

Introduction:

The Politics of Exile

Exile is a perennial subject that signals a logic of political exclusion and exclusion from domestic public spheres. Western democracies have increasingly developed pluralistic and tolerant public spheres that enabled to contain countervailing, opposition forces without expelling them from their midst, as long as all sides abided by the democratic game. Former ruling elites, whose misdeeds during tenure have been exposed publicly, as well as dissident intellectuals and vocal opponents of incumbent administrations, have been able to act and express themselves in the public domains, without being forced to abandon their home countries. After being impeached and resigning to the presidency, Richard Nixon did not leave the USA. Charles De Gaulle abandoned office in 1946 for the solace of Colombey les Deux-Eglises, to return to power in 1958 and found the Fifth Republic. When Giulio Andreotti, prime minister of Italy for many terms, was accused of corruption and complicity with organized crime, he still could stay in his home country and trust justice. Under established democracies and within the rule of law, both leading and rank-and-file politicians have been able to remain in their home countries, and be involved in the public domain. This has not been the case in Latin America.

Since its inception, Latin American politics has been a game of inclusion and exclusion. We do not refer only to pressures for widening the franchise and around access to political power and resources by the masses, which in the region have been forced to work through mediating networks of clientelism and favoritism. Although

exclusion of the opposition has been a natural correlate of authoritarianism, exclusion has not been absent from democratic openings. Both under authoritarianism and democracy, those fallen from power or directly in the opposition, have been often forced to take the road of exile. Many opposition figures have moved abroad following Chavez's increasing control of the public sphere in Venezuela. Former presidents as Alberto Fujimori, Carlos Salinas de Gortari, Jamil Mahuad and Alejandro Toledo have decided to leave their home countries, instead of facing the difficulties of post-presidential life. Democracies have professed to respect the basic rights of every citizen and yet, similarly to the authoritarian polities which have used expulsion and exile as normative political tools, democracies too have been characterized by recurrent persecution, exclusion and ostracism. The recurrent use of exile reflects an ongoing challenge of the incomplete and exclusionary nature of the nation-states in the region.

Political exile has been a major political practice in all Latin American countries throughout most of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. It is our claim that exile has played a vital part in shaping the form and styles of Latin American politics.

In spite of its ubiquity in these countries, political exile is still an under-researched topic. While fascinating, until recently it has been conceived as somewhat marginal for the development of these societies and has been studied in the framework of traditional concepts and concerns in history and the social sciences. It is not unusual to find numerous biographical monographs that mention exile as a formative political experience, from notorious cases as those of Bolívar or Perón to less renowned individuals, whose aggregate testimonies build up a collective story of communities of exiles and expatriates. Similarly and not surprisingly, a testimonial literature

accompanied the last wave of political exiles, first documenting the experiences of Brazilians who were forced to leave their country in the aftermath of the 1964 coup d'état,¹ and marking a trend that was to repeat itself continuously over the next three decades. The number of such biographies and testimonies has burgeoned in the past generation, and include some outstanding and insightful works.²

These biographical accounts and testimonies of exiles and expatriates contribute important building blocks towards a reconstruction of the collective experiences of exile. They also point out the ubiquity and profound impact of the phenomenon, which resulted from political exclusion and persecution by the military dictatorship of the 1960s to 1980s. And yet, most of these testimonies do not provide a systematic analysis of the role of exile in Latin American politics and societies, and also do little to explain the recurrence of exile or its transformations over time, from the early nineteenth century to the late twentieth century. Only recently have collective works moved in the direction of constructing building blocks for a comprehensive approach to specific communities of co-nationals exiled during the last wave of military dictatorships.³

In parallel, recent years have witnessed the proliferation of literary analysis and criticism focusing on the universal meaning of the experience of exile, from imposed to

¹ Pedro Celso Uchôa Cavalcanti and Jovelino Ramos. Memórias do exílio: Brasil 1964/19??. São Paulo: Editora Livraria Livramento, 1978; Abelardo Jurema, Exílio. Paraíba: Acauá, 1978.

² Among them: Albertina de Oliveira Costa, et. al. Memórias das mulheres do exílio: obra coletiva. Rio de Janeiro: Paz e Terra, 1980; Albino Gómez, Exilios (Por qué volvieron). Rosario: Homo Sapiens Ediciones, 1999; Flavio Tavares, Memorias do esquecimento, Sao Paulo: Globo, 1999; Carlos Ulanovsky, Seamos felices mientras estamos aquí. Buenos Aires: Editorial Sudamericana, 2001; Diana Guelar, Vera Jarach and Beatriz Ruiz.. Los chicos del exilio. Argentina (1975-1984). Buenos Aires: Ediciones el País de Nomeolvides, 2002; Abril Trigo, Memorias migrantes. Testimonios y ensayos sobre la diáspora uruguaya. Buenos Aires and Montevideo: Beatriz Viterbo Editora and Ediciones Trilce, 2003; Jorge Luis Bernetti and Mempo Giardinelli. México: El exilio que hemos vivido. Editorial de la Universidad Nacional de Quilmes, 2003; and Pilar Roca., Ismael Viñas. Ideografía de un mestizo. Buenos Aires: Dunken, 2005.

³ Silvia Dutrénit-Bielous, ed. El Uruguay del exilio. Gente, circunstancias, escenarios. Montevideo: Trilce, 2006; Pablo Yankelevich and Silvina Jensen, eds. Exilios. Destinos y experiencias bajo la dictadura military. Buenos Aires: Libros del Zorzal, 2007.

self-imposed exile. This literature is mainly anchored in 20th century writings, reflecting the pronounced impact of political repression and military dictatorships of the 1970s and 1980s on exile.⁴ Often, these works provide in-depth theoretical hindsight of the existential experience of marginalization and the tensions it creates, especially for writers rooted in the language of communities that were silenced by repression and underwent processes of cultural transformation in which the exiles took only a tangential part while abroad. And yet, most works in this line are strongly permeated by post-modern emphases and have been less prone to contribute to the systematic social and political study of the impact and roles of exile in Latin American politics.

Another major corpus of work is that developed by psychologists, social psychologists, social workers and psychiatrists on 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-américains. La malediction d'Ulysse* that analyzes on the basis of their

⁴ Gloria Da Cunha-Giabbai, *El exilio: Realidad y ficción*. Montevideo: Arca, 1992; Vásquez, Ana and Angela Xavier de Brito, "La situation de l'exilée: essai de généralisation fondé sur l'exemple de réfugiés latino-américains". *Intercultures*, 21 (1993):51-66; William Rowe and Teresa Whitfield, "Thresholds of Identity: Literature and Exile in Latin America". *Third World Quarterly*, 9, 1 (1997): 232-55 ;, Maria José de Queiroz, *Os males da ausência ou a literatura do exílio*. Rio de Janeiro: Topbooks, 1998; María-Inés Lagos-Pope, "Testimonies from Exile: Works by Hernán Valdés, Eduardo Galeano and David Viñas", in idem. ed. *Exile in Literature*. Lewisburg: Bucknell University Press, 1999; Hamid Naficy, ed. *Home, Exile, Homeland*. New York and London: Routledge, 1999; Amy K. Kaminsky, *After Exile. Writing the Latin American Diaspora*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1999; Mike González, "Exile", in Daniel Balderston, Mike González and Ana M. López, *Encyclopedia of Contemporary Latin American and Caribbean Cultures*. London and New York: Routledge, 2000, Vol. 2, pp. 539-40.

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' 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. While we rely on the insights of this work and similar contributions, we will refrain from reviewing in a systematic way their contribution to the understanding of the exilic condition.⁵

Our work will follow a socio-political perspective, analyzing political exile, its background, patterns and wider social and cultural impact. Recent developments in political science and history, sociology, anthropology, and international relations have highlighted the centrality of Diasporas and transnational studies, of transience and relocation, of cultural hybridity and multiple modernities. Following these analytical developments, we suggest that the study of Latin American exile can become a topic of central concern, closely related to basic theoretical problems and controversies in these disciplines. In parallel, we suggest that the systematic study of exile also promises to lead to new readings of Latin American development, away from the traditional readings of national histories and towards other, more regional, transnational or even continental dimensions.

On the theoretical level, the study of exile highlights an ongoing tension between the principle of national membership and the principle of citizenship. Once a person is pushed into exile, she or he may lose the entitlements attached to citizenship, but at the

⁵ See for instance Jorge Barudy et al. Así buscamos rehacernos. Represión, exilio y trabajo psico-social. Santiago: COLAT-CELADEC, 1980; Luis Grinberg and R. Grinberg, Psicoanálisis de la migración y del exilio. Madrid: Alianza Editorial, 1984; Ana Vásquez and Ana María Araujo, Exils latino-américains. La malediction d'Ulysse. Paris: CIEMI and L'Harmattan, 1988.

same time he or she may become even more attached than before to what is perceived as the “national soul.” There is a latent but distinct dimension of collective identity submerged in citizenship, necessarily recognized while in exile. Accordingly, it has been abroad that many of the displaced nationals discovered, re-discovered or rather invented the ‘collective soul’ of their countries in primordial or spiritual terms. While some migrants and sojourners became transnational and de-territorialized, many others have sought to reconstruct their bonds of solidarity in terms of the home collective identity, thus opening a fascinating area of political and cultural debate as these societies returned to democracy and opened their public spheres.

After periods of crisis, which produce a significant number of exiles, fascinating debates have been normally generated between those who stayed in the home country and those who moved abroad over the definition of the components of national collective identity. Concurrently, new bonds have been forged with exiles from ‘sister-nations’, reinforcing a dynamic of shared recognition and identification of shared problems and transnational interests in the inter-American system. Exiles, hoping to return some day to their home country, often attempt to define in novel ways the terms of collective identity. In many instances, exile seems to have played an important role in Latin America, in defining or re-defining both the national and the pan-Latin American identity.

At the same time, though the exiles often claim they are the true representatives of the People while abroad, they interact in new environments, are exposed to fellow exiles from other countries and confront new models of organization that transform them willingly or not. This poses a major dilemma for every exile, at the personal, psychological, familial and collective level: how to relate to the host society and whether

to become part of it, beyond the instrumental level of everyday life, and even develop hybrid identities and commitments. Moreover, if they settle in what they perceive as a more developed, organized or cultured environment, they face this dilemma more poignantly. The longer the exile the more likely this leads to fragmented identities, to visions of heterogeneity, migrancy and heteroglossia, which some may celebrate and others mourn about.

The experience in exile challenges the displaced persons to reconsider the ideals they came with and their notions of both the host country and the homeland that they left behind. A profound process of redefinition of cultural, social and political assumptions thus takes place, which is crucial to trace as one analyzes later transformations in these countries.

This approach leads us to suggest that political exile has a synergetic function. It is both the result of political processes and a constitutive factor of political systems. In causal terms, as it results from political persecution but stops short of annihilation of the opposition, exile speaks – in Gramscian terms – of an authoritarian pattern of politics and hegemony, whatever the formal definition of the political system. Such patterns of politics are built upon exclusion and a situation set between a winner-takes-all competition for power and the perils of a zero-sum-game broadened into civil wars.

While resulting from such forms of political competition, the recurrent use of exile has ensconced it in the political culture of these countries, reinforcing the exclusionary rules of the political game in Latin America. In early stages of political development the widespread practice of exile has limited democratic institutionalization, even if it projected pressures on a wider domain of political action. It affected democracy

by limiting representation and contestation within the polity, hindering the scope of free debate and the possibility to contest established power by the open channels of democratic action.

The study of exile requires a nuanced reading of context and history, as it evolved and changed its character throughout the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Political exile is dynamic, hinging on political action and evolving in a parallel fashion to processes of political institutionalization and de-institutionalization and to the reformulation of political ground rules. In parallel, the dynamics of recurrent exile have been a main component of limited or exclusionary democracies in Latin America.

It should be stated that the experience of exile is multiple and yet, there are trends and patterns in exile, which can be studied from various disciplinary vantage points. We follow a socio-political and macro-historical approach that combines institutional and network perspectives. Our thesis is that political exile has been instrumental in defining key aspects of Latin American states, with consequences on the ways in which politics has been played and public life structured in these countries since independence. Although recognizing the early use of translocation in colonial times, we have identified in post-independence times the transformation of exile into a major mechanism for regulating authoritarian polities, with central consequences for the public spheres of these countries.

We also claim that exile has changed its concrete structure with the passing of time. In the context of elitist politics, exile developed a three-tier structure, shaped around the interplay between the expelling state, the exiles, and the host countries. By the late nineteenth century, and moreover in the twentieth century, this tiered structure will start

developing a fourth tier in the form of an international public sphere with increasing impact in modulating the ways in which the other tiers interact.

In the early pattern, the combination of political factionalism and the lack of mechanisms of political turnover and representation created waves of individuals expelled into neighbouring territories. Oppositions often found themselves ostracized. As the frontiers of the new states were still in the process of being defined, exile became a major mechanism of regional politics. In spite or due to defeat, exiles moved to neighbouring areas to prepare themselves to regain control of the home political scene. Motivated by their own agenda, the host rulers exercised their regional influence by giving shelter to those fleeing detrimental constellations of power, turning them into sympathetic political allies. Therefore, it is not surprising that when a faction a ruler sided with was defeated in a neighbouring country, the ruler often welcomed the vanquished into his territory, hosting them, and even supporting their plans of return to the polity of origin. When the defeated faction was inimical to the host's political design, he could still host the expelled individuals and control their freedom of action, thereby curtailing the possibilities of plotting against an ally, the ruling government in the neighbouring country. In all cases the translocated individuals and the communities of exiles played an important role in this three-tiered structure, both within the plans of regional hegemony of the host countries and within their home country's strategies and pressures on the states hosting the translocated.

This dynamic was maintained throughout the first two centuries of independent political life. Still, major changes were effected in its workings as the result of social, economic and political transformations, particularly the degree of institutionalization or

de-institutionalization of the different polities. Political factionalism reflected the format of elitist and mass politics. Political openings and mobilizations – both through civil wars and enlarged franchise – generated increasing complexity. This was reflected both in the diversification of the social and economic background of the exiles, and in the extent to which the route of exile was followed by increasing numbers of individuals of varied background. In a certain way, exile mirrored the pace of modernization, evinced in pressures for political inclusion by incorporation of new social strata into politics and at the same time exclusion through banning, persecution and translocation. Accordingly, exile progressively reflected the limited character of the political arena facing the mass activities of individuals in political associations, parties, professional associations, trade unions and student organizations.

Exiles were not necessarily champions of political democracy. Many of the ‘revolutionaries’ going into exile were no less authoritarian and violent than the rulers who sent them into exile or from which they were fleeing. By tracing the characteristics of the exiles, research may trace the changing tug-of-war between authoritarian politics and the pressures to democratize Latin American politics. The violence generated by this political process has been a major ingredient pushing people to flee their home countries, even when their connection to politics was tangential. By the 20th century, massive migration resulting from political conflict, civil war, and violence was manifest throughout the continent. The refugee problem became evident both in civil war situations and in protracted and low-intensity conflicts.

The triangular structure of exile underwent a core transformation once a fourth, and increasingly important, element entered the exile equation: a global arena

preoccupied with humanitarian international law and human rights. In Latin America, the ground for this fourth tier was laid in the nineteenth century. The proliferation of exiles, and later on of refugees, triggered Latin American efforts to internationally regulate the issue and move toward the creation of an Inter-American set of international regimes of asylum. As early as the 1860s and 1870s, delegates of these countries have discussed the right of asylum and progressively elaborated a corpus of norms of international private law and international penal law. The issue of exiles and refugees has increasingly resonated in the global arena, creating a more complex political environment in which the actions taken by expelling governments were increasingly questioned and placed under criticism. Exiles were incorporated into widening trans-national networks with a voice not to be silenced by distance and time. Networks of solidarity, non-governmental organizations, international governmental organizations and global media created a new and more complex organizational environment to be taken into account. Toward the late 20th century exile already clearly evinced this four-tiered structure.

This study traces the origins of political exile in colonial translocation. We reconstruct the emergence of exile out of colonial forms of translocation, when it was used for juridical, administrative and social purposes, into the modern form of political exile, and its subsequent transformations in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. After independence colonial precedents were ingrained in the formation of exile as the mechanism to serve the hold of small elites over the masses by avoiding a zero-sum game situation inherent in factionalism. One of the unintended consequences was that exiles became a factor in defining the boundaries and borders of nations and states in the region.

The emerging situation of being translocated helped shape the ways in which borders, identity, and alterity were defined in Latin America. Thus it gave substance to the formal definitions that were taking place among both the mass and the elites in the process of defining new states in the Americas. In such manner, exile was unwittingly instrumental for these states, based on formal administrative divisions inherited from colonial times, as their elites strived to shape singular identities and create their own ethos and nations. As the ostracized political actors took the road of exile within the American continent, they ascertained their status as ‘nationals’ of a ‘polity’ left behind as soon as they were out of the reach of the rulers of their place of origin but realized they were not accepted as full members of their place of destination. This phenomenon in itself has shaped in novel ways what turned out to be fragmented spheres of power emerging from former colonial boundaries. Hence, political exile helped in defining the new polities and forms of sovereignty characteristic of the emergence of modern nation-states out of disintegrating empires. We thus attribute to political exile not only a derivative function of former traditions but also a formative role in the transformation of politics and states in the Americas.

The Janus-face nature of political exile was evident as it continued to reinforce the authoritarian characteristics of the political game in these states. In the political culture of the various Latin Americas, to follow the expression coined by Renato Ortiz, exile turned into a major regulatory mechanism of political action. Exile and return allowed the new polities to stabilize by projecting political pressures outwards, and by ruling momentarily without being challenged by internally well-organized and effective oppositions. These phenomena also enabled their organization on the basis of the formal

political models of the time, to be coupled with the lack of political debate within their countries.

The very exclusion of exiles from the domestic public arena shaped, however, a transnational public sphere and multi-state politics in the Americas and beyond, in which some of the exiles learned how to play their national politics from afar and the states were drawn in to play politics on an international and later on, global scope.

Another important implication of this is the emergence of political cultures characterized by a lack of congruence between the boundaries of statehood and the definitions of national identity. Many nationals, including members of the elite, found themselves fleeing abroad. Whereas only by the late 19th century are there true diasporas, translocated individuals moved across territories as they debated and redefined their identity and their country's identity and boundaries. This also implies that there was a spillover of politics beyond the formal borders of any single Iberoamerican state, and that the very definition of a country's identity and borders turns into a function of exiles' personal and collective experience in the nineteenth century, as it will become a vector of political and cultural renovation in the twentieth century.

That is, by excluding members of the political and cultural elites, the problems deemed internal to a polity are projected to an arena that only then becomes identified as "abroad". Accordingly, the interplay of exiles in the evolving realms helped in shaping the transnational and the national domains in ways that both linked the new states to the older administrative boundaries and projected them into new visions and definitions, while perhaps reducing the internal pressures for change.

The structure of this book follows the above claims and suggestions along an analytical line. Chapter 1 analyzes the exilic condition and focuses on the key issues, meaning, and scope of exile as an exclusionary social and political phenomenon. The chapter examines prevailing approaches on translocation and displacement and suggests analytical dimensions for the study of political exile.

In Chapter 2, the Latin American tradition of displacement and the historical antecedents of exile are analyzed. The chapter reviews Portuguese and Spanish practices of banishment; the early construction of differentiated Latin American collective identities in exile; and the formative role of exiles in the process of constitution of the new nation-states and their collective identities.

Chapter 3 is about the three-tiered format of early exile and the emergence of communities of exiles, addressing their role in the transnational dynamics of Latin American politics. Special attention is devoted to collective imaginaries and the formation of the new state identities through a politics of exit.

Chapter 4 elaborates on the role played by major sites of exile, by reviewing the cases of Chile in the nineteenth century, Paris as the cultural Mecca attracting exiles and émigrés since independence, and Mexico in the twentieth century. It examines receptivity of host countries and the limits set by them on the political activity of the exiles.

Chapter 5 treats the relationships between widening political and social participation and the massification of exile as the counter face of political inclusion. It elaborates on issues of international agreements of asylum and the transformation of the format of exile into a four tiered structure, in which transnational networks played an increasingly important role.

Chapter 6: The varied dynamics of communities of exiles in the late 20th century, their relationship to the diasporas of co-nationals, and the political role they played as part of the globalizing fourth tier of exile are examined through the cases of exiles from Brazil, Argentina, Chile and Uruguay. Special attention is given to the way in which proactive communities of exiles impacted their home country politics through the international arena. For reasons of space and research design, the focus is on the communities of exiles escaping repression in the Southern Cone, leaving aside other important exile communities such as those of Cuba, Haiti and Central America.

Chapter 7 combines quantitative and qualitative data on the extent of Latin American presidential exile since independence and into the present, singling out the displacement of heads of states due to their centrality in the political process, both practically and symbolically. An original data base of nearly 1,500 presidential terms in Latin America is analyzed in terms of the extent and forms of exile.

Finally, chapter 8 examines life after exile and the issue of return as the undoing of institutional exclusion. It analyzes the varied impact of the exile experience on: changing gender attitudes; the impact on the rewriting of history; the repatriation of remains of national heroes who died in exile; and the incorporation of new global models by the returnees. The chapter concludes by indicating the broader implications of this study and future lines of research.

The combination of themes around political exile and its Latin American variants constitutes an attempt to see the theoretical implications of the development of this phenomenon on the basis of its development in a region that has used and abused political exile as a regulatory mechanism. The multi-focal approach we follow escapes

simple historical-developmental analysis. By encompassing different aspects and angles of political exile we hope to raise awareness to both the main problems of research ahead, as we suggest lines of analysis that are both theoretical and empirical, based on hundreds of past and contemporary cases of displacement in the Americas.