

Citizen-Victims and Masters of their Own Destiny: Political Exiles and their National and Transnational Impact *

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Abstract: Exiles have been victims of a form of institutional exclusion that characterized many polities in Latin America. This article puts forward two claims. First, that until recently their displacement was largely dismissed as basis for recognition of victimhood. In the Cold War era, this was due primarily to the exiles' own perception of being militants willing to forego a personal sacrifice for their cause, an image they personified against the accusations of treason and betrayal of the nation that those in power projected onto them. Later, this lack of recognition of exiles as victims was retained due to the concentration of attention on prototypical victims of repression such as the detained-disappeared or the long-term political prisoners. The second claim put forward is that, while ignored as victims, exiles remained agents of their own destiny and reclaimed their abrogated national identity and citizenship. Being displaced and having lost the political entitlements of citizenship, they were forced to come to grips with past defeats, face present challenges, and reconstruct their future. It was under those conditions that exile had not just constraining effects, but also expanding effects. Exile also provided windows of opportunity to change statuses, upgrade skills, discover strengths, and develop new relationships. It thus often became a transformative experience, a kind of *aggiornamento*, which is analyzed here focusing on some of its impacts on the reconstruction of Southern Cone societies in post-dictatorial times.

Keywords: citizenship, political exclusion, territorial displacement, transformative agency.

Many political systems have used territorial displacement as an important mechanism of institutional exclusion. In Latin America, too, modernity emerged with contours of exclusion. Policies generating territorial displacement of thousands were implemented by all states in the region throughout the two centuries of political independence. All the countries used and abused

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exile along with other mechanisms of institutional exclusion imposed on those who were suspected of being on the “wrong side” of the competition for power. Since early independence, exile became one of the main possible sequels of involvement in politics, culture, and public spheres.

Politically or culturally active individuals, willing to retain a critical voice in public affairs, experienced exile, in addition to other individuals serving time in prison or losing life. In the nineteenth century, exile was an elite phenomenon, yet with widening franchise and participation in the twentieth century, exile became a massive phenomenon, affecting the lives of hundreds of thousands of citizens of all social classes who dared to challenge those in power or who, even if not involved directly in the struggle for power, were affected by the increasing violence and political polarization of their home countries.

This article analyzes the macro-sociological significance of exile in Latin America, focusing on some of its impacts on the reconstruction of Southern Cone societies in post-dictatorial times. Analysis starts with a discussion of exile as a mechanism of institutionalized exclusion, stressing how territorial displacement implies the loss of citizenship and affects the recognition of exiles as victims of repressive systems. Next is a review of the challenges that forced displacement has posed to the hyphenated model of the nation-state, followed by a discussion of the dynamics of national commitments and transnational connections developing in exile. The last section provides further hindsight on some of the transformative impacts that returning exiles have had on the reconstruction of public spheres and institutions as these societies democratized.

Territorial Displacement, Loss of Citizenship, and the Margins of Victimhood Recognition

In modern societies, citizenship has crystallized as the core idea that determines political, civil, and social rights and defines people’s membership in one or more political communities. As Steven G. Ellis, G. Hálfdanarson, and Ann Katherine Isaacs have indicated, citizenship demarcates groups of individuals who have certain privileges and responsibilities in common; and, at the same time, it is also a source and a result of exclusion. “Citizenship is not open to all and often can only be acquired by obeying elaborate rules and satisfying particular requirements” (2006: xi). But even when formally granted, citizenship cannot ensure an equal implementation

of rights, leaving room for the reproduction of unequal forms of participation, partial access to resources and markets, and the existence of all sorts of limited rights and “denizenship,” as emphasized among others by Pierre Bourdieu in his theory of power and practice (1990). The partial implementation and enforcement of rights is to be expected since the formal bundle of rights and duties are part of citizenship regimes; they are of patterned combinations of citizenship rights and accompanying modes of interest intermediation (Yashar 2005). Although modern states are presumably based on inclusive and homogenizing criteria of citizenship, contestation often emerges around the definition of citizenship and of the rights and entitlements connected to it, as well as around the workings of the mechanisms of intermediation and implementation. In Latin American societies, territorial presence has been central to the definition of citizenship (Herzog 2003). Unsurprisingly, institutional exclusion has taken the form of displacement from a national territory, in addition to time in prison and, in many cases, the loss of life.

Throughout the region, such a mechanism of exclusion was used and abused by independent states and soon became part of political culture, that is, what everybody anticipated as the possible outcome of engaging in politics. Argentine historian Félix Luna (1995: 202) described the choices of those opposed to Juan Manuel de Rosas in the early to mid-nineteenth century as involving *encierro*, *destierro o entierro*, that is, prison, exile, or death. The same formula was present elsewhere in the region and remained prominent in the twentieth century, as reflected for example in testimonies on the fate of dissidents in the 1930s and 1940s in Honduras (Bomilla 1989: 1–2, in Barahona 2005: 101). In modern times, exile became a ubiquitous phenomenon, one of the most likely destinies of anybody defying current socioeconomic structures and cultural premises, and for those challenging powerholders or not paying them the expected homage (Roniger, Green & Yankelevich 2012; Sznajder & Roniger 2013; Roniger 2014a).

Despite its ubiquity, until recently exile was largely conceived as somewhat marginal for the development of these societies and was studied in the framework of traditional concepts and concerns in history and the social sciences. For decades, one could find numerous biographical monographs that mentioned exile as a formative political experience, from notorious cases such

as those of Bolívar or Perón to those of less-renowned individuals whose aggregate testimonies build up a collective story of communities of exiles and expatriates.

Nonetheless, for a very long time, the very same states and societies that could not ignore the widespread use of exile as a form of institutionalized exclusion from the body-politic downplayed its presence as a form of victimhood. In this regard, exile was sidelined by other forms of exclusion; namely, long-term imprisonment and the loss of life. Some sort of hierarchy of victimhood was created, which Gabriel Gatti defined as a “hierarchy of despair” (Gatti 2011: 525, developing the concept of Agier 2008: 81). Of consequence was the centrality of the figure of the detained-disappeared as the ultimate victim, a limit case of a crime against humanity, a total victim defining the very limits of being human and as such overtaking the symbolic representation of victimhood in societies such as Argentina since the 1970s or more recently Mexico, following the disappearance of 43 students in Guerrero. A similar dynamic was operated in other societies, such as Uruguay or Brazil since the 1980s, where the “typical” victim was the political prisoner serving long-term time in prisons, in which s/he underwent physical and/or psychological torture and denial of citizenship rights. Compounding it in the Cold War era, this disconnect of exile and victimhood was sustained by the exiles’ own perception of being revolutionary militants willing to forego a personal sacrifice for their cause, an image they personified against the accusations of treason and betrayal of the nation that those in power projected onto them. The lack of recognition was thus buttressed by the perception of repression as the price to pay for revolutionary violence, a perception that only belatedly, hesitantly and tactically at first, shifted into a discourse of human rights (Markarian 2005; Jensen 2008; Allier Montaño & Crenzel 2015; Yankelevich 2016).

Blurring the lens of recognition was also the widespread spectrum of phenomena involving territorial displacement. Indeed, exile assumed a multiple physiognomy, which was only partially recognized by the states. There were individuals who had been driven out of their country by the authorities’ decision and went abroad under various legal arrangements; namely as banished, proscribed, deported, and expelled. Another category was that of those displaced internally, suffering a forced relocation within the national territory, much alike the measures adopted by past empires and colonial rulers relocate offenders to the marginal and unpopulated areas within their realm. The generic category of exile also covered expatriates, that is,

individuals and groups leaving on their own, who escaped for the sake of their lives and physical integrity by smuggling borders or entering under the protection of an embassy and thus receiving *asylum* to move either to the country of diplomatic asylum or to a third country. In between these poles of the spectrum there were situations—known sometimes as the *opción*, that is, option—by which individuals were offered to go into exile instead of continuing to serve time in prison, provided they accepted certain conditions such as giving up their right of return. The enormous variation in legal status and conditions made hard to construct fronts of shared claims vis-à-vis the expelling countries.

In parallel, it was often difficult to disentangle political from economic motivations amid a community of co-nationals in the *diaspora*. There were displaced individuals who conceived their move abroad in terms of migration, that is, a fully voluntary move, albeit the conditions leading to such “exit” from a national territory might have been induced by an atmosphere of repression or structural constraints such as dismissal from a job and not just the personal drive to attain a better livelihood in another country. Much depended in practice on how the displaced played out their identities vis-à-vis each other and vis-à-vis the home and host societies.

In addition, the categories used were affected by the condition under which individuals arrived in the host countries. Some arrived under diplomatic asylum; others arrived with a visa or after being issued refugee status by the UNCHR (ACNUR); others, as tourists, with a temporary permit, or even a labor contract. Moreover, the categories taken on by displaced individuals might change due to shifts in their plans and horizons and the conditions that took them abroad. Thus, an exile might turn into a migrant once changes in government or the power structure took place and the impediments to a possible return to the home country were removed. Given such changes, there were exiles who became sojourners, that is, started going back and forth between the host country of residence and the country of origin.

Starting in the late twentieth century, the phenomena of mass displacement has been addressed by the international community, which has coined the legal figure of refugee, usually perceived as being less Byronic and of lower socioeconomic status than exiles or political exiles. Calling attention to legal status implies recognizing that some exiles left without documents or with just a *laissez-passer* issued by a host country, whereas others left legally or illegally (i.e., smuggling across borders), but with documentation that eased the process of their legalization

abroad, even when in some cases the home state refused to renew the passport of exiled citizens. As territorial displacement was also present in many other situations (e.g., tourists and cosmopolitan travelers), the propaganda machinery of the expelling states worked incessantly to convince remaining citizens that those who left were traitors to the nation and had left to live a “golden exile” in the countries of relocation, thus further downplaying the image of victimhood.

Only in the aftermath of the last wave of repression, due to the massive character of exile, political exclusion, and persecution by the military dictatorships of the 1960s to 1980s, its systemic impact has been increasingly recognized by academics and belatedly by policymakers (for a comprehensive review of the literature, see the detailed analysis of Roniger 2014a and the Oxford bibliographical essay by Roniger 2014b). This analysis builds on that literature to highlight the analytically important role played by exile in the configuration of Latin American nation-states.

Exile and its Challenge to the Nation-State Model

Beyond the gradations and negotiations of meaning taking place between displaced individuals, their co-nationals at home and abroad, the states of origin and destination, the international agencies and the transnational networks of advocacy (e.g., Simpson & Bennet 1985; Keck & Sikkink 1999; Jensen & Lastra 2014), exile as a category called into challenge many of the truisms of the model of the nation-state emerging out of Westphalian understandings in the seventeenth century and reaching its heyday by the twentieth century. This was so since exile creates a rupture in the hyphenated model of the nation-state, which assumes the convergence of national identity and political membership.

Once exiled or internally displaced, many citizens often lose their entitlements or cannot exercise them, although they may still retain their freedom and regain their voice, especially those who move abroad. Hereafter, I shall focus on the latter. Even if fleeing individuals exited the territorial borders legally, carrying a passport, authoritarian rulers have devised ways not to renew those passports or prohibit the re-entry of “undesirables” to the country of origin. For example, in the case of Chile under Pinochet (1973–1990), the state found ways to oust from the national territory anybody critical of its policies. The extent of use of exile as a mechanism of punishment and control can be envisioned through the following cases of individuals whose residence in Chile was nullified by administrative expulsion and ostracism. José Zalaquett, a prominent human rights

activist, later adviser to President Patricio Aylwin and to the South African “Truth and Reconciliation Commission,” who headed the Legal Department of the Pro-Peace Committee (*Comité Pro Paz*) was arrested and sent to a concentration camp in November 1975, and was deported in April 1976. Zalaquett would return to Chile only 10 years later. Jaime Castillo Velasco and Eugenio Velasco Letelier were expelled in August 1976. Castillo Velasco returned and was expelled again in 1982. On that occasion, street demonstrations against the expulsion were a clear proof that human rights concerns were already at the center of Chile’s repressed public sphere. This prominent political leader and ideologue of the Christian Democratic Party—and Minister of Land and Development and later Minister of Justice in the government of Eduardo Frei—spent years of exile in Caracas, Venezuela. In 1978 he was one of the founders of the Chilean Commission of Human Rights, and its head from 1987 to 2003. In 1990 he became a member of the Commission of Truth and Reconciliation, known as the Rettig Commission. Eugenio Velasco Letelier, a professor of law and former dean at the University of Chile, having worked in the *Vicaría de la Solidaridad*, was expelled and lived 11 years in Venezuela and the United States. After the transition to democracy he was nominated to Chile’s Constitutional Court. Nimia Jaque de Benavente faced a different situation: she was detained at the airport in Santiago and accused of carrying anti-Chilean artisanal works, letters to exiles, Communist reading materials, and the blueprint of a high-technology machine of the *Compañía de Acero del Pacífico* (Bronfman & Johnson 2003). In 1981, Gerardo Espinoza Carillo, who had served as Minister of Interior Affairs in the Allende government, was expelled after participating in an act honoring the memory of José Tohá, former Minister of Interior Affairs under Allende. In August 1981, Chile expelled Carlos Briones, Alberto Jerez, and Orlando Cantuarias, who supported the activities of the trade unions against military rule. Manuel Bustos Huerta and Héctor Cuevas Salvador, the leaders of the *Coordinadora Nacional Sindical*, the umbrella organization coordinating the unions, were expelled in December 1982, accused of defying the authorities and hampering the legal order. For the same reasons, Carlos Podlech, leader of the Wheat Producers Association was expelled to Brazil in December 1982. Using transitory decree 24, Pinochet expelled Jaime Insunza Becker and Leopoldo Ortega Rodríguez in 1984. All appeals to Chilean courts failed. The common denominator of all these and thousands of other cases—in addition to the public prominence of some of those expelled—was the use of non-appealable administrative powers. The theoretical

premise of those using expulsion was that internal stability and perhaps legitimacy would be achieved by “cleansing” the public sphere of all who openly opposed military rule.

At an experiential level, exiles and internally displaced persons suffer the consequences of such forms of territorial displacement and exclusion from the body-politic. Unsurprisingly, their experiences led to a huge testimonial literature (Roniger 2016). Psychologists, social psychologists, social workers, and psychiatrists have traced the difficulties that many exiles faced as they were displaced from their homeland. These works have elaborated, often in penetrating ways, the problems of adjustment, personal disarticulation, mental stress, distrust and isolation, cases of suicide, as well as high rates of family disruption and divorce. Outstanding is the pioneer work of Ana Vásquez and Ana María Araujo, *Exils latino-americains. La malediction d’Ulysse* (1988) that, based on their professional experience with South American exiles in France, have elaborated a theoretical stage-by-stage analysis of exile. According to their analysis, also reminding of the Grinbergs’ 1984 work, exiles live through an initial phase of pain and remorse, followed by a phase of transculturation and a possible third phase of shattering illusions and deep questioning. Focusing on Chilean exiles, Thomas Wright and Rody Oñate Zúñiga also described the personal challenges and difficulties that many faced upon their forced displacement:

Regardless of their destinations and material circumstances, exiles carried heavy psychological baggage: the bitterness of defeat, feelings of guilt for having left dead, jailed, or disappeared comrades behind, memories of prison and torture they had endured—these and myriad other legacies of a sudden, violent, forced uprooting profoundly affected the exiles, compounding the challenges of adaptation. They arrived with dreams smashed, families torn apart, careers destroyed. Personal space contracted: Many of the men and some of the women, losing the public roles that their political involvement had given them in Chile, were forced by exile into the private realm. Parents became dependent on their children, who learned the host country’s language quickly and became the link between household and outside world. In the developed countries, where most professionals were unable to work in their fields, many found menial jobs that provided a living but no satisfaction. These traumas had to be borne without the support and solidarity provided by the typical Chilean extended family... The magnitude of the adjustment problem was such that, particularly beyond Latin America, exiles suffered high rates of depression, divorce, alcoholism, and suicide (Wright & Oñate Zúñiga 2007: 38; see also Kay 1990; Vásquez & Araujo 1988).

Paramount is the sense of individual loss felt by many exiles, which led observers to emphasize the *constraining* effects of exile. Relocation is difficult; working conditions can lead to

downward socioeconomic mobility; there is financial insecurity; psychological imbalances and alienation are generated; previous bonds of partnership disarticulate under the pressures of exile. For many, it may be hard to find a new purpose in life. Nonetheless, exile has also led to what we may call *expanding effects*, often triggered by new experiences, thus leading to unforeseen opportunities to change one's status, upgrade skills, and discover one's strength and develop new relationships. This is true since exile also opens windows of opportunity for the individuals leaving their home society. It is while peregrinating that many exiles grow to become leading and mature intellectuals, academics, researchers, or politicians.

In addition to the individual consequences of exile, I would like to draw attention also to the core macrosocial *problématique* generated by territorial displacement. Rooted in translocation, political exile, expatriation, and internal displacement call into question the territorially bounded conception of the nation-states, creating awareness to the inner tensions of that model. In her work, some of it published posthumously, political philosopher Judith Shklar analyzed exile in terms of social contract theory, identifying a government's rupture of political obligations toward its citizens at the basis of an equivalent release of commitment on the part of the displaced individuals (Shklar 1993; Hoffman 1998). Such actions, beyond generating a possible crisis of individual life projects and commitments on the part of those who were expelled or forced to escape beyond the home territory, open a collective scenario for redefining national loyalties regardless of the loss of citizen entitlements and political obligations to the home state and government. Indeed, exiles undergo many personal and organizational changes as they adjust to the various cultural, linguistic, social, and political landscapes of the host countries. Moreover, exile implies coming to terms with their inability to achieve the political projects they had envisioned before displacement. The defeat forces a reevaluation of ideological prisms, whereas being displaced often prompts new understandings of politics and cultural trends and questioning of past premises and markers of certainty.

The crux of being an exile is the ongoing connection with the place of origin, shaped by the inner conviction and promise that s/he will return once conditions allow it. Although this may never be realized due to many personal and contextual changes, the activism of many exiles still implies an ongoing relationship with the home country, itself a key factor when analyzing the experiences of returnees. It also implies the emergence of solidarity and transnational connections

with citizens displaced from other Latin American countries, discovering common challenges and finding a new voice fighting for democracy and human rights. Last, but not least, while they face a wide range of personal and collective hardships, being abroad also provides many of these individuals with windows of opportunity for academic training, social growth and intellectual diversification. In the following sections, I analyze some of these impacts and effects focusing on several cases from South America.

Retaining a Sense of National Commitment while Rediscovering Transnational Connections

During the dictatorships, the Southern Cone governments slipped into a renewed use of regimes of exception, military interventions in public life, and suspension of constitutional freedoms and guarantees, with severe consequences in the realm of human rights. They condoned genocidal practices and institutionalized exclusion in terms of “saving the national soul” and structure of society. These societies, which in the 1960s and 1970s had experienced processes of massive popular mobilization and increased, disordered and almost “anarchical” participation, were forcefully demobilized under military rule. In many cases, political parties were banned or their activities frozen by decree; educational systems were regimented and disciplined after major military interventions in the universities; school programs were reshaped according to the new ideological parameters; heavy censorship was imposed upon the media and cultural expression was “purified” of any leftist orientations; trade unions were attacked, with many of their activists jailed and/or assassinated; professional and entrepreneurial associations were co-opted or “cleansed” of hostile elements; and self-censorship crystallized as the result of a highly repressive situation. Various degrees of exclusion were applied in each of the Latin American countries, finding expression in the intervention into academic life, the destruction of some professional career tracks, the proscription and sometimes burning of “dangerous” books and artistic creations, and even the prohibition against broadcasting “subversive” music. Policies of annihilation of the radical left and its supporters were carried out both domestically and beyond the national borders. As exiles and expatriates claimed their critical voice back once abroad, repression turned transnational. These policies were also accompanied with efforts to shape the home citizens’ minds into supporting the order imposed from above by the rulers, with relative success in some cases.

Such policies did not go uncontested on the part of exiles. The broadest analytical elements denoting exiles are:

- their forceful institutional exclusion and displacement and their strong will to retain control of life decisions, all under constraining conditions and persecution
- their move to a foreign environment and the recreation of life strategies and images of homeland from afar
- their impaired yet persistent will to return to the home country

For exiles, the maintenance of a common identity is a *sine qua non* of their existence, as they vacillate between their past back home and their present abroad. Together, these themes provide a characterization of exiles as they converge, as each of them separately is not enough to define this phenomenon (Sznajder & Roniger 2013).

While losing their entitlements, many exiles retained and even deepened their sense of national identity. They promoted it through the arts and letters, food and music, public gatherings and protest initiatives. Many claimed to represent the true “spirit of the nation” and called into question the narrative and pretended hegemony of the home governments and dictatorships. As terror and fear of persecution expanded well beyond the national borders, exiles were able to capitalize on international solidarity networks, projecting the issue of repression and exile into the general public awareness and helping develop an arena for transnational activism. The crystallization of an international public sphere attentive to what once were considered “internal matters,” wrapped in the nation-state mantle of sovereignty, publicly unraveled the character of authoritarian repression, projecting the plight of the exiles in terms of human rights and “de-bordering” its treatment. In the last stages of the Cold War, the work of transnational solidarity networks and international agencies echoed cases of autocratic abuse, making them politically costly, strengthening the cause of democracy and opposition to authoritarianism (Whitehead 1996; Roniger 2015). This generated pressures in multiple directions, unforeseen by the rulers of Latin America until then. The transnational dimension emerged as a crucial aspect of the tug-of-war between political exiles, their supporting networks, and the repressive attempts of their home countries. Theoretically, this tier of political tug-of-war operated against the supposed monopoly of the nation-state over domestic public spheres and politics by empowering exiles in terms of transnational influence and resonance for their voice in the global arena. Moreover, beyond their

diversity, various communities of Latin American migrants, students, and sojourners were often politically activated and radicalized by incoming exiles, as in the case of Central America and the Caribbean (Carr 2012).

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 has potential to be a catalyst for the formation or at least an *image* of being an influential community. One paradigmatic example is that of the Russell Tribunal II. While in Chile, Brazilian exiles—members of a Committee of Indictment of Repression in Brazil—had met Italian Socialist senator Lelio Basso in October 1971, while he participated in a seminar on the Transition to Socialism. This encounter led to the idea of launching a Russell Tribunal II, modeled on the one on American war crimes of Vietnam, to be focused on the Brazilian situation, later to be expanded to cover repression in other South American countries. Basso had taken part as rapporteur in the Vietnam Russell Tribunal and embraced the idea enthusiastically. He served as the Tribunal's chair, joined by leading figures of the intellectual and political world as part of the 25-member Jury; among them: Yugoslav historian, Wladimir Dedijer, Colombian writer, Gabriel Garcia Márquez, Belgian professor of International Law, Francois Rigaud, French Sorbonne professor, Albert Soboul, Dominican Republic former president, Juan Bosch, Argentinean writer, Julio Cortázar and French Nobel Prize of Physics, Alfred Kastler, and Greek PASOK secretary general, Andreas Papandreu. In April 1974, the Russell II Tribunal issued a verdict after meeting on March 30–April 5 to evaluate the extent of repression and human rights violations in Brazil, Chile, Uruguay, and Bolivia. In its verdict, it declared “the authorities that exercise power in Brazil, Chile, Uruguay and Bolivia to be guilty of serious, repeated and systematic violations of human rights” and that “these constitute a crime against humanity.” The Tribunal called all democratic forces in the world to publicize the extent of repression in Latin America, to raise funds, to ask governments to stop all economic and military assistance to the condemned countries, to launch a massive campaign for the liberation of political prisoners there and exercise pressure on the Chilean junta so that it provides safe conducts to political leaders who found asylum in embassies, and finally conduct a boycott on sales of arms to the repressive governments. The Russell II Tribunal decided to transmit its works and conclusions to a wide array of international organizations and individuals, which includes the Secretary General of the United Nations, the United Nations

Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), the International Labor Organization (ILO), the World Health Organization (WHO), the Organization of the American States (OAS), the Non-Aligned States, the Justice and Peace Commission, the World Council of Churches, the International Red Cross, leagues of Defense of Human Rights, and all government members of the Congress of the United States. Exiles, particularly in Chile, managed in this way to rekindle their cause in the transnational arena, from where it will reverberate back in their home country. Moreover, the experience of exile may prompt complex identities and a critical awareness that may be projected by displaced grownups even to their children who relocated at an early age or were born abroad (Fried-Amivilia 2004).

Exile as a Form of *Aggiornamento*

From such a perspective, exile should be analyzed in terms of the series of personal and collective challenges it poses, while opening opportunities to reach out—occupationally, educationally, and socially. Oftentimes, exile may force or enable to overcome well entrenched “markers of certainty” and “provincialism” and trigger self-questioning and awareness to one’s own views and identities. José Carlos Mariátegui, one of the leading figures of Latin American thought in the twentieth century, reflected on such widening of horizons as he spent years abroad, “departing for a foreign country not in search of the secret of others, but in search of our own secret. Once abroad, he was able to overcome borrowed and limiting visions of modernism and attain a wider vision of humanity reconciled with a particular understanding of being Peruvians and ‘children of the Andes’” (Mariátegui 1994). Likewise, the experience of exile leads to unforeseen opportunities to upgrade skills, learn languages, discover one’s strengths and weaknesses, develop new relationships and understanding of roles, including gender roles. Often, exile widens the sojourners’ perspectives of personal identity, national identity and, in the case under consideration in this work, also pan-Latin American identity.

In what follows, for reasons of space, I’ll draw attention to two such transformations resulting from the last wave of exile from the Southern Cone. One refers to political transformations operated in exile and the other to a change that impacted the structure of higher education. In the first case, Chilean political lines were redrafted radically because of the wave of exile operated during Pinochet’s rule. With their major leaderships displaced into exile, the Chilean Left parties underwent a profound transformation. 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 and “real Socialism,” positions changed and alliances were redrafted. In many cases, the contact with communism in the Socialist countries brought about early disenchantment and the will to go back to the fold of the West, driving some to break ranks with the Communist Party. While the Sandinista victory in Nicaragua in 1979 could still 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 Bloc 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. The Chilean Communists, which had been a moderating force in the Unidad Popular (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 also 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 1982–1986 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 Christian Democracy (PDC) to contest Pinochet in the 1988 plebiscite on the dictator’s extended rule. Their success led to the *Concertación*, the alliance of 17 parties that defeated Pinochet a year later and opened the way for the return to civilian rule.

Similar transformations were experienced by many individuals from Chile and other nations who deepened their reflexivity while in exile. Illustrative is the case of Héctor Schmucler from

Argentina, who settled in Mexico to escape persecution in his home country. Once abroad, Schmucler remained politically active and participated in several hotly debated issues in the exile community, especially from the pages of the journal *Controversia para el examen de la realidad argentina* (“Controversy for the analysis of Argentine reality”). This journal had been launched in Mexico in October 1979 and ran through August 1981, with the explicit purpose of debating the defeat of the guerrilla, the situation in Argentina, and the sense of democracy, a model that was disregarded previously by Marxists and the Peronist Left. In the first issue of *Controversia*, Schmucler published a text on “The Actuality of Human Rights,” which triggered a strong debate and defamatory attacks. In it, he mentioned a declaration by an Association of Victims of Terrorism in Argentina and asked whether the struggle for human rights ought not to include also the victims of the violence triggered by the Left. “Are human rights valid for some and not for others? Is there any way to discriminate between one life and another?” His intention was not to defend those fighting “subversion,” but to draw attention to the partisan use of the banner of human rights by the guerrilla organizations (Schmucler 1979; see also Yankelevich 2009). In a later text, Schmucler also addressed the issue of the *desaparecidos*, after news about their fate became known through testimonies of a few prisoners who were released and who settled in Europe. He suggests recognizing the death of the *desaparecidos*, a position that stood in stark contrast to the position of the Mothers of Plaza de Mayo demanding their return alive. Schmucler’s intimate yet rational critiques did not go unanswered. He had clearly touched a raw nerve, pushing the boundaries of the truisms held by key social actors in the diaspora community and in the home country, all of which considered such positions scandalous (Yankelevich 2009: 149–172). Attesting to the avant-garde opening of these controversial issues was the more traditional appeal of those truisms and the idealist portrayal of the Montoneros, which persisted in some Peronist political circles in Argentina in the first two decades of the twenty-first century (Sarlo 2012).

Returning exiles made major contributions to the reconstitution of many intellectual, professional, and academic domains. A short list of individuals impacting democratizing public spheres would include some of the following areas: first, the publishing industry, with returnees such as Daniel Divinsky in Argentina, Pablo Harari in Uruguay, and Carlos Orellana in Chile, which energized and took on many initiatives, supporting the publication of books reflecting the experience of the dictatorship and the challenges of re-democratization. Even in Paraguay, a society with dominant oral traditions and more reduced circles of readers of books, a returnee,

journalist and novelist Juan Bautista Rivarola Matto, attempted, although with partial success, to make a significant change by launching a publishing house in the early 1980s, when Paraguay was still under Stroessner's rule. Likewise, returnees such as Mempo Giardinelli in Argentina and Ricardo Ehrlich in Uruguay, each from very different platforms, positions, and scope, were key players in efforts to eradicate illiteracy and contribute to major initiatives to raise the standards of both informal and formal education.

In addition, upon their return, former exiles contributed greatly to the renewal of free discourse through the arts, as illustrated by the theater scene in Argentina. Banned by the dictatorship, the contestation performances of *murgas*, Carnival's popular troupes presenting left-wing themes and against censorship were also included, as well as works on Chile and Nicaragua (Pardes 2016; Roibal Fernández 2015). The slogan of the 1984 season was *el teatrazo*, that is, "the attack by the Theatre" on limitations to free speech and the wish to "share [their] opinion in the context of freedom." One of the leading figures of *Teatro abierto*, Carlos Gorostiza, was appointed Secretary of Culture by newly elected President Alfonsín. Following the failure of the 1984 season, much of which was cancelled, the company dedicated its 1985 season to young playwrights from all over Latin America, with some success. The sixth season was cancelled. Some of the actors who returned to take part in Teatro Abierto also took part in the renewed national film industry. Pepe Soriano was cast as the lead character in Mercedes Frutos' 1984 film version of Adolfo Bioy Casares' *Otra esperanza* (Another hope), a horror narrative set in a factory with secrets, a timely metaphor for much of the repression that had targeted industrial workers in the 1970s and early 1980s. Soriano also interpreted the leading character role in Juan José Jusid's 1984 film *Asesinato en el senado de la nación* (Murder in the Senate), a historical drama on the attempted murder of the reformist Democratic Progressive Senator Lisandro de la Torre in 1935.

Actors, such as Luis Brandoni, Nacha Guevara, Héctor Alterio, Horacio Guarany, and Norman Brisky, had moved abroad due to the climate of violence and intimidation carried out by the Alianza Anticomunista Argentina or Triple A. Brandoni, who was head of the *Asociación Argentina de Actores* fled to Mexico in September 1974, after receiving death threats. Nonetheless, he returned after 10 months and spent the years of the dictatorship in Argentina, being abducted in 1976 yet soon freed through the intercession of a military officer. In 1987, after being part of the founding group of *Teatro abierto*, he played the key male character in Juan José Jusid's cited *Made*

in Argentina, a 1987 film based on a theater play portraying in sharp relief the loss and ambivalence created by exile, potential return, and transnational migration. Carlos Carella (1925–1997), another fellow actor of *Gente de Teatro* escaped to Spain and returned at the beginning of democratization; he too participated in *Teatro abierto* and starred in films during the 1980s and 1990s.

Playwright Roberto Cossa wrote the screenplays for the play *El arreglo* (The Deal) and *No habrá más penas ni olvido* (Dirty Little War), based on Osvaldo Soriano's novel, in 1983. Both became well-known for their bold indictments of the problems of corruption and revenge. Following 1983, his prolific work included *Ya nadie recuerda a Frederic Chopin* (No One Remembers Chopin), a study of frustrating exile; *De pies y manos* (On Hands and Feet), a realistic look at the impact of dictatorship on one family; and *Los compadritos* (The Poseurs), a controversial review of the events surrounding the 1939 sinking of the *Graf Spee*.

Among returning actresses, the cases of Norma Aleandro and Marilina Ross are also worthy of note. Aleandro had fled to Spain together with almost all her fellow actors of *Gente de Teatro*, a group directed in the early 1970s by David Stivel. Norma Aleandro returned to Argentina in February 1981. Per her testimony, for over two years, at least until President Raúl Alfonsín's election in October 1983, she lived in constant anxiety; insomnia was her "way of life." Only one theater risked hiring her. That same year, while Aleandro was still blacklisted, director Luis Puenzo wrote the script for the film *La historia oficial* (The Official Story) with her in mind. As soon as Alfonsín took office and political tensions eased, filming began. Aleandro's fears that she would be forgotten were unfounded. Every time she went on location, crowds gathered to cheer her. "Everyone knew I had been in exile and banned from working," she says. "I was no hero. I was just one of the fortunate people who were still alive." Under the new government, the film was a huge success; Norma Aleandro won the award for Best Actress at the Cannes Film Festival, and the film was awarded an Oscar for best foreign film in 1985. Interpreter Marilina Ross, another actress of *Gente de Teatro*, also sought exile in Spain in 1976. Upon her return, before democratization, she contributed to Argentine rock music. She was censored by the military, yet Sandra Mihanovich listened to her once and asked permission to record *Puerto Pollensa*, a song composed by Ross that became a rock classic. Her seminal album, *Soles*, was launched in 1982 and in 1983 and 1984 she released the albums *A mis queridos seres* and *Sobre un mar de miedos*.

The talented actor, playwright, and director Juan Carlos Gené (1929–2012) was another member of *Gente de Teatro* forced to flee Argentina. He lived in Venezuela until 1992 where in 1975 he founded the performing *Grupo 80* within CELCIT, the Latin American Center for Creation and Theater Research, part of the *Ateneo de Caracas*, established with state support two years before Gené arrived in Caracas. One of Gené's major contributions was to establish a transnational network of Latin American theaters through CELCIT. A subsidiary of CELCIT in Buenos Aires was created in 1979, headed by Carlos Ianni, which organized a regional meeting of researchers on the history of Latin American theater in 1984. Returning to Buenos Aires in 1992, Gené was appointed general manager of Channel 7 (the state's TV channel) and artistic director of the Teatro San Martín in Buenos Aires. He also directed the Institute of Theater Studies of Latin America, based in Buenos Aires. In 1993, he became Deputy Director General of the International CELCIT and Chairman of CELCIT Argentina. His career in theater, TV, and film, as actor, director, playwright, and teacher enjoyed continental prestige and stature for his creative relationship among central and distant locations in Argentina as well as among Latin American theater groups.

Returnees were also leading figures in the reconstruction, modernization, and expansion of higher education. Due to the policies of reinsertion, this was particularly salient in the case of Uruguay where three of the four provosts of the leading institution of higher learning, Universidad de la República (UDELAR), were former exiles: professors Samuel Lichtensztein, Rafael Guarga, and Rodrigo Arocena. With the return of democratic rule, the plight of highly skilled Uruguayans was addressed by both the government and civil society at large. On December 20, 1984, locally based scientists and others living abroad met to design a program to promote basic sciences. *Programa de Desarrollo de las Ciencias Básicas* (PEDECIBA) was eventually set up in October 1986 by state and UDELAR representatives, with active support from the UN Development Program (PNUD). Between 1993 and 1997 the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB/BID) provided funds to be administered by CONICYT (*Consejo Nacional de Investigaciones Científicas y Técnicas*). Starting in 1995, and with added allocations in 2008, PEDECIBA has been funded on a permanent basis by the Uruguayan state. One of PEDECIBA's key goals has been the "recovery of scientists who had emigrated and of students who carried out their graduate studies abroad" (Pellegrino nd: 23). It focused on training highly skilled human resources; strengthening existing scientific groups and creating new ones while also establishing new scientific disciplines

particularly in areas that would contribute to the country's development. The program evolved and now covers specialties in biology, informatics, physics, mathematics, and chemistry. With IDB, and later with state support, new resources were allocated to develop basic sciences in both academia and R&D. PEDECIBA generated the creation of new master and doctorate programs while many of those expelled during the dictatorship were being reintegrated into the educational system. In addition to seeking to promote the return of scientists and professionals, PEDECIBA promoted cooperation between domestic and exiled scientific communities. This also resulted in successfully educating and training a significant number of students and professionals in the basic sciences (PNUD 2009: 30–31).

The role of returning academics or sojourners was not inconsequential. As indicated, three of the four provosts in the first 30 years after democratization were former exiles: professors Samuel Lichtensztejn, Rafael Guarga, and Rodrigo Arocena. There were also important academic figures with such impact in Argentina and Chile, although within specific faculties and departments and not with a macro-impact as in Uruguay. As we have seen, other returnees were also instrumental in the process of institutional diversification and growth of Uruguayan science and higher education. Ricardo Ehrlich went from consolidating life sciences at the Faculty of Sciences at UDELAR, together with Omar Trujillo, a scientist who had stayed in Uruguay during the dictatorship, to becoming Minister of Education. Danilo Astori, Dean of the Faculty of Social Sciences, became Minister of Economy and then was elected vice president of the country serving with President Mujica.

With such key figures bridging the scientific community and the political arena, substantial changes did occur within higher education during the post-authoritarian period. The Universidad de la República reconstructed, expanded, and reorganized its academic structure. It divided the old Faculty of Humanities and Sciences into newly created faculties of sciences, of humanities, and of education. A Faculty of Social Sciences was formed in 1989 and opened its doors in 1991, unifying courses offered up until then in law, economics, and social work, and in 1994, a new Faculty of Psychology was also launched. Starting in 1990, UDELAR organized councils in charge of promoting academic research (*Comisión Sectorial de Investigación Científica*, CSIC), extension courses (CSEAM) and teaching (CSE), as well as offices for continuing education geared to the graduates' needs to update their skills.

In 1984, Uruguay was the only Latin American country to have only one university. A few years later, the country had created new institutions, diversified careers, and invested heavily in research and development. Instrumental in this transformation was among others the *Asociación Franco-Uruguaya para el Desarrollo de la Ciencia y la Técnica* (AFUDEST), a notable non-governmental initiative geared to facilitate cooperation and/or return of highly qualified exiles. AFUDEST functioned as an interregional cooperation network of researchers between France and Uruguay, working on projects that were initiated in Uruguay between 1985 and 1994. Founded by 40 Uruguayan scientists in France, AFUDEST registered as a French NGO to address the scientific imbalance between the two nations. Issues examined included training human resources in science and technology, the “brain drain,” technology transfer, Uruguay’s scientific and technological development, and the regional integration of the country in the basic sciences. AFUDEST was involved in many institutional initiatives: establishing a network to select French host institutions for Uruguayan students with scholarships; obtaining fellowships for Uruguayan scientists from the *Fondation pour la Recherche Medicale* and from CESTA; coordinating and assisting Uruguayan students in their submission to the European Union of 17 projects for the development of basic sciences; establishing a program for epidemiological cancer research at UDELAR’s medical school; sending publications to the Montevideo University science library; helping Uruguayan students with their accommodations in France, and providing assistance to obtain a guaranteed job upon returning to Uruguay. In 150 cases studied between 1986 and 1992, the rate of return to Uruguay rose from 50% to 90% following AFUDEST efforts. AFUDEST also launched the first meeting of biotechnology in Uruguay in May 1987, which resulted in the submission of the first national biotechnological plan to Uruguay’s Parliament.

Not every country benefited to the same extent from the process of territorial displacement and dispersion that created a diaspora of knowledge that could be reconnected as societies entered a process of re-democratization. Yet, the potential was there, anchored in the fact that exiles saw themselves as more than victims. While some could not overcome their sense of defeat and depression, many others became instrumental in the opening of the home societies to processes reaching out of territorial boundaries. Those countries that managed to build bridges with co-nationals in the transnational arena and welcome those willing to return or at least those eager to contribute to the development of the country from afar, managed to reach better results

than other countries that continued to support polarizing narratives and reinforced the sense of estrangement between exiles and those who stayed in the home countries during the period of authoritarian rule (see Sosnowski 1987, 1988; Lastra 2014, 2016; Roniger, Senkman, Sosnowski, Sznajder 2017).

Conclusions

Throughout two centuries of independent statehood, exile became a major mechanism of institutionalized exclusion, regulating dissent and politics in Latin America. Forced displacement and relocation often followed political defeat, ostracism, and persecution. Whatever its concrete forms, going into exile was often the result of political systems that forced some of their citizens to escape for their lives and personal integrity. In all these societies, exile became ubiquitous, and was seen almost as a “natural” consequence of being involved in public life and politics in the region. Until relatively recent times, however, exile was sidelined as basis for recognition, primarily due to the concentration of attention on prototypical victims such as the detained-disappeared or long-term political prisoners, and its conceptualization in terms of the consequence of defying power structures. On the other hand, for very long, attention was focused on the constraining effects of exile, which involves a sense of loss, a loss of “markers of certainty” and an experience of detachment from home networks, sights, and routines.

This article aimed to draw attention not just to the individual aspects of exile but also to its collective significance, particularly the challenges it posed to the hyphenated model of the Latin American nation-state. Likewise, this study reviewed some of the expanding effects of exile, triggered by relocation to other societies, which opened windows of opportunity for new experiences, leading to unforeseen chances of upgrading skills, developing transnational relationships, and undergoing an *aggiornamento*. All this allowed many of them to become masters of their own destiny and envisage alternative paths of development for the societies of origin, once conditions leading to forced displacement disappeared and they could return or at least reconnect while still staying abroad. Analysis illustrated such trends in Southern Cone countries, where, in recent decades, former exiles have claimed recognition and have had substantive impacts on the reconstruction of societies in post-dictatorial times, leading changes in multiple public arenas, ranging from politics and education to the arts and sciences.

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