

# EXILE COMMUNITIES AND THEIR DIFFERENTIAL INSTITUTIONAL DYNAMICS: A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF THE CHILEAN AND URUGUAYAN POLITICAL DIASPORAS\*

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## Resumen

El artículo se concentra en la pluralidad de las experiencias de exilio político tal como se manifiestan en las comunidades de exiliados chilenos y uruguayos en la segunda mitad del siglo veinte. Enfocándose en las dinámicas de exilio como la interacción entre el país expulsor, el exiliado(a) y el país anfitrión, el artículo elabora dos fenómenos básicos: primero, el hecho de que los *lugares* de exilio pueden devenir, a través de las acciones de los exiliados, en comunidades de exilio, si como en uno de los dos casos analizados los exiliados logran movilizar y representar a los residentes en su conjunto. El artículo elabora la dinámica diferente que se da en este proceso en las dos comunidades, donde problemas personales y comunales se desarrollan y son tratados paralelamente a las actividades públicas relacionadas al exilio político. Segundo, analiza la transición de una estructura trilateral de exilio hacia una cuadrilateral, cuando la arena internacional y global se transforma en una importante dimensión de las actividades políticas de los exiliados.

## Abstract

By focusing on the experiences of the Chilean and Uruguayan exile communities settling abroad during the last wave of dictatorship and repression in the 1970s, this article suggests ways to analyze exile communities in the late 20th century. By focusing in the dynamics of exile as the interaction between the expelling country, the person forced into exile and the host country in a changed international environment, it elaborates two basic phenomena: first, the fact that the sites of relocation (*lieux d'exil*) may become communities of exile (*milieux d'exil*). The article discussed the conditions effecting this transformation for the case of the Chileans, as the exiles managed to galvanize their co-nationals through their actions and be the vectors representing the plight of the displaced, in parallel to personal and communal problems, which develop and are addressed in parallel to public activities related to the condition of political exile. Second, the article discusses the structure of exile, which in this period undergoes a transition from a three-tiered into a four-tiered structure, as the international and global arena became an added major dimension conditioning the options and political activities of the exiles.

**PALABRAS CLAVE** • Comunidades de exilio • Lugares de exilio • Exilio político • Diásporas  
• Arena global • Dictaduras militares

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This article discusses the strategies and dynamics of exile communities at the collective level, analyzing the plurality of collective experiences by focusing on the waves of exile in the last quarter of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. As thousands of individuals moved abroad escaping political persecution, communities of exiles developed throughout the Americas, Europe and as far as Australia, Asia and Africa. While in some places only minor concentrations found asylum, other locations attracted thousands of co-nationals, among them political exiles, turning from mere *lieux d'exil* into *milieux d'exil*, which in turn would attract new waves of politically persecuted individuals and groups.

Often political exiles were but a minor part of the entire community of co-nationals in a certain host country, and of diaspora politics. However, existing communities of Latin American migrants, students and sojourners were often politically activated and radicalized by incoming exiles. Under conditions of mobilization of the host country's public opinion and new connections with international organizations and transnational social-political spaces and networks of solidarity, the presence of exiles often constituted a catalyst for the formation of an *image* of an influential community of exiles.

There is immense variance in this regard across communities of exiles, which can be analyzed through two key elements; namely, the degree of politicization and political activism of the exiles; and their capacity to become the core vectors of a community of displaced co-nationals through their ability to organize the newcomers and represent them as exiles vis-à-vis local, national and international organizations and networks. We will analyze this capacity in terms of the relative quietist or pro-active engagement of various exiles.

Analysis follows a theoretical model that sees political exile as exhibiting a three-tiered structure turning increasingly into a four-tiered pattern during the last wave of forced ostracism. By that we mean that initially, the dynamics of exile was shaped by the triadic interplay between the expelling polity, the exiles, and the hosting polity in which the exiles relocated, as the central actors. This triangular structure of exile underwent a core transformation in the 20<sup>th</sup> century once a fourth element became increasingly important in the exile equation: a global arena preoccupied with humanitarian international law and human rights. Accordingly, in the period analyzed in this work, exile can be shown as affecting and being affected by the implications resulting from the global arena becoming a major scenario of mobilization and a trigger for changes in discourse and institutional mechanisms of enforcement of human rights. Following this perspective, we focus analysis on the cases of the Chilean and the Uruguayan exiles, which reflect the variable centrality of the 'political' domain in the constitution of these communities and the capacity of the exiles to become the core vectors of a community of displaced co-nationals, especially representing them vis-à-vis local, national and international organizations and networks.

The first case selected is that of the Chilean exiles, in the Americas and especially in Europe, who managed to become early vectors of resistance to the Pinochet dictatorship and the core representatives of all Chileans in a diaspora fighting with a very effective political activism. While military rule in Chile lasted for 16 and a half years, the political activism of Chilean exiles and their organizational capacity managed to mobilize forces in many countries and in the international public spheres, both benefiting and projecting the case of Chile as the cause célèbre of the Left, at least in the early 1970s. As control case, we follow that of communities in the Uruguayan diaspora, created even before the dictatorship with the dispersion of hundreds of thousands, due

to the socioeconomic and political crisis. Following the onset of the civil-military dictatorship in Uruguay in 1973, political exiles joined many of these migrants, but found it hard to mobilize them massively into political action against the dictatorship. As we will show, the inner composition of these groups precluded the projection of an image of Uruguayans being a massive diaspora of political exiles, with an impact parallel to that of the Chilean diaspora.

## I. THE CHILEAN DIASPORA: POLITICAL MOBILIZATION AND OPENNESS TO GLOBAL TRENDS

Historically, Chileans perceived their country as a site of asylum for others, yet already in the 19th century, Chile had expelled part of its own elites or transferred them into internal exile to remote parts of the country, while accepting exiles from other countries. In the early 20<sup>th</sup> century notorious members of society and politics were forced into external or internal exile. Arturo Alessandri Palma was exiled in Italy in 1924-25 as a result of a military coup. Emilio Bello Codecido spent the period between 1925 and 1936 in exile. Eliodoro Yáñez was exiled in Paris between 1927 and 1931, during Carlos Ibáñez del Campo's dictatorial rule. Ibáñez himself escaped to Argentina twice. The first time in 1931, when he lost power as a result of the demonstrations related to the economic crisis of that time and again in 1938 after the failed coup by the Movimiento Nacional Socialista de Chile that wanted to place him in power, skipping the national elections. Later, in 1948-58 the outlawing of the Communist Party forced many members of the PCC, among them Pablo Neruda, to move abroad (Cobos and Sater, 1986; Loveman, 2001).

Yet, it was mainly during the last wave of dictatorship that the Chilean phenomenon of exile acquired a distinctive, transformative character, both in terms of the country and its political realignment. Law-decree 81, enacted by the military junta in November 1973 legalized administrative exile as an executive procedure to be used at the discretion of the rulers.

By decree 81 of November 1973, the military government required citizens who had left the country after the coup to obtain permission from the ministry of the interior to re-enter Chile. Thus no exile considered dangerous was allowed to return. When they renewed their passports at Chilean consulates, many exiles had the letter L stamped on them, indicating that the bearers were on the list of those prohibited from returning. Having portrayed exile as a humane alternative to prison for "enemies of the nation", the regime had no intention of changing its policy on return. When foreign correspondents covering the plebiscite on the 1980 constitution asked Pinochet whether exiles would be allowed to return, he replied: "I have only one answer: No" (Comité Pro Retorno de los Exiliados Chilenos, 1980: 10, in Wright and Oñate, 2007).

Furthermore, by law-decree 604 the government precluded the re-entrance of Chileans who had left the country for any reason. In practice, these regulations were enforced by the Ministry of Interior and the border police of Chile through the use of 'black lists' of nationals and former residents who had left, were banished or were not permitted to return to Chile, as they were considered 'enemies of the nation'<sup>1</sup>.

<sup>1</sup> These lists of individuals still included 4,942 names in 1984 and 3,878 in 1985 (Chile 1986: 452). By December 1987, according to the Chilean government 338 cases of exiles precluded from return remained pending. The Vicariate of Solidarity claimed that the number was of 561 (Chile 1988: 412).

The estimate of Chileans who left Chile between 1973 and 1990, ranges from a few hundred thousands to nearly two million. With democratization, the National Office of Return in Chile estimated 700,000 Chileans abroad, of which 200,000 had left the country for political reasons (Montupil, 1993: 10).

At the beginning, international organizations in charge of assisting those in exile estimated that about 4,000 individuals had requested political asylum or had been expelled from the country. Some years later the estimate had increased to 10,000 (30,000 with family members). If we add to the political exile *sensu stricto* the other exile motivated by 'political' unemployment, this number increases to 200,000 (Esponda, 1991: 21-27). However, the number of people who have suffered expatriation has always been difficult to determine because motivation for emigration has varied and no data are available to provide an objective follow-up. We estimate that another 100,000 persons should be added to this number. Without doubt, this has been the greatest emigration in Chilean history (Llambias-Wolff, 1993: 580-1).

The latest estimate of the Chilean Commission for Human Rights in its 1982 annual report is 163,686, while an article appeared in a Chilean weekly, *Hoy*, in January 1984 gave a total of 179,268. Also in 1984 a study was carried out in Chile and abroad by the Centre for Research and Development in Education (CIDE), which gave a total of 200,250 (Angell and Carstairs, 1987: 153).

There are even larger estimates, such as Jorge Arrate's, who places the number of exiles and migrants at 1,800,000 (Arrate, 1987: 90-1; also: Gilbert and Frödden, 1992: 122). Even deducting natural emigration figures caused by non-political factors (such as traditional Chilean migration to Argentina, especially in periods of economic prosperity there and economic difficulties in Chile), the figures are very high for a country with a population just above ten million at the beginning of the period and under 14 million at the end of it. Adding the fact that Chile lived through two periods of prosperity under military rule –between 1978 and 1981 and between 1985 and 1990– the strength of political repression as an expelling factor becomes even more evident. Political repression was not only exerted directly against a single political activist, who might be directly persecuted and haunted, but also against the groups as a whole, such as the Left-wing parties and organizations in Chile.

The closure of all forms of political expression, with the exception of those favoring military rule and military sponsored ideas, placed a heavy burden in a highly politicized society and especially on its political class. All those that were not inclined to support ideas such as those of the union labor activists of Catholic Integralist leaning, the corporative Nationalists, the authoritarian neo-liberals and all others, connected to various versions of the Doctrine of National Security, felt the rarified atmosphere. To some extent, this explains why many of the leaders and activists of Chile's Christian Democratic Party, who actively opposed Allende's government before the 1973 military coup, left for exile. Many of them moved to Italy where they were well received by their political counterparts of the ruling PDC –and acted abroad in total opposition to military rule. Among them were not only the haunted activists but also many former members of the administrative state apparatus who were "exonerated", i.e. fired because their loyalty to military rule was dubious, because of cuts in government size or a combination thereof. Others were individuals freed from prison under the expressed purpose of expelling them from the country by using an authoritarian

legal mechanism known as '*pena de extrañamiento*,' an expulsion punishment that included a non-return clause. In 1987, about 800 people were still affected by such a ban, precluding them from entering Chile. Many others had to leave Chile as they simply could not find a livelihood in a rapidly changing socio-economic set up devoid of any kind of political freedom and dominated by an unbound version of free market economics. Fernando Montupil, whose estimate of the number of Chilean political exiles for the whole dictatorial period reaches one million people, believes that even around 1993 about a fifth of them or close to 200,000 of those who had left the country for politically related reasons stayed abroad after re-democratization (Montupil, 1993: 10).

This number of exiles, spread across many countries, constituted a potent diaspora disputing the legitimacy claimed by the Pinochet regime and struggling to energize the international campaign against its rule. Chilean exiles formed "nuclei of *Chilehood*" ("núcleos de chilenidad") aimed at giving international projection to the plight of Chile. The parameters of their activity were shaped by high level of politicization of Chilean society in the period prior to military rule and by the length and strength of the dictatorship. Many Chilean exiles, looking back at their country with a political vision, adopted voluntarist attitudes that stressed the need for political activism, the organization of committees of solidarity and the dissemination of information about the Chilean cause, in order to confront the dictatorship while abroad. This attitude, seen as closely related to the struggle against dictatorship being led by different political actors inside Chile at various levels during different periods, resulted in a view of exile as a transitional phenomenon, which could be activated to accelerate the fall of military rule. In a certain sense, the attitudes of many Chilean exiles could be summarized in Bertold Brecht's dictum on exile: 'Do not even put a nail on the wall, throw your jacket on the chair. Is it worthwhile to worry about four days? Tomorrow you will return' (Arrate, 1987: 34).

Political activism abroad fed a sense of transience and was in turn perceived through such lenses. But the dictatorial period was harsh and long and strong. From another angle, confronting life in exile brought up the problems of integration. These extended from the fulfilling of basic needs to becoming a full member of the host society. There was a basic contradiction between leading the political struggle that would allow going back and integrating into the new environment, especially in Europe. From the beginning, exile was marked by the constant tension between the need to accommodate to the host society and the tendency to remain attached to the homeland. A certain level of accommodation was universally required, even if the basic intention was to be politically active as an exile and return to the home country as soon as possible.

Until that wave of exile, Chile assumed its insularity. The country was perceived by its own citizens as a very far away country, perceived as *Finis Terrae*, as if at the End of the World, and as such, rather isolated from the international scene. Salvador Allende's accession to power, as the first freely elected Marxist president in a democratic framework, projected the Chilean experience into a special place in the framework of the Cold War, awarding a strongly universal meaning to the defense of the values of Chilean democracy, soon to be crushed by the military. The Chilean experience was well known in the international public sphere, because of the novelty and the many questions raised by the experience of democratically elected Marxists in power. And yet, it was only with the arrival of the Chilean exiles that a new bond of solidarity was created that both energized the political scene in the host countries and served as a powerful instrument in breaking Chilean insularity or historical isolation (Arrate, 1987: 33).

Chilean exile was a corollary of the political and social project imposed on Chile by military rule. As it exiled virtually the entire leadership of the Left that was not assassinated or imprisoned during the first stage of state terror, and prevented those considered dangerous from returning at least until 1984, Pinochet managed to consolidate his hold on Chile. And yet, the creation of a Chilean diaspora proved dysfunctional for Pinochet's project in the long run, as discussed below.

Immediately after the military coup, a Commission of Refugees (or CONAR) was formed, led by the Lutheran Bishop Helmut Frenz. Its main role was to help persecuted Chileans reach and enter foreign embassies where they would receive asylum and save their lives. In 1974, an agreement was reached between the Inter-European Committee for Migration, the International Red Cross Committee, CONAR and the Chilean government, to facilitate the exit of those individuals placed under administrative detention but not scheduled to stand trial. In 1975, another agreement was signed that made it possible for people who suffered from political persecution and were serving sentences to also leave Chile. Three thousand Chileans were freed from prisons in order to leave the country. In addition, since 1974, large numbers of detainees who were held in concentration camps without convictions, under the provisions of the State of Siege Law, were expelled from the country by decree. On April 30 1975, Decree Law 504 established that a sentence dictated by the military courts (prison, internal exile [or *relegación*] or conditional sentences) could be exchanged into an *extrañamiento*, i.e. the expulsion from the country without right to return.

In Latin America, the greater concentrations of Chilean exiles were in Argentina (especially before 1976), Venezuela, Brazil and Mexico. Important, although more reduced, was the number of Chileans who moved to Cuba and later Nicaragua. Others went to Canada and the US. In Europe, Chileans spread all across the continent but many went to the UK, Sweden (who helped especially in many urgent cases), Italy, Spain, France and Denmark. In 1992, there were nearly 28,000 Chileans in Sweden, out of which 13,900 were political refugees in 1987 –6,500 of these had arrived in 1968-77; 3,800 in 1978-84 and 3,600 in 1985-87 (Joly and Cohen, 1989: 198; Moore, 1993)<sup>2</sup>.

According to Jaime Llambias-Wolff (1993: 581), the distribution of Chilean expatriates in 1984 was as follows (in percents):

Venezuela	44.0%
Other Latin American countries	3.0%
Spain	10.0%
France	8.3%
Italy	6.6%
Sweden	5.5%
Other Western Europe	6.6%
Canada	6.7%
USA	1.3%
Australia	5.0%
Eastern Europe and others	3.0%

<sup>2</sup> Until August 1987, 800 Chileans had been received as refugees in Denmark (Joly and Cohen 1989: 43).

A group of members of the Communist Party received asylum in East Germany, and a few in the USSR (Arrate, 1987: 95-6). Not only Communists arrived in the Eastern block. After being detained and tortured during military rule, later President Michelle Bachelet left Chile in 1975 with her mother to go to Australia. Later on, she moved to East Germany, where she studied German and continued studying medicine at the Humboldt University in Berlin. In 1979 she returned to Chile, finished her studies and resumed political activism.

As any other group of exiles, the Chileans were a diverse group in terms of age and gender, occupational and class backgrounds, and regional or ethnic composition. In terms of class background, workers were a minority versus individuals of middle and upper class backgrounds. A relatively large group of Mapuches, 500-strong and particularly targeted by the military, found its way into Western Europe, where they founded their own organization, the *Comité Exterior Mapuche* that coordinated actions with other organizations and networks of Chilean exiles. The common denominator of the exiles was the banning of the political organizations back home, in which they had activated or sympathized, and the brutal state repression that drove them into exile. This commonality led to the re-establishment of the political parties abroad: the Socialist Party, the Communist Party, MAPU, MAPU-OC, the Radical Party, the Christian Left, MIR, all associated to the former coalition of Allende and reconstituted in exile, mainly in Europe (Montupil, 1993: 14-15). Thus, the majority of exile organizations belonged to Leftist parties, although there were also non-partisans and a small group of Christian Democrats, who after their initial support of the coup opposed the ensuing policies of Pinochet and found themselves on the run (Wright, Oñate and Hodgson, 1998, 2007). Political action through parties, committees of solidarity, NGOs, local and international organizations took place almost immediately with the arrival of the Chilean exiles. In the UK, committees of Solidarity with Democratic Chile were established in London, Birmingham, Sheffield, Oxford, Swansea, Edinburgh, Liverpool, Manchester and Durham. While at the beginning the initiative was taken by British Leftist groups and the Labor Party, the arrival of almost 3,000 exiles gave further impetus to the committees (Montupil, 1993: 59). Political activity was often hectic, with leaders participating in numerous meetings and intensely defining the methodologies of working in unison with the local waves of solidarity generated by the September 1973 events. Locally, the Chilean case became a *cause célèbre* for Europeans and found strong echoes with public officials, parliamentarians, party activists, trade union activists, human rights associations, Catholic and Protestant Churches, and student federations. Massive marches of protest and popular demonstrations were organized in front of Chilean embassies. Stevedores' unions in Anvers, Liverpool and Marseilles boycotted Chilean ships. In Israel and Spain, public protests managed to block the entry to port of the Esmeralda, the training ship of the Chilean Navy that in 1973 had served as a prison and torture center. Fearing for the safety and lives of those in Chilean prisons, exiles led hunger strikes which impacted public opinion in Europe. Folkloric *peñas* were organized to collect monies to support the families of political prisoners, widows and sons of disappeared in Chile. Chilean music was a major key in keeping spirits high. Exiled groups as the Quilapayún located in Paris and the Inti Illimanyi based in Rome traveled incessantly from community to community in order to energize the struggle against the dictatorship and keep their culture of resistance alive (Cobos and Sater, 1986).

Chilean exiles created in Europe a series of organizations that combined politics and cultural collective identity. Among them: Chile Democrático in Rome, the Instituto para el Nuevo Chile and

the Centro Salvador Allende in Rotterdam, SEUL-Casa de América Latina in Brussels, el Comité Salvador Allende in Laussane, el Comité Salvador Allende in Stockholm, the Centro de Estudios Salvador Allende in Madrid, the Comité Chileno Ant-Fascista y Chile Democrático in London and Chile Democrático in Paris (Montupil, 1993: 17).

In the first stage, all these activities were believed to articulate and support the consolidation of a strong and effective opposition that supposedly would lead to the demise of the dictatorship in Chile. However, the margins for anti-military political action in Chile were nearly closed by repression and persecution. The consolidation of Pinochet's rule in Chile led to a phase of questioning and reevaluation of the political tactics. In parallel, the enthusiasm of the Chilean *cause célèbre* had waned. International solidarity had shifted to other causes. As distance and time took their toll in a long protracted process, Chilean political activism decreased and was replaced by social activism in the communities of exiles. Indeed, besides strict party political organizations, Chilean exiles had also reconstituted trade unions and women organizations abroad, and created cultural centers and football teams. In many European cities, they established associations of family members of disappeared and prisoners, as well as institutions dedicated to the treatment of specific problems of exiles. Similar initiatives and frameworks sprung in France, Sweden, Italy and other countries. In the mid-1970s the Chileans who arrived in the first wave of exile had already established social organizations aimed at easing the landing and adaptation of new arrivals. In Brussels, COLAT (Latin American Collective of Psychosocial Work) was founded, later renamed as EXIL. In Copenhagen, a Committee of Assistance for Refugees and Migrants (CEPAR) was established. The University of Hamburg held a series of symposia on culture and psychosocial pressures in Latin America, with the participation of exiled academics and mental health professionals. In a third stage, committees pro-return were established, becoming part of a pan-European network (Montupil, 1993: 13-16).

There are differences among the various communities of Chilean exiles. All exiles had problems of adaptation, but those settling in Latin American countries felt a sense of belonging, that was mostly absent among those settling in Europe, Canada, Australia, Asia or Africa, where they had to adjust to different cultures, foods and lifestyles. In some cases, the difficulties led to closure of the exile community. Osvaldo Puccio, son of President Allende's secretary, was 20 when he arrived in Germany. Years after his arrival, in a testimony, he was highly critical of many Chileans who created cultural and social *ghettos*, turning in to their music and their sadness. He noted with regret that some lived in Germany for 10 and 15 years without learning the language and thus were secluded from communicating with the environment (Rodríguez Villouta, 1990).

The various communities of exiles differed also in terms of their composition. For instance, Mexico received a large group of exiles, close to 10,000. Four-fifths of them arrived after receiving asylum at the embassy in Santiago. Among them were professionals and technicians, in addition to individuals connected to the high echelons of the former government and public administration. Among them were the widow of Salvador Allende and his two daughters, Clodomiro Almeyda, Pedro Vuskovic, ministers and subsecretaries of state, senators and deputies, leaders of political parties, important academics and core cultural figures, who found occupational opportunities and were warmly welcome by the Mexican administration and the population. Once there, Chilean exiles established close relationships with their Mexican counterparts and were active politically and socially as a community, influencing the strong position of Mexico against the Pinochet regime



in the international arena and keeping alive their connections to Chile. They also made major contributions to the host society, including those of Miguel Littin in cinematography; José de Rocka in the arts; Luis Enrique Delano in literature; Angel Parra in music; Fernando Fajnzylber in economics and Edgardo Enriquez in medicine (Mara, 1998: 136-7). Contrastingly, the communities in Sweden, the UK or Canada included larger percentages of individuals of popular background (Mara, 1998: 129).

The greater difficulties in adjusting to countries beyond Latin America were somehow compensated for by the existence of governmental programs of assistance in the developed countries that provided means of subsistence through welfare programs. Wright and Oñate mention the case of his widow Viola and their ten children of union leader Isidro Carrillo, executed six weeks after the coup. Moved to the Soviet Union and were provided housing, jobs and educational opportunities through the university level (Wright and Oñate, 2007: 6). Similarly, in Western Europe, Canada and Australia, exiles were offered language classes, occupational training, scholarships and even subsidized housing. The case of Sweden is paradigmatic. Most Chilean exiles were of middle-class extraction; 35-40 years of average age; students, professionals, individuals with technical background, artists and artisans and labor leaders, with a substantial number of political activists. In Sweden the government of the Social Democratic Party felt sympathy towards the cause of the Latin American political exiles. It is important to note that another factor allowing an open reception policy is the ethos of the country which always helped refugees and political exiles of the Third World. Public opinion in Sweden identified itself with the Chilean political plight. Many young people visited South America through NGOs or UBVs. Some were imprisoned, others killed and others expelled, such as the ambassador Harold Edestam, who saved many lives and gave asylum to the persecuted. There were numerous committees of solidarity with Chile and the main image of the Latin Americans was very positive. In the 1960s the Swedish were a source of inspiration for radical ideas and they were also imbued by a missionary Lutheran spirit. Until the 1980s all Latin American immigrants were seen in Sweden as synonymous with political refugees, perceived as “heroes” or “martyrs”. The combination of a receptive ethos and a supportive governmental action was a constant that was maintained even as the Social Democrat government fell from power in September 1976 (Moore, 1993: 161-83).

Still many found themselves alienated from their new environments and in a process of mourning their defeat, feeling guilt for the dead, jailed or disappeared left behind, which produced high rates of depression, divorce, alcoholism and suicide. But most worked to adapt, developing new occupational skills, learning in higher education, projecting their culture onto the new generations and keeping alive the spirit of resistance.

The crackdown of Pinochet on the UP leadership and the failed attempt by Socialists, Communists and the MIR to resist as clandestine organizations, which were crushed and decimated, transformed exiles into the most effective front for fighting the dictatorship, at least until 1982. Pinochet used exile to suffocate political action, but once abroad, the exiles reconstructed a dense network replicating their former political organizations on the local, regional, national and international plane.

The Socialists and the UP established their headquarters in Berlin. The Communists opted for Moscow and the MIR selected Havana and Paris. As a result, the exile community created several

trans-national networks, following former ideological divisions and commitments (Vásquez, 1989: 125-32; Arrate, 1987: 100-01). Every Leftist party of Chile was reconstructed abroad: the Socialists, Communists, MAPU, MAPU-OC, Radicales, Izquierda Cristiana, MIR, and in the first years –even the youth movements of each of these parties. Also established were the Movimiento Democrático Popular or MDP; the Convergencia Socialista; the Bloque Socialista; and later on, the MIDA and the PPD. Exiles worked with their parallel political parties and student, labor, church, and human-rights associations in the host countries and they formed numerous committees of solidarity with Chile. In some cases, as in the German Federal Republic or Canada, there were over a hundred committees of solidarity. Exiles also activated in the framework of the union organizations (CUT, the Comité Sindical Chile) and women’s organizations linked to the UP, which they established in close to 35 countries, as well as cultural centers, football teams and other associations. Moreover, the magnitude and brutality of the repression ignited the emergence of new associations such as the Asociaciones de Familiares de Detenidos y Desaparecidos, Comité Exterior Mapuche, Pastoral Católica del Exilio, youth centers and childrens’ atteliers.

Political activities were combined with, and carried out by, cultural, union, sport and other group activities. Accordingly, the organizational impetus also led to many civil organizations and committees of solidarity that crystallized during exile. Through these organizations, exiles lobbied host country governments to condemn the Pinochet regime at the United Nations and other international forums, and organized campaigns for the release of political prisoners and ban Chilean imports. “These efforts were crucial to countering the influence of powerful business interests that supported the dictatorship for reopening Chile to international capital and, through the neo-liberal policies it imposed, creating an ideal investment climate” (Wright and Oñate, 2007).

Along with this impressive organizational impetus, the exiles replicated their traditional political rivalries while abroad, although they were able to combine efforts and collaborate for the sake of their common goal, which is the key to the Chilean exiles’ effectiveness in keeping the plight of their homeland as a top-priority issue in the international agenda.

The exiled leaders of the UP, who lived on subsidies from host governments or political organizations or received well-paid jobs, traveled among exile populations and worked with world political and government leaders to gather support for their cause. Some of them turned into figures with international clout. Anselmo Sule, president of the Radical Party, was elected vice-President of the Socialist International in 1976, a reflection of the high priority the Chilean case had for this organization. The Socialist International lobbied governments and the UN, supported think tanks and publishing houses active in the campaign for the 1988 plebiscite. Similarly, the cross-party organization, Chile Democrático that received financial support from governments in Western Europe, lobbied at the highest levels, published a very influential periodical (*Chile América*) with information about Chile and monitored the human rights situation there, while it also supported financially the Chilean movement of human-rights related to the Vicaría de la Solidaridad in the home country.

The socioeconomic profile of political exiles included rank-and-file activists of the parties, student and professional organizations and labor unions. In exile, political solidarity and activism erased, to a large extent, class and rank differences that were salient in Chile. Activism and political solidarity went together, especially between members of the same political party in the home and the host countries. Jose Rodríguez Elizondo, a writer and later diplomat, coming from the higher

ranks of the Communist Party and Chilean UP administration, went with many of his 'comrades' to exile in East Germany. He recalls the beginning of his sojourn in Leipzig, as a local committee of solidarity invited all the Chilean exiles to a welcome party in the Democratic Republic of Germany. Speeches in German and Spanish were made, which spoke highly of international brotherhood, of the common bonds of Communism, of the anti-fascist struggle. Food and alcoholic drinks were served in a lavish manner. After the formal speeches and reception, the party began. The Chileans, still somewhat shy, were drawn into dancing. Rodríguez Elizondo was standing by a short stocky Chilean union member from Valparaíso. The man enjoyed so much the food, the drinks, and dancing with a tall, statuesque, blond and blue-eyed East German female comrade who invited him to dance. In the heat of the party, rhythms of dance changed into slower, romantic tunes. Soon the man found himself dancing with his nose buried in the bosom of the German lady. In a break, the comrade from Valparaíso came back to Rodríguez Elizondo and declared:

“Comrade, as I always believed...The Socialist paradise exists. It is here...”  
(Rodríguez Elizondo, 2000).

While the leading politicians worked at the supra-organizational level, it was the localized and social support of the myriad organizations of the exile that kept the sense of confidence and direction alive and created domestic networks and committees of solidarity with Chile:

The political groups carried out organizational activities, disseminated information on Chile, organized marches and demonstrations, and collected used clothing to be distributed among the poor in Chile, whose ranks multiplied under the Chicago Boys' economic policies. They held *peñas* and made and sold *empanadas*, the traditional meat and onion pies, to raise money and consciousness (Wright and Oñate, 2007: 8-9).

Even in countries with greater structural constraints for the Chileans, the political activism of the exiles kept the cause of Chile alive. On the basis of interviews with former exiles, Wright and Oñate reconstruct how the exiles worked under such conditions in Costa Rica and Brazil:

[In] countries with fewer nongovernmental organizations, exiles used lower profile approaches to cultivate the support of their host countries. Frustrated by the divisions among the UP parties in Costa Rica, a group of exiles established a binational solidarity organization, *Por Chile*, to influence the media and the Costa Rican government in quiet but effective ways. In Brazil, the military government prohibited open political activity such as street demonstrations or leafleting but tolerated political events in private spaces such as churches (Wright and Oñate, 2007: 9).

The Chilean Left underwent a profound transformation, especially under the impact of reconfiguration of the European Left around its debates on Euro-communism, the struggle of Solidarity in Poland and the disillusion with the Soviet Union. In many cases, the contact with *real-Communism* in the Socialist countries brought about early disenchantment and the will to go back to the West, leaving the ranks of the Communist Party<sup>3</sup>. While the Sandinista victory in Nicaragua in 1979 could still

<sup>3</sup> Such were the cases of high-ranking officials of the UP administration such as José Rodríguez Elizondo, who spent part of his exile in East Germany, and of Gustavo Silva, member of the PCCH, who visited Eastern Europe while in French exile. Interviews with Silva, Santiago, August 2001, and with Rodríguez Elizondo, Jerusalem, March 2000. See also Rodríguez Elizondo 1996).

be interpreted within the framework of the Cold War, events in Europe –the transformation of Euro-Communism into a new kind of Social Democracy and the process of parallel rigidity, weakening and disintegration of the Eastern Block and the USSR– went far beyond. All these collective and personal transformations contributed to the reconfiguration of the Chilean Left, especially as they followed self reflection and reassessment among its ranks and as they established a series of think tanks to study ways to modernize Chile. These trends of transformation were also part of a process of redefinition of the political positions and horizons of other exiles in the Chilean diaspora.

Ricardo Lagos, who was close to Allende and set to become the Chilean ambassador to Moscow at the time of the military takeover in 1973, went into exile in the US. He returned to that country, where he had received a PhD at Duke in the '60s, to serve as a Visiting Professor at the University of North Carolina. Later on, he took a position as an economist in the UN until 1984. In an interview in May 2002, President Lagos reflected on the impact of exile on the reformulation of his political ideas and attitudes toward democracy:

Never in the history of Chile so many Chilean women and men with varied degrees of cultural exposure –social leaders, politicians, heads of local associations, and many more– move into the world (*se asoman al mundo*) and begin to see the world from the new reality they witness. This produces a change, especially in the Left-wing and most progressive thought of Chile. I recall my participation in a meeting of the Chilean PS in Bordeaux. ...Someone would stand up and say: 'We, the Socialists of Milan think'. Another would declare: 'We, the Socialists of Stockholm, say...' One could sense a cultural renewal in the way of thinking of the delegate from Milan and a Scandinavian worldview in the exile from Stockholm. I believe that exile left its imprint, leading us to recognize the value of democracy, the higher value of human-rights... abandoning the classic tools of the Left in the 1960s and '70s, to be replaced by the revalorization of democracy, of human-rights, of the place of the market, of the role of the means of production and service. In other words, there is a great *aggiornamento*, moving and preceding the move to globalization (Lagos, 2002).

The Chilean Communists, which had been a moderating force in the UP government, found themselves not supported in their idea of leading a broad anti-fascist front of the UP parties and the Christian Democracy. By 1980, they decided to support all forms of struggle, including armed struggle and popular insurrection. In 1983, they supported the creation of the guerrilla group known as the Frente Patriótico Manuel Rodríguez. The experience in exile changed the Socialists, leading them progressively to embrace political democracy in a principled way. At first the Socialists split in 1979 into a radical and a more moderate wing. While the latter became closer to the Christian Democracy, the hard-liners attempted to join the Communists and use the mass protests of 1982-6 to topple the regime. With the return of exiles into Chile, the shifts also influenced the domestic front. After failing to defeat Pinochet through mass insurrection, the hard-liners joined the renovated wings of the Party in an alliance with the PDC to contest Pinochet in the 1988 plebiscite on the dictator's extended rule. Their success led to the *Concertación* of 17 parties which defeated Pinochet a year later and opened the way for the return to civilian rule<sup>4</sup>.

<sup>4</sup> The think tanks and periodicals disseminated the renovated ideas. ASER in Paris, the Instituto para el Nuevo Chile in Rotterdam and Chile Democrático in Rome were leading think tanks. *Plural* published in Rotterdam, *Convergencia*

The tiered structure of exile is clearly reflected in the experience of the Chilean communities of exiles. These communities were caught between a strong military government that created a mass phenomenon of expulsion and precluded their return, despite their willingness to do so, and the presence of host societies and wide networks of political and social solidarity supporting their activism abroad. The increased politicization characteristic of Allende's period evolved and crystallized in the form of exile communities that fought against repression by constituting themselves into a living bridge to the international public sphere and many networks of solidarity that eventually affected Chilean politics and the transition to democracy.

## II. THE URUGUAYAN DIASPORA: ECONOMIC AND POLITICAL MOTIVATIONS

The Uruguayan diaspora crystallized precociously and was as widespread as the Chilean. Yet, it lacked the organizational strength and political presence of the latter, primarily as it was formed by a greater component of economically motivated expatriates. Yet also due to political factors: the revolutionary character of the Leftist activists both in terms of rhetoric and action; the experience of the political Left in the opposition, being harassed and persecuted already before the onset of military rule; the factionalist trends of the Left; and the belated move of the Leftist political exiles to a strategy of action already envisaged by Zelmira Michelini before his assassination, namely a strategy connected to the rising discourse of human rights. In addition, since Uruguay had lived under democratic governments until the 1970s—with the exception of Gabriel Terra's dictatorship in the '30s—there was no tradition of political exile, unlike in Argentina and many other countries in Latin America. Analyzing these factors we attempt to explain the distinctive character of the relationships between the exiles and the communities of Uruguayans in the diaspora.

Unsurprisingly, the composition of the Uruguayan diaspora has led to an approach mainly in demographic, quantitative terms, which reveal its magnitude and patterns of formation. While we will pay attention to this composition of the diaspora, we will turn subsequently to the relative weight of the political exiles within it. Studies by Adela Pellegrino, Silvia Dutrenit Bielous, Cesar Aguiar, Israel Wonsewer and Ana Maria Teja portray the patterns of formation of the Uruguayan diaspora. In parallel, they highlight and stress how difficult it is to disentangle the political from the economic motivations of hundreds of thousands of co-nationals who moved abroad (Aguiar, 1983; Wonsewer and Teja, 1983; Pellegrino, 1996, Dutrenit Bielous 2006).

The flow of Uruguayans to neighboring countries, primarily Argentina, started very early on and reached a peak in the 1970s. On the basis of censuses and estimations, by 1914 Argentina had already attracted a large number of Uruguayan migrants. According to the above analyses, 88,650 Uruguayans were living then in Argentina, representing 7.2 percent of the Uruguayan population at that time. Even though theories of chain-migration could have predicted the growth of that community, the number of Uruguayans in Argentina went down progressively until it was reduced to 58,300 or 2.1 percent of the Uruguayan population by 1970. Between the years 1963 and 1975, about 7 percent of the Uruguayan inhabitants left the country. According to the census of

*Socialista* in Mexico City and *Chile-América* in Rome were both major factors and expression of this transformation. See Revista 2006.

1981, the emigration before 1963 was of 33,000 (9.8%); between 1963 and 1975 it went up to 200,000 (54.7%) and between 1976 and 1981 it comprised 133,000 migrants (36.3%). Standing out in particular was the period 1970-75, when 88.3% of the total of émigrés for the period of 1960-75 left Uruguay. The peaks were found in 1974 with 64,687 emigrants and in 1975 with 40,984, a direct reflection of repression in Uruguay. The number of Uruguayans who settled abroad grew exponentially (Pellegrino, 1996).

The trends of movement reflected socio-political shifts in South America. Until the year 1976, 54.2% of the emigrants went to Argentina. As anti-Leftist violence increased and democracy broke down, Buenos Aires –a ‘classic’ site of relocation for Uruguayans across the Rio de la Plata– became a trap for political exiles. Increasing repression combined with cooperation between the security forces of both countries in ‘depuration campaigns,’ which proved deadly for many Uruguayan Leftists who were abducted, tortured and made to disappear in Argentina. Among the assassinated were Senator Zelmario Michelini and Speaker of the Chamber of Deputies Héctor Gutiérrez Ruiz (Roniger and Sznajder, 1999: 24-5).

After 1976, the number of persons migrating to Argentina lessened, due to the local coup and the economic crisis. The US became the second choice as host country for the emigrants with a total of 11%, followed by Australia with 7.4% and Brazil with 7.1% (Notaro, Canzani, Longhi and Mendez, 1987). According to the various censuses conducted in the 1970s, the Uruguayans in Argentina numbered 58,300, in Brazil 13,582 in the US 5,092 and in Paraguay 2,310. Under the dictatorship, Uruguay lost 25% of its professionals and technicians, 10% of its doctors, 15% of their architects and 9% of its engineers (Bottero, 1987). Between 1967 and 1975 Uruguay lost 8% of its population, which departed due to forced exile or migrated. From 1976, the phenomena declined, but it worsened again in 1981 and 1982 as a result of the economic crisis generated by the rupture of the famous “tablita”<sup>5</sup>). In the 1980s, there were 109,724 Uruguayans in Argentina, 21,238 in Brazil, 13,278 in the US, 9,287 in Australia, 7,007 in Venezuela and 4,160 in Canada (Pellegrino, 1996: 18). During the period 1970-85 it is estimated that between 300,000 and 400,000 persons emigrated (Migraciones 1993).

Repression increased in December 1967, under the presidency of Jorge Pacheco Areco, and reached its peak following the decrees outlawing a myriad of Leftist organizations in December 1973. With authoritarianism in the mid-1970s, Uruguay witnessed massive arrests conducted mostly in the open; long-term reclusion of political prisoners; and torture, disappearance and assassination of political opponents. Many believed that Uruguay had in this period the highest record of political prisoners in Latin America (Roniger and Sznajder, 1999: 25).

Once known as the ‘Switzerland of Latin America’, Uruguay had become in the words of [Uruguayan essayist] Eduardo Galeano a vast ‘torture chamber’. In the following years [after 1973] 300,000 people (20 percent of Uruguay’s population) left the country, driven out by the combined pressure of economic decline and a level of repression that made it necessary to have a political permit to celebrate a birthday (Rowe and Whitfield, 1987: 230).

<sup>5</sup> A fiscal mechanism aimed to secure monetary stability through a pre-established scale of devaluation.

The format of the Uruguayan Diaspora shifted with political and economic changes in the host countries. As Argentina sunk itself into its own repression by the mid-1970s, the attractiveness of Brazil heightened due to the latter's policies of technological and scientific development. Concentrations of Uruguayans also moved to Venezuela and Mexico, which were attractive due to their labor opportunities and a demand for qualified personnel. Venezuela attracted many migrants, refugees and exiles from other Southern Cone countries, which made Uruguayans the smallest group of newcomers from that area<sup>6</sup>.

In addition to Mexico, Venezuela and Brazil, exiles preferred to relocate to France, Spain, Switzerland and Holland. Members of the Communist Party were admitted into the USSR and the countries of the Eastern Block, following the mediation of the PCU. Tupamaros and Communists were admitted in Cuba. Some of the latter volunteered to participate in the revolutionary struggle by relocating to Angola, Algeria and to Nicaragua under the Sandinistas (Dutrenit Bielous 2006: 14, 448-449).

Other Uruguayans went to the US, driven by prospects of occupational training and higher salaries, even for those without special skills. According to Pellegrino, by 1980 the percentage of Uruguayan professionals in the US and Canada was nearly 12 and 10 percent respectively, far behind representation in the communities of Uruguayans in Venezuela and Mexico, while the percentage of workers was over 40 percent, more than double the case in the latter communities (Pellegrino, 1996: Table 10). In the US, many Uruguayans worked in blue collar and service jobs. Even if we cannot draw a line between the various motivations of newcomers, it seems that the pull of economic prospects was combined in most cases with the attraction of moving to a less oppressive political environment<sup>7</sup>. This created a disjuncture between the circles of exiles and the larger socioeconomic diaspora. While both groups relocated following a blend of increased repression and economic decline, exiles found it hard to mobilize politically the Uruguayan diaspora.

As indicated above, Uruguay had lived under democracy for most of the twentieth century. But by the end of the 1960s,

economic decline coupled with inflation and labor unrest fuelled political activism and urban guerrilla activities, primarily of the Movimiento de Liberación Nacional-Tupamaros, founded in 1962. The response of the government of President Pacheco Areco was to impose martial law in 1968, to which the Tupamaros responded by increasing their actions. In a political system characterized until then by the search for consensus and power sharing, Pacheco Areco introduced non-party technocrats to the cabinet, used the military to repress strikes,

<sup>6</sup> In 1981, according to DIEX (*Dirección Nacional de Identificación y Extranjería*) of Venezuela, 6,747 Uruguayans held work permits as against 11,541 Argentineans and 23,185 Chileans (Bidegain, 1987).

<sup>7</sup> By the late 20<sup>th</sup> century the drainage of co-nationals continued. The preferred countries for emigration were: Argentina (24%), Spain (18%), US (16%), and Australia (13%). According to data reported by the newspaper *El Observador* in 2000, there were 18,111 Uruguayans in the US and 133,453 in Argentina (other estimates put the number around 250,000), 43,000 in Brazil, 20,000 in Paraguay, 17,000 in Australia, 1,500 in Sweden, 8,2000 in Spain, and between 1,500-2,000 in France. In Cataluña there were 6,400 Uruguayans registered and it was estimated that another 1,800 lived there. During the last years, in comparison to the emigration of the 70s which was mainly towards the regional countries, the move became increasingly motivated only by economic considerations and shifted accordingly to the US and Europe. The strongest communities were located in Buenos Aires, Rio Grande do Sul, Sydney, Toronto and Miami (Cibils, 2000: 2-4).

limited media coverage of terrorism, and in September 1971 suspended the right of habeas corpus on the basis of a declaration of internal war. The old system of power-sharing between the two major political parties (the Colorados and the Blancos) was shattered... (Roniger and Sznajder, 1999: 13).

Buenos Aires became the center of Uruguayan political exile. Thousands of political activists flew to Argentina as repression in the home country increased. Argentina was driving in the opposite direction: the military, which tried unsuccessfully to preclude Peron's participation in political life since 1955, had finally acknowledged the lack of governability of the country without Peronism. Héctor Cámpora was elected President in March 1973 and the road for the return of Peron had been paved. Argentina was then in a state of political effervescence, contrasting hopes of radical and reformist change, and revolutionary rhetoric. For the Uruguayan exiles, the trends of political change in Argentina seemed to reassure them of the correctness of their radical revolutionary ideals, which could become a reality in Uruguay as well. The survival in power of the democratically elected Marxist President of Chile Salvador Allende further contributed to this sense of confidence. They also maintained contacts with the Tupamaros back home, as well as with revolutionary groups in Argentina and other South American nations.

Following the June 1973 civil-military coup, thousands of Uruguayans moved to Argentina. Among them was former Senator Enrique Erro, founder of the Leftist Frente Amplio, who had enjoyed the electoral support of the Tupamaros. In Buenos Aires, he founded in October 1974 the UAL (Unión Artiguista de Liberación) that proclaimed total war on the Uruguayan dictatorship, sharing with other associations—as the ROE, Resistencia Obrero-Estudiantil, established by other exiles in April 1974—the revolutionary optimism of earlier times more than a year after the onset of Pinochet's rule in Chile. In March 1975, Erro was arrested by the democratic government of Argentina, accused of violating the asylum laws. He became a political prisoner, who was relocated from Buenos Aires to prisons in Ushuahia and in Chaco, to be later expelled to exile in France, from which he traveled all across Europe, Mexico and Venezuela in an effort to denounce the Uruguayan dictatorship<sup>8</sup>. Many other Uruguayan activists met even worse fates: they were abducted, tortured and made to disappear, even before the military takeover of March 1976.

Political exiles sustained their previous revolutionary positions and rhetoric in terms of class struggle and revolutionary war against the bourgeoisie and its henchmen, the military. They did not believe in the 'humanitarian lamentations' and purely informative activities of the human-rights groups and organizations.

It is important to point out that Erro, as other radical Leftist activists, were in contact with human rights organizations but did not seem to consider them playing a crucial role against the regime. They still believed in the short-term success of their ways of fighting and traditional resistance in Uruguay (Markarian, 2006).

This position was coherent with a belief in total confrontation between the people and the repressive structures and the need for violence, total dedication and sacrifice while engaged in class war. Addressing human rights NGOs, international organizations and groups of humanitarian

<sup>8</sup> Senator Erro died in exile in 1985, shortly before the return of democracy in Uruguay (Caula, 2006).



and charitable activists in the developed world was perceived as a sign of revolutionary weakness and possibly falling into the many traps set by Western imperialism. It also implied a profound lack of belief in the workings of civil society and liberal democracy. It would take years for them to slowly open to the rising transnational discourse of human rights, a process that operated similarly among other Latin Americans (Roniger and Kierszenbaum, 2005: 5-36).

Contrastingly, Senator Zelmur Michelini, also an exile in Buenos Aires, supported the strategy of denouncing the human rights violations in the international arena. Michelini understood that the adoption of the human rights discourse in terms of liberal democracy could be used to put pressure on the Uruguayan military government, though international organizations and governments. Michelini did not abandon his Leftist political position and contacts, but the concern for human rights led him to reframe the meanings of the experience of political imprisonment, torture and murder of activists, to be instrumentally used to contest the claims of legitimacy of the military rulers in the very centers of Western hegemony. Michelini's approach stressed the international domain, where links should be fostered with Amnesty International and the Red Cross, aimed at defining mechanisms of punishment for human-rights violators. He believed that international human rights organizations could be used by Western imperialism, but could also be effective in the opposite directions as stage for denunciation of institutionalized repression and for raising support for its victims. For Michelini, the US—which was responsible for the installation of military rule in Latin America—was susceptible to support the plight of the victims in terms of the defense of their human rights. By addressing the Russell Tribunal or the US Congress with these issues, he thought, he and his fellow political exiles could create pressure on the Uruguayan administration. Michelini thus shifted to the language of universal human rights. He led a trend of using this discourse within a historical narrative that stressed the Uruguayan civil tradition and its attack by the military, thus reformulating the importance of individual human rights in detriment of earlier class struggle (Markarian, 2006: 7-9). As he was scheduled to present the case of Uruguay at the US Congress, he was abducted—together with Gutierrez and two activists of the Tupamaros—and assassinated. Michelini's murder focused public attention on the gross human rights violations by the dictatorship and led many exiles to understand the importance of supporting the first wide campaign of Amnesty International against torture in Uruguay, launched in February 1976 in New York. Wilson Ferreira Aldunate, leader of the Blanco Party and the opposition in exile, had escaped a fate similar to Michelini while in Buenos Aires, joined efforts with Edy Kaufman, an Argentine-Israeli scholar holding a leading position in Amnesty International at that time and who had been instrumental in saving Ferreira Aldunate's life (Kaufman, 2003). Kaufman and Ferreira Aldunate testified before the US Congress and were echoed, especially by Democratic Senators Edward Kennedy, James Aboureszk and Frank Church and Congressmen Edward Koch, Tom Harkin and Donald Frazer, all of whom challenged the policies of the Secretary of State Henry Kissinger on Latin America.

In September 1976 Congress passed and submitted to the President a foreign-aid appropriation bill that prohibited military assistance, international military training and weapon credit sales to the government of Uruguay for its violations of human-rights standards (Markarian, 2006: 12).

This strategy was effective following the assassination of Orlando Letelier in Washington DC –which sensitized public opinion to political persecution and repression in the Americas– and on the eve of a political shift that would bring Carter to the White House. The lack of relative weight of Uruguay in the overall US foreign policy was probably also instrumental. Yet, even though effective, the strategy followed was not based on the massive mobilization of the Uruguayan Diaspora, thus contrasting for instance with the strategies carried out by the political organizations of the exiles in the Chilean Diaspora. The crucial discriminating factors in this case seem to have been the different insertion of the Uruguayan exiles among their co-nationals, their limited organizational structure abroad and their origins in a society with almost no tradition of political exile in the twentieth century. All these explain the distinctive character of the relationships between the exiles and the communities of Uruguayans in the Diaspora.

Among Uruguayans, internal divisions and fragmentation have been studied sociologically by Abril Trigo for the case of those living in Fitchburg and Leominster, in the state of Massachusetts. The first Uruguayans arrived there in 1967 and by the 1970s they reached the number of 300. Most arrived through personal and family contacts, in a sort of chain network, that followed until the mid '80s, partly coinciding with Uruguay's political transition and the economic crisis of the so called 'Fall of the Tablita'. The immigrants of the first wave felt driven by a strong and honest ethic which motivated them to succeed through hard work, while they viewed later expatriates as degraded, driven by greed into faking work accidents, filling faulty insurance claims and contracting debts they did not intend to repay (Trigo, 2003).

The second wave differed from the first in various terms. In the first place it was to a certain extent stimulated by a travel agency in Montevideo that sold tickets to Mexico and provided contacts with the *coyotes* that facilitated the entry to the US, or the tourist visas for those who want a less adventurous trip directly to New York. In the second place, even when both migratory waves presented a similar working class profile, with little technical skills and an average elementary or high school education, the members of the first wave insisted on pointing out the existence of social and cultural differences with the second wave, which they attributed to the environment of origin, in the latter case originating in marginalized neighborhoods.

This trend is replicated in other communities, particularly the Cubans in the US. When the *balseiros* arrived, the old-timers were ambivalent. Some favored supporting them in order to prevent their move into robbery or the drug business, something that would discredit the Cuban community. Others were fearful of the newcomers and their competition (Martinez nd). Despite the willing help of many in the Cuban community, many others exhibited a defensive prejudice against the newcomers, "who are not the same as we are". The exiles that arrived in the 1970s and '80s found themselves converted into a work force often exploited by those who had arrived first, thus adding tensions to an already complex interaction of exiles and migrants (Hernandez, 1991: 136).

Returning to the Uruguayans in the US, while in fact many of the old-timers lacked more than a primary education, they still praised their cultured background as an asset enabling them to project themselves into a path of upward mobility.

Part of this self image was buttressed by the exile of prominent Uruguayan intellectuals joining other exiles throughout the world during the heyday of repression. Among them: Mario Benedetti, Carlos Rama, Daniel Viglietti, Eduardo Galeano, Juan Carlos Onetti and Cristina Peri Rossi, who

were exiled in Spain; Fernando Ainsa and Angel Rama in France; and Emir Rodríguez Monegal in the US. These and other figures of Uruguayan arts and letters strongly influenced the character and limits of mass political action carried out by the fronts of solidarity (Cardoso and Costa 2006).

An important community of Uruguayans existed in Venezuela, with 7,000 migrants, most of them arriving in search of a living<sup>9</sup>. Mexico had granted asylum to 300 individuals in the 1970s and by the early 1980s there were between 1,500 and 2,000 Uruguayans in Mexico (Wollny, 1987: 219-236). But the most active community of exiles from Uruguay was perhaps that of Spain, where exiles exhibited a high degree of self-help and organization, having their own Casa del Uruguay, Colectivo de Mujeres Uruguayas, and other institutions. Most active individuals were disciplined members of the leftist Frente Amplio. Although they tried to retain control of the organizations over those activists who remained in Uruguay, they did not show the party cleavages and divisions that characterized Argentine and Chilean exiles in Spain (Ruffinelli, 1987; Gutiérrez, 1987: 11). The main organizations were the committees of solidarity with Uruguay, which disseminated information about the repression back home and denounced the dictatorship. Still, the impact of Uruguayans was rather limited, with many co-nationals lacking the epical prestige of being labeled 'an exile,' even though Spanish intellectual and academic circles felt rather close to the presence of leading Uruguayan intellectuals who had moved to their midst (Svirsky, Waksman, 1987: 12; Vich Flórez, 1992; Pieri Rossi, 1998).

These trends were projected after the return to democracy. With democratization in 1985, months of euphoria accompanied the arrival of hundreds of exiles as visitors to Uruguay in order to assess the possibilities of return. However, in parallel, the national census of 1996 identified between 60,000 and 70,000 Uruguayans who emigrated between 1985 and 1996. In 1997, on the contrary, for the first time a decrease in the emigration numbers was noticed, but it did not last long. According to a report by *Crisis Económicas*, between 1995 and 1999, 218,000 Uruguayans had left the country. In contrast to other nationals living in the US such as Guatemalans and Salvadoreans, most Uruguayans did not send remittances to their families back home, as many migrants either took their families abroad or disengaged themselves after leaving at a relatively early age. In addition, Uruguay did not take advantage of the skills and education the returnees received abroad, for lack of demand and means (Pereira, 2000: 2-3).

### **III. THE EXILE COMMUNITIES AND THE GROWING RELEVANCE OF THE FOUR-TIERED STRUCTURE OF EXILE**

Every exile faces individual constraints and openings as s/he is forced to shift her residence to a new place. The ways in which individual exiles will face these limitations and make use of these opportunities is not only the result of his personal skills and capital. They are also connected dialectically to the previous existence of a community of co-nationals and the possible constitution of a group of exiles playing a central role among the gamut of these co-nationals and vis-à-vis the home and the host countries.

<sup>9</sup> Venezuela was hosting also 25,200 Chileans and 11,451 Argentines in 1981 (Bidegain, 1987: 299-323).

In the period preceding the consolidation of state boundaries and national identities, exile played into a three-tiered structure, in which the displaced individuals and the communities of exiles were important in the definition of interregional politics, becoming political tools for both host and home countries and thus contributing to defining the boundaries of membership, loyalty and political obligations.

Along with the consolidation of national borders and identities, a series of norms and agreements about diplomatic and political asylum were elaborated. This precocious trend was strengthened when the international arena turned to draft regulations and legislations, which rapidly became the basis of a framework recognizing the rights of asylum. The triadic structure of political exile in early independent times shifted in connection with the transnational dynamics of Latin America, contributing both to the international awareness about the problem of exile and later on to the elaboration of new norms linked to international law and human rights.

A crucial factor affecting the capacity of the exiles to impinge the global arena and indirectly affect the fate of the home country is the variable centrality of the political exiles within the community of co-nationals. In relation to the expelling country, the range of possibilities varies according to the balance between the emergence of a community of exiles and the creation of a diaspora constituted primarily by migrants. The formation of a community of exiles hinges upon the emergence of a critical mass of individuals with a pro-active attitude and focus on the home country. In the case of a typical diaspora community, the critical mass of individuals tends to be pro-active economically vis-à-vis the host country.

There is nothing natural in the process of crystallization of these two types of communities of sojourners. Historical, sociological and political conditions may tilt the balance towards either one. In the case of Uruguay the recurrent economic crisis of the model of development had already created a series of migration waves that later combined with the military repression. However, those Uruguayans who escaped repression were unable to shift the center of power in the Uruguayan Diaspora at large towards a political pro-active attitude that would increasingly become hegemonic among the sojourners. The impact of Uruguayans was limited due to this predominance of economic migrants, who had a different perspective than the politically pro-active exiles. Still, Zelmor Michelini and other Uruguayan exiles perceptively understood activating the importance of the discourse of human rights in the developing arenas of the international domain.

On the other hand, Chileans abroad further projected such constant presence in the public spheres of the host countries and the global arena. They came from a political system with strong political parties that actively projected themselves into the host countries and international organizations. The military takeover in Chile did constitute a breakdown of the democratic constitutional tradition of the country, and ended the first experiment that brought to power a Marxist-Socialist administration through the ballots. The clear-cut terms of the process of military takeover and the magnitude and harshness of repression transformed Chile into the cause célèbre of the Left and later of democratic forces in general. Chilean exiles were thus able to find resonance to their cause, everywhere, both in Western democracies and Communist countries. Since the Chilean military rulers closed the political parties, alienating many Christian Democrats and members of other non-revolutionary and center parties, they created a situation that transcended the divide of the Cold War and unwillingly became a *bête noire* in the East as well as in the West. The

Chilean Diaspora became a critical mass of politically pro-active exiles that disseminated a strong moral image about the fight against the military dictatorship and Pinochet. The projection of the DINA's activities outside Chile to Latin America, the US and Europe, and Operation Condor were ineffective, not in targeting political opponents, but in silencing the opposition. Pinochet would soon have to face the political implications of this internationalization of the war against the political opposition, damaged Chilean military rulers' image at the center of the Western democracies. It is the combination of all these factors that explains how Chilean exiles had such an impact on the redefinition of international human rights and the struggle for the return of democracy.

#### **IV. CONCLUSIONS AND FUTURE LINES OF RESEARCH**

The model we suggested provides hindsight into the factors explaining how different communities developed in such distinctive ways. Rather than implying that there is some intrinsic tendency due to their national character, we claim that the differences pointed out in this article were due to the organizational format in which these communities had to put forward their plight as groups of individuals forced to leave their homeland. First are the background factors of exile, such as the level of politicization of the social strata, the organizational strength of parties, unions and professional associations, and the organizational experience of the newcomers. These factors determined the extent to which the displaced had a capacity to reconstitute as a pro-active political force while abroad. Second are the ways in which the exclusion of exiles from the public spheres and politics was operated. The relative magnitude and pace of repression determined the pace of arrival and the chances that a community of exiles would be set in a specific host country to welcome new waves of escapees. Third is the background and measure of political commitment of the exiles themselves, the social and educational capital of individual exiles, and their capacity of leadership.

In the future we plan to broaden the comparison to cover also the Brazilian and Argentinean cases, which on their face value could complement this analysis of displacement by Southern Cone dictatorships. The Argentinean case seem to resemble the Chilean one in terms of dispersal of exile communities and the drive to create their own organizations, geared on the one hand to the political domain and on the other to support the exiles socially. Equally important, these exiles seem to have been able to establish links with networks of solidarity in the host countries and the transnational arena. Yet, the very nature of the Argentine political process and the centrality and divisions of Peronism projected an unclear image that reduced the attractiveness of the political platforms aimed at centralizing armed struggle in fighting dictatorship. On the other hand, it would take time for Argentinean exiles to trust the possibility of reaching success in the global arena. As illustrated by the case of the Argentine community in Mexico (Yankelevich, 1998; Bernetti and Giardinelli, 2003), international solidarity was seen as important but not decisive. Debates ensued that would divide the communities of exiles, and eventually shift the center of the exile community to the discourse of human rights and the struggle against those who so blatantly violated such principles. The other interesting case to expand this analysis is that of Brazilian exiles, which while important individually, did not manage to assume a strong voice as a community that was politically pro-active in the fight against the military government in their home country. Although as individuals, many acquired prestige and a voice in their sphere

of activity, as a community of exiles, their presence seems to have been feeble, partly because of the internal divisions but mainly due to a lack of political articulation in facing a military administration that claimed to be committed to national development, internal stability and the eventual reconstruction of the democratic political game. As analyzed by Denise Rollemberg (1998, 2007) and others, the second wave of exiles, many of whom had supported the ideology and practice of armed struggle, clashed with the first wave that had arrived after 1964, making it difficult to construct a united front.

We would like to conclude by stressing that communities of exiles have varied space for political pro-activism, depending on the attitude of the host government, the networks of solidarity on the part of local political, social and professional organizations and the extent to which the theme of exile retains a prestigious presence in the public sphere. During the Cold War, political exile played into the polarization between East and West, Left and Right, Communism and Capitalism. This dichotomy created a situation in which some groups of persecuted individuals were granted the label of exiles while others were denied it, with all the consequences in terms of asylum, benefits and possibilities to continue operating politically. In parallel, ideological polarization produced a situation in which expelling societies broadened the scope of repression, expanding it to cover liberals as well as other groups in the political center. Thus, whether in Cuba or under military rule in the Southern Cone, the scope of the 'enemy' became so wide that large groups were forced into exile, even if unconnected or not clearly connected to the so-called subversive activities, due to a critical stance towards authoritarian rule.

What we defined as the fourth tier of international organizations and international governmental organizations granted a wide projection to the plight of the exiles and a wider voice to their political activism. Diasporas became a resonance chamber for home country politics. Through the presence of diasporas of co-nationals and the activities of exiles in their interface with international organizations and committees of solidarity, domestic political struggles were projected into the transnational arena, adding a fourth tier into the exile equation. This global tier echoed in a more effective way the situation of the exiles, as part of the opposition to policies of human rights violations. Representing political exile in terms of human rights violations allowed proactive exiles to transcend the particular-national character of their struggle, projecting it into transnational public spheres, in universal terms. It contributed to constraining the choices of the host repressive governments and forced them to redo their policies, at least by acknowledging they could no longer silence the voice of the opposition forces by expelling them beyond the borders of the state. The expelling states had to increasingly recognize that politics was in fact projected by the presence of the co-nationals abroad, turning exile into a less effective tool to close the vernacular political arena, than it had been in previous waves of dictatorship. This projection was so effective that it often allowed to overcome the divisions created by the Cold War and generated strong international pressure on the expelling countries. Attentive to the rising hegemony of the discourse of human rights, exiles managed to relate to that discourse and promote it in ways that connected their personal and political demand of democratization to a moral claim that could not be disregarded in the international arena.

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