yet, I was surprised at the outcome. Technically, I was very careful both in the design and the distribution of the questionnaire. I shared two days of camaraderie during the conference yet the result was disappointing. I then, as other refugee scholars (Moussa, 1993; Salinas, 2000), realised that a crucial research element was missing: trust. Those returnees who failed to answer the questionnaire or did it partially, suspected my presence there. I did not belong to that 'community.' Because they were the most disadvantaged group of returnees, they distrusted either the purpose of my research and did not see any positive value in it, or my class background and even my unknown political stance or a combination of the three. This experience highlights the many social and political differences among 'returnees' and suggests the difficulties of 'doing research in your own community' and primarily the power relation between the researcher and the subjects of the research even when the experiences of forced migration are shared.

The first-hand accounts of this study constitute the most important source of oral information. It is noteworthy that during documentary collection, I found three videos on the experiences of Chilean returnees. The 1986 FASIC-PIEE *Volver* (Return) with testimonies of 'returnee' children, the October 1990 nationwide-broadcast report *Exilio-Retorno* (TVN October 1990) by journalist Santiago Pavlovich and a third one by PIDEE (1992) entitled *Retornados-Reexiliados: Encuentro de jóvenes retornados*. Despite the oral testimonies that provided important information on *exilio-retorno*, there is neither depth on the underpinning issues involved, nor on the concepts used, hence the *retornados* appeared stereotyped. This fieldwork experience encouraged me to pursue the in-depth interviews. Field interviews started in Chile. I conducted five in December 1999, followed by nineteen in 2000 and thirty-two in 2002, a year that I stayed three months including January 2003. Interviews in Chile ended in June 2004 with the exception of Father Caro's phone 'conversastion' in 2008. Considering first and second

interviews, this study's evidence is drawn from sixty-five interviews in Chile, two in the UK and one transnational.

Atkinson *et al* (2003:120) have intriguingly asked 'How do you know if your informant is telling the truth?' The main issue the authors are trying to address with this question is related to the credibility of informants as it seems to be 'a recurrent trouble for social scientists...as the truthfulness of informants could be seen as a major problem'. Researchers who particularly rely on refugee and returnee 'voices' have been challenged on the grounds of what amounts to 'the truth' (Ranger 1994). In this case, two issues need to be noted. First, most returnees are rather critical of present-day Chilean society and political system, and second, my researcher status was an indeed an asset. Having being a refugee for fifteen years and a returnee for almost four, allowed me to distinguish between the 'subjective' and the 'objective' in my respondents' accounts.

I started by interviewing returnees I knew either while I was a refugee in the UK or who were colleagues of mine before the coup who had also gone into exile. I then interviewed parents of those children I worked with while at PIDEE-ONR. From then on the snowball technique helped me. However, the snowball technique has its pitfalls. I realised that there was a danger in continuing using this technique. I would have ended up with a study of middle-class returnees, a biased empirical exercise I detected in the scant number of studies in Chile (Rebolledo 2004). Hence, I decided to look for different social strata returnees; the *Encuentro Metropolitano* offered me that possibility. Most lower-middle and working-class respondents were recruited at the November 2002 Conference in Santiago.

Three of the elite returnees I had the opportunity to interview, were holding government or political posts. I had access to them through appointments fixed with their secretaries or through a contact. Two of these were complicated and short interviews (20-30 minutes). They were conducted in their offices amidst telephone calls and interruptions by their secretaries. The reason to consider this section of the returnee population was because they not only have personal experiences as 'returnees'; but also hold an 'official' account of the returnee situation. Some scholars have decided against giving voice to elite returnees who are now in high positions (Rebolledo 2004). I hold the view that elite returnees are an important category because it emphasises the elitist aspect of Chilean politics and their views on other returnees are important now that they are in a position of power and their new official political identities may have influenced their past experiences both as exiles and returnees. To illustrate this point further, since the return to democracy in 1990, there have been four *Concertación* Presidents, two of them are returnees and one, Michele Bachelet, was Chile's first female President (2006-2010). Though Bachelet's experiences of repression are addressed and in a lesser extent her experience of exile, return is superficially touched (see Guzmán and Rojas 2005; Politzer 2010). Neither of these Presidents have ever been addressed as 'returnees,' as if this status devalues elite returnees.

Before the interviews I informed respondents about my research agenda. Noteworthy is an unexpected methodological situation encountered. When I started interviewing I thought that this would be a fairly

straightforward process as the respondents would be informed of the purposes of this study and my researcher identity. However, this was not always the case. On a couple of occasions some middle and upper-class returnees I did not know, proceeded to screen me before I could explain my research and the purpose of the interview. The questions posed to me were related to my background in terms of exile/return location, returnee experiences and for whom I was doing this research and the status of the institution. Chileans by nature are status conscious and I was not surprised by that. What surprised me was the depth of the questions. Because I was not prepared for such a challenge, I felt some embarrassment at the beginning but my determination and confidence in my study and my background soon remedied the impasse. My social positioning and my refugee/returnee statuses were an advantage this time, though I had to substantiate these. In contrast, lower and working class returnees – although asking about the reasons for being interviewed – were more open and never challenged my position as researcher or the institution under which I was doing this study. This is in sharp contrast with the response I had in the aforementioned conference. The face-to-face research setting was more advantageous as it allowed me to introduce myself and gain the trust of my respondents. In general, I could argue that with the exception of ‘elite’ returnees and the ‘managerial’ category, most of my respondents were what Rubin and Rubin (1995:11) have called ‘conversational partners’ rather than research subjects. This term, they argue, ‘has the advantage of emphasising the link between interviewing and conversation, and the active role of the interviewee in shaping the discussion. Moreover, the term suggests a congenial and cooperative experience, as both interviewer and interviewee work together to achieve the shared goal of understanding.’ This concept fits more of my interviews’ interaction with forty of my respondents. Firstly, because there was no need to use textbook modes of asking questions, interview conversations (not ‘ordinary conversations’ though) were fluid and relaxed. Secondly, because it was an informal manner of knowing in their own terms their ideas and experiences it produced a natural rapport between me as an interviewer and my ‘conversational partners’. This is illustrated by the manner in which some included me in their narratives: ‘You must remember’, or ‘as you know’, followed by my name yet, I have omitted both. However, on a couple of occasions respondents avoided certain issues. One way of evading the questions was to give short answers and then asking me “what else did you want to ask me?” Still, research power relations were on my side. I had an agenda and I would have the power to select what they were telling me. At one point I felt very guilty. This feeling was only mitigated by distancing myself and assuming the researcher role.

The interviews were all tape-recorded and later fully transcribed and summarised in a conventional manner according to the core themes of pre-exile, exit, exile, children (if applicable), prospects for return, actual decision, and post-return life. This was a complex task because respondents’ narratives were not time linear. Many times pre-exile, exit, exile, and return intermingled. Besides, I did not use qualitative data software because I believe in emotions, body language and gestures. At the time of transcribing I vividly remembered those past moments of conversational partnership where their emphasis on certain issues was supported by those emotions and gestures. The quality of the interview material lies, in my view, in the rapport acquired during the interview partnership rather than in the

techniques used. In this manner, I stepped outside the imposed boundaries of agents/victims or exiles/returnees; I just let them be and allowed them to provide *their* life experiences. As a result, the interviews provided ample descriptions of this study's respondents' experiences prior to exile, exile, return and in two cases, preparations for re-emigration. However, my aim is not to present a sanitised version of the actual fieldwork undertaken. Two interviews are not included. One conversational partner whispered (her husband and family was around) and was so inaudible that at the time of transcribing it was impossible to reproduce what she had said. The other case was of a respondent who had a serious problem with his voice and, as in the previous case, was inaudible. On one occasion, I recorded over a previous interview so I had to write what I remembered from the unrecorded forty five minutes experiences of my respondent. Eventually, I did not use such interview. On a further case, when I changed the cassette I turned the tape incorrectly. All these difficulties show that when interviewing conversational partners, the technical aspects of interviewing are in some way interruptors of the flow that not only separated me from my respondents but also challenged trust. Changing tapes, checking the recorder and so forth are all aspects that for an insider/outsider like me ended up betraying some of those experiences that in many ways I had also experienced and that for many of my respondents were so meaningful. On two occasions the interviews were interrupted by strong earth tremors. Another technical problem I encountered during some interviews was noise. That was expected in public places but sometimes I also encountered it in homes. Many returnees had pets, particularly barking dogs, as most Chilean dogs are and on one occasion it was a very loud parrot that tried to catch the attention of his owner and so the interview was disrupted several times by my partner attending *Lolo's* demands and repeated requests 'to behave'. I could see that pets among many of my respondents played an important part in their *exilio-retorno* lives. Apparently, they provided the most needed comfort, companionship and sense of normality and stability. Referring to her pets Ana told me: *they are my children here*. Pets also seemed to have played a role in easing the temporariness of exile and the uncertainties of return particularly under the dictatorship. Miriam Bravo who returned in 1979 resorted to pets to provide stability both in exile and return: *When we arrived in Mexico we rapidly rented a furnished flat to live in it straightaway and immediately bought a cat and a dog, we put the little girls in a nursery school and started feeling that you belonged there. The idea of a cat and a dog were mine, to have the sensation of being rooted however long, not feeling like birds of passage and on return I think it was the same. Soon after we returned we started to buy a house where I live until today and rapidly got a cat and a dog, to have a sensation of stability, not just being passing through again, that was a very important sensation.*

In general, with the exception of elite returnees, first interviews lasted between sixty to ninety minutes (with two exceptional cases lasting almost three hours), and were normally held in the interviewees' homes. Three of them took place in cafes. Two exceptions are worth mentioning. The second interview with Carmen that took place at one of the *Juzgados* in Santiago during a long wait for Luis Muñoz who, in December 2002, was giving evidence about the disappearance of his *compañera* Diana Aron (see Muñoz 2005). The second was the phone interview with Father Caro. He has been living in New York since 2000 and at the time of the interview he was visiting his parishes in Chile. He kindly gave me twenty-five minutes of his scarce time in Chile.

When I developed a stronger rapport with my respondents I gave them the opportunity to choose a pseudonym. The idea arose primarily as a consequence of the dissatisfaction with many qualitative studies that refer to their respondents as 'one of the women', 'one male remarked' or 'wife A/B/C'. This extreme way of anonymous identification of respondents is, in my view, undignified particularly after sharing similar exile and return experiences with many of my conversational partners and after having developed rapport during the interviews. Women were particularly happy to choose their pseudonyms as most of them felt identified with that pseudonym. Cecilia for instance, decided for this name in memory of her teenage daughter who after suffering from anorexia committed suicide while in exile. Soledad (loneliness in Spanish), chose hers after her separation from her husband of almost forty years of marriage. Some respondents wanted to have a surname. I explained to them that this thesis had a word limit and a double name would work against this rule. Others wanted to use their own names but I suggested that a pseudonym would be better, something that eventually convinced them. In general, I felt more uncomfortable asking men about this and more so to elite men. However, one male conversational partner said: *'fine, baptise me as Simón'*.

I also found that interviewing at home had its drawbacks. It was positive when dealing with families because it encouraged secondary members of the family directly involved in the return process to participate. But, it could also hinder the narratives of one of the partners. Gender played a key role during interviews. In the case of men still in positions of political influence and authority, *their* accounts mattered to the point of injecting tensions into the interview's atmosphere. For example, when wives commented on their role played in their husbands' experiences, men usually dominated the argument silencing the woman's opinion or experience. In one case, and to avoid further tensions during a second interview, I interviewed them separately. Generational tensions were also experienced. During the course of the interview the sons of two female conversational partners intervened challenging the mother's view on return experiences. The presence of the sons made the atmosphere tense. These however, were enriching fieldwork experiences as the generational tension was less constraining than the gender one, yet, there was also a gender dimension in them as the mother felt overpowered by her son's views. Unlike the pronounced gender tension however, generational tensions allowed me to interact. During these 'confrontations' I decided to let them challenge each other's opinions and ideas and I only participated when necessary. Although enriching, they were a limited experience.

Regarding respondents' narratives, I encountered an almost insurmountable problem, particularly with one category of troubled returnees, whose present problems either with their children, husbands, political situation, or other returnees dominated their narratives. Out of my sample, seven women and one man fell into this category. Though their problems differed in nature, they focused so intensely on these that it tended to dominate the interview. Post-return grievances are commonplace in current literature and have emerged as another field of research hence, since the early 1990s the literature has burgeoned (Allen and Morsink 1994; Allen 1996; Hammond 2004; Markowitz and Stefansson 2004 to name a few). However, what is becoming clear by now is the similar pattern of difficulties, regardless of

the nature of repatriation. This is more striking in the Southern Cone of Latin America (Mármora et al. 1987). The idea in this study is not to add another case study to this growing literature. Though the difficulties and grievances will appear in this study's narrative the aim was to find the nuanced underpinnings for those difficulties. Indeed, the insistence on the difficulties of most of this study's conversational partners impelled me to look for the structural reasons for their difficulties. With this exercise I expect to find the reasons for my own failed return.

After a year or two, I tried to conduct follow-up interviews with most of my respondents. From the category 'conversational partners' (40), I succeeded on fifteen opportunities. There were several reasons for this. Either they were not available, were too busy coping with the adjustments to a *wild neo-liberalism* as two of them put it over the phone, had moved house without leaving any trace, or as in two cases, had sadly passed away (Pedro and María). The complementary accounts that appear in this thesis emanate from a seminar on exile that took place in November 1999 in Santiago, published and unpublished literature found in Chile and abroad.

Before closing this section, two points need to be made. First, a conceptual concern with *who is a 'returnee'* and second, what accounts as an 'interview'. First, as this study progressed, I started questioning whether it was appropriate to approach ex-exiles assuming that they 'were' all 'refugees' hence, once back in Chile they were 'returnees'. This difficulty was obvious with the group of exiles I encountered during my fieldwork who fall into the category of what Goodwin-Gill (1996) called 'displaced refugees', that is, those Chileans who were outside the country before the coup. This major change in the political situation made their return impossible or dangerous. Among those was a group of seventy-nine teenage working-class men and women who were sent during the Allende government (1970-1973) to the USSR to study different professional and technical careers. Most of them had a connection with the Communist Party, either as children or relatives of militants or they themselves were members of the "J" (*juventudes*: young members of the Party). Also, there are the cases of some diplomats such as ex-Ministers Jorge Arrate and writer and CP's Senator and intellectual Volodia Teitelboim, musicians of *la Nueva Canción* like Inti-Illimani and Quilapayún who were touring in Europe and were refused re-entry into Chile. As we shall see in the next chapter, the power of State as an expeller constitutes the major identifier of exiles, and 'displaced refugees' were not forced to leave the country in any manner, quite the opposite, their departure was facilitated by the democratic State either to represent the Allende government abroad, or to better themselves through State-funded studies. Though their return and post-return experiences are somehow shared with other returnees, this experience constitutes only half of the story. For this reason, the interviews conducted on two USSR men who had returned after 1990 were later abandoned. Their experiences differ mainly, because in their case, there was neither pre-exile nor flight. Another category of respondents whose interviews were later abandoned comprised those 'returnees' who left Chile as children or adolescents. I had interviewed four of them but, as in the previous case, I realised that they are a somewhat different category of respondents. Undoubtedly, those fieldwork findings added theoretical complexities to the conceptualisation *returnee*.

The second point is associated with the interview I conducted with ex-President Patricio Aylwin (1990-1994) on 30 April 2002. Ultimately, it became a brief encounter that only lasted twenty minutes. The smooth initial flow of the interview was interrupted when he could not remember about the exact dates of his Presidential tours abroad where he met with Chilean communities still in exile. Neither could he remember details about the creation of the ONR, saying that *from memory I can say only a few things, to be honest, I don't remember much detail, memory is fragile*. He then personally arranged a date for me to visit his Foundation's library (*Corporación Justicia y Democracia*) to look for the documentation regarding the legal edifice that created the ONR and copies of his speeches delivered to the exiles in Europe. Hence, I do not include him as a respondent yet I will consider his brief accounts. Though I am truly grateful to him for giving me those minutes, this experience posed me with a dilemma whether to consider that fieldwork 'encounter' as an interview.

Documentary evidence

The second important source of information and more related to the macro analysis of this thesis has been the extensive documentary evidence on the *exilio-retorno* issue in Chile. Although this is considered 'indirect information' (Cicourel 1981:64), it does 'provide the researcher with background knowledge that facilitates and enhances the analysis produced.' Hence, the primary indirect information sources of this study are constituted by those documents that came into existence in the periods I was a refugee and a returnee. I used my personal 'archives' accumulated during my years as a refugee and as *Chile Democrático's* officer and *Niño Luchín Saturday School* Organiser that had travelled with me to and from Chile and during my problematic experiences as a failed returnee. These were complemented with the documents given to returnees by the ONR. Among the secondary sources, I looked at theses, exile journals and magazines, Pro-Return Committee reports, bulletins, information leaflets and other material that includes Chilean newspapers' cuttings and magazine articles of which the *Chilean Biblioteca Nacional* (National Library) has an excellent archive. I also used the *Institute for the Study of the Americas'* library in London that kept an impressive archive of Chilean magazines and documents produced during the dictatorship. I looked at the writings (mainly in the form of testimonial literature), of several exiles and returnees written either in Chile or in exile, which are full of detailed information about the political cost of exile, their political and ideological stance regarding nationhood, the future of Chile and their demands to live in *la Patria*. Many of these were written during this protracted study constituting a complementary source of data. In addition, I also undertook a wide review of the literature on repatriation, VRp, RM, exile politics and the analysis and discussions on the political situation in Chile during the dictatorship and democracy. I drew quantitative and documentary data regarding the return of Chilean exiles from the excellent Documentation Centre of the Vicariate of Solidarity in Santiago as well as those of FASIC and PIDEE (Bickford 2000), three important organisations that will feature heavily in this study particularly in Chapter Five. Another important source of data and references was OIM/CIMAL Documentation Centre in Santiago.

2.9 Addressing the 'voluntariness' of voluntary repatriation: central research questions

The purpose of this study is to explain Chilean VRp, that is, why did Chilean refugees/exiles return and in the process explore and describe the the whole trajectory of those involved in a gendered and classed framework. By asking how voluntary Chilean VRp was, some research questions were posed. As my return was failing, I confronted myself with the underpinnings of my own return decision that had so simplistically varnished with naturalness. Thus the central question of this study is: why did Chilean refugees return? To address this main question two levels of inquiry are proposed: the micro and macro spheres where the idea of return was entertained.

The first set of questions refers to the macro determinants of the decision to repatriate, that is, the broader structural forces and ideas behind the return decision. Among the forces this study has considered are the following: the changing international migration and refugee systems, the evolving political scenario in Chile and the role played by host and home states. On the specific issue *exilio-retorno* this study will explore the role played by: international and national agencies and NGOs both in Chile and exile, by exile politics and the Chilean Parties, by the Catholic Church, and the peripheral society's *Comités Pro- Retorno* (Pro-Return Committees). In the realm of ideas, this thesis focuses on the return discourses available and deployed during the process of VRp. The guiding research questions at this level are: What sort of pressure these broader structures and ideas placed upon refugee/exiles to repatriate? If so, how was that pressure exerted and for what reasons? Was gender involved? The answers to these questions will respond to the issue of 'voluntariness' so heralded in VRp discourses.

The second set of questions centre around the individual level and focus on the social positioning of returnees regarding class and gender. The questions at this level are: What determinants informed the return decision of men and women? What pushed them from exile? What pulled them towards home? Did they feel any pressure to return? Did the return attitudes of men and women differ? Did gender/class changes in exile play a role in the decision to repatriate? In answering these questions this study will position respondents in the wider social structure mobilising VRp.

These questions would frame my study. By addressing macro level factors and events with the intricacies of the micro level, this synthetic approach would permit an integral analysis of Chilean VRp. The purpose for using a synthetic approach lies in the need to identify what was at work in VRp decision-making and what sustained its underpinnings. In sum, this synthesis would provide a detailed and more accurate picture of Chilean VRp, challenge/enrich previous explanations and theories, as well as integrating returnees' own meanings of *their* VRp.

Conclusion

This chapter has set the methodological strategy of this study. In it I have reflexively exposed the advantages and constraints of being an outsider/insider researcher. It suggested that this duality entailed me to step in and out of returneehood turning it into an advantageous research stance. It simultaneously, allowed me to explain and describe the adopted methodological strategy which I think most accurately fits the complexities of VRp. The next chapter enters the body of this thesis and will explore and describe the extent and manner in which the Chilean State turned us into exiles and refugees. It starts by addressing the structural issues involved in the first interview question: *Cuéntame, ¿por qué saliste de Chile?* (Tell me, why did you leave Chile?).

CHAPTER THREE

The military Chilean State: the gendered *Historical National Project* and exit

Introduction

The overall aim of this chapter is to contextualise the exit of Chileans. The frame of analysis focuses on the role of the State during the Cold War. The main reason for this is that most case studies on Chilean exile are insufficiently critical of the many issues that involve the refugee situation. In addition, the gendered aspects in the formation of Chilean refugeehood have also been neglected. To redress this situation, this chapter attempts to examine the political and ideological gendered foundations of the Pinochet dictatorship by stressing the maleness of the anti-communist authoritarian State project and the ways in which the gendered State controlled the exit and return of Chileans. It also describes the significant economic, cultural and ideological changes that permeated the Chilean society to which refugees started to return since 1978. By drawing from existing social and cultural authoritarian elements, applying brutal repression and automatically introducing the new economic model of neo-liberalism, the dictatorship proudly inaugurated a 'new Chile' under the *Historical National Project* instilling 'the concepts of love of God, of the *Patria*, and the family...' (*Objetivo Nacional del Gobierno de Chile*, Junta Nacional de Gobierno 1975:10). The aim of this chapter is to examine how these changes occurred as this is the 'Chile' to which exiles would return.

11th September 1973. Creating a 'New Chile': love of *la Patria* and the destabilising of 'home'

The military coup of 11 September 1973 violently ended not only the democratically elected coalition government of President Salvador Allende's *Unidad Popular* (UP, Popular Unity) and its "Chilean Road to Socialism" as a unique political experience that pursued socialism through constitutional means, but also a historically hard-won democratic political system. From the outset, the military dictatorship's intention was to reshape Chilean society and economy, as Oppenheim (1993) put it, it 'created a new Chile.'

Since 11/9/73, and for seventeen years, a process of institutional militarisation was inaugurated. From its very beginnings social control via a disciplining process penetrated the entire civil society. Militarism, an existing ideology which values war and legitimates State violence was further reinforced with the introduction of the National Security doctrine (NSD). In a Cold War scenario, adherence to NSD was used to justify an 'invented war' (Ensalaco 2000) against civilians with the purpose to defeat the threat of communism and subversion. The social process of militarisation that took place in Chile under NSD involved the take over of the State and society. In this context, the division between 'warfront' and society was breached. The whole society was turned into a sinister and hidden battlefield conditions in a 'total war' (Pirelli 1990) that aimed at the annihilation of what

would be called 'enemies' of the nation and the State. Chileans condemned as enemies and seditious were not to be trusted and according to the military, posed a threat to the nation and national security. As Zolberg et al. (1989:199) noted, '[B]ecause the military held a very broad view of the conflict, security became an extremely broad concept that attempted to control all situations. Accordingly, the military included more and more sectors in its definition of enemy.' This was a useful nationalist category even when those considered 'enemies' were compatriots. Having a common enemy unites people and as Guibernau (2001) reminded us it constitutes an essential strategy in the generation of national identity. In this manner, an essentialised 'Chilean' national identity centred on 'friendliness' with the State determining who was considered worth of being 'Chilean' emerged. The 'enemy' was not an external threat, it was 'within'. The nationalistic idea of the 'enemy' paved the way to dismiss, arrest, torture, imprison, expel, execute, disappear, exile and prevent the return of such 'enemies.' Though Chilean history provides various historical examples of violent exclusion (Vitale 1981; Portales 2004, 2010), the military coup generalised it in a brutal and all-encompassing manner. Yet, the underpinnings for such enterprise, albeit dormant, were already there. Many Chilean historians have agreed that the Chilean State was built on foundations of extreme pragmatism and authoritarianism best represented by the figure of Diego Portales (Villalobos 1993; Jocelyn-Holt 1997) as well as social and sexual domination (Bengoa 1996). These outstanding political and gendered foundations of the Chilean State are important at the time of exploring the State as recreated by the National Security Doctrine.

The military State could be interpreted as the quintessential expression of patriarchy (Valenzuela 1987) and to implement 'war' and exclude enemies, patriarchy was at its best. During seventeen years a militarised form of patriarchy resocialised Chile's population. To understand the gendered nature of this process and how it affected the Chilean society we need to explore its intellectual and gendered ideological foundations.

The next three sections of this chapter will address the process by which the NSD State essentialised gender categories; in so doing it deepened the differentiation of men and women, between masculinity and femininity while simultaneously reinforcing the hegemonic institutional structure of the family and related sexuality with a corresponding patriarchal ideology. The idea was to exclude and marginalise.

3.1 National Security Doctrine: the re-masculinisation of Chilean State and society

The insurrection that took place in Chile on Tuesday 11 September 1973 launched a new type of State that also intervened in the gender order and deployed gender discourses. One of the most theorised aspects of Southern Cone military regimes has been the authoritarian domination patterns of its military States and their nature. The aim of the Chilean version of such State was the elimination through repression and terror of an entire political class and those associated with it including members of the middle and upper-classes and even the military itself. Explanations for this new

phenomenon focused on issues raised by the Cold War and the counterinsurgency doctrine associated with it, the National Security Doctrine (NSD), hence, 'National Security Doctrine States' (Tapia 1980; Zolberg et al. 1989) (henceforth NSDS). The second and most prominent paradigm is that of Guillermo O'Donnell's (1978) 'bureaucratic-authoritarian state' (BA). Though both theories are not mutually exclusive, for the analytical purposes of characterisation of the exodus and constraints for the return of Chilean exiles, this study favours the former as a model that places the emphasis on the new repressive, political, economic, and ideological roles of a particular form of State, a military State, the NSDS that would inaugurate a new process of nation-state formation. Once again, the violence unleashed by the State constituted a foundational moment of nation-building.

Alleging that Chile's national security was in severe jeopardy, the NSDS was both a politico-military and ideological response to the UP's socialist model. It was ideological because in order to protect the 'threatened' national security that the military action had achieved, the military Junta invoked the doctrine of NSD to eradicate those considered aliens to NSDS's nation-building process. NSD constituted the legitimising ideology behind the military intervention of the new authoritarian regime.

The literature on National Security Doctrine uses the terms doctrine and ideology interchangeably (see Comblin 1979). Indeed, it is both a doctrine and an ideology. It is an ideology for three main reasons: its association with power and its concentration in the hands of the armed forces, its role in the justification of the actions of the military regime, and its linkage to neoliberalism, a particular economic model that intended 'to recompose a capitalism far too interfered by redistributive policies, by a growing role of the State, by democratic demands, and by the irruption and participation of the masses in political life...' (Garretón 1987:32), it was indeed capitalist restructuring. According to neoliberal theory, economy and society should be based on market forces and on the private sector. Thus, NSDS's other face was neoliberal. In this economic paradigm, the citizen is construed as an entrepreneur (rather than worker) that is, an economic actor who has the capacity to exchange contracts in the marketplace, and indeed, a public sphere with unequal access (Einhorn 2000a). This economic identity (entrepreneur) was to rule Chilean society under NSDS and beyond. Besides, to reach all sectors of society, neoliberalism allowed the massification of consumption to lower-middle and working-classes through credit cards not just issued by financial institutions but more important were the ones issued by department stores (*multitiendas*). This massive integration of many social sectors through credit created a form of citizenship that Moulián (1997:102-110) called the 'credit-card citizen.' In other words, the NSD and its attached economic model guaranteed the social and economic re-foundation of the Chilean State and society by integrating citizens through consumption and de-politicisation.

Politically, NSD also comprised a body of anti-communist ideas with a certain structural coherence that had its own 'rationality' and power of explanation; it was highly gendered. By stressing the all encompassing nature of the NSD, military men were blurring the dichotomy of public and private spheres to which they had full access culturally, politically, ideologically, economically and

repressively. NSD did not originate in Chile or in Latin America even though it acquired its full force there. It was a doctrine born with the rise of the Cold War and most fully articulated among the armed forces in the countries of the Southern Cone. Garretón (1989a) suggests that it was actually elaborated in the United States from various European currents of thought and then transmitted to Latin American armies through officer-training institutions set up by the United States. The doctrine is thus maintained by the set of institutions linking Latin American armies with the U.S. Armed Forces. This shared masculinised militarism under NSD's counter-insurgency indoctrination was key in the implementation of an almost all-male repressive apparatus responsible for the gross violation of human rights.

Zimbardo (2003:xvi) noted that 'torturers are made, not born, the way they are.' Between 1950 and 1979, nearly seven thousand Chilean officers were sent for advanced instruction at the U.S. military-run *School of the Americas* (SOA), in Panama, or at other American bases, where national security concepts and counterinsurgency techniques were taught (McCoy 2005). Most of those in charge of the intelligence apparatus created by the military regime (DINA/CNI) as well as the torturers and paramilitary groups were military men who had taken courses on Urban Counterinsurgency at SOA either before or soon after the military coup. According to *Derechos Chile* one in seven of the top DINA men trained and graduated at SOA. In addition, DINA's personnel was also formed by civilians recruited from and by extreme Right-wing paramilitary movement *Patria y Libertad* /Fatherland and Freedom (Vuskovic 1975). They participated not only as informers, some, were also trained to be torturers (Guzmán 2000). This evidence substantiates Zolberg et al.'s (1989) assertion that the violence that provokes refugee flows can be exercised not only by the State but also by sections of the population. Pedro noted that *nobody talks of the rich farmers, the rich agribusiness entrepreneurs who were also killing people here in the south, they killed poor peasants but nobody says anything about it, nobody!* Furthermore, each branch of the armed forces had their own intelligence agency capable of torturing, killing and disappearing political prisoners: SIFA, SICAR, SIN, DINE (see Agger and Jensen 1993; Weinstein et al. 1987).⁸ Intense rivalry between these intelligence agencies either increased the number of deaths or paradoxically, saved some lives (Muñoz 2005).

However, NSD invented nothing new; it validated and perfected a form of masculinity already existing in Chilean society. The implementation of NSD furthered male systems of repression complementing the existing machismo and a long term 'military-racial cultural identity' (Larraín 2001). The latter, according to Larraín, has historically conflated military and racial aspects that have been present since the conquest. Indeed, the axes of Chilean nation-state formation are virility, whiteness, discipline, morality and racism. This military-racial paradigm is accompanied by strong patriarchal and *machista* elements that sustain the inferiority of women who have neither intelligence nor military value. The military-racial version of Chilean identity, argues Larraín (2001:157), 'is oppositional par excellence in the sense that more than other versions of identity, it requires the 'other' whom it is necessary to conquer or defeat. The war implies a threatening enemy that it is

⁸ See acronyms.

necessary to destroy. A national identity based on war, is reaffirmed in that need.' This rearticulated national identity was to be grounded on a modified gender order, in which one type of masculinity was replaced by another. The aim was to annihilate the political pride of supporters of the UP's *vía chilena* to socialism that had attracted so much international attention.

Barrett (1996:129) convincingly argued that 'the military is a prime candidate for the study of masculinity, not only because it is an institution populated by men, but also because it plays a primary role in shaping images of masculinity in the larger society.' When the military run the country the images of masculinity associated with them define a dominant adult male role model that shapes the socialisation of men. The NSDS proclaimed: 'in every soldier there is a Chilean; in every Chilean there is a soldier.' The issue at stake here is what happens to the rest of male civil society and the possibility of a model of multiple masculinities. In his study of the intersection of masculinity and violence in northern Uganda, Dolan (2002:77) asserts that, in conditions of violence/war, [I]ndividuals subscribe to the hegemonic model for economic and psychological survival reasons,... Militarism provides a route for some with full support from a state policy of increasing militarization... Under these circumstances the space for multiple masculinities largely collapses.' Indeed, the military coup in Chile revitalised a process of militarised masculinity that put a premium on toughness and force. A militarist culture that legitimised violence as a way of resolving conflicts was imposed. It penetrated the whole society, a society that became ruled by 'a political power that combined a political-military leadership (personalised in General Pinochet) with the authority of the armed forces as an institution' (Garretón 1991: 52). This militaristic culture and society redolent with masculinity was indeed highly gendered.

If, during UP period there was a clash between revolutionary/reformist and conservative femininities and masculinities, under NSDS, new sources of gender power appeared whereby male power rested on a State that repressed, excluded and controlled civil society. Realms of mainly male civilian activities that had a long history in democratic Chile such as academia, Parties and trade unions were banned and rendered inadequate and inferior to be replaced with male-dominated "apolitical" institutions and feminine organisations that replicated State militarisation. The military had the power to impose a dominant masculinity that stigmatised all stereotyped feminine characteristics and the qualities associated with them. One way to destroy men's masculinity was by homosexualising Leftist public men whereby masculinity was frequently used to challenge their political credibility. This practice started during the UP administration (see Bernedo 2003). Under NSDS, the nation was to be constructed as masculine in opposition to a feminised other. In this highly gendered context, gendered nationalist judgements were strongly felt by both men and women.

One of the first manifestations of this new repressive gender order was an attack on Leftist 'political' physical appearance. Since the influential Cuban revolution in 1959, Latin American revolutionaries' appearances and behaviour mirrored that of the mythical figure of Ché Guevara who became an icon

and *Hombre Nuevo*⁹ role-model for the Latin American Left. Ché's beard and long hair influenced young male militants of the Left to adopt his looks 'as a visible sign of their political option' (Sanfuentes 2003:214). In her accounts of her life under NSDS trade unionist and MIR's militant, Miriam Ortega (Muñoz 2003:25) noted that after the coup, '[M]en had to cut their hair and moustache, because as soon as they saw them they assumed they were subversives. They had an image of what we were and it was dangerous to have that image, then we had to change our appearance, we had to use the costumes of formal people.' Commenting on women's clothing and appearance in 1970s' Chile, Sanfuentes (2003:208) observed that all women wore trousers not only as 'a symbol of rupture with previous epochs', but also as a 'visible symbol of the gender equality Chile had reached in those years'. Though 'gender equality' was a too celebratory term, the high cost associated with this free way of dressing under a transformative period was soon considered masculine and femininely ambiguous hence questionable. In their determination to impose conventional gender norms in terms of dress and appearance, immediately after the coup it was dangerous for men to grow long hair and beards and for women to wear trousers. For the military and its civil supporters, masculinity and femininity became clearly defined, and clothing was one manifestation. People were to be uniformed.

Primarily, the regime insisted on the 'perversity' of politicians and politics that he dismissed as *politiquería/politicking*'. Pinochet's venomous anti-Marxism stemming from his geopolitics formative military years, reached a point of not only demonising Marxism and those influenced by this 'diabolic mind' but also 'referring to Allende as "Mephistopheles"' (in Lowden 1993:51), undoubtedly, a depiction to gain Catholic hearts and minds. Traditional political actors such as Parties were blamed for Chile's crisis and the 'social chaos' of the UP government that, in Pinochet's view included the Christian Democrats. In this 'demonic' scenario, 'politicians' became the defeated, shamed and no longer the protectors of *la Patria*, women and children. Political power was thus replaced by military power with no possibilities of alternative models. For the military power, the *Historical National Project* was to recuperate the nation, the lost fatherland, and in their preferred term, *la Patria*. Noteworthy is the idea of *Patria* used by the military. This was a term ubiquitously used by elites throughout Latin America during the nineteenth century. Elites preferred to use the term '*patria*' rather than '*nación*', precisely because it enabled them to evade the tricky issue of how to incorporate all of the population into a unified nation (Miller 2006). The military used *Patria* with the same purpose and monopolised its use from the outset. In their rhetoric, 'politicians had betrayed the nation, engaged in demagogy, and allowed Soviet-inspired Marxists to gain control of the Chilean state' (Loveman 1997:269). In a frantic, socially pathological manner the military displayed its powerful monolithic maleness to restore the 'health' of the nation. It was necessary to exterminate the 'Marxist-Leninist cancer' that had been consuming *la Patria*. In this way, the territorial, political and ideological boundaries and membership of the Chilean nation under NSD were determined by nationalistic ideas of a communist-free society predicated on the exclusion of those perceived as 'enemies' of the nation. Focusing on a common enemy had a tremendous political utility, it allowed the creation of broad political alliances that permitted the NSDS to define the boundaries of the nation

⁹ See glossary.

between those included and excluded from it. If during the Allende administration Chilean society was politically polarised, the NSDS created a national divide based on the category 'enemy'. This also had a powerful social connotation. In a linguistic construction that mixed UP with *peliento*, a Chileanism synonym of poor or destitute, the Right called UP supporters *upelientos/as*. After the coup, it became a byword for 'enemy'. Ana was socially isolated at work, nobody trusted her anymore, *after being so popular (populachera) among the staff, nobody spoke to me in the hospital, nobody, nobody! It must have been because of sheer fear or because I was upelienta, that was really hard*. For many, it was impossible to escape such identification, the alternative was to integrate into the 'peripheral society.'

By excluding the 'enemies' of the *Patria* in arresting, imprisoning, torturing, killing, disappearing, exiling and impeding return, the NSDS was not simply purging *la Patria* of what they considered a dangerous political element, they were also fighting for the recuperation of the nation. Defending *la Patria* against the internal threat was a primary objective. With this purpose in mind, the dictatorship deployed a brutal military response that not only exhibited aggression, but, in their view, also courage, endurance, toughness and lack of squeamishness (see Pinochet 1980; Whelan 1989) thus, validating an aggressive masculinity. During the Pinochet dictatorship military masculinity and political violence intertwined.

3.2 The military response: a State gendered articulation and an ideal form of masculinity

Contrary to the widely-held view of the long-standing 'exceptionality of Chilean constitutionality', violence, militarism and the participation of the armed forces in twentieth century Chile was present in countering any working-class advance that would affect private property and means of production (Illanes 2002; Frazier 2007). With equal purpose, the 11/09/1973 armed forces intervention resulted in a military regime that would last seventeen years. Constituted in a military Junta, they declared a 'state of internal war' against an internal 'enemy.' Though in general, States are supposed to defend themselves from external incursions and enemies, in Chile, the 'enemy' was within. This categorisation helped in the formation of a new type of State, the NSDS with a clear political identity; the NSDS intended to impose an identity between itself and 'its people.' The result was that Chilean society turned from a praised 'constitutional democracy' into a militarised battlefield and under battlefield conditions, anyone who failed to follow orders risked being searched, arrested, tortured, killed or disappeared. It was a political and psychological war against a homogenised Left through the imposition of State terror and a culture of fear (Poltzer 1989). According to Moulián (1997:22) what characterised the dictatorship was its reign of terror, 'The state had the capacity to act upon the bodies of its citizens without having to acknowledge both the limits of the intensity of the interventions or the harm and face any effective regulation in the application of punishment or prohibitions'. Congruent with the literature on State terrorism (Stohl and Lopez 1984), the NSDS used terrorism as a very special form of coercive State violence. The Chilean NSDS ruled by the use of terror, violence, and intimidation with the purpose to achieve its end, the elimination of the Marxist Left and associates.

Chile turned into a fearful society permeated by spies and informers; the purpose was the total control of civil society. Such new State institutionalisation affirmed the authority of its repressive apparatus to execute policies and enforce decree laws regarding its 'enemies' and other statehood functions.

The military response of the armed forces was headed by top military men who soon formed an all-male military Junta (the Executive), comprised of Army Commander-in-Chief, General Augusto Pinochet Ugarte, General Gustavo Leigh Guzmán, Air Force Commander-in-Chief, Vice-Admiral José Toribio Merino, Navy Commander-in-Chief and General César Mendoza, General Director of *Carabineros* (national uniformed police). The excessive display of modern weaponry and militarised masculinity during the 'combat' to depose the Allende government demonstrated soldiers' 'ability' to function as combatants and Pinochet's opportunity to affirm his virility and patriotism by exchanging information with Navy plotters from the front. By heralding the heroism and masculinity of the men who took part in the war-like action, patriarchy was strengthened even further.

However, the construction of masculinity necessarily implies a relational reference to an 'other' constructed as feminine. Feminine roles in the war system, argues Goldstein (2001:251) 'are performed by women who support war in myriad ways, voluntarily and involuntarily, in specific nonwarrior roles, such as mothers, nurses, prostitutes, camp followers, rape victims and even peace activists.' In Chile, this process started during the UP government when the Right (which historically has praised women's non-political role and confined them to the privacy and protection of the home), brought them into the public arena by politicising their concerns in their gender roles, precisely in the confines of the hegemonic family. The hegemony of the family in Chilean society is of paramount importance. Historically, and even during the progressive government of the Popular Front (1938-1952) the state intervened to strengthen the family, particularly among the poor. State campaigns to fight the pernicious effects of licentious life on the family were part of the political project of the time (Roseblatt 1995) as well as those of foreign companies operating in Chile (Miller Klubock 1998).

During the UP government, 'the family' took a powerful political role but, from the opposite side. Right-wing female support in what was called *Poder Femenino* (Female Power) successfully instrumentalised their family roles of wives and mothers against Allende's government. From the outset, Allende's administration did not have a discursive way of inclusion of women a lacuna that was opportunistically filled by Right-wing women. This was one of UP's grossest errors as the military coup would be engineered from this void (Shayne 2004). From the outset, Right-wing women opposed Allende's government. Their two political weapons were the *patria* and the family. In their opinion the UP government was endangering family values and threatening the family as an institution. Using nationalistic discourses such as "Woman, the Patria is in danger. The Patria is being threatened and it is calling you. Defend her. Defend your constitution. Defend the sacred rights that the fathers of the Patria have bequeathed us when they founded the Republic. Do not allow communism to ration your bread, your house, your clothes. Woman, the Patria is calling you..." (in Vidal 1972:82-3), they aimed at undermining the socialist administration and legitimate the need for

military action. After Fidel Castro's visit to Chile, their most famous action was the "March of the Empty Pots" in December 1971. In their roles as virtuous housewives, mothers, and wives (though most had maids and nannies), they marched through the streets of Santiago banging pots and pans to protest against food shortages (see Baldez 2002; Power 2002). With this type of action they were concealing in their gender roles their radical Right-wing political orientation and kinship to politicians and military leaders who shared the same ideology. Direct action and gender ideology were key to pressure for military action, and this was demonstrated on 21 August 1973 by the shameful protest against the then army commander-in-chief and Defense Minister General Carlos Prats. During those last days of the UP administration and in the midst of a convulsed country when General Prats was rapidly losing his battle to preserve the army's constitutional posture, he was deeply humiliated by a demonstration of three hundred officers and generals' wives who gathered outside his residence taunting him a coward and demanding his resignation. Regarding women shaming men into war, Goldstein has noted that women's use of shame to goad men into fighting has been observed in a variety of settings. Using the Chilean example, Goldstein (2001:272) noted 'right-wing women threw corn at soldiers to taunt them as "chickens." General Prats' humiliation was a gendered articulation. In his view, women were voicing plotting generals' pleas (Prats 1985). He told Jaime Gazmuri 'I have dedicated forty years to this institution, they are my friends; what I cannot pardon is that they are *maricones* they have sent their women' (in Gazmuri 2000:113).

Right-wing women used any resort possible. Nina Donoso, an anti-Allende poet vividly depicted their call to incite military men into fighting against the UP government in her poem "Knocking on the Doors of the Barracks" (see Power 2002:477). In their opposition actions they became inspirers of "male glory". In the words of General Pinochet (1991:18) 'A patriotic duty impelled the armed forces to rescue the country from the acute chaos that the Salvador Allende government was precipitating it to which the first to react were the women.' He then added, 'Women had instinctively realised the danger which threatened their homes, their children and their husbands and acted with exemplary and moving courage' (1991:266). With the military overthrow of Allende's socialist project, Right-wing women praised the militarised masculinity of the commanders and soldiers that had saved Chile from the 'ruin' at the hands of a socialist leader. In their view, soldiers were heroes, not murderers. The armed forces would be the guarantors of their threatened families. Under the predominance of NSD, the State was encouraged to murder, imprison, disappear, exile, restrict return and made redundant (*exonerar*) their Left-wing 'sisters', partners, husbands and children. Chile became a socially and politically schizophrenic country. On one hand, the NSDS was protecting its two 'families: the 'military family' and the 'national family' i.e. women, men and children supporting *their* national project, they were *the* 'protected', these were what in this study are called *nationals*. Conversely, State terrorism was unleashed mercilessly over the 'unprotected' women, men and children considered enemies of the State. Thus, in this schizoid scenario the 'bond of loyalty' between citizen and State continued for one sector of the society whereas for another it disappeared altogether. With time, the prisoners and victims' testimonies have shown that what went on underground was sinister and brutal.

3.3 The military dictatorship's gender ideology: *Patria*, Motherhood, Family and the ideal femininity

The previous section showed the right-wing foundations of NSDS' gender order. The utilisation of women by military male dominance benefited from women's sensibilities regarding children's and family security. Again, the military regime invented nothing new. 'It just recuperated and reorganised the existing spaces of power and non-power to empower its own strategies' (Munizaga and Letelier, 1988:536). The primacy of essentialised 'women' and 'the family' had never in Chilean political history been so openly discoursed to the extent that Carmen Grez, the leader of the mobilisation against Allende's government, was publicly designated as Minister of the Family by Pinochet (Kirkwood 1986:52). Women were frequently reminded that 'by biology and tradition they were the keepers of hearth and home, to nurture and teach children "our ways"' (Cockburn 2001:19). Every time Pinochet had to make public important national matters he directly informed his female supporters embodied in so-called *Voluntariado* (volunteer women association). According to Munizaga and Letelier (*ibid*), his strategy was 'to address all Chilean women generically, invoking them as the foundations and support to the regime...in this way he hands over a myth: that of the rescued *Patria*, and the restoration of the natural order of things...'. By identifying nation and family, NSDS' gender ideology reconciled women and nation and in so doing it facilitated the reconstruction of national identities and national loyalties. An illustration of this gendered nationalism is found when Pinochet called for patriotic sacrifices for *la Patria* and when Right-wing women responded with fervour to his call. To make public their identification with the recuperated *Patria* and loyalty to the NSDS, they keenly donated their most precious jewellery for National Reconstruction, in exchange for a symbolic copper ring that they would wear 'as long as Pinochet lasts' (see Tesser's accounts in Politzer 1989). According to Anthias and Yuval-Davis (1989:7) one of women's five principal roles in nationalism is to be 'symbolic signifiers of national difference.' Chilean Right-wing women became such symbols embodying *the Patria* and as such, 'the mothers of the nation, responsible for its physical, cultural and social reproduction.'

Certainly, under NSD, women became a strategic ideological sector. Pinochet's wish to "depoliticise" the country was done through the political use of women. Women were seen primordially in their gender roles of mothers and wives and not as "political". Yet, the politicisation of women has never been so striking. Through them the military regime penetrated and militarised the private sphere. Appeals to morality, patriotism and feminine virtue were fundamental in the regime's discourse. In it, not just the *woman*, but above all, *the mother* was to be the resonance box of authoritarian values within the family. To introduce and reproduce this patriotic gendered discourse, Right-wing women's consent and participation was crucial. To exercise power and control over thousands of women all over Chile, the regime used both *Poder Femenino* women and existing state women's organisations. The idea was to mobilise a feminine social base for the regime's national project particularly among the *poblaciones* (poor neighbourhoods) and rural poor. With this purpose in mind, the NSDS re-created and militarised *CEMA-Chile* (Chilean Mothers' Centres) and the *Secretaría Nacional de la*

Mujer (Women's National Secretariat/SNM). CEMA controlled and disciplined women through their traditional roles (Lechner and Levy 1986; Valenzuela 1987). The military control was exercised through *Pinochetista* women as the main posts of CEMA were in the hands of the wives of high-ranking officers. Lucía Hiriart de Pinochet (Pinochet's wife) was appointed president of CEMA-Chile. According to Patricio Orellana *the relationship between Pinochet and his wife was fundamental, she was even much more reactionary than him. Many times Pinochet hesitated about things but she incited him.*

Both state institutions constituted the female organisational support used to strengthen the patriarchal military regime. Women became key political actors ensuring the ideological continuity of the regime and their *Historical National Project* in a 'non partisan' military Chile. In some ways, the gendered nature of the military government in Chile resembled that of the Nazi regime (see Koonz 1986). While military men and their associates preached hate of communism stressing the threat it posed to destroy the morality of *la Patria*, women's participation in the military regime created an unreal gloss of 'idealism', society's stability, virtuous family and motherhood. Yet, simultaneously, the everyday reality encountered by those considered 'enemies' was radically different.

3.4 NSD State's gendered abuse: the unprotected

One of the hallmarks of Southern Cone NSDSs was its gross violation of civil and human rights through their own repressive apparatuses. The purpose in Chile was twofold: to destroy the human, political, ideological, social and cultural vestiges of the Allende regime and to suppress conventional political activity. Not only trade unions were dissolved and Parties of the Left declared illegal by Decree Law N°77 of 13 October 1973, but also the centre Christian Democratic Party (henceforth DC). Because of the junta's despise for the Christian Democrats, whom they made responsible for having paved the path for Chile's fall into Marxist-Leninist hands and to avoid its reorganisation it was declared 'in recess' and several of its militants later suffered repression. Repression formed a key part of the total war against 'the enemy' and subversion. Although the term 'enemy' was never defined by any of the NSDS of the Southern Cone, this 'identity' had ideological attributions. The unclear notion of enemy was perverse because as Argentinian General Breno Borges Forte put it, 'the enemy uses mimesis, it adapts to any environment and uses every means, both licit and illicit, to achieve its aims. It disguises itself as a priest, a student, or a *campesino*, as a defender of democracy or as an advanced intellectual, as a pious soul or as an extremist protestor' (in Pirelli 1990:95). In Chile, NSDS' notion of 'enemy' could also have schizoid characteristics. In Ana's case, her persecution was a sinister 'cat-and-mouse' game by which they controlled people individually. She worked at a hospital in Santiago.

I could not leave the job; they wanted me there. They dismissed me (me echaban) and then they employed me again (me recogian) and carried on paying me. Suddenly, a decree-law arrived in which 'by decree such and such, Doña Ana Flores had to leave her position and then later another decree-law arrived saying that Doña Ana Flores had to resume her post'. It was an incredible persecution! And on top of that they took me out of the hospital for interrogation several times.

Effectively, the term constituted the Chilean projection of NSD's ideological foundations that allowed the state to exclude/include those it considered its citizens. In this manner, NSDS smartly evaded its responsibility of protecting all its citizens. For the regime, the 'enemy' was genderless, classless and ageless. However, repression was always more pervasive among young and middle aged Leftist men with the poor being more affected. According to Roniger and Sznajder (1999:22), working-class (peasants, drivers, industrial and other workers) constituted 30.1% of NSDS's victims followed by the 25.45% of self-employed (artists, business people, housewives, unemployed, full-time militants, retired and others) and students 14.22%. Women, even pregnant women, were also repressed though they constituted a minority. In addition, some children, even toddlers, were also tortured and killed (see Riquelme and Troncoso 1992). In her study of Latin American NSDSs, Caro Hollander (1996:56) noted that 'society is redefined as a war zone, and the militarization of ideology stresses the couples of chaos/order and enemy/ally, imposing a sense of catastrophic danger and constant unpredictability. The terrorist state speaks of the need to respect the family and social order; however, entire families are attacked, destroyed and violated.' To consolidate itself, the NSDS required a morally nationalist justification.

'Politicians' and leftist militants were the primary target and the first ones to experience repression. They were stigmatised and shamed as 'wimps', as not being *proper Chileans* and as communists *vendepatria* (vendors of the *Patria*). Under such patriotism, to be a *vendepatria* was a negation of national identity hence, the worst offence that any 'proper' Chilean could commit. The way this was more brutally experienced was when repression, sexuality and patriotism intersected. The classic repressive scenario of this sinister triad was to be found in the dozens of secret places where political prisoners experienced not only torture but also sexual humiliation carried out to emasculate men, test their masculinity and degrade women. One of the earliest testimonies was *Tejas Verdes* by writer Hernán Valdés (1974). In his chilling accounts of imprisonment and torture at this grim concentration camp, he recalled his endurance to constant sexual references, insults and ill-treatment by male interrogators who constantly called him *maricón* (faggot). 'Are you a queer?' was a routine torture question. When not getting an answer from him, they not only intensified torture but also turned the interrogation towards his alleged girlfriend's sexuality calling him *cornudo* (cuckold) particularly to incite suspicion over the whereabouts of female counterparts. These powerful challenges to masculinity (generally associated with dominance and control), and particularly against political masculinity and manhood constructed around participation, engagement, and decision-power, were to make Leftist men more aware of their masculinity than before.

Today, when there is ample recognition that sexual violence is a weapon of war, the gender emphasis is mainly on women (*FMR* 2007). However, sexual violence and torture are ideologically gendered endeavours affecting men and women as well as femininity and masculinity (Goldstein 2001). Franco (1992:109) suggested that '[W]hereas the torture of men often presented them with the challenge to behave like a man and die or to become like a woman to survive, the treatment of women prisoners

was rooted in sadistic fantasies.’ NSDS’s repressive apparatus borrowed heavily from the Catholic ideology of familialism and in particular the image of the woman as mother and guardians of a moral order. In this view, Leftist women did not conform to a strengthened gender regime that recognised and valued women only as good mothers, good wives and non political, hence bound to be abused psychologically and verbally. Under NSDS, once the woman was perceived as revolutionary and ‘political’ she radically distanced herself from the image of the Virgin Mary and the Holy Family, and as Warner (1976) put it, she becomes ‘tainted’, soiled and by definition aggressive and active, hence, she becomes a whore. This powerful gender ideology overrode class and status differences. In situations of torture where the tortured was a middle-class woman or even a British doctor (Cassidy 1977), male torturers of a lower class used this almighty gender ideology to punish political women ‘calling them ‘whores’ and ‘traitors of the patria’ (Rebolledo 2004: 35). Certainly, in this internal war, leftist women were seen as hostages or as possessions of men the military considered to be the enemy (Bunster-Burotto 1986). This were the cases of *Mirista* women such as Carmen Rojas (1988), Gladys Díaz (in Wright and Ofiate 1998: 79-84) and Miriam Ortega (Muñoz 2003). The ideological stand and commitment of these defiant imprisoned women were a puzzle for the male guard. Miriam Ortega (Muñoz 2003:53) recounted: ‘I think this is due to the fact that one is a woman, they are very *machistas*, they prefer their women to stay at home, so they don’t understand that one chose to give one’s life for the cause.’ One way to acquiesce these women was by the use of merciless sexual torture (see Bunster-Burotto 1986). The object of physical and psychological violence against ‘enemy’ women was also symbolic. ‘The bodies of militant women were an occupied territory, humiliated, and discarded by the victors and at the same time it was a warning to other women who dare to “dive into men’s affairs”’ (Rebolledo 2004:102). Women were also raped as a means ‘to damage men’s “honour” to destroy his place in society through the rape of the figure of mother-wife, in which the “moral” value of his existence is sustained as a member of the community’ (Carrera 2005:65). Women’s rape also meant the violation of the pre-existing nation-woman construction. In a highly militarised patriarchal and *macho* repressive environment where obsessive masculinity ruled, sexual torture was more harshly experienced by unmotherly lesbian prisoners. In her analytical accounts of her torture, Chilean exile Consuelo Rivera-Fuentes (2001:663) noted that although she hid her lesbianism, her torturers knew ‘how to denigrate me even more, if that was possible, and that’s why they raped me so that I could have “a real fuck from real men.”’ It was not until the publication of the Rettig Report in 1991 that some of these experiences became ‘officially’ known.

If for women rape has to be negotiated between silence and stigma (Kelly 2000), rape of men under NSDS has been silenced by victims themselves as in the case of Latin American ex-political prisoners living in exile in Denmark (Thorvaldsen 1986 in Agger 1990:46), and Sweden (Sundquist et al. 1995), but above all by the lack of scholarly attention compared to that on women, a well known fact elsewhere (Zarkov 2001; Jones 2006). Although statistically more men than women were imprisoned and tortured, evidence suggests that more women political prisoners than men were subjected to sexual violence (Agger and Jensen 1989; Franco 1992). Certainly, many leftist Chilean men were also victims of sexual violence when in the hands of DINA/CNI. Yet, male rape has only been revealed

recently in Chile, not by men themselves who provide hints into these experiences (Valdés 1974; Durán 2003; Muñoz 2005) but by ex-prisoner women (Acuña 2005; Corporación Humanas 2005; Gutiérrez 2005). The purpose of sexual humiliation was not only to discipline leftist men but also to annihilate masculine self-respect and 'honour' and to achieve the total degradation of the political or religious man. When imprisoned they were symbolically positioned as homosexuals.¹⁰ However, until a decade ago, rape under detention circumstances were justified as criminal acts, not acts of torture or persecution, or as Crawley (2001:35) suggested, as an act of sexual gratification rather than of violence.

Clearly, because State repression responded to the 'private-public' divide, more men than women were targeted. Women who had been political activists during the UP government were targeted for their own activities and others because they derived their identity from their relationship to a male 'enemy' either as partners (*compañeros*), sons or fathers (Bunster-Burotto 1986). The next section examines the macro structural foundations of a climate of State repression as a major reason to leave the country.

3.5 The absence of State protection: the making of Chilean refugees/exiles

The previous section demonstrated the manner and extent in which the NSDS created the conditions for exit: persecution and the absence of State protection. This view moves away from the tendency that has focused on a single cause, specifically, on the issue of the fear of persecution. This emphasis is due to repressive situations like those discussed above but principally because of the overwhelming influence of the 1951 *UN Refugee Convention's de jure* definition of 'refugee'. Article 1A (2) of this Convention, defines a 'refugee' as someone who:

'As a result of events occurring before 1 January 1951 and owing to well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion, is outside the country of his nationality and is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to avail himself of the protection of that country; or who, not having a nationality and being outside the country of his former habitual residence as a result of such events, is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to return to it'

Although this definition has been a major point of contention (Loescher 1993), studies on Chilean exile have insisted on persecution as the main reason for leaving the country (Villamar 1984; Orellana 1980-81; Salinas 2000; Rebolledo 2004). In 2006, however, Prognon added the surplus labour force under the neoliberal model. One first explanation for emphasising persecution lies in the timing of Chilean refugeehood. Chileans were applying for refugee status in the early/mid 1970s. At that time, the 1951 *UN Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees* was the key international instrument

¹⁰ In March 1975, 43 female relatives of political prisoners held in the concentration camp *Melinka* (Puchuncaví), denounced that after Good Friday religious services, "approximately forty prisoners were taken violently out of their beds and ordered...to march, run, threatened with machine guns...made to fight each other...and for those who disobeyed, to dance cheek to cheek and kiss each other in the mouth while enduring the mockery and indecent remarks of their guards..." (*Chile-América* 1975:85). In the case of murdered Father Antonio Llidó, Father Jordá (n.d.:8) noted that 'For his condition as a priest, the tortures he was subjected to were marked by sado-sexualism.'

governing asylum and, because of the magnitude of the violation of human rights it was amply applied to their case on grounds of persecution. Yet, persecution has been also problematised on gender grounds (Greatbach 1989; Crawley 2001; Kuttner 2002; Kneebone 2005).

Undeniably, persecution is an important factor but not the sole determinant of the exodus of refugees. As discussed, the absence of State protection for a particular sector of the population is determinant in the inclusion/exclusion of citizens. Changes in State nature are of most importance. Keely (1996), suggested that refugee production is rooted in geopolitical structure, that is, when 'the form of state changes due to internal unrest, whether originated in rightist, leftist, or other ideological factions, the potential for refugees exist.' The overnight replacement of a socialist-democratic State with a security-State (NSDS), that guaranteed and protected the Right's political, economic and cultural interests, not only shook the entire fabric of Chilean society but it also culminated in a fertile ground for social change and the formation of refugees. Hence, the analysis of the State's role in refugeehood is primordial and historically highlighted during the formation of new nation-states (Zolberg 1981). Yet, States and nations keep recreating themselves and in that process nation and State are not only linked (Lemay-Hébert 2009), but also 'legitimise' themselves by including or excluding certain sectors of the population.

In this context, one convincing proposition regarding the role of the State in refugee formation is that of Shacknove (1985:277). Drawing from social contract theory, he argues that '[P]ersecution is a sufficient, but not a necessary, condition for the severing of the normal social bond.' He identifies the absence of State protection of the citizen's basic needs as the root cause for refugee flight. Shacknove adds '[I]t is this absence of state protection, which constitutes the full and complete negation of society and the basis of refugeehood.' Supposedly, 'the military is a collectivity of professional individuals (i.e., soldiers, officers, etc.) responsible for the protection and defense of their country or others they are ordered to protect or defend' (Ross 1995:116). However, as fully discussed above, the military that took power of the State in its distinct NSD form was characterised by its complete unwillingness to protect those considered 'enemies of the nation'. Hence, the supposed social contract, understood most basically as the mutual obligation between the State and its citizens in which the latter promise to respect the rule of the sovereign and the former pledges to protect its citizens and all this under the principle of consent, was maintained between the sector of the population supporting the military coup and the NSDS, that is, the *nationals*. This retreat of the State from its commitment of protection of the life and welfare of a large part of its citizens and its rule through fear and repression (Corradi et al. 1992), divided not only the Chilean nation but also the unprotected sector of the population between those who either remained in the country (stayees) or left it (refugees/exiles). Hence, though still valid for the analytical purposes of this study, Shacknove's argument half accomplishes its line of discussion. Under NSDS, persecution, repression and lack of protection run in parallel. Furthering Shacknove's argument this study suggests that lack of State protection manifest itself in two forms: direct and indirect repression. These modes of repression would lead to

many paths of classed and gendered exit thus constituting an added differentiation among Chilean exiles.

3.5.1 *Direct repression Chilean refugees*

NSDS repression in Chile was exercised directly and indirectly. In this context and for analytical purposes, this thesis supports CODEPU's (1989:736) distinction of State repression between direct and indirect repression though in most cases, the boundaries became blurred. **Direct repression** (henceforth DR) refers to one or more of the following: assassination, kidnapping, disappearance, detention, torture, exile, internal exile (*relegación*), home searches without warrant, imprisonment, and intimidation (threats, surveillance, continuous harassment). Those who left the country under DR represented *de jure* refugees that at the time still had the 'right to leave and to seek asylum'. Chileans in this category claimed their refugee status on the grounds of persecution, as it was a salient factor in their petition. Most countries prioritised their visa applications against those who left differently. They became strict 'Convention refugees.'

Within this category two flight contexts are identified. By virtue of the power conferred on the Executive by emergency legislation, political prisoners were expelled under the newly created *Decreto Supremo* 504 (DS 504) of 30 April 1975 and their right to return prohibited. These will be called 'Decree refugees'. In general, 'Decree refugees' were political prisoners released from prison under the so-called "*extrañamiento*" program as a 'humanitarian solution' that was widely covered in the official media. In fact, it was a measure both to bolster Chile's access to loans agreed during the UP government (Barros 2002:162), and to clean NSDS's negative image in response to mounting international pressure. Joly (1987:95) noted 'the Chilean Junta signed a bilateral agreement with the International Organisation for Migration (IOM) and issued a decree law (Decree 504 April 1975), which permitted some political prisoners to commute their sentences to exile if a number of conditions were fulfilled. Those conditions were that people had to have been tried, they needed a visa for another country and they agreed to serve their sentence in exile. Yet, most of those who exit under these circumstances were never tried.' The options were either to rot in prison (15 to more than 20 years) or to go into forced exile. This 'choice,' as FASIC (1982:18) rightly noted, 'forces the person to leave, to make him 'choose' exile, and to accomplish with "his own hands" rupture and loss.' In 1958, Petersen (:261) recognised five categories of migration: forced, primitive, impelled, free and mass. In his typology, *forced migrants* do not retain any "power to decide whether or not to leave." Once forced to leave the country they had to go to places where they had been accepted. In Petersen's categorisation, Decree refugees were classic 'forced migrants'. Because they were considered a threat to national security they were forbidden to enter the country and their passports stamped "*solo salida*" (exit only). Soon after a letter "L" was added to their passports. This singled out those who could not return without official permission. By cancelling their passports the NSDS eliminated exile temporariness for them.

From a psychoanalytic perspective exile, as a specific type of migration, has two features: departure is involuntary and return impossible (Grinberg and Grinberg 1989). The authors argue that exiles have no chance to go through the ritual of saying 'goodbye' before exiting home. Though this is an overgeneralisation, this was the case of Decree refugees. They endured this potentially traumatic experience as they were expelled directly from imprisonment to the airport. Decree refugees also fall into Richmond's (1993) categorisation of 'reactive' migration. Richmond suggests that these refugees have very little agency in their exit decision and their choices whether, when, and how to 'move' were almost non-existent. However, it can be suggested that Decree refugees' departure was a NSDS determination that did not influence their destination. These 'reactive' refugees' paths to exile and *where* to go were enabled by structural factors such as class, education, contacts, networks and 'political weight' of the prisoner. Accordingly, these paths were bifurcated by political and class channels. One way to leave Chile under DS 504 was by being sponsored. Middle-class political prisoners were sponsored by human rights agencies such as Amnesty International. This type of support was to be directed to either professionals or 'prisoners of conscience' rather than to hardline political leaders or activists. At the time, the solidarity lobby was structured around the male political prisoner's class, work, and political position, the former was 'white collar solidarity'. Conversely, working-class prisoners were mainly adopted and resettled by Western working-class trade unions; this was true 'blue collar solidarity'. For example, Juan Olivares, a metal worker and leader of the Chilean Federation of Metal Workers was adopted by the UK Engineering Electrical and Plumbers Trade Union (E.E.P.T.U.). He returned clandestinely as part of 'resistance return' and was later assassinated. In general, most working-class political leaders and activists were received by Eastern-bloc States as the majority belonged to the Communist or Socialist Parties.

The assertion of refugees and forced migrants as deprived of agency and as simply passive victims of circumstances has been a debatable issue in forced migration circles (Bakewell 1996, 2004). Though later attempts to contextualise the concept of agency seem to challenge previous generalisations, such as Essed *et al.* (2004:3) who take it to the extreme of arguing that encamped refugees 'Escape from hegemonic political structures and the redefinition of gender identities...reinforced women's social, political and economic empowerment and emancipation. Often, these achievements become more permanent assets after return.' In this study's view, these are massive overgeneralisations. Yet, 'passivity', has never been defined. As seen, this was a common assertion in early definitions of forced migrants (Petersen 1958) and particularly of refugee women characterised as powerless individuals whose 'traditional cultures' disempowered them. Though this view has been challenged (Salinas 2000) the tendency of some Western scholars and policy makers to classify refugees first as victims (Stein 1981) and later as people able to exercise agency (Bakewell 1996, 2004; Turton 2003; Essed *et al* 2004) reflects the overwhelming shifts in 'profiling' refugees from above taking unproblematised assumptions at face value. Lately, refugee policy has turned the clock back. According to Sales (2007:82), 'refugee policy in the receiving states also forces refugees to prove themselves as vulnerable and 'victims.'

Certainly, DR political prisoners were neither passive nor agents as individuals. They could 'orientate' their exit, visa applications or the search for sponsors through their class background, level of education, and political or labour networks. Their agency stems from these structural factors and not from them as individuals. The NSDS did not choose where to resettle them abroad, it just expelled them. Furthermore, this process was gendered. Before the actual exit, many endeavours had to be made. In some cases, relatives who were already in exile applied for visas from their host countries, but in most cases, visas were applied for from Chile and were primarily the task of wives and mothers. Despite that this matter was discussed by ex-political prisoners after an amnesty in 1976 (Testimonio II 1979:5), next to no studies exist of the pre-exile experience and the processes of what was involved in visa and grants applications, legalising certificates, as well as risky dealings to obtain supporting documentation under NSDS. As we shall see later one exception was FASIC's documentary work on a family reunification program in partnership with UNHCR mainly with women of working-class and peasant background (Vera 1991).

The number of refugees belonging to this category was minimal when compared to total exit. Certainly, statistical problems related to refugees' exit was a contentious issue. According to FASIC, the Ecumenical NGO working with political prisoners and their exit, they numbered 1,878 (Vera 1991:19). *Chile-América*, the exile journal produced in Rome (F.M.V. 1978:207), put this number at 1,121. Out of 3,129 prisoners who were condemned by Military Tribunals like the War Council or the Martial Courts, '168 were women and 9 of them were expelled under DS 504' (Rodríguez et al. 1980:139). This is a highly gendered fact. It illustrates that gendered repression responded not only to the domination of politics by men but also to the 'public-private' ideology of the regime as well as what was conceived as 'politics'. It is quantitatively clear that DR affected more men than women as DR targeted public activities that were male dominated. For example, out of 3,129 people prosecuted between 1973 and 1977 only 168 were women (Rodríguez et al. 1980:139) and among the 1,129 disappeared 93,79% were men (Padilla 1995:110). In Kay's (1982) view the reason lies in that most women had remained on the fringe of political life or involved in low level supportive roles. This is a contested argument to which we will return later. In sum, Decree refugees were both stateless persons and were prohibited from re-entry. Thus, the NSDS administered and legalised exile and it would do the same with return. By ruling exile by decree, the NSDS provide it with a connotation of 'deviance' associating it with the notions 'enemy', 'subversive', 'terrorist', and 'extremist'. Any infraction to national security would be 'punished' with exile.

A second category of DR refugees was constituted by three subgroups of people also distinguished by class, gender, education, and political affiliation. First, those who spent time in prison and were later released either with no charges or under the 1978 Amnesty decree. According to Orellana (1980-81:51) '[T]his group is impossible to quantify but must be the most numerous one and it is composed of those who feared repression for their political past.' A second subgroup was constituted by what Kunz (1973) called either 'anticipatory' or 'acute' pressure driven refugees but in this case, the boundaries were blurred. These were Chileans who in the immediacy of the coup sought international

protection via extra-territorial asylum in Santiago's foreign embassies that at first was status selective (see Rodríguez 1990). Carmen Lazo (PS female leader) who sought asylum in the Colombian embassy, noted that embassies scrutinised people "if you were important the ambassador welcomed you at the door" but 'if you were an unknown trade union leader you had to throw yourself through the back of the embassy. I saw that.' Then she added 'Only fat fish interested them, not the *picantes* (townies). I have the idea that we, who had names, were privileged because it was terrible what happened to those less important' (in Zerán 1991:124). Diplomatic asylum was possible because in 1933, Chile had recognised the right of diplomatic asylum with most Latin American countries. The Argentinian and Mexican embassies had the most numbers of asylees followed by Venezuela, Panamá and Colombia. By December 1973, these embassies were full to overflowing as over 4,000 Chileans were estimated to have taken asylum in foreign embassies (AI 1974:67). Western countries' embassies however, received less persecuted as there was no pact for political asylum with Chile (Camacho 2006). Canada, for example, was not a signatory to the Caracas Treaty of 1954, a treaty which recognized the right of political asylum in foreign embassies (Dirks 1977:246), hence 'rightly or wrongly, it sheltered Chileans "as a matter of courtesy only"' (Lee 1975:339). Paradoxically, it was democratic Chile's practice of asylum and safe conducts that made things easier for embassies under NSDS's rule; it was the Foreign Office Ministry (MINREL) that granted safe-conducts to the relatives of those who were already abroad (Camacho 2006). The Swedish embassy was notably different. Ambassador Harald Edelstam, who, in order to protect the persecuted risked his own life, managed to obtain asylum for 1,300 Chileans (*APSI* 1985:26-28) to the extent that his action inspired the Swedish film 'The Black Pimpernel' (2007). His example provided great encouragement to other European embassies that later opened their doors to the persecuted.

In general, diplomatic asylum was a protection resort that most political leaders sought after their names had appeared on the 'most wanted list' but also differed in terms of class and political status. The length of time spent in embassies varied from one to several months. As Lazo put it, the Colombian embassy was considered by the most well-known political leaders. Historically, Latin Americans fleeing repression sought refuge in the proximity to their homelands, the reason being *returnism*. Temporary refuge could be turned into an asset as 'a political necessity to reconstruct the movement and to organize resistance' (Eastmond 1989:29). Mexico, Venezuela and Colombia offered such possibility. Soon after the coup, Leopoldo Acuña, a physician and political leader, took refuge in the Colombian embassy. Making a distinction between the 'political' and the 'professional' exiles whereby the former stayed in Latin America, he safeguarded his masculine high political status.

I went into exile because I was concerned for my life. I sought asylum in the Colombian embassy and I stayed there for nine months. They refused to give me a safe-conduct. People such as Allende's Home Office Minister Hernán del Canto and Roberto Garretón left before me. Of course that was a paradox (contrasentido). I stayed in that country because I thought that whatever I could contribute to the demise of the dictatorship it was better done from Latin American countries than from Europe where there were more professional exiles.

Soon, political parties started losing their protective capacity over their militants and even more so over clandestine life. According to political status, parties suggested or ordered militants to either

leave the country or seek asylum. While ex-State elite leaders who sought asylum as anticipatory refugees belonged to the upper leadership of Parties and senior trade unionism and knew each other well, those who entered embassies months later belonged to the 'rank and file', were of a lower-class¹¹ and had endured systematic repression or were underground. Immediately after the coup permanent military guards were posted outside asylum embassies with orders to shoot on sight at all those trying to gain access to them but 'on 11 December 1973, increased security measures were taken to prevent persons from gaining access to Latin American embassies' (AI 1974:68). European embassies remained an alternative as with time many diplomats 'decided that the exigencies of the moment were of greater importance than an over-literal interpretation of the Caracas Treaty: that the saving of human life took precedence over diplomatic protocol' (AI 1974:67). The Italian embassy was one of them. Roberto, a working-class militant saw how the siege was tightening around him. His Party suggested that he leave Chile. A progressive Catholic priest and a nun helped him to do so 'through the back of the embassy':

We were already in profound clandestinity in our work and on the night of the 11th August 1974 weird things started to happen in the place where we used to meet ... On the night of the 12th our safety house was searched and many of my compañeros were arrested and some of them are today disappeared, then we knew we had to flee. Then they gave us orders to get out of the country. We were in contact with the Church that always gave us tremendous support. They helped us to get asylum in the Italian embassy. I remember that nun Monica and a priest – I cannot remember his name – helped us in that operation (operativo). The operation itself was a difficult one because the embassy compound was surrounded by security guards but we took advantage of a little moment that was like a change of guard. They formed for some minutes and in that little moment they left a dead spot, an unpatrolled place. Then sister Mónica and the priest did this: they walked from one side of the street and we from the other. We met at that dead spot and I asked the priest for a light while she was watching the guards. That was the moment when we managed to jump over the back wall and with their push... we got in!

By July 1974 after increased international protest, almost all those in asylum in foreign embassies were finally permitted to leave Chile. Between September 1973 and July 1974, 1,500 safe-conducts were granted (Yundt 1988:104). Others were offered 'courtesy visas'. But to seek asylum in an embassy was a challenging issue. For most politically active male leaders – even when repression was so harsh – the idea of exile was not welcomed. Most testimonies of high status political leaders who took refuge in embassies in Zerán's book (1991) refer to dreading the idea of taking diplomatic asylum. Masculinity was at stake here. Even when repression was so harsh the idea of exile was not welcomed, particularly because it carried the stigma of cowardice and guilt. For them only cowards seek diplomatic refuge. They referred to the case of Right-wingers who, after a coup d'état attempt against Allende's government in June 1973, sought refuge at the Embassy of Ecuador. Ultimately, however, many of them resorted to it. Only MIR's militants rejected this option despite fierce repression against them. In MIR's case, seeking asylum in an embassy was at best a vilified way of leaving the country and not a revolutionary or heroic act; at worst considered to be traitorous. After the military coup, MIR's motto was *el MIR no se asila* (MIR members do not seek asylum), those who

¹¹ Classism in Zerán's (1991) accounts is striking, particularly when the first vintage of asylees referred to the 'lesser' politically important individual and to those who sheltered and protected them in their humble houses in the *poblaciones*. The word *humilde* (humble) is frequently repeated to differentiate their former lifestyle and that of their humble protectors. Ex-CP leader Guastavino even go so far as mocking his poor female protector.

did were considered traitors. Even when diplomatic asylum was an alternative to imminent assassination, MIR's National Leadership was so rigid in condemning it as 'a way of abandoning the struggle against the dictatorship and a treason to the *pueblo* (people) and the working class', that a disciplinary investigation was needed to assess the cases of two surviving leaders of an armed confrontation with the DINA. Conversely, the Communist Party, though rigid at the beginning, later authorised its militants to leave (Corvalán 1999). A dramatic example is the case of PC's Youth General Secretary, the late Gladys Marín whose name was on the NSDS's list. Despite her refusal, she was ordered by her Party to take refuge in an embassy while her husband, was not. He remained in the clandestine struggle until his arrest and later disappearance (see Marín 2002). Carlos, who was facing an arduous situation in which the '*odious ring of persecution and harassment*' was complemented by his unemployment and that of his wife.

It was through my contacts with the Party that I managed to meet some leaders whom I informed of my distressing situation and of my project to go abroad. After a while I received the authorisation with the recommendation that I should join the political work and the international campaign against the dictatorship as well as to further myself professionally. I was so imbued in the discipline of the Communist Party that it would have been unthinkable to leave Chile without their consent and besides I could have had to face serious charges if I didn't follow their instructions, due to the fact that they informed the 'exterior' about the formal authorisation of those militants who could travel.

A third subgroup was constituted by those who were detained after the coup under the State of Siege, stayed in prison for a period of time, released, and later left Chile legally but whose sentences were pending. This category of DR refugees, although they were pressured to leave Chile, had the 'opportunity to choose' either to exit or stay put. Those who left the country did it in a 'legal' manner, that is, through normal channels either with their ID cards in the case of neighbouring countries or passports for any other destinations. Individuals in this category could exercise some agency in their exit decision but were still strongly influenced by the repressive circumstances (their chances were either to be re-arrested or being sent to internal exile), by class background and militancy. The case of Mariano, a medical doctor who was given asylum in the US, is a good example. He was able to make use of 'white collar' solidarity and of a foreign policy that excluded communists,

I was an Amnesty International case. When I was in prison they sent me letters that I never received. When I left prison in May 1974 and then sent to internal exile, (relegación) a young woman who worked for the Post Office and who had been a patient of mine approached me and gave me about 100 letters. All these letters were addressed to San Antonio Prison. They were all written in English and from California's Amnesty International Chairman...It seems that I was assigned to an Action Group in California by the headquarters in London. That group was informed that there was a 'relegado' obstetrician who was married with two children. From then on a series of letters started to be sent because this is the way Amnesty International works with prisoners of conscience...Then, a cousin of mine who was going to do a PhD at Harvard went to see me while I was in internal exile and asked me 'do you want something?' I said: 'I'll write a letter; post it when you get to Boston'...Then they went to interview my cousin about the existence of this doctor to whom they had been writing for years but he had never replied...Later, I was contacted by the U.S. consulate...

Equally important is the gendered process of exit under NSDS's repression. Yet, few attempts have been made to uncover that experience (López Zarzosa 1998). One of the few testimonial acknowledgements found in the reviewed literature was that of exiled Claudio Durán's (2003)

autobiographical accounts in which he interviewed his eighty-year old mother. She provided evidence of her arduous endeavours for securing her teenager son's life and future exit.

Indeed, the emphasis on the legal parameters of asylum seeking and refugee status ignores the sociological, psychological and emotional aspects of the process of enduring repression. Especially noteworthy is that most women related to DR victims had to undergo a difficult and traumatic life that the 'private-public' divide cannot grasp. This paradigm sees women as 'safe' in their private sphere. Hence, women are depicted as if they did not experience any suffering while their husbands were detained or in prison. It is evident that women's experiences have been largely underestimated because the emphasis on persecution and repressive measures tended to focus on the political prisoner who was generally male. This constitutes another strong reason to support the aforementioned argument regarding the importance of protection rather than persecution. The reasons are twofold. First, the private sphere did not protect women, particularly working-class and peasant women. DR's female relatives were vulnerable to abuse in their own homes. Second, the 'private-public' boundaries were soon blurred. Under NSDS's survival circumstances, women not only became the head of family with the accompanying role reversal, but also were responsible for securing their men's lives and/or release while under continuous surveillance by the security agents and, what is more, under total unprotection. Women were accountable for obtaining documentation for visa and/or scholarship applications. They had to secure the lives of their husbands, sons or brothers by dealing with highly risky and lengthy procedures that sometimes exposed them to fear, degradation, blackmail, threats and sexual advances/harassment because the repressive apparatus saw them as the vulnerable wives or *compañeras* of political leaders (for some hints, see López Zarzosa 1998). Also, 'there was a tendency among women not to worry their partners unnecessarily with domestic problems' (Salinas 2000:105). Indeed, in most cases, women concealed from their husbands or partners the difficulties they had to endure. In this way, women were protecting men even when they themselves were unprotected. Under NSDS's lack of protection, women's efforts to protect their families and husbands started immediately after the coup. Clementina, a Communist Party militant, who spent her exile in Argentina was pregnant at the time:

I was expecting my first child and because of so much bombing and so many other things that were happening I lost my baby, but they had to operate on me...It was the 5 October and they took me to the maternity wing of Hospital X in Valparaiso and there were all these women of naval officers and 'carabineros' who had a similar problem but they were happily talking about the killings at the USACH and other things we didn't know because of all that information restriction...Then I said to myself I'm not going to have a general anaesthetic because under pentothal if they asked you 'A' you tell them up to 'Z'. So I said to myself 'I'm not going to have a general anaesthetic, no way!' I will bear the pain. The doctors tried to convince me by all means but they couldn't. I told them that I was very brave. Then I concentrated so hard mentally that the doctors could not believe it, I used all my will power...Also, my sister-in-law who worked there had told me that they were taking Leftist women even from the operation theatre so, I had information of what could happen to me if I talked, because the only thing that worried me most then was his fate (husband), imagine if I said something about our work; to be honest with you, I did not want him to be arrested because he was a leader and who knows! (qué diablos!) what could have happened to him.

Not only did most women help to protect their partners/ husbands or families from DR but also in the process of coping they discovered many different ways to face a difficult situation and surprised themselves at what they were able to do. However, they never felt free from male moral patriarchal pressures either represented by the regained authority of their fathers (Kay 1982), brothers, and even sons¹² or the surveillance from the male political community representing the man in prison (López Zarzosa 1998).

Furthermore, repression also differentiated and gendered the profile of women who were affected by DR. Those directly affected were highly praised and elevated to the same status of heroism as their male counterparts (Castillo and Echeverría 2003; Vidaurrázaga 2005) creating a kind of what Franco (1992:108) calls 'pseudomales' to be praised. Others who experienced the execution or disappearance of their male partners and went into exile were either positively recognised by the political identity and commitment of their *compañero* or became problematic for the troubled men in exile. Caggiani, (1979:18) noted that trying to find a partner among affected individuals within the exiled community in Sweden posed complex questions and asked himself: 'Would it be convenient to marry a woman who was raped while in prison? Or one whose husband is disappeared and could re-appear at any moment? Or one whose husband was murdered by the regime?' At the time of early exile, such questioning reveals men's failure to validate DR's female victims experiences and more so of sexual abuse suffered under NSDS. This observation concurs with Matsuoka and Sorenson's (1999) work on Eritrean refugee men in Canada. But DR was not the only form of NSDS's terror, there was also indirect repression. This form of repression also led to exit and it is here that the blurring of boundaries is found.

3.5.2 Indirect repression Chilean refugees

According to CODEPU (1989:736), **indirect repression** (henceforth IR) refers to one or more of the following: dismissal from work; the deprivation of housing, health and food; severance from social, political, and labour organisations; censorship, distortion of facts, and systematic manipulation of information; the limitation or the loss of the right to due process; total or partial loss of individual and collective freedom of expression imposed at times by the pretence of legal principles, other times by self-censorship provoked by fear. In other words, IR can be economic and/or social repression. Going back to Shacknove's argument, these are citizens' basic civic and physical needs for which State protection is absent in times of crisis. In the IR context the principal factor in seeking asylum was marginalisation from the social, political and economic spheres.

As noted, NSDS's ideology embraced a neo-liberal economic model in what Gill (2008) calls 'the historical structure of disciplinary neo-liberalism.' Though mentioned earlier, we need to recapitulate on it. It is widely accepted that Chile's was the first experiment with neo-liberal state formation (Harvey 2005). The NSDS launched a restructuring of the economy based on the economic policies of

¹² See *Araucaria* N°8, 1979:160

Milton Friedman and others in the US, and followed by Chilean economists of the 'Chicago School', the technocratic sector embodied in the so-called 'Chicago Boys.' The appeal of the Chicago boys to the military was that they represented a type of male a-political civilian identity that would ideally replace political masculinity. They were assertive well-groomed young men and 'presented themselves as neutral technocrats of a scientific, rather than political, kind' (Angell 1986:30). Their imposing technocracy was soon felt 'below'. Rosario who worked at McKay biscuit factory said: *Soon after I arrived there they started to get rid of the old bosses who still were all right (buena onda), those who still employed mature women, treated you well, took their children to the factory, who said hello to you, that is, the sort of super paternalist treatment. They were replaced by young people, male engineers and technicians. From then on people started competing ferociously because if you behave and accepted the sexual jokes and all that they moved you from the production line to another section with a bit better pay.*

Overall, neo-liberal reforms included privatisation, monetarism and deregulation. Although neo-liberal aspects of NSDS activity have been widely examined (Foxley 1986; Harvey 2005; Gill 2008 to name a few), suffice to say here that these policies included a 'shock treatment' (immediate privatisation and marketisation), and 'austerity measures' combined to promote a restoration of UP's threatened capitalism and to eradicate communism. These measures led to widespread unemployment, poverty and unprecedented hunger and misery for large sectors of the Chilean population. Göranck (1976:33) observed '[T]he economic situation is virtually chaotic. Poverty, starvation and need are massive and have increased during the past year. Both workers and salaried employees are forced to sell their belongings in order to survive. Inflation is enormous. Last year it reached 374 percent.' Chile experienced a sharp increase in unemployment and a drop in real wages and salaries by almost 40% between 1974 and 1976 with respect to their 1970 levels (Foxley 1986:16). The primary target of forced unemployment, redundancies and dismissals was UP's entire civil service.

Clearly, as the UP government had an expanded State administration, another major hallmark of the NSDS was the massive dismissal from public administration. This was part of the 'austerity measures' that mainly affected UP sympathisers, particularly men (Kay 1982). The sense of power acquired during the UP where *el Hombre Nuevo* emerged, vanished and men's hard work during that period was publicly devalued and moreover, they were now regarded as 'enemies of the nation' 'delinquents' and a 'danger to national security.' In this context, unemployment for men meant the loss of pride in their provider role, the incapacity to uphold a family and national honour. Men's other locus of masculine pride was eroded. In a continent where, according to Olavarría (2001:163), work is 'the fundamental axis of masculine identity' to be unemployed in a militarised patriarchal society had a triple connotation for men: they were the enemies of the regime and the nation, could no longer protect their women and children nor provide for an expression of themselves as men. Under NSDS they were unmanly men. Besides, if the wife or *compañera* was forced to find some alternative employment this was not generally accompanied by a role reversal. In recent studies of masculinity in Chile, Olavarría (2001:168) has pointed out that 'it is more humiliating for an adult male that someone

else works instead of him, particularly if he can do it, and more so if this person is his wife.' Exit constituted an alternative to palliate the shame of politically caused unemployment.

The fact that a large number of Chileans left the country because of economic reasons was acknowledged in 1980 during a Conference organised by the newly created Chilean Human Rights Commission and the Pro-Return of Exiles Committee (CCHDH/COPROREX 1980:9) in Santiago. In a workshop called 'Exile as a disintegrating factor of scientific, professional and work activity' it was stated that '[N]ot all the reasons for exile are strictly or directly political. There are economic causes too. Many workers had to flee because of the high level of unemployment, low wages and lack of job opportunities in their areas. The exile of workers, whatever the causes, can be considered as a real expulsion from the country as the result of the political, economic and social model developed by the military Junta rather than the international market's attraction for professionals, technicians, skilled and non-skilled labour force.' The differentiation between 'economic' and 'political' refugees has been the subject of numerous debates and more so lately as policy-makers are using the blurring of such categories for the advantage of restrictive asylum policies. This distinction has been emphasised (Joly 2002), blurred (Kay and Miles 1992; del Pozo 2006) or conceptualised differently (Richmond 1993). Yet, the extremely pervasive view of an open differentiation carries an added danger; it can be manipulated by refugees themselves. Regarding individual's standing in the exile community in Scotland, Kay (1982:42), noted that '...exiles were differentiated into *políticos* or *económicos* by the extent to which political or economic factors had played a part in their departure, but also on the relationship of the exile community as a whole to those comrades who remained in Chile and whose judgement was feared and respected.' This was a generalised view throughout Chilean exile that clearly denoted classism (López Zarzosa 1991).

Unlike the strong politically repressive role of the NSDS, its economic and social participation in society became debilitated (Vergara 1986). Under the neo-liberal model the atrophy of State institutions and public spending also meant unemployment for working and middle-class people loyal to the previous government. This added an extra impetus to the post-coup emigration. Chileans migrated to other Latin American countries such as Brazil, Costa Rica, and Ecuador although the bulk of refugees (particularly working-class) went mainly to neighbouring Argentina¹³ and Perú in a combination of 'anticipatory' and 'acute' movements (Kunz 1973). Immediately after the coup, and because of a deepened contact between Chile and Argentina since the Peronists came to power in May 1973, Chilean refugees were welcomed, provided with travel documents and permanent residence (Yundt 1988:109-110). This was a propitious exit opportunity for working-class Chileans. Though many left Chile as 'anticipatory' refugees (Kunz 1973), most of them did not neatly fit Kunz' definition as these refugees were not necessarily affluent but just had the means to buy cheap coach tickets to cross the Andes. Clementina's husband, Mario, a working-class Communist Party leader illustrates this:

¹³ Between September 1973 and July 1974, an estimated 15, 000 refugees went to Argentina (Yundt 1988:109).

I received the 'envelope' on 28th December 1973. In that note they asked me to resign. If not they would send me to the military justice. Then, having no alternative, I, with other comrades resigned collectively...I had the tickets ready to go to Argentina and my taxes paid, because it was necessary to pay them before leaving, and then we travelled to Mendoza. From then on our pilgrimage started...we spent our 21 years of exile there.

Middle-class Chileans, particularly professionals and high status government officials, arranged their own travel and also migrated to border countries. Some left with the intention to stay if things were favourable to them before returning to Chile. Others used them as a bridge to resettle in a third country. Among NSDS's repressive measures was the total closure of those university faculties considered dangerous to national security. The Institute of Sociology at the University of Concepción (considered a 'breeding ground' for radical students), was one of them. All staff, both academic and administrative lost their jobs leaving them as targets of vicious repression. Simón, a young lecturer at the time also explained how political temporariness and *returnism* impinged on his destination:

The fundamental motivation why I left – I would say – is of a political kind. In 1973, I was working at the University of Concepción and on the 11th I lost my job with all the people at the Institute of Sociology. Soon after that I was arrested and taken to the stadium [stadiums were turned into prisons] by the military. When I left there I was denied work anywhere in the country and there was someone permanently 'asking for me'. It was a problem of personal security and also a problem of survival and subsistence. I had no job. I couldn't have one and together with that I had a problem of political persecution...I thought that this would be a brief situation and thinking that I would return soon and for my political commitment I wanted to be as near to Chile as possible. That implied that I crossed the Andes and went to Argentina with the purpose to be there for a couple of years doing a postgraduate and waiting for things to change and then come back.

The military coup of 1976 in Argentina and the activities of the right-wing paramilitary forces were factors that pushed some people to leave for a second resettlement country. Miriam Bravo, who left Chile at the end of 1973, recalled how Argentina was a transit country to reach a final exile. Equally to Simón she left with political temporariness in mind,

Well, I left in different stages...my husband was the Director of the Corporation of the Agrarian Reform (CORA) in Lampa and that was finished! Besides, there was a very, very difficult situation here and we left for Argentina and stayed there until March 1974 when we left for Mexico where we were exiled for five and a half years...Well, when we left for Argentina we did it with an Argentinian passport because my husband had, by chance, been born in Argentina; so in Mexico we counted in the quota of Argentinian exiles, so to speak...We left Argentina because the situation was rather difficult again and they had shut down the frontiers for the Chilean exiles. In any case, being in Argentina or Mexico our purpose was to return as soon as possible, thinking that Pinochet would not last long and that our return would be easy because we did not have an L in the passport, none of that nonsense...

Perú was more problematic. Although the military government of Velasco Alvarado (1968-1975) was a progressive one, it 'indicated that they were only prepared to allow transit facility' (Goodwin-Gill 1996: 183). Chileans faced many difficulties there. Amarilis, a professional actress explained that:

I left first because of a political matter. We were called by a military bando (list of people required to present themselves to the new authorities) and my house was continuously searched. I was terrified for my son who was so small. Then I decided to leave but I did not have a fixed place where to go. Then in February 1974, my sister who lived in Perú sent me a letter of invitation to spend the holidays with her...In Perú I got a job as a drama teacher at the University of San Marcos but I was rejected by the authorities because I had to have a

permit and a permanent visa. I did all that but in the end the authorities still decided against it. So I started looking to go elsewhere...

Certainly, middle-class Chilean asylum seekers had more advantageous positions than workers and poor peasants as they 'had wider horizons, more information and contacts abroad but they also had access to channels, such as the WUS scholarship program which workers did not have' (Kay 1982:65). However, long-distance travel was more costly for big families and the changing political scenario in countries of asylum made matters more difficult for them. For some, the cost of exit lagged through early exile. Bernardo, a renowned geologist who had been experiencing political harassment prior to the coup said:

When the coup arrived, one of the possibilities I had was to go Liverpool University because I had a close connection with an English professor who had a scientific working team here in Latin America. Everything was arranged but when the Conservative government fell in 1974 and Labour came into power there was a big restructuration in the ministries and this arrangement would be through the Overseas Development and so it remained on hold and for that reason I left for Japan accepting another invitation I had before the coup. Marta and the children left four months later and joined me there. The Japanese gave me a big loan to take the family out of the country, but there were six of them and even the youngest who was twelve had to pay full fare. I then paid part of the debt with a book I co-edited on comparative geology between Chile and Japan. But I had to borrow more money to pay the rest of the loan before leaving for Liverpool so a Japanese professor lent me the rest of the money that I carried on paying every month from the UK with the money I earned there.

The classed nature of Chilean exit has been recently re-emphasised. Unlike the case of the US that accepted mainly working-class refugees (Eastmond 1989), in France 'the cadres and militants of leftist parties belong to the middle and upper-classes of a rather segregated and elite respectful society' (Jedlicki 2007:65). Hence, these self-exiled Chileans were able in one way or another to afford their exit and keep their passports and/or ID cards. In leaving the country they were not assisted by any international organisation such as UNHCR or IOM as in the case of DR refugees, although later, in Peru and particularly in Argentina (CEAS 2001), UNHCR had an important role to play in resettling many of them. In sum, exit to Western countries was mainly 'white collar' tinted. In this manner, the channels and ways by which Chileans left the country reproduced and transported into exile the hegemonic social stratification sustained in Chile.

By exposing NSDS's DR and IR as an agent for the formation of refugees, this study is suggesting that the conventional dichotomy between political and economic migration or between forced and free migration is redundant. The macro-structural conditions of repression, unemployment and the war-like situation that the NSDS brought about in Chile impelled those considered the 'enemies of the nation' to leave the country. Paraphrasing Max Weber, the State had the 'monopoly over the legitimate means of violence.' Politically, the NSDS regarded as legitimate extrajudicial executions, arrest, torture, imprisonment, disappearances, violence and terror. Economically, the NSDS managed the control of the newly imposed neo-liberal economic model and similarly regarded legitimate dismissals, redundancies and mass unemployment. Considering the all encompassing role of the NSDS the divide between DR and IR is problematic. Besides, this divide also constitutes a methodological and ethical problem (Turton 2003). As discussed, the conditions and factors that led Chilean refugees to departure

are intertwined between DR and IR. Following the useful discussion by Kay and Miles (1988) and Miles (1990) regarding the blurring of boundaries, this study has granted a more instrumental function to the State as an agent in the formation of refugee flows. Although this argument is by no means new (see Petersen 1958), this study suggests that through the use of fear, lack of personal safety and protection, persecution, unemployment and economic hardship for those associated with the deposed regime, the expelling State (NSDS) was responsible for the blurring rather than the differentiation between 'economic' migrants and 'political' refugees or between voluntary/involuntary migrants. According to Miles (1990:286), '[T]he reproduction of the nation state is therefore often secured at the cost of stimulating an emigration.' Thus, the Chilean NSDS was able to start its nation-building process through the *Historical National Project* of reconstruction by sending its 'enemies' into exile.

3.6 Seeking asylum in the 1970s: a gendered and classed endeavour

The emphasis on legal parameters in the refugee definition and the asylum seeking process favoured Chilean men by granting them refugee status based on their public roles, as direct victims of repression. Consequently, few women had independent reasons for fleeing and the chance of obtaining refugee status was less likely for them. The Refugee Convention's criteria for being recognised as a refugee in the 1970s were drawn primarily from the realm of public activities, particularly male political activities, something that has been under scrutiny since the mid-1990s (Spijkerboer 2000; Crawley 1999, 2001; Kneebone 2005). Women's political activities were not recognised as "political", even when organised in the women's movement. Hence, married Chilean women could only apply for a visa or a scholarship on the basis of their husband's status, mainly as political prisoners (López Zarzosa 1998). Even when women were affected by DR as victims of rape and/or sexual violence by agents of the NSDS' repressive apparatus, they could only claim asylum on the grounds of persecution for reasons of 'membership to a particular social group' – meaning political parties or organisations – and/or for their 'political' opinion.

This thesis suggests that apart for the need for personal safety and the safeguard of their families, married women had a secondary reason to leave Chile, a marital duty to follow their husband. This was regulated by the patriarchal 1857 Civil Code. In the Chilean case the gendered tied refugeehood was the result of a patriarchal legal system that did not protect women's autonomy. The emphasis on the male access to refugee status fails to acknowledge the legal ties of women. The archaic Civil Code gave extraordinary faculties to the husband and was still in full force at the time of the coup. Under *Potestad Marital* (set of rights granted to the husband by laws over the person and property of his wife), article 133 established that 'the husband has the right to compel his wife to live with him and follow him wherever he establishes his residence' (*Código Civil* 1970:49).¹⁴ The power of this legislation over women extended to what Kay (1982) calls 'moral pressure', that is, women were pressured by male relatives to follow their husbands. Gladys was influenced by her parents, *they*

¹⁴ For a discussion of the difficulties it posed to professional women see Klimpel (1962). Due to pressure by opposition women, Article 133 was annulled during NSDS's last year rule by Law N°18.802, of 9 June 1989.

wanted you to leave with your husband, that you remained married, that was the only thing that really mattered to them. Unsurprisingly, in Salinas' (2000:106) study of Chilean exiles in Britain, married women in her sample did not decide to leave the country 'because of marital duty'; the reason being that all of her female respondents had been victims of political repression in one way or another and 'were aware of the difficulties they would be encountering if they chose to remain in Chile.' However, as will be shown here, this was not the case for all women. There is certainly class and militancy involved. For middle-class partisan women such as Miriam Bravo, the gendered reasons for exit were overridden by political allegiances.

If our flight was more related to the direct activity of my husband because of his public political post, I cannot say that I was dragged through life both to leave (hacia afuera) and to return (hacia adentro). NO! I do not have that sensation. Yes, the most difficult situation was his not mine, but, we were both militants, and we had worked so closely together, so that did not make much sense...

Most studies on Chilean women in exile concur with the view that exile was perceived by women as a safe haven for the family (Kay 1982; Huijbregts and Vera 1985; Bolzman 1993a; Salinas 2000). However, a number of them, particularly lower-middle and working-class women, 'unwillingly followed their men into exile but given these women's overwhelming desire to secure their men's physical safety, any perceived costs of exile had receded' (Kay 1982:62). According to Teresa Gómez, a social worker who worked at FASIC's Reception and Medical Programme for Returnees between 1981 and 1990:

What I did feel was that, starting from exile, women saw themselves in their majority forced to follow their husbands, forced to go into exile. We are not talking about those women who for their own political participation had to go – women in general had to follow their husbands into exile leaving many things abandoned, their families of origin, their work, their house, their neighbourhood etc. Women were taken out of the country and then brought back (fueron llevadas y traidas).

3.6.1 Family reunification: 'tied' refugeehood

In the first place, I want to make very clear that I never participated in anything political. I was just dedicated to my teaching and to manage the household as I should do; caring for the children and my house and nothing else. Then, the only person that participated in politics was my husband as a trade union lawyer and because he was so well known for his surname he was persecuted by all the branches of the armed forces and as a result he spent two years in jail. Then he was expelled from the country by decree and had to leave on 5 January 1976 and later I left for France with my children under family reunion because the Red Cross asked him what country he wanted to go and as our children studied at the Alliance Française, he asked for France, Algeria or French Canada and it ended up being France. I was accompanying my husband; that should be quite clear.

Norma's account of her exit highlights the role played by family reunification as one of the main ways in which many women followed their husbands into exile. For the 1951 Convention 'the unity of the family...is an essential right of the refugee.' The drafters of the 1951 Convention linked a protection regime premised on the individual's fear of persecution to the refugee's family. Recommendation B urged governments to 'take the necessary measures for the protection of the refugee's family, and declared that the unity of the family...is an essential right of the refugee' (Jastram and Newland

2003:557). Family reunification was used to implement this right. In general, family reunification constituted a much larger intake by host states than Convention Chilean refugees. This was particularly the case when political prisoners (mainly men) were expelled under Decree 504 and their wives became heads of households in Chile. Norma was such a case. She was a middle-class teacher and her children attended a private French school. However, not all women whose Decree Refugee's husbands went into exile were in her social position. As noted, FASIC's cases were lower-middle and working-class women. The costs of being mother, father and earning financially were great. Mireya Vera (1991:41), FASIC's director of the Family Reunification Programme (henceforth FRP) since 1977, noted that these women endured 'constant social and emotional problems. Among them, depressions – for the enormous number of responsibilities (provider, mother and father), crises, emotional breakdowns, disorientation to face the future, shock and ambivalence at the time of obtaining the visa.' Vera further noted that this overwhelming situation 'hid the profound reasons of repression, persecution and the departure of one or more of the members of their families into exile' (*ibid*: 44). For these women, family reunification was a form of safety and protection awaiting them and their children. They became another category of forced migrants and the literature shows considerable agreement on this.

Among the scholars who have paid some attention to the gendered exit of Chileans, Vera (1985:5) observed that in Holland for the period 1973-1984, 'the majority of women who arrived in exile did so for reasons of family reunification and against their will. Many said that they felt very well in Chile because despite the difficulties they had a very busy life there.' Kay's study of Chileans in Scotland (1982) pioneered this view. Bolzman (1993a:191) similarly suggests the 'tied' aspects of repression and refugeehood. Sometimes married women were 'pushed' to reunite because of 'revenge' repression. Constanza, said:

Most of all I left Chile because of my husband. He was more involved in politics than me, I wasn't really. He was arrested and when he was released he left first. Then, because of his activities I was arrested for five days. I was terrified after that and then I joined my husband who was already in France.

Bolzman (1993a:191) concluded that in Switzerland 'for the majority of women interviewed, the decision to leave the country was not a direct threat to themselves, but the need to follow their partners or fiancés who were in immediate danger. Only those women who were more politically involved left the country as a consequence of sudden violence (imprisonment, threats). Thus, for the most part, departure into exile is viewed as a need to maintain family unity: at a time when repression destroyed public life, it was necessary to go to their husband's destination in order to at least safeguard their private life.' Gladys, the wife of a high-profile Party leader, provides a culinary illustration of the 'tied' refugee:

I left Chile because I was accompanying him. I was the arroz graneado (boiled rice) accompanying the steak, I wasn't the guest of honour at the farewell party he was the steak so I followed him. Besides, I was very motivated. I thought that by helping the Chilean cause abroad, collecting funds for the fighting men, the problems of Chile would be solved so I dedicated myself entirely (de frentón) to do political work as I had never done before...

At the time of the Chilean exile, 1973 onwards, FRPs was the dominant form of legal entry and resettlement into many Western Europe states (Kofman and Sales 1997), a policy that has changed dramatically since the mid-1980s (see Ali 2001). UNHCR had no office in Chile, hence, protection and support for prospect refugees was the task of *ad hoc* domestic agencies, an issue further explored in Chapter Five. It was not until a year later that UNHCR started its protective work with Chilean asylum seekers. In 1974, and with the agreement of the NSDS, UNHCR started the FRP. As discussed, one of the regime's predominant values was the defense of the traditional notion of the family. This time, the family was instrumentalised as a cynic strategy to dispose of their enemies' families. For this purpose the NSDS declared under special Decree N° 1698 that 'the preservation of the family unit is one of our fundamental purposes in our society and so the Junta will facilitate family reunification of those relatives who remain in Chile with the head of the family already abroad.' In a second clause the regime acknowledged UNHCR's interest in the matter by stipulating '[That] the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) has offered its assistance and collaboration to solve all the problems related with those persons' (in Vera 1991:23). We must remember that, at this time, UNHCR's High Commissioner Prince Sadruddin Aga Khan (1965-1977) had achieved a degree of independence and credibility for UNHCR that it had not enjoyed before and as a result it was well respected for its knowledge and expertise about refugee law and the 'supervision' of refugee conventions (Loescher 2001a:141-200). This can explain Chilean NSDS's positive response. By accepting UNHCR's intervention in Chile, the NSDS portrayed itself as a 'caring' State aspiring to gain legitimacy and 'clean' its already sullied international image. It was NSDS's schizophrenic way of nation-building.

As is its *modus operandi* in these situations, UNHCR relies on having partners in the country of its beneficiaries. In the case of Chile, it established an agreement with FASIC with the assistance of the World Council of Churches (WCC). UNHCR's proposition to FASIC to implement the FRP took place on 28th November 1975 (Garcés and Nicholls 2005:45), but it only began on 31 March 1976 with the assistance of ICEM (CIME). So, 'even if exile was predominantly political...it meant not only the exit of the political cadre or leader but also of his entire family' (Orellana 1991:4). Unlike South African exile where most exiles were single (Bernstein 1994; Majodina 1995), Chilean exile was a 'family exile' and as such with a marked patriarchal character; FRP was instrumental in this.

In general, the people who entered the FRP were mainly low-income or working-class women. These women were housewives with no other qualifications to enter an already contracting job market in Chile, others had been dismissed, many had low-average remunerated jobs such as teachers but principally they had low-income jobs such as secretaries or shop assistants. The 'shock treatment' of the economy and the severe repression made extremely difficult for these women to sustain their households (Vera 1991:41-45). Their only exit alternative was offered by UNHCR-FASIC's partnership. During the fifteen years of operation, the FRP assisted 2,599 family units, that is, 6,100 individuals to leave Chile (*ibid*: 91). Many of these women and children were of humble origin for whom it was the first time in their lives that they had left their villages let alone their country. This

type of protection to more disadvantaged refugees fits UNHCR's 'normal' work, that is, special attention is given to the particularly vulnerable people who are present in any refugee situation, most notably women and children among other disadvantaged people. Certainly, 6,100 individuals assisted by the FRP is a small figure when compared to the bulk of exile that, as we shall see later, was estimated at one million.

Other times, the 'tied' aspect of refugeehood responded to a highly gendered decision. Women's wishes to find refuge in countries of their wish was overridden by their husbands' political agenda. From the outset, Laura strongly opposed her husband's idea of seeking diplomatic asylum, *I was very shortsighted but it was because I was so adamant not to leave Chile that I didn't want him to seek asylum, IMAGINE!* But when deciding where to go she told Leopoldo,

'Look, let's go to a developed country like Canada', I really wanted to have a quieter life ... but, he never wanted to leave Latin America. He said we are staying in Latin America, we belonged here. That was it (no hubo caso). Had I taken that decision we would have gone to Canada...

Unlike migrant women where emigration-decision making has become a collective enterprise (Brettell 1979, 2003), in the case of forced migration, FRPs clearly reveals the dependency of women on the refugee status of their husbands or fathers and that the welfare and security of the family were key factors in the decision to leave. Hence, women's agency in the exit decision was structurally mediated. In Kay's study (1982:101), non-politicised working-class women who had experienced their husband's imprisonment initiated or pressed for exile. It was women's subsumed role within the hegemonic family that pressed them for exile. This was also the case of some middle-class professional women. Abril pressed for exile. She is a middle-class skin scientist who after the coup was not affected by post-coup dismissals. Yet, in November 1976 she was confronted with the exit decision. Noteworthy, is that many Leftist men did not necessarily marry revolutionary women and the 'tied' refugee status of women is highlighted in experiences like this. After two years of imprisonment Abril's MIR-militant husband was released. At that time repression was at its peak and often those who had been released were caught again. While in prison, her husband had 'received' a visa attached to a WUS scholarship to study in the UK. The pressure to decide whether to flee or stay put posed a big dilemma for both. The exit decision-making confronted two hegemonic gendered institutions: Abril's husband's Party and her extended family. Abril decided to protect her family.

I always said, 'I want to leave!' It was he who made a case for not leaving because of his party's decision not to leave [MIR's drastic rejection of diplomatic asylum]. Then I told him "No!; take that decision now! because after all we've been through we are not going to take any more risks again because I am not only risking my own life but also that of my own family. They are going to be in danger too, all of them!"

The corollary of this form of gendered exit in which the hegemony of the family, either in its nuclear or extended form, played a crucial role in the exit decision-making process seems to suggest that a great number of women left Chile under duress as 'tied refugees', particularly working-class women as Agger and Jensen's (1989) study also showed. In this manner, family reunification tended to reconstitute the patriarchal family and returned the role of protector to the male member of the family

because under 1951 Refugee Convention in the early 1970s, 'tied refugees' depended on the father's or husband's refugee status, a situation that would have repercussions once in exile. This is explored in the next chapter.

In sum, the above mentioned evidence suggests that Chilean women leaving the country after 11/9/73 did so under various circumstances that are not mutually exclusive: in strict 1951 Convention terms, as a gender obligation and/or looking for economic security and personal safety for themselves (a minority) or their families and their children (the majority), with a 'tied refugee' status. Hence, most women kept their passports. This would allow them to visit Chile in the future. Yet, even in the third edition of *The Refugee in International Law*, Goodwin-Gill and McAdam (2007) failed to include this gendered aspects of exit. In general, this is the result of the connections between patriarchy and the prevailing 'private-public' paradigm ruling both politics and the refugee regime. A nuanced finding of this study regarding the gendered exit of Chileans suggests that even under NSDS's brutal circumstances, some women were not only seeking protection but they were also providing it and when stretched to the limit and no longer sustainable they were drawn to opt for flight, hence, this may be considered another reason why women flee.

3.7 Reception worldwide: grounds for international assistance and protection

'In these years of fascist tyranny, Chile has received universal and generous solidarity of great quality and on an enormous scale. The great majority of humanity has participated in this. Most of the governments both socialist and capitalist have shown much solidarity with the Chilean people, along with the United Nations proper and its organisations, the non-aligned countries...the Socialist International, the Christian Democratic parties...the three international trade union confederations...the Catholic Church...'

(Orlando Millas, 1992 p.242)

One of the common assertions is that Chilean exile was characterised by being massive, widely dispersed and one that has received more international solidarity than any other (Orellana 1980-81:39). Indeed, it is widely acknowledged that Chileans managed to find asylum in more than fifty countries throughout the world. This is a striking fact if one considers that Chile had a very short history of emigration. However, the idea that the international community should protect refugees should be scrutinised. Millas's quotation seems to confirm the remarkable welcome Chileans received by some States, by an array of worldwide organisations with a certain degree of influence such as trade unions (for the case of Britain see Wilkinson 1990), and by the then recently adopted 'quota programmes' by UNHCR's High Commissioner Sadruddin of which 'Chilean and Indo-Chinese refugees benefited most' (Loescher 2001a:180). As entry restrictions worsen, other refugees, Somalis for example, resented this welcome (see Griffiths 2002).

However, Millas's assertion should be examined as the reasons for such a reception seems to be a paradoxical fact considering that in the context of Cold War, Chilean refugees were the result of the demise of a Marxist regime and Communist refugees had a more problematic welcome, particularly in the capitalist West. Miles (1990:291) suggests that the 'formal, legal notion of refugee was structured

by ideological considerations' and these were not intended to protect communists. The international legal definition of refugee emerged only after 1945 (although certain ad hoc definitions were formulated in the inter-war years). This legal definition was constructed in parallel with the development of the 'Cold War.' Although the U.S. held a strong position against Allende's socialist government, it can be suggested that the UP project was generally considered 'soft' socialism when compared to the then considered 'hard' Cuban and Eastern European regimes of the Cold War. The UP government had been democratically elected and, at the time of the coup, Chileans had not taken up arms to defend their socialist project. Consequently, despite the Cold War scenario where the admission of refugees associated with the political Left was problematic, Chileans' asylum-seeking profile was more dynamic and adaptable to the 1970s international political scenario. Besides, the timing of Chilean's exit was during the 'tail end' of what has been known as *les trente glorieuses* (1946 to the mid-1970s) and when UNHCR's coffers could respond with massive material assistance programs throughout the world (Loescher et al. 2008).

Despite being labelled Marxists-Leninists by the NSDS, Chileans were accepted with little restriction worldwide, particularly throughout Europe where there were no Latin American refugees. This, according to Loescher (1993:85), was the result of the fruitful appeal of UNHCR with the exception of the U.S. that 'remained singularly unresponsive to the plight of Chilean refugees. It ignored appeals for resettlement, and it refused to provide any funding to support ICEM programmes to finance resettlement. Fearing that a generous refugee admission policy would result in the admission of 'leftist radicals' into the US, the Nixon and Ford administrations and the US Congress resisted establishing a comprehensive parole program for Chilean refugees.' Because resettlement in the US was not afforded to countries with a communist government, when the US accepted refugees from Chile, it was a thoroughly screened small quota (see U.S. Senate 1973). Congruent with its foreign policy, US refugee policy was politically discriminatory (Loescher 2001a). Camilo, who was then a Catholic priest and spent two years of his exile in the US working with fellow Chilean exiles, provides a good illustration of this,

It was really weird this thing with the Chileans there. Among those who had been in prison and were accepted in the US, there were neither Communists nor Miristas (MIR members). They accepted Socialists, Radicals but not from the other two groups. It was people who came from small towns. That caught my attention because Chile is a country where 80% of the population is concentrated in three or four big cities and these people came from little towns or villages such as Chincolco, Los Muermos, Catemu, etc., a number of places that I didn't even know existed and their educational level was more or less low. With a few exceptions the exile who went to the US had no university education. So, it was people with soft militancy, from small towns and of little academic formation, that is to say, that the type of people they accepted was very well thought out.

According to Ana, the screening process was rather thorough. *Before giving us a visa they investigated even about our great-great grandmothers. I had two interviews with the consul Ms Eleanor Parker. We were very, very investigated. They wanted to know if we were terrorists and would be planting bombs in the US or kill Kissinger, who knows! Remember that the CIA was deeply involved and we knew it. We were accepted as parole refugees anyway.*

Indeed, those who were admitted in the US were given the 'parole refugees' status and accepted on a case to case basis (Eastmond 1989). Around four hundred of them resettled in the US, most of them of working-class background. Exceptional cases were a handful of professionals, yet their status determination followed the same procedures. Physician Mariano was one of them:

They gave me a passport of the United Nations that only allowed you to enter the US but you could not leave the country, it was one called 'parole indefinite', it was a sort of visa for the refugees. It was not until after some time, I think it was two years after I arrived in the US, that thanks to Edward Kennedy's pressure, a law was passed allowing all of us who were in the same situation to have residence. That is how I entered the US.

Undoubtedly, world opinion regarding the brutal overthrow of a constitutional government, and the ensuing gross violations of human rights by the NSD terror state and its condemnation, contributed to the reception of Chileans. But their admission was not trouble-free and as generous as it appeared. Because of widespread repression, Chileans accepted any opportunity possible. All respondents in this study were keen to go anywhere particularly during arbitrary repression. When desperate people went to CIME's office in Santiago asking for a possibility to exit Chile, 'choices' were limited. Ana, who had been in prison twice said:

God, where do I go? After leaving Tres Alamos I was trapped in a particular area. It was like living a semi- clandestine life: house-hospital-hospital-house. Then a colleague told me: "Ana you must leave now, things are getting tough here, they can arrest you any time, this hospital is full of informers". So I went to CIME. The girls at CIME asked me 'where do you want to go?' I said anywhere in the world! I don't care!. Then they said 'the only visas we have are those for the US because nobody wants to go there. I said I don't care because I have to save my skin (pellejo) and that of my child before September. Had I not done that, I would not be talking to you now and the dictatorship would have one more orphan on their records.

Cels and Loescher (1988:324) noted that 'Practically all refugee admission decisions are influenced by considerations of public opinion in the host country, and foreign policy.' Among the countries conditioning the asylum of Chilean refugees was Peru indicating that 'they were only prepared to allow transit facility' (Goodwin-Gill 1996:183). Argentina, the border country that received large numbers of Chileans experienced a military coup in 1976 and personal security was so severely threatened that a solution beyond the region was urgently called for. As a result of numerous appeals by UNHCR, some 14,000 refugees were resettled by other countries in the period 1973-80' (*ibid*).

In West Germany for instance, even being of German descendant, admissions were scrutinised. In the case of Pedro, a veterinary surgeon, his Party membership was problematic. He was a renowned Communist with a UP official post. After leaving prison, his first country of asylum was Costa Rica where he arrived with his family. Relying on the German principle of *jus sanguinis*, he applied for asylum for West Germany from Costa Rica:

I could have left Costa Rica a year earlier but they did not want to give me the entrance to Germany straightaway even being of direct German descent because I was considered a terrorist. It took them six months to get a reply because the worst thing that could happen to a German bourgeois is to have a German Communist at home. That thing is horrible there, because if you were a 'black head' (cabeza negra) that was fine, but worst if you were a Chilean-German and a Communist. Then, you were in trouble specially having East Germany as a neighbour! [laughs]

However, new developments were changing the scenario. Until the early 1970s the great majority of refugees fleeing from Communism to the West were from Eastern and Central Europe (Loescher 1989). In 1973, Chilean asylum seekers therefore spearheaded what would soon be called the 'new refugees.' In Canada's case, when comparing the total number of refugees admitted between the late 1940s and 1975, there were 38,000 Hungarians, 12,000 Czechoslovaks, 7,000 Asians expelled from Uganda, 6,500 Vietnamese and roughly 3,000 Chileans (Gotlieb 1975:8). Canada's selection process 'was subtly determined by racism, sexism and discrimination on grounds of political ideology but above all by classism as Chilean refugees were chosen from middle-class families with completed or post-secondary education' (Tomic and Trumper 1993 in Escobar 2000:29). This constituted the legacy of Canada's Cold War refugee policy and Chilean asylum seekers were part of one of the 'Designated Classes' (Lanphier 1981). By the end of the 1970s, Canada received 6,657 Chileans (Lanphier 1981:122), of which a small number were working-class.

Nevertheless, there is no doubt that the changing political scenario in the mid-1970's and the solidarity lobby (Wilkinson 1990), was crucial in the acceptance of Chilean refugees who were able to appeal to a remarkable array of humanitarian and political support worldwide to the extent that their cases were to be considered an important exception to the practice of increasing restrictions (Loescher 1989:17). This was possible because the majority of those exiting Chile were middle-class or professionals. European countries such as France, Holland, Sweden and Switzerland responded promptly to asylum applications particularly in urgent cases. Besides, the still favourable immigration and refugee regime of the early 1970s was to be advantageous for Chileans who could apply for visas then.

Political sympathy distributed Chileans in different geographic scenarios. For example, Eastern Europe received more Communist Party members along with a number of Socialists. This was due to the legacy of Allende's foreign policy that re-established relations with countries such as Cuba, the People's Republic of China, the German Democratic Republic as well as Nigeria and an opening of commercial relations with North Korea and North Vietnam (Fortín 1975).

In order to establish the granting of legal refugee status and prompt resettlement of Chilean asylum-seekers, four enabling factors could be identified. First, the international condemnation of NSDS's terror apparatus gross violation of human rights and its arbitrary repressive practices. Second, the affinity in international circles with the Chilean political project of a democratic "road to socialism". Third, the already fading – but still present – encouragement of immigration in some countries to augment their labour force. Fourth, from a hitherto less problematised UNHCR refugee protection based on the 1951 Convention refugee's definition and the 1954 Caracas Convention on Territorial asylum. All these factors interacted for the benefit of Chilean asylum seekers.

3.7.1 NSDS's institutional violation of human rights: widespread terror and repressive legislation

The NSDS generated widespread and pervasive terror through atrocious violations of human rights directed at its own citizenry (Corradi et al. 1992). In a country so chauvinistically proud and uncritical of its long legal and democratic tradition, this was a hitherto unknown experience. Though the intensity and gendered nature of repression was discussed at the beginning of this chapter, the following section exposes the pattern of repression that led to the emergence of a robust human rights discourse and network that came to dominate both home opposition and exile activities that included exile and return.

Although human rights violation in Chile have been widely researched elsewhere, it is important to stress the three different stages in which NSD repression was applied (Frühling 1983) and to which the flight of refugees is associated. The first phase of total arbitrariness and widespread repression began on the day of the coup and lasted until June 1974. According to Frühling (1983:511) it had 'the twin goals of heading off any possibility of socialist resurgence and of implanting a new social structure.' Mass detention without trial in military establishments and detention camps throughout the country was an extensive practice. In December 1973, by Decree Law N° 228, the government granted itself the powers, retrospectively, to make such arrests. Practices to obtain information such as torture, until death in many cases, was hitherto an unknown practice in Chile, as were the existence of secret, extralegal or simply criminal executions and disappearances of prisoners. Political imprisonment was a tragic novelty in Chile. Under NSDS, working, middle and some upper-class Leftists became the main target of repression only because of their political ideas or support for the UP. During this phase, repression was carried out by all branches of the Armed Forces and *Carabineros* through their respective intelligence services and often colluded with right-wing civilians. The Truth and Reconciliation Commission Report (1991:43) verified that 'there did not exist among the military officers a proper knowledge of war and moral laws i.e. regarding the treatment of prisoners, torture, interrogation, executions, and trials in times of war.' Indeed, arbitrary practices of repression were substantiated by NSD ideology. During this period of savage repression the Relocation Department of the Peace Committee (COPACHI) helped 3,200 people to leave the country (Lowden 1993:52).

A second phase of repression started in June 1974 when the regime's repressive apparatus was centralised under the direction of the secret police network, the National Intelligence Directorate (DINA) created on 14th June 1974 by Decree Law N°52. DINA was to be subordinated to the head of State (Augusto Pinochet) and was characterised by its systematic and secret repressive activities for which it was 'equipped with an infrastructure of secret agents, unmarked vehicles, clandestine detention centers, and freedom of action for its agents.' (Arriagada 1988:13). DINA had the extensive mission to 'gather all national information from different spheres in order to produce the intelligence necessary to the formulation of policy and planning and the adoption of measures which ensure the protection of national security and the development of the country' (Lowden 1993:49). During this period arbitrariness of repression gave way to a still brutal but targeted repression. The aim of this greater selectivity was threefold: to avoid the high cost involved in random coercion, an appearance of greater

normalcy in economic and government administrative activities and the destruction of Leftist parties' organizations (Frühling 1983:520). This was soon extended to silence centrist political party members critical of human rights violations such as prominent Christian Democrat jurist Jaime Castillo Velasco who, as we shall see in Chapter Five, was expelled twice from the country spanning these two periods of repression. In general, DINA was responsible for both national and international repressive and terrorist activities aimed at the extermination of the most prominent and determined opponents to NSDS. Following NSD ideology, DINA practiced what Harff and Gurr (1989) called 'politicide.' DINA's first focus of attention was on the eliminating of MIR, a movement they thought represented an armed threat to the NSDS. In 1975, its focus turned to the Socialist Party and in 1976, to the Communist Party. Between 1974 and 1977, DINA was to be the intelligence service with most responsibility for the violation of human rights. The international response was felt immediately. On January 5th 1976, the Inter-American Human Rights Committee of the Organisation of American States (OAS) condemned human rights violations in Chile. In July 1976 the United States government approved the "Kennedy Amendment" which banned military assistance to Chile. The boundaries of NSDS's terrorism were limitless. DINA's international terrorist operations targeted elite political opponents outside the national territory. The assassination of General Carlos Prats and his wife in Buenos Aires in August 1974, the unsuccessful murder attempt of Christian Democrat ex-Vice-president Bernardo Leighton and his wife in Rome on 6th October 1975, and the car-bomb assassination in Washington, D.C., of exiled Socialist ex-Defence Minister and ex-ambassador to the US, Orlando Letelier and his American secretary Ronni Moffitt in September 1976, were its major international actions. (see Dinges and Landau 1980). Letelier's assassination and its repercussions both internationally and inside the US created the conditions for the dismantling of DINA in August 1977.

With DINA's replacement by the National Intelligence Central, CNI (*Central Nacional de Informaciones*, created on 13th August 1977 by Decree Law N°1.878), a third phase of repression started. The reasons behind the change in state repression agencies are threefold: international pressure to end such violations, newly-elected President Carter's strong foreign policy on human rights that involved changes in the US executive policies towards Chile and the process of institutionalisation of the regime that, by 1978, involved reforms, disputes among Junta members and between hard and soft-liners within the regime (Remmer 1991; Huneus 2007). Between 1977 and 1990, CNI became the principal State organisation in charge of political repression and counterinsurgency characterising this phase 'by a recognition that the attempt to destroy opposition forces would fail and that it was necessary to replace the policy of destruction by a policy of containment' (Frühling 1983:529). According to Lowden (1993:81), 'the real differences between the CNI and the DINA were less than clear, except that the CNI was responsible to the Minister of the Interior rather than directly to the head of the Junta, thus giving the new organisation an appearance of greater formality within the state institutions.' During this period victims were chosen even more selectively. While brutality still continued, by 1978 the number of victims fell sharply, operations abroad were curtailed and there were far fewer disappearances compared to the first and second repressive phases (see Padilla 1995). The policy of

containment lasted until 1990 and operated with great fluctuations in the intensity of repression, depending on the degree to which the internal opposition mobilised.

This differentiation into three phases is important because it explains the quantification of flight and return. The greatest number of exiles was generated up until 1978. From then onwards, the number of Chilean asylum-seekers decreased considerably, coinciding, as we shall see in the next chapter, with the first returnees to the country. Nonetheless, human rights violations were constantly condemned throughout the military dictatorship and the operations of both agencies revealed (see Derechos Chile's website).

Solidarity on these grounds was based on the predisposition of world-wide trade unions, church organisations, academics, women's organisations, trades and students unions to adopt political prisoners and sympathetic governments' willingness to accept Chilean refugees. The latter was bound to depend on the political affinity of the government in power. Britain illustrates this argument brilliantly. According to Wilkinson (1990:84), '[T]he Conservative government of 1973 had agreed in principle to admitting refugees, but none were admitted by them and many Tories were clearly opposed to the idea.' At that time, when many Chileans were taking refuge in foreign embassies, there was no chance of obtaining asylum at the British Embassy in Santiago because the Conservative government hastened to recognise the new regime and gave instructions that no non-British subject was to be given asylum in the British embassy. Browne (1979:29) recorded: 'Earl Ferrers, a government spokesman, replying in the House of Lords on 4 December, 1973 to a question from Lord Brockway, stated the position of the British government as follows: "...the principal function of an Embassy is to maintain relations between Governments, and it would be an abuse of their proper role if Embassies came to be used as refuges for opponents of the very government with which we were trying to maintain relations.' This situation changed dramatically in 1974 when the Labour government came into office. Britain opened its doors to Chilean refugees, a favourable attitude that meant taking active measures to facilitate their arrival and settlement (Browne 1979; Joly 1987), though normal diplomatic relations with the NSDS continued until early 1976 when the arrest and torture of Dr Sheila Cassidy and the ensuing public outcry (Wilkinson 1990:53). This 'honeymoon' period for Chileans in Britain came to an end with the next Conservative government in 1979. In a Cold War scenario, Britain's doors were closed once again to Chilean asylum seekers but widely opened to the Vietnamese 'boat-people' who 'received much more adequate funding and provision because the government no-doubt saw the program as a means to call attention to the evils of a socialist state from which they fled' (Wilkinson 1990:85). British support groups such as JWG were dismantled and the new organisations that emerged, such as Party-ruled *Chile Democrático*-UK, strengthened its home orientation as well as developing more solidarity with exile (López Zarzosa 1991).

3.7.2 (Gendered) political sympathy

Chilean asylum seekers were also favoured by the great deal of attention for the Chilean political project of the democratic 'road to socialism'. The compatibility of formal democracy and Marxism tested in Chile during the Allende government had an international significance. This unprecedented political project came after the '1968' political and social events that permeated the international political arena. Chile during the UP became a political and ideological laboratory; it attracted a great share of world attention. Politicians and trade unionists from all over the world visited Chile. Academics and researchers worked and examined the Chilean national project. In 1971, President Allende was visited by political figures such as François Mitterrand, Fidel Castro, and Mexico's President Luis Echeverría. Links were also forged between European and Chilean Labour and trade union movements and members of the Socialist International also visited Chile on a regular basis as guests of Allende (Wilkinson 1990). These high-rank visits and links forged during the UP years would prove crucial in welcoming Chilean asylum-seekers in the future. However, according to Moulián (1997:158), '[T]he abortion of the "peaceful road" happened at a culminant moment in the history of Chile, the Marxist world history, and of the socialist experiences. It was the failure of an unprecedented experience that had stirred up multiple expectations.' The brutal overthrow of the UP government and the death of its emblematic President sparked worldwide condemnation and Chile once again caught worldwide attention and much support was given to those considered enemies of the dictatorship. Worldwide solidarity campaigns, national demonstrations, myriad world conferences of 'Solidarity with Chile' were some of the widespread support manifestations. However, the tremendous attention on the political devastation of the UP project emphasised its maleness. Men were seen as the public face of the project and they would profit from a good image, an issue to be discuss further in the next chapter. What surprised most Party leaders (including Millas 1993), was the overwhelming welcome given to Chilean refugees worldwide when compared to that given to other similarly brutal NSDS' refugees from the Southern Cone, particularly Argentina and Uruguay. The reason was succinctly put by Alan Angell,

There was sympathy with the Allende government which came to power in 1970 –the first time a Marxist government had been elected democratically –a government attempting a profound social, economic and political programme of reform, raising questions of whether the transition to socialism was possible in a peaceful way in a country with economic dependency. This concern contrasted sharply with two other campaigns –following the military coups in 1976 in Argentina and in 1973 in Uruguay. Possibly the military regime in Argentina was even more brutal than the Chilean and the torture of people in Uruguay more extreme... Why? Perhaps because Argentina's politics were extraordinarily complicated and there was little interest in the country preceding the coup. Also the first days of the coups in Argentina and Uruguay were not so overtly brutal. There were active terrorist units in Argentina and Uruguay –which people found difficult to come to terms with as opposed to the Chilean democratic left. The Chilean experience was exceptional.

By 1973, many Latin American countries were closed to Marxist exiles. Apart from Argentina, among the countries that received the largest number of Chilean refugees were Mexico and Venezuela. Mexico's willingness to accept Chileans was based on two grounds. One was the political affinity with Allende and his government fostered by an exchange of presidential visits that establish parallels based on economic nationalism and a shared history. Most of the political elite, including Allende's widow

Hortensia Bussi, were welcomed in Mexico. The other reason was economic. Oil producing countries such as Mexico and Venezuela, and despite the world recession that started around 1973, 'were experiencing economic booms during the middle and late 1970s and thus were able to accommodate larger numbers of professionals and academic exiles' (Wright and Oñate 1998:92). It is specially noteworthy that this reception contrasts sharply with that of Guatemalan indigenous refugees who in the early 1980s fled in their thousands to Mexico. These communities were characterised as of 'lower-class origin that added pressures to pre-existing problems of access to land' (Sznajder and Roniger 2007a:23). As Mexico asylum policy changed, Guatemalan refugees' agency in VRp was welcomed.

The Communist bloc received members of Parties of the Left and trade unionists particularly from the PC and PS. The recognition of the magnitude of the military coup and the dismantling of the 'socialist project', made countries such as the USSR, Rumania, Bulgaria, Czechoslovakia and East Germany to welcome these refugees. For example, East Berlin welcomed members of the Socialist Party and became the headquarters of this party in exile. Likewise, the USSR accepted Communist Party militants and Moscow was the centre of all political activities for that party. The eagerly awaited daily programme *Escucha Chile* (Listen Chile) containing news from Chile, folk music and commentaries was broadcasted from Moscow to audiences in the peripheral society and the world (see Teitelboim 2000). MIR's cadres and their families were mainly received in Cuba and France. Others, benefited from the 'the sympathy by the European left for the Chilean road to Socialism that favoured the flight of Chileans into Europe' (Zolberg et al. 1989). According to the 1988 Report from the European Council, 60,000 Chileans were residents in the 21 member states (Gaillard 1992:16). Sweden and France accounted for one third of Chilean refugees in Western Europe. Congruent with the overwhelming sympathy of Swedish ambassador in Chile, Harald Edelstam and the then permissive Aliens Act relating to the granting of asylum, in 1986 there were 15,276 Chilean refugees in Sweden (SM/Diakonia 1987:10). Conversely, French political links with Allende's government and Leftist post-coup solidarity with Chile, France resettled 6,000 refugees (Gaillard 1992:17). The UK accepted 3,000 (Joly 1987:93).

3.7.3 Recruiting skilled labour

A third factor that supported the exit of Chileans was host countries' underlying motivations for assistance. The humanitarian support also had an economic purpose, that of the need for skilled labour particularly in affluent Venezuela and in the Northern Hemisphere (see Bovenkerk 1975). Wright and Oñate (1998:124) argued that 'in the mid 1970's, Western European countries (except for Spain, Portugal and Italy) still faced labor shortages and welcomed not only Chileans, but other South Americans fleeing dictatorships...to complement their usual sources of guest labor.' Although the mid 1970s experienced an economic recession prompted by the oil crisis and the decline of the guest-worker scheme in Western Europe (Castles 1986), the unskilled migration was giving way to more qualified migrants. As we shall see in Chapter Four, some of this study's respondents who went to countries such as Sweden and Canada were immediately given some form of training to enter the labour market in the shortest period possible. It is widely acknowledged that the Chilean exile was mainly structured around

skilled manual workers, university students and middle-class professionals. Bidegain (1986:299) illustrated this point quite clearly when he stated that 'in the 1970's Venezuela entered a phase of economic expansion as a consequence of the rise in the oil price that in turn called for a policy of recruiting skilled labour. Hence, immigrants from Chile, Argentina and Uruguay encounter little difficulties in finding employment both in the productive and service sectors, because the high percentage of them were professionals or engineers. Conversely, the stability of the representative and democratic system in Venezuela meant a complementary incentive for these immigrants.' According to Bidegain (1986:301), between 1971 and 1984 a total of 6,947 Uruguayans, 13,074 Argentinians, and 23,907 Chileans entered Venezuela. Yet, as the next chapter will show, we should not be too celebratory of the 'recruiting skilled labour' argument; it was the economic and immigration order that was changing.

3.7.4 The unproblematised UNHCR refugee protection

Lastly, Chileans were able to be accepted as refugees thanks to the hitherto less problematised UNHCR refugee protection based on its narrower meaning of the 'refugee' definition. Refugee policies regarding forced migration still focused on the 1951 Convention thus protecting individuals who for particular 'political' reasons had been forced to flee their countries. Although the flight of Chileans was the outcome of an anti-Communist regime, they still fitted the Cold War political profile of an individual facing political persecution. The '*non-entrée* regime' developed later would have questioned those who in this thesis are called IR refugees. In her study of Chilean exiles in France, Gaillard (1992:13) noted that 'Chileans, were the first refugees in France to benefit from the extension of the right of asylum to countries outside Europe (Bellagio Treaty of 31st January 1968), and who did not confront the reality that asylum seekers from Third World countries face today.' This 'grey' period (before the problematisation of the Convention definition and the politicisation of asylum) of the early 1970's, cushioned Chileans's flight from NSDS's DR and IR. Besides, by 1975 the number of refugees worldwide was 2.4 million; this number does not compare to the 18.2 million in 1990 (Castles 2003:14) when, with the end of the Cold War and the advent of a New World Order, the increasingly aggressive and exclusionary immigration policies in Western Europe, USA, Canada and Australia established real fortresses to prevent immigration (Martin 1999; Kofman et al. 2000).

To summarise, Chilean refugees were welcomed because of a political and economic disposition. The boundaries between the political/economic motivations for leaving countries of origin articulated in the current exclusionary discourse were blurred in the Chilean case because not only were the reasons for exit political or economic but because the countries that accepted them needed them either for political or economic reasons. This argument does not intend to lower the profile of the Chilean refugees. On the contrary, the point to be stressed here is that the Chilean case constitutes another experience in which the boundaries between political and economic refugees can be blurred or emphasised by the geopolitics of the international political and economic order. Those categorised here as IR refugees were accepted as Convention refugees with little or no restriction and left the country in great numbers.

3. 8 The disputed numbers: *un millón de chilenos*?

According to Zolberg (1981:19) ‘refugees are an elusive mass, at least in the statistical sense. It stems from ambiguities that are an integral aspect of the refugee phenomenon itself... [F]or quite obvious reasons, government that expel some of their populations, or produce or tolerate conditions that cause them to flee, do not desire to acknowledge this publicly by acquiescing to the recognition and enumeration of the target population as refugees under international law.’ Chile was not an exception.

The number of Chileans who left the country after the military coup, has never been exactly clear. This is not a point to ignore. Numbers can be manipulated according to interests and either enlarged or shrunk. During the NSDS years exile and return became a tug-of-war and the exit numbers a disputed and confusing issue. According to Angell and Carstairs the number of Chileans in exile is hard to establish as the totals differ from one source to another (1987:8). Some of the differing and almost irreconcilable estimates are as follows. In 1977 the Catholic Migration Institute (INCAMI) put the figure at one million. Notably, this figure became emblematic for the Chilean exile. It appeared in publications, journals, magazines, political parties’ manifestos and solidarity reports both in Chile and in exile. The heading *Un millón de chilenos* (One Million Chileans) became a metaphor for the Chilean exile, it made it ‘visible’. To complicate things further, in 1984 a new figure appeared. CIDE’s study carried out abroad (Cariola and Rossetti 1984-1985) gave a total of 200,000-250,000. Nonetheless, *Un millón de chilenos* continued to identify Chilean exile. Considering that in September 1973 Chile’s total population was ten million, one million Chileans fleeing the country was a significant number to aim at VRp narratives and posterior repatriation policies.

The imprecise numbers and statistical debate over the Chilean population in exile reflects both its political manipulation and diverse composition together with the practical factors argued above and elsewhere (Zolberg et al. 1989). This study suggests that there are two reasons behind the discrepancies. First, the emphasis on the political side of Chilean refugeehood whereby all Chileans in exile qualified as ‘political refugees’ neither problematising the number nor the Convention status of exiles, an issue to be furthered in the following chapter. Second, although the age of exiles has been acknowledged (mid-adulthood: 29-35), the gender composition has never been provided. In general, most statistics of asylum seekers and asylum decisions did not provide a breakdown by gender. According to Spijkerboer (2000:38) ‘this suggests that most governments, demographers and international institutions do not consider gender relevant in the context of asylum practice.’ Hence, we still don’t know whether women and children were included in the total numbers. Their ‘tied’ status made them invisible yet symbolically inclusive. Kibreab (2003b:315) noted that ‘over time statistics assume the status of “truth” through repetition.’ Indeed, during NSDS rule that was the case of the *Un millón de chilenos* narrative.

3.9 NSDS's legal repression: legislating exile and return

Another feature of all NSDSs is the control of the legislative and part of the judicial power with their own military legislation and tribunals. This form of State protection by way of constitutional rights to life and liberty was unavailable under NSDS (Barros 2002). Some commentators argued that such features are shared with most authoritarian regimes including Nazi Germany with which Chile's dictatorship shared many features (Fagen 1992). As far as the Chilean legal system was concerned, NSDS's initial strategy was to change those elements that were indispensable to securing power and establishing its ideological position. In this manner, judicial protection and due process were severely undermined. An anonymous Chilean lawyer in exile described the fundamental legal characteristics of NSDS: 'Firstly, the State Constitution has been abolished and replaced in practice by the authority of the Junta and *de facto* legislation (Decree Laws). Secondly, there is no principle of legality; *i.e.* relations between the state and the individuals, and among individuals; they are governed not by the law but by the will of the dictator, who can declare legal today what was illegal yesterday and vice versa. Respect for the law is enforced on individuals but not on the state. Thirdly, there are none of the traditional principles of responsibility in the actions of the government, it can act without any limitation and can even violate its own rules' (AFCh 1979:1).

Also, the fundamental principles of justice were deliberately violated. This meant the abolition of individual rights and guarantees and these included 'the basic right to life, freedom of movement, guarantees of due legal process, right to nationality and to live in one's own country.' (AFCh 1979:1). All these rights became gracious concessions by the government. Juridical uncertainty and total insecurity were therefore the outcome of the total absence of State protection. NSDS's power was capable of enforcing not only rules of conduct within Chile but also of promulgating legislation that regulated exile and prevented the return of those considered 'enemies of the nation.'

3.9.1 Decree Laws: three legal-administrative restrictions on return and the policy of 'lists'

"...I am an enemy of those people. And those people hate me. They won't be allowed to enter the country. Those scoundrels are a mob of liars. They keep lying and if we let them into Chile, as has happened with those who have already been allowed to enter, they will not comply with their promises of not doing *politiquería* (politicking). They keep lying".

(Augusto Pinochet in an interview with *La Tercera*, 8 March 1981:5)

Pinochet's determination not to allow exiles to return to 'do politics' was 'legalised' in several ways: Decree Laws, Constitutional Transitory articles and a policy of lists. This section deals with these restrictions and suggests that they were raised as boundaries to exclude its own people, to strengthen NSDS's conflict-free 'ideal' Chilean society and as a corollary, to consolidate state-building, something fully supported by the nationals. To guarantee national security, legitimate the NSDS and to act 'legally' in public, the regime constructed a body of *ad-hoc* legislation and ruled the country by numerous Decree Laws. Between 11 September 1973 and 6 November 1973, one hundred Decree Laws

were promulgated. This 'legislation' went as far as violating international instruments protecting the 'right to return'.

The NSDS regulated exile and return via Decree Law 81, Supreme Decree 604, the ambiguous but almighty Amnesty Decree 2,191 and a policy of 'lists'. By legislating exile and return the NSDS distanced as far as possible exile and return, thus eliminating the temporariness of exile and any possible nexus between the two. This would prove crucial for the future *exilio-retorno* nexus. It also furthered the exclusion/inclusion process that started with the labelling 'enemies' of the nation. By virtue of these Decrees, Chilean exiles' citizenship and their right to live in their own country was stripped from them.

Decree Law No 81 of the 6th November 1973. The aim of this decree was to punish those who had been summonsed publicly by the military authorities but who did not present themselves in time (five days after the notice was placed in the *Diario Oficial*). In that case a person would be punished with imprisonment (from 3 years and 1 day to 5 years) or exile (for 10 years and 1 day to 15 years). People who were abroad when cited would have their passport automatically cancelled (Art.1).

Decree 81 gave the military courts jurisdiction over cases involving clandestine entry into the country. It contained five articles which established discretionary rules relating to the expulsion and return of exiles. Article 3 dealt with the procedure to be followed by Chileans who wanted to return to the country and who were in the following categories: those who left the country as asylum cases, those who left Chile without following the established procedures (illegal departure), those expelled or forced to leave, and those serving sentences of exile; none of these would be able to return to the country without the permission of the Ministry of the Interior. Exiles had to apply to return and the outcome depended on the discretionary power of the Interior Minister who could refuse or accept the return to the country of exiled applicants under his definition of 'state security'. The authorisation had to be granted through the respective Consulate. 'The Ministry of the Interior could refuse any application for state security reasons.' Decree 81 did not mention any procedure to appeal against the Minister's decision, so it was assumed that his decision was final. Article 4 dealt with clandestine entry and its consequences. 'The established sanction is the highest penal punishment including death.'

A further Decree was passed on the 9th August 1974: **Decree Law No 604**. According to CODEPU's lawyer Alfonso Insunza (1983:12), Decree Law 604 'is a perfect example of the application of the National Security Doctrine in repressive-preventative legislation because it only requires the government's judgement to forbid the entry of any Chilean to his country by considering him a danger or a threat to institutional stability.' This decree forbade the entry to the national territory to five categories of people. In general, this was a more nationalistic measure as the first essential aim of the Junta was 'the preservation and accentuation of Chileanness, devotion to the *Patria*, and its sacrosanct emblems and historical traditions.' Transgressing the patriotic boundaries of the nation and dishonouring it merited punishment. Decree 604 covered situations that the earlier one did not consider.

It established that 'any person, alien or Chilean, who from abroad shamefully dishonours, defames or discredits the country, its government and its people, is seriously prejudicing the essential interests of the State, and if *he*¹⁵ is Chilean, is disowning his Patria.' In order to emphasise the maleness of the respect for the *Patria* the Junta considered such actions as acts of cowardice hence projecting an image of UP supporters not only as 'enemies of the nation' but also as unmanly cowards. Thus 'in order to safeguard and protect the inviolability of the Supreme and lasting values of the Chilean community and national honour thus assailed, it is imperative that such persons be debarred entry into the country. If this person is a Chilean, the Ministry of Interior will issue a Supreme Decree forbidding the re-entry to the country and the corresponding Administrative Authority will cancel their passport.' (Art 1). The cancelling of the passport left Chilean refugees stateless.

Undoubtedly, the objective of issuing Decree 604 was to inhibit Chileans or foreigners from promoting or participating in activities abroad which opposed NSDS ruling as well as prohibiting return or entry into the country, and by imprisoning those who enter or return to Chile clandestinely. Decree Law 604 provided penalties of 15-20 years imprisonment for offenders, thus converting the right to return into a penal offence. Hence, Decree 604 was unequivocally directed at the exile community in general, and in particular at those who were not affected by Decree 81 but who actively took part in acts which NSDS considered damaging to national security. Among those forbidden from entering the country, were: 'those spreading or promoting, by the spoken or written word or by any other means, doctrines calculated to destroy or violently change the social order of the country or its systems of government; those who are suspected or reputed to be agitators, or active proponents of such doctrines; those whose acts, under Chilean law, are deemed to be offences against external security, national sovereignty, internal security or public order of the country; those whose acts are contrary to Chile's interests; and those who in the opinion of the government constitute a danger to the state' (Art 1). According to the exiled lawyer, Decree 604 'was discretionary and arbitrary, not only in the classification of those who can be prevented from returning to Chile, but also in the basic norms of legal procedure' (AFCh 1979:3). It was the State, particularly the security services that decided against whom the prohibition could be used and when it should be imposed. In a letter to the UN General Secretary, Kurt Waldheim, Clodomiro Almeyda, the Executive Secretary for the Popular Unity in Exile wrote:

"The hundreds of thousands of people who had to leave Chile after the military coup and who did it legally, their right of return to the country can be denied for no reason by virtue of the arbitrary prerogative that the Junta granted itself with Decree Law 604 that is still in force. This was the experience with the ex-parliamentarian and leader of the Association of Teachers, Cesar Godoy, who had left the country voluntarily and fulfilling all the requirements to travel back to Chile, was expelled yesterday from the airport as soon as he stepped on Chilean soil" (Almeyda 1978:206).

"Allowing exiles to return": Amnesty Decree 2,191 or the 'bluff' return decree

Following mounting international pressure over the gross violation of human rights, the NSDS lifted the state of siege in March 1978 and on 18th April 1978 promulgated a third Decree that tangentially dealt

¹⁵ Own emphasis.

with exiles' return: Decree Law No 2,191. It was also known as 'Amnesty Law' in fact, it was 'self-amnesty.' Article 1 bluntly stated that '[A]mnesty is granted to perpetrators, accomplices or concealers who took part in criminal acts during the State of Siege between 11th September 1973 and 10th March 1978, provided that they are not presently undergoing trial or serving sentence.' Soon after the publication of this Decree there was strong evidence that its objective was to protect and pardon totally and absolutely the many crimes such as torture, murder, disappearances, kidnapping and assault committed by the members of NSDS security forces. It was a decree of impunity. Observers noted that it 'constituted a self amnesty... that effectively prevented investigations into the human rights abuses under Pinochet's rule because it allowed courts to close cases and investigations before indictments were handed down' (Roht-Arriaza and Gibson 1998:847). Decree 2,191 became universally known with Pinochet's arrest in London in October 1998 and with the subsequent legal proceedings at the Appellate Committee of the House of Lords when the 1978 Amnesty Law effectively blocked human rights prosecutions for the overwhelming number of crimes committed between 1973 and 1978 (Brody and Ratner 2000; Davis 2003; Evans 2006).

But, it was difficult to issue a decree that so blatantly and exclusively benefited State security and the repressive apparatus and those responsible for it. The NSDS found it necessary to incorporate certain categories of their 'political enemies' in it. Article 2 extended the amnesty to those convicted by military courts during this period. ICJ (1992:100-101) considered that this decree 'was advertised by the government as a reconciliation measure. However, apart from its lack of democratic legitimacy, the decree's positive effects were limited, since the majority of convicted prisoners had their sentences commuted to exile but despite the amnesty were denied permission to return' (*ibid*) because Article 5 stated that 'those persons who are favoured by the present Decree and who are outside the national territory must comply with article 3 of Decree Law No 81 of 1973 in order to enter the country.' This category consisted of 2,071 ex-political prisoners who were condemned by military tribunals of whom 1,121 had left the country under Decree 504 and, if wanting to return, had to follow Decree 81 and apply for entry to the Ministry of Interior.

Undoubtedly, Decree 2,191 was the result of NSDS's response to international pressures with the aim to clean up its image. Sergio Fernández, the Minister of Interior and Mónica Madariaga, the Minister of Justice announced in a press conference that 'in their purpose to look for concord it was possible not only for those covered by the amnesty but also for the exiles to return to the country...' This announcement also included 'those expelled from Chile who were serving sentences of exile, those who left the country by way of asylum, and those who left via ICEM without passport...' (F.M.V. 1978: 208). The proclamation of this decree was accompanied by a huge public relations campaign both in Chile and abroad. Statements by government officials, Church dignitaries and various national and international bodies, gave the initial impression that the amnesty was intended as a genuine gesture of national unity by the NSDS. It was assumed that the beneficiaries of the amnesty would naturally be political opponents of the regime who had been deprived of their basic rights, including personal freedom and 'the right to live in their own country.' A list of names of numerous ex-Ministers and

leaders from the UP who could be sure beneficiaries of return was published. One such person was prominent Christian Democrat Bernardo Leighton and his wife who had been applying to return before their assassination attempt in Rome. They were allowed to return on humanitarian grounds three weeks after Decree 2,191 was passed. On his return he received an impressive welcome. Their return provided a solid foundation for the *exilio-retorno* compression, something to be explored in Chapter Five.

Though some exiled political leaders considered this legislation a 'bluff' (F.M.V. 1978:208) it did ignite *returnism*. The quest for nationhood and belonging was animated. Effectively, as we shall see in the next chapter, the year 1978, was a turning point for return. The first news created a sensation of relief among the exiles and many believed that there was a real opening. However, this situation created expectations and confusion yet, according to IOM, some eighty Chileans managed to enter the country that year (see Appendix 4). Other sources (AFCh 1979:5) raised this figure to 'approximately 300 exiles from Europe who had returned to Chile without applying, but it is not known what their status abroad had been or how they left Chile.' This reveals the lack of knowledge regarding the nature of Chilean exile. Among this confusion however, some of this study's respondents managed to return.

But this was not all. As the NSDS regime was institutionalising itself, it was time to end the *ad hoc* emergency decrees. In 1980, the regime replaced the 1925 Constitution with a new **Political Constitution**. It was an undemocratic document and as Barros (2002:172) put it, 'drafted in secret and enacted by a sovereign law-maker, the Junta, without any popular participation through an elected constituent assembly.' Politically, socially and culturally, the new Constitution 'institutionalized anti-politics, anti-Marxism, and the new socio-economic order. It reaffirmed traditional Hispanic values and practices and explicitly emphasized the role of the patriarchal family as the basic unit of a hierarchically organized society. It did this in the name of Western-Christian values, patriotism and *national security*.' (Loveman 1988:343). Taking advantage of a brief economic boom (1979-1980) the new Constitution was 'ratified' by a 'plebiscite' in 1980. The legitimisation of the 1980's Constitution consolidated NSD State-building and created the foundations of the future Chilean nation.

Transitory Article 24 of the new Constitution concentrated on the expelling and return-regulating power of the previous Decree Laws. In general, transitory articles not only reasserted the status quo of dictatorship but also granted the President¹⁶ new and broader discretionary, repressive powers, available irrespective of whether a State of Exception was in effect. Among its faculties it allowed the President to 'expel from Chile or prohibit from entering the country any individual propagating Marxist doctrines or effecting acts contrary to Chilean interests or that constitute a threat to internal peace and banish (*relegar*) individuals for periods up to three months to specific urban localities within Chile (Barros 2002:171).

¹⁶ Pinochet made himself the formal President of the Republic in December 1974 by Decree Law 806.

The policy of 'lists': *Listado Nacional*

Once the NSDS had developed a definite 'legal' framework for return, it started to issue 'lists'. From December 1982 until October 1983, it started to lift the ban on return on some exiles. It issued ten consecutive lists of 3,475 people authorised to return. This procedure could also be reversed either positively or negatively even if the person had already visited the country before. As we shall see later in this study, some of this study's respondents experienced this arbitrariness. These lists were not only arbitrary but also contained many errors such as names of returnees, of children and babies and even deceased. Cecilia's dead daughter's name appeared on one of these lists. Because they had taken refuge in an Embassy they all fell under Decree Law 81. Cecilia said,

She appears [showing the list] on these lists of the government and I can only explain this in that when she died neither I nor my ex-husband went to the Consulate to register her death and so she appeared as if she was alive. Now, after all these years I have come to think about it, pucha! (blimey!) she appeared on a list authorising her to return.

Two reasons seem to have prompted this policy. First, the overwhelming international condemnation of human rights violations and attached restrictions on entry, compelled the NSDS to respond to this pressure with what Risse and Sikkink (1999:25) called 'tactical concessions'. Second, because a more open form of dissent and opposition against 1982's severe economic crisis inside Chile that led to a series of mass protests starting on May 1983 until July 1986, a worrying issue for both the NSDS and the U.S.¹⁷

However, NSDS's 'generosity' had been simultaneously counteracted by a series of small lists with the names of those forbidden to return. These lists appeared intermittently. The first one was dated 23rd January 1980 (Decree 34). It contained the names of fifteen exiles and was signed by Pinochet himself and the Minister of Interior. Subsequent lists were dated 6th (Decree 82) and 7th March 1980 (Decree 92). According to this policy: 'these Chilean citizens living abroad constitute a threat to the State, and according to Decree Law 604 (Art. 1) of 1974: Forbids the entry to national territory to the following persons:...'. Among the names included on the second list was that of Pedro. Despite his sustained *returnism*, temporariness for him was over. He said:

*I was on that infamous list of 1980 because they considered me a terrorist. I never expected too much of that fascist dictatorship anyway but that made me think that I could not carry on thinking that I would return soon. It's horrible to know that you cannot go back. Those lists were cruel. When there were rumours of a list, people glued themselves to radio Moscow because they used to broadcast the names in *Escucha Chile*. When people didn't hear their names they got into terrible depressions. For me it was a real blow because my name appeared just at a time when I was facing serious problems with my children.*

The Catholic Church in the person of Bishop Juan de Castro pressured the regime to publicise the list of those Chileans impeded to return 'so they would know what to do' (*El Mercurio* 23 November 1982). The final list containing the names of 4,942 persons forbidden to enter the country was published on their 'emblematic' day, 11 September 1984 in a final *Listado Nacional* that was made public in official newspapers, given to International Police at entry points, and 'distributed to Chilean diplomatic

¹⁷ See Chapter Five

missions abroad and airlines flying into Chile' (Barton 1986:28) which had to consult International Police in Santiago before selling a ticket, an issue to be contextualised in Chapter Six. Similarly to *Un millón de chilenos*, the 4,942 figure became an iconic identification to struggle for the right to return.

From this date, the 'solo salida passports' (as in the case of Decree refugees), was substituted by the visibility of an "L"ed passport. The "L" became another repressive symbol. Though Goodwin-Gill (1996:82) suggests that 'many Chileans obtained or renewed national passports, apparently without difficulty' evidence suggests that in many cases, the "L" was stamped when doing so. Though an "L" in exiles' passports meant to be on the lists and limited to return to the country, many exiles as Cecilia who worked for the Pro-Return Committee in Chile, *did not know what it meant*. In practice, it meant not to be considered a national of the country, and *de facto* stateless, hence, obliged to make an application if they desire to return. "L"ed exiles were excluded from the nation. Reasons for 'earning' an "L" were as arbitrary as the Decrees themselves. Similarly to Cecilia's daughter, Physician Leopoldo, got an "L" for taking refuge at the embassy of Colombia. Because return had been denied him under Decree 81, he insisted on applying. During the interview his wife Laura participated with important information and comments. Stressing the temporariness of his exile, he said,

[Leopoldo...*well, we always lived with the suitcases ready because in any moment they could allow us to return because we did everything that was required under the decree. We applied to the embassy, to the Ministry of Interior, to the Foreign Office, we even asked Presidents of other countries, I mean renowned people from other countries, but they never allowed me to return...there were successive applications; it is a summary of two years of arduous work. Then one day, the 24 December around 8 pm at night I receive a phone call from the Embassy. [Laura: We were not in and when we knew it was from the embassy we thought that they had accepted his application and so we could return. Can you imagine? After all those applications! Well... it was to tell us that his last application had not been accepted...and they told us that on Christmas Eve!*

An "L" in exiles' passport could be stamped to wives or children, that is, to 'tied refugees'. Cecilia got an "L" because of her association with her ex-husband. According to her, he had received Party orders to leave the country. By association to his 'enemy' status, her passport was stamped with an "L" and in the process, not only forbidding her to return, but also gendering the policy.

I think that they gave me the "L" because we left under the family reunification programme of the United Nations. So, I left as the wife of Manuel Pérez; he had been arrested in the National Stadium accused of providing arms to people at the University, things like that, and I imagine that they put everything together and put me into that package. Personally, I had done nothing too relevant really...

In general, the systems of *listas* either allowing or forbidding return caused frustration and uncertainties among exiles curtailing any possibility to materialise their cheered *returnism* and as elite politician Jorge Arrate (2007:229) put it, 'a total sham, but we were all prisoners of that cruel public spectacle.' NSDS's 'iconic' "L" also inspired opposition theatre scripts. In August 1982, the theatre group *Loica* performed *Documento Internacional "L"* in the interior to close the 'month of the Chilean exile' in what was called *Ferías Culturales del Exilio* something to be discussed in Chapter Five.

In sum, legal repression reaffirmed NSDS's right to maintain jurisdiction over its own territory and regulate exclusion/inclusion and membership, that is, who belonged to the *patria*. Against this backdrop, questions of exile and return gained centrality both in public and private spheres. In the public sphere, it defined *who* was a Chilean exile and the political and moral duties attached to that status. In the private sphere, legal repression and more so the *Listado*, ignited *returnism* turning it into a pressing issue in both spheres. For those allowed to return, it automatically ended *temporariness* forcing individuals and families to face up to the 'dilemma of return' (Grinberg and Grinberg 1989; Zetter 1994) at a time when exile had been implacably running its course.

Conclusion

This chapter has explored the process of Chilean exile. It has suggested that the 1973 military coup replaced the previous democratic state with a repressive-authoritarian one, the NSDS. By violently creating a 'new Chile', it destabilised the entire fabric of Chilean society prompting the formation of refugees. This new form of State was ruled by an almighty ideological and repressive doctrine, the National Security Doctrine that in turn, enhanced two forms of masculinity and manhood: military-authoritarian and a-political-technical. This chapter showed the manner in which and extent to which the NSDS proscribed political life and political men and how in the process the imposed masculinities replaced an historical manhood constructed in public life around the ideals and practices of political-democratic masculinities. Building a new nation involved a highly gendered process. In order to recuperate *la Patria*, women were drawn into the national project of *National Reconstruction* under a gender ideology that favoured the family institution and a type of femininity that best served the interests of the Chilean nation under NSDS. This was to happen to the detriment of thousands of Chileans, who, as a result of NSDS's lack of protection, endured DR/IR. NSDS viewed them as its 'enemies' thus creating the conditions for their exit and legal restrictions to return. The exit process was both gendered and classed. The very process of exit differentiated the distinct social categories of Chilean refugees. The next task is to examine these differential experiences in exile and their possible impact on return decisions. The next chapter will commence such exploration putting *returnism* and *temporariness* into practice. It starts by discussing the ubiquitous 'uneasiness of exile'.

CHAPTER FOUR

From 'Enemies of the Nation' to refugees: the uneasiness of exile and prospects for return

Introduction

This chapter explores the experiences of the *exterior*. It follows Zetter's (1994:316) argument that a 'greater understanding of the likely scope and processes of return can be gained from an examination of how exile has been experienced by different social categories and the extent to which exile itself has created socially differentiated groups with different perspectives on the future.' To understand the dynamics of VRp, gender issues and social [re]integration of Chilean returnees, there is a need to explore the social and political categories and respective activities [re]created during exile and even more so of the dynamics of the prospect of return. This is important because Chilean VRp has been a limited migratory experience and was more likely to occur in particular groups of refugees even when conditions did not seem appropriate to outside observers. Accordingly, the concern of this chapter is to investigate how certain developments that took place in exile either maintained or reinforced the 'foundational decision to return'. Most studies that have considered the Chilean experience have seldom contextualised exilic aspects of discontent and its relationship to return. When included, scholars have just examined them as part of the 'refugee experience' as if this experience is not articulated to promote return and related to events happening at 'home'. Essentialised views of 'refugees' limits their understanding. They are people with a social, political and cultural past free from refugee regime's institutional labels. This chapter claims that it is the first stage of exile that strengthened *temporariness* and emphasised *returnism*. The central aim therefore is to explore the possible association between the 'refugee experience', exile politics, and micro-level problems with the idea of return. This becomes more pressing in relation to VRp where the central claims are that return decisions are individual and that refugees decide to return voluntarily. In examining these dynamics the idea of 'voluntariness' warrants further examination. The chapter begins with social downgrading in its many manifestations.

4.1 Downward social mobility, loss of status and the refugee status/label

The dominant definition of exile is that of total rupture with previous life (Grinberg and Grinberg 1989; Norambuena 2000). This rupture is highlighted by downward social mobility that in some cases can be ideologically justified (see Rogg 1971). These sections will consider three dimensions of this experience: downward occupational mobility, loss of status and the refugee status/label. In the exploration of the motivations that informed return at the micro level, these are important sociological themes to be considered. This study suggests that downward social mobility in the case of refugees is an all encompassing social experience that not only refers to the downgrading in the occupational sense. This study broadens the conception of downward social mobility beyond the conventional focus on occupation by considering loss of status and the refugee status and 'label'. Being a 'refugee'

implies an all encompassing set of social, psychological, political, ideological, cultural and institutional experiences that cannot be analytically limited. These three conditioning elements of downward social mobility are explored below. The purpose is to provide an account of how Chilean refugees have fared while in exile and how these sociological variables can illuminate our search for the micro factors, reasons and motivations that led to their return.

4.1.1 Downward socio-economic mobility: occupational downgrading

Following the argument of labour recruitment discussed in the previous chapter, Chilean agronomist Jorge Toro (2002:179) noted: *Había trabajo y faltaban trabajadores* (There was work but a lack of workers). Yet, the jobs he found in Sweden was as building window cleaner and later as a low-skilled worker in the tin can industry 'Godings'. Downward socio-economic mobility alludes to the significance of occupational location and social class. Fully acknowledged in studies of Latin American labour migration to the US (Pessar 1986), the general tendency has been to explore the possibilities of upward social mobility as its focus is on the less advantaged migrant. Historically, migration has evolved from being dominated by men, followed by households and later by women. Studies on labour migration before 1980 focused on the male migrant (Castles and Kosack 1973) and his chances of upward social mobility through migratory employment. In the case of Latin Americans in the US, socio-economic mobility is inextricably linked to the social and political capital of both 'political' and 'economic' migrants. The most studied cases of Cuban and Mexican migrants in the US are an illustrative example of how the State is a key player not only in distinguishing between economic and political migrants but also in their chances of occupational mobility (Portes and Bach 1985; Pedraza-Bailey 1985). As migrant families tended to reunite in the mid 1970s, gender and migration studies emphasised the prominence of the household as a social unit (Chant 1992; Valenzuela 1999). Households are sites of migration decisions (Lawson 1998) and of changes in the dynamics of gender relations as a result of women entering the labour market. This dominant paradigm in gender and migration studies also reached the study of Chilean refugees in Britain (Salinas 2000) but as Zlotnik (1995) cautions, its dynamic dimensions limit its analytical power. Hence, this study concurs with Hondagneu-Sotelo's view (1994) that family relations rather than household is a preferred concept to study patriarchal gender relations. From a sociological viewpoint, household and family are radically distinct concepts whereby the latter, as a social institution, presents characteristics that household, as an analytical variable lacks, i.e., social, cultural, ideological, and/or religious value attachments, to the extent that Althusser (1971) considered family among the Ideological State Apparatuses (ISAs). The 1970s and 1980s disciplinary predominance of anthropology seems to respond for such emphasis (Hondagneu-Sotelo 1994) when mainly during the 1980s' the increasing visibility of women migrating as workers attracted so much scholarly attention. As these women were concentrated in low-status, low-paid occupations their prospects for occupational or social mobility were rather limited and more so for contract workers (Zlotnik 1995).

If studies on labour migration consider class and gender, the tendency in refugee studies has been to homogenise refugees. Though Kibreab (2003b) has challenged claims that refugee flows are dominated by women and their dependents (Martin 1992; Moussa 1993), the general tendency has been to emphasise the psychological costs of refugeehood with detriment on gender. Commentators have suggested that one reason for this prevailing focus has been that psychology as a discipline has resisted transformation and less likely to incorporate gender and that it has been anthropology that has become deeply gendered (Stacey and Thorne 1985). Precisely, it is from this discipline, particularly from feminist anthropology, that most of the criticism of the omission of gender in refugee studies has emanated (Indra 1999). Indeed, by leaving behind family, friends, and a country, refugees experience psychological traumas, but by stressing trauma (flight and/or torture), scholars and practitioners see refugees as survivors and omit an essential fact: refugees leave a society where they were social subjects. When in their countries of origin, refugees were of a certain age, belonged to a certain class, ethnic group, Party, tribe, and/or occupational strata. When they move into exile they enter a new system of social stratification by class, race, gender, and so on, hence, the task of qualifying them as gendered, classed, aged and raced beings is left to the host society. Moreover, as argued elsewhere (López Zarzosa 1991), in the case of refugee migration, although in a miniaturised form, 'home' social stratification/differentiation also moves to the *exterior* forming part of the peripheral society, and so exile is socially experienced both from without (host society) and within (exile/refugee 'community'). Although scholars such as Vásquez and Araujo (1990:25) have cautioned against the impossibility of interpreting Chilean exiles in terms of social class because social mobility is higher in Latin America than in Europe and 'so many of the professionals and intellectuals who arrived in exile belonged to families where they were the first ones to have access to the university', this section intends to examine downward socio-economic mobility by considering Chilean exiles' class position acquired through social mobility prior to exit (see del Pozo 1992 and Barr-Melej 2001).

Class as a structural variable is less acknowledged by studies of refugees in the resettlement process. This study argues that this is the result of postmodernism's intrusion in refugee studies. As noted in Chapter Two, postmodernism has tried to make class either invisible or declining (Pakulski and Waters 1996). In the case of refugees, as Van Hear (2006) noted, the postmodern emphasis on place and identity has contributed to this trend. To disregard class is a classed argument argues Skeggs (1997:7), because '[M]aking class invisible represents a historical stage in which the identity of the middle classes is assured.' This is more important because of the need to give voice to those outside this category. The title of this thesis is self-evident. It attempts to assess how gendered and classed Chilean VRp was. One way to start looking at this phenomenon is by addressing the downward socio-economic mobility experienced by many Chilean refugees and its impact in the process of return.

Although downward socio-economic mobility is acknowledged in studies on refugees (Yap 1986; Kibria 1990; Nassehy-Behnam 1991; Al-Rasheed 1992; Kamalkhani 1988; Ali 2001), only Al-Rasheed in her study of the Iraqis in Britain made the connection between temporariness and downward social mobility. Though occupational downward mobility of Chilean exiles in Western

countries has been acknowledged (Testimonio I 1979; Vásquez 1980; Kay 1982; Vera 1985; Vásquez and Araujo 1990; Sundquist et al. 1995; Bolzman 1996; Gaillard 1997; Luján 1997; Salinas 2000) to the extent that it reached the British film 'Truly, Madly, Deeply', only accounts on exile and return report working-class exiles' betterment in living conditions (Wright and Oñate 1998; Rebolledo 2004), yet without exploring if this was 'truly' upward social mobility. Still, none of those studies provide an analysis of the role downward mobility plays on return decisions. Information available reported that Chilean refugees' occupational profile was structured around professionals and technicians. According to a report by the Council of Europe (Cuco 1987:12), '46.4% of Chilean exiles in Europe are university graduates and only 3.8% are unskilled workers.' Rebolledo (2004:142) added that 'a great majority of them were professionals, university students and in a lesser degree technicians, workers and peasants' and in France women were as qualified as men (Gaillard 1997:46). This study's respondents fits this profile.

The economic structure is the first great reality in which immigrants must find a place, and they are by no means assured of finding one which will correspond to their aspirations, their desires or immediate needs (Bagú 1963). Similarly, refugees, are confronted with this reality. Despite Chileans exiles' *returnism*, their need for a job was real. Yet, their emphasis on their political status denied this fact and distanced themselves from the 'economic' refugees (Kay 1982). Lester (2005:333) rightly acknowledged the economic dimension to refugee movements suggesting that 'when 'economics' and 'refugees' are heard together, or even in loose association, evoke the pejorative images of those who move to seek a 'better life' and so the economic element is downplayed. Besides, the overwhelming emphasis on exile as 'a condition of terminal loss' (Said 1984) tends to desocialise refugees' daily lives and work/employment as a category of analysis loses its value. Eventually, and despite the 'recruitment-of-skilled-labour' persuasive argument seen in the previous chapter, when confronted with the labour market, most Chileans exiled in Western countries experienced downward socio-economic mobility regardless of their education, profession or skills (Lie 1983; Vera 1985; Gaillard 1992; Salinas 2000; Toro 2002; Arrate 2007). The result was initial professional disqualification and a declining in living standards compared to the one Chileans had enjoyed in Chile. IR meant that for many people loss of employment and social status occurred prior to their flight and for some this provided the impetus for their flight. On arrival in exile, Chileans as any other immigrants, had to confront the challenges of the 'factors of destination' (Bagú 1963:41), employment was one of them. Yet, professional Chilean refugees were confronted with what Bravo (in Bloch 1997:176) called 'functional over-qualification' that is, 'too well qualified for lower grade posts, have too little work or professional experience for higher-management posts, and feel that they are too far along in their career path to switch careers. Frequently their language skills are not commensurate with their qualifications.' With little chance of being self-employed and with no access to equivalent employment, they were forced to take downgrading positions. Language, gender relations, and race played an important role in this process particularly in Western countries.

Allí no tuve problemas ya que no tenía que hablar, solo limpiar (I had no problems there because I didn't have to talk, just clean) said Gloria Salas (2002:453), a Chilean refugee in Sweden. The literature on refugees resettled in industrialised countries indicates the need to learn the host country's language (Martin 1992; Bloch 1997). The specific literature on Chilean exiles suggests that apart from being a cultural barrier, language was a key factor in finding a qualified job. Most Chileans had no proficiency in foreign languages and the majority were absolute beginners (JWG 1975; Araya et al. 1981; Gaillard 1992; Bolzman 1996), particularly lower-middle, working-class and peasant refugees. In Holland for example, some exiles observed that the language 'turn us into deaf people' and to others that 'we have regressed to the age of three' (Araya et al. 1981:38). Yet, there is disagreement in the literature. del Pozo's (2002) study in Québec showed that Chileans arriving there were in one way or another familiarised with either English or French, hence language was not a barrier for finding work. Such positive view cannot be generalised however. Muñoz (2006) found that for working-class refugees in Canada, language constituted the first practical factor for downgrading. In this study, conversational partners' accounts indicate that language command was an issue for them. English was one of those languages. While in Scotland, Mariela, who was a nutritionist in Chile, encountered gendered language-related problems,

When I lived in Chile, I was a rather independent person, I had my professional life, my friends, all that outside my marriage. When I got there I felt I had no income and practically I felt like an illiterate because I could not communicate; it was terrible! with lots of big conflicts, one feels that you depend not only on the other person, (that person is doing politics and studying anyway), but also of the circumstances and events that are occurring that in turn limit you in what you can do, apart from being centred around the hearth.

Another telling example was that in the US. As seen in Chapter Three, Chileans were admitted into the US as 'parole refugees' and most were of working-class or lower-middle class background (Eastmond 1989). Ana was among them. Since the early 1960s she worked as a health assistant in a maternity ward and later in a nationwide birth control project during the Frei's administration (1964-70). Ana had no political affiliation yet she was arrested, imprisoned and tortured. After leaving prison, she arrived in the US with her eight-year old son Marc directly to Agape Foundation refugee camp.¹⁸ Ana did not belong to any Party. This meant that no Party claimed responsibility for her and her child either in helping her finding accommodation or resettlement. Ana was left to fend for herself. After spending three and a half weeks in difficult conditions, she was recruited from the refugee camp by an American upper middle-class white woman as a low-level domestic live-in job that supposedly entailed enhancement of 'communication' skills. Ana joined the cluster of Latina and Asian domestic servants working in the US.

I didn't know English, only that bit I learned at school yeeears ago, how could I remember? I was employed as a live-in maid for a ninety-year old lady who never stopped shouting 'Aaaaana, the beeed pan!' I had to give her medicines, clean and cook. Her family gave me a cookery book so I could cook what the lady liked but I did not know about imperial weight... What are pounds? Ounces? [Laughs]... And so when my son was asleep I started to translate

¹⁸ The experience of Chileans arriving to refugee camps remains unresearched. A similar experience occurred in Denmark (Agger and Jensen 1989).

the recipes that Mrs Knoll wanted to eat the next day...then I started to understand better about pounds and those things but I found a new word: 'pinch'. I asked her 'what is a pinch, like a pinch of black pepper?' Pinch did not appear in my little dictionary I had brought from Chile. Then she told me what a pinch was. It was a pizza! I mean things like that were big problems for me because of my lack of language.

Nonetheless, even when it was equally difficult for refugee men and women to learn a language, it has been widely acknowledged that women learn the language faster than men because women have more contacts outside the home (Haefner 1984). Although many couples in this study could deal with outside home issues together, it was women who concentrated on that. In the process of dealing with other spheres, women were not only learning the language but also knowing the 'workings' of the host society's system. Abril who spent her exile in Britain provides a further example of this,

At the beginning the two of us were learning about the system but perhaps I advanced more than him. He knew the professional side of it, full stop! But to try to know the system for a better life, for a better wellbeing for our daughter as well as for ourselves, it was me who fought for that. I knew the system better and the proof is that when we arrived in London from Swansea I wanted to see the possibility of having a council house. I knew where to go. I was the one who was doing all that. It was me who was looking for a nursery for Celeste, looking for doctors for the family, rents, and houses. It was only me!

Others learned the language as a coping mechanism against host society's adversities. When racism was a problem, for example in East Germany, Chilean exiles learnt German with the purpose of defending themselves. Gladys commented,

*The GDR was terrible, there was racism even when shopping. The only good thing was that one had Honecker on our side and one could threaten them with accusing them of being racist. Then they got very scared (*se morían de miedo*). The first thing I learned in German was: 'Look, do you know Hitler? And as many Chileans said 'I learned German to fight.' The only thing that I learned best in German was to fight to tell them that they were racists! [laughs]. Besides, in the GDR there was a big prejudice against people who came from other Socialist countries such as Bulgarians and I was taken as a Bulgarian rather than as a Latina. They took me as a Slav as if I had won them the war. I really despised Germany.*

Language, Gender, and Class: Temporariness, Returnism, 'Suitcases' and 'Feet'

Learning a language was a problematic issue that was definitively tied to political *temporariness*. If the demise of the NSDS would happen soon there was no need to learn a new language. In the US Chileans strongly resisted learning English as they 'were not in the US to stay like the Vietnamese or the Cubans' (Eastmond 1989:36). Evidence from research suggests that other non-Spanish speaking host countries provided some form of language training but this varied from country to country (see Friedmann 1980; Prognon 2006). Many Chilean university students who resettled with a university scholarship (particularly in the UK), were favoured with more refined language courses. They were in a different position altogether. One such student and parent of children attending a Saturday School in London in the 1980s said, "We were rather protected compared to other Chileans whose experiences were not as enriching as ours... Therefore we cannot generalise our experience to the rest of the people... We can consider ourselves fortunate because we previously had an education in Chile. We arrived from the university to the university; this was not the case for all Chileans" (in López Zarzosa 1991:11). In the long-term formal university education enabled them to bolster, secure or raise their

class position as well as potentially capitalising them for return. For those without scholarships the situation was otherwise. Besides, short-term language courses cushioned the abrupt impact of joblessness. But this was a temporary solution that would gradually reveal an uncertain future and would lead to 'survival jobs'. Rita, a returnee psychiatrist who since her return from Canada became a renowned opposition politician (Testimonio I 1979:6-7) spoke both as an exile and professional,

"With the arrival of the penultimate month of the language course psychosis strikes, it is a situation of anguish of what is going to happen, 'I'm not going to have those X dollars, I do not have a possibility of work.' Then, the drama starts, 'that such and such is in the factory X, that there is a job in a hotel and that you have to do, 14 rooms etc... This is the stage when you say: I am nobody now, so, come what may... So when a friend asked me if I could share her job cleaning a flat I asked her 'How much do they pay?' – '15 dollars.' Then I said to myself: if they don't consider me here as a doctor, they consider me for nothing, I need to live, so, welcome those 15 dollars!"

The exceptions were male elite exiles. Men in this category continued with the position of privilege they enjoyed prior to exit. Similarly to Rita, elite exiled women fared differently. Miriam Bravo for example, whose husband was an awardholder in Mexico worked as a saleswoman of Britannica until she became the manager of a renowned Leftist Chilean artist. Unlike her, none of the male elite respondents in this category reported neither language problems nor downward social mobility. They generally continued living off politics, furthered their studies, had good jobs, travelled extensively meeting intellectual and political elites developing an influential network that allowed them to finance their oppositional projects. Luis Jara's exile had a different meaning,

...of course to be in contact with other cultures in another country, other visions of things, of politics, of life, it helps to widen your horizons and more so to find answers that exile poses to any exiled about the causes for the political defeat of the process in which he participated and the causes of the situation that affects him...

With the exception of those holding a scholarship, most conversational partners resettled in Western countries experienced downward social mobility. This regression, according to Wright and Oflate (1998:124), was temporary. Professionals 'could achieve a material level that was comfortable by Chilean middle-class standards' and working-class exiles in Western Europe 'if successful in finding employment, normally exceeded their accustomed standard of living by far.' To emphasise their argument they cited Jorge Arrate who once described exile as 'an immense scholarship programme.' Such accounts oversimplified a complex process and emphasised a middle-class bias. More dangerously, by privileging well-known political figures, they, with the exception of Father Caro's accounts (*ibid*: 125-130/201-204), depict exile as solely politically problematic. Recent in-depth studies of Chilean refugeehood, provide richer class-related insights (Muñoz 2006). Certainly, although low-status jobs are socially diminishing for upper-middle and middle-class professional exiles, some, with time, would be able to unblock their mobility and achieve relative success, particularly due to their 'human capital' but above all through furthering their education or qualifications. For many other refugees, however, the situation involved complexities that in many ways were also related to the issues of temporariness and *returnism*. In the meantime, survival jobs 'at least secured an economic basis for the household' (Salinas 2000:51).

Mobility unblocking is neither a generalised nor an automatic process. In her study of the Iraqi community in London, Al-Rasheed (1992:544) reported the difficulties for those in politically neutral professions such as medical doctors, scientists, engineers, computer analysts and architects in finding jobs in Britain. 'University qualifications for certain occupations are not automatically recognised across countries.' To an extent Al-Rasheed's argument applies to the situation of many professional Chilean refugees. Though the situation is more difficult for certain 'vulnerable' professions such as sociologists, journalists and lawyers who are more prone to downward socio-economic mobility, it was also difficult for doctors. They have to prepare and pass examinations before they can practice. This was the case of medical doctor Mariano in the US. His, is a good example of how hard he had to work to have his qualifications recognised particularly because he lacked language skills because *I had studied at the Manuel de Salas and there was no chance to know much about English*. He also ignored that he had to apply for a new 'labour qualification'. In 1976, the US had passed *The Health Professions Educational Assistance Act* which affected the approval procedures for all professionals. Yochum and Agarwal (1988:270) noted that from that year '...physicians and surgeons were subject to new testing procedures certified in the Health Professions Act.' Mariano faced tremendous challenges. In general, unemployment or underemployment, so common among refugee men meant both a significant decline in economic contribution (Kibria 1990), and the most serious threats to manhood (Tohidi 1993:191), a manhood already undermined by Mariano's DR experiences. His exilic journey to regain previous qualifications, avoid the stigma of unemployment and loss of status was a long and difficult one, he had to pass the new test of competence,

I was medical chief of a small hospital here. I soon erased that experience there. But deep inside me, I knew who I was but then I thought 'I have to make it here. If I have to start from zero so be it! If I have to be a phlebotomist so be it! If I have to be a medical technician so be it! but I couldn't work for a year. When an available state hospital post appeared I applied but in the exam they asked me about scanners and I didn't know what they were talking about because the San Antonio hospital I had worked in didn't even have a lab! [laughs] ... Then I learned about how to be a doctor in the US and that really gave me a push. I had to obtain my doctor's degree there; then I knew that I had to pass two quite hard exams and I became sort of obsessed with the idea that I had to do it and quickly. It took time as I had to learn English first, but the course was so slow that I quit. I applied to take those exams and I had to do it quickly. I started to study really hard, like a mad person, 18 hours a day! And so in one month I prepared one exam, I crammed all the medical knowledge in one month...I took that exam in December but I thought I had failed and started studying again to retake it, but I had passed. Then I had to apply to do the internship...and I had to carry on studying. ...

The studying period to qualify as a doctor required of a breadwinner. This role was performed by Mariano's wife Soledad who in Chile was an occupational therapist. Her first job in exile was as a hospital theatre interpreter. Myriad empirical research on refugee women have shown how in exile gender roles and gender relations evolve (Tohidi 1993; Shahidian 1996; Sales and Gregory 1998; Kay 1982; Vásquez and Araujo 1990; Franz 2003, among others) and that it has been women who have sought employment first. Women often accepted any available job many times even those below their qualifications to help provide for the family while men prefer to remain at home and take care of household tasks rather than accept work they perceive as degrading (Nassehy-Behnam 1991; Affi 2004). According to Villamar's (1984:287) study on Chilean returnees 'it was mostly women who worked in Western Europe, North and South America' and additionally, 'women also studied and

worked compared to men who mainly worked when in Eastern European countries.' Two main reasons have been put forward for this situation particularly in Western countries. One relates to the status and roles played by men and women both in Chile and in exile. According to this argument men were more involved in political activities than women. Secondly, a differential experience of repression in Chile producing greater degrees of traumatisation and consequently greater problems of adjustment in host societies (WUS 1986). Explanations of this kind emphasise the primacy of men, though as Chapter Three showed the difficulties faced by women both under DR and IR were significant.

Depending on class, networks, language and marketable skills, women were more readily available for quality jobs. Upper-middle class Soledad had studied at a top English school in Santiago. Her proficiency in English positioned her more advantageously than her husband. However, their case illustrates the importance assigned to Mariano's refugee status and how this was crucial at the time of finding a job for Soledad, and the impact of *temporariness* symbolised in the 'packed suitcases' metaphor,

I had studied at the Santiago College, and that allowed me to get a job one week after arrival as an interpreter at a hospital's operating theatre because in the US all day surgery had to be carried out bilingually by law. I found this job through Amnesty International because thanks to them Mariano got to the States. He had to study hard for over two years. It was a very difficult and painful process. He was depressed because he thought he would never make it. In the end it was really difficult because he had promised me that we would be away only for two years but it was for fifteen! We lived with the suitcases behind the door all the time! He was always thinking that he would return.

Because of the predominating 'private-public' paradigm at the time of Chilean exile, access to language provision was less accessible for women (Freire 1995; López Zarzosa 1998). Although it has been suggested that France was one of the most supportive countries, starting with the opening of its embassy for diplomatic asylum and later with what Gaillard (1992:37) called a 'model reception' (*France Terre d'Asile*, FTDA), that is, with almost exclusive material and political solidarity for Chileans, not all benefited from it. Evidence suggests that in Western countries Ana's experience was the norm where domestic jobs such as cleaners, tea ladies, hotel chambermaids and low-skilled factory jobs were more readily available for women (Friedmann 1980; Vera 1985; Salinas 2000) particularly during the first stage of exile. Middle-class women whose political position either derived from or was less relevant than that of their husbands, found themselves in a vulnerable position either due to abandonment (López Zarzosa 1998), separation, no Party affiliation or protectors. They were more prone to downward mobility and ended up doing the kind of jobs that working-class women do in Chile. Age also mattered. Despite the existence of FTDA in France, middle-age women with no transferable skills or qualifications found themselves in the low-end of the job market and so 'Chilean refugee women in France worked in temporary jobs considerably more than men' (Gaillard 1992:47). In middle-class Cecilia's case, the intersection of age, gender, separation, lack of language skills, no prospects for training, and little to offer to Western countries' job markets such as book selling, made her unemployable. This situation led her to a rethinking of prospects as she became conscious of her

undervalued existence in exile. Because of her “L”ed passport she could not return earlier. Cecilia’s downward social mobility constituted propitious conditions for *returnism* to dominate,

My experience in exile was very bad (ingrata) because I could barely get by in French; just enough not to die of hunger. The course they gave us was minimal only to work as manual worker, what could I do then? I had sold books all my life; I worked at the University of Chile and Pedagógico’s bookshops. That was all I knew but to work in a bookshop in France, well..., when I applied they once told me that I needed four languages: Portuguese, French, English and Spanish. So, I ended up working as a cleaner, minding babies and ironing. These are the jobs I had all the time I was there. Later they gave me a better language course but as a cleaner I could not practice my new language, could I? [Laughs] Soon after, I was allowed to return. I had been applying through the Vicaría. Really, I was not a person there, I had nothing to do there. Then I thought I am worth something in Chile, here I’m not.

Language courses were also class-related. Working-class refugees had less access to them. In some cases, exiles learned the language *in situ*, mostly at work. Pedro provided an example of what happened in West Germany to a Chilean working-class refugee man who joined the ‘guest-worker’ population,

I met a man who was a welder in Chile and who very soon after arriving in Germany managed to get a job at a port welding ships. He told me that the company who was employing him at the time said ‘we will send you to X port for six months and there you will learn the language by speaking it’ (en la práctica). What happened was that there was not a single German in his team, only Turks and so he ended up learning Turkish rather than German! [laughs], and that, I tell you, was not uncommon. Of course, with time people had to learn German but that depended on where you lived and worked.

Downward socio-economic mobility was also influenced by the intersection of ‘race’ and class. In those Western countries with a concentration of what Luján (1997:7) called the ‘poor exile’, that is, exiles with little economic or educational capital living in West Germany and Scandinavian countries, women were at a disadvantage in the labour market. In her comparative study of the impact of employment experiences on integration of British, Yugoslavian and Chilean immigrant women in Norway, Stiver Lie (1983) shows that the situation of the Chilean woman is the most problematic despite the fact that their occupational profile is similar to that of the Norwegian female population. They ended up in jobs considerably below their occupational and educational backgrounds. Lie’s findings lie in the ‘visibility’ of Chilean women, that is, in their ‘ethnic’ appearance. Lie notes that ‘she not only encounters discrimination in finding jobs, but more than the other two groups she experiences racism in daily encounters with Norwegians’ (*ibid*: 65). Unsurprisingly, the ‘poor exile’ was more likely to encounter racism as the ‘darker’ complexion of poor and working-class Chileans differs from the more ‘white’ middle and upper-middle class.¹⁹ Therefore, in looking for a job in ‘white’ countries, three variables were at work: gender, class and race. Refugee women and men whose class and ethnicity were detrimental to them ended up sharing the unskilled labour market with other racialised refugee and immigrants in low-paid jobs. Racism was experienced both at work and outside it in, what Jane Kramer (1990:88) regarding the ‘invandrare’ in Sweden, called a ‘calmer, quieter disapproval.’ In Sweden Chilean refugees experienced not only great contrasts between the

¹⁹ For a critical discussion of the construction of race and class in Latin America and in Chile see Solberg (1970), Pinto (2003) and exiled Mapuche Cotrena (1993) who experienced more racism in Chile than in Belgium.

two countries but also a sense of distance, discrimination and racism (Sundquist et al. 1995). Manuel, a car mechanic in Chile who endured eight months in prison and whose twenty-two years of exile were spent in Sweden working as a manual worker said,

Sweden was a white hell that was driving me mad. When I finally assimilated to the society I was able to distinguish the nuances of the most pure racism because when people do not know the language many times they do not see racism but when I understood the language and the system I realised the general rejection for immigrants. Then I understood that it was pure racism that I was experiencing at work from the very beginning. For them I was just one more immigrant in their country, in their society or a neighbour that they couldn't stand. I was another 'black head' (cabeza negra) for them.

Experiences of middle-class exiles in Latin America shows otherwise. In most cases they maintained their socio-economic status (Rebolledo 2004) and language seemed to be a bonus factor. Simón, the sociologist who spent his 'stepped' exile in Argentina and Ecuador, evaluated his as 'a good exile.' He never experienced downward socio-economic mobility. Being a man in Latin America and a father in markedly ethnicised, classed and patriarchal Ecuador was obviously advantageous and more so if white, middle-class and professional. His class background and professional status converged positively around his 'good exile' experience. He purposefully avoided the 'ghettos' and opened himself to the Ecuadorian society. He found friends easily and those relationships allowed him to integrate,

I had a relatively easy arrival because I was welcomed and supported by a group of Chileans with whom I shared a lot but together with that I established a network of Ecuadorian friends, basically because I always rejected the idea of living in a ghetto. I think language played a great part in that, I did not feel exiled. I think people feel more exiled, more marginalised if they had to change language. The fact that I did not have a language change was crucial because language change implies a lot of cultural aspects. As I remained in Latin America, that was something quite easy to assimilate. ...And as a father, well... the authority of the father is sacrosanct. What the father says no one challenges it, neither the wife nor the children. The one that takes decisions is the father, the man.

Coping with downward social mobility with the help of Returnism

Manuel's account takes us back to another important point made by Lie. At the time of recruiting low-paid workers the labour market in Western countries was status blind; it did not distinguish between immigrants and refugees. Rosa and her husband's case in Sweden show a new situation in labour recruitment: the reinstatement of 'refugees' economic value' (see Kay and Miles 1988). The mid 1970s' oil crisis and posterior world recession plus the so-called 'age-shock' were altering the economic and immigration orders. At the time, Castles and Kosack (1973) acknowledged that the reception of refugee flows corresponded to labour market needs. Western Europe for example, was recomposing its migrant labour force (Phizacklea 1983); 'muscles' were being replaced by 'brains'. In Sweden, job recruitment was starting to shift towards the more skilled and educated and refugees were on their way to be proclaimed 'Sweden's new labour reserve' (Schierup 1991:32). Rosa and Ronaldo's, case, illustrates this argument and show how the *foundational decision to return* allowed them to endure social downgrading. Rosa said,

What happens in Swedish social democracy, where there is this combination of State, workers and entrepreneurs, is that there is a level of education that is directly related to the

needs of the industry... and it was there that the majority of us who were immigrants or political refugees ended up... Well the Swedes were really good to us, we are very grateful for that, but it is true that they also needed educated and skilled manpower particularly if we already had the training or education in our countries of origin. Most of us were university students and so we as political refugees had the level of training that the Swedish industry required and many people went there particularly to the metal industry, Ronaldo [husband] managed to work as a skilled worker in a tin industry. I personally never felt integrated there. I studied all the time and I never worked, but to be honest, I was with one foot in Chile and the other one in Sweden. I never managed to integrate because from the start we were quite clear that we were there not to stay. We never left Chile thinking that we would stay there; never!

A case that highlights how political temporariness helped to bare the brunt of downward socio-economic mobility is provided by middle-class Harold who in Chile was a renowned theatre scenographer. Soon after he arrived in Britain he joined 'Shoestring', a solidarity theatre group where for about three years he worked *ad honorem*. He then realised he had to earn money for the family. In Britain, a number of jobs were found through trade union contacts (JWG 1975:19). These often were not on a par with Chileans' previous work experience, a situation with which the JWG was not very keen as their feelings 'were to orientate Chileans towards taking jobs which will provide them with technical skills which will be both useful and appropriate when the time comes for them to return to Latin America' (*ibid*). In Harold's case, it was through trade union solidarity that he was offered a traditional working-class occupation as a manual worker at the British Leyland car factory in Oxford; political *temporariness* convinced him to accept the job.

I entered the factory as any manual worker. I knew nothing about cars. At that time, they gave you training courses and I ended up as quality inspector... When I joined the car factory I had to work on a production line, it was horrible! But, well, it was a temporal thing because during the first years I was with the suitcases packed ready to depart... [pause]... Pinochet wouldn't last long and all that...[laughs]. Then, as time went by I followed the advice of some English people who told me 'they can send you to Rolls Royce and that is another world'. So I approached the quality and inspection training officer and I was sent there. I worked much more relaxed there and that's why it didn't shock me as much as the other place. I even worked at the library where they paid you much less but it didn't matter and so I decided to carry on waiting for the opportunity to return.

Harold however worked as a manual worker for twenty years until his 'early retirement' in 1997 from the troubled Rover car industry in Oxford. His professional actress wife Amarilis worked in menial jobs her entire twenty three years of exile.

Yet, what might be considered downward social mobility in Western countries was not necessarily understood as such by women in Latin American countries but it equally involved resignation. The late María who had been an influential feminist lawyer in Chile did not exercise her profession during her exile in Caracas. She started a totally new waged activity yet still within the solidarity framework.

Overnight I realised that my profession was rather conflictive because in Venezuela it is quite dodgy (mafiosa). Then I said no, I'm not practising here, I will abandon my profession altogether and then, because I always loved crafts, I bought crafts like arpilleras²⁰ and other things from the Vicaría and I sold them in a craft boutique I established there. That was a nice experience because it allowed me to integrate almost fully into that society. I used to travel throughout the country. I went to the indigenous zones, to the villages. That changed

²⁰ See Glossary. For an *arpillera* on return see Appendix 3 A and for an account Agosin (1987).

the vision I had of Venezuela. It was an enriching experience, but I had to struggle because I had to break my life patterns (esquemas) and that is a struggle because we (Chileans) are very attached to them.

These extracts first show that the experience of socio-economic downward mobility encompassed more than downgrading. Congruent with myriad studies on migration and forced migration, they showed that language change was the first destination factor that automatically exiled Chilean refugees. Language 'disadvantage' was both a communication barrier and one of the many obstacles to economic and social integration and as Phizacklea (1983) reminded us, in many cases it was used as a tool for exploitation. It was clear from these illustrations that employers hired Chilean women with limited language skills into worse jobs leaving them vulnerable to exploitation. Besides, when language intersected with lower-class, it downgraded and racialised women and men even further. Gender ended up complementing the downgrading process positioning women in the most economically and socially devalued jobs. The emancipatory impact of migration on women via employment strongly heralded by most studies on gender and migration, focuses mainly on poor women. The literature on Chilean working-class women follows this trend (Eastmond 1996). As a result, women were less likely to return. Before advancing any generalisation, such as that made by Eastmond (2006) when she suggested Chileans' 'reluctance to give up their own comfortable lives and return to Chile' led them to 'painfully realise that the sacrifices and the struggle had been in vain', a more nuanced class view was required. Not all exiled women were emancipated by the sole access to the low-end service sector of the labour market. This was the case of Ana and Cecilia whose social backgrounds are dissimilar. The section also showed that social mobility in Latin America had a different dynamic to that of Western countries.

The discussion also showed that host States determine the acceptance or marginalisation of refugees legally or culturally. Seen in this context, initial downward socio-economic mobility was only counteracted by political temporariness, it either cushioned the impact of downward socio-economic mobility or pressured refugees to take this type of job vis-à-vis imminent return. But, if downward socio-economic mobility downgraded middle-class Chileans, this does not explain why working-class men in exile also experienced downgrading. The next section will explore this issue as another form of social downgrading and its relation with prospective return.

4.1.2 Loss of status: from *Unidad Popular* (UP) to exile

Before discussing this issue it is important to stress that status here is understood as positive or negative social positioning with respect to social prestige, hence, it should not be confused with class. In a Weberian sense there is a clear conceptual distinction. Class and status are different forms of social stratification that exert 'their effects through quite different social processes or mechanisms, and that alike need recognition if a full understanding of the structuring of social inequality is to be obtained' (Wing Chan and Goldthorpe 2007:2). The theoretical premise is that not only class and occupation provide negative or positive privilege but so does the status order. Further, when a

dimension of power is introduced into the analysis two distinctive but interconnected spheres of social life appear: the public and the private realms with their respective statuses and roles.

Existing research literature on migrants suggests that it is often men who lose most status as a result of migration (Pessar 1986; Buijs 1993; Jones-Correa 1998) and equally after flight (Sales and Gregory 1998; Matsuoka and Sorenson 1999, Griffiths 2002). Both bodies of literature resonate with the Chilean case (Kay 1982; Eastmond 1989). This literature depicts men's roles of domination, authority and active providers as threatened. This study adds the loss of political masculinity. Of the employed men interviewed for this study, it was clear that this loss was felt more strongly by those living in the West. This included highly politicised men such as the late Pedro who had three teenage children. In his case, status loss was more related to his role as provider than as a political person because he still held a relatively important Party role. Pedro's status loss was related to his patriarchal authority in the family. His masculinity, authority as a father, head of the family and financial provider were challenged not by downward social mobility or unemployment but by the German consumerist society and peer pressure associated with it,

I earned lots of money in Germany but the children were a sponge and so the money never went far enough because "it has to be Nike, it has to be Lee, it has to have stripes, that the T shirt must be such and such." So when we got together for Christmas the issue (cuestión) of presents was a real nightmare because the three kids said: "well how much money are you going to give me to buy Christmas presents?" so I gave them each 100 marks and they said "well with that shit (huevá) we cannot buy anything!" and then they said "if you cannot give us more money leave home" Imagine! Your own children asking you to 'leave home' because you could not give them more money, so I said CHAO! (BYE!). I think that they had to show off (aparentar) in front of the German kids, that they were the best and that they had more, and things like that. I talked to them several times about this and they told me "we have to arrive with the whole ensemble because otherwise it is very hard for us." Then things got so intolerable that one of the measures I adopted – so I didn't have to fight with them any more – was to interact with them through the Youth Defense organisations.

Another form of status loss was related to participation in the public sphere. With few exceptions, Chilean exiles were directly or indirectly engaged in the UP's national project. For most, their professional, occupational and political status stemmed from their positioning within this political project. When reflecting about who had been more damaged by the military coup, Alfonsina said,

In a sense men were more affected than women because they had a project as machos, their socio-political projects are more robust than those of women because of their manly nature. Women were a bit secondary (segundonas). Men were really damaged because it was a political project they had created, because, like it or not, they have constructed society...

Alfonsina's comment points to the masculinist nature of the UP project. It involved public masculine institutions such as the State, Parties and trade unions, three crucial political pillars for the *Six Year Plan* reforms. By addressing historical inequalities, the UP's overall intent was to improve the disadvantaged position of the poor, mainly peasants and working-class, raising their wages, improving working conditions, and permitting them access to land, health care and education. Yet, this was a gendered process.

Historically, Chilean women had participated in the emancipation movements and feminist Parties (Kirkwood 1986) as well as in the working-class mass movement struggles of the first decades of the nineteenth century (Vitale 1981). Besides, the slow but remarkable advances made by middle-class women throughout the twentieth century resulted in a large number of professional women (Klimpel 1962). Notwithstanding the above, women's status was determined by class, education, employment, income, social and political participation yet ruled by the prevailing gender ideology that in Latin America ascribes a higher status to men. This ideology was dominated by ideas such as domesticity, male superiority and authoritarianism (Mattelart and Mattelart 1968; Gissi 1980) and rooted in an essentialist social construction of gender. The construction of this powerful gender ideology has its history in colonial Latin America. In a process that started with the violent gendered Spanish conquest in which *machismo* – as a discourse of hypermasculinity and male superiority over females – originated (Vásquez and Araujo 1990) and reinforced during the colonial period, the Catholic Church was a key institution in the redefinition of patriarchy. In the context of Iberian influence, the Catholic Church was an important agent of ideological-cultural transmitter (Gissi 1980). In its ideological expression, Catholicism, particularly since the nineteenth century, in an alliance with conservative oligarchies sustained a definitive power in relation to family and the reproductive rights of women (Luna 2002). Thus, the hegemonic trilogy gender ideology, Catholic Church and family was, from the outset, at the core of Latin American society. As such, gender ideology is not something that is easily eradicated and so efforts to initiate change by integrating women into the socialist project were confronted with this powerful trilogy. The rigid gender ideology and its *machismo* counterpart remained fairly intact during the UP period to the extent that Gissi (1980) argued that it was detrimental to the participation of women in the UP project. Even the more revolutionary projects felt the weight of this ideology. A telling example was provided by exiled/returnee historian Luis Vitale (1979:122) who while in prison at the Chacabuco concentration camp, carried out an inquiry among fellow male prisoners regarding changes in women workers' behaviour during the UP. He found that despite working-class women's active participation and commitment in *Cordones Industriales* and freer ways of social interaction with men, when they took the initiative to invite them for a meal at a restaurant or to the cinema, 'Leftist men acknowledged that they were incapable of overcoming their "machista" conceptions. They got upset because women went to Party, trade union or neighbourhood meetings thus, not fulfilling their maternal or domestic roles such as having a meal on time or their husband's washing ready as before.'

A less well-known way of integrating women into the national project was through the aborted *Servicio Social Obligatorio* (see Tinsman 2002), an initiative to include women from the poorest sectors of society with the purpose of taking them out of the restrictive sphere of the home and train them to play a role in society. In the process, it attempted to redress the dominant gender ideology and elevate women's status in society. The purpose was to contest the hegemony of a strong patriarchal capitalist society where culturally and legally the woman had an inferior status to the man, particularly

the married woman who under the 1857 Civil Code was defined as a legal minor thereby giving men control of family life and property. Progressive and Leftist middle-class women were crucial in the incorporation of working-class women. María, the upper middle-class feminist lawyer who returned in 1987, was in charge of *Servicio Social Obligatorio* which according to her, aimed at 'ending the pervasive machismo in Chile.' She then added that,

As a legal advisor of the Ministry of Justice and of Allende and of many other beautiful projects like women's equal rights and the right to divorce – today in vogue, I tell you – all of them were born out of our project. It was a splendorous time for women. Remember that there was so much abuse against women and that the married woman was considered as incapable as a child or insane! That was the legal situation of women in Chile then and that was my banner. I had a lot of support from Allende. We discussed all of those things and made lots of publicity and later had meetings with women, but it was an epoch of many disputes and I tell you [whispering] all the Leftist men were such machistas that you had to be a coquettish feminist, (toda arregladita), I told my colleagues that you had to be coquettish to get your views across, if not they thought that you were sad and that you didn't like men....

Contrary to Salinas' (2000) argument that educational advances mediated this rigid gender ideology, María's narrative reveals that not even progressive professional women were free from its rigidity and that, even during a socialist political project, Leftist men persisted to be *machistas*. Certainly, the maleness of the UP project both empowered and enhanced men's political masculine prestige. In this study, not a single female conversational partner failed to mention *machismo* as a negative experience,²¹ either in their narratives of exile or of return. Conversely, not a single elite male respondent mentioned *machismo* once. All of them had returned under NSDS and were nation-builders. Only four men touched the issue rather carefully but none of them challenged their own manliness. For example, when bluntly asked: As a man, how did you feel in that society? [US]...Did you experience changes? Upper-middle-class Mariano responded *I do not have that vision as a man, I do not know what you mean*. Only an hour later when talking about male doctors' arrogance (*prepotencia*) in Chile, he suddenly pointed to an issue highlighted by Jorge Pinto (1996) in his essay on Chilean northern men: Chilean women reproduction of *machismo*.

That thing of machismo...well... I think that we carry on being machistas, our formation was machista and it was women who shaped us (nos formaron) machistas. Soledad [his wife] has shaped her children machistas...

Conversely, working-class men pointed to the emancipatory argument of women's gains in exile and the influence of Western feminism. As a Party leader involved in its private intricacies, Pedro sarcastically commented that in West Germany,

Machismo did not persist. Women worked, men didn't. The woman started to work, dyed her hair blonde and bought a synthetic fur coat and when the man asked her "and that shit?" (¿y esa guevía?), she answered "it's my money because I earned it and I do whatever I want with my money" and all this because there were the other German women hammering into them (metiéndole en la cabeza) that machismo here and the other thing there (que la cuestión aquí y allá), etc.

²¹ Contemporary discussions on *machismo* in Latin America have challenged this cultural stereotype and include its 'positive' traits (Hardin 2002).

Sergio, a working-class car mechanic, whose marital difficulties got worse in his first resettlement country (Argentina), and ended up in separation in his second (Sweden), is another case in point. Similarly to Pedro, he 'blamed' the opportunities that Western European countries 'offered' to working-class women. His point anticipates a fact to be discussed below, marriages were already failing before exit. *We separated when we were in Sweden because our marriage arrived wounded there. In Sweden women saw that there were other possibilities and that harmed our marriage more because women have lots of support there, it's a country that provides a lot support to women.*

These accounts reveal the pervasiveness of a gender ideology that has lately been reshaped as *neomachismo* (Montecino 2008). Despite Allende's keen support for women's demands he was not only fighting the Right but also the diehard supporters of the traditional patriarchal ideology of UP leaders. Although Allende managed to establish the *Secretaría Nacional de la Mujer* (National Women's Secretariat) this was a highly partisan and doomed entity. More importantly, among of the forty measures of the UP Programme was the creation of the Ministry for the Protection of the Family. Though this Ministry was blocked in Congress by the Right, this points to the importance of the preservation of the family. The emphasis on the institution of the family provides evidence for this study's claim, namely, the historical hegemony of the family in Chilean society even during 'progressive' times. In sum, in its brief existence, the UP government failed to alter the powerful predominant patriarchal gender ideology.

The resilience of motherhood

Following the above discussion, the primary identity and status left for women was, to use Lagarde's (1993) term, that of *madresposas* (motherwives). Women carried it with them into exile. The cultural construct of *Marianism* (see Stevens 1973; Melhuus and Stølen 1996; Navarro 2002) that stems from Catholicism, is the ideal of the binomial women-mother and as such venerated as something sacred. 'Maternity', argues Valenzuela (1987:74) 'is associated to the very essence of the woman, almost as a synonym of her sex, and the quality that allows her to acquire spirituality and a superior moral category with respect to men. In this ideology of motherhood, adds Valenzuela, 'she acquires a 'social stature' through her reproductive capacity more than her personal characteristics as individual.' This 'maternalist' discourse found throughout Latin America, has been internalised by the very women, because according to Luna (2002:5), 'the maternal representation contains a symbology in which acknowledgement and influence are mixed.' Hence, this symbol is thought from different perspectives, some oppressive and others emancipating (Montecino 1991). Chilean women's 'destiny' as wives and mothers has been ideologically articulated by distinct political interests particularly by Pinochet's NSDS but also by progressive socialists such as Luis Emilio Recabarren, the founder of the Chilean labour movement and according to Vidal (1972) the pioneer of Chilean women's emancipation. At the turn of the nineteenth century Recabarren praised the working woman for joining the social struggle to support socialist men. In 1906 he wrote 'Women were to aid men in their struggle, while men's duty was to help women fulfil their destiny as wives and mothers.' Recabarren

was not only praising working-class women in their *madresposa* roles in the revolutionary process, but also the patriarchal working-class family, the centre of the working-class movement of the early nineteenth century.

Thus, not only gender relations were transported 'unexamined' into exile (Kay 1982) but principally, the underexplored link between motherhood and the hegemonic institution of the family. Most studies on refugee women and gender relations (Bright 1992; Freire 1993; Matsuoka and Sorenson 1999, to name a few) and Chileans in particular (Kay 1982; Vera 1991; Eastmond 1993) have highlighted the role played by the continuity of women's statuses as wives and mothers and it is precisely the latter that provides them strength. Although marriages entered into a 'crisis' in exile, a point discussed below, the centrality of the motherhood identity was a continuum throughout pre-exile, flight and exile. On return, the apprehensive narratives of this study's female respondents indicate that motherhood was an even more salient identity.

One category of women who saw their family life and motherhood identity challenged was that of highly politicised women embarking in 'resistance return.' At the time of thinking of returning clandestinely, women's competing identities as mothers and militants conflicted. Children became a barrier as they could not be taken back to Chile. Thus, when fleeing the country, a handful of resolute militant women decided to leave their offspring behind before entering the country either legally or clandestinely. These were mainly MIR's 'vanguardistas' (Vidaurrázaga 2005) though there were other women who left Chile without their children such as the iconic case of clandestine PC leader Gladys Marín who could not see hers. Those who had taken their children to the *exterior* or had them there, collectivised the agonising tension 'armed struggle-motherhood-returnism' by eventually accepting the solution proposed by their Party; they left their children in Cuba in the care of 'social parents' (*Proyecto Hogares* in Cuba, for example), while they received military training to return clandestinely and engage in underground political and/or military resistance (Muñoz 2003; Vidaurrázaga 2005). In some cases, the issue was discussed as a couple but it was women who finally took the decision. According to Vidaurrázaga, the three MIR women she studied opted for 'resistance motherhood.' Marcela's experience illustrates this argument. She was a middle-class highly politicised MIR militant who, after being imprisoned for seven months became a 'Decree refugee'. This repressive experience enhanced her political convictions and was a catalyst in her determination to return clandestinely. After expulsion, she went to Mexico where she had a child with a Party *compañero*. Marcela's strongly held beliefs in MIR's political cause and identification with MIR's resistance call for *Operación Retorno*, to which we will return later, confronted her with a crucial gendered barrier, the overcoming of motherhood to join MIR's clandestine work,

When we had Carla we talked a lot about her because we both took the decision to return. Then in that sense since she was born we were thinking about with whom we would eventually leave her. There were three possibilities: with my aunts in Chile, my sister in Canada or simply in Cuba. I took the final decision and he agreed. The two of us decided to return clandestinely because both of us were forbidden to do so otherwise so we left our three year old daughter under the care of his parents who were also in Mexico and when we agreed to take the decision to return to Chile, they decided to move to Cuba in order for our child to have better health care and education. The only project we had was that our

daughter would be much safer there. From there each one of us returned clandestinely but independently...

But Marcela's experience was in the minority when compared to the *un millón* or even the 200,000-250,000 later figure of Chilean exiles. If family and motherhood were politically and more so revolutionary challenged, class added another dimension. According to Vera's (1985) study in Holland, the more educated exiled women questioned the motherhood hegemonic model while working-class tended to respect it fully. Similarly, Vásquez and Araujo's (1990:147-149) study in France reported that it was mainly middle-class Chilean exile women who acquired the conscience of 'being a woman.' Yet, this generalised female positive view of exile should be seen with caution and begs the question: why did women return to Chile if exile was so positive and emancipatory for them? This study suggests that hegemonic constructions of motherhood vary with age, class and race. Hence, some women in exile in their respective social and political locations may subvert this hegemonic model, particularly the young middle-class generation. Among this study's respondents a distinct category emerged. These were women with unchallenged monolithic notions of motherhood and family. This is comprised of the more mature exiled (30 and over) and working-class women who never had fully conflicting and ambiguous feelings about motherhood even when many of them acquired economic autonomy; their life projects would be circumscribed to it. The power with which hegemonic institutions such as the Catholic Church have invested motherhood and the family is often less challenged by these women even considering women's advances noted earlier; quite the opposite, they value their motherhood even more in the face of exile's uneasiness. Unlike Western scholar Sara Ruddick (1994), who views female identity beyond motherhood, Lagarde (1993:379) has reminded us that in Latin American culture the fundamental role that women should perform to qualify as such is that of being 'mother': 'The first labour is the symbolic ritual of the birth of the real woman: the mother.'

Indeed, Chilean women continued to mother and cherish their children, a commitment shared with other refugee women (Franz 2003) and with Latina 'transnational mothers' (Hondagneu-Sotelo and Avila 1997). In this study, the intersection of single-parenthood and age enhanced motherhood. Ana for instance, was thirty-six when she left for the US with her eight-year old son Marc. In her accounts, Marc became the centre of her life and his wellbeing and schooling ruled her existence. During her difficult initial exile nobody knew of her whereabouts until she was found by Camilo, an exiled Chilean Catholic priest who dedicated his time helping fellow Chilean refugees.²² He and another priest invited both to Disneyland on a Thanksgiving Day. When describing her harsh experiences of imprisonment, persecution, flight and their later arrival to the Agape Foundation refugee camp and their impact on Marc, Ana became very emotional. In a veil of tears she said:

First I have to tell you that my son did not understand a thing. He cried from the airport until our arrival in Perú, but he did not cry, he cried in a tantrum, uncontrollable, obviously, he was abandoning his childhood kingdom, his school, his aunties, his school, his bike, his everything! I was so scared that my son would breakdown. Then he was so exhausted that he

²² Because of the 1980s' US policy of refusing refugee status to those fleeing US Cold War ally States, some Catholic sanctuaries such as that of Father Muriarte were welcomed. Ana was sheltered and protected by him.

fell asleep the rest of the flight. We then arrived to that refugee camp and this was my impression...A wooden staircase, all these huge warehouses in which there were lots of Asian women, that I did not know from where they were, all of them breastfeeding, surrounded by flies, with a number of malnourished children dressed with a thin T-shirt or even naked and with lots of threads on their wrists and ankles...They were escaping the Vietnam War and came from refugee camps in Malaysia, full of skin problems all over, you see? We ate rice at breakfast, lunch, afternoon and evening!.... Then came that old lady of the beeed pan...to be honest with you I do not know if Marc enjoyed the day, maybe some things but I?... I didn't... It wasn't Disneyland that impressed me (crying inconsolably) but...it was the chance of going out with Marc for the first time in months of isolation and hell. We did suffer but children? I tell you, Marc lost his childhood from the moment he left Chile, it only lasted until he was eight.

Studies have sustained that mother's roles have been redefined in exile (Eastmond 1989; Bloch et al. 2000), however, refugee women maternal attitudes during flight and later in exile and more so on return, have received no attention. Return to a Latin American gendered milieu highlights such attitudes. Interestingly, most female conversational partners talked extensively about their children in exile and on return more than two decades after events happened and many of them recalled experiences in their most detailed manner. Filomena for example, added the pre-exile scenario, that is, early 1978. Her husband was arrested in January 1974 and remained at the Silva Palma garrison for two months. Despite being traumatised after this experience, they decided to remain in Chile until new pressures from SIN forced them to leave Chile in 1978. Three months after her husband's departure for Colombia, her father paid for her's and her two young daughters' airline tickets. In general, flight, is associated with a hasty departure, but this is not always so. The process of sorting and clearing a house before departing for exile as part of flight is seldom mentioned despite its gendered relevance. As seen, in many cases, men left first so this task was left to women. Filomena's accounts provide a connection between the ambivalent decision to leave, the sorting out of household contents, friends and family's belief in *political temporariness* and how oblivious she was of her children's exit experience.

The decision to leave was a decision that WE took because we could have remained in Chile It was not a well-thought, calculated and free decision as you force (arrastras) your children. It is above all an adult decision, it is very traumatic and painful because one always carries that strange and absurd feeling of guilt, something that one should not have done especially when it is related to your children...I arrived with a couple of suitcases and two daughters because you have to dispose of all the things you love and if you think and reflect about it, is worse. I wanted my things to stay in friends' hands, so to every single friend that passed through my house I said "take this, take that or that" but they told me "Filomena, you are giving everything away, you will have nothing when you come back." But it was this desperation that you had to leave and that you have to dispose of your things. In the middle of this madness I did not realise what my daughters were putting in a bag. On our way to the airport, my eldest daughter was carrying a big doll that she had received for Christmas it was bigger than her and a doll's pram that she did not want to leave behind. How were you going to forbid her to leave or take everything? My other daughter was dragging and dragging a very heavy bag...When we arrived in Colombia and in calmer times I asked her "what did you bring in that heavy bag?" That tells you how traumatic everything had been that I did not pause for a second to think what she was taking in that bag that she did not want to let go of. Well, that bag was full of little remnants...I have no idea how they did it!. Those bits of fabrics were like their treasure because they used to make dresses and tablecloths for their dolls and for their furniture they used matchsticks. It still impresses me (crying) because you don't know about how children's reasoning works in such a traumatic moment, what for them was very important, for me was a stupidity. What I want to tell you with this "anecdote" is that these "details" indicate how dreadful it must have been for them

to leave, I cannot imagine what those moments must have meant for them, what they were thinking – maybe they thought it was an outing – I really don't know what was crossing their little minds at the moment of departure (in tears).

Motherhood also constituted a tool to scrutinise Parties 'policies' on families' political resettlement and ensuing costs. For Cecilia, who spent her exile in East Germany, Bulgaria and finally back in France, the separation of the family ordered by '*the Chilean organisations who took superstructural decisions where families had to go to one place and the children to another,*' the later suicide of her teenage daughter in 1975 were devastating experiences for her. When talking about the circumstances that led to her daughter's suicide, Cecilia acknowledged that she already had some problems in Chile but it was her losses in exile that culminated first in anorexia and then in her suicide:

...but above all what really got at her was the fact that she had to leave her country, let's say that because she was a very active young Communist and so her life evolved around her lycee – she was a very good student – and the 'Jota' (Communist Youth). Suddenly, she got there and found herself without her lycee and the 'Jota' and then she sank and sank. And soon they took us from one country to another so she was always leaving something behind. That was terrible, to be honest, that was a disaster...

Although Cecilia did not want to expand on this, her point regarding Parties' resettlement policies is important. In Carlos Cerda's novel *To Die in Berlin* (1999:61) this issue is more explicit. At the time of writing it he had already left the PC. In the novel, the Bureau (*la Oficina*) the superior organisation above all Communist militants decided and agreed over issues in exile: 'Once adopted there are no majority or minority votes. Resolutions should be informed but never of the talks that lead to those decisions' (see also Pérez 1996).

The cost of leaving children for the purposes of resistance return was high for Marcela. In total, she was separated from her daughter for ten years with the added aggravation that her clandestine husband had been killed by the NSDS in December 1984. *I went to Cuba in 1989 and we were reunited. I realised that those ten years of separation had ...[very emotional]... It was impossible that she would travel back with me, she didn't know me. The few letters we exchanged [in tears]...I was a stranger for her and the grandparents had created a very difficult situation too because I had another partner. So my little girl could not take the decision to leave Cuba with a stranger that on top of that had formed another family, you understand? [crying]. I think that the mother's role is CRUCIAL! It is unique, unique and extraordinary even if you are the worst mother! I missed that and the deprivation is there.*

Marta also lost a daughter through cancer. In her study of exiled adolescents from the Southern Cone, Vásquez (1980) noted that the first stage of exile was lived by them in isolation and sadness. Marta's case illustrates this. She admired her children who, according to her *could adapt through suffering*. Referring to the late Magdalena's initial time in exile, Marta sorrowfully remembered: *Magdalena told us that sometimes when she crossed the road she did it with the hope that a car would come and finish with her because she couldn't cope any longer...She named the language centre she attended 'Little Hell' and I was always anxious about her returning home safe and well*. Upper-middle class women exiled in Latin America were even more apprehensive. María who had three children, found

that Venezuela is a beautiful country, the first day of the creation! But it is very violent and that worried me for the children's safety. To tell you the truth I always felt that my children were in constant danger in Venezuela. I did not even allow them to go to the corner shop to buy the newspaper; I didn't because it was so dangerous! They had an imprisoned childhood (*infancia prisionera*), they could not go out on their own, they were so dependent on us. Laura's three small girls in Colombia also had an *infancia prisionera*, that simultaneously turned her into an imprisoned mother and into what Silva-Labarca (1981) termed the "mother-sacrifice" model:

My life in exile was flat (plana). I was confined to the home all the time because you know Colombia is a very dangerous country and the girls were so little. That is why I first started a nursery and then a furniture shop in the house. It is not that I liked to make furniture, but because Leopoldo was working so hard and dedicated so many hours to the solidarity work with Chile, I could not count with him. We lived in the first floor and the shop was on the ground floor. So I always look for ways of staying with them. I was caring for the girls all day, what I mean is that everything was dictated by their safety so nothing would happen to them.

This evidence suggests that upper middle-class women were more open to say that they were afraid of the dangers that exile ills posed to their children than women from other social standing. Another category was that constituted by abandoned women, a historically common experience in Latin America (Peralta 1971:63-64), and not uncommon in exile. Lucía was one of them. Despite the traumatic experience of separation and abandonment in exile, she talked extensively about how she managed to provide for her two children, make them happy and manage a successful career as an anthropologist in Ecuador.

I had a husband who was a bit of everything: an anthropologist, an eccentric and a party-goer (parrandero), well, no wonder that he left me. After he left me, I managed to cope on my own, I managed! I had wonderful friends and colleagues and all that helped. Unlike Chileans, Ecuadorians are warm, practice solidarity (solidarios) and are very helpful people. Despite all that I endured there I was happy in Ecuador, you understand?

Self-acknowledgement on 'good' motherhood despite exile's uneasiness, were not uncommon among female respondents mainly when regarding the successful education of their children. Soledad was extremely pleased to have spoken to her children in Spanish while in the US and see how successful they are now because of their bilingualism. They now hold high-status bilingual posts in that country: *I never spoke in English at home and so my children are bilingual, they speak a fantastic Spanish and that is why my eldest son won a place at Berkeley and the good jobs he has had after that is because he masters the two languages and my daughter studied Art at UCLA and then she did a Master in Education and she is now in charge of the university bilingual program for the students and my youngest son is studying Economics.* Likewise, Ana was pleased and delighted because: *I made two investments in exile, my son's education something I did for his future and that worked for me, because it doesn't for others, he ended up at Berkeley, and the other, is that car that is being locked up in the garage....*

Contrary to most criticisms from Western feminists on the 'passive' and uncritical acceptance of these roles by Latin American 'political mothers' (except Schirmer 1993), migrant women roles as wives and mothers have allowed them to manipulate family ideology in their favour (Chamberlain 2006). In

the case of forced migration whereby repression, disruption and upheaval are the markers, family and children provided a meaningful life in exile, a sense of continuity, purpose, and as Agger and Jensen (1993) noted a 'source of strength', and even of 'home' and belonging (Einhorn 2000b). In her work with Dominican migrant women in the US, Pessar (1986:276) noted that '[e]ven as a "bird of passage" women may be metaphorically compared to an actual bird which carries in its genetic makeup the capacity and proclivity to construct a nest wherever it goes.' According to Chilean writer Isabel Allende (2005:209) 'we have a very developed nest instinct.' This maternal attitude was present in most of this study's female respondents whereby motherhood makes 'home' anywhere. This gendering of 'home' is illustrated by middle-class Marta, who with almost finished university architecture studies withdrew from them at the beginning of her marriage. Within four months of her husband Bernardo leaving Chile for Japan, she joined him with their five children in June 1974. Their exile in Japan was a complex experience so after eighteen months Bernardo applied for a job in England where they stayed until 1989. It was here that Marta had all her children with her for the longest period. Once their children were adults, Bernardo was offered a more rewarding professional position in France and Marta followed him to Marseille. Out of these three sites of exile Marta considered England her 'home'. If for her husband Bernardo *Chile* is his definite 'home', for her, 'home' was not geographically rooted,

Look, at a given moment, I felt different to Bernardo. My home was England. I had my hearth there because I had my five children with me, I had my nest. That is I thought, 'may be I will remain here for the rest of my life.' I had no identity there but I had my nest. That is why I am very fond of England because I made my home there, because I had all my children with me there. But then, from the moment Camila [one of her daughters] did not want to root herself in England and decided to return to Chile in 1985 my soul turned to Chile.

When looking for gendered factors in return decisions, one of the aspects that caused severe distress among most of this study's working female respondents was related to their children and strained motherhood roles. It has been repeated *ad nauseum* that employment in exile/migration liberates women. However, the cost women pay remains unexplored. This euphoria may be illusory and only based on transitory rewards. For most working female respondents in this study, one of the most worrying aspects was their long absence from home and their children and more importantly, their concern that their children had to cope on their own. In child-uncentred capitalist industrial societies such as Sweden for example, where child rearing is not mystified (O'Kelly and Carney 1986), women experienced additional problems. The literature suggests that Nordic countries were rather problematic. Sweden was most difficult for parents and primarily for mothers (see Raquel's accounts in Politzer 1989). Working-class Rosalba in Stockholm saw her first marriage's two daughters grow up in a society that unlike Latin America has no cult for motherhood. She raised them as a Latin mother though with unexpected results. Equal to the case of refugee mothers in Denmark (Agger and Jensen 1993) and Dominican migrant mothers in the US (Guarnizo 1997a), Rosalba's eldest teenage daughter rebelled. Because Rosalba used some form of physical disciplining, in a country that she did not know considered it illegal, her parental authority and more so her motherhood authority was drastically challenged by the intervention of the powerful Swedish welfare state. Swedish society's empowerment of children against parental abuse challenged a common authoritarian practice in Chile.

Rosalba's eldest daughter reported her mother's physical abuse with tragic consequences for Rosalba, her daughter was put into care. Distressed by both the erosion of her motherhood authority and control over her children and the loss of one of them, she said:

Look, you really work hard there. The worst part is when one has to decide that both have to work. That makes life harder because you have to leave your children alone for long periods whereas in Chile your children can be looked after in nurseries or crèches or even by your family. You had the right to work normal hours there and children spend long hours on their own and the girls are the same as boys, they also take to the streets, the discotheque, their friends. In my case, I tell you, my eldest daughter became strong-willed and when she was 12 she left home...to the street, to the disco, to her friends and when I presented myself to the police to give notice that my daughter had left home they told me that if it "was her decision, they could do nothing." And when one insists on the return of one's child home they asked you "Why?" Then the social part intervenes, psychologists and social workers start investigating whether the girl has problems or if you had punished her and if you do, forget it! The State can take your child away for anything that they consider damaging to the child, for example if you slap your child there (le das una cachetada) and she accuses you, you won't see your child again. Really, one loses one's authority as mother there (autoridad de madre). [crying]

A less tragic experience was that of Margarita who spent her exile in West Germany. Because she and her husband worked long hours, they left their two children alone. Return highlighted even more the motherly uneasiness of exile. Despite the myriad problems they endured after return, she preferred the latter to those faced in West Germany,

Despite all the problems we have had, I am happy to be in Chile again because in one way or another we have been able to be closer to our children, something that one couldn't do abroad. When I had to leave for work my daughter started having tummy aches, 'please don't go to work mum.' I was crying all the way to work and I did not want to carry on doing that. Even when we have been experiencing some economic hardship (pellejerías) here we have been with them, accompanying them, though we quarrel more often because we are much closer here. Whatever you say...This is priceless! I won't change this for the financial security in Germany. I am not interested. I am happy here because I have been able to be with them. We do not need to have them with a key round their necks as working parents do in Germany.

4.2 Men, gender, politics and loss of status in exile

Chilean men arriving in exile had a somewhat ambivalent profile. In the public sphere they profited from a positive public image. Their visibility and positive evaluation as someone who has fought for the liberation of his country and democracy (Neves-Xavier De Brito 1986) stereotyped Chilean refugee men as strongly masculine. 'The myth of the Latin American *guerrillero*, helped to make the Latin American exile accepted and even valued by an important sector of the population, so that, even dispossessed of power, he is seen positively' (Vásquez 1982:85). This public view derived from the fact that Leftist men's masculinity was empowered and politics more than employment provided a key source of masculine status and prestige either as political leaders, trade unionists, political party militants, activists, or simply as men supporting the UP project. Upper-middle and middle class Leftist men had held highly prestigious government, bureaucratic, professional, intellectual and political positions; once in exile they constituted what Bolzman (1989) called 'elite' exiles. With the expansion of the State, some lower middle-class men had had access to newly created government posts such as *interventores*, (people in charge of statified industries and land). Working-class leaders also enjoyed

high status positions in trade unions, labour and peasant movements. Thanks to the implementation and/or radicalisation of previous reforms, urban working men as well as peasant men had been favoured and their status rose. The Agrarian Reform, for example, favoured almost exclusively men as heads of household (Deere 1985). By improving men's salaries considerably and giving men access to land, the reform empowered their masculinity as providers and heads of the family. Despite the fact that women also benefited from the Agrarian Reform in a certain manner, it left the principle of men's authority over women fundamentally unchallenged (Tinsman 2002).

Certainly, during the UP Leftist men 'lived' in the public sphere sustained by a very high socio/political status where their political identity was important. Men's family statuses as husband and father were totally subordinated to their political and employment status despite UP's efforts for more gender mutualism (Tinsman 2002). In general, and with few exceptions, particularly for the less politicised women, the UP experience was considered one of the best periods in peoples' lives (Bolzman 1996), but this, was a gendered experience. Though most women in this study were also involved in the UP project either directly or indirectly, it was men who were more recognised and involved. For them politics both shaped and ruled their lives. Ricardo Garrido said: *I have been fundamentally shaped by politics. I am a political animal even not being an alchemist of politics 100%. But I live, think, dream, and have nightmares with politics [laughs] and not for the family because I have never have had nightmares with the family. Obviously, I am talking in relative terms, because there are problems with the family too, but not big ones, luckily. Politics is like a fiancée (novia) because as a partner it brings you lots of problems [laughs].* Every medium-term married woman (married for at least four years) in this study's sample mentioned the partial or total absence of the family man during the effervescent political days of the UP. These were three years of intense commitment and political life in what Arrate and Rojas (2003) called an 'immense collective passion.' Laura's experience is a telling example of how her husband's consuming militant life proved to be,

A few years ago I calculated that I had been separated from Leopoldo a third of my marriage, first because he was the General Secretary of the Party and he left for Santiago. Then, two months after the coup he sought asylum in the embassy of Colombia where he stayed for nine months and then while we were in Colombia he had two jobs: his profession and solidarity work. I didn't see him but at weekends and even then we organised so many activities in solidarity with Chile that we were both very busy as I also participated in that.

The 'Chilean Road to Socialism' was an exhilarating historical, political, social and cultural period in Chile. If politics and the many artistic forms were taken to the countryside, *poblaciones*, universities and land seizures in the late 1960s, the optimism of the period 1970-1973 tripled these activities. Consequently, men who were engaged in politics distanced themselves from family life and duties; the 'absent father' figure (Montecino 1991) continued. Masculinity was solely based in political activities, and as Chapter Three revealed an easy target to annihilate men. Elite politician Luis Maira, an IC leader and UP parliamentarian illustrates this perfectly, 'From the first year at university politics permeated my existence, it was a superior commitment. Afterwards I entered Congress and for the next eight years I had a 24 hour activism for 365 days a year. In the end it was a life that collapsed and an alternative one didn't 'exist' (in Zerán 1991:88). We should not forget that before Allende's

government political effervescence was *in crescendo* and more people engaged with the Left. Frei's Christian Democratic administration (1964-1970) allowed the formation of a network of trade unions and committees that allowed shanty-town dwellers, workers and peasants to participate in their demands. Also, and because of political disaffection, new Leftist political coalitions emerged, such as MAPU in 1969. During the UP, the Left grew even more. Support for the socialist project attracted more students, workers and peasants as well as developing alternative political and ideological ways of action (Arrate and Rojas 2003). Leftist men who identified and worked for the UP project elevated their statuses in an unprecedented manner (Deere 1985; Tinsman 2002). By criticising the UP project as 'reformist', those outside it, such as revolutionary MIR militants, heralded an even higher masculine identity.

The coup however, shattered all Leftist men's privileged statuses and produced a different gender power balance. As Chapter Three showed, the military coup meant total disruption for Leftist men and above all 'political defeat'. Muñoz (2006:83) noted that 'the military coup marked the boundaries between involvement and exclusion.' From being prominent social actors they were displaced from their statuses 'as political actors and breadwinners both important for male identity and self respect among Chileans' (Eastmond 1989:38). Overnight, power relations between men changed. Leftist men's varied locus of political masculine pride was eroded, either as bureaucrat, political activist, trade unionist, cadre or Party militant. The idea of political defeat and not military defeat in which Gazmuri (2000) insists is important because it shows not only the constitutional nature of the UP project but also the lack of military response and resistance. It is as if men's political masculinity was not manly enough to respond to military action. Chilean men's political status and erosion of their masculinity was bluntly depicted by Oses (1996:35-6):

'... (the coup) tested the old *machista* national culture. The sad *machos* are the subordinate *machos*, they have the obligation to behave, if not, soon other more powerful *machos* will take over, they have machine guns and tanks and they are the only ones who can go out at night. The other ones are the *machos* under curfew, who obediently have to go back to their little homes and lock themselves with their wives and children. In this manner the sad *macho* has been overwhelmed and has no possibility to raise his head... '

Yet, the picture is more complex. Although the regime had turned Leftist men into enemies the peripheral society and more so the *interior*, glorified those who had experienced DR and regarded them as heroes to whom their women had to be fervently loyal (López Zarzosa 1998). This public view however, was mediated by exile. Exile constituted a boundary where men's statuses as heroes was scrutinised. Despite the positive image, once in exile masculine statuses were easily lost. Defeat as political humiliation together with exile carried the meaning of loss of honour for men. According to Freire (1993:6) 'in facing exile, all situations are experienced as more punitive, more depriving, more humiliating and more degrading for them. For the men with high verbal skills, high levels of education, and positions of political leadership and public life in the native country, the situation in the new country is devastating.' In strict terms, exile meant political devaluation and loss of hero status. This was vividly illustrated by elite political leader Jaime Gazmuri's (2000:247) transnational political

activities. His experience demonstrates the workings of the peripheral society and the boundaries of heroism. Immediately after the coup he was in charge of the clandestine reconstitution of MAPU-OC in Chile. With the creation of DINA in 1974 repression became more targeted and his security endangered. After some months of severe repression, in July 1975 the Party thought appropriate that he should do a 'political tour' to help enhance international solidarity. It was according to his interviewer, *la gira del "héroe"* (hero's tour). Once in the *exterior*, the *interior* leader was welcomed with open arms and overwhelming solidarity in each of the twelve countries he visited. He was received by high profile political leaders and Presidents, participated in countless meetings with them, other political and trade union organisations and obviously with the exiled. He was a hero who from *the interior* had come to denounce the dictatorship and assist those in the *exterior* in maintaining international solidarity alive and continue in their struggle for return. However, when he returned to his clandestine life in February 1976, repression was at its peak with DINA's more surgical repression against Parties' leaders. He was advised to leave Chile again. With reluctance he went into exile in Rome where MAPU-OC had its headquarters. "I was received well by a few comrades but not with the same enthusiasm of before, because the icon and the hero were finished for them." Patricio Orellana highlighted the transnational links and duties within the peripheral society, that is, between the *exterior* and the *interior*: *I went to Berlin a couple of times and I was received so respectfully and introduced as "the compañero from the interior". So, it was always considered that they [exiles] should be present in the struggle, they couldn't be absent, that there should be a constant relationship.* The *interior* was always reminding the *exterior* that it should 'behave' because exile was a shameful and a politically devaluing option as fear rather than courage prompted it. Only political activities destined to overthrow Pinochet and commitment to return provided the *exterior* with some political value. *Returnism* was validated as a high-profile manly political endeavour.

This factual evidence corroborates the fact that none of the men interviewed referred to loss of political status in exile, particularly those who, by the time of being interviewed, had resumed positions of prominence in political life. Once back in Chile, they tended to erase or obscure the more disagreeable aspects of their life in exile highlighting their participation in exile politics, indefatigable solidarity work, or a retake of political activities on return. Eastmond (1996:245) acknowledges the impact of the political culture that tends to de-emphasise personal experiences where men are more reluctant to reveal painful experiences such as torture. She contends that there is a 'heroic discourse and image of a man as revolutionary and fighter, invulnerable and stoic, never giving up. Admitting pain also implies admitting that their perpetrators had been successful in humiliating the movement.' This was a powerful discourse among Leftist men who resisted physical pain under torture with what Gazmuri (2000) calls 'political intelligence.' Despite the emphasis on the psychological costs of repression and exile (Sundquist et al. 1995; Sundquist and Johansson 1996), men in this study did not want to be seen as defeated and even less so mentally ill. Precisely because their masculinity was at stake they concealed the political humiliation they had experienced under NSDS. Certainly, men were more open to talk about downward socio-economic mobility prior to exile and afterwards but resisted to acknowledge loss of political status in exile. In their accounts, most men recurred to a sort of

'uniqueness', that is, the tendency to counteract their undermined masculinity and the shame of exile and dishonour by invoking the importance of their past political and/or professional status and self, their courage and endurance while in prison or in the process of flight and more so their role in exile politics. Hence, men's narratives were cast in a heroic mode, as lone protagonists. Statements such as *I was one of the few doctors condemned by the War Tribunals* (Mariano), *I was one of the oldest political prisoners in the concentration camp* (Ronaldo), were not uncommon. Leopoldo Acuña, who, as we shall see in Chapter Six, embarked in public return attempts together with other five prominent political leaders forbidden to return, said: *I was the one who invented those return projects*.

At the private level, information provided by many of this study's female respondents add that in fact the loss of men's status was first felt by their own women particularly at the time of coping with daily life in early exile, mainly in Western countries as in Latin America some respondents employed maids. Research on refugee women has demonstrated their resourcefulness, high level of coping and adaptive capacities (Bright 1992; Kibreab 1995; Sales and Gregory 1998). This study is more cautious in this respect as other studies (Schrijvers 1997) have shown that women's strength is paralleled with vulnerability particularly in relation to a shattered but still aggressive masculinity. In this study, when burdened women demanded from men their masculine 'value' against their own sacrifices while they were imprisoned, and when coping with exile, men's hero' status collapsed. Abril, who had placed her husband in a pedestal said,

Jorge knew English better than me because he went to an English school but for some reason he had more difficulties in communicating than me. When the occasion arose that we had to ask for something he said "you ask". Oh!!! I tell you! That really made me ill because I felt that the hero was falling apart, the tortured hero, the imprisoned hero and all that! I felt like if I had a child and when I had my daughter I felt that I had two children and I could not stand that and I told him "For goodness sake!" And I used to put a mirror at him so he could see himself and he felt awful, because he realised that he wasn't important any more, but for me it was important because in me was all that I had sacrificed for him. For me, he fell down as a hero (se me cayó el héroe). He could not fulfil all that I expected from him. Neither he could replace all those dear things I had left behind because of him so, I was judging him all the time and that, is very powerful.

The uneasy relationship between exile and lost political masculinity and how it affected men's status was furthered by Yiya, a lower-middle class housewife who spent her fifteen years of exile in France. She illustrates the extent to which Latin American masculinity was significantly affected by exile as opposed to the idea of 'women's moral superiority' encapsulated in *marianism*. Political temporariness helped her to console her troubled husband. Furthering Abril's comments, she proudly showed her superiority simultaneously acknowledging that patriarchal authority in exile wasn't that challenged,

I think that women are stronger than men. That is my personal experience. In exile, I had to console my husband many, many times and tell him "We are going to overcome this, please do not think that this is going to last much longer, we will return soon, we both want to return, please think that there is not much longer to go and that we have to come out of this". I did this particularly when he was down. Even when I said nothing I was next to him comforting him and giving him support. The man is like a child and I think that the saying 'the man has a child inside him' is true and I think he is like an adolescent [laughs]. While abroad, I knew of many cases of Chilean men's suicide who could not resist...All that tale that they are superior, strong, that is a bluff because society made them like that, particularly

the Latin American man or others from underdeveloped countries because I had many friends from France and other developed countries and they were different. They show their sentiments, their weaknesses. Chilean men take that as if they were not proper men. Chilean men will never cry or show emotions because that is considered a sign of not being sufficiently manly. Latin men wear a shield, but ultimately he is the one that gives orders and wears the trousers.

Still, gender relations were not the only site in which status loss was scrutinised. The added conspicuous idea of guilt consistent with that of Jaspers's (1947/2001:x) particularly 'metaphysical guilt', that is, 'the responsibility that survivors often feel toward those who suffered and died.' In a then predominantly Catholic country like Chile, the notion of sin underpinned any other feeling of guilt. It was 'moral' and 'political' guilt. In scholarly and testimonial accounts found in the literature on Chilean exile, guilt is viewed in two forms. First, as a feeling of regret, 'Not only for having felt the weight of the law and the humiliation of departure, but also because one could not share death or heroic prison with those who stayed behind' (Vásquez and Araujo 1990:10). Secondly, as a transitory feeling which is only overcome by the courage and commitment to struggle. As Arrate (2007:165) metaphorically put it, 'For many, guilt, the malignant cost that has to be paid for having escaped the hunting-party, was relativised with the speculation that departure was not a renouncement but a halt to carry on fighting. To leave Chile was like taking shelter under an awning from a heavy rainfall and when it was over to continue walking.' Again, stayees will always judge the exiled. According to Arrate (*ibid*) the degree of guilt was directly related to the nature of exit. 'The backdrop was guilt. Higher for the expatriated and those who sought asylum in embassies, less for those who left after imprisonment or from the concentration camp and more dense for those who emigrated for economic reasons.'

Unlike their counterparts in Europe, women in partnership in patriarchal Latin America had a more 'benevolent' attitude. Leopoldo Acuña's guilt for example, was not only related to his asylum at the Colombian embassy but also to his privileged position in exile where *I could sleep undisturbed in my house and have a job while my comrades in Chile were living in very difficult conditions*. Because guilt is a paralysing state, exiles started to act quickly engaging in hectic exile politics and solidarity work. Leopoldo dedicated most of his time to both and the struggle to return. These almost full-time activities gave him a greater sense of masculine public importance and less of a sense of guilt. Expressing admiration for what her husband could do in exile, Laura safeguarded Leopoldo's status while simultaneously revealing *returnism's* gendered nature,

Look, Leopoldo is a person who talks very little...the thing is that he felt very guilty for having left Chile. He always felt very, very...(unfinished sentence) and so he turned to solidarity work but not only for Chile ah? He worked a lot [una barbaridad]. In Bogotá he organised the solidarity campaign with Nicaragua and El Salvador almost all by himself...also, he organised these big seminars, the biggest lasted one week from 6 to 9 PM and 755 people enrolled. The theme was about the kind of society we wanted and how we could help, and all those tremendous things! (cuestiones tremendas!). I think that he was kind of the head of solidarity with those countries...

Until now, middle class socio-economic downgrading and loss of status, especially for men, has sustained a downgrading process that interplayed with the refugee status. One way to counteract total

downgrading was by embracing the 'positive' value of being an 'exile'. Indeed, it is at this juncture of the legal status 'refugee' that the situation gets more complex. To be a 'refugee' and 'labelled' as such seems to be in opposition to the notion of exile. The following section considers the hidden dimensions of this opposition and the intrinsic dilemmas of the refugee status and its impact on *returnism*.

4.3 'Refugee Status', 'Refugee Label' and the *worthy* 'Exile Status': negotiating life in the *Exterior*

When discussing repatriation, Zetter (1988b) raised crucial questions regarding refugee identity. This section will provide some insights into the Chilean experience by exploring how *returnism* impinged on this identification. Though Chilean exile took place in more than fifty countries not all Chileans in exile were refugees. According to Orellana (1980-81:16) many Chileans decided not to apply for refugee status, 'only 30,000 Chileans have refugee status particularly in Europe, the rest are political exiles who live in countries where the refugee status does not formally exist or they have avoided registering as such.' Although this number seems to be rather low compared to the supposed '*un millón*' that left Chile after September 1973, one of the findings in the literature and among respondents is that Orellana's calculations are not that far from reality. For example, Bolzman's (1989) study showed that out of 700 Chileans living in Geneva, only 300 had refugee status. In Italy, Chileans were never given official status as refugees (Wright and Oñate 1998:127). In the early 1970s, some Latin American countries had no institutionalised criteria for the protection of refugees (Gros Espiell et al. 1990) or had a conflictive regulation that was mediated by political events in each country (Yund 1988). In Argentina, a country where thousands of Chileans had escaped, refugee legislation at the beginning of 1974 was 'restrictive and selective. Effectively, legal clauses in the Migration Regulation of the early 1970s in Argentina (Articles N°14 and 15) referred exclusively to those of European origin who would be accepted as refugees' (CEAS 2001:35). Certainly, there were other reasons why Chileans were exiles and not refugees. In Mexico, out of over a million of Chileans, Argentinians and Uruguayans who escaped Southern Cone's NSDSs, only 2,404 of them were registered as refugees (Palma 2003:4). Filomena added another factor for not applying for refugee status in Colombia,

It was very difficult to have refugee status in Colombia because it was difficult to obtain refugee status in Latin America and more so in Colombia where there is always a latent situation of conflict and where the paramilitary groups and repression are very strong, so it was disadvantageous to have refugee status. There were some people who had it but they lived more disadvantageously because they were more controlled. Besides, in Colombia there was a strong Chilean embassy in the hands of Onofre Jarpa²³ and there was persecution. He interceded for constant repression against the Chileans who were not part of the embassy. It was more dangerous to be a refugee in Colombia than not being one.

The refugee definition is associated with the *non-refoulement* policy. Draft Article 4 states: 'No person claiming to be a refugee shall be subjected to measures such as rejection at the frontier, or if he

²³ Onofre Jarpa was the ex-leader of the ultra conservative National Party. After his Ambassador post in Colombia (1976-1978) and Argentina (1978-1983), he became Minister of Interior (1983-1985).

has already entered the territory, return, expulsion or extradition which would compel him to return to or remain in a territory where his life, physical integrity or safety would be threatened for the reasons set out in Article 1' (in Vevstad 1998:166). This policy constitutes refugee protection and respects the right not to be returned to a territory where the individual may be subjected to persecution, yet, it also challenges *returnism*. Because of this, many exiles and self-exiled Chileans avoided the status altogether. One way of resisting the idea of refugee status was by holding on to the passport demonstrating in this manner 'a deep desire: to mark, though with a document, the will to return' (Vásquez and Araujo 1990:27). If African refugees used space to mark the physical boundaries between exile and return with their reluctance to be institutionalised in organised settlements and preferring to remain near border areas because they believed they will soon be able to return to their homes (Rogge 1985), some Chilean 'exiles clutched their passports as if they were treasure' (Vásquez in Carvallo 1979:52). Though '[H]olding a Chilean passport could still be compatible with refugee status' (Goodwin-Gill and McAdam 2007:138), the main concern for exiles such as middle-class Alfonsina was that it militated against *returnism*. In such cases, *returnism's* role was striking, it strongly discouraged applying for it. Alfonsina for example, re-availed herself of national 'protection' even though she had been tortured and imprisoned for eighteen months and had left Chile *aterrada* (terrified) because *had I stayed in Chile they would have arrested and tortured me again*, yet, she was determined to return at all costs. Her short exile started in Spain in 1975, continued in West Germany and ended in Spain in 1979,

I never wanted to get asylum. In Germany more than in Spain, they offered me asylum several times but I always refused. Asylum meant the possibility of a job, access to further education and accommodation but it also meant the impossibility of returning to Chile, the "L" in the passport; definitively I could not enter Chile again, in the end it tied you (te amaraba). This situation kept me in a very difficult position because I had to keep going to the police every three months to get my temporary residence there. That I did for some time because they were very supportive people (gente solidaria) in Germany who gave you work. I worked as an interpreter, and at the same time they offered you accommodation. Had I accepted it, the Chilean Consulate would put a restriction on my entering Chile and I tell you the only thing I didn't want was that. I left Chile legally with my passport, I did not seek asylum in any embassy because I was determined to return.

Another illustrative case of re-availment of 'national protection', this time by the renewal of the Chilean passport, is that of Rosario, a MIR militant who struggled to be freed from the ties of being a refugee. After being in several concentration camps, she was released in September 1976. With the support of the Catholic Church, she went to Belgium as a refugee. She returned in 1979. In Rosario's case, it wasn't difficult to take a haste return decision. Her case shows that under the influence of a foundational return decision, any 'return impulse' (her expiring passport) will positively influence 'compulsive return',

I renounced my condition of refugee. I went to the embassy in Ambers and started to do all the necessary dealings. Then a Belgian told me 'you have one month to retrieve your passport if you want to return; yours expires the 24th September and if you renew it you won't be able to enter Chile because all passports come marked with an "L". I cannot guarantee that 100%, but there is that possibility.' Then I said, yes! I'm going back to Chile. So I renounced my refugee condition. I went to the United Nations office. It was an enormous amount of bureaucracy (un papeleo inmenso) because everybody was opposed to the idea as I would be left with no protection and this would bring me a lot of problems in Belgium because the refugee status in Belgium protects you and opens the doors for you. So it was

very difficult to do it but I said NO! NO! NO! I want to return to Chile. I had no money so between Chilean and Belgian friends they bought me a return ticket...

But there is another reason why Chileans refused to be Convention refugees: the 'refugee label'. '[T]he label "refugee" both stereotypes and institutionalises a status' (Zetter 1988a:1). Primarily, it stereotypes them as 'dependents' (Harrell-Bond 1986) and victims. Although commonly used in situations of encampment (Harrell-Bond 1986) and 'refugee estates' (Zetter 1991), the label is usually attached to the refugee status, and even refugee women writers prefer not to identify themselves as refugees (Langer 2002). The characterisation of contemporary refugees as a 'scourge' and a Third World phenomena escaping State or 'ethnic' violence and captured in the evoking images 'dominated by media footage of people living in camps, being fed by volunteers and aid workers, and depicted in the press as victims – photos and video footage of streams of people in shock, shuffling along dirt paths, carrying a few precious possessions ...' (Davenport et al. 2003:31) is what middle-class refugees feared. This victimised, inferiorised and stereotypical image turned into 'refugee identity' is what Chilean²⁴ renowned writer Ariel Dorfman rejected when he was offered refugee status by a UN woman who, at the Argentinian embassy, where he had sought asylum, droned the refugee definition to him. After not having a response from Dorfman she asked him,

...“what I need to know is if you intend to avail yourself of refugee status.”... The woman from the UN dryly delineates the advantages of being a refugee: training, job placement, language courses in the country of asylum, preferred housing, free medical attention, social security, no need to renew visa approval each year from the local immigration authorities. Well? I hear myself saying no...Perhaps that is why I have refused to be classified as a refugee: so that people like her, so people in the outside world, will recognize me as an individual and not as part of the helpless masses that flood the newsreels and the TV screens... overwhelmed by forces outside their control that they do not seem to comprehend... When the woman from the UN had said the word *refugee*, that, is what came to mind: the camps in which people without a country stagnate amid the filth and the flies...“I’m not a refugee,” I said to the woman...“I’m an exile.”

(Ariel Dorfman *Heading South, Looking North. A Bilingual Journey*, 1998:236-8)

Dorfman's refusal of the refugee status is telling about the choices he could make. His status and class positioning allowed him to choose. More than the refugee status *per se*, he wanted to liberate himself from the stereotype and the contemporary identity associated with the label 'refugee'. Instead, he wanted to conceive his identity not as a victim but with agency, an agency that emanated from his social standing. This evidence suggests that exile identity as 'political' is viewed as more liberating and honourable than that of 'refugee' and as Knowles (2003:143) put it, 'it carries more romantic claims than that of 'refugee.' Said (2001:181) contextualised the differing terms 'exile' and 'refugee' associating the latter with the creation of modern sovereign states. Said's old idea of 'exile as banishment' replicates Dorfman's, it is better than that of 'the twentieth-century state political creation of the "refugee" 'whereas "exile" carries with it, I think, a touch of solitude and spirituality.' Unsurprisingly, the literature on Chilean refugees suggest that those who looked for protection and safety from host states preferred to call themselves not only exiles but 'political exiles' or 'political' refugees. Without exception, all respondents in this study identified themselves as such. Vásquez

²⁴ Dorfman was born in Argentina, grew up in the US and arrived in Chile at the age of twelve. His interesting fusion national identity challenges the notion of Chileanness.

(1984:10) suggested that, identification as 'exile' itself constituted during early exile the 'main coping mechanism and capital in the very definition of social identity.' It can be safely argued that the adjective 'political' seemed to have softened the negative stereotype described above, especially, the despised identity among Chilean exiles of 'economic' migrant or 'economic refugee'. Being a 'political refugee' or rather an 'exile' positioned them in a valued and higher status from which to look down economic migrants (López Zarzosa 1991), a fact also acknowledged in early (Friedmann 1980) and more recent studies (Muñoz 2006). This study suggests that self-identification as exiles have strategic political values. It can be used as a political tool against home governments, whereas 'refugee' deprives the status from such 'empowerment'. It also frees the status from its association with the term repatriation. In future, exiles will speak of return as *el retorno* rather than repatriation, a point to be discussed in Chapter Six.

Furthermore, the gendering of both terms is noticeable. Whereas the label 'refugee' has been associated with the mass of women and children in refugee camps, the term 'exile' depicts the intellectual/writer, highly prestigious male exiled (Langer 2002). In her study of Chilean exiled women in Canada, Escobar (2000:9-10), noted that though the term 'exile' is not legally defined it is also associated with the inability to return. 'The term refers to the punishment these people are subjected to being prohibited from returning to ones *patria* or country of birth. As such, the reference to exile evokes images that in contrast to the label refugee, gives the person certain prestige. Typically, exiled people are viewed as men being excluded from their country for their ideas, their political position, as individuals who often are illustrious and important in their own country.' Escobar's observation is important because it would be *this* notion of 'exiles' that, as we shall see in the following chapter, will become hegemonic in the Chilean right to return discourse.

Also, the Western psychiatry of both migrants and refugees also contributed to the despising of the label. Paradoxically, politicised exiles themselves reproduce these powerful discourses. Writing in *Araucaria de Chile*, the iconic Chilean exile journal, González-Dagnino (1979:118) distinguished exile and emigration stressing the voluntary character of the latter. His purpose was to distance Chilean exiles from migrants thus demonstrating how identities can not only be manipulated by public policy and bureaucratic practices (Zetter 1991), but also reproduced by refugees/exiles themselves. 'The emigrant,' González-Dagnino noted, 'even when forced to leave his homeland makes a choice...Traditionally it has been proved that among emigrants one type of personality abound: one able to sever ties with the homeland ...and that a major proportion of them have schizoid personalities in relation to average population.' Such statements mirror the wider psychiatry of refugees leading to long-term detrimental consequences.

In sum, Chileans were conveniently resisting both the 'refugee identity' and attached label. Notwithstanding that the status grants the same social and economic rights citizens in the host country hold, it stigmatises. New developments add more complexities to both the status and the label. Among those are the increasing restrictive access policies, the current politicisation of the refugee label (Zetter

2007) and the no longer laudable Cold War refugee status since contemporary asylum seekers are 'increasingly perceived in terms of a moral underclass' (Sales 2007) and after September 11, a threat to countries' national security. In addition, the status is civically restrictive, it eliminates the possibility of political participation in host countries particularly post-industrial Western countries. An optimistic way of including migrants/refugees' political participation is found in the literature on transnational political participation (for LAC countries in Europe, see Lafleur 2011). Back in the 1970s and early 1980s, and free from Convention status, some exiles resettled in Latin America joined national and local political causes. The following barbed comment made by Marcia illustrates this point as well as disdain for exiles who resettled outside Latin America,

Those of us who were in Latin America were the crowd (la gallá) of people who had – well I do not want to make odious comparisons – but in Europe if you are a refugee you have to comply with the Geneva Convention, and, if you were in a country with welfare state you had benefits you didn't have in Latin America which we had none actually, then you had the same life as any other Latin American Leftist. One day you stood in a street and protest for something and the police attacked you (te cagaban), that is, you experienced everything the same as the others, so you were so much attached to the politics of those places... One militated for Chile but was also very attached to the political movements and what happened there and so one lived two distinct logics.

Yet, exile politics would be one major way of counteracting downward social mobility and loss of status as well as of redressing the catastrophic loss of political masculinity, employment, political community, and a failed political project for social change. Men and Parties played a major role.

4.3.1 Exile politics, political parties and *returnism*

Contrary to NSDS's insistence on the 'perversity' of politics and politicians, exile politics showed otherwise. It allowed the possibility to discuss the reasons for the collapse of the UP experiment, reconstruct Parties, start a global campaign of denunciation of the NSDS's political activities and human rights' violations, promote international solidarity, regain the denigrated political masculinity and primarily start nation-building in which Parties would play a fundamental role. Undoubtedly, these exile experiences are shared by many exiles and dissidents who have played an important historical role against home governments (Shain 1989). Political activism has been defined by Shain (1989:2) as the opposition activities of exiles who historically have challenged not only the authority of regimes to define the object of political loyalty, but also their right to establish criteria for inclusion in and exclusion from the polity.' However, a problem with exile politics literature is its gender blindness and interest on leader's political identity (e.g. Angell and Carstairs 1987; Hite 2000). This is another indicator of the sole acknowledgment of masculinist and elitist political projects. Yet, there was the Party political elite that from the supra-political level worked transnationally and received financial support from Western European governments (Sznajder and Roniger 2007b); the 'active exile' which did most of the hard work and comprised middle-range leaders, rank-and-file militants; activists and sympathisers; and the more 'democratic' solidarity lobby. Apart from ideological and political differences and factionalism there were also class differences because 'even the most cohesive ethnic/national group almost always entail a system of social inequality, and where the

dominant group(s) typically exercise hegemonic control over the 'culture' and political project of the 'collectivity' (Walby 1996:238). The purpose of this section is to explore and uncover the political power behind the return political project as *exterior* collectivities were run by specific political forces at different times. For example, while *Chile Democrático-UK* was intermittently run by the PC and MIR (López Zarzosa 1991), Filomena noted that in Colombia the corridors of power were classed,

The Miristas were always segregated – 'Miristas here NO!, 'they are not allowed to enter here'. That made life abroad even more restrictive and conflictive (conflictuada), maybe because it was so restrictive I don't know... Besides there was a group of people who had a very precarious economic situation, who were sort of slaves of the hierachs (jerarcas), of the bosses...

Conversely, the solidarity lobby that comprised a number of collectivities was less discriminatory and allowed a broader participation. Many of this study's conversational partners belonged to the latter category though many times, with the exception of the political elite, categories overlapped. It can be safely argued that *exterior* women from the last two categories contributed to political remittances through the making and selling of *empanadas* (see glossary). Elite political leader Jaime Gazmuri (2000:257) acknowledged that 'many ruffles and empanadas were made and an immense, incommensurable number of empanadas were kneaded by the *compañeras* in exile to fund the party and solidarity activities.' What he does not say however, is that these activities reproduced gender roles and class stratification. 'The *compañeras*', the main contributors in the making of *empanadas* were mainly mostly working-class 'tied' refugee women of whom Alan Angell will refer to later. As many middle-class women in exile, Rosa, learned how to make empanadas in exile because *I had a need of Chile, I had to learn how to cook Chilean meals*. This illustrates once again how women play a crucial role as active transmitters and producers of the national culture (Anthias and Yuval-Davis 1989:7), this time with the 'national dishes'.

Another category in exile was what *Chile Democrático-UK*'s leadership called 'passive exile', that is, those who either were no longer loyal to their political organisations or were totally disengaged. This categorisation is important because it does not privilege a particular notion of 'political exile' or a category. According to Ma (1993:379) a truly political exile has three essential elements: forced exit, dissenting voice, and struggle to return. The latter, is a major source of problems but also 'has the most significant political implications, because it involves direct challenges to the political power of the home regime and demands for fundamental change as a precondition of exile's return.' (*ibid*). However important Ma's argument may be it still generalises the complex issue of 'who is a political exile?' (Shain 1988), hence the need to go beyond such rigid and gender blind conceptions and explore the gendered and classed dynamics of Chilean exile political activism and its role in *returnism*.

The scarce literature on Chilean exile politics usually present a gender blind examination of political activities and an all encompassing view of political engagement. Clearly, not all Chileans in exile engaged in strict 'political' activities nor have they taken active roles vis-à-vis the dictatorship in the same manner. The answer lies in the classed and gendered social structure of Chilean exile. So far, this study has suggested that under NSDS, military masculinity was brutally imposed. Through exile,

the proscription of UP Parties and later the PDC and the discrediting of its leaders, politicised men lost their expression of masculine identity. Exile was a propitious space for this male hegemony to reorganise to partially compensate for the status loss experienced. Unlike the majority of women, Parties' leaders, militants and activists arriving in exile could somewhat regain their lost identity by engaging in political activities and by benefiting from their past position as men and as political beings. Although there were a number of militant women in exile, the positive and valued image of 'the myth of the Latin American guerrillero' (Vásquez 1982:85) worked much more in favour of the men than the women. According to de Brito (1986:68), 'the image of women's past was too weak to be of use.' Indeed, exile politics became a realm that offered the opportunity to recuperate masculine identity and status. In her study of Chilean exiles in Scotland, Kay (1982:64) found that 'men's deprivation from the public realm was publicly lamented and that the 'real loss' for the politicised men was the defeat of the UP and that the women's loss remained hidden from public view and sometimes even from their husbands.' These authors are right in arguing that international recognition and solidarity was gendered, but it was also elitist. Certainly, international support for the anti-dictatorship struggle would be addressed to an elitist male-dominated exile political project. The following comment made by Gladys, one of the *Dawsonianas*,²⁵ illustrates this point:

*I do not know what happened to us women. We dedicated ourselves with so much abnegation, with such idealism. I remember that we thought about the future, that we could even be goddesses and when we arrived in exile nobody remembered us because the heroes were the men! After all that we did! We carried so many things, six kilograms of books under the arm in the heat, the cold, the snow, to take them where they were imprisoned, living under house arrest, with problems with our children, they [repressive forces] even took one of my daughters one night. And after all this the men ended up being the heroes, they organised cocktails for them and when we arrived there they did not even take notice of us. For me Germany was a terrible experience because first, Ricardo [husband] left me alone too much and secondly because he travelled so much to the United Nations, to the United States, to Geneva and many other parts and they only paid his ticket, they didn't invite me, I had to stay in Germany, a country that to a certain extent was rather hostile despite its apparent education and other things. He went to the University in the morning to work in this Latin American Seminar that they gave to the exiles so they could discuss and amuse themselves and I was left at home dealing with the Germans. I did a language course, everything rather sophisticated but that was all. We lived two different films (*vivimos dos películas distintas*). We have to write a book about NOS-OTRAS (US-WOMEN). We have forgotten that issue, don't you think?*

Gladys's comment highlights that worldwide solidarity was mainly directed to 'men's real loss.' Her observation is congruent with the literature on exile politics. This literature deals with organisational and ideological experiences of exiled Parties and leadership and indeed, this is a predominantly male arena (Lewis 1967; Edinger 1956; Ameringer 1974; *Third World Quarterly* 9(1), 1987) This is not surprising, as exile politics, though 'abnormal politics' (Lewis 1967), is a continuum of the deposed government male-dominated politics. Indeed, worldwide solidarity recognised men's participation in the national project of the Party coalition of *Unidad Popular* where the major parties were the PS and

²⁵ *Dawsonianas* was the nickname given to the wives of UP's top male political leaders (27) taken prisoners to the remote Dawson Island. According to one of them, Cecilia Bachelet de Miranda (1990:21), 'We turned into a strong group of women capable of doing anything for the man we loved.' Sergio Bitar's (1988) *Isla 10* narrates the men's experiences under the repressive environment of this concentration camp where their manhood and political masculinity was purposefully shattered by brutal military masculinity. However, *Dawsonianas*' pivotal role in this high-profile political episode remained only romantically acknowledged.

PC followed by the PR, the smaller divided MAPU and MAPU-OC plus the IC. Though MIR was not part of the UP, exile politics revolved primarily around these various constituencies. Suffice to say that the UP was not a socio-political and ideologically homogeneous coalition, there was unity but also marked differences. These were not only reproduced within the peripheral society but, more importantly, new political and ideological dynamics appeared (Furci 1984; Pollack and Rosencranz 1986; Hite 2000) and these were related to specific return strategies and the conflicts and tensions between those militants working in the political spaces of the *interior* and those in the *exterior*. This strict politicised divide according to Carlos, was *a drastic division as a result of exile. It divided us into two opposed worlds, made up of those like us living outside the country and those who lived in its interior.*

Gendered elitism: more 'suitcases' plus 'feet'

Non-partisan exiles had no access to Parties' internal dynamics and political affiliation was highly gendered. Considering that 'in 1975, only eight per cent of the first women prisoners in *Tres Alamos* had really done sustained mass work as party members, and only five per cent had been in high or intermediate leadership positions' and that 'the majority of the women only had experience in rank-and-file conspiratorial activities or in the reproduction of materials and ideas which others had elaborated' (Díaz 1983:34), it can be firmly suggested that exile politics was an elitist male activity from which the majority of exiled women were excluded. This was the specific case of working-class women who 'were not expected to be militants or as politically active as the men, they were expected to support, and often did, their partner's political commitment' (Eastmond 1989:50). A case in point was CAF (Anti-Fascist Committee) in Britain where only leaders and militants of Leftist Parties participated, the rest of the exiled population was excluded (López Zarzosa 1991).

As for the women, apart from being the wives of leaders or militants, two were the most prominent feminine positions and roles they played in exile politics and as 'nation-builders'. Exile politics' masculine hegemony gave women special statuses in relation to the *patria*. These were primarily related to women's public behaviour: woman as a symbol and as committed militant or *guerrillera*. According to Radcliffe (1993:200), socially constituted femininities and masculinities are significant not only because they locate and identify male and female persons, but because they give powers to act in various political contexts. This power to act exists in everyday behaviours and practices, as well as in formal political spheres traditionally associated with 'politics'. Certainly, both feminine positions held political and ideological power because they were associated with formal 'politics' and nation-building. The construction of gendered political roles into powerful symbols in exile, particularly 'the widow', totally excluded other women of lesser political value. As political symbols of feminine heroism these women were idealised by Parties' leaders who privileged and cherished them. Around them, men were able to share power as these women were the feminine representations of mythic leaders. For example, exiled *Mirista* Carmen Castillo (Miguel Enríquez' widow) who despite her efforts not to become a 'heroic widow' as imposed by her Party, found herself so morally

and politically implicated that she could not stop being one of the most privileged feminine symbols (see Echeverría and Castillo 2003).

Others, such as Hortensia Bussi, (Allende's widow) and Laura Allende (Allende's sister who eventually committed suicide) are also illustrative of these high-profile female models as heroines rather than victims. Hortensia Bussi was indeed the most influential female symbol but was always introduced as 'ex-President Allende's widow'. Though she never participated in 'formal' politics, she was overnight placed on a political pedestal and endowed with symbolic importance. Though Allende had set the bar too far for his wife to reach his position, his political and heroic legacy was transferred to her; Mrs. Allende was idealised for what she represented in relation to her husband and received a status relative to the masculine by way of being his widow. It can be safely suggested that she represented the feminised oppositional *Patria* aligning herself to the counter nation-building project while simultaneously denouncing that of the NSDS by praising her heroic dead husband's project and his aspiration to build a 'humanist and democratic society' as well as calling 'for the return of democracy.' She became the spokes-person and most representative living symbol of the anti-Pinochet struggle as well as being considered by Chilean magazine *Hoy* (Otero 1984:19) as 'the main feminine figure of Chilean exile' turning her into the maximum representative of Chile abroad. However, as Yuval-Davis (2001) reminded us, femininity is not just the absence of masculine power. 'She would tour the world, participate in international conferences, meet with heads of state, tirelessly, talk about her compatriots, conveying a message of unity' commented Arrate and Rojas (2003:263). She acquired a heroine-like status and was honoured with innumerable guerdons, medals and titles. More importantly, she became the voice of the more accepted non-violent opposition to the NSDS thus heralding the all-male agreed solution to end the NSDS, to be discussed in the following chapter. By using her conservative stance, Leftist male-dominated Parties capitalised her widowed status to convey their own political agendas. She became the female symbol of the 'democratic Left' thus representing the future *Patria*. Cusack (2000:546) noted that 'carrying such a burden implies that women have to be exemplars of virtue' as well as 'being guardians of men's honour' (López Zarzosa 1998:191).

Another respected role for women in exile politics was that of the committed, mobilised, and highly-politicised militant and revolutionary woman actively participating in a counter national project. In Silva-Labarca's (1981:47) view, it corresponds to the second stereotypical myth-model of Chilean exiled women, that of the 'pure and hard militant whose life is dedicated to the proletarian cause, a person without a private life with neither conflicts nor contradictions. She won't be dominated by consumerist society as she is outside and above it. Untouchable, serene, and always ready for her party's orders: she belongs to it. She is the "exemplary militant despite her sex.'" This model embodied those 'committed and fearless fighters' who 'had heroically resisted torture' that is, up to '95% of female political prisoners' (Díaz 1983:35). Admired role-models of revolutionary committed militant women as symbols of brave resistance during torture, such as Gladys Díaz, a returnee journalist and one of the few women who became part of MIR's Central Committee, suggests that

women's political respect is acquired through the same commitment, endurance and strength, expected of male militants/prisoners (Díaz 1983). This is dramatically contrasted by the case of Beatriz Allende (one of Allende's most committed daughters) who in exile in Cuba headed the *Comité Chileno Antifascista* and organised countless events but who in 1977 ended her own life. Although her father's suicide was considered an heroic act because he died fighting, his daughter's wasn't. Once alive she was regarded as a true revolutionary but her political character exceeded her strength. Her suicide was considered by militants to be an act of cowardice as 'militants die fighting' (Castillo and Echeverría 2003). Generally, MIR 'demanded from women a similar political behaviour to that of their male comrades' (Vidaurrázaga 2005:148).

Brave revolutionary women were revered by male militants and this appreciation empowered them. Central American *guerrilleras* became role-models and a revolutionary inspiration for female militants particularly MIR's militants (*Miristas*). Their way of expressing loyalty to the Party was by returning to fight against the NSDS. 'Resistance return' constituted the most heroic and revolutionary forms of return. By 1978, *returnism* was at its most powerful and so were the debates about return strategies that were congruent with Parties' military, political and ideological lines. According to Lira and Kovalskys (1984:95), around 1978 'The point that appears the most important is the decision to return to the country.' This was a testing period for the 'packed suitcases'. Certainly, militant women were also under the influence of *returnism* particularly those who lived politically ghettoised. Marcela said,

I arrived in Mexico thinking of return. Well, I think I never unpacked the suitcases really. I lived in a hotel with other people from the party and I started to live a collective life; that means that I was always in a group, attached to others (apegadita) attached to the party, attached to solidarity actions. I have to confess today that I had no interest in working, in studying, in nothing. I think that I had a big depression but I did not realise at the time. So my integration was nil despite that the system was opening itself in front of me. I think I only worked three times – always as a secretary – I had not finished my university studies here nor had I the will to finish a career there, I couldn't concentrate, I was always thinking of returning, and how to return to Chile... I couldn't engage in any type of obligation – including long-term relationships. Everything was like so transitory, everything for tomorrow, maybe tomorrow, the suitcase unpacked. I never had many clothes I never bought many clothes, really nothing because I was always clinging to return.

This peak in *returnism* was propitious for the Parties to push for their militants to return. Parties would define the length of political temporariness, manipulate the foundational decision to return and promote *returnism*. The year 1978 offered that possibility. None of this study's respondents said that they left Chile with the intention to stay and their actual return powerfully demonstrates that. Carlos, a Party leader who spent his exile in Britain, said,

One always left with the compelling idea that one was not leaving for good, that we would return because our departure was forced by repression and one left with the idea of returning. Since taking off we were asking ourselves 'When are we going to return?' We, the political ones, and by instructions and mistaken ideas of our parties thought that the dictatorship would not last more than three years, the same time as our studies [WUS scholarship], and then we would return. That was more or less the idea, that is, from the beginning we had the idea of returning and that we were not going to open our suitcases, nor that we would settle there by having a house or having too many relations. The truth is that psychologically, that idea was not very healthy – to use a graphic term – we put one foot

(patita) on the island and the other remained in Chile and we never abandoned the foot that remained in Chile. Then the political parties, more concretely, those that managed us, dominated the theme of return.

4.3.2 Political Parties' roles: from protectors to surrogate family

Undoubtedly, the primacy of Parties and Party politics are an essential feature of Chilean society (Caviedes 1979; Valenzuela and Valenzuela 1986; Angell and Carstairs 1987; Garretón 1987, 1989a; del Pozo 1992; Scully 1995), and their impact and articulation with the 'social base' (*i.e.* peasants, workers, urban dwellers, students, trade unions) was so decisive, that Garretón (1989a) considered them the 'backbone' of Chilean society. Ana's experience in the US highlights both the importance of Parties and their exclusionary protective roles in the *exterior*. Even though Chilean exiles' political profile in the US was that of a 'soft Leftist', they distrusted others with no political affiliation. Though Ana had experienced harsh DR, this did not validate her. In her case, the void of protection by a Party was filled by another hegemonic structure operating in the *exterior*: the Catholic Church,

I had my social conscience but I never belonged to any political party or trade union maybe because I didn't know how important it was to have the support of a party. I realised that when I was in prison and afterwards when I arrived at Father Muriarte's refuge. When I arrived there they didn't know if the new compañera was MIR, MAPU, PC, PS or DINA. There was a terrible lack of trust! I had a horrible experience with those Chileans there. Well, I was a single mother, young and not that ugly and some of the men there – not all were sex-mad (calientes) – thought I was "available" to the point that one married man, whose wife was living there, IMAGINE!, started saying that I was pretty and things like that and then he approached me with open sexual intentions. Thank goodness for Father Muriarte!. If it wasn't for that priest who was my little Guardian Angel... We had an awful time with Marc there.

Ana's experience challenges overgeneralisations advanced by some scholars who argue that one way to seek refuge from exile's initial adversities, find networks for work and contacts was by approaching the exiled community (Rebolledo 2004). The so-called 'exile community' was ruled by Parties. Parties' hegemonic role in Chilean society constitute an important reason to unravel their performance in exile and their relationship with exiles, return and post-return experiences particularly because Parties constitute viable regime alternatives. From the reconstitution of the UP in 1975 in Mexico and the establishment of its headquarters in Berlin the role of male-dominated Parties greatly shaped exile activities to the extent that political militancy during the early years of exile 'became a category of social belonging whereby those without Party membership were seen as second class Chileans' (Silva-Labarca 1981:45). Ana's experience underlines the fact that only women as symbols, heroines, 'vanguardistas' and militants counted. The experience of CAF in Britain, vividly illustrated this argument (López Zarzosa 1991). In sum, political elites played a key role in exile and more so in keeping *returnism's* flame alive.

However, if 'political parties also "represent" social, cultural, and ideological sectors, homogenise perspectives and aspirations as well as convening, appealing and promoting' (Garretón 1987:194), what were their roles in exile? If Parties 'in their relationship with politics and the state appear as mediators and channels of social demands' (*ibid*), what happens in exile considering that under NSDS

those ties had been broken and Leftist Parties' "social bases" disappeared? Carlos, an exile political leader, provides an illuminating path to this puzzle,

Parties provided a projection to exiles' lives by maintaining alive the ties with the Patria and the outside world. They also helped to establish and sustain Chilean and solidarity organizations in the different countries where Chileans settled, those organisations wouldn't have existed without the active participation of the militants of the different party organisations. They rescued militants and helped them to exit the country. That was my case because it was thanks to the intervention of my party that I was rescued from Chile, a situation that was repeated with thousands of other persecuted who were rescued by the parties already organised in exile. They also had a strong power of denunciation through the worldwide brotherhood of parties and trade unions as well as fundraising that they sent through various channels to the interior to those who were fighting against the dictatorship. The Communist Party was undoubtedly the one that contributed most because of its renowned efficiency that allowed sending enormous sums of money to sustain the resistance and challenge the dictatorship. Generally, Leftist parties' activities in the exterior contributed to maintain the mass of exile in a permanent state of mobilisation not only in relation to the interior but also with the authorities and host population.

Carlos' summary is important. Parties in exile played even more powerful roles. By strengthening the ties with the *Patria*, they maintained the idea of nationhood alive as well as representing Chilean citizens excluded by the NSDS. Parties could not mediate with the NSDS yet, they maintained that important role and would be fundamental in the future restoration of the bond between citizens and State. Secondly, despite the harsh repression unleashed against them including assassination, disappearance or exile of some of their most prominent and middle-level leaders and cadres, exile constituted a political space where Parties managed to recreate leadership and organisational structures. This is significant because with the exception of Angell and Carstairs (1987), Angell (1996), Roniger and Green (2007), exile's role in delegitimising the NSDS remains sidelined in the literature.

With the exception of Silva-Labarca (1981), Parties' social roles in exile have hardly been acknowledged. As suggested, the hegemonic structures of the patriarchal family and Parties in Chilean society should be included in any analysis of the social forces impinging on exile and return. The complex interaction between the dynamics operating during the exhilarating three years of UP government and those related to the disrupting effects of the military coup and its repressive and traumatic aftermaths that resulted in pre-exile, flight and exile, destabilised the institution of the family (Friedmann 1980; Muñoz 2006). This sudden change prompted existing constituencies to respond to such loss becoming its substitute. To some extent, according to Silva-Labarca (1981:45), 'political parties replaced the family and lost social networks. It is the only old reference frame...and the party became external, infallible and unquestionable.' Cecilia's comments above provided a hint of this development. Indeed, Parties' power was more strongly felt until the late 1970s when they entered a crisis (for the PS see Pollack and Rosencranz 1986 and for the PC see Furci 1984).

Parties not only surrogated the extended family but also safeguarded it as a patriarchal institution, particularly at times of 'private crises' thus bridging the public and the private and becoming a means of political and social control. Familist discourse has been historical in the Communist Party

(Roseblatt 2000). In exile, PC's political leaders authoritative role allowed them to discipline and control Party members through 'solving' private issues, specially, among its working-class militancy. Kay (1982) sustained that working-class women who saw their power as lying within the family jealously guarded their domain from political encroachment or expropriation. Yet, Parties' intervention in private lives calls for a rethinking of Kay's 'private-public' paradigm. It was precisely through private matters that Parties breached this divide. The private sphere was under Parties' surveillance, it was far from 'private'. Pedro's accounts illustrate this argument,

Sometimes, people phoned me even after midnight. One night, a man phoned me and said: "compañero, this huevona cut me with the knife again" Well, put her on the phone: What happened? "Well, it's that this huevón here, thinks the world of himself (se cree la muerte) because he is the one who organises all these solidarity things, meetings, events and all that, but he is never here, so I got fed up (ya me cabrié) and I cut him." Will you do it again? "Yes, I will." Well, prepare a nice tea and we will talk over it tomorrow afternoon... When she explained what happened it was clear that they had a big row, it was a serious marital dispute. But she was rough (media chora) because she was from an X (no se cuánto) población in Santiago and she really cut him with a knife. Imagine! We had to deal with those kinds of things. On another occasion, a woman phoned me saying that she would commit suicide there and then. 'Why? Tell me what's happening. "He is having an affair" Shit! It was a forty-five minutes drive from where I lived, but she sounded desperate... Tell me. "He had an affair in Concepción and the woman wanted a child...that child now wants to meet her father and wants to come to Germany! He never told me! And on top of that he is having an affair here." I had to say, 'Well, as a leader of the Party I promise you that he is not having an affair (no te está poniendo el gorro), though I knew he was. I will talk to him. "I do believe you compañero" she said...Other times there were very serious things involving children...Well, all those things!

A more dramatic case is seen when Chilean Parties' discipline and *returnism's* demands converge with peer international Parties' policies on militants' duties, obligations and 'their' *returnism*. Roberto fell in love with a Vietnamese Communist woman who was studying in Bulgaria. Her Party didn't approve the relationship because for them *I was a citizen of a fascist country. And all this was because my political organisation never supported me even in this regard. "You are with tasks here and you are going back at any moment so we do not want you to... [unfinished sentence] So we started living together without their approval (a la maleta) and so I then encountered more problems because my girl got pregnant and then these Vietnamese bastards (huevones) wrecked my house because they opposed all this.* Roberto's life was determined by his relationship with both Parties. In the interim, the Party ordered his girlfriend to leave Bulgaria. In desperation she tried to commit suicide losing the baby in that attempt. Eventually, they got some help from Bulgarian friends. Eventually the Vietnamese became his friends *and they started to help us but as persons not as militants. Then I asked permission to my organisation and told them that what I was doing was my own responsibility. So I had a word with the Bulgarians and they found a sort of diplomatic solution. "What do you think if we give you a Bulgarian passport and then you both go to Vietnam".²⁶ I asked my organisation and so they told me that it was my business (me estaba arriesgando yo solo). But what happened? Even having a Bulgarian passport I was still Chilean in Vietnam!* His girlfriend had to go back to Bulgaria to finish her studies and Roberto didn't want to stay on his own because he never got used to his new

²⁶ Acquiring Bulgarian nationality was easy because Bulgarian national law made specific provision for it (Ordinance for Granting and Regulating the Refugee Status, Art. 14(4) in Fitzpatrick and Bonoan 2003:526).

'host' country and when it was known that he was not a Bulgarian and his girlfriend had already left for Bulgaria, *they respectfully threw me out (me echaron a lo caballero)*. Roberto's saga ends when, after being 'sent back' to the GDR, he returned to Bulgaria and reencountered his girlfriend and he married her by the Orthodox Church. After some years of marriage and a more stable life *we lived with the condition that both of us had to go back to our countries and that we should be open about that. Nobody was supporting us then and so it was a bit mad (tirado de las mechas) that we should swim against the current. Then in 1984 the famous lists appeared and my name was on one of them.*²⁷

Promoting returnism

Parties also disciplined and controlled membership through the promotion of *returnism*. Their role in nation-building under NSDS was central. They constituted the locus of *Chileanness*, to the extent that to be a member of a Party defined the boundaries of what it meant to be Chilean. Labarca (1981) noted that in exile there were different categories of *Chileanness* and these were related to Party membership. If, as noted earlier, Parties' relationship with the State is essential in the mediation of social demands, up to now it seems that building a new Chilean nation was the sole responsibility of elitist male-dominated Parties in which women as symbols and/or militants participated.

Despite continued repression, now in the hands of the newly-created CNI (1977-1990), the year 1978 saw the beginning of exiles' return. Though some returns had taken place since 1976, by 1978, Chilean exiles were – to use Ferris (1988) phrase – already 'waltzing with return'. Three testimonies of returnees (Lira and Kovalskys 1984:95) noted that in 1978 'everybody started to talk about return'. One professional returnee woman from East Germany said:

'acknowledging that repression, economic and other conditions continued in Chile, we saw that we had to start talking about return, not to promote a massive return to Chile but to start creating consciousness in our *compañeros* that this was a political task, the right we have to live in our own Patria, independently that we would like to return or that we have the conditions to do so.'

To understand the dynamics of *returnism* we must briefly consider what was occurring inside the Parties. The PC started its return campaign in 1977. Ricardo Garrido said:

We had the earliest repatriation policy. It was very well thought out and debated. In August 1977 we had a clandestine meeting outside Chile attended by all of us who were in the leadership. It was the first time after the coup. Everybody brought their opinions and then we all converged after doing an evaluation of all that had been happening in Chile. We concluded that despite the harsh and difficult circumstances up to then it was fundamental that, in order to morally comply with our values and commitment, it was necessary to return... We conducted an intense campaign in all countries within the party. These were the political issues we were discussing at the time and we extended our campaign to other exile parties independently of their return policies.

Certainly, 1978 inaugurated Party *returnism*. In its promotion, they looked for any event that could indicate some rupture within the NSDS regime. By 1978, the rift between General Leigh and Pinochet was imminent. Though Leigh was as fiercely anti-Communist as Pinochet himself, he grew

²⁷ See Chapter Five.

increasingly critical around issues such as Pinochet's personalism, the armed forces' insistence on holding power, the social cost of neo-liberal economic policies, the disinterest in a Constitutional Chamber that would guarantee a return to civilian rule and even around the issue of exiles. On the latter point, he talked of 'a selective policy of return by opening the door a little bit more, leaving outside only those who are irreversible aggressors. Blokes like Altamirano for instance. Gentlemen of that kind should not return to the country. However, relatives should be seen differently, those with minor faults, well, so many people who would be in conditions to return to the country providing that they will respect current legislation' (in Varas 1980:31). Parties in exile viewed this rift with strong optimism; *returnism* found a crack in the regime. Carlos said,

There was a political fact that is hardly remembered. The Parties had their weekly meetings where we analysed the Chilean political situation and the news that we received. Around that time the differences between Pinochet and General Leigh were deepening and ended in his final dismissal by Pinochet. Then we... imagine!, (I find it a bit opportunistic) as if General Leigh was going to open up a possibility and we, said the Communists, would join (ayuntarse) with God or the Devil, or whoever was necessary to change the situation in the country. I say this to you because from then on there was like a light where "compañero return is very close so let's get our suitcases ready and we will all return." When these events occurred in 1978, they unleashed a return campaign. It was then that we started to talk about preparing return and, for all the constituencies that were created, return was the main point and we as leaders took this idea to all Chilean fronts, we took this idea to all these organisations to promote return. From that year on everything revolved around return, that was the main theme.

This scenario seemed to concur with Larkin et al. (1991) 'space' theory whereby refugees see an 'opening' or temporary situation from which they can profit. This was 'resistance return' and it could be legal or clandestine. MIR was another keen promoter of *returnism*. In 1977, MIR called for a political resistance front and in 1979 implemented its *Operación Retorno*. Responses to this return policy differed. Rosario said,

There was a total policy of return and I was included in it but I said "I am not going." It was a big struggle but I said "I'm not going." Because of the present conditions in the country I don't think it is the moment, there aren't thousands of resistance committees and all that; truly, Chile's reality is different. So I decided...[pause] could it be in the end because of fear but "I am not willing to assume it, I am not going to do what you are asking."

Because of the heated internal debate around the leadership imposition of 'resistance return' (see Pérez 1996; Vidaurrázaga 2005), and the scarce political agency of its militants who somehow felt pressured to take the return decision which involved the affirmation of revolutionary identities, resistance return could also be legal. Eventually, Rosario returned legally and so did middle-class Ronaldo and Rosa. While reconstructing their experiences a tension arose. Though both were militants and determined to return, Ronaldo didn't want to appear as if he had influenced Rosa to follow him either when leaving or returning.

[Ronaldo] *At least for both of us that option was clear since we left: to return to Chile to overthrow the dictatorship. From that moment we knew that we would return with that purpose, that was our idea, right or wrong but that was our idea at that moment, we were willing to return.*[Rosa] *I was willing because everything we did there was with the intention to return. I wanted to return because it was necessary to contribute to a change in Chile.* [Ronaldo] *Yes, but I didn't take her to exile, she did it. When she returned I didn't bring her back either, it was her option to return to Chile.* [Rosa] *I returned not because of him but because I had my own activities. There were cases of women who followed their husbands*

because of his activities. In our case, we met when we were activists. We had independent political activities.

Ronaldo and Rosa's accounts highlight the gendered aspects of both exit and return that at the micro level appeared gender equal. This was not always so. Marcela's narrative illustrates the importance of considering the tensions between the hegemonic structures involved in materialising 'return decisions'. Family and Parties' *returnism* many times collided,

When they told him [MIR leadership to her compañero] that he was ready to return and he accepted, he did it without consulting me though we had been discussing our return to be in the frontline for the last five years! When he told me that at such a date he would return to Chile, I tell you, that was the first time I felt an earthquake degree 10 under my feet...I could not internalise it and I told him "you have destroyed our family at this very minute" but, I decided to help him. We had to dismantle the house because he had to have money to leave. I was left with our daughter, the car and the dog. That was all the capital I had. After a while they asked me if I wanted to return but I felt something strange, like a little treason to that slight temporary and transitory stability and so I accepted impulsively. I accepted immediately but that meant that everything was finished!

These considerations help to understand the boundaries of 'voluntary/involuntary return decision-making and more importantly, they highlight the politico-ideological air of *returnism* that, from 1978 onwards, was breathed within the *exterior*. Exaggerated information about mass struggle in Chile, hunger strikes, pre-revolutionary moments and so forth, promoted *returnism*. Worse still, some political organisations limited in their ability to provide concrete evidence of political life in Chile resorted to producing exaggerated even fictional information about it. This 'information' made people think that the political conditions in Chile were optimum to accelerate the demise of the NSDS. In the case of African repatriations, Rogge (1994) argued that this type of information was 'deliberately distorted.' Biographical reconstructions of conversational partners involved in 'resistance return', had been reshaped and reworked by their post-return experiences particularly regarding the costs of such information and *Operación Retorno*. *Returnism's* axis also encompassed versions of masculinity beyond the mere formal politics; resistance fighting in a strongly masculinised patriarchal context such as that under NSDS meant that to be a real committed man was to be ready to fight and ultimately to kill and to die, Ronaldo commented,

The other thing that happened was that possibilities for the development of political work were in total disagreement with what the party had said. We returned to Chile and a month and a half later almost all those with whom I had to get in touch and develop a political activity had been killed. Almost 90% of them! [long silence]... They had returned clandestinely, unlike me...but they all died. Why then? Well... I escaped because I took my own security measures by accident I think but, apart from that, the information that we handled at that moment did not correspond in the least with reality. Therefore we came to develop an activity for a time that did not have the right conditions. For that reason the people who returned politically, I mean clandestinely, to carry out their activities only arrived to be sacrificed.

Recent literature on 'homecomings' (Markowitz and Steffanson 2004) have stressed the contrast between the idealised home and the real one encountered on return. In the case of 'resistance return' the idealisation was political not nostalgic and the policy was gendered. Marcela said,

When I returned, well, I felt cheated and disappointed with the discourse that the men had elaborated outside. The men sent us back. Every time we gave our opinions regarding ...

[unfinished sentence] *maybe it is not like that, maybe the people are not resisting with arms in the streets and all that of the prolonged popular war, of the formation of an alternative army...NO! It -is-like- this! they said. And they implemented a policy...well...I would say of a very small group of men that aimed at convincing us women. From a political viewpoint, I was not that convinced that my opinion was valued, they showed me a political country that did not exist, they cheated me right up to the bone.*

Regarding the PC, where the majority of its base militants were working-class (del Pozo 1992), the idea of return was, according to Carlos, *unfavourably regarded*. As in other refugee cases, for instance Chadian refugees (Watson 1996), women rather than men were more concerned about returning and eventually their return decision was usually linked to the men's. Commentators have argued that Chilean working-class exiles experienced upward social mobility (Wright and Oñate 1998) and that women through the process of rebuilding stability and security have become more independent. So far, this study has suggested that despite women's income-earning work that certainly provided some independence, the hegemonic roles of motherhood and family stability have been determinant in their future lives and decisions. At the time of return decisions these two hegemonic powers were confronted with that of Parties' *returnism*. Though in the case of *vanguardista* women this clash was less severe, in working-class families where most women were 'tied refugees' it had cataclysmic effects. Through the lens of *returnism* the following account reveals the elitist, classed and gendered dimensions of return pressures and the extent to which working-class exiled women had a different agenda to that of men's. Carlos' narrative illustrates this point. When asked about who was opposed to return he first addressed those within Parties rather than within his family.

There wasn't much discussion about it in the Parties. But it can be said that those less inclined to this return were the less prepared sectors of those Parties, those without professions, that is to say those who were poor in Chile. But I think that they were dragged off and obliged to go. I would say that that was one of the most serious errors because those people made their children suffer a lot because on return they were exposed to starvation in their original poblaciones where they came from, like La Pincoya and places like that. Those who returned from Sweden, Argentina, Peru and the UK were poor people. In the UK there was an exile that did not arrive with WUS grants like us. Among those who rejected this return were the women because women had a different position than men. For the women it was more difficult to adapt to these societies and then they grew roots with their children. I do not want to make too many distinctions, but women were always looking for ways to provide security for the family and especially for their children, they suffered a lot but they adapted eventually. Curiously, women tended to see those societies as ones that solved their problems and allowed them to settle and then WE, the machos of the Parties told them that it was necessary to return. This once more broke the stability built up by women that is sort of natural for them. So there was resistance at one point on their part but then it always ended up with the Party imposing itself and the man over the woman....

Carlos points to the crucial issue of the authoritarian nature of Parties. This is an historical feature of Chilean political life and of the authoritarian state-society matrix (Jocelyn-Holt 1997; Portales 2004, 2010). Unsurprisingly therefore, Parties in the *exterior* imposed *returnism* on women, particularly working-class 'tied' refugee women. Yet, motherhood and family were instrumental in dissuading women to follow Parties' return policies. Chapter Three discussed the role of motherhood and family in NSDS's gender discourse. Here, this very same ideology, entrenched in Chilean society, antagonised Parties' *returnism*. Women's relationship to *returnism* was sometimes ambivalent, others antagonistic. On many occasions, the family project was more important. Marcia's account highlights

the extent to which women resisted *returnism*. They resorted to family and motherhood's hegemony. This suggests that women were not sufficiently committed to the Party's return policy even with a history of militancy and commitment. Marcia said,

I think that we women resisted much more the orders of the parties; among other things our political commitment was not 100%, because half of us had small kids and were concerned about the family so you distanced yourself from some things. So, if at any moment they said to you that you had to go to die or go somewhere else, that allowed you to say 'fuck off, you idiot! (ni cagando puh huevón!) I will stay with my small kid!' and to a certain extent, that liberated the men to go and die anywhere, understand? I know that in my case, my compañero, the father of my child, was reassured because that decision of mine guaranteed him that he could get on with his life because I took charge of the child. I feel that that was not only my personal experience but a collective one. The logic of the militancy at that time worked through the hero-martyr and the widow model.

These extracts show the importance of considering the 'micro-macro integration' (Cicourel 1981) and the role played by authoritarian hegemonic institutions when identifying factors, reasons and 'motivations' for return. This discussion poses serious questions to the homogenised and separate analyses of the contextual factors that coalesce around the decision to repatriate, particularly micro approaches. It also challenges the idea of 'spontaneous returns' under conflict. According to Coles' (1985:164) 'during the twelve years of military rule in Chile,...UNHCR and ICM have assisted the repatriation of over 2000 Chileans...There has been a larger number of spontaneous returns, but the exact number is hard to ascertain.' Indeed, return had been promoted by Parties and the 1978 conflict between Chile and Argentina (FASIC 1984b), the principle of 'safety' was redundant.

The above discussion shows that when gender is considered a more complex picture emerges. Even when refugee women gain some autonomy and equality at the private level, the overarching authoritarian public patriarchal political structures remain intact above them. Bringing Walby's (1990:20) patriarchal structures to this section's discussion, of the six structures she considered, this thesis suggests a seventh is missing: women's direct or indirect involvement in political patriarchal structures. In exile, the latter impinged on women's lives to such an extent that if they were being 'liberated' and 'emancipated' from what she calls 'private patriarchy', the 'public patriarchy' examined in this section, still ruled their lives even in the absence of the domestic State. In exile, this void was filled by the reconstructed male-dominated Parties where men's lost and humiliated political masculinity was regained, and so it was their dominant position vis-à-vis women. Carlos's insightful accounts necessarily leads to the examination of the outcome of these tensioned gender relations around return: the so-called 'private crisis' (Kay 1982) in exile.

4.4 The 'private crisis' revisited

The data in this study shows that at the time of the interviews, out of the forty five returnee respondents, twenty eight were married, twelve separated, three single and two in partnership (with a *compañero/a*). Of the twelve separated, nine were women. This data therefore does not substantiate the ubiquitous argument of the 'private crisis' in exile (Corral and Páez 1980; Kay 1982). Hence, both the 'newness' and nature of the crisis needs to be revisited.

Consistent with the literature on migrant and refugee women, several key themes emerge here as factors for the 'private crisis' in exile. So far, this Chapter has discussed the pressures impinging on the institutions of marriage and the family. One such factor, already highlighted by Pedro and Sergio, has been the 'emancipatory' role of exile and migration on women particularly because those living in Western countries have found more independence as women and from their husbands (Corral and Páez 1980; Kay 1982; Vera 1985; Vásquez and Araujo 1990; Gaillard 1997). Related to this is the impact of women's entry to the labour market (particularly working-class women) on men's masculine authority already undermined by a loss of political and economic status and their social experiences in the host society (racism, classism). Though this is an important gendered factor, it is not the only one. Corral and Páez (1980:166-167) are right in arguing that there were underlying 'social processes' underpinning marital dissolutions. Focussing on Southern Cone exiles in Europe, these authors emphasise the devaluation of traditional morality, both by the impact of political or ideological influences of the 'social transitions' in the past and the encounter with host countries' progressive and radical European gender and political models. This pressure, according to these authors plus the inexistence of other 'permanent groups such as political parties or trade unions, concentrate conflicts and expectations in the only stable group remaining: the family' (*ibid*). Yet, this study's evidence is suggesting that some Parties still had powerful influences and control particularly over 'tied' refugee women. While Party allegiances dimmed with time, the concept 'family' was also evolving and single-parent families became a regularity in the *exterior* (López Zarzosa 1998). Thus, exile threatened not the institution *per se* but rather the patriarchal family and its social control powers that, as we shall see in the following chapter, constituted a telling point for the Catholic Church.

Additional factors impinging on family and marital dissolutions found in the literature are the lack of extended family (Affi 2004) and refugees' mental health problems of which men suffer more frequently than women (Sales 2007). When men are included in discussions of marital dissolutions, most authors suggest that in exile, men's inability to carry out their traditional role as provider leads to a loss of their status within the family, thereby placing enormous pressures on relationships (Kay 1982; Eastmond 1989; Bloch 1997; Sales and Gregory 1998). More convincingly however, Maletta and Szwarcberg (1985:24) in their study of return to Argentina, have suggested that separations in exile are not solely attributable to exile. The authors argued that 'it might be that this was a normal evolution of those relationships.' Following Maletta and Szwarcberg's argument, this study's findings provide clear evidence that there are four themes responsible for it: marital life during UP, gender experiences during exile (seen above), the unacknowledged constitution of those relationships and the age of couples.

As discussed, the exhilarating years of the UP altered the public and private realms. The issue of men's dedication to politics during the UP, as Laura noted above, arose in the literature (Kay 1982; del Pozo 1992; Salinas 2000; Rebolledo 2004) and repeatedly in respondents' narratives. Because of this quasi-separation, tensions among more 'mature' couples were not infrequent and most of the

middle-aged women interviewed, were already separated at the time of exit, or in the process of doing so. Cecilia for example, who was forty-one years old when exiting Chile, had separated during the UP. Soon after the coup and with the authorisation of his Party, her husband sought asylum in an embassy in Santiago. Despite their separation, the family's safety took priority,

He talked with his organisation and was recommended to seek asylum and so he did. From there he started to see how he could get us out of Chile. We were already separated but at that moment the children and the family came first. So then all the dealings to leave Chile were done and we all left together.

There is also the need to consider the constitution of marital relationships *before* exile. In this study, a number of relationships and marriages were born out of the repressive circumstances. Some women were in relationships that under the impact of imprisonment of their fiancés and the prospects of exit precipitously ended in marriage. Abril, for whom the collapse of an idealised political image of her husband also played a role in their separation, illustrates this claim. She married her boyfriend while he was imprisoned in *Tres Alamos*.²⁸ In her accounts she acknowledges that their marital problems and separation obeyed to many factors and the predominant ones were the immaturity of her relationship and men's emphasis on their political status. Scholars who have addressed marital dissolution in exile have stressed the importance of couples' psychosexual dynamics (Agger and Jensen 1989), but ignored the importance of those relationships' constitution and the age of the partners. Most studies agree that Chilean exile was young. The average was 29 (Villamar 1984), something corroborated by this study (see Appendix 1). This shows that on arrival, most exiled marriages were in their early stages either with small or no children. Abril, said,

The fact that we were fellow students we knew each other in the academic sphere but not as persons and you know, we married while he was still in prison. Also, there are factors in exile that contributed to our separation. In fact, the tremendous enrichment of his figure as a political prisoner and within his Party, that made him later fail in his other roles, because he was too high up. To start, he was very high with being tortured and all that. Then this image started to diminish together with his roles of father, husband, household head, and provider. All that contributed to our separation; that image was getting weaker and weaker particularly with respect to the British system because he simply could not understand it. That too influenced our separation a lot. But I would say that another factor was the loneliness you live in exile and that was aggravated by Celeste's [daughter] ill-health, your family is not there to help you.

Others met their future husbands while visiting their male imprisoned relatives. Their 'relationship' developed *during* visit times and *continued* throughout imprisonment. Once their boyfriends were released and granted visas to leave Chile, the 'decision' to marry was under the imminent pressure to depart ending in hasty marriages. At the time of the coup, Yiya was twenty years old. In her accounts, she also highlights the unexpected consequences that lack of both private and State protection brought to her life,

My family suffered a lot (cualquier cantidad). My father was arrested and so was my brother...Really, I do not want to remember (in tears)... Before, my home was a nest, the family, the children, my mother, my father, all was protection and care, and suddenly... everything collapsed! (quedó la escoba!). We all felt so unprotected. From then on we had to

²⁸ Some civil marriages were allowed inside this imprisonment camp. Because *Tres Alamos* was one of the visible faces of NSDS's repressive apparatus, many human rights organisations monitored it. By allowing prisoners to marry in its premises, the NSDS tried to show a 'human and civic face'.

fend for ourselves because my father and my brother were imprisoned and there was no money, very little food,, we started living a different life altogether... It was as if I had another life and it was in that life that I met my husband. I met Juan when I visited my father and brother in prison and then we started a relationship, and then when his visa arrived we said... 'What shall we do? Then he said, blimey (pucha) I have to leave!, Let's marry then" And so we got married.

In addition, the intersection of class and exit modes, were often determinant variables. The case of 'tied' working-class refugee women is illustrative. Those who were not into politics blamed their husbands for the new situation and if unresolved (including Party intervention), this resulted in separation and the posterior return of the woman and her children. Rita (Testimonio I 1979:16), a returnee psychiatrist who treated Chilean refugees during her five-year exile in Canada, when back in Chile in 1979 noted,

"The man felt that the woman was capable of doing many things and he acknowledges it there in exile but eventually, he cannot accept it and then there is a break up. When the man was well prepared politically and was working here in Chile, the woman accepted him because he was her husband, but with the problems they were facing there, she blamed him heavily for the fact that she has to live in a foreign country, for having to cope with a totally different situation. She then does not understand how he can still do the same things there. She cannot believe that he is in a meeting up until 10 pm and when she hears him talking politics, she thinks she is going to go mad and that she cannot stand him anymore. In those cases there is practically nothing to do. Then the man looks for a political *compañera* with whom he will get on ideologically. So that poor woman, the only thing she thinks of is return home to her family and taking the children with her."

Rita's observation is crucial. Her in-depth knowledge will constitute a valuable contribution to the issue *exilio-retorno* to the rapidly emerging 'spaces' of assistance and protection of returnees in the *interior*. By acknowledging the uneasiness of exile and particularly about conjugal problems and separations conducing to a stream of women returning with their children and in future need of assistance, Rita also highlighted the role of the family and gender in return decisions. Studies on gender and RM have shown that women are less likely to return than men but ultimately motherhood concerns (children's wellbeing), and the reunification of extended families are the principal reasons that impels them to return (Guarnizo 1997a,b).

Similarly, in this study, return decisions weighed heavily on the hegemonic institution of the family. Yet, in the context of *returnism*, the family is seen as the cradle of national identity and class extraction. It was this conception of family that drew most respondents to return. In their responses, women adopted family roles, particularly that of daughter and mother. Even for mature single women such as Alfonsina, the family exerted an influential power on her desire to return. She did not want to appear as an undutiful daughter,

In my case, it was the need to reunite with my family. It was to return to my nucleus because I have a very good family, and so to return to Chile was to return to my family. It was fundamental to return to my father to whom I loved dearest. I did not want to be away for long because he was very old. Even being old and despite that he had been very ill in the past, he visited me in Spain. I did not want to be outside that family circle; powerful, very powerful. Essentially, because he was a very consistent person and a great support for us all. Therefore, that pulled me a lot (me tiró mucho), to be back with my family again; that for me was very important.

Cecilia decided to be a return Trojan Horse. *I always felt that if I returned first, it was like opening the path for the return of my children, that is, it was the first part (pata) of this cueca*²⁹ *to reunite the family if you like, but they stayed put.* Hence, it was feasible for both independent and ‘tied refugees’ to return even under NSDS’s rule. In common with experiences of other Southern Cone NSDSs where more women than men returned (Bidegain 1986), Villamar’s (1984, II:59) study showed that until April 1984, among the returnee population ‘the feminine sex is represented by 72% of the total sample and 28% of the masculine. Among the causes, the tendency is that women return alone because of their separation and/or because of administrative restrictions on return that mainly affects men’ (see also Celedón and Opazo 1987). This data corroborates this study’s earlier claim of women’s ‘tied’ refugeehood.

Whatever happened to the ubiquitous ‘exile as emancipation’ thesis if women were returning even under NSDS’s terror? A plausible explanation will be explored through the experience of Saturday schools, women’s children and motherhood.

4.5 Rescuing the children: Saturday Schools, Chileanness and *returnism*

‘Politics’, the widely recognised primary activity of the *exterior*, neglected ‘ordinary’ problems such as those faced by women, particularly working-class women and the second generation. Both categories were uncared for unless they were somehow attached to a Party. Because Chilean exile was a ‘family exile’ (Orellana 1980-81; Inostroza and Ramírez 1986; Rebolledo 2004), the second generation was not a minority. For example, in a survey carried out in Britain in 1984 by *Chile Democrático-UK*, ‘the number of adults interviewed was 180 (41.19%) whilst the number of their children was 257, corresponding to 58.81% of the total population’ (CHD-UK 1985:9). For those who arrived as children or adolescents exile constituted a turning point in their lives. They were now ‘refugees’ and for most, their childhood was truncated. Similarly to children of Mexican immigrant families in the US (Valenzuela 1999), they began to play gendered roles such as ‘tutors’, ‘surrogate parents’ and translators (Araya et al. 1981) with the added complexity of being in a forced migration setting. Middle-class Loreto resorted to her seven year old daughter to translate for her,

Though I did a French course in Canada, I spoke only in Spanish, I refused to speak French. When I had to go to the bank for example, I took Claudia and asked her: “tell her that I want to deposit” and she translated for me. I fucking refused to speak! (no hablaba ni cagando!). I hated Canada, I did not settle there (no me ambienté)...

Aware of the threats posed by exile and resocialisation to *returnism*, some Parties provided schooling activities for their cadres’ children; these focused on their politically-oriented return projects and prepared children and parents to face ‘resistance return’. The *Escuela de Pioneros* (Pioneers’ School) tied to the PC was the most known, though MIR also established schooling activities with similar purposes. Yet, children who attended those activities were a minority and both experiences remain largely unexamined. In the mid- 1970s the influential work of COLAT (1981), the Latin American

²⁹ See glossary.

Collective of Psycho-Social Work established in 1976 under the academic supervision of the Catholic University of Louvain (Barudy 1988), was an inspiration for the emergence of the Saturday School movement. Unlike Parties, COLAT acknowledged children's problems associated to social and school marginalisation (see Luis Peebles in Wright and Oñate 1998:130-135). Children's problems indicated the need to provide solutions to counteract cultural influences, identity conflicts, intergenerational problems, lack of communication, and the resocialisation of children that seriously threatened *returnism*. As discussed earlier here, language other than Spanish was a problem. Evidence suggests that children adapted to host countries more quickly than adults (Vásquez 1980; Araya et al. 1981) and that communication became more difficult among working-class families mainly for the housebound mother who never had access to language courses. As this study evidence has already shown, women rather than men have been more sensitive in capturing what was going wrong in their daily lives. Exile's instability was challenging the quintessential Latin American 'maternal sphere': family, morality and education. Regarding morality, and from an ideological viewpoint, complaints about 'liberal' and 'loose' values with core hedonistic individualism and consumerism, were voiced in public and private gatherings and more so in Women's Conferences (López Zarzosa 1991). For most, these were 'capitalist values' (del Pozo 2002) and considered 'false values' from which they wanted to protect their children and not to succumb like migrants had done (see Raquel's accounts in Politzer, 1989:69-92).

Conversely, mainstream education was boycotting *returnism*. Children were losing their language and their *Chileanness*. Studies on nationalism have stressed the importance of language as a national marker and more so among those who, as Smith (2001:11) noted, 'stress 'objective' factors such as language, religion and customs, territory and institutions.' Certain Leftist Parties *i.e.*, PC, MIR stressed those 'objective factors' and language was key in maintaining not only national identity but also a commitment to *returnism* and in this project women played a key role. In the 'exile as emancipation thesis' much is said about housebound working-class women not playing a public role. This viewpoint is illustrated by Kay's (1982) concept 'privatised woman' examined through the 'oppressed woman' paradigm. However, women as housewives and mothers actively participate in the ideological reproduction of the collectivity as transmitters of the national culture (Anthias and Yuval-Davis 1989:7). Roach Pierson (2000:47) went further and suggested that in the triad 'language, culture and ethnic descent as binding elements of a nation, the figure of the mother as bearer and educator of the young and preserver of culture acquires national stature.' For the aforementioned Parties, *returnism* was paramount and women were crucial. Women's roles as reproducers of a nation through teaching the 'mother-tongue' were being challenged by exile and acculturation with the danger that their children would move away from *returnism*. Equally to Maya women in refugee camps in Mexico (Crosby 1997), the loss of identity was a major concern among working-class and politicised Chilean mothers: 'children were growing away from them because they were losing their mother-tongue, national and cultural identity' (López Zarzosa 2006:4). *Returnism* was being challenged by children's re-socialisation.

This degree of concern was emphasised by most respondents. Parents mentioned the ages 12 to 15 as critical for their return because once children had reached adolescence they would refuse to return. Leopoldo Acuña said: *Laura went on ahead in 1984 because our eldest daughter was already fifteen and had we let time pass she wouldn't have liked to come here.* Another concern for most respondents, already aired by upper-middle class María and Laura whose children lived an *infancia prisionera*, were the social dangers posed to adolescents. Concerns regarding drug addiction, sexuality and above all gang problems were not uncommon (López Zarzosa 1991), particularly for those living in rundown estates, the *banlieu*, or *invandrare* areas. Children were also growing away from parent's social mores. Solidarity events and meetings mixed exiles from all genders, classes, political affiliations, sexualities, ethnic origins and ages. In these 'democratic' events, children from all backgrounds mixed. It was Laura's eldest daughter who, many years after return pointed out to her about the 'risks' involved in those gatherings. Laura said,

We, the Chileans of the solidarity movement held meetings on Sunday mornings and, we took the girls. There was a group of kids who had a musical folklore group and so the girls joined it and it seems that those kids were rather locatelli (all ravers), who would smoke marihuana and all the rest. Then Julia (daughter), who is now a child psychiatrist, and who was the most affected by all this told me once 'mum, when I think...you were fortunate, you left us with all those wild kids'... We thought that because they were all Chileans everything was fine'

Research on migration and refugeehood also suggests that children learn a foreign language rather rapidly. In a study carried out in Holland, Latin American exiled parents remarked that this had an opposite effect 'the language swallows the children' as well as 'their original culture' (Araya et al. 1981:11). These women's children were moving away from the nationhood project of *returnism* and developing feelings of alienation of belonging. For this reason Rosalba constructed boundaries. *I always put frontiers to the children. Outside the front door they were foreigners, inside it they were Chileans because we were Chileans. They tried to speak another language, because they had daily contact with that society, it was easier for them to speak Swedish and so afterwards they wanted to transform the house so I forbade them to speak Swedish at home. They spoke in Swedish to me but I responded in Spanish.*

Results from an empirical study carried out in London (López Zarzosa 1991:42) add further complexity. The downgrading of ethnic minorities' languages and racism attached to it (which some working-class Chilean families were experiencing), 'induced many parents to use English, albeit broken, as a survival strategy, making children more aware of the even lower status of their mother-tongue.' One way of redressing those problems was by creating Saturday activities in the form of workshops, projects, and schools.

Return schooling: commitment to Returnism

The Chilean Saturday School movement of the early 1980s was a particular type of schooling that emerged out of the social and political awareness of primarily exiled women from different social political backgrounds. For example, the outcome of the First National Conference of Chilean Women

in Exile in London in December 1982 was an overwhelming approval for the creation of new Saturday Schools destined to palliate and/or reverse identity loss and to support the existing ones. Politicised women's interests converged with working-class women's uneasiness of exile, particularly language interference in their relationship with their children who were rapidly losing their *Chileanness* and 'roots'. This type of refugee education was defined as 'Complementary Education' (López Zarzosa 1991). Its two curriculum pillars were language and identity. By placing emphasis on these 'objective' patriotic factors, the struggle against political temporariness continued, this time, in an educational setting. Pedagogically, the idea of complementary education 'was not to supplement mainstream education or to provide a varnish of 'ethnic' literature and history. Nor was its purpose to teach children basic skills to improve their attainment in weekday schools. The objective was to complement the process of socialisation taking place at home in an irregular form (exile) and so to provide educational knowledge that would explain and respond to the fundamental question: *Why are we here?*' (López Zarzosa 2006:2) Certainly, refugee complementary education's aim was to 'root' children in Chile and *returnism* was fundamental to it. By strengthening their cultural and national identity children would be better equipped to cope in mainstream school and society. The late Enrique Parada (1990:18), *Chile Democrático-UK's* first Education Officer noted, '[T]he main aim of the schools was to prepare the children for their return to Chile. This was behind the curriculum which included Chilean history, geography and language.' This knowledge would help to materialise the abstract and 'theoretical' notion of *Chile* that parents were transmitting to the children; their return would be to a 'real' Chile.

Saturday Schools therefore, were another constituency contributing to the promotion of *returnism*. One illustrative example is *Niño Luchín* Saturday School in north London. This school maintained a highly creative curriculum. It used Paulo Freire's (1972) pedagogy and maintained a more relaxed approach towards monolingualism, monoculturalism, and the politicisation of children. Initially, the school provided classes for primary age but it later included teenagers in an educational and recreational Youth Club as well as activities for the parents. The school commitment to prepare children for their return was paramount. One of the specific objectives was related to political *temporariness*: '[E]xile is to be short lived. The dictatorship could not retain power for long; the historical tradition of democracy in Chile would be against it.' (López Zarzosa 1991:46-47) Yet, *returnism* in a schools setting was not blindly accepted, it was incisively criticised as harmful to the children by a Chilean psychologist who had been working with exiled adolescents in London and later at the school itself. He once said: '[P]arents made life impossible for their adolescents with the constant threat to return to Chile (I use the word threat because that is as they feel it, it is an interpretative word), those kids were trying to settle, to adapt and understand this society, however, their parents were always pulling them out...' (in López Zarzosa 1991:47). He was right, children at home were getting a confusing and contradictory vision of Chile. On one hand, a paradisiacal idea of Chile; on the other, the terrifying experiences of life under the NSDS. Vázquez and Araujo (1990:49) put it bluntly:

'During the first stage of exile Chileans willingly evoked the wonderful landscape, the warmth of their fellow compatriots, and above all the food whose taste and aroma often

merited nearly lyrical memories. The “do you remember...?” seem to make you forget the difficulties, risks, repression and torture but as soon you remember them, suddenly, the guilt feeling appeared...See-saw recollections of which they are not conscious, were seized by their children in their total paradox, who echo them as caricature, as they were tired of this contradiction.’

Despite these criticisms, *Niño Luchín School*’s commitment to prepare children for return was praised by its umbrella organisation *Chile Democrático-UK*. In a survey carried out in Britain for the purpose of making recommendations to the Working Group on Return to Chile³⁰ regarding assistance for return, concerns were raised around children and adolescents’ misgivings around return primarily because ‘[T]he different attitudes taken by some of the adolescents have brought some sort of division within the Chilean families in exile’ (CHD-UK 1985:12). Among the recommendations to help children to return and resettle in Chile, the report stated; ‘[I]n this respect the Chilean Saturday Schools seem to be offering a very good experience’ (CHD-UK 1985:13). This was a boost that reaffirmed *Niño Luchín School*’s commitment to prepare children for return and made public in 1988. As we shall see in Chapter Six, 1988 will be a turning point in Chilean political history, the demise of the NSDS was in sight. In exile, pro-return committees were either being strengthened or set up, host government funded ‘guides to return’ mushroomed, and myriad meetings, seminars and conferences on return were organised in the peripheral society. One of these took place in London in May 1988, the First National Conference on Return organised by *Chile Democrático*. During this conference, *Niño Luchín School* declared its commitment to *returnism*. In its motion to Conference it stated:

‘We believe that exile still continues despite that the dictator says otherwise. Only when he is deposed we can declare ourselves free to return to Chile. While he is still in power we will continue educating and preparing our children for return to a Chile that requires a physically and ideologically strong generation to create a new society. Those who are returning soon will have all our help by preparing their children better in their command of the language and what it means to face a sudden change in a country that not only has the beautiful Andes mountains and birds like the condor, but above all the changes that the dictatorship has brought about. Those who are expecting to return later, will continue having the same quality education we have been providing for more than five years that in turn depends on the fate that the Conservative government that had been cutting all kind of funding to what they call ‘ethnic minorities’.³¹

By now, some parents and their children had already returned while others were in the process of doing so. Their return was to be to a rapidly and profoundly changing Chile.

³⁰ The Working Group was constituted by BRC, WUS, CAFOD, Christian Aid, OXFAM, War on Want, CIIR, International Social Service, Helped the Aged, *Chile Democrático-UK*, CCHR-UK and CSC.

³¹ Personal archives.

Conclusion

This chapter examined the dynamics of becoming an exile and its relation to political temporariness and *returnism*. The exhilarating period of the UP followed by the disruptive and traumatic experiences of the military coup and its repressive aftermath, were two periods that tested not only individuals' strength and capacities but also the social structures that underpinned Chilean society. Exile, furthered this testing. The chapter showed that in the process of exile, both individuals and social structures were challenged by the disruptive forces of displacement. Language, downward socio-economic mobility, status loss, the refugee status and its corresponding label, attempted against class, status, gender relations, family, and motherhood. Though the hegemony of the patriarchal family institution was challenged, family and motherhood continued to dominate exiles' concern; the latter was a resilient feature throughout this chapter. Conversely, the hegemony of Parties in the *exterior* was maintained through the most critical period of exile and their roles artificially enhanced through return policies and surrogacy roles. *Returnism*, as well as constituting a nationhood artifice, it was a social control mechanism.

In sum, this chapter has shown that in situations of displacement, social and political hegemonic structures still manage to survive. When analytically considered, exile is seen as a period of crises and not of destruction or collapse. The hegemony of the family, Parties and motherhood provided a continuity that enabled individuals to cope with the uneasiness of exile. These institutions in turn became promoters of *returnism* with the result that exiles started returning to a country dominated by the same conditions that expelled them. It is time to examine the situation awaiting them in Chile as they were returning to 'a country in crisis' (FASIC 1985). Who protected them under NSDS, how and with what purposes? The next chapter will respond to such questions keeping in mind that those returning will do so with a baggage of experiences in the *exterior*; they will now confront the *interior*.

CHAPTER FIVE

Protective discourses, institutions and practices: return under NSDS, 1978-1987

Introduction

This chapter deals with so-called 'return under conflict' and is situated in the *interior*. It aims to fill the lacuna in our understanding of such paradoxical repatriations and its different sets of dynamics. More importantly, the chapter explores previously unresearched constituencies involved in Chilean VRp. In the absence of State protection, this chapter explores the support provided to *exilio-retorno* and the creation of 'spaces'. In exploring this dynamic, the validity of the 'space theory' is assessed. The chapter has three parts. The first part begins by discussing the protective moral role of human rights and the configuration of a network of constituencies and actors involved in the articulation of human rights and the right to return. It pays particular attention to the specific oppositional discourse that emerged out of NSDS's repressive policies on return: *El derecho a vivir en la patria* (the right to live in one's own homeland). The second part examines the major developments occurring in Chile at the time of exiles' return. Finally, it provides a discussion of the institutional welfare and humanitarian network protecting *exilio-retorno*. The chapter argues that by using *El derecho a vivir en la patria* to struggle against NSDS, *returnism* turned into an internationally recognised and protective narrative that could be easily articulated to promote and facilitate VRp. Given this chapter's interest in the macro-level factors involved in the support of *exilio-retorno*, the hegemonic role of the Catholic Church, the family, *patria*, and Parties are considered. This dominant axis will play an instrumental role in promoting *returnism*.

5.1 Early protective agencies and discourses

This section explores VRp protection under NSDS. The existing legal framework restricting return distanced exile and return; it eliminated the temporariness of exile and any possible nexus between the two. Early return linked the two processes inextricably and so the protection-solution paradigm was mirrored by the *exilio-retorno* one. As seen in Chapter One, when refugees return to their country of origin where conflict still rages it constitutes 'repatriation under/during conflict' (Larkin et al. 1991; Cuny et al. 1992; Stein et al. 1995). Stein and Cuny (1991) argued that repatriation under conflict is refugee-induced and is the result of refugees' own agency and their 'rational' return decision based on the information available to them. Yet, returning under NSDS was more complex. Most of the repatriations studied by these scholars were from refugee camps unlike Chilean exiles who were scattered around the five continents and were neither *campesinos* nor *indigenous* people.

UNHCR (1997:153) suggested that returning under the same circumstances that expelled people, 'a host of problems, uncertainties and dangers await returnees on their return to their home country.' In such cases, UNHCR identified five types of insecurities: physical, legal, social, psychological and

material (*ibid*:154-159). This is particularly important because Chilean VRp was not visibly assisted by UNHCR and returnees under NSDS would require protection in any or all of these forms. One omnipresent form of protection was provided by the doctrine of human rights something that UNHCR has always included in any repatriation programme (UNHCR 1997) because as Goodwin-Gill (1997:13) asserted 'voluntary repatriation has institutional and human rights dimensions.' This recognition points to UNHCR's ghostly role thus offering the possibility of gaining deeper insights into forms of protection in 'repatriation under conflict.'

5.1.1 Human Rights

In 1977 Pinochet said 'the suspension of certain rights in Chile protects and in fact guarantees human rights' (Rouquié 1987 p. 261 in Taylor 1993:3). Among those 'suspended' rights were all but four of the thirty Articles laid out in the Universal Declaration (Articles 4, 16, 17, 24). This was a move away from 'the natural law revival and a return to a Utilitarian, ultra-Liberal and individualistic notion of human rights in which the right to own a property [17], superseded all others...' (Taylor 1993:2-3). In a neoliberal context, the NSDS safeguarded a traditional capitalist right (especially Article 17), it restored trust to those property-owners who had been expropriated by the UP administration. One way to counter such a powerful doctrine was by invoking the doctrine of human rights and emphasising the right to life that the NSDS had violated so grossly. The circumstances and timing were propitious. By appealing directly to the nascent global struggle for human rights, Chile fitted perfectly into the global liberal consensus about human rights norms that simultaneously was starting to be shaped by the new approach to the refugee problem. In Chile, human rights filled the void left by the absence of Parties's narratives and would prove to be instrumental in their sustainability. At the time of NSDS's DR, the recourse to human rights was imperative in keeping citizens' protection at the forefront of opposition discourses. This was all the more necessary because, despite the ratification by the Allende administration in 1972 of the Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, the NSDS continued with its schizophrenic approach. While rhetorically recognising the validity of human rights norms it systematically continued ignoring them to the extent that for eleven years (1974-1985), the United Nations General Assembly overwhelmingly voted against NSDS's human rights violations in Chile. The period coincided with the expansion of transnational human rights NGOs and advocacy networks to which Chile contributed greatly (Ropp and Sikkink 1999). So important had the advocacy of human rights been in Chile that it constituted an internationally respected and acknowledged pursuit. Pablo Fuentes, a prominent human rights lawyer, who since 1973 had been involved in the establishment of early human rights constituencies and who returned in 1983 to reintegrate the Human Rights Department of the *Vicaría*, said:

Human rights workers, especially, those of us lawyers who had a more public role in the defense of human dignity had overwhelming national and international support. The opposition political leadership respected us enormously. The leaders of the dictatorship loathed us. They kidnapped us, they killed us, but the whole theme of the defense of human rights constituted a CV in itself. However, during the dictatorship, that very same work started to turn into a prontuario [list of heinous crimes] because the activities we undertook had political consequences such as that of prosecuting Pinochet.

However, the emergence of a strong human rights movement in Chile was not due to the grievance of human rights violations and lack of protection alone. It is well established among human rights scholars that simple grievances are insufficient to launch a social movement (Bickford 2002). On the contrary, certain other conditions must be in place before grievances can be translated into collective action. Soon after the coup and in the absence of any other response Churches were the first to act.

5.1.2 Churches and human rights: Ecumenical responses

The literature on human rights organisations in Chile stresses that these were formed over successive generations. The first generation was based on religious organisations, especially the Catholic Church; the second was primarily comprised of family members of victims; the third was based on Parties or a combination of these three (Orellana 1991). This means that the pre-existing social-institutional underpinnings for the formation of human rights organisations in Chile were already in place: the Church, the family and Parties. Though the latter had been erased from the public sphere, their very survival soon showed their resilience. The former two, represented what Bickford (2002:17) called 'sacred spaces'. To these, this study adds love for the *patria*. The hegemonic stance of these axes of Chilean society were determinant in *exilio-retorno*.

The influential role of the Catholic Church in Chile has been widely acknowledged since the 1833 Constitution recognised Catholicism as state religion (Smith 1982; Fleet and Smith 1997) and even more so under NSDS (Lowden 1993; Fernández 1996; Cancino 1997). Despite Chile being the 'least Catholic' of all Latin American countries the Catholic Church is 'one of Chile's most admired national institutions' (Fleet and Smith 1997:35). This admiration has emanated from the Church's five main stands: its historical and consistent efforts to contain Communism since the 1900s, its marked patriotism, its preferential option for the 'poor' (Mecham 1996; Smith 1982; Fleet and Smith 1997; Gill 1998), its moral tutelage and authority (Loveman 1988; Lowden 1993) and finally, its adoption of the cause of human rights since Pope John XXIII's *Pacem in Terris* of 1963 (Lowden 1993). These underpinnings have provided the Catholic Church in Chile with high prestige and social legitimacy, allowing it to pursue its own political agenda, particularly in the realm of public policy in matters such as abortion and divorce (Lies and Malone 2007).

At the time of the military coup there were several social forces operating within the Catholic Church (Smith 1982) and simultaneously it was losing hegemony to Protestantism (Gill 1998).³² Besides, within the Armed Forces and *Carabineros* there was a parallel Catholic Church, as well as a growing Protestant Evangelical presence (Lagos and Chacón 1987). Both the institutional conservative (including the ultra-conservative 'Opus Dei') and the moderate forces within the Church applauded the coup. Two days after the coup the leaders of the Episcopal Conference praised the Junta for its 'patriotism and selflessness' in their difficult task of restoring the institutional order and economic life of the country' (Fernández 1996:135). Three weeks later, Archbishop Fresno defended the coup arguing that the 'military did not

³² Though Protestantism has experienced considerable growth in the last twenty years, in 2006, the predominant religion was still Roman Catholic (89 %). (Hepburn and Simon 2006:47).

perpetrate a fascist or brutal coup, but rather liberated the country' (Smith 1982:292). Conversely, the minority radical-progressive forces considered by the Evangelic sector of the Armed Forces and *Carabineros* as the "traitor" Catholic Church (Lagos and Chacón 1987), opposed military intervention. In the meantime, the all-encompassing and arbitrary DR forced hundreds of desperate people to seek protection in churches of all denominations. Apart from the limited and difficult access to international diplomatic protection there was nowhere else to turn. This massive plea for safety and protection turned the Church into what Cardinal Silva Henríquez called "*Iglesia alero*" (protective Church) in her "*madre y maestra*" roles (mother and instructor). In so doing, the Church was able to recuperate its moral power, 'the only power able to oppose the power of the army' thus, it was 'power versus power' (Fernández 1996:147-8). The institutional gendered role played by the 'Mother Church' has been ignored. Though the hierarchical Catholic Church is all male, its protective *madre y maestra* roles are feminine. This powerful gendered intersection allowed the Church to maintain an authoritative stance against the highly patriarchal NSDS and to promptly create protective spaces. The void produced by the proscription of male-led Parties and related social organisations allowed the Church to play surrogate humanitarian, social and political roles. Because all major social organisations had been outlawed, placed under heavy surveillance, or in recess, the Church was virtually *the* only moral actor allowed to function openly thus sharing a public space dominated by the NSDS (Garretón 1989b:405-406). The Church had the infrastructure, funding, and international support to challenge the NSDS (Smith 1982; Lowden 1993) as well as its proximity to the Christian Democratic Party (Fernández 1996).

Helping refugees and the persecuted: CONAR and COPACHI

Soon after the coup, two protective spaces appeared: CONAR and COPACHI. Because of the Catholic Church's initial support for the coup and inconsistent statements of the Episcopal Conference, other churches took the initiative. One of the leading figures was German Lutheran Bishop Helmut Frenz who was already familiar with the situation of Latin American refugees. He was a prime mover in the creation of the *ad hoc* National Committee for Assistance to Refugees (CONAR), an ecumenical effort (mainline Protestant, Catholic, and Catholic Orthodox) that, with the approval of the military Junta materialized on 24th September. CONAR had the 'support and active collaboration of ICRC, ICEM, World Council of Churches, Caritas Church World Service, World Lutheran Aid and other interested organizations' (US Senate 1973:27). CONAR's aim was to assist and protect the exit of vulnerable foreign nationals who were given shelter under the Allende government (see US Senate 1973). According to Bishop Frenz, the Intergovernmental Committee on European Migration (ICEM), the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) and UNHCR were vital in the establishment of CONAR. UNHCR's support, in the person of its representative, Oldrich Haselman, was paramount: it legitimised CONAR *vis-à-vis* the NSDS. Bishop Frenz noted: 'UNHCR provided the international protection and the reputation of not being agents of international communism. Also, it provided us with most of the financial support to save the lives of many refugees.' UNHCR destined US \$340,000 from its Emergency Fund to sustain CONAR's work and helped to resettle 2,5000 of them (ACNUR 1975:15). At this early time, when the Catholic Church

was uncertain about its commitment with the situation of foreign refugees and the persecuted, Bishop Frenz's involvement was crucial. His extensive international contacts allowed the channelling to Chile of international solidarity and funding from the World Council of Churches. Yet, the Catholic Church had a bigger infrastructure and resources than other churches; it 'rented some of its retreat premises to CONAR' (Garcés and Nicholls 2005:28). After resettling most foreign refugees, the CONAR/UNHCR/ICEM partnership ended. Soon a major vilification campaign against Bishop Frenz was launched, his residence permit was revoked.

One of the interesting outcomes of this early refugee assistance was the establishment of Church asylum refuges, a kind of 'sanctuary' or 'protected areas' for people in need of protection, such as those in Padre Hurtado Catholic Convent and others in La Reina, Florida and Macul. This is a practice dating back to the Middle Ages (Vevstad 1998) but never resorted to in Chile before. UNHCR acknowledged that the experience acquired during the Chilean crisis was innovative. 'The agreement in the relative use of refuges constitutes an enormously significant experience in the development of the right of asylum and its practice as well as those in human rights' (ACNUR 1975:9). UNHCR's views provided a boost for the emergence of human rights as a legitimate and internationally acknowledged doctrine. From now on, UNHCR's role will be influential yet discreet.

The work of CONAR/UNHCR/ICEM laid the foundations for the creation of the Committee of Cooperation for Peace in Chile (COPACHI) on 4th October 1973 by leaders from Catholic, Methodist, Baptist, Greek, Orthodox and Jewish faiths. Bishop Frenz shared the copresidency with Catholic auxiliary bishop of Santiago Fernando Ariztía but, as Lowden (1993:55-6) noted, 'although the Committee was ecumenical, it was the Catholic dimension which was essential.' The Committee gave material aid to the people who had been arbitrarily dismissed from their jobs, established employment cooperatives (*bolsas de trabajo*), provided legal aid to defend prisoners, created the *comedores infantiles* (lunch service for poor children), and collected information on human rights abuses. Soon, COPACHI had representatives in most of the main cities of the twenty-five provinces. However, what began as a program of assistance and advice for the families of political prisoners expanded into a series of diverse programs thus broadening COPACHI's work. These included a legal office, a labour law department, a university office, material assistance and health departments. International financial assistance was arranged by Bishop Frenz through the World Council of Churches, the Committee's principal funding agency. The rapid expansion of the Church's humanitarian roles required moral and financial international support (Smith 1982; Lowden 1993).

In general, COPACHI took the character of a sanctuary, a protective safety space. According to later accounts (Fernández 1996:169) 'people with problems of repression could not express their suffering. They had to hide what was affecting them to avoid the rejection of other people, because to be a victim of repression "contaminated the environment, the family." It marked people. The Committee constituted 'the only place where people could tell what they were experiencing: 'there you were allowed to cry, you were allowed to express affection, sorrow, anger etc.' Most of this study's respondents praised the work of the

Church during their repressive ordeal. One of these was 'Asylum Operation'. Despite increased security measures around foreign embassies, courageous progressive priests, nuns and lay members of the Catholic Church associated with COPACHI, helped the persecuted to gain access to foreign embassies and exercise their right to seek diplomatic asylum. Earlier, Roberto explained the manner in which he was helped by a nun and a priest to gain entrance to the Italian embassy. Though he could not remember some names, Sister Odile, Father Roberto Bolton and Bishop Ariztía appear in many embassy asylum accounts (see Zerán 1991). Like Roberto, Carlos was helped by progressive members of the Church. As he was not living underground, his experience differed,

At that time, international solidarity was opening its generous arms and people knew which doors to knock on. Normally it was through the channels of the Church. I, with other friends, looked for the necessary contacts and I happened to be interviewed by the Bishop of Santiago, Fernando Ariztía who committed himself totally to help the thousands of persecuted who could no longer stay in the country. I will never forget his reaction when I told him about the brutal abuses against my four year old son and my small niece, he held his head in both hands; it was as if he could not believe the excesses that were taking place in the country. Then I realised the role played by the more committed clergy with values and human dignity who weren't considering the enormous risks they were running and the persecution that they endured later. The Church was able to organize this enormous machinery that provided protection and helped thousands persecuted by the military tyranny to leave the country. He then put me into contact with Fernando Estornol, a lawyer who was in contact with those friendly embassies receiving refugees.

Soon State-Church relations deteriorated. NSDS applied relentless and obstinate pressure to close the Committee. Because of accusations of being infiltrated by Marxists (including Bishop Frenz), DINA's continuous harassment against small Base Christian Communities practicing Liberation Theology, and repression against religious and lay leaders, the NSDS's pressure to close the Committee was mounting. In October 1975, Pinochet was enraged at the involvement of priests and nuns assisting four MIR members to gain asylum after a confrontation with DINA's military forces (see Cassidy 1977). On November 11, 1975, he forced Cardinal Silva Henríquez to dissolve the Committee. The following month the Cardinal replaced COPACHI with the *Vicaría de la Solidaridad*, the Church's human right's office, a constituency to be discussed below.

5.1.3 The Catholic Church and *Exilio-Retorno*

Scholarly literature on the Catholic Church's role on *exilio-retorno* is nonexistent. This section will attempt to fill this void. Four important aspects regarding the Catholic Church's instrumental role in articulating *exilio-retorno* are noteworthy. First, the support which Cardinal Silva Henríquez received from the Vatican, Pope Paul VI, Pope John Paul II, international bishops' meetings and national Episcopal conferences regarding human rights (Smith 1982:323). Second, the Church's awareness of what it called 'the suffering of exile' that comprised the uneasiness of exile and specifically the instability of the family. Considering that Catholicism provides religious legitimisation for the family structure (Gissi 1980), this was a major concern for the Church. Third, and following its historical role in the development of nationalism (Lomnitz 2001) was its influential patriotism constantly invoking the *Patria* and the right to live in it. Finally, the Church's ulterior interest in reconciliation as a

primordial requisite to achieve a national consensus that in turn would guarantee a peaceful transition to democracy.

Smith (1986:293) noted that during the first three years of the NSDS, the Church's 'moral critique of the principles and practices of the military government tended to be cautious and cast in very general terms and was rarely denunciatory.' It would not be until mid-1976, that the Church reacted more intensely against the NSDS. Two major events occurred that year. First, the bishops themselves suffered repression with anonymous attacks directed against its buildings and welfare programs. Second, the increasing DR against progressive Catholics secular and religious (including imprisonment, torture and assassination), Christian Democrat militants and leaders opposing human rights violations. These developments culminated in the expulsion of prominent Catholic Christian Democrat leaders such as Jaime Castillo Velasco. Though the Church had participated in the creation of ecumenical humanitarian organizations, it was not until these events that the hierarchy started to doubt the legitimacy of the regime and realised that abuses of power by the security forces were part of a system of a repressive State present in Chile and other Latin American countries (Smith, 1982; Angell 1993). NSDS's repressive apparatus was now turning against the Church and the Christian Democratic Party, two key moral and political institutions that had endorsed the coup.

On August 17th 1976, DINA organised a vexatious demonstration against Bishops Enrique Alvear, Fernando Ariztía and Carlos González at Pudahuel Airport. They were returning from a failed Latin American Episcopal meeting in Ecuador where the military authorities had suspended the event and detained the bishops. They were 'received' at the airport by a group of pro-NSDS demonstrators and DINA members carrying banners with insulting messages such as 'traitor priests', 'sons of Marxism', 'Church, yes, Marxist priests no.' The demonstrators threw stones at them and physically mistreated the bishops and their entourage. The Permanent Episcopal Committee denounced this vicious attack as well as the repression they had suffered at the hands of the Ecuadorean State (Cavallo 1991). In their statement, the bishops threatened excommunication for those involved. The expulsion of Castillo Velasco and other prominent Christian and Social Democrats highlighted the problem of exile. These developments constituted one of NSDS's greatest political errors as it will be from these powerful and influential sectors that *exilio-retorno* will feature high on the opposition's national project and political agenda, it would moralise and politicise it at the highest level. Together with the Church, the PDC was in better shape, it had political agency and autonomy to challenge the NSDS yet, in March, the PDC was banned. Subsequently the PDC would play a decisive role in the opposition and democratisation; soon after it proposed a 'National Movement of Democratic Restoration' (*Chile-América* 1977:75-79).

In a 1977 Christmas letter entitled 'The Suffering of Exile', the bishops addressed the 'injustice of exile' for the first time. The letter coincided with the peak of *temporariness*. It conveyed an accurate view of exile and constituted an open call to return. The bishops' concerns for the family and exiles separation from the *Patria* were paramount. They stated:

“Brothers: Christmas is approaching. Many of you without doubt evoke with nostalgia the happy days, lived in the Patria, amongst your family and loved ones... The situation in exile is diverse. Some have succeeded and are well. Others barely get by. Almost all of you long for the Patria and many want to return to it: they miss the language, customs, climate; they can't settle. Some have problems with the family: your children cannot understand why they have to live among strangers and they can't accept it, others adapt too rapidly breaking the unity of the family... We the Bishops of Chile together with all the Catholic people of our Patria, to which most of your relatives and friends belong, remember you with affection, we wish you the best and await your return... We want to see you return to the patria, without hate or rancour, with solidarity and a constructive spirit, to join us and work together for the common good of Chile and for the reconciliation and peace amongst all Chileans, enriching our national life with your fecund contribution of your experiences and suffering. We wish Chile will welcome you, offer you jobs and dignified means of subsistence and invite you to collaborate in a common task”

The Bishops of Chile (*Mensaje* N° 266, Enero-Febrero 1978:84)

This declaration constituted a milestone in the Catholic Church's acknowledgement of the injustice and uneasiness of exile. Seeing exile as an injustice and a source of national identity loss, since exiles were forced by the NSDS to relinquish their *patria*, the Church was voicing *urbi et orbi* that this problem should be addressed. The bishops' declaration opened a transnational link between prominent exiles (who were already denouncing the wrongdoings of the NSDS to their host governments), and the Church. Moved by the bishops' declaration, exiles in Paris responded with a publication that linked the uneasiness of exile with the right to live in their patria. In an article published by the Jesuit journal *Mensaje* in October 1978 (273:636-639), entitled 'The Problems of Exiles' and subtitled "The Right to live in their Patria", exiles in France informed about what *Mensaje* called the 'psychology of the exiles.' The article, supported by an exilic poem by Neruda, discussed aspects related to the nature and stages of exile, downward social mobility, the creation of ghettos, and above all, changes in the structure of the family and familial relations as well as its consequences on children. In the presentation of the article, *Mensaje* acknowledged that exile was an issue that deserved to be analysed comprehensively. The article was a definite call for the end of such suffering. *Mensaje* described 'the problem of exile as a national illness that urgently calls for a cure...'. That cure is envisaged in the last part of the declaration cited above: the return of exiles to contribute to the political change in Chile. This is no other than *returnism* henceforth *exilio-retorno* hyphenated. Mirroring the paradigm protection-solution the most influential moral institution in Chile was endorsing and legitimating *returnism*. By 1982, exile was high on the Church's agenda; the Church's protective umbrella transnationalised.

Pastoral del Exilio

The Catholic Church's pastoral activity isn't new in Chile particularly in times of challenges to its hegemony mainly among the lower classes (Gill 1998). The foundations of the *Pastoral del Exilio* can be found in Pope John II support for human rights, Father Caro's transnational work with exiles in Europe and Catholic exiles' request for a Pastoral in 1978 (C.L.E. 1983). At the time of Chilean exile, Father Caro was studying sociology at the University of Louvain in Belgium,

I had already started to provide spiritual support to the exiles. I used to visit their families. In the year 1982 there was a meeting in Louvain of the Charismatics, I think, and four or five bishops from Chile attended the meeting. Among them were Mgr Hourton and Mgr Camilo

Vial. I told them 'We think that the exiles should have support because they arrive with their families and not everybody can participate in the Christian communities and they are uncomfortable with the culture and all that. The bishops listened very carefully and when I went to Chile in the summer of 1983 we talked more extensively with the Permanent Committee of the Episcopal Conference. Then after permission from the superiors, the Conference appointed me to assist the Chileans scattered throughout Europe, my parish covered from London to Moscow, from Sicily to Helsinki ...I celebrated mass on a Saturday afternoon in London the next one the following morning in Paris and another one in the afternoon in Brussels, I moved here, there and everywhere (de un lado para otro).

Yet, the bishops were troubled by exiles' political identity. NSDS's influential characterisation of Chilean exile as Marxist-Leninist proved effective. Still, exile was politically heterogeneous and socially complex. By the early 1980s, the PS, one of the major Leftist Parties had experienced radical ideological and political identity transformations known as 'renovation'. Renovation meant the abandonment of Marxism-Leninism, its replacement by Gramscian ideas and the rejection of any conception of a vanguard Party or class. Elite-induced profound ideological transformation, futile endless meetings, and Parties' splits and factionalism usually resulted in exiled rank-and-file militants' disaffection (Silva-Labarca 1981; Salinas 2000). Militants either left their Parties or engaged meaningful political activities for example in revolutionary Nicaragua or independent Mozambique such as Emilia. By 1982, the ideological and political landscape of Chilean exile had changed radically. The bishops however, still held the view of a Marxist-Leninist exile. Because of his in-depth knowledge of Chileans in exile, Father Caro was able to change their view,

At that moment the bishops held the sentiment that all Chileans in exile were Marxists. I told them that that view made no sense because together with a Communist exile were his wife, their in-laws, or their parents, relatives (parentela) who many times did not participate of his ideology, they could held some Leftist views but they were not militants of a party. Those were the ones that when I visited them asked me: "Father I want you to baptise my child or my grandchild" or "I want you to prepare my niece for her First Communion." Those people were always concerned about what they were unable to do in exile regarding sacraments they had received when they were in Chile... I was with people from all over Chile, people from Lota for example, of course the miner was communist but together with his Party ID (carnet) he had a stamp of the Virgin of Carmen.³³ It was sweet (simpático) to see that he had his own version of popular religiosity that was alien to that of the atheist thought of Moscow communism.

Another problem worrying the bishops was the uneasiness of exile. Among the main issues discussed at the December 1983 meeting were: exile's impact on marriage, the family and its corrosive effect on children's Chilean identity, parents' nostalgia for their country and uprooting. 'The Chilean church cannot ignore the fate of these human beings that with their families represent an important percentage of Chileanness that is divided and bleeds... They are not foreign cases, they are fragments of the Patria that bleeds with each Chilean that cannot return' (INCAMI 1983:5). In their plea, the Church appealed to Ecclesiastical documents such as Pope John XXXIII *Pacem in Terris*, and to Pope John Paul II speeches in which he had repeatedly characterised exile as a 'civic death'. On January 31st 1982 the Pope had said:

"Exile is a grave violation of the norms of life in society, in flagrant opposition to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and with the very same International Right. Man

³³ The Patron Saint of Chile. General O'Higgins (a freemason himself) proclaimed Virgen del Carmen Patroness Saint and General of the Chilean Armed Forces in February 1817.

should not be deprived of the fundamental right to live and breathe in the Patria that witnessed his birth, where he keeps the most memorable memories of his family, the graves of his ancestors, the culture that provides him with an spiritual identity and that in turn feeds it, the traditions that provide him with vitality and joy, the number of human relations who sustain and protect him...exile is a true exclusion that hurts deeply and on many occasions is equivalent to what is called 'civic death.' (in INCAMI 1983:9).

Interestingly, in his adamant plea for a serious discussion on VRp and attacking the 'exile bias', Coles (1989:389) invoked Pope John Paul II's address to Kampuchean refugees on the border of Thailand in 1984. On that occasion, the Pope expressed similar views on exile particularly when he said that refugees 'have a right to go back to their roots, to return to their native land with its national sovereignty and its right to independence and self-determination.' This time, the Chilean Catholic Church pre-empted the claim. One of the pastoral tasks emanating from that meeting was the establishment of the *Pastoral del Exilio* as one of the Specialised Pastorals depending on the Archbishopric, 'it seems convenient the creation of pastoral delegates in the host countries to maintain a stable contact with the extraterritorial pastoral' (INCAMI 1983:11). Father Caro described his pastoral mission as *acompañamiento* (accompaniment) of the exiles. His idea of *acompañamiento* centred around missionary duties but also to counteract exaggerated and idealised notions of 'home'. Father Caro's involvement with exiles as a pastoral caregiver allowed him to know the easiness/uneasiness of exile as well as its political, social and cultural heterogeneity. He stressed that *there were exiles and exiles*. He was critical of idealisations of 'home' and ubiquitous 'rural nostalgia' particularly by the 'poor exile'. In his view, this social section of Chilean exile was unrealistic,

My task was one of accompaniment. I made them to come to terms with reality (aterrizar) because there were people linked to the MIR, not the ideologues of the University of Concepción who made the revolution because they were pampered in life (sobrados de lleno), but of the marginal sectors, not even the MIR of pobladores and industrial workers of Santiago. Those marginal sectors in Western Europe never worked in their areas; it was another social sector altogether. I saw how they lived in a dream and with such nostalgia that they created many problems for their children. Those children grew up and when they were brought back to Chile they encountered an unexpected reality. The water-melon that their parents described to them with open arms to show the huge size of it, turned out to be false. Everything they fantasised big about Chile had nothing to do with reality. When many of them returned to Chile to their original families in marginal sectors, in poblaciones, they realised that their standard of living in Chile was much, much lower than the one they had in Europe.

Experiences of pastoral work with migrants isn't new. The Portuguese Catholic Church in Germany for example, actively cultivated migrant congregations abroad where priests nurtured and frequently emphasised the commitment of their flock to returning 'home' (Klimt 2000). Father Caro's Pastoral mission was less proselytist and more attuned with this study's argument: *we organised our work with the pro-return committees in Europe. There were committees in different cities and these were usually run by the different Parties and so all had their groups and committees. I remember that Ivan Quintana was in Frankfurt, he was rather effective. The best organised committees were those of the PC. From the mid- 1980s onwards the pro-return movement gathered strength to the extent that by the early 1990s it became a pan-European network. These committees championed 'El derecho a vivir en la patria'.*

5.1.4 The right to return in Chile: *El Derecho a Vivir en la Patria*

As seen in Chapter One, the right to return is enshrined in UDHR48 and many other international instruments. This section will deal with the discourse rather than with the right to return in international law. As a discourse, it both reinforced the existing legal human rights framework and normalised the right to return. In the Chilean case, the intersection of the right to return as a legal instrument and as discourse resulted in a powerful protective narrative but also a normative and manipulative one. The discourse was constructed around two ideas: the human right to return and the notion of *patria*. Though *El Derecho a vivir en la patria* was heralded as a counter-hegemonic discourse to the legal repression legislating exile and return, it reclaimed the right to *live* in the national territory of the political community *patria* occupied by the ‘wrong’ State.

Generally, the creation and reproduction of national and nationalist ideologies has been the task of male intellectuals (Yuval-Davis 2001). Certainly, the principal ideologue of the Chilean right to return discourse was Jaime Castillo Velasco the prominent DC jurist and human rights lawyer and former minister of Justice of the Frei government (1964-70) who had been expelled for the first time in August 1976. He was part of a group who had signed a letter addressed to the assembly of the OAS denouncing NSDS human rights violations. From exile he launched a weighty expert international campaign against the legal injustices of expulsion and the violation of the right to live in one’s homeland. His plea received national and international support. During his exile in Caracas he wrote an explanatory document entitled *El Derecho a Vivir en la Patria* (Castillo 1977). In it, he expertly challenged NSDS’s legal repression restricting return. He based his claims on the two main legal bodies on the right to return, the UDHR48 and its article 13(2), and on Article 12 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights that Chile signed in 1969, ratified in 1972 under the Allende administration and entered into force in 1976. In the preamble he states:

The result of exile for many men or women in Latin America, Europe and other parts of the world is that they live uprooted, separated indefinitely from their patria, their hearth, their people, with the permanent desire to return and with the hope that States, Churches, political movements, social and cultural organisations, etc., should totally identify with their problem and denounce before the (home) Governments this fundamental affront to the human being. (:1)

Castillo Velasco’s narrative mirrors High Commissioner Jean-Pierre Hocké’s discussed in Chapter One. He equally appealed to exiles’ primary identity as members of a nation to be regained through the right to live in the *Patria*. Seemingly, Castillo Velasco pre-empted the solution to the refugee problem eleven years earlier than Mr Hocké. Yet, there is a need to be more careful. At the time, according to Coles (1989:390), the exile bias ruled and so the approach to VRp was, in his opinion, irritatingly tepid. He noted: ‘[T]he draft Convention on Territorial Asylum prepared by a group of experts convened by the High Commissioner in the early 1970s included only a brief and passive provision on voluntary repatriation. In its own documentation, UNHCR refused consistently to accept the human right of return as the starting-point for a consideration of voluntary repatriation.’

Coles' concerns therefore did not fall on deaf ears. Being a prominent jurist and a human rights advocate, Castillo Velasco validated and naturalised the solution to the Chilean exile problem: he articulated the powerful discourse of human rights and linked it to *patria*. In this sense, he was ahead of a slow-to-react refugee regime that Coles (1989) was so critical of. Though he employed the term 'live' rather than return or repatriate, the slogan's ideology remained the same; it was linked to a *patria*, the powerful territorial element that creates cohesion: there is one *patria* for all. By disguising the idea of return/repatriation with the term 'live' Castillo's narrative was avoiding a conceptual issue that involves complex meanings with political and sociological repercussions. In her discussion of Guatemalan repatriation, Long (2008b:7) highlights the conceptual accommodation of the terms 'repatriation' and 'return' and this 'in part stem from the essential reluctance to engage with the political implications of repatriation and in part from the pressures of interested state-parties to de-politicise displacement management.' Yet, the politics of conceptualisation does not solely occur in high spheres. The middle-level can also contribute to conceptual accommodations. To 'live' bypasses the act of returning or repatriating and in this case it also challenges the idea of death, or the practices attempting to the human right to life that the NSDS was so flagrantly violating. Castillo's smart narrative encompassed the two most violated rights, the right to life and the right to return. By using 'live' in the *patria* he, unlike the conceptual discussion held by Long (2008a, b), politicised the right to return with precisely the notion of belonging to a nation, a *patria* hitherto monopolised by NSDS. In its articulation of *patria*, *returnism* implied a patriotic moral duty to return to recuperate it from NSDS's hands. Thus, Castillo Velasco's return narrative was powerfully meaningful. When *patria* was metaphorically gendered it became even more powerful, it echoed that of NSDS's. During the tenth anniversary homage of Pablo Neruda's death (1983), his widow Matilde Urrutia, said: 'The patria belongs to all those exiled. The right to live in their patria is the most sacred right of any human being; it is like the right to be a mother' (CHD-UK 1983:14).

Though exile commenced soon after the coup, it was not until the expulsion of Castillo Velasco and other prominent Christian Democrats in 1976 that, exile and return as inextricably linked experiences were made public in Chile. The *exilio-retorno* compression was inaugurated and Castillo Velasco became the most distinguished and prominent advocate of the right to live in one's own country. Exile and patriotism as constituted in nineteenth-century Spanish America (Chambers 2003) continued under NSDS. As discussed in the previous chapter, it is the idea of 'exile' as banishment and punishment that is romanticised and politicised. To reverse their situation exiles will claim their right to live in their own 'territory', their own nation. Castillo Velasco's views on the right to live in the *patria* were shared by many other high-profile exiled patriotic politicians who claimed that "To live in the Patria is a right, not a favour" such as "L"ed high-profile economist Sergio Bitar (Mosso 1983:36-38). As the pace of return gradually increased, the slogan started to appear in bulletins, guides and manuals oriented to prepare return. Declarations referring to return as 'A moral and patriotic decision and a commitment to the people' by female exiled political leaders Julieta Campusano and Mireya Baltra to explain their decision to return clandestinely to Chile in 1987, appeared in the introduction of a bilingual manual (German/Spanish) which purpose was to facilitate VRp (Quintana and Rosendahl

1987:47). Castillo Velasco's expulsion and repatriation narrative were widely publicised in the opposition media network, particularly the Christian Democrat leaning *Hoy* Magazine. The first image of a man with a suitcase with the heading: '*Exiliados. El Derecho a Regresar*' (Exiles. The Right to Return), appeared in May 1978 (*Hoy* 1978a 51). Soon after, Bernardo Leighton, another well respected oppositional DC who narrowly survived assassination by DINA in Rome in 1975, was allowed entry. This evidence suggests that the issue of exile as a violation to the right to live in the *patria* was born out of the exile suffered by Christian Democrats. This genesis provided the discourse with both political legitimacy and authority, hence, easily acknowledged internationally. Jurist Castillo Velasco was allowed to return in April 1978.

The discursive power of *El derecho a vivir en la patria* engendered a sense of nationhood to VRp thus becoming part of the nation-building project constructed by elite exiles. Nation-building projects are usually ascribed to particular nation-states yet, the role of exile as an extraterritorial political activity not only voicing and struggling to return but also aiming at rebuilding the 'home nation' through VRp, has been given limited attention. It is mainly relegated to the scholarly realm of 'exile politics' that in general is a male-dominated area of politics (see *Third World Quarterly* 1987 9(1)). The next section explores the political process by which this discourse underpinned *returnism*.

5.2 Returning under NSDS: events at 'home'

"While there are people who wish to leave certain countries as soon as possible and sometimes in deplorable physical conditions, in the case of Chile, the only thing they want is to return. There must be some reason."

Enrique Montero, Interior Minister *El Mercurio*, 26 Octubre 1982:A1

Exiles have been returning to Chile since 1976. The paradoxical 'return under conflict' paradigm seems to be an interesting theme to continue exploring. In this study, twenty-three out of forty-five respondents returned under NSDS and seventeen of them had returned before 1988, the year when exile was ended by decree. The obvious question is: What was so compelling for exiles to return under NSDS? Chapter Four provided some insights regarding individuals' allegiances to return. A 1984 survey conducted by *Chile Democrático* (CHD-UK 1985:i), 'confirmed the view that most Chilean exiles in the UK, wanted to return to Chile (81.6%)' and that '60% of all of those prepared to return need additional support to return to Chile at least for the first year' (*ibid*:24). This data however, was highly gendered and empirically dubious, after all, it was to be reported to the Working Group on Return to Chile. It was almost exclusively derived from male informants and the data probably obtained at *Chile Democrático*'s headquarters. According to the report, '72 per cent of those interviewed are men, largely because women were at home caring for their children at the time of the survey' (*ibid*:25). The survey revealed that unemployment among men was higher than for women and that over the last three years it was on the increase. Congruent with the argument of men's loss of status in exile because of unemployment, a possible way out would be return. According to research (Cuco 1987), the unemployed were more anxious to return. They would indeed require assistance as they were returning to a 'country in crisis' (FASIC 1985). Between 1979 and May 1984, 1,773 exiles

returned to Chile of which 993 returned in 1984 (56%) (see Appendix 4). The following section will explore returnees' experiences behind these statistics.

5.2.1 Economic crisis, protests, lists and political alliances: uncovering *Returnism*

Among the three reasons for the interest of exiles in returning to Chile cited in the aforementioned 1984's CHD survey were the temporariness of exile, the end of the 'break', and 'the rise of the new mass opposition to Pinochet that had created a space in which exiles can operate, the most obvious proof of this has been the powerful demand inside Chile for the right to return which, along with the international campaign, has forced the regime to allow exiles to return' (*ibid:i*). This propitious political scenario strengthened *returnism*. Of the seventeen respondents who returned between 1978 and August 1988, all of them stressed that their exile was temporary and that a foundational return decision was present at the time of exit. Expressions such as *I wanted to return since the day I left and boarded the plane, it was a moral duty, the truth is that I never wanted to leave* (Marcia), *I returned to do political work because I never forgot why I was abroad. I was narrowed minded. They offered me a grant to study but I was always in transit (de paso), I had to return* (Emilia) reveal that what appears to be a 'rational' action to return, was in fact *returnism*. As discussed in Chapter Four, exiles return determination was maintained, strengthened and promoted by the political and moral pressure of Parties and the patriotic discourse *El Derecho a Vivir en la Patria*. These pressures seem to challenge the notion of 'voluntariness' in return decisions and more so when there is the instrumental determination to act politically. Ronaldo returned *to overthrow the dictatorship*, Alfonsina *to struggle to end with the repressive order of things*, Leopoldo Acuña *to end the dictatorship and that is why I lived with the suitcases ready because they would allow us to return at any moment* and Rosa *because I had to do something in Chile to change the situation*. There was consensus in the need to overthrow the dictatorship, yet, as we shall see below, the political paths to achieve it differed. Contextually, these were politically purposeful returns and so return decisions were a continuation of the foundational decision to return. Parties capitalised on *returnism*. *It was said that those who could return should start preparing themselves* (Miriam Bravo) and, *there was this thing that we had to return to Chile and those who could return should do so to get rid of Pinochet, it was a party order* (Loreto), or *it was a political motivation. We had to return to the patria to reconstruct it* (Marcela).

This evidence suggests that these respondents' return decision-making followed a sequence that started with the foundational return decision, then by determination, soon fuelled by political commitment, Parties' instructions and social standing, a convergence embedded in the larger political process of overthrowing the dictatorship. All of them were Party militants and, with the exception of Emilia, of upper-middle and middle-class extraction. This finding substantiates the main argument of this study in that certain already existing mobilising hegemonic structures must be in place prior to return decisions. These exiles' return was individual and without material support from the refugee regime. At that time, the West, particularly the US, was supporting anti-Communist 'freedom fighters' (Loescher 2001a). Yet, these Chilean exiles were returning to overthrow an anti-Communist regime.

Two factors were on their side. First, a gradual emphasis on VRp and the sidelining of 'voluntariness' in favour of two other principles: 'safety' and 'dignity' (UNHCR 1996:11-12). To illustrate, UNHCR's High Commissioner Poul Hartling (1978-1985), addressed return in 85% of his speeches and 'dignity' featured highly in them (Bradley 2007:4). Second, the powerful human rights discourse fitted perfectly the new notion of 'safety.'

Publicly, these returns were never considered to be goaded or pushed particularly because such compelling *returnism* was the result of a right to be regained even under NSDS and in times of economic crisis. Noteworthy, most of these respondents returned with some form of resentment, in need to regain their dignity and their right to live in their country, yet with little expectations. *They expelled me but my dignity compels me not to accept it. I had to regain my dignity and the right to return to my country* (Simón). *The anger (pica) that they would put a letter ["L"] forbidding me to return, the fact that I had rights, the right you have to live in your patria, THAT made me to return* (Loreto). *When I left I felt that I had lived a very unjust imprisonment so I considered that it was indispensable to fight them, to fight against their human rights violations, at least to make them feel that not all Chileans were indifferent* (Alfonsina).

Between December 1982 and October 1983, ten lists of those authorised to return (exiles referred to it as 'the lottery') were published. The last one contained the most names: 1,190. Among those was Jaime Castillo Velasco who had been expelled for the second time. In total, 1,599 exiles were allowed to return. This 'concession' was the result of political pressure from a number of home fronts. Among these was the financial crisis that started after a period of 'economic boom', the so-called 'Chilean miracle' (1976-1979) that was solely based on speculation, not production. The 1982-83 ensuing crisis resulted in the collapse of the neoliberal economic model. This crisis plunged Chile into a prolonged economic recession. It almost brought Chile to the edge of bankruptcy which was officially acknowledged on 13 January 1983. At the time, the entire banking system practically collapsed and so the government took over five banks, ordered the closure of three and put two more under its supervision. This paradoxical situation shows that while the NSDS had proclaimed the privatisation of the economy and free-market *laissez faire*, it ended up owning or controlling the country's banking system. Thus, as well as controlling political power, the NSDS regained an overwhelming economic power. Conversely, the rate of unemployment soared to 35% in 1982 while economic growth plummeted by 14% as did investment which fell by almost 40%. Industrial production was much lower than in 1970. The per capita income was 3.5% less than in 1970 (Huneus, 1985:52-56). Workers and the poor were the most affected by the recession. Considering that the neoliberal economic model had atrophied the State sector and that private enterprise based on free market forces had taken over the production and job market, finding employment was difficult. However, the years 1983 and 1984 saw an increase in returnees (see Appendix 4). Only the intellectual/political and professional elite who arrived with externally financed academic/research projects or other arrangements could establish their own research private institutes or NGOs. By 1986 for instance, there were 41 social sciences private research centres dedicated to analyse Chile and Latin America's

structural problems. All were staffed by academic stayees and returnees located mainly in Santiago. The total number of researchers was '543, of whom 73 are doctorates, 32 PhD candidates and 61 hold a Master, degrees obtained mainly in European, US and Canadian universities' (Lladser 1986:9). Hence, returnees outside this category experienced economic hardship, particularly those who returned to join the resistance opposition. Middle-class Rosa and Ronaldo, who knew that the first restrictive lists were appearing, decided to return before it became a regular practice. They wanted to avoid at all costs the serious challenge that lists posed to *returnism*. They arrived legally in March 1980 with their ten year old child. Rosa and Ronaldo's initial post-return experiences however, followed the pattern of most returnees (FASIC 1981b; Villamar 1984). These were marked by unemployment, economic dependence on the family of origin and living as *allegados*.³⁴ The length of time as *allegados* depended on previous property ownership, savings brought from exile that allow renting or properties passed on by families. Despite the fact that exiles also returned to recuperate their family (López Zarzosa 1998), who on many occasions were encouraging return and offering help, the unexpected consequences of living as *allegados* was disillusion and conflictive relationships resulting from parent's interference in their lives (FASIC 1981b, Celedón and Opazo 1987; Ferris 1988; Rebolledo 2004). In this study, working-class, lower-middle class and most middle-class (25) conversational partners lived as *allegados*. In general, after initial euphoria, the first of the five stages of reintegration delineated by Corvalán and Contreras (1989), family relationships tensed. Rosa and Ronaldo illustrate this argument.

[Rosa: *We arrived thinking that people will welcome us but it wasn't like that. The offers 'come back (vénganse chiquillos) we will pay Pancho's private school', well, those family promises had nothing to do with reality. When we arrived we had nothing, no work, very little money, nothing really.* [Ronaldo: *I took whatever job I could get but that was for very, very little money. We got by in any way we could, we got a bit from here, from there, and anywhere. Sometimes we got a bit of money from someone and my mother also gave us something. We lived with her for some time and then we went to live with a friend because 'we were occupying too much space, the child cried too much and I had no job' so sometimes we didn't eat...After a year we went to live in an empty house that my family owned.* [Rosa: *we had one bed only but at least we didn't have to pay rent. Imagine if we had to pay rent!* [Ronaldo: *I made a table with Pancho [son] and we sat on empty upturned apple crates. Christmas was approaching and we still had nothing. We didn't even have a radio. The only valuable thing we brought from Sweden was a radio but security personnel at the airport opened it and broke it!* [laughs]

This problem was even more complex for returnee single parent women. After gaining certain personal autonomy in exile, living as *allegadas* with their family of origin led to a confusion of roles. According to FASIC's study (1981b:39), 'Economic dependence on parents, the need to be mother and daughter at the same time, ambivalences between recently gained autonomy and the need for protection, combined with the delayed expression of feelings, and the pressures in adapting to a different reality, tended to give rise to regressive conducts.' Although Abril was living independently her low salary made her dependent on her mother sometimes. *That is something terrible, it infringes on my freedom in the sense that if I depend on her she has rights over me and I have to listen to her advice (consejos). If I am short of money I have to ask her and that implies that I have to depend on her.*

³⁴ See glossary.

Marcela, who attended FASIC's group therapy sessions with other returnees, many of whom were women who had returned with their children, had a wider view about this situation. She had been living clandestinely for four years with her new *compañero* and a second daughter. When her name appeared on a list in April 1987 she traveled to Argentina and entered Chile legally, a regular practice to come out of clandestinity. Her major problem was a burden of guilt for having left her three year old daughter in Cuba to return to Chile clandestinely. Up to the interview in December 2002, she was still distraught about her deeply unsettling and unresolved problem with that daughter. Soon after leaving clandestinity she sought counselling from FASIC's Medical Psychiatric Programme. Clandestine life liberated her from living as *allegada* as clandestine returnees were forbidden to have any contact with their family of origin and their accommodation was arranged before entering Chile. The therapy environment made her realise about the practical problems that many 'open' returnees were facing. The problem of living as *allegados* was intrinsically related to the family of origin, a family that as Rosa and Ronaldo demonstrated was one of the major agents in revitalising the foundational return decision. Paradoxically, as Rosa and Ronaldo's case illustrated, the family of origin was a source of conflicts, tensions and disenchantment. It can be safely argued that the authoritarian character of the family, challenged by middle-class exile and gendered under NSDS's (Kirkwood 1983), remained intact. Referring to the returnees attending FASIC's therapy groups, Marcela said,

All of them talked about the same thing, that they couldn't stay longer than three months with their families. Luckily, that wasn't my case. Those very same families, whom they had loved, missed, and cared so much while in exile and that they had even supported financially. After three months they started pulling faces (ya empezaban las malas caras), criticisms of the children's behaviour and even of oneself. That the children were drinking too much, that they were out most of the time, that there was no control and discipline and that it may be necessary to resort to physical punishment. All these made family relationships unbearable and so after the fourth month people had to leave from their parents' home that very home that had initially welcomed them. Then they had to look for accommodation elsewhere just when the money had run out. That was horrible!

Marcela highlights the key point of remittances. All conversational partners without exception contributed in some way with 'social' and/or 'political' remittances directed for the demise of the NSDS either individually or as a member of a collectivity as acknowledged by Eastmond (2006). Yet her assertion is genderless. Family and political remittances were definitively gendered and involved costs. In some cases, women such as 'tied' Gladys who, once in exile, dedicated themselves entirely to:

organise different parties, gatherings and things like that to collect money to send to Chile, my house was a political headquarters (Secretaría). E-very-body came to my house and I neither worked nor studied because of that dedication. That was the most serious error I made in exile. I dedicated myself to the campaign well, thinking that because I was the leader's wife, and the leader had to do the big things and I had to accompany him by administering a political office, so I think that I didn't manage my exile well because Pinochet took seventeen years to fall...

Conversely, family remittances were superficially reported by them. While living off a grant in Belgium, Rosario said that *money wasn't pouring but when you are learning to live on your own, you*

are very stoic with your expenses and that allowed me to save some money and I sent it to my family (casa). I dressed with second-hand clothes that I got in refugee centres, so I could save money. In general however, 'family remittances' were considered a private matter (*asunto de familia*). Unlike labour migrants whose remittances are a public issue, some respondents in this study, who in their majority were middle-class, acknowledged the fact that many middle-class stayees experienced downward social mobility, only few recognised that their direct relatives were impoverished. Hence, the higher the social positioning the less they mentioned family financial contributions. In a couple of cases this situation was reversed, that is, they were financially helped from Chile by their families of origin. Similarly to recent studies on remittances (Hammond 2007), most conversational partners were reluctant to discuss this issue in-depth despite the fact that some sent some form of assistance to relatives as a source of sustaining their wellbeing during economic hardship, they spoke of gifts and parcels (*encomiendas*) without mentioning their content and less so about amounts of money. Only working-class Roberto who returned from Bulgaria spoke openly about both political and family remittances,

I could never send economic aid (ayuda) here because of the thing of the exchange and for the situation that my correspondence was never direct with Chile. The time I did it, the letters arrived open. So I could never send money to help them. I knew what that meant; they could take it badly as if I did not want to help them. I know of many compañeros who sent aid to their families but they lived in other countries like Germany. The channels that existed in Bulgaria were to send aid to organisations. We sent aid to CUT [Chilean TUC], the Peasant Confederation and others through the political organisations but at the family level I was not in conditions to do so. I earned good money but that was good for Bulgaria so I used to help the children of compañeros who were worse off than me there, but to Chile it was impossible. I am not trying to justify it; that was the situation.

This evidence suggests that links with the homeland were maintained through political and family remittances. It reveals exiles loyalty to the family of origin and Party-related activities, two instrumental hegemonic institutions playing key roles in *returnism*.

Heightening *returnism*

Paradoxically, as the economic situation worsened and a climate of discontent grew in Chile, the plea for the return of exiles was heightened. The refusal to permit the entry of the President of the Chilean Human Rights Commission Jaime Castillo Velasco, who had been expelled for the second time, and to other prominent Christian Democrats such as Renán Fuentealba and Claudio Huepe to attend the funeral of ex-President Eduardo Frei in January 1982, sparked both national and international condemnation. After this event, the campaign for the right to return reached its peak. On 25th October 1982 the NSDS announced that it would review the situation of exiles by creating a high level Inter-Ministry Commission on exile. Appealing to the common good of the *Patria*, Pinochet stated:

... the greatness of the *Patria* requires all its children who, agreeing sincerely and in good faith with the high values that should inspire civic duty, wish to work for it. Higher reasons of common good led to the adoption of the measures to which I have referred, but the Government, in its constant concern to guide society to that higher goal and in view of the present circumstances...has estimated it advisable to review this matter... a high level Commission will review the situation of all those who, recognising the legitimacy of the Supreme Government and of the 1980 Constitution and having renounced persistence in the

activities that gave rise to the impediment of returning to the country, accept the commitment to collaborate in the construction of the free and unified society that the new institutional system is shaping. The report of this Commission, with its concrete proposals, must be completed within this year so a report and resolutions may be adopted in accordance with the information set forth...

El Mercurio, 26 October 1982: A12

Church representatives such as Cardinal Silva Henríquez and Mgr Manuel Santos were pleased with the idea of allowing exiles to return to their Patria. The CCHDH however, reacted with cautious optimism. It considered positive that the government had decided to rectify its wrong judgment regarding exile but warned against 'unreasonable expectations' (*Mensaje* 315, 1982:713-715). The CCHDH however, was correct. Pinochet's declaration was longer than the existence of the Commission. Once the Commission prepared a report containing the rules and procedures to be followed in this regard and delivered it to him, Pinochet subsequently declared that the Commission was dissolved. The Commission had been established on 8th November 1982 by Decree Law 456, and was dissolved on 18th December. Alfonsina said:

The Commission appeared when Pinochet was in great difficulty (aprieto). I can't remember the nature of the problem. Then he created the Commission on Exile. It was formed by four or five people, it was tiny. Its objective was to review the lists. It was supposed that the Commission would clarify why such and such procedures to exile people had been used, how many people they had exiled, and in which countries they were living. It was supposed that it would deal with the problem of exile, but nothing happened, NOTHING! The Commission ended almost as soon it was established.

One outcome of the failed Commission was the issuing of ten consecutive lists of people authorised to return but according to Pinochet (1991:105) 'Only few of the beneficiaries, or their keen promoters thanked me.' This new anxiety period commenced on Christmas Day 1982 and ended in October 1983. These lists heightened *returnism* once more. According to Mozes and Aäronkerk (1985:5), in Holland the impact of their publication was enormous: 'return was the only important issue among exiles and families. The 80% to 90% of enquiries that both Projekt Nazorg and Centre for Refugee's Health received, referred to return issues.' However, among the names there were people who had returned, children, and deceased. The lists were a point of contention between the NSDS, CCHDH and pro-return committees. It was a period dominated by lists and counter-lists. As soon as a list was issued the latter organisations denounced the outrageous irregularities in them. Still, in times of crisis, the lists only dealt with the problem of exile. These 'tactical concessions' could not respond to political repression, rising unemployment, an ever increasing gap between the few rich and the many poor, the increase in extreme poverty and the gradual increase in the cost of living and less so to halting the waves of discontent that were extending nationwide.

Discontent soon took the form of massive national protests. From May 1983, the "Days of National protest" brought about mass mobilisations in the form of monthly mass demonstrations, strikes, barricades, spread of *miguelitos* (nails designed to puncture tyres), electrical blackouts, and bombings (de la Maza and Garcés 1985; Oxhorn 1995; Schneider 1995). For three years Chile's streets and *poblaciones* (urban low-income neighbourhoods), were the scene of serious angry protests vis-à-vis

NSDS's strengthened repressive powers. The *poblaciones* and popular sectors bore the brunt of arrests, deaths, injured, house search and police operations. According to Oxhorn (1995:218), 'the regime used the protest movement as a pretext for massive house searches in the *poblaciones* before and after declared days of protest. These were combined police-military operations in which entire *poblaciones* were sealed off and all the men were at least temporarily detained while their papers were checked and their houses searched.'

The protests unchained a growing and threatening politicisation process against the NSDS that simultaneously opened political spaces for exiles to return. Exile politics stopped being the centre of Party politics, debates and rethinking about Chile's political future, particularly from the intellectual renovated sector of Leftist parties (see Petras 1990; Hite 2000). By 1983, exile political activity had lost relevance. From now on, the *interior* offered the possibility of engaging in meaningful political activities and of regaining political and masculine status. Politics in Chile, as Huneeus (1985:57) put it, 'stopped being an activity of catacombs, of small circles, it turned into an activity that embraced all intermediate social strata, associations and groupings. The political arena expanded abruptly, creating spaces of freedom.' These 'spaces of freedom' pulled politicised and elite exiles to join the *interior* opposition movement. This process contributed to the re-emergence and strengthening of Parties as active actors capitalising on the protests.

One of the unintended consequences of the collapse of the neoliberal model was the erosion of middle-class support for the NSDS. Women from these sectors joined the popular discontent. Ironically, they used the same tactics that Right-wing women had used against Allende's government e.g., banging empty pots and pans for hours. The '*like with like*' argument emerges here. Opposition women used the same Right-wing gendered logic to struggle against the NSDS. The protests were seconded by political rallies and marches around human rights violations including the right to return. Alfonsina was one of them.

All the movements were strengthened during the protests, including our own [COPROREX]. It started in the poblaciones but soon all of us joined in. First we turned the radio off, then all the lights, soon we started banging pans every night, and then we took to the streets. The discontent was tremendous. I think that the economic crisis helped in mobilising the discontent.

Returning during this highly politicised period of mobilisation both offered spaces of participation and counteracted problems associated with return as these could be explained and usually justified by the repressive political situation and the struggle against the NSDS. For Alfonsina *everything we analysed or experienced here we saw it as a consequence of the dictatorship*. Others were less deterministic. In a two page testimony that appeared in *Chile Democrático's* bimonthly bulletin (CHD-UK 1988 43:3-4) an anonymous returnee summarised the emotions of returning to Chile, his encounter with his family and the discord between his responses and those of relatives and stayees who in general were uninterested in his exile. Again, these experiences appeared encapsulated within the repressive environment of the dictatorship *vis-à-vis* hyper social mobilisation. 'Despite our anguish, contradictions, misunderstandings, etc., we are happy. We are experiencing them in a context

of deep happiness because we are fed by the beauty of our geographical and cultural environment and despite the bitterness and sadness that reigns in our country, we see that from every corner many expressions of dignity are arising such as the one-day social mobilisations ...' This indicates that most grievances were attributed to NSDS's all-pervasive rule.

Undoubtedly, the regime was shaken by the enormity of the protests. In order to 'save the government', 'Pinochet was forced to call an experienced leader of the National Party, Sergio Onofre Jarpa' (Angell 1993:119). In August 1983, Jarpa, who featured in the previous chapter, was appointed as the first civilian Minister of Interior in what was called *apertura*, (opening). The state of emergency was lifted, opposition media grew and new magazines and newspapers appeared. Plays on exile and return were performed in Chile. Among them, *Primavera con una esquina rota* (Springtime with a broken corner, 1984), *Retorno sin causa* (Return without cause, 1984) that, according to Cecilia, *the first performance on 21 August 1985 was in benefit of COPROREX and Cinema-Utopia* (1985) (see Boyle 1992). It was under this *apertura* that the 1,599 exiles mentioned above were allowed to return. Jaime Castillo Velasco, Andrés Zaldívar and other DC leaders were welcomed with big demonstrations. Under the *apertura*, another Commission was set up. This Commission established an office at the Ministry of Interior and was headed by *Carabineros*' Commander Torrealba. On 1st November 1983 the Ministry of Interior Under Secretary Simón Figueroa announced: 'relatives of the exiled could enquire about their doubts regarding the names on the lists. To obtain a written reply they should provide an address or sender.' Again, the fate of this new Commission did not differ from the one discussed earlier and Jarpa's *apertura* was to be short lived.

Nevertheless, the policy of lists continued its tyrannical domination with concomitant gendered dimensions. Villamar's study (1984, II:59) reported that women returned in greater numbers than men, some because of the lists. In this study, eleven respondents appeared on the forbidden lists. Their narratives revealed two attitudes towards this policy and these are related to integration in exile, marital status, and family stability. Some respondents were 'glued' to the issuing of lists and in so doing affecting the whole family. To lessen this impact, wives got heavily involved in the dealings to return, to the extent that in many cases, women returned earlier to press for their husbands to be lifted from the ban (see Celedón and Opazo 1987). Women had in their 'favour' NSDS's dominant gender ideology hence, motherhood protected them. Returning as mothers with children, allowed them to cross the dotted line of the peripheral society relatively smoothly; they were less likely to attract attention and suspicion. These constituted 'gendered returns'.

Some women sent their children ahead and returned later on their own. Laura for instance, returned in April 1984 when the human rights movement still had a space for her. Similarly to Alfonsina and Cecilia, Laura's secure financial situation allowed her to join the human rights movement. Immediately after her return, she got heavily involved in pressing for her husband's right to return. While still in exile she expressed her anxiety about NSDS's despotism regarding her husband's numerous unsuccessful return applications. She returned in the midst of the protests while her

husband moved to Buenos Aires. He wanted to be closer to Chile in anticipation of a speedy return, a strategy used by many families of listed persons (see Celedón and Opazo 1987). She said,

I wasn't afraid of what was going on here. It is not that I am brave, no! It was because when one reaches such a limit situation you are at the edge in every sense. Thankfully, the girls hadn't suffered yet. The only thing I wanted was to return, the only, only thing because we had been listening to these wicked lists (malditas) for so long and the situation was getting desperate. As soon as I returned I joined a human rights organisation here. I knew that I had returned to do that. We worked a lot and I tell you there wasn't anything left for us to invent! At the same time I was doing all sorts of endeavours for Leopoldo. I even took my three kids (cabras) to see this Carabineros lieutenant X.... He was the only one that wanted to help me. His idea was to take me to see Jarpa and I said NO! because he had been the ambassador in Colombia and at that time Leopoldo headed Chile Democrático there. You can't imagine all the rallies and demonstrations he had organised against him and the embassy! (le armó la pate' pollo!).

A second attitude of this study's respondents was to continue with exilic life and ignore the moral pressure of the lists. This was the case of single men such as Camilo. Clearly, the more integrated the 'listed' exile, the less anxious about the lists. Camilo, who after two years in the US, went to Peru where he left the priesthood said,

Surely, I wasn't glued to the lists, I wasn't clinging to see whether I was or I wasn't or if I could return or couldn't, NO! I had integrated quite well and moreover, I had received a WUS scholarship to study sociology. I was working on popular education there and I combined my sociology studies with my work in an NGO. I was also conscious that my contribution later on to Chile could be more comprehensive (integral). I cannot say that I wasn't integrated in Peru, quite the opposite I felt I was appreciated, much loved and supported. I learned a lot.

The lists were the visible symbols of the changing political scenario in Chile and of State's behaviour. From 1983 onwards the central places occupied by the Catholic Church and the human rights movement would be relegated to a still important but secondary position by the mostly male-dominated Parties. It is, therefore noteworthy that, by coming to the fore, Parties, as institutional mediators between State and citizens, were creating the embryonic conditions for representation and consent. In this process political male authority was being re-imposed in the form of elitist political alliances.

5.2.2 Political alliances and 'unrenovated' returnees' disillusion: the power of the *interior*

Though Parties had been in the background, the protests led to their re-emergence and visibility. The old political elites were reactivated and the 'historical parties' (Huneus 1987) reinitiated political competition. Despite that the massive women's movement was at the forefront of the struggle against NSDS' human rights abuses (Waylen 1993, 1998; Matear 1996), and that feminists were challenging what Walby (1990) called 'private' and 'public' patriarchy with their slogan *democracia en el país y en la casa* (democracy in the country and in the home), the reappearance of Parties as the main actors in the struggle against the NSDS challenged the 'power' and 'agency' of the social movements (Kirkwood 1986). From 1983 onwards, political masculinity revived. The 'new political actors', that is, the social movements that played a considerable role in times of dictatorships in Latin America, never, according to Huneus (1987), replaced the role of the Parties. By September 1983 two major

opposition coalitions had emerged: the *Alianza Democrática* (AD) and the *Movimiento Democrático Popular* (MDP). The AD comprised the dominant PDC, dissident Right-wing groups such as the Republican and Liberal parties, renovated Socialists and other small Centre-Left parties. The MDP was formed by parties excluded from the AD such as the PC, MIR, MAPU-OC, the Socialist Party led by Almeyda and the Socialist bloc. These coalitions proved to be conflicting political projects, each one envisioning different political strategies to overthrow the regime. Angell (1986:31) noted that ‘the major tactical difference that separated the two coalitions was questions of legitimacy of violence in the struggle against Pinochet. The Communist Party’s refusal to renounce its right to use violence as part of an overall strategy clearly makes impossible an alliance covering the right, centre and left.’ Prospective and actual returnees’ political allegiances will be channelled to either of these coalitions. The AD under the political leadership of the PDC, presented itself as the democratic alternative to the NSDS commencing in this manner the complex process of democratisation in Chile. This process was politically and financially supported from foreign sectors, among them European Parties and others such as the Ford Foundation and European NGOs (Grugel 1996; Angell 1996). AD’s initial political agenda considered ‘the end of exile; legalisation of political parties; reincorporation of *exonerados*;³⁵ whereabouts of the disappeared; access to television; and above all, the suppression of transitory article 24 of the Constitution that widened almost absolutely the presidential powers’ (Otano 1995:16).

Consistent with Huntington’s (1991) ‘third wave of democratisation’ argument, whereby by the mid 1980s the image of a ‘worldwide democratic revolution’ became a reality in the minds of political and intellectual leaders in most countries of the world, Chile’s political arrangements are unsurprising. The ‘demonstration effect’ of the neighbouring experiences of Argentina and Uruguay’s demise of their NSDS was encouraging. The problems lay in the division of the opposition over the way to bring down the regime, the nature of transitional political and economic arrangements and the monolithic unity of the regime (Angell 1986). The political *temporariness* of exile was proving to be longer than expected. Once more the Catholic Church’s intervention worked. After its failed efforts to negotiate with the regime, the AD under the initiative of new cardinal Juan Francisco Fresno, for whom reconciliation was central to a viable democratisation, established the basis for an *Acuerdo Nacional* (National Agreement) on the transition to democracy. Both the negotiations and *Acuerdo* were underpinned by the notions of reconciliation, national identity, and unity. This patriotic project aimed at avoiding violence and confrontation.

“All us Chileans must truly collaborate in the search for a path of consensus and not violence. We expect that the authorities would act decisively in their patriotic duty to soon open the gates of a true democracy and that the political and social leaders start overcoming their particular interests pro the superior and common good of the Nation and in respect of the rights of man, a man created in the image and likeness of God.” [in Baño 1989:211]

In August 1985 an agreement between the AD and the parties of the Right was finally signed. For the first time a member of the Junta, General Matthei welcomed the tone and the content of the opposition proposals. Allegedly this made Chile’s political environment more promising yet Ronaldo commented

³⁵ See glossary.

that maybe that from the economic crisis of 1981 until 1985 was the only period when the Left could have changed its history but by 1985 the die was cast. The campaign for the *Acuerdo* led to one of the largest mass demonstrations in Chilean history. The “Chile demands democracy” demonstration took place in the Parque O’Higgins on 21 November 1985 and more than 500,000 people gathered to hear Gabriel Valdés, the leader of the PDC. Valdés, also President and leader of the AD had warned that ‘the alliance is in favour of a transitional government which will restore democracy as it existed before the coup.’ In Valdés’ view, ‘the PC has no place in this process because it had adopted the strategy of armed struggle and is dependent on the Soviet Union’ (Furci 1984:163). This meant the exclusion of a number of people belonging to the PC and the more radical sector of the Left including MIR. ‘If the PC was excluded’ Furci argued, ‘then the coup will have accomplished its main task’ (*ibid*). This was a huge political disappointment and disillusion among returnees belonging to those political sectors. Nationhood was constructed otherwise, *returnism* was showing its true political face.

Literature on homecomings in the Southern Cone (Mármora et al. 1987; Notaro et al. 1987; Maletta et al. 1988), Africa and elsewhere (Allen and Morsink 1994; Allen 1996; Pilkington and Flynn 1999; Hammond 2004; Markowitz and Stefansson 2004), and on labour migration (Gaillard 1994) challenge simple views of ‘home’ and stress the disappointments of homecomings. Migrants and exiles encounter a changed society. However, as argued elsewhere (López Zarzosa 1998), ‘home’ changes politically, socially and culturally from the very moment of the event(s) that leads to displacement and often before. Yet, homecoming accounts seldom explore political disappointments. Marcia, who returned in late October 1985 from Ecuador, illustrates this claim. Her narrative reinforces an earlier argument illustrated by Ronaldo. Arguably, information about the home situation leads to VRp as self-repatriation. This study is finding that there are different types of information and, as the previous chapter showed, this was just one operating variable during the process of ‘resistance return’. Ronaldo and Marcela’s case illustrated that political information was distorted. Studies suggest that exiles were well informed about ‘home’ (FASIC 1981a, 1984b), yet this proved insufficient regarding the important events that were taking place during their absence. In this study, the main sources of information were Parties in exile and families of origin in Chile. However, information-reality mismatch was common in the *exterior*. Parties’ agendas overrode the real socio-political situation in Chile. Even Marcia, a politically well-informed militant, could not fit the ongoing events into her politicised and intellectualised information, she could not capture the ‘complexities of the invisible transition’ (Garretón 2001).

I returned during the midst of the dictatorship, in October 1985. I was able to attend the last demonstration before the assassination attempt on Pinochet. There was a massive demonstration at the O’Higgins Park. It was organised by the nascent opposition and that for me was terribly shocking. This is to show you that one did not fit into the logic of what was happening here. I remember that I went with my sister-in-law. We got on the tube and it was crowded with Leftist people jumping up and down and shouting against Pinochet. It was such an impressive thing! We arrived in the park and the main speaker was Gabriel Valdés and I did not understand anything, anything! At one point I realised that if I did not make an effort I would cry because the last image I had before leaving Chile was of Aylwin and that nasty, nasty (asquerosa) DC handing Allende over and all that! To see that the main speaker was Valdés and all the Left clapping and cheering...(long silence)... then you realised that there had been a whole history that you had not lived and at some point you had missed all that had happened, because for the people to applaud and to get to that day many things

must have happened. People must have had a very rough time and made a tremendous effort to get to some consensus about certain things... but me? I was not part of that history and that was dissonant for me. From then on I felt that I was a stranger, someone from outside (very emotional).

By October 1986 a significant political shift was taking place. This, according to Pinochet would be *el año decisivo*. During this 'decisive year', three imminent measures were set up for 1987: the end of the state of siege, the approval of the law on Parties and the return of exiles. A gradual way of eliminating the problem of exiles was by consecutive editions of lists. After seven editions, the iconic 4,942 exiles forbidden to return in September 1984 were reduced to 3,717 in May 1986. Though exile continued, this step meant that legislated exile was gradually fading and so was the political value of the *exiliado*. 1986 also witnessed the FPMR's failed assassination attempt on Pinochet's life and the ensuing harsh wave of repression: the state of siege was reinstated, censorship against opposition media was reinstated and four MDP members were assassinated, among them renowned returnee journalist José Carrasco (*Pepone*). These events highlighted the White House concerns for the increase military resistance to the NSDS that posed the threat of insurrection or turning Chile into another Nicaragua (see Angell 1986). Yet, the protests had been disarticulated and the popular sectors participating in them marginalised. According to critical commentators (Petras and Leiva 1988:97), '[T]he new line adopted by the party elite of the AD transfers the axis of opposition struggle from the streets to downtown meeting rooms and replaces the action of hundreds of thousands of shantytown dwellers, trade unionists, women, professionals, and students with the negotiating "talent" of a handful of party officials. The new tactics of the AD displaces the social mobilization of the masses in favour of "political-electoral" manoeuvres of Chile's political class... promoting peaceful petitioning, and accepting Pinochet's 1980 Constitution and his schedule for a "plebiscite" in 1988.' Hence, by 1986, a new political arrangement of power relations involving reconciliatory and politically renovated political masculinities was taking over. This resulted in a power imbalance between these and revolutionary masculinities and femininities. The latter were devoid of any political and ideological power or significant agency, rendering those identities redundant even before the peaceful demise of the NSDS.

In this scenario, 'political disillusion' was strongly felt by returnees who still held unrenovated ideas and whose *returnism* was attached to a political resistance mission such as the case of Ronaldo for whom *our objective had nothing to do with democracy; as always, it was to build a free socialist patria. Could be that democracy is a step to that but our final objective wasn't to install a President like Aylwin, Frei or Lagos, but to participate in a revolutionary process.* Similarly, Emilia, who, since the age of fourteen had been politically active and had *left legally to enter legally and be able to do whatever I wanted*, returned with the same purpose in 1984 from Mozambique where she had been a development worker (*cooperante*) since 1981. On her return she and her *compañero* worked in a *población* in Santiago. Her narrative illustrates the collapse of the revolutionary alternative and the hegemony of the human rights organisations in controlling a number of gendered political 'spaces' available under NSDS,

At that time, our organisation was already in crisis and so we entered the human rights work. I learned to work openly in the población and my compañero worked in the cultural part. Soon an Association of Popular Singers was formed and he worked on that. We worked in different areas and that was very good because our work was linked to other poblaciones such as Perales, Curicó, Villa Negra, Zenteno and Puerto Natales³⁶, it was a network (cordon). We worked with the cultural, social and human rights base groups of those poblaciones...but I must tell you an anecdote. I always took my baby to the evening meetings like the other women but when people from the Human Rights Commission went "to guide" the housewives who were just entering into "politics" they told us not to link with the people of MIR or PC and that we should not let them influence us because those extremist groups were looking for spaces. Well, 50% of us were from those organisations and that tells you about the intelligence with which you join those groups and how you worked [pause]...But things started to change considerably and then I had a horrible period, I only thought about committing suicide because soon after there was no party life, NOTHING!...

5.3 Protection under NSDS: Coordinating Commission of the *Exilio-Retorno* problem

Undoubtedly, non-elite returnees were experiencing problems. These will come to light during the years 1983-84, the second turning point for return. The promotion of return under the pressure of *returnism* was succeeding and, unlike other return experiences such as that in Guatemala where refugees returned collectively (Stølen 2007; Long 2008a, b), Chilean exiles were returning individually. Once back in Chile, it was not expected that the State that expelled them would offer any protection, assistance or services to cope with their post-return problems. Yet, State institutional failure was replaced by a booming institutional framework. In the absence of State protection and support an alternative institutional fabric protecting *exilio-retorno* emerged. This study has suggested that the protective spaces generated immediately after the coup laid the grounds for the creation of a supportive network assisting returnees. Though the Coordinating Commission (*Comisión Coordinadora Problema Exilio-Retorno*, henceforth Commission), was created in 1984, many of the ecumenical, religious and secular institutions that constituted the Commission were already involved in assisting and protecting returnees, that is, it benefitted from the already existing surrogate enclave. These were mainly indigenous and international non-governmental organisations (NGOs) that under NSDS substituted for the State and in so doing, as Rogge (1994:33) argued, 'international agencies can also influence the desire to return by the scale and nature of the services they deliver.' Hence, indigenous agencies can also have the same result and more so the amalgamation of international and indigenous agencies. This was the strength of the Commission that Manuel Barrera described as *una casa de acogida* (a welcoming house). The Commission constituted the backbone of the *interior*.

Under NSDS, indigenous NGOs created a niche for opposition researchers and a possibility for economic survival for professionals (Hojman 1993) but as this section will show, by rendering assistance to *exilio-retorno*, NGOs also helped to sustain *returnism*. The social forces behind the Commission were the Catholic Church, the Parties, the family and the *Patria*. The Commission's moral underpinnings were based upon the tenets of human rights and particularly the right to return. The purpose of the Commission was 'to coordinate the integral assistance to those Chileans affected by this problematic. The Commission started from the basic premise that the right of every Chilean to

³⁶ Original names have been changed.

live, enter and leave his patria is an uncompromising one.³⁷ The practical ways of providing such assistance targeted the peripheral society and took many forms and in some instances overlapped. Among the areas of assistance to returnees were: entry authorisation (administrative dealings, legal support and presentation of writs of *habeas corpus*, tasks regarding the right to live in the patria), and services to exiles (information regarding changes in Chile at societal and daily life levels, legal dealings to eliminate penal charges, repossession of housing and children's nationality problems). For the specific case of returnees, it offered the following services: a) reception that can be applied to the pertinent international organisations or any of the institutions integrating the Commission, b) employment (reintegration grants with employment prospects, research grants in different social institutions and organisations, the grant programmes are limited in numbers and duration, c) Health (due to the restricted health service system to the returnees there is the limited possibility of mental and physical health for those poor children, adolescent and adult returnees), d) education (information and grants for students and professionals who wish to further their studies, convalidation of degrees obtained abroad and educational support for children and adolescent returnees) (*ibid*: 1).

Though this is a good summary of the assistance provided by the Commission, it does not inform about the role of the social forces sustaining it, nor if it had anything to do with the heralded 'development' expected with the return of refugees (see Adelman and Sorenson 1994). With that view in mind, the following section explores the institutional fabric dealing with 'the problem' *exilio-retorno* and its contextualisation. The analysis neither follows a chronological account nor the ascribed status of the institutions constituting it. Rather, it follows a narrative of promotion and facilitation of VRp and the protection of *exilio-retorno*.

5.3.1 Comisión Chilena de Derechos Humanos (CCHDH): struggling for the right to life

The Chilean Human Rights Commission (henceforth CCHDH) was certainly the most important lay institution under NSDS. It was created on human rights day, 10 December 1978, by mainly high-profile lay political and social leaders from centre Parties. Among its principal founders were leading Christian Democrats Jaime Castillo Velasco and Máximo Pacheco. Both men were widely respected moderate political figures. Their 'moderate' political masculinity distanced them from that of revolutionary Leftists. With the gradual entry on the scene of distinguished DC male political figures such as Gabriel Valdés, Patricio Aylwin, Castillo Velasco and others, a different type of dominant political masculinity was being legitimised particularly in the human rights scenario where revolutionary masculinities and femininities would be rendered redundant.

The CCHDH emerged as a response to the significant human rights demands that could not be fulfilled elsewhere. To protect its development, the CCHDH affiliated itself with a number of international human rights organisations such as the International Commission of Jurists, the

³⁷ Mimeograph document entitled 'Comisión Coordinadora Problema Exilio-Retorno' 1984. Pp.1-2 (:1). Personal archives.

International League of Human Rights, The International Federation of the Rights of Men, and the International Movement of Catholic Jurists and immediately endorsed the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. According to the CCHDH's Constitution:

'The objective would be to work in our country as a non-governmental organisation, in a pluralist, free and autonomous manner for the effective strengthening, respect, protection and promotion of the civil, cultural, social and economic rights that are enshrined in the international charter of Human Rights...' (in Hutchison 1991:103)

In looking for international protection, the CCHDH both bypassed the NSDS and brought pressure on it. Soon a link was established between the already existing Human Rights Committees in the *exterior*. These channels informed about the human rights situation in Chile, the problem of exile, and return restrictions. This new development boosted an already fading international solidarity towards Chile. So successful had been the CCHDH that, from the small group that created it in 1978, by 1985 it had more than 1,500 members in thirty cities throughout Chile (Orellana 1991:33). The work of the Commission spanned from the denunciation of the human rights situation through monthly and semi-annual publications and reports distributed both in Chile and abroad. Among CCHDH's main tasks regarding the legal protection of *exilio-retorno* were: assisting with return applications to returnee relatives of exiles, denunciations of expulsions, prohibition to return, abuses committed against returnees including deportations, repression and discrimination. CCHDH's legal aid was free and secure. CCHDH was structured around different departments concerned with women's and children's rights as well as health, employment, and cultural rights. Returnees were able to seek help directly to any of these departments. Though members of the Commission itself were not exempt from expulsions, threats, detentions and searches, it constituted an important protective umbrella under NSDS.

The year 1978 constituted a crucial conjuncture in the consolidation and emergence of human rights organisations in Chile. The 'bluff' Amnesty Law, the power struggle within the Junta, the inauguration of a third repressive phase under CNI characterised by a policy of containment rather than destruction and the mounting international pressure enhanced by the newly inaugurated Carter administration provided the grounds for the human rights organisations to thrive in what Orellana (1991) called 'generations' of human rights organisations. The case of the CCHDH is interesting. While Parties in exile were discussing the timing and strategies to return and in the process destabilising the fragile stability of the family that women had arduously built, in the *interior*, opposition Parties were finding their 'spaces' in the emerging human rights movement. The CCHDH was the best example. Frühling (1989: 369-370) convincingly suggested that a number of 'human rights organisations grew because party politics *per se* have been prohibited. Some Party members had discovered that human rights activities permitted them to reach more people and to be in closer contact with reality than through clandestine political activity.' Though Frühling later adds that this 'does not mean that party activists are the only most important components of human rights organizations', it can be safely argued that the human rights movement was the first constituency to open up spaces for political dissidence to be articulated as a legitimate weapon against the NSDS, simultaneously allowing recently arrived middle-class returnees to enter them. Cecilia, who had

arrived in January 1981, soon found herself working for the Pro-Return Committee as a volunteer. This was possible because whilst in exile she rented out her well-situated house. On return, she continued renting out her property and lived in her mother's flat. *I had the economic problem solved because I had a house and I rented it out, so I had a regular income and I didn't need to look for a job, so I had those two things solved and I could give all my time to 'the other job'.* One of the most pressing issues on VRp has been that of restitution of housing and property to refugees (FMR 2000). Paradoxically, NSDS's respect for Article 17 of the UDHR, made redundant the restitution of property rights issue. Cecilia's advantageous position allowed her plenty of free time to struggle against the NSDS. The workings of the peripheral society helped her. A friend in Chile with whom she kept in contact during exile, allowed her to enter the human rights movement. Her culinary accounts illustrates the role of this network in providing spaces for early returnees,

I think that the one who arrived and entered (se metió) directly to a human rights organisation or in their Parties adapted more easily. Return was easier for them than for those who only focused on finding a job, or looking for a way to work in their profession and all that. It seems that the former were situated in what was really happening in Chile, in the daily struggle against the dictatorship so return was easier for them. I always say that I felt like the little piece of potato of the carbonada.³⁸ There was one ready to be cooked and I was that piece of potato that was missing so I entered and I fitted perfectly. I worked there until 1988.

The protective role played by the CCHDH was just as important. Its links with high-profile international human rights organisations such as Amnesty International and those created by exiles worldwide formed a powerful bloc moving within the peripheral society and pressing the NSDS to end its gross violation of human rights. It was therefore able to provide legal assistance to returnees experiencing harassment and persecution. At the end of 1979, the CCHDH called all Chilean human rights organisations to a Conference in which the problem of Exile and Return would be discussed. The final agreement of that Conference was to allow the CCHDH to act as an 'umbrella' of all activities related to these issues and a working meeting on the *Derecho a Vivir en la Patria* was called for 1980. Henceforth CCHDH would encourage and shelter numerous emerging human rights organisations. Noteworthy are two considerations. First, because of its links with Parties, the CCHDH was not an autonomous organisation. Second, it strengthened the links between stayees and exiles thus reinforcing the peripheral society with its transnational links. One organisation that emerged out of CCHDH's influential umbrella was COPROREX, a pressure group that dealt with the specific right to return.

5.3.2 COPROREX (Comité Pro-Retorno de Exillados): struggling for the right to return

Soon after the first expulsions of Decree refugees, some relatives of exiles gathered informally to discuss the injustice of exile and its destructive role upon the family. But as their plea required a solution from the State, the need to organise was paramount. In Concepción it started 'as a group of

³⁸ See glossary.

ladies who were relatives of exiles in a group called *Esperanza* (Hope) who later organised and created an association to struggle against exile' (Vega 1999:541). However, it would be in Santiago where the most transcendental activities took place.

The 1979 CCHDH Conference where the issues of exile and return were discussed followed previous developments conducive to the creation of an organisation that would deal with both issues. In its struggle against NSDS's legal restrictions on return, *COPROREX* appealed to the internationally acknowledged discourse of human rights. By appealing to universal standards and norms of State behaviour enshrined in UN covenants on human rights, *COPROREX* was able to generate international pressure on the NSDS to end its restrictions on return. The methods used were campaigning, lobbying, advocating and facilitating return. According to Orellana's (1991) periodisation of the human rights movement in Chile, *COPROREX* fits into the 'second generation' of human rights' organisations. These organisations emerged from the institution of the family and as early as 1974; they were the *Agrupaciones* of relatives of the victims of repression such as the *AFDD* and *AFPP*. In Orellana's view, in some organisations such as *COPROREX*, there was a combination of origins. Among its members, there were relatives of exiles, members of Parties as well as recently returned exiles. Indeed, in uniting as relatives around the specific human right to return, these associations were better equipped to demand a solution from the State and more so because of its gendered foundations.

The gendered genesis of COPROREX³⁹

As discussed, NSDS's repression relied on the 'private-public' divide, so restrictive legislation on return affected more men than women. Women therefore, were able to return on visits primarily as wives, daughters or sisters. The year 1978 was propitious for this purpose. In September 1978, two months after the Pinochet-Leigh rift, and using in their favour women's image mastered by the NSDS, a delegation of the wives of five exiled renowned political leaders (Clodomiro Almeyda, Anselmo Sule, Jorge Inzunza, Luis Maira and Juan Carlos Concha) returned to Chile to demand the return of their families. They entered the country using their Chilean passports (the NSDS did not recognise Convention travel documents, though according to Goodwin-Gill, 2007:138, holding a Chilean passport was still compatible with refugee status). Despite being the wives of renowned political leaders in exile, under NSDS's gendered paradigm, their feminine identity provided them some protection. This gendered return visit to the homeland (on behalf of their husbands who were forbidden to return), opened an exile awareness-raising space inside Chile laying the first stone for a pro-return committee. Although the purpose of their visit was manifold (see Cáceres 1979) their main aim was to add visibility to the injustice of exile, the need to end it, and the free return of all exiles. Their aim was to discuss this issue with the Minister of Interior but the delegation was not received by him. By invoking the *patria*, they publicly declared 'the need for national reconciliation cannot ignore

³⁹ *COPROREX* was not the sole organization struggling for the end of exile. CODEPU, an NGO founded in 1980 established CHIPTAEX. Unlike *COPROREX*, for which the prohibition to return was solely a human right violation, CHIPTAEX considered it a fundamental political problem and so was its solution. Professional associations also had Pro-Return Committees.

those Chileans, who, despite existing political interpretations, belong to the patria, have lived with the will to serve it and have never incurred in punishing anyone as others have done to them.' (Hoy 1978b 69:11-12).

Some months later, one of them, Irma Cáceres de Almeyda said in an interview "I think that our visit to Chile helped to reopen the debate about the problem of exile and for the creation of a committee that we now know is already operating" (Cáceres 1979:131). Indeed, in April 1979, people with relatives in exile or who had previously been in exile themselves funded the *Comité Pro-Retorno de Exiliados Chilenos, COPROREX*. Some 'pioneering returnees' joined COPROREX. Alfonsina, who had returned at the time the committee was being created, found out about it while attending an incipient reception centre for returnees run by returnee psychiatrist Luis Weinstein. Under NSDS it was common for those considered 'enemies' to be feared by relatives and friends who espoused anti-UP views. On return, her family constituted the first reliable safe space, soon others started to emerge,

When I arrived it was really difficult because my friends distanced themselves from me, my family didn't. I am very fortunate because I have a marvellous family, they helped me a lot. Since I returned most of my friends distanced themselves out of fear and that hurt me deeply. The case was that it took me a great deal to reintegrate. I felt really repudiated. Amidst all those things I went to a reception centre for returnees run by Luis Weinstein. It was the first one of its kind. It arose out of nothing. It welcomed returnees. By that time there were a handful of us. The place where we met was a health centre that catered for those people without health insurance. There were doctors, psychologists and psychiatrists. I went to two or three meetings there and I encountered a person who asked me "are you a returnee?" I said "yes." "Do you know that we are now establishing the Pro-Return Committee?" Those were very early days, they had had two or three meetings and so I joined them. I felt I had a space there.

According to Rebolledo (2004), the tendency of returnees to cluster in certain groups continued the exile 'ghetto' trend, something termed 'returnee enclaves' with a separate 'returnee identity' (Lin 2007). These claims suggest the need for a more nuanced examination both of the returnee 'ghetto/enclave' and 'returnee identity'. The existing literature on 'repatriation under/during conflict' (Larkin et al. 1991; Cuny et al. 1992) indicates that most refugees return to areas of conflict through unofficial channels, under no organised repatriation programs and where refugees perceive some form of protection even though hostile conditions continue. In the cases of Central America, Africa and Asia examined by these authors a key factor in refugee's decision to return was the availability of 'protective' 'spaces' or 'opening in society that provides the refugees not only some measure of physical protection, but also material and moral support' (Cuny et al. 1992:16). This study suggests that it is not the sole existence of the 'protective spaces' *per se* that motivates return decisions but the already existence of hegemonic social structures sustaining such spaces and *returnism*. Early human rights 'protective spaces' such as CONAR, COPACHI and *Vicaría* (discussed below), were protecting lives, the integrity of the family, and upholding the hegemony of the Catholic Church. thus providing the grounds to further the emergence of new 'protective' spaces that, for reasons of security, turned them into single-focused safety 'bubbles' where early returnees such as Alfonsina could contribute.

I entered a ghetto because I started to work in the world of human rights straightaway and I didn't interact with the ordinary world (mundo común y corriente), my friends were from the same ghetto. So that ghetto was different to what was going on outside. I know I lived in a

ghetto, a dangerous one. I did not have that contact with the outside society, it was more or less a closed vision of it: from my house, to my work and then to the committee. I lived in a glass cloche, in a bubble, looking out but, yes! feeling the dictatorship, the violence of brutal repression.

If human rights work was dangerous, political work, according to managerial respondent PS militant Patricio Orellana, was even more so. Bravery competition ruled the *interior*. He had worked for both the political and human rights movement; *the human rights work was dangerous but more so was the political work I was doing when I was selling our 'magazine' Avance*. Still, Alfonsina's point is an important one. Safety spaces protected and insulated returnees.

Yet, who provided those spaces? How were they created? And for what purposes? These are important theoretical questions that further this chapter's analysis. The visit of elite political leaders' wives in 1978 and Alfonsina's account of her initial post-return experiences are two significant factors that help our understanding of the creation of one such 'space'. The intersection of politically purposeful visits and the early return of exiles were propitious factors for the development of 'spaces'. Hence, the 'space theory' discussed in Chapter One acquires some validity, though the rational element should be scrutinised. Returnees were able to bypass NSDS's political and social control through their engagement in 'apolitical' human rights organisations and family relations. This is a genuine sociological issue that calls for the conceptualisation of such 'spaces'. The existence of 'returnee ghettos' and 'spaces' is suggesting that these did not exist in a vacuum. Ghettos and spaces existed within some form of societal structure tangential to the core society. This sort of parallel society-like environment was structured around oppositional politics to the NSDS's gross violation of human rights and neoliberal economic policies. Paradoxically, NSDS's very repressive policies led to the emergence of a parallel social world with its own moral and political power operating within the repressive boundaries of the State apparatus, that is, the *interior* section of the peripheral society.

Chapter Three validated Shacknove's (1985) argument of the 'rupture' of the 'bond of trust, loyalty, protection, and assistance' between state and citizen upon which membership is premised. In his view, this 'rupture' occurs whenever the citizen's basic needs are unmet. Whereas many Chileans went into exile looking for protection, others stayed put living in what many termed '*inxilio*'. Precisely, the unprotective nature of NSDS and its newly implemented neoliberal economic model that minimalised 'State assistencialism' (Raczynski and Serrano 1986), led to the emergence of a 'surrogate enclave' that protected human rights and citizen's basic needs, thus replacing State responsibilities. The surrogate enclave was constituted by a sophisticated body of institutions and organisations (mainly NGOs), both lay and religious, attempting to cover the protection, needs and demands of the large group of people marginalised by the NSDS, the stayees. The *interior* was also constituted by myriad of classed and gendered spaces such as middle-class academic and research institutions (e.g. *Academia de Humanismo Cristiano* created by the Catholic Church) and also survival self-help working-class groups palliating the impact of the neoliberal economic model on the poor such as the numerous popular economic organisations (OEP) constituted mainly by poor women who had been

forced to work (e.g. *Comprando Juntos*). Most human rights-based protective organisations were created between 1973 and 1984 (Frühling et al. 1989) and operated on the fringes of the Catholic Church (Garretón 1986).

The abolition of the male public sphere and its corresponding masculinities left a void that was rapidly occupied by women affected by NSDS's political and economic repression. However, any political activity had to take a different form from conventional 'politics'. Most activities centred around human rights (see Waylen 1992, 1996, 1998; Chuchryk 1991; Valenzuela 1998). COPROREX was no exception. Membership was constituted by 'female relatives of exiles and female returnees' (Orellana 1991:47). Benefitting from the gendered values promoted by Chilean culture and strengthened by the NSDS, women as relatives of victims of repression, primarily in their role as mothers and wives were already occupying 'spaces' in the public world (Valdés 1987). More importantly, in their struggle against the dictatorship, women used the same conservative gendered paradigm championed by the NSDS. The elevated motherhood status and self-sacrificing role was now being spearheaded against the NSDS. In their struggle against human rights violations and economic hardships under neoliberalism, women turned their gender identities and statuses within the family, the defense and protection of their children and the integrity of their hearths into political weapons against the regime; women were fighting *like with like*. In this manner, women counteracted NSDS's 'familiarist discourse' (Grassi 1993:236-244) that blamed the 'irresponsible' mother/family, for the personal problems (imprisonment, disappearance) of her child/dren and by association, as Grassi argued, onto a dysfunctional family 'guilty' for its own mistakes. Alfonsina said:

COPROREX was created by a group of relatives of people who had taken asylum in embassies or ex-political prisoners who were in exile. Among them was Marta Pérez, whose son had been in prison and later sought refuge in an embassy. Other relatives had been expelled and some had left Chile under Decree 504. So their relatives got together, the same as the other associations that formed under Pinochet. They were relatives of the victims, not directly though, but yes, they were their relatives. That is how the committee originated.

Patricio Orellana noted that the social-institutional underpinnings for the formation of COPROREX and other human rights associations were already in place. He insightfully summarises the claim posed here regarding the unshaken hegemonic societal structures that remained meaningful under NSDS.

All human rights organisations including COPROREX did not arise from a vacuum. They were born out of the Church and the family. What I am saying to you is that these institutions already had legitimacy in the Chilean society even for the dictatorship, the great absentee was the trade union movement, that is my point and that is strange because the political parties reappeared later...

El derecho a vivir en mi tierra

One common argument is that 'diaspora politics' often colours representations of homeland (Hammond 2004). This section contends otherwise. Coloured representations of the homeland emanate from exile but primarily from the *interior*. Exile and the right to return provide an ideal setting for exploring such claim. The foundations of COPROREX's work was NSDS's stereotypes of

exiles and its restrictions on their return. By keeping its 'enemies' physically at bay and beyond the borders of the State, the NSDS's discourse on exiles made them responsible for their own situation, but above all attributed them with a weak attachment to the *Patria* and unworthy of it. According to Alfonsina, COPROREX's first task was,

To reconstitute the image of the exiled, that they weren't delinquents, that the golden exile didn't exist⁴⁰, that they had been uprooted, that their rights had been confiscated and that the majority of them had been imprisoned and tortured. It was necessary to reconstitute that image in front of society and to say who were the Left-wing people who had to leave Chile. The regime kept discrediting the exiles. It was always referring to them as the 'enemies', 'the Marxists', sort of centring Marxism on the exiled. This was already creating a lot of resentment against them.

NSDS's Cold War-fitting discourse and tendentious image about exiles could only be counteracted by adopting a protective language that would allow exiles to return, if not in safety, at least in dignity (Appendix 3B). The only counter-language providing some protection to returnees was that of human rights. COPROREX's foundational ideas took advantage of the powerful global human rights discourse and the burgeoning human rights organisations bypassing the State. Indeed, COPROREX's narrative drew heavily from Castillo Velasco's return discourse. When asked about the underpinnings of such discourse and specifically about Castillo Velasco's influence, Alfonsina responded:

I do not know because I wasn't in Chile at that time. What happens is that the right to return is enshrined in the United Nations Human Rights Declaration. It was a right, not a petition, it wasn't an application of benevolence, it was a right that should be reclaimed. You could chose to stay or return but the thing was that that was your right and our work stemmed from that, and that was our struggle, to demand a right that was enshrined in the United Nations Charter. That's why every year we sent a Report to the UN. It is quite probable that this was taken from his idea but in any case we simply stuck to the idea that that it was not a Chilean invention but of civilised countries that had accepted that people had the right to live in their own countries and that the destierro was not accepted, less so the administrative one... So we always fought for that right. It may probable be that it was don Jaime...

COPROREX's main tasks were to denounce the injustice of exile as a serious human right violation and to struggle for the restitution of the right to live in one's own homeland. To distance themselves from NSDS's *ad nauseum* use of the term *Patria*, they used the term *tierra*. *Tierra* in Chilean-Spanish language is a term homologous to *Patria* and nation but with a more folkloristic undertone. In Spanish *tierra* (from the Latin root *terra*), means 'land', 'soil' and when the term soil is invoked, it associates people to a territorial homeland, to a place from which their national identity is rooted, and, as Connor (2001:53) put it, 'The emotionally pregnant concept of 'my roots' implies soil.' Zetter (1998:309) noted how the metaphor of having one's 'roots in the soil' permeates the construction of the 'myth of return' for Greek Cypriot refugees by implying an organic connection to the land. These attachments of national identity to a soil are frequently performed by metaphoric practices. For instance, when some people go into exile and take along a handful of soil (see Allende 2005) or 'when returning to Chile kneels in the soil and kiss it as if it was his mother' (Ríos 1987:37) to express their loyalty and emotional ties to a nation, a *patria/terra*. Precisely, this extreme attachment to the land underpinned the Chilean discourse of the right to return, it territorialised it. In COPROREX's *El*

⁴⁰ Some exiles acknowledged the existence of a 'golden exile'. Returnee Mauricio Redolés referred to elite and upper-class exiles as the "Red Set" (in Rodríguez, 1990:206).

derecho a vivir en mi tierra narrative, landscape and territory were primordial. It suggested that Chilean exiles had a land and a country to which they belonged and to which exiles often made connections and finally wanted to return. The use of the term *tierra* rather than *patria* was more advantageous. *Tierra* not only refers to soil, it encapsulates other meanings. When talking about the advantages of living abroad and having become more broadminded and less ethnocentric, Amarilis said,

I lost that tremendous patriotism. Ho-we-ver, when I listen to a cueca or something folkloric about the south or the very north of Chile, I get incredibly emotional because they are talking about the tierra, of the people who work in it, and that touches me very deeply, and that is Chile for me. That thing of being CHI-LE-NO, that? I lost.

In Connor's (2001) view, emotional attachments to territory transform land into homeland, 'The ethnic homeland is far more than territory. As evidenced by the near universal use of emotionally charged terms as the motherland, the fatherland, the native land, the ancestral land, land where my fathers died and, not least, the homeland, the territory so identified becomes imbued with an emotional, almost reverential dimension' (Connor 1986:16). Connor's argument explains why homeland rather than 'home' constitutes a potent and mobilising factor even in an era of globalisation and transnationalism. Appealing to emotional attachment, COPROREX's discourse encompassed the commonplace idea that 'Return is an essential part of exilic condition that has strong link to the concept homeland' (Ghorashi 2003:129). The need to convey their message required visibility and a poster was a good idea. Alfonsina commissioned the drawing from a young artist (see Appendix 3),

There was a need to make a poster that would identify us. So then we asked some people to make a sketch. I spoke to some young progressive artists and I told one of them (he was about 20 years old) about our work, what we were doing, and what exile and forcibly living outside Chile symbolised for us. He then told me "I am going to do a sketch with these ideas for you" and he did. For him all Chileans lived in a glass cloche and those living abroad were desperately trying to reach it and be able to enter it. Well, this is the original idea that he conveyed in it.

Noteworthy is the stayee's perception of exiles even by young progressive people. In a highly re-masculinised and nationalist NSDS's Chile, exiles image was influenced by this view. When asked about the powerless and sexless figure touching the glass cloche, Cecilia, who had joined COPROREX soon after her return from France in 1981, said: *Well, this is how people saw exiles here in Chile. The exiled was an amorphous being trying to enter his country that is enclosed in a glass cloche but he cannot even touch it.* Cecilia is right, the 'exile' is symbolically depicted as an estranged amorphous being timidly touching the glass cloche as a way to reach 'its' inaccessible *tierra*. Unsurprisingly, the poster was not free from controversy. Alfonsina commented,

It provoked some controversy because some people found it a little bit infantile, not serious enough because they considered that exile was a very hard experience to be treated so lightly. What happened is that I was really fed up (harta) of seeing posters full of blood because all of them were about the crisis, the pain, the anguish and I said "why don't we show the strong wish of people to live in their own country, why don't we show a happy and transparent Chile, inside a glass cloche that is not a wall but something you see and you want to reach, to where you want to enter. That was the idea. Inside are the Andes (cordillera), the houses on stilts (palafitos), the sun, there is a bit of everything, there is hope in it (está como la esperanza). The little red sack the exile carries was the sack of hope according to him. Sure, the figure should have been more serious because it is almost a

caricature. But I found it rather sweet because he could synthesise all that I have told him about exile, of what I had experienced abroad. He hadn't left Chile and was working for the ending of exile, so it was easier for him to capture all my feelings.

Thus, the poster was the result of the joint ideas of an early returnee and the perception of exile by stayees. It legitimised a narrative difficult to contest: it was the *interior* return narrative. More importantly, it implied that by re-entering Chile, exiles would be returning to their familiar territory, their homeland, their revered *patria/tierra*. The end result was not infantile but a discursive framework that embedded place, return and homeland wrapped in nostalgic patriotism. Gaillard (1997:24-5) who in her work on exile and return of Chileans from France highlighted the role of nostalgia in return prospects, noted that spatial separation meant an interruption of primary (family), secondary (close friends) and tertiary (community, institutions) reference objects that are associated to a nostalgic imagery of geographic, topographic and climatic factors. The poster's imagery depicted nostalgia as a pull towards an idealised homeland symbolically represented by a captured landscape. Chilean iconic topographical features such as the Andes (always referred to as the *cordillera*) and considered a natural beauty (that in exile acquired great cultural significance as well as becoming a reservoir of the national spirit), benevolent climate elements depicted in a shining sun, smiling clouds, carefree people, houses on stilts, and countryside were nostalgically trapped inside the glass cloche. It was precisely the naivety of the poster that gave it an extra power. It highlighted the significance of a landscape with national character in a sort of mythical and iconographic manner that celebrated what was 'Chilean'. In its narrative, exile has separated the displaced both in time and space, yet space/territory remained intact. Anderson (1988:24) noted this when he claimed that 'The nation's unique history is embodied in the nation's unique piece of territory – its 'homeland'...The time has passed but the space is still there.' By emphasising Chilean landscape as physical characteristics of the homeland the poster took for granted the nostalgia for the *tierra* to which each exile belonged. Return meant the possibility to enter the glass cloche. The poster was widely reproduced within the peripheral society, it appeared on postcards, matchboxes and in myriad exilic bulletins. 'Homeland sentiment' argues Connor (2001:53), 'has been a favourite of poets and lyricists.' Unsurprisingly, Pablo Neruda's exilic myth-making poems, such as the one which introduced this study, featured prominently in COPROREX's documents. The concealed message was that Neruda's patriotic achievement should be emulated. The campaign ahead aimed at that.

Making exile a national issue. Appealing to the national consciousness: UNHCR's ghostly VRp role

Among these activities was the joint organization with CCHDH of the *Primeras Jornadas por El Derecho a Vivir en la Patria* (First Conference on the Right to Live in the Patria) in Santiago between 20 and 22 June 1980. The Conference was supported by FASIC, WUS, UNHCR, CESPO and CODEJU. Discussions on the nature of exile centred around its juridical dimensions and its disintegrating effects. The detailed information about the uneasiness of exile contained in the report arising from the three-day conference further validates a claim made in Chapter Four. Returnee mental health professionals such as Fanny Pollarolo, Luis Weinstein and Paz Rojas, contributed to the

accurate information provided in the twenty-two page report. The inaugural speech focused on the deterioration of human rights in 1980 and the problem of exile as a national tragedy because 'hundreds of thousands of Chileans are prevented from returning to the patria and live the painful consequences in a sort of prison in a foreign country, and they are longing to return to their patria' (CCHDH/COPROREX 1980:3). Among the manifold resolutions was to establish the 20th August as the *Día del Exiliado* (Day of the Exile). This chosen date was highly symbolic. It was the anniversary of the birth of Bernardo O'Higgins, the Father of the *Patria* who himself was a 'famous refugee' (see Ibarra 1987) and who also had been manipulated ubiquitously by the regime. In the exilic narrative he was the first *desterrado* (deterritorialised) of Chile as an independent nation. Soon, August was declared 'Month of the Exiled'. Cecilia noted that *on 20th August we used to take flowers to Bernardo O'Higgins' statue, we tried to evade the pacos (police). All this when we could of course, if not, we had to go back with the flowers!*

The *like with like* argument reappears once more. The 20th August was religiously respected by the NSDS and most of the time by the peripheral society. Many significant events in exile were planned for this date such as National and International Conferences, for example the First Conference of Chilean Exiles in the UK in 1982 in London (CAF 1982) and demonstrations outside Chilean embassies where exiles carried placards and suitcases to demand their right to return to the patria (see Appendix 5). Among COPROREX's tasks were: to make exile into a national issue, to intensify legal and administrative actions to achieve the exercise of the *Derecho a Vivir en la Patria*, to advise exiles to take advantage of their exile in order to eventually contribute more positively to Chile, and to create the conditions for the re-encountering of Chileans as a priority and permanent task. This was an important development. By institutionalising the right to return backed by a body of international law, the usage of the powerful terms *Patria* and *tierra* to which most Chileans were allegedly identified with, and a more in-depth professional knowledge about exile (particularly its psychological and social effects), converged in a powerful narrative capable of challenging NSDS's repressive legislation on return and its despised image of exiles as traitors living a 'golden exile'. To counteract these negative views, COPROREX embarked on a campaign to create a national consciousness around exile and the right to return. Cecilia said,

There was a phrase at the Committee which was 'to make exile a national issue' that was our banner, particularly during the first years, because to talk about exile was almost a bad word. They (dictatorship) said that the exiles were gangsters, that they were all a gang of robbers, that they were having a great time, that they were cheating everyone. All that appeared in the press and for that reason, little by little, the question of exile started to emerge and so we started to make people conscious about exile, of what to be in exile really meant and how people were living abroad and how their relatives were experiencing it inside Chile.

The vast literature on women's movements under dictatorships in Latin America mentions the contribution of returnee women from Europe and North America as one of the key factors contributing to the growth and enhancement of political agendas of both women's movements and feminism (Alvarez 1990; Valenzuela 1998; Shayne 2004). Yet, returnee women's role in the human rights movement is ignored. Anthias and Yuval-Davis (1989:7) have identified five major roles in

which women participate in national projects: as biological reproducers of the members of collectivities, as reproducers of the boundaries of national collectivities, as active transmitters and reproducers of the national culture, as symbolic signifiers of national culture and as active participants in national struggles. Working from COPROREX Alfonsina and Cecilia contributed to an alternative national project not as feminists but as active participants in a national struggle. By intersecting the right to return and the end of exile they were struggling for the end of the dictatorship and re-democratisation; they not only heralded *returnism* they practised it.

In their efforts to counteract NSDS's profile of the *exiliado*, COPROREX embarked on sensitising campaigns. Between 1983 and 1988 five *Ferias Culturales del Exilio* (Cultural Fairs of Exile) were organised in Santiago. For this purpose they resorted to the *exterior*. The objective of the *Ferias* was to show exilic cultural production. Videos, plays, music, poetry as well as posters, photographs, magazines, record sleeves, and literary and academic works were displayed. According to Alfonsina *they were truly amusing parties of art and colour*. The peripheral society worked. This large amount of material was sent by relatives from exile and as Cecilia put it *to obtain all that material it was crucial that relatives here should put pressure on their exiled children to pull up their socks (se pusieran las pilas)*. *They shouldn't keep the material they received in their drawers. I kept pestering (los picaneaba mucho) my children so they kept sending me things with people who travelled abroad such as posters, records, cassettes etc.* An extra fair on the specific issue *Exilio-Retorno* was also held in Santiago. The fact that *Ferias* took place in Santiago reveals the centralised nature of Chile leaving other regions where returnees also lived less sensitised. Also, these *Ferias*, showed a definitive class element. COPROREX's counter-discourse used the exclusionary category 'intellectual', the producer of exilic culture. Alfonsina said,

To remove the exclusively political edge of the exiled and show that the exiled is also cultured, we said we are going to show Who is an Exile. So we showed the Chilean exiled in the arts like (por decirte) painting, literature, poetry, theatre, and also in the sciences. The Fairs were quite successful and I tell you even some Right-wing or Centrist relatives didn't know much about this human being who was in exile. So, in some ways we reconstructed the exiles' profile with those Fairs. It was a little grain of sand but it was worth it.

By placing exile firmly on the opposition agenda, this information was disseminated in various ways. One of them was through public opinion campaigns which had immediate effects. Between 1979 and 1980, 'the growing attention on the exile question was clearly seen in the official media. In the first semester of 1980 alone, eighty-four news items and nine editorials appeared in four of its newspapers' (CODEPU 1983:5). As noted, since 1978, opposition magazines such as *Hoy* and *Andlisis* featured a number of articles on exiles and their pleas to return. Obviously, most of the official media coverage was openly opposed to the return of exiles particularly after the Chilean Episcopate demand for the return of exiles in January 1981. The increased attention on the *exilio-retorno* issue coincided with the international promotion of VRp. Between January and March 1984, influential opposition weekly magazine *Hoy* published in seven consecutive editions (340-346), a testimonial report about the various experiences of exiles around the world. This was the result of a multidisciplinary project carried out by Chilean journalists, psychologists and sociologists in twelve countries. It was entitled

Vivir sin Chile (Living without Chile) and referred to exiles as *desterrados*. Its 101 pages provided a full spectrum of life in exile ranging from: 'The first steps', 'Daily Life', 'The itinerant family' and so on. The last chapter was dedicated to the meaning of exile and the prospect of return. The testimonies of mainly professional and elite political figures gave a grim meaning to exile and dwelt on their nostalgic wish to return to 'their patria'. Views on *exilio-retorno* by Catholic Church representatives, Christian Democrat leaders as well as those of Pinochet and some of his ministers, also featured. Pablo Neruda's nostalgic poems added weight to this publication.

A second way of capturing public attention was by flash demonstrations. For example, COPROREX members gathered for a few minutes with their banner "*¡Fin al Exilio Ahora!*" (End to Exile Now!), and then disbanded (see Appendix 3C). One significant demonstration carried out by five COPROREX women on 9th December 1985 (eve of Human Rights' Day), was the brief occupation of UNHCR's office in Santiago. The action took place during the first day of the visit of Fernando Volio, the UN Human Rights Commission Special Rapporteur who was monitoring human rights in Chile and that included the right to return (see *Mensaje* 1986 348:152-154). Because of its constitutive nature, COPROREX's strength lay in the visibility of women members and the invisible tutelage of men and Parties. While at UNHCR's office, the women delivered a letter signed by Sergio Bitar, Claudio Huepe, Alejandro Toro, Aníbal Palma, Rafael A. Gumucio, Luis Maira, Jorge Lavandero, and Juan Pablo Letelier, eight prominent male political leaders, most of them returnees. In the letter and in a press conference held minutes before the COPROREX women's action, they had called attention to the drama of exile and the need to end such violation. The political and gendered convergence of this action made it powerful: two major international organisations were made aware of the *interior's* plea for the right to return in Chile: UNHCR and the UN Human Rights Commission. Alfonsina said:

The action itself was similar to the other ones we carried out. The purpose was to convey our denunciation to the national and international opinion as quickly as possible through the opposition media and foreign correspondents. In one way or another, we succeeded. The action took place at UNHCR because it was an organisation directly related with refugees, exile and return. I do not know how the staff reacted. At that time, action was worth more than words or statements, it was the only way in which you could continue with the actions if you really cared about the cause.

A third way of making their plea to be known internationally was by presenting successive reports before the United Nations (eight in total). The first one is dated November 1980. In it, COPROREX (1980:10) provided updated detailed information about the repressive legislation impeding return and calling for 'a prompt solution to the painful and irreversible effects of exile that worsen day by day.' They made a call to 'international opinion and supranational organisations such as the United Nations to join the Chilean people's efforts and decisively contribute to press the military authorities to abolish immediately the norms that allow the President to impede people living in their own patria...'. Due to increased repression after the protests and the 1986 failed assassination attempt against Pinochet, the last Report, presented to the 42nd General Assembly in October 1987, was emphatic in denouncing both the harassment, persecution and discrimination that impinged upon recent returnees and that the right to live in the patria, leave and return to it, had not been reestablished (COPROREX 1987).

One way to promote a 'responsible' return was through information about 'living in Chile'. This was accomplished through *Boletines* and *Cartillas del Retornado* which were sent to the exterior Pro-Return committees and community organisations. In her discussion on the shifting modes of repatriation, Amore (2002) argues that *Boletines* as a source of information, played a crucial role in Chilean self-repatriation, something that Koser (1993) had prioritised.

The *Boletines* and *Cartillas*' information somewhat differed. The *Boletines* informed exiles about the current situation in Chile (without mentioning safety *per se*), recommendations to exiles and information about UNHCR's support for VRp. Cecilia commented: *we also worked with UNHCR, I wasn't personally involved with that work as I was working on something else so, I couldn't tell you how was that relationship but [reading a Cartilla] here it says: 'UNHCR, voluntary repatriation, in search of permanent solutions, it is the solution to the problem of refugees.'* The *Boletines* focused more on *El derecho a vivir en mi tierra* that, as a discourse heightened and promoted *returnism* and so it could be suggested that the *Boletines* had a quasi-ideological role. Cecilia however clarified that *we never said that they had to return; soon Alfonsina added that we considered that the Parties' policy was legitimate according to the wish of their militants but no one should be obliged to return. So many had been obliged to leave, so why oblige them to return? it was doubly unjust, wasn't it? So we rather talked about the right to return.* Yet COPROREX documents were more insistent and demanding. For instance, the types of demands regarding what was expected from exiles and their right to return exerted a moral pressure on them,

“We urge exiles to contact their respective workplace, professional or trade union to support their right to live in Chile. To motivate relatives in Chile to join the campaign to restore this right. To make widespread denunciations in international bodies. Exercise your right – wherever possible – go to Chile. This will allow exiles to experience the current reality of Chile so as to take an informed decision on a definitive return.” (*Boletín* N°16, 1984:6)

The *Boletines* also made recommendations on the procedure to exercise the right to live in Chile. To protect prospective returnees, COPROREX appealed to UNHCR. Apart from informing on entry applications, COPROREX insisted that applicants (including relatives in Chile) should 'send a copy of the document to COPROREX and to UNHCR.' (*Boletín* N°16, 1984:7). With further recommendations on the preparation for return and on the material support required, the *Boletines* resonated UNHCR's language and understanding of voluntariness whereby the agency favours pull factors and emphasises that refugees should not be pushed out of the host countries (Kagan 2006). COPROREX's *Boletines* were doing the work for UNHCR. Conversely, the *Cartillas* were structured around two issues: facilitation of return and reintegration. For example, the first section of the *Cartillas* entitled 'Preparing return' included general information about the organisations assisting returnees (to be discussed below), education (schools and fees), a space for adolescents and young adults, universities (places and fees), bureaucratic chores and the documentation required to live in Chile, customs regulations, status of titles and degrees obtained abroad, re-encountering Chile and its new regions, professional bodies, new legislation on entry, updates of the lists of those forbidden to

enter, the health system and so forth. The second section, 'Living in Chile' contained information on the economic situation in Chile, salaries and wages, cost of living (*canasta familiar*), the housing rental market, and an added section on cultural news. Between May 1985, the date of the first issue, and September 1986, COPROREX published seven *Cartillas*. Noteworthy is the introduction to the *Cartillas*. The introductory section *Así ven Chile* (How they see Chile) provided opinions, testimonies and interviews of returnees who, despite problems both in exile and return, emphasised the temporariness of exile, their *returnism* and attachment to their *tierra*, simultaneously advising prospective returnees to plan and prepare a well-informed return. As Cecilia put it, *it was a way of informing what was going on in Chile so the prospective returnee would know exactly how the situation was here; informing exiles that this is the country they needed to know about. That was the intention*. However, only five conversational partners knew about the *Cartillas* or *Boletines*; two of them had been members of Pro-return committees in exile (Mariela and Carmen), the others were linked to Parties and had spent their exile in Europe. In general, the family back in Chile was the main and most reliable source of information. Marcia noted,

The moment I decided to return I started to enquire about things in Chile – I was already separated from my son's father, he was living in France and he had more information. Then I told him that I needed to look for a school for Mario. He then said 'I will send you all the information I have'. In the meantime one was phoning and writing to one's relatives (of course not about political news). Then the father of my son sent me the information that was circulating in Europe but not in Latin America. That was from this Pro-Return Committee about the facilities and the little aid that existed, the lists of schools and all that. Well, it was the Francisco de Miranda or the Latinoamericano but there was more information about the Latinoamericano. So then I asked my brother-in-law who lived very near the Francisco if he could find more about it and if he could put Mario's name down. Then I asked my parents if they could enquire about the documentation required. Basically, I was involving the family who was here in Chile in my return. Do this, do that, or that other for me; things like that.

COPROREX's information was widely disseminated through exile bulletins such as *Chile Democrático's* in the UK. Testimonies of returnees, similar to the one included above, usually ended with the defiant cry "We have returned! Here we are! They didn't destroy us!" (CHD-UK 1988: 3-4). Defiance and low expectations were a regularity in return under NSDS. The *Cartillas* complemented information about Chile's political situation and exile activities around return. The result was a powerful *returnism* tool yet with limited reach. The genesis of these booklets however, was elitist and male-dominated. The *Cartillas* were the result of various interrelated developments. Among these were: a number of conferences on return that were taking place in the late 1970s and early 1980s in Europe, the frequent visits of political representatives from the *interior* to the *exterior*, studies on *exilio-retorno* carried out by stayee Chilean social scientists commissioned by national and international organisations, and the complexity of problems being experienced by returnees. One of the pioneering conferences on return took place in Paris just days before the *Primeras Jornadas* discussed above. It was held on 7th June 1980 at the Sorbonne and sponsored by the International Association of Democratic Jurists, the International Federation of the Rights of Man and the International Movement of Catholic Jurists under the initiative of the 'Right to Return to Chile Collective.' In his opening intervention, elite political leader Rafael Gumucio expressed 'our gratitude towards our Chilean *brothers* (emphasis added) of the Pro-Return Committee who, in the *interior*,

struggle with so much courage for our return to the patria'. He then thanked 'All the institutions that work for the 'Rights of Man' including the 'ad hoc' rapporteur of the United Nations Human Rights Commission who is collaborating in this campaign' (Collectif 1980:4). Though COPROREX's visible members were women (See Appendix 3C), male exile leaders still had problems to acknowledge this fact.

The *Primeras Jornadas* propelled a number of conferences and seminars on return throughout exile. These gatherings received a push from representatives of Parties from the *interior*, like elite political leader Jaime Gazmuri's 'hero's tour discussed in Chapter Four. These *interior* high profile leaders held meetings with exiled political organisations and return was part of the agenda. Alfonsina said:

Many people from Chile went to various countries. They were invited by the Pro-Return Committees so they talked about the need for people to prepare their return. These issues had already been proposed in the Primeras Jornadas and these visits helped to inform about this imperative to the heads of the parties so that they could implement this point.

In 1980 a 'European Consultation' was convened for May 1981. Among the participants to be invited were 'organisations of Chilean exiles in different countries, for example, *Chile Democrático* (Italy), the *Instituto para el Nuevo Chile* (Institute for the New Chile, see Arrate 2007), representatives of West European Pro-Return to the Patria Committees and hopefully a representative of UNHCR (Draft 1980:a). The purpose was twofold: first, to contextualise the Chilean exile both nationally and internationally. In providing the latest information on the NSDS's legislation and restricting policies on return, they reassured European agencies that they would provide an updated report of the current Pro-Return to the Patria campaign. The Consultation would 'also consider European return migration policies so that government agencies and inter-governmental organisations (European Parliament, Council of Europe, etc.) would press the Chilean government to change its arbitrary legal restrictions on return'. (Draft 1980:b). Second, 'to implement the policy for the support to return outlined at the *Primeras Jornadas*.' This involved two priority research areas regarding the exiled population in Europe: levels of integration and the situation of the labour market and job prospects in Chile' (Draft 1980:c). This brief discussion reveals the overwhelming power of 'homeland'. Events taking place in the *Patria* shaped the directions of exile. The transnational impact of the *Primeras Jornadas*, the *interior* 'visits' and the existence of *exterior* Pro-Return Committees even in the early 1980s suggests that at the macro level, the power of *Patria*, *tierra*, *interior* and *returnism* strongly promoted the return of Chilean exiles to the extent that institutions working with returnees since 1978 acknowledged that return was not planned and that return decisions were 'emotional and impulsive reactions' particularly when these 'decisions' were pressured by 'lists' authorising return. A sense of urgency appeared. According to FASIC (1984b:34) 'to be able to return produces a "crisis of return": of packing up one's belongings and leave...Exiles say "we are leaving before something else occurred that might impede return.' This means that some exiles never crossed the boundaries of the foundational decision to return. Equally to Rosario, Cecilia's accounts reveal that 'compulsive return' never detached itself from the foundational return decision. To justify it, she once again appealed to her undervalued exilic existence,

To tell you the truth this thing of return was an impulse, it was like something irresistible.... I decided just like that... Thinking seriously, it was a matter of saying 'I was worth something there but here I am worth nothing'

The power of 'homeland' also featured in *exterior* pro-return committees' promotion of *returnism* through art. For instance, *Teatro Popular Chileno* (Chilean Popular Theatre) in London wrote and staged a play entitled *El Sur del mundo nos está llamando* ('The south of the world is calling us'). This play was performed throughout Great Britain and Europe where audiences were usually mixed yet most were nationals of the countries in which the play was performed. In March 1981, Hugo Medina, one of the actors and the company director said 'it is a play written to help the discussion on return and the need to return. The play is available for all the emerging pro-return committees.... The pro-return committee called 70 people for a video viewing of the play, but 300 turned up, that means that people are thinking on their return' (*El Chasqui* 1981:25). UNHCR's understanding of *voluntariness* in repatriation clearly favours pull factors (Kagan 2006). Hence, even Chilean exilic plays were assisting UNHCR's shifting VRp policies.

Making prospective return sustainable

Another way of ensuring VRp sustainability under NSDS was through programmes aimed at facilitating the process of reintegration of returnees. Considering the difficulties experienced by some early returnees arriving in Chile in the late 1970s and early 1980s and motivated by concerns of host governments and international institutions in charge of refugees (UNHCR and ICEM) about 'improvised return' that would end up in re-migration, a transnational study on *exilio-retorno* funded by the Ford Foundation was carried out by the Chile-based research institute CIDE under the auspices of the Catholic Church (Cariola and Rossetti 1984-1985). The idea behind the study was to address the impact of future repatriations. The study was commissioned by national and international organisations and NGOs supporting VRp. Among the national NGOs were FASIC, PIDEE, CCHDH, COPROREX and CODEPU. The international agencies were WUS, UNHCR and IOM. In this manner, UNHCR diffused its presence and intervention and left the task of promotion, facilitation, protection and 'aid' to internationally funded indigenous NGOs.⁴¹ Hence, stayees would be 'in charge' of the protection and assistance of returnees providing in this manner grounds for perceiving Chilean VRp as 'self-repatriation' to which this study will return in the next chapter. According to Cariola and Rossetti (1984-1985:1-3), the need for a 'diagnostic' study emerged as a way 'to contribute to the definition of adequate strategies for employment of those Chileans who will return to the country' and to assess 'their intentions to return.' After an important increase in return in 1984

⁴¹ Following UNHCR's Executive Committee Conclusions on VRp (N°18(XXXI) and N°40(XXXVI) on the agency's potential role in regard to the fate of returnees, the agency stepped in. On 22 September 1983, Luise Drucke, UNHCR's representative in Chile wrote to Coronel Enrique Seguel, the Undersecretary of the Treasury, on behalf of returnees' customs duties for their domestic goods and tools. Stressing UNHCR's mandate, she requested 'the partial or total exemption from customs duties for reasonable quantities of belongings especially regarding household goods, books or work tools. Therefore, for these reasons, UNHCR would look very favourably upon the enactment by the Treasury of an exceptional measure to assist those returning to Chile and in line with the measures taken by the Supreme Government for the return of Chileans to their country of origin'. [Fundación Documentación y Archivo, Vicaría de la Solidaridad]

where 993 exiles returned the following year saw a sharp decrease (see Appendix 4). CIDE's 1984-1985 study however insisted that despite this decrease 'it is indispensable to continue thinking about effective ways to face return. On the one hand, it is important to contribute in maintaining a flow of return to Chile. On the other, the process of return is a complex phenomenon that cannot be treated in an *ad hoc* manner, rather, it requires planning' (:2). Returnees' economic and employment issues were a priority because 'there is no stable reinsertion without employment' and these 'would be dealt by the Chilean institutions that already had a trajectory and experience in the assistance work with returnees (*ibid*:1). One of those institutions was FASIC.

5.3.3 FASIC, *Fundación de Ayuda Social de las Iglesias Cristianas: an Ecumenical NGO*

The exiled came back to an insecure country. Obviously the problems of persecution and insecurity with which we lived here were terrible – but in a certain manner those problems were magnified abroad – so people were afraid of returning and once they did they were even more scared. Maybe one got used to live in the midst of terror but you were able to control that fear somehow. What I certainly saw here were people with lots of personal insecurity and with difficulties in approaching any other institution where they did not feel protected and with such fear as to reveal that they were coming back from exile, it was worse in the case of those who had returned from Socialist countries and so people were afraid of saying that they were arriving from exile. Here, we had the possibility of welcoming people in its real dimension. We understood what they were experiencing, something that the rest of the society did not do. I think that people came here because they felt that this was a protective space where we understood what they said, we understood the languages they spoke and the problems they were facing. That is the kind of feature that this institution was able to offer and that's what people were looking for.

Teresa Gómez, social worker, FASIC

FASIC's work aimed at both a 'responsible return' and the facilitation and reintegration of returnees. From the outset, FASIC constituted a key protective space. It is an ecumenical NGO whose Executive Committee included the Catholic Church, Evangelic Lutheran, Methodist, Pentecostal Methodist, and Pentecostal Mission Church (Garcés and Nicholls 2005). Though FASIC was officially founded 1st April 1975, it had been working with Decree refugees and their working-class and peasant families since the end of 1974 (Garcés and Nicholls 2005).

Regarding a responsible return, FASIC produced similar information to that of COPROREX's *Boletines* and *Cartillas* under the heading *Chile-Retorno-PAS*. Yet, one of FASIC's most important and acknowledged areas of work was the Medical Psychiatric Programme (*Programa Médico-Psiquiátrico, PMS*) established in 1977 to attend the victims of repression. The Program's interdisciplinary team comprised social workers, psychiatrists and psychologists. Some of FASIC's professionals were returnees themselves such as psychiatrist Fanny Pollarollo and social worker Adriana del Piano. Similarly to Alfonsina and Cecilia, FASIC's returnee professionals entered and worked within the surrogate enclave. This new experience strengthens an argument presented above: the contribution of early returnees in creating and/or sustaining the growth of protective spaces that sheltered unemployed stayees and returnee professionals. As most of them had worked with ex-political prisoners in exile, they were able to provide expertise and knowledge about their own

experiences qualifying themselves in a new field of knowledge and research: the *exilio-retorno* 'problem'. The result was an enormously influential body of empirical knowledge on the psychosocial aspects of *exilio-retorno* starting with their most cited socio-psychological empirical work of 25 returnee families (FASIC 1981a). According to the authors, the approach was psychosocial and not medical *per se*, it scrutinised the socio-political factors that influence returnees's mental health. It suggested that the basic pathogenic factor in the emotional disturbances of their patients had originated with events associated with the psychosocial trauma of the coup. In fact, 47 per cent of returnee patients stated that their emotional disturbances originated with the coup itself, 38 per cent reported that exile contributed to further psychological problems and only 15 per cent blamed return (FASIC 1981a:38). Though the political roots of returnees' psychosocial problems were stressed, what transpired were the psychological problems of the *retornados*. Of the twenty-three conversational partners who returned under NSDS, only four women reported receiving psychological help either at FASIC or CODEPU (Alfonsina, Loreto, Marcela, Rosario).

This is a thorny issue in Refugee Studies from which this thesis isn't free. The debate around psychological healing of war-affected populations moves between the 'trauma' and 'resilience' approaches where the latter claims to allow liberation and empowerment (Agger 1994). This approach follows the work developed by COLAT's psychiatrists and psychologists in Belgium. Though this is not the place for a lengthy discussion on this debate of which Agger (2001) provides a summary, it should be noted that relying on psychosocial frameworks to study returnees also falls into a paradigm of essentialism; the term *retornado* acquired a particular connotation. Unintentionally, the term designated returnees as people in crisis with particular practical needs and mental disturbances. Acknowledging that the Programme's work on return provided significant and valid insights into the relationship between changes and transformations in Chile and in exiles themselves, 'reverse culture shock', social, practical, psychological and cultural post-return problems and their impact on reintegration, its work on return mirrored that on exile, it constructed an essentialised *retornado* category widely used in its assistance work. This gradual construction provided the underpinnings for the label *retornado* and in the process it deepened the already existing social divisions, this time between 'nationals', 'stayees' and 'returnees' as new types of social categories. In his discussion of refugee repatriation in the Horn of Africa, Opondo's (1996) fitting observation of the association between the label 'returnee' and the humanitarian industry's 'stereotyping' matches this experience.

The Programme's preferred analytical concept, *cotidianeidad* (everyday life) that uncritically emphasised everything which was outside 'normal' daily life as being interrupted by exile and/or return, provided the conceptual underpinnings for such essentialising. Thematic issues related to trauma, uprooting, loss, exile as a means of survival and its emotional costs, acculturation, and mental health problems that originated before, during and after exile, featured regularly in the Programme's work (FASIC 1978, 1981a, 1982). This approach laudably constituted a particular counter-discourse that weakened that of the NSDS's 'golden exile'; it revealed 'real exile'. Paradoxically, however, the emphasis on this stereotypical paradigm termed 'exile syndrome' (Israel 1996), created a negative

precedent for the image of returnees even though the aforementioned study concluded that only 15 per cent of the patients acknowledged that emotional problems were associated with return. The *retornado* identity became overloaded with unfavourable meanings that usually emphasised the psychosocial characteristics. The dangers from continuing association of exiles with psychological disturbances and their treatment as 'patients' (see Rojas 1983a, b; Hoy 1983 287), would in future influence a negative public consensus of non-elite exiles, it created an image of the *retornado* as a generic figure with fixed characteristics. However, NSDS's political context attenuated the psychosocial image of the *retornado*. As long as the *exiliado* as a political category remained in the public discursive agenda and the *retornado* as a psychosocial one within the boundaries of the surrogate enclave particularly in the private sphere of assistance, the labels were bounded.

Exceptions were elite exiles and Party leaders, they were spared the 'exile syndrome' and associated labels (see Hite 2000). Male-dominated exile politics and international recognition for both the masculinist UP project and the democratic struggle against the NSDS personalised in the hyper-patriarchal figure of Pinochet, allowed them to bypass the 'exile syndrome' and the *retornado* label. In the struggle against an all powerful remasculinised Chilean State there was no room for syndromed exiles or returnees. Yet, this issue requires further elaboration as reductionist explanations restrict our understanding of the label *retornado* and more so the 'returnee' concept which has proved to be a difficult term (Allen and Morsink 1994). For example, an entire collection on prospect Palestinian refugee repatriation preferred to 'avoid (the concept) as much as possible, not because it is wrong but because it may cause confusion' and continued using 'the term returned *refugee*' because 'it has the added advantage of conveying the continuity in the status of refugees (Dumper 2006:17). This preferred term causes even more confusion, something that the authors wanted to avoid. The hyphenated *exiliado-retornado* in Chile was equally confusing.

In this chapter, the term *retornado* is acquiring two meanings: political and as object of assistance. Politically, the negative image of returnees portrayed by the NSDS as threats to national security was turned into a positive image by the *interior*; it acquired political value turning returnees into political capital. In Alfonsina's case it was associated with her pre-exile experiences of DR, marginalisation and political background. These were valuable political 'assets' in the *interior*. As the protests against the NSDS expanded (1983-1986) and the demise of the dictatorship was 'in sight', the political dimension 'returnee' empowered and was articulated as a strategy to lose fear. Returning under NSDS constituted a political asset rather than a liability. The political dimension of the *retornado* identity provided both political value and agency within the peripheral society and more so in the *interior*; it constituted a political capital for democratisation. After some years of struggle against the NSDS, Alfonsina asserted the political dimension of her returnee identity,

*When I arrived I felt totally rejected. You couldn't say that you had been in exile anywhere because you were scared if there were Right-wingers around, but even Left-wingers could be frightened of your presence. Because I had been imprisoned, I was marked, I contaminated. Even people from other Parties and from your own Party feared that they could be caught if you were with them and sudden repression happened. That is the reason why I did not join the Party on return. Then I felt very *retornado*, this lasted about four years. Then I integrated*

fully and I couldn't care less, it didn't matter, I even liked to tout that I was retornada because I thought it was good to herald it, so people could lose their fear, to say 'We are here, we are not dead, we are not in tatters!'. At the beginning we hid it but then we showed it.

Conversely, assistance turned the 'retornado' into a special and distinct psychosocial category worth studying and assisting. By the mid-1980s, the *exilio-retorno* area of knowledge and practice was well established and as an indigenous NGO, FASIC played a crucial role in assisting returnees (FASIC 1984a, b; 1986). Its prestige and links with UNHCR placed the institution in a unique position. Because of its expertise knowledge, returnees trusted the institution. After 'coming out' of clandestine life, Marcela attended the Program,

I went to FASIC to have group therapy with returnee people. There were 12 of us, but there were more women than men. Many women were heads of family and in charge of their children. They had separated in exile. We all had gone back from different countries. There were people from Europe, Latin America and other parts. The therapy was very well organised by a psychiatrist and a marvellous psychologist. It consisted in telling our story, the every day experiences of each one of us. That therapy lasted 5 months but of those 12 who started, only five remained in Chile, the rest went back to their places of exile because they could not mesh what they had learned in exile with what the Chilean reality offered them.

Marcela's account indicates two points: the gendered nature of FASIC's assistance and the remigration of failed returnees because of the absence of a propitious environment to use their skills and resources. Teresa Gómez, one of FASIC's social workers illustrates the first point. Most people attending were women and interests were gendered,

The first obvious thing was that those who attended the institution were mostly women and when we received a family it was mainly constituted by women heads of family and her children. Men had great difficulty in approaching our institution because it was fundamentally giving assistance. Men are less inclined to seek assistance, they are more interested in the productive side. Men attended Return Programmes that were more related to productive or employment areas for example PRAL or WUS. That was the first task of men while women were sort of secondary; all this when the whole family returned – let's say that because that was not always the case. A high percentage of the families that we saw here were constituted by the mother and her children. Most families had broken in exile and so if there was a possibility of helping women in that sense, fine, but in the case of whole families men were first.

For the *retornado*, receiving assistance made him/her feel a victim of the circumstances of exile and return. The *retornado* identity placed ex-exiles in a vulnerable position. Equally to the 'refugee-as-a-victim', the *retornado* was a person seeking help for practical problems, therapy, counselling and above all employment. Returnee's unemployment and underemployment is evident in return literature (Gaillard 1994; Van Hear 1995). Indeed, getting a job was one of the primary practical problems experienced by Chilean returnees and some, depending on class, personal contacts, education and qualifications, experienced long periods of unemployment particularly during and after the 1982-83 recession (Villamar 1984; Weinstein 1984). In a re-masculinised society, unemployment threatened masculine identity once more.

Facing NSDS' neoliberal changes: finding a job with FASIC's help

Changes in the country of origin are commonplace in return migration and repatriation literature. These have indeed questioned the meaning of 'home'. Chile was no exception. Under NSDS, there were large-scale structural changes that impacted on the micro-level. With the imposition of the neoliberal economic model, the NSDS radically changed Chile. Finding employment and welfare was a problematic endeavour for stayees and indeed for returnees. COPROREX and FASIC's bulletins could hardly inform about the various dimensions of the sea changes implemented in neoliberal Chile. Deindustrialisation of the productive structure resulted in dramatic employment decline (Gwynne 1986). The old welfare State was dismantled. The social security system that in the past protected workers and their families had been replaced by a privatised one where poor women were most affected (Arenas and Montecinos 1999). The praised National Health Service (SNS) had been replaced by the creation of a two-tier private system of health care: the ISAPREs and FONASA (Larrañaga 1999). Similarly, the educational system, upon which the NSD was applied to control both teachers and the curricula, had been decentralised and legal and market incentives spurred the growth of state-funded private schools (Cox and Lemaitre 1999). The housing sector and the pension system had also been privatised. Hence, for those returnees who had worked in any of these State sectors or had benefited from its services prior to flight, these no longer existed. This was a more pressing situation for working-class returnees for whom the 'spaces' available were class-selective. Manuel Barrera, a prominent ex-academic stayee who himself was dismissed from the University of Chile and later became WUS-Chile Executive Director commented,

Those who returned found a slim State (estado flaco). It was not the fat State of the 1960s and the UP; it was extremely slim. State companies were few and far between and so were State workers; actually, these were finished. The only ones left were the copper industry workers but this is an autonomous enclave that has its own logic. So there were no Telephone, Electricity or Water companies and many other State companies. They were all finished! So where do you put a returning worker? The State has no place for him. The only alternative is the private sector but they are going to ask "What have you done between 1970 and 1978? "I was abroad Sir"... "This one must be an exile." Obviously, they did not employ him!

This was the case of Ricardo Garrido, who returned in 1988. *Well, the other thing was that the State had been completely shrunk (jibarizado). So that field was completely closed and it was necessary to think about business! But, NO! I never did business with my own money. The other thing was to work for an enterprise, something like that but.... The situation was rather confusing. The truth is that I had to work in whatever came up. Luckily, I found some classes in an Institute.*

By applying for jobs in the private sector, returnees were not only competing with stayees but also putting themselves at risk to NSDS's loyal employers who were usually well informed by the DINA/CNI about returnees (Baeza 1990). An added problem was the use of 'formal means of applying for jobs (job advertisement, CVs) rather than the more adequate means, such as "pitutos"⁴²

⁴² See glossary.

and contacts' (CIDE 1985:48). This was a main problem for returnees as their contacts and *pitutos* were in the *interior* not in the 'core society'. Middle-class single-parent Loreto who was an IBM computer programmer before exile, a skilled occupation highly sought under the neoliberal economy in the early 1980s, illustrates this argument and the costs associated with not having a reasonable middle-class income to cope with class prerogatives and the privatisation of education,

*When I returned to Chile in 1981 they started to follow me so I left for Canada again and stayed there for an extra year. During that year I prepared myself psychologically and professionally to be able to enter Chile again. When I returned I started looking for a job in computing. I sent countless CVs everywhere but they never accepted it. When they called me for interviews it was just to insult me, to humiliate me. It was horrendous! Then I found out about the Deere tennis courts. They required an administrator there and I introduced myself and I got the job but they paid was very little. At the beginning we had lots of problems. I remember that I organised barbecues every Saturday. I invited the people I knew but it was a sort of party (*malón*), that is, everybody had to take something and I served half of what people brought, the other half I kept for us so we could eat the rest of the week because I could not afford it otherwise. The salary I got at the tennis court wasn't enough to pay the children's school fees, the maid and the food. At that time I was renting a small holding and we planted tomatoes and the kids used to go out to sell them...*

In 1980, unemployment among 25 returnee head of families was '44%, 32% had precarious jobs and of the 24% remaining half of them had found jobs but in activities outside their profession' (FASIC 1983:6). International organisations facilitating Chilean VRp under NSDS had an accurate picture of this situation. SIDA in Sweden for example reported: 'The majority of returning exiles see employment as a fundamental factor to solve other problems. Even though the majority of them are aware of employment statistics, they unconsciously believe that the situation would "get better". Possibilities of finding employment were low and so were the expectations about jobs. Wages were lower than expected and employment stability inexistent. People had lost the contacts and networks that in the past helped them to get a job. There was no employment office and jobs depended on contacts and "*pitutos*"; at the beginning people are left to their own devices' (Palmgren et al 1985:13).

One way of palliating returnee unemployment was through grants (*becas*). In 1983, FASIC structured a special program for returnees: the *Becas Laborales de Retorno* (Return Employment Grants). The aim of the *becas* was 'to facilitate the reintegration of the returnee into Chilean society, by granting a maximum period of one year of economic support. During that period the returnee can work in a company or an institution as a grant-holder, such that at the end of the year they may be employed permanently by this same company or institution.' (FASIC 1984b:38). Exiles could apply for *becas* from the host country and up to six months after their return. It is at this juncture that a term already in use by stayees will enter returnees' lexicon, that of *project*, this time reintegration projects. Most commonly articulated in the case of African VRp (ICARA II 1984), it reached Chilean shores with the same purpose: that VRp of refugees to their countries of origin should be encouraged and supported by programs to assist with their socio-economic reintegration in their own society (Crisp 1986:163). 'The criteria used to select candidates centred around the presentation of a non-academic or research Project that would ensure future employment, the socio-economic status of the household, job qualifications, and the region where the Project would take place (grants were apportioned between Santiago and the provinces). Grants ranged from US\$300 to 500 per month and the grant holder made

a commitment to dedicate thirty hours a week to the Project. The 'host' institution or company appointed a supervisor that would report biannually on the performance of the grant holder' (Garcés and Nicholls 2005:183).

So far, the constituencies discussed above have been using the term 'reintegration'. Much of the literature on repatriation does not implicate reintegration, it is a new start (Hammond 1999, 2004) and that refugees do not return 'home' only to their country of origin (Warner 1994). This study suggests that it is more appropriate to use *integration*. Yet, integration is also a sensitive term. It has been used by UNHCR, intergovernmental organisations and NGOs in their planning and implementing of humanitarian and development aid policies and considered by UNHCR 'as one common factor to all three solutions to the refugee problem' (cited in Hvidt 1999:37), that is, including VRp. UNHCR itself acknowledges the difficulties of integration as it 'entails...a range of adjustments and readjustments...' (Hvidt 1999: 38), a recognition that provides the conceptual impetus to use the term here. By 1987, Celedón and Opazo's compilation of Chilean returnee women's accounts showed that return implied a new start: it was *Volver a Empezar* (Start All Over Again). Hence, the term *integration* seems to better fit VRp under NSDS; Chilean returnees' integration was a new start. Without dwelling on the terminology maze (e.g. Hvidt 1999), this study further suggests that generally, integration under situations of conflict does not occur into the 'core society'. Rather, it takes place into a separate socio-political environment, the *interior* sector of the peripheral society and most times to a specific segment of it, the surrogate enclave. Unlike UNHCR's VRp discourses heralding return to 'familiar surroundings'/'home', Chilean returnees encountered a NSDS Chile that they could not recognise and so it was mainly through the integration to the *interior*'s spaces and interactions with core society that the returnee identity developed its many dimensions.

'Spaces' under NSDS

By the late 1970s and the early 1980s there were a considerable number of spaces occupied by stayees and early returnees i.e. clandestine or low-profile political organisations, numerous human rights organisations, NGOs, and educational and academic/research institutions. Several respondents joined the human rights movement; these were Alfonsina, Cecilia, Laura, Emilia, Marcela, María, Pablo Fuentes and Patricio Orellana. So far this study is showing that the wider society in general and the neoliberal job market in particular, did not welcome returnees; they were tinted with the Marxist UP, exile, and identified as 'enemies', 'terrorists', 'subversives' or 'extremists'. Hence, the *interior* was the available safe space offering protection to live as a returnee to the point that it became a visible category in Santiago where there was a spatial concentration of middle-class returnees and stayees living in so-called *comunidades* in the *La Reina*, *Ñuñoa* and *La Florida* sectors. These condominiums were built by stayee architect Fernando Castillo Velasco. 'The idea was to recreate a shared life among groups of people with similar ideas and to both cope with internal exile and to protect themselves from repression' (Rebolledo 2004:316). The existence of these *comunidades* illustrates that most stayees and returnees protected themselves even spatially. According to stayee Manuel

Barrera, returnees *did not insert themselves in the official circles, in the official Chile rather, to this political periphery that existed. Hence, everybody there was the same (como lo mismo) it was a community.* The interior constituted a wider space where post-return problems could be overcome. Yet, integration to these spaces was facilitated by a positive profile of the *retornado* that matched the political, social and professional requirements of the interior society but more so 'if, according to private academic centres' heads, they brought their own funding' (CIDE 1985:46). Indeed, some brought what Manuel Barrera called *marraquetas*.⁴³ *Well the truth of the matter is that the big political leaders didn't need a WUS scholarship they arrived well financed, and some with their marraqueta under the arm for example Viera-Gallo; he arrived from Italy with such a big marraqueta that he was able to open a CESOC Centre here [Santiago] and another in Concepción and to be a senator later on.* Indeed, factors such as prompt return, high socio-professional status, personal and political contacts before and during exile, would guarantee a positive integration to the interior that in turn may lead to the creation of new protective spaces for returnees, stayees or both but also create resentment.

One of the areas enabling integration was the NGOs' social projects sector. FASIC's *becas* constituted another springboard to join such sector. In 1984, Camilo made use of the existing protective network and his pre-exile network. The positive outcome of his experience made him to say that *my reintegration was gilt-edged (de lujo).* Though he is not part of this study's elite returnees, who generally had political rather than socio-economic post-return difficulties, Camilo's employment experiences illustrate the workings of the interior's dynamics and the surrogate enclave and how they worked so well for some returnees,

I arrived in 1984 and my landing was quite smooth because there were a lot of people in the welcoming of exile and they were linked to me for the Christian thing so when I arrived in Chile they told me "look, if you want a WUS grant there is such and such person or if you want a FASIC grant there is such and such other. I do not know why I accepted FASIC, maybe because it was the first on the list. So I approached FASIC's Executive Director and explained my situation. He asked me about my expectations around social and employment reintegration and that I had to write a sort of job description that means 'during the year of the beca Camilo is going to do a study about the regional situation and get in touch with different employment sectors ta,ta,ta...' that means a number of things; that was signed jointly by the sponsor of the beca and me. That was the minimum that could be done. No one could expect that if I was so out of touch (desenchufado) of the reality of the country and of the social problematic I could elaborate a precise Project. Then FASIC's Executive Secretary said "look the criteria we are prioritising is from people who return from abroad with a political rather than economic exile" (something that in my case wasn't difficult to prove), and "that the applicants would be opting to use their becas in the provinces rather than in Santiago. So you will have more possibilities of getting a beca if you present a Project to be carried elsewhere but in Santiago." Well, that fitted me perfectly, because I wanted to be in a province. At the moment I was applying for the beca, I wasn't unemployed because, soon after I returned, OXFAM contracted me for some months to evaluate some social projects, so while waiting for the approval of FASIC's grant I had the privilege to evaluate an NGO working in Chiloé, then others in Copiapó and finally I had to evaluate a popular education institution that had various offices throughout the country, that means that six months after returning I had travelled to many places within Chile, I felt good. But things weren't easy with the implementation of the project... Well the period covered by the beca

⁴³ See glossary.

was too short, it only helped in looking for a job (pega) and that was my objective in some way.

Undoubtedly, Camilo was a successful returnee; he integrated fully into the *interior* and was able to establish his own internationally funded NGO. But this required a strategic vision and robust background. Camilo's personal characteristics such as Catholic background, class positioning, English language proficiency, WUS scholarship and experience in popular education in Peru, allowed him to identify a 'space' still available within the *interior* and to participate in nation-building. He became a *returnism* agent.

I saw the need to create a service oriented to provide the labour force with a kind of formation distinct from the technical one given by some NGOs that to a certain extent prepared the social leaders for a proper management of the economic themes because if one didn't talk in economic terms nobody understood you in this country and more so because many of those terms were in English and so for a trade unionist to understand what was 'franchising', 'outsourcing', 'leasing', 'holdings' who knows! it was difficult. Besides there was an entire technical-legal formation because there had been a Labour Reform and a Labour Plan with another type of legislation, so in this new economic, legal and political scenario there was a need for a certain technical formation for trade union leaders.. Conversely, there was the political formation provided by political parties to their cadres. But while I was in Peru I had already detected something that I corroborated during those months I was working for OXFAM that there wasn't a social training that would transform the labour force (mundo laboral) not only as reactive people to their concrete job problems and their safeguarding but they could be transformed into actors who would propose what type of country and economic, social and educational life they aspired to...

Camilo's experience validates Smith's (1990:231) argument that the majority of NGO executives and staff are from middle classes and include intellectuals, professionals, clerics and political activists who are often dissatisfied with prevailing public policies for addressing the needs of low-income sectors. It also furthers Hojman's (1993) claim regarding the boom in the formation of Chilean NGOs under NSDS.

By 1985, the peak of national unemployment, FASIC had distributed 150 *becas* financed by Diakonia. Despite that FASIC's grants prioritised regional and non-professional returnees, most of FASIC's grant holders were professionals who had decided not to return to their provinces of origin and intended to live in Santiago (Vera 1986:114). Technicians and administrative employees constituted a third of the total grants and only a very small number were manual workers, either skilled or unskilled (Palmgren et al. 1985:7). This data indicates that up to 1985, Chilean VRp was mostly middle-class and that the brunt of post-return hardships and difficulties were being felt by working-class returnees, especially women with children (Celedón and Opazo 1987). Of the total of respondents returning under period I (17), all but one were of middle and upper-middle class background and more than half were upper-level professionals. A similar scheme had been set up by WUS years earlier.

5.3.4 World University Service: WUS-UK/WUS-Chile

Little interest has been shown in WUS as a facilitator of *returnism*. WUS's initial tension between humanitarian and academic objectives was overcome through the long-term goal of development

(SUM 1995). Indeed, WUS-UK Chilean Scholarship Programme's nexus humanitarian assistance-development underpinned its resettlement and return programmes. An information booklet addressed to Chilean exiles stated,

'We don't think that the Chilean community in this country wants -or even could want- to remain here any longer than strictly necessary. Only some of you will want to remain in this country and there won't be many. The role of Great Britain in this instance is temporary. WUS's firm understanding is that the present tragedy of Chile will come to an end: if we didn't believe this, our work would be limited. The recent improvements in the WUS Programme emphasise this point: a reorientation programme that tries to help Chileans to return to Latin America as soon as possible; an academic coordination programme based on the premise that your studies should be able to fully aid the future reconstruction of Chile, and not to prepare a generation with the necessary skills to work in the industrialised Western European countries" (WUS 1978:6).

With this aim in mind, in 1979 WUS established research scholarships under the Return Grants Programme (*Programas de Becas de Retorno*). These one-year resettlement grants 'essentially combined humanitarian, political and development objectives in order to support the first groups of exiles that were returning to their patria' (SUM 1995:10). There were two return grants modalities: WUS-UK and WUS-Chile. The former was initially restricted to ex-awardholders but according to Alan Angell, gender-related compassionate pressures forced them to extend it. His narrative reveals the end of 'tied refugeehood',

We really offered a kind of dual criteria. On the one hand, it was humanitarian and, on the other, developmental. For example, if you had a highly trained economist who wanted to go back then that was the central idea. This person could contribute to Chile and there was no argument...but then we started looking at the applications it was quite clear that there was another category and that was important, it was humanitarian. Then we began to switch the emphasis to try to combine the two criteria: those who could contribute to development to Chile but also those who basically ...a lot of them were women whose marriages had broken up, didn't integrate into British society, who had problems with the language, who had visible job problems and were selling empanadas in football matches whatever or even the case of one woman who was seriously ill and wanted to return to Chile to die, very difficult to return and refuse a grant.

WUS-Chile was less elitist and discriminatory. It opened its Programme to all returnees regardless of their asylum country or social background. During the Seminar: "*Políticas y Programas de Inserción Laboral para el Retorno Chileno*" organised by CIDE in November 1985 and funded by the Ford Foundation to which the Commission and representatives from supra-national organisations such as ICM and UNHCR were invited. José Bengoa, WUS-Chile Director, noted that 'The objective of the *becas* is to provide a sort of "landing strip" and within a year place the exiles in equal job market conditions to those of resident Chileans' (Rossetti 1986:11). With the idea that *becas* would not constitute a privilege, the grants amounted to US\$300 per month and had one-year duration. The idea according to Bengoa was 'to avoid returnees' dependence from the assistance organisations' (*ibid*). It was expected that the institutions providing employment placement would eventually employ the returnees. The Programme lasted sixteen years (1979-1994) and assisted 2,500 awardholders (SUM 1995:11). Among them was working-class Roberto who had returned in January 1989. He managed to have his *Conservando la Primavera* (Conserving the Spring) project approved by WUS-Chile. While in Bulgaria, he had worked in a dairy cooperative. That experience facilitated his project's approval.

Roberto's narrative shows that WUS heralded development criteria were better implemented in less elitist and politically oriented projects.

When I was doing the dealings to have my return tickets from Bulgaria refunded, the lady from that international office [he refers to UNHCR] asked me if I wanted to get funding for a year but for that I had to present a project first. So then I did one related to the agro. Because in Bulgaria they make lots of conserves my idea was to give courses to the poorest peasants on how to make them with the discarded surpluses of vegetables like tomatoes, runner beans, carrots, etc, including meat. I worked in the Corporación Campesina "El Surco" giving them support and training. I was with the WUS grant there and I am very grateful of that because that helped me a lot and so it did to lots of other people. There I started to realise that things were difficult here (la cosa no era tan papa) and that there was a lot of very poor unemployed people. With my grant at least we could eat (parar la olla) because I had to share it; there was no money in my family. They paid me in dollars and inspected us from time to time. I worked a lot with the peasants there and it was really worth it because one went to do a specific course but people asked you for many other things. Sometimes I was in a village for a month training people to make conserves and also teaching kids to read. One would come in and out of the project, but sharing and training people who were worse off than you was a rich experience.

Roberto highlighted the importance of a viable project as an essential pre-requisite to apply for a grant. This study suggests that the term *project* became a byword for VRp under NSDS. Returning without a job was problematic and projects were fundamental to enter the *interior's* employment 'market'. Among the *spaces* available to returnees was the expanding NGO sector and WUS-Chile grants. Marcela was employed by CODEPU. In her case, employment was a means to save money. Her failed motherhood played a key role. Her purpose was to travel to Cuba to bring back the daughter she had left there before entering Chile clandestinely. *My only interest was to see her, to bring her here. That was fundamental for me.* Simón, whose first 'forced return' took place in 1978 as a result of being expelled by the Ecuadorian military government, encountered two very difficult years of unemployment and downward social mobility. In early 1980, he managed to get a WUS grant that allowed him to establish an NGO together with fellow unemployed stayee colleagues. *That allowed us not only to survive but also to carry out a couple of studies as well as establishing projects on popular and marginal sectors that in turn allowed us to collaborate in the reweaving of the shattered social fabric.*

The WUS Return Grants Programme favoured women. International factors such as the UN Decade for Women (1976-1985) and the spread of global feminism constituted a protective international scenario that provided an impetus to research and action on gender worldwide. Women's position attracted international interest. It created an environment in which networks of individuals and organisations were influenced to render women's visibility, mainly around development initiatives. Development paradigms such as WID (Women in Development) and later GAD (Gender and Development), were propitious scenarios to develop and support women's groups and research in Latin America. International funding for women's NGOs was speedily available in Chile, WUS was among them. Consistent with research findings reporting job instability as one of returnees' main employment problems (Cuco 1987), Marcia was changing jobs constantly. Her case exemplifies the twisted paths to employment specifically in the difficult and competitive social sciences area so dependent on international funding (Cariola y Rossetti 1984-1985). By 1984 the available '*spaces*'

were already becoming scarce and stayees less sympathetic to returnees and more reluctant to make spaces for them. According to WUS's (1984:5), optimistic view: [A]t present, the institutions are saturated with qualified personnel, being ex-granholders, self-repatriated returnees or those who stayed in Chile. However, Chilean reality is so dynamic that institutions are always amalgamating or new ones are being created where it is possible "to find something" or do something.' WUS's dangerous optimism was based on the evidence that in order to survive, professional returnees would do 'anything' to sustain themselves. The process of job-seeking strategies after return and before applying for a WUS grant is illustrated by Marcia who before her exile was a journalist but while in Ecuador qualified as an anthropologist. The first stage of that process was to approach a politically and professionally safe space; second, to make oneself 'visible' as a professional; third, resort to known networks of stayees and early returnees; fourth, accept 'anything' offered; fifth continue networking; and finally, because of the instability of the job market apply for a WUS grant. Her narrative also reveals the approaching closure of *spaces* and how in order to find a job sometimes 'gains' in exile were a hindrance rather than an asset. Her narrative follows a pattern of most middle-class professional conversational partners returning under NSDS.

The next day I arrived I started looking for a path to find a job [pega]. Obviously, it was difficult because we were in the midst of the dictatorship. I knew I could work as a journalist but I did not want to. Neither did I know anybody from the world of anthropology but the next day I arrived I saw in the paper that there was an anthropology conference. I went there and obviously I watched, listened and put my hand up said a couple of things and made myself visible. Then, I started thinking about friends from the past who had been in journalism but had to survive doing other things. Then a comrade who had studied with me at the Catholic University and who had been living clandestinely for ten years appeared (engancha). He had managed to get into ARCIS that was starting as an institute then. He then said: 'impossible this semester but no problem for the next one, we will put you in any course.' He also told me that 'there is a guy from Germany, a philosopher who is lecturing on the history of religion at a private university but he is leaving, it is not well paid but the syllabus is ready' I told him 'I don't know anything about the history of religion!' but he said, 'well you have two months to prepare it.' They generously gave me the syllabus of that guy, and told me 'there you have two books' Then my ex-husband in France sent me another couple of books and so from one day to the next I was a lecturer on the history of religions! This huevá (shit) is a joke! Then the next term: 'what course am I going to offer at ARCIS? There was an optional course, General Sociology and I said: well, Sociology of Religion! [laughs]. Apart from being forced to go to mass, I never felt attracted to religious anthropology! [laughs]. In Ecuador I had done a masters in Andean History and I was an expert on that but anyway I gave that little course on religion. In the meantime I carried on visiting friends and then I started creating a network. A community of returnees emerged here equal to those there (Ecuador), they helped you with housing, employment, etc. Then I contacted one of those Chileans who had returned from Ecuador who was running an Institute which was an NGO but he told me that it was impossible for him to give me a job but that his wife had been working with a feminist who ran a programme for women and that they were giving money to gender so 'I cannot help you but my wife can'. So I went to see this woman in charge of the Programme and had the fortune (tuve la cueva) to find the most generous woman I have ever come across because at that time people here were shit (de mierda) like those in the Centro de Estudios de la Mujer (Women Studies Centre) who were Socialists. She wasn't. I told her my story. 'Look I have just returned and I am looking for a job and, this person told me to contact you'. She then asked me 'what are you doing?' I said well...I am doing a bit of teaching of Sociology of Religion [laughs]. "What is your professional area?" I am a journalist and anthropologist and my area is urban anthropology, but I then specialised in Andean Colonial History. Hueón (shit), useless! Totally useless! Then she said, "you are a loser (estai jodia); I cannot offer you anything but I can be your guarantor. You can elaborate a Return WUS Project. I work with peasant women"... She wrote a letter, I elaborated a project, WUS accepted it and I got the grant...

By 1984, people had been losing their fear and the opposition against the NSDS was mounting. The role of returnees was fundamental in this process. So far, this study has shown that returnees such as Alfonsina, Cecilia, Emilia and Simón either entered or created *spaces* for democratisation and that their contribution varied. Unlike Marcia, Camilo, acknowledged that the experience he acquired in Peru with a WUS grant allowed him to capitalise knowledge and experience that on return enabled him to engage in the creation of democratising spaces. His return contributed to the empowerment of the rapidly strengthening civil society. By being a trusted returnee, Camilo became part of the political capital accumulating under NSDS.

I feel that to a certain extent from this little institution we contributed with small-scale studies to situate ourselves in the social reality of the new Chile. The idea was to create meeting spaces of reflection so people could lose their fear. We returned for that reason...

Camilo's case illustrates a doubly successful integration: personal and political. Personally, he was able to acquire social and economic security. Politically, he was able to contribute to the democratisation project. He accomplished *returnism* under NSDS. Yet, the *becas* were a transitory resort to returnee's unemployment. Both FASIC and WUS's grants were one year only and not all WUS awardholders were as successful as Marcia whose grant enabled her to enter the academic sphere. During a WUS Conference on Return held in London on 5th May 1984 and attended by more than 250 exiles, José Bengoa, (WUS-Chile President) talked pure *returnism*. He informed about WUS Return Grants Programme emphasising that it was 'considered a significant contribution "to the democratic cause" and directed at the most committed segment of the exiled population who shared such cause and with a serious determination to return, to contribute to development and to promote and strengthen the social base in Chile' (CHD-UK 1984:16). However, what worried the audience most was the situation of those returnees who had completed their grant. Bengoa's response was statistical: '25% ended up working in the grants' placement, 25% in other institutions, 7% were working-part-time, 9% on different occupations; 25% had employment problems and the rest (19%) had serious unemployment problems.' (*ibid*). In general, both FASIC and WUS *becas* were strategic temporary 'employment' devices that not only bypassed core society and in the process strengthened its *interior* counterpart, but also avoided placing returnees up against stayees in competition for employment. WUS-UK grants specifically returned human and political capital to Chile. The efforts to protect returnees did not stop here: the Catholic Church's Vicariate of Solidarity had long been in the background.

5.3.5 Vicaría de la Solidaridad

Although the role of the Vicariate of Solidarity (henceforth *Vicaría*) in Chile's democratic transition has attracted some scholarly attention (Lowden 1993; Zoellner 2006), little is known of its specific role in *returnism*. Undoubtedly the most important institutional response of the Church to the NSDS was the creation of the *Vicaría* on 1 January 1976. The strength of the *Vicaría* lay in its status. Unlike ecumenical COPACHI, the *Vicaría* was exclusively Catholic and its existence a decision of Cardinal

Silva Henríquez himself. Though many of its members were mainly lay people whose political allegiances covered a wide spectrum, the institutional attachment of the *Vicaría* to the Catholic Church was definite. This meant that any NSDS attack on the *Vicaría* would be against the institution of the Catholic Church, a living symbol of Western Christianity (Lowden 1993). As Ferris (1989:175) noted, 'the Churches stand out from other NGOs since they possess not only large numbers of adherents but also a certain moral authority which may be used to sway public opinion.' It is precisely the *Vicaría's* moral authority channelled from the Catholic Church that provided it legitimacy.

To counteract the one-sided information on national life of official media, the *Vicaría* published the bi-monthly bulletin *Solidaridad* that mainly focused on problems affecting the poor i.e. peasants, working-class and their families, the student movement and the Church both in Chile and abroad. The topics covered were repression, unemployment, the social movement and in to a lesser extent it covered problems related to exile, the *Pastoral del Exilio* and testimonies of returnees. Equally to COPACHI, the *Vicaría* became the main institutional space in which people could find a refuge from NSDS and have their rights protected. The *Vicaría's* two main spheres of protection comprised human rights and welfare. This work was carried out by a team of priests, lawyers, and consultants numbering between 150 and 200 including Pablo Fuentes, one of this study's elite respondents.

The specific juridical work with returnees aimed at the 'normal reintegration of returnees' eliminating all legal barriers to ex-political prisoners, normalising the legal situation of children and foreign spouses, solving customs problems and so forth. The *Vicaría* presented legal actions for people who had been tortured, denounced the cases of those exiles arbitrarily deprived of their nationality as well as providing legal assistance to returnees who had been deported. Most of this study's respondents, including the most revolutionary, praised the *Vicaría* for its human rights work. Social worker Rosa applied for a WUS-UK scholarship through the *Vicaría* to do a postgraduate course in Britain. As was common practice among Chilean asylum seekers, she and her husband also applied for a Swedish visa and this was granted first. Ronaldo was very grateful of the *Vicaría's* work with political prisoners: *the only help you could get then was from the Church and the Vicaría. They really did a lot for us while we were in prison they made sure that we did not disappear.* Leopoldo Acuña was even more thankful because he had been solidly supported by the *Vicaría* in his many applications to enter Chile. Apart from maintaining correspondence with the family in Chile and the political organisations working for the demise of the dictatorship, he frequently *sent many notes to the Vicaría, to the lawyers and the people who worked in the defence of human rights there. I thanked them for what they were doing and for the help I was getting.* Yet, the *Vicaría's* work did not end there.

Rosario illustrates the assistance and humanitarian character of the *Vicaría's* protective work. Her parents' links to the Catholic Church allowed her to count on prompt protection. Immediately after the coup it offered her the possibility to leave the country to study in Belgium. She refused and decided to continue with her university studies. After numerous problems and false accusations she was forced to leave the university. She then worked for the Worker's Pastoral (*Pastoral Obrera*). After three months

she was arrested and imprisoned for two years. When released the Church helped her to leave the country resettling her with a university grant in Belgium. On her return in September 1979, she was welcomed and escorted by a delegation of two *Vicaría* lawyers, two priests and two nuns. On her return she opted for the poorest end of the labour market where she was able to experience first-hand the gendered outcome of the neoliberal shock treatment of the economy. Male unemployment had forced them to join PEM and poor women to find any employment and/or survival strategies for their families and children. Rosario joined one of the *Vicaría*'s less known social projects, a communal soup kitchen for poor and PEM (Minimum Employment Program) workers,

I could have stayed peacefully at home. My parents could have maintained me. But I said NO! I did not return for this. I wanted to get some financial autonomy but in something meaningful. I wanted to know what was going on here and how I could contribute. Besides, I had the protection of my family. I was offered a job at a campamento. I worked there for three months as a machinist making bed linen. Then I worked as a cook at a communal kitchen where around 100 people went to eat. I had never done something like that before. This was in 1980, the peak of the dictatorship and most of the workers eating there were from PEM. The kitchen was run by the Vicaría. It charged very little for the meal and they gave a free meal to the cooks. All of the cooks were middle-age población women who had been doing this for a long time even during the summer. It was crazy work! Friday's meal was fried fish and we also provided an evening meal. It was such hard work! After a year I left the kitchen and entered the McKay biscuit factory as an industrial worker (obrero)...

Rosario's case was unique. No other middle-class conversational partner worked in such precarious 'employments' or as industrial workers. Though Rosario's downward social mobility was a *moral and political duty*, in general, unemployment and underemployment particularly among the less privileged returnees, continued to be a serious concern. (Villamar 1984; FASIC 1985). The economic crisis (1982-83), the success of *returnism* sustained by the issuing of lists allowing return and the concomitant increase in the number of returnees looking for a job in a discriminatory job market, aggravated the situation. By 1984, the available *spaces* were rapidly being occupied and as Cecilia rightly put it above, return was more difficult for *those who only focused on finding a job, or looking for a way to work in their profession*. By April that year, *Vicario* Ignacio Gutiérrez (1983-1984), was fully aware of the situation faced by returnees. He argued, '[I]t is obvious that the work of the *Vicaría* oriented to make effective the right of every Chilean to live in his Patria, confronts us with another problem: the moment and conditions to exercise that right. In other words, the end of exile implies the issue of return' (Vicaría 1984a), hence, 'the *Vicaría* should assume its responsibility to avoid that return, as the dramatic evidence available shows, turns into a second exile' (Vicaría 1984b:1). For the *Vicario*, the problem was political and deeply rooted in the NSDS. There was a need to take advantage of host countries' interest in the return of exiles to engage them further in assistance to returnees and the demise of the regime. During a Conference headed "To live in one's own Patria is a right" held in November 1984 in Rome between progressive bishops and around 200 representatives of exiles with the participation of Father Caro representing the *Pastoral del Exilio*, Mgr Gutiérrez's objective was to examine the conditions of a responsible return. Because of the *Vicaría*'s effectual work on *exilio-retorno*, he had a more realistic view of the difficulties experienced by returnees. He suggested that the existing social and political conditions in Chile were not propitious for a massive return. Aware that the protective *spaces* were already becoming scarce, he warned of the difficulties returnees would

experience. It was far from being a rosy picture. As he put it in his testimonial book: 'On the contrary, I informed them about the bleak situation that would entail an irresponsible return. The job market did not offer security. More so given that among exiles there were a large proportion of academics who would not be welcomed by the militarised universities or the already crowded independent research centres' (Gutiérrez 1986:221). During the Conference he stated,

"We wish that return, which I insist is a right, should be treated with utmost seriousness. We do not want the returnees to pass from an external to an internal exile; an internal exile that the majority of our people live today. For this reason, we, and other specialised institutions have commissioned a detailed study of the Chilean exile and the likely return to Chile. Friendly countries, with which we have diverse contacts, are inviting us in the most serious manner to elaborate return guidelines and projects that they would finance. We are in no rush; that is why we are going slowly. There are many host governments interested in the return of Chileans, but we do not want them to return to an internal exile. I think that it is not enough that there would be a certain amount of money for that Chilean to stop being a problem in the host country; that country in turn should do whatever possible in its international sphere for Chilean exiles not to return to live in a concentration camp."

(*Pastoral del Exilio* 1984: 25).

Despite Mgr Gutiérrez' warning, between 1983 and 1984 1,331 exiles returned (see Appendix 4), the largest number since return started. Indeed, employment would be an issue; the *Vicaría* would be key.

5.3.6 PRAL (Return Programme and Employment Support): an employment NGO

Research on return intentions in Europe (Cuco 1987) claimed that the working out of a strategy for finding employment did not appear to be a matter of major concern. On return, this was a most pressing issue. Unlike the *becas* where grantholders could stay within the boundaries of the *interior*, PRAL's employment reinsertion programme differed. By offering employment assistance in the form of loans, it forced returnees to enter the neoliberal market economy. The result was far from unproblematic.

The appearance of PRAL obeyed primarily to 'the national and international efforts to end exile and to reclaim the right that all Chileans have to live in Chile' and 'to create an employment-source based in the effort of the returnees themselves' (Martin and Corvera 1988:42). Up until now, returnees could resort to FASIC or WUS *becas*, but these were proving to be selective and insufficient. In June 1984, the *Vicaría's Exilio-Retorno Program* discussed the manner in which it would address the concrete economic support of returnees. *Returnism's* ubiquitous 'fundamental right of every Chilean to live in his patria' provided the framework. According to *Vicaría*, the solution to returnees' employment problem was an important mechanism for social reinsertion. 'Up to today, the only valid economic possibility is the system of grants (employment, education), we consider it necessary that the *Vicaría* assumes leading responsibilities regarding these' (*Vicaría* 1984b:3). When asked why some projects funding were dated 1984, a year before PRAL was established, Héctor Hermosilla, an ex-staff member of PRAL in Concepción, said: *what happened was that this scheme had been operating at the Vicaría for some time. That's how it started. This repair small fishing boats project for example (showing a list of projects) was approved 15 December 1984.*

Returnism's 'success' materialised in the increased number of returnees facing unemployment. To avoid returnees' re-migration supranational organisations such as ICM stepped in. Following Anita Gradin's 'happiness' at ICM's increased attention on return migration, the organisation had the opportunity to facilitate repatriation in Chile. '[I]n October 1985, it proposed to undertake a programme that would try to solve the problem of employment for those who had returned. IOM invited the most important organisations linked to humanitarian work on return to form a joint board to establish PRAL' (OIM 1989:6). Among ICM's invited organisations were *Vicaría de la Solidaridad*, FASIC, Concepción's Archbishopric Pastoral of Human Rights, Diakonia (Sweden), Latin American Council for Refugees, and WUS-Chile.⁴⁴ Manuel Barrera was involved in the establishment of PRAL,

Some United Nations organisations, especially ICM, later named IOM, was the convenor of a group of institutions with the participation of WUS for certain specific programs like small enterprises or grants. Then we formed an institution called PRAL.

This new intervention was a Southern Cone enterprise. ICM's employment scheme was part of a 'Special Programme' that started in 1984 between IOM and the Uruguayan and the Argentinian governments. The programme ethos was 'based on the concept that successful reintegration is closely related to the employment reinsertion of the returnees' (IOM 1990:1). Unlike in Argentina and Uruguay, in Chile, ICM assistance to returnees was implemented *during* NSDS. The existence of the surrogate enclave made this possible. This was the more necessary because unemployment, particularly among working-class returnees with no networks or '*pitutos*', was critical. Thus, one strategy adopted by some returnees was to apply to more than one NGO in the hope of obtaining either a *beca* or aid, or both. According to Héctor Hermosilla, this constituted an important reason for the emergence of PRAL.

Why was PRAL started? There were a series of institutions that dealt with the problem of return. There were NGOs, the Vicaría and others. They worked in different parts of the country and so returnees – you know how Chilean people are – went from one place to another asking for help. Sometimes they asked in two places at the same time. Because this problem was detected a number of organisations agreed to channel resources and established one Program only. That was named PRAL, Programa de Retorno y Apoyo Laboral. It was headed by the IOM because fundamentally the whole issue was established in the offices in Santiago and it operated in its headquarters; Roberto Kosak was the representative of this issue in Chile. But also present were UNHCR and a Swedish organisation and some other international cooperation agencies that channelled the resources to Santiago.

CIDE's study (Cariola and Rossetti 1984-1985:1) had suggested two alternative ways for the economic reintegration of returnees: independent and self-generating employment. Following this suggestion, PRAL established two schemes: PAR (*Sub-Programa de Asistencia a la Reinstalación*), and employment reinsertion projects. Both schemes required an hour-long interview with a social worker who would determine the 'authenticity' of the applicant's political exile status and their socio-

⁴⁴ ICM's Chilean programme started in July 1985. Among the international agencies involved were Diakonia (Sweden), HEKS (Switzerland), Brot für die Welt (Germany), Norwegian Refugee Council, CAFOD (UK) and Amnesty International (UK).

economic situation. This was a useful scheme for those returnees who brought no savings, particularly for senior exiles, unaccompanied adolescents, and the considerable number of women heads of household with children. By 1989, PAR had approved 1,923 cases benefiting disadvantaged returnees including those from Argentina (353), Cuba (157), France (138); Mexico (131), East Germany (115) and Sweden (105). Sixty-six per cent of the beneficiaries were unemployed professionals, administrative workers and non-professionals. The rest were technicians, manual workers and some students. Forty-eight per cent of the support was for subsistence, twenty-three per cent for resettlement and the rest for small projects. The average amount per case was US\$524 (PRAL, 1989:13). Héctor Hermosilla's following accounts reveal that, as part of the Commission, PRAL as a bureaucratic agency, was inaugurating an entirely different type of assistance,

Most returnees who had just arrived went to the office to seek help. They then had a first interview with the social worker. This professional verified their antecedents – the first thing was to check them (this had to be something formal) with the Vicaría's data. To a certain extent, it was necessary to establish that they were effectively political returnees that they had been political exiles in the first place. This information was processed by the social worker. Once that was established, if they had the right antecedents, then we offered social assistance for a limited period of time. It was a monetary aid called 'subsistence aid' that in principle was for six months. That was the period during which we the technicians worked with them in a viable line of activity that they would implement later on their own.

However, PAR's aid did not guarantee future funding from PRAL. According to documentation data, many returnees had false expectations about this nexus (Martin and Corvera 1988). This was a totally separated scheme from PRAL's second scheme: 'Employment Reinsertion' which consisted in financing (through the provision of small-scale loans) enterprises that would in turn generate employment hopefully for returnees and stayees.

To obtain a PRAL loan returnees had to be already in Chile for at least two years, not to be beneficiary of another scheme, and to be in a disadvantaged socio-economic situation verified by a social worker. Equally to the situation of the *becas* discussed above, to enter PRAL's employment reinsertion scheme, returnees had to present a financially viable 'project'. In this study, only Emilia approached PRAL. Emilia's primary motivation for return was political. She brought little savings from her exile in Canada and Mozambique. By the end of 1985, a year after her return, she had been experiencing not only politically-related emotional problems but also economic hardship. After having a baby she approached FASIC to request some financial help. Conscious that that was not a solution to her problems, she and her *compañero* elaborated a joint project and presented it to PRAL.

When I arrived I had a shit job that only paid the transport fares and a kilogram of dried milk. That was all. So I went to UNHCR⁴⁵ and told them that if they did not help me with some money I wouldn't leave the office. In the end, they gave me US\$40. I know that that was not the way to carry on living but we knew that there was a lot of money for the returnees. After that we learned about the projects for the returnees. We then started to plan a self-service laundry, the same as those in Canada and Europe. We started studying all residential places that could have such service and finally we presented the project. We passed, passed, and passed so many bureaucratic stages and the last one was an interview with this person, I think his surname was Cabezas [Ricardo Cabezas, PRAL's national coordinator]. I remember that we were on the coast and they phoned us urgently from Santiago saying that we had an

⁴⁵ FASIC-UNHCR partnership confused returnees.

interview with Cabezas. Because I was fed up with all this bureaucracy, my compañero came. He said "they are going to say yes because this is the last step". We had the complete project ready. Even other compañeros told us how to elaborate and present a project properly. We walked and walked and walked through all Providencia. We even did a market research study, E-VERY-THING! Then, they told us that it was not viable. W-H-A-T? I was so distraught (me quedó la cagá) because you cannot say that a project is not viable if you haven't started it yet. With that very same astonishment you get with such a response then you see a similar project in La Gran Avenida in the 11th Bus Stop... There you had a launderette in the Cordillera side of the street with the very same characteristics as our project! I do not know if it was of returnees because I had not asked them, I would be lying to you, but there it was! LA CHUCHA! (SHIT!). What did we do wrong?

There were a number of rejected projects. For example, between 1986 and March 1988, out of 187 applications 120 projects were approved and 37 were rejected. Among the reasons given for the rejection were: 'they do not qualify' (there is capital input but not labour); 'lack of technical-economic viability' and 'rejection of the persons behind the project' (Martin and Corvera (1988:25). It seems that Emilia and her *compañero*'s failed project falls into the second category and this, was 'the main reason for rejection because these projects had the wrong location, an insecure market, little possibilities of commercialisation, the budget was disproportionately high in relation to the employments to be generated, risky investments with nil possibilities of insurance, slow maturation of the investment etc.' (Martin and Corvera 1988:38).

All this means that PRAL's returnee projects had to perform and compete in a neoliberal market economy. In other words, returnees had to turn themselves into small 'entrepreneurs', an activity that did not fit unproblematically with most political exile's Leftist profile. In general, Chilean political exiles' pre-exile employment profile excluded self-employment, hence, the 'difficulties in taking on the role of entrepreneur' (PRAL 1987: 14). Nonetheless, there were a few heralded star projects such as *Fundición Gris S.A.* and *Medusa*. Two features made these projects successful: the presence of a qualified stayee among its personnel for the former and the presence of human capital in the latter. *Fundición* had a stayee managing director with previous experience in foundry and entrepreneurial management. *Medusa*, was an all-returnee women video producer project. Out of the four members, two had studied film and video in exile in Europe, a third had studied art and the fourth worked as an executive secretary. Besides, *Medusa*'s market was the *interior* society, i.e., the Women's Institute and the influential CCHDH (PRAL 1989:3-11). Certainly, the 'successful' outcome depended on the aforementioned conditions, something that Pilkington and Flynn (1999) did not discuss when praising IOM's scheme in Latin America. Those who did not fit the 'star' projects profile moved in the stereotypical world of the *retornados*. This played a role in the management of the projects particularly when related to age at exit and host country's economic and welfare system. Referring to the early 1990s Héctor Hermosilla added,

There were all kinds of people among returnees. Those who came from countries with a more mercantilist vision about things, that is, those who had lived in market economies where they had to fend for themselves were better prepared, it was a bit easier for them. However, those who came from socialist countries like the Soviet Union were quite vulnerable. Some of them had left Chile when they were very young. Then, there was very little you could do for them. We had to keep an eye on them more carefully and see what they were doing. They could have acquired skills there but they had no clue how to commercialise, how to promote their

enterprise, or how to budget. In general, those from behind the Iron Curtain were more passive, more humble people; they allowed themselves to be led unlike those from France for example, most of them were a bit arrogant (that usually happened with those who arrived from developed countries anyway but it only happened at the beginning). I tell you, that was a notorious difference. The others were like little sheep [laughs], more inoffensive. That is why it was necessary to accompany them more; the situation was more difficult for them. All these aspects were quite complicated. Well, there was a bit of everything. You also had those who had lived on aid and welfare all their lives in exile.

Indeed, among PRAL's myriad problems reported by external evaluators Martin and Corvera (1988:42-3) was the contested issue of refugees' 'dependency syndrome' (Harrell-Bond 1986; Allen and Morsink 1994; Kibreab 1994). According to the evaluators '[M]any exiles got used to having their basic needs partially or totally covered by the host governments, agencies or solidarity groups.' Hence PRAL's policy 'to break this dependency was through the provision of loans rather than donations, so as to demand a personal effort to guarantee success' (*ibid*:43). However, and despite PRAL's flexible loan system that allowed returnees to reschedule the debt (sometimes successively), the inevitable consequences of operating under NSDS' neoliberal economy and a harsh financial mechanism that had dramatically changed the economic landscape of Chile was an insurmountable problem. Returnees had to pay their loans in UF (*Unidad de Fomento*) and not in the national currency (Chilean pesos).⁴⁶ Hence, returnees were at a disadvantage even when compared to stayees because like it or not they had been forcibly adapted to the drastic neoliberal changes. PRAL's duties included the familiarisation of returnees with 'the market'. Héctor Hermosilla noted,

One of the things we normally discussed and reinforced to most to them was the study of the market. For example, who are your possible clients? How are you going to commercialise? Who would supply you? There were many different ways of doing all this and that depended on their disposition. Who was willing to sell? For example, if they were willing to sell their products in offices or government departments. For the returnees that was more complicated because they did not have the courage. It wasn't something they had done before. It was odd for them to come and start selling things in places they did not know, how they would be received, how clients would respond. They were not in a daily relationship with those people. If you didn't know the social behaviour of the Chilean people at that moment, if you didn't know how to get to places or where to sell, all that was rather complicated. People who had been unemployed in Chile did this for a long time but for the retornados it was more difficult, they had been away for so long.

Commenting on Pérez Miranda's exile literary narrative *En esa copia feliz del Edén* (In that happy copy of Eden', a line in Chilean national anthem), and the impact of displacement in grasping the Chilean reality despite communication advances, Kaminsky (1999:94), noted that '[G]rowth and change elsewhere cannot be identical to growth and change at home...Survival under dictatorship requires some adjustment and accommodation – which is not the same as collaboration. It breeds a familiarity that makes it possible to go on living a life developing strategies that makes such living possible.' Trust and shared confidence were fundamental factors differentiating stayees from

⁴⁶ UF is an index of consumer price inflation dating back to the mid 1960s, but only operational under NSDS's neoliberalism. It is used to denominate certain financial transaction such as loans and real estate, so it is used by people with capital to maintain the value of their capital. For example, if a returnee took a loan from PRAL for 20 UF (the value of the UF in June 1988 was 4,200 Chilean pesos) he received a loan for 84,000 pesos. When paying back the loan, the UF would not be 4,200 pesos but, for example 5,800 pesos, this would mean that the returnee would have to pay back 116,000 pesos. Because the UF value increases daily, even when rescheduling their loans, returnees' debt grew higher. Wages are paid in Chilean pesos and not in UF.

returnees. As a stayee, Héctor Hermosilla had to accommodate the changes which had occurred under NSDS.

The difference was that because we were staying here we had to proceed by adapting to the situation and you had a network (red), you knew each other and at the end of the day you knew who was or wasn't a Rightist for his/her behaviour, you knew if you could talk or not. You knew all that, the returnee didn't. So if you wanted to start a productive activity you had to start from scratch...

These were major disadvantages for PRAL's beneficiaries. The outcome was that by June 1988, of the 30 projects evaluated '19 of them should have started to pay; yet, they have paid very little. The rest, despite having rescheduled their debts in some cases, had not repaid anything until March 1988.' (Martin and Corvera 1988:49). This does not mean that there were other successful projects. Manuel Barrera said,

As they [PRAL] had to get money they had a better notion of the result because unlike us [WUS-Chile], they lend money and it was supposed that they had to get it back sometime when there was some form of success in the matter. In reality, they got back a very low percentage because truly the returnees used those loans for their daily subsistence, actually to feed themselves. They weren't in a situation that would allow them to capitalise or save. That is very difficult. Some, only a few, were successful, some good restaurants for example.⁴⁷

Besides, PRAL's universe was highly heterogeneous. Because of the complexities and differentiation of experiences of pre-exile, exile and return plus the added heterogeneity of the returnee population, PRAL's scheme could only end up favouring the better equipped returnees, something that the IOM-PRAL partnership did not foresee. In their evaluation, Martin and Corvera (1988:43) noted that one of the main risks was not only privileging returnees over stayees thus creating 'an elite between those who had suffered repression and discrimination', but also of leaving behind the more disadvantaged returnees including women, thus not only creating tiers of returnees but also engendering resentment against them with the added danger of 'creating a difference between 'business partners' (returnees) and employees (local unemployed) lending itself in some cases to exploitation' (*ibid*:72). Also, the convergence of neoliberal pressures, the responsibility to maintain a small enterprise and the fear of failure, confronted returnees with their moral and political principles. In some cases, Leftist returnees were reluctant to employ workers and when they did they tended to pay them salaries higher than their own. In others, where many workers had been employed, 'business partners' were confronted by a strike of their workers. 'Despite agreeing with their demands, they had to reject them because the enterprise could fail' (Martin and Corvera 1988:71).

Nonetheless, IOM-/PRAL's problematic outcome lies in the structural underpinnings behind its employment reinsertion scheme. There was a mismatch of its objectives. Unlike the rest of the

⁴⁷ Some restaurants appeared on a list published in *Solidaridad* (N°251, 1987:6) under the heading "Restaurants. Employment alternative for returnees" and in *Apsi* (N° 212, 1987:2), "Return and food". The latter referred to this 'formula' as tasty and practical. 'It benefits from the culinary knowledge acquired in exile that on return is turned into a source of employment for them'. Among the restaurants were *El Mesón Danés* (Denmark), *Cafeteria Frida* (Germany), *La Pampa* (Argentina), *Donde la mamma* (Italy), all located in Santiago. *Los Hornitos de Chiguayante* offered Chilean food in Concepción. Other food-related PRAL projects functioning under NSDS were bakeries such as *Las Semillas* and *Halle-Neustadt* in Santiago.

agencies constituting the *Comisión Coordinadora*, PRAL's scheme was sustained by conflicting objectives. Its humanitarian objectives collided with its neoliberal financial ones. First, the approval of a loan meant that PRAL's beneficiaries would have to repay it. This responsibility was assumed by the applicant during the elaboration of the project. As Emilia's case illustrated, the analysis for the approval was lengthy and demanding something that militated against the urgent human needs of the prospect beneficiaries. Once the project was approved there was some distancing from the beneficiaries hence, the humanitarian aspects prevailed over the financial ones including the repayment of loans thus forcing PRAL to spend more time resolving 'difficulties that have both human and technical roots' (PRAL 1987:15). Second, the structuration of both the Commission and of PRAL's Executive Committee solely around human rights had its pitfalls. According to the evaluators '[T]he constitution of PRAL's Executive Committee incorporates institutions with a great deal of experience in human rights, refugees, and work with returnee exiles, however, it does not include those with major experience in social organisation, social development and small enterprises in Chile' (Martin and Corvera 1988:45).

The problems with the encapsulation of *exilio-retorno* within the Commission operating within the *interior* particularly the surrogate enclave, were revealed when returnees had to confront the core society. While more privileged returnees could maintain themselves within the parameters of the 'protective spaces' of the *interior*, and sometimes step outside it, only direct repression was a problem. Yet, for those who returned when the *spaces* were becoming scarce, alternatives such as PRAL could only work when they could fulfil core society's requirements. Some of those unable to solve the employment problem even resorted to PEM (FASIC 1984b) and occasionally suicide. If unemployment for a man was a gendered stigma before exile, to be a middle-age unemployed *exiliado-retornado* in a remasculinised NSDS society, the erosion of masculine pride was more strongly felt on return. Engineer Omar Bahamondes Lara who before exile worked for the State-run railway network as an engineer returned in 1983 and only managed to work for eight months. After becoming seriously depressed because 'of not finding a job and feeling useless in his own country' he committed suicide in February 1987 (Rajević 1987:19). Yet, the impact of unemployment-related crises would be more strongly felt by the family's children.

"They wanted to return...it was always: Chile, the Andes and the struggle; now we do not have money, my mum wants to return to Denmark, my father says no, never...now they quarrel a lot about money, I don't know what will happen." [12 year-old boy in Tapia and Baeza 1989:1].

5.3.7 PIDEE: a children's assistance NGO

Undoubtedly, children and young 'return forced migrants' (López Zarzosa 1995) were the highest casualties of the tyranny of *returnism* and more so those of working-class families who did not arrive with a grant, savings or a job prospect. Current literature on children 'returning' 'home' from refugee situations (Cornish et al. 1999) and that more extensive body on second generation returning migrants (Potter 2005), suggest similarities in the kind of difficulties children and youngsters experience in their parent's countries.

The Chilean experience during NSDS differs somehow. Equally to employment, children constitute a big issue in return situations. Following the argument of the protective 'spaces' arising from the institution of the family, one such 'space' that welcomed returning families and their children since 1979 was PIDEE (*Protección de la Infancia Dañada por los Estados de Emergencia*). Similarly to most human rights NGOs, PIDEE's constitutional embryo was the family. It emerged out of the Association of Relatives of the Political Executed and of the intervening FASIC's Medical-Psychiatric Programme particularly under the politically influential and expert returnee psychiatrist Dr Fanny Pollarolo. PIDEE's main focus was to provide medical, psychological and educational assistance to children and adolescents whose parents or themselves had suffered DR or IR. Between 1980 and 1984, PIDEE assisted 157 returnee families and 304 children (PIDEE 1984:2).

Similarly to working-class women who reluctantly followed their politicised husbands into return under NSDS, children generally opposed the idea of return (López Zarzosa 1995). *Returnism* and children were incompatible. Though Saturday Schools intended to make that antagonistic relationship more reconcilable, once return decisions were taken, children faced enormous pressures. Pablo Fuentes, the human rights lawyer who had returned from Belgium in 1983 to be in charge of the *Vicaría's* work on *exilio-retorno*, spoke both as a professional and as a father,

There is this family problem. Children grew up abroad and so the patria referent was not Chile. I remember that one of the things that impacted me most during my work on exilio-retorno on my return was when I was so happy to break or twist the arm of the Pinochet regime and exiles could return. From the Vicaría I had the pleasure of telling them "You can return now". Then I read the testimony of a girl in Paris that was a sort diary where she said: "There is happiness in the house. The Vicarla has just communicated to my father that he can return to the country. We will be returning to Chile in one month's time. The exile of my parents has ended, mine is just beginning". I tell you this because for me that was an enormous issue. I had already lived it at a personal level when I returned with my two children. When we left the girl was 8 and the boy 11 and we only stayed 4 or 5 years. When we returned she didn't have problems but my son who was 16 did. For him return was a very traumatic thing.

Pablo Fuentes' account points to the key aspects regarding children and *returnism*: the decision and timing to return. In general, children's future in 'their' *patria* was determinant on the timing of parent's return decisions. The idea of nationhood conveyed in *El Derecho a Vivir en la Patria/tierra* discourse did not appeal to children who either left Chile at a cognitive age and could recall painful memories of their parents' repression in that *patria* or had been born in exile and socialised in host cultures. As discussed, the ages between 11 and 14 were critical for convincing children to live in Chile. The rationale was that it would be more difficult to 'convince' them as young adults. This way of thinking highlighted patriarchal and authoritarian impositions within exiled families (López Zarzosa 1995). In some cases when women refused to return, men tried to convince their wives by manipulating this rationale resorting to motherhood and *her* children's well-being. An exile in Cuba in the mid 1980s said to his wife 'if we do not return now while they are still young, it will be worse later because these kids will refuse to go and if they return later they will suffer more there' (in

Celedón and Opazo 1987:52). All respondents with children followed this rationale. Single-parent Carmen who returned with her children aged 1, 5 and 14 said,

My son was going to be 15 and I panicked because had I stayed there he could have remained in England and return would have become impossible. This happened to many people there. When your children start having long relationships (se emparejan) and start getting married then it is impossible to return because that produces a distraction, it really tears you apart (te parte).

The consequences of forcing children to return were revealed by PIDEE's work. This study suggests that post-return problems stem from the very authoritarian decision to return associated to *returnism* rather than what Cornish et al. (1999) called 'acculturative stress' and that post-return negative experiences aggravated the situation. The 'national project' and Chileanness attached to *returnism* was something that, was alien to most children and adolescents who were not related to a particular political project (see Bastidas et al. 1991). The remedial work undertaken by PIDEE consisted of specific areas of support such as mental health, physical health, creative workshops (music, painting, theatre) and most importantly its pedagogic and psycho-pedagogic support for the children who, besides their problematic return experiences, had no knowledge of the Chilean school system and practices. Return highlighted the fact that compared to the bulk of exile, only a minority of children returning under NSDS attended Saturday schools, hence PIDEE's support in subjects such as Chilean history and geography proved beneficial. An empirical study carried out later (López Zarzosa 1995) showed that school adaptation was not solely dictated by the unknown curriculum but also by the pedagogical and social experiences within the Chilean school system. Equally to the family, the school system was authoritarian in character. Only class played a role in palliating negative experiences. Upper-middle class Laura's three daughters studied at a private French School (*Alianza Francesa*) in Colombia. Laura said,

In Bogotá they studied at the Alianza Francesa and when they arrived here they transferred to the Alianza. That was rather elitist for a town like Concepción. Well, these three Colombian girls with their odd way of talking arrived to this school and on top of that with this father who did all these odd things (cosas raras). Had we lived in Santiago these things would have been unnoticed so they lived in constant anguish and insecurity. Everything was odd. Their life circumstances were never normal but because teaching in Colombia was extraordinary, that helped them. It is said that it is the best French School in South America. The girls write extraordinarily and read a lot so they were above the mean in all these aspects and above all, they are good students...

Though children could attend 'alternative' schools sympathetic to returnees such as the ones mentioned by Marcia above, the *Latinoamericano de Integración* and *Francisco de Miranda* in Santiago, these were private schools operating within the *interior*. Both schools received 'many returnee children whose parents are able to afford its fees' and 'participated in the Coordinating Network of Schools Supporting Return, an organisation created in 1984 whose objective was to create a space for the interchange of experiences in relation to schools' role in the support of return' (Domínguez et al. 1985:3). These schools provided invaluable pedagogic and social spaces for these children, yet, they catered for the better-off returnees. According to Baeza and Tapia (1988:17) two of PIDEE's social workers in Santiago, '...These schools do not receive any subsidy from the government or municipality, so in order to survive they have to charge high monthly fees, making

impossible the entry of children whose parents would prefer such education for them.' This evidence suggests that children from returnee families' adaptation varied according to social positioning, language command, parents' political involvement and levels of repression that in some cases was unleashed on returnee parents or teachers such as the cases of José Manuel Parada and Manuel Guerrero. Less privileged children therefore were experiencing myriad problems and using coping strategies that were detrimental to their well-being (López Zarzosa 1995). This was more difficult for those who arrived from socialist countries. Teresa Gómez, said,

I remember that those who returned from Socialist countries for example, made their children invent a number of stories, of tales such as that they had come from a different country, to say the one who came from Cuba had to say that he came from Mexico with all the serious consequences that that implies for children. That was terrible because they valued enormously their lives in Cuba in terms of their welcoming, their settlement, their identity and then suddenly they had to negate their past and say that they came from another country, they were erasing their entire past lives. That was a frequent situation we saw here, it was terrible!

Through assisting the integral well-being of children, PIDEE was both protecting and safeguarding the problem-stricken returnee family. Yet, its assistance also labelled. An interesting parallel can be made here. In the case of refugees, Zetter (1991) argued that to gain access to both social and economic services, refugees have to present themselves as 'cases' and those needs are institutionalised. In this process, a new identity is created for the refugee. Similarly, to qualify for the services available within the surrogate enclave, needy returnees also had to present themselves as 'cases'. Emilia, who had been experiencing economic hardship from some time now, resorted to PIDEE where she was given a cheque-voucher to buy essential foodstuff. Its use was limited to certain supermarkets and the goods bought were restricted and assessed according to their brands and price; this process stigmatised,

When our son was born we enrolled PIDEE. They gave me a bag with supermarket food. Then I was given a cheque for a limited amount. One day I took something extra but I had problems. The first time I took oil, pasta, and all that stuff (la huevó), then when I got to the check out I was told "No, you cannot take that, you have to take the other type of pasta" and all that because that pasta was not marked with 'el retorno'. I couldn't take Carozzi, I had to take Las Tres Pepas cachai? (understand?) I couldn't take the brand I wanted it had to be specific brands. I am talking about the supermarket in Pedro de Valdivia near Irarrázaval. I am telling you the whole truth (la pura y santa verdad). I don't care if other people don't say this. We had to eat broken pasta. I always ate them, but that was not the problem, it was that cheque that marked you as a returnee. The cheque didn't say that but they knew where it came from. That was the second, third, fourth slap (charchazo) you got. I also took my son for check ups there and they gave me dried milk in these plastic bags and all that because we came from a Third World country [Mozambique] we weren't FAO staff earning good money there, we were only cooperantes....

Middle-class returnees who had experienced serious downward social mobility, such as Rosa and Ronaldo who at times were living in the margins of poverty, could have applied for assistance and be a 'case', yet, they decided against it. Return, in their case, entailed some change in gender relations. While Ronaldo only found sporadic jobs, Rosa became the primary breadwinner, *I was the one who could give some economic stability*. To cope with an enlarging family, Rosa, who while training to be a teacher, had to work in two schools operating within the *interior*. This positioning of the schools allowed her to teach without a degree, something only possible *for a pituto because it was a Methodist Church school that was specifically created to receive people with political problems*. Because of her

extremely busy working life the homemaker role was left to Ronaldo. As discussed in Chapter Four, the literature on changes in gender relations in exile emphasised that those changes are detrimental to men and empowering to women. Return provides a different setting to test those changes particularly when return also creates role reversal as women may have more access to jobs than men. The literature reviewed has failed to examine this. Though Rosa brought some economic stability to the household, it was Ronaldo who decided on certain things such as whether to request assistance; he was the one in contact with the *interior* society. *He was the person who did all the dealings (trámites), I wasn't because he knew exactly how things were.* Hence, he was still responsible for decision-making. To request assistance would have eroded even further his pride both as a political and middle-class man. When referring to the assistance available he commented,

I didn't get anything! I know of people who did but as I am saying to you it was so denigrating in many aspects. If you for example, wanted to obtain medical assistance in a doctor's surgery, you had to take your children to have tea to a place they had for them. So if you show them destitution (indigencia) you could have the medical option, if you didn't you wouldn't have it – we weren't destitute! (indigentes), we didn't have money, that was different, and we weren't that poor either! – and if you were wearing a parka, "but how are you wearing that parka" or a jacket "but you are not poor!" – "NO! I am not poor, I am a retornado, I'm not an indigente" And so they look with a poverty criteria and one of servility (servilismo) that a political being like me was not used to.

Another case in point is that of middle-class Gladys. She returned in 1987 when the process of democratisation was proceeding apace and so were returnees' expectations of participation in it. Yet, the decline in availability of 'spaces' and the increasing bureaucracy associated with obtaining assistance militated against expectations.

I arrived in Chile so committed, I was so happy to be back that I started to offer myself everywhere despite the selfishness against the returnees. I started to offer my services to all the human rights organisations with my famous credulous intelligence and then everybody said "we will call you" but NO-BO-DY called me, NO-BO-DY wanted me, everybody had their niche (hueco) occupied and they kept it just for themselves (reservado) and they hid it and so when you went there and offered yourself all the places were filled by all the patriots that had been here... Then, I was increasingly annoyed and angry when these organisations helping returnees started questioning me (interrogativas). So, I asked them to visit the house where I was living then. It was ten times smaller than this one but they still interrogated me. It was a tiny house...but they started being difficult at the time of paying for what I brought. I didn't bring anything from exile like furniture for example, I only brought one box, I managed to send all the books by post. I find that in this retorno there has been a bad reception for the returnees.

Undoubtedly, assistance strengthened the differences between returnees. Considering that this study's sample class spectrum was limited for this period and only complemented by documentary data, this chapters evidence showed that working-class returnees experienced greater difficulties and constituted a lesser category. Although protecting them under NSDS, assistance reproduced and strengthened an increasingly highly unequal Chilean society.

Conclusion

Moving within the *interior*, this chapter dealt with the political, economic and social context of VRp under NSDS (conflict) where returnees had no possibility of availing themselves of the 'protection' of the State. The analysis revealed that the absence of State protection provided the conditions for a complex alternative formation to emerge, a 'space-based' *interior* society. One key section within the *interior* was a strong surrogate enclave conformed by numerous protective spaces organised around human rights, assistance, professional, employment and political niches mainly structured as NGOs. A pivotal contributor for the emergence and sustainability of such space was the influential Catholic Church. One significant finding was that by encapsulating protection and assistance within the *interior* and particularly within the surrogate enclave, the core society remained aloof and uninterested in return thus paradoxically influencing returnees' lack of interest in returnees' grievances. A corollary of this finding was that it was within the *interior* and not in the core society that the returnee identity acquired significance and it is here that it developed two differing dimensions: assistance-related and politically-related. While the latter constituted valued political capital for democratisation, the former labelled. This important finding demonstrates that it is not the returnee identity *per se* that identifies people but rather the contextual dimension.

As *exilio-retorno* emerged as a pressing issue, the surrogate enclave's niches dealing with returnees converged into an all-encompassing body of protection and assistance: the Commission, which became a much stronger body able to better compensate for the lack of State protection and the increasing demands of returnees. Prompted by international agencies, the Commission turned some of the assistance to returnees into a more bureaucratic endeavour. In discussing the Commission, the chapter found that, despite being a key issue in VRp sustainability (and insufficiently discussed in the literature reviewed), employment prospects for non-elite returnees in an unfamiliar strong neoliberal economic setting and with a hostile and shrunk State, were limited. Employment therefore relied on temporary support, leaving return sustainability down to class and links to hegemony-related structures.

The eminence of *returnism* was in this chapter revealed as the discourse *El derecho a vivir en la patria/tierra*, a return narrative that emerged out of the conflict between the NSDS' return restrictive policies and the hegemonic institutions heralding *returnism*. In such a context, it constituted an enabling discourse for justifying assistance programs and legitimising the agencies providing it. The chapter found that the Chilean VRp discourse pre-empted UNHCR's promotion of VRp. Though the core element in these discourses differed (*patria/tierra*), these were essentially patriotic narratives aimed at recuperating the *patria* and its territory from NSDS's hands. The discourse appealed to everybody yet in an essentialised and unproblematised manner whose flaws were revealed by the post-return experiences so far analysed. The chapter showed how the discourse was articulated by family-based constituencies where women played a key role. Yet male-dominated Parties were behind such constituencies (e.g. COPROREX). This gendered articulation demonstrated that women managed

such constituencies but control and political power remained in masculinist institutions acting in the shadows. Therefore, the Chilean version of the right to return constituted a powerful and influential political tool against a strong masculinist repressive State, the *like with like* argument helped in such analytical context.

Finally, the chapter revealed that the existence of an *interior* society furthered Chilean society's socio-political stratification into 'nationals', 'stayees' and 'returnees' a differentiation that entailed tensions within it and its core counterpart. While 'nationals' and 'stayees' remained in the Chilean territory adjusting and/or coping with the changes brought about by the NSDS, returnees, who had been living in the *exterior* were at a disadvantage. Timing was crucial. Early returnees could easily integrate into the *interior* spaces. Later arrivals had more difficulties in sharing these spaces with 'stayees' who with time and according to political allegiances proved to be selective and discriminatory.

This chapter's critical findings will assist us as we move to the next one which seeks to understand what happened when legislative exile was coming to an end and when *returnism* was acquiring a different face.

CHAPTER SIX

‘Waltzing with Return’, 1988-1990: the interim return period

Introduction

In November 1988, UNHCR’s magazine *Refugees* (Ferris:10-11) published an article entitled ‘Waltzing with Return’ stating that: ‘For many Chileans, the waltz with the decision to return has now picked up pace.’ This chapter deals with the ‘waltz’ tempo and the context in which it was speeding up, namely, the midst of the controlled transition to democracy and the rapid political changes that occurred between 1988 and 1990. These were NSDS’s last eventful years. Internationally, the Cold War was coming to an end and a new world order was starting to consolidate. It was in this particular political scenario that the interim period of Chilean VRp took place. It constituted an exhilarating two-year period worth examining separately. Three major events shaped the interim period: the end of administrative exile, the 1988 plebiscite that rejected Pinochet, and the December 1989 elections. As only a fraction of the exiled population had returned to Chile, these fundamental political events would provide *returnism* a renovated strength which relied on new pulling discourses. This chapter looks at this brief but crucial period in which the construction of nationhood was embellished with new discursive narratives. The chapter argues that because *returnism* has been a mostly elite male-led project of nationhood as a political tool grounded on the territorial *patria*, it not only created unrealistic expectations but also empowered the *interior* and in the process invalidated exile. The chapter begins by going back in time to explore the practical role played by the gendered political elite in the process of ending legal exile.

Paving the way to end administrative exile: speeding up the waltz tempo

Having explored the workings of *returnism* so far, it would be simplistic at this stage to claim that the end of exile was the sole responsibility of the NSDS. Orellana (1991:29-30) has argued that the end of exile obeyed to factors such as ‘the work of Chilean *intelligentsia* in developing solidarity with the Chilean people; the massive character of exile and its spread over five continents that included leaders from the political centre such as Christian Democrats, Social Democrats and Radicals; the moral control that these brokers put over host countries’ policies towards the dictatorship; the financial and ideological support to the civil society both at home and in exile; and lastly, host governments’ submission to open their doors to a mass of Chileans and their eventual support of return campaigns’ (Orellana 1991:29-30). While Orellana’s core arguments are valid he fails to acknowledge that this was a powerful gendered and classed frame operating to end exile. Though he rightly acknowledges the role of host states in *exilio-retorno* he does not contextualise host states’ ‘good intentions’ in an internationally changing geo-political framework with shifting refugee policies where, as Chapter One discussed, the emphasis on integration and resettlement as durable solutions to the refugee problem were giving way to VRp as the most preferable *solution* in the form of the human right to return in

safety and dignity. The following section will deal with a particular type of 'return' that the Chilean exile *intelligentsia* promoted but one that has received no scholarly attention. Conversi (2000:421) argues that 'the *intelligentsia*, or the professionals, constitute the group that has the power to apply and disseminate the ideas produced by the intellectuals' and differentiates between the *intellectuals* and the *intelligentsia* where the former are the creators, inventors, producers and analysts of ideas which the *intelligentsia* may then spread. In Latin America however, the boundaries have not always been clear-cut as the boundaries are blurred and where exclusion and inclusion have depended on the nature of the State. In this case, the NSDS did not distinguish between *intelligentsia* and *intellectuals* particularly if they were both seen as 'enemies'. This study nonetheless concurs with Conversi and argues that this differentiation is important. Chapter Five showed that as an influential ideologue intellectual, Castillo Velasco constructed a powerful discourse of the right to return soon to be embraced and articulated by gendered constituencies sustaining *returnism*. Still, as Miller (2005) cautioned us, by definition both terms tend to exclude women. This was yet again illustrated in 1984 by what this study will term 'denunciatory return' in which an all-male group of intelligentsia elite exiled leaders, some of them intellectuals, disseminated *urbi et orbi* the need to end exile. All of them had been part of the State in one way or another.

6.1. 'Denunciatory Returns' and the power of the *Interior* and hegemonic institutions

Claims to the national territory articulating the right to return have been historically heralded by Latin American *desterrados* elite men. An iconic case is that of Chile's national leader and so-called 'father of the Patria,' Bernardo O'Higgins, a national character who featured in the previous chapter. Extolling the heroic actions of such past national leaders and appealing to territorial allegiances, elite exiles felt empowered to challenge the political power of the NSDS's return restrictions. In 1984, Chilean exile was made known internationally when *returnism* actually 'landed' in the national territory. As discussed in Chapter Three, 1984 was the year of the *Listado Nacional* of 4,942 persons forbidden to enter Chilean territory. It was also the year of social and political mobilisation and when the centre stage of political opposition shifted from the *exterior* to the *interior* and when male-dominated Parties regained their status. This scenario created the propitious political conditions to challenge NSDS's policy on exile and return, it re-empowered political elite men to demand their right to return allowing *returnism* to 'land' in Chile. In a highly publicised and provocative 'denunciatory return', six elite leaders made public on Chilean soil, albeit from inside a plane, the need to end such injustice. This event has received biographical attention (Arrate 2007), yet little VRp analytical interest. Jorge Arrate, Jaime Gazmuri, Eduardo Rojas, José Vargas, Edgardo Condeza and Luis Guastavino, all belonging to the Socialist bloc (except for PC Guastavino) , embarked on three consecutive attempts to enter Chile. They were not only forbidden to leave the aircraft but were also repressed and returned to their place of departure (see Arrate, 2007 for a genderless detailed account). The purpose of these 'denunciatory returns' was to capture international attention on the injustice of administrative exile and 'to situate it on the political agenda with the view to abolish it' (Arrate and Rojas 2003:363). They were all men and mostly of upper-middle and middle-class extraction. All of

them belonged to the exile political elite, a category that Alejandro Hales (1989:17) called *exilio superior*. These aspects of power constituted the underpinnings of 'denunciatory returns' as a particular type of return one that was fully supported by the *Pastoral del Exilio* in the person of its delegate in Chile, Bishop Tomás González Morales.

Unlike the case of women's ambiguous relationship with *returnism* discussed in Chapter Four, in this all-male elitist case it acquired an offensive and liberating stance. It challenged NSDS's legal repression legislating return as well as liberating these men from their guilt. This was clearly illustrated by Leopoldo Acuña's (pseudonym) accounts of their return attempts. Because of his "L"ed passport, he had to apply for re-entry. Yet, after several frustrating failed applications *I invented those return attempts*. These are termed here 'denunciatory return'. According to UNHCR (Barton 1986:27) the *Listado Nacional* was distributed to airlines flying into Chile which before selling a ticket to Chileans had to consult Embassies abroad and International Police in Santiago. At the time of embarking in these denunciatory returns, he had moved from Colombia to Buenos Aires in case of a speedy return. When asked about how he managed to get an Air France ticket if there would be sanctions for the airline, his response was seconded by his wife Laura who provided the most detailed information about what Leopoldo Acuña termed *empresas familiares* (family enterprises) as she had been deeply involved in supporting his denunciatory returns,

Leopoldo: Well, I don't know if you know that from Buenos Aires one can travel with your ID and I travelled...well, I don't think that measure was that effective. [Laura: and the others travelled from Europe in an Italian airplane...[Leopoldo: so that doesn't appear to be that effective, does it? Besides, the arrest of a person occurs when one arrives here at International Police, there is where it happens. They have all the information about you there and ...well...there are are thousands and thousands of travel agencies around the world and they just sell tickets.

Interestingly, Leopoldo Acuña called his 'denunciatory returns' a 'family enterprise'. One of the arguments carried through this study is that the hegemonic institution of the family played a fundamental role in organising resistance against the NSDS under what this study formulates as the *like with like* argument. In this micro-setting 'the family' void of any protagonism other members of the institution which, on this occasion was an abnegated wife and mother heralding her husband's right to return. Laura said: *We were the only ones who wanted to enter the country* (at the time of his last attempt she was already living in the country with their three daughters), *imagine, we even involved the girls, we had been separated for two years, he in Buenos Aires and me here in Chile, I was doing all these dealings but they had told us that he could not enter, ten times, ten times!* Yet, the family was not acting alone. Laura had the full support of the Catholic Church. Though not powerful enough to persuade the NSDS to lift the ban on his entry, this influential alliance protected her to the extent that she could carry on with these risky and tiresome dealings particularly because the families of the other members of this group did not participate. While he was describing the episode when they were sent back to Buenos Aires handcuffed on an empty jumbo plane and escorted by 20 plainclothes investigations police (detectives), Laura corrected him immediately,

there were 24!, I remember everything because we were on our own – look, only two other relatives participated in this and those were Arrate's parents who were a wonderful elderly

couple. That is, all the others... really there were no other relatives because all of them were terrified.

Patriotic heroes?

Denunciatory returns took place between 1984 and 1987. In the midst of the hyper anti-dictatorship struggle, denunciatory returns underscored political masculinity, the manliness of political leaders, patriotism, national identity and belonging. In Arrate's (2007:44) narrative, he as an individual exile, a political leader and part of the *intelligentsia*, exile's political *temporariness* and the role of memory were inextricably linked: 'Signs of identity are insistent, inevitable. The identity one knows is what provides one with security. One does not want to forget it. In some cases, such as mine, we nurtured it stubbornly, because we resisted integrating to the host societies. When one wants to be an unintegrated exile one has to remember, remember, remember. Time is an enemy and it feeds the engine of oblivion... To combat oblivion the best thing is to repeat, again and again... The slogan is to repeat, repeat, not to forget.' Arrate's narrative reveals the underpinnings of what sustains *returnism*, the struggle against the 'permanent' *temporariness* of exile in all its dimensions. Generally, and particularly during initial exile, refugees were openly discouraged to put down 'roots' in host countries (Kay 1982). The metaphoric depiction of *temporariness* in the 'packed suitcases' had to be sustained as a form of reasserting the commitment to return to such an extent that *Party authority* (*autoridad partidaria*) as Carlos put it, was implacable in this regard.

Issues of nationality tightly associate exiles to a *patria* thus legitimising the right to claim for a return to it. Indeed, a non-Chilean and even more so a 'renegade' one could not struggle for that right. Here, Leopoldo Acuña, added the core idea of nationhood, that is, where nation is understood as a community of birth where one belongs to: *we were interested in living in Chile because of the family, because we felt rooted to the Chilean society where we were born, lived, studied and worked.* In these narratives, two powerful interpretations of the 'family' were articulated: the genealogical and the national. They were not only intersecting but also reinforcing one another. At this juncture, return is guaranteed and so is the political and symbolic status of those involved in denunciatory returns. For the democratic opposition they were 'heroes'. Gazmuri (2000:363) noted, '[W]e decided to develop an initiative consisting in that exile figures could regain from abroad and in a practical and not only theoretical manner, the right to live in the patria.' Because they were proclaimed 'heroes', the NSDS insisted in their anti-patriotic stand to the extent that Arrate (2007:204) noted that 'by the treatment we received we were ashamed "heroes"'. Indeed, the NSDS was still determined to continue crushing daring political masculinity though carefully avoiding killing them and turning them into 'real' heroes as Allende had been. Their humiliation was summed up by Arrate (2007:68) in the following manner:

"We never thought that we were going to die, we were not heroes. Only a group of political leaders with a bit of guilt for being exiled and being outside the main scenario of the struggle and with some anxiety for being the protagonists in the recuperation of democracy. We had the pretension of occupying a legitimate political space in the challenging times ahead, we shared an idea of our duty and responsibility. In those days being a Leftist politician was essentially being a fighter". [emphasis added]

The power of the *interior* relativised heroism, however. At the time of their attempts, the economic crisis and protests were at their peak. This led Leopoldo Acuña to say: *it was more worthy what people were doing here rather than what we were doing. I always had that consideration; we were privileged.* Yet failed heroism did not obscure *returnism*. On the contrary, 'denunciatory returns' highlighted it even further with the patriotic, intellectual and moral leadership of these political elite men denouncing the injustice of exile. The harassment and repression that they endured and the favourable (opposition) and unfavourable (official) media coverage that these attempts for the right to live in the *patria* attracted, allowed them to gain the hearts and minds of people worldwide as well as pressing the NSDS to end exile. Their leadership in this matter was unquestionable. They said '...we are leaders, we lead the way and that is leadership. And that is not to say that we have been defeated or that we have compromised with those who murder and torture, yesterday, today and this month of September.' (in Arrate 2007:216). The allusion to the month of September is telling, it is the month in which the military coup took place and the *Mes de la Patria* (month of the nation) where the latter commemorates the 1810 Declaration of Independence and the armed forces' 'military glories'.

During these national holidays foundational myths, symbols and heroes are historically remembered including the Catholic Church's *Te Deum* on the 18th September. The maintenance and safeguarding of past events, such as these invented traditions (Hobsbawm and Ranger 1992), play a key role in both nation-building and national identity. The use of the national anthem and allusions to the *patria* while they were kicked and punched, showed the patriotic symbolic dimension of these men's denunciatory returns. The appeal to the hegemony of the *patria*, their long attachment to it and its land, highlighted the historic continuity that generally derives from the interplay between land and people. By claiming their *right* to live in their *patria* in this manner, they were appealing to the power of their 'indissoluble ties' (Bauer 1996) to the homeland, they were fighting *like with like*. Billing (1995) noted that both political Right and Left aspire to represent the nation; the Chilean Left has historically been patriotic particularly in their struggle against imperialism (Halperin 1965), this time by an all-male intellectual and political elite championing their right to return to their *patria*.

Precisely, these six elite men's obsession for the *patria* and hyper *returnism* were fundamental in their claims. Articulations of *patria* and belonging empowered *returnism* to such an extent that in the case of denunciatory return, it led to a potential danger. While these men were willing to return and exercise their *voluntariness*, the issue was not whether the conditions were safe to return, but the way they pressed host governments for their cause; they got very close to transgressing a central tenet of refugee protection, the principle of *non-refoulement* enshrined in the 1951 Refugee Convention that is, protection against being sent back to face danger or persecution. After being expelled to Colombia, they met with President Belisario Betancourt. During that meeting they told President Betancourt that despite the admiration they had for his country they had refused the asylum it offered them. According to Arrate's testimonial account (2007:150) they told President Betancourt that '[W]e only agreed to enter Colombia to avoid embarrassing its government and to request that the authorities proceed to expel us to our rightful destination: Chile.' Then they added '[O]ur thesis is patently obvious: no one, particularly someone who isn't a national from

a country, can be forced to live in it. Asylum is a right established to benefit the persecuted but can't be turned into an obligation... We are asking you two things Mr President, the first is that you order Avianca airlines to take us back to Santiago. The second, and more transcendental, is that you adopt our argument and turn it into a doctrine of international value that adequately configure the right to asylum and to make impossible arbitrary exile, without due process or judicial verdict. If you were to adopt it, it would acquire a superior and unimaginable strength, and could be even known as the "Betancourt doctrine"...'(ibid:150 In their obsessive *returnism*, they were setting a dangerous precedent yet, because they were voluntarily exercising their right to return, something that, as discussed in Chapter One, was increasingly popularised in the mid-1980s, there were no critical accounts of their action. On the contrary, unlike 'resistance return', denunciatory return attracted much attention and praise even when '[F]or a durable solution to satisfy the interest of the international community, it must be accompanied by well-founded changes in the 'material circumstances which originally caused the exodus' (Goodwin-Gill 1989:257).

However loud and risky 'denunciatory return' was, there was also a considerable degree of nuance. According to Leopoldo Acuña, who by the time of the interview had been sidelined from competitive 'high politics' and had established a Movement for Referendum and Citizens' Rights, *of the six, five of them considered this solely a political and propagandistic enterprise more than a real decision to enter the country. They always managed to inform the press and others that we were arriving so I said if we do that they will be waiting for us and would not allow us to leave the plane.* Undoubtedly, in this type of return there was some 'politics' involved but more importantly mainly male voices have been recorded (Gazmuri 2000; Arrate 2007).

Despite developing a strong friendship with the other members of the group, Leopoldo Acuña decided to go solo. *Then I saw that that system [return attempts] would not work and so we started to organise things differently with Laura, step by step and each step well examined from all angles. Then I dyed my hair and the actor Patricio Contreras helped me with what to wear and how to speak like an Argentinian.* Laura traveled to Buenos Aires where they discussed in detail about the perils of engaging in such a solo enterprise. Then they planned his fourth denunciatory return that was to take place in June 1986. Though she was somewhat mentioned in Arrate's accounts she was not given proper attention. Equally to Gladys, who struggled alongside her high-profile husband, Laura's role was determinant during her husband's four denunciatory returns even though he insisted that this was a 'family enterprise'. Laura was even more important during the organisation of his final solo denunciatory return. *Well, I was in charge of all bureaucratic dealings (todos los trámites) they had to be done again and again because they had negated his entry ten times. I had to do so many things including many presentations of writs of habeas corpus and there were so few of us! My sister was my right arm because we only trusted the closest family members. We had decided to do it on our own and without politics and politicians.* This was a strategic move. As with the NSDS's porous gender order allowing women to enter the country more easily, the family as a patriarchal institution offered more protection than Parties, it embodied the dream of family unity as well as being protected by the UDHR48. Article 16(3) states that the family 'is the natural and fundamental group unit of society and is entitled to protection by society and state.'

After a total makeover Laura's husband entered Chile clandestinely. Two days later he presented himself before the Justice Tribunal to legalise his denunciatory return and reclaim his right to live in his patria amidst local media scrutiny and coverage organised by Laura and her sister. To further protect her husband's return she resorted to the power of human rights and renowned political figures,

I had a list of international contacts to call in case anything happened and I started calling many people starting with Volio, I don't know if he rings a bell to you, he was the United Nations Human Rights rapporteur who came to Chile in 1985, I also contacted President Betancourt and many others...

The campaign "for his right to live in the patria" (*por su derecho a vivir en la patria*) was hefty. Apart from the moral and legal backing of the human right to return, every sector of the interior society supported his claim. Two fundamental institutions led his campaign, the Catholic Church in the Concepción Archbishopric Human Rights Pastoral Department and the the Association of Relatives of Exiles. These were seconded by professional associations such as physicians, architects, and lawyers followed by Parties and the new AD coalition. Two dossiers provide an idea of the extent of the campaign (Departamento Pastoral Derechos Humanos 1986). They contain information on administrative exile in general and of his case in particular, UDHR and International Convention on Civil and Political Rights, Pope John Paul II and bishops' views on exile, signed petitions to the Regional Governor (*Intendente*), announcements for discussion meetings on exile and 'his right to live in his patria', opinions and poems including Neruda's exilic poem opening this study. The existence of such a network of support indicates that he was not going solo and that Laura was fully supported in her struggle for her husband's *derecho a vivir en la patria*. Leopoldo Acuña's case neatly illustrates this study's claim of the existence of a protective surrogate enclave operating under NSDS and the dominant hegemonic axis playing an instrumental role in supporting *returnism*. Thus, it can be suggested that unlike 'resistance return', 'denunciatory return' was accepted as a moral and democratic claim to live in the patria. Crucially, it did not challenge military masculinity.

After these experiences, a stream of important denunciatory returns heralding the *Por el Derecho a Vivir en la Patria* discourse, occurred including those in 1987 of high profile exiles such as PS leader Clodomiro Almeyda, who had been Allende's Foreign Relations Minister and vice-President, and two ex-parliamentary senior women and members of the PC Central Committee, Julieta Campusano and Mireya Baltra. Unlike the previous case, they returned clandestinely (the women did it by crossing the Andes on mules). Their return followed the pattern of 'denunciatory return' that is, in the process of returning and making themselves visible in order to stop being excluded and perceived as dangerous to national security, attachments to the homeland and national belonging were openly displayed and indeed linked to their right to live in their homeland. 'Exile is the drama of thousands of Chileans who cannot tolerate any longer its continuation. I returned clandestinely to Chile because otherwise I had taken the decision to commit suicide in the Chilean embassy in Argentina as a final blow to the military regime' said Julieta Campusano, one of the women (in V.T. 1987:72). Though they weighed heavily on being grandmothers, their high-profile political status overrode their respected protective gendered status. However heroic these women were, the peripheral society's public sphere continued to be the domain of men. After entering

Chile, they 'decided to hide themselves to allow Clodomiro Almeyda (*the male leader*) to have the required publicity' (Camus 1987:46). His bravery was acknowledged even by the political Right that simultaneously considered 'exile as non-operative because it can be cheated' hence it should be abolished. Yet, soon after, and according to Transitory Article 24 of 1980 Constitution that gave powers to the Executive to administratively order a detainee to serve 3 months of banishment to a remote part of the country (*relegación*), all of them were *relegados* either to the remote north or south of the country. This was clear evidence of the persistent power of the NSDS. However, not all women returned 'in glory' or had their experience documented.

6.2. Gendered 'visits' before and during the interim period

The raising of exclusionary boundaries such as Decree Laws, Constitutional transitory articles and the policy of lists presupposed the strengthening of the NSDS. Yet, one of the arguments carried through in this study is that NSDS's own gender ideology made the State boundaries more porous for women thus allowing them and their children to enter the country more easily. Women carried out visits, 'exploratory trips' or simply returned. Conceptually, 'visits' should not be considered return but reconnaissance visits. Several women visited Chile even when NSDS's boundaries were rigid and many, including those of "L"ed husbands had already visited the country (such as the 'founding mothers' of COPROREX in 1978). In general, these visits were classed. By the end of the 1970s and up until the mid 1980s, these trips were costly. Hence, mostly middle-class exiles could either afford the trips or were able to get a bank loan. Abril, Laura, Marta, Amarilis, María and Gladys visited Chile, and some more than once. Other women's exploratory visits had a dual purpose. Soon after her name appeared on the last list, Margarita visited Chile in 1988. She wanted to assess the situation in Chile and at the moment of her departure *some of my friends who went to say good-bye had been collecting money for me to bring to Chile told me 'Margarita here you have this money, you can give it to the organisation that you consider merits it, you decide. So I gave it to my Party.*

In their accounts of being 'in and out of exile,' Cuban exiled women stressed the refusal to sever ties with their relatives in Cuba or their histories (Torres 2003) transforming these journeys not only into bridges between exile and their homeland, but also explorations of what Torres (2003:x) calls the 'ambiguous zones' of disagreement, of looking at their histories and at themselves so as to be able to maintain their engagement with the people and places they love. In this case, Chilean women's attachment to places and families of origin was a key motivation for return journeys. Visits were often holiday breaks to see relatives with the social purpose of taking the children to meet their family of origin. These took place mainly during the summer when the weather was more pleasant and children could be taken to sea-side resorts. In general, these visits created hope and expectations because as visits, relatives welcomed them with warmth and special treats. Being a welcomed visitor, exiles concluded that to return to Chile was a 'family party' (Jessen 1993) depicting in this manner a 'cosy' *interior*. Conversely, purposeful 'exploratory trips', that is, trips oriented to enable permanent return, allowed obtaining information regarding employment prospects and safety issues before attempting return. According to *Vicaría's*

lawyer, Pablo Fuentes, exploratory visits were fundamental to success. *Those were excellent return situations. Hundreds of exiles who came to see how things were, assessed it well and then returned, those were successful returns.* However, the boundaries between these journeys were sometimes blurred. With *returnism* in the background, a visit could provide information about the political and socio-economic conditions in Chile, thus weighing heavily on the final decision to return. Before returning permanently in February 1989, lower-middle class Yiya visited Chile in the summer of 1986-87. The gendered dynamics of *returnism* and its 'ambiguous zones' were evident when she was asked who opposed return:

I did! Even though when we arrived in France, the only thing that we were thinking about was to return and to tell you the truth that decision was taken even before we left but when the trip back was getting near and the departure moment arrived I said "no, we are not going anywhere." I had been here with the children (chiquillos), two years earlier visiting and I had a good time (lo pasé regio), because I brought money to stay for two or three months. We had a great time, the chiquillos had a wonderful time too but I saw that the situation wasn't good here....

But not all women were fearless, particularly those less associated with their husbands' political stands. Elite politician Luis Jara commented how difficult it was for his 'tied' upper-class wife to visit Chile. They had left the country soon after the coup in 1973. Hers was a problem of fear. According to him, *she was not exiled but it took her 6 or 7 years to return for the first time because she was really afraid to do so. Once she conquered her fear she returned for holidays with the girls.* Other times, women returned to attend the funeral of parents or close relatives. Gladys, whose exile in three countries made her very unhappy, visited Chile twice. Being the wife of a renowned political leader made her more vulnerable if she didn't 'behave'. The purpose of her first visit in 1979 was twofold: for a respite and to see her eldest stayee son who had been released from forced internal 'displacement' (*relegado*). She entered as a mother and experienced no problem. Her second return in 1983 was as a dutiful daughter. Her father had died and she returned to bury him only to find out that after this visit her passport was stamped with an "L" because *they said I had made a speech at the cemetery when I buried my father. Well, I had the great idea of denouncing the government and speaking against everything it had done and was doing; then, they issued me with that prohibition to enter Chile. I was forbidden to enter from 1983 until 1987 when my name appeared on a list.* Gladys' experience illustrates NSDS's gendered porous boundaries but also its narrow margins of tolerance with women. Tolerance ended once women transgressed the official gender ideology of 'good' mothers, daughters and wives. By being 'political' Gladys represented a threat to the nation. When she finally returned in October 1987, things were already speeding up, the transition process from a dictatorship to democracy was unfolding and regime-change was in the air. Gladys was happy to leave her *painful* exile in East Germany behind. Arriving in Chile under NSDS was bliss, it euphorically territorialised her. Though euphoria for having escaped and survived also constitutes the initial stage of the 'refugee experience' (Boyle et al. 1998:192), it mostly appears in studies on Chilean repatriation as one of the first stages of the process (Palmgren et al. 1985; Corvalán and Contreras 1989; Llambias-Wolff 1995) but also features on studies of repatriation in Africa (Allen 1991). Initial euphoria generally refers to the discovery of returnees' own country, places, friends, language, and in the Chilean case, their *cordillera* yet it also has to do with the nature of refugeehood. In these studies euphoria is accompanied by feelings of great optimism about the future

both in exile and at 'home'. Being a tied refugee and metaphorically describing herself as *the boiled rice accompanying the steak*, Gladys' return was unsurprisingly euphoric,

The decision to return was so fundamentally compulsive that I arrived here during the dictatorship because I arrived fifteen years ago when there was still dictatorship. I remember that my mother would be eighty at that time so I planned the date of my return just before her birthday, so I had to be in Chile by the 12th October ... It was like being stoned (marihuaneada), I grabbed the trees and I kissed them, I found that the Carabineros were beautiful, I found EVERYTHING beautiful!

It is within this positive context that administrative exile was coming to an end. The next section examines the long awaited end of decree exile and the societal responses to both core and peripheral societies.

6.3. The end of exile's administrative *temporariness* ;*Se Acaba el Exilio!*: speeding up the tempo

Administrative exile was now becoming a political embarrassment for the NSDS. The domestic lobby, individual exiles and exile constituencies were being successful in heralding *El derecho a vivir en la patria*. COPROREX's work and 'denunciatory returns' contributed highly to this development. Yet these were not isolated developments, rather they were part of wider political accords aiming at the possibility of a swift end to dictatorship and of the nation-building project of democratisation. *Returnism* was succeeding. On 1st September 1988, Decree No 303 'left without effect all supreme and extent decrees that article 41 (4) of the 1980 Political Constitution forbade the entry to the national territory of those people mentioned in it' (*La Nación* 2 September 1988). By then only 512 exiles were forbidden to return. However, this 'measure' seemed to be associated above all with a political marketing operation to regain public support for the rapidly approaching plebiscite in which the political fate of both the NSDS and Pinochet were at stake. Decree 303 only restored the universal human right in which 'Everyone has the right to leave any country, including *his* own, and to return to *his* country' (UDHR48 Article 13/2). The system of lists either permitting or forbidding the return of exiles and the infamous "L" became history. Administratively, there were no more *exiliados*, yet, the situation was more complex. The NSDS and its repressive apparatus was still in force, therefore another paramount human right, the right to life, remained vulnerable. Returning exiles availed themselves of a State that still had not resumed political protection to all its citizens within the Chilean territory. In Shacknove's (1985) terms there was still 'absence of State protection' as well as persecution particularly after the failed attempt against Pinochet's life in 1986. This was illustrated by NSDS's leadership opinions. While some were pleased with the measure, for instance the General Director of *Carabineros* Rodolfo Stange and the Right-wing party UDI, less happy were Vice-Admiral Merino, Navy Commander-in-Chief and Onofre Jarpa who at the time was RN's President. Both Merino and Jarpa opposed the idea of allowing in 'those at the service of the Soviet government' and Merino went as far as threatening with incarceration those 'who wouldn't respect the law' (Poza 1988:27). Conversely, the Catholic Church that, since the II Migration World Congress in October 1985 that took place in the Vatican City, declared itself a 'reconciled' and 'reconciliatory' institution (*Mensaje* 341, 1985:316-318) expressed its profound happiness particularly the *Vicaria* for which 'it was a longed for aspiration of the majority and firmly held by the Church overcoming in this manner an obstacle to achieve the aspired national reconciliation and contributing to an improvement of the required environment for the

present moment' (Poza 1988:27). Hereafter, reconciliation and exile (as *forced migration*) will be inextricably linked.

Decree 303 produced a paradoxical situation. Although Chile was still under NSDS, exiles were no longer forced by political coercion to live outside the country. The State had lifted the boundaries of exile and return. From now on, exiles were freed from any administrative or legal impediment to return to Chile, there were no more lists and no more forms to fill in. Yet, Decree 303 did not pardon the three *relegados* who continued forcibly 'displaced' nor those whose sentences had been commuted for exile (177 people), or those exiles who figured on a list of 'undesirable foreigners', that is, those who became naturalised in host countries. Nonetheless, the end of administrative exile was welcome in the *exterior* confronting the displaced once again with the return dilemma and the moral pressure of *returnism*. The unavoidable dilemma of whether to return or not after years of exile when, for many, their lives had been transcending from strict political concerns to more personal ones (Pérez 1996), would test *returnism's* strength even further. Within the peripheral society, seminars and conferences on return mushroomed. In the meanwhile those in the *interior* were discussing how to face and deal with the challenges posed by massive returns and the problems faced by returnees.

The interim period was a critical one. Because the peripheral society was rapidly aligning itself with the core society, the need for protection, safety and assistance of both stayees and returnees appeared to be redundant, yet as return increased its existence continued to be necessary. However, as Chapter Five revealed the availability of 'spaces' was diminishing thus returnees had no choice but to cross the dotted boundary and knock on the doors of core society. Consequently, returnees' difficulties were out in the open, this time voiced by returnees themselves as a collective with an 'acquired' group identity: *los retornados*. Until now those difficulties had been voiced by assistance NGOs, the Catholic Church, returnees themselves documenting other returnees' testimonies (Celedón and Opazo 1987) and in a descriptive study carried out in 1984 by social worker Kadem Villamar. As we shall see below, these difficulties were 'denounced' collectively and more strongly as the interim period was coming to an end and when returnees were meeting with stayees in bigger numbers. It is at this juncture that returnees' practical problems were exacerbated by a total disinterest in their exilic life.

The unimportance of daily exile: grounds for silencing the experience of exile

All conversational partners reported total disdain for their life in exile. This seems to be a universal phenomenon (Maletta and Szwarcberg 1985; Hammond 2004) – with the sole exception of Eritreans (Kibreab 2002; Bascom 2005) – that has reached international literature and was movingly expressed by Milan Kundera (2000:34) in his *Ignorance*. When Odysseus returned, people wittered on about things that had happened during his absence but nothing was asked about his life while away. 'Nothing bothered him more. He was waiting for just one thing: for them finally to say "Tell us!" And that is the one thing they never said.' Among the standard explanations found in the literature is the 'stigma of exile' (Maletta and Szwarcberg 1985). Emilia called these phenomena *lagunas* (lacunae) and these particular ones were

lagunas mentales (mental lacunae), that is, the tendency of stayees to oblivion which, in her view suited them (*les conviene*). Celedón and Opazo's (1987) collection of Chilean returnee women's testimonies suggested that for stayees, exile simply didn't matter even for their families of origin. Roberto, who returned in November 1989 from Bulgaria, illustrates this study's conversational partners' consensus on the 'tabooing' of exile,

It has been quite difficult until now because exile means a huge amount of memories (mucho recuerdo). One talks with one's relatives and it is as if they do not want to touch the subject, they have forgotten it, or sometimes "why are we going to remember if we are all going to get sad". So it's hard, it's hard. In the end one has to forget that there are so many things that we lived when abroad; I suffered a big disappointment when... [very emotional] because I always collected the letters I managed to receive, I treasured them, I kept the cards and anything that they wrote to me. So I always had the illusion that when I had returned I would sit down with them and get the letter X (carta tanto) and my reply to tell them when, how, and why I wrote what I wrote. I always had that illusion and I relied on it. The first day I arrived and after all the greetings, all the friends, all the relatives, all the cheers! (salud!), and the many ¡VIVA CHILE!, that is normal when one returns, and after eating some chorizos, I asked for my letters. Then...the first big silence...They explained to me that they had burnt them because one of the neighbours had reported them, that "this and the other", that they were scared that they would search (allanar) the house". And...what about the photos? Such and such photos?... "Well, they are not here", that "during a search (allanamiento) they took all the photos" and because they feared another search they had burned the rest. So then... [crying] I suddenly felt as if I had been robbed – apart from all that I had been robbed by the milicos and Pinochet – I felt [crying] ...I don't know if they did it out of fear, I don't know, but it was as if they had robbed part of my roots, my memories... For years I longed for that moment but, I cannot blame them, but it hurt me so much, it really hurt me...[crying inconsolably]...It has been very difficult with my family (me ha costado montones con mi familia) because they never asked me about my life with my Vietnamese compañera, my wife, or what happened to my life with her, the only thing that caught their attention was that I had returned on my own. That hurt me too because for good or bad that was part of my life. It is as if they do not consider you, they are not interested in you...[continuing crying]... The only thing in which my closest friends and my family were interested in was whether or not I had brought money. Nobody was interested in your life there or if you had suffered or not...

Roberto's narrative reveals the unimportance of daily exile, and the importance of money. Most conversational partners could not understand this *Ignorance*. Though this cost has hardly attracted analytical attention, this study suggests that the overwhelming emphasis on the political, economic and logistic aspects of forced migration eclipses any other dimension of exilic life. Though exile has many meanings and for some authors constitutes a crisis of meanings (Kay 1982; Al-Rasheed 1993), privileging exile as the violation of the right to live in the *patria*, explains part of Roberto's 'unimportant' experiences in exile. The patriotic cry ¡VIVA CHILE! with which he was welcomed illustrates how the *patria* and more so the *interior* were more important than his exilic experiences; the biographical rupture and reconstruction that exile entails is something uninteresting for stayees. Stayees' lives in the *interior* were dominant.

Consequently, assistance during the interim period became more difficult to obtain. As discussed, during the height of the NSDS, assistance NGOs were at the forefront of solving post-return problems. During the interim period however, and because of their limited capacity to cope with the increasing number of returnees (see Appendix 4), returnees placed assistance organisations in the spotlight. Though commentators such as Ferris (1988) in her *Waltzing with Return*, written soon after Pinochet's defeat in the October plebiscite, acknowledged the problems encountered by returnees, particularly the second

generation, NGOs were usually uncritically presented. Yet, this study's conversational partners' accounts around NGOs roles and practices incorporate both praise and criticism. Although NGOs had supported and palliated returnees' post-return problems in some way, this had a caveat: returnees began encountering problems there too. Among these criticisms were: 'the excessive number of interviews, the bureaucratisation of appointments, the slow processing of projects, and the posterior approval of projects for a limited number of people (1 or 2) rather than approving bigger projects that would provide employment for more returnees and sources of income' (Holmstrom 1989:141). The *magic word* 'project', that had previously opened some doors for returnees was losing its 'lifesaving' value and was proving increasingly difficult to present successfully.

Concerns regarding the role of the NGOs in the assistance to returnees have already been voiced, particularly by the less advantaged conversational partners such as Emilia, who returned in 1984. Her candid views about NGOs' assistance roles were furthered by her when she referred to their ideological role in a political context of a peaceful demise of the dictatorship, something that Schuurman (1993:203-4) discussed in the context of the relationship between Third World NGOs and a possible discourse of imperialism imposed by developmental Northern NGOs. Against this backdrop, Emilia's accounts also reveal NGOs' social control role and an interesting question about defining 'who is a returnee'.

This thing of the NGOs caught our attention – we were talking about this with my new compañero the other day – because if you start thinking carefully, Where do these NGOs come from? Where do they get the money? What are the roots of the NGOs? Then we said, let's look more carefully and we concluded that the NGOs in a certain manner were a brake on the political mobilisation of the people because they solved your immediate needs (coyunturalmente) because they gauged the mentality of the Chileans. Chileans only make economic demands (son reivindicativos) in their struggles and because the NGOs are quite intelligent they said, in my case for example, 'well, we can solve this woman's (mina) problem with her baby, so she will stop fighting,' like saying, 'that's one more who will keep quiet' (una menos que huevee), 'we have solved her employment problem so one troublemaker less (que huevee). Like this, the NGOs controlled people. At a certain moment, they grew like mushrooms and that allowed them to do intellectual-ish (intelectualoide) and ideological work and, did you know that many of those NGOs were in the hands of renowned returnees who had been in Mexico or Italy. And it is from there that the chameleon culture emerged, many of those changed their spots (ropaje) helped by the law of Relativity plus the chameleon culture; SHIT! (PUTA!). This is what we are living through now! There you have all those renovated (renovados) who returned with confidence knowing that having a chameleon culture they would be able to occupy the posts that always belonged to them. What happens is that they returned for conjunctural reasons and as many of them said being a Leftist was a sin of youth. They changed without remorse (sin asco), so they never thought of return as we did. They left for exile because they had a different political vision but they were certain that they would return. So for me they are not returnees, they were just waiting for the doors of this "democracy" (entre comillas) to open because they knew where things were leading. It is not an accident that some of them met with the military in 1987-88 to plan the democratic transition. I can tell you many things I heard while I was in Mozambique.⁴⁸ Some of them said things like "We have to get back to Chile to occupy our places" and these were people who were rather important during the UP, so they knew that their period of youth rebellion ended when they were thirty; then they pursued other struggles. They had enough knowledge and experience about Chilean mentality; Chileans believe everything they are told (se las come toda). All that helped them to return to occupy their places. In my opinion, they didn't return, THEY CAME BACK (VOLVIERON) TO OCCUPY THEIR PLACES USING "THE PEOPLE" ("EL PUEBLO").

Emilia's anger was more serenely corroborated by Simón: *Look, the political exile that returned was not the political exile of the workers but of the political groups who returned to reinsert themselves politically*

⁴⁸ There were around 2,000 Chileans contributing with Mozambique's nation-building (see Rovira 1982).

again, the political class, to occupy posts in the State, in Parliament etc., etc. Simón's assertion suggests that the political class occupying the peripheral society regained its elitist position through VRp and from it, constructed bridges leading to the State. These accounts also point to the fact that the political class that survived within the peripheral society was in the past part of the structure of the State.

Concurrently, Emilia and Simón accounts take us back to the conceptual issue of returnee identity that this study is revealing: the several dimensions of the returnee identity. Emilia for example, was contrasting the *retornada* identity she had been ascribed by the assistance sector of the surrogate enclave aiding her, with that of political elite returnees with a high political status; a political positioning that annulled any identification with return. One possible explanation for Emilia's view is that the existence of a peripheral society in which elite political leaders moved highlighted their political and social status that was kept almost intact once they had crossed the dotted line. Once in Chile they integrated with the *interior*'s elite and when this was disappearing they swiftly moved to core society and State.

This ongoing evidence is suggesting that the term *retornado/a* only referred to the aid dimension of the status that in turn was drawing on the negative connotation ascribed to that identity. Paradoxically, this dimension of the ascribed returnee identity would become visible from the interim period onwards. Hence, returneehood is mediated by an ascribed socio-political status with differing 'value'. Here lies one of this study's contributions in the understanding of a seemingly critical issue in VRp situations, that of returnee identity. Chapter Five has revealed that in cases of VRp, returneehood has a 'political' as well as a 'humanitarian/social' 'value' where the former, as a political tool against the dominant regime, constituted a valuable asset for the national project. Everything the NSDS did against the *retornados* was contextualised as 'political' and usually encompassed within the narrative of human rights violations thus blurring the humanitarian and the political dimensions. For example, COPROREX's denunciations of the different forms of repression unleashed against returnees ranged from internal exile (*relegaciones*), assassinations, harassment and the proposed *empadronamiento* (registration and control) of returnees. Conversely, the 'social' value of returnees had relevance only to the assistance sector of the surrogate enclave that in turn helped to sustain and justify the *exilio-retorno* narrative as a political weapon against the NSDS. However, once administrative exile had ended, the protective umbrella for those affected by the NSDS was coming to an end. It seems that among those who returned to struggle to end exile and/or to overthrow the regime, there was marked differentiation and this was determined by their political positioning within the correlation of political forces acting in the country. This entirely different category of *retornados*, highlighted by Emilia, poses the question of whether this totalising and homogenising term calls for more nuanced ways of identification and definition. Many of the political power-seeking exiles started to return in the mid 1980s when the Church was yielding centre stage to Parties. This was illustrated by the number of returns. According to IOM between 1984 and 1986 1,926 exiles returned to Chile; of which 993 did it at the peak of mass protests in 1984 (see Appendix 4). These new developments would mark the beginning of the end of the political value of *exilio*, the *exiliado*, and the *interior* giving way to the increasing visibility of 'el retorno' and 'los retornados'; the former will keep their political value for another couple of years while the head of the NSDS was being displaced. Ricardo Garrido said,

The fall of the dictatorship was rapidly approaching, that was for sure. My desire to return to the country and that of other Communists who had been highly involved in it (demise of dictatorship) was very strong. We already had the intention of returning clandestinely if that didn't happen. At that moment, the conditions to return were given.

6.4 The end of the *interior*: highlighting the rift between stayees and returnees

The rift between stayees and returnees is not new. Pioneering literature on return migration acknowledges that conflicts and tensions between stayees and returnees are also commonplace in labour migration (Bovenkerk, 1974). Though a stayee/returnee binary might appear simplistic, this study is arguing that in this case of VRp, it constitutes part of a general process of social fragmentation that involves competing for legitimacy and reproduction. In this case, the end of administrative exile meant that *returnism* and associated moral pressure soared. After Decree 303, the first ones to return were a large wave of high profile politicians and intellectuals who arrived in Chile amidst huge media coverage. Among them were public figures such as Isabel Allende (Allende's daughter), Hortensia Bussi (his widow), ex UP Ministers and members of the *Nueva Canción Chilena* such as *Inti Illimani* and *Illapu* and their families. They all arrived in Santiago in early September 1988 where they were welcomed by a large cheering crowd carrying Parties' banners such as those of the newly created PPD and the PS historical logo (see Appendix 6). It was a definitive defiant action stating that Parties were there to stay and that from then onwards they had resumed their place at the centre of the Chilean political process (Scully 1995). From now on, the institutional mediator between citizens and the State already ruling the disappearing *interior* will rapidly move to towards the core society.

Among the ex Ministers was Ricardo Garrido. He is both an intellectual and a professional politician. He had been imprisoned for over three years and was reluctantly in exile in Venezuela, Cuba and in the GDR for another twelve. Only the masculine roles of political leadership and associated honour made him justify his flight; exile allowed him to perform the values ascribed to his gendered political masculinity. Indeed, he did not privilege his academic and intellectual career over his political commitment. Unlike the *renovados*, Ricardo Garrido is a 'party loyalist' (as in Hite's 2000 typology), he remained with his Party throughout. Similarly to other elite exiles, his hectic exilic life revolved around Party and exile politics. While in Venezuela, where he joined his wife, youngest son and eldest daughter who had been expelled by the NSDS, he combined a teaching post at Caracas' main University and worked for a research institute.

What I couldn't do was to stay indefinitely at the university and to opt for a permanent post even though the conditions there were very good at that time. One could obtain a permanent academic post and stay there with very good remunerations or do a postgraduate. Others did that but I had this commitment. Exile for me meant the political commitment to struggle against Pinochet; that for me was essential, it was a matter of honour even more than a political profession or activity. It was a commitment with the people who died, who disappeared, and who suffered so much. I thought only of that and I put it into practice to help as much as possible.

He, along with many other prominent exiles had been living in Buenos Aires in the hope of a prompt return. On return, he encountered a plethora of criticisms from comrades and friends who had stayed in Chile under NSDS. His high political status however, protected him from such resentment. Studies on

return migration (Gmelch 1980) have shown that stayees exaggerate images of an easy life as migrants, something that has been mirrored in the case of refugees (Stefansson 2004). All three categories of informants reported recurrent resentment against returnees. Those who had spent six years or more in exile experienced deep resentment and, similarly to the case of Bosnian returnees (Stefansson 2004), it was a combination of political and social resentment. The longer the exile, the stronger the resentment and this was, as Chapter Five demonstrated, underpinned by the availability of 'spaces' within the *interior* society or the lesser possibility of integrating into the core one. Early returnees such as Alfonsina and Rosario became aware of this as time passed. Stefansson (2004:60) noted that the 'anti-returnee atmosphere' was 'an imagined sense of stayee accusations rather than actual social practices.' Here, it started with such accusations but with the ending of spaces, 'actual social practices' had *real* consequences. Commenting on those who had returned after 1988, Rosario, who herself returned in September 1979, remarked on such accusations: *I would say that within some sectors (of stayees), it wasn't envy, but a lot of criticisms of the returnees 'that they hadn't had such a bad time after all, that they returned loaded with money, that they dedicated themselves to study, that they have returned with postgrads, that they have not suffered here (no se habían mojado el potito) and that it was so easy now that elections were here, that you haven't fought (no estuviste en la quemada).* Stefansson however, doesn't link these accusations with power. It is that association that makes this 'imagined sense of stayee accusations' dangerous: stayees' accusations came to legitimise the NSDS's fostered feelings of resentment by discrediting exiles as living a 'golden exile' that harshly contrasted with the economic hardship faced by 'Chileans' at home, thus aggravating the rift between stayees and returnees. Carlos commented that it was commonplace to hear that 'joke' that *we were privileged because we received the so-called "Pinochet scholarship" that supposedly brought us educational advancement and well-being.* Yet, the NSDS discourse was also justifying the consequences of its imposed neoliberal model that was repeatedly collapsing, particularly between 1981 and 1985, after which it started to recover. Pablo Fuentes, the human rights lawyer who, after his return in 1983 became a prominent actor within the surrogate enclave particularly in the *exilio-retorno* issue, substantiates the argument of the existence of an alternative society. His narrative shows from his influential position the experiences of disadvantaged returnees. It also shows that, the *interior* legitimised NSDS's hegemonic discourses even when its members themselves had been affected by DR or IR. Status and influence provide a platform for it,

In the thousand cases I had to deal with, and that was a very traumatic situation when one saw people who returned with such illusion but that they did not prepare themselves (no tomaron las providencias) so they encountered enormous reinsertion dramas because we should not forget that exile was a serious violation of human rights but the Chilean society – I am referring to the Chilean society opposing the military regime – was not prepared to receive those who were returning to such an extent that even in Manuel Bustos discourse – he was, undoubtedly, one of the most important trade union leaders in this country – even in his discourse he talked of those who left and us who stayed and those who came to occupy spaces. There was there a big issue (tema muy fuerte) and many exiles-returnees (exiliados-retornados) didn't want to understand that the warm welcome given by the human rights organisations was not shared by the social base constituting the opposition to the military regime. To that we had all the military regime discourse against the exiles and the golden exile, all that discourse did a tremendous damage (mella). Well... we were in a very complex situation.

Pablo Fuentes' narrative is puzzling however. Manuel Bustos, a DC trade union leader also experienced imprisonment and exile. In 1982, a year after participating in the creation of the *Coordinadora Nacional*

Sindical (CNS), Bustos was expelled spending his short exile in Italy returning to Chile in October 1983. In 1988 he was sent to internal exile for eight months; soon after he was elected president of the *Central Unitaria de Trabajadores*, CUT (equivalent to the British TUC). This is a telling example of both the issues of guilt and of the power of the *interior* society. At the moment of qualifying as a stayee with the moral authority to disqualify exiles and returnees, a short exile did not count. Contrary to Eastmond's (1989) argument that the temporary divide between those working in the 'interior' and those in exile, marked continuity where 'exiles were not seen as a distinct social category', this evidence is showing the power of the *interior* and the harsh distinctions that can be made. In this study's formulation of the existence of a peripheral society with an *interior* and *exterior*, power emanated from the territorialisation of the struggle. Under NSDS, there was a strong dimension of power in being territorialised; the *interior* had such control over the *exterior* that those who stayed behind always judged the exiled to the point of stating that '[T]hey (exiles) are nothing, they are worth nothing, they are all cowards. And so whatever people who remained inside do or do not do, whatever they say or do not say has an impressive weight for those who are abroad' (Testimonio II 1979:6).

This evidence helps to understand something that appears paradoxical. When the NSDS started to open up in 1983, VRp sustainability was getting more complex; timing was crucial. As time went by, negotiation and bargaining with those occupying 'spaces' was more difficult and resentment was increasingly associated with returnee labelling. If 'refugee' 'constitutes one of the most powerful labels currently in the repertoire of humanitarian concern, national and international public policy and social differentiation' (Zetter 1988a:1), similarly, the 'returnee' label is used in VRp policy-making in a homogenising manner. Yet, when applied in situations of emplacement, it intensifies social differentiation. However, unlike the notion 'refugee', the 'returnee' has no recognised status. The literature on 'refugee label' or studies associated with the concept is vast. Conversely, returnee labelling has received unequal attention despite the burgeoning literature on VRp and homecomings. *Retornado*, as Chapter Five showed, was uncritically (though unintentionally) used resulting in the portrayal of assisted and psychologised returnees as stereotypical. The stereotype got stuck in the confinements of a perceived negative experience. Opondo (1996:25), one of the refugee scholars who has paid some attention to the returnee label, argued that it 'has the potential of isolating the returning refugees from the rest of their home societies and thereby setting them apart for special treatment even though some of the 'stayees' may be in similar, if not worse predicaments.' This is a fundamentally true argument in situations of forced migration to which we will return below. Yet, as argued, it is not only the *label per se* that differentiates, but the underpinning 'professionalisation' of the label. Under NSDS, the possibility of shedding its negative connotations was plausible because of the ubiquitous highly politicised oppositional context ruled by anti-Pinochet discourses. Nonetheless, resentment still hurt. Marcia, who, while trying to find an academic job in the mid 1980s, encountered tensions amongst stayees and resentment towards women returnees.

Quena was really good with me but there was this bad thing (onda) that there were a lot of conflicts in that Women's Programme. Also, there was a real fear that returnee women would enter there. These old cows were really scared (se cagaban de susto) with the threat of returnee women entering the Programme because – we are talking 1986 here – at that time Julia Medel who had arrived from

Nicaragua, myself and Vicky Quevedo⁴⁹ who returned from Sweden, entered Quena's Programme. Then one day they told Quena: 'until when are you going to fill up the Centre with "returnee women"?' (hasta cuándo te llenas de "retornadas")? W-H-A-T? It was like saying 'until when are you going to fill up with rubbish?' I heard that and it really hurt me, then I got very angry. I said shit old cows (viejas de mierda) we will show you that we are capable of doing things – after all that we have endured and been through one was willing to do any fucking thing (cualquier huevá)...

This indicates that, in feminist research/academic circles, gender solidarity was almost non-existent and more so against returnee women who were seen as competitors. Studies on the role of returnee politicised women who in exile had formed autonomous feminist groups with their own theories and practices, argue that initial resentment from stayee feminists, soon gave way to collaboration such as in Brazil (Neves-Xavier de Brito 1986; Alvarez 1990). This generalisation was scrutinised by Marcia's experience; her political allegiance was marginal to the correlation of political forces aligning since the mid 1980s.

If, during the existence of the surrogate enclave, returnees were already experiencing resentment and hostility, the end of administrative exile came to erase this 'safety net' for returnees; it immediately brought to the fore their visibility and the attached label that with the increasing number of returns was becoming more apparent. The gulf between stayees and returnees was widening. It is too simplistic to assume that with Decree 303 the politically accepted *exterior/ interior* binary lost its political value. This study suggests that under NSDS Decree 303 the *interior* was strengthened. This explains the increasing rift between returnees and stayees and the ensuing incomprehension of exile. Referring to the rift between artists and writers in exile and those who remained in Chile, stayee novelist Damiela Eltit (Green 2005:166) noted that there was an 'inside and an outside, an exile and an *inxile* which, it has to be said, created a certain degree of resentment...So, I would say that relations between those that left and those that stayed are difficult and definitely marked by mutual incomprehension.' Indeed, this study's data is also indicating that this divide reached hegemonic institutions such as the family and Parties, the very institutions that not only entertained *returnism* but also constituted the pulling factors that Alfonsina called *imanes* (magnets). Resentment was expressed by members of returnees' own stayee families, relatives, and comrades. Returnees expected rejection and resentment from nationals but never as Roberto put it, *from people who think like you*. This was an unexpected and painful experience and something that many respondents could not understand. Yet 'nationals' were also among their own families. The root of such problem can be traced to the UP period. Some conversational partners indicated that since then their families had been politically divided. Others reported no problems. Amongst the former group was Filomena. At the time of leaving the country for exile and saying goodbye to her beloved and distraught father she noticed that for him her departure was the *coup de grâce* of his family. *For my father my family had already broken up because up to the 11th of September we had distanced ourselves so much so that every single day we quarrelled at the table because we all had different political allegiances; after the 11th we stopped seeing each other*. Cecilia, Camilo and Ana also reported similar experiences. As we shall see in the next chapter, these experiences exacerbated returnees' problems. Conversely, for Alfonsina, Abril, Simón, Laura and Gladys, their families were their greatest asset on return. This is important because the

⁴⁹ Real names.

immediate encounter after return is with the family of origin where the returnees find 'nationals' and 'stayees.'

One protective status against resentment and moralising lecturing was that of being part of the political elite. Elite returnees Luis Jara and Ricardo Garrido acknowledged the existence of resentment yet, they excluded themselves from being targeted by it; either they were protected by their high political status both before (both had been Allende Ministers) and during exile or ignored its impact on them. Luis Jara was aware of its existence in both core society and Leftist circles: *There is a certain rejection by the Chilean society that is above all a certain lack of understanding of exile but it also existed even among the Leftist people who struggled here in Chile, they considered the exiliados as privileged. They said: "Youuuu? What are you demanding now if you had a good time abroad, unlike us who struggled here' Well, there is this odious thing here.* Similarly, Ricardo Garrido distanced himself from any form of stayee resentment.

I started noticing that in many conversations there were general opinions against returnees that emanated from the inner soul of people (salían de muy de adentro). Even my son [a stayee] showed it sometimes, not recriminations against the family who went into exile but yes, he differentiated between those inside and those outside (los de adentro y los de afuera). With time I realised that this difference between los de adentro y los de afuera was a wound, a big wound that hasn't healed. There are people that if you scratch them just a little you touch this deep issue and their open disdain. They will easily tell you "no..., you were abroad' or 'you, those who left etc., etc." and all that with the purpose of making you feel uneasy. This happened with very honest people who had returned, who while in exile had fulfilled their political tasks and responsibilities very well, I knew that. They complained that they were being looked down upon...I haven't discussed this issue with people from other Parties but I have with our people, the issue is nailed there. It was a shock.

The interaction between clandestine return and resentment is noteworthy. Though clandestine return was praised and politically valued, a commonsense assumption would be that it both protects against resentment and bypasses the *retornado* label. Yet, this study's data contests the root of such assumption. Marcela's case reveals that clandestine return constituted a boundary that paradoxically was politically and morally too porous to resist stayee's resentment and gendered moralising lecturing grounded in the already discussed *Marianist* ideology. While living clandestinely⁵⁰ Marcela worked for a human rights NGO ruled by, as she put it, *highly militant people* who would certainly resent her having left for exile. Clandestine (yet non-combatant return) was, after all, return *from* exile. Because of her unhappiness of not living in the 'real' country, she had been twice in and out of clandestine life.

I couldn't tell them that I was clandestine but they guessed that I had returned from exile. For them the word exilio meant golden exile, exile loaded with money, exile-dollars, exile-projects, exile-EVERYTHING. Besides, I was a woman with a daughter in one part of the world [Cuba] and another here in Chile. That also implied a world and a history around me that would reveal my exile and so I could not confirm that either; I was still quite vulnerable and living in a sort of limbo. Then I joined the AFDD where I was openly received with "Ah! How wonderful that you lived in exile and you didn't spend time here in Chile because we did suffer you didn't". Or "how awful you had so many partners because here we stick to our partners, you there...because women there..." many other things, stigmatisations and the like. Anyhow, in those circumstances you wouldn't be telling your story and all that, would you? NO!

⁵⁰ Clandestine life took many forms. Marcela's meant having a 'normal' life with a different identity. She ran a household, had a new compafero with whom she had a second child and worked in the surrogate enclave.

Another case in point is that of Loreto who, at the time of the interview in December 2002, was a successful entrepreneur. Loreto jointly owns a printing company with 2 stayee colleagues where she is the general manager. In 1988 they bought the company with a loan for returnees from the State Bank (then *Banco del Estado*). In 2002, the company had a workforce of 84 of which only two were women. After attempting to establish an all-women's printing company, she encountered too many problems with female employees. In a highly gendered culture, female workers were dependent on formal permission from their 'responsible' male relative. In this case, women had to consult their husbands about anything regarding their employment contract. She and her colleague then decided *to do the reverse, let's exploit men, because they have exploited us always*. Being a successful businesswoman for many years, another easy assumption would be that she would be free from any label and would interact socially with both nationals and stayees. However, Loreto still only associates with returnees (mainly women) and female ex-political prisoner peers.

Here I mainly – even almost exclusively – see ex-prisoners, the people who I knew before I was a prisoner had changed; when I arrived here they had changed their opinions, their point of views, so fundamentally my friends are the women who I was prisoner with and I am not a social animal (que bruto que sociable.) I get together with them, we prepare food, go out as a group but I don't have any friends who were not prisoners, they are the result of that friendship that we lived at that time or they are returnees or women friends of those women who have returned but I know no one of the Right, absolutely nobody. But you move in entrepreneurial circles, don't you? Yeah, with clients, full stop.

This evidence indicates that resentment not only led to an unfriendly atmosphere and the ghettoisation of returnees but also the extreme fragmentation of Chilean society that was 'accommodating' returnees according to *individual* pre-existing niches. Despite all the efforts of the assistance sector of the surrogate enclave to protect and assist returnees, the NSDS, through terror and the radical economic and political changes, was extremely successful in disrupting and fragmenting Chilean society even further. If in the years immediately following the military coup, Chile became 'a nation of enemies' (Constable and Valenzuela 1991), the imposition of a model where the individual superseded the collective had tremendous consequences for the Chilean social fabric; it furthered the fragmentation into what this study suggests was the atomisation of Chilean society. Camilo who returned in 1984 experienced this dramatic development that was more evident during the severe economic crisis of the early 1980s. His view was possible because he didn't join a safety 'bubble'. Similarly to Rosario who always worked with vulnerable sectors, Camilo was one of the few conversational partners who, through his NGO, worked with poor stayees. His positioning allows us to comprehend how resentment led to the emergence of 'the Other',

I returned to a Chile that was very inward looking because of the economic needs of many people, living their sorrows individually because there was no legitimacy for their bereavement of their human rights, there was no legitimacy for the bereavement of unemployment, no legitimacy for the reinsertion of those who were returning because they were seen as 'the privileged', those who didn't have economic penuries, those who had academic opportunities, so then everybody from their little hole (hoyito) self-victimised his/her life experiences and so he/she saw the others as privileged. 'The others are indifferent to my pain as relative of a disappeared', 'the others arrive from holiday abroad, having a good time, having had the lot.' Besides, 'they reconstructed their political and social discourse, they had that freedom' but all this here was seeing as out of place with what was being lived here and today...I found a very sick society, I experienced it, I felt it; a very sick society but, regrettably, a society that didn't want to face that sickness. It was like "I am sick and but if the others aren't they are indifferent to my sickness or they do not want to walk with me in the solution of

this sickness." So all the way outs to this problem were individual and with difficult solutions. I experienced that, and I understood it and I also learned from it...

In general, the boundaries between stayees and returnees were determined by what one of Stefansson's (2004) Bosnian returnee informants called 'the monopoly of suffering.' But in this case and even more worryingly, this sentiment had been already present among Chilean exiles in what Carlos Jorquera called the 'Olympiads of suffering' (in Rodríguez 1990:261). Yet, these conflicts were never addressed in exile. On the contrary, political and ideological differences only exacerbated the rift. Major actors in exile such as Parties' sole preoccupation on what was going on in the *interior* both legitimised the rift but also devalued exile experiences. With this antecedent, little could be expected from stayees if among exiles there was an already existing rift regarding who suffered most. In such a competitive culture of suffering, everyone had to establish their credentials. Certainly, these conflicts travelled unexamined to Chile but more importantly they provided the grounds for what Chilean psychologist Rosario Domínguez attending returnees at FASIC, termed a 'perverse' characteristic, 'a sort of competition of suffering' (in Rajević 1987) that would permeate most spheres of returnee's lives. This analysis provides a sounder explanation for the so-called ghettoisation of returnees. The ensuing result was a new social differentiation grounded in a socially constructed returnee identity emanating from assistance.

6.4.1 Resentment and *more* returnee identity

Apart from having political, humanitarian and social dimensions, the returnee identity also carries a cultural dimension that neither poses any threat nor demands any assistance, hence, the more accepted 'foreign' practices associated with it can even be emulated. This is an 'exotic' dimension of the returnee identity associated with the idea of a traveller, of strangeness and of positive difference. This dimension of the identity turned into a conflictive but still a strategic path to 'enter' core society during the interim period; a period of change and relatively open to culturally harmless influences. This dimension was classed and gendered. By the time of the interview, upper middle-class María, who was married to a French national, had been back in Chile for a number of years yet she vividly remembered how she was seen by mainstream society. Though her *retornada* identity appeared 'odd' it subscribed to an idea of exoticism, one of an accepted white 'foreigner' living in the country.

At the beginning people saw me as retornada but not anymore, we have been here for some time now. I even remember that they kept asking me 'Where do you come from? Because of the accent, you see? Because we speak the same language (Spanish in Venezuela), after 15 years the accent sticks. I remember that I spent a lot of time explaining to people that I was Chilean but this thing was rather curious. Even when I answered the phone, "Where are you from? ...I remember that they (Venezuelans) have lovely traditions that I adore! For example, they decorate the front door with garlands of different things and I did that here and so my foolish Chilean friends said "Why do you do that?" [laughs] "Why do you decorate your front door?" ("pa qué arreglai cosas en la puerta?") [more laughs] I found it lovely (precioso) and I love that thing and I can see that it is entering the country now, but when I arrived "Why do you do that?" And now ...some of them are liking it.

Important research on the return of political exiles carried out in Argentina and Uruguay soon after the end of their own NSDS versions (1983 and 1985 respectively), suggested that among the factors intervening in the societal responses to returnees were the relative weight of the return and its impact, the socio-political

background of returnees, and the political and structural changes in the home country allowing return (Mármora et al. 1987). In the case of Argentina, Maletta and Szwarcberg (1985) found that the 'stigma of exile' followed returnees. Yet, these studies only contextualise returnee identity within core society. The returnee identity and its dimensions are socially constructed by both core and *interior* societies. The more positive cultural connotations of the returnee identity as an exotic white 'foreigner' to which Chileans are historically deferential (Solberg 1970), mirrors the acceptance of the positive political dimension associated with the term. Both the cultural and political dimensions of the *retornado/a*, to a certain extent, provided protection from the lesser dimensions of the term and resentment associated to it. In future, the 'exotic' dimension of the returnee identity revealed in this section will serve as a coping strategy during the *integration* process, a point furthered in the following chapter.

As a result of the assistance sector's imposition of the term *retornado/a*, lower middle-class and working-class ex-exiles self-identified with the label (Roberto, Emilia, and Rosalba). Hence, the more post-return difficulties and the higher the degree of assistance, the more the self-identification as *retornado/a*. This is in sharp contrast to middle, upper-middle-class and elite exiles who returned soon after Decree 303 or before the plebiscite. Useful data provided by class and status interviewing during the first part of the interim period was the feeling of freedom from the returnee label and identity. The political atmosphere around the forthcoming plebiscite was reminiscent of the free political elections pre-NSDS. The next section will address the impact of such a pivotal historical-political event on *returnism* and its consequences for the returnee.

6.5 The 1988 plebiscite and the transitional period: *returnism's* changing face

NSDS's Chile was getting used to plebiscites. The first one in December 1974 called for a YES or a NO vote in support for the military Junta. A second one was carried out in September 1980 to ratify the new Constitution that came into effect on March 11, 1981 legitimising the continuation of Pinochet's administration until 1989 with the possibility of his re-election for another term of office lasting until 1997. According to the 1980 Constitution the four members of the military junta had to name a date and a single candidate for the plebiscite prior to December 11, 1989. The date would be 5 October 1988. In this plebiscite Chilean citizens would be given the opportunity to accept or reject a further nine years of Pinochet in office. According to Scully (1995:223) in implementing the plebiscite, Pinochet 'made a crucial mistake by giving various opposition groups the opportunity to agree on a common objective, the defeat of the military dictatorship.' This would be the final plebiscite under NSDS and a fundamentally decisive one in Chile's political future not for its results but for the political process involved in it.

6.5.1 The *NO* campaign and return: the rainbow and ¡*La Alegría ya Viene!* (Happiness is Coming!)

By 1988 the NSDS had lost support both nationally and internationally. Unlike his predecessor, the Reagan administration favoured a policy of improving relations with dictatorships so as to promote democratic transitions. However, after three years of serious protests in Chile, fear of Marxist resurgence

strengthened US interest in democratisation. Commentators argued that the US government feared that Pinochet's intransigence would polarise even more the situation in Chile that in turn would strengthen the position of the Communist Party, one of the most pro-Soviet in the region. Hence, the Reagan administration shifted its 'silent diplomacy' towards the Chilean government to an increasing pressure to obtain significant political changes for the country (IRELA 1986:13-14). With this strategic backing, the conditions for a plebiscite heading towards democratisation were propitious and exiles returning to Chile during the interim period would experience a strong sense of *déjà-vu*. This new context will highlight the dynamic power and metamorphic nature of *returnism* that would render almost invisible the *retornado* identity under an euphoric political climate.

In his discussion of the reintegration of repatriates in Eritrea, Bascom (2005:170) noted that resentment against returnees was almost non-existent. One determinant factor for the willingness to welcome returnees was the 'widespread aura of joyful optimism associated with independence coupled with a strong sense of collective identity associated with participating in the 'long struggle' forging in this manner, 'a deep solidarity during the 30 years of conflict.' Similarly, Kibreab (2002) observed a mutual understanding of suffering between stayees and returnees. Until now one of this study's findings is the noticeable disappearing stayee-returnee solidarity. The interim period offers an interesting scenario to test Bascom and Kibreab's finding as it mirrors the 'widespread aura of joyful optimism' experienced by returning Eritreans. The 5 October 1988 plebiscite and the political enthusiasm arising from the possibility of ending fifteen years of repressive dictatorship provide the backdrop for such testing.

The months preceding the plebiscite witnessed euphoric campaigns for the two options: the *SI* (YES, supporting NSDS's continuation for another nine years) and the *NO* (against it). The YES campaign was dominated by Pinochet as the sole candidate, his staunch property-owning class supporters and Right-wing Parties. Conversely, the NO campaign was dominated by opposition Parties, the support of the remaining trade unions (most in the hands of Christian Democrat leaders), intellectuals, human rights organisations, students, *pobladores* and the 'indirect' support from the Catholic Church with its civic education programmes 'Bethlehem' and *Cruzada Cívica* (Civic Crusade) to encourage people as citizens to register and vote without fear (see LASA Commission 1988; Caviades 1991; Angell 1996). So seductive was this period that many exiles returned explicitly to participate in the *NO* campaign. The possibility of regime change and of consolidating Chile's nation-building was imminent. At stake in this process was the political nature of the State rather than the masculinist institution of the State *per se*. For fifteen years a repressive patriarchal NSDS had been ruling Chile, the prospect of a plebiscite opened the possibility of returning power to a civilian regime. This new national project, as any other, required the participation of women. Following Anthias and Yuval Davis' (1989) argument carried through this study women participate in national projects in manifold manners. In this study, women have been long-distance biological reproducers of the nation; participants in its ideological reproduction and transmitters of its culture; participants in the nationalist struggle for a different *Patria*; and signifiers of national difference as well as being the symbols of a 'new' nation. By now, it is clear that women have also been the reproducers of political boundaries illustrated in the binary YES/NO.

Although women had been participating in the overarching struggle for the return of democracy (Waylen 1993, 1998; Matear 1996, 1999; Valenzuela 1998) that in turn guaranteed a degree of success to their movement (Franceschet 2005), the pre-plebiscite period highlighted even further the political value of women as voters for a ‘new’ democratic nation. Women not only participated in the *NO* campaign (*Comando de Mujeres por el NO*) but also put gender high on the national political arena. With the *Demandas de las Mujeres a la Democracia* women demanded inclusion in the rebuilding of a democratic nation. This proposal focused on civil, labour, and reproductive rights⁵¹ as well as family issues. According to Valenzuela (1998:54), ‘[It] was an attempt to link the women’s agenda to the broader political and social agenda for the transition to democracy.’ The plebiscite period highlighted the participation of both stayee and returnee women. In July 1988 twenty-two feminists groups and eleven well-known individuals took out a full-page paid advert in *La Epoca*, a major opposition daily newspaper at the time, calling upon all Chilean women to participate in the rebuilding of democracy based on gender equality (Shayne, 2004). In order to declare their opposition to Pinochet, women used their public visibility to encourage people to register to vote *NO*. Returnee women joined the campaign.

María returned in February 1988 just when the opposition campaign and the *Concertación de Partidos por el “NO”* (Coalition of Parties for the NO), had been established. The coalition was constituted by the major Parties that existed before the military coup such as the DC, PS, Nuñez and Almeyda faction, PR and a small faction of the rightist National Party and another dozen small parties, but not the PC. To this rainbow of Parties, and, as part of the *NO* campaign, a purposefully founded Party by elite returnee Ricardo Lagos emerged in 1987: the *Partido por la Democracia* (PPD, Party for Democracy). This indicates that the NSDS had failed in its aim of destroying Parties; the existence of a peripheral society prevented this. The coalition was headed by the largest member party, the Christian Democrats with its president Patricio Aylwin, as its spokesperson. February 1988 also saw the opening of electoral registries. Though the level of fear had been reduced by the protests, María’s contribution to the *NO* campaign mirrored the Catholic Church’s work on civic education through *Cruzada Cívica*. Similarly to all respondents in this study, María’s commitment to the homeland was expressed in her foundational decision to return. *I left thinking of return. From the day I left I wanted to return, this was very clear to me, it was a goal.* After years of exile however, for return to materialise an impulse was needed. Apart from having an ambivalent relationship with her host country, particularly as a mother, the political juncture of the plebiscite and the possibility of playing a role in it, and her classed political connections (she was politically independent) provided her with a sufficient ‘return impulse’ to leave Venezuela.

I returned to prepare the plebiscite. XX (she named an elite male returnee politician) – well, we had been university classmates, because I studied at the Catholic University and I was a good friend of his – he told me “please come” (vente) – because at that time we still maintained correspondence (nos carteabamos) – he said “there is a need to prepare the plebiscite here” and so we returned with that purpose. I returned very willingly! (¡con tantas ganas!) I knew that there was a lot to do because people were still scared if they wanted to vote for the NO, people had to be persuaded...

⁵¹ Chile has one of the most severe anti-abortion laws in the world. The right to divorce was achieved in November 2004.

Indeed, the plebiscite raised expectations among exiles. It would mark a turning point in free elections but, above all, as Garretón (1988:23) argued, ‘regardless of whether it takes place or not, whoever the candidate would be, whether the YES or NO wins, this period would unfold new dynamics for a transition.’ The campaign for the *NO* vote involved a door-to-door campaign, small meetings and the production of persuasive media spots. ‘For 27 days each campaign broadcast their TV spot (*franja televisiva*) for 15 minutes from 10:45 P.M. to 11:15 P.M. on weekdays and from 12:00 noon to 12:30 P.M. on weekends with a total of 7,302 spots (Hirmas 1993:85). The powerful role of the ‘alternative media’ in democratisation has been proved to both maintain a tradition of independent criticism and to undermine regime legitimacy (Randall 1998). If this was the case of radio after the military coup (Bresnahan, 2002), the interim period showed an all encompassing democratising media fostering mood-change in Chile. The strategy adopted by the opposition was an optimistic *NO* campaign that targetted women and the young who were found to be undecided voters. In ideological terms, the TV *NO* propaganda appealed to what Bengoa (1996:40-42) termed ‘the lost democratic identity’, that is, it looked at the inside of the country, ‘its intimacy, its people, its landscape, its forests, its poets, its ethnic roots, its culture’... All these were ‘presided over the issue of “dignity.”’ This narrative was congruent with exilic discourses, thus creating an ideological and moral alignment between the *exterior* and *interior*. Equally to COPROREX’s logo, though on a much larger scale, the *NO* campaign ruled out any ‘sordid’ representation of DR. Compared to the drab YES campaign that emphasised what Hirmas (1993) called the “horrors” of the Allende period, that is, shortages, streets clashes, disorder, chaos, property and land seizures to which the nation could go back if the *NO* would win, the opposition campaign adopted a rainbow as its symbol of ‘joyous pluralism’, as LASA Commission (1988:7) put it. The rainbow not only symbolised the numerous Parties of the newly created Coalition but similarly to the sun’s arrival after a storm, the *NO* rainbow represented a promising future after Pinochet’s dictatorship; in Otano’s (1995:63) words: ‘They were selling reconciliation; the affable logic of the rainbow.’ The *NO* became a byword for optimism and joy reflected in the newly composed *NO* hymn *Chile, la alegría ya viene* (Chile, happiness is coming). This idea of a future ‘happy’ nation soon turned into a discourse, and both the hymn and the rainbow became ubiquitous symbols of a ‘new Chile’, thus creating enormous expectations. This was registered in all exile publications. The pre-existing chant *y va a caer* (‘and he will fall’) added even more expectations to the referendum. As will be seen below, the pre-plebiscite period created a plethora of expectations among exile communities, Catholic Church migration-related organisations such as INCAMI, and European and Latin American NGOs.

During the interim period, the slogan *la alegría ya viene*, strengthened the main pulling discourse *El Derecho a Vivir en la Patria*, and in a certain manner, it metamorphosed *returnism*; there was a political shift in the macro discourses of nationhood and nation-building. As discussed, the preoccupation of the peripheral society and the international community had been the defence of human rights where the struggle for the right to return equated *El Derecho a Vivir en la Patria/terra*, as one of the rights to be reclaimed. From the political developments that took place from the mid-1980s onwards, a new political scenario emerged. To the ongoing preoccupation for the respect of human rights, the clear interest for the issue of democratic transition became increasingly dominant. This was reflected in Cecilia and Alfonsina’s decision to leave COPROREX soon after Decree 303 though, according to Cecilia, COPROREX carried

on working for another two years, that is, between 1988 and 1990. With the end of administrative exile, COPROREX's main objective had come to an end, there was no more exile to fight for; the task ahead was to consolidate the transition to democracy and consolidate *returnism*. This is showing that the old actors championing the right to return had lost their political validity. This was illustrated when Cecilia noted that *to tell you the truth I now feel a bit useless because after all that activity (quehacer), I feel...well, the problem is that I am a bit introverted (metida para adentro) and so it is difficult for me to work with other people*. Yet, their contribution to regime-change as political capital would always be acknowledged, thus keeping this dimension of the returnee identity historically appreciated, 'this return had a capital importance in the reconstruction of the opposition movement to the dictatorship and played an important role in the electoral defeat of the 5 of October' (SUM 1989b/n.p) .

However, *returnism*'s era sustained by *El Derecho a Vivir en la Patria/tierra*, continued to be the return banner in exile particularly because the NSDS was still in power and *returnism*'s moral and legal powers persisted, yet, it was now requiring to be articulated by a different political actor with a promising nationhood narrative. This would be astutely provided by a narrative that would focus solely on a democratic future for a Pinochet-free 'Chile'. According to Jocelyn-Holt (1998), the attacks were concentrated on Pinochet rather than on his regime, that is, not on the NSDS. '[I]ronically, the plebiscite structure helped cohere an incredibly diverse and fragile coalition around the one thing on which they totally agreed: no to Pinochet and his regime.' (LASA Commission 1988:7). In ex-President Ricardo Lagos' (2000-2006) words, whose exile ended in 1979 and one of the key figures in the NO campaign, 'the economic system is not in question, what is in question is Pinochet. It is the Patria that is calling us now to this great national enterprise, no colour of the rainbow is too many...'⁵² The epic idea of the nation, still as *patria* but increasingly heralded as 'Chile', was at the core of such discourse. Now, *returnism* as an ideology of nationhood encapsulated in the idea of a future nation recreated as a 'happy' one not only enhanced it but made it more powerful because it promised a radically different Chile. There were NO rallies everywhere in the country, with a final and multitudinous one, "The March of Happiness" converging on Santiago from all corners of the territory. The peripheral society was waltzing. While exiles were 'Waltzing with return' (Ferris 1988), stayees were waltzing with the NO (see Hoy 1988 582:12-18 for *El Vals del NO*). The country was visited by hundreds of foreign journalists, political commentators and observers as well as personalities such as Spain's ex Prime Minister Adolfo Suárez and celebrities like French actor Yves Montand. Video messages from Hollywood actors like Jane Fonda, Christopher Reeve, and Robert Blake inviting Chileans to vote NO and a concert given by Sting in Santiago added glamour to the NO campaign. As LASA Commission (1988:3) put it, 'the whole world was watching.' YES and NO advocates discussed issues related to hypothetical results and their impact on Chile's political future. Numerous writers and artists created poetry, prose and drawings, and some of them were published in *Why NO* (Navarro 1988). Clever broken linguistic constructions were used such as *NO-ticias* (news, which in Spanish is one word), or *Gente como NO-so-tros* (people like US), referring to people supporting the NO. National and international opinion polls monitored the pulse of bombarded voters' 'choices' (Méndez et al.

⁵² Speech during the No campaign available at www.radiocooperativa.cl/documentos. Accessed March 2006

1989). Campaigns for the plebiscite started to change the political atmosphere of the country (see Otano 1995).

The euphoric pre-plebiscite atmosphere was vividly recalled by Ricardo Garrido, who returned soon after Decree 303 was passed, that is, four weeks before the referendum. Though according to such Decree, exiles returning to the country could not vote in the plebiscite, this did not mean that they refrained from participating in the numerous activities organised by the *NO* campaign. Noteworthy is the fact that despite being excluded in the *Comando por el NO*, in June that year, the PC issued a declaration calling on its militants for a *NO* vote. This allowed Ricardo Garrido to participate in the campaign amidst a climate of 'joyful optimism' associated to the possibility of regime-change. His narrative illustrates the dynamics involved in an elite leader return and the impact of returning under such an engineered 'political happiness' annulling in this manner any *retornado* identity yet, restoring his political masculinity. His experience shows both political *déjà-vu* and the inauguration of high expectations with which exiles returned,

*My reinsertion here was one of the most beautiful periods of my life. It was an accident – one can say that because I could have returned earlier. I perceived that in those months before the plebiscite an explosion of optimism occurred in Chile, the dictatorship's days were numbered and it was possible that the plebiscite could be won; these were a series of things that were reflected when I returned. The minute I stepped on Chilean soil I started giving interviews. Then all the political activities that were rather intense during those 2 or 3 months. All those things were tremendously gratifying. At a certain moment I thought that nothing had changed in Chile, that it was the same as before '73. I experienced that climate because when I was walking down the streets, wherever I went, there were people who recognised me, people who had seen in the press that I was back, well, everybody wanted to greet me, it was a special moment, maybe it was the same in the past, I don't know, but these were two or three special months. I think that many exiles felt the same favourable impact I had. First, seeing it as a political triumph because there had been a campaign for the return of exiles, so that we were allowed to return, it was a defeat for the dictatorship and a victory for us. Second, the plebiscite was fast approaching about which there was so much hope. So then, there was a series of interacting factors and I played a political role there. I participated in meetings, rallies, went on tours and many other things during those four weeks. So, in this way it was a triumphant return (todo un regreso triunfante). I do not mean for me personally but rather for all of us who were participating at that moment... So, you didn't feel *retornado* then. I don't know what you mean by that. In the sense of feeling alien (ajeno), an outsider or stigmatised? Oh NO! Nothing like that! I felt I was coming back home (hogar),⁵³ surrounded by people doing important things. Well, that was the sensation at the time. If we had analysed the situation politically, I shouldn't have been so euphoric.... But at that moment, we were talking about a new government, about what the new regime would be like, it was a very special moment. I thoroughly enjoyed that period. Then the presidential elections' year arrived [1989] and things started to be seen differently, but me? I enjoyed my return very much, my coming back (regreso). That moment was like an oasis....*

The existence of such a variety and number of oppositional activities and organisations in which returnees could participate, during what Otano (1995:84) called 'those magic NO weeks' was possible thanks to the overwhelmingly generous international political and financial support. Political support from the US was crucial. President Reagan 'publicly vowed to oppose tyranny in whatever form, left or right. The State Department issued a statement describing Chile's human rights records as 'the greatest disappointment in

⁵³ There is no equivalent word for the English word 'home' in Spanish. *Hogar* (hearth) as used here refers to 'home' in the sense of a familiar place of abode. Stølen (2007) referred to this issue in the case of Guatemala.

the Western hemisphere' and the US sponsored an annual UN resolution reproaching Chile for the first time (Lawson 2005:189). The new Ambassador Harry Barnes was encouraged to establish links with centre opposition groups and a number of government loans were refused. If during the pre-plebiscite period material support had been constantly channelled to a variety of research and promotional institutes sustaining academic criticism of the regime (later playing a key role in the *NO* campaign), it increased considerably as the plebiscite approached. Among its recipients were the opposition media, the surviving trade union movement, the Catholic Church, the centrist Parties and NGOs. Sources specifically aiming at promoting and assisting democratisation, such as the US' National Endowment for Democracy (NED) created in 1984 by the Reagan administration under his so-called "Project Democracy" (Huntington 1991), and the Agency for International Development (AID) increased their financial support to Chile. From the US alone at least US\$5 million went to Chile; of that amount, Civitas (for the *Cruzada Cívica*) received US\$ one million (see Angell 1996; Grugel 1996 for a detailed breakdown and sources of financial support for the opposition in Chile). Though Scott and Steele (2005) cast doubt on the effectiveness of NED grants as an instrument of democracy promotion, they acknowledge the financial support provided by NED to civic and labour organizations for the purpose of organising, developing and support of their activities. There was no shortage of financial support for the *NO* campaign. María, who had returned to contribute in the plebiscite, was quite candid in her comments about this point. As seen above, she had returned seven months before the referendum to contribute to the campaign against Pinochet's intentions to remain in power. Similarly to middle-class Alfonsina, Cecilia and Laura, upper-middle class María joined a human rights NGO where she encountered an unexpected situation.

I arrived in this human rights programme and soon started to realise that it was a dance of dollars! (¡una danza de dólares!), so much aid was pouring in (llegando a borbotones) that at a certain point one didn't know where one was or what was going on because in this programme I'm telling you, they controlled even the amount of sellotape I used! That I shouldn't use too much sellotape, it had to last because there was no money. But, how there is no money? (¿pero cómo que no hay plata?) if the Foundation X gave us so many millions! Hey, (oye) let-me-use-a-bit-more-sellotape-please [laughs]. I tell you, that was the level of things, but I could tell you more, there were two or three gentlemen in that Programme – I can tell you their names – who kept everything... (se lo guardaban todo). The work was very interesting but disastrous because I realised what was going on. It was a big blow for me because you see (ponte tú) I spent all my exile in Venezuela where there was a boom there (vacas gordas) so we had a good situation and my children grew up in a life of plenty. but me, as a good person, I was always thinking of Chile so I told the girls "OK, from all these dolls that you got as presents we are going to choose two and we will send the rest to the poor people in Chile." That was my mentality and so it was a big blow for me because I took away the dolls from my daughters, they didn't need them, but I had the idea that we had to send everything to Chile... So when I saw this dance of money, uff!... I left the Program soon afterwards...

Financial support for the plebiscite undoubtedly boosted the *NO* campaign. Furthermore, by the end of 1985, the economy had begun to recover; according to Eduardo Silva (1991:113), one scholar who paid considerable attention to the NSDS's economy, 'the private sector's confidence was beginning to return, and the national days of protest had ceased to be a threat. Pinochet's regime had weathered the storm.' NSDS's economy policy makers, Silva (1991:103-114) argues, 'shifted from radical to "pragmatic" neo-liberalism. After all, the protest movement gathered voices against an economic model that had imposed unpredictability, unfairness and hardship on them.' Happiness and economic recovery would turn *Chile*

into an attractive pull for return and a smiling *returnism* started to acquire a more official tone in which the language of VRp found a propitious terrain.

6.5.2 The end of political temporariness: the *NO* wins

This study has suggested that in the dynamics of *returnism* different forms of *temporariness* converged. Previous sections have shown that the end of administrative temporariness was embedded in Chile's evolving political process of democratisation. Although this was a positive development in terms of standards for VRp, the repressive and authoritarian character of the NSDS was still in force. To displace the dictatorship from power 'political *temporariness*' would depend on the success of the NO campaign. For some women who followed their husbands into exile, the pre-plebiscite atmosphere opened the possibility to evaluate their personal and political situation through the lens of the referendum. The idea was to consider return. Filomena, who during her exile in Colombia finished her interrupted studies on journalism and later became a foreign correspondent for a Latin American Press Agency funded by UNESCO, went to Chile to report on the plebiscite. The outcome of this historic political event made her think about the end of the conditions that forced her to follow her husband into exile. Though she, as many of this study's conversational partners, was critical of the short-term nature of exile projects that entailed *returnism*, she was always thinking of her return. This was triggered by the ballot-box response to the NSDS. On the evening of October 5 1988, the Chilean population and the world saw an astonished Pinochet and Right-wing supporters lose. A total of 3,967,579 people voted NO and 3,119,110 voted YES, giving the NO 54.71 percent of the vote to 43.01 percent for the YES. The *NO* had won in 10 of the 12 regions of the country. For some exiles this result constituted a necessary return impulse. Filomena said,

I was sent as a special correspondent to report the plebiscite in 1988 and when I arrived here and then the NO won, that is, the transition was coming and the elections were announced for the following year I said to myself the conditions for my exile have ended, that is I left because of specific and objective reasons and those reasons have ended. So, I returned to Colombia to prepare my daughters and I sent them ahead of me in January [1989]. I stayed another two months there arranging the possibility of some correspondent jobs so as to be able to return with some kind of employment because I didn't have any real contacts here. The situation for some Leftist people here was economically precarious but not so much for others...

Filomena's comment points to the voluntariness in VRp's basic principle, that is, the possibility of VRp as a durable solution to refugeehood provided that the conditions in the homeland have changed. For her, who had left as a 'tied' refugee/exile, the promising results of the plebiscite opened the possibility to materialise her foundational decision to return. These two political events were determinant in unmasking *returnism*: the open possibility to contribute even further in nation-building. Parties manipulated this propitious political scenario and the foundational decision to return. In West Germany, for example, Pedro's Party had been emphatically promoting return and that included the manipulation of children and even threats. Chapter Four examined the disciplining role of Parties in exile, particularly the PC. Pedro provides further evidence of the moral pressures involved in a *returnism* that was acquiring disturbing dimensions. Pedro, who experienced a difficult fatherhood in exile and spent his working life as a

veterinarian in two abattoirs and dedicated the rest of his exilic life to party politics, was critical of his Party's moral pressure to return.

...when that famous plebiscite arrived (this started much earlier anyway), then the political parties started to insist (machacar) with "EL RETOOOORNO COMPAÑEROS, EL RETOOOORNO!"... There were always those who had been proclaiming (pregonando) "el retooorno compañeros, I will return and my children too, what about you?... Ah, that's fine". They were giving lessons to you: "you compañero bla, bla, bla" but the children couldn't care less (estaban en otra)... so they started with these things (cuestiones) and even threats. They said that "the Chilean government could possibly recourse to a Nuremberg Tribunal" – the Nuremberg Tribunal in Germany is the one that grants asylum and that is not something that they give to you just like that, you have to produce enough evidence to prove that you have been persecuted here, then they give it to you but that could be revoked – and so they started with those threats that "the Chilean government was going to..." nothing official! just rumours spread by political leaders interested in terrorising people and all that...

The plebiscite undoubtedly added momentum to *returnism*. So far, this study's evidence suggests that VRp as a process requires examining the dilemma of the decision to return and the voluntariness ascribed to it with reference to macro-structures and their own dynamics. Even for those who had abandoned their Parties, return was a Sword of Damocles.

Another statistical indicator of the relative success of *returnism* during this period was the WUS Return Grants Programme. Whereas between 1987-88 out of 555 applications 141 grants were given, in the period 1988-89, 178 grants were approved out of 345 applications (SUM 1989a:3). So what was happening to *returnism*? A plausible explanation was that despite the end of administrative exile, the positive results of the plebiscite, and the hope of a 'happy' nation, the NSDS was still in place and so the enjoyment of fundamental human rights was still restricted. This meant that the re-establishment of bonds between citizen and state was still not effective, something that most Pro-Return Committees in exile acknowledged (see Quintana and Rosendahl 1987 and *Comité* 1989). Conversely, as Holmstrom (1989) denounced, the socio-economic situation of a considerable number of returnees, continued to be a hindrance to prospective returnees. The interim period would show that the success of *returnism* would depend on the resolution of both situations. In this scenario, class as a macro-factor still remained a facilitator of VRp. The widely heralded 'informed decision' only operates when social class is included in the analysis of VRp process. For example, Filomena was able to secure her employment situation before her final return, something that, according to several studies, many returnees didn't do (FASIC 1978; Weinstein 1984). Middle-class Filomena's marital relationship had turned into a kind of soul separation that was lingering on for some time. Though she still lived with her husband, they lived separate lives. *He had a life project and I had mine, he had his circle of friends, I had mine, I participated in politics, he didn't; really, we were together for one objective: our daughters.* Indeed, exile reversed their life projects. Filomena's husband's experiences of imprisonment and torture changed him radically: *he had learned the lesson of the dictatorship.* Involvement in politics means running risks; therefore he turned his back on his experiences of DR and politics, he would avoid its risks at any cost and that included return to Chile. For him *returnism* had no meaning. Hence, *what interested him most was to earn money, be happy, to travel, have a beautiful car and so he turned into an entrepreneur in Colombia.* Conversely, Filomena became more politicised and loyal to *returnism*. The positive political events of the interim period that she was

able to experience on her journalistic covering of the plebiscite highlighted her political affinity with those developments and her affiliation to a democratic Chile; unlike her husband, her 'tied exile status' prompted her to embrace *returnism*. When her journalistic job had ended she returned to Colombia to prepare her return to Chile. Her financial position allowed her not only to return to Colombia but also to take her daughters back to Chile and leave them under the care of her mother while she returned to Bogotá to plan some job security in order to make her return sustainable. Her network of international contacts allowed her to accomplish this aim.

So I returned when I had everything ready, that is, I managed to get three correspondent's jobs (corresponsalias) and besides I told everybody "I am returning to Chile and so any report that would be needed by the television, radio whatever you want, I can deliver it immediately; I will be working 24 hours a day." I contacted a woman from an NGO in France and she asked me to investigate the transnationalisation process of the Chilean economy and so on... (por ahí) I contacted a friend in Switzerland who requested me to research little things and also interviews related to the Latin American political processes and other things (y qué se yo); that's how I returned.

Self-repatriating?

Cases such as that of Filomena have prompted some scholars to argue that Chilean VRp was a case of self-repatriation. Drawing on Llambias-Wolff's (1993) work on Chilean repatriation, Amore (2002) noted that the period 1986-1989, was still characterised by self-repatriation and particularly, 'voluntary independent return.' This argument follows the claim that a significant proportion of repatriation is non-official and refugee-induced (Koser 1993). The idea behind self-repatriation is that refugees return from exile on their own initiative, that is, without government or agency assistance and outside the framework of international protection (Simon and Preston 1993). Does this mean that self-repatriation assistance and support are only overtly exercised? What is meant by 'own initiative' when this study is already demonstrating the synergy of hegemonic structures such as Parties, the Catholic Church, the family and the power of *patria* in a reconfiguration of nationhood where repatriation has already been operating in a *returnism* framework? Seen in this context, the term self-repatriation seems ambiguous. To add more confusion to the use of the term, Bariagaber (2006:133) suggests that self-repatriation 'is characterised by a notable absence of life-threatening pressure and a conspicuous presence of 'positive original motivations.' While the latter part of his argument has not been questioned in this study, the first part is still challenged by the pervasive presence of the NSDS.

Besides, self-repatriation as discussed by Amore and Llambias-Wolff homogenises refugees/returnees, ignores gender and class structures and relations, bypasses links with moral, political and ideological pressures and pays no attention to agencies' agendas and host states' regressive policies, that is, they do not problematise Chilean VRp. In this case for example, democratic prospects in Argentina and Uruguay plus the publication of the tenth list allowing the return of Chilean exiles prompted Mexico, a country stricken by an economic crisis and an inflow of Central American refugees in the mid 1980s, to pressure exiles from the Southern Cone to return to their countries. This appeared in an article entitled '40 thousand exiles "invited" to leave Mexico' written for *Panorama Latinoamericano* (ALA), by Olivia Mora Campos, a Chilean journalist in exile in Mexico (no date). In the UK, pressure was exercised more subtly. To the

development-related repatriation scheme (WUS-ODA) discussed in Chapter Three, Alan Angell favoured the role of refugee community organisations (RCOs),

The second pressure I think but I am not sure about this was from the Department of Social Security that argued that many of the Chileans were unemployed or divorced so they were in a sense costing state money and it was cheaper to send them back to Chile rather than have them here on extended social security. I think those were the pressures. But most of the pressure I think came from the Chilean community itself, that was very strong. From where? There was....[pause] I again forgot the exact name of the organisation.../Chile Democrático? Yes, Chile Democrático was one and another one represented by Hernán Rosencranz on the committee [WUS] and some other Chileans as well on the committee. They were very crucial, they were the major actors.

Yet, equally to many other RCOs (Griffiths, 2002), *Chile Democrático U.K.* was a collectivity run by mostly male-led political organisations; they were not 'just any' exile Chileans. 'Communities' responded to the Parties political agendas for which the power of events in the homeland attached to a patriotic nation-building process shaped exile collectivities and concomitant activities. In 1987, *Chile Democrático's* leadership was rather clear about this, something that shall be discussed in the last section of this chapter.

The interim period therefore constituted a propitious scenario to promote and facilitate VRp. NSDS's measures ending administrative exile and the opposition's victory in the October 1988 plebiscite triggered a steady increase in the number of returnees (see Appendix 4). This meant the end of a successful political strategy to restore democracy in Chile. Pinochet's clear defeat forced him to call for open presidential elections. The international political scenario favoured the ousting of Pinochet. The end of the Cold War and of the Communist threat led to a new emphasis on the development of democratic institutions as well as the increased perception that repatriation was *the* only effective solution to refugee problems. The synergy between national and international political conditions boosted *returnism*, which was additionally fostered by UNHCR's official voice. Two months after the plebiscite Jean-Pierre Hocké, UNHCR's High Commissioner expressed: 'We enter 1989 with a renewed hope that more refugees will be granted their wish to return to their homeland. The Office of the High Commissioner, in keeping with its mandate, will naturally be there to help them' (Hocké 1988:5). The certainty of a civil President was expected to be a decisive factor.

6.6 The 1989 *Gana la Gente* presidential elections: the fading colours of the rainbow

After sixteen years of NSDS's rule, 1989 was the year of presidential elections. The joyful environment left by the results of the plebiscite created enormous expectations of regime-change in the peripheral society, host countries and international refugee agencies. The *Concertación's* slogan during the presidential campaign was *gana la gente* (the people win), and it was, as Otano (1995:86) put it, 'an optimistic message, open, in the line of "*la alegría ya viene*" (happiness is coming). Once again the tap of enthusiasm was turned on.' Yet, for those whose hopes had been placed on a more collective process of redemocratisation, the colours of the rainbow started to fade. Between the 1988 plebiscite and the 1989 election the newly-named *Concertación de Partidos por la Democracia* (henceforth *Concertación*) managed to secure a handful of amendments to the NSDS's Constitution. However, a number of 'binding

laws' (*leyes de amarre*) severely restricting the freedom of action of the incoming government were accepted by the *Concertación* (see Otano 1995; Portales 2000). Among the number of laws passed were those favouring the entrepreneur class who had profited from the NSDS's neoliberal model (*Ley de Estado Empresario*), those favouring the Armed Forces (*Ley Orgánica de las Fuerzas Armadas*) making them practically independent of future civilian governments and the Electoral Law that, among other things, kept intact the voting 'binominal system' that in an antidemocratic way benefits the minority (the Right) and the system of 'institutional senators' of whose number Pinochet would later be one. The ideal design for the opposition after the plebiscite was to negotiate with the Armed Forces in order to modify the constitutional framework so as to proceed with free elections as soon as possible with a single candidate that would transform the *Concertación* into the future government coalition. According to critical commentators (Otano 1995; Portales 2000), these constitutional changes reinforced rather than weakened the economic, political and social system of the dictatorship. In July 1989 these measures were further 'corroborated' by a puzzling *Yes* plebiscite. Critical of the role played by the *Concertación* in the constitutional reforms, Portales (2000:35-47) argued that what went on after the plebiscite was what he calls a 'secret pact' in which the *Concertación* accepted the modification of two key articles (65 and 68) that would allow the future elected government the possibility to approve any legislation without full ratification. Yet, this secret pact needed to be ratified by a plebiscite argued Portales, something that the *Concertación* leadership accepted; losing in this manner the 'immense power that the very original 1980's Constitution gave them. Yet, what is more serious, from a democratic viewpoint, is that these amendments were made to pass completely unnoticed, among the number of constitutional reforms that were plebiscited in July 1989. Practically, no adherent of the *Concertación* (nor of the right, though for these it benefited them) knew that their vote was validating a tremendous transfer of political power to the future right-wing opposition.' Hence, against the backdrop of the imminent election of a President of the Republic representing the *Concertación*, the post ended up with less influence than that originally given by the 1980's Constitution. Portales (2000:43) noted that "democracy" was left even more 'tutelaged' and 'protected'.⁵⁴ This was possible because the *Concertación* imposed a strong elitist leadership. Everything was tied up from the top. Governmental and opposition parties and their rank and file members were left only to obey. 'Concertación's Parties newly arrived to the political arena had to comply with this consensus. According to Otano (1995:84) 'a disciplined and self-regulated democracy was profiling itself, its eyes timidly fixed on not troubling military or business sectors.' This means that the post-plebiscite scenario and its pacted transition was a fundamental turning point in Chilean political history. It is precisely this type of political and ideological compromises that most politically aware conversational partners were highly critical of. For Emilia, who considered herself part of *del perraje* (rank and file), and for whom her revolutionary Party and involvement in their 'national project' were finished, this meant the shattering of a feminine revolutionary political identity solely attached to the political struggle, in which her private life was subsumed by political militancy. In 1988 she attempted to take her own life. Eventually, only motherhood would replace her lost political role and self-worth in life. Emilia also had returned to Chile with a gendered objective, that of 'biologically reproducing the members of the national

⁵⁴ Referring to the type of 'our democracy' that his government would pursue, Pinochet used the terms 'protected' and 'authoritarian' (*Cerro Chacarillas* Speech 9 July 1977 in Pinochet 1977:12-15).

collectivity' (Anthias and Yuval-Davis 1989:7). She decided to have children in *this land (tierra)*, not *abroad and at any cost*. In fact, she had her child during the repressive period that followed Pinochet's assassination attempt in 1986. When referring to the post-plebiscite period she said,

*At that time there was already nothing, there was no partisan life, the Party didn't exist; my family had changed. Because I had changed my blood family for the party family; everything I did was in relation not to the Party but political work and there was nothing else but political alliances and all this shit, then I broke down (me quedó la cagá en la cabeza). I suddenly saw myself orphaned, understand? (cachai?). I was told "nothing exists, try to do your best, try to start anew, have more children, try to study something".. THEN! I broke down and nobody could take away the idea of committing suicide, there was no reason to carry on living.... I broke down, it was an emotional breakdown and there was no way out. And what about your son? NO! because my family did not end at the front door, my family was bigger, with a political definition and that organisation wasn't there any more and I found myself facing things on my own. In those moments of lucidity I phoned a *compañero* who was a psychiatrist and with whom I had been in Mozambique, thank goodness I did it because there are many families who had attempted collective suicide, I was not the only one who was thinking about it, even with their children and so I could be talking to you a long time about it but the pain and sorrow I have is that of many *compañeras*! A week and a half ago Pepone's son committed suicide *compañera*, he threw himself under the train. He got ill after what had happened to his father... [the interview was interrupted by Emilia's distraught accounts]... A HELL OF A CRISIS *compañera*! [still crying]... We were analysing that this thing had been dying since 1986 but when they discharge you that is another matter. That is, you are seeing the symptoms, but you say, these are only symptoms, things can get better, we never expected this result... Regardless of human beings' ideology it is that sentiment of 'you got up to here' that is horrendous because we all have the same sense of commitment and the need to feel integrated, to be useful, to contribute, understand? (cachai?). I finally managed to overcome that but ... I turned introverted and then I didn't want ANYTHING!... I started to get rid of everything that I cherished and smelled of folklore, everything that smelled Leftist. EVERYTHING that smelled of either in the house I got rid of and so there were only bare walls. I never listened to folk music again and I tell you, this went on for months and months! My *compañero* who was a popular folk singer had to play elsewhere. So little by little I started rethinking about what I was doing and if I am not able to support the *Hombre Nuevo*' that we dreamt so much about, let's say in the person of my son, so then I was worth nothing (valgo callampa). So I must start to generate from my own house towards the exterior, but to be well it implied a number of things: to generate an employment, to generate stability for the child, to generate emotional stability... I was taking all that on board (asumiendo) on my own, this time without the help of a psychologist, NOTHING!...*

Emilia's political and personal experiences show both the impact of political marginalisation and the fact that by the interim period, some returnees did not recourse to the surrogate enclave. MIR and PC had been excluded in the democratic transition to democracy. Therefore, returnees belonging to these organisations bore the brunt of a negotiated transition and all the more so women for whom Party membership was giving way to elitism and political dynasties. Women were still expected to play the NSDS's victim role and not of that of strong women who were prepared to embark on more intrepid political actions. After the October plebiscite the gendered political boundaries of the transition were also established. Emilia's disillusion was extended to wider groups. The much lauded strong women's movement, so fundamental in the struggle against the NSDS, lost all relevance. The elite male leadership that had controlled the political project of democratisation from the peripheral society wanted them to play a secondary role as partners and would shortly pigeon-hole them (see Gaviola et al. 1994; Palestro 1999). Otano (1995:65) was rather candid in his evaluation of the outcome of the plebiscite, the suppression of the hard-won civil society and ensuing negotiated transition: 'On that day of massive triumph, by a simple act of omission, the opposition leaders squandered the most effective instrument of social partnership that they themselves had designed. A transition constructed for the people but avoiding the people was decreed there. That marvellous

celebration of democracy ended in *coitus interruptus*, at the beginning of a civil absence.' *NO* supporters were requested by Patricio Bañados, the *No franja* presenter, that 'when the time comes to celebrate do so at home because democracy has space for everybody.' This political fact explains why *returnism* as a nationhood project was losing its pulling effect: not all Chileans within the peripheral society were included in it and less so the more disadvantaged. This evidence refutes facile depictions of non-returning exiles with 'flawed images of themselves as political heroes with the idea of Socialism that implied the painful realisation that the sacrifices and the struggle which had nearly cost some of them their lives had been in vain' (Eastmond 2006:221). After Decree 303 and the plebiscite, political heroes were those already territorialised or who had acquired such status under NSDS' DR/IR *within* the territory; exile, as this study is revealing, never produced any heroes: something demonstrated in Chapter Four with Gazmuri's 'hero's tour' and in this chapter by 'denunciatory return.'

Ruling again: political parties' regained hegemony

One way to integrate into the fading *interior* was by (re)joining a Party. The presidential elections provided a propitious scenario. One of this study's conversational partners who returned during this period was Renato. Soon after returning and even before looking for a job, he joined the campaign for a candidate running on the Leftist parallel list *PAIS* (*Partido Amplio de Izquierda Socialista*). This party operated between November 1988 and March 1990. The aim of the Party, headed by elite returnee Luis Maira, was to register candidates belonging to excluded parties such as the PC and others like the IC, MAPU and PS Almeyda plus all those belonging to the United Left. This political space still constituted a pole of attraction for returnees to participate. Renato was one of them. *I amused myself a bit helping out in the electoral campaign for a senatorial candidate, I can't even remember his name because he is a minor figure (no suena ni trueno), he was running with the support of PAIS that was a party created by the Left, it was something a bit experimental and the candidate didn't win anyway* [laughs].

Undoubtedly, the centre stage actors were now the Parties. This meant that civil society, social movements (including that of women) and those constituencies helping in the restitution of the social fabric such as Camilo's NGO were in the process of being made redundant. The shattered 'backbone' of Chilean society had now recovered and the embryonic democratic State was starting to develop. Camilo, whose NGO struggled to free itself from protective umbrellas such as that of the Catholic Church or Parties, felt the impact of such resurgence more heavily. Because he was new to his resettlement area, he didn't have what he called a *padrino político* (political Godfather) nor an *umbrella* and so when he set up his NGO in 1985 his first workteam was constituted by a multiparty staff (IC, PC, PS, MAPU and MIR). Although he acknowledged that Parties provided certain legitimacy to the trade union leaders attending his NGO's courses he refused to have an organisation that would involve either ecclesiastical or political proselytism.

To a certain extent that was one of my permanent struggles until people had to leave the office. If they weren't incapable of placing a social logic before their partisan logic then no. That is, I acknowledged that there was a right and the need to have a political life and options; what should not be done was to instrumentalise an NGO in a partisan matter.... Now, to present it not so nice, the truth is that we were rather enthusiastic because in the course of 85, 86, 87 and 88 we ran many courses where we trained many leaders. At a

certain point when the CUT was created, of the eleven leaders, eight or nine had taken courses at our NGO. One looked at the metallurgic, textile and forestry federations, practically there were times when an entire leadership had been on our courses; there was a strong trade union influence from our side but, what happens? The transition was approaching, the political parties started to recompose and things like a parliament and democratically elected authorities were re-emerging, all this work collapsed. People return to the regular channels and so they said "well, through my militancy I will reach the Regional Governor (Intendente)" or "through via my militancy I will reach the Labour SEREMI" or "we the coal or forestry leaders will call Viera-Gallo,⁵⁵ we are going to call the parliamentarians and will take them to our work places." So that work we developed inside organisations to build educational and participatory processes was finished (*se rompió*). That capital we had provided diluted itself; we couldn't say that they are not out there but they are not in the spaces we wanted them to be to contribute to a more participatory trade union life...

Camilo's narrative demonstrates that by 1989 'spaces' without Parties' backing ran the risk of being bypassed. The plebiscite had shown the existence of a rainbow of Parties constituting the *Concertación*. Within this coalition, the PDC was not only the largest Party but also the one with an hegemonic trajectory of opposition to the NSDS. Unsurprisingly, the *Concertación* candidate would be PDC's president Patricio Aylwin who in 1988 had been the president of the *NO* campaign. His opposition to the Allende administration and welcome of the military takeover reassured Right-wing Parties of any supposed agreement with the PC (Angell and Pollack 1990). The second candidate representing the Parties of the Right (RN and UDI) was Hernán Büchi, NSDS's Finance Minister 'responsible' for the economic recovery. A third candidate was Centre-Right Francisco Javier Errázuriz. While Büchi's vision of Chilean society was positive ('prosperous society'), Aylwin's was more negative (a 'divided society'). Aylwin's view was politically smart. On the one hand, it prepared the path for the future national project of uniting and reconciling a divided nation as well as excluding any possibility of an insurreccional or violent regime-change. On the other, it was an appealing standpoint for UNHCR and host countries to solve the Chilean 'refugee problem'. In 1989, and acting 'as if he were president-elect' (Angell and Pollack 1990:13) Aylwin visited Europe 'reiterating the commitment of his future government to democratic reconstruction, in developing concrete policies on this issue' (Esponda 1989:177). Thus, in order to reconcile the languishing peripheral society with its core counterpart, the future democratic administration required assistance to dealing with an expected massive return of exiles. The next section considers this issue.

6.7 Preparing for mass return: laying the foundations for the National Return Bureau (ONR)

The prospect of a democratic election was indeed a pulling factor for return and 1989 proved to be an extremely hectic year for *returnism* within the peripheral society. In Chile, the process of transition to democracy and nation-building was to be consummated. The prospect of a massive influx of exiles returning to the country presupposed new challenges. Attention was given to two countries: Argentina and Sweden. These two countries concentrated the largest number of the 'poor exile' (Muñoz 1989; Luján 1997). According to data provided by the Catholic Church, there were 800,000 Chileans living as political exiles in Argentina (Pastoral de Migraciones del Obispado de Neuquén 1981). In August, SUM (1989b) organised the Second Gathering of Argentinian and Chilean pro-return organisations in Santiago. The aim

⁵⁵ Returnee elite PS Senator.

was 'to prepare and coordinate the conditions for such returns and optimise the human and material resources of those of us committed and involved in the task Exilio-Retorno.' The reasons behind such interest in the return of Chilean exiles was the political, social and economic crisis affecting Argentina in 1989 (Muñoz 1989). A document related to the meeting in Neuquén stated that the crisis 'had deepened the marginal condition of our compatriots, to the extent that a significant number have been verified as returning' (Pastoral...1981:2). These were 'desperate returns' pushed by poor political, economic and social conditions in the host country. In general, desperate returns led to serious post-return problems where the 'poor exile' turned into the 'poor return'. These circumstances accounted for the later emergence of returnees' organisations such as the *Comité de Retornados del Exilio* (Committee for the Returnees from Exile) to which we will return in the next chapter. In a nation-building context, a massive 'poor return' could turn unmanageable and complicate the process.

Building on the Papal visit in 1987 who at the time said 'here we are lacking the many Chileans who are scattered around the world', two important seminars on *Exilio-Retorno* took place in Santiago. In August, the International Seminar *Religión y Exilio-Retorno* organised by the *Pastoral del Exilio-Retorno* of the Social Pastoral of the Episcopal Conference of Chile dealt with the efforts of the Chilean and Swedish Christian Churches to link the problems of exile in Sweden with 'the strong cultural difference between Chilean and Swedish societies, where refugees' identity crisis was more accentuated' (INCAMI 1989:1). Exiles in Sweden were characterised in the Seminar by sociologist Orlando Mella as 'the average Chilean, that is, 'they are not fervent Communists nor militant Masons, or the "gente linda"⁵⁶ or renowned politicians... they are 'the 'González, the Pérez, etc., the grey mass, people of black hair, more or less short, with state education, that is, very bad education, and who in their majority lived in neighbourhoods of lower middle-class in Valparaíso and Santiago' (Mella 1989:12). This is the stereotype of the 'poor exile' that was statistically numerous in Sweden and even more so with an accelerated inflow that had arrived between 1985 and 1989 (Klinthäl 2007). Available statistical information on intentions of returning showed that the country with the lowest figure was Sweden (Cuco 1987). The seminar therefore was geared towards what Mella (1989) called the 'economic-political exile' and indeed (though not openly addressed), to the last worrying wave of purely 'economic immigrants' which, in practice, proved to be the most reluctant to return.

A month later, a crucial seminar took place in Santiago, *En el Umbral de la Patria. La Migración Forzada y el Retorno. Los Desafíos de la Transición* (On the Threshold of the Patria. Forced Migration and Return. The Challenges of the Transition). Interestingly, INCAMI, the Catholic Foundation organising the event used the term 'forced migration' whereas before the term 'forced exile' was used to identify this phenomenon (Orellana 1980-81; Villamar 1984). INCAMI was up to date with international migration spheres where this term was replacing 'refugee migration' and controversially introduced in refugee studies (Turton 2003; Hathaway 2007), yet today, forced migration is an accepted concept and a wider field of research. Considering that, for INCAMI, exile and its concomitant problems "constituted a social sin" (INCAMI 1989:85), the issues discussed honoured the title of the seminar: the challenges posed by

⁵⁶ e.g. the Chelsea set.

mass return to a future democratic government. The responsibility to provide recommendations based on both practical and research experience informing the challenges was given to experienced international and national professionals and organisations already operating in Chile such as FASIC and COPROREX. Among the international experts was Argentinian returnee migration scholar Lelio Mármora representing CIM. Mármora gave a master class on VRp in Argentina, Uruguay and Central America. These experiences served as a model to be considered. Participants heard about return policies and domestic return agencies such as CNREA in Argentina, CNR in Uruguay and CEAR in Guatemala, UNHCR's principle of *voluntariness* in repatriation and concomitant implications for returnees' rights, tripartite agreements and much more. Mármora had done extensive research on Argentina and Uruguay (Mármora et al. 1987) hence he could provide important policy lessons from those experiences. UNHCR was present in the person of Belela Herrera. She had been UNHCR's representative in the Southern Cone and Central America between 1973 and 1987. Drawing from her positive experiences in those regions, she explicitly voiced UNHCR's VRp discourse by emphasising one of the main micro foundations of *returnism*: refugees' foundational decision to return. 'But there was a common denominator, both in the Southern Cone and Central America: the profound need and conviction to think about their prompt return. They were leaving their little houses, but dreaming of returning...The most gratifying work available to those people who have participated in helping people to flee, with the pain that means to leave their patria, is to try to see that those people could go back to their country, with all the guarantees and the necessary support to reinsert themselves in that society they had left with heavy hearts when they fled' (INCAMI 1989:152). UNHCR was now coming out of the shadows.

Among the participants were returnees from the 5th Region whose complaining voices were heard. Their realistic post-return experiences challenged Belela Herrera's rosy discourse. Though these returnees remained loyal to their patria, their experiences were revealing the cracks of the narrative *El Derecho a Vivir en la Patria/Tierra*. As an idea of return to the 'homeland' where one belongs, it was a seductive but deceptive narrative and that, in the process of accepting and accommodating expellees was revealing an ungrateful and oblivious '*patria*'. *Returnism* as an articulating ideology of nationhood and national conscience embedded in such narrative was revealing its true colours. The returnees stressed: 'We have the right to live in the patria that saw our birth and for which we will continue fighting tirelessly until we will exhaust all means possible to be assisted in a dignified manner to obtain the necessary support for our reinsertion. It should not be forgotten that from exile we have contributed financially to the Chilean cause.' These returnees' voices were showing that exile *per se* was not considered part of the political history of Chile. Once the October 1988 plebiscite had produced its promising results, returnees lost their political value. The returnees warned: We have arrived to our homeland but would not like to see ourselves obliged to "retornar" [re-migrate] to the countries of exile because of not finding in our patria what we were looking for: A dignified integration' (Holstrom 1989:143). This was the most worrying and pressing issue in this seminar. Referring to the case in Argentina, and representing an UNHCR agency, Jorge Muñoz (1989:158) said: 'Well, if this is happening to the strictly political returnees, the degree of marginality and lack of care that this exile is enduring would pose massive quantitative and qualitative difficulties to this Chile that we all want to reconstruct.' Indeed, *returnism* was now requiring a different

approach considering that the State was liberating itself from the NSD. Practically, the surrogate enclave would be surpassed by the perceived sheer numbers of returnees and more so now that both UNHCR and host countries were openly promoting VRp.

Certainly, returnee's voices made a strong practical and moral impact during INCAMI's seminar. INCAMI's October-December magazine issue *Migrantes* (45, 1989) was dedicated to the Church's future action regarding prospective returnees. The issue was entitled 'Returnees Cannot Wait. We embraced the challenge in a recent Seminar.' One of the articles focused on a eucharist in southern Temuco during the Day of the Migrant. The homily's main message was dedicated to the Catholic family whose task ahead was 'to create a welcoming environment because many of the hopeful have returned, others are packing their suitcases to return to the patria and all of them will have once more a period of painful adaptation because people and things have changed here so, the country is facing the problem of how to receive them in a dignified manner, how to give them opportunities to start their lives again, to heal wounds, to re-establish their families.' (*ibid*:20)

Yet, the Catholic Church was not the only agency preoccupied with this issue. Equally, to Alfonsina and Cecilia in COPROREX, Luis Jara and Miriam Bravo in national 'high politics', Pablo Fuentes in the human rights movement and the *Vicaría*, other returnees such as the Association of Returnees from Great Britain created in 1985, all formed part of the political capital operating under NSDS. With the propitious pre-election political climate and the support of the British Embassy, the Association of Returnees from Great Britain launched the fortnightly magazine *Links* in English.⁵⁷ The purpose of *Links* was 'helping returnees and other Chileans who had lived in that European country to maintain and strengthen their links with that nation' (*Links* 1989:13). Their 'links' were also associated with current politics in Chile. In the second issue they published a column entitled "References to Return Contained in the Basic Principles of the Programme of the Coalition of Parties for Democracy", the coalition of parties discussed above. Some of the issues concerned were the following: restoration of nationality, residence for foreign spouses, clearing criminal records ascribed by the dictatorship, recognition of studies and degrees obtained abroad, pensions rights, access to health system particularly mental health, the unalienable right of all Chileans to live in their own country and proper reception. According to *Links* (1989:7), 'these aspects are all being studied by a working group in the Concertación' which 'sees the possibility of finding work as the key to resolving the majority of the returnee's problems of integration' (*ibid*). Accordingly, three modalities were proposed: 'employment grants similar to that provided by the WUS, employment training and a subsistence grant for the returnee and his/her family to cover the period of training, and a subsidy for a specific period of time that would be paid to companies employing returnees and making a commitment to offer them stable contacts in the future' (*ibid*). While all this is laudable, it created tremendous expectations for those still in exile particularly in a regime-change environment when the 'happiness' created by the plebiscite was still in the air. Deteriorating conditions in countries of exile and improving conditions in the home country have repeatedly been given as the optimum explanation for VRp particularly by UNHCR. The micro-foundation of *returnism*, that is, the foundational decision to return

⁵⁷ *Links* was launched at the residence of former British Ambassador Alan White on 6 September 1989.

plus the expectations of a NSD-free State and gendered family commitments, converged in actual return. Renato and Susana returned in 1989,

Renato: Look, the decision to return was never questioned, that means that I never had to decide to return because for me it was natural, what mattered was when that could be materialised. I could have returned after the Pope's visit in 1987 when I was allowed to return because I was among the 4,942 who could not return and then these shorter lists allowing certain people to return started to appear. I was on one of those. This happened because my mother made some bureaucratic endeavours before the Vatican and the Chilean authorities... when they allowed me I was studying journalism but I had to finish because I would certainly depend on that to settle here in Chile; I needed a profession. That is why we did not face our return immediately and stayed longer in Venezuela. Then we saw that the situation there was entering a gradual deterioration that did not make that country that attractive even though it was still professionally attractive for me. I could have done postgraduate studies for free, something impossible in Chile. Then I experienced the Caracazo.⁵⁸ Susana was already in Chile with Juani [daughter]. [Susana: I arrived with Juani in January because I had to register her in the school in March so she could start her school year from the first day and that would be less disruptive for her. [Renato: I could have probably stayed at that moment but the one who triggered that was Susana who was already here and above all there was all this big perspective after the plebiscite and of the coming year 89, the first elections after so many years of dictatorship, that means "la alegría ya viene" ("happiness is coming") [laughs]... well, we believed in that, didn't we? Certainly, one thought that not only the Rule of Law (Estado de Derecho) was to be restored but also democracy...

Indeed, the latter aspects mentioned by Renato were indicators of political trust for those returning. Undoubtedly, events taking place during the interim period were undermining the power of the NSDS and those returning wanted to be protected and represented by a State free from the NSD.

6.8 Preparing *El Retorno* from exile: the Pro-return Committees

Although the pro-return movement had been operating since the early 1980s, the plebiscite results and the presidential elections produced a surge of conferences, meetings, return surveys, and dealings with local, governmental and international agencies and organisations. European and Latin American NGOs, Pro-return Committees and Commissions gathered to discuss the return of Chilean exiles worldwide. One example of this is the contribution of important Swedish organisations. In 1988, days after the plebiscite, Sociala Missionen and Diakonia, two Swedish Christian voluntary organizations that since 1982 had developed Support Programs for refugees and return (Pérez et al. 1988; SM/Diakonia 1990), organised an international gathering on the return of Chilean exiles. These two organizations had participated in the European Gathering on the Return of Chilean Exiles in Madrid in November 1987. As a corollary of these gatherings Sociala Missionen and Diakonia organised an International Meeting of European and Latin American Pro-Return NGOs between 28-30 October 1989 in Nynäshamn, Sweden. Among the issues discussed were the Human Rights situation in Latin America, Return and Reintegration Policies and NGOs future role in supporting return. Among the participants were representatives of Argentinian, Uruguayan and Chilean NGOs working with refugees and returnees. Representatives of all the NGOs, particularly those constituting the *Comisión* discussed in Chapter Five, participated in this meeting. In an ecumenical environment the central idea of this gathering was to stress the importance of human rights organisations

⁵⁸ See glossary.

as ‘moral vanguard’ in the consolidation of democracy as the prevalence of the NSD in Argentina and Uruguay and its pervasiveness in Chile attempted against such consolidation. UNHCR’s presence in this meeting was interesting. Apart from highlighting VRp’s principles and guidelines and reassuring these organisations that it was willing to support their efforts in facilitating and promoting VRp, the agency ‘washed its hands’ *but* made clear that international law is quite clear on the right to return. ‘...even though it doesn’t specifically concern voluntary repatriation, other international documents assume directly or indirectly its relation with the right to return (Universal Declaration of Human Rights – Articles 9 and 13(2), the 1965 Convention on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination, the 1966 International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights ...’ (SM/Diakonia 1988:19). Considering that Chileans had been heralding their *derecho a vivir en la patria* since the mid 1970s, UNHCR found a propitious scenario to join the two discursive efforts. The rest of the document provides an overview of the specific area of work of each of Chilean and international NGOs participating in this event. What this section is showing so far is that the claim the period between 1986 and 1989 was still characterised by self-repatriation (Llambias Wolff, 1993; Amore, 2002), is insubstantial. The presence of the surrogate enclave from the *interior* in full and the *exterior* represented by the European Network of Chilean Exile (*Coordinación Europea del Exilio Chileno*) and the Pro-Return Programme (*Programas de Retorno*) in Sweden is telling of the role played by domestic and international agencies in supporting both. This is further illustrated by the dissemination of information emanating from the *interior* such as that of COPROREX and FASIC.

Since the mid 1980s a number of ‘manuals’ for sustainable return had been appearing in Europe. In 1986, ABF in Sweden (Inostroza and Ramirez 1986) published a comprehensive and reflexive ‘study material’ on *exilio-retorno* with the purpose of assisting exiles to take an informed return decision. Another example was a bilingual manual (German/Spanish) by WUS-Deutsches Komitee and the German-Chilean Solidarity and Pro-return Committee (Quintana and Rosendahl 1987). Similarly to COPROREX’s *Boletines* and *Cartillas*, both manuals provided information particularly from the surrogate enclave, oriented to promote a responsible return. The ABF one was rather objective. It included the case of a failed Uruguayan returnee woman who attributed her failure to lack of preparation rather than of information. In this study’s eyes the key factors for her failure were classed and gendered. Another feature of the ABF document is its lack of an explicit discursive *returnism* unlike the bilingual one which was boldly entitled *Für Das Recht; In Der Heimat Zu Leben. Por El Derecho a Vivir en la Patria*. *Returnism* appears here as the ‘committed, moral, and patriotic duty to return’ and as ‘a contribution to democracy’, thus providing the manual with political underpinnings. The overall context of this particular manual was positive about return. Even in a more reflexive anonymous article on *desexilio* (post-exile life), where the preoccupation centred around the possible tension between stayees and returnees, it postulates understanding between the two as a crucial step of *desexilio* warning that exile nostalgia should not be turned into *contranostalgia* (counternostalgia) in people’s own patrias. Counternostalgia refers to nostalgia for what people have in countries of exile and would be lost on return. This is a dangerous feeling that could lead to remigration to host countries. The section entitled “*Autoridades and Burócratas*” (:73-95) informs about the rules of the German government concerning the repatriation of Chilean exiles regarding pensions, health insurance, tax refund, loss of residence and related issues.

In Austria, the "Pro-return Committee" constituted by Austrian political collectivities and social organizations that included representatives of the Chilean exile met in 1988 with Interior Minister Karl Blecha 'with the objective of discussing and requesting governmental support to the permanent aspirations of the Committee consisting of those in the organisation and coordination of the massive voluntary return of Chilean exile to its Patria.' The Minister's interest in this issue was welcomed by the Committee that later met with 'a dozen public services officers who in one way or another would be involved with such request' (Comité 1989:13). Indeed, the plebiscite results reignited once again the discourse of the 'old aspiration of all Chileans who live in this country to return in dignity, with hope and without fear to our land that saw our birth and lived a rich and vital experience of a free, democratic and socialist society' (Comité 1989:15). The 'Return Program' supported and financed by the Austrian government was to be implemented by IOM. Initially the Program would benefit 90 families, approximately 360 persons. The *Informe* described the activities and guarantees involved in the Program. These comprised financial assistance: payment of airfares in the cheapest and shortest route, transport of some personal effects, a one-off subsidy for resettlement, a living allowance for a year until the returnee has a regular income, IOM Medical Insurance for migrants that would palliate the private health insurance system operating in Chile, and school subsidy during the first year for 180 children (Comité 1989:17-21). Similarly to Quintana and Rosendahl's (1987) manual, the *Informe* provided information about the agencies assisting return under the umbrella of the *Comisión*. Yet, being a Return Program, the difference lay in the creation of an *ad-hoc* professional Commission that would assist the Executive Committee. The Commission was constituted by five Austrian professionals and one Chilean social worker in charge of providing the maximum possible information about economic, employment, housing, education, health and social security situation in Chile as well as juridical aspects regarding tax and administrative issues in both countries so as to take a responsible return decision. By 1989, similar experiences could be found in Scandinavia, Switzerland and Italy. This was the result of the existence, at least since 1983, of the European Coordination, the umbrella organisation for a myriad of Pro-return committees. Some European governments such as Germany, Belgium, Austria and Switzerland had already contributed financially to the return of Chilean exiles (Bell et al. 1993).

A final conference on return took place in the UK in May 1989. The objective was to delineate a return project and request funding for it. During this conference issues related to the materialisation of return were discussed by an audience of around 200 exiles who elected an Executive Committee; though there was a pro-return committee before this conference, the new one would be *Chile Democrático's* official one. The name of the organisation would be '*National Committee for the Return to Chile, Chile Democrático-GB*'. All the members worked *ad honorem* and extremely hard even occupying their weekends. The first task was to carry out a survey to gather updated information to be presented to funding agencies. In July 1989 a questionnaire in English was sent to 723 households through *Chile Democrático's* mailing list; only 97 were returned. Such a weak response was later corrected by a second and shorter questionnaire that was sent to 100 households chosen at random. 'The questionnaire contained three questions: to determine whether the survey questionnaire was received, if it was answered and whether the

person (or family) wished to return to Chile' (CHD-UK 1989b:4). It was established then that '21 percent should be deducted from the original 723 questionnaires sent out giving a correct figure of 571 to be taken as 100% for the purpose of the extrapolation' (*ibid*). Despite these methodological inconsistencies Victor Hugo Villalobos commented,

The questionnaire provided a series of data (antecedents) that were evaluated. Then the results were related back to the community who were told that with these results we would produce a survey to be sent as a report to different organisations such as the British Refugee Council, WUS, the United Nations, IOM and the Home Office. After that we maintained regular contact with them here in London and in Geneva. Alongside this, there was an interesting process of agitation in which people were very enthusiastic and so a Conference (Convención) of all the existing pro-return committees was organized in Belgium in 1989. The late Hidalgo represented us there and then we could see that we were much ahead of all the other committees but CAREFUL! (OJO!) we did not re-invent the wheel! el retorno was one of the biggest motivations of the Chilean community.

Equally to the results of the 1985 survey carried out by *Chile Democrático*, 85 percent of those who responded to the 1989 questionnaire were willing to return, yet 48.9 percent wanted to do it in more than 2 years, 33.3 percent in two and 17.8 percent within one year. A secondary question asking if they would return with an assistance grant for 18 months showed that those wanting to return rose to 63.90 percent. The main concern was related to employment in Chile followed by housing. What is puzzling about the results of this survey is that by mid-1989 'the great majority of respondents (92.7%) would like more information made available to them. Given the degree of uncertainty about job expectations, the availability of relevant information would be of particular help...' (CHD-UK 1989b:3-4). The lack of information about employment is telling about the information provided by COPROREX and FASIC-PAS *Boletines* and *Cartillas*. This further substantiates a finding in Chapter Five regarding the limited reach of these organisations' information. Today when there is so much emphasis on repatriation sustainability in which information about local economies and social realities play a key role (Hammond 2006), these results are already casting doubt on the possibility of a mass return and more so on its sustainability. This meant that political leaders had to find creative ways to obtain funds. As the head of *Chile Democrático* in the mid 1980s, Carlos did his best,

I think that we arrived at a good agreement with Great Britain because the country was not willing (dispuesto) to give us big sums of money as happened in Germany that helped with money for el retorno - let's be clear - to get rid of Marxist exiles. It was different in Great Britain. For that reason we talked about el retorno with authorities, parliamentarians, and important people. In the end we set the basis for the final agreement in which they would pay us these grants that we conveniently called "Insertion Return Employment Grants" ("Becas del Retorno de Insercion Laboral") ...This deal gave us the grants and I think it was a good way out for the British government because they could elegantly get rid of us and through our own will. We proposed this to them and they found that it fitted perfectly (como anillo al dedo). They organised it and accomplished it fairly quickly. Effectively, this caught their attention because we were the first group of foreigners who asked them "look, we want to go", we were odd (pájaros raros). The rest of the Latin American community found that we were silly and arrogant because for them it was their dream to live in these European countries and we had all the benefits they didn't have, the world turned upside down (el mundo al revés). They were fighting to have benefits with lots of problems because some of them were illegal and we, who had all the benefits were knocking on doors to return and to be thrown out.

If by the mid 1980s VRp was already regarded as the preferred solution by host governments and many of the refugees themselves rather than seeking integration into the host country were hoping to return as soon as possible as the discourse suggests, then the hegemonic structures behind Chilean VRp and not the exiles *per se*, had been successfully championing and implementing the discourse. Exiles' awareness of this situation became clear only when VRp as the preferred solution to the refugee problem was being adopted by host governments and the concepts involved in VRp were unclear. Indeed, the major problem faced by the National Committee, was with the concept 'return'. It is at this juncture that *el retorno*, as it was ubiquitously known, became problematic. Unlike many other issues that were usually divisive and conflictive (López Zarzosa 1991) *el retorno* was a centripetal force. Carmen, who was a member of the Executive Committee, noted that *the truth is that there was a sense of unity in the Left as a whole that el retorno was an important task*. Víctor Hugo Villalobos, another member of the Committee and a managerial respondent, said that once the Executive Committee was appointed in May 1989, *those people who took those posts had the ample support of the Chilean community, something that had not happened with many other projects that had been organised before*. Still, despite the overwhelming moral and political consensus on return, at the time of discussing its actual facilitation as a community, conceptual disputes dominated the Committee's internal discussions. Similarly to the Guatemalan refugees who differentiated between 'repatriation' and 'return' where the former referred to UNHCR's assisted repatriation (*repatriación*) and the latter to a negotiated collective and organised return (*retorno*) under the tutelage of their exile organisation, the CCPP (Stepputat 1994; Egan 1996; Stølen 2007; Long 2008a, b); Chilean exiles were becoming aware of conceptual differentiations. Despite that Chilean exiles had been returning since 1978, it was not until the interim period that as a concept, 'return' became an issue. Seeing return as a human right, Chileans never problematised it. Paradoxically, it was precisely when 'conditions at home were improving', that is, when the NSDS was dwindling, that the concept was scrutinised. This awareness coincided with UNHCR's shifting paradigm. As Chapter One discussed, solutions to displacement and the so-called 'refugee problem' were shifting in nature. Of the three alternatives, that is, local integration, resettlement in a third country and VRp, the latter was now the preferred solution to the refugee problem. Henceforth, Chilean exiles would perceive it more cautiously.

This is a critical point in this study as *returnism* rather than *el retorno* has been used here. Stepputat (1994:181) suggests that in the case of Guatemala, *el retorno* was linked to a normative concept of 'refugeeness' where a 'real refugee' was defined as someone who had suffered violence and dispossession, perceives exile as transient and should not repatriate until conditions are ripe for a communal return. In this study however, refugeehood has been primarily associated with lack of State protection and ensuing direct and indirect repression. As discussed in Chapter Three, immediately after the September 1973 military coup, Chileans sought international protection. Since they left the country and entered their life in the exile, the countries that created and supported the refugee regime and had welcomed them in the mid-1970s were becoming less tolerant towards refugees and were feeling that there was no more room for immigrants of any kind. The refugee problem was reaching such a critical point that the very institution of asylum was being threatened (Loescher 1993). As Keely (2001:304) notes, 'The very notion of repatriation as the preferred durable solution presumes that countries will give temporary refuge.' Therefore, and

considering the analysis done so far, this study suggests that it was not the erosion of the NSDS *per se* but these changes that made Chileans aware of the concept 'return'. This was an issue already concerning *Chile Democrático* in 1987. Despite the fact that Chilean exiles had been returning since 1978, *el retorno* had never been collectively challenged.

By the interim period however, the difference between repatriation and *retorno* was becoming clear; the former was understood as 'forced', the latter as 'voluntary'. This was suggested in 1987 when return was to be discussed at *Chile Democrático*'s Third National Congress in June that year. In their words, 'it is necessary to document ourselves and to elaborate a stand regarding return with the objective of presenting it to the Government, Agencies, Institutions and solidarity organisations, making clear that *retorno* should not be confused with the repatriation policy that the government intends to apply' (CHD-UK 1987:13). Indeed, what was at stake now was the notion of *voluntariness* in repatriation, the most important principle of VRp. Victor Hugo Villalobos, stressed that at that time of the National Committee there was a weakness in the concepts related to repatriation and that conceptual ambiguities were turned into lengthy political disputes,

People wanted to have a program; they didn't see it as something negative, as something that would be a forced return. The concepts 'asylum seekers', 'forced return' and 'repatriation' appeared many times and were thoroughly discussed in the Committee because some people said that what was proposed was not return but forced return and that would be a precedent for people to be expelled from the country. Others talked of forced repatriation and others said that this wouldn't work in real terms.

This is telling. If there was an overwhelming consensus on *el retorno*, the manner in which the actual act of returning would be implemented was divisive. Guatemalan repatriation has been refugee scholars' *cause célèbre*, they have praised the agency of refugees (Stepputat 1994, 2006; Egan 1996; Ackerman 2002; Stølen 2007; Long 2008a, b). Though acknowledging that Guatemalan repatriation has not been entirely successful in the long-term, it has been heralded as one of the most 'politically successful' repatriations (Stepputat 2006). This thesis is more critical of such celebratory outcomes. As my personal experiences of immersion in such a complex process ended up in failed return as did those of Lucía, Sergio and Rosalba, what is required is a more nuanced analysis of such successes precisely because the long-term consequences of VRp are rooted in the political process of democratisation. Views of VRp as political process *per se*, (Long, 2008a, b), do not provide explanations of post-return tensions and failures. Discussions around the conceptualisation of *el retorno*, provide interesting questions regarding the agency of refugees. Victor Hugo Villalobos's accounts were strongly dominated by the issue of conceptualisation as this involved serious implications for the parties facilitating *el retorno* and those 'benefiting' from it. The Committee assumed a tremendous responsibility. This might be a possible explanation for the reticence of some of the approached ex-members of the Pro-return Committee to be interviewed. Indeed, one of the most contentious issues in VRp is that of *voluntariness*, that is, refugees' capacity to choose for themselves whether to leave their host countries. As discussed in Chapter One the main problem with this concept has been its 'historical past' (Chimni 1999) which by 1988-89 was problematic for the National Commission. Up to now, Chileans living within the peripheral society had been rather efficient in promoting *returnism* yet at the moment of negotiating return and of being responsible for collective VRp,

the power of *returnism* was already in the hands of agencies outside their own and so not all Chilean exiles' opinions concurred. Víctor Hugo Villalobos added,

There was an intense discussion during the Conference on Return in May 1989 as well as during our meetings but above all during those organised by Chile Democrático itself; those were debates that lasted entire weekends particularly over the conceptualisation of el retorno actually. That is, the conceptualisation is for example... [pause] there were sectors that...I do not want to give a name to this or other group but there were sectors that said that el retorno was negative because it meant opening the doors to the English government to expel people, that was one. It also meant that el retorno would open the possibility for a forced repatriation, not voluntary and that it would involve very little financial support, that is, very cheap, with which many people were unhappy about (desconforme). Another group said that at the end of the day it would be the return project "Return to Chile" (entre comillas) and so it would be yet another project which was not necessary to support because it would vanish in time as so many others that had been implemented and ended up disappearing. And so we had many problems with the conceptual part particularly and on many occasions, how to explain to people about it!. We, in the Committee, discussed amongst ourselves what we understood by repatriation and even then we did not have a reply for it for ourselves. So we had to discuss this for a long time as well as educating ourselves in the field of immigration law here in London and with those compañeros who had some background in law because we didn't know if we were getting ourselves into a tight spot (si realmente nos estábamos metiendo en un lío) and we would spoil the life of many people from the legal point of view; how to do it for people to keep the door open and have the possibility of coming back if things did not work for them. At the end of the day we put our minds at rest because we were clear that the law allows a person with permanent residence here to leave the country for just two years and so we informed all the compañeros that they should not be abroad (no se deberían alejar) for more than two years because otherwise they would have problems entering the UK, that we left very clear (establecido).

This evidence suggests that ambivalences around the 'official' concept VRp would in the long-term disrupt its sustainability. In the meantime, events were taking their course. Presidential candidate Patricio Aylwin was abroad. Speaking in the name of the *Concertación* during the September 1989 INCAMI seminar, the future Director of the National Return Bureau (ONR), lawyer Jaime Esponda, an advocate of the right to return since the early 1980s (Esponda 1981), reaffirmed the future commitment of the democratic State in redressing the NSDS's wrongdoings, that is, the broken or denied social contract between the Chilean State and citizens would be restored. This claim was illustrated by Esponda's (1989:177) speech. He said: 'In his trip to Europe that is almost concluding, don Patricio Aylwin has reiterated the commitment of the future democratic reconstruction government of developing concrete policies regarding this matter' [return]. In other words, presidential candidate Aylwin was guaranteeing in host countries the safety of Chilean returnees under his future democratic government. Hence, the anxiety of some of the members of National Committee regarding the concept 'return' and the possible encouragement of host countries to making them repatriate was justified.

Esponda added, '[T]he serious responsibility that is borne out of the certainty of the *Concertación's* victory on 14th December regarding this issue obliges us, as in many others, to act with extreme care, without creating false expectations to the diverse sectors of the country that are demanding the solution to the serious problems generated in the last years. For this reason, the definitive policies proposed would be carefully studied. The *Concertación's* Manifiesto indicates that "it will be the democratic government's duty to enact the necessary legal and administrative measures such that the State assumes the duty to repair the inferred material and moral damages suffered by the victims of human rights.'" The final chapter of this study will examine if this claim held substance.

The December 1989 elections were won by Patricio Aylwin with 55.18 per cent of the votes followed by Right-wing candidate Hernán Büchi who received 29.39 percent and populist Centre-Right Errázuriz with 15.43 per cent of the votes. With these results the *Concertación* had commenced an era of governments. President Aylwin would now have the chance to implement what had been promised above with the purpose of reconciling what he had called 'a divided society' and one in which returnees would have a place. In Chile, the *alegría llegó* (happiness arrived).

Conclusions

This chapter has explored the interim period and found it to be a critical turning point in Chilean political history. One particular type of return, that is, denunciatory return contributed to end administrative exile as it showed to be a more 'democratic' type of claim for the human right to return. The political environment of democratisation made this type of return more acceptable and as such fully supported by the 'apolitical' institutions of the Catholic Church and the family and more so if seconded by classed constituencies and women who identified with a male-dominated national project. To some extent, this development contributed to the process of democratisation, something unacknowledged in previous accounts of political exile and democratisation. The end of the administrative temporariness of exile, the positive results of the 1988 and the real possibility of a NSD-free State created a plethora of expectations around a welcoming Chile.

The analysis showed that this was a period in which the *exterior* was aligning with the *interior*. As the political value of the *interior* was coming to an end and with it the availability of 'spaces', the chapter showed that exilic experiences had a lesser value, highlighting in this manner a marked rift between stayees and returnees that only made allowances to the political dimension of the returnee identity while the exotic dimension was accepted as a new 'tolerated other'. This finding is important because it substantiates those of the previous chapter regarding returnee identity. As socio-political developments evolved so it did the returnee identity.

One significant finding in this chapter was exiles' discontent with the ambiguous concept 'return' despite that *el retorno* has been the centripetal force since they left Chile. It was not until changes in the refugee and immigration regime and ensuing host countries' immigration and asylum policies, that VRp not as *el retorno* but as repatriation that Chilean exiles became aware of the dimension of the concept return. It was coming from *outside* the community. What they did not grasp was that return has ideological and structural underpinnings, that is *returnism* not *el retorno*, and as we shall see in the next chapter, it will be articulated by the State. The final chapter of this study will build on these findings and will explore the experiences of returnees in a different political scenario where it was expected that they would do better than under NSDS'rule.

CHAPTER SEVEN

Repatriation under transitional democracy: *Chile Somos Todos*, State returnism

Introduction

This concluding chapter deals with VRp under the democratic transition in Chile. Such a transition was deeply embedded in a global trend of democratisation and repatriations were intrinsic to it. Continuing a policy direction initiated in the mid 1980s and boosted by the opportunities of the end of the Cold War, the new UNHCR High Commissioner Sadako Ogata (1990-2000) declared the 1990s the 'decade of repatriation.' In Chile, the end of the dictatorship meant that by shedding itself of the National Security Doctrine, the transitional democratic State would assume the responsibility of developing a policy to promote the right of Chileans to live in their *patria* and to create the conditions for their reintegration. This chapter addresses these policies as well as the experiences of returnees in a post-conflict context. It argues that during transitional democracy *returnism* acquired its true meaning of nationhood. Democratic State-making required nation-building. The Chilean post-NSDS nation should be a 'unified nation' and to achieve such a goal, democratic State legitimacy would require, among other things, the return of NSDS's displaced citizens. It is from these processes, the chapter claims, that we should look for returnees' grievances. The chapter has three parts. The first focuses on institution-building and State legitimacy through a body of law regarding Chilean VRp. The second examines the experiences of returnees in light of the developments that took place as a result of the implementation of the VRp programme. It furthers an ongoing issue in this study, that of the 'returnee identity'. The final section focuses on the gendered experiences of returnee women and men.

7.1 The establishment of the *ONR* (1990-1994), a State *returnism* agency: Law 18.994

Any nation-building process entails the creation of State institutions as well as legitimacy. The *ONR* (*Oficina Nacional de Retorno*/National Return Bureau, henceforth *ONR*), was one of these institutions. As discussed, the genesis of the *ONR* was found even before the interim period when the existence of a surrogate enclave took care of returnees. The *ONR* capitalised on the achievements of the *interior's* surrogate enclave. This is an important point because most post-conflict return programs seemed, according to the surveyed literature, to have been initiated by the transitional governments and portrayed as if this was a turning point. This has been the case in Argentina (CNREA), Uruguay (CNR), two experiences from which the *ONR* benefitted enormously (see INCAMI 1989), and the South African SARP and NCCR.⁵⁹

⁵⁹ See glossary

On the emblematic date of 20th August ('Day of the exiled') 1990, Law 18.994 created the *ONR* under the aegis of the Ministry of Justice. The *ONR* would operate for a period of three years, that is, until 20th December 1993 and would be a decentralised public service office under the supervision of the President. Law 18.994 contained eleven articles and two transitory articles. This body of law encompassed manifold objectives and duties. It first defined 'who' was a *Chilean exile* qualifying as an *ONR* beneficiary returnee. In general, DR and IR qualified people as a 'political exile' with the added condition that they must have resided in exile for a minimum period of 3 years (see Loveman and Lira 2001:228-232). As a State agency, the *ONR* was a new actor in *returnism's* trajectory. While in the past the task of protection of *exilio-retorno* was left to the dominant axis constituted by the Catholic Church, the Parties and family-related organisations operating in the peripheral society, statist *ONR* would now regulate returnees' VRp and so the initial stages of their lives.

In future, the term *retornado* would be high on the political agenda with the variant *exiliado-retornado*. Unsurprisingly, participants in the "*Encuentro Metropolitano de Retornados del Exilio*" in November 2002, called Law 18.994 *Ley del Retornado* (Returnee's Law). It was telling that, eight years after the *ONR* had ceased to exist, two panelists at the *Encuentro* reminded the audience about the long list of reasons that 'made' a Chilean exile. Most participants, who were disadvantaged returnees identified themselves as *retornados*, highlighting once more the argument that the least valued dimension of the returnee identity is overtly classed.

The Chilean repatriation program started on 8th November 1990 with a tripartite agreement signed between the Chilean Government, UNHCR and the IOM (see Appendix 7). The *ONR* started to operate four days later. According to IOM (1991:1) 'one of the first measures was to open an office in Santiago conceived as "*Centro Inicial de Acogida para los Exiliados*" and to subscribe a tripartite agreement with UNHCR and IOM oriented to channel the cooperation of both international organisations to the Chilean Government to implement its return of exiles policy.' Article III of the Agreement established that 'For the accomplishment of the objectives of this Agreement, the National Return Bureau of the Republic of Chile will function as a counterpart of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees and International Organisation for Migration.' In this manner, UNHCR made clear to the newly established democratic government and to prospective returnees that its mandate regarding VRp was assured in Chile. If under NSDS UNHCR had a ghost role in the promotion of VRp, this time it overtly promoted it. Exercising its mandate, UNHCR stated that '...in seeking durable solutions and cooperation with the governments in the task of fomenting the voluntary return of refugees to their countries, will cooperate with the government of Chile in the implementation of its return programs' (Article IV.1, *Convenio* 1990:2). Although tripartite agreements had been commonplace in VRp experiences in the 1980s, the *ONR* naively stated in a final document (ONR 1994:33) that this 'agreement was the first one of its kind in the world, whose action was key particularly in the initial stage of repatriation of exiles and afterwards, and helped expert international observers to examine this Chilean experience, one which, according to those responsible

for it, deserves to be known and studied.’ Statements such as this one suggests *ONR*’s self-proclaimed legitimacy.

The expertise of the surrogate enclave’s agencies such as the *Vicaría* and FASIC would be central in the institutionalisation of VRp and were the first ones to be *ONR*’s counterparts. In November 1990, the *ONR* signed the *Convenio de Colaboración entre la Oficina Nacional de Retorno y la Vicaría de la Solidaridad del Arzobispado de Santiago* with the prestigious *Vicaría* that principally was to provide legal assistance to returnees. Additionally, there was a framework agreement (*Acuerdo Marco* n.d) between the *Vicaría* and UNHCR (n.d:1). The purpose of this agreement was ‘to structure the cooperation of both Organisations according to the policy established by the Government of Chile’ (E:1). Justifying the reasons for the agreement, Point B stressed the long-term association between the *Vicaría* and UNHCR. This evidence bolsters an argument made earlier regarding UNHCR’s ghostly VRp role under NSDS. The document began as follows: ‘Considering: That this close cooperation between the *Vicaría de la Solidaridad* and the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees has been forged during the last 17 years...’ Certainly, the Catholic Church’s past role legitimised the *ONR* at the highest level. In this manner VRp officially normalised State-Church relations.

ONR’s second agreement was signed with FASIC whose past partnership with UNHCR was an asset. *ONR*’s Director and FASIC’s Executive Director signed an agreement that delineated the main objective: ‘Training the returnees for their integration into the labour market focusing on returnee women...’ This latter agreement was tied to the European Commission and the Planning and Cooperation Ministry. These various agreements stated that the *ONR* had the ultimate responsibility for the implementation and administration of the Repatriation Program yet the activities would be FASIC’s responsibility once the *ONR* had sent them those who qualified as returnees (*Acuerdo FASIC-ONR para la Ejecución de Actividades Componentes del Programa “Retorno y Reinserción de Chilenos”* ALA/AL/RR/1/91 Chile (CE 1991).

Yet, State legitimacy cannot solely be achieved by signing agreements. The intervention of Parties was central. The two previous chapters revealed that the democratic government evolved outside the fringes of the NSDS, namely, from Parties’ roles and their political and ideological developments occurring within the peripheral society. The *Concertación*’s Manifesto regarding *exilio-retorno* spoke of State *returnism*. It stated that the future ‘democratic state was committed to develop an active policy to promote the return of all Chileans to their patria, creating the conditions for their full insertion.’⁶⁰ As Chapter Six showed, the certainty of the triumph of *Concertación*’s candidate prepared the grounds for the creation of the democratic State office in charge of the Chilean VRp and the returnees. Soon after assuming power on March 11th 1990, Patricio Aylwin Azócar, the first elected President since 1970, committed himself and his government to consolidate the long awaited national project of democratisation proclaiming that he would be ‘the reconciliation President’. After

⁶⁰ Programa de la Concertación de Partidos por la Democracia. Bases Programáticas Político Institucionales, 1989. [Biblioteca Nacional Chile]

all, he had characterised the nation as a 'divided society.' The Chamber of Deputies began debating the creation of a State entity in charge of returnees in July 1990 (see Lira and Loveman 2005).

Reconciliation has been central in post-conflict situations, particularly those in which serious human rights violations had taken place to the extent that the reconciliation-repatriation nexus has been heralded as a road to successful repatriation (Purdeková 2008). However, once the reconciliation-repatriation nexus is managed by the State it involves rules, laws and regulations and above all 'force' to oblige conformity to its rules. Hence, the institutionalisation of VRp involved power. The marked 'legalistic' nature of all *ONR* programs reveals a degree of continuity with the historical authoritarian nature of the State (Portales 2004, 2010). If Chapter Three revealed that the NSDS was characterised by a lengthy collection of decree-laws in a strong legalistic framework, the democratic welcoming State appears to follow that same path though to a lesser extent. An entirely new and complex legal framework including laws, decrees and dispositions (see Pereira and Quezada 1992), was not only unknown by the returnees but also constituted the first encounter with the 'reconciliatory' State. A plausible explanation for this legalistic nature of Chilean political culture has been provided by social historians Salazar and Pinto (1999) who critically underscored the primacy of the role of a historically Constitutional and law-producing State as the only legitimate State and embedded in Chile's *Estado de Derecho*. These arguments around the nature of the Chilean State are important when discussing the *ONR* as a VRp State agency because they will explain returnees' experiences and their views on the *ONR* and its policies and practices.

On 24th August 1991, the *Diario Oficial* (edition N° 34.054) published Law 19.074. This law recognised naturalisation, technical and professional titles and degrees obtained in host countries. Then, on 7th February 1992, Law 19.128 granted the 'duty-free' import of household goods up to the value of US\$ 5,000; work and professional instruments/tools up to US\$ 10,000 and the same sum for a vehicle: car or pickup (see Appendix 8), all being for personal use. To avoid customs, returnees could deposit these goods in bonded storage (*almacén/bodega particular*) but a detailed inventory was obligatory. In general, most people sent their belongings in containers either singly or shared them. The latter entailed joint meetings to organise distribution, weight, transport and ensuing dealings in Chile. At times, as in the case of this study's author, these were joyful meetings characterised by rose-coloured expectations towards return and future life in Chile. According to Law 19.128, returnees were allowed to declare their own place of residence to be the bonded store and were asked to sign a letter of guarantee so as to produce the goods when required by customs. To favour those who had returned under NSDS (since 1982), Law 19.128 was applied retroactively. As we shall see below, this law led to a number of serious problems, yet legitimacy also requires discourses.

7.1.1 Chile Somos Todos. Uniting the nation: the territorial face of returnism

As Chapter Three showed, under NSDS Chile became a 'divided country', a 'nation of enemies'. One way to unite the nation was through a discourse which asserted that '*todos somos del mismo país* (we

are all from the same country) in which only one basic entity is acknowledged without the need for acknowledging anything else, we forgive each other because we were either victims or executioners' (Garretón 2000:129-130). President Aylwin called himself 'the President of all Chileans' and started to speak and act on behalf of the total population of Chile, its nationals at home and abroad. He aimed to reunite the nation under one democratic State, namely, to end the peripheral society. After all, he was being loyal to his Party's (PDC) 'National Movement of Democratic Restoration' launched in Europe in October 1977 (*Chile América* 1977:75) whose slogan was *Una Patria para Todos* (A Patria for all). The idea was the territorial unification of all members of the nation which was now free from NSD. This discourse promoted a sense of collective identity and a common nation: one people, one land, and with the ideal of national unity. Similarly to "Simunye" (the Zulu word that translates into 'we are one') in South Africa (Croucher 2004), *Chile Somos Todos*, conveyed an overriding sense of nationhood, a discourse aiming to unite Chileans and overcome the rift that had resulted between the nationals, stayees and exiles. Similarly to South Africa's "Simunye", it created a 'utopian nation out of the chaos' that in this case had been Chile. As Chapter Six showed, the idea of recuperating the exiles was openly discussed during the interim period at the INCAMI seminar (1989:183-187), and was heralded by Antonio Leal, the ex-President of *Chile Democrático Exterior*. For this purpose, President Aylwin engaged in a world tour.

7.1.2 The Presidential Message: the European Tour call for return

The purpose of President Aylwin's tour was threefold: to legitimise his democratic government, to insist that Chile was now prepared to welcome the exiles, and that the conditions were ripe for their reintegration.⁶¹ President Aylwin's European tour as part of his *Proyecto de Orden y Unidad Nacional* (Order and National Unity Project), comprised of three stages. In 1991 he visited Holland, England, Italy and Germany and in 1992 it was the turn of France, Belgium, and Portugal. In 1993 he visited the Nordic countries of Sweden, Finland, Denmark and Norway, which, according to Otano (1995:306), 'had the most demanding test for the whiteness of Chilean democracy. Their opinion weighed enormously within the international community.' Yet, because of his role at the time of the coup, Chilean exiles did not welcome him in the same manner. Comparing exiles' response in Stockholm and Paris ex-President Aylwin said,

I met with all the Chilean residents in every country I visited. There were some parts, especially – I would say dramatic and even tense – for example in Sweden and Norway. In Sweden principally – there was and still is – a numerous Chilean exile and a very challenging (duro) one. Those who went there [unfinished sentence], unlike those who went to the countries behind the Iron Curtain who were more ideological (ideologizados) and got used to totalitarian regimes but to a certain extent changed their vision and became more understanding, those in Sweden [unfinished sentence]...I met with part of them in a big theatre, it was full but those who remained outside insulted me and when we left they threw eggs at us and one hit Sergio Molina in the face [laughs]. I was escorted by the Swedish police and my own personal escort. In all those venues I was very moved by the exiles I met. In France, I remember that I had a very cordial meeting because there was a climate of understanding because I wasn't there to give speeches but to listen and to convey a message that the doors of Chile were open and I understand that all of you have the right to return.

⁶¹ Speeches. Personal archives.

We will look for ways in which we would help you to return. After the Rettig Report [CNVR] and together with the measures to help the relatives of the Disappeared and of the Executed we included certain measures to favour el retorno, to give loans and some support (asistencia) to those people who would return from exile.

The creation of the ONR, the benefits offered to returnees (see Appendix 9), the slogan *Chile Somos Todos*, and the presidential tour, ignited *returnism* for the last time. State *returnism* revived the languishing foundational return decision, made exiles more conscious of the 'uneasiness of exile', and empowered stayee families to encourage their exile relatives to return. For Abril, the family was paramount. She had a refugee cousin (Francisca) who was living with her extended family in Manchester but they had returned in 1990. Her narrative shows that 'return decisions' are prompted by return impulses in which the family plays a central role. Although respondents gave random reasons to return throughout the interview, it was necessary to look for specific reasons. Abril said,

First, the return to democracy in Chile. Second, Francisca's return. That was fundamental because she was the family support (punta) I had there. I used to visit them regularly, that was my family there and so without her I felt very lonely because it was not only Francisca but Victor, Daniel, Francisco, and auntie Mercedes, there were five people and their return was very important for Celeste [daughter]. Another important point was that some of the parents of those friends who had returned died soon afterwards. I was really frightened by that because the same could happen to me and I would not be able to be near my parents in their last years, that made me take the decision apart that in her letters Francisca was always telling me "tienes que venirte, tienes que venirte" (you have to return).

State *returnism* was also stimulated by farewell parties. These parties could be either private (close friends), or open like the ones Parties organised for their returning leaders. These were symbolic events, it made Parties' leaders exemplary models of *returnism*, they were returning to rebuild the democratic nation. Carlos' farewell party had various meanings,

It involved a big, big sentiment, that it was an accomplished task and that I was returning to the unknown because I didn't know what I was going to do. As a leader I had... well, had I been thinking about my children I should have stayed there, we had a good situation mainly in the sense of family stability so, it was madness to return, but being a leader one had to return because if we were talking all the time about return that's what we had to do. A year had passed [since the dictatorship had ended], and I hadn't returned yet, I had mixed feelings almost of guilt because we the leaders, those of us leading exile – I was the president of Chile Democrático for a long time – I had to return, it was yes or yes. I was also very moved because I didn't expect such a lovely and spontaneous acknowledgement because even in the card they gave me it said "compañero Carlos Salas in recognition for the work accomplished. We will thank you always"...I was so pleased and that gave me strength to leave... I had done my duty and the cycle was closed with the support and acknowledgement of my compañeros. That was so important that gave me courage to struggle (para pelearla) here.

Further, State *returnism* was supported by host governments. The mushrooming *Gulas para el Retorno* provided detailed information for an 'informed decision' and host governments' return programmes. Between 1990 and 1994, myriad IOM sponsored *Gulas* appeared in most times supported by exile Pro-Return Committees. Germany, a country experienced in *gastarbeiter's* RM, had various schemes: LARAP, RECHA, REAG and ZAV (see Bäurle 1991). According to Pedro, these programmes gave few benefits and for no more than three months and that it was difficult to enter anyway, they selected people (no era al lote). Other countries followed suit: Sweden (Sjöquist 1990), Switzerland (Programa RCH 1990), Belgium, REAB (Padín y Valdés 1991), Holland

(Sperberg 1994), Spain (Berreiro et al 1991) to name a few. Most *Guías* referenced surrogate enclave agencies (some in partnership with the *ONR*), thus providing legitimacy to host governments' return programmes.

According to IOM, in 1990, 2,132 people returned to Chile (see Appendix 4). The *ONR* will be in charge of their assistance and benefits (see Appendix 9). Because UNHCR continued to support VRp, especially in the context of Third World refugees, the UN High Commissioner for Refugees Sadako Ogata, early in her tenure announced a year of repatriation that soon turned into the 'decade of repatriation', 1990-2000 (Allen and Morsink 1994). Refugees were encouraged to return to their home countries which, as Chapter One discussed, was assumed to be what they wanted. Chilean returnees inaugurated the decade. From 1990 until 20th August 1994, the *ONR* would be a reference point in their lives as returnees.

7.2 *Los Retornados*: visibility and grievances

The creation of the *ONR* mainstreamed the *retornado*. It enhanced returnees' visibility as a different 'category' of Chileans. These 'new *Chileans*' would be identified in relation to their past labels associated with the NSDS. Carlos said: *we were all the 'ADOS' in one: encarcelados, torturados, exonerados, refugiados, and now retornados*,⁶² *all those 'ADOS' marked us, they are a sort of stigma that you have to shed.* Carmen added: *I have a brother in law who is a neurologist who says "you are all uprooted (desarraigados)" he sees us as a psychiatric category.* This view was expressed by a number of participants at the *Encuentro* in November 2002. The perception that returnees were 'trastornados' (insane) was not uncommon; I myself was interviewed for research on returnees' mental health (see Hernández 1996). Furthermore, even trivial aspects such as clothing made them visible. Many female conversational partners complained about being labelled as 'returnee' only because the way they dressed. The idea of a homogenised national unity developed by the NSDS was even reflected in the cultural codes of dress. Similarly to stayees' resentment discussed in Chapter Six, feelings of antipathy towards post 1990's returnees extended to returnees from earlier vintages who had culturally conformed to the *status quo*. The *te vistes como retornada* (you dress as a returnee), mentioned by several female respondents was expressed by Filomena,

The other thing that shocked me was the extreme conservatism. Things so simple and stupid – because you arrive from a country where colour is dominant, you dress with vivid colours and not in black and white. So I used bright colours and EVERYBODY looked at me and said "blimey, your skirt is really colourful" like saying "how horrible!" that is, why do you dress like that! That meant that everything that was different was ugly, everything that wasn't the same as others dressed was bad so there was something wrong with you. And so the rest of the compañeras tried to transform the way you dressed, the way you did your make up, the way you did things, it was to pigeon-hole you with the already established norms. That is to say, if you didn't follow these norms then you weren't part of society.

Moreover, the family played a key role in the 'border guarding' of cultural codes. Such returnee women were seen as separate members of the Chilean nation. In *Ecuador*, Marcia commented,

⁶² Imprisoned, tortured, dismissed, refugees, returnees.

fashion doesn't exist and so when I returned with my out of date fashion, that was also related to my economic precariousness there, the next morning my mother gave me breakfast and told me 'let's go out shopping.' I thought that we were going to the supermarket, NO! IT WAS FOR CLOTHES!
[laughs]

Men were also included and class was an added variable. To avoid being labelled a *retornado*, Mariano was advised by a cousin in advance of how to be a good upper-middle class man in Chile.

I had a cousin who was a doctor who visited me and told me "I am going to give you some advice" and it was in good faith. "You will live with X money, the type of car you have to buy is such, the area where you have to live is such, the shirt and tie you have to wear is such." BUT I have never used a tie! ...He was giving me advice without bad intentions, he wanted to help me, he wanted me to reintegrate. He gave me a sort of decalogue Sad no? It didn't anger me, it saddened me, his outlook saddened me, so in order to survive I had to do all these things. "Look this is my opinion..." He was serious! He was a very dear cousin otherwise I would have told him to fuck off! (lo mando a la mierda!)

Returnees' visibility acquired more serious dimensions with the 'legalistic' nature of the ONR. As noted above, Law 19.128 allowed the 'duty free' import of household goods, tools and a car. Yet the law stipulated that these would be inspected later on in what is called '*aforo*.' Yet, Customs was another bureaucratic entity that returnees had to deal with. Pedro said,

What we brought were all old things! Old furniture, old dishes, old cutlery everything you see here is old! Then they asked me to show everything we brought, EVERYTHING! up to the last knife we had to show it to the customs officer... Well, I had paid an idiot – a bribe you know because I wanted to avoid this thing of 'sign here, sign there, pay this, pay that – but on the 18th September he phoned me and told me "your container is on the street." How come? I had paid that idiot! "Well, we got it and it is in the street and if you want, take your things without declaring them to customs." Almost two years later I received a letter saying "Dear Sir, if you don't notify the list of things you have brought into the country in 48 hours, you have to take them out again." And all this because it was a bonded storage but nobody had explained that to me! They had a copy of our list but we had to show ours, imagine almost two years after! Who keeps a list when one is already in the country!

The most problematic issue with Law 19.128 was related to the import of a car for US\$ 10,000. Two problems were identified. First, those related to the import itself and second, the market value that the import licence acquired. The former only affected the individual returnee. In Chapter Four Ana said that she had made two investments in exile: her son's education and a car. She brought a jeep from the US but *they swindled me, I have had it locked in the garage for six years, I cannot use it, I cannot sell it, I can't do anything!* Chapter Six revealed a dimension of the returnee identity that was more exotic. Return under the ONR furthered that dimension, that of being associated with the notion of a *gringa/o*.⁶³ In her case, what was emphasised from that identity, was naivety. Most stayees referred to returnees as *volados* (up in the air) or *desubicados* (out of place) and because they are naïve they can be easily cheated. When trying to solve the problems with her car it was the naïve dimension of being a *retornada/gringa* to which Ana fitted,

I exceeded the total by US\$2,800. I tried to solve this problem with customs. I went to the ONR and they recommended me a bloke (gallo) who was "an expert on customs." All I wanted was to pay the difference you see? ...This block told me "look madam, don't worry I can solve your problem I know how to deal with it because I have done it many times." Well,

⁶³ See glossary

that car has been locked in the garage for 6 years because customs laid an embargo on it because this famous bloke recommended by the ONR must have had some sort of business with the people dealing with return. I paid him \$500,000 [Chilean pesos] but, do you know what he did? He falsified the customs document and registered the car. Well, I used my car (cacharro) for a year without a problem but one day the carabineros came to impound it. It remained in a car pound (corral) for 3 months. Then a judge ordered that I could keep it in the garage... GRINGA! I could have enquired more. Imagine how much it took me to adapt there [US]. There is a minority who lie and rob or are dishonest there and so I got used to be honest and trust people and so I arrived GRINGA! While I was doing all these dealings a lawyer who had been exiled in Germany told me "Look Ana, if you want to get on in this country you must be a thief, a liar and a trickster...with that moral standard in the ONR (moralidad)." With the passage of time I realised she was right. I was horrified when she said it, oh yes.... how terrible!

The second problem reached disproportionate dimensions. Under Law 19.128 returnees would be forbidden to sell any of the goods they had imported. However, both the imported car and the license harboured fraud and corruption to the extent that by 1993, it became known as 'trafficking of returnees' rights' (see Inostroza 1993:10 for example). The cost of a returnee car was approximately half the price of what it cost in Chile and if the returnee sold the import right, a car dealer would make the purchase and import the car directly; both situations entailed a profit (Riquelme 1993: D2). Not only were import licences falsified but also some disadvantaged returnees sold their right. According to Ricardo Pérez, COPROREX's General Secretary: 'those who had returned from exile have had many problems to reinsert themselves such that they have been forced to sell their licenses' (*El Mercurio*, 1993: C11). This led to the arrest of several people who were prosecuted by Criminal Courts and Customs Tribunals (*Tribunal Aduanero*). Yet, according to ONR's Director, none of those arrested were ONR beneficiaries. None of this study's respondents sold their rights. Susana who worked for the ONR for a short while said:

There were so many lies, so much theft, so much corruption; it was denounced but nothing was done about it... I was reprimanded by the ONR's management because I said to people 'do not return.' I think that the Office earned a fee for each returnee, like trading on the Stock Exchange and that seemed very cruel to me..

All this made Abril comment: *I am very happy not to have thought of selling my right.* At the official level however, there was a certain resentment about *los retornados* who abused ONR's good intentions. This issue, plus the added corruption of the so-called *platas alemanas* ('German monies') with which the State Bank (*Banco del Estado*) committed fraud for which it was unable to respond satisfactorily either to the German government or to the returnees affected, ended up in a regrettable situation for disadvantaged returnees, a situation that seemingly lingers on (see <http://www.retornadosdelexilio.galeon.com/>; <http://www.radiobiobio.cl/2009/09/11/retornados-politicos-exigen-a-hacienda-solucionar-cobros-excesivos>). Furthermore, the opposition and particularly the Right-wing media capitalised on this problem. Through extensive media coverage, the Right's leading newspaper *El Mercurio*, it accused 'unscrupulous beneficiaries', third persons involved, and the ONR as State institution. Pablo Fuentes, who had held an important post at the ONR said,

Beyond the critical perceptions that some people have, it [ONR] was an extraordinarily valid entity that allowed many important things in which there was abuse by the returnees, but that was not the Bureau's responsibility. For example the famous trauma that developed with the

import of cars for the exiliados-retornados in which there was extraordinary abuse that the Right was so interested in publishing as a negative thing... That is why I repeat to you that I am very annoyed (molesto). This undermines considerably the dedication that we have shown during all these years. That there are people who, because they weren't given what they wanted or because their debt wasn't written off, they started developing a light (fácil) discourse that failed to acknowledge what history is and above all it failed to acknowledge what truth is. When one requests credits, one has to pay them and that has made immensely unpopular the exiliados-retornados vis-à-vis the readings that mainstream Chilean society does. If you observe, in Chile today [interviewed May 2004] not much is said about the exiliados-retornados because it is not a pleasant topic due to all these situations that had been developing and when it has been in the headlines it is because the Right wanted it there.

There is an important finding here. Pablo Fuentes' narrative suggests that the denigration of the *retornado* in its criminal dimension is one of the major reasons for the existing silence around return. Three years after *ONR's* establishment, *los retornados* were already criminalised. This would add a new dimension to the returnee identity that would be extremely detrimental. Toledo (1995:76) noted that *ONR's* Director, Jaime Esponda, had explained that 'in Chile the phenomenon of *retorno* is viewed as a problem and that people in Chile identify them as *gente pedigueña*, that is, as people whose main interest is asking for and getting benefits from the system.' *Los retornados* were therefore seen as intrinsically problematic. The commonplace portrayal of refugees as abusive of aid assistance is mirrored in this case with the disadvantaged returnee hence, this new dimension is overtly classed. To cope with the ensuing stereotyping, some middle-class conversational partners recourse to its exotic dimension, that allowed them to raise identity boundaries that, in an historically racist country like Chile (Portales 2010), had its benefits. Pedro, whose second wife was German said: *for us the process of reintegration was faster because she is GRINGA!, That has to be said here, Chileans are racists to the core! (a morir!)* The 'positive' exoticism of returneehood constituted a coping strategy, it shielded returnees from external pressures and more so from gender pressures, particularly separated women. Abril, who moved in high-status medical circles, felt protected by this dimension,

Despite that separations are common, they play with hypocrisy here, it is marriage that gains you respect. The problem of machismo is deeply seated here. Men are always playing with the hormonal thing, that 'you are on your own' that 'you don't have a companion'... This thing of being gringa saves me, it protects me. I am able to go to a wedding on my own and not being nervous because I AM A GRINGA! "She did this in England where it is accepted and we are the underdeveloped ones that do not accept this." Indeed, that helps me a lot here. I am a gringa, so I can get away with it.

Such strategic coping mechanisms however, is a telling example that returnees, including upper and middle-class professionals such as Abril and Mariano, were fending for themselves.

On 20th August 1994 (Law 18.994 was modified in 1993 and the *ONR* was extended for an extra year), the *ONR* ceased to operate ending in disrepute. *Returnism* as a State enterprise was off the agenda. Corruption around the *retornado* issue was its executioner (see Brescia 2001; Lira and Loveman 2005). Henceforth the *retornado* became involved in discourses and counterdiscourses. Arguments tended to draw from the experiences under *NSDS* and more so on the role of the surrogate enclave towards disadvantaged returnees. By the time of this study's fieldwork, Teresa Gómez, ex-surrogate enclave social worker expressed misgivings about the *ONR*. Distancing herself from the *ONR*, she said,

Until 1990 we had important financial resources to assist the returnee population, after that all those resources were channelled to other organisations, fundamentally the ONR, so we lost the possibility to grow...From 1983 until 1990-91(particularly between 1983 and 1986) we provided important support schemes such as house repairs, furniture allowances and a six-month subsistence program and also the Employment Reinsertion Program. That made many people come here. They were manual workers, unskilled labourers, women without a profession and with average or unfinished education. I think that was a central characteristic that differentiated us from the ONR and I would tell you the ONR was a bureaucracy that consumed itself in its bureaucratism, it lost the essential point that it was to assist people with all their problems (toda su problemática), we never lost that perspective even when we didn't have resources. We assisted people who had left for exile for a certain reason, that was never questioned they didn't need to have the refugee status...The ONR was always inclined for those who were political exiles that would comply with what was established there. If the person didn't fit an investigation was made, that was terrible, people felt intimidated, disqualified, of feeling scrutinised and many times they felt as being liars or inventing situations. I think that made the relationship between the ONR and the returnees enormously conflictive, something we never lived because we trusted them (de buena fe)... We had to call the ONR many times to tell them about specific situations, to complain about the treatment that they gave people starting from the queues they had to form waiting with their little number.

7.2.1 The end of spaces: solidarity among returnees?

The two previous chapters have shown the near closure of spaces. The arrival of more returnees after 1990 made this even more problematic. The institutionalisation of *returnism* within the State meant that returnees had to have a link with one of the *Concertación*'s Parties ruling the State. This was the case in the shrunken public sector. At the moment of looking for a job, returnees had to show their political credentials. Solidarity was confined to the hegemonic structures articulated in this study's analysis. Unlike other refugeehood cases, such as indigenous Guatemalans in Mexico (Stølen 2004 2007; Long 2008a, b), Chilean exile was divisive (López Zarzosa 1991, 1998) hence, solidarity was confined to those spheres. The unavailability of 'spaces' contributed to the weak support and lack of solidarity among returnees. Once again, conversational partners pointed to fellow returnees. Despite claims that many of the employees in the expanding globalised business elite of the booming Chilean economy of the early 1990s, 'were 'returning Chileans exiles of the Pinochet years' (Jones 1998:310), the private sector was generally unavailable for returnees, they were still knocking at the doors of NGOs and the new State institutions. Of the twenty-two conversational partners who returned between 1990 and 2002, only Mariela entered the latter sector. Two sectors were particularly conflict-ridden: academia and the fading NGOs. If under NSDS gender solidarity had been limited to political allegiances and engagement in *returnism*, gender solidarity after 1990 was almost non-existent particularly from those returnees who had some influence in the newly created State institutions such as SERNAM, an institution oriented to address gender inequality. Lucía, a 'tied refugee/exile', who did not fit the two valuable roles assigned to women under NSDS, namely, as a symbol or as committed militant or *guerrillera*, returned in 1993 from Ecuador with her two teenage children,

I have moved in various spheres but to tell you the truth, women's solidarity is all talk and no trousers (de la boca para afuera), because at the time of asking them a favour, they give you a blatant NO! But this NO has an explanation. I have experienced horrible things with a fellow university compañera who now has a key post in this institution of women, SERNAM. I asked her for help but she told me "look, I am going to be very hard but I am going to tell

you that there are no jobs for those who stayed here, less so for those who left, so why don't you just go back" but SHE HAD RETURNED HERSELF! That parted me... even having the idea that the best solution is to go back but when they tell you in that way! ...With the exception of a couple of women, when you ask for help to a woman they slam the door in your face, they all look after their square metre... Look, what is really funny (chistoso) is that they are the most patriarchal women, there is self-criticism but not will for change... After all this, I have grown the skin of a rhinoceros here...

This data points to two issues. First the limited circle in which returnees were still moving, that according to Soledad were *islas* (islands) and second, what Emilia called *the culture of the square metre*, that is the safekeeping of spaces by both stayees and returnees. This new evidence suggests that return before the interim period and more so during the mass protests was more sustainable because of the existence of the *interior* society and the surrogate enclave supporting the struggle to overthrow Pinochet while simultaneously protecting returnees. This paradox is explained by Carmen,

those who integrated better into this society were those who returned in 1984. Why? Because they arrived with well paid NGOs. They endured (se mamaron) six years in which they were able to enter this society but with good money. But those of us who arrived in the 90s could go to hell! (que se jodan!) EVERYTHING CLOSED! EVERYTHING CLOSED! plus all that stigma that "you arrived when the dictatorship had ended"... Compare Delfina Pérez with me, she has shares in the Bueno School, earns 3 million pesos per month and she has less education than us, HUEVÓN! it is a bit scandalous don't you think?

The employment solutions for returnees were either to resort to hegemonic Parties or well-connected families, namely, the use of *pitutos*. According to Soledad, *this is the only way that you do a short-cut, in the US is upfront. Thank goodness we have this private employment, if not we would have had the same fate of all those who went back to the US. These are brutalities!* Although WUS and PRAL employment schemes continued alleviating the employment situation, it wasn't sufficient and more so now when the magic word 'project' had lost its power. Unlike previous experiences seen in Chapter Five, some conversational partners expressed strong misgivings about WUS. After finishing her WUS grant Carmen had several jobs and found to be exploited along with fellow returnees. Still, she was harsher with the outcome of WUS grants: *I arrived with a WUS grant but what was that really? It was to employ returnee people for free for a year where they promised you that they would employ you afterwards – LIES!, ALL LIES! Tell me how many people got employed afterwards? There was no support policy for the returnees either from WUS nor from the ONR.*

It is clear by now that, by the mid 1990s, there were no more 'spaces' available for returnees. Only those like Mariano and Soledad, who were highly qualified gerontologists and with financial resources, were able to establish a private centre for elderly people with Alzheimer in the upper-class sector of Santiago. The alternatives for the more disadvantaged was to recourse to loans through the *Banco del Estado* as part of the return programme established by the German and Chilean governments (Bäurle 1991). As mentioned above, this was another episode that contributed to the denigration of the *retornado*. All this evidence points to the nature of non-collective VRp and the nature of the State *returnism*.

7.3. A brief look at the nature of the social contract and reconciliatory State: the evidence

Much has been recently said about VRp as remaking the 'bond of loyalty' between those citizens whose ties with the State had been broken in a violent manner. One theoretical paradigm that has been put forward in post-conflict VRp situations has been the social contract theory (Bradley 2005; McKeever 2003; Long 2008a, b). Yet, what is not explored by these authors is the nature of the State that re-enters into such a contract. Seemingly, this theory seems to fit the Chilean case at the dawn of democracy. Now that the State was NSD free, and that the government was being transferred to civilians, it appeared that State VRp policy would remake the broken social contract with those considered 'enemies' and in this particular case, the exiles. Yet, a thorny issue with the liberal theory of social contract is that of *consent*, its critical constituent. Despite the peripheral society holding a general consensus on the need to replace the dictatorship, consent, as Chapter Five demonstrated, was unclear.

So far this study is revealing that *returnism* as an ideology of nationhood has been mostly heralded from above despite exiles wanting to be agents of their own VRp and contributors to the remaking of the 'bond of loyalty' between citizens and State. This was further illustrated by Carmen who before her return in October 1990, had been a member of *Chile Democrático's* Pro-Return Committee's Executive in the UK. Her narrative challenges the illusory agency of refugees and therefore questions the nature of consent, that is, social contract's core notion,

We started that committee in 1988. With the possibility that there would be elections and a return to democracy we said 'well, we need to decide what we will require for our return and what we could ask of this country.' We were seeing that Germany was giving lots of money to people who were returning; it gave them two years of full salary, the possibility of buying a house etc. and we in England never had that possibility. The only thing that we managed to achieve was to influence WUS to have a positive discrimination policy with their scholarships Programme. Then in 1990 we had a European meeting of all the other Pro-Return Committees. I remember that Esponda went to that meeting as a representative of the government and we asked him then – well, he was there asking very difficult things (cosas re jodidas) of the governments [European] and we didn't like that. Esponda and the [Chilean] government came to ask these governments – and I think they got it and that was terrible, that the governments would give all the funds and support for el retorno directly to them instead of letting us manage things and in fact they received a lot of money. We found that what they did was really bad (super malo) because the European governments gave all their support directly to them and not to us. What we asked Esponda during that meeting was never considered and, do you know what this wretch (infeliz) said during that meeting? that the exiliados-retornados should be in charge of their return but that never happened!

A further problem with the reconciliatory State was the persistence of what Garretón (2000:124) called 'authoritarian enclaves'. This refers not to the legacy of any problem inherited from the preceding military regime but to its constitutive elements which are inherited by the post-authoritarian regime that in turn alters democratic life and popular sovereign expression. These are problems or tasks that weren't resolved during the transition and had to be dealt with by the post-authoritarian regime thus limiting its full democratic character. Garretón identifies four authoritarian enclaves: institutional, ethic-symbolic, actor-related and cultural. Of particular interest here is the second enclave: the effects of human rights violations. This enclave has an institutional character as Amnesty Laws and the failure of judicial institutions to achieve justice still persisted. This is a major problem

not even addressed by the CNVR (1991). It was only after Pinochet's arrest in London in 1998 that the problem of justice began to be debated.

Against this backdrop NSDS's repressive legislation was not automatically repealed. The issue of criminality appeared once more. This was the case of 'Decree refugees' that the democratic transitional State had allowed to return but did not recognise as citizens. They were denied the right to vote and of obtaining a Chilean passport because their 'criminal' records from the martial courts were not cleared. While the NSDS's Amnesty Law (Decree Law No 2,191) was maintained and the perpetrators of violations of human rights protected and pardoned, Decree refugees were still considered 'criminals' with the added aggravation that they were also *retornados*. García Rodicio's (2001:127-130) 'restorative justice' paradigm, where the realms of repatriation, reintegration and reconciliation are interdependent, claims that while under repatriation the legal restoration of citizenship is 'automatic', social reintegration is not. While the latter is now being researched and cited in the body of this study, the former has not. The case of three ex-political prisoners conversational partners highlight the lingering validity of NSDS thus showing the nature of Chile's transitional democracy State. In 2002, Carmen was working to solve Decree refugees' problem,

And they can't say that we are the pariahs, no? There are numerous compañeros who were imprisoned and are now returnees who have no civil rights and cannot vote today, they have political criminal records (prontuarios). When we told this to the representatives of Amnesty International that visited Chile recently they almost fell off their chairs (casi se cayeron de poto), they could not believe it. Because on top of this there is the problem of return and you have a criminal record (papeles manchados) as if you were a terrorist so you cannot work – can you imagine? But at the same time they are pardoning those who have been torturers, those real criminals, a lot of military (milicos) who were and are now retired with millionaire salaries, so what about it? (en qué estamos?)

Even though she could not vote, Margarita's loyalty to the national project of democratic consolidation was vividly illustrated during the 2000 presidential campaign of elite returnee Ricardo Lagos. Despite her disillusion with Leftist Parties and militants, particularly with her PS, she still held great expectations from a future PS President in solving Decree refugees' problems. She said,

*Compañero Lagos was a great hope for us... We made about 2,400 bread rolls in this house, at this very same table to take to the polling stations officers (vocales de mesa) during the day of elections because we had the hope that he could help us to resolve in part this serious problem. No no one is asking enormous programs but a little bit of political will, no more. We realised then that in this country everything remained the same, there is no respect, no help, there is no knowledge about this. Even until today we practically are the pariahs of society. We carry on being pariahs here and I tell you that to recuperate my citizenship rights – do you know what I have to do? I have to go as any delinquent to the jail and sign during five years to erase my criminal record (prontuario) and I am not ready to do that because I am not a delinquent, I have never been one. I was practically kidnapped, horribly tortured and for 8 days disappeared, they even did several mock executions to me and all the horrible things that you can imagine and all because of my political thinking and I am not ready to go to the jail to sign as any ordinary delinquent to be liberated from that sentence and finally be able to vote. I cannot work for the civil service because I have a sentence for life (condena a perpetuidad). Ask the deputies, senators and all the leaders of this Party [PS] and the Concertación how many times we have stated (plantear) this problem. **NOBODY LISTEN TO US, NO-BO-DY!** because for them it would be better if we didn't exist, do you understand?*

Mariano was another Decree refugee conversational partner who couldn't work for the public sector. Being an upper-middle class geriatric doctor returning with high skills in an area yet to be developed in Chile plus enough savings and the necessary equipment to establish a home for elderly Alzheimer sufferers in the wealthy area of Santiago, allowed him to bypass the public sector and enter directly into the private health sector. From his position he speaks for the disadvantaged Decree refugees,

...the other day I went to get a personal record certificate just to see what happens. I had my doubts about it but there it was! In it appeared that I belonged to paramilitary groups and that I was tried by San Antonio N°36 Military Tribunal, condemned to such and such... PARA-MILITARY GROUPS! just like that, I swear to you. All those charges! But imagine what about if I was an NN⁶⁴ with such a criminal record and wants to get a little job (peguita)...PARAMILITARY GROUPS! Huevón! It wasn't as if I was just twiddling my thumbs! I was registered as such and all that story!... Thank goodness I have never needed to present a record certificate, NEVER! But what happens with the NN who has to present one? What has this government done to erase all those lies? Who is going to employ that chap? (gallo?) if he is a PARAMILITARY? NOTHING HAS BEEN DONE IN THIS RESPECT UP TO NOW! That really hurts me. If you compare how many people were in that position and nobody is interested in their stories! NO-ONE! When I tell mine, that is a fairytale compared with theirs!

This concrete evidence suggests the need to have a more nuanced look at the nature of the reconciliatory State repairing the broken bonds between citizens and the State particularly in post-dictatorship contexts. Nation and State-building still requires to acknowledge and include the characterisation of refugees by the States that had created them. In the meantime, women were having additional grievances.

7.4 New challenges to motherhood: departing children

If exile posed challenges to motherhood, return would challenge it even further. Research has revealed that most children and adolescents felt that 'their return' was forced and that their parent's *patria* was hostile to them (López Zarzosa 1995). As Chapter Four suggested, children and adolescents were at odds with *returnism*. On return, this was a pressing issue and rifts were not uncommon. Many times these result in tense discussions where parents and children blame each other for 'the decision to return' and *returnism*'s unrealistic expectations. This was a difficult time for mothers who according to this study's findings, have cherished their children throughout and, with the exception of *vanguardista* women, 'home' was where their children were. Out of seventeen female conversational partners who had children, fourteen of them took all of them back to Chile and most reported having problems with them. Children's decision to leave carries a huge impact for the parents, particularly to motherhood. Female conversational partners, sometimes in a veil of tears, expressed their sorrow when confronting the difficult moment when their children communicate their grievances and ultimately their decision to go back 'where they belong.' In the case of Yiya, Carmen, Abril, Filomena and Soledad, one or two of their children had left for their parents' countries of exile. This constituted another stern test for motherhood, this time in respondents' *patria*. Soledad who had left two grown-up children in the US, brought her youngest son to Chile. At one point her teenager child said *mum, I cannot live in this society, I can't, they are killing me here. You are fantastic but explain to me why do*

⁶⁴ See glossary

you want me to be here, this is your thing, I'm out of it. I understand that you wanted to return and retake I don't know what, but this is your trip. Soon her eldest son intervened from the US: *I think that you are harming Javier, he has to return.* The literature on RM and VRp reviewed does not address the meanings of bringing children back 'home'. In this study it has two meanings, one is gendered and the second constitutes a coping strategy. In Soledad's case, having her youngest son in Chile would help her to continue with the idea of having a family, of being a mother while simultaneously helping her to face return's vicissitudes. His departure constituted the end of such fragile strategy,

First of all it meant a very painful thing because I always felt that my children would have been raised in another way here in Chile, a fantasy at the end of the day. I thought that in having him here he would give me a bit of family. It meant that he would help me with his friends, and groups giving me the sensation of a family... Here we are the two old people and each one taking their own ways. This is the legacy of exile with a family with all my children there [in tears].

Returning to a country that has been ruled by a reinforced ideology of motherhood and of femininity for seventeen years and one in which the family as an institution is paramount, mothers who arrived separated and whose children leave after some time, show the blatant consequences of this powerful intersection. Abril whose only daughter had left by the time of the second interview, was vividly affected by this unexpected experience; the interview was dominated by this major event in her life. In fact, none of these women expected their children's departure. It is through this painful experience that these women scrutinise NSDS's societal legacy of 'good mothering' where single and divorced mothers are not included in the positive images of 'the mother' and *madresposa* (motherwife) (Lagarde 1993). Abril said,

*The most difficult thing I have endured lately has been Celeste's departure, it is very difficult [crying]. I cannot explain this to my colleagues. They think that Celeste is a bad daughter. People have told me that she abandoned me. Some people think that is a good thing because Europe is a paradise... but as soon as one gets to a more intimate level of conversation with them, they tell you what they are really thinking. One of them told me openly: "she is a bad daughter." I said that she wasn't and that I wasn't a selfish mother, but people here don't understand that because being a mother is so dominant here, I am the odd one out ... That is something overemphasised (*sobredimensionada*) here and I think that it has to do with the roles that one plays in society: daughter, mother, wife. They never see them as separated and society plays a role here, that means, one always is playing these important roles that create these dependence ties and overprotection that I found pathological. I think that this has been the most difficult thing, it is another reality in Chile, I am a *madre-huérfana* (orphan-mother) here.*

Yet, this is not the sole motherhood grievance found in the data. Because of children and teenagers uneasiness in Chile, mothers felt the pressure to solve their problems and seek assistance – their lives revolved around their children's well-being. Constanza who before her marriage to a Leftist was an upper-class woman, had separated in exile and had returned with three teenage children in 1991. Because of her downward social mobility in exile and more so on return, she was more conscious of it because she could contrast her past life in Chile with the one she had in exile and then on return. By the time of the interview in November 2002, her twenty-two year old son Rolando who was suffering from schizophrenia had been admitted to a psychiatric hospital twice and had made two serious suicide attempts. The interview was consumed by her problematic life with Rolando's problems and

more so because of Rolando's dominant presence. His interventions overpowered his mother's accounts. When Constanza lifted his jacket sleeves to show the scars on his wrists he said,

I want to forget Chile, it killed me. It killed my childhood, my adolescence and my youth. It is a country with many barriers, complications and prejudices (trancas). They laughed at me in school... This is a matter of life and death. I cannot carry on living in Chile, I am choking. I hate the climate, I dislike everything, everything, EVERYTHING! Anything from Chile, not even how people speak. I told my mum I want to get a visa for Belgium, England, Holland, Switzerland, Norway, Denmark ANYWHERE! Anywhere where there is culture, respect for human beings, where one can better oneself even if it is difficult, it doesn't matter, I prefer to be cleaning toilets rather than having a mansion here...

Unsurprisingly, Constanza was deeply troubled by her son's contempt for her for having brought him to Chile and all the dealings with the ONR's staff to get a humanitarian visa for Rolando to leave Chile. She felt an intense feeling of guilt. One finding at this point was that the more grievances experienced the more returnees and their offspring scrutinised not only the ONR but also the *interior* society and the premium that human rights had placed on victimhood. *I don't know anything about politics but I think Lagos is doing his best because there is more sensitivity now but I have nobody dead, executed or disappeared, and so if you don't have a death in your family you don't have assistance but Rolando is dying in life! (¡muriendo en vida!).* Constanza's narrative shows that resentment during democratic transition acquired disturbing dimensions. It eventually meant that the world of human rights was fragmenting and that exile had no place in it. Emilia added further evidence of this. *Throughout these years the Concertación government had personified the human rights issue in one Association that is the AFDD. So they have both lowered the profile of other human rights violations and legitimised the AFDD as the only human rights entity to be respected and I say this to you with complete responsibility.* At the time of the interview, Emilia's Chile-born teenager child had followed his failed returnee father into Canada. Emilia's husband's failed return is pointing to another issue discussed in Chapter Four, that of revolutionary Leftist men's loss of masculine status as heroes.

7.4.1 The 'heroes' keep falling

The two most important axes of Leftist masculine identity, namely as providers and political militants had been devalued during exile, yet as discussed, it was only indefatigable exile politics that compensated for that loss. The political developments analysed in Chapters Five and Six had rendered redundant revolutionary masculinities and femininities. Conversely, military masculinities, although in the background, remained untouched and feared because of a possible 'U turn'. By now, heroic militancy had lost its value and more so when intersected with masculinity and class. By the early 1990s returnees' average age was forty. Being older, without a political project and poor, male privilege as associated masculinity vanished. As Radcliffe (1993:200) has suggested 'masculinities and femininities refer to the gendered identities created through everyday practices and discourses.' As discussed, the masculinities ruling Chile under transitional democracy had been forged through the discourses championed against the NSDS much before 1990 and by upper and middle-class male professionals associated with the State in the past. Those masculinities created outside those

boundaries were redundant. Referring to those militant exiles that went to contribute both militarily and politically with Nicaragua's nation-building, Marcia said,

Even those Party professional militants who were paid by their Parties, went to conferences and were superaguerrillados, those are the ones that are crushed (se hacen más mierda) because values have changed. One of them told me once "I am finished (jodido) today. When I was in Nicaragua I had lots of women (minas). I was a hero, I was brave, I was OK. Today I am a shit decrepit man (viejo de mierda), a bad provider because I am poor, because I am not professional, what I did in the past is worthless (vale callampa) I am nobody and the women I was used to establish relationships with because I was a self-taught militant with a working-class origin, and a good reader, at that time my compañeras were university professional women who went back to their business and, what do I find here when I return? The old toothless woman," something I find a brutal insult but it's real.

Yiya's hero fell because he had various affairs culminating in a serious relationship. Similarly to the case of lost motherhood seen above, these women never expected a separation after return. They were convinced that having weathered the uneasiness of exile they would face together return's vicissitudes. Still, men had gone back to a remasculinised society and to patriarchal domains framed in national identity. Yiya noted that her husband *became a Chilean again* and that *his eyes got bluer*. Yiya, has been one of this study's conversational partners who by sustaining political temporariness was able to appease her husband's exilic apprehensions. Yiya was deeply affected by her husband's behaviour,

I arrived quite aware of the problems that we would have here: economic and those associated with social reintegration but what I was NOT expecting was that we would separate, that our marriage would enter into a crisis. In general, couples returning... [crying] ...What hurt me more was not that he was playing away from home (que me pegaran en la nuca), but all the lies, SILLY LIES! that was the worst part...[crying] he had been my hero but he had now fallen...

Conversely, returning to a remasculinised society also entailed scrutinising fatherhood, a bedrock of manhood. If fatherhood in Chile has historically been associated to the notion of 'huacho',⁶⁵ (Montecino 1991; Salazar 2006), and in exile to the disintegration of the patriarchal nuclear family with its relevant father figure (López Zarzosa 1998), return would challenge fatherhood even further. Carlos, arrived in Chile with three children. Being a Party and community leader dedicated to public life, he was labelled as an 'absent father' by his daughter's psychologist. Furthermore, because of the problems they were experiencing, his children challenged his role as a father regarding the return decision. Carlos said,

In our culture, and I underline this, we did not consider our children's decision. I would say that we brought our children as luggage (bultos), as bluntly as that... We adults are the ones that determined if we returned or stayed regardless that our children were in the middle of their studies, of adolescence, it didn't matter, we cut all that. We brought them without asking them, we idealised this country for them, and they say here "if you never asked me, you brought me here and with all this you were talking about, Chile this, Chile that." We never thought or listened to our children's opinion. We should have considered them, there was a certain selfishness from our part, we were the important ones, it was our self-development, our dream, but in quotation marks "they paid the price" ("a costa del sacrificio de ellos").

⁶⁵ See glossary

Conclusion

The narratives of respondents have provided concrete data to discuss Chile's official VRp programme and policies and has dealt with very sensitive issues. Although only briefly discussed, it provided rich insights into the implications of a State body of law ruling returnees lives under transitional democracy. The chapter first showed that, despite good intentions, the bureaucratisation of VRp entailed the bureaucratisation of the *retornado*. The chapter showed the extent and manner in which the *ONR* as a VRp State agency created an extra dimension for that identity, and that this one was the most detrimental of all. The ensuing corruption encouraged the criminal dimension of the *retornado* resulting not in a different category of *retornados* but in a lesser strata of Chileans with an inferior status and image. To avoid stigmatisation, the returnees' alternative was to resort to coping strategies associated with the less stigmatised dimension of the returnee identity.

The gendered experiences in this chapter were manifold. Gender solidarity among returnee women was almost inexistent unless they fitted the gender roles ascribed by the powerful *interior* society. In this manner, victimhood was getting narrower. The chapter also revealed NSDS's success in eliminating its most despised type of masculinity and related femininity, those that posed a political threat to the *status quo*. According to the data presented in this chapter, this was a classed process. Being categorised as inferior, the recourse to 'real manhood' masculinity in a remasculinised society was the only way out. Men had to show their manliness either by degrading women of their class or by showing their 'regained' virility and abandoning them. Machismo therefore continues being a prevailing gender ideology. In this context, motherhood is the principal gender bastion left for women. Yet, return sometimes ended up shattering it.

This chapter also showed the gendered complexities of the 'return decision' under *returnism*. Children were key in this problematic. They challenged both 'good' motherhood and fatherhood. The chapter has disturbingly shown that returning to a homogenised, refeminised and remasculinised national community, returnee men and women were questioned by previous vintages returnees and increasingly by their own 'returnee' children. The next chapter will discuss albeit briefly, the findings of this unexpectedly protracted and long study.

CHAPTER EIGHT

Final Conclusion

This evidence-based study has located VRp at the heart of Chile's democratic transition to democracy. The still existing narrow concept of 'politics' sidelined VRp as part of Chile's political history in general and democratic transition in particular. The vast literature on democratisation, human rights, women and *pobladores*' movement has failed thus to explore the fundamental role that VRp played in Chile's democratic transition. The strategy used by this study to achieve this aim was to examine VRp in its own parameters. In so doing, it has advanced a battery of analytical concepts headed by *returnism*. Through returnees' journeys as expellees, exiles and returnees and with the assistance of *returnism*, this study has examined the voluntariness of VRp. In this process, this study has tested the theoretical paradigms advanced by refugee scholars either for VRp under conflict or beyond. This was a necessary exercise as the limited theoretical debates around VRp tend to be dominated by Western scholars and this study author comes from the so-called Global South.

The introduction of class and gender in the analysis has been most beneficial as it has resulted in a dehomogenised view of exiles and returnees. It was from Chapter Three's discussion that differences were found. The focus of much literature on refugees and more so on returnees fails to acknowledge how gendered and classed VRp is. This study has departed from such inadequate paradigm. By articulating these variables, this study has focussed on the differential experiences of exile and return. Hence the findings show that while flight, exile and return are experienced by all those who have left Chile, these take completely different forms. Furthermore, *returnism* as an idea of nationhood, has been lived through the lens of different political projects. It is at this juncture that this study's argument started to be tested. Accordingly, prior to return decision, certain preexisting mobilising structures must be in place. The hegemony of institutions such as the family, Parties, the Catholic Church and the *Patria* were paramount in the promotion and facilitation of VRp. Agency therefore emanated from any or all of the latter more than from individuals *per se*. It was precisely NSDS's brutality, repression and lack of protection that impelled the emergence of the idea of *returnism* and of surrogate protection. Not only were these structures able to operate and cross the boundaries of the NSDS on its own gendered foundations, but they also created the conditions for these structures to operate. Exile's uneasiness contributed to the intervention of important institutions such as Parties and the Catholic Church. By invoking the *patria*, *returnism* was kept alive, thus, what was mythologised was neither return nor 'home' but *patria*. It was at this point that an important finding emerged: 'counterdiscourses' were articulating what was termed in this study the *like with like* argument. The analysis showed that counterdiscourses were struggling against the NSDS using its very same foundations as political weapons against it, particularly its gender ideology and the *patria*. Historically hegemonic institutions and ideologies such as the family and the Catholic Church's moral power and love for *patria* were included in the counterdiscourses. This powerful axis made the NSDS politically porous, enough to be undermined from its very own foundations. It was precisely from this niche that

the discourse struggling against the repressive legislation forbidding return emerged. While the 'right to return' was starting to be articulated in international circles, the Chilean version *El Derecho a Vivir en la Patria* pre-empted UNHCR's. One of the influential constituencies articulating this right was the Party and family-based COPROREX. This creole VRp discourse contributed greatly to the pull on Chilean exiles. The wealth of literature on democratisation fails to acknowledge that it was through that right that the democratic nation was also built. With the moral and patriotic support of the Church, this creole version of VRp discourse legitimated *returnism* at the highest level. By invoking a human right and the *patria*, it appealed to all exiles. Those who returned under NSDS were able to benefit from generous international support for democratisation. This in turn would create further social differentiation among returnees. VRp therefore furthered social stratification.

These dynamics worked within the confines of what was termed 'peripheral society' where stayees, returnees and exiles shared class and gender ideologies. The prompt return of exiles inaugurated *exilio-retorno* mirroring in this manner the protection-solution paradigm. *Exilio-retorno* became an assistance, political, and research issue. One of the findings in this study emerged out of this triad: the returnee identity and its many dimensions. This study claims that the constructed identity of the *retornado* does not constitute a category *per se* because, as this study's analysis showed, its various dimensions emerged out of the consolidation of VRp as a socio-political process. Under NSDS, the *retornado* was almost invisible as one of the characteristics of the *interior* society and more so the surrogate enclave was the insulation of the *retornado* and its problematic. As the political process of democratisation ran its course and reached what this study termed the 'interim period', further dimensions of the returnee identity emerged and these did not amalgamate in one sole identity. From the valued political dimension under the most critical period of NSDS's reign, the *retornado* was acquiring a more assistance-related character. Assistance constituted the embryonic bureaucratisation of the returnee identity, but because it was still insulated within the confines of the *interior* society and the process of democratisation, its negative characteristics were felt individually or at the family level. Once political developments reached the interim period, returnees started to acquire more visibility. Yet, it was not until the establishment of the State agency *ONR* that the identity was fully bureaucratised. From a valued political being participating in Chile's democratic process it disturbingly ended up being criminalised and stigmatised. So powerful was the latter that the other dimensions were overridden to the extent that even the benign exoticism of the identity had ambivalent results.

Another major finding in this study was that solidarity among returnees was solely based on political grounds. The paramourcy of the political struggle for the demise of Pinochet, pigeon-holed solidarity to the extent that gender solidarity was also based on those grounds. So, when moving to the *ONR* period, gender solidarity was almost nonexistent. Furthermore, out of NSDS emerged distinctive gender role models that invalidated any other except that of the 'good mother'; that in this study constituted a continuum. Yet, lack of solidarity was also associated with the availability of spaces. While under NSDS these could be created via 'projects', NGOs and alternative spaces associated to

international cooperation and large inflows of financial resources promoting democratisation, the arrival of the *ONR* as a State agency meant that spaces became directly associated with the reinstated hegemony of male-led Parties now in power. Those who had abandoned political militancy in exile and or whose political projects became sidelined during the pacted transition, had the least possibility of finding a space unless their class position allowed them to create their own or recourse to what Filomena called *plaits* of influence. This study therefore suggests that this is a valid finding to explain 'failed return'.

One of the most striking findings however, was the absolute oblivion for the experience of exile not as a political fact, namely exile politics, but as a socio-cultural experience. Chapter Four dwelt on those experiences yet, on return, exile had no validity unless it was connected to a Party network. Important experiences such as non-political solidarity or educational work attracted no interest. In such narrative, 'tied' refugeehood had no place and once more this was usually classed. Almost all of this study's conversational partners accounts dwelt at length on the issue of resentment. It can therefore be suggested that the power of the *interior* society provided masculinist traits such as prestige, bravery, heroism, and resilience, that in a wider context of emasculation, degradation, and arrogance helped to sustain political masculinities and hence the project of *returnism*. It can be suggested therefore that Chilean VRp was an elitist masculinist non-revolutionary project aimed at rebuilding masculinist entities such as the State and the *patria*. The latter provided a significant model of homogeneity that erased all differences and engendered nostalgia. It was through the idea of nationhood that VRp discourses and practices both under NSDS and *ONR* glossed over the actual experiences of returnees. By exploring how voluntary, how gendered and how classed Chilean VRp had been with the assistance of the concepts introduced in this study, it has been possible to reveal such experiences. Returnees provided the necessary evidence and their own meanings of the political process of VRp that itself was engrained in the wider context of democratisation and the international promotion and facilitation of VRp.

Finally, because this study has concluded with a certain unease regarding the nature of the changes encountered by returnees at 'home', a possible future research agenda should explore in depth those changes considering the entire cycle of refugees' journeys.

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Work consulted in the Refugee Studies field

Various bodies of Refugee Studies literature constituted a background for this thesis. Among these were: the literature on the Right of Return (specifically the case of Palestinian refugees), the work of feminist refugee scholars such as that in the voluminous collection of papers in *Gender Issues, Refugees and Development Implications* (York University, May 9-11, 1993). On nation-building and repatriation, the work of Janet Gruber on post-conflict reconstruction provided an impetus for theoretical orientation.

* Locations of unpublished and restricted distribution documents and reports are provided.

Appendix 1

List of respondents – “conversational partners”

	Pseudonym	Age at exit	Sex	Country of exile	Year of return	Period of return
1	Abril	25	Female	United Kingdom	1993	III
2	Alfonsina	40	Female	Spain/West Germany/Spain	1979	I
3	Amarilis	38	Female	Peru/United Kingdom	1999	III
4	Ana	36	Female	USA	1994	III
5	Bernardo	38	Male	Japan/United Kingdom/France	1994	III
6	Camilo	30	Male	USA/Peru	1984	I
7	Carlos	30	Male	United Kingdom	1991	III
8	Carmen	21	Female	Costa Rica/UK	1990	III
9	Cecilia	41	Female	France/East Germany/ Bulgaria/France	1981	I
10	Clementina	30	Female	Argentina	1995	III
11	Constanza	28	Female	France/Spain/France	1991	III
12	Emilia	18	Female	Canada/Mozambique	1984	I
13	Filomena	26	Female	Colombia	1989	II
14	Gladys	42	Female	Venezuela/Cuba/East Germany	1987	I
15	Harold	35	Male	Romania/United Kingdom	1999	III
16	Laura	30	Female	Venezuela/Colombia	1984	I
17	Loreto	27	Female	Canada	1981 & 1983	I
18	Lucía	26	Female	Ecuador	1993	III
19	Manuel	29	Male	Sweden	1998	III
20	Marcela	23	Female	Mexico/Belgium/Cuba/Mexico	1983	I
21	Marcia	26	Female	Ecuador	1985	I
22	Margarita	27	Female	West Germany	1992	III
23	María	30	Female	Venezuela	1987	I
24	Mariano	31	Male	USA	1994	III
25	Mariela	29	Female	United Kingdom	1991	III
26	Mario	31	Male	Argentina	1995	III
27	Marta	36	Female	Japan/United Kingdom/France	1994	III
28	Norma	33	Female	France	1990	III
29	Pedro	40	Male	Costa Rica/West Germany	1993	III
30	Renato	26	Male	Sweden/Venezuela	1989	II
31	Roberto	23	Male	Romania/Bulgaria	1989	II
32	Ronaldo	26	Male	Sweden	1980	I
33	Rosa	25	Female	Sweden	1980	I
34	Rosario	24	Female	Belgium	1979	I
35	Rosalba	19	Female	Sweden	1993 & 2000	III
36	Sergio	26	Male	Argentina/Sweden	1993 & 2000	III
37	Simon	27	Male	Argentina/Ecuador	1978 & 1991	I & III
38	Soledad	28	Female	USA	1994	III
39	Susana	27	Female	Sweden/Venezuela	1989	II
40	Yiya	20	Female	France	1989	II

Average age at exit – 29.2

List of respondents– “elite”

	Pseudonym	Sex	Country of exile	Year of return	Period of return
40	Leopoldo Acuña	Male	Colombia/Argentina	1986	I
41	Luis Jara	Male	Italy	1985	I
42	Miriam Bravo	Female	Argentina/Mexico	1979	I
43	Pablo Fuentes	Male	Switzerland/Belgium	1983	I
44	Ricardo Garrido	Male	Venezuela/Cuba/East Germany/Argentina	1988	II

Total returnee respondents

Total number of respondents:	45	
Women	28	62%
Men	17	38%

Period of return:

I	Under NSDS: until 1988	17	37.8%	51%
II	Under NSDS: interim period, 1988 - 1990	6	13.3%	
III	During democracy: from March 1990 - 2002	22	48.9%	49%

List of respondents – “managerial”

	Name	Role
1	Alan Angell	Political scientist/Former President “Academics for Chile”
2	Héctor Hermosilla	PRAL, Projects Manager, VIII/IX/X Regions
3	Manuel Barrera	WUS-Chile Executive Director, Return Programme
4	Patricio Orellana	Civil Servant/Human Rights Worker/PS militant
5	Teresa Gómez	Social worker: FASIC
6	Victor Hugo Villalobos	<i>Chile Democrático’s</i> Comisión Nacional de Retorno a Chile-UK, Executive Committee member
7	Father Luis Caro Silva	Congregation C.S.s.R. (Redemptorist Order)

CUESTIONARIO PARA RETORNADOS DEL EXILIO

Estimados compañeros/as: estoy haciendo una investigación acerca de la situación de los retornados. Les rogaría que cooperaran con esta investigación ya que vuestra experiencia no se conoce en profundidad. La información entregada es estrictamente confidencial y por ello no es necesario que pongan su nombre. Escriban claramente por favor. LEAN TODAS LAS PREGUNTAS PRIMERO Y LUEGO RESPONDAN. Cuando salga la alternativa SI/NO subrayen la correspondiente. Les agradezco infinitamente vuestra cooperación. En caso de duda, pregúnteme!

EXILIO

Sexo: M/F Edad al salir al exilio.....

1.-¿En qué te trabajabas antes de salir al exilio?.....

2.-Razón de tu exilio: (subraya por favor): conmutación de pena/ asilado /exonerado/ex-detenido/

Otra:.....

3.-¿Estuviste en algún otro país durante tu exilio? Cúal o cuáles?.....

4.-¿En qué trabajaste durante tu exilio?.....

5.-Cuáles fueron tus vínculos con Chile?.....

.....

.....

6.- ¿Participaste en la solidaridad con Chile? De qué forma?.....

.....

.....

7.-¿Te preparaste para retornar? ¿Estudiaste? SI / NO ¿Qué estudiaste?.....

¿Pudiste ahorrar?.....

¿De qué otra forma te preparaste?.....

.....

8.- ¿Tenías impedimentos para retornar? SI / NO.....

¿Estabas en las listas?.....

9.-¿Quién de tu familia tomó la decisión de retornar?.....

.....

10.-¿Se opuso algún miembro/s de la familia al retorno? Quién y por qué?.....

.....

.....

RETORNO

11.- Edad al retornar.....País que dejaste

12.-¿A qué ciudad/pueblo llegaste?.....¿Vives ahí todavía? SI/NO Dónde?.....

13.-¿Qué razones te motivaron a retornar? Cuéntame si fue por: (lee todas las alternativas por favor antes de responder)

a) Razones familiares (ej: por familiares o por tus hijos).....

.....

.....
.....
b) Estabas en edad de jubilar y podrías vivir con la pensión del exilio?.....

.....
c) Dificultades para encontrar trabajo durante tu exilio:.....

.....
d) ¿Estabas en las listas? SI/NO.....

e) ¿Sentías nostalgia por Chile? SI/NO. En caso de ser tu respuesta positiva ¿qué extrañabas de Chile?

.....
f) ¿Tenías problemas de salud? SI/NO. En caso de ser tu respuesta positiva, qué tipo de problema tenías?

.....
g) ¿Razones políticas? (Cuéntame sin decirme a qué partido pertenecías). Si retornaste **durante la dictadura** por qué lo hiciste?.....

.....
Si retornaste **durante la democracia**, ¿por qué lo hiciste?.....

.....
h) ¿Tenías otra razón para retornar? Cuéntame cuál.....

.....
¿Te sentiste presionado para retornar? SI/NO (Explica por favor si fue así y ¿por quién?).....

HIJOS

¿Tienes hijos? SI/NO, Cuántos?.....Hombres..... Mujeres.....

¿Se vinieron contigo? SI/NO.....

¿Estaban interesados en retornar? SI/NO. En caso de que ellos se negaron, cuéntame que decían.....

.....
.....
Razón más importante para retornar.

14.-Te viniste con posibilidades de de trabajo? SI/NO Con beca? SI/NO

¿De quién?.....

¿Cómo conseguiste esa posibilidad?

Por una institución? SI/NO En caso de ser tu respuesta positiva, cuál institución?.....

15.-¿Recibiste apoyo de algún organismo al retornar? Cuál y por cuánto tiempo?.....

¿Qué hiciste después?.....

16.-¿ Recibiste apoyo de la Oficina Nacional del Retorno (ONR)? SI / NO /Qué tipo de ayuda?.....

17.¿Cómo fue tu experiencia con la ONR? (Subraya) Muy buena / Buena / Regular /Mala / Muy mala

Por qué?.....

18.¿Tenías un trabajo seguro a tu retorno? SI/NO Si respondes SI ¿cómo lo lograste, en qué y por cuánto tiempo?.....

¿Tienes trabajo ahora? SI/NO ¿Qué haces?.....

19.-¿Quedó algún miembro de tu familia en el país de tu exilio? SI/NO ¿Quién?.....

Pasado un tiempo en Chile alguno de ellos se devolvió? ¿Por qué?.....

20.- Vives en: (subraya) casa propia / arrendada / de allegado. Cuánto tiempo viviste de allegado?.....

21.-¿Cuáles han sido las barreras y/o dificultades que has encontrado en tu retorno a Chile? Cuéntame.....

22.- ¿Quién te ha apoyado más en este retorno?

23.- Estas contento/a con tu decision de haber retornado a Chile? SI/NO ¿Por qué?.....

*Nota: Si estás dispuesta/o a que te entreviste para profundizar tu experiencia házmelo saber por favor.
Te vuelvo a agradecer por el tiempo concedido a este estudio.*

Helia López Zarzosa
Santiago 23/24 Noviembre 2002

Appendix 4

*Return of Chilean Exiles: 1976 –1994**

Return under NSDS

1976	:	5
1977	:	35
1978	:	80
1979	:	117
1980	:	179
1981	:	104
1982	:	42
1983	:	338
1984	:	993
1985	:	383
1986	:	550
1987	:	773
1988	:	791
1989	:	1,381
Total	:	5,771

Return under ONR

1990	:	2,132
1991	:	1,692
1992	:	1,768
1993	:	2,926
1994	:	N/A
Total	:	8,518

Total Population assisted by ONR from 12 November 1990 to 20 August 1994: 56,000**

Total Recorded Returnee Population: 61,771

Returnees' Continents of Exile***

Latin America	:	44.739 %
North America	:	12.02 %
Europe	:	39.996 %
Oceania	:	2.07 %
Africa	:	1.06 %
Asia	:	0.13 %

Sources:

* 1976 – 1993 IOM – *Retorno de Exiliados Programas ACNUR/OIM. Total Persona –Acumulativo Mensual*. IOM Misión en Chile, 31/12/1993. [OIM/CIMAL]

** Letter dated 15 June 2004 addressed to author by the Ministry of Justice [personal archives].

*** ONR, *Carta Informativa. Edición Cierre*, Año N°4, N°15, 1994: 9 [personal archives].

Note: Until 1988, data from IOM corresponds to legal entry. A number of exiles returned bypassing international migration agencies and the NSDS, i.e. clandestine 'resistance return'.