

The influence of integration on transnational political engagements: the Colombian community in Chile



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Summary

This dissertation addresses different factors that influence involvement in the homeland conflict. The factors discussed (in accordance with the literature from Regts, van Houte and Ruben (2010) are: integration, perception of conflict, motivations to migrate, travel frequency and date of arrival. The assumption was that the factor integration has major influence on transnational political engagements. There were indications that it was the main factor of influence on migrants' engagements with transnational activities in (post-) conflict countries. During the process of writing this dissertation, I discovered that the other factors play an important role as well. Therefore, I looked into all relevant factors, but the focus was placed on the presumed link between integration of migrants and refugees into new host societies and their influence on the conflict. In light of the Colombian international migration, the case study of this dissertation focused on the Colombian transnational community living in Santiago de Chile. "Involvement in the homeland conflict" is an extensive notion; this thesis focuses on the political transnational engagements.

For this study the Colombian community in Chile was divided into different groups (based on Aranda & Morande, 2007): migrants and refugees. The migrants were divided on basis of their education: low skilled workers and Qualified Human Resources (QHR). The refugees were subdivided into: regular refugees, refugees participating in the Program of temporary exit of Colombians (*programa de salida temporal de Colombianos*, PSTC) and resettled migrants. During the research I discovered that the division of refugees into groups might be relevant for the start of their integration process, but for the complete analysis the division should have been different. The refugee group should have been divided into the same categories as the migrants; low and high skilled people. The degree of education seems to have influence on both the integration process and the perceptions people have of the conflict as well as on the engagements in transnational political activities. Where possible I tried to make the distinction between high and low skilled refugees.

The most important differences between the groups with regard to integration, is that most QHR have integrate easier in the Chilean society, both on the *de facto* and *de jure* side of integration. They encounter less problems when looking for a place to live, have a larger network that helps them with housing and employment, encounter less discrimination and feel more at ease between the Chileans. Low skilled workers and refugees (mainly the low skilled refugees) encounter most problems when it regards housing and employment. Their situation is even worse when they do not have a documented status (yet). Resettled refugees and regular refugees seem to have more difficulties to establish social contacts with Chileans than QHR or low skilled workers.

Integration has an important influence on the involvement in transnational political engagements, both positively and negatively. Four main conclusions on the relation between *de jure* and *de facto* integration and involvement in transnational political activities were drawn. In the first place, *de jure* integration is important for most people, because if people are struggling to survive they don't have time for involvement in the homeland conflict. In the second place the force/potency of a diaspora network cannot be underestimated. In some cases it is even more important than *de jure* integration for political activism. In the third place, *de facto* integration in Chile does not seem to have a major

impact. QHR have least trouble mixing with the Chileans, but at the same time there are also a lot of other people involved in political activism while they mention not to have good relations with Chileans. In the fourth place some people deliberately tried to become less involved in the homeland conflict, because it impeded their (mainly *de facto*) integration into society.

Although integration is an important factor, the other factors cannot be left out of the analysis. The perceptions on conflict also have a noteworthy influence on the transnational political engagements. As the Colombian conflict is perceived as complex, few people carry out concrete activities. The date of arrival also has a direct link to the involvement, as do the motivations to migrate. In 2005 more and more Colombians started to arrive. Those who arrived after they year 2005, have more trouble finding a house and work and refugees receive less assistance. This increased number of Colombians also led to an increased distrust between the Colombians in Chile.

The main reason to emigrate from Colombia was the violence, insecurity and the conflict. Other factors as the lack of economic perspectives in Colombia, relations and migratory chains and other reasons play an important role as well, but the violence, insecurity and conflict formed the major incentive to depart. That violence, insecurity and conflict was the main reason to leave has implications for political engagements. If people leave Colombia because of insecurity and violence (instead of for example the lack of employment opportunities) their stay in Chile will probably not be temporary, because if the situation does not improve they cannot return (low skilled migrants showed less involved in the homeland conflict than low skilled refugees). Only the travel frequency does not seem to influence the link between integration and involvement in the homeland conflict.

The Colombian community in Chile is a group of people that is created as a the result of the movement of people and that shows affinity with their host country and their homeland: features of a diaspora. Nevertheless, there is a lot of distrust. The number of Colombians living in Chile have increased the last years as have the initiatives to organize themselves. Despite the distrust, it seems that they form a transnational community more and more every day. In sum, I think I can refer to the Colombian transnational community as a diaspora, but in accordance to the literature (Bouvier in Smith and Stares, 2007) also in Chile the diaspora is hesitant.

The transnational political activities were divided into electoral and non-electoral politics. In non electoral politics there are almost none activities, besides one woman that donates a small amount of money to a Ngo that tries to stop the conflict. Concluding there can be stated that Colombians in Chile participate at least in two out of three aspects of electoral politics (“Membership in home country political party” and “Gives money to home country political party”). Movements as the Independent Movement of Absolute Renovation (*Movimiento Independiente de Renovación Absoluta*, MIRA) and Corphuex have gained increased importance. MIRA has more and more members from the Chilean wing every year, especially via the church a lot of people join the movement.

Even though there were not many initiatives to transform the conflict, I hoped there would be some valuable ideas about what can be done in the future. Only a few people came up with good ideas. The most valuable opportunities for the future were to increase solidarity between Colombians and to demonstrate good behaviour as an example. A more concrete idea is to start a network that can

help Colombia y by exchanging products and knowledge and to promote education. I added a few recommendations:

- The Colombian diaspora in Chile can make it hard for the world to forget about the conflict. The Colombians in Chile can start by informing Chileans about the conflict and organize demonstrations in the streets (in the past there have been some demonstrations).
- They might be able to mobilize political contacts in the host country in the future. This is only feasible if they grow and gain more political influence.
- They can become involved in problem-solving workshops. When they have more money they can train people in Chile and send them to Colombia to organize these workshops.
- Another opportunity is the promotion of norms, values (what is already been done) and institutions that define a democratic polity.
- The promotion of ideas, such as the importance of a non-corrupt government.

Acknowledgements

Hereby I present my master thesis for the study Human Geography, specialization Conflicts, territories and identities. More than one idea has crossed my mind before the subject of involvement in the homeland conflict of the Colombian community in Chile was chosen.

During my internship at the gender division of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs the idea was born to investigate Violence Against Women (VAW) in Latin America, as that was one of the topics I worked on. The knowledge I gained during my internship, about VAW, the role of women in conflict and women's rights opened my eyes and I will always carry the knowledge with me. Despite the need of further investigation of this topic I decided it was too little related to the specialization of the master and I switched topic. The period in the Hague did help me to demarcate my subject.

A few colleagues were working on the topic of women in conflict. In Latin America one of the countries the Ministry focuses on is Colombia. As it is one of the longest ongoing conflicts in the world and produces millions of Internally Displaced Persons (IDP's) and an exodus to countries over the whole world I thought it would be interesting to investigate their activities as a diaspora. Especially because the Colombian diaspora is known to be reluctant in their activities towards their homeland. The reason to opt for the Colombian community in Chile is that the community has grown significantly the past decade and Chile seems to offer a political and economical stable environment. Another reason to opt for Chile was a personal fascination with the country.

I have always had interest in the Latin American continent and during my Bachelor International Business Communication I went on an exchange to Santiago de Chile for a year. This thesis links my Bachelor with my master Human Geography. The knowledge I gained and contacts I established during my year in Santiago helped me writing this thesis. Especially without the contacts it would have been impossible to accomplish this research.

This thesis could not have written without the help of many people and institutions. First of all I would like to thank the *Vicaría de Pastoral Social y del Trabajador* (refugee area) in Santiago de Chile, especially Cristián Fuente and Guillermo Aravenas. They gave me useful information and provided me with the opportunity to contact Colombian refugees. I would not have had the opportunity to enter the Vicaría if it wasn't for Eduardo Rojas and Gianina de la Barrera from the Catholic University Cardinal Raúl Silva Henríquez. Eduardo also presented useful information about the situation of refugees in Chile. Further I would like to thank Deicy Delgado who introduced me to The Church of God, Ministry of Jesus Christ International (*Iglesia de Dios, Ministerial de Jesucristo Internacional*) and Alexander Ramírez who gave me the opportunity to conduct interviews in the church.

Further, I would like to thank my thesis supervisor dr.ir. M van Leeuwen for his time and advice during the year from the first ideas to the final thesis. The road to this final thesis was long and he guided me through it with a lot of patience. After meetings I was always overwhelmed with new ideas. He succeeded to give me key insights, gave me useful feedback on my writings and gave me very useful advice about the structure of the thesis. Finally I would like to thank my friends for the

moral support and advice during all the hours we spent together in the library and my family, in special my parents, grandparents and Niek.

Simone Holvast

Breda, 16 September 2010

Abbreviations

AUC	United Self-Defence Forces of Colombia (<i>Autodefensas Unidas de Colombia</i>)
CSO's	Civil Society Organizations
DDR	Disarmament, demobilization and Reintegration
ELN	National Liberation Army (Ejército de Liberación Nacional)
FARC	Armed Revolutionary Forces of Colombia (<i>Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia</i>)
HR	Human Rights
IDP	Internally Displaced Person
ILO	International Labour Organization
INE	National Institute for Statistics (Instituto Nacional de Estadísticas)
MIRA	Independent Movement of Absolute Renovation (<i>Movimiento Independiente de Renovación Absoluta</i>)
PSTC	Program of temporary exit of Colombians (<i>programa de salida temporal de Colombianos</i>)
QHR	Qualified Human resources
TC	Transnational Community
VAW	Violence Against Women

Table of contents

	Page:
Summary	4
Acknowledgements	8
Abbreviations	10
Table of contents	12
List of maps, tables and figures	14
1. Research framework	16
1.1 Introduction	16
1.2 Research objective and research questions	21
1.3 Social and scientific relevance	24
1.4 Research design and methodology	24
2. Diasporas in conflict: theoretical background	28
2.1 Immigration	28
2.2 Diasporas	31
2.3 Diasporas and involvement in the homeland conflict	33
2.4 Integration	34
3. Breaking up the roots in Colombia: background information	36
3.1 The Colombian conflict	36
3.2 The road towards Chile	38
3.3 Migration in Chile	39
3.4 Characteristics of Colombians in Chile	41
3.5 The global Colombian diaspora	42
4. Leaving the Colombian <i>Sancocho</i>: the road towards Chile	44
4.1 Perceptions of Colombians on conflict, violence and other problems in their country	44 46
4.2 Motivations to migrate and the road towards Chile	
5. Integration and transnational political engagements	52
5.1 Specifics of different integration trajectories:	52
- Immigrants; QHR and low skilled migrants	
- Refugees; regular refugees, PSTC, resettled refugees	
5. 2 The formation of a Colombian diaspora?	65

5.3 Transnational political engagements	68
5.4 What are the relations between integration and transnational political engagements and how do the other factors exert influence?	72
6. Discussion and conclusions	76
7. Literature	82

Appendices

1. Details about applicants for the status of refugee per sex & nationality from 2006-2009
2. Statistics about resettled refugees
3. Part of the interviews on the perceptions of conflict
4. Part of the interviews on motivations to migrate
5. Part of the interviews on the integration trajectories
6. The campaign folder of MIRA

List of maps, tables and figures

	Page:
Graphic 1: factors that influence involvement in the homeland conflict	17
Graphic 2: Increase of immigrants in Chile	39
Table 1. An attractive destination for immigrants?	40
Table 2: departments with major numbers of emigration.	47
Table 3: motives to emigrate from Colombia	49
Map 1: Overview of the departments of origin	51
Image1: Management system of MIRA	70

1. Research framework

1.1 Introduction

This dissertation will address different factors that influence transnational political engagements as part of involvement in the homeland conflict. The factors discussed (in accordance with literature) are: integration, perception of conflict, motivations to migrate, travel frequency and date of arrival. The assumption is that the factor integration has major influence on transnational political engagements. In light of the Colombian international migration, the case study of this dissertation will focus on the Colombian transnational community living in Santiago de Chile.

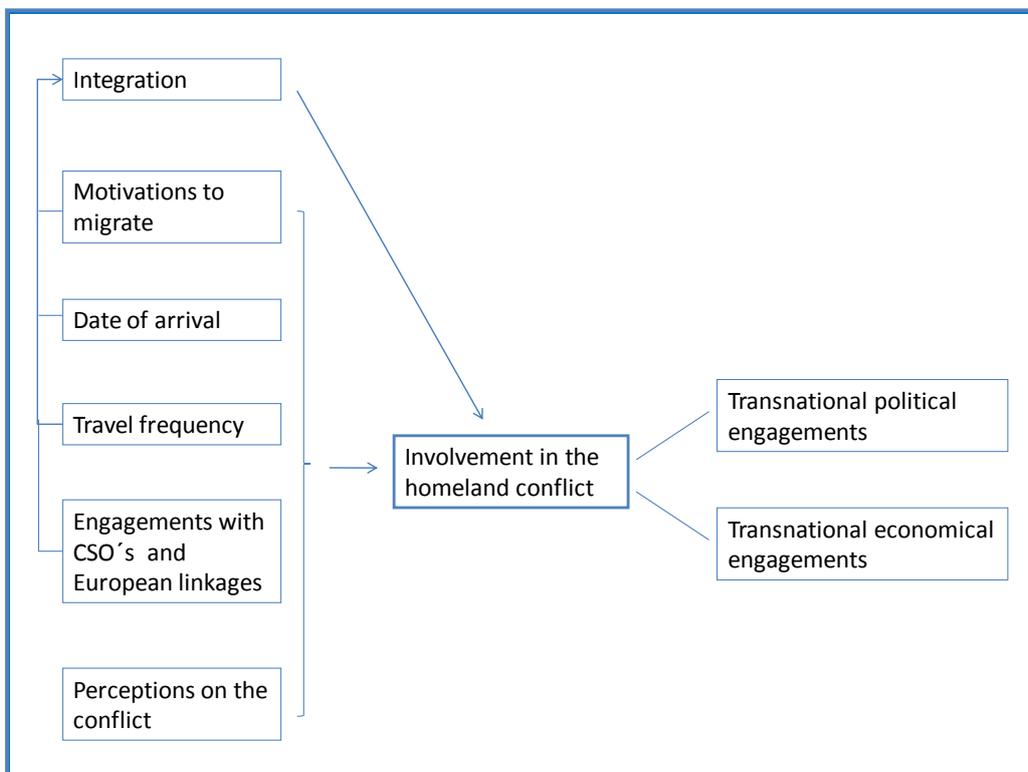
Through globalization, reduced costs of communications and new technologies people get more and more interlinked with each other. The flows of migrants and refugees that are living in host countries seem to have more and more contact with their country of origin (Regts, van Houte and Ruben, 2010). Therefore it might be easier for Transnational Communities to get/become involved in transnational engagements. The influence of Diaspora on conflict has been discussed frequently. Conflict related diasporas often have a critical role in home land conflicts, in a conflict reducing or increasing way. Scholars as Collier and Hoeffler (2002) and Cochrane (2007) point to the risks of migrant involvement, because they might have a conservative perspective on their homeland politics (Caarls, Franssen and Ruben, 2010). Nevertheless, according to many studies transnational communities (TC's) can play a crucial role in the process of conflict prevention and post conflict reconstruction (amongst others: Regts and others 2010; Zunzer, 2003 and Lyons, 2004).

Only migrants in host societies in the Western world have been acknowledged to play an important role in post-conflict societies (Caarls, Franssen and Ruben (2010). Therefore most scholars focus on the migrants in the Western world and do not include migrants and refugees in other parts of the world. Diasporas that matter are essentially located in rich Western countries. Their location allows the Diasporas to collect and mobilise financial resources, transnational networks and connections throughout the whole world. This enables them to change the situation in the homeland, for whatever motive (Mohamoud, 2006). This research goes off the beaten track and will investigate a non-Western country as host society for reasons that will be touched upon later.

Few studies have focused on the factors that influence migrants' engagement with transnational activities in (post-)conflict countries. Research conducted by Regts and others (2010) reveals that factors as "the degree of integration", "engagement with civil society organizations and European linkages", "perception of conflict", "travel frequency" and "arrival date" play a role in shaping diaspora networks. When I started to write this thesis I intended to place the entire focus on the factor "integration". I had indications that it was the main factor of influence on migrants' engagements with transnational activities in (post-) conflict countries. These assumptions were based in the first place on a link in the literature. Barajas Sandoval (2008) investigates a link between integration and the role migrants play as social actors in The Netherlands and as development actors in their countries of origin. She concludes that integration is not needed at all levels, but when people are able to interact in the receiving society in an appropriate manner, it increases the chance

they become a social or development actor. In the second place integration seems important because non-Western countries are left out as host-countries in which diaspora involvement in (post-) conflict can develop significant activities. This indicates that scholars who exclude non-Western societies as relevant host societies, attach value to interaction with the receiving society. They seem to establish a link between the possibilities migrants have in a host society, which is partly determined by their integration, and their involvement in the (post-) conflict of their homeland. During the process of writing this dissertation, I discovered that the other factors play an important role as well. Therefore, I will look into all relevant factors, but the focus will be placed on the presumed link between integration of migrants and refugees into new host societies and their influence on the conflict. The reason I decided to leave the factor “integration” as the main object of research is that I assume that a high degree of integration into the host society facilitates the opportunities for involvement in the homeland conflict.

Graphic 1 visualizes the relationship between different factors and the involvement in the homeland conflict. The factors included in the graphic are: “Integration”, “Motivations to migrate”, “Date of arrival”, “Travel frequency”, “Engagements with CSO’s and European linkages” and “perceptions on the conflict”. They all have a certain degree of influence on someone’s involvement in the homeland conflict. The factors “date of arrival”, “motivations to migrate”, “travel frequency” and “engagements with CSO’s and European linkages” also influence the integration process. In the graphic “involvement in the homeland conflict” consist of two kinds of engagements: transnational political and transnational economical engagements. The focus will be placed on transnational political engagements. This choice will be explained below in relation to the case study.



Graphic 1: *factors that influence involvement in the homeland conflict*

As non-Western societies are frequently (if not always) left out of analysis on the role of diaspora in the homeland conflict, it might be interesting to look into the possibilities that exist in a non-Western host society. The focus on a non-Western society might provide new insights in the possibilities non-Western societies have to offer. The presumed link between integration of migrants and refugees into non-Western host societies and their influence on conflict will be examined, together with other factors of influence. A case study will provide more insight into the integration of Colombian migrants and refugees in Chile.

The Colombian conflict has been going on for more than 50 years. It is the longest on-going conflict in South America and estimations are that more than 50.000 people have been killed. The Colombian international migration in the end of the 1990's and the beginning of the 21st century takes place in a context of internal conflict and reviving of the drug trafficking. It is marked by the economical crisis, the social gap that exists in Colombia and the lack of economical possibilities. The urban unemployment rate increased up to 20% (the national unemployment rate was 16,7%). This decade was the time of the consolidation of the linkages between the drug traffickers and the armed groups. The line between political violence and criminality became unclear, what lead to more terror in multiple zones in Colombia and therefore, to the deterioration of the quality of life of the population. It led to a high level of internal displacement in the country. There are estimated to be 3 million Internally Displaced People (IDP's) in Colombia. Only the IDP populations of Sudan and the Democratic Republic of Congo are larger in number. Over 10% of all 43.8 million Colombians were living abroad by 2002, in more than 25 countries on four continents (Bouvier in Smith and Stares, 2007). Most of them fled to the United States or Europe (Spain) and countries in Latin America, especially towards neighbouring countries as Venezuela, Peru and Ecuador. The Colombian diaspora is dispersed over more than 25 countries worldwide. The cross border migration can be seen as a continuation of the internal displacement, forced by factors related to the conflict (Arande & Morande, 2007). The high amount of externally displaced Colombians provides a lot of potential. The number of people who could become involved in changing the homeland conflict is relatively high. As a large part of them is living in a non-Western society, their potential should be investigated as well. The Colombian diaspora world wide has been known to be reluctant in the involvement in the homeland conflict (Bouvier in Smith and Stares, 2007), what makes it an interesting case to study.

Another very important reason to conduct more research about this topic is the weak social cohesion, the ad-hoc character of organizations working and the critical attitude of solidarity oriented engagements calls the possibility of Colombian diaspora involvement in peace building and development into question. In most other cases the diaspora is relatively coherent, which is obviously absent in the Colombian case. Peace building models seems to assume that peace building takes place in a post conflict situation and that a new (legitimate) government manages development. Most conflicts are framed as bipolar. At the moment, Colombia does not fit one of these assumptions. Riñao-Alcalá and Goldring (2006, pp. 18) conclude that

"[...] the activities of the activities of Colombian solidarity activists constitute a form of peace building that relies on mobilizing international pressure so as to foster social change and support human rights, and then peace building needs to be re-conceptualized more broadly, or there is little probability that Colombians will be involved in peace building and development in the near future."

They are participating in a particular version of peace building and development, that is not recognized by the Colombian government. This is mainly due to the way the state frames the violence, obscuring its own role and further because the state conducts peace building separately with the different parties. Colombians abroad are not included. However, the situation has changed since 2006. According to Bouvier (in Smith and Stares, 2007, p. 143) the Colombian government now recognizes the diaspora community as a “vital part of the nation” with “great potential to contribute to the social and economic development of the country”. The government’s taxation, immigration, electoral and regulatory policies have increasingly encouraged rather than penalized migration, enabling migrants to become political and social “agents of change” both abroad and home. This is good news as we have seen in the second chapter that diasporas only intervene in conflict if they can, if they have some kind of access to power. The factors that hinder a more coordinated or effective coordination are manifold and will be discussed in chapter 3.

The period in which the Colombian migrants started to arrive in Chile coincides with economical crisis and the recrudescence of the conflict in Colombia. The amount of Colombians arriving in Chile has increased the past decade. Colombians started to see Chile as a possible destination, because of the image they have of the country. They perceive Chile as an epicentre of welfare and economic dynamism in the region. This image, of Chile being a privileged destiny, with a good economic situation and stability and security, are determinants for those who decide to choose it as a destination. Nevertheless, it seems to be more than just an image. Every year, relatively more people migrate to Chile. According to the IOM the increasing number of immigrants is related to the relative good economic development compared to other countries in the region (Fuentes, 2009). This has led to an increasing demand of labour. After the 1990’s the conditions to migrate to Chile improved: Chile became a democracy and was economically stable, which made it a more attractive destination for migrants, especially from Latin American countries. Even though Chile is a non-Western country, it has a lot of potential. The statistics of the census of 2002 show that this immigration is (in volume) the biggest Chile ever received in recent history (Fuentes, 2009). In 2005 there were 231.500 immigrants in Chile. Migration towards Chile in these numbers, is a rather new phenomenon and little is known about the integration of Colombians into the Chilean society. This might have implications for the way Colombians are being received by the government, Ngo’s and the Chilean population.

In many scientific articles there is a division between economic migrants and conflict generated diaspora groups. The Colombian community in Chile is heterogeneous; the conflict produces both migrants and refugees. Violence in Colombia has escalated, the situation is particularly acute in the countryside where different insurgent groups engage in war against the government and paramilitary groups. In many rural areas conflict over land and violence have caused massive internal and external displacement. The Colombian community living abroad is in a great part conflict generated (Bouvier in Smith & Stares, 2007). Nevertheless, the Colombian conflict produces many problems and a clear division between who is a migrant and who is a refugee seems difficult to determine. The Chilean government, on the other hand, draws very clear lines between refugees, migrants or people who are in the process of obtaining a migratory visa or the status of refugee. They have different integration trajectories and offer a different amount of support to refugees than to migrants. The integration trajectories the Chilean state does or does not offer, to both migrants and refugee might play a mayor role in successful or failed integration into the Chilean society.

“Involvement in the homeland conflict” is an extensive notion. In graphic 1 we have seen that it consists of two parts; the political and economical transnational engagements. The choice to opt for this dichotomy is that the Colombian conflict is ongoing and very complex. Terms as conflict prevention, conflict resolution, conflict mitigation, peace building and conflict transformation are avoided on purpose. In Colombia, all phases in conflict exist concurrently, and theoretically, each provides an access point for the engagement or interference of the diaspora community (Bouvier in Smith and Hazel, 2007). It also makes it difficult to focus and therefore I have decided to focus on transnational political engagements. The opportunities for political interventions in the Colombian conflict are more interesting than the economical interventions. In the first place because most actors in the conflict have enough resources; the drug trafficking, kidnappings and other criminal activities have made them rich (Hanson, 2009). They do not depend on resources from the diaspora. In the second place because there are many possibilities to intervene in a political way as we will see in the second chapter.

There is little information available about the Colombian community in Chile. This research will provide qualitative data about the Colombian community in Santiago de Chile and will show how the migrants and refugees themselves experience the integration into Chilean society. Integration is one of the factors graphic 1 shows for involvement in the homeland conflict. For the case study of the Colombian community in Chile, not all factors will be investigated: involvement in civil society organizations (CSO’s) and European linkages will not be dealt with. The reason to leave this factor out is that Chile is a non-Western country. It would be strange to state the importance of investigating a transnational community in a non-Western host society and, at the same time, investigate the linkages the community has with Europe. After looking into the integration into society and the other factors that influence involvement in the homeland conflict this research will look into the actual transnational political engagements of the Colombian community in Chile. If there are few signs of involvement, I will look at the opportunities that exist for future engagement.

With this dissertation I hope to make a contribution to the literature by investigating the link between integration, other factors and the involvement of diaspora organizations in the homeland conflict. Furthermore, I hope the Colombian community will have a better idea of the options and possibilities they have to participate in transnational political engagements in their home land.

These arguments form the basis for the writing of this dissertation. The structure is as follows; Chapter 1 provides the research framework and Chapter 2 the theoretical background of diaspora involvement in (post) conflict. Chapter 3 contains background information on breaking up the roots in Colombia. Chapter 4: “Leaving the Colombian *Sancocho*: the road towards Chile” describes the first two factors that influence involvement in the homeland conflict: the perceptions on conflict and the motivations to migrate. This information is crucial in explaining their integration into society. Following Chapter 5 describes the actual integration trajectories for the different groups present and the transnational political engagements and the possible contributions to conflict resolution. This chapter also addresses the other two factors that influence transnational political engagements (date of arrival and travel frequency) within the framework of the integration trajectories. The reason not to discuss the factors in separate paragraphs is that the date of arrival of migrants and refugees is the beginning of their integration process and can therefore hardly be separated. The

factor “travel frequency” is also incorporated into the integration into society, because it is part of their daily lives and influences their integration process. Finally, Chapter 6 provides the discussion and conclusions.

1.2 Research objective and research questions

The main goal of this dissertation is to gain better understanding in the factors that might influence participation in political transnational engagements and changing the homeland conflict. The main factor of interest will be integration. The case of Colombian migrants and refugees in Chile will be studied. As the Colombian diaspora worldwide is known to be reluctant, another aim is to gain understanding in their situation and to arm the Colombian diaspora with knowledge and guide them to become politically involved in their homeland conflict. Hence, two goals are formulated. The first central goal is:

To contribute to the debate about diaspora involvement in the homeland conflict, by analyzing different factors that might influence transnationalism.

The second goal is:

To offer knowledge and guidance the Colombian diaspora can use to become more politically involved in their homeland conflict

The following main research question is derived from the central goal:

What is the relationship between integration and transnational political engagements and what other factors can provide opportunities for the Colombian community in Chile?

In order to investigate the link between transnational political engagements and integration, the perceptions on conflict, motivations to migrate, travel frequency and date of arrival there are different sub-questions that have to be answered. The main reasons for Colombians to migrate will be investigated, as well as their perceptions on the homeland conflict. Hence the transnational political engagements will be investigated as well as opportunities that exist for the future. Furthermore, the different integration trajectories of migrants and refugees will be studied and their solidarity within the Colombian community; do they form a diaspora group? Finally, the implications for the relation between integration, other factors and transnational political engagements will be analysed.

In order to investigate the transnational engagements it is important to gain insights in the perceptions Colombians have of the conflict, violence and other problems in their homeland. As I base my investigation upon the answers of Colombian refugees and migrants present in Chile, I draw conclusions on how they *perceive* the conflict, violence and other problems in Colombia. The way people perceive conflict can have a huge impact on the possibilities of resolving the conflict. As Riaño-Alcalá (2006) states: when conflict is ongoing, unresolved and largely glossed as criminal and drug related and not political, diaspora groups can or will not necessarily involve themselves in

peace-building. In other words: if the conflict would be more transparent the contribution that diaspora group could or would make in conflict resolution would most probably be higher. The way they perceive the Colombian conflict, will be important for their willingness to be(come) involved in the homeland conflict. This leads to the following sub question:

1. *How do Colombians perceive the conflict, violence and other problems in the homeland?*

For a better understanding of integration, it is important to get a better understanding of the reasons why they emigrated from Colombia to Chile. The reason why they left has, ideally, a link to the legal status they receive in Chile. A migrant can have a different integration process into society than a refugee or a student.

2. *What were the personal motivations to migrate from Colombia and how did the Colombians arrive in Chile?*

As stated before “involvement in the homeland conflict” is an extensive notion and this dissertation will focus on the transnational political engagements. The different political activities will be discussed in paragraph 2.3. If there appear to be no or few signs of initiatives related to involvement in the homeland conflict, there might be interesting transnational engagements that would make conflict resolution possible in the future.

3. *What are the actual transnational political engagements of the Colombian community in Chile and what opportunities do they see for the future?*

The Colombian community does not have all the signs of a diaspora community. By Colombians themselves the term diaspora is rarely used when referring to the people living outside Colombia. In scientific articles the term diaspora is used at times. The relevance of knowing whether they form a diaspora or not helps in establishing the links that exist between the Colombians in Chile and their homeland. If they do not form a diaspora, the chances they will be(come) active in political activities concerning their homeland are very small.

4. *Is there a Colombian diaspora?*

There might be a link between integration in the country of settlement and the possibilities and willingness to establish transnational engagements or even participate in conflict resolution. I think the better the integration in the host society, the higher the odds are that somebody participates in conflict resolution.

Generally speaking, people who are integrated *de facto* and *de jure* possess of the right means to achieve their goals. *De jure* integration covers housing, education and participation on the labour market. If somebody does not require a minimum of this integration, he/she will be more occupied surviving than being able to participate in time-consuming or expensive transnational engagements or conflict resolution. *De facto* integration concerns interaction with the population, language, social contacts, habits, standards, values and a sense of belonging (Barajas Sandoval, 2008). Social contacts and networks might help to establish more links with for example governmental organizations and

Ngo's. Knowing a country's standards, values, habits and the language will help you to find one's way and to achieve goals. Then, there is also the other face of integration: acceptance and discrimination on part of the host society. However, this part of integration might have a different link with transnational engagements and conflict resolution. I assume that non-acceptance or discrimination on part of the host society might trigger the need to establish more transnational engagements and the participation in conflict resolution.

There are different ways to categorize migrants. The only qualitative study that I could find (by Aranda & Morande (2007) about Colombians in Chile uses the following classification for migrants: low skilled migrants and Qualified Human Resources (QHR)¹. I will use the same categories as it is a logical way of dividing the Colombian migrant population in Chile. The refugees can also be split up into different categories. The refugee categories I mention do not originate in another study, but the divisions I have made originate in the different programs through which refugees arrive. This has major impact on their integration and involvement in political activism, because one of the programs offers them only a visa for a year. Furthermore, the integration trajectories in terms of support they receive differs tremendously between the different groups. There are the regular refugees who arrive in Chile by their own means. Then, there are the people who arrive in the *Programa de Salida Temporal de Colombianos* (PSTC, the program of temporary exit of Colombians). This program focuses on social leaders who are in direct need of refuge out of Colombia. Next, are the resettled refugees that, in the case of Colombian refugees in Chile, are mostly resettled from Ecuador, Venezuela and Costa Rica. They are resettled by the UNHCR, because host countries near the border from Colombia cannot handle the amount of refugees and migrants entering their country. For further explanation on this topic see paragraph 2.1. The question that arises is how those different trajectories influence their integration into Chilean society.

5. *What are the specifics of the different integration trajectories of the heterogeneous Colombian diaspora in Chile and how does it affect integration?*
 - a. *Immigrants: QHR and low skilled workers*
 - b. *Refugees: regular refugees, participants in PSTC and resettled refugees*

All those sub questions still have not answered the main research question. The relation between integration and transnational political engagements is not established and the influence of the other factors neither. Therefore sub question 6 is formulated:

6. *What does all this imply for the relation between integration and transnational political engagements and what opportunities exist?*

The definitions used in the (sub)questions will be defined in chapter 2.

¹ Aranda & Morande (2007) divide the Colombian migrants into three groups. They split the group of Qualified Human Recourses into two categories: those who came to Chile strictly for labour and those who want to expand their education (master and postgraduate students). I will focus on the people who came to Chile for labour.

1.3 Social and scientific relevance

As part of the Colombian exodus, every year more Colombians decide to migrate to Chile. Were in 1992 there were only 1.514 Colombians migrants present in the country, in 2008 that number increased up to 9.162: from 1992 to 2008 the Colombian community has folded more than five times (Fuentes, 2009). Different investigators coincide that, although the number of immigrants might be small, they do have a significant impact on Chile. They have made relevant contributions in areas like technological innovation, modernization of the agricultural sector, the development of commerce, banks, industry, the mine sector and others. At this moment, Chile is the fourth most popular destiny in Latin America. Argentina, Venezuela and Brazil receive more immigrants than Chile. However, a decrease of immigrants is visible in those three countries. As a matter of fact, there are only four countries in Latin America that had an increase of migrants: Ecuador, Bolivia, Colombia and Chile. In terms of percentage, between 2000 and 2005 Chile had the highest growth of immigrants in whole Latin America: 30,54%.

There is little research available on the situation of Colombian migrants in Chile. The existing research places the focus mainly on quantitative data (for example the last census of 2002 conducted by the National Institute of Statistics in Chile (INE) or, when it considers qualitative data mainly Peruvian, Bolivian and Argentinean migrants in Chile are investigated (for example Alarcón, Lissette, Cabello, Elizabeth, Espíndola & Dana, 2000). The only qualitative study I encountered regarding the specifics of the Colombian community in Chile is from Aranda & Morande (2007) who provide a case study of Peruvians, Bolivians and Colombians in Chile.

To avoid repetition, all other information regarding the social and scientific relevance can be encountered in paragraph 1.1.

1.4 Research design and methodology

This research was divided into two parts. The first part of this research provided a theoretical background and an analysis of the situation of Colombian migrants and refugees in Chile based on literature. The second part analysed the interviews and dealt with the link between integration, other factors and transnational political activities. Besides answering the research questions one hypothesis will be tested:

A high degree of integration into the Chilean host society will have a positive influence on the involvement in transnational political activities of Colombian migrants and refugees.

The necessary information was derived from different sources. In the first place, scientific literature provided the base for the theoretical background. Concepts of integration, diaspora and transnational political engagements were discussed as well as diaspora- homeland links and involvement in the homeland conflict. For the analysis of the situation data was obtained in Santiago de Chile. Interviews with Colombians in Santiago were held with refugees and migrants that arrived after 1997 in Santiago de Chile. The group of refugees consisted of regular refugees, people of the PSTC program and resettled refugees. The group of migrants constituted low skilled migrants and

QHR. The choice was been made not to interview students, because most of them don't work and they have other integration trajectories than migrants and refugees. The distinction between the different refugees and migrants was made, because they receive a different amount of support from the Chilean government and might therefore have different integration trajectories. They were divided into different groups that were already discussed in paragraph 1.2.

The group of people that was interviewed contained man between 18 and 65 years old and women between 18 and 60 years old, people in the working age². In the semi structured interviews they were asked questions about their integration in Chile and their involvement in transnational political engagements. In order to gain more insights in the degree of integration, the categories as used in the research of Barajas Sandoval (2009) were be applied. Her categories were very useful for my research, as she also investigated a link between integration and the role migrants can play as development actors in their countries of origin. The categories she used to gain insights in the degree of integration allowed me to structure my interviews. I added a few more questions, because her categories only focus on integration, but they formed a useful basis. She divides integration into two categories: *de jure* and *de facto* integration: the section economic, social and political participation and the section cultural orientation.

The section *economic, social and civil political participation* consists of:

- Income and poverty,
- Housing,
- Education,
- Occupation and participation on the labour market,
- Political and civil participation.

The section *cultural orientation* consists of the theme's:

- Interaction with the population,
- Language,
- Social contacts,
- Habits, standards and values,

The other face of integration: acceptance in the host country

To her categories I added the category "date of arrival". This factor is important for the debate about involvement in the homeland conflict. I thought it fitted in well, because in the case of Colombians in Chile the date of arrival plays an important role in their integration trajectory. As more and more migrants arrive in Chile every year, the Chileans don't receive them with the same hospitality as they used to do. For the Colombian community this means that the level of distrust between Colombians themselves grows as they do not know everybody personally anymore (Aranda & Morande, 2007).

In order to gain insights into the involvement in political transnational engagements variables of Guarnizo, Portes & Haller (2002) were used. I used their variables, because they are one of the few authors that provide such a clear overview of the different transnational political activities. In other articles or investigations a lot of activities were mentioned, but they were not categorized. Even

²In Chile men work until they are 65 and women until they are 60 years old.

though this study provides qualitative data, it was useful to have some variable that could structure the story. This does not imply that additions could not be made: the variables provided structure, nothing more nor less. Guarnizo, Portes & Haller (2002) divided transnational political practices into two different groups, “electoral politics” and “non electoral politics”, which both contain three subcategories.

Electoral politics:

- Membership in home country political party
- Gives money to home country political party
- Takes part in home country electoral campaigns and rallies

Non electoral politics:

- Membership in a civic hometown association
- Gives money for community projects in home country
- Membership in charity organization active in home country

Furthermore, professionals of different Ngo’s and the government were interviewed to provide a more complete image of the Colombian refugees and migrants in Chile.

The information obtained from the interviews was processed in chapter 4 and 5. I was aware of the different manners that exist to process this information. A regular way of processing the information is to analyse the data and use quotes to support the story and to add the interviews in the appendices. I mainly used this style. Nevertheless, I chose consciously to add a summary of a few interviews about the corresponding topic, before the analysis in chapter 4 and 5. Especially for the analysis of the integration trajectories I thought it was important to provide some complete stories (one per category) before the analysis. The analysis of integration consists of many different subjects that will all be discussed separately. I wanted to provide a complete image of the integration of some of the most important relates. The rest of the interviews can be found in the appendices (per topic). The quotes that are included to support the text, are not literal quotes as the interviews were held in Spanish. I tried to translate them as correctly as possible, but I cannot guarantee that the translations are perfect. The names of the people I interviewed are changed, because of privacy and security reasons.

There has to be noted that there were some limitations that influenced the outcomes of this investigation. In the first place was the period of time I stayed in Santiago de Chile too short. I have been there for a total of three months, of which I wanted to dedicate two months and a week to the investigation. I took me longer than expected to contact the right people and to gain their confidence. Before leaving for Santiago I had established some contacts (through people I already knew from an earlier stay in Santiago) with a refugee organization. I took me two weeks (due to summer holidays) to contact the right people within the organization. They gave me valuable contacts with a Colombian refugee, trough which I finally arrived in a Colombian church in Santiago: The Church of God, Ministry of Jesus Christ International (*Iglesia de Dios, Ministerial de Jesucristo Internacional*)³. In the church I conducted most of the interviews, for the simple reason it was very

³ When in this document the church is mentioned it always refers to the Church of God.

difficult to establish contacts with Colombians. When I went to the church for the first time, I only had four weeks left. That fact that most of my interviewees attended the church is the second shortcoming of my research. Of all people I spoke with most people were religious and if they were politically active most of them were stimulated from within the church and their religious beliefs.

In the third place the 27th of February of this year Chile experienced a massive earthquake of 8.8 on the scale of Richter, which happened during my last month in Santiago. The earthquake had a terrible destructive effect on the country. Especially in the south of Chile entire cities, villages and all infrastructure were destroyed. In Santiago only a few buildings collapsed entirely, but the infrastructure towards the city was heavily damaged. Also inside buildings a lot of things were destroyed, think of windows, computers, televisions, actually almost everything that is not fixed to the wall. Normal life seemed to commence again rather fast. A few days after the earthquake everything appeared to function normally again. Nevertheless, people were still in shock and afraid of a possible next heavy aftershock and they were not in the mood to be interviewed. They were also busy with other things: cleaning their houses, fundraising or worrying about friends or families that were in the south of the country (communication was very difficult the first two weeks). This had consequences for my investigation as well; at least 50% of the interviews I had planned were cancelled. Obviously I cannot say for certain that they were cancelled because of the earthquake because before the earthquake many interviews were cancelled as well. I think a lot of Colombians agreed to an interview because they are too polite to reject my question directly. They always had a vague excuse of not having enough time, or they did not answer my phone calls or emails. I think this is a matter of intercultural communication, what because of my former bachelor (international business communication) was no surprise.

The fourth limitation is that the information on the Colombian community in Chile is scarce, I only used a few sources and could not check all the given information. In the fifth place it would have been better if I would not have focused only on migration as factor that influences transnational political engagements. Then I would have been able to develop a more logical structure for the thesis. In the sixth place is the number of people I interviewed too small to draw any significant conclusions. This is not a grave shortcoming as the qualitative data only pretends to provide insights in the stories and not in the numbers. However, I had to be careful not to make any generalisations.

2. Diasporas in conflict: theoretical background

In this chapter the major concepts will be clarified. The first paragraph will deal with the notions of migration, immigration, transnationalism, transnational communities and refugees. The different categories of migrants and refugees that will be used in this thesis will be clarified. The second paragraph will define the term “diaspora” and provide an insight in the actual debate about the concept. The third paragraph gives insight in the role diasporas can play in a conflict and how the involvement in the homeland conflict of the Colombians in Chile will be approached. One of the assumptions made in the first chapter is that there is a link between integration on one side and transnational political engagements and the involvement in the homeland conflict on the other side. Therefore the fourth paragraph will address theories regarding integration.

2.1 Immigration

Regarding the topic of immigration the next definitions of The dictionary of Human Geography by Johnston, Gregory, Pratt and Watts (2006) will be used:

Migration

“Permanent or semi-permanent change of residence by an individual or group of people.” (pp. 504-506)

Immigration

“A form of migration that occurs when people move from one nation to another.” (pp. 373-375)

Refugees

“Refugee are persons who, owing to a well-founded fear of persecution for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion, are outside the country of their nationality and either unable or unwilling to return.” (pp.680)

Migration is not a new phenomenon, but it has grown in volume significantly since 1945 and therefore the past 50 years are seen as the decades of migration (Castells and Millar, 2003). It has been estimated that 3% of the world population is a migrant. Migration has been enormously influential in determining cultural and social change at all scales, not least at global, and may be fundamental to individual experience (Johnston et al, 2006). This definition of migration will be used, because it describes the permanent or semi-permanent change of residence. Migrants are mobile; when they move they can leave the host country for another place, or they can return home.

The definition of immigration is extended with the following information:

“Immigrants change their permanent dwelling place and are therefore distinct from sojourners, who relocate temporarily, usually for employment-related reasons; immigrants also move voluntarily and are therefore distinct from refugees, who are forced to leave their homes because of persecution.”

When immigrants settle in a new country without the knowledge and approval of the government in power, they are called “undocumented”, illegal, or “unrecorded” immigrants”.

This concept distinguishes clearly between refugees and migrants. Migrants move voluntarily and refugees not. They change their “dwelling” place and are therefore also different from “sojourners” who only relocate for a short period of time. Most migrants stay to the country they move to, but they have the political freedom to return or leave when they want to. For this dissertation I will use the term “undocumented” (instead of illegal) for immigrants that do not have the knowledge and approval of the government in power.

Johnston et al (2006) describe how the analysis of migration has significantly changed. Immigration used to be seen as a linear process, and it was analysed in terms as push and pull factors: people leave their country for a certain reasons, most common poverty or conflict, and go to another country that can offer them a better life. This vision people were seen as rational individuals that can cast aside culture, identity and loyalties and can embrace others if it is in their advantage. The settlement was seen as one directional, as a progressive process where immigrants integrate into the host society and become assimilated. This concept of immigration was developed in the twentieth century the Chicago school and still influences research about immigration. More recent studies offer a different perspective in the field of immigration, history, culture and identity are studied more in detail. Migration is seen as a collective process that happens in both directions. Life in the host country is almost always linked to life in the homeland. This results in immigrant culture being a mix of traditions and practices. Identities are flux rather than fixed. Cultures can be diasporic – scattered but connected across enormous distances. This consciousness has led to the concept of transnationalism and is important because it indicates the influence of immigration in economic, political and cultural systems. Diaspora and transnationalism will be discussed in the next paragraph.

Johnston et al (2006, 680) add information about the development of the concept refugee:

“Displacement, banishment and exodus are as old as human history but the legal concept of refugee was not formulated until the twentieth century inter-war period (1919-39). Two basic statutes (UN convention relating to the status of Refugees, 1951 and the UN Protocol, 1967) extended international protection to refugees. [...] This broad definition encompasses refugees who are conventionally classified according to their desire or possibility of returning to their homeland [...]. The Convention/ Protocol definition does not include internally displaced persons and victims of repressive military or economic policies, however, and there are at least 5 million such persons according to UNHCR (1998; refugees are often defined situationally – Harreld-Bond, 1986). [...]

Opposite to migrants are refugees not free or they don't want to return to their homeland. The Colombian refugees in Chile (and all other Colombian diaspora world wide) fear persecution not for religion or nationality. Most of them fear the violence in the country, the possibility or reality of being persecuted because you belong one of the striving parties. Others are afraid they are persecuted because they live in a region where the power is switching or switched recently. If they lived in a village that used to be under FARC control, for the paramilitaries this might be enough prove they are on the side of the FARC and the other way around. Some Colombians are persecuted

because of their race, but that percentage is small. Many of the Colombians do not want to return if the safety situation does not improve and the conflict stop completely.

As stated in paragraph 1.2 different categories of migrants and refugees will be used. Aranda & Morande (2007) and Morande (2005) touch upon the subject of integration of the different Colombian groups living in Chile (the only literature I could find on this topic). They give some useful insights in different trajectories of integration. One of their conclusions is that the process of insertion and integration of the Colombians in the Chilean society differ heavily per migratory group. Therefore, I will deal with the specifics of the different integration trajectories per migratory group. According to the literature, the Colombian migration population can be divided into four groups: the QHR, students, low skilled workers and refugees⁴. The focus will be placed upon the different integration trajectories of refugees, low skilled migrants and QHR. The reason to opt for these three groups is that the most valuable data fall inside these three groups. Students are not taken into account, because they have a different reasons to migrate to Chile and might (therefore) integrate in a different way than migrants and refugees do. Normally they come to Chile for a defined period to study. In many cases they do not have any economical or political boundaries that impede their return to Colombia after their studies (or earlier if they prefer to do so). This might also have influence on their willingness to participate in transnational engagements and or conflict resolution.

The refugees were divided into three groups. There are the regular refugees who arrive in Chile by their own means. Then, there are the people who arrive in the PSTC program. This program focuses on social leaders who are in direct need of refuge out of Colombia. Chile, Uruguay and Argentina, in collaboration with the Swedish embassy in Bogotá, Cáritas Sweden, the International Labour Organization (ILO) and the Dutch embassy in Bogotá, offer them a visa for a year, a place to live and all necessities of life paid for and the possibility of extra training. However, it has been estimated by the people I interviewed that around 30% of the participants stay in Chile. At the moment of writing the Chilean state and the *Vicaría* were discussing the viability of the PSTC program. There is a possibility that the program will be dissolved, because of the involvement of ex-FARC members in the program. There should be mentioned that people from the PSTC program are not allowed to become involved in their homeland conflict. They were saved from an unsafe situation in Colombia by the Chilean state and the state does not want them to make their place of residence known. Nevertheless, most people I interviewed decided to stay in Chile after the official year was over. Next, are the resettled refugees that, in the case of Colombian refugees in Chile, are mostly resettled from Ecuador, Venezuela and Costa Rica. They are resettled by the UNHCR, because host countries near the border from Colombia cannot handle the amount of refugees and migrants entering their country. The question that arises is how those different insertion trajectories influence their integration into Chilean society.

⁴ Aranda & Morande (2007) divide the Colombian migrants into three groups. They split the group of Qualified Human Recourses into two categories: those who came to Chile strictly for labour and those who want to expand their education (master and postgraduate students)

2.2 Diasporas

The next definition of diasporic communities and transnational communities are useful for this investigation:

Diasporic communities

"[...social groups that settle and establish themselves in another country and are internally heterogeneous. Different parts of the same diaspora can and do have different interests, defined among other things by class, gender, generation, occupation or religion. Diasporas are rarely constituted by a single factor other than the broadest of connections to a specific homeland. Diasporas are not, for instance defined by religion." (Smith in Smith and Stares, 2007, p.4)

"[...diasporic communities are transnational communities created as a result of the movement of peoples, living in one or more host countries, organized on the basis of solidarity, shared ideas and collective identities, and showing loyalty to, and affinity with their host country as well as their original homeland. " Bercovitch (in Smith and Stares, 2007, pp.18-19)

Transnational Communities

[...] are generally characterized by transnational practices that transcend national borders." (Levit in Regts and others, 2010).

At first I will provide insights in the development of the term diaspora and the debates in order to gain understanding in the concept. Hence I will explain the relevance of the two definitions given above. The development of the diasporas is a historical phenomenon in which three waves can be distinguished (Sheffer, in Smith and Stares, 2007). In the first place the "historical" diasporas that were formed in pre-modern times. Then, during the industrial revolution "new" diasporas were formed and in the third place, incipient "ethno-national" diasporas are of recent origin. The Colombian diaspora is part of the third wave, the ethno-national diaspora.

The word diaspora was originally only applied to the dispersal of the Jews following the Roman conquest of Palestine and the destruction of Jerusalem in AD (Keller, 1971). The term is now applied more widely to other non-voluntary population dispersals such as the Black diaspora that resulted from the slave trade. Several types of diaspora have been distinguished including victim, labour, trade, imperial and cultural diasporas (Cohen, 1997). Within cultural studies, attention has focused on the transnational connections and hybrid cultures that have developed across such diasporic communities (Chow, 1993; Gilroy, 1995; Brah, 1996), ideas which are now being debated within geography (Mitchell, 1997)." (Johnston et al, 2006). Major part of the Colombian diaspora is involuntarily; if it would not be for the violence, insecurity and conflict most of them would still be living in Colombia. The transnational connections of a diaspora are what this thesis will focus on.

The term “diaspora” derives from the Greek word *diaspeirein*, what the scattering of seeds means and was originally used to refer to the dispersal of Jews. The concept and meaning of the word diaspora has been the subject of an ongoing debate. A group of people defined as a diaspora is a community of people that, through psychological and physical links are rooted in a larger context or environment. All diasporas have in common that they are settled outside their homeland (or imagined territory) and they acknowledge that the old country continues to have claim on their loyalty, emotions and level of possible support. The difference between diasporas and migrants is that the term “immigrant” connotes an individual that is trying to come to terms with a new society. The term diaspora acknowledges that communities settled outside their original territory maintain, to a certain level, ties with their homeland (Johnston et al, 2006).

Both definitions above could be used and both have their strengths and weaknesses. In this research the second definition (of Bercovitch, in Smith and Stares, 2007) will be used. In the first place, the emphasis on the connection diasporas have both with their homeland and host country gives a good impression on the divided or double loyalty of a diaspora group. Further I prefer the term “transnational community” over “social group”. A transnational community are generally characterized by transnational practices that transcend national borders (Levitt in Regts and others, 2010). Social groups are groups of three or more people that are primarily focused on social activities, as opposed to tasks, and help humans develop identity and self esteem. Most people belong to more than one social group (Hammond, 2010). The definition “social group” has a broader meaning than a “transnational community”. The strength of the other definition is that they highlight the heterogeneous nature of a diaspora: they can have different interests and are defined by class, gender, generation, occupation and religion. Although I will use the other definition the aspect of heterogeneity will be taken into account. The biggest differences between the Colombians in Chile lie in class, gender and occupation. Class produces in most Latin American societies a very large gap between people. Class is very important affects all aspects of life. Also religion plays an important role. Most Colombians are catholic, but some of the Colombians in Chile are very fanatic what provokes distance.

The definition of transnational communities focuses on the transnational practices that transcend national borders. These transnational practices will be investigated in this research. Transnational movements consist of three flows (ideally): the flow of people through transnational migration, the flow of capital in and the flow of information through the whole world in the context of modern communications. There are voluntary migrants and displaced refugees who make transnational passages and that are relocated towards other countries. Both of them can be labelled as Diaspora communities Tambiah (2000).

The definition of both diaspora communities and transnational communities have been mentioned, because I further on in this investigation there will be looked into the Colombian community in Chile and seen if they form a diaspora. The investigation whether they form a diaspora or not is not about the terminology. The Colombian diaspora is known to be reluctant, therefore it is important to establish whether they act like a diaspora. I choose to use the word diaspora as it is more specific as a transnational community. Nevertheless, I think a group of people can be a diaspora and a transnational community at the same time. In fact in my opinion all diasporas are transnational communities. But not all transnational communities are diaspora. Therefore, in this thesis both the

terms will be used, because the Colombians in Chile form definitely a transnational community and in chapter 5 we will see they also form a reluctant diaspora.

2.3 Diasporas and involvement in the homeland conflict

In this era of globalization, diasporas have been reconstructed as new and potentially powerful actors in international politics (Smith in Smith and Stares, 2007). Technology, communication, ways to travel, etc. makes it easier for diasporas to sustain the bonds with their homeland. The involvement of diaspora in conflict in their homeland has therefore, also become easier. The nature of diaspora intervention in conflict is a result of the respective power relations within diasporas and between diaspora, home and host country. Diasporas intervene in conflict because they can. Diasporas without access to power will not intervene in conflict. Men, boys, girls and women all experience conflict differently, due to the nature of socially constructed gendered roles in society. Gender matters at every stage, from pre-conflict, to acute conflict and post conflict reconstruction (Smith in Smith and Stares, 2007).

The question is how diasporas can influence a conflict in their homeland. They can play a constructive role by introducing norms and practices of cooperation, helping to reframe a conflict, supporting moderate positions. Or, on the other hand they can play a destructive role for example by supporting extreme or conservative visions on the conflict or by exacerbating feelings of hostility. One remark has to be kept in mind; when diasporas are engaged in activities, those activities are intended primarily to enhance their own cultural, civic and economic well-being in their host-countries, and only secondarily to improve the welfare of their host countries or homelands (Sheffer, in Smith and Stares, 2007).

The way a diaspora can intervene depends, amongst others, on the stage of the conflict (Bercovitch in Smith and Hazel, 2010). Nevertheless, this research will focus on the Colombian community in Chile. As stated in the introduction the situation in Colombia is complicated and the country is not in a clear stage of conflict. Conflict, conflict prevention, conflict mitigation, conflict resolution, and post conflict reconstruction exist at the same time and each provides an access point for a diaspora to intervene or engage (Bouvier in Smith and Hazel, 2010). Therefore, this research will not focus on one particular stage of conflict and the matching stage of intervention, because the Colombians could intervene in all stages. There are four areas in which diasporas can exercise influence in the course of a conflict: political, military, economic and socio-cultural. This research will focus on the political arena as Guarnizo, Portes and Haller (2002) did. The definition of transnational political engagements is:

“Transnational political engagements are the political activities conducted by contemporary immigrants across national borders, affecting communities, parties, and official institutions in the sending nations.” (Guarnizo et al, 2002, p 2)

Nowadays the number of immigrants that can link towards political activities in more than one country is increasing. They are formally incorporated here and there. In the past the immigrants left

their homeland and rarely they were engaged in the political life of their homeland, as of today the immigrants can participate with success in “politics through borders” (Gómez Kopp, 2003).

Transnational political engagements can be measured by electorally-related indicators (see paragraph 1.4). However, people want to be represented and participate in decision making through different political means, and not just by elections. Therefore electoral and non-electoral activities aimed at influencing the conditions in the homeland are important.

When in this research the concept “involvement in the homeland conflict” is used I refer to all kinds of political involvement in the homeland conflict. There are many studies conducted about the possible or actual activities of diasporas. Some examples of transnational political engagements can be encountered relating: Koser (in Smith and Stares, 2007) mentions “participation in elections”, “constitutional roles”, “political rallies and demonstrations” and “mobilization of political contacts in host country”. Bercovitch (in Smith and Stares, 2007) gives a more detailed overview. A selection of his suggestions: a diaspora can lobby governments, the UN and international organizations, they can make it hard for the world to forget about the conflict, they can mobilize international civil society, they can advocate an economic boycott of enemy produce, they can make information available to its homeland, engage in media campaigns, promote dialogue and mediation in the termination phase, they can get involved in problem-solving workshops, strengthen civil society, promote norms, values and institutions which define a democratic polity, promote ideas such as freedom of media, democratic rights, respect for human rights and gender equality and they can provide (political) education.

2.4 Integration

Integration is a complex issue and although many people have an understanding of the term, the definition refers to a complex phenomenon, which affects different areas of the migrant’s life.

The concept of integration from the European Commission (2003) will be used (Barajas Sandoval, 2008 p.11). I have opted for this concept, because it formed the base for the development of a model of different indicators of integration trajectories that I will use for the description of degree of integration.

“Integration should be understood as a two way process based on mutual rights and corresponding obligations of legally resident third country nationals and the host society which provides for full participation of the immigrant. This implies on the one hand that it is the responsibility of the host society to ensure that the formal rights of immigrants are in place in such a way that the individual has the possibility of participating in economic, social, cultural and civil life and on the other, that immigrants respect the fundamental norms and values of the host society and participate actively in the integration process, without having to relinquish their own identity.”

The definition of integration by European commission formed the base for a report by Entzinger and Biezeveld (2003) who explored the concept of integration and showed how some aspects could be measured. They distinguish between two elements: a structural dimension, involving participation in the major institutions of a society, such as the labour market and education and a cultural

dimension, which are the changes in immigrants cultural orientation and identification CERI SciencePo (2008). Hence, different investigators used this dichotomy as a base for their research, amongst them the Barajas Sandoval (2008) in her investigation on integration and development trajectories. She established clear categories to measure the elements. The first element mentioned describes income and poverty, housing, education, occupation and participation on the labour market and political and civil participation. The second element refers to interaction with the population of the host country, the language used, social contacts, habits, standards and values, a sense of belonging and interaction with the country of origin. As described in the method paragraph her categories are used to structure the interviews and data on integration.

3. Breaking up the roots in Colombia: background information

3.1 The Colombian conflict

The origin of the conflict goes further back than the rise of the left guerrilla movements in the 1960's. In 1891 Colombia liberated itself from the Spanish conquistadores led by Simón Bolívar. He was elected the first president of former Gran Colombia (great Colombia). There were two political parties, the conservatives and the liberals. Conflicts between those two parties led to the thousand-day war between 1899 and 1902 that cost over 70.000 lives. The conservatives remained in power until the 1930's when the reformists and the liberal party gained power. They had ambitious social reform plans, amongst which the agrarian reforms that should stimulate the economic growth and industrialization. Landowners resisted fiercely against the plans. In 1948, after the murder of a liberal populist politician, an uprising took place in which a lot of blood was shed and expanded from Bogotá over the whole country. For 16 years, armed groups of different parties ravaged the country. This struggle, known as "*La Violencia*" has cost over 200.000 lives and displaced over 2 million people Salbi (2007). It was at the end of this period that the first guerrilla groups were formed, amongst them the *Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia* (FARC) and the *Ejército de Liberación Nacional* (ELN). In 1963 Catholic radical students and left-wing intellectuals hoped to follow Cuba's communist revolution and founded the ELN. The FARC was founded two years later, a self proclaimed Marxist-Leninist organization, that wanted to bring together communist militants and self-defense groups formed by farmers. They have similar programs; both claim to represent the rural poor against the wealthy classes and oppose US influence in Colombia, privatization of natural resources, multinational corporations and violence from the rights side of society. Some of the guerrilla groups reintegrated into society in the 1980's, but others as the FARC and the ELN strengthened their activities. The two groups have an ambiguous relationship; in some parts of the country they cooperate, while in others they have clashed directly (Hanson, 2009).

The two political parties united themselves in 1975 in the national Front en agreed upon switching power every 4 years. This agreement ended the massacres, but excluded all other groups from access to power, because every party could elect their own officials, mayors and governors. Colombia was know as one of the most stable countries in the region and achieved a lot of reforms. However, especially in rural areas the quality of the medical care, judicial system and education was very low Salbi (2007).

They guerrillas started to extend their power over coca-growing areas. Their territory expanded into the richer municipalities (their traditional control was in the remote colonized regions). In those regions they found popular support and expanded their practices in extortion and kidnapping. However, their acts were counteracted by paramilitary groups, sponsored by big landowners and drug traffickers and driven by vengeance. They frequently operated under the shadow of the Colombian military stationed in the regions. The *Autodefensas Unidas de Colombia* (AUC) were the biggest paramilitary group (they were formed in 1997) and their aim was to rid Colombia of all

guerrilla forces and establish own territorial dominance in old guerrilla territories. Many regions have shifted power more than once and the official army is only one of the several competing military occupiers (Meertens, 2001 in Moser & Clark). However since 2003 a lot of members of armed groups, especially paramilitaries including the AUC, have gone on ceasefire and then participated in Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration (DDR) programs. In total more than 43,000 members of armed groups were demobilized (Torres, Giha and Jaramillo, 2009).

Since the foundation of the guerrilla groups a lot has changed. They argue their goals have not changed much, but their illegal activities have increased tremendously. Experts from the international crisis group estimate that FARC takes in between \$500 million and \$600 million annually from the illegal drug trade (estimation made in 2005). The FARC also profits from kidnappings, extortion schemes, and an unofficial "tax" it levies in the countryside for "protection" and social services. The ELN's primary income source is also drug trafficking, a shift from the ransom or "protection" payments that accounted for much of its funding in the 1980s, and the kidnappings that produced revenue in the 1990s. Colombian government sources believe this latest shift occurred between 2005 and 2007, which coincides with increased ELN activity on the Pacific coast and Venezuelan border, coca-growing regions, and drug-trafficking zones (Hanson, 2009).

Where the traditional power holders could offer some security and protection to the population (including guerrilla's in the old territories), the present frequent power-shifting makes this impossible. Protection is replaced by terror and the civil population is caught in the logic "*si no estás conmigo, estás contra mí*" (if you are not with me, you are against me) (Meertens, 2001, in Moser & Clark, pp. 136). The past decades dozens of Human Rights (HR) activists were murdered and communists, teachers, farmers, doctors, politicians, union leaders and others have disappeared, were tortured or killed. The number of kidnappings in Colombia arose to the highest in the world; in 2007 3000 people were estimated to be kidnapped and some of them are still held hostage, some for many years. In the 1980's and 1990's the armed conflict worsened, because of arms trade, drug production and trafficking and the black market. The guerrilla forces are involved in the production of cocaine in the remote highlands, whereas the paramilitaries are more involved in the growing of marijuana in the lowlands Salbi (2007).

Entire villages are abandoned as people decided to flee to the suburbs or slums around the large cities. Since the 1980's the flow of displaced people has increased and their origins extremely extended. Displacement has been a consequence and threatens to be a further source of the conflict, with some 3 million IDPS's in 2007. Only the IDP populations of Sudan and the Democratic Republic of Congo are larger in number (Bouvier in Smith and Stares, 2007). The conflict has acquired international dimensions: it has pushed hundreds of thousands of refugees across Colombia's north-eastern border with Venezuela and its shorter south-western border with Ecuador. In 2002 over 10% of all 43.8 million Colombians were living abroad, in more than 25 countries on four continents (Bouvier in Smith and Stares, 2007). Most of them flew to the United States or Europe (Spain) and countries in Latin America, especially towards neighbouring countries as Venezuela, Peru and Ecuador. The cross border migration can be seen as a continuation of the internal displacement, forced by factors related to the conflict (Arande & Morande, 2007).

In 2002, peace negotiations between the conservative president Andrés Pastrana and FARC failed, what led to the election of Álvaro Uribe from a period of four years and was re-elected until 2010. He proposed a democratic security policy that promised a crack-down of the guerrilla's as part of the war on terrorism. This policy allowed him to take exceptional measures to re-establish public order. He placed entire regions under military control and by creating a network of paid civilian informants. It was under his leadership that members of paramilitary and other groups demobilized. A controversial new law of justice and peace has been introduced that allowed a reduction of sentences for the paramilitaries in exchange for demobilization (Riñao-Alcalá & Goldring, 2006). The United States have been engaged in the Colombian conflict since the 1990's, but the financial aid increased up to 4 billion dollars in the period of 2000 to 2005. 80% of that aid went to the Colombia's military and police force for training, weapons, equipment and intelligence operations. The overall security situation in the country has increased, but Uribe's methods have been debated, amongst others because of the violation of HR on a large scale. Since a few weeks a new president has been installed, Juan Manuel Santos Calderón, he is expected to continue Uribe's security policies.

3.2 The road towards Chile

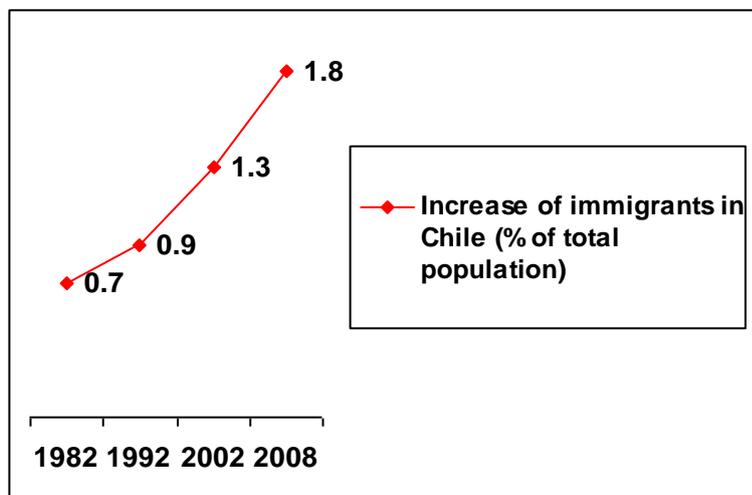
The period in which the Colombian migrants arrive in Chile coincides with economical crisis and the recrudescence of the conflict in Colombia that was already mentioned. The urban unemployment rate remained 20% (the national unemployment rate was 16,7%). This decade was also the time of the consolidation of the nexus between the drug traffickers and the armed groups. The line between political violence and criminality became unclear, which led to more terror in multiple zones in Colombia and therefore, to the deterioration of quality of life of the population.

When we examine the pull factors that explain the movement of migrants towards Chile, the *image* Colombians have of Chile is important. They perceive Chile as an epicenter of welfare and economic dynamism in the region. This image, of Chile being a privileged destiny, with a good economic situation and stability and security, are determinants for those who decide to choose it as a destination. A survey of the IOM showed that the reason for Colombian migrants to choose Chile as a destination, they referred to "the good economical situation" and the "reputation of begin a safe country". Both conceptions (although they might be justified by numbers and specific indicators), show that in this case the widespread image they have of Chile is part of a collective image that the Colombians had at the moment of choosing the destination. (see Lelio Mármora in Aranda & Morande, 2007).

An educational pull factor is the recognition of Chile in certain academic areas, on regional level it stands out, which attracts Colombian students and professionals. Therefore, a part of the Colombian immigrants are highly educated and they hold high positions in the business sector. They migrate to Chile for job offers or are transferred by transnational corporation. The so called QHR. In paragraph 3.4 the different groups that will be used in this thesis will be further elaborated on.

3.3 Migration in Chile

Chile has not been a country that received a lot of migrants, as for example the United States, Argentina or Brazil. In fact, the proportion of the population of immigrants is estimated to be 2%, which is lower than the average world level that reaches 3% of the population. Recent studies estimate that the number of immigrants in Chile is around 300.000 people. In terms of percentages, in 2008 around 1.8% of the population is an immigrant. Graphic 2 shows the increase of immigrants in terms of the total Chilean population. The past decade the percentage immigrants of the total population has more than two folded. This low percentage of immigrants in Chile's national territory has erroneously led to the assumption that the topic is not important. In the political agendas of different Chilean governments only sporadically there were intents to approach the topic in a concrete way. For example the measures taken in the middle of the 20th century which aimed at the colonization and settlement in the South of Chile (Stefoni Espinoza, 2002).



Graphic 2: Increase of immigrants in Chile (Fuentes, 2009)

During the 20th century migration patterns in Chile have changed significantly. Three flows can be distinguished. The first begins with the arrival of migrants from countries outside the region and experiences its peak between 1870 and 1910. Most of them were European colonizers, especially Germans, Brits, Italians, Dutch, Croats, Swiss and French, encouraged by the Chilean government to settle in the South of Chile. The second flow of migration is represented by the movement of people inside the continent and within which the arrival of (Colombian) migrants to Chile is framed. These movements to Chile originated primarily in 1995 and still find itself in a process of growth. Finally, there is a movement of Chileans towards the United States and other western countries. This flow has started in the 1950's with the movement of professionals and technicians in search of employment (Aranda & Morande, 2007). Then, during the military occupation from 1973 until 1990 and the economical reforms, over 800.000 Chileans flew abroad (Flores, 2007).

From the 1960's on there is a clear decrease of European immigrants, leading to only 17% of Europeans in 2002 (according to the census). On the contrary, of Latin American origin the percentage increased up to 67,8% in 2002. In the case of the Andean population, except for Bolivia,

the immigration towards Chile started after 1996. According to the census of 2002, over 50% of all migrants present in Chile arrived after this date. This is especially relevant in the Peruvian, Colombian and Ecuadorian case (Floresa, 2007). According to the IOM (International Organization for Migration) the number of migrants arriving to Chile, has increased from 177.000 immigrants in 2000, to 231.496 immigrants in 2005. More recent data from the *Departamento de Extranjería y Migración* (2009) show us that in 2009 there are 290.901 people in Chile that were born elsewhere. Every year, relatively more people are migrating to Chile. According to the IOM this has something to do with the relative good economic development compared to other countries in the region (Fuentes, 2009).

In 2005 Chile was the fourth most popular destiny in Latin America (see table 1). Argentina, Venezuela and Brazil receive more immigrants than Chile. However, a decrease of immigrants is visible in those three countries. As a matter of fact, there are only four countries in Latin America that had an increase of migrants: Ecuador, Bolivia, Colombia and Chile. In terms of percentage, between 2000 and 2005 Chile had the highest growth of immigrants in whole Latin America: 30,54%.

Country	2000	2005	In terms of percentage:
Argentina	1.544.265	1.500.142	-2.85%
Venezuela	1.014.589	1.010.148	-0.43%
Brazil	684.536	641.474	-6.29%
Chile	177.332	231.496	30.54%
Paraguay	175.430	168.220	-4.1%
Colombia	115.337	122.713	6.39%
Bolivia	90.187	116.306	28.96%
Ecuador	100.394	114.370	13.92%
Uruguay	88.554	84.114	-5.01%
Peru	45.899	41.557	-9.45%

Table 1. An attractive destination for immigrants? Number of immigrants present per country (Fuentes, 2009)

Different investigators coincide that, although the number of immigrants might be small, they do have a significant impact on Chile. Immigrants have made relevant contributions in areas like technological innovation, modernization of the agricultural sector, the development of commerce, banks, industry, the mine sector and others.

The number of people who apply for the status of refugee is smaller. According to official government numbers (see appendix 1), between 2006 and 2009 2671 Colombians applied for the status of refugee out of a total of 2982 applicants. The data from the Colombians are not sex disaggregated, but from the total they are: 1395 men and 1623 women applied for the status of refugee in a period of four years. The statistics from the resettled refugees are not complete. In total (2008 and 2009) 557 refugees were accepted. However, the statistics do not add up. Whether there is information missing or they made a miscalculation is not clear (see appendix 2). According to that source, at least 96 Colombians from Ecuador, Colombia, Costa Rica were accepted and resettled.

As to the period in which the migrants started to arrive to Chile, the census of 2002 shows heterogeneous results, depending of country of origin. In the Peruvian, Ecuadorian and Colombian

case, the first arrivals are concentrated from 1997 onwards. Whereas the Bolivians and Argentineans started to arrive before that year. In relation to the territorial distribution of the migrants per region, there is an important concentration of them in the Metropolitan Region (which includes Santiago), where around 63% of the population resides. The Regions of Valparaíso and Tarapacá follow with respectively 7,79% and 7,1% of the population (Fuentes, 2009).

3.4 Characteristics of Colombians in Chile

The Colombian migrants in Chile form a special group. In the first place, Colombia is part of the Andean Sub region, which provides the major flow of immigrants to Chile nowadays. In the second place, it is a recent phenomenon with an increase of 146% between the census of 1992 and 2002. In the third place this group reflects certain characteristics that the other groups do not have, due to security being one of the major reasons of leaving their country. Some of them are people that need protection when they arrive and receive the status of refugee, a condition to which the Chilean state is obliged to establish certain guaranties (Aranda & Mordande, 2007).

The Imila project shows the characteristics of the Colombian migrant population in Chile. The majority of the Colombian population is between 20 and 44 years: in the economical active age. The period most of them arrived is without a doubt the past decade. When data are analysed per sexe, the presence of women is slightly higher than the presence of men. Children younger than 15 years constitute 13% of the Colombian population, indicating that family migration is also an important component in Chile.

Lelio Morande (2005) studied the process of insertion and integration of the Colombians in the Chilean society and concluded that it differs heavily per migratory group. The integration process of a professional that has a job is different from the process of a student, a refugee or a low skilled worker. The last group mentioned are confronted mostly with discrimination and have, therefore more problems with integration. Of all groups they mentioned mostly situations of rejection because they were Colombian. This concurs with the fact that these immigrants are most vulnerable to the violation of their rights, especially if they do not have a visa (yet). On the other extreme are the professionals with a job. They seem to make little efforts to integrate, partly because they do not wish to stay forever (note that this differs per company). Mármora explains this phenomenon (in Aranda & Morande, 2007): The globalization makes that professionals that work in multinationals and other countries don't have the necessity to acculturate. They can live in the new society without integrating, but not because they are marginalized. They don't make an effort to integrate in the host society, but because they know their stay is temporary. Their movement depends on the company or organization for which they work. Nevertheless, there are also some general experiences. Most Colombians tend to describe Chileans as "closed and distant" , which leads, especially in the beginning, to problems in establishing contacts. As to stereotypes the Chileans might experience about the Colombians, the latter affirm that even though begin Colombian is being linked to drug trafficking, guerrilla and the FARC, in general they do not feel discriminated or rejected because of their nationality.

A study realized by the OIM in 2006 shows that as to the immigration process, the majority of the respondents described the process as “not difficult, nor easy”. 14,2% qualified it as a very easy process, 22,5% as an easy process, 19,8% as difficult and 4,3% as very difficult. In total, around 24% encountered difficulties in the integration process, whereas 37% says to have integrated rather easily. Finally, when we take a look at the future and the plans of the Colombians in Chile, over half of the respondents do not want to stay indefinitely in the country, 44,8% plans to return to Colombia and 16,4% wants to settle in another country. These results imply that the movement towards Chile is not for ever. However, these plans to return to Colombia or to migrate somewhere else change over time, especially due to attachment, work, studies or the unfeasibility to return.

3.5 The global Colombian Diaspora

Not all authors bring up the term diaspora when addressing the issue of Colombians living abroad. Arande & Morande (2007) divides the Colombian community living in Chile in different groups: emigrants, refugees and RHC's (as mentioned before). Riñao-Alcalá and Goldring (2006) wrote the article “*A Colombian Diaspora?*”. When they discuss the tensions and challenges in transnational engagements of Colombians they do not give a conclusive answer about the Colombian community being diaspora community or not. Nevertheless, at the same time they continue to use the term diaspora when referring to the Colombian community. Their text shows that there are several transnational engagements, the country of origin and the country of settlement are linked by social fields. However there seems to be no strong link with their sense of co-ethnicity with other Colombians. The cohesion between the Colombians is difficult, *because of* their shared history. Then, there is another reason not to opt for the use of the term “diaspora”. The Colombians themselves rarely use it when referring to Colombians living outside the national territory, because it is sometimes associated with the Colombian drug traffickers (Bouvier in Smith and Stares, 2007). The Colombians in the United States, despite the long-term Colombian conflict have been reluctant or participants in the diverse phases of the homeland conflict. There are different explanations: they lack a sense of having a shared identity and they are sometimes called the “invisible community”. They are a highly heterogeneous group and are known for their cleavages. Furthermore they are characterized by a lot of exclusive communities that have little in common (Bouvier in Smith and Stares, 2007).

The transnational activities of the Colombians living abroad, are rarely discussed in literature. For example, in books that are mostly quoted about transnationalism, Colombia appears hardly as a footnote, if they even mention Colombia at all. Therefore, more research should be done concerning the transnational political engagements of Colombians living abroad in order to gain more knowledge about their factual activities (Gómez Kopp, 2003).

The main factors according to Riñao-Alcalá and Goldring (2006) that impact or hinder a more coordinated or effective social mobilization between the Colombians in Canada are:

- The conflict is ongoing, complex and plural
- The alliances with Canadian actors are fragmented and the alliances are changing.
- Fear and distrust are a source of fragmentation and division
- The need of settlement is instant.

Bouvier (in Smith and Stares, 2007) findings on the Colombians in the United States:

- The conflict is ongoing, complex and plural
- The sharp division between the Colombians according to their documented or undocumented status
- Colombia's status as a democracy and no clear tyrant who has overturned them makes it difficult to know how to respond from abroad
- Distrust of the Colombian political and economical institutions at home

Despite all the factors that hinder an effective social mobilization there are some positive signs as well. It seems that the Colombian diaspora in the US has an increasing role in economic support with contributions to conflict prevention or mitigation. There are also signs of political organization at home and abroad of Colombian migrants that enter politics and form new global alliances. They are the beginning of the challenge of traditional power dynamics and patterns of social inequalities that are present at home. The new geography of the Colombians in the US also provides new, unexplored, opportunities for dialogue that could contribute to new models for inclusion and equity and finally reconciliation at home (Bouvier in Smith and Stares, 2007). The question is whether these limitations also count for the Colombian diaspora in Chile.

In short there can be said that Riñao-Alcalá and Goldring (2006) are the least optimistic about the existence of a Colombian diaspora or not. Bouvier (in Smith and Stares, 2007) believes in a reluctant diaspora, that is on the rise. Gómez Kopp (2003) thinks that more research should be conducted in order to get a better image of the transnational engagements of the Colombians abroad. The question that arises is whether these restrictive factors are also applicable to the Colombian transnational community in Chile.

4. Leaving the Colombian *Sancocho*: the road towards Chile

The Colombian conflict has been referred to by George Will⁵ as a *sancocho*, what is traditional stew pot made in certain Latin American countries. The Colombian conflict is a *sancocho*, cooked for a long time, with many ingredients. It is a conflict between classes, an ideological war with ethnical vendettas (Posado Carbó, 2010).

4.1 Perceptions of Colombians on conflict, violence and other problems in their country

In this chapter I will try to answer the question: how do the Colombians perceive the conflict, violence and other problems in their homeland? Studies show that people perceive conflicts in a different way. If the conflict would be more transparent the contribution that diaspora group could or would make in conflict resolution would most probably be higher (Riaño-Alcalá, 2006). A short analysis gives a good insight in the group of people I interviewed. Due to the complexity of the Colombian conflict, I expect the different perceptions to show large variations. Further, I expect to find little people who *only* mention conflict as being the major difficulty. Within the analysis I will refer to the part of the interviews regarding perceptions on conflict, violence and other problems in Colombia that can be found in appendix 3.

Analysis

The assumption that the perceptions on the problems, violence and conflict differ tremendously is correct. The guerrilla/ FARC are being mentioned most often as being a major difficulty: six out of ten interviewees. (Un)employment is mentioned 4 times, as is (in)security. Drug (trafficking) is mentioned three times, violence only twice and politics/politicians also twice. Only Natalia says explicitly that the complexity of the situation itself is one of the biggest problems, but all other people mention more than one reason for the problems in the country. For example Pablo states:

“The root of all problems is the intolerance, nobody helps another. That leads to corruption and violence and poverty.”

And according to José:

“The conflict is not Colombia’s largest problem, but the politicians and corruption are. They form a bigger problem than the guerrilla and armed conflict.”

There is nobody in this group of interviewees who mentions the conflict as the only problem. What is remarkable is that corruption is mentioned twice as one of the major problems. I think that

⁵ The American journalist, columnist and author and Pulitzer price winner.

because it is very difficult to change a situation were the politicians are corrupt people experience it as a major problem. Another comments seemed remarkable to me, Daniela says:

“People are used to insecurity. If they migrate it is because of other reasons, for example employment opportunities.”

It seems remarkable because I had the feeling that insecurity (directly or indirectly) in a lot of cases was a major reason to migrate, to escape the country (it has also been confirmed by the literature). Daniela herself also left Colombia under threat of the FARC. I think that people can be used to the threat of insecurity, but that when the situation becomes really dangerous from close by, people will flee.

Under the people I interviewed there was no agreement on the subject of tolerance in the society. Pablo states that there is a lot of intolerance in the society. He assumes that if people would help another, there wouldn't be any poverty. What is missing is understanding and respect. On the other hand, there is Maria who states that there is a lot of solidarity between the people. In my opinion it is strange that in a country that is in the middle of a conflict with very high income differences Maria can say that people are solidary. I assume she refers to the people who are just trying to live their life, as for example neighbours, family, friends, etc. Pablo is probably referring to the society as a whole. Further, some people have a more ample analysis of the situation than others. For example Natalia has a very well funded opinion and she mentions a lot of issues that influence the situation in Colombia. She says that the conflict is not the only problem Colombia has; the situation is complicated, there are a lot of different actors and stakeholders. People tend to simplify the problems, especially abroad. In Chile people know little about the current situation and think the problems are limited to the drug trafficking and the FARC. However, the problems are bigger than just Pablo Escobar⁶:

The Colombian situation is very complicated. In the first place, there are various different actors in the conflict. In the second place there is corruption, para-politics⁷ and the lack of political consensus to fight all the problems. Most political parties are involved in questionable negotiations. In the second place, the conflict generates trickery and fraud and violence has become normal. For example, if somebody steals something I am allowed to kill him. Social costs are becoming higher every day. In the third place, Colombia does not form a homeland. Then, there are the kidnappings, that are very bad for the international image of Colombia. The kidnapping of Ingrid Betancourt and Clara Rojas was extensively discussed in the (international) press. When the Colombian government negotiated with the FARC, they categorized the rest of the kidnapped people, it seems they are forgotten. Under the mandate of Álvaro Uribe the situation intensified. There are more people leaving Colombia than ever before. In the 90's there was a huge change in the guerrilla forces with respect to drug trafficking. From that moment on they started to live by the laws of drug trafficking. Within the FARC there are people with normal values, but they are scarce. As a consequence most intellectuals are part of right wing political parties; they do not want to be associated with “the left”

⁶ Pablo Escobar (1949-1993) a Colombian drug lord who gained infamy from the drug trade, he was head of the Medellín drug cartel.

⁷ Para-politics are the legalized political parties from the para-military wing.

and the FARC. The para-military causes a lot of danger as well. In the village where I was living, the para-militaries were expelling people out of their houses and properties. They threatened to kill people who refused leaving their houses. They set an example and let an entire family dig their own grave before killing them with a chainsaw. They work together with the landowners and hand them over the expropriated or recovered lands.”

In the chapter 5 we will see that she is not politically involved in resolving the conflict. I think the complexity of the war in her case definitely contributes to this detachment. On the other hand there is Isabela, who mentions the lack of common identity to be the major problem. On the whole the outcomes of the interview are not very surprising. People mention a lot of different reasons for the situation in Colombia. Some people contradict each other, but that happens often. In short you can conclude that almost all Colombians find the situation complex. This complexity of the situation might hinder the involvement in transnational political activism.

4.2 Motivations to migrate and the road towards Chile.

Reasons to migrate differ from person to person. Whereas in the Colombian case the main reason for migration is the ongoing conflict and the additional violence in the country, economic perspectives and living conditions play a major role as well (Bouvier in Smith and Stares, 2007). In this paragraph I will try to answer the questions: what were their personal motivations to leave Colombia and how did they arrive in Chile?

Migration is not a linear process anymore; it's a collective process that happens in both directions. Life in the host country is always linked to life in the homeland. I think the reasons to leave one country and the reasons to go to another place are interlinked. When people decide to go, they analyze the options they have. They compare different countries before making a choice. Often people ended up somewhere else then they planned. One only decides to go when the perspectives *seem* better elsewhere. One of the stories of the interviewees provides a good example. A woman fled with her family to Ecuador, lived there for eight years and then had to leave to another country due to security issues. When she arrived in Chile, her oldest son didn't like it there and went back to Colombia. It is impossible to anticipate the upcoming events when one decides to migrate.

In order to answer the questions asked above, I will look at a Colombian study from 2007 that investigated the main reasons for Colombians to migrate. One of their finding is that that the department of origin has a major influence on the probability of migration. Khoudour- Castéras (2007) investigated the main reasons for Colombians to emigrate. In 2006 there were over 3,3 million Colombians living abroad. The origins of migrants differ extremely between the departments. The departments with major numbers of emigration in 2006 were *El Valle del Cauca* (24,1% of all people that emigrated), *Bogotá*, the capital district (18,7%) and *Antioquia* (11,9%), see table 2. These three zones represent over half of all Colombians that emigrated. I will compare these outcomes to my own results. The geographical location of Chile with respect to Colombia will most certainly give different outcomes than when looking at the total of Colombian migrants and refugees. However, I think it is important to keep in mind the relevance of department of origin within Colombia, as the intensity of conflict and violence and the living conditions differ extremely.

<i>Department of origin</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
El Valle del Cauca	24,1 %
Bogotá	18,7%
Antioquia	11,9%

Table 2: *departments with major numbers of emigration. These three zones represent over half of all Colombians that emigrated (Khoudour-Casterás (2007)).*

Another important conclusion Khoudour- Castéras (2007) draws in his econometric study is that people with sufficient resources, who are well prepared (and educated), and come from a department with severe socio-economic difficulties have the highest propensity to migrate. Migratory chains might have an influence as well. Khoudour- Castéras (2007) did not take this into account in his research, but considers it an explanation in the debate why people from some districts migrate in larger numbers than people from other departments. This information permits to determine the emigration rate, per department, partly. However, this is an econometric analysis and personal reasons to emigrate are not included in the model of analysis. In my opinion, personal reasons are very important and I will analyze all cases separately. Therefore, I will analyze the departments of origin of the different interviewees, to see if there is a pattern visible from Colombians who migrated to Chile. Again, I am aware that this sample contains too little interviews to draw any significant conclusions and this is not my intention. However, the in depth-interviews might give a good insight in the origin of Colombians in Chile.

For a better understanding of integration, it is important to get a better understanding of the reasons why they emigrated from Colombia to Chile. The reason why they left has, ideally, a link to the legal status they receive in Chile. A migrant can have a different integration process into society than a refugee or a student.

In total I conducted 19 relevant in depth interviews with low skilled migrants, QHR and refugees. I will only describe one conversation per category, the rest of the information on the motivations to migrate can be found in appendix 4. To be able to divide the stories into the categories, I filtered out (what seemed to be) the most important reason for people to leave Colombia. The categories that seem most relevant will be discussed below. The first category is violence, insecurity and conflict. The second category covers the lack of economic perspectives. The third category is the relations/ migratory chains and the fourth category covers the other reasons.

A. Violence, insecurity and conflict

Maria and Alberto from the department of el Cauca (refugee and migrant)

They fled Colombia to obtain a better life, to move forward and for security reasons. Alberto was working as a private security guard when guerrilla forces entered their town. All people working for the police or private security sector were a red alert for the guerrilla. Inside their village there were “*milicianos*” (members of a militia) who collaborated with the guerrilla and passed on information. They could recognize Alberto because his hair was very short. One day he went to visit his mother, who lived outside the village on the slopes of a mountain. When he was walking up the hill, some

members of the guerrilla stopped him and threatened to kill him. This was the straw that broke the camel's back. Three years before, his father died in motorcycle accident. The brakes of his motorcycle did not work, and he and his co-driver fell into the river. The co-driver managed to climb onto the shores of the river, but Alberto's father was never found. They did find all of his clothes, though. It is a very strange story and the family still does not know what happened. One explanation might be that the paramilitaries used his body to identify him as a victim of the guerrilla, as a *falso positivo*⁸. The family and the police have done an investigation, but never found out the truth. The guerrilla say they do not have him captured and nobody in the region ever heard from him.

After the threats, they explored their options. The police helped them and gave them papers that affirmed that their lives were in danger. Alberto decided to go to Chile, because Spain was very difficult and they had contacts in Chile. A friend of a friend lived there and offered them a place to stay the first weeks. In the first place, Alberto went to Chile. After one month, Julieth followed him because they started threatening her as well and they wanted to be together.

B. Lack of economic perspectives in Colombia

Pablo & Nicolás from Calí, department of Valle del Cauca (migrants)

In Colombia he was working as a commercial engineer. He was fired and could not find other work. Besides looking for new employment, he was searching God. He read the bible and went to different churches, but did not like any of them. He decided to emigrate, in search of new employment opportunities and God. Chile was a good option, because he was told there was work and he could go there by bus. People also told him it would be easier to go to Chile, than to a Western country and it was easier to find work in Chile than in other South American countries. He asked his nephew Nicolás to join him, as he was unemployed as well. He had lost his job in a sewing atelier of jeans. They took local buses, from village to village because it was cheaper. It took them a week to arrive in Santiago de Chile.

C. Relations/ migratory chains

José from Ibagué, department of Tolima (migrant)

He decided to go to Chile to improve his opportunities. Literally: "*Me fui para obtener oportunidades nuevas.*" In Colombia he had a good job, but in Chile there are more opportunities for professionals, he is an industrial engineer. Two of his sibling were already in Chile and asked him to join them. They had been living in Chile for three years when José decided to go there as well. They are also professionals: his brother is a medic and his sister is an architect. Especially Colombian doctors find employment easily in Chile.

D. Other reasons

Juan originally from Risaralda (migrant)

⁸ A *falso positivo* killing is when paramilitary soldiers kill farmers and dress them up as a guerilla fighter. For every guerilla they kill they receive a bonus (Begg, 2010).

He migrated to Chile, because his church sent him from Colombia to Chile. The Church of God, Ministry of Jesus Christ International (*Iglesia de Dios, Ministerial de Jesucristo Internacional*)⁹ has churches in 34 countries all over the world. Their pastors can be sent to other countries all over the world. He will stay in Chile for at least seven years.

Analysis

Table 3 provides an overview of the different motives to emigrate from Colombia. Violence, insecurity and conflict were the major reasons to migrate: 10 out of 19 people indicated this to be the most important motive. This finding corresponds with the literature, namely that the Colombian exodus is in great part conflict generated. Rodrigo is a good example. He lived in the middle of the conflict and did not want to become involved, therefore he left Colombia. He wanted to be safe, to be able to say what he wanted and that was not possible in Colombia. Some had to flee from the guerrilla, others from the intensifying conflict. In several departments the situation had become very insecure and the only option was to depart. Marta said:

“They were recruiting new guerrilla members. As my oldest son was 14 years old, he had the right age to be recruited. We decided to leave for Ecuador immediately.”

The lack of economic perspectives was for 5 people a reason to migrate. The conducted interviews above show that two of them were unemployed at the time of leaving the country, someone else had a job, but was looking for better perspectives elsewhere. Pablo and Nicolás also left in search of employment, but Pablo also considered it the plan of God that he migrated to Chile. Relations/migratory chains were for three people an incentive to depart. One of them is José, for him relations in Chile were the main reason to migrate and he also wanted to improve his opportunities. However, the fact that his brother and sister were already living in Chile is most likely the main reason he went to Santiago. In his case, the pull factors were more important than the push factors. Only 1 person (Juan) had other motives to leave: Juan’s work replaced him to Santiago de Chile.

1. Violence, insecurity and conflict	10
2. Lack of economic perspectives	5
3. Relations/ migratory chains	3
4. Other reasons	1
Total	19

Table 3: motives to emigrate from Colombia

9 out of the 19 interviewees are refugees, 4 of the 19 interviewees were low skilled workers and 7 of them are QHR. The refugees and QHR mentioned violence, insecurity and conflict to be the main reason to depart. It is surprising that the QHR also mention violence instead of relations/ migratory chains or work (other reasons). They do not only leave because of work related motives. This implicates that, if the conflict will not be resolved and the security situation does not improve, the possibility that they return to Colombia is not very likely. This might indicate that they do not have

⁹ When in this document the church is mentioned it always refers to the Church of God.

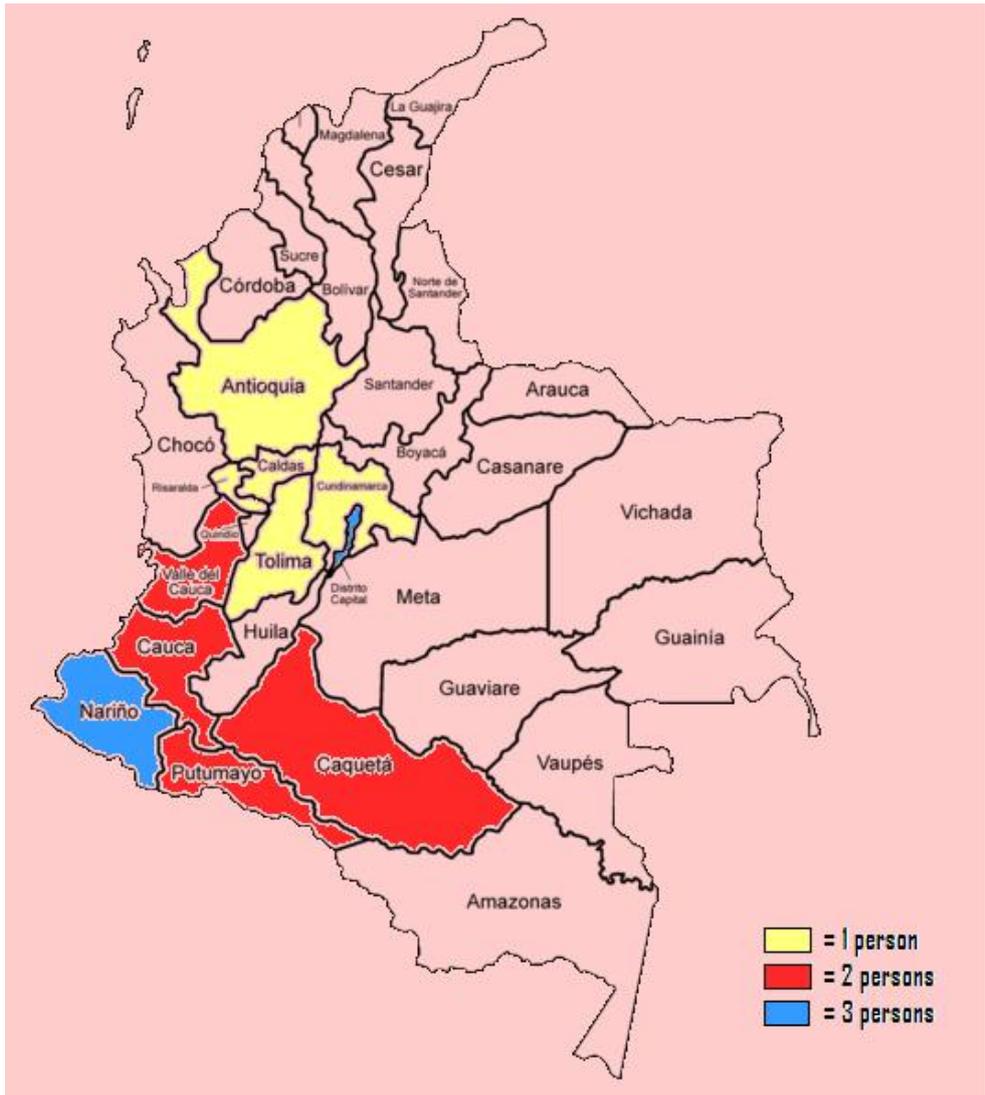
the position as described in the literature by Aranda & Morande (2007) that QHR make little efforts to integrate, because they don't need to do so, because they know their stay is temporary. I think this might influence their integration process. If people left Colombia because of violence and not because of work, there is a large possibility that their stay in Chile is not temporary. This affects their integration process: if people plan to stay for a long time they will put more effort in integrating in the host country.

Amongst the low skilled workers the lack of economic perspectives in Colombia was the most important reason. These results were to be expected as the low skilled workers encounter most problems finding employment.

Hence, I will take a look at the incentives to migrate to Chile. For the refugees the PSTC program and the resettlement program of the United Nations were decisive. Three out of 9 refugees came as a participant in the PSTC program, the temporary program that allowed them to stay in Chile for a year. Due to personal or security issues they decided to stay and still live in Santiago. Two out of 9 refugees arrived through a resettlement program of the UNHRC. For the regular refugees the reason to opt for Chile was the image they had of the country: economic and political stability and security. Good condition to rebuild their lives. This is in accordance with the literature of Aranda & Morande, 2007. For the migrants social relations in Chile and employment opportunities were the main reasons to opt for this country.

Map 1 provides us with an overview of the department origin of the interviewed Colombians living in Santiago de Chile. Most people come from the south or south-west of Colombia. El Nariño and the capital district of Bogotá are the department of origin for three people. The departments in the south as Putumayo, Caquetá, el Cauca and el Valle del Cauca are all the department of origin of two people. It seems that the geographical location of the departments played a role in the choice of moving to Chile, as most people come from the south or the south-west what lies closer by the northern frontier of Chile. If we compare these results to the study conducted by Khoudour-Casterás (2007), the three departments (El Valle del Cauca, Bogotá and Antioquia) with major numbers of emigrations are also highly represented within the people of the conducted interviews of Colombians that are living in Santiago de Chile. 6 out of 19 people are from the departments with major numbers of migration.

One of the conclusions I can draw is that for this group of Colombians the main reason to emigrate from Colombia is the violence, insecurity and conflict. This finding corresponds with the literature, namely that the Colombian exodus is in great part conflict generated. Another conclusion, regarding the pull factors to come to Chile, is that for the refugees the PSTC program and the resettlement program of the UN played an important role. More than half of them came to Chile through these programs. I think this is not a good reflection of reality, because the Chilean state is trying to discourage people to seek refuge in Chile. I don't have the exact numbers, but I am sure that there are more regular refugees than refugees that arrive in programs as the PSTC and the resettlement program. The migrants were drawn to Chile because of economic opportunities and social relations.



Map 1: Overview of the departments of origin of the interviewed Colombians living in Santiago de Chile.

5. Integration and transnational political engagements

This chapter will deal with the integration and transnational political engagements of Colombians in Chile. I will try to answer the question whether there are different integration trajectories between QHR, refugees and low skilled workers and how this influences their insertion into the Chilean society. Then, I will investigate a possible link between integration and the involvement in transnational political engagements and conflict transformation. In the first paragraph, the specifics of different integration trajectories of immigrants (QHR and low skilled workers) and refugees (regular refugees, PSTC and resettled refugees) will be discussed and analysed. The second paragraph will discuss the possible formation of a Colombian Diaspora and the third paragraph will take a closer look at transnational engagements and conflict transformation. The fourth paragraph will go into detail about the relations between transnational engagement and the involvement in transnational political activism.

5.1 Specifics of different integration trajectories

The process of insertion and integration of the Colombians in the Chilean society differ heavily per migratory group, as stated before I will use the categories from Aranda & Morande (2007): QHR, low skilled migrants and refugees. I subdivided the refugees into three different groups: regular refugees, people in the PSTC program and resettled refugees. In the first place I will provide per migratory group 1 or 2 summaries of an interview about this topic. I will pick a story that stands out or that represents the group well. This gives a good image of a complete story of the trajectory of integration of 1 person per group. It will help with the understanding of the entire integration process and gives good insights into the differences between the different categories. The rest of the stories about integration can be found in appendix 5. Hence I will analyse the obtained data from all interviews. The analysis will be done per subtheme, structured by the topics of Barajas Sandoval (2008) (see chapter 1). In the first place different aspects of *de jure* integration will be discussed, followed by *de facto* integration. Not all categories from Barajas Sandoval (2008) will be addressed equally. The contents of the interviews will differ per person. Everybody tells what is important for him/her with regard to their integration. Some theme's will not be touched upon entirely.

Furthermore I will test the findings of Aranda & Morande (2007) and Morande (2005) and compare them to my own results and I will test my own assumptions. Aranda & Morande (2007) had different findings about the integration of Colombian refugees and migrants in Chile. In the first place the about the topic discrimination. In Chile, prejudices about Colombians exist. They are linked to drug trafficking, guerrilla and the FARC. One of the findings of Aranda & Morande (2007) is that low skilled workers are confronted most heavily with discrimination and have therefore more problems with integration. Of all groups they mentioned most often situations of rejection because they were Colombian. However, in general Colombians do not feel discriminated or rejected because of their nationality. In the second place they found that the low skilled workers are the most vulnerable group when it comes to the violation of their rights, especially if they don't have a visa (yet). In the third place, they think that QHR make little efforts to integrate, because they don't need to do so. Mármora explains this phenomenon (in Aranda & Morande, 2007): The globalization makes that professionals who work in multinationals and other countries don't have the necessity to

acculturate. They can live in the new society without integrating, but not because they are marginalized. They don't make an effort to integrate in the host society, but because they know their stay is temporary. Their movement depends on the company or organization for which they work. Nevertheless, there are also some general experiences. Most Colombians tend to describe Chileans as "closed and distant" , which leads, especially in the beginning, to problems in establishing contacts.

Hence my expectations. I think that refugees have an advantage when it comes to integrating. In the first place they receive more support from the government and Ngo's than regular migrants do. In the second place, most of them are unable to return to their country of origin and will therefore make more efforts to integrate. The urge for refugees to integrate is vital. Low skilled workers have similar problems. Due to money issues they cannot return whenever they please. Furthermore, I think that the strict refugee policies might form an obstacle for receiving the status of refugee, it might be easier to become a(n) (ir)regular migrant. The denial of the status of refugee might take a few months up to a few years, this has huge impacts on integration, because somebody is denied the right paperwork in order to find a job, a house, etc. Despite the efforts the government made to facilitate the search for work by providing paperwork that allows working documented, not possessing a RUT continues to provide problems. Continuously I assume that the topic "Language", is not very relevant in this case. The Chilean accent is very different from the Colombian accent, therefore people might have some difficulties when they have just arrived, but in the end it is the same language and therefore I do not expect too many difficulties.

Immigrants

Pablo and Nicolás (QHR and low skilled migrant)

When Pablo and his nephew Nicolás arrived in Santiago, they started to look for a job immediately. Pablo is a professional (commercial engineer) and he did not foresee any problems finding a job, but it took him a few months to find something. These months Pablo and Nicolás ran out of financial resources and had trouble surviving. One day, they decided to return to Colombia if the situation would not change. The next day, Pablo asked God: "manifest yourself, because we can't take it anymore." The next day, they met a group of social workers from the Independent Movement of Absolute Renovation (*Movimiento Independiente de Renovación Absoluta (MIRA)*), a Colombian political party that will be discussed below. Nicolás spoke with them and explained the situation. One of them offered them a place to live in Maipú¹⁰. They also took them to the church and God spoke to Pablo. He gave him personal advise and told him: "now you are in my church. In Colombia you always had to watch your back, but here you are safe. I have been with you all your live and will be with you forever."

The winter came and they were living in Maipú, in a very humble place. They had no heating, gas, light, water, food and fire and it was very cold. In their second month in Chile Pablo found work as a truck loader. It was a test of modesty and humility, this life was very different than his life in

¹⁰ A suburb of Santiago, on the south west of the city.

Colombia. There he studied and before losing his job he had a life full of luxury. One day God told him he had passed the test. That same week they returned to Santiago and from that moment on he started to receive job offers. He worked as a photocopier and afterwards as a record keeper for a small business and as a manager in a restaurant. At the moment of the interview he was unemployed. He would have started a new job as a commercial engineer on Monday the 30th of February, but because of the earthquake¹¹ part of the building was damaged. When the business opens again, he can start working there. Nicolás found a job as a chef in a Colombian restaurant. At this moment they are living in Santiago in a three room apartment with 6 other Colombians. They also have Chilean friends. Chileans are great people. However their culture is less friendly, because they are isolated from the rest of the continent because of geography. Chile had a war with all their neighbouring countries. They would like to be Europeans, that is a good goal. It helps them to grow economically and socially as a country and to obtain a good infrastructure.

Susana (QHR)

She went to Chile, because they offered her a job at IBM. She is residing in Chile on a working visa. She changed jobs a few times, because of contractual issues. It was easy to find a place to live, she has a house in Las Condes, one of the best areas of Santiago. Her three children are living in Chile as well. Two of them have a good job, one as a fashion designer and the other as a visual designer. The third one is still in school. She has been in Chile for only five months, before she lived with her father in the US. Susana's husband arrived in Chile two weeks after this interview. They have been living apart for over 6 years.

The interaction with Chileans goes very well. According to her, when you are Colombian, doors will be opened by Chileans. Colombians are well received and she has a lot of Chileans friends. Colombians residing in Chile come together, but she is under the impression that people from lower classes do not arrive to the gatherings. Through church she has many Colombian acquaintances and friends. They share in customs, culture, national holidays and typical food. The good thing about church is that there are no barriers of class, social status or wealth. The boundaries are broken. They undertake activities together and all ideas are valuable.

Gianina (low skilled migrant)

Gianina arrived in Chile two months before this interview (in January 2010). It was rather difficult to find a place to live, but she found something through Colombian acquaintance. She shares an apartment of three rooms with 7 other people (amongst them Pablo and Nicolás). She is working in a clothing store, but does not have a fixed contract, nor a visa and earns little money. She goes to church almost every day of the week, the people there help her a lot. She knew the church through her roommates. Contact with Chileans is difficult, they are not very open. She does not like living in Chile, but hopes that time will change that. She would go to the United States or Europe if she could.

¹¹ The earthquake of the 27th of February of 2010 in Chile. The epicenter of the earthquake was near Concepción, the second largest city of the country.

Refugees

Marta & her husband (resettlement program)

She arrived in Chile in 2007 through the resettlement program of UNHCR. When she and her family arrived in Chile the UNHCR had all the paperwork ready for them to obtain the status of refugee. Very quickly they also obtained definite residence. Further, the UNHCR provided them for (only!) one month with a place to live, food and all other basics they needed. Marta considered this to be very a very short period of time, because in one month time they did not have enough time to find a house to live in and a job that supports for the family. From the organization FOSIS (the Fund of Solidarity and Social Inversion¹²) they received little support as well. In Chile in order to be able to rent a department or house you need to have an indefinite term contract, which they did not have after one month. Fortunately there was a man that had enough confidence in them to rent them a department without an indefinite term contract. They are still living in this house in Maipú.

For Marta's husband it is very difficult to find work. They have been living in Santiago for two and a half years and he remains unemployed. He is 56 years old and a lot of Chileans prefer not to hire a foreigner at age. In Colombian and Ecuador he used to sell car parts (not a professional). Now he wants to obtain his drivers license once again to become a taxi driver. However, this is very difficult because they have to pay for all the expenses themselves. The UNHCR promised them capacity courses, but after their first month in Chile they didn't receive any more help from the UNHCR, the same happened with support from the *Vicaría*.

Marta is working in a beauty salon. In Ecuador she used to own a little pastry shop. Their oldest son works independently and their two daughters are still in school. With respect to their cultural orientation, they do not have a lot of contact with Chileans. Chileans are less open minded than Ecuadorians. Now she understands that is their culture, but she had a difficult time getting used in the country. All her friends in Chile are people that go to the church; they are like a family. They majority of them is Colombian. It is very difficult to meet new friends outside the church. She is not in touch with any Ngo or other refugee organization. The only social contacts she has are with the church. The only Chilean friends she has are the people she met in church. Even with her colleagues she doesn't get along very well. She keeps in touch with her family in Colombia as often as possible. She does not think they will ever be able to visit them in Chile or that she, her husband or children can go back to Colombia. She lacks the economic possibilities.

If she could, she would go to another country immediately. Not only because of social relations, but also because she thinks that Chile is inappropriate to be a country of resettlement. The UNHCR does not provide them with enough means to build up a life. They do not have social security or FONASA¹³. For example, a friend of hers went to Canada and she received a lot more help as social benefits and insurance.

¹² FOSIS is a service from the Chilean government with the aim to contribute to the efforts of the country to overcome poverty and to decrease social vulnerability of people (Fosis.cl, 2009).

¹³ FONASA is the Chilean National Health Fund (Fondo Nacional de Salud) (FONASA.cl, 2010)

Daniela (PSTC)

She and her two teenage children arrived in 2003 through the PSTC. She adapted herself rather easily to the way of living in Chile. After eight days she had the feeling she was settled down: she had a place to live and found a school for her children. The first six months she did not work and stayed at home to take care of her children. Afterwards, she started to look for a job. She found a job through her work with homeless people where she volunteered for a while. They liked her way of working and offered her a job. In Colombia she had been a social worker. Finally she ended up working for the Chilean government and had the responsibility over eight communities in the prevention of violence in the family. She earned 700 luca (+/- 100 Euros) per month, what is considered to be a well paid job in the sector of social work. At this moment she works for CONASI (the National Council for Drug Control). She does not feel discriminated in her work, nor in her private life. However, there remains to be a distance between her and her colleagues. With respect to housing, it was fairly easy to find a place to live. At this moment she owns her an apartment in Nuñoa, which she shares with two Colombians.

Daniela has Colombian and Chilean friends. In the first years she lived in Chile, she had a lot of contact with other Colombians that arrived through the same resettlement program. That way she met some other people. In the beginning she thought Chileans to be distant people that didn't enjoy their lives Colombians do. Now she is more used to their culture and customs and realizes they have another way of expressing themselves. In 2007 her daughter decided to go live with her father in Venezuela. One year later, her son was diagnosed with cancer, a few months later he died in Venezuela, were the whole family was united. She stayed in Venezuela for one month, to be close to her son, during his last weeks. There, she was introduced to the *Iglesia Ministerial de Jesuchristo Internacional*. Back in Chile, she went to the church in Santiago as well. The church and people she met there, were a great support to her during this difficult time. She has a lot of social contacts in church, with Colombians as well as Chileans. Despite living in Chile without her children, she does not consider moving anywhere else. Chile is her home.

Maria ("regular" refugee)

Maria arrived in Chile in March 2008. Her husband Alberto arrived one month earlier and lived with a Colombian acquaintance for a few weeks, until he found an apartment. Now they are living with their baby near church, (Arturo Pratt con Victoria). He applied for the status of refugee, but that did not result fast enough and he applied for a migratory visa. They needed to pay off a loan and therefore he needed a visa as quickly as possible. Maria is still in the process of obtaining the status of refugee. The government lingers in completing her application because of the change of mandate that happened in March 2010. In *Extranjería* nobody knows who has to sign the paperwork. Officially it is not possible to work then, but she has a working permit. She certainly wants to obtain this status because it provides a lot of benefits. For example the government can help financially with the purchase of a house the opening of a business. One day they would like to buy a house one day and open up a cyber café. The *Vicaría* continues to support her, sometimes with a bit of money, or with medications. Many people don't receive that much help from the *Vicaría*. A lot of refugees do not know what their rights are. However, you have to search the possibilities and ask for help. She is working as a nurse, as is her original profession. She earns a bit more money than in Colombia (285 Euro's per month), but the life in Chile is more expensive.

Her husband is working as a private security guard and earns around 430 Euros monthly. They both found a job rather easily. Four days after her arrival she found work, it went all really quickly. It was an abrupt change for her. Within four days she had a house, and a job in Chile. She arrived in autumn and it was very cold in Chile and she missed her family. The language was also difficult. In the beginning she didn't understand the Chilean accent very well. Especially in her work this caused some problems.

In her opinion Chileans are less respectful than Colombians. They only have friends within the church (besides the acquaintances they already knew when they arrived in Chile). The church is like a big family and they attend service seven days a week. Further, they do not go out. They have good contact with their family back home. A few weeks after this interview they returned to visit their family in Colombia. Their parents are worried because of the earthquake and wanted to see their grandchild.

De jure integration covers housing, education and participation on the labour market. If somebody does not require a minimum of this integration, he/she will be more occupied surviving than being able to participate in time-consuming or expensive transnational engagements or conflict resolution. *De facto* integration concerns interaction with the population, language, social contacts, habits, standards, values and a sense of belonging

Analysis

Housing

I will start with discussing housing and occupation and participation on the labour market, as I think those are vital aspects of the economic, social and civil participation. In the first place, I will discuss the QHR, in the second place the low skilled migrants and then the refugees. On forehand, I assumed it would be rather easy for QHR to find a job and a place to live in Santiago and that it would be a lot harder for low skilled migrants. In general, these assumptions are correct. A place to live was easy to find for almost all of the QHR, except for Pablo. I presume it was more difficult for him because he did not have sufficient economic resources at the time of arrival. At this moment he has a roof over his head, but his living conditions are not optimal. He shares a three room apartment with 7 other Colombians. José could move in with his brother and sister and for Susana it was no problem finding a place to live at all. Juan received help from the church community in finding a place to live. These stories show us the importance of economic resources and contacts in Chile when it comes to finding a place to live. Most QHR found a house through family, friends or acquaintances. The low skilled workers encountered a lot more problems in their search for a place to live. Nicolás is in the same position as Pablo; after three months he found a place to live, but is sharing the apartment with 7 other Colombians. The first three months they did not have permanent accommodation and were moving around, until they met somebody who offered them shelter. Gianina was lucky to find accommodation in the same house as Pablo and Nicolás, through contacts she had in church.

I have a more complete image of the housing situation of the refugees than of the low skilled migrants, due to the amount of the taken interviews. One of the aspects that made it difficult for some of the refugees to find a place to live, was the procedure to obtain the status of refugee. On

the other hand some of them received assistance for six months from the Vicaría. Looking at the resettled refugees, regular refugees and people attending the PSTC, there is a difference. In the first place, most resettled refugees are satisfied with the help they received, except for Marta, who only received support for one month. Luis on the other hand, received six months of support. I think on the other hand, that he received a lot more support than Marta, due to earlier arrival in Chile than Marta (I will go more into detail about the importance of date of arrival later). The only regular refugee I spoke with, María, had a very positive image of the possibilities for a refugee in Chile. Nowadays, the resettled refugee receives a lot more help than regular refugees. People attending the PSTC, Daniela and Natalia also have positive stories about the Vicaría and the government. Within one month they both had a place to live. Daniela:

“After eight days in Chile I had the feeling I was settled down. I found a place to live and a school for my children. I knew I would stay in Santiago for the rest of my life.”

People who are in the process of applying for the status of refugee don't have a RUT (Chilean identity card), what makes it very difficult to obtain work. This leads to the fact that people do not have a fixed income, what leads to landlords being unwilling to rent them a place to live. Even though this was not mentioned in the interviews with the low skilled workers, I think they experience the same difficulties. Marta (resettled refugee) lived this experience. She said:

“ In Chile in order to be able to rent a department or a house you need to have work wit an indefinite term contract, which we did not have after one month. Fortunately we met a man that had enough confidence in us to rent us an apartment. We are still living in this house in Maipú.”

Further she says she only received support from the Vicaría for one month: “it is an extremely short period of time to find a job and a place to live.” Natalia (PSTC) has a complete different story. When she arrived in Chile in 2003, the Vicaría helped her with a lot of things, amongst them finding a place to live. They wrote them a letter of recommendation, what made the search for a house quite easy.

Employment

Two QHR indicated they had problems finding a job. However, eventually all QHR succeeded in finding work within three months. Two of them already had work when they moved to Santiago. For Juan it was the main reason to move there. Contacts might be equally important when it comes to finding a job. José did not have the right contacts, what might explain why it took him longer to find employment. For the low skilled workers it appears to be more complicated. They have to search for a longer period of time and have poor working conditions. For example, Gianina. She arrived in Santiago two months ago and fortunately has a job. However, she does not have a fixed contract (what is logical after a few weeks), but she barely earns enough money to make a living. It is not surprising that low skilled workers do not have the best working conditions. The exploitation of low skilled migrants happens world wide on a large scale. They receive low compensation for their work. Especially people with an undocumented status are vulnerable; they have little rights. Gianina is one of them and she does not expect to receive a migratory visa in the near future. In short it seems that some QHR encounter some difficulties when it comes to finding a job, but within three months they all found employment. The low skilled workers I interviewed are all working as well. However, their working conditions leave nothing to be desired. Most refugees I spoke with found a job within a few

months. It took some of them longer than they expected, but in the end all, except for the husband of Marta, they found a job. Some of them had to work beneath their level, in order to survive when they continued looking for other employment. For Marta (resettled refugee) it was not difficult to find a job in a beauty salon. She didn't find it within a month, but within three. Her husband has a lot more problems. They have been living in Santiago for two and a half years and he remains unemployed.

Natalia (refugee in the PSTC program) and her husband did not work for the first year, because they expected to return to Colombia. When they decided to stay, they had work the first months, but it was beneath their level:

"I and my husband decided to participate in some kind of a traineeship. This traineeship resulted in a job for a Ngo, where I am working as a social worker. My colleagues help me a lot and the organization gave me the possibility to go on maternity leave when I was pregnant."

Natalia seems to like her job and the fact that she could go on maternity leave surprised her. Her working conditions are good, although the salary is not very high. Daniela (PSTC) did not have to work the first six months, because of government support. Although she arrived in the one year program, she never had a doubt that she would stay in Chile. After the first six months, she started to look for a job, and through volunteering as a social worker, she found a real job. Finally she ended up working for the Chilean government and had the responsibility over eight communities in the prevention of violence in the family. She has a very good occupation. Maria (regular refugee) found a job within four days. She had not difficulties at all to work as a nurse. I think that the type of documented status people have in Chile is not as important as their working history and education. Only people who arrived in the PSTC (Natalia is a good example) are not obliged to find employment, because their expenses are covered for a whole year. It seems to me that with regards to finding employment it does not really matter whether you are a refugee or migrant. The division that does matter is are you a professional or not. Low skilled migrants have less job opportunities than QHR. For the refugees this division is not based on the base of education. In reality it is easier to find a job for a high skilled refugee than for a low skilled refugee.

Importance of date of arrival

When Natalia arrived in Chile in the year 2003, the Vicaría offered her and her family with a lot of support. She is under the impression that refugees who arrive nowadays receive less help. She was not the only one who thought this, Luis said: people who arrive as a refugee at this moment, receive less help. The Vicaría shortened the period of economical help to three months. The resettled refugee receives a lot more help than regular refugees. It is not a fixed amount of money, but depends on the composition of the family. The partition happened around the end of the year 2005, when a lot more Colombians started to arrive. Those who arrived after they year 2005, have more trouble finding a house and work. The number of refugees in Chile has increased, but the capacity and resources of Ngo's like the Vicaría has not increased equally. The amount of Colombian people present in Chile increased fast, what led to a decreased trust between them. According to Natalia there is a clear division between people who arrived before 2005 and people who arrive afterwards. The relates from resettled refugees that arrived after 2005 differ between help for one to three months.

Income and poverty

When it comes to income and poverty, as expected, the low skilled workers are in a weaker position than the QHR. They have less income from their work and some of them are busy surviving instead of living. Most QHR are in a better position, but not all of them. As said before, Pablo is living together with 7 other people in a rather small apartment. When I entered their house I noticed they did not have a lot of possessions. There was rarely any furniture in the apartment and everybody was sitting on the floor. Only in the bedrooms there were some wardrobes with clothes, but the rest of the house was quite empty. When Pablo can start working at his new job as a professional, I presume that within a year he will earn enough money and move to another place to live. He lives there at this moment, due to the fact that he could not find a job the first months. Gianina (low skilled worker) is living in the same house and does not see any opportunities to find another job and escape from this situation of poverty. Between the refugees there are differences as well. People who arrived through the PSTC saw their expenses covered for one year. If they want to stay, they have at least one year to arrange everything they need. In comparison, people who are resettled nowadays receive only support for one month. Marta, especially in the first months, was trying to survive. Now she has a job, but she does not earn barely enough money to support the whole family. Nobody has social security and the children have to help and earn some money as well.

Education and political and civil participation

The topic education was not discussed extensively during the interviews, because it was not relevant to most of the interviewees. Some of them were professionals who already finished their education, others low skilled workers that weren't considering education. Marta and her husband were the only ones to mention education. In the resettlement program they were promised capacity training after their arrival in Chile, however they never had the possibility. Her husband wants to obtain his drivers license (the Colombian license is not valid in Chile) to start his own taxi company, but has to pay for all expenses himself. Marta was not offered a capacity course either. Children were left out of the interviews, simply because of a lack of time.

Cultural orientation

One of the assumptions of Aranda & Morande (2007) was that qualified human resources don't have the necessity to integrate, because they are not planning to stay for indefinite period of time. Obviously, work, sufficient income and a place to live are a necessity to survive, also for QHR. Therefore, the expected lack of integration of QHR should be sought under the section cultural orientation; under interaction with the population, language, social contacts, habits, standards and values. The interviews showed that the interaction of QHR with the Chilean population and social contacts goes rather well. Juan and Susana have many Chilean friends and acquaintances. José says he has good contacts with the Chileans. Pablo (QHR) says that they are "great" people and that he has some Chilean friends. Nevertheless, according to him their culture is less friendly because they are isolated from the rest of the continent because of geography and Chile had a war with all their neighbouring countries. In my opinion this last comment can hardly be the reason why people are less friendly, because a lot of countries have a history of war. Juan says the interaction with Chileans does not provide any difficulties, since all people are children of God. The low skilled workers are divided about the interaction with Chileans. Gianina does not like them very much. She does not have any Chilean friends or acquaintances outside the church. She said:

“It is difficult to make contacts with the Chileans, they are not very open. I do not like living in Chile, but I will hope that time will change that. If I could I would go to the United States or Europe.”

She says it is difficult to make contact with Chileans and she does not like living in Chile and hopes that time will change that feeling. She would leave Chile immediately if she could, and move to the United States or Europe. Nicolás did not have an explicit opinion on Chileans. One of my assumptions was that for a refugee it is more important to integrate than for migrants, because most refugees do not have the possibilities to return to Colombia if they want to. When I speak about integration the major part of economic, social and civil participation is a necessity to survive. Housing, occupation and participation on the labour market and poverty are all subjects in which I assume most people try their best to succeed in order to survive. Therefore, I think that the part in which they have the choice not to participate in Chilean society must be under cultural orientation. Nevertheless, the interview shows that Colombian refugees seem to have more difficulties when it comes to social contacts with Chileans than migrants. Marta (resettled) does not have a lot of contact with Chileans. All her friends in Chile are people that go to the church; they are like a family. The majority of them is Colombian. It is very difficult to meet new friends outside the church. The only Chilean friends she has are the people she met in church. Even with her colleagues she doesn't get along very well. Luis (resettled) has many more Colombian friends than Chilean friends. Luis:

“It is difficult to make friends with Chileans. The Chilean friends I have are mainly female.”

The Chilean friends he has, are mainly female. Maria (regular refugee) thinks that Chileans are less respectful than Colombians. They only have friends within the church. The church is like a family and they go seven days a week. Further, they do not go out. Daniela (PSTC) has Colombian and Chilean friends. In the first years she lived in Chile, she had a lot of contact with other Colombians that arrived through the same resettlement program. That way she met some other people. In the beginning she thought Chileans to be distant people that don't enjoy their lives the way Colombians do. In the beginning, Natalia (PSTC) had few Chilean friends and acquaintance. Only when their first child was born and went to primary school they started to *chilenizar* (to become Chilean). She left Colombia in the past for her children and her work. Their Chilean neighbours are very forthcoming and a lot of her colleagues as well.

What is striking to me, is that most of the people who attend church have little or no friends outside of the church. Some of them seem to detest Chileans. Of them is Marta. She does not have any contacts with Chileans at all, except for her colleagues (who she does not really like) and some Chileans that go to church. It strikes me that she does not make any more efforts to make friends in Chile. It might have to do something with the fact that she works a lot. Further, she goes to church almost seven days a week. This does not facilitate getting to know other people outside the church. Most Colombians (of all groups) notice a difference when it comes to the Chilean culture. The professionals relate about the Chilean culture to be “different”; they are more distant, introvert and sparing. Colombians are more open. However, Colombians who are in Chile for a longer time told me it took time to adjust to the Chilean culture, habits and people. After a few years, most of them seem to have found their place in the Chilean society.

Language

Even though Chileans and Colombians both speak Spanish, there are a lot of differences in pronunciation and vocabulary. Opposed to earlier assumptions, the different accent and use of words in Chilean Spanish leads to misunderstandings and other problems. I think the professionals have fewer problems with the language than other groups. In the first place, because higher educated Chileans use less “*chilenismos*” (Chilean expressions). In the second place, because they did not mention it to be a difficulty as other groups did. I Did not expect it to be an important issue, but a lot of people mentioned it to be a difficulty during their first period in Chile. For example María, who had problems in her work, because she didn’t understand her employer:

“Chileans speak very fast and unclear. I did not understand the accent in the beginning. Especially in my work as a nurse it was a problem, because older women did not like it when I did not understand them.”

The other face of integration

Aranda & Morande (2007) state that being Colombian is linked (by Chileans) to drug trafficking and guerrilla. However, in general Colombians do not feel discriminated or rejected because of their nationality. For the QHR this statement seems to be true and they do not seem to feel discriminated. Susana:

“Being Colombian opens doors. I am received very well everywhere and I have a lot of Chilean friends.”

Before the year 2005, when more and more Colombians arrived in Chile, they had a very good reputation. Almost all Colombians that arrived in Chile were highly skilled professionals. Especially medics and dentists come to Chile, because they could earn more money than in Colombia. Today there are still a lot of highly skilled professional Colombians in Chile, but because the arrival of many unskilled Colombians and refugees their reputation changed.

For the low skilled refugees and low skilled migrants the reality seems to be different. The interviews of the low skilled migrants noted above do not go into detail about whether they feel discriminated or not. I did have the feeling that Gianina does not feel accepted. But she did not mention specifically being discriminated. Amongst the refugees there are also different opinions about the other side of integration; the degree of acceptance by the Chileans. Marta (resettled) does not have many Chilean friends and does not feel accepted by her colleagues at work. If she could, she would go to another country immediately. Not only because of social contacts, but she does not consider Chile to be an appropriate country for resettlement. Maria (regular refugee) does not feel accepted either. While Daniela (refugee in the PSTC program) feels Chile to be her new home, where she feels respected. In her work she has felt in the past that there are small differences between her and her colleagues, but she was never openly discriminated.

I think many refugees are not openly discriminated, but they might have the feeling that they are not accepted. Aranda and Morande (2007) assumed that low skilled workers would experience more discrimination and therefore more problems with insertion and integration. The amount of interviews held with low skilled migrants is not enough to draw any conclusions. However, the

deducted interviews with low skilled refugees being present in Chile gave me the feeling that they have more problems with discrimination than the high skilled refugees do. Again I think the division between refugees and migrants is not that important, on the other hand, the division between being a professional or a low skilled worker is. A refugee is not only a refugee, but can be a professional or a low skilled worker as well. Furthermore, low skilled workers (also low skilled refugees) might have more problems with integration, but I have not found a clear link between more discrimination and more problems with integration.

Another finding of Aranda & Morande (2007) was that low skilled workers are the most vulnerable group when it comes to the violation of their rights. Especially when they do not have a visa yet. I think the situation of Gianina provides us with the perfect example. She arrived in Chile and does not have a visa. Her employer exploits her, she does not earn enough money and is busy surviving instead of living. Nevertheless I think the low skilled refugees encounter the same problems.

An analysis of the complete integration process

My own assumption was that refugees integrate more easily, because they receive more support from the government and NGOs, they don't have the possibility to return and have to make the best of it. It is partly true that they receive more help than migrants. Especially people who arrived through the PSTC program and resettlement program before the end of 2005. However, regular refugees receive hardly any more support than migrants. Further I met a refugee who did return to Colombia; some of them have the possibility to return. However, I think she is an exception. Not all of them make the best of it because they don't have the possibility to return. Marta has the feeling she is trapped in Chile. She cannot return nor go any place else. It seems to me that people who have the freedom to leave whenever they want try harder to become part of the society. The QHR I interviewed are a good example. Juan, Luz y Leonardo all have an active life in Chile and seem rather happy with their life there. Furthermore, most low skilled workers do not have the freedom to return to Colombia or go some place else. Most of them are bound through economical restrictions.

The question that has to be answered is whether there are different integration trajectories between QHR, refugees and low skilled workers and how this influences their insertion into the Chilean society. Before discussing the most important findings, one remark has to be made. The division of refugees into groups was not convenient in analysing the integration processes. The refugees were divided in the groups: regular refugee, a refugee in the PSTC program and resettled refugees. For refugees the category to which they belong is important when looking at the amount of support they receive. People participating in the PSTC program receive a lot of support compared to regular refugees. This gives them an advantage in the integration process. However, their level of education should have been taken into account as well. On the short term the different groups pass through different insertion trajectories. However, when it comes to finding a good job the level of education plays a major role.

This leads us to the first conclusion (the conclusions are in a random order). It is a lot easier finding work for somebody who is a professional than it is for a low skilled worker. This has consequences for their whole integration process. They have money to find a place to live and once the basic necessities of life are fulfilled there is time for cultural orientation. Also the degree of discrimination high skilled people seem to experience is lower than the degree of discrimination that low skilled

workers (refugees and migrants) experience. The second conclusion is that contacts are very important in finding a place to live and employment. Most QHR seemed to have better networks that allowed them to find a house and a place to live. In the third place it seemed that low skilled workers encountered more problems to find a place to live than QHR and refugees. Probably because most refugees received assistance from the *Vicaría*. The fourth conclusion regards employment. Especially undocumented people are vulnerable; they have little rights and when they find a job it often underpaid and without a contract. People without a documented status are mainly low skilled workers or people that applied for the status of refugee but who are still in the procedure. Concurring with the findings of Aranda & Morande (2007) is that low skilled workers are the most vulnerable group when it comes to the violation of their rights. All QHR had a job within three months. All the low skilled migrants I spoke with as well, but the conditions were poor in many cases. For the refugees the situation was almost the same as for the migrants, but there were some people who were unemployed for more than two years.

The fifth conclusion is that the date of arrival is important for the integration process. People who arrived after 2005 as a refugee received less assistance. In 2005 more and more Colombians started to arrive. Those who arrived after they year 2005, have more trouble finding a house and work. The number of refugees in Chile has increased, but the capacity and resources of Ngo's like the *Vicaría* has not increased equally. The amount of Colombian people present in Chile increased fast, what led to an increased distrust between them. The sixth conclusion is that low skilled migrants and low skilled refugees (except for the refugees in the PSTC program who receive assistance for a year) have less income and are poorer than the QHR and well skilled refugees. The most poignant situation of poverty I stumbled upon was a house were 8 people were living in a two bedroom apartment without furniture. It was a place were mainly low skilled migrants lived and 1 QHR who has just arrived in Chile and had not found employment yet.

The seventh conclusions concerns the Chilean culture, something that Colombians from all categories had the same opinion about. Chileans are more distant and introvert; it is difficult to establish friendships with Chileans, especially in the beginning. After a few years, most of them seem to have found their place in the Chilean society. Conclusion number eight is that refugees seem to have more difficulties to establish social contacts with Chileans than QHR or low skilled workers. QHR have the least trouble mixing with Chileans. In the tenth place I want to say something about the church where I conducted a lot of interviews. The community was very close, what certainly has positive aspects; for a lot of people the church replaced the family they missed in Colombia. Close friendships arose there I am sure. Nevertheless I think that if people work five days a week and go to church every day this impedes their interaction with the Chilean society. There were some Chileans attending the church, but they were few. Conclusion number 11 is that Even though Chileans and Colombians both speak Spanish, there are a lot of differences in pronunciation and vocabulary. The last conclusion regards discrimination. Most Colombians do not feel discriminated because they are Colombian. Only some low skilled migrants and low skilled refugees had the feeling that they had been discriminated, but never openly.

In short you can say that QHR seem to have the least trouble surviving and therefore the best opportunities to integrate. Also in their cultural orientation, they seem to fit in better into Chilean society as well. The low skilled migrants have more trouble surviving and also more trouble in the

cultural orientation. This gap between the high and the low skilled people is also visible in the group of refugees. High skilled refugees have less trouble surviving than low skilled refugees. However, this does not imply they do not encounter any difficulties at all. Refugees who arrive in the PSTC program are mainly high skilled, because the program focuses on social leaders. They have an obvious advantage, because all their expenses are covered for their first year in Chile. They are supposed to return to Colombia after a year, but around 30% of them still lives in Chile. If we compare the low skilled workers to the low skilled refugees the refugees have a small advantage when it comes to *de jure* integration. They receive a little bit more assistance when they arrive in Chile than migrants, but all of them struggle to survive. In cultural orientation low skilled refugees seem to integrate better into the Chilean society than the low skilled migrants. It is difficult to explain this difference. Maybe because the migrants have a bit more freedom and have at least the idea that they can leave Chile.

5.2 The formation of a Colombian Diaspora?

With the arrival of more people every year, Colombians had the urge to start to organize themselves. The last years, more and more initiatives arose, what seems to be the beginning of a Colombian community in Chile. In this paragraph fragmentation and division will be looked into, as it seems to be an important factor in Colombian communities living abroad. Furthermore, different Colombian organizations and other initiatives will be discussed.

Natalia's story illustrates in a good way the development of her friendships with Colombians and Chileans during her time in Chile. Therefore, I have added a part of it to this paragraph:

Natalia

Their first months in Chile, Natalia and her husband had few Chilean friends and acquaintances. She took some classes at the university, there she met a Chilean woman who became a good friend. At that time, most of her friends were Colombian. Only when their first child was born and went to primary school they started to "*chilenizar*" (to become Chilean). She tries to leave Colombia in the past for her children and her work. Their Chilean neighbours are very forthcoming and lot of her colleagues as well. The most striking part to Natalia is that it was possible to be together with so many different Colombians in one room: people from different places, social classes and with different ideas. Many of them were political enemies. But in Chile, at least they could sit together and eat and drink. After a few years she decided to get more distant from Colombia, as it affected her a lot. She had to accept for herself that she couldn't change the situation in Colombia, because she couldn't cope with it any more. At the same time, a lot of her friends who also participated in the PSTC program returned to Colombia. Furthermore, at the end of 2005 the situation changed: a lot more Colombians started to arrive in Chile. This led to increasing distrust amongst the Colombians in Chile. However, Natalia always stayed in touch with the *Vicaría* and with Colombians through the church. The church is visited by over 100 people. It is a neutral zone, people feel safe and help each other. Natalia says that it is better not to know where other Colombians come from.

Her story could be the story of a lot of migrants or refugees in the whole world. She tells that in the beginning she had more Colombian friends, but after a few years she understood that she had to become more involved in the Chilean society if she wanted to continue living her daily life instead of

always living in the past and in Colombia. She says there is distrust between the Colombians in Chile, but that they are possibilities for them to come together. The church is a great help, because it creates a neutral zone. Nevertheless it is better not to know where other Colombians come from; there is a high amount of distrust according to her.

There are different opinions about the degree of distrust there is between the Colombians in Chile. Marta agrees with Natalia that there are no tensions between the people who attend church. In church they also discuss politics, but she thinks outside church there are no tensions either. Marta and other people denied the existence of tensions between Colombians in Chile. Pablo and Nicolás also said they do not feel any tensions between the Colombians in Chile and that you always have to get to know people before judging them. Claudia does not agree with them:

“If two Colombians meet abroad the first question people ask is: where are you from? When I was living in the United States, I even got the question to which college I went. The place where you live and the college you went to says a lot about your social status. There is a lot of distrust between Colombians.”

I don't know why people deny there is distrust amongst Colombians in general. They might not feel it themselves or they prefer to deny it, because they are ashamed of it. Fact is, that within the church people seem to feel at ease and trust each other. Most of the people in church support the political party MIRA.

Marta and other people denied the existence of tensions between Colombians in Chile. Pablo and Nicolás also said they do not feel any tensions between the Colombians in Chile and that you always have to get to know people before judging them. They see an opportunity in religion, because it makes it possible to discuss politics as well. According to Daniela, there are tensions between Colombians in Chile. People come from different economical and social backgrounds. In many occasions people do not know where the other comes from, that leads to distrust. Maria stated:

“I do not notice distrust between, but I feel that Colombians in Chile don't want to know anything from other Colombians. Fortunately, in church all tensions disappear.”

In my opinion there is a lot of distrust and tensions amongst the Colombians in Chile. The church is a neutral zones where people can even talk a bout politics. This safe, neutral zone offers a lot of possibilities, but it can also repel people who are not religious to join the cause of an organization as MIRA.

The first Colombian organization in Chile I want to discuss is MIRA. Almost all people who visited church on a regular basis participate in this movement. They want to lessen corruption and to abolish the mandatory military service. MIRA is a political party, but more than that, also a way of living and thinking; an ideology. *Miraísmo* strives to change people's daily life's by changing values. As this is a political organization it will be further discussed in the next paragraph. Some members of MIRA also have aspirations in non electoral politics. They want to establish an organization that helps Colombians that arrive in Chile. Nevertheless, they lack the means; they do not have the money, nor the permit, or the legal entity to start an Ngo. Hopefully in the future they can fulfill

their dreams. The reason why they want to establish this Ngo is that many Colombians arrive in Chile without any possessions, work and a place to stay. The Ngo *El Hogar de Cristo* only gives them a bed to sleep in, but do not offer them anything else. Only refugees receive money to survive for one month. They rest does not receive anything. Some arrive without appropriate clothing, because they do not know Chile has four seasons.

The second organization is Corphuex, it was established in 2009 by two Colombian refugees. Now they are 11 people (one Chilean and the rest is Colombian), amongst them are two lawyers. It is an organization for refugees (not only Colombians). They fight for refugee rights and they want to make sure the Chilean government fulfils the (international) refugee laws. According to the treaty of Bogotá and Geneva, refugees have certain rights. They work together with the *Vicaría*. Through them they get in touch with newly arrived refugees. However, they base their work on the needs of the refugees. At this moment they focus on:

- cultural integration
- legal documents and housing
- employment
- project *Organización deRefugiados Americanos* (the American Refugee Organization, ORA). This project of *Corphuex* wants to join different organizations in Latin America that work with refugees. furthermore, they want to increase the knowledge of Chileans about refugees. What refugees are, what they need and how Chileans can do something to help them; they want to raise awareness¹⁴.

The third initiative to which some Colombians in Chile have united themselves is *Colombiano de Verdad* (A Real Colombian)¹⁵. This initiative wants Colombians that live in foreign countries to live like Colombians. To feel like a Colombian and to be a patriot, to have the same charisma that makes Colombians stand out in the rest of the world. Unfortunately, according to *a Colombiano de Verdad*, there is a small group of Colombians that left the country and create a negative image of the beautiful Colombia. When living abroad Colombians have to think of ways in how to change this bad image people have from Colombia. Therefore Colombians have to live and feel Colombia inside. A Real Colombian has the spirit to work hard, is a fighter, eager to learn and enjoys the love for his roots and family. The fact that people united themselves to this initiative shows their compassion with Colombia. MIRA used the logo of *Colombiano de Verdad* in it's campaign folder.



Another initiative is a Colombian newspaper with a lot of news from Colombia, but ofcourse also from the Colombian community in Chile. The newspaper is published every month.

¹⁴ See for further information: www.corphuex.blogspot.com

¹⁵ www.colombianodeverdad.com

Furthermore, there are also initiatives on the internet: www.colombianosenchile.com, (Colombians in Chile) is a website that was only launched recently and what provides all sorts of information that could be relevant for Colombians in Chile varying from information about the weather, information on Colombian food and where to celebrate Colombian holidays and information about Chileans migratory laws and what to do if you want to apply for a visa. On social networks they are also active, even on facebook they have their own page: *Colombianos en Chile*: <http://www.facebook.com/group.php?gid=5501869631>

Furthermore, there are initiatives of Colombians to celebrate holidays together. There is one street in Santiago, with some Colombian restaurants. They celebrate Colombian carnival there and other national holidays. During my stay in Chile the carnival was planned, but due to the earthquake it was cancelled.

It seems that the Colombians in Chile form a transnational community more and more every day. They are a group of people that is created as a result of the movement of people and show affinity with their host country and their homeland. Nevertheless, there is a lot of distrust. Some people are organized on the basis of solidarity, for example people who attend the church, but a lot of people say it is better not to know where the other Colombians is from. The initiatives of Colombians living in Chile have increased the last years; movements as MIRA and Corphuex have gained increased importance. MIRA has more and more members from the Chilean wing every year, especially via the church a lot of people join the movement. The people who attend church and participate in MIRA clearly form a diaspora network. Corphuex increased from 2 employees in one year to an organization with 11 employees and they work together with the main Chilean Ngo working in the field of migration. The main problem is finding enough sponsors for their activities. There are also initiatives on the rise. There is a group of Colombians who want to help their compatriots when they arrive in Chile. Furthermore, there are initiatives of Colombians to celebrate holidays together, there is a Colombian newspaper and there are Colombian websites. In sum, I think I can refer to the Colombian transnational community as a diaspora, but in accordance to the literature (Bouvier in Smith and Stares, 2007) also in Chile the diaspora is hesitant.

5.3 Transnational political engagements and conflict transformation

The interviews with different Colombians gave me an impression what the most important transnational engagements are. I investigated if initiatives exist of Colombians in Chile regarding conflict resolution. There are little of those initiatives and therefore I also decided to look into the possibilities they see for the future. Are they willing to participate in conflict resolution and how can they achieve that? In order to structure this question I will use (as described in chapter one) variables by Guarnizo et al (2002). Electoral politics is divided into "Membership in home country political party", "Gives money to home country political party" and "Takes part in home country electoral campaigns and rallies". Non electoral politics is divided into "Membership in a civic hometown association", "Gives money for community projects in home country" and "Membership in charity organization active in home country".

With regard to initiatives in the field of electoral politics, one party was mentioned most frequently: MIRA. They are one of the few Colombian political movements within Colombia that maintains ties with Colombians abroad. They are actively recruiting new members and encourage people to vote in the consulates abroad. See appendix 6 for their campaign folder. Further, they facilitate the activities in other countries, when people feel the urge to be part of this movement. Image 1 shows us the management system of MIRA. This scheme shows us that they want to change the dissatisfied community (there are conflicts about territory, population and other theme's) into a community with human dignity and quality of life. People are happy about their territories, the population and other theme's. They want to obtain this through communication and the creation of leaders who spread their ideas. They base their way of working on their values: justice, solidarity, integrity and deliberation.

The pastor of the church, Juan, is an active member of the MIRA. As the pastor of the church he tries to motivate people to join the movement. The Chilean wing of MIRA is recent. One of the things the wing does is to try to improve the quality of life for migrants. Further they try to promote the MIRA political party to gain more power in Colombia, because (according to them) it is the only way to lesson corruption and to stop the conflict. Juan also links MIRA with religion, according to him, when somebody has God inside him, he has a lot to offer to the world. People come to the church, because God has a plan with them. Juan links MIRA to religion and his church. This leads to a huge devotion from people who visited the church regularly. For example, Daniela who supports MIRA because of her religion and values. Maria is under the impression that MIRA promotes a religion as well:

“Mira wants two things: change in the Colombia and that people get to know God.”

In their political party program, MIRA does not mention religion at all. MIRA is supposed to be a political party accessible for people of all religions¹⁶. This devotion from the church leads to many new followers, nevertheless it also has negative side. It might impede people who are not religious joining (the Chilean wing of) MIRA, because of it's religious association.

¹⁶ <http://www.webmira.com/mira/>



Image1: Management system of MIRA (Sistema de gestion miraista).

During my stay in Chile there were elections in Colombia, for the senate, the chamber and the Andean Parliament. Most members of MIRA were trying to recruit members for MIRA. Marta, one of them, went out on the street to handout information and brochures in the *Plaza de Armas* (the central square in Santiago) and other Colombian meeting points. She is under the impression that a lot of Colombians in Chile support the cause. According to the Colombian consulate in Chile is the only political activity the MIRA movement.

There were little people active in the field of the non electoral politics. Only Susana gives a little amount of money every year to the *Asamblea Por la Paz*, because a good friend of hers works there. It seems that if people want to participate in a civic association, a community project or a charity organization they prefer to be active in Chile. As we have seen in the former paragraph, there is a number of Colombians who want to help improving the situation of Colombians in Chile.

From the interviews I extracted different reasons why Colombians participate in civic associations, community projects and charity organizations in order to help Colombians in Chile instead of people in Colombia. In the first place, people see the difference they can make for Colombians in Chile. They all are or have been in the same situation of arriving in a different country. They see Colombians trying to survive on a daily base. In the second place, they can contribute to the cause by participating, and it does not necessarily involves donating money. A lot of the people I spoke with had just enough money to survive and could not afford the sponsoring of charity. I guess that if they have spare money they give it to relatives in Colombia, instead of to charity. In the third place, the situation in Colombia is more difficult to change than the situation of Colombians in Chile. In chapter 4 people describe what they feel to be Colombia's major problem. The outcome shows that the situation in very complex. Compared to the situation in Colombia, the situation in Chile is transparent: there are few Colombians in Chile that need help and concrete action can be offered in order to improve their situation.

Even though there are not many initiatives to transform the conflict, I hoped there would be some valuable ideas about what can be done in the future. Only a few people came up with good ideas. I expected more people to have valuable ideas. For example Natalia who had a very ample description of the conflict in Colombia. Maybe the fact that she understands the complexity of the situation very well impedes her taking action and thinking about opportunities to help Colombia. She also stated that she does not want to be involved too much anymore, because it impedes her living her life in Chile. Especially now she has children she does not want to think too much about the hopeless situation in Colombia. Many people do not see any opportunities due to the fact that they are living in Chile and the situation in Colombia is very complex. Marta said:

“When living in Chile it is difficult to make a difference for Colombia. The only option is to behave well; show the values you have and help others whenever you can. Change the image people abroad have from Colombia, that is a way of helping Colombia. Colombia should more transparent, then the conflict would reduce.”

Apart from donating money to the *Asamblea por la Paz*, Susana also had some valuable thoughts on conflict transformation:

“ Colombians should become more united. They are separated, they have a war between themselves. They are selfish, like all Latinos. There should be more solidarity between the Colombians abroad. There is a lot of jealousy. In the first place she would help integrate Colombians in Chile, improve their living conditions and capacitate them. With their help, they could start to generate companies and facilitate education wherever they can: establish companies and import from and export to Colombia. Create opportunities for the people in Colombia and the Colombians in other places. Start an exchange of products and knowledge. What other countries could do in respect to Colombia, is that they could provide education in order to decrease the ignorance and the analphabetism in Colombia.”

Both people mention that the solidarity between Colombians should increase. According to Marta the image from Colombia should be changed in order to stop the conflict. I think it is a good start to promote values. This is also a suggestion Bercovitch (in Smith and Stares, 2007) makes. Susana has more concrete ideas by starting companies that can exchange products and knowledge and she wants to promote education. I think her starting point of helping Colombians in Chile is logical. Her ideas to start from there to start a network that could help Colombia is a very good idea.

Concluding there can be stated that Colombians in Chile participate at least in two out of three aspects of electoral politics (“Membership in home country political party” and “Gives money to home country political party”). I assume they also give some money to the home country political party. They might not give money directly to the party in Colombia, but to the wing of MIRA in Chile. In non electoral politics there are almost none activities. The most valuable opportunities for the future were to increase solidarity between Colombians and behave well so that you are an example for others. A more concrete idea is to start a network that can help Colombia y by exchanging products and knowledge and to promote education. As the outcomes of the valuable ideas were slightly disappointing, I had a few recommendations (based on my observations in Chile and the literature) of activities that they might use in the future:

- The Colombian diaspora in Chile can make it hard for the world to forget about the conflict. The Colombians in Chile can start by informing Chileans about the conflict and organize demonstrations in the streets (there have been demonstrations in the past).
- They might be able to mobilize political contacts in the host country in the future. This is only feasible if they grow and gain more political influence.
- They can get involved in problem-solving workshops. When they have more money they can train some Colombians in Chile and then send them to Colombia to organize these workshops.
- Another opportunity is the promotion of norms, values (what is already been done) and institutions that define a democratic polity.
- The promotion of ideas, such as the importance of a non-corrupt government.

5.4 What are the relations between integration and transnational political engagements and how do the other factors exert influence?

As this research is qualitative, it is difficult to measure the degree of integration and the relation with transnational political engagements as part of involvement in the homeland conflict. All factors

and their possible link with transnational political engagements will be discussed. Again keep in mind that the links I found are only representing the group of people I interviewed. I will discuss all factors, starting with integration, then the motivations to migrate, the date of arrival, the travel frequency and the perceptions on conflict.

Integration

I think there are different links between integration and involvement in political activism. By looking at the different categories of migrants and refugees I will try to explain the relations. QHR, high skilled refugees and refugees from the PSTC program have an advantage when it comes to *de jure* integration. High skilled people encounter less problems when looking for employment and refugees from the PSTC program receive support for one year from the Vicaría and government. However, there should be mentioned that people from the PSTC program are not allowed to become involved in their homeland conflict. They were saved from an unsafe situation in Colombia by the Chilean state and the state does not want them to make their place of residence known. The refugees in the resettlement program have a small advantage when it comes to *de jure* integration compared to regular refugees, but most of them struggle to survive.

For all categories I expected *de jure* integration to be unconditional in order to become involved in the homeland conflict. For most people this is true, but there are exceptions. Some people I met did not have a job yet and/or were living under poor conditions, but they were active in the electoral field of political engagements. All those people attended church on a regular basis. Most of them were low skilled migrants, but there was also one resettled refugee (low skilled) involved. Therefore I think that if somebody is struggling to survive, but belongs to a diaspora network he/she is more likely to participate in transnational political activities than somebody who does not belong to a network.

This leads us to *de facto* integration. Also *de facto* integration has a twofold link with involvement in the homeland conflict. It seems that people who go to church and are part of the diaspora network are more likely to become involved in transnational political engagements. Most of them have barely time to establish friendships and acquaintances with Chileans outside their work and the church, because most of them are at least five days a week present in church. There were no differences between the migrant and refugee groups. The ability to establish friendships has more to do with personal characteristics. Therefore it seems that people who form part of a diaspora network and have less social contacts with Chileans are more involved in the homeland conflict. However, there is also another angle. Refugees seem to have more difficulties to establish social contacts with Chileans than QHR or low skilled workers. QHR have the least trouble mixing with Chileans and at the same time they show the most activities in involvement in the homeland conflict. In my opinion the explanation is that QHR have the best integration and also feel most at home in the Chilean society: they have the time to become involved and are most at ease with their situation.

There is also the story of a QHR who is integrated very well (both *de jure* and *de facto*). After a few years in Chile she deliberately chose to leave the Colombian conflict in the past, because it impeded her integration into society. Now she is very well integrated and is not politically active anymore.

In short I think four conclusions can be drawn on the relation between integration and engagements in transnational political activities. In the first place *de jure* integration is important, because if people are struggling to survive they don't have time for involvement in the homeland conflict. In the second place the force/potency of a diaspora network cannot be underestimated. In some cases it is even more important than *de jure* integration for political activism. In the third place, *the facto* integration does not seem to have a major impact. QHR have least trouble mixing with the Chileans, but at the same time there are also a lot of other people involved in political activism while they mention not to have good relations with Chileans. In the fourth place some people deliberately tried to become less involved in the homeland conflict, because it impeded their (mainly *de facto*) integration into society.

The hypothesis I formulated in chapter one ("A high degree of integration into the Chilean host society will have a positive influence on the involvement in transnational political activities of Colombian migrants and refugees") is partly true. For some people a high degree of integration means having the opportunities to become politically engaged. For others a high degree of involvement in the homeland conflict impedes good integration.

Perceptions on conflict

This factor has a huge impact on the willingness to participate in involvement in the homeland conflict. In chapter 4 we have seen that the Colombian conflict is perceived as complex. None of the Colombians interviewed mentioned the conflict to be the only problem. The FARC is seen as the major problem, but other factors as unemployment, insecurity, drug trafficking, violence and politics are perceived to be important factors as well. It seems that the non-transparent nature of the conflict and its complexity hinders the involvement in the homeland conflict severely. In the former paragraph we have seen that a lot of people mention this to be an important reason not to act, because they do not know what they can do. Not to become involved, simply because they do not know how to become involved. Not all people who think the conflict is (very) complex let it stop them. One woman gives money to an NGO that tries to create a situation of peace in Colombia and a lot of people are a member of MIRA. MIRA is the biggest initiative that is involved in transnational political engagements to which people unite themselves in large numbers. The main reason a lot of people unite themselves to MIRA is that the movement is being promoted in church, but I think that is not the only reason. As we have seen in image 1 they describe the problems in Colombia in a very simple way: the needs of the community are unmet, because of a conflict over territory, population and other themes. By capacitating social leaders and spreading *Miraísmo*, human dignity will be regained and the quality of life will improve. I think it is one of their strengths they describe all the problems as something that *can* be changed and they set concrete goals what activates people to take action.

Motivations to migrate

For the majority of this group of Colombians the main reason to emigrate from Colombia is the violence, insecurity and conflict. The group of low skilled workers was the only group to mention the lack of economic perspectives in Colombia most often. Nevertheless they also mention the conflict to be part of the reasons to leave. This finding corresponds with the literature, namely that the Colombian exodus is in great part conflict generated (Bouvier in Smith and Stares, 2007). A conclusion regarding the pull factors to come to Chile, is that for the refugees the PSTC program and

the resettlement program of the UN played an important role. More than half of them came to Chile through these programs. This is not a good reflection of reality; the majority of the refugees in Chile are “regular” refugees. The migrants were drawn to Chile because of economic opportunities and social relations.

That violence, insecurity and conflict was the main reason to leave has implications for political engagements. If people leave Colombia because of insecurity and violence (instead of for example the lack of employment opportunities) their stay in Chile will probably not be temporary. This will most likely affect their integration process: if people stay for a long time they will put more efforts in integrating into the host society. One of my findings is that in the migrant group the QHR are more involved in transnational political engagements than the low skilled migrants are. For the refugee groups there were no noteworthy differences: the motivations to depart from Colombia were mainly conflict related as expected.

Date of arrival

The date of arrival is the starting point of a new life in a new country, also integration starts here. For the degree of integration the date of arrival is important. At the end of 2005 more and more Colombians started to arrive. The number of refugees in Chile increased, but the capacity and resources of Ngo’s like the Vicaría have not increased equally. For the integration of refugees this meant they received less assistance. For the Colombian community this also had implications. Not everybody knew each other anymore and the distrust amongst the Colombians increased.

The implications for involvement in the homeland conflict are that the refugees who arrived after 2005 had more trouble to be able to survive. For the Colombian community this increased distrust means a weaker base for common action. On the other hand, the Colombian community has increased and there are a lot more people who can be(come) committed to the same cause.

There is also another relation visible between the date of arrival and the involvement in political transnational engagements. Some of the people I spoke with had been in the country for more than 6 years. A few of them indicated that in the beginning they had been involved in the homeland conflict, but that after a few years they decided to focus on integration in Chile. For others their period in Chile only confirmed their believes that they should act.

Travel frequency

Of all factors this factors is least discussed in all preceding chapters. The reason why is that in all interviews only two people had been in the opportunity to return to Colombia. Juan, who is a QHR and the pastor of the church has gone back twice, for work related reasons. José, also a QHR returned once to visit his mother, other family and friends. Especially in the case of José his return to Colombia did not seem to have a huge impact on the willingness to become more politically active. He is an active member in the church and also supports MIRA, but there is no link between his return to Colombia and his activities.

6. Conclusions and recommendations

There are different factors that might influence transnational political engagements. When setting up the research I assumed that the factor “integration” would be very important and have a large impact on political activity. During the process of writing this dissertation I discovered that other factors cannot be left out of the analysis. The other factors that were investigated are: “The perceptions of conflict”, “Motivations to migrate”, “Travel frequency” and “Date of arrival”. All the factors will be addressed discussing the different sub-questions. The answers to the sub-questions are discussed and contribute to the understanding of the relationship between integration, the other factors and transnational political engagements of the Colombian community in Chile¹⁷.

The Colombian community in Chile is divided into different groups: migrants and refugees. The refugees were sub-divided into: regular refugees, refugees participating in the Program of Temporary Exit of Colombians (PSTC) and resettled migrants. The migrants were divided on basis of their education: low skilled workers and Qualified Human Resources (QHR). During the research I discovered that the division of refugees into groups might be relevant for the start of their integration process, but for the complete analysis the division should have been different. The refugee group should have been divided into the same categories as the migrants; low and high skilled workers. The involvement in the different refugee programs has influence on the first period of residence in Chile. However, for the other factors this division was less relevant. The degree of education seems to have more influence on the integration process, the perceptions people have of the conflict and the engagements in transnational political activities. Where possible I will also try to make the distinction between high and low skilled refugees.

Integration

Integration was assumed to play a major role in the involvement in the homeland conflict. The hypothesis (“A high degree of integration into the Chilean host society will have a positive influence on the involvement in transnational political activities of Colombian migrants and refugees”) is partly true. For some people a high degree of integration means having the opportunities to become politically engaged. For others a high degree of involvement in the homeland conflict impedes good integration. I will explain this through discussing the main conclusions on *de jure* and *de facto* integration and the link with integration and transnational political engagements.

De Jure integration

In the first place it is easier for high skilled people (refugees and migrants) to find employment than for low skilled migrants and refugees. This has consequences for their whole integration process: it is easier to find a place to live that meets their wishes, they have a higher living conditions, they can provide their children with good education and once their necessities of life are fulfilled they can focus on cultural orientation. The third conclusion regards employment. Especially people without a

¹⁷ The conclusions drawn only reflect the opinion of the Colombians I interviewed in Chile and no generalizations can be made.

documented status are vulnerable; they have little rights and when they find a job it often underpaid and without a contract. People without a legal status are mainly low skilled workers or people that applied for the status of refugee but who are still in the procedure. Concurring with the findings of Aranda & Morande (2007) low skilled workers are the most vulnerable group when it comes to the violation of their rights. In the fourth place in Chile contacts are very important in finding a place to live and employment. QHR seem to have better networks and find work and housing easier.

The fifth conclusion is that the date of arrival is important for the integration process. People who arrived after 2005 as a refugee received less assistance. In 2005 more and more Colombians started to arrive. Those who arrived after they year 2005, have more trouble finding a house and work. This increased number of Colombians also led to an increased distrust between them. The date of arrival is also important, because it indicates how long people have been in Chile. Some people indicated that in the beginning they had been involved in the homeland conflict, but that after a few years they decided to focus on integration in Chile. For others it was the other way around: their period in Chile only confirmed their believes that they should act. The sixth conclusion is that low skilled migrants and low skilled refugees (except for the refugees in the PSTC program who receive assistance for a year) have less income and are poorer than the QHR and well skilled refugees. The seventh conclusion is that travel frequency does not seem to have a huge impact on the willingness to become more politically active.

I think there are different links between integration and involvement in political activism. QHR, high skilled refugees and refugees from the PSTC program have an advantage when it comes to *de jure* integration. The refugees in the resettlement program have a small advantage when it comes to *de jure* integration compared to regular refugees, but most of them still struggle to survive. I expected *de jure* integration to be unconditional in order to become involved in the homeland conflict. For most people this is true, but there are exceptions. Some people I met did not have a job yet and/or were living under poor conditions, but they were active in the electoral field of political engagements. All those people attended The Church of God, Ministry of Jesus Christ International (*Iglesia de Días, Ministerial de Jesucristo Internacional*) on a regular basis¹⁸. Most of them were low skilled migrants, but there was also one resettled refugees (low skilled) involved. Therefore I think that if somebody is struggling to survive, but belongs to a diaspora network he/she is more likely to participate in transnational political activities than somebody who does not belong to a network.

Two main conclusions on the relation between *de jure* integration and involvement in transnational political activities can be drawn. In the first place, *de jure* integration is important for most people, because if people are struggling to survive they don't have time for involvement in the homeland conflict. In the second place the force/potency of a diaspora network cannot be underestimated. In some cases it is even more important than *de jure* integration for political activism.

De Facto integration

In the first place most Colombians agree about the fact that the Chilean culture is different from the Colombian culture. Chileans are more distant and introvert and it is difficult to establish friendships with Chileans, especially in the beginning. After a few years, most of them seem to have found their

¹⁸ "The church" always refers to this church

place in the Chilean society. In the second place refugees seem to have more difficulties to establish social contacts with Chileans than QHR or low skilled workers. QHR have the least trouble mixing with Chileans. The third conclusion regards language. Although Chileans and Colombians both speak Spanish, there are a lot of differences in pronunciation and vocabulary. Conclusion number 4 is that most Colombians do not feel discriminated because they are Colombian. Only some low skilled migrants and low skilled refugees had the feeling that they had been discriminated, but this rarely happened openly.

Also *de facto* integration has a twofold link with involvement in the homeland conflict. It seems that people who go to church and are part of the diaspora network are more likely to become involved in transnational political engagements. Most of them have barely time to establish friendships and acquaintances with Chileans outside their work and the church, because most of them are at least five days a week present in church. There were no differences between the migrant and refugee groups. The ability to establish friendships has more to do with personal characteristics. Therefore it seems that people who form part of a diaspora network and have less social contacts with Chileans are more involved in the homeland conflict. However, there is also another angle. Refugees seem to have more difficulties to establish social contacts with Chileans than QHR or low skilled workers. QHR have the least trouble mixing with Chileans and at the same time they show the most activities in involvement in the homeland conflict. In my opinion the explanation is that QHR have the best integration and also feel most at home in the Chilean society: they have the time to become involved and are most at ease with their situation.

Two main conclusions on the relation between *de facto* integration and involvement in transnational political activities can be drawn. *The facto* integration in Chile does not seem to have a major impact. QHR have least trouble mixing with the Chileans, but at the same time there are also a lot of other people involved in political activism while they mention not to have good relations with Chileans. In the second place some people deliberately tried to become less involved in the homeland conflict, because it impeded their (mainly *de facto*) integration into society.

The perceptions of conflict

Colombians perceive the conflict, violence and other problems in their homeland to be complex. Non of the interviewees perceive the conflict to be the only problem. Guerrilla is seen as the major problem by most, but other factors as unemployment, insecurity, drug trafficking, violence and politics are perceived to be important factors as well. It seems that this complexity hinders their involvement in the homeland conflict severely. Interviewees mention this to be an important reason not to become involved, simply because they do not know how to become involved and how to make a difference. However, fortunately not all people let the complexity of the conflict stop them. There are some engagements in the transnational political field as we will see in the subsection “transnational political engagements”.

Motivations to migrate

For the majority of the Colombians the main reason to emigrate from Colombia was the violence, insecurity and the conflict. Other factors as the lack of economic perspectives in Colombia, relations and migratory chains and other reasons play an important role as well, but the violence, insecurity and conflict formed the major incentive to depart. This finding correspond with the literature,

namely that the Colombian exodus is in great part conflict generated (Bouvier in Smith and Stares, 2007). Only the group of low skilled workers mentioned the lack of economic perspectives in Colombia most frequently to be the reason to depart. This is not surprising as they are the group that encounter most trouble finding employment in Colombia. Nevertheless they also mention the conflict related factors to play an important role. In the migrant group the low skilled migrants are less involved in transnational political engagements than the QHR are. The work related motivations to migrate might have an influence on their engagements in the homeland conflict, but other factors are important as well.

That violence, insecurity and conflict was the main reason to leave has implications for political engagements. If people leave Colombia because of insecurity and violence (instead of for example the lack of employment opportunities) their stay in Chile will probably not be temporary, because if the situation does not improve they cannot return. This will most likely affect their integration process: if people stay for a long time they will put more efforts in integrating into the host society. That is probably why low skilled migrants have are less involved in the homeland conflict, because they have more hope that they can return one day.

It was surprising that also for QHR conflict related reasons were the major motive to depart. This has implications for their integration process and the way their participation in transnational engagements. If the security situation does not improve and the conflict is not resolved the possibility that they can return to Colombia is not to be expected. This can be explained by the fact that the Colombian exodus is mainly conflict driven, also for higher educated people with good employment opportunities. The motivations to migrate for the refugees were mainly conflict related as expected. There do not seem to be outstanding differences between the refugee groups when it comes to motivations to migrate and the link with engagement in the homeland conflict.

A hesitant Colombian diaspora

The Colombian community in Chile is a group of people that is created as a the result of the movement of people and that shows affinity with their host country and their homeland: features of a diaspora. Nevertheless, there is a lot of distrust. The number of Colombians living in Chile have increased the last years; movements as the Independent Movement of Absolute Renovation (MIRA) and Corphuex have gained increased importance. MIRA has more and more Chilean members every year, especially via the church a lot of people join the movement. Despite the distrust, it seems that they form a transnational community more and more every day. In sum, I think I can refer to the Colombian transnational community as a diaspora, but in accordance to the literature (Bouvier in Smith and Stares, 2007) also in Chile the diaspora is hesitant.

Transnational political engagements and opportunities

The transnational political engagements of the Colombian community can be divided into two fields: electoral and non-electoral politics. In the field of electoral politics were number of activities. The most important activities take place within MIRA. This political and social movement from Colombia strives for an honest and effective distribution of power. They try to form consensus in order to live worthily and to assure that all members of society achieve their life projects. They promote active citizenship through a democratic and deliberative political culture. They want to lessen corruption and to abolish the mandatory military service. MIRA has the mission to defund *Miraísmo*: a way of

understanding reality and acting correctly. (MIRA, 2010). The Chilean wing of MIRA was founded recently. Almost all people who visited church on a regular basis participate in this movement. One of the things the wing does is to try to improve the quality of life for migrants. Further they try to promote the MIRA political party to gain more power in Colombia, because (according to them) it is the only way to lesson corruption and to stop the conflict and they recruited new members for the upcoming elections. Juan also links MIRA with religion, according to him, when somebody has God inside him, he has a lot to offer to the world. This devotion from the church leads to many new followers, nevertheless it also has negative side. It might impede people who are not religious joining (the Chilean wing of) MIRA, because of it's religious association.

There are other initiatives on the rise from members of MIRA in the field of non-electoral politics. They want to establish a new organization that helps Colombians who arrive in Chile with housing, employment, etc. Their motivations to start a Ngo are that many Colombians arrive in Chile without the most essential possessions, warm clothes, a place to stay and finally employment. The existing Ngo's (*El Hogar de Cristo* and the *Vicaría*) do not have enough means to offer shelter to all refugees and migrants that arrive in Santiago. However, they lack the means; they do not have the money, nor the permit, or the legal entity to start an Ngo. Hopefully in the future they will be able to accomplish their ideas.

Many people indicated that for them it would be easier to help the Colombians in Chile than to try to change the homeland conflict. There are different reasons for this. In the first place see they Colombians struggle to survive on a daily basis. They all have been in a similar position. In the second place they can contribute to the solution of the problem in a way that does not involve money. In the third place it is easier to make a difference for the Colombians in Chile than to change the homeland conflict.

In non electoral politics there are almost none activities, besides one woman that donates a small amount of money to a Ngo that tries to stop the conflict. Concluding there can be stated that Colombians in Chile participate at least in two out of three aspects of electoral politics ("Membership in home country political party" and "Gives money to home country political party"). Even though there are not many initiatives to transform the conflict, I hoped there would be some valuable ideas about what can be done in the future. Only a few people came up with good ideas. The most valuable opportunities for the future were to increase solidarity between Colombians and to demonstrate good behaviour as an example. A more concrete idea is to start a network that can help Colombia y by exchanging products and knowledge and to promote education. As there were few valuable ideas, I have made a few recommendations based on my observations in Chile and the literature:

- The Colombian diaspora in Chile can make it hard for the world to forget about the conflict. The Colombians in Chile can start by informing Chileans about the conflict and organize demonstrations in the streets (in the past there have been some demonstrations).
- They might be able to mobilize political contacts in the host country in the future. This is only feasible if they grow and gain more political influence.
- They can become involved in problem-solving workshops. When they have more money they can train people in Chile and then send them to Colombia to organize these workshops.

- Another opportunity is the promotion of norms, values (what is already been done) and institutions that define a democratic polity.
- The promotion of ideas, such as the importance of a non-corrupt government.

The implications for the relation between integration and transnational political engagements

Integration has an important influence on the involvement in transnational political engagements, both positively and negatively. It is not the only important factor. The perceptions on conflict also have a noteworthy influence on the engagements. As the Colombian conflict is perceived as complex, few people carry out concrete activities. The date of arrival also has a direct link to the involvement, as do the motivations to migrate. Only the travel frequency does not seem to influence the link between integration and involvement in the homeland conflict.

Limitations

There were some limitations that influenced the outcomes of this investigation. The period of data collection in Santiago de Chile was too short. It took me longer than expected to contact the right people and to gain their confidence. That fact that most of my interviewees attended the church is another limitation. Of all people I spoke with most people were religious and if they were politically active most of them were stimulated from within the church and their religious beliefs. Furthermore, during my stay in Chile there was a massive earthquake of 8.8 on the scale of Richter, which happened during my last month in Santiago. This had consequences for my investigation as well; at least 50% of the interviews I had planned were cancelled. Next, it would have been better if I would not have focused only on migration as factor that influences transnational political engagements. Then I would have been able to develop a more logical structure for the thesis.

7. Literature

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