EFFECTS OF POLITICAL AGENDAS ON CHILEAN ARCHITECTURE AND THE PLANNING PROCESS

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INTRODUCTION

This paper is focused on the Chilean planning process, emphasizing the factors that have produced remarkable internal changes during the terms of office of the last four governments since: Salvador Allende 1970-1973 (socialist), Augusto Pinochet (military regime) 1973-1990, Patricio Aylwin 1990-1994 (transition to democracy) and Eduardo Frei 1994 to date. The country restored democracy in 1989, when the population was allowed to vote in a national referendum. In 1973, when the militaries took over the power, any political affair or party was forbidden by law.

Having stated that, the first part of this paper analyzes the factors that have developed the economy and how this process has affected urban development.

The second part reviews the poverty policies and highlights the schemes and initiatives that have included more equitable social aims, within the existing economic wealth.

The third part describes the urban land management and planning systems and gives a critical view on recent experiences of urban management.

The conclusions show the importance of developing an appropriate system of political administration and urban policies to achieve a sustainable urban development.

Economic Wealth and Urban Development

Internal factors of change and their national consequences

The country of Chile has been recognized worldwide for its economical stability reflected in its growth of exports, moderate inflation, a balanced fiscal budget and the development of the business sector in several scales of production. However, despite these symbolic changes, such achievements have been accompanied by several deficiencies, significant symptoms of weakness and steps back due to variations in the international market in the past. Ffrench-Davies defines the most critical aspects of these deficiencies as:

- low rates of investment and domestic savings
- the severe economic instability that has characterized the economy
- the exclusion from modernization and from opportunities suffered by the vast social sector
- high outstanding social debt.[1]

These factors reveal the typical failings inherent in the neo-liberal economic approach set by the military government. However, in a changing and emerging economy under democratic management, these types of problems would be solved satisfactorily by implementing other varieties of economy leading to a more efficient model of development.

In any case, it is obvious that if the rate of investment and domestic savings is decreasing, then it is almost impossible for the poorest families to apply for subsidized housing or to buy properties directly on the private market. In this way the economy forms a circle which disqualifies them from obtaining their homes. This process has resulted in slum areas, because the squatter appears as a spontaneous reaction of the poorest families and as a consequence of their homeless condition.

Throughout Chile's urban development, there have been several periods of economic instability followed by internal falls, that have shown this kind of popular reaction (in 1982, the country was hit by the deepest depression of all the Latin American countries and, in 1989, it showed the strongest recovery). These fluctuations, associated with negative and positive external variations, have also influenced the rise and fall of the building sector which is closely related to changes in the macro-economy. During Pinochet's military regime, when the economy became unbalanced, there was a "self-justified" need to adjust the economic model by reducing the budget for public investment. That action affected schemes under construction and resulted in large housing areas without being completed with other facilities, and very costly indeed in social and environmental terms.

With regard to social equity, it is necessary to evaluate the negative experience of the past and look forward to the process of reinforcing the internal capacity of the local governments and communities. In fragile economies, this will obtain better results under external changes. In particular, this will focus attention on an equitable distribution of the economic benefits on the city's enhancement, and try to incorporate people's initiative in the periphery where the squatters remain despite central upgrading plans. In this context, changes that are too radical and large projects have demonstrated much worse results than a measured "step-by-step" approach, where the process itself has an important feedback generated by the adjustment between the interacting groups.

The challenge of making growth consistent with adequate urban development will continue to be extremely important, especially because the last two

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democratic governments have shown a lack of efficiency in incorporating people's initiatives or even enough evidence of reversing the authoritarian role of the military regime. Indeed, as the military coup appointed "Delegated Senators" in the Parliament in order to ensure that the established Constitution would continue to control the governance on the whole country — called "continuation" despite the new democratic administration — it was also extremely difficult to implement a model of participatory planning, especially in the first period of Aylwin's government, because the staff in public offices had been appointed by the former administration. However, this change is needed.

> *Economic growth is consistent with a gradual systemic improvement in the distribution of opportunities and income. Democracy requires that both advance simultaneously. To achieve such compatibility, the main social and political actors must reach substantial political agreements that will make it possible to negotiate and concert an acceptable time sequence for the distribution of the cost and benefits involved in economic growth.[2]*

Accordingly, we can observe that if people are to achieve this balance between opportunities and income, then their political representatives should concentrate on maintaining an equitable distribution of cost and benefits by paying equal attention to all participants who are involved in the process of development. At the same time, it also deals with people's understanding because they are conscious of the kind of decision making between their social and political representatives and comprehend the efforts made by the authorities.

Just as social and political actors must reach agreements to achieve better results in terms of economic growth, clearer symptoms of a reborn democracy would also include the capacity for negotiation and cooperation between a local council and its neighborhoods to ensure better urban development. This idea is the same argument implicit in the concept of 'sustainable urban development', defined as the equilibrium between the economic, social and environmental development. This means to incorporate all the "factors" that affect and are affecting the economy, and consequently to ensure a systematic approach to the development of the city.

"Economic growth is decisive in determining the ability of society to provide a higher level of welfare to people. The specific form adopted by economic growth also defines the distribution of power, that is, the capacity for action by the different social sectors to maintain or increase their quota of participation in society."[3]

Consequently, the hardest task of Frei's government is to recover the social meaning of its emergent exporting economy by improving the quality of life for all the social and income groups. This will mean either providing a social arena or creating a democratic space, where all the groups can be heard, as well as negotiating and prioritizing their own individual needs. It is one of the alternative ways of encouraging people's participation, in order to ensure a systematic urban development. The past has proved that the more physical the way of planning the

more devastating are the final results within the neighborhoods.

Poverty and policies implementation

In many Chilean cities, illegal settlements and the number of squatters grew rapidly at the end of the seventies. This was especially seen in Santiago, the capital, where those settlements were often found on the urban edge. While the former socialist government of Allende set an historical precedent in establishing and enhancing these illegal settlements, the military regime undertook a number of very large-scale resettlement schemes, as part of their poverty-housing targets, clearing most of the existing squatters.[4] These created several areas of new neighborhood developments out at the city's edge, where basic housing and infrastructure were provided, but also resulted in vast areas of homogeneous poverty and socio-cultural deprivation, without community facilities, inadequate commercial areas, rudimentary transport, hardly any locally work and consequently high unemployment.[5] Even worse, it was the population which was paying the social cost of the neo-liberal economic model because through an abstract perception, poverty was seen and understood to be a stigma transmitted from generation to generation — the figures are not clear, because there was no official information available but in the mid-1980s the poorest constituted between a quarter and fifth of the total population, that is to say roughly 2.500.000 people — whose condition became even more impoverished because of a lack of social programs to maintain the poorest areas.

Poverty was defined in absolute terms, as the incapacity of an individual or household to achieve the satisfaction of certain clearly defined minimum needs. Extreme poverty was defined as the failure to meet even the minimum food needs of the household, expressed in terms of the ability to acquire a basket of basic foodstuffs.[6] Thus, the solution was to propose policies and social programs through which state action should focus its effort on fighting the expanding blight, particularly concentrating on extreme poverty. Moreover, one of the most important targets of the military government was to reduce public expenditure and the fiscal budget to ensure balance in the economy. They considered that the best solution was to transfer the administrative responsibility to the local councils in an attempt to decentralize the responsibility for services (housing, education and health) to the councils.

The councils implemented a survey system called the CAS form. The meaning of the term is literally the CAS record (Council for Social Action). This is the social committee organized by each council to coordinate the services provided for the poor by different public and private organizations, as well as to administer the information system provided by the record which was supposed to match the ultra-poor's need.[7] The CAS score was, despite other important qualitative elements, the decisive figure affecting eligibility to apply for resources or housing subsidy. The system permitted a degree of arbitrariness in the whole process, with very dubious effects on extreme poverty, because it was also driven politically by the military regime. Poor families were concentrating their main efforts on obtaining more points
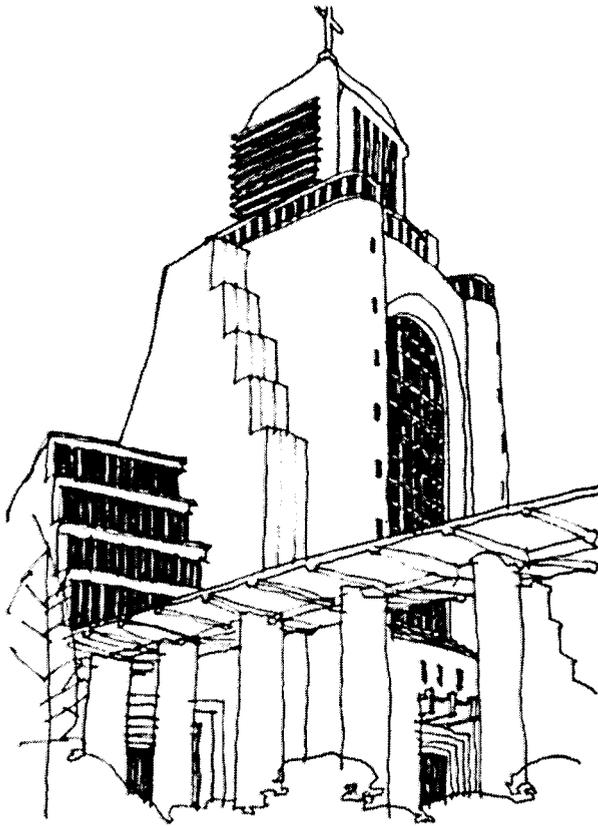
Fig. 1. Votive Temple of Maipu. This temple is dedicated to the glory of the Chilean Army and was finished during the military regime.
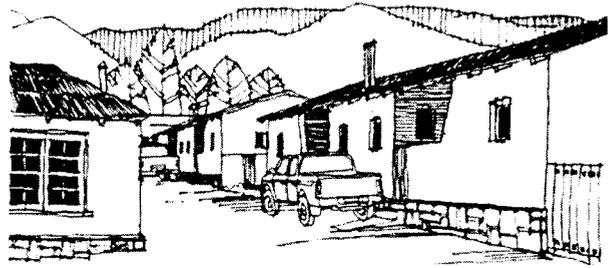

Fig. 2. Low-cost housing, Putre. This scheme was built with appropriate technologies on the Andes mountains.

initiative was implemented by adjusting the tax system to stimulate the sectors where the need was greatest.

First priority was given to the tax reform intended to finance an increase in social expenditure, in order to provide better opportunities to young people from low and middle-income sectors. Equal opportunities and social organization are two essential components necessary to achieve genuine modernization in Chile.[9]

This was the way that economic growth became consistent with an improvement in the distribution of opportunities and income. People throughout the country have begun activities with appropriate technologies and access to modern systems of production (after the demise of the military regime, several developed countries supported the democratic initiative by transferring modern technologies). By the end of 1990, the proportion of poor in the population had dropped below 15 per cent, demonstrating that by tackling disparities the idea of growth with equity can become a reality. The central idea of Aylwin's government explicitly recognized that people should have equally appropriate opportunities and oriented its policies to disadvantaged neighborhoods or depressed areas.

Land management and planning for real

As Unwin defined, the real drama of the modern city is its own periphery. There are clear and evident signs of deterioration where the quality of life falls into dereliction or uncontrolled urban growth. In Chile, the urban edges are in theory fixed by a master plan and regulated by law, but in reality squatters fill any empty space where it is possible to build a group of homes (in Chile these settlements are called Mushrooms, because they grow everywhere in a spontaneous way). This immediately transforms them into an illegal settlement and in addition, the inhabitants use the city's facilities without paying service charges or local taxes.

Hardoy, points that low income people and their subsequent illegal settlements are telling the planners where the city needs to be expanded. Indeed this mass produced way of housing is not only taking over the land, it is also driving the city's growth out of the council's control. In time, there is an enormous cost to the inhabitant and the city's infrastructure, due to the provision of services and transport. Gross, has made cost comparisons, in Santiago, and has demonstrated that the

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to gain governmental help rather than on saving money and improving their housing or neighborhoods.

Hence, this is the reason why the alleviation policies and Pinochet's intentions failed to be realistic. Their administration was highly technocratic and from the top down. There was a complete lack of input or potential solutions in cooperation with the communities.

On the contrary, the first democratic post-Pinochet government of Aylwin made a great effort with more "inclusive or consensual" policies and ways of planning. It was not easy to change the well oriented macro economic policies to develop the private sector and produce a change to integrate "micro-enterprises" to the favorable economic conditions. This was made possible by the social program run by FOSIS (Fund of Social Solidarity) which allowed the integration of the informal sector of the economy, some 1.5 million small factories, employing fewer than five people, in micro businesses, with modern technology, many of them small but efficient with high standards for export. This has increased the rate of exports of "non-traditional products" across the whole country since 1990.[8]

These kinds of policies reflect the concept of targeting the extremely poor, by accepting that the poor also take an important role in the country's economy and development, instead of ignoring the fact that they form part of the 'systematic focus', mentioned before. To help these programs, the main idea of supporting people's

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cost of providing housing outside the city's edge is about twenty times higher when compared with the ones built at the urban edge or in the city centre. This also disregards the fact that the quality of the housing projects goes down and that the dwellings also reduce the quality of urban life.

As a result of the strong influence of the "garden city" model or North American "neighborhood" images, it is true that families with better incomes have chosen to live outside the city's edge. However their sites and lots have very pleasant views or well landscaped areas, in absurd contrast to the derelict land that has been taken over by the illegal settlements.

Immediate negative effects follow the illegal settlements and come as a rapid reaction to the site's natural condition. Normally there are immediate environmental risks, on the one hand because the squatters take over waste land exposed to inundation by rivers and rain waters, or, on the other hand, because the lack of adequate drainage or pavement leaves the land unprotected against erosion or land slides. The potential for urban disaster is totally comprehensible to the international media and well understood by the whole population, but neither the city administration nor the planning authorities advise them about soil qualities or the risk of disasters.

Associated with these negative effects, land values are greatly reduced outside the city's edges and conversely are escalating "downtown." This generates a real pyramid for the city's political and social control through the land market. However, when these settlements represent a good chance of being transformed into development areas the existing squatters are pressed to move out. It is perhaps an oversimplification, of the city growth, to state that whereas the greater part of the facilities and services are located in the city centre, the majority of the population lives out of the city in stark contrast with the public investment made in central areas. Thus, dereliction can be seen in both areas, centrally located and within or beyond the city's edges.[10]

During Aylwin's administration, the Ministry of Housing and Urban Development attempted to stimulate urban development in both directions. This oriented the policies towards the promotion of inner city regeneration and squatters' reallocation programs. The legal policy, document number 152 MINVU, was the first means which allowed the derelict inner city areas to apply for subsidy to improve their housing conditions.[11] Meanwhile the same Ministry encouraged cooperative work between the communities and the local NGOs, supporting several medium-scale housing or neighborhood enhancement schemes, in particular those oriented towards upgrading the existing squatter settlements.

Several of these initial schemes could be seen as the very beginning of participation, but the sense of belonging and the current quality of life of their residents are the best proof for encouraging similar programs.

Housing schemes and neighborhoods as new urban starter

In the 17 years of Pinochet's era, the housing and urban policies applied were characterized by their physical

nature, disregarding social concern and showing a complete lack of consciousness about the poorest in society.

There existed a need to destroy any remaining evidence of the previous socialist government of Allende by clearing the illegal settlement located within the city's edges. This also required radical changes in the planning system to impose a very regulated way of overseeing the city as an artefact, in which people's behavior could be shaped by urban design interventions.

Throughout the country, there were deep social and political conflicts between the inhabitants and the government. The neo-liberal economic model avoided master plans and planning methods by leaving the city to the private sector. Powerful organizations were entitled to propose developments for large areas, in which case the people living in squatter settlements were cleared out and forced to live further away from the city's edges in even more impoverished slum conditions. Sometimes, under police pressure, they were forced to move to other cities.

These processes led the military government to establish an authoritarian planning system to provide standardized housing which actually ignored the inhabitants' needs and most of them returned to the previous sites under risk of imprisonment or death, contributing to the long list of human rights violations. The remaining residents started to alter the given neighborhood making the periphery of the city a living political belt against the housing policies and political repression, where even the police were afraid to patrol.

There is no doubt that housing for the extremely poor was not one of the first priorities of the military coup, instead, strong privatization for national companies and the building sector was the best known action of Pinochet's period. Only a few initiatives were implemented to fight poverty. It was after the earthquake of 1985 that in spite of the political repression, the NGOs began to work within the communities. Everywhere there existed a lack of alternative ways of providing housing besides the traditional fiscal system in which one is allowed to apply for housing through a waiting list, depending on the given score according to people's savings and income or the CAS record for the ultra-poor.

In the military era, two strong NGOs named "Taller Norte" and "Taller Sur," applied for international funds to help communities to improve their illegal settlements or to build new real neighborhoods.[12] Housing developments were carried out through participatory approaches and by using local materials like mud bricks or rough timber or a combination of appropriate technologies.

Later on, with the restoration of the first democratic government, ODEPLAN (National Office for Development and Planning) and MINVU (Ministry of Housing and Urbanism), founded a "schemes bank" forming an efficient network to obtain national and international funds. Soon they realized that as the governmental housing provision was slow and not very efficient, there was little chance of matching the extreme poverty target without its own support.

Even though land values and market speculation continue to represent a real problem, master plans are
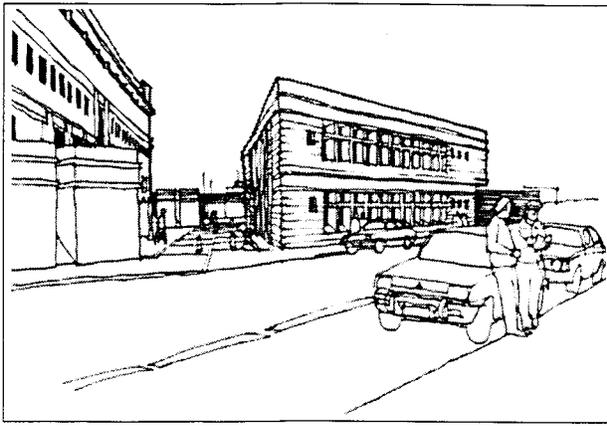
Fig. 3. Public building. This scheme emphasizes the importance of public and pedestrian areas given to the citizens.

not seen as the rigid key to control land use or zoning, as was firmly believed in the past. Instead, that rigid physical idea has been replaced by several "Development Committees," which are actually administering the city's development by consensual agreement. This is the social space where the private, public sector and the residents can "negotiate" their mutual interest in the city's development together.

Besides, as the government is not able to regulate land values because of the neo-liberal market which regulates itself, it is at least providing the arena for "corporate work" when the schemes carried out by the groups need to develop mutual interests. Thus, different groups are incorporated into the projects where sustainable development is achieved by the balance of profit, social concern and an appropriate urban environment.

This has lead to the squatter settlements being taken into account as real neighborhoods, where social organization already exists and can cooperate from the project's start. This approach, of course, is not the only one way to plan and design our living spaces in the city, but at least it has achieved better results and shown a more contented population in the Chilean urban context: above all, an improved quality of life, equity and sustainable urban growth in the whole country.

CONCLUSIONS

It is believed that each unbalanced situation would become a balanced fact in a natural way. After 17 years of a military regime and the restoration of democracy, the whole country has learned this. Let us remember that regaining democracy was only possible because Chile's democratic parties were all able to work together and set aside the differences that had previously divided them before the military intervention in 1973.[13]

The real challenge of making economic growth consistent with an equitable distribution of opportunities and welfare continues to be extremely important for the Chilean's planning system and the city's development. The democratic process requires that economic growth

and quality of life advance simultaneously, paying special attention to the people who are involved in the process and creating an appropriate urban environment for them. A "sustainable urban growth" is supported by the city's organizations and housing association, whose role of cooperation and negotiation seem to maintain a "systematic focus" in which physical and social development have the same importance.

The planning system and housing provision should allow people's participation arising positive attitudes towards local and central government. However, local and central government need to assume a more supportive role in order to better understand the people's needs and to use their capacity of self-organization to solve their existing problems. This starts from a recognition of the fact that even the poorest squatter has a real right to develop their particular way of living, thereby achieving a sense of belonging to a certain location and community. There are still an enormous number of local people's solutions that can assist with the building of the city, giving an identity to their own homes and dwellings and making them aware of the costs involved in housing provision. This will also contribute towards maintaining the whole environment by transferring the responsibility onto the inhabitants.

Equitable and sustainable urban growth is a really fashionable term, but it will only become reality if all the social groups are satisfied and compromise with the development of the city. This will also mean paying equal attention to creating arena(s) for all the existing social groups.

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