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Allende's Chile: A Multiplicity of Realities

Peter Wesley Hall

University of Redlands

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ALLENDE'S CHILE:  
A MULTIPLICITY OF REALITIES

A thesis presented by

Peter Wesley Hall

in partial fulfillment of the  
requirements of the Proudian  
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ALLENDE'S CHILE:
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By
Peter Hall
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Individual accounts, interpretations, and critiques of a situation consistently portray a "reality" documented by objective, factual evidence. Seldom, however, does such a presentation betray an awareness that facts themselves arise out of a most subjective process of gathering, selecting, and weighting of but a tiny proportion of available information. What appears to be uncontestable reality, objectively documented, is thus a subjectively interpreted reality supported by very personally perceived facts. Perhaps such a statement appears more fitting as the central contention in a conclusion rather than an opening statement. However, the original aim of my research was altered and rechanneled to such a degree that a preliminary explanation is necessary. I originally set out to do a case study of an internationally attention-attracting event: the election of Salvador Allende as President of Chile and his subsequent downfall three years later. While living and studying in France during the academic year 1975-76 and again in 1978, I observed considerable speculation about the significance of the world's first democratically elected marxist chief-of-state in the most "Europeanized" nation of Latin America. Attempts to draw inspirational parallels for French and Italian marxist parties abounded. Not surprisingly, Allende's overthrow in September, 1973 evoked immediate responses throughout Europe. Orthodox marxists victoriously, if grimly, warned
against the fallacy of the "peaceful road to socialism" and preached inevitable revolution as the only way. Moderate socialists' hopes for a more palatable, less violent road to socialism plummeted overnight. Back home in the United States I discovered the significance of Allende's accession to, and fall from, power increasing as speculation and debate skyrocketed about alleged and documented U. S. intervention, both public and private, in Chile. I thus embarked on a detailed study of Chile during the Allende years with the expressed goal of better understanding the events which led to Allende's downfall.

At the outset of this study, I discovered that a plethora of socio-political literature had already been written both in the United States and Europe. Faced with an abundance of very diverse, even contradictory, material describing, analyzing, and judging the Allende experience, I came to the realization that yet another account based on second-hand sources would be of minimal value. Amidst the confusion, uncertainty, and disagreement over why Allende failed and the condition of Chile under the Unidad Popular (UP) government, I found qualitative discrepancies in different writers' assumptions of certain "objective realities" proven by certain documented "facts." Consequently, the process of my research directed me to reflect further about the perceptual frameworks within which various writers have studied, analyzed, and critiqued Allende's Chile. Such reflection propelled me into restructuring my
endeavor from solely analyzing Chile under Allende to analyzing the analyses.

Recalling the case for a perceptual approach to international relations as outlined in a widely used textbook, I sought to establish a theoretical base in the sociology of knowledge as explored and defined in Peter L. Berger's and Thomas Luckmann's *The Social Construction of Reality*. Subtitled *A Treatise in the Sociology of Knowledge*, Berger's and Luckmann's book describes the relationship between structural realities which appear as objective facticities independent of one's desires and perceptions, and the human process of constructing and defining these realities. The dialectical relationship between social reality and, in Berger's and Luckmann's words, "the human enterprise of constructing reality" is the focus of the book. The reference to such a dialectic can be traced back to Marx, but Berger and Luckmann break new ground in recognizing the need for incorporating the dialectical process in a conceptual framework which bears upon the theoretical orientation of the scientist or analyst. Berger and Luckmann redefine the sociology of knowledge and the role of the empirical sociologist in order to explore the full significance of a systematic account of how "facts" and "realities" are accepted within society as such and thereby assimilated into a social body of knowledge. This social body of knowledge becomes objectified and institutionalized, creating "structural realities" which, in turn, are inter-
nalized and legitimized. "Reality" acquires an independent existence even though it is the product of human definition and construction.2

Berger's and Luckmann's treatise in the sociology of knowledge elucidates the process of reality-construction and provides concepts with which to view Chilean society as an amalgamation of many differently perceived realities. Since no single objective reality was widely perceived during the tumultuous Allende period of socio-political upheaval, an inevitable cloud hovers over that period. Hence, it should not be too surprising that the multitude of analysts and experts who have written about Allende often hold quite divergent opinions about what was and what was not happening in Chile under Allende.

II. Recognition of a Multiplicity of Realities

1. Basis of International Relations Theory. A beginning student in international relations cannot go far before recognizing that nations or societies see things in often fundamentally different ways. Rosen and Jones, in their introductory text, explain the necessity for a perceptual approach to understanding relations between nations. National societies maintain distinct perceptual systems which uncover and accept different fundamental facts supporting different realities; these realities define the parameters within
which international events are perceived and national actions are justified. Perceptual systems, encompassing a set of values, beliefs, and cognitions, are established and modified primarily according to incoming cognitions or "facts." One easily recognizes the subjective, personal nature of values and beliefs but is less ready to admit the subjectivity of facts themselves. However, cognitions or facts do not necessarily represent autonomous realities, independent of the perceiver. Facts are selected from an infinite array of potentially available information, are given meaning through interpretation, and, finally, are ordered in their relative importance to other facts. Only after this very subjective human process of selection, interpretation, and evaluation do facts become endowed with an objective, i.e., an independent, status of their own. Realities substantiated by objective facticities actually reflect different perceptual systems engaged in defining and acquiring acceptable bodies of knowledge, a knowledge of "reality." David Easton himself defines a fact as "...but a peculiar ordering of reality according to a theoretic interest."³ Thus, an introduction to international relations includes the defining of reality as the product of social and theoretical perception; implied is the existence of a multiplicity of realities rather than one absolute and objective reality.

2. Chile's Social Diversity. Allende's Chile presents an excellent case study in the existence of a multiplicity of perceived realities. Just as perceptual processes define
the core of international relations, so too do they charac-
terize intra-national relations, relations between different
societal groups.

Chilean society historically has been fragmented into
numerous socio-economic groups. Understanding the multi-
plicity of realities perceived by Chileans themselves during
Allende's socio-political "experiment" requires an under-
standing of the genuine diversity of Chilean society; some
accounts of Allende's Chile written by experts from northern
hemisphere industrialized nations lead one to wonder if a
true appreciation for the degree of fragmentation common to
most Third World societies exists. The social diversity
found in a modern, industrialized nation should not be
equated with social fragmentation characterizing a less
developed country (LDC). Especially critical to guard against
while viewing Chile is the assumed existence of a "broad,
middle class" on the fringes of which are miscellaneous
groups. For many North Americans and Europeans the often
used term "middle class" implies the majority or average
class. In Chile, a careful look into the composition of
society reveals the co-existence of several quite distinct
population groups, none of which can claim to represent the
majority, average, or centrist class. Indeed, a historical
trend towards greater fragmentation and polarization has
characterized Chile and, for this reason, any attempt to
uncover one "objective reality" relevant to all of Chilean
society is bound to fall prey to oversimplification.
Chile's often interrelated landed oligarchy and urban bourgeoisie form the socio-political and economic elite, a status seldom shared so all-inclusively by even the wealthy upper echelons of the industrialized capitalist nations. At the time of Allende's accession to power, this elite probably shared the most unified "class consciousness" within Chile. Though the traditional rural oligarchy owes considerable economic and political power to its extensive landholdings, much of the urban bourgeoisie's power directly emerges from its close ties and involvement with the powerful foreign sectors of Chile's economy. Such sectors have included the foreign monopolies in copper, iron, nitrates, electricity, and telecommunications. Often working for foreign firms as national managers of multinational corporate branches, and drawing a variety of tangible and intangible benefits from close contact with the "center" of the world's international capitalist system, the urban bourgeoisie perceives its economic self-interest to lie with the broader interests of the foreign sectors.

Chile's middle class, a social grouping alluded to by many analysts despite the aforementioned danger of employing such a connotative term, includes lawyers, physicians, and other professionals, along with small business owners and white collar workers. The middle class shares some similarity in economic well-being and social prestige but lacks a class consciousness because of competing hopes and fears. For the class, as a whole, its long-term economic and political interests lie in genuine national economic development.
rather than in continued maintenance of the dependent economic status which primarily benefits the foreign sector and national elite tied to the foreign sector. Yet, fear of losing ground to a strengthened proletariat and peasant base in the event of a radical restructuring of the political economy, coupled with the hope for economic advancement within the present system renders the middle class vulnerable to alternating appeals from elites above for allegiance to the status quo, and from the groups below for radical change. Renato Sandri describes the middle class "fluctuating between the mirage of the upper classes and the uncertainty of their own real condition."  

Moving downward, Chile's proletariat knows a low standard of living, harbors little hope of attaining real economic gains in the current political-economic structure, and is confronted with the possibility of losing employment or finding subsistence-level wages so undermined by inflation that it risks joining the poverty-stricken unemployed urban slumdwellers and rural poor. Preceding and during Allende's presidency, however, the working class experienced a dynamic, rising class consciousness with seemingly unlimited potential. Popular mobilizations demanding and sometimes effecting real structural change in Chile's economic institutions increased significantly. Yet even this group experienced some fragmentation between those workers who received higher wages by working in the economy's foreign sector and those who did not. Class division also appeared between those workers
who sought immediate economic gains, considering any gains rightfully theirs, and workers who realized the necessity of foregoing immediate benefits, rightfully theirs or not, to achieve more permanent, long-term gains associated with the establishment of new political and economic institutions.

Chile's poorest and probably largest social sector includes urban slumdwellers, peasants, and Indians. This broad group lives in the worst poverty, facing the task of daily survival, receiving, and expecting few, if any, benefits from the national political and economic institutions. Unlike Chile's elite and middle class, this mass of rural and urban poor has nothing to lose and most to gain by dramatic change; yet, the scattered and isolated poor lack much hope, vision, or common consciousness of the possibility for radical transformation of Chilean society. "Stability" for this large sector of the population means little more than the continuation of a system which exploits, oppresses, and tolerates great suffering.

In summary, far from containing a relatively homogeneous population, Chilean society encompasses several distinctly dissimilar and unequal population groups. Each of these groups necessarily perceives the social reality as quite different. Each group forms a "sub-society" and is exposed to very different living and learning situations, different certainties and challenges, different struggles and hopes. Individuals within these sub-societies come to know different "things" as certain and as having a real,
tangible existence. For one group, a high consumption lifestyle is taken for granted. For another group, hunger or unemployment is a daily reality, a fact of life. Within these respective population groups both extremes are seldom perceived as extremes. Rather, different standards of living and different experiences repeatedly familiar from day-to-day become accepted as actual, independent conditions of life, as "facts." Being in or under control of societal institutions, exploiter or exploited, is such a fact. These facts yield very different expectations and aspirations. The composite body of these perceived facts and feelings within one population group forms a social body of knowledge which in turn determines an external, "objective" reality. Each social sector thus perceives a unique social reality.

However, only certain perceived realities are successfully projected as "national" realities—as realities relevant for the entire society. The proletariat and especially the marginal groups of peasants, Indians, and urban poor have been repressed consistently and powerfully, able to contribute little to the national perception of social reality. With the electoral shift from the far right to an increasingly moderate and progressive center, and culminating in Allende's victory of the moderate left, many more of the various groups within Chilean society began playing a more active role in the society. No longer could the small wealthy elite project their own limited notion of reality as the
only national social reality. The diversity of Chilean society unfolded as socio-political upheaval, climaxing under Allende, released hitherto repressed alternative interpretations of social reality, each coinciding with a different set of perceived facts.

III. Social Constructions of Reality

1. Treatise in the Sociology of Knowledge. At this point, Berger's and Luckmann's treatise in the sociology of knowledge adds invaluable insight into the process of the "social construction of reality." How do societies come to accept and "know" particular realities? This is the underlying question of their treatise; consideration of this question will hopefully shed new light on why members of a society entertain sometimes radically different notions of objective reality.

Berger and Luckmann discuss in the central part of their treatise the concepts of "objectivation," "institutionalization," and "legitimation" which elucidate the process by which subjective human activity results in the formation of independent objective realities. This process defines the relationship between social reality or structural realities and the human activity which constructs that reality. Examination of this relationship will provide a more subtle appreciation for the notion of "reality." More particularly, the reason for such a multiplicity of perceived realities,
both by groups and individuals within Chilean society and by analysts looking in upon Chilean society, will become clearer.

a. **Objectivation.** "Objectivation" of human activity creates the foundation for knowledge in everyday life upon which a social construction of reality takes place. Human activity is the expression of subjective meaning in one's life. At the same time, the product or result of an individual's or group's activity becomes independent or externalized and attains a certain objectivity. Objectivation is then the objectifying of subjective meanings. On a personal level, the activity of communicating very private and inner thoughts leads to the creation of an external language. Language becomes a very physical, objective structure independent of any one individual. On a societal level, social groups engage in political activity reflecting their own social experiences; in the process, that political activity becomes objectified in the form of political institutions and ideas which are transformed into controlling mechanisms over societal groups. Thus, internally held meanings and perceptions become externalized and objectified, creating language on one level and political institutions on another.

"Knowledge" is the familiarity one achieves with the body of objectified material in a society. The ongoing process of objectivation creates a social body or "stock" of knowledge, to use Berger's and Luckmann's term. The "social stock of knowledge" orders, restricts, and simplifies the vast amount of potentially available information in one's environment. The social stock of knowledge provides
a common link with others' subjective meanings, permits the location of oneself or of one's group within society, and enables more efficient human activity in the form of everyday routines. Routines narrow the range of daily decisions which have to be made; consideration of alternative methods of performing an activity is minimized. Objectification leads not only to the creation of a social stock of knowledge but also to the creation of the social order itself. The social order arises out of that portion of human activity which becomes subject to habitualization. Habitualized activity makes possible the incorporation of routines into the social body of knowledge.

Briefly, the sum of each individual's and group's objectifying activities results in the creation of a social stock of knowledge. Repeated events, situations, and living experiences accumulate in a person's memory, gradually coming to be perceived as certainties or facts existing independently of that person; those facts which confront many people similarly within a society become objectified into that society's social body of knowledge. From this social body of knowledge emerges a picture of reality perceived commonly by a group of people and which sets the context for all further human activity and thought in that society.

Finally, within this common body of knowledge, reality for an individual or group is differentiated by degrees of familiarity. The whole of the social body of knowledge is not familiar to any one individual or group. Knowledge is
socially distributed. A particular social distribution of knowledge determines various individual and group perceptions of everyday reality.

b. **Institutionalization.** "Institutionalization" is the result of habitualized activity. Social institutions arise out of historically created social bodies of knowledge and are the products of "reciprocal typification of habitualized actions" by different groups or individuals within a society. What was first subjectively perceived by individuals within a social group has now become tangible and independent of the individual. Ideally, a group's social structure embodies the reality confronting that group and thus is relevant and corresponds to the needs of those within the group. In short, social institutions represent the culmination of a historical social construction of reality which confronts the individual as an objective and externally imposed reality.

c. **Legitimation.** Institutions acquire and retain their power of control primarily through a process of legitimation by which individuals come to perceive institutions not as creations of subjectively expressed human activity, but as historical realities existing independently. Institutions have to be understood in their historical context. Once they have passed down through several successive generations they no longer reflect directly the human activities of the present society and may even appear as wholly alien and unrelated to the lives of the society's members. Survival of the institutions depends upon an on-going process of
legitimation. The social reality as embodied in institutions needs to be explained and justified.

The process of explaining and justifying institutions rests upon the transmission of certain values and knowledge. Legitimation is most visibly and forcibly pursued through outright political and economic coercion of a society by those presiding over that society's institutions. However, a much more common, continuous, and powerful process of legitimation occurs less overtly. The problem of legitimation confronts the individual rather than the institution itself.

In modern society, the division of labor is responsible for the growth of specialized activities. Specialization entails the need for "role-specific" knowledge which represents but one fragment of the social body of knowledge. Specialization requires a social distribution of knowledge. Individuals and individual groups thus operate within sub-universes of the greater body of social knowledge which is responsible for the social construction of reality. The problem for these individuals and groups is to integrate meaningfully their own fragmented social experience and knowledge into the whole of the social body of experience and knowledge. Legitimation of social institutions actually becomes in this context a legitimating of one's own limited subjective experience to correlate that experience with one's perception of the whole society. The individual feels compelled to legitimate his own experience in relation to the society-at-large because of his own perception of the
massive objectivity of that society. The burden of legitimation consequently shifts to individuals and groups within a society, ironically solving the problem of legitimation for the social institutions themselves.\textsuperscript{12}

The full circle of Berger's and Luckmann's dialectical relationship between the social reality and the human enterprise of constructing that reality is now evident. The need for individuals and groups within societies to legitimize objective reality coexists with their need to defend their own subjective perception of reality based upon limited knowledge acquired in everyday activity. These subjective perceptions become externalized as they are expressed through daily activity. The dialectical process recommences: externalization brings forth objectivation and institutionalization which necessitates internalization and legitimation.

2. Multiple Realities, Competing Realities. Berger's and Luckmann's delineation of the process of reality construction can be extended to provide new insight into multiply perceived realities. From their account of an objectified, institutionalized, and legitimized reality arising out of a society's single social body of knowledge emerges a clearer understanding of similar processes within a genuinely fragmented society where distinct social bodies of knowledge coexist. Chilean society, in particular, constitutes several social sectors, each with its own common body of knowledge and unique perception of an objective
reality. Each social sector acquires a corresponding social body of knowledge—knowledge about daily life common to all within the sector. The social body of knowledge is based upon a group's acquired set of historical facts which corporately constitute an objective reality unique to that group. This objective reality dialectically reflects the living experiences of the group while shaping its subsequent expectations, aspirations, and perceived limits of action.

In a society as fragmented as Chile's, the existence of multiply perceived realities reflects the actual historical diversity of the population. No singular reality confronts all social sectors similarly and simultaneously. It thus becomes more useful to ask not which perceived reality is indeed the imagined "objective reality" for the society as a whole, but what is objective reality for whom? However, for the outsider who looks in upon a society and even to many insiders, there often appears to be one overriding objective reality because one social sector's perceived reality dominates. The reward for the dominating reality is institutionalization and legitimation at the national level: it becomes accepted as the legitimate national reality. New questions arise. Which social sector, which class, which population group wields the power to propagate its version of reality defined in its common body of knowledge at the national or societal level? What combination of social, political, and economic power is necessary? How crucial is this power? A response to the first question is not too difficult when power within a society is concentrated
and some form of absolute government exists. It is less easy to respond to the first question when power does not clearly reside in the hands of one group, as in the case of Allende's Chile, even though Chile historically had known a relatively consistent concentration of power in the hands of one segment of society. A response to the second question would be the envy of all analysts and power-seekers the world around, and though worthy of creative consideration, it does not practically lie within the scope of this paper. Finally, how crucial is the power to propagate a particular version of perceived reality at the societal level?

A response to this last question becomes apparent after recognizing the significance of the legitimating process for an institutionalized reality. All social sectors within a society become controlled and tangibly affected by that society's institutions, albeit to varying degrees. The sheer force of these institutions should not be underestimated. Responsive or not to the daily realities which confront the population sectors, established institutions dominate a society by their massive physical presence, reinforced by an appearance of historical detachment and independence from all human activity and perception. Any reality socially constructed by one population group which becomes institutionalized acquires a subsequent legitimacy in the eyes of nearly all people. Ultimately, though an institutionalized reality remains relevant only to that social sector whose living experiences gave rise to the perceived reality, it no longer is associated with the particular social sector. Still very subjectively perceived and no more valid or ob-
jective than another group's perceived reality, the institutionalized reality becomes perceived as the one genuine objective reality, free of class bias, for the entire society. Not only do the other sectors of society find their own just as meaningful and tangibly felt realities ignored, but they pay a tremendous physical and psychological price for the discrepancy between what is real for them and what is acknowledged as real for them by the institutions which control or significantly affect their lives. In many countries, especially LDC's, the price paid is manifested in broad socio-political and economic exploitation by national institutions indifferent to the realities of many sectors' harsh living conditions.

The success and endurance of a set of institutions, as evidenced in continuation of the legitimation process, depends on the capability to reflect the social experiences and to meet the social needs of whichever social sector gains part or all of the crucial power to institutionalize its perception of reality. When the power to institutionalize one particular perceived reality no longer clearly resides with one population group, competition occurs among the various social sectors to promote the institutionalization of their respective objectified social bodies of knowledge. This competition is more familiarly known as "class conflict" and describes the state of Allende's Chile. Such class conflict is characterized by a breakdown in the legitimating process. Certain social sectors no longer perceive
the social institutions as historically independent, as legitimate. Individuals within those social sectors become more consciously aware of the reality of their lives and of the irrelevancy and unresponsiveness of the social institutions to that reality. To summarize, the decay of a nation's socio-political structure is evidence of a breakdown in the legitimation process for a set of social institutions embodying a particular perceived reality.\textsuperscript{15}

IV. Allende's Chile

Two objectives were clear in constructing a framework with which to study selected literature on Chile. First, I hoped to uncover points of departure from which analysts view the Allende period. Second, I desired to explore the perceptual processes utilized by experts to analyze and judge Allende's Chile. This latter objective, however, was hindered by many analysts' failure to formulate and/or utilize an explicit theoretical or perceptual framework with which to study the Chilean situation. Many scholarly articles were stimulating and informative descriptions, but few sought seriously to probe beyond the surface. Fewer still were self-conscious about their paradigms.

In my initial attempts to construct a framework permitting categorization of representative articles on Allende's Chile, I was wary of falling into a simplistic, two-pronged outlook which categorized articles according to their leftist
or rightist, pro-Allende or anti-Allende approach. I searched to uncover the basis for at least one other more centrist, less absolute position, incorporating perhaps perspectives from both political sides. Later, I also sought to avoid labeling the articles in political terms at all. Only after several attempts to formulate a seemingly more sophisticated framework did I realize the futility of ignoring the increasingly intense politicization and polarization occurring within Chile preceding and during Allende's presidency. During the sixties and into the seventies, consistent policies were followed only by extremists of both ends of the nation's political spectrum; politically centrist positions fluctuated and became increasingly undermined. Thus, in 1973, the less revolutionary Communist Party (CP) found itself compelled to support radical workers' demands, under pressure from activist leftist groups advocating immediate socialization and revolutionary change. Similarly, the once relatively centrist Christian Democrat Party (PDC) went so far as to advocate outright rebellion and a military overthrow of the democratically-elected Allende government—a recourse once perceived to be shockingly illegal and advocated by only the extreme fascist right.

Such a socio-political climate inevitably influenced the nature of the articles written about Allende's Chile. Though a few articles did search for a more subtle and less easily categorized explanation for the cause of Allende's failure, most analyses represented one of two general perspectives: the first, resembling a politically leftist
viewpoint, emphasized structural and external factors which rendered Allende's experiment very difficult; the second, tending to coincide with the Chilean opposition, stressed Allende's own faults and mistaken policies.

(Note the compendium of selected articles on Allende's Chile and the diagram summarizing these two broad perspectives on the following three pages.)

1a. Allende's Political Leadership: A View From the Left. Though Allende's downfall is primarily attributed to the inherent contradictions of Chilean society and the forces of dependent capitalism, he is criticized for failing to mobilize and consolidate the Left while too often seeking to pacify a hostile and uncooperative opposition. Allende is faulted for not realistically confronting the issue of power in a class-divided society, where power means survival. Thus, the Left's judgement of Allende's political leadership proceeds both sympathetically and critically. Ultra-leftist, more revolutionary groups such as the Socialist Party and the Movement of the Revolutionary Left (MIR) tended more openly to criticize Allende while Center-left, more reformist-minded groups such as the CP tended to sympathize with the difficulty of Allende's undertaking.

More specifically, leftist critics accused Allende of being blinded by post-electoral euphoria and of failing to realize the necessity of consolidating the mass base of the UP into, as T. V. Sathyamurthy states, "a coherent instrument for the effective articulation of political power."
Compendium of Selected Literature on Allende's Chile
Offering Two General Perspectives

A Leftist Perspective


A Rightist Perspective


## WHY ALLENDE FAILED

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PARTICULAR EMPHASES</th>
<th>VIEWED FROM ULTRA-LEFT AND LEFT</th>
<th>VIEWED FROM OPPOSITION</th>
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<tr>
<td>Politics and political leadership</td>
<td>Personal failings of Allende as a revolutionary leader</td>
<td>Personal failings of Allende as a democratic leader: an uncompromising ideologue who did not understand the need for moderation and common consensus in a democracy</td>
</tr>
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<td></td>
<td>Allende experienced and capable, but sought unprecedented change which threatened a powerful bourgeois elite</td>
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<tr>
<td>Economics</td>
<td>Structural weaknesses of Chilean political economy</td>
<td>Inept economic policies of the UP government</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nature of the UP coalition government</td>
<td>Disunity of the Unidad Popular</td>
<td>The UP: a minority regime incapable of national leadership which deliberately divided and polarized the nation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nature of the opposition</td>
<td>A unified domestic and foreign opposition, inseparably linked</td>
<td>A legitimate internal opposition independent of foreign forces</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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Some leftists feel Allende placed too much faith in Chile's constitutional bourgeois institutions—-institutions which were designed to maintain the exploitative grip of the landed oligarchy and bourgeoisie. Had he been willing to admit just how little power was his, even as president, in a system committed to maintenance of bourgeois supremacy, Allende would have realized that his and the UP's survival depended upon strengthening the proletariat and peasant masses. Ties between the more politically conscious sectors of the working class and peasantry and the entire working class and peasantry should have been encouraged in order to develop a powerful, cohesive mass movement capable of confronting an active and violent opposition. T. V. Sathyamurthy observes:

The tragedy of Chile indeed lay in the fact that, throughout his presidency, Allende concentrated his efforts in containing and in fact thwarting the revolutionary upsurge within the sphere of his support whereas those determined to force his regime out developed their violent counterrevolutionary offensive without fearing reprisal. 17

Indeed, when workers organized "cordones industriales" and "comandos comunales" 18 in response to the increasing domestic crisis, fomented in large part by disruptive Opposition tactics such as the October 1972 road transportation strike, Allende refused support. During the truck-drivers' strike, Allende even declared state emergency rule in several major provinces, effectively handing over power to a hostile military, and invited military officers into his Cabinet. Allende succeeded in buying time, dispelling the crisis at hand and pacifying the Opposition, but this cost him much more in the long-term as it weakened
his own popular political base. The cordones industriales and commandos comunales strengthened the workers' position, but without Allende's support they were not sufficient to generate a broader worker and peasant class consciousness throughout the country. More significantly, the creation of a politically conscious and cohesive worker-peasant movement, knowledgeable and practically experienced in the use and control of power, failed to emerge.

In summary, Allende's inability to effect real structural change in Chilean society and to maintain control over the political economy in the face of a powerful opposition offensive is little surprising for leftist critics. James Petras and Morris Morley note that "no efforts at increased economic productivity and planning had a chance to succeed while the question of political power remained undecided." Cristobal Kay concludes:

The Chilean experience can be viewed as vindicating the theory of the "extreme" or "revolutionary" left which maintains that it is impossible to initiate a transition to socialism by working within the bourgeois institutional framework.

On a sympathetic note, the Left also recognized the difficulty for any leader who sought unprecedented qualitative change in Chilean society, and specifically in the Chilean economic structure. Allende and his UP recognized that Chile was an underdeveloped nation not capable of providing enough private, individual consumption goods--those produced in a capitalist market economy--to fulfill the basic needs of its people: Chile, under dependent capitalism,
was failing to provide for the critical needs of the majority of the population. Jack Spence provides a good historical perspective for the stagnant dependent capitalist Chilean economy—an economy controlled by a domestic oligarchy tied to foreign economic interests which had impoverished peasants and workers, creating a stagnant economy also adverse to the interests of the petty and national bourgeoisie.

State-sponsored import substitution industries had expanded the economy in the 1930's and 40's but had exhausted their potential due to the narrow, elite market of consumers. In the late 50's and 60's increasing economic concentration throughout the economy and the penetration of foreign capital into the more modern industrial, wholesale, foreign-trade, and investment sectors had not ended economic stagnation and chronic inflation, nor broadened consumer demand. Though new modern enterprises tended to pay higher wages than traditional sectors, their capital intensive character did not significantly contribute to lowering unemployment. This stagnation, in turn, retarded retail enterprises (not yet concentrated into national franchise operations). Increasing foreign and domestic concentration hurt small and medium enterprises by weakening their competitive position, buying them out, or otherwise driving them out of business.

Allende perceived the need for new economic structures, for a new kind of market sensitive to the need for public goods rather than for private, individual goods. Allende's program of nationalization of U.S.-owned copper mines, nationalization of most of the banking system, expropriation of all latifundia and middle-size farms, and expansion of the state sector of the national economy with a subsequent reduction in the private sector represented genuine change. A sharp break from the policies of his predecessors was perceived as essential in order to create a new, independent
political economy capable of meeting the critical needs of the general population.

Such qualitative and unprecedented change necessarily threatened the privileged sectors of the society and generated serious opposition among the traditionally powerful. Consequently, many viewers from the Left acknowledged and emphasized Allende's uphill struggle. Goldberg summarizes Allende's failure:

Allende's downfall was the result of the choices of public policy made by his government and the responses to those choices by key groups and elites both within and outside of Chile, including the United States. 22

A cogent explanation of his ultimate failure in leadership lies in his very determination to shift basic policies, and the consequent change in the conditions of political groups, already described, which made ineffective many of the conventional tools of Chilean presidents to maintain, broaden, and solidify their base of support. 23

Allende's attempt at qualitative change did not create class conflict, but did spark a social and institutional power struggle in an already genuinely fragmented society. Allende's successes in raising worker and peasant class-consciousness, and providing a new vision for a less exploitative society, credit his name, even as these successes served to unite a hostile opposition.

In summary, while some leftists criticized Allende for adhering too rigidly to bourgeois democratic practice, many others were only too aware of the power of the sectors threatened by the UP program. To avoid an immediate Opposition revolt and coup, many claim that Allende was required to
work for change within the given constitutional structures of Chile. The dilemma facing Allende was one of administering a capitalist economy while transforming it. Renato Sandri notes

...the contradiction between the process of structural reform directed toward the painful birth of a new social order, and the continuing existence of the previous legal and constitutional super-structure, which had been created for the express purpose of defending the ownership system of the society. 24

Allende had to walk a political tightrope for survival, pushing for broad social change while not leading the nation into further economic deterioration. He faced the problem of maintaining and increasing production while reducing the political and economic power of the dependent bourgeoisie and foreign multinationals.

1b. Allende's Political Leadership: Opposition View. Allende's opposition emphasizes the relative stability of Chile preceding his presidency, thereby concentrating the blame for both his downfall and the disintegration of Chilean democracy on his own poor and divisive leadership. Allende is accused of having sown the seeds of his own destruction—and that of Chilean democracy—by usurping power beyond his constitutional rights as president, and by deliberately encouraging division within the nation. From his first day in office, Allende challenged and threatened Chile's traditional institutions, deliberately fomenting class conflict. His provocative use of revolutionary slogans condoned increasing societal violence and eroded whatever possibility
had existed for peaceful and orderly progress through national consensus. Moderate individuals and organizations were frightened into a defensive counterrevolutionary union with the Right. Allende's only success was in wrecking the middle ground of Chilean society and politics.

Overconfident from a narrow 1970 electoral victory, Allende refused to seek cooperation from or conciliation with the moderate forces of the PDC in order to obtain a workable base of support within the Chilean legislature. Instead, Allende triumphantly declared that the UP would "go it alone," laying plans for a national plebiscite to abolish the two-house legislature with a single popular assembly, assuming the inevitability of a UP majority. Allende demonstrated his refusal to cooperate with the existing legislature on many an occasion. In October, 1971, the Congress passed a constitutional amendment limiting the excessive power of the president to socialize private enterprises without justification. Allende both refused the amendment and any attempt at compromise, precipitating a major institutional stalemate. Nationalization of private enterprises continued, displaying Allende's determination to bypass the legislature. John P. Powelson writes:

President Allende was reputedly an astute politician. He had extraordinary skill in manipulating other politicians in legal ways. Some such manoeuvres became a comic opera. When Congress impeached his ministers, he shuffled around the portfolios, so that impeachment was invalid unless it was begun again for each new position. He could do this inde­finitely. When he needed support, he brought the military into the government; when criticism for this was excessive, he arranged their exit. He cleverly called for new institutions, such as people's courts, where old ones did
not work. He encouraged labour seizures of industries, which might then be nationalized legally because they were operating inefficiently.

His astuteness, however, was confined to narrow manipulations. He failed to see the necessity for a national consensus and for sound economic policies. Popular Unity's choice lay between the "ego trip" on the one hand, and compromise on the other. 26

Allende antagonized the other constitutional branches of government and disregarded the limits of executive power and constitutionally-mandated roles of the legislature and courts. Using laws long out of use and employing emergency measures out of their original context in his pursuit of "instant socialization," Allende manipulated democracy to his own ends and undermined the spirit, if not always the letter, of the constitution. Concurrently, he sought to manipulate the public with confused and alternating doses of first legalist, then revolutionary, philosophies, never understanding the reality of democracy nor his responsibility to uphold the Chilean order. David Holden speaks for many in the Opposition who were puzzled, if not angered, by Allende's rhetorical blend of democracy and revolution:

Revolution is born of, or generate, sectional conflict—a fact of political life that Allende acknowledged every time he spoke of "overthrowing" what he called the "bourgeois" state. But a democratic constitution rests upon consensus—a basic acceptance of the fact that the State represents more than a merely sectional interest. The second permits reform, but the first denies it; and there is no way of reconciling the two. 27

Summing up more harshly the repercussions of Allende's political leadership, David Jordan states:
It was shocking that the Allende regime in less than three years had transformed the nation from a lawful polity to one inured to violence, assault, assassination and ideological views of law and justice. 28

2a. Economics: From the Left. As noted above in a preliminary manner, the Left maintains that Allende's failure cannot be understood nor judged without recognizing the basic structural weaknesses of the Chilean political economy. No person of any political persuasion denies that Allende and the UP made mistakes. However, both supporters and critics of Allende within the Left emphasize that his failure was not unrelated to the intrinsic precariousness of the Chilean political-economic system.

The historical vulnerability of the Chilean economy arises out of its dependent ties to international capitalism. Sandri summarizes the reality of dependency for contemporary Chile at the time of Allende's election:

Chile was a dependent country—dependent on the world imperialist market which, because of the fluctuations of the price of copper on the London exchange, made any attempt by the government to balance its budget a gamble—dependent on the technology and industry of the "metropolis" (from which even the simplest spare parts had to be imported); dependent on the financial institutions controlled directly or indirectly by Wall Street, which granted credits not for "development" but for mere survival, and into the bargain charged exorbitant interest. It was a country primarily and above all dependent on the United States corporations, which, after trifling initial investments in the copper mines granted to them as concessions, had made profits of about 3.8 billion dollars over a period of forty years. 29

Such a dependent country is tightly bound and vulnerable to external, foreign circumstances and even to outright
dictation of its domestic policies. Dependent Chile suffered from a self-perpetuating political-economic cycle described by Goldberg:

New presidents typically entered office with the economy operating at below capacity as a result of previously deflationary policies designed to dampen inflation. Increased government spending would stimulate the economy to reach full capacity, but beyond that point the rate of inflation would rise sharply since no new investment would be forthcoming to raise productive capacity. At this point the dominant direction of conflict would prompt the political elite to cut back on social programs so that inflation would not reach runaway levels.  

Initial economic successes led to inflationary declines which necessitated renewed austerity measures, the burden falling on the poor masses. A parallel rise and fall of individual governments occurred with each new period of austerity and social suffering, breeding increased class conflict.

Allende was determined to stop this cycle in order to effect real improvement in the living standards of the masses. Speeding up agrarian reform and nationalizing foreign and domestic monopolies, Allende attempted a genuine redistribution of the nation's wealth. When the imbalance between greater purchasing power of the masses and reduced supply on the market accelerated Chile's perennial inflation, he refused to cut back on social expenditures for the poor. Instead, he sought to trim the excessive wealth of the nation's economic elite--an elite tied to the powerful foreign monopolies. This confrontation denied Allende the loans, aid, and credit available to his predecessors which had previ-
ously kept the dependent economy afloat. The crucial safety valve that foreign capital represented, "open" for Allende's predecessors, was firmly "shut" for Allende. This was the price paid for daring to tamper with the Chilean political-economic structure and attempting to break out of historical dependency.

2b. Economics: The Opposition's View. Allende invited economic disaster in Chile by pursuing a host of inept economic policies. Revolutionary dreams blinded Allende from economic reality. Political fantasizing rather than economic reasoning led to an irresponsible stab at the impossible. The UP government claimed to seek a strengthening of Chile's industrial and agricultural base while attacking key sectors of that base. The UP government claimed that broadening the industrial-agricultural base would strengthen the Chilean economy, yet it pursued a policy of undermining the substantial private sector in an attempt to reduce Chile's economy to a state-controlled one. Ignoring basic economic laws of supply and demand in situations of scarcity, Allende irresponsibly promoted increased consumption among large sectors of the population whose productivity did not rise, and even decreased.

The UP ignored the resulting hyperinflation, oblivious to its consequences while derisively labeling it a "bourgeois, capitalist" problem not relevant to socialist economic planning. Instead, the UP impulsively embarked upon a much too rapid agrarian reform which caused severe rural dislocation and upheaval adverse to maintaining, let alone increasing, food
production. The necessity for more food imports only worsened Chile's negative balance of payments. Sudden nationalization of many firms reduced industrial efficiency and overall production levels. Inexperienced workers were expected to assume the responsibilities of industrial managers overnight. Allende soon had to face the problem of an overextended, newly-created social sector which did not have the money to meet the higher wages decreed by the UP government, and lacked the expertise to achieve greater production. Paul E. Sigmund, critiquing UP economic policy, even implies the inconsistency of that policy according to marxist criteria:

Marxist economists and policymakers have always placed primary emphasis on investment and the expansion of the productive capacity of the economy. By contrast, the Allende policymakers emphasized increases in consumption and combined this with a headlong rush to take over industry and agriculture—a course far removed from the "two steps forward, one step back" of Lenin. The consequences of these policies after their deceptive initial success were massive government deficits, runaway inflation, and a near-breakdown of the economy.31

Dismissing the leftist portrayal of Allende as a victim of foreign pressures, Opposition critics deny that Allende's difficulties resulted from a cutoff in crucial foreign aid. First, any alleged U. S. influence to promote an international credit embargo against Chile did not prevent Chile from receiving increased aid from certain nations. Sigmund states:

The argument that Allende's economic problems were the result of a shortage of foreign credit does not really hold water, since they were caused by policies initiated before the foreign squeeze and since, in any event, Allende's regime
managed to secure enough foreign credits from Latin America, European, Soviet and Chinese sources to increase the Chilean foreign debt from $2.6 billion to $3.4 billion in less than three years.32

Second, whatever U. S. economic intervention within Chile or in Chilean international economic affairs did or did not occur, it is considered insignificant compared to the economic breakdown and political turmoil brought upon Chile by her own leaders. David Holden summarizes several of the preceding points in a stinging critique of the Allende government:

...U. S. influence may have limited Western aid and credit but it was far from being able to condemn Allende's Chile to economic purdah. In any case, Chile was not one of the under-developed world's hard cases, totally dependent on external aid and credits for its survival...

Unfortunately, nobody with even a nodding acquaintance with economics could have classified the management of the Allende government as anything but disastrous. To a great extent it placed itself beyond the pale for any but the most trusting--or dedicated--of creditors. But even if that had not been so, and if the blame for Chile's economic difficulties could have been laid fairly and squarely at Washington's door, Allende would surely have had small cause for complaint. It was, after all, his administration which announced its immediate determination to "expropriate imperialist capital... realise a policy of self-financing...and review, denounce and repudiate, as the case may be, treaties or agreements limiting our sovereignty, specifically the reciprocal assistance treaties, the mutual aid pacts, and others, between Chile and the United States" (The People's Unity--Basic Programme of Government, 1970).33

Finally, whatever aid Allende did lose from the U. S. is not surprising given his needless challenging of U. S. interests. Specifically, his failure to compensate for the nationalization of U. S. copper companies' mines amounted to outright confiscation. Mark Falcoff, implying the neutral
or apolitical character of the international economic system, observes:

...to refuse a defaulted debtor additional credit is not prima facie an act of internal subversion--it is a rather ordinary, humdrum business practice.\(^{34}\)

Allende and his government are thus held responsible for the unprecedented economic chaos that led to a deterioration of Chile's traditionally stable social and political institutions.

3a. The Unidad Popular: Self-Image. Just as explanations of Allende's failure are contingent upon different evaluations of his political leadership and his government's economic policies, the nature and intent of the UP and Opposition coalitions are perceived differently depending on one's socio-political point of departure.

The diversity—or contradiction—of the UP is revealed by the strategic philosophies of its two major components, the Communist and Socialist Parties. Committed to a legal path to socialism, the CP deemed it essential to avoid scrupulously a confrontation between the Right and Left which would encourage a brutal repression of the Left by the Opposition military and bourgeois forces. In contrast, the SP generally represented a more radical leftist group which qualified its participation in the UP coalition by an insistence upon the temporary nature of any electoral strategy: the electoral path could only achieve limited socialist advancement and could not replace the inevitability of violent confrontation with the bourgeoisie. Key
components of the CP strategy, "gradualism," "reformism," and "constitutionalism," did not ideologically coincide with the SP's call for "uncompromised advancement" and "revolutionary transformation."

The Left generally acknowledges that the UP coalition was one of political convenience hastily organized to prepare for the 1970 elections. Though admitting that the diverse composition of the UP rendered cohesive and unified action difficult, leftists emphasize that the UP represented a majority of the people--this was its strength. However, after the UP electoral victory, agreement on policy and action between its ideologically disparate elements was not only difficult, but often impossible. Internal division prevented the UP from rallying around the Allende government and effectively combatting the increasingly vocal and violent Opposition. Renato Sandri discusses the cause of the UP government's loss of authority and initiative:

Within the [UP] alliance, unfortunately, the discussion often took the form of justification of partisan positions rather than an attempt to clarify the issues before the country, to warn the people of the great peril to democratic institutions, and to mobilize the entire population behind the program of Unidad Popular.35

Cristobal Kay makes a similar observation:

During...1971-1973...the UP could have developed the objective and subjective conditions for decisively defeating the bourgeoisie and initiating the transition to socialism. That the UP was not able to overcome many of the obstacles in its way was the result largely of internal differences. Neither the "reformists" nor the "revolutionaries" were dominant within the UP and the lack of a coherent strategy resulted in a middle-of-the-road policy which responded to events rather than shaped them. It was the
absence of a unified public leadership that prevented the UP from exploiting and channeling the mobilized power of the masses towards armed insurrection.\textsuperscript{36}

The weakness of the UP is particularly exemplified by the aftermath of the June, 1972 Lo Curro Conference, a high-level strategy meeting. Allende and the more moderate leftists argued for the consolidation of gains already made, implying a freeze on both socialization of the economy and worker-peasant mobilizations. But more radical socialists felt the Left's best defense was to continue the socializing process without hesitation. Popular mobilizations should be encouraged. Inflation must be fought not by reducing the masses' buying power but by raising taxes on luxury goods and lifestyles. The final agreement to pursue Allende's consolidationist approach was tenuous. While the UP government thus sought to renew talks with the Opposition about defining the limits of the UP-created social sector, a key cause of the legislative-executive deadlock, workers took over three more factories. The UP tried to discourage these mobilizations, but when the workers generated wide support from workers' committees elsewhere, the UP was forced to accede to the workers' demands to incorporate the three factories into the social sector. Consequently, talks with the Opposition broke down. Another occasion for compromise was lost as the nation drifted toward a hardening polarization. Spence disavows simple explanations that the ultra-left stirred up trouble or Allende alienated the masses:
If popular mobilizations in the late 1960's contributed to the UP electoral victory, UP policies after 1970 created conditions for more militant mobilizations. One condition—the bourgeoisie's diminished control over the state's repressive force—has been mentioned. The installation of worker participation and peasant collectives gave unprecedented power to these groups. They made newly nationalized establishments work, though oftentimes with a good many problems, including absenteeism, and resultant inefficiency. Their successes, and increased material benefits gained in wage negotiations with the state, led other groups to initiate takeovers, and the success of these initiatives led to more. Some forces within the UP encouraged and organized these actions, and even less militant UP forces initially wanted to better the bargaining position of the UP by "stampeding" the disorganized opposition. Moreover, the political danger of attempting to stop militant takeovers prevented decisive action against them. The dilemma of the consolidation line lay in the implication that its implementation would require repressing mobilizations.

The choice of encouraging or confronting popular mobilizations was just one of the dilemmas facing the UP leadership. Given the diversity of the UP, one can better understand why Allende was both criticized and praised within his own ranks. However, the consequences of the UP's divisiveness become no clearer than when Allende is violently overthrown.

3b. Unidad Popular: Defined by the Opposition. Though both leftists and rightists recognize the UP's division as a primary contributing factor in Allende's downfall, leftist dismay at this division gives way to Opposition condemnation. The UP is portrayed as a minority regime incapable of effective national leadership which in its own weakness deliberately sought to polarize the nation.

First, the Opposition rejects the UP's claim to a popular, majority base. Specifically, the 1973 Congressional elections are cited as proof of a decline in the UP's pub-
lic support from the 1970 municipal elections and of the existence of an anti-marxist majority. Consequently, not only was the UP coalition intrinsically weak due to the incompatible philosophies represented within it, the UP did not express the desires of a majority of the population. Yet Allende insisted on carrying out the UP program even though he lacked majority support of the people, which he had originally declared necessary to justify the policies of his government.

Secondly, Opposition critics point out that the intrinsic contradiction of the UP prevented it from exerting sound and cohesive national leadership. While some elements of the UP professed democratic, pluralist, and libertarian ideals, other elements advocated armed confrontation and revolutionary struggle. Both groups consistently clashed in and out of the government, not only paralyzing the government the UP was supposed to lead, but dangerously polarizing the nation.

In summary, while leftists regretfully acknowledge the divisions of the UP which contributed to the failure of Allende's government, the Opposition vehemently denounced a coalition government so divided that it was unable to govern the country, creating a vacuum of national leadership and political power which threatened the very existence of the Chilean nation.

4a. The Opposition: Defined by the Left. The Left claims that one inseparably linked domestic and foreign opposition collaborated from the first day of Allende's
presidency to bring him down through deliberate political and economic sabotage. In the wake of popular mobilizations where qualitative demands for more decision-making power and control of the means of production increasingly superceded traditional quantitative demands for basic goods and higher wages, a powerful domestic alliance fought back. The bourgeoisie, professionals, petty bourgeoisie, and military were determined to preserve their positions of political and economic advantage, regardless of the consequences to the economy or to the democratic institutions of Chile. The resulting crisis atmosphere only frightened previously more neutral middle sectors into the Opposition camp.

Jack Spence states how the role of foreign forces was crucial in this strategy:

The U. S., substantially weakened by its misadventure in Indochina, was in no position to dispatch the Marines, in the classic imperialist pattern, played out in Latin America most recently in the Dominican Republic, of overthrowing a government leaning dangerously to the left. Though it explored various CIA models for overthrow, general bungling, a strong institutionalized left with a mass base, and a complicated political and military structure prevented a Guatemala-type coup in the early years of the UP. The U. S. was left with aiding right-wing allies in the joint strategy of creating economic chaos.\(^3\) Spence points out how even a weakened U. S., due to Chile's dependent economy and U. S. international economic strength, was able to accelerate Chile's internal chaos by cutting off credits to Chile and financing anti-Allende groups. Petras enlarges upon the U. S. role:

The intensifying anti-government activity within Chile
was carefully coordinated with U. S. policy designed to further weaken the economy. Loans and credits from public, private and international banks were cut off and shipments of essential parts for U. S.-produced machinery were inexplicably "delayed." On the direct action front, U. S. financing of opposition activity--especially the truck owners' lockout--was evidenced by the large influx of dollars which recently stabilized for over a month the price of the dollar on the black market.39

Finally, both Spence and Petras respectively place the U. S. role in perspective:

U. S. efforts were not sufficient by themselves to overthrow Allende, but they were necessary for the anti-Allende groups to be able to create the conditions for the military to intervene.40

The coup thus was neither solely the product of the CIA nor the result of purely Chilean forces, but a combined effort resulting from the shared interests of both the U. S. and the Chilean bourgeoisie and its military allies.41

To summarize, the Left views the Opposition as a bourgeois, class-based alliance which responded not to economic and political deterioration but to the political challenging of their elitist position within Chilean society. Foreign manipulation and intervention aided and encouraged the domestic opposition. The CIA and some U. S. corporations contributed to the financing of fascist groups and violent fascist activities as well as to the financing of Opposition medias, parties, and strikes. The Chilean military continually received aid in the form of weapons and tactical "know-how" from its U. S. counterpart. U. S. and U. S.-dominated international financial institutions cancelled credit and loans to Chile. Indeed, the Opposition
solidified and grew increasingly violent in direct proportion to Allende's success in extending greater benefits and responsibilities to the masses in his effort to create a more equitable society and independent society capable of sustained and self-generated growth. Allende's alleged economic mistakes were not responsible for the hardened opposition. Rather, growing polarization reflected genuine class war in a battle of high stakes.

4b. The Opposition: Self-Image. The Opposition denies that foreign intervention was the decisive factor in enabling a "domestic elite" to preserve its position and bring Allende down. First, though some Allende critics admit the obvious role of the U. S. in Chile, they insist that no such foreign intervention, covertly or overtly, could have significantly altered the balance of power between the UP and the Opposition. No external manipulation could have succeeded without legitimate domestic discontent and unrest over Allende's policies. Secondly, Allende's opposition comprised not an elite but a majority of the population (based on the 1973 Congressional elections) which felt it imperative to combat the growing anarchy and threat of economic collapse resulting from Allende's policies and leadership. His inaction in the midst of increasing civil unrest and economic chaos alienated Chile's politically moderate middle sectors, whose own economic positions were being threatened by uncontrolled workers' strikes and factory takeovers. The general precariousness of both economy and government under Allende compelled these sectors to join
the more extreme right-wing forces to end the stagnation and deterioration characterizing UP rule. Indeed, it is the UP government which was responsible for sending Chilean society on the road of suicidal polarization. Consequently, there existed a legitimate domestic opposition to Allende independent of foreign forces.

Ultimately, a professional, law-abiding military, not associated with any particular sector of society, was forced to act to halt national decline, and to save its own organizational integrity. Allende had consciously brought the military into his power struggle with the Opposition under the guise of upholding the constitution while actually subjecting it to narrow-minded UP partisanship. Allende's politicization of the military reflected his desire to co-opt it to serve his own political ends. But for the military, politicization was one short step from polarization and division within its own ranks. The military understandably acted to prevent its own division and demise as a professional, autonomous institution. It was Allende who prompted the military overthrow of his government.

In summary, a rightist perspective describes Allende's opposition as legitimate and domestically based. In the end, a counterrevolutionary coup was the only alternative to prevent economic disaster and a political "dictatorship of the proletariat" by a government which had wholly undermined the spirit of constitutional democracy and had inexcusably tolerated severe economic decline.
V. Conclusion

The focus of this study has been two-fold: an exploration of Allende's Chile coupled with a probe into Berger's and Luckmann's treatise in the sociology of knowledge. Briefly summarizing the process of my research, I initially attempted to explain Allende's downfall. This aim was modified as my appreciation for the complexity and multiplicity of perceived realities in Chile grew. Yet, analysts seemed to search for one particularly valid, more objective reality while employing innumerable perceptual approaches. I thus attempted to bring together some of these analytical approaches by devising a broad framework around them. Though achieving some success in this endeavor, I was increasingly bothered by analysts' frequent failure to self-consciously construct explicit paradigms to guide their work and to honestly present their own socio-political, economic, theoretical and/or intellectual points-of-departure. Equally troubling were analysts' often implicit acceptance of the notion of a singular, objective reality. A desire for clarity and absolute understanding consistently prevailed on their part, even when analytical integrity demanded the recognition of occasional perceptual ambiguity. Especially, my own observations began to center on multiply perceived realities which shared legitimacy and objectivity among different social sectors within the diverse Chilean society. I was consequently motivated to explore how knowledge of objective reality is acquired and socially created. Thus,
I used Berger's and Luckmann's description of the process of reality-construction to guide my study of Allende's Chile.

Linking these two bodies of research requires one final question. What does Allende's Chile teach us about social constructions of reality? In particular, what can be inferred about the institutionalization of dominant realities, about the nature of political and economic power, about reform and revolution? These are the ultimate questions to which this study leads.

During the sixties, Chile experienced the progressive decline of a minority construction of reality which had historically dominated Chilean political and economic institutions. Allende's Chile in the early seventies represented the culmination of the disintegration of this institutionalized reality as another social sector (actually, another coalition of social sectors) sought to institutionalize its own socially constructed reality. Allende's Chile became an excellent example of several perceptions of the social order—several social constructions of reality—coexisting within one society and competing for institutionalization, with the accompanying reward of legitimation at the national level. Thus, the theoretical description of the process of reality-construction and the tendency of social constructions of reality to coexist, to compete, and to seek institutionalization finds credibility in the practical experience of Allende's Chile.

The significance of institutionalization for a par-
ticular social construction of reality lies in the dialectical process through which that reality is not only institutionalized but, in turn, thoroughly defines the response of the institutions to the society. New relevancy of the institutions to a particular social sector is achieved. The political and economic power associated with a nation's institutions directly supports and encourages those social sectors whose construction of reality is embedded in the national institutions. A dominant social reality, a nation's institutions, and political-economic power are deeply intertwined. Class struggle in Allende's Chile exemplifies the process of multiple social constructions of reality vying for dominance through institutionalization.

Finally, the recognition of social institutions as objectified constructions of reality by one or more social sectors reveals the fundamental contradiction of Allende's political experiment. Allende sought to initiate real, i.e., revolutionary, political, economic, and social change while rigorously seeking to maintain the existing national institutions. He assumed a reformer's distinction between sets of institutions and differently perceived social realities. Yet for the institution which represents and is even created by a particular social construction of reality, such a distinction is not evident. Therefore, effective and qualitative change requires a new set of institutions responsive and relevant to the new dominant social reality. Allende confused reform for revolution, failing to recognize that institutions are intrinsically enmeshed within one historically perceived objective reality.
FOOTNOTES


2. Ibid., pp. 53-67.


4. Dependency theorists such as André Gundar Frank and Osvaldo Sunkel provide insightful views into the nature of the international capitalist political and economic system. An important dependency concept is that of a linked world "center" and world "periphery," the latter experiencing different degrees of domination by the first. Suggested readings are: André Gundar Frank, Latin America: Underdevelopment or Revolution (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1969); and Osvaldo Sunkel, "Big Business and 'Dependencia'," Foreign Affairs, 50 (April, 1972), 517-31.

5. Terminology itself reflects a peculiar perception of reality based upon different personal experiences and values. Reference to "small business owners" does not yield the same connotation as "petty bourgeoisie." I have chosen the first term at this point to present a seemingly less colored notion of those independent and semi-independent capitalist entrepreneurs who comprise an important segment of the middle class.


8. Debate has occurred among socialists over whether a "labor aristocracy" existed or not within the proletariat. For contrasting views, see T.V. Sathyamurthy, "Chile: Parliamentary Socialism and Class Struggle--Part II," Economic and Political Weekly, 10, No. 15 (1977), 628; and Sandri, p. 212.

9. For an understanding of "economism" among Chile's proletariat, see Sandri, p. 201.
The social body of knowledge is subject to change, either through addition or deletion of certain "facts." Hence, objective realities are never static or absolute.

Berger and Luckmann, p. 54.

Though social institutions often succeed in an ongoing process of legitimation due to their massive presence in society, one must be careful in assuming this process of explanation and justification is automatic. Indeed, Allende's Chile is an all too clear illustration of what happens when the legitimating process breaks down.

Allende's Chile exemplifies the danger for the analyst of assuming that a national society embraces but one social body of knowledge portraying one perceived objective reality.

Exploitation not only refers to deliberate subjugation of one population group for another group's well-being, but also can be defined as inaction in the face of serious suffering by those with the power to relieve or lessen the suffering.

It is worth noting that institutional decay is itself neither necessarily a good or bad process. From one perspective, such decay is viewed as courting disastrous disorder, uncertainty, and instability one step away from national destruction and suicide. From another perspective, institutional decay paves the way for a readaptation of societal institutions to contemporary human conditions—for a reassertion of human energy over institutions, humanly created, but now alienating and obsolete. In this light, institutional decay permits a positive reconstitution of relevant reality reflecting current social experiences and needs.

Sathyamurthy, p. 625.


The "cordones industriales" were industrial belts organized by the industrial proletariat and the "comandos comunales" were grass root organizations seeking to unite the industrial proletariat, urban slum dwellers, and local peasant councils. See Cristobal Kay, "Chile: The Making of a Coup d'Etat," Science and Society, 39 No. 1
(1975), p. 6-7.


20 Kay, p. 24.


23 Ibid., p. 104.

24 Sandri, p. 203.

25 Ibid., p. 200-201.


29 Sandri, p. 197-198.

30 Goldberg, p. 103.


32 Ibid.

33 Holden, p. 15.

35 Sandri, p. 216.


37 Spence, p. 149.

38 Ibid., p. 162.

39 Petras, p. 28.

40 Spence, p. 162.

41 Petras, p. 28.