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Squatters, Shanties, and Technocratic Professionals: Urban Migration and Housing Shortages in  
Twentieth-Century Chile

by

Nathan Norris

Submitted in partial fulfillment  
of the requirements for the degree of  
Master of Arts History, Hunter College  
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# Squatters, Shanties, and Technocratic Professionals: Urban Migration and Housing Shortages in Twentieth-Century Chile

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## Acronyms

**ALPRO** The Alliance for Progress. A U.S.-sponsored economic development aid program for Latin America established in 1961 under John F. Kennedy intended to preempt the spread of communist revolution.

**CORHABIT** The 1936 Popular Housing Fund was one of Chile's oldest housing related organizations. When merged into CORVI in 1953, CORHABIT was relegated to gathering data more than financing homes.

**CORFO** The Corporation of Production and Development, created in 1940 to assist recovery from the 1939 Chillán earthquake. Used to stimulate development throughout the country more broadly.

**CORMU** The Corporation of Urban Improvement, created in 1965. The organization sponsored many of Santiago's modernist projects in the 1970s.

**CORVI** The Housing Corporation, was fashioned when CORHABIT was merged into the Urbanism Section in 1953. The organization was under the guidance of Luis Muñoz Maluschka, disciple of Brunner.

**IADB** The Inter-American Development Bank created in 1959 greatly augmented U.S. spending capabilities in the region.

**IA-ECOSOC** The Inter-American Economic and Social Council, functioned to provide ALPRO aid recipients with technical advice, conduct detailed studies, and report back to U.S. offices.

**MINVU** The Ministry of Housing and Urbanism, created in 1965 to keep up with Frei's promises. Consolidated other organizations like CORVI and CORHABIT. Tasked to oversee planning and housing-related policy.

**MIR** The Revolutionary Left Movement, a far-left group that opposed the Allende presidency.

They organized several land invasions in the 1970s.

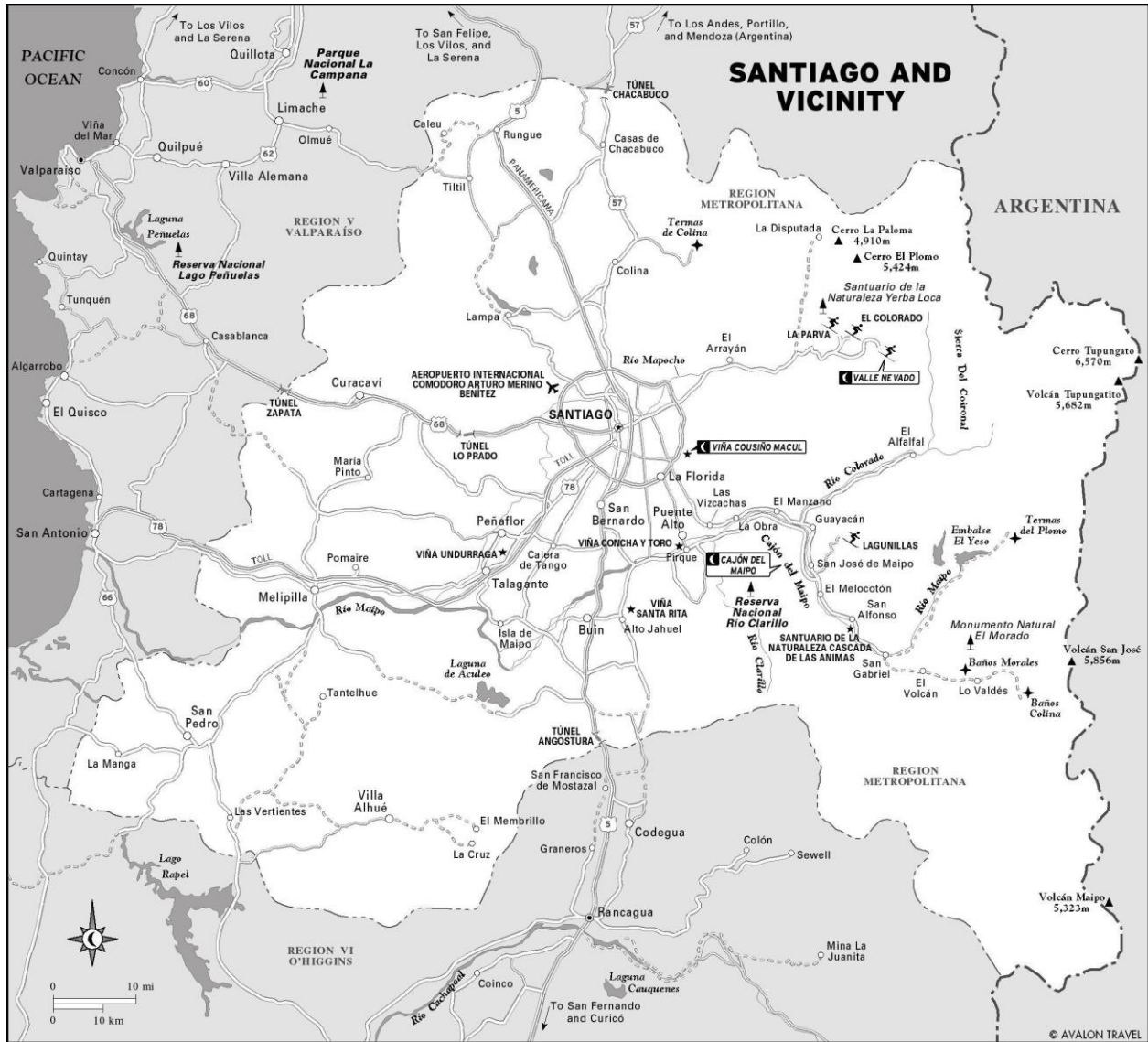
**PC** Communist Party, established 1922.

**PDC** The Christian Democratic Party, founded 1957.

**UP** Popular Unity, the coalition of left groups that supported the election of Salvador Allende in 1970.



**Figure 1.1.** Map of Chile (Source: <http://www.mapsopensource.com/chile-map-black-and-white.html>)



**Figure 1.2.** Map of Santiago and Valparaíso area (Source: <https://moon.com/maps/south-america/chile/>)



## Introduction

Rural Chileans migrated to cities in droves from the late nineteenth century through the 1970s, mostly to the capital of Santiago and the nearby major port of Valparaíso. Economic dependence on copper and nitrates, an outdated, oligarchic class structure, the concentration of wealth in the agricultural realm, and natural disasters like earthquakes, prompted dislocation. Migrants transformed the nation from a largely rural society to a decidedly urban one—from one third of the population living in cities in the early twentieth century to two thirds by the 1970s. Chile's urbanization was one of the more rapid and extensive of all Latin America. A Chilean preoccupation with housing the urban poor was rooted in this massive demographic shift, as poor rural migrants quickly overwhelmed available housing and infrastructure.

The squatter and slum population, in large part jobless or partially employed women and their children, struggled to live in challenging if not outright dangerous environments. Through local organizing efforts squatters and other poor urban strata succeeded in extracting policies and programs of immediate impact on their daily lives, such as affordable housing, and access to public utilities, space, health care, and other essentials. The advocacy of the urban poor and those championing their struggle steered the entire nation in a progressive direction that resulted in a brief period of much-needed reform under presidents Eduardo Frei Montalva (Christian Democrat 1964-70) and Salvador Allende (Marxist 1970-73), before Pinochet's nearly two decades of repression.

A large progressive middle class and an organized working class developed in Chile alongside urbanization and modernization. The interests of these contingents were increasingly reflected and represented in the establishment and growth of new parties and unions that also

consistently advanced a preoccupation with low-income housing throughout the twentieth century. Housing was promoted as a universal right in Chile as early as the 1920s.

However, while Chilean housing programs were ostensibly designed to assist lower sectors, they instead ended up disproportionately benefitting the middle sectors of society, even into the late 1960s. Despite efforts to the contrary, this situation did not markedly change until Salvador Allende's short three years in power.

Chileans attacked housing shortages and rapidly growing slums with a combination of private and state-funded initiatives. The result was an array of institutions that were private, public, or some hybrid of the two. The creation in 1965 of MINVU (The Chilean Ministry of Housing and Urbanism) centralized and condensed most of the public institutions into one umbrella organization. This gave the Frei and Allende administrations an unprecedented and efficient tool for producing and repairing homes, as well as planning neighborhoods and building public works and utilities.

I hope in this thesis to shed light on how the intellectual trends within circles of technical experts influenced and substantiated prevailing public opinion and government policy regarding urban housing. Chilean architects, planners, engineers, and other professionals were in continual dialogue with their European counterparts, dating back to the nineteenth century. This provided for refined approaches to housing, planning, and construction that maintained pace with worldwide practices. Although Chile was not visited by influential modernists like Le Corbusier and Josep Lluís Sert, Chileans selected their own set of foreign professionals to learn from, such as Austrian planner, Karl Brunner in the 1930s, who many perceive as having delayed the adoption of modernist approaches in Chile given his outspoken dislike of Le Corbusier.

Nonetheless, historical, economic, and political contexts aligned in a way that Chileans began to pioneer modernist approaches to housing shortages and were recognized for their efforts internationally. By the 1940s, 50s, and 60s, colossal housing shortages in cities and lack of resources necessitated a turn to modernist principles of urban design and mass apartment blocks.

Global advances in science and technology dictated that urban studies embody precision and professionalism, backed by concrete statistical figures. In this spirit, constructing a new town or housing community was a complex procedure—one that normally required detailed demographic studies, surveys of the natural landscape, and the employment of considerable power and machinery.<sup>1</sup> The involvement in projects of sociologists, anthropologists, developers, religious leaders, political leaders, geographers, and technicians of all stripes accompanied the coordination of architects, urban planners and engineers. This history suggests that much is left to be discovered within the records left by these experts, as numerous and scattered as they are.

This thesis is the product of weaving together information culled from available books and articles on these subjects with personal research done at the Chilean National Archives in Santiago and the Paul Lester Wiener Collection at the University of Oregon. MINVU provided most primary source material used in this analysis.

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<sup>1</sup> Paul Lester Wiener Papers, Special Collections, the University of Oregon Library.

## Chapter 1: Historiography of Urban Housing in Latin America

In the twentieth century, most of Latin America was characterized by urban centers swelling from influxes of poor rural migrants in search of economic opportunity. English geographer Alan Gilbert was one of the first authors to theorize about the resulting housing shortages and the shantytown phenomenon. Gilbert's many studies were guided by the fundamental goal of understanding "... how the needs of the urban poor with respect to housing and servicing are articulated and satisfied."<sup>2</sup> Gilbert worked with survey teams that were deployed to major cities throughout Latin America with questionnaires. The cities he studied differed in their historical contexts, political settings, timing of migrations, property relations, types of housing, etc. Nevertheless, cities developed with "... almost identical suburbs, so that it is difficult to tell either the shanty towns or the high-income residential areas in one city from those in another." Describing the inescapable poverty that characterizes these cities in which "Traffic congestion, skyscrapers and street children are found everywhere,"<sup>3</sup> Gilbert proposes that a shared struggle against mass poverty arose throughout Latin American cities.

While the results of urban migration may have been similar throughout Latin America, migration to cities occurred at a dramatic rate in Chile that significantly outpaced its neighbors.

This surge in urban population proved instrumental in shaping the physical development of

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<sup>2</sup> Alan Gilbert and Peter M. Ward, *Housing, the state, and the poor: Policy and practice in three Latin American Cities* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 1.

<sup>3</sup> Alan Gilbert, *The Latin American City* (New York: Penguin Books, 1975), 1.

Chile's cities, as well as government policy on all levels. Poor migrants new to Chile's cities, in most cases accustomed to generations of living in isolated or remote areas and unfamiliar with the conventions of modern western finance and land ownership, encountered a lack of affordable dwellings, along with a complex bureaucratic process impeding access to scarcely available state-financed assistance. Families took matters into their own hands, staking out large sections of vacant land and rapidly transforming them into mosaics of makeshift houses constructed out of whatever material was available. The authorities tore the shacks down, but the poor relentlessly reconstructed new ones virtually overnight.

In Chile (in what reads as uniquely Chilean) an expansive vocabulary was employed to refer to shanties and slums: most famously *poblaciones*, inhabited by *pobladores*, but other terms for poor neighborhoods included *callampas*, *ranchos*, *conventillos*, *cités*, *campamentos*, and *tomas*. These off-the-grid communities, out of the reaches of municipally provided paved streets, plumbing, and potable water, were viewed by officials and elite sectors of society (the church, policy makers, business owners, etc.) as hygienically hazardous moral disaster zones.

The improvement of poor neighborhoods in Latin America hinged on successful grassroots efforts, as well as overcoming bureaucratic hurdles. In Brodwyn Fischer's *A Poverty of Rights: Citizenship and Inequality in Twentieth-Century Rio de Janeiro*, she illustrates that in Brazil enfranchisement entailed performing a host of duties that people were often unwilling or unable to comply with.<sup>4</sup> Local organizing is no easy task, yet throughout Latin America groups of all kinds made their voices heard. In Chile, this ranged from women's groups, to football clubs, housing associations and homeless committees, unions, and the Communist Party.

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<sup>4</sup> Brodwyn Fischer, *A Poverty of Rights: Citizenship and Inequality in Twentieth-Century Rio de Janeiro* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2008), 310.

Latin American social movements celebrated the entirety of the poor masses, not just those on the assembly lines. Communists, radicals, progressives, and Christians assisted in navigating modern laws and programs, as well as in articulating the voice and needs of the informal and peasant populations. There was a vague consensus among many in Latin America that the poor simply deserved more. Both the impoverished citizens themselves and their proponents used the umbrella terms like “poor families,” “poor workers,” or the “urban poor” to identify a population that inhabited various occupations, homes, and neighborhoods.<sup>5</sup> Fischer notes that despite the conventional leftist position on the lumpenproletariat (the informal and part-time workers outside the realm of mass industrialization, who unlike the factory worker, were not seen as central to the revolution), party members (capital C Communists) outspokenly promoted the rights of favela dwellers in the twentieth century. The same can be said for Chile and the *pobladores*.

Edward Murphy combines anthropological and historical methods in his book *For a Proper Home: Housing Rights in the Margins of Urban Chile, 1960-2010*.<sup>6</sup> Murphy writes: “In mass-market, democratic societies, private property regimes have retained certain exclusive and hierarchical characteristics, forming much of the material ground upon which class distinctions develop.” Murphy continues: “Such a foundation links individual comportment with spatial relations, the distribution of resources, and governance. It has implications for ideas of both social standing and justice. In the former instance, gaining access to property is about gaining a

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<sup>5</sup> They encompassed not just industrial workers and miners but “...washerwomen and domestic servants, street vendors and odd-jobbers, cobblers, tailors, and workers fallen into the ranks of the perennially unemployed,” Ibid., 3-4.

<sup>6</sup> Edward Murphy, *For a Proper Home: housing Rights in the Margins of Urban Chile, 1960-2010* (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2015), 26.

place in the social order.”<sup>7</sup> Perceptions of space and home ownership were intrinsically linked to social hierarchies and enfranchisement, in what was a gendered and inherently violent process. Owning property proved the basic means of accessing the benefits of the centralized state, such that lack of ownership cemented many in the role of underclass citizens. Murphy shows how the Chilean state imposed itself at the very doorsteps of the shanties, in the form of exclusion and outright threat. Space, class, gender, and race were fundamentally interconnected in the slums of Santiago despite promises of equality and reform.

Conservative segments of the population assumed, with some basis, that the slums were headquarters for radicals, and that the poor were susceptible to recruitment by them. Civil discontent was associated with poor neighborhoods early in Chile’s urbanization, a reality that continued into the 1960s and 70s. As far back as the 1940s and the Popular Front era, radicals and progressives of all stripes spoke up for the homeless and squatters and became active in their neighborhoods, and they were celebrated in return; in the 1960s this included folk singers like Violeta Parra,<sup>8</sup> and organizers like Gladys Marín.<sup>9</sup> By 1970 the poor suburbs surrounding Santiago became known as the “Red Belt,” and the neighborhood of San Miguel was known as “Red Country.”<sup>10</sup> By the 1970s and 80s riot police would ritually storm into the shanties and attack protesters, who fiercely fought back. Organizational efforts engaged in by radicals and

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<sup>7</sup> Ibid., 27.

<sup>8</sup> Murphy, *For a Proper Home*, 79.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid.; Margaret Power, *Right-Wing Women in Chile: Feminine Power and the Struggle Against Allende, 1964-1973* (University Park: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 2002), 18; Cathy Lisa Schneider, *Shantytown Protest in Pinochet’s Chile*, (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1995), 53.

<sup>10</sup> San Miguel was adjacent to the well-documented Yarur textile mill, see Peter Winn, *The Yarur Workers and Chile’s Road to Socialism* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1986), 84.

progressives yielded real results for the shanty dwellers who in return committed themselves to the left.

The Latin American history of housing, shantytowns, and the urban poor is necessarily interrelated with that of other spheres, for example, the history of public health, disease, and medicine. Diseases, natural disasters and even the toll of war ripped through poor neighborhoods, both urban and rural, far too frequently inflicting the greatest tolls on those already suffering most. In *The Ailing City: Health, Tuberculosis, and Culture in Buenos Aires, 1870-1950*, Diego Armus examines how disease grew to become associated with the Argentinian urban poor. He writes of the tuberculosis public health program: "... it ended up, by the second quarter of the twentieth century, focusing on certain social groups, now defined by their occupation and place of residence rather than, as in the past, their lifestyles and presumed morality."<sup>11</sup> Being poor was synonymous with a hazardous, unhealthy, and disease-ridden existence, such that attempts to eradicate disease were overwhelmingly centered on city slums. Armus continues: "This process, like many others associated with the arrival and consolidation of a certain modernity, was bound up in consent and coercion, social imitation and learning, novelty and tradition."<sup>12</sup> State expansion and modernization in this instance sent public health and medical professionals to dwellings to help an often-unreceptive lower class. Outdated sewage systems, lack of potable water, close quarters in multifamily homes where people lived side-by-side with farm animals—these were singled out as some of the most pressing unsanitary occurrences in poor neighborhoods.

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<sup>11</sup> Diego Armus, *The Ailing City: Health, Tuberculosis, and Culture in Buenos Aires, 1870-1950* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2011), 346.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, 346.



Modernizing processes of all kinds—state and legal expansion, social programs, urban development, disease containment and control, construction of housing and infrastructure—constituted a multifaceted force for change that bore down on the poorest residents of urban slums in Latin America. Informal workers, the working class, agricultural laborers, and increasingly religious leaders, the middle class, and politicians, centered efforts on housing and the plethora of issues closely related to it. Urban poverty was frequently treated as an emergency, even when it was not the result of natural disasters like earthquakes, or war displacement. The crisis of urban poverty ultimately demanded state intervention, accompanied by significant foreign financial backing.

## Chapter 2: Structures of Chilean Society

### Class, Economy, and Urbanization

The twentieth-century Chilean experience with slums is necessarily informed by Chile's geography and socioeconomic development. The narrow strip beyond the Andes was remote in colonial times. The provincial capital of Santiago, founded in 1541 by Pedro de Valdivia, sat at the center of a region relegated to feeding the other parts of the Spanish empire.<sup>13</sup> An elite group of Spanish immigrants exploited a small indigenous peasant population.

This dynamic did not drastically change with independence from Spain. The *latifundia* system of large estates employing semi-peon laborers dominated Chilean agriculture in the nineteenth century, and lasted in rural regions well into the twentieth century. By the end of the 1930s, and despite various reform and redistribution efforts, most useful land remained in the hands of a few: between 1935 and 1936 an estimated tiny elite-owned 626 estates constituted 57.73 percent of all arable land.<sup>14</sup> Monteón notes that many of the families who controlled Chile in 1963 were related to those who sat atop the colony in 1800.<sup>15</sup> The Larraín family, for example, epitomized these Spanish-descended aristocrats.<sup>16</sup> The same can be said for Chilean cities, as "... in the early nineteenth century, the ruling clique in Santiago could not have included more than fifty or sixty families..."<sup>17</sup> Zeitlin and Radcliff describe the ruling class as

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<sup>13</sup> Fernando Pérez Oyarzún and José Rosas Vera, "Cities within the City: Urban and Architectural Transfers in Santiago de Chile, 1840-1940," in *Planning Latin America's Capital Cities, 1850-1950*, ed. Arturo Almandoz (London: Routledge, 2002), 110.

<sup>14</sup> Thomas C. Wright, *Landlords and Reform in Chile: The Sociedad Nacional de Agricultura, 1919-1940* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1986), 125, see Table 15.

<sup>15</sup> Michael Monteón, *Chile and the Great Depression: The Politics of Underdevelopment, 1927-1948* (Tempe: Arizona State University, 1998), 4.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*

having indistinguishable economic and family interests.<sup>18</sup> They were, in fact “... simultaneously ‘capitalist’ and ‘landlord,’ [and] integrated into particular clusters of multiply intermarried propertied families...”<sup>19</sup> This ruling elite maintained disproportionate control, as many Chilean political parties and organizations were essentially extensions of the ruling class.

Most Chileans were part of the underclass of *inquilinos*, or tenant farmers. Before the colossal migrations hit critical mass, these people had little economic opportunity or prospects of rising out of deep indebtedness to large landowners. Rural folk were expected to grow their own food and extra wheat to sell and pay other expenses, as well as provide wheat for the landowner, though there was rarely enough land left over to make this feasible. People worked in exchange for *regalías* (derived from the word gift), which included housing, food, a small plot of land, and other necessities provided by the old aristocratic families. The *inquilinos* received some cash payment, but as late as the 1950s as much as 70 percent of their income was received as *regalías*.<sup>20</sup> In something akin to sharecropping, the *inquilinos* owed the landowners a large portion of the crops produced on their farm.<sup>21</sup> Furthermore, the small farmers were required to hire seasonal workers out of their own pockets.<sup>22</sup> The market was already flooded with the product of the large landowners (also grown with the labor of the *inquilinos*) and cheaper imported goods, so the common farmers could not compete given their small operations.

Chile may have been a frontier under Spanish control, but after independence the global market reflected international business interests. The Chilean wheat industry produced massive

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<sup>18</sup> Maurice Zeitlin and Richard Earl Radcliff, *Landlords & Capitalists: The Dominant Class of Chile* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1988), 7.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*, 9.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*, 21.

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*, 22.

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*, 22-23.

quantities to feed overseas nations like the U.S. and Australia. Apart from agriculture, the pillars of the Chilean economy became the production and export of copper and nitrates (saltpeter),<sup>23</sup> industries that were predominantly foreign-owned.<sup>24</sup> The wealth that was generated from the nitrates industry in its heyday reverberated throughout Chilean society, sparking unprecedented industry, commerce, migration, and construction.<sup>25</sup> Copper remained economically paramount in Chile throughout most of the twentieth century; however, in an often-volatile world market the nation was destined to face insecurity when selling its major product, which eventually became overwhelmingly U.S.-controlled. In contrast, however, the nitrate industry only sustained the nation into the beginning of the twentieth century, as it collapsed during the Great Depression.

Chile's urbanization patterns and its construction of infrastructure aligned with its geography and industries. The nation's elongated and narrow geography required that wealth and transportation be concentrated around the Central Valley.<sup>26</sup> The nitrate era saw some export activity out of ports in the north, but for the most part all movement of natural resources, food, and products was slated for a circumscribed path that led first to Santiago, and then out the port

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<sup>23</sup> Nitrates were in demand on the international market not only for their value as a fertilizer, but also as a key component in munitions, see Michael Monteón, *Chile in the Nitrate Era: The Evolution of Economic Dependence, 1880-1930* (Madison: The University of Wisconsin Press, 1982), xii.

<sup>24</sup> The annexation of the Antofagasta region at the very northern tip of Chile, acquired with victory in the War of the Pacific (1879-83) fought against Peru and Bolivia, incorporated territory rich in nitrates, initiating the nitrate era.

<sup>25</sup> As DeShazo writes: "This development of industrialization, and infrastructure required manpower. The country remained in a state of great demographic flux for the next fifty years, as agricultural workers of the Central Valley gravitated to the mining camps and ports of the North and to the fast-growing cities of Santiago and Valparaíso," Peter DeShazo, *Urban Workers and Labor Unions in Chile 1902-1927* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1983), 3.

<sup>26</sup> Jon V. Kofas, *The Sword of Damocles: U.S. Financial Hegemony in Colombia and Chile, 1950-1970* (Westport: Praeger, 2002), 91.

of Valparaíso.<sup>27</sup> The material conditions of the country and its geographical layout, the location of its economic foundations, the motives of owners, and the structure of Chilean society all suggested that a high rate of migration would inevitably yield an urban housing crisis.

An itinerant labor force staffed the first railroads, mines, construction sites, and ports necessary for urbanization. Many of the first urban migrants were these seasonal workers who floated from job to job, and who worked the labor-intensive phase of the wheat harvest. They filled many careers that would gain influence as the century wore on, such as railcar operator or dockworker. These laborers became the backbone of Chilean modernization and urbanization, as the floating seasonal workforce found opportunities at first in the mining boomtowns and ports, but increasingly primarily in the capital and Valparaíso.<sup>28</sup>

Families and single men fled the mines at the northern end of the country and the beleaguered wheat farms in the thousands for the cities of the central region.<sup>29</sup> The Santiago-Valparaíso region became one of the only viable destinations for those seeking jobs. The country's transition from rural to urban in character was the result of these two cities' booming population growth.

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<sup>27</sup> Valparaíso developed in parallel to the California Gold Rush, as before the building of the Panama Canal ships were forced to sail around the entire South American continent. The port city often accommodated travelers from places like San Francisco, and in turn some U.S. architects and planners made their way south through this connection.

<sup>28</sup> Ibid.; DeShazo vividly describes how the rural workforce came to form the basis of the “peón-gañán segment of the Chilean urban working class.” He concludes: “A peón-gañán could move quickly from one task to another, from city to harvest to mine and back again. As time passed, many took up more permanent work,” see DeShazo, *Urban Workers and Labor Unions in Chile*, 5.

<sup>29</sup> For example, in August of 1914 *South Pacific Mail* reported 2,000 unemployed families flooded into the capital, most having fled the dying industry in the nitrate fields, see Walter, *Politics and Urban Growth in Santiago*, 60.

**Table 2.1.** Population totals in and net migrations to Santiago and Valparaíso

| <b>Year</b> | <b>Santiago</b> | <b>Valparaíso</b> |
|-------------|-----------------|-------------------|
| 1885        | 172,271         | 109,581           |
| 1930        | 542,432         | 196,025           |
| 1952        | 1,754,954       | 498,254           |
| 1960        | 1,797,212       | 549,229           |
| 1970        | 3,208,553       | 736,708           |
| 1940-1970   | 788,407         | 66,500            |

(Sources: Markos J. Mamalakis, *Historical Statistics of Chile: Demography and Labor Force, Volume 2*; R. Paul Shaw, *Land Tenure and the Rural Exodus in Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, and Peru*; Peter DeShazo, *Urban Workers and Labor Unions in Chile*.)

**Table 2.2.** Urbanization of Chile

| <b>Year</b> | <b>Urban Population</b> |
|-------------|-------------------------|
| 1907        | 43%                     |
| 1920        | 46%                     |
| 1930        | 49%                     |
| 1940        | 53%                     |
| 1952        | 60%                     |
| 1960        | 68%                     |
| 1970        | 75%                     |
| 1975        | 78%                     |
| 1980        | 81%                     |

(Source: Mamalakis, *Historical Statistics of Chile*)

### ***Ranchos and Conventillos: Evolution of Chilean Shanties and Slum Tenements***

The first wave of migrants to Santiago crowded into makeshift shantytowns along the Mapocho River, initially dubbed *ranchos*. The outskirts of Santiago became populated with women who carried with them their rural tendencies, combining domestic agriculture, cottage

industries, and small commerce out of their shacks to stay afloat on the edge of the city.<sup>30</sup> Yet these women were consistently stigmatized for this industriousness. Women and children were some of the earliest migrants to cities, as an underclass of women was necessary for urban life—the aristocrats and developing middle class desired domestic workers, such as nannies and maids.<sup>31</sup> The ranchos were the roots of the *pobladores* that would become famous by the 1960s and 70s. To the elite these presented a repulsive juxtaposition to the grandiose *beaux arts* style of the city’s center, which they described using dreadful racist language—the visible poverty, after all, clashed with the perceived sophistication of the central Alameda and the Mint.<sup>32</sup> The rich and middle class wished to avoid embarrassment with European visitors, who were troubled by the normal homelessness, begging, and lack of open public space.<sup>33</sup> Despite efforts to eradicate them, the shacks were a persistent city sight in the early decades of the twentieth century. They extended up into the hills surrounding Valparaíso and circled downtown Santiago in nearly every direction but the northeast.

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<sup>30</sup> Elizabeth Quay Hutchinson, *Labors Appropriate to Their Sex: Gender, Labor, and Politics in Urban Chile, 1900-1930* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2001), 5.

<sup>31</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>32</sup> A smallpox outbreak had devastated Santiago’s *conventillos* (tenements) and *arrabales* (low-income neighborhoods composed of Arab immigrants) in 1871, prompting the demolition of unsanitary dwellings and leaving their residents packing for the even further off-the-grid *rancherías* along the river. The rich went as far as to label these people “barbaric African hordes,” see Murphy, *For a Proper Home*, 45

<sup>33</sup> A publication by Albert Masch in Geneva documented his trip to Santiago between 1904 and 1906, where he witnessed 200,000 *rotos* or “broken ones” in the city slums, see Walter, *Politics and Urban Growth in Santiago*, 18.

**Table 2.3.** *Conventillos* in Santiago

| Year | Conventillos | People  |
|------|--------------|---------|
| 1906 | 2,000        | 130,000 |
| 1916 | 2,022        |         |
| 1930 | 3,000        | 250,000 |
| 1936 | 4,700        | 300,000 |

(Sources: DeShazo, *Urban Workers and Labor Unions in Chile*, 57; González Arriagada, “Surviving in the City,” 87)



255 «CONVENTILLO» SURAMERICANO

**Figure 2.1.** *Conventillo* as depicted by Karl Brunner in 1939 (Source: Karl Brunner, *Manual de Urbanismo Volume 1* [New York: Routledge, 2016], 262)

*Conventillos*, tenement style multi-family housing, offered only minimally improved living conditions to the ranchos. Most of the *conventillos* were a residue of Santiago’s not-so-distant agricultural past, repurposed buildings, such as grain warehouses and the like, typically



one or two-story buildings “...with a single door on the street opening into a square courtyard.”<sup>34</sup> Landlords used the shells of old structures and compartmentalized the buildings into apartments to maximize profit, without consideration for the safety or comfort of the residents. Families would occupy their own small, dimly-lit room surrounding the courtyard, most lacking a window, as the window-equipped rooms facing the street commanded the highest rent.<sup>35</sup> The *conventillos* were extremely susceptible to earthquakes, storms, and other natural disasters, as they were cheaply and haphazardly constructed.<sup>36</sup> The rooms faced internally toward a communal courtyard, kitchen, and an open sewage canal that ran through the whole complex. This understandably became acknowledged as a serious health hazard.<sup>37</sup> *Conventillos* also housed bakeries, storefronts, and farm animals. The courtyards became centers of urban life, as the practices of rural living had to be adapted to fit in the new availability of space.

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<sup>34</sup> DeShazo, *Urban Workers and Labor Unions in Chile*, 59.

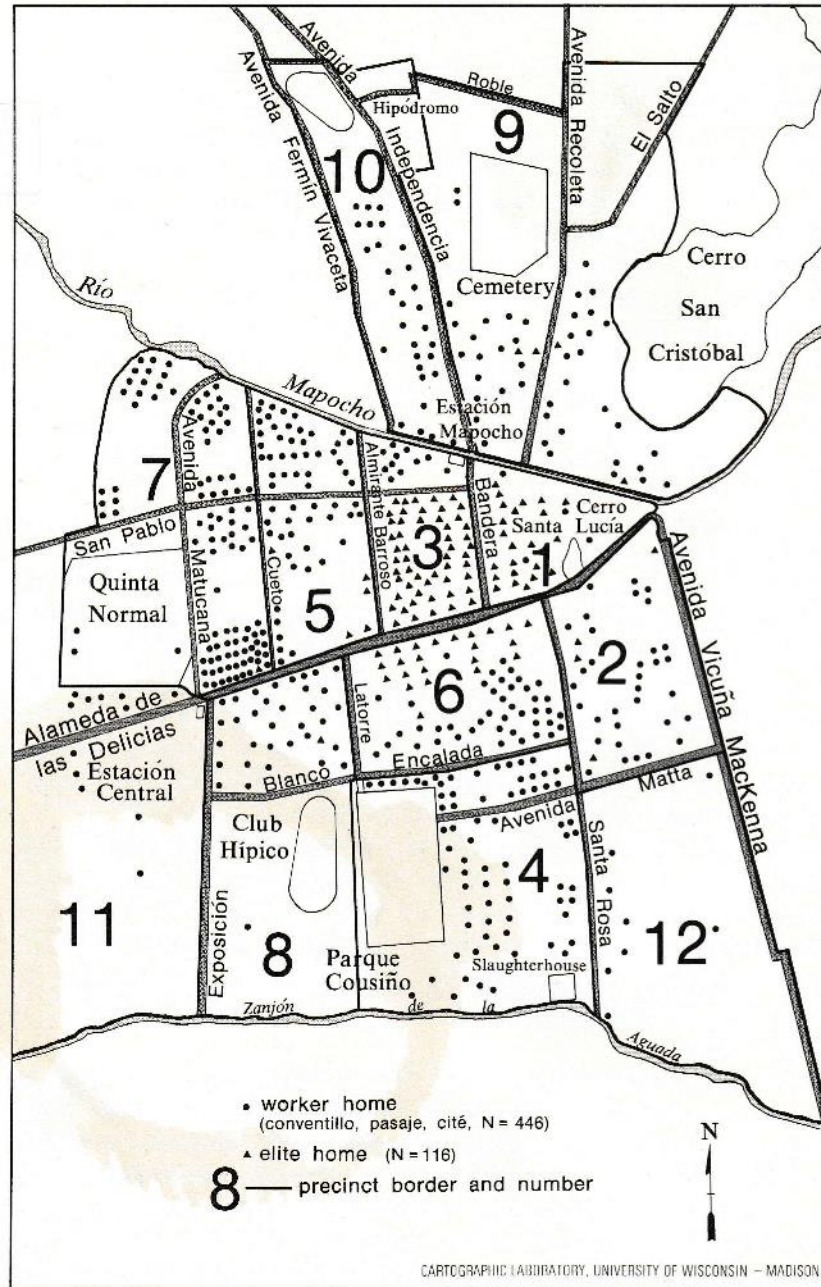
<sup>35</sup> Ibid.

<sup>36</sup> Ibid.

<sup>37</sup> Hutchison, *Labors Appropriate to Their Sex*, 29.

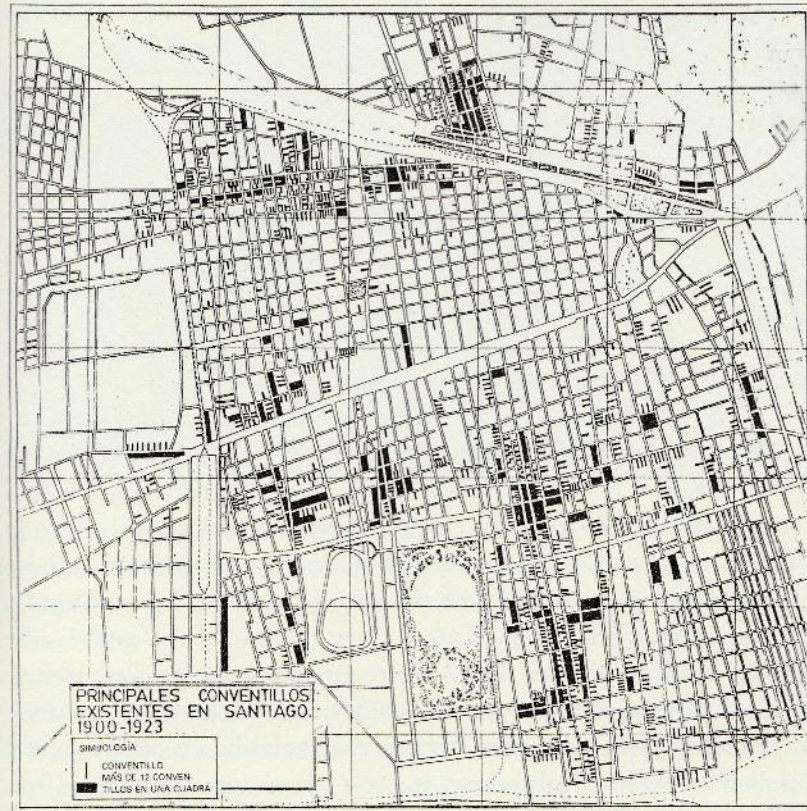


**Figure 2.2.** Aerial view of Santiago's *conventillos* (Source: Brunner, *Manual de Urbanismo*, 60)



Map 3.1. Elite and worker housing in Santiago, c. 1910. Sources: elite addresses from Policía de Santiago, *Guía de informaciones policiales*; for conventillo addresses, see note 4.

**Figure 2.3.** Map of *conventillos* and *cités* in Santiago, 1910 (Source: DeShazo, *Urban Workers and Labor Unions in Chile*, 58)



3. Santiago's *conventillos*, 1900–1923. Source: Isabel Torres Dujisin, “Los conventillos de Santiago (1900–1930),” *Cuadernos de Historia* 6 (July 1986): 69. Courtesy of *Cuadernos de Historia*, Universidad de Chile.

**Figure 2.4.** Map of *conventillos* 1900-1923 (Source: Elizabeth Quay Hutchison, *Labors Appropriate to Their Sex: Gender, Labor, and Politics in Urban Chile, 1900-1930* [Durham: Duke University Press, 2001], 31)

Early in the century large portions of Santiago were entirely composed of shacks, tenements, and other forms of cheap housing. A 1915 article noted eighty blocks in the northwest section of the capital as being entirely composed of *cités* and *conventillos*.<sup>38</sup> *Cités*—two or three-room brick apartments clustered in small groupings around a corridor that opened to the street—were a step above *conventillos* and were often reserved for city clerks and

<sup>38</sup> Walter, *Politics and Urban Growth in Santiago*, 83.

bureaucrats.<sup>39</sup> *Cités* were unavailable to the poorest Chileans but were still demarcated as substandard.

**Table 2.4.** Demographic comparison of men and women in Santiago and in *conventillos*

| Year and Scope                 | Men     | Women   | Children |
|--------------------------------|---------|---------|----------|
| 1925 Survey of 24 Conventillos | 375     | 498     | 471      |
| 1920 Population of Santiago    | 252,873 | 300,625 |          |

(Source: Hutchison, *Labors Appropriate to Their Sex*, 32, 25, see table 1)

Santiago was a city of poor women and their children, who were the most common occupants of the repurposed *conventillos*. Men, if employed, often resided in housing provided by employers. Lucrative men's occupations were backbreaking and conditions were hazardous, providing for an appalling mortality rate, and leaving many widows bound for the cheapest housing available. Furthermore, many men arrived in the earlier migration waves described above. As rural society further collapsed women and children fled the dire situation. In 1925, the U.S. ambassador to Chile wrote to Washington disgusted by the *conventillos*, describing them as crowded 15 sq. ft. rooms that typically housed families of four, but often as high as eight individuals.<sup>40</sup> The Labor Office estimated a density of about 65.4 people per building.<sup>41</sup> People were sleeping side-by-side in tiny rooms stacked up for several floors. Mothers and their children were forced to live near unfamiliar and even outright threatening men. In 1918 the High Council on Housing ordered 1,319 *conventillo* rooms be torn down.<sup>42</sup> Houses built by the

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<sup>39</sup> Ibid., 13.

<sup>40</sup> Walter, *Politics and Urban Growth in Santiago*, 13-14.

<sup>41</sup> Ibid; DeShazo, *Urban Workers and Labor Unions in Chile*, 57.

<sup>42</sup> Hutchison, *Labors Appropriate to their Sex*, 30.

Santiago Savings Fund in 1919 were meant to be affordable, but proved far out of reach of the budgets of their intended consumers, the poor.<sup>43</sup>

Despite the visible abject poverty, by the 1920s the local authorities had formed a new, albeit unofficial stance on shanties that did not easily harmonize with the goals of professionals and policy makers—so long as the slums remained out of sight from the city center and other rich neighborhoods, their residents were left alone. The poor took advantage and camped out in every nook, such as unoccupied corners between roads and rivers, though most concentrated just north of the Mapocho River.<sup>44</sup> New arrivals from the nitrate fields, on the other hand, received government-provided shelters called *albergues*.<sup>45</sup> State housing could not tackle the persistent stream of new arrivals from the north, and many displaced miners and their families did not manage to duck the slumlord-owned *conventillos*. Nonetheless, the contrast in government assistance perpetuated a division between the informal part-time laborers with rural beginnings and the incoming miners, though the two groups might easily be neighbors sharing a wall or even a room within the same tenement. From the viewpoint of most groups promoting industrialization and urbanization, workers displaced from the mines were expected to enter more worthwhile occupations and in turn fuel the economy.

The Chilean urban population explosion necessitated expanded bureaucracies and distinct zones, so that tasks and funds could be divvied up. In turn residents were abruptly confronted with new bureaucratic offices and complex laws. 1906 witnessed the division of Santiago into nineteen municipalities, which left many residents disconnected from city services and

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<sup>43</sup> DeShazo, *Urban Workers and Labor Unions in Chile*, 64.

<sup>44</sup> González Arriagada, “Surviving in the City,” 21.

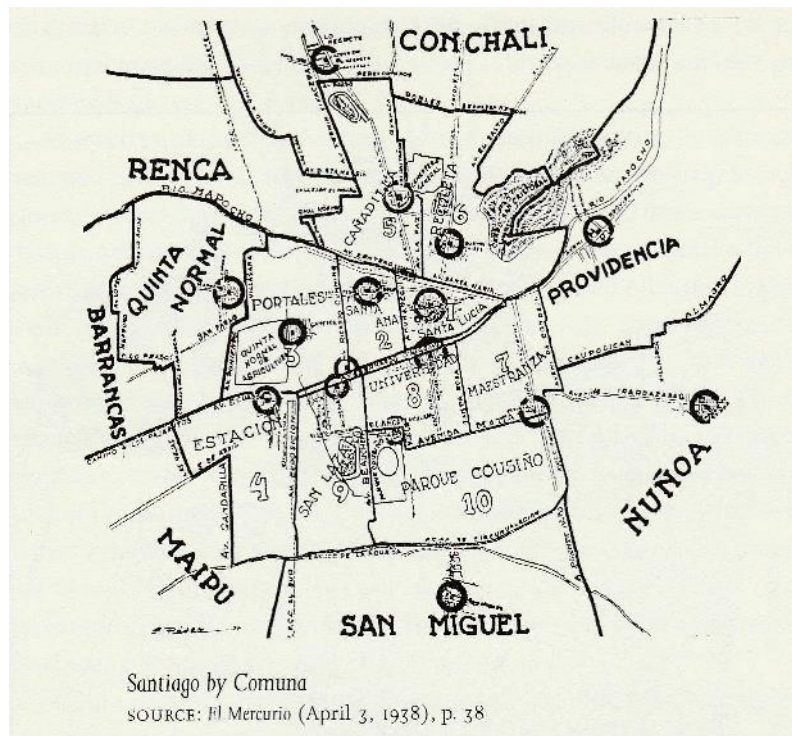
<sup>45</sup> *Ibid.*, 22.

infrastructure. Per the MINVU website, twenty-nine new *poblaciones* were created in the city in 1925, and fourteen in other regions.<sup>46</sup> The new neighborhoods of Santiago exploded in population, a large part of which can be attributed to *rancho* and *conventillo* residents.

**Table 2.5.** Growth of new municipalities of Santiago

| Year | Providencia | Nuñoa  | San Miguel | Quinta Normal | Conchalí |
|------|-------------|--------|------------|---------------|----------|
| 1907 | 11,028      | 17,880 | 7,256      | 6,932         | 8,997    |
| 1920 | 23,130      | 26,756 | 13,234     | 19,711        | 11,951   |

(Source: Walter, *Politics and Urban Growth in Santiago*, 74)



**Figure 2.5.** Santiago’s neighborhoods in 1938 (Walter, *Politics and Urban Growth in Santiago*, 10)

<sup>46</sup> “Historia del ministerio de urbanismo y vivienda.”

In the process of creating municipalities, poor residents were sold fake land titles by developers, giving them a false sense of security in “phantom subdivisions.”<sup>47</sup> Homes were relegated to no-man’s-land, forgotten between adjacent official zones; most commonly these were the informal shacks and tents wedged up against a bridge or riverbank. Horror stories were typical, as residents held onto titles for decades only to discover their paperwork was meaningless.

### **Radicalization and Progressivism**

Working-class Chileans developed an affinity for unionization and militant actions in the first few decades of the twentieth century, with much of the struggle rooted in overcrowding and lack of homes in urban centers. In the early part of the century, strikes, protests, and outright violent conflict were a common sight in Chile’s major cities. One of the most significant working class demonstrations took place in 1905 and was deemed “Red Week.” Rising food prices and a cattle tax mobilized 30,000 to 50,000 people in Santiago to protest peacefully at first. But this quickly broke down into two days of mob-led destruction and looting aimed at the wealthy and their property. It proved to be the “...bloodiest uprising in the history of Santiago before 1973; over 300 persons were killed and at least 1,000 injured.”<sup>48</sup> Major strikes included the 1916 railway strike in Santiago, the 1917 general strike in Valparaíso, and the 1918 printing strike.<sup>49</sup>

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<sup>47</sup> Murphy, *For a Proper Home*, 55.

<sup>48</sup> Wright, *Landowners and Reform in Chile*, 103.

<sup>49</sup> DeShazo, *Urban Workers and Labor Unions in Chile*, 167.



In 1930s Santiago, students organized armed contingents and engaged in outright gun battles with the Chilean *carabineros* or police force.<sup>50</sup> The civil unrest in the cities was overwhelmingly orchestrated by middle sectors, while the participants in the upheavals were more likely to be artisans, transportation workers, or students, not the homeless.<sup>51</sup> Urbanization entailed pushes for equality and reform, a response to the tremendously concentrated wealth in the hands of the Chilean upper class. Residents demanded attention from the government to their basic needs, and they often did so by taking to the streets. Not surprisingly, demonstrations and clashes with the authorities inevitably extended to the issue of inadequate housing and poor housing conditions. By 1925, after three years of renter strikes over *conventillo* conditions in both Valparaíso and Santiago—they mainly consisted of nitrate workers and their families who had been moved out of government-provided housing—tenant leagues sprang up throughout the cities.<sup>52</sup> Even formally employed workers and middle-class segments of society were relegated to substandard homes and neighborhoods. Accustomed to decades of experience voicing gripes and, if need be, organizing strikes and demonstrations, they naturally continued to put up a fight.

While the city's poor made their way south and north of downtown in search of affordable rent, those with enough money fled to the eastern suburbs, to neighborhoods that remain upper and middle class to this day, like Las Condes and Providencia. A new bureaucracy and contingent of skilled professionals who made up an incipient middle class began to cohere within this group of better off urban dwellers. They would be at the forefront of emerging efforts

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<sup>50</sup> Monteón, *Chile and the Great Depression*, 45-46.

<sup>51</sup> See Table A.1 and A.2 in Appendix A.

<sup>52</sup> González Arriagada, "Surviving in the City," 21.

to make city life possible.<sup>53</sup> Meanwhile elite Chileans from cities and the countryside alike sent their children abroad or to the universities in Santiago and Valparaíso for education, which they attained living adjacent to the visible suffering of rapidly mushrooming inadequate housing. Concern, sympathy, and worry for the workers and underclass took hold among the younger members of these better off sectors of society as they were exposed to the deplorable living conditions of the urban poor. In addition, these early members of the Chilean middle and bureaucratic classes also largely ascribed to a concept of a Chilean ‘people,’ a notion that, combined with a measure of patriotism or nationalism, shaped a concerted effort to assist the members of the “Chilean race”. At a more self-interested level, moreover, emerging professionals were also motivated to address the misery of the poor to preempt that group’s radicalization and the emergence of civil unrest.

Regardless of the exact motive, Chile’s middle class functioned to convince the unwilling aristocratic elite to permit reform, in what often amounted to a generational clash. These professionals became engrossed in “...the ‘social question,’ or the problem of worsening living and working conditions in the country’s mining centers and major cities, especially Santiago and the port city of Valparaíso, and the associated proliferation of working-class radicalism.”<sup>54</sup> From this perspective, the middle class was relatively successful in harnessing knowledge centers, negotiation, the press, and bureaucratic positions to promote their own causes, and in turn brought the social question to the table on the larger political stage.<sup>55</sup> Middle class elements turned Chile’s third major party, the Radical Party, towards a moderately center-left direction by

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<sup>53</sup> Walter, *Politics and Urban Growth in Santiago*, 145-146.

<sup>54</sup> Patrick Barr-Melej, *Reforming Chile: Cultural Politics, Nationalism, and the Rise of the Middle Class* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2001), 3.

<sup>55</sup> *Ibid.*, 3-4.

the 1930's. As the middle class grew along with the demands of urbanization, reform became increasingly less taboo.

## **Crisis**

By 1930 the economic situation in Chile had worsened tremendously with the Great Depression. The lower and middle classes were devastated, but even the aristocratic-descended landlords and urban elite felt the repercussions. The country had managed to amass \$140.9 million in debt by 1930.<sup>56</sup> Wall Street canceled loans to the country in the wake of the 1929 crash, starving its financial resources. Monteón emphasizes the dire situation, writing: “Families roamed the countryside subsisting on wild greens. The government put many of the unemployed in urban warehouses; even then, thousands remained homeless.”<sup>57</sup> When Arturo Alessandri (1932-38) was reelected to a second stint as president of Chile he ran on a platform of economic nationalism with a semblance of populism, vowing to take the country out of economic crisis. Between 1933 and 1935, with an aim to reinvigorate the economy with jobs, the government offered a ten-year tax exemption for all new buildings.<sup>58</sup> Policies of this sort yielded immediate results, as between 1932 and 1935 these incentive programs aided in reducing unemployment from an estimated 129,000 to 8,000.<sup>59</sup> Given these tax breaks, it was considered safest to invest one's money in real property, which presented a stable government-subsidized market. Alessandri resurrected the economy in a manner that not only impressed the elite, but also the

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<sup>56</sup> Kofas, *The Sword of Damocles*, 92.

<sup>57</sup> Monteón, *Chile and the Great Depression*, 24.

<sup>58</sup> *Ibid.*, 119.

<sup>59</sup> Julio Faundez, *Democratization, Development, and Legality: Chile, 1831-1973* (New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2007), 77.

lower ranks of the population. It is not surprising that his policies fared well across the political spectrum.

Yet despite their popularity, government policies recommending quick fixes to accommodate arriving migrants typically foundered. A 1933 article in the publication *WIKEN* noted the government's effort to channel the poor south of Santiago to other provinces while *HOY* suggested a "return to the land," and that the unemployed should be provided with small agrarian plots.<sup>60</sup> Chile passed a law that permitted the president of the republic to allocate poor families gold-bearing lands and established the Gold Panning Office.<sup>61</sup> It was a failure. The program dumped people in areas completely detached from infrastructure.<sup>62</sup> Panning for gold was brutally exhaustive work, and while 400,000 people were transported to the gold sands in March, after the dreadful winter only 26,000 remained.<sup>63</sup> Efforts like the gold scheme and the catchy rebranding of rural life are indicative of a shortsighted if not panicked response to social and economic malaise.

Despite the problems associated with the Great Depression at the close of the 1920s, such as rising inflation and food prices, feverish construction booms characterized the early 1930s. However, this was unsustainable, as the faux economic growth was bound to falter without an industrial base to fuel it. Santiago, and to a lesser extent Valparaíso, were struggling to house refugees from the failing nitrate fields, and in turn the cities saw an explosion in their slums, such as the ill-reputed *conventillos*. Attempts to solve the housing shortages, address disease,

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<sup>60</sup> González Arriagada, "Surviving in the City," 54.

<sup>61</sup> The law-decree number 280 based on decree 248, see *Ibid.*, 55.

<sup>62</sup> *Ibid.*, 56.

<sup>63</sup> *Ibid.*

and recover from disaster would lead to a network of laws and institutions that would prove their worth in the subsequent decades.

## Chapter 3: Urban Planning and Architecture

### Early Influences

In the early twentieth century, Chilean architects were familiar with popular international trends like embryonic modernism, verticality, and the need for orderly planning based on the gathering of data.<sup>64</sup> Indeed, Chileans had a long history of recruiting foreign architects and other professionals dating back to the mid-1800s. Instructors came from places like Italy, France, Spain, and Germany to teach some of the first architecture courses and head some of the first architecture departments in the Latin American nations.<sup>65</sup> This international exchange of expertise led by the 1920s to optimism in the fields of urban housing, hygiene, and planning, though solutions were hindered by a lack of resources and an inability to translate ideas into material actions to address the needs of the common poor.<sup>66</sup>

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<sup>64</sup> For example, in 1924 artist and writer Juan Emar published a review of *Vers un architecture* (Toward an Architecture) by Le Corbusier (Charles-Édouard Jeanneret), which had first come out the previous year and had been introduced to him by architect Vicente Huidobro, see Fernando Pérez Oyarzún, “Chile,” in *Latin America in Construction: Architecture 1955-1980*, ed. Barry Bergdoll, Carlos Eduardo Comas, Jorge Francisco Liernur, and Patricio del Real (New York: The Museum of Modern Art, 2015), 157.

<sup>65</sup> Chilean architects had primarily been trained in Europe, but in the mid-nineteenth century the country established one of the first professional architecture courses in Latin America. The Universidad de Chile, founded in the 1840s, generated the Academy of Arts under Italian Alessandro Cicarelli in 1848, which housed a *Curso de Arquitectura* (1853) taught by Brunet, see Walter, *Politics and Urban Growth in Santiago*, 7; Pérez Oyarzún and Rosas Vera, “Cities Within the Cities,” in *Planning Latin America’s Capital Cities*, 111.

<sup>66</sup> As early as 1908 and 1909 Santiago hosted the First Pan-American Scientific Congress, covering issues such as sanitation, housing, and physical fitness. Spanish planner Soria y Mata was invited to attend the conference but was unable to, instead asking Carlos Carvajal, Inspector General of Architecture in the Chilean Public Works Department, to stand in and present his writing “Rational City Planning as a Practical Solution to Low Cost Housing,” which adduced the atrocious infant mortality rates in Santiago—it was estimated two thirds of newborns died in their first year of life, see Collins, “Linear Planning Throughout the World, 83-85; Brenda Elsey, *Citizens and Sportsmanship: Fútbol and Politics in Twentieth-Century Chile* (Austin: The University of Texas Press, 2011), 35; see Appendix B: Names.

The rapid growth of cities and the prevalence of *ranchos* and *coventillos* resulted in the passage of a rash of housing laws early in the century.<sup>67</sup> The series of laws encompassed the financial as well as physical aspects of construction. These laws also addressed and assisted with repairs of apartments and houses.<sup>68</sup> Laws of this period highlighted two main phenomena: “*arrendamiento a piso*” and “*huerto obrero*.”<sup>69</sup> “*Arrendamiento a piso*” (roughly translated to “lease a floor”) referred to a housing option for a family with scarce resources who intended to further build a partially complete home as the family members saved up. The “*huertos obreros*” (workers’ gardens or orchards), in contrast, were plots that were utilized as both home and income generators, through the establishment of small agriculture, industry, a market, etc. These houses were erected “...in the middle of economic opportunities.”<sup>70</sup> As Hidalgo Dattwyler writes: “In these conventillos there were people in coexistence with birds, pigs, horses, in addition to the fleas, bedbugs, cockroaches, and lice that they house.”<sup>71</sup>

A 1935 law stipulated that the President could issue plots in the name of the Housing Department, designated as “*las mejoras*,” which referred to the above mentioned *arrendamiento a piso*, where the tenants would effectively improve their lot over time via self-help efforts or their own labor.<sup>72</sup> Under this law the President regulated prices and guaranteed titles. “*Compraventa de sitios a plazo*” (trading of term sites), allowed people with faulty documents to

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<sup>67</sup> See Appendix C: Timeline of Housing Laws.

<sup>68</sup> Hidalgo Dattwyler, “El papel de las leyes de fomento de la edificación obrera,” 95, author’s translation.

<sup>69</sup> Ibid., 97-98.

<sup>70</sup> Ibid.

<sup>71</sup> Ibid., 95, author’s translation.

<sup>72</sup> Ibid.

trade in for official papers.<sup>73</sup> Through this law *arrendamientos a piso* were issued in 115 different *poblaciones*. Another 18,682 official leases on plots were allotted.<sup>74</sup>

In total, between 1906 and 1925, housing laws, despite flaws, made a dent in the housing shortage: the laws of this early period resulted in demolishing 15,147 homes and constructing 97,782.<sup>75</sup> But these early approaches to housing overall favored the burgeoning middle class and ultimately amounted to a surface-level patch on a deep wound. Around the time Santiago was being divided along neighborhood lines it also constructed its first public housing. A series of fledgling programs constructed homes and neighborhoods, providing a foundation later for more impactful projects. Santiago built its first two public housing projects in 1911: the Población Huemul south of the Alameda, and the Población Eugenio west of the Club Hípico (Polo Club).<sup>76</sup>

The mass influx of desperate nitrate miners in the 1930s transformed the city, as the local government accelerated its construction of public works to meet pressing demands. Oscar Prager, for example, designed the Parque Bustamante, also known as Gran Bretaña, in an Austrian style on land reclaimed from the river,<sup>77</sup> while Guillermo Schneider produced housing complexes in the 1930s intended to replace the *conventillos* and *cités*—these included the TURRI and Plaza Blaquedano apartments.<sup>78</sup> These projects however only housed a few hundred families. They would characterize much of Chile’s experience in attempting to provide public

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<sup>73</sup> So long as bosses and landowners ensured rent was not more than 30 percent of tenant wages, the Housing Department gave tax breaks, see *Ibid.*

<sup>74</sup> Law 6630, see *Ibid.*, 98-99

<sup>75</sup> Hidalgo Dattwyler, “El papel de las leyes de fomento de la edificación obrera,” 92.

<sup>76</sup> Walter, *Politics and Urban Growth in Santiago*, 14; Polo is a laborious game for men employed to constantly switch out exhausted horses and care for them, as owner/riders and their paid team go through multiple horses a person per match. It can be assumed many people employed in the sport lived nearby.

<sup>77</sup> Eliash, “Santiago de Chile: Moderna a palos,” 9.

<sup>78</sup> *Ibid.*, 10.



housing for the urban poor—often aspirational and well-meaning, but ultimately inadequate over time.

The confidence placed in planners in this period by the government was impressive, though overly optimistic given the insufficiency of financial backing. There were repeated failed attempts at implementing plans for Santiago in the 1920s and 30s modeled after European cities.<sup>79</sup> Grandiose visions for the city were dreamed up, but in practice small-scale solutions proved more attainable and cost efficient.

The city underwent significant additions and re-orderings, but this was at the expense of several rejected regional plan proposals. In 1922 a *plano de la manzana transformada* materialized on land purchased next to the famous San Francisco Church.<sup>80</sup> *Manzanas* are city blocks cut internally and usually diagonally by alleys and public spaces.<sup>81</sup> Santiago acquired a European aesthetic and feel through its connections to Spanish and Austrian planners. These internally cut units of buildings were intended to provide the charm of small streets and alleys; the *manzanas* also resembled the organically developed layout of *conventillos*, facing inward toward a central public space, now a street, alley, or park.<sup>82</sup>

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<sup>79</sup> In 1923, Alberto Schade produced a plan for the city in the style of the influential Austrian Camillo Sitte, see Arturo Almandoz, “From Urban to Regional Planning in Latin America, 1920-1950,” *Planning Perspectives* 25, no. 1 (2010): 88, accessed March 6, 2015, doi:10.1080/02665430903515840.

<sup>80</sup> Walter, *Politics and Urban Growth in Santiago*, 120.

<sup>81</sup> The term *manzana* was borrowed from the Spanish planner Ildefonso Cérda’s design for Barcelona, see Alexander Doerr, “Behind Four Walls: Barcelona’s Last Utopia,” *Failed Architecture* January 15, 2014, accessed December 27, 2016, <http://www.failedarchitecture.com/behind-four-walls-barcelonas-lost-utopia/>.

<sup>82</sup> Perhaps the diagonal cuts into city blocks allowed the designers to mask the sight of poverty, as visitors most likely stuck to major streets. Furthermore, people would be oriented toward a new, and hypothetically cleaner street to replace the old *conventillo* communal space.

Yet, slum conditions persisted and even worsened despite social programs and the dedication of professionals to their eradication. In the late 1920s it was estimated that Chile had the highest infant mortality rate in all Latin America, as "...by 1928 one in four (as compared with one in three at the beginning of the century) live births in Santiago ended in death before the first year of life was completed."<sup>83</sup> In the same year renowned planner Carlos Carvajal concluded that 40 percent of Santiago, 192,000 people, lived in some 8,000 unsanitary buildings.<sup>84</sup> "Unsanitary" was a blanket label for any homes that defied ideal standards, including features like dirty drinking water, open sewage, or lack of streetlights and pavement. Near the end of 1928, the Ministry of Interior required local governments to provide lighting and pavement for *barrios populares*, adding to the multifaceted effort to improve health and mortality rates that extended beyond the construction of homes. Addressing the atrocious infant mortality rate necessitated this combination of solutions, improving each family's individual household while simultaneously illuminating the sidewalk to create a safer walk home or educating people to refrain from sleeping near their livestock or dumping their dirty water out the window.

Chileans used their familiarity with slums when engaging with other technical experts internationally, communicating their optimism about solving an intractable shortage.<sup>85</sup> Conferences held in Santiago invited architects and planners from throughout Latin America and the world to witness the progress made in solving the problem, as well as to contribute advice.

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<sup>83</sup> Walter, *Politics and Urban Growth in Santiago*, 21.

<sup>84</sup> *Ibid.*, 163.

<sup>85</sup> *Cuartos redondos* were slightly pricier than a typical *conventillo* room, as they were equipped with a window that faced out to the street, offering more sunlight and privacy, see Alejandro González Arriagada, "Surviving in the City: The Urban Poor of Santiago de Chile, 1930-1970," (Uppsala: Uppsala University, 2000), 87.

For instance, the Pan-American Conferences on Architecture and Urbanism brought together professionals throughout the region to collaborate and debate.<sup>86</sup> At the first of the congresses, held in Santiago in 1923, it was agreed that it was the "...'primordial duty' of the state to provide citizens with cheap, healthy habitation."<sup>87</sup> Chilean architects took this ideal to heart and by 1923 the Chilean Association of Architects was vocally committed to solving the housing crisis along the standards for minimum dwelling established at the Brussels CIAM conference.<sup>88</sup> Six years later in 1929 the Public Works Department had committed to the "science of *urbanismo*," a popular concept with visiting planners, embracing planning as a necessary component of any social housing or hygiene program.<sup>89</sup> At times, it was even viewed as a panacea, as if a neat neighborhood alone could somehow inspire poor residents to pull themselves out of poverty without financial assistance or job opportunities.

Natural disasters provoked changes in policy and drove Chileans into emergency relief efforts; for the poor, natural disasters equated to displacement, homelessness, and at times even lethal conditions due to a landlord skimping on safety or the limits of a self-built home. Earthquakes certainly quickened migrations. Pressured into action, the Chilean government created a series of disaster relief measures and institutions that became useful tools in the struggle for housing. The 1928 earthquake in Talca furthered burgeoning interest in codifying planning principals, as a 1931 law generated in the wake of the tragedy required that "...every

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<sup>86</sup> Pérez Oyarzún, Pérez de Arce, and Torrent, "Introduction," in *Chilean Modern Architecture since 1950*, xii.

<sup>87</sup> Valerie Fraser, *Building the New World: Studies in the Modern Architecture of Latin America 1930-1960* (New York: Verso, 2000), 116.

<sup>88</sup> Hidalgo Dattwyler, "El papel de las leyes de fomento de la edificación obrera," 94.

<sup>89</sup> Ibid.

city with a population over 20,000 must develop a General Transformation Plan.”<sup>90</sup> The law also established national urban standards, for example, for the widths of streets and the heights of homes.<sup>91</sup> The Central Board gestated by this law was rebranded in 1936 as the Popular Housing Fund or CORHABIT. It offered housing loans with twenty-seven-year terms and initial payments on mortgages.<sup>92</sup>

Displacement and homeless caused by earthquakes and the crash of industries, as well as urban crowding more generally, created an ideal context for the adoption of foreign models of planning and affordable housing. Reconstruction of damaged regions and a slum crisis nurtured experimentation. A Chilean affinity for city planning developed early in the twentieth century, and pieces of European schools of thought were sensibly adopted. Linear Planning and *urbanismo* were incorporated into courses taught in Chilean universities, borrowing from Spaniard Arturo Soria y Mata and Austrian Camillo Sitte.<sup>93</sup> Chileans were aware of the modernist movement—for example, upon graduating from the Universidad Católica in 1928,

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<sup>90</sup> “Historia del ministerio de urbanismo y vivienda;” This was the General Construction and Urbanization Law written by Luis Muñoz Maluschka, who would partake in many urban projects in the following decades and worked closely with the Austrian planner Karl Brunner, see Luis Valenzuela, “Mass housing and urbanization: on the road to modernization in Santiago, Chile, 1930-1960,” *Planning Perspectives* 23, no. 3 (2008): 275-276, accessed March 12, 2015, doi:10.1080/02665430802102799.

<sup>91</sup> Hidalgo Dattwyler, “El papel de las leyes de fomento de la edificación obrera,” 96.

<sup>92</sup> “Historia del ministerio de urbanismo y vivienda.”

<sup>93</sup> In 1928 Alberto Schade Pohlenz taught a class on *urbanismo* at the School of Architecture of the University of Chile’s Faculty of Economic Sciences and Mathematics with a syllabus clearly influenced by Camillo Sitte, see Arturo Almandoz “From Urban to Regional Planning in Latin America,” *Planning Perspectives* 25, no. 1 (2010): 88, accessed March 6, 2015, doi:10.1080/02665430903514840; Arturo Almandoz, “Urban Planning and Historiography in Latin America,” *Progress in Planning* 65 (2006): 88, accessed March 6, 2015, doi:10.1016/j.progress.2006.02.002.

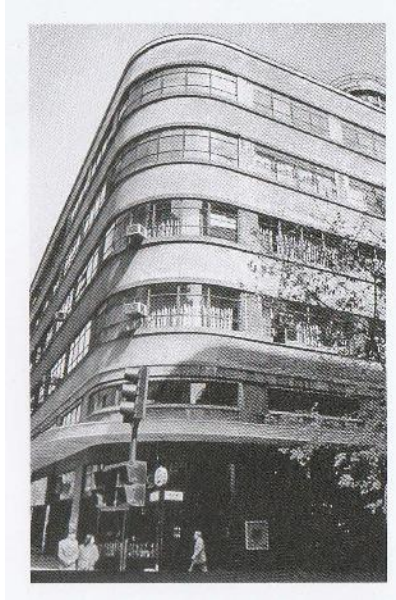
Sergio Larraín García-Moreno toured Europe, working with architects including Le Corbusier,<sup>94</sup> and in 1929 Larraín, who had returned to Santiago, with Jorge Arteaga designed the Oberpauer building in a distinctly Bauhaus aesthetic.<sup>95</sup> That being said, in the 1930s and 40s Chilean planners took an alternative route to that of the modernists, instead looking to another Austrian for influence, Karl Brunner, possibly because professionals had already cultivated a deep admiration for and sense of comfort with planners like Sitte.<sup>96</sup> Brunner's impact on Chilean planning proved to be long lasting; his efforts primed the country to promote social housing over the next few decades.

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<sup>94</sup> Pérez Oyarzún, "Chile," *Latin America in Construction*, 157; In 1928 Le Corbusier, art historian Sigfried Giedion, and the Bauhaus school led by Walter Gropius organized the International Congress of Modern Architecture (CIAM) 1 in June to promote rationalization, standardization, and prefabrication in a general Taylorist spirit, see Eric Mumford, *Defining Urban Design: CIAM Architects and the Foundation of a Discipline* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2009), 3.

<sup>95</sup> Horacio Torrent, "Abstraction and Tectonics in Chilean Architecture since 1950," in *Chilean Modern Architecture since 1950*, ed. Malcolm Quantrill (College Station: Texas A&M University Press, 2010), 93.

<sup>96</sup> Brunner followed the teachings of fellow Austrian Sitte, who had advocated for curvilinear streets that created a "picturesque" never-ending stream of building facades, and who was starkly in opposition to Haussmann's Paris designs, see Lance Jay Brown, David Dixon, and Oliver Gillham, *Urban Design for an Urban Century: Placemaking for People* (Hoboken: John Wiley & Sons, Inc., 2009), 49.



**Figure 3.1.** Oberpauer Building (Source: Fernando Pérez Oyarzún, “Chile,” *Latin America in Construction 1955-1980* [New York: MoMa, 2015], 158)

### **Karl Brunner, the Austrian Planner**

Karl Brunner von Lehenstein was officially invited by the Chilean president in 1929 to reconstruct post-earthquake Talca—at the height of urban migrations caused by the reverberations of the Great Depression.<sup>97</sup> Disaster and economic turmoil yielded innovation and a desire for order. For Brunner, this was an opportunity to showcase the value of his techniques. In 1929 he published the influential *Santiago de Chile: su Estado Actual y Futura Formación* (Santiago de Chile: A Study for Future Expansion).<sup>98</sup> Brunner stayed in Santiago until 1932 and

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<sup>97</sup> Chilean Architect Rodolfo Oyarzún met Brunner in 1927 while studying in Vienna, and suggested that the Austrian visit his homeland, see Pérez Oyarzún, “Chile,” *Latin America in Construction*, 157.

<sup>98</sup> Valenzuela, “Mass Housing and Urbanization,” 270; Furthermore, Eliécer Parada Pacheco, former mayor of Nuñoa, who had garnered the Santiago position of First *Alcalde* in 1929, partnered with Brunner to transform the capital, suggesting a deeper connection to the popular barrios of Santiago, see Walter, *Politics and Urban Growth in Santiago*, 137.

returned in 1934,<sup>99</sup> working with Chilean notables who would carry on his legacy long after his departure.<sup>100</sup> His ideas were categorically influential in Chilean urban planning, including in dealing with the ever-present problem of housing the poor. In Brunner's vision for Santiago, the hygienic crisis in the *conventillos* could only be solved through a thought-out response to population growth. The task of planners was to craft a set of standardized policies and orderly infrastructure and plots to receive and guide urban newcomers. To an extent his ideas corroborated and continued many of the practices that were already in play within Chile.



**Figure 3.2.** Karl Brunner in 1931 (Source: Höffer, “El origen de la metrópolis,” 1)

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<sup>99</sup> Arturo Almandoz, “Introduction,” in Karl Brunner, *Manual de Urbanismo Volume 1* (New York: Routledge, 2016), xiv.

<sup>100</sup> Such as Rodulfo Otazún Philippi (who was Brunner's disciple in Vienna), Luis Muñoz Maluschka, Alberto Mackenna Subercaseaux, and Alfredo Prat Echaurren, see Isabel Pavez, “El archivo Karl Brunner,” *Facultad de Arquitectura y Urbanismo de la Universidad de Chile, Resita de Arquitectura* 8: 33, accessed April 21, 2015, <http://repositorio.uchile.cl/bitstream/handle/2250/117993/el-archivo-Karl-Brunner.pdf?sequence=1>.

Brunner famously held a bitter dislike for the work of Le Corbusier, but shared common threads with the modernists and other schools of planning. On October 29<sup>th</sup> and November 14<sup>th</sup>, 1929, Brunner outlined his urban planning theories in a series of lectures at the Universidad de Chile, titled “*Problemas actuales de urbanizacion*” (Current Problems of Urbanization).

Brunner began by explaining that town planning in its modern incarnation required consideration for both the aesthetic and the scientific. *Urbanismo* focused on three components necessary to planning cities: first a human element, meaning culture, social hygiene, and economic and political contexts; second, a technical engineering aspect; and third, an artistic component.<sup>101</sup> All three parts required equal attention.

Brunner called for something akin to zoning, what he called “a separation of sectors” each designated for business, public buildings, residences, industry, etc. Each of these sectors were to be “...separated from the other through open spaces with vegetation, spaces that must connect the city centre with the countryside.”<sup>102</sup> He described what was essentially a circular or radial city: “The city’s central nucleus... is encircled by residential barrios surrounded by strips of gardens and parks...”<sup>103</sup> Brunner suggested the widening of streets and the preservation of public monuments and historic buildings.<sup>104</sup> One can note the parallels, whether it be to Le Corbusier’s call for green space, or the Garden City Movement’s and Frank Lloyd Wright’s desire to marry town and country. Brunner’s thoughts on green space, preservation of historic

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<sup>101</sup> Karl Brunner, “Problemas Actuales de Urbanizacion,” Santiago: Universidad de Chile, 1929,

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<sup>102</sup> Ibid.

<sup>103</sup> Ibid.

<sup>104</sup> Ibid., 3.



charm, zoning, and especially hygienic precautions all meshed well with the Chilean experience with planning and neighborhood development up to this point, and was adopted without protest.

Brunner employed examples of Austrian and German cities to communicate his ideas on social housing and verticality to the Spanish-speaking audience that was consuming his planning guide. He professed of Vienna: “It is a recognized fact that the way housing is built for the mass is an essential element for the general aspect of the city.”<sup>105</sup> Brunner acknowledged the unique political context in the city of Vienna—that of a socialist majority in the municipality—and that its public housing could be irrelevant to other cities like Santiago.<sup>106</sup> He particularly took issue with the height of Viennese apartments: “All the skyscrapers of the Vienna Municipality lack lifts so dwellers every day have to go up and down the seven or nine floors afoot...”<sup>107</sup> Brunner pointed to a “two-thousand housing-unit project” he was commissioned to do in that city, and to lessons learned from his experience. He admitted the large buildings made possible a great range of apartment sizes and layouts, and that in turn he could experiment with methods of providing natural light.<sup>108</sup> However, Brunner maintained that this taller and wider building design did not work well in the Chilean context.

German cities, in Brunner’s view, provided better models for Chile and other Latin American countries. The guarantee of public green space, curvilinear streets, shorter buildings, and more sunlight made the German model more applicable to the dire housing situation in Chile. He observed: “Exemplars of new style working-class housing are to be found in German cities where entire districts have been subject to uniform planning and are provided with wide

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<sup>105</sup> Ibid.

<sup>106</sup> Ibid.

<sup>107</sup> Ibid.

<sup>108</sup> Ibid.

meadows between the building blocks.”<sup>109</sup> The apartments he had in mind were about two to four stories tall. The Chilean situation resembled that in Germany, in that the German state also provided very reasonable interest rates to new homeowners.<sup>110</sup> Middle and working-class people would hypothetically prefer a three or four-story building instead of one close to ten if given the option.

North American skyscrapers, according to Brunner, tended to block out sunlight and prevent open air spaces with homogeneous rows of tall buildings, which in turn necessitated the extreme widening of streets.<sup>111</sup> The staggering of upper floors inward he thought to be at least a partial solution for the problems of lack of sunlight.<sup>112</sup> Skyscrapers were to be built sparingly only in locations where they genuinely improved the skyline.<sup>113</sup> Brunner used Rio de Janeiro as an example of the problems with verticality, as in the Copacabana region: “It almost seems as if the eight- to twelve-storey houses were intended to hide the view of this barrio of huts [favelas] from the beach, but unfortunately the vista of the hills is thereby covered too.”<sup>114</sup> This cosmetic solution was unacceptable in Brunner’s eyes. Verticality masked the true poverty and frequently caused more problems than it solved.

Brunner was perhaps most concerned with the layout of streets and the flow of traffic. He was optimistic for a future in which transportation technology continued to develop at a remarkable pace. He speculated that city streets would soon become two or three stories tall.<sup>115</sup>

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<sup>109</sup> Ibid.

<sup>110</sup> Ibid., 5.

<sup>111</sup> Ibid.

<sup>112</sup> Ibid.

<sup>113</sup> Ibid., 6-7.

<sup>114</sup> Ibid., 7.

<sup>115</sup> Ibid.

The capital was not quite ready for this type of forward-looking construction—historic Santiago had its own beauty that deserved preserving and celebrating—though Brunner presciently recognized that the explosive urbanization would only continue for Santiago and that the city would be forced to adapt. He declared Santiago to be in a “happy situation,” where the Alameda and other planned streets could serve as exemplars, though Brunner stressed “...the visitor will have to recognize that, in a few decades, this street will become an important road of transit and will have to carry the traffic for the barrios that will arise here in the future.”<sup>116</sup> The colonial grid was considered an impediment to desired radial avenues, though it had some advantages when it came to the subdivision of blocks.<sup>117</sup> Santiago was equipped with other features Brunner viewed as promising for its oncoming explosive urbanization. In a few decades, the city would be unrecognizable, and its planners would have to be willing to react quickly and decisively. All they could do was prepare the best they could for the inevitable.

Several parks, public spaces, and avenues would have to be extended and modified, and much of the transformations would take place in the popular barrios.<sup>118</sup> Santiago, suggested Brunner, shared the flexibility of war-torn European cities, and would have no trouble adjusting plots and building blocks, thus assisting the process to “...sanitize insalubrious or dilapidated barrios...”<sup>119</sup> State-sanctioned programs under Brunner targeted certain roads and parks exactly because squatters had traditionally camped out in those locations. He found Santiago’s numerous hills advantageous for this purpose as vantage points.<sup>120</sup> Part of Brunner’s plan

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<sup>116</sup> Ibid.

<sup>117</sup> Ibid., 10

<sup>118</sup> Ibid., 9.

<sup>119</sup> Ibid., 11.

<sup>120</sup> Ibid., 12.

involved the expectation that working and middle-class families would build their own gardens in the style of the English and Dutch, much as many had already done at the foot of San Cristóbal hill.<sup>121</sup> The state had been broadcasting mixed messages, in the past scolding people for making alternative use of their living spaces, and now endorsing it. Brunner addressed Santiago with the macro-management role stereotypically desired by many planners, sitting atop the city's hills imagining the future, and marking out entire sections of slums to be cleared out and replaced.

### **Advancing Modernism**

Brunner advised the Second Congress of City Mayors in 1931, where he showcased his Urbanism and Industrial Progress Exhibition.<sup>122</sup> At this meeting Chilean officials feverishly debated how best to solve the housing crisis, and it would inadvertently expose several overt flaws in the Austrian's teachings. Senator Lira Infante suggested that an institution semi-independent of the government could create 166,000 homes in three years, but Luis Muñoz Maluschka, a student of Brunner, challenged this, declaring that at that rate they would never make ground on the shortage of 370,000, as estimated by the Architect's Association.<sup>123</sup> Muñoz posited that the solution lay in planning, that housing responsibilities should be completely turned over to private sources, and that light material houses should be placed directly on the lots of former *conventillos*, with preference given to wage earners of at least 20 pesos a day.<sup>124</sup> Many

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<sup>121</sup> Ibid.

<sup>122</sup> Valenzuela, "Mass housing and urbanization," 270.

<sup>123</sup> Ibid., 275.

<sup>124</sup> Luis Muñoz Maluschka had been a committed disciple of Brunner since his first visits, see Ibid.

of the principles learned from Brunner thus would exacerbate the situation, as here the talk of minimum earning credentials for social housing could only perpetuate the gap between classes of city dwellers.

At first experimentation with taller buildings was exclusive to designers of office and government buildings, but this vertical approach would eventually be applied to apartments. Chileans dotted the skyline of their capital city with tall skyscrapers in the early part of the century; for example, the triangular Ariztía Building (1921) and the eleven-story Errázuriz-Simpson office building (1924), which with its additional four-story tower was to be the tallest in South America at the time.<sup>125</sup> The vertical growth of Santiago was frequently met with the sound of protests, as middle-class people worried their views would be blocked and their green space jeopardized. Brunner's 1933 plan for Santiago advised against excessive building of skyscrapers, advocating for a revitalization of the city center.<sup>126</sup> Nonetheless, the construction continued unabated, partially due to policies that incentivized foreigners investing in construction to dodge high taxes.<sup>127</sup>

Brunner dominated Chile's planning scene, though some modernist works began to percolate through the barriers. The Ministry of Finance Building completed in 1933 was acknowledged as distinctly Corbusian in style.<sup>128</sup> In 1934 Brunner returned to Chile and produced his influential "Santiago: Study of the Regulatory Plan of the Central District of the City."<sup>129</sup> He organized a local team, headed by Roberto Humeres, Chief of Urbanism, which

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<sup>125</sup> Ibid; Walter, *Politics and Urban Growth in Santiago*, 148.

<sup>126</sup> Ibid, 149; Valenzuela, "Mass housing and urbanization," 270.

<sup>127</sup> See Appendix C: Timeline of Housing Laws.

<sup>128</sup> Walter, *Politics and Urban Growth in Santiago*, 148.

<sup>129</sup> Valenzuela, "Mass housing and urbanization," 270.

drew up the definitive “Official Plan for the Urbanization of the Municipality of Santiago,” eventually approved in 1939.<sup>130</sup> That same year, following the 1939 earthquake that devastated both Chillán and Concepción, Le Corbusier tried, but failed, to obtain a commission to generate plans for Santiago and other Chilean cities, given that it was met with strenuous objection of Brunner’s disciples.<sup>131</sup>

### **Brunner’s *Manual de Urbanismo***

In 1939 Brunner was working in Bogotá, where he published his *Manual de Urbanismo*, in which he drew heavily on his prior Chilean experiences. He was saliently aware of the limitations Chilean governments endured, and he detailed them in this volume. Brunner wrote: “Rudolfo Oyarzún Ph., the renowned Chilean urban planner, speaking recently, of urban problems today, spoke about the phenomena and prejudices of urban speculation...<sup>132</sup> Brunner then went on to directly quote Oyarzún: “Thus it is not difficult to comprehend that no government or municipality has the sufficient economic capacity to finance any path in which the expropriations should be based on these speculative valuations.”<sup>133</sup> In the 1930s, the General Commissary of Subsistence and Prices, composed of lawyers, decided it was necessary to impede housing speculation, but the intervention ultimately failed to have an impact.<sup>134</sup> Brunner and Oyarzún acknowledged that the speculative process often dictated the exclusion of

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<sup>130</sup> Ibid.

<sup>131</sup> Pérez Oyarzún and Rosas Vera, “Cities within the City,” 133.

<sup>132</sup> Brunner, *Manual de Urbanismo*, 68, author’s translation.

<sup>133</sup> Ibid., author’s translation.

<sup>134</sup> Hidalgo Dattwyler, “El papel de las leyes de edificación obrera,” 98.

the most marginalized persons. Still, planners did not abandon their approaches from the prior decade.

Brunner's Manual employed the "South American *conventillo*" as an archetype for other slums throughout the world, suggesting that the solution was, of course, planning and slum clearance. He described the *conventillos* as extremely congested in comparison to Central Europe, where residents lived in apartments of five to eight stories--in South America, the same number of occupants would be crowded into one-story apartments.<sup>135</sup> He noted that slums were not only located in downtown areas: "There are other sectors further removed from the commercial center... Although the land is cheap, in these regions transformation does not happen automatically as they are not attractive to distinguished people."<sup>136</sup> Brunner's solution to these distant off-the-grid slums, as might be expected by now, was efficient planning. He continued: "These sectors can only sanitize and transform themselves through a total reconstruction, through an effective and well-organized official action."<sup>137</sup> Brunner celebrated Chile's long history of housing programs as exemplary efforts to be mimicked, making specific note of the Urbanism section of the Public Works Department, CORHABIT, and architects like Muñoz.<sup>138</sup> Brunner admitted that relocating slum dwellers was a difficult task (not to mention one that had not been achieved in his decade of work in Chile), but he perceived it to be the only solution, as well as one other regions should emulate.

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<sup>135</sup> Brunner, *Manual de Urbanismo*, 262.

<sup>136</sup> *Ibid.*, 268, author's translation.

<sup>137</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>138</sup> *Ibid.*, 286.

## CORHABIT

Muñoz, with the Architecture Department of the General Works Office in the 1930s, organized the Affordable Housing Exhibition in 1936, which resulted in the formation of the National Housing Plan.<sup>139</sup> This Exposition focused on the Linear City, as championed by participant Carlos Carvajal who insisted that linear planning could solve the problem with the *huertos obreros*.<sup>140</sup> Muñoz recommended that adobe structures replace the ranchos, so that they would be resistant to fires.<sup>141</sup> It was agreed upon at the 1936 Affordable Housing Exposition that: 1. A third of the country lacked adequate housing. 2. This totaled some 1,500,000 people. 3. 300,000 new hygienic homes would need to be built. 4. It would cost between 2 and 3 billion escudos. 5. The plan should be passed on to the “financiers” of the Superior Council and Law of the Popular Housing Fund.<sup>142</sup> Chilean professionals documented the shortage and reported it to those who controlled the purse strings.

The Popular Housing Fund or CORHABIT was fashioned in 1936 to assist with the above noted financial shortcomings attributed to state-sponsored housing.<sup>143</sup> It was anticipated that it would supply one billion escudos for 166,000 houses at a median value of 15,000 escudos.

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<sup>139</sup> Valenzuela, “Mass housing and urbanization,” 274; Collins, “Linear Planning throughout the World,” 84.

<sup>140</sup> The modernist Enrique Gebhard also contributed to the conference, with his article “*Urbanismo y Estadística*” (Urbanism and Statistics) stressing the 25,000 living in 3,000 conventillos in the city of Santiago. Muñoz himself estimated some 250,000 unhealthy homes needed to be replaced, and 120,000 new homes were needed. In total 370,000 houses, 37,000 per year for ten years, needed to be constructed, see *Ibid.*, 96.

<sup>141</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>142</sup> *Ibid.*, 95.

<sup>143</sup> This was Ley 5950 of 1936, championed by the Senator Alejandro Lira Infante, see *Ibid.*, 99; see Appendix C: Timeline of Housing Laws.



With five people per family, the program was to benefit some 333,000 people.<sup>144</sup> One of the few organizations to oppose the organization was the Property Owners' Association of Chile. The group suggested that the state was far too forgiving with late payments, and that in combination with low interest rates, CORHABIT presented a competitor with an unfair advantage.<sup>145</sup> CORHABIT projects included the Población Vivaceta, housing 600 families at a rent of between 170 and 300 pesos, and the Población Montt located adjacent to the Yarur cotton mill.<sup>146</sup> Montt must have been placed strategically to handle these mill workers, as owner Juan Yarur only provided about 10 percent of his employees with company housing, and was notorious for leaving employees bound for the *conventillos*.<sup>147</sup> Apart from groups representing the interests of property owners, most Chileans saw this as a reasonable step in achieving the type of housing they had been fighting to obtain.

Foreigners showered the Chilean programs with praise, but this meant little for the average slum dweller. Francis Violich, the famed planning professor at UC Berkeley and expert on Latin American cities, heralded CORHABIT as the best housing program in all Latin America.<sup>148</sup> But in 1937, a study found that a twenty-nine-block triangle north of Mapocho Station—between Avenidas Bulnes, Independencia, and Borgoño—was still almost entirely

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<sup>144</sup> Ibid.

<sup>145</sup> Ibid., 100.

<sup>146</sup> Walter, *Politics and Urban Growth in Santiago*, 256.

<sup>147</sup> Juan Yarur mostly employed rural women who were naïve and new to the city. He manipulated workers by establishing a paternalistic approach. Housing was part of the Christmas “bonus package,” used to further cement indebtedness, see Winn, *Weavers of Revolution*, 35, 38, 65.

<sup>148</sup> Ibid.

composed of *conventillos*.<sup>149</sup> Foreign planners saw a new frontier in the global south where they could experiment and relay lessons back to their own nations in an almost carefree, adventurist spirit. This estranged the reader and academic alike from the on-the-ground realities of slum dwellers. Labeling the Chilean program as “the best in Latin America” relegated the entire region to an inferior status, as if it were impossible for any Latin American country to become equal with the civilized western world. The seeds of dependency on the outside for technical expertise were planted early before the Cold War.

CORHABIT took about seven or eight years to accumulate momentum, as most of the organization’s homes were constructed in the later part of its existence. Between 1936 and 1952 the semi-independent institution constructed 43,310 homes;<sup>150</sup> however, between 1937 and 1941 worker housing laws more generally resulted in the construction of some 9,180 homes, 58 percent sponsored by CORHABIT, and 42 percent created indirectly by the government offering tax breaks and investing in self-help programs. This was a small fraction of the 3,000 promised per year by CORHABIT or the 37,000 it projected could be accomplished.<sup>151</sup> In 1941 the president of CORHABIT blamed this failure on a lack of funds, claiming that if properly equipped the organization could have manufactured 5,000 homes a year.<sup>152</sup> CORHABIT would be reworked in 1943, after which it would become much more effective. There is some truth in the interpretation that CORHABIT failed chiefly due to financial deficiencies, but the housing program was also bogged down with ineffective bureaucracies and the drag of nepotism on the

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<sup>149</sup> 194 *conventillos* were recorded in this triangular area, see Walter, *Politics and Urban Growth in Santiago*, 256.

<sup>150</sup> Valenzuela, “Mass housing and urbanization,” 263.

<sup>151</sup> *Ibid.*, 100-101.

<sup>152</sup> *Ibid.*, 101.

appointment of heads of departments. Furthermore, the institution was not equipped with the capability to levy taxes for the money it needed (many would have to be levied against foreign corporations), and thus, it could never solve its financial issues internally.

In short, Chile's housing and planning laws unmistakably exhibited the dominant influence of Brunner in the 1930s—most explicitly in the move towards inter-communal plans and diverse placement of wide streets, recurrently transitioning Spanish grids into radial cities with curvilinear streets and diagonal arteries. Housing policy evolved meaningfully during the 1930s under his influence, but as argued by María Isabel Pavez, the insurmountable arrival of additional waves of rural migrants in the 1940s masked the fruits of Brunner's methods, which were not made clearly useful until his disciple Muñoz reintroduced his ideas into the 1950s.<sup>153</sup> Thus the 1940s, while left-leaning in many ways, saw much of the above outlined progress in planning and housing policy rendered inapplicable, due to inflation and indebtedness to foreign lenders. A resurrection of housing construction would have to wait until the 1950s.

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<sup>153</sup> Isabel Pavez, "El plan Brunner para Santiago," 2.

## Chapter 4: Ambition and Experimentation in the 1940s

### The Popular Front Years

The Popular Front period (1937-41), while brief, greatly impacted the relationship of the Chilean state and the poor, leaving a lasting effect for decades to come. In this reformist-minded moment fulltime workers—such as miners, factory workers and construction workers—gained political leverage and access to government resources that lasted into the 1950s and 60s. Radical leftist parties were rewarded for their persistence with government offices, though opportunist heads of state were repeatedly retired, having promised much and delivered little. Membership in unions and labor syndicates grew impressively, and the same can be said of involvement in strikes, which reached a zenith in 1946 with over 70,000 people striking illegally.<sup>154</sup> Copper miners benefitted from Popular Front policies most as they received “...state subsidies for private investment in state jobs, housing, health care, social security, and increases in real wages.”<sup>155</sup> Workers and labor unions, most of all copper miners, were lionized in the public eye during the 1940s, as political rhetoric unabashedly promoted their struggle. The same cannot be said for the most marginalized informal workers.

Natural disaster again stifled the state’s ability to fund projects and threw the entire nation into a panic. An earthquake struck in April 1939, this time in the south in Chillán, devastating the nearby heavily populated coastal city of Concepción. In January 1940 following the tragedy the government created the Corporation for Reconstruction and Assistance, and with it the Corporation of Production and Development or CORFO under Muñoz’s Division of

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<sup>154</sup> Increasing from just over 54,000 recognized members in 1932 to over 250,000 in 1948, see Monteón, *Chile and the Great Depression*, 193.

<sup>155</sup> Thomas Miller Klubock, *Contested Communities: Class, Gender, and Politics in Chile’s El Teniente Copper Mine, 1904-1951* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1998), 230.

Urbanism.<sup>156</sup> These organizations were tasked with reconstructing earthquake-damaged regions, and CORFO with promoting industrialization and development more generally. The state could not abandon the survivors, many of whom were employed in the copper mines and related industries, the core industry of the Concepción region. These projects necessitated funds the government did not have, forcing the state to take out loans.

The borrowing and debt accrual of the Popular Front eventually caught up with the government, triggering inflation. The cost of living nearly doubled in both Santiago and Valparaíso between 1939 and 1943,<sup>157</sup> while nationally it rose from 15 percent between 1940 and 1946, to as high as 84 percent by 1955.<sup>158</sup> Higher costs for food (already high due to the lack of mechanization and inefficiencies in the structure of the Chilean agricultural realm), transportation, and all consumer staples, fell most heavily on the lower classes. In the late 1940s, in response to widespread public discontent President González Videla (1946-1948) "...began to resort to repression, with the result that during his administration the country was in a state of emergency for nearly half of his term in office."<sup>159</sup>

A law in 1941 allowed the president to set aside state funds and directly offer loans to aspiring homeowners. An estimated 6,000 houses were eventually built through these means.<sup>160</sup> Credit institutions were crafted to keep up with Popular Front promises through general lending, as the chaotic jump in prices spurred widespread chants for bread, a roof, and clothing on the

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<sup>156</sup> Pérez Oyarzún, "Chile," in *Latin America in Construction*, 157.

<sup>157</sup> Monteón, *Chile and the Great Depression*, 281.

<sup>158</sup> Faundez, *Democratization, Development, and Legality*, 85.

<sup>159</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>160</sup> Law 6,640, see "Historia del ministerio de urbanismo y vivienda."

streets.<sup>161</sup> Houses, however, were not always the primary concern of common people as, for example, in 1945 in Quinta Normal, when residents harassed developers attempting to convert a football field into low-income apartments.<sup>162</sup>

In 1939, the municipal government considered the first Housing Plan completed. It then implemented a second improved master plan for the larger Santiago region, the *Greater Santiago: Regulatory Study* plan based off the sketches of Roberto Humeres.<sup>163</sup> At the peak of the Popular Front years, between 1938 and 1942, CORHABIT built as many as 9,180 homes, 58 percent directly by the institution, and the rest by indirect methods such as requiring factory and mine owners to provide worker housing, setting up lending institutions for homeowners, or provision of construction materials.<sup>164</sup>

In the late 1940s and early 1950s, the state embraced new methods of funding the construction of homes. For example, a 1943 law restructured the way CORHABIT gathered capital. It dictated that industries set aside five percent of profits for housing workers in addition to providing tax breaks for the construction of affordable housing.<sup>165</sup> Taxes were levied in areas like inheritance, legacies, and donations.<sup>166</sup> The law reinvigorated CORHABIT, though it would

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<sup>161</sup> González Arriagada, “Surviving in the City,” 58.

<sup>162</sup> Elsey, *Citizens and Sportsmen*, 183.

<sup>163</sup> Valenzuela, “Mass housing and urbanization,” 276.

<sup>164</sup> *Ibid.*, 277; The 1948 Pereira Law, for example, was intended to stimulate housing construction via state-backed mortgages, but was overwhelmingly geared at the middle classes, see “Historia del ministerio de urbanismo y vivienda”; Murphy, *For a Proper Home*, 62.

<sup>165</sup> Law 7,600, see *Ibid.*, 61.

<sup>166</sup> Policy makers explicitly aimed to tax mine owners and chip off a piece of the most lucrative industry in the country. But this manner of tax reform appeared to be most of all directed at the aristocratic landlords, who kept their money within the nation and passed it through inheritance, see Hidalgo Dattwyler, “El papel de las leyes de fomento de la edificación obrera,” 102.

disintegrate a decade later.<sup>167</sup> Between 1944 and 1953 CORHABIT built 35,174 houses, about 80 percent of total production for its entire existence. This amounted to roughly 3,000 homes a year.<sup>168</sup> The lopsided success of this program evidenced that the route to successful social programs in fact necessitated a reasonably progressive economic foundation.

Sanctioned home construction still lagged far behind the needs of the population. Land invasions establishing new neighborhoods began as early as 1940, with Población Arenera acknowledged as the very first.<sup>169</sup> The new squatters exhibited an unprecedented fearlessness, energized by the Popular Front and emerging left-leaning groups. Communists and socialists gained the trust of slum dwellers. Land invasions like that of La Lengua embodied the possibilities. As Schneider writes, forces of all sorts combined "...creating an array of popular grassroots organizations. Under joint Communist/Socialist leadership, Committees for the Homeless, Committees for Just Rents, Committees for Neighborhood Improvement, and Committees for Neighborhood health flourished in the poblaciones."<sup>170</sup> Numerous organizations of this kind thrived into the late 1940s.

These popular efforts had their material effect as the forties wound down. The end of the 1940s and beginning of the 1950s witnessed the construction of thousands of homes of a noticeably improved quality. The homes built, while impressive in comparison to years past, did not scale with explosive urbanization and population increases. Although foreign observers like

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<sup>167</sup> Ibid.; Valenzuela, "Mass housing and urbanization," 278.

<sup>168</sup> Hidalgo Dattwyler, "El papel de las leyes de fomento de la edificación obrera," 102.

<sup>169</sup> González Arriagada, "Surviving in the City," 89.

<sup>170</sup> Schneider, *Shantytown Protest in Pinochet's Chile*, 39.

Professor Violich once again applauded the success of CORHABIT in 1949,<sup>171</sup> in 1947, about 90 percent of Chilean workers lived intermixed with the unemployed in overcrowded dwellings of all varieties.<sup>172</sup> Per the Social Service Department of the Labor General Office, there still existed 32 *poblaciones callampas* (the mushroom camps that appeared overnight, essentially the new iteration of *ranchos*) housing some 4,579 families.<sup>173</sup> Between 1906 and 1952 all worker housing laws combined supplied about 50,000 homes. As has been evidenced here with institutions like CORHABIT, most of this activity occurred at the tail end of that period.<sup>174</sup>

### Chilean Modernism

Planners strongly desired order and standardization in the 1940s as they had been primed to do in the previous decades, and they pursued these goals through careful detailed policy informed by data collection. The 1944 Ordinance of Urbanization and Affordable Constructions, for instance, stipulated exact measurement standards for affordable housing: structures were to be placed on surfaces of between 36 and 100 meters squared, to support a multitude of housing typologies.<sup>175</sup> The law regulated the minimum space between homes, the maximum height of buildings and number of floors, as well as minimum light and ventilation. Communities were

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<sup>171</sup> He suggested Chile's 18,000 constructed dwellings lead the Latin American pack, with Brazil at 15,000, Argentina at 7,500, and Venezuela at 5,000, see Valenzuela, "Mass housing and urbanization," 277.

<sup>172</sup> Schneider, *Shantytown Protest*, 39.

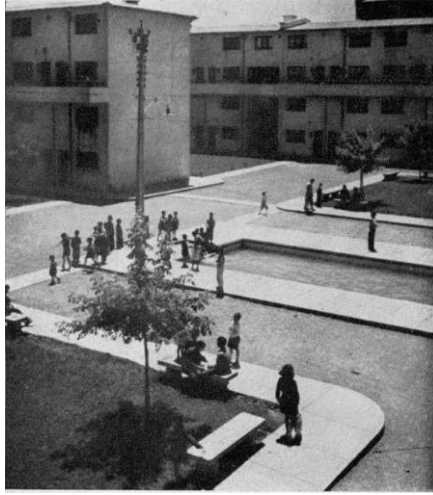
<sup>173</sup> The well-known lower-class *poblacion* Zanjón de la Aguada, for example, housed 7,558 people, or about 1,710 families, see González Arriagada, "Surviving in the City," 88-89.

<sup>174</sup> Hidalgo Dattwyler, "El papel de las leyes de fomento de la edificación obrera," 103.

<sup>175</sup> *Ibid.*, 102; In the 1940s academia and the state allowed for competing schools of thought, for example, in 1947 the University of Chile hired both the principal student of Brunner, Luis Muñoz Maluschka, as well as Enrique Gebhard, who brought with him knowledge of Le Corbusier and German planning techniques learned in Hannover, see "Facultad de Arquitectura y Urbanismo de la Universidad de Chile," 2.



required to be linked to potable water, sewage, public lighting, and industrial energy and gas. Neighborhood designs were required to include communal spaces and sufficient spacing and density.<sup>176</sup> One can note the obvious relationship to earlier ambitions, especially the hygienic struggles of the 1920s and the fascination with space, sunlight, air, parks, building height etc. espoused by Brunner.



**Figure 4.1.** Población Huemul II (Source: Luis Valenzuela, “Mass housing and urbanization: on the road to modernization in Santiago, Chile, 1930-1960,” *Planning Perspectives* 23, no. 3 [2008]: 286)

In the 1940s the ambiguous Popular Front populism allowed housing designers to gravitate toward the social messages of the CIAM architects, not to mention the potential for cheap construction costs.<sup>177</sup> Julio Cordero’s 1943 Población Huemul II typified 1940s approaches. The complex was designed with principles derived from “rationalist

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<sup>176</sup> Hidalgo Dattwyler, “El papel de las leyes de fomento de la edificación obrera,” 102.

<sup>177</sup> The 1940s witnessed the graduation of Chilean modernists who would become immensely influential in the 1950s and 60s, such as Jorge Aguirre, Alberto Cruz Covarrubias, Fernando Castillo, Emilio Duhart, and Héctor Valdés, see Fernando Pérez Oyarzún, “Chile, Matter, and Landscape,” in “Architectures of Latin America,” *Harvard Design Magazine* 34 (2011): 114.

architecture.”<sup>178</sup> The community replaced a rundown glass factory in Santiago and supplied 186 homes in rows of three or four at a density of 826 residents per hectare, all organized into “*manzanas completas*” or complete blocks.<sup>179</sup> Huemul’s simple boxed design was established as the norm for apartment complexes in the following decades.

## Sert and Wiener

Chileans reached out to foreign modernists in the 1940s such as Le Corbusier’s disciple Josep Lluís Sert, when a connection was made by a corporation complying with government housing laws. A series of communications took place in 1945, per the records of New York City urban planner Paul Lester Wiener.<sup>180</sup> The Valparaíso Gas Company contacted he and Sert via the American Consulate, seeking worker housing in compliance with a 1943 national Chilean law,<sup>181</sup> illustrating the effectiveness of ulterior methods of promoting housing, such as tax incentives and government policies that promoted self-help construction.

Sert and Wiener officially began a partnership with their Town Planning Associates (TPA) in 1941, operating out of New York. After working for the Brazilian government in 1943,<sup>182</sup> in 1944 the U.S. State Department sponsored three South American lecture tours by Wiener, where he advocated for a what he called the “Diagram of the Human Environment” and

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<sup>178</sup> Ibid.

<sup>179</sup> Ibid.

<sup>180</sup> Mumford, *Defining Urban Design*, 58.

<sup>181</sup> Law 7,600, see Paul Lester Wiener Papers; The Cia de Gas de Valparaíso, now shortened to GasValpo, is the oldest gas company in Chile having been established in 1853, per the company’s website, see <https://www.gasvalpo.cl/adefault.aspx>.

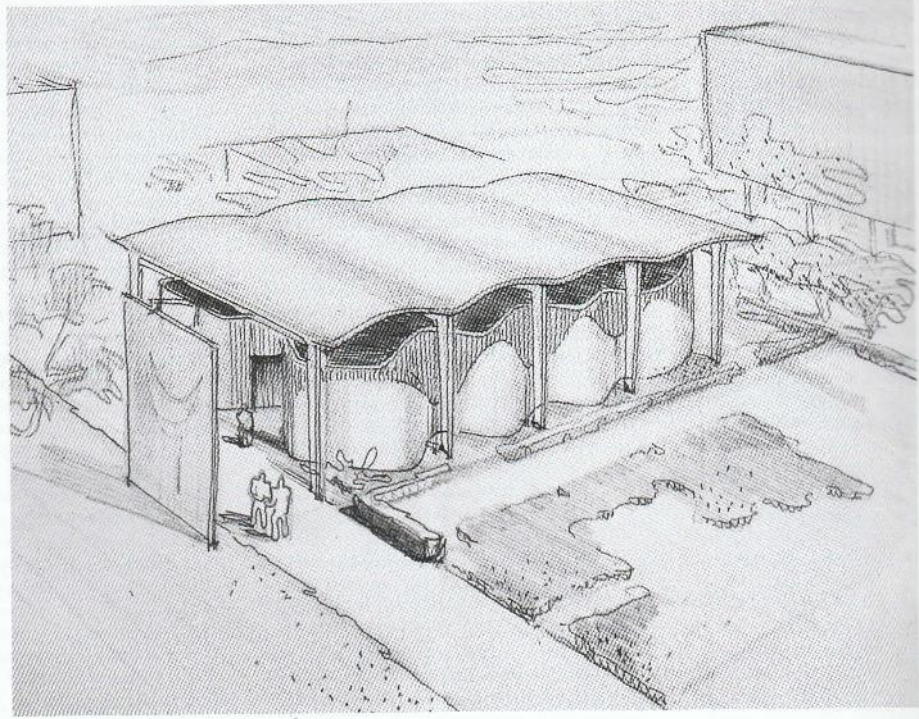
<sup>182</sup> In 1943 the TPA was commissioned to design “*Ciudade dos Motores*” or the “Motor City” from scratch with Brazilian architect Oscar Niemeyer in “...reclaimed marshland twenty-five miles northwest of Rio de Janeiro,” see Mumford, 144.

“The Human Scale of City Planning,” later incorporated into Le Corbusier’s CIAM “grid.”<sup>183</sup> Wiener advocated for a “science of measurement,” whereby fleets of technical experts would be deployed before plans would be drawn up. Urban planning was to take into consideration “...all forms of analysis and commentary (public opinion, public authority, specialists, sociologists, economists, technicians, etc.)...”<sup>184</sup> It is uncertain why the Valparaíso Gas Company took an interest in the two architect/planners; perhaps it was a result of experts attending the lectures or learning of the TPA’s work in other nations in the region.

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<sup>183</sup> The U.S. State Department hired the TPA early in the planning and housing company’s existence to experiment with relief housing for war-torn Europe, see Timothy Hyde, “Planos, Planes y Planificación: Josep Lluís Sert and the Idea of Planning,” in *Josep Lluís Sert: The Architect of Urban Design, 1953-1969*, ed. Eric Mumford, Hashim Sarkis, and Neyran Turan (New Haven and Cambridge: The Yale University Press and the Harvard University Graduate School of Design, 2008), 57.

<sup>184</sup> *Ibid*, 59.



**Figure 4.2.** A TPA prefabricated structure (Source: Josep M Rovira, *Jose Lluís Sert: 1901-1983* [Milano: Electra, 2000], 112)

The first letter made clear the company was interested in the TPA's specialty; prefabricated homes. These homes would be delivered as packaged modular parts, constructed out of cheap, durable, lightweight materials, to be assembled on location. The connection was facilitated by the Foreign Construction Unit at the U.S. Department of Commerce.<sup>185</sup> The Gas Company had very specific requests; it sought houses 20' by 24' that could be expanded to 20' by 36' with the addition of bedrooms, and that were to be constructed of damp-proof and fire-resistant material.<sup>186</sup> A Wiener document directly quoted the initial inquiry as reading "...the

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<sup>185</sup> The December 1945 document titled "PREFABRICATED HOMES... HOUSES WANTED FOR CHILE" noted the initial inquiry was addressed to J. Joseph Palmer, Acting Chief, Foreign Construction Unit, Department of Commerce, Washington, D.C. as the first to receive a Chilean letter and notify Wiener and Sert, see Paul Lester Wiener Papers.

<sup>186</sup> Ibid.

country needs urgently 300,000 workmen's houses and no less than 10,000 yearly, to absorb the increase of population. We are studying different solutions for our problem and are very much interested in receiving this information."<sup>187</sup> Wiener presumed the request would open the door to serving the Chilean country generally rather than simply the Gas Company.

Chileans were testing the water with Sert and Wiener's TPA, and it is uncertain why the deal never went through. In a document titled "Chile – Estimate," Wiener carefully calculated the costs of the requested houses, and anticipated each "superstructure" would amount to about \$1,250.00.<sup>188</sup> It can be assumed this was either too expensive for the Chilean company or that they found a better option, for the correspondence ended here—in 1946 Sert and Wiener moved on to Peru, where they were commissioned to generate a master plan for the port city of Chimbote.<sup>189</sup> The entire communication evidences a willingness of Chileans in the mid-1940s, with slightly better funding than previous decades, to search for housing solutions abroad, including with planners and architects directly connected to Le Corbusier.

### **Father Lebret**

Other planning schools made an impact on Chilean professionals in this era. In 1947, the same year as CIAM 6 in England, the French Dominican friar Louis-Joseph Lebret, leader of the Economy and Humanism movement with origins in the early part of the decade, made his first

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<sup>187</sup> The letter inquiry is signed by Gaston Ossa, S.M., manager, Compañía de Gas de Valparaíso, see Ibid.

<sup>188</sup> Ibid.

<sup>189</sup> Mumford, *Defining Urban Design*, 81.

trip to Latin America, visiting both Brazil and Uruguay.<sup>190</sup> In June, he met with several members of Chile's burgeoning "Falange Nacional" movement (the predecessors of the Christian Democrats) in Montevideo, and created the Latin American Centre of Economy and Humanism (CLAEH) housed in the Uruguayan capital.<sup>191</sup> Between September 7th and 11th he held the Inter-American Session on Economics and Humanism, which featured fifteen Chilean representatives.<sup>192</sup> In the 1940s, Chileans were traveling abroad to scout out and recruit professionals.

Lebret's teachings reiterated the technocratic approach of most other planners who were popular in Chile at the time. Religious professionals advised the whole region during the Liberation Theology movement of the 1960s, who did not necessarily view populism, religion, and science as the least bit mutually exclusive. Lebret's IRFED (Institute for Research and Training in Development), founded in 1958, prided itself on a comprehensive curriculum. Goulet writes that the IRFED required that students "...be acquainted with the assumptions and methodology of all the major disciplines—economics, planning, human geography, cross-cultural sociology, politics, nutrition, demography, and so on."<sup>193</sup> Lebret had students from all over the globe and established a diversity of tools to reflect this, expanding his curriculum beyond strictly planning. He preached a humanistic approach to development and planning. He was immensely influential up until his death in 1966, even sitting as an expert at the famous

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<sup>190</sup> Virginia Pontual, "Lebret in Latin America: Urban Planning Institutions in Uruguay and Brazil," *15<sup>th</sup> International Planning History Society Conference*, 1, accessed April 21, 2015, <http://www.fau.usp.br/iphs/abstractsandpapersfiles/sessions/05/pontual.pdf>.

<sup>191</sup> Ibid.

<sup>192</sup> Ibid., 8.

<sup>193</sup> Denis Goulet, "Lebret, a pioneer – Part 2," 2, accessed April 21, 2015, <http://www.lebret-irfed.org/spip.php?rubrique95>.

Vatican Council II from 1962 to 1964.<sup>194</sup> Lebet was deeply involved in the Christian Liberation movement. He quoted and saw his work as in conversation with influential thinkers like Marx, Kropotkin, and Nietzsche.<sup>195</sup> Lebet wished to ensure the Church addressed the material realities of poverty under capitalism or face losing relevance to radicalism. He understood that religion had to adapt to the needs of the poor, their last remaining bastion of support.

Architecture magazines, authored by the same professionals who headed institutions and instructed university courses, heavily dictated the character of development efforts. In 1946 the publication *Arquitectura y Construcción* which had a close relationship with CORFO and had been championing the use of earthquake-resistant materials like reinforced concrete—warned that urban decentralization of the population was necessary, as 70 percent of Chile’s people and industry were centered in the Santiago-Valparaíso axis.<sup>196</sup> 58.4 percent of Chileans lived in urban centers in 1950, reinforcing the narrative of inevitable collapse put forward by *Arquitectura y Construcción*.<sup>197</sup> Brunner’s predictions had become reality; infrastructure could not handle the strain of urbanization. Professionals, privy to years of data collection, warned of imminent collapse. In the 1940s, the problems with the centralized urban corridor of the country were glaringly evident.

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<sup>194</sup> John Mary K. Kabyanga, *Towards Integral Human Development: To Be More Rather Than To Have More* (Sparta: Prell Books, 2004), 10.

<sup>195</sup> Louis J. Lebet, *Human Ascent*, trans. Robert and Martha Faulhaber (Chicago: Fides Publishers Association, 1955).

<sup>196</sup> Hugo Mondragón López, “Aviation, Electrification, and the Nation: Visions from Colombia and Chile,” in *Latin American Modern Architectures: Ambiguous Territories*, ed. Patricio del Real and Helen Gyger (London: Routledge, 2012), 242.

<sup>197</sup> Almandoz, “Urban Planning and Historiography in Latin America,” 95.

## Chapter 5: Steady Progress in the 1950s

### *Callampas and Campamentos: Locating Lower-income Neighborhoods during Ibáñez*

Housing programs continued to advance even as the economy generally swiftly spiraled downward in the 1950s. Between December 1952 and April 1955, the cost of living rose 207 percent.<sup>198</sup> During Carlos Ibáñez del Campo's second term (1952-58), public transport costs rose by 50%, while economic growth fell to 2.5%. His government bore down on labor with austerity measures to combat inflation and generate revenue domestically.<sup>199</sup> Anti-inflation policies motivated popular discontent, such as riots that broke out in the streets of Valparaíso in March 1957 over bus fare hikes.<sup>200</sup> Popular dissatisfaction was vocalized more over the severe increase in the price of commodities like sugar (100 percent increase) and transportation (50 percent) than the lack of homes, though the housing shortage and the incoming rural migrants remained a pressing issue.<sup>201</sup> Austerity measures were the primary concern for the time being, as people needed to eat and get to work above all else.

Ibáñez had no qualms about repressing popular upheavals. During his administration, the demographic spacing of the capital drastically shifted, as class became more polarizing and pertinent to neighborhood makeup. His administration instituted a strike ban and drastic cuts in economic assistance to workers in November 1954, a crackdown on students and workers with the police,<sup>202</sup> and even declared martial law, which involved occupying Santiago with thousands

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<sup>198</sup> Kofas, *The Sword of Damocles*, 105.

<sup>199</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>200</sup> *Ibid.*, 122.

<sup>201</sup> *Ibid.*, 123.

<sup>202</sup> *Ibid.*



of troops, a policy that stayed in effect until February 29<sup>th</sup> 1956.<sup>203</sup> The wealthy, seeing crowds of poor protestors and fearing for their safety, built homes in the hardly settled northeast suburbs of the city.<sup>204</sup> The rich opted for the secluded oft garden-style communities nearer to the foot of the Andes, rather than the downtown so desired in colonial times. Spatially, cities were divided by class via organic migration, zoning laws, and financial realities. The rich quickly discovered which neighborhoods they preferred and took measures to keep the poor out.

The poor expanded their shanties in every direction away from the city core other than the northeast. Development of poor communities took place in locations like south of downtown, in territory already composed of *conventillos* and in rapidly growing lower-class suburbs like San Miguel. In 1952, the city was approaching 1.5 million inhabitants.<sup>205</sup> The first Chilean housing census of 1952 used the separate specialized terms *campamento*, *poblacion*, and *callampa*.<sup>206</sup> The census found that 36.2 percent of Santiago lived in substandard housing conditions.<sup>207</sup> 3,500 were in “conventillos or similar”, and 225,000 in *poblaciones* and *campamentos*.<sup>208</sup> Social Service Department listed some 16,502 families lived in *campamentos*.<sup>209</sup> The squatting problem had only deteriorated, as the poor gravitated towards or could only afford to illegally camp out. *Conventillos* were no longer the dominant form of low income housing; instead many more of the poor found themselves in the tents and shacks of the

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<sup>203</sup> Ibid., 121.

<sup>204</sup> Schneider, *Shantytown Protests in Pinochet's Chile*.

<sup>205</sup> Valenzuela, “Mass housing and urbanization,” 265.

<sup>206</sup> Murphy, *For a Proper Home*, 82.

<sup>207</sup> Ibid., 59.

<sup>208</sup> González Arriagada, “Surviving in the City,” 88.

<sup>209</sup> Ibid., 89.

*poblaciones, campamentos, and callampas*, foreshadowing the tumultuous events of the late 1960s. Physical growth of the city was almost entirely due to shanties and camps.

San Miguel was a persistent problematic thorn that managed to disrupt planning efforts. Politician Mario Palestro nicknamed the neighborhood the “Independent Republic of San Miguel,” exaggerating its tendency to defy any outside authority.<sup>210</sup> The southern region of Santiago, which had been owned by the Subercaseaux family in colonial times, had reached 100,000 by the 1950s. Elsey writes: “State projects that relocated squatters from the city’s center and northern neighborhoods to San Miguel further stretched the municipality’s resources. This population increase resulted in severe housing shortages keeping the quality of substandard.”<sup>211</sup> The municipal government had given up on San Miguel, as the neighborhood was perceived as entirely beyond regulation or rescue. In a self-defeating strategy, the government relocated any squatters there and let the people manage themselves.

The shanties were primed for tragedy, as poorly constructed shacks of found materials could only last so long against natural elements. Crisis in the shacks produced increased land invasions on unused government property and in the backyards of the landlord-descended rich. In 1956 a fire raged through the city’s largest *callampa*, Zanjón de la Aguada in San Miguel along the river, leaving several thousand stranded.<sup>212</sup> The newly homeless were given emergency shelter in the Municipal Stadium of San Miguel, where they planned the famous La

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<sup>210</sup> Elsey, *Citizens and Sportsmanship*, 168.

<sup>211</sup> *Ibid.*, 169.

<sup>212</sup> Schneider, *Shantytown Protest in Pinochet’s Chile*, 42-43; In 1957 Zanjón de la Aguada, despite being wrecked by fire, was still Santiago’s largest *callampa*, with 35,000 inhabitants. Zanjón housed between 5,000 and 6,000 families, and would eventually be split into ten distinct regions, see González Arriagada, “Surviving in the City,” 22.

Victoria land invasion.<sup>213</sup> Women's committees were heavily involved in land seizures including La Victoria. These women organized a free medical clinic and prohibited liquor to preclude sexual and physical abuse.<sup>214</sup> In the same year communists and socialists asked CORHABIT to purchase land for squatters, who would eventually complete payment in rent.<sup>215</sup> La Victoria's three thousand families, partially organized by the Communist Party's Committee of the Homeless, demanded CORVI (the Housing Corporation, discussed below) provide utilities such as running water.<sup>216</sup> Land invasions were not spontaneous land grabs but instead complicated strategic plans thought out months in advance and executed at the most opportune time, though at times an occurrence like a fire or earthquake forced immediate action.

### **CORVI, CORHABIT, and Self-help Programs**

Government housing institutions were afforded more capabilities in the 1950s, as policy makers increased funding and consolidated bureaucracies: 20.4 percent of the national budget was spent on housing and urban development in 1955, and in the 1960s that number increased to 25 percent.<sup>217</sup> CORHABIT was merged into the Urbanism Section in 1953, creating the Housing Corporation or CORVI, under the guidance of Luis Muñoz Maluschka.<sup>218</sup> The same year

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<sup>213</sup> Elsey, *Citizens and Sportsmanship*, 176.

<sup>214</sup> Power, *Right-Wing Women in Chile*, 61.

<sup>215</sup> Schneider, *Shantytown Protest in Pinochet's Chile*, 42.

<sup>216</sup> *Ibid.*, 43, 45.

<sup>217</sup> Murphy, *For a Proper Home*, 63.

<sup>218</sup> Valenzuela, "Mass housing and urbanization," 277; CORVI also incorporated the *Corporación de Reconstrucción y Auxilio* (the Corporation of Reconstruction and Assistance). Muñoz would also be instrumental in forming MINVU in the 1960s and has been discussed in connection to Brunner, see Pérez Oyarzún, "Chile," in *Latin America in Construction*, 158.

CORVI and CORHABIT partnered under the Urban Planning and Construction Law to develop a national housing plan, which in the words of Schneider:

...included delivery of finished houses for middle-income groups. It also contemplated elimination of poblaciones callampas through delivery of plots to be followed by self-built homes for low-income groups. In addition, the program contemplated an important housing subsidy to help low-income families cover mortgage payments. Ultimately, however, these subsidies, based on people's capacity to save, benefitted high- but not low-income groups.<sup>219</sup>

Lending programs like that under the Chilean Chamber of Construction or the Chilean State Bank in 1953 fell into this same pattern of ineffectiveness by subsidizing the wrong population.<sup>220</sup>

The poor, in the meantime, could never save enough to meet minimum standards for loans. The Social Service Department estimated some 32,237 families still lived in *campamentos* in 1959.<sup>221</sup> An estimated eight percent of Santiago, 150,00 persons, were thought to be homeless by the end of the decade.<sup>222</sup> CORVI and CORHABIT delivered completed homes to the middle-class people, while the poorest were expected to construct their own with what little self-help assistance was offered. This approach aligned with a burgeoning capitalist ideology that took a couple more decades to become fully established in Chile, one that blamed the poor for their own poverty, as avenues out of poverty were claimed to exist if they were only willing to work hard enough.

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<sup>219</sup> Schneider, *Shantytown Protest in Pinochet's Chile*, 41.

<sup>220</sup> "Historia del ministerio de urbanismo y vivienda;" The State Bank is likened to the U.S. institution Fannie May—loans were intended to increase homeownership, and the State Bank had close connections to both the International Development and Inter-American Development Banks, see Murphy, *For a Proper Home*, 62-63.

<sup>221</sup> González Arriagada, "Surviving in the City," 89.

<sup>222</sup> Murphy, *For a Proper Home*, 62; González Arriagada, "Surviving in the City," 89.

Self-help programs were geared more toward the poor than the middle class. The Self-Construction and Mutual Aid Program between the Chilean and U.S. governments constructed close to 3,000 housing units in the 1950s. However, homes were commonly situated along the banks of rivers and canals, and in turn were completely cut off from basic infrastructure and public services, as well as susceptible to disaster like flooding.<sup>223</sup> Self-help was not a new concept in Chile, as explored here, however at this moment the practice became increasingly associated with and directed at the poor. The stigma of residing in the slums carried on when transferred to (mostly privately funded) self-help homes, as they were placed where ranchos had traditionally been located. Space held a deep and complex relationship with the past such that class divisions could not be easily overcome with orderly neighborhood plans and brand new concrete walls.

### **Alberto Cruz and 1950s Modernism**

In Viña del Mar, Alberto Cruz and his associates at the Architecture Institute of the Pontificia Universidad Católica de Valparaíso operated ambitiously with the support of adventurous investors, symbolizing the popularization modernists gained in the 1950s. His work always centered on the poor. For example, in Achullapa, where Pérez de Arce writes: “The commission envisioned the creation of a working-class residential zone situated on the plateaus behind the urban area, following the trend that relegated low-cost workers’ dwellings to the periphery. Cruz, however, proposed an alternative placement closer to the center and organized

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<sup>223</sup> Hidalgo Dattwyler, “La vivienda social en Chile,” 4.

the dwellings around a boulevard offering easy access to the urban core.”<sup>224</sup> Cruz boldly tested boundaries with the placement of worker housing. He ignored the concerns espoused by the rich and instead made worker homes the focal point of Viña del Mar; they deserved the beach air and the convenient transportation most of all. The blank slate on the sea emphasized the advanced design concepts alive in Chile, as well as the willingness of some, like the Church, to promote such experimental programs that centered the poor.

University construction fostered change in architecture and planning that made modernist apartment complexes possible. Bresciana, Valdés, Castillo, and Huidobro designed the Universidad Técnica del Estado, with a curriculum focused on industry and technology, on parts of the Quinta Normal park.<sup>225</sup> The “Ciudad Universitaria” or university city, built between 1957 and 1962, was a large L shape that included green central courtyards and an adjacent student housing complex, the Unidad Vecinal Portales.<sup>226</sup> As early as the 1930s, college campuses were constructed in the style of a university city, as was the trend throughout Latin America. These were self-contained campuses that centralized all facets of student life, linking apartments, classrooms, cafeterias, etc. through pedestrian courtyards.<sup>227</sup> Brunner’s 1931 plan for Concepción, for instance, included an independent design for the Universidad de Concepción.<sup>228</sup> It is not surprising that the contemporary practices were well-received in Chile, as their history would suggest decades of interest.

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<sup>224</sup> Rodrigo Pérez de Arce, “Landscape in Everything: Lessons from the Valparaíso School,” in “Architectures of Latin America,” *Harvard Design Magazine* 34 (2011): 193.

<sup>225</sup> Fuentes Hernández, “Campus Universitarios en Chile,” 129.

<sup>226</sup> Ibid.

<sup>227</sup> Between 1929 and 1932, President Ibáñez sent a troop of 26 professors to Europe, where they ostensibly soaked in contemporary techniques, see Pérez Oyarzún, “Chile,” *Latin America in Construction*, 157.

<sup>228</sup> Almandoz, “From Urban to Regional Planning in Latin America,” 88.



**Figure 5.1.** Brutalist Portales Neighborhood (Source: <https://www.pinterest.com/pin/487303622153047834/>)

Architects made clear their devotion to incorporating modernist teachings. A series of experimental lower-class dwellings were built in Corbusian style, increasingly the norm in the 1940s, 50s, and 60s.<sup>229</sup> The shift was organic. The Población Juan Antonio Ríos in Santiago was at the forefront of this trend, built between the late 1940s and early 1950s, it was composed of some 5,271 dwellings.<sup>230</sup> The 1954 Población Arauco in Santiago presented open green spaces and sleek staircases. Two-story homes were grouped in “*manzanas alargadas*” (extended blocks). The whole complex was composed of 300 homes.<sup>231</sup> Chinchorro (1955-56) and Estadio (1956-57), constructed by the Bresciani Valdés Castillo Huidobro firm, showcased the

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<sup>229</sup> Hidalgo Dattwyler, “La vivienda social en Chile,” 4.

<sup>230</sup> Ibid.

<sup>231</sup> Hidalgo Dattwyler, “El papel de las leyes de fomento de la edificación obrera,” 102.

capabilities of the team and reiterated a willingness to create affordable housing.<sup>232</sup> The 1955 to 1958 Portales neighborhood was built by the same superstar firm. Liernur describes the construction: “The most original feature is the continuation of the open-air corridors as raised passerelles, which created a circulation grid that passes right over the houses...”<sup>233</sup> The complex was composed of 2,000 units and was globally recognized as a brutalist flagship.<sup>234</sup> Affordable housing displayed a distinctly Chilean character by the 1950s, with large complexes constructed of typically earthquake-resistant concrete with plenty of shade, embodying the spirit of life in the arid zone between the Pacific and the Andes. These housing complexes ensured the same qualities desired for decades; clean air, sunlight, community and green space, solid cheap materials, etc.

## CORFO

A 1959 earthquake added to the distressing pattern of tremors reappearing to haunt the country every decade. President Alessandri was forced to adopt platforms of public expenditure and increased taxation. Tidal waves wreaked havoc in the Valdivia area with 2.5 million people affected, as: “Three thousand people perished during this natural disaster, thousands were left homeless, and the damage to buildings, factories, mines, and the infrastructure was so extensive

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<sup>232</sup> Pérez Oyarzún, “Chile,” in *Latin America in Construction*, 158.

<sup>233</sup> Jorge Francisco Liernur, “Architecture for Progress: Latin America, 1955-1980,” in *Latin America in Construction*, 77.

<sup>234</sup> In 1964 the Portales Neighborhood, designed by Bresciani, Valdés, Castillo & Huidobro, was completed after ten years of construction and “...internationally recognized following its publication in the book *The New Brutalism*, by Reynar Banham,” see Torrent, “Abstraction and Tectonics in Chilean Architecture since 1950,” in *Chilean Modern Architecture since 1950*, 98.



that it required external financial assistance.”<sup>235</sup> The IMF advised the Chilean government to deploy CORFO in the region with a ten-year plan, as well as urging Alessandri to ask congress for increased taxes.<sup>236</sup> Emergency capabilities were bestowed upon the president in such moments, under the 1958 State Security Act.<sup>237</sup> The government mobilized CORFO to address the crisis of poverty and housing shortages more broadly, beyond the devastated area. This enabled the expansion of CORFO capabilities, instilling a trust and openness among Chileans for developmentalist agendas. The Chilean government’s mobilization of CORFO funds legitimized a technocratic approach to housing and infrastructure.

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<sup>235</sup> Kofas, *The Sword of Damocles*, 138.

<sup>236</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>237</sup> Faundez, *Democratization, Development, and Legality*, 114.

## Chapter 6: Conflict, Reform, and Housing in the Frei Era

### The Alliance for Progress and Expanded U.S. Funding

In the 1960s, the U.S. aimed to influence most social programs and government policies in Latin America. Social engineering, it was thought, would ensure that the capitalist vision of modernization would prevail over any alternatives. Financial aid was invested to prevent popular discontent and any turn toward radicalism. Corporations, charities, and state-sanctioned and international bodies like the IMF and the World Bank collaborated to influence Latin American countries thought to be vulnerable to communism.<sup>238</sup> Chile was a prime target for major funding given its affinity for leftism and populism, as well as its role as one of the more intellectually significant centers of South America.

The 1960 Act of Bogotá and the 1961 Punta del Este Charter set the gears in motion for what would become the notoriously flawed Alliance for Progress (ALPRO) with the intention of achieving the above objectives. ALPRO was a vaguely defined web of U.S. financial and technical assistance programs to Latin America.<sup>239</sup> Chile submitted a national plan to the program immediately.

In the 1960s, the 'Big 3' foundations (Ford, Rockefeller, and Carnegie), which had been investing in Latin America back to the 1920s, promoted and assisted the goals of ALPRO. Slum

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<sup>238</sup> Many note the visceral hostility that Vice President Richard Nixon and his wife faced throughout Latin America during their 1958 trip as part of the reasoning behind increased U.S. interest in the region, as people hurled insults and even objects at the couple.

<sup>239</sup> It originally had a budget of about \$1,000 million for the entire region of Latin America. In 1961, the Punta del Este Charter established the Social Progress Trust Fund, which had an initial budget of \$525 million, see Felipe Herrera, "The Inter-American Bank: Catalyst for Latin American Development," *The World Today* 20, no.11 (1964): 481, accessed March 9, 2015, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/40393559>; "The Chilean Land Reform: A Laboratory for the Alliance-for-Progress Techniques," *The Yale Law Journal* 73, no.2 (1963): 134, accessed March 9, 2015, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/794770>.

clearance and a measure of legal protection were high on their agendas.<sup>240</sup> Parmar writes: “Elitist, technocratic, utilitarian, and ethnocentric, the foundations’ leaders presided over huge endowments that were aimed at social engineering. Their philosophy was generally practical, pragmatic, and utilitarian.”<sup>241</sup> Their projects channeled a sympathy for the poor while perpetuating at the same time a U.S.-centric vision of the world scarcely indistinguishable from Cold War propaganda.

The formation of the Inter-American Development Bank (IADB) in 1959 augmented the effectiveness of U.S. aid programs to Latin America.<sup>242</sup> In the 1960s the resources and mechanisms of delivery made possible “...[u]sing U.S. funds, the [IADB] would make loans across Latin America to help infrastructure projects in transportation, health, and education.”<sup>243</sup>

Despite immense pressure, Chileans had refused to break relations with the Cubans, undoubtedly stirring tensions and intensifying U.S. attention to the country.<sup>244</sup> Countless development projects were undertaken in Chile under the auspices of the above funding. The money had no visible end in the early and mid-1960s, as Chileans acquiesced to ALPRO and the IMF’s recommendations.<sup>245</sup> By 1962 U.S. aid to Chile had reached \$200 million. The

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<sup>240</sup> Inderjeet Parmar, *Foundations of the American Century: The Ford, Carnegie, & Rockefeller Foundations in the Rise of American Power* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2012), 40.

<sup>241</sup> *Ibid.*, 63.

<sup>242</sup> Previously, the Eisenhower administration was largely restricted with the Import-Export Bank. Usually the Import-Export Bank tried to guarantee that Latin American nations bought U.S. products with the loans and increasingly so when they dug themselves out of debt, see *Ibid.*

<sup>243</sup> *Ibid.*, 18.

<sup>244</sup> Albert L. Michaels, “The Alliance for Progress and Chile’s ‘Revolution in Liberty,’ 1964-1970,” *Journal of Interamerican Studies and World Affairs* 18, no.1 (1976): 78-81, accessed March 9, 2015, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/174817>.

<sup>245</sup> For example, in January and February 1963 alone, USAID lent Chile \$35 million for development projects, with \$25 million from the Eximbank and the U.S. Treasury, as well as

Alessandri government (1958-64) received about \$447.7 million in U.S. aid, dwarfing the \$69.1 million given to Ibáñez (1952-58),<sup>246</sup> and between 1962 and 1969 Chile received \$743 million from U.S. sources.<sup>247</sup> Between 1961 and 1971, Chile received the “...highest per capita US aid in Latin America,” second only to Vietnam globally.<sup>248</sup>

ALPRO structured the IA-ECOSOC (the Inter-American Economic and Social Council) to provide technical experts to Latin American countries to conduct studies, for example, to gather figures as to how many homes each nation was expected to build with the economic aid.<sup>249</sup> Chile’s ten-year plan satisfied ALPRO representatives with its embrace of stringent planning. The January 1961 ten-year development plan, “...which CORFO economists, managers, and engineers drafted...” centered on an agenda prescribed by U.S. aid, mostly focused on electrical power, as well as mechanization of agriculture and industry.<sup>250</sup> The plan internalized ALPRO’s suggested paths to economic growth, promoting housing construction along with mechanization and electrification.<sup>251</sup> The rural sector certainly required modernization, a fact no Chilean would question: efficiency would produce more grain,

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\$5.4 from Food for Peace, see Taffet, *Foreign Aid as Foreign Policy*, 54-56, see table 3.1; *Ibid.*, 50.

<sup>246</sup> Kofas, *The Sword of Damocles*, 146.

<sup>247</sup> This was “11.8 percent of all the Alliance for Progress money sent to Latin America. It was the third highest recipient of U.S. funding behind only Brazil and Colombia,” see Taffet, *Foreign Aid as Foreign Policy*, 67.

<sup>248</sup> Michaels, “The Alliance for Progress and Chile’s ‘Revolution in Liberty,’” 77.

<sup>249</sup> *Ibid.*, 50.

<sup>250</sup> *Ibid.*, 141.

<sup>251</sup> U.S. corporations naturally would profit, as Latin Americans were encouraged to purchase U.S. tools and machinery. In the case of housing, Chileans were expected to import construction materials and prefab homes, see Winn, *Weavers of Revolution*.

necessary to all regions of the country, in turn stabilizing what had been sky-high inflation in agricultural prices.<sup>252</sup>

### Housing Shortages in the 1960s

At the end of the 1950s unemployment had at least doubled in every Chilean city. Poverty and insufficient housing remained prevalent. The urban housing shortage was an estimated five times that of rural sectors.<sup>253</sup> The country lacked at least 1.5 million homes, with most of the deficit in Santiago and other cities.<sup>254</sup>

**Table 6.1.** Housing shortages in Santiago

| Year | Shortage in Santiago |
|------|----------------------|
| 1952 | 156,205              |
| 1960 | 454,000              |
| 1970 | 592,324              |

(Source: Hidalgo Dattwyler, “La vivienda social en Chile,” 5)

By 1960, Santiago, now a city of 2 million, had physically expanded in area to 20,900 hectares, about three times its 1930 size.<sup>255</sup> The United Nations Center for Housing and Planning considered 25 percent of Santiago neighborhoods to be slums in 1964, and 20 percent

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<sup>252</sup> Stabilization and growth of the economy effectively required massive outside financial assistance. Nationalization of major industries would most likely have been the only other option, but was not tolerated by foreign advisors; even if nationalization were achieved, copper, wheat, textiles and other products would remain subject to swings in global market prices and to spending constraints faced by domestic consumers.

<sup>253</sup> Shaw describes the urban shortage as “...ranging from a deficiency of 18.5/100 in the province of Valparaíso to 56.8/100 in the province of Linares,” see Shaw, *Land Tenure and the Rural Exodus in Chile*, 18.

<sup>254</sup> Power, *Right-Wing Women in Chile*, 16.

<sup>255</sup> Valenzuela, “Mass housing and urbanization,” 265; At this point, the plan initiated in 1960, the *Plan Intercomunal de Santiago 1960-94 MOP*, as the title would imply, intended to project growth for the next several decades, see Isabel Pavez, “El plan Brunner para Santiago,” 1.

of Valparaiso's housing was labeled inadequate.<sup>256</sup> The situation gained attention in the U.S; a 1961 article in the *New York Times* headlined "CHILE SQUATTERS DEMAND HOUSING: 10,000 Homeless Camp on Site of Delayed Project" highlighted the tragedy in Santiago.<sup>257</sup> The piece noted the people had been waiting about five years for homes though they had already paid deposits, and that four children had died in the harsh cold.<sup>258</sup> The article read: "The most elaborate structures have rickety wooden frames, corrugated roofs held in place by stones, and sides formed of boards, canvas or blankets. Some squatters have dug into the ground and put dirt around their tents as protection against the wind and cold."<sup>259</sup> Chileans were depicted as some poor souls in a far-off land, living in structures U.S. cities had long-abandoned as relics of the 19<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>260</sup>

### **Frei and Housing Initiatives**

In 1964 the centrist Christian Democrats, as part of the effort to win workers and sway them away from the left, renewed attention on the struggles of the poor, as advised by ALPRO. ALPRO employed what Taffet calls impact projects, propaganda, to help the Christian Democratic Party (PDC) elect Eduardo Frei Montalva (1964-70) Frei over the Socialist Party's Salvador Allende. U.S. dollars were mobilized to ensure the poor knew Frei and his platform's progressive promises.<sup>261</sup>

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<sup>256</sup> Shaw, *Land Tenure and the Rural Exodus*, 17, see Table 1.5.

<sup>257</sup> Edward C. Burks, "Chile Squatters Demand Housing," *The New York Times*, August 2, 1961.

<sup>258</sup> Ibid.

<sup>259</sup> Ibid.

<sup>260</sup> The Great Chicago Fire of 1871 comes to mind.

<sup>261</sup> The PDC was a party representing the interests of the new urban elite, the middle class. It emerged as a centrist movement out of progressive Catholic sympathy for the poor and U.S.-

Frei increased spending on housing by 66.3 percent between 1964 and 1967, as well as on the urban sector more generally by 114.9 percent.<sup>262</sup> He proposed, as Oxhorn describes, “...the construction of 60,000 new homes per year for 6 years... The state would support home ownership with loans, flexible financing, and subsidies based on wage levels. To ensure new houses were in viable communities, Frei promised the construction of shopping areas, parks, theaters, and schools.”<sup>263</sup> Frei understood this would not completely solve housing shortages, but construction was also expected to provide jobs and spark the economy.<sup>264</sup> The lower classes made the Frei victory possible, as they gravitated to his focus on “...bread-and-butter’ concerns of the day (jobs, housing, control of inflation, and educational opportunity).”<sup>265</sup> The poor were not necessarily radicalized beyond accepting reformism—most were willing to settle for a decent wage and an end to the absurdly high costs of living.<sup>266</sup>

Frei was invested in a wide array of social programs as he wished to preserve his popularity with the lowest sectors. He encouraged localized organizing, in turn validating grassroots activism techniques used in the past. Frei’s “Popular Promotion” policy was intended to encourage the formation of neighborhood councils, mothers’ centers, youth centers, sport

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financed efforts to combat Communism. The party already had some roots in the Liberation Theology movement, when religious figures genuinely took interest in the struggles of the poor, see González Arriagada, “Surviving in the City,” 23; Many of the PDC politicians, including Frei, were educated at the Catholic University by radical priests, see Virginia Marie Bouvier, *Alliance or Compliance: Implications of the Chilean Experience for the Catholic Church in Latin America* (Syracuse: Maxwell School of Citizenship and Public Affairs Syracuse University, 1983).

<sup>262</sup> Robert R. Kaufman, *The Politics of Agrarian Reform in Chile 1950-1970: Public Policy, Political Institutions, and Social Change* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1972), 101.

<sup>263</sup> Philip Oxhorn, *Organizing Civil Society: The Popular Sectors and the Struggle for Democracy in Chile* (University Park: Pennsylvania State University, 1995), 52.

<sup>264</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>265</sup> Taffet, *Foreign Aid as Foreign Policy*, 60.

<sup>266</sup> *Ibid.*, 33.

clubs and other local groups.<sup>267</sup> Between 1964 and 1970, roughly 21,917 organizations were assembled under Popular Promotion, in which over 660,000 people participated.<sup>268</sup> This included 3,487 neighborhood councils and 9,000 mothers' centers.<sup>269</sup> Although the Frei era was quintessentially one of bourgeois politics, behind the scenes there was immense public support for taking ownership of one's struggles and aggressively seeking change.

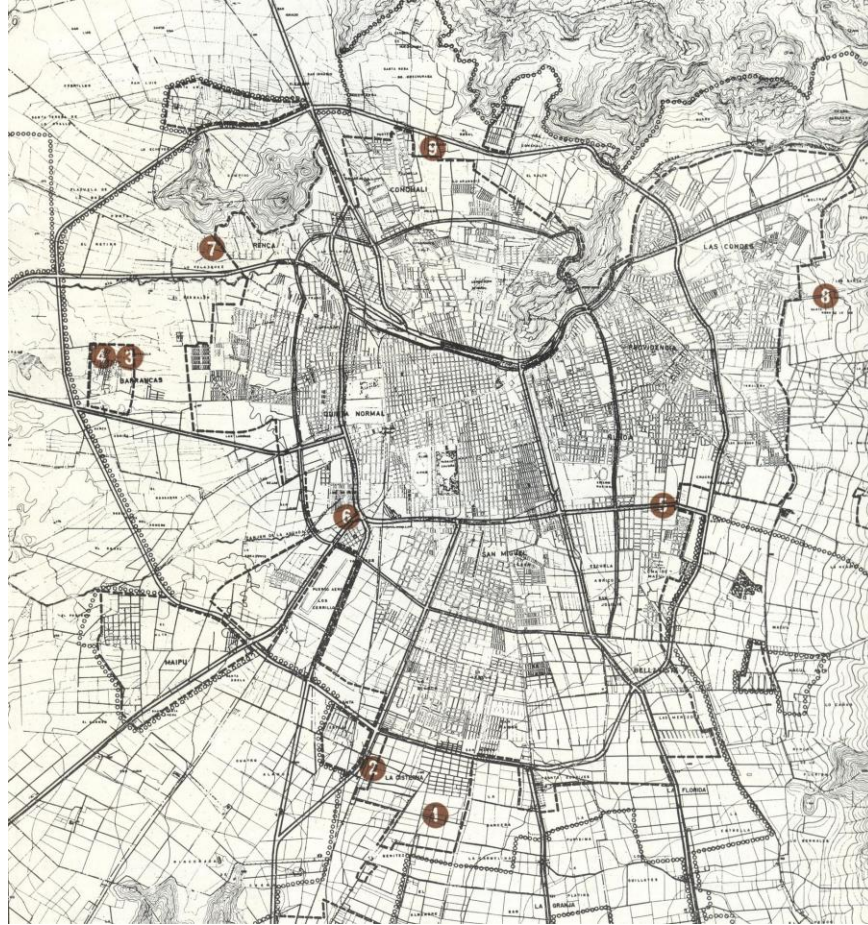
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<sup>267</sup> Oxhorn, *Organizing Civil Society*, 52.

<sup>268</sup> Murphy, *For a Proper Home*, 85.

<sup>269</sup> Oxhorn, *Organizing Civil Society*, 52.





**Figure 6.1.** Map of *Operación Sitio* locations (Source: Gideon Long, “Story of Cities #33: how Santiago tackled its urban housing crisis with ‘Operation Chalk,’” *the Guardian* April 29, 2016, <https://www.theguardian.com/cities/2016/apr/29/story-cities-33-santiago-chile-housing-crisis-operacion-sitio-operation-chalk#img-3>)

In 1964, Frei’s *Operación Sitio* (Operation Housing Site) functioned by granting the poor land purchased from private developers by the government.<sup>270</sup> It became known as Operation Chalk (*Tiza*), as between 1964 and 1970 up to new 65,000 plots were literally drawn out by residents with chalk.<sup>271</sup> On the new plots the program went about “...providing semi-urbanized

<sup>270</sup> Schneider, *Shantytown Protest in Pinochet’s Chile*, 50.

<sup>271</sup> Justin McGuirk, *Radical Cities: Across Latin America in Search of a New Architecture* (Brooklyn: Verso, 2015), 91; Hidalgo Dattwyler, “La vivienda social en Chile,” 5.

sites for people to build their own housing.”<sup>272</sup> The 1964 self-help program shaped the neighborhoods of Sara Gajardo, Las Parcelas, Villa O’Higgins, and La Hermina, where an estimated 100,000 families benefitted from these lots.<sup>273</sup> Two years into the program, however, funds ran out, and *Operación Sitio* was forced to reach out to the Chilean Chamber of Private Builders, who required that the focus of the housing project be reoriented away from the poor.<sup>274</sup> This self-help program established neighborhoods for the poor in peripheral suburbs like San Miguel, Conchalí, Barrancas, and La Cisterna, as illustrated by the above map. The same problematic regions of the city lingered on from the initial carving up of Santiago.

In 1965 MINVU (the Ministry of Housing and Urbanism) was formed and charged with handling all matters of housing and planning. The ministry remained Chile’s principal housing-related tool after the 1960s, and remains so to this day. The new ministry, armed with capacities unrivaled by previous generations, went about pursuing massive projects in home construction, zoning, standardization, etc. MINVU was composed of “...28 institutions depending on 8 departments relating to housing.”<sup>275</sup> It centralized all the government’s precursor housing agencies; it absorbed and or guided CORVI, CORHABIT, CORMU (the Corporation of Urban Improvement), and numerous other private, public, and hybrid housing related organizations.<sup>276</sup>

MINVU initiated an intercommunal plan for greater Santiago and commenced suburban zoning.<sup>277</sup> The plan dictated uniform lot sizes for single-family homes built of solid materials

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<sup>272</sup> González Arriagada, “Surviving in the City, 89.

<sup>273</sup> This was coupled with the Popular Savings Plan, which provided private loans for home repair, see Schneider, *Shantytown Protest in Pinochet’s Chile*, 50-51.

<sup>274</sup> *Ibid.*, 51.

<sup>275</sup> “Historia del ministerio de urbanismo y vivienda.”

<sup>276</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>277</sup> *Ibid.*

along a grid pattern, which was intended to ensure expanded access to transportation and government institutions.<sup>278</sup> It was crafted by working closely with USAID and the IDB and aimed to “*sanear*” (sanitize) neighborhoods and “integrate” inhabitants.<sup>279</sup> With regard to downtown dwellings, “...government strategies within the domain of urban planning and design introduced a mandatory typology of twenty-story apartment towers.”<sup>280</sup>

### **The MINVU Archives: Planning for Lower-income Santiago in the Late 1960s**

Chile’s robust history of grassroots organization provided for well-informed and experienced citizens of the lower classes, as evidenced by the types of petitions MINVU received in its first five years. Poor inhabitants elected representatives to appeal for their needs in the transition to the new government body. A petition in the MINVU archives inquired (in legal jargon) whether new homes would be held to the same standards as those under CORVI and Social Security.<sup>281</sup> Requesting housing through the state required navigation of complex bureaucratic structures, forcing the poor to recruit the assistance of middle class professionals.<sup>282</sup> Labor leaders were amongst the loudest and most influential in pressuring for the construction of dwellings.<sup>283</sup>

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<sup>278</sup> Murphy, *For a Proper Home*, 84.

<sup>279</sup> *Ibid.*, 84-85.

<sup>280</sup> Rodrigo Pérez de Arce, “Material Circumstances: The project and its Construction,” in *Chilean Modern since 1950*, 49.

<sup>281</sup> Ministerio de Vivienda y Urbanismo, Archivo Nacional de la Administración, author’s translation.

<sup>282</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>283</sup> The Ministry of Labor and Social Prevision was particularly prominent in the archives, see *Ibid.*

MINVU used many of the same tactics that proved successful in the past. For example, it incentivized lending for affordable housing, as the Central Bank offered a “rediscount” to smaller banks. For buildings to qualify they had to comply with exact standards recently outlined by MINVU.<sup>284</sup>

The working-class San Miguel neighborhood south of downtown, where the city’s poor had traditionally been abandoned, received the bulk of the assistance and attention from MINVU and other government bodies in the second half of the 1960s. An October 1967 document addressed to the Director of MINVU highlighted recent talks between the Urban Planning Development sub-department and the Minister of Public Health “...about the situation of a habitable zone in the middle of a frozen industrial zone of the community of San Miguel...”<sup>285</sup> The document pointed to the MINVU Plan, and that per the new ordinance “...in the mixed zones with bothersome industry or frozen industrial zones, the installation of new bothersome industries is not permitted and the existing ones can only extend or improve themselves.”<sup>286</sup> MINVU officials utilized Santiago zoning ordinances to enforce physical change in the neighborhood and improve the quality of life, frequently openly favoring the rights of citizens and their dwellings over industrial development. Housing placement became recognized as linked to quality of life: “The localization of households in these areas are contemplated considering beforehand the inconveniences that their installation can generate for the residents of

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<sup>284</sup> Session No. 2.034 of July 21, 1965: the reimbursement to banks were only for buildings “...that do not exceed 70m2. excluding corridors, stairs and communal surfaces, that they adjust to the Regulation No. 5 approved by the Ministry of Public Works, with date 25 of May of 1965,” author’s translation, see Ibid.

<sup>285</sup> Ibid.

<sup>286</sup> Ibid.

them.”<sup>287</sup> Even the poor apparently might deserve a life free of the noisy, polluting, imposing factories, and as such zoning ordinances would hypothetically guard the San Miguel residents from “harmful industries,” which otherwise would take liberties to expand unchecked.

MINVU ambitions included supplying residents with access to ample public space, which in turn could be positioned in strategic ways to serve other planning goals. A June 1968 document described a large T-shaped “Projected Park,” designed to “...solve the lack of Green Spaces in this sector.”<sup>288</sup> The park in San Miguel espoused the ideals of practical zoning, and specifically attempted to segregate industrial and residential development with a buffer zone where “... [Virginia street] widens to 25 meters, between Central Avenue and 1<sup>st</sup> Street as to isolate the Industrial block from the Housing Zone.”<sup>289</sup> Public works could assist the planners in influencing the private development, over which it did not have direct control. MINVU zoning policies in San Miguel took as their purpose serving residents through gently guiding the path of development, gradually dampening the problems associated with proximity to factory pollution or disconnectedness from public transportation and public space, for example.

Regulations and standards were of course also used to restrict resident’s construction and direct settlement patterns, as the social engineering ideas of ALPRO and charities recommended. Planning was used to alter neighborhood composition, and at times unreasonable expectations equated to dislocation. A July 1968 document dictated that buildings in the industrial zone of San Miguel were to be between 5 and 6 meters from the medians. *Antejardíns* (front gardens) could not be extended too far toward certain streets. Fences along streets involved in the region

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<sup>287</sup> Author’s translation, *Ibid.*

<sup>288</sup> *Ibid.*

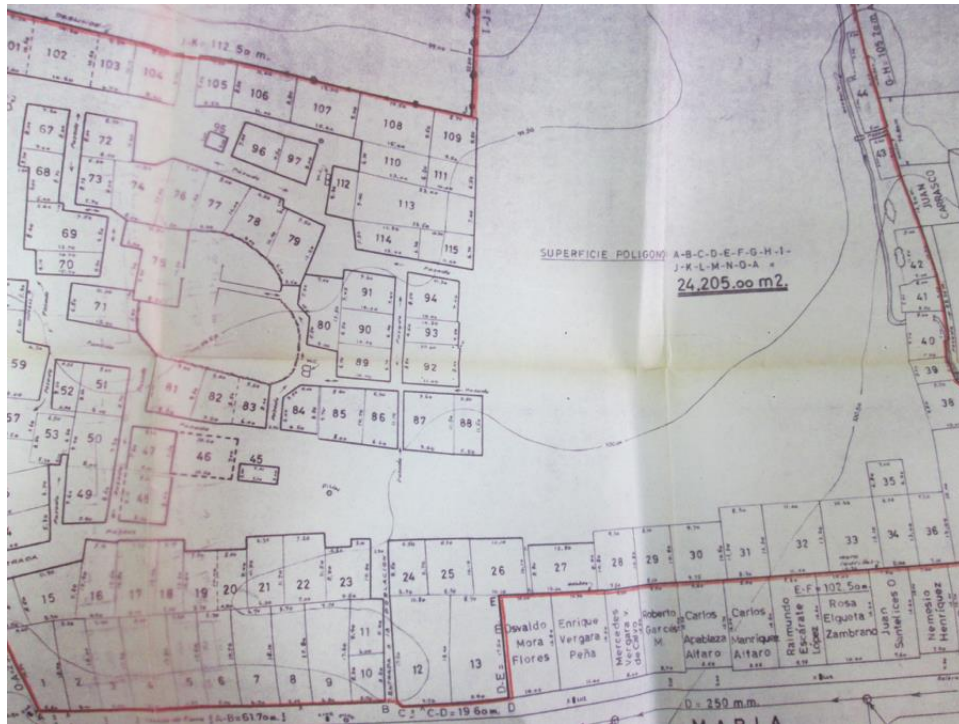
<sup>289</sup> *Ibid.*

could not exceed 2.4 meters.<sup>290</sup> Presumably in this way laws managed to exclude many of the families who carried with them their agricultural practices, and turned to their small plots for extra subsistence. The document noted the advantages of this “...modification is the freeing of future expropriation around 30 households of the Carmen Nueva neighborhood, with the beneficial consequence for a numerous group of families who live there and which otherwise, sooner or later need to be eradicated.”<sup>291</sup> MINVU officials promoted secure living conditions for residents, but slum clearance was part and parcel of their idea of improving a neighborhood. In this instance planners suggested the thirty San Miguel families would be better off if the government hurried the inevitable slum-clearance process, showing they lacked true understanding of or did not fully appreciate the needs of the poor.

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<sup>290</sup> Ibid.

<sup>291</sup> Ibid.



**Figure 6.2.** Conchalí addition (Source: Ministerio de Vivienda y Urbanismo, Archivo Nacional de la Administración, author’s photograph)

The Conchalí province to the north was another area of interest for MINVU as several established homes wished to be officially incorporated. The community was composed of self-help homes though properties had been attained through land invasions on large portions of an aristocratic family’s estate. The lines between squatter and self-help beneficiary were somewhat blurred at this moment. In a letter addressed to the Director General of Public Works dated February 1966, the suggestion was made that the agricultural neighborhood of “Villa Conchalí” (formerly Villa Julio San Martin) be incorporated into the communal plan.<sup>292</sup> Per a MINVU document from November 1965, the Villa Conchalí residents had successfully petitioned for the

<sup>292</sup> Ibid.

inclusion of their neighborhood in October, based on “the Direction of Public Works in view of that solicited by the representatives of the Society of self-help Villa Conchalí.”<sup>293</sup>

In February 1966, a document addressed to the Minister of MINVU and signed by the Executive Vice President of CORVI, advocated for the appropriation of land privately owned by one man and housing squatters, siding in favor of the Conchalí residents, as it was decided best “...to declare necessary the lands owned by the Suc. Raúl Díaz Riesco, located in the Community of Conchalí of this city, those which currently, one finds occupants of the Neighborhood ‘JULIO SOTO PEÑA,’ composed of 123 illegal occupants.”<sup>294</sup> The division of this larger property into smaller plots was typical in Chile by this point. The document labeled the residents “illegal” yet sought to provide a path to legitimate ownership, posing interesting questions about the thin line between official or nonofficial.<sup>295</sup> A planning survey illustrated that the plots were in a neat polygonal shape, which it was assumed would make for seamless incorporation.<sup>296</sup> CORVI acted as the purchaser of the inhabited land, which was ostensibly passed on to be developed. If land was going to be allotted to the occupants, it was going to be done along a regulated plan that provided for easy integration into the city.

Las Condes—a well-known middle and upper-class suburban neighborhood, not only in the 1960s but in contemporary times—was surprisingly susceptible to pressure from poorer residents, per the MINVU archives. This same ambiguous squatting/self-help status of the residents here provoked a debate over the incorporation of homes Las Condes. A text signed by

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<sup>293</sup> Ibid.

<sup>294</sup> Ibid.

<sup>295</sup> Did land titles make residents suddenly “legal?” If so, this had already been recognized as an unstable form of proof in the near past, as residents in the “phantom subdivisions,” knew all too well.

<sup>296</sup> Ibid.



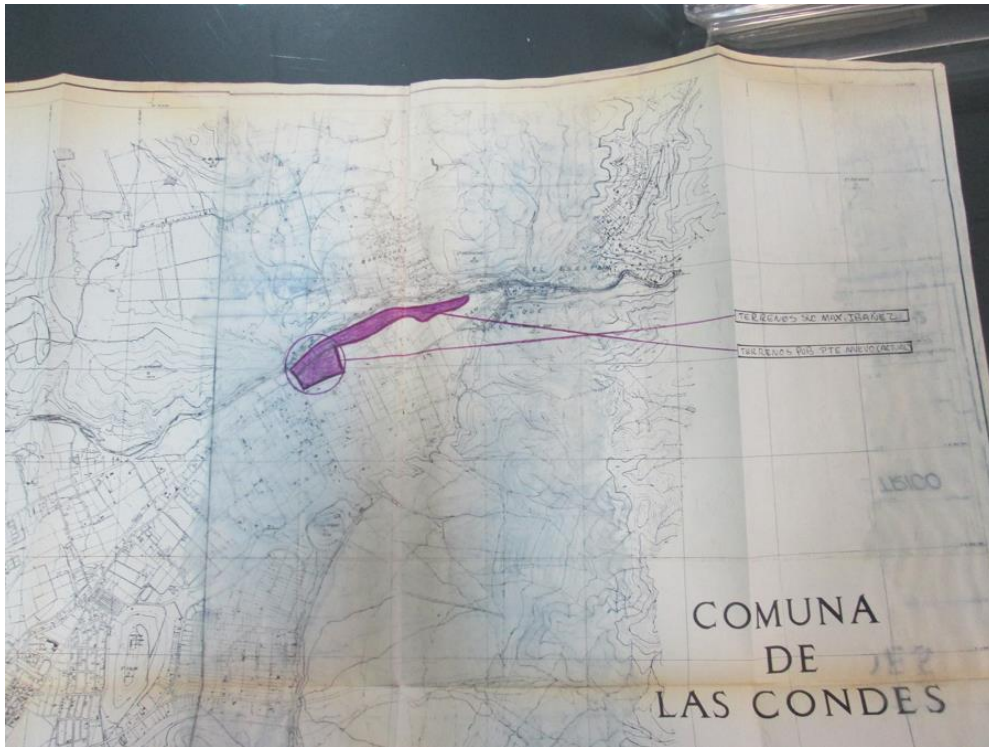
the Director of Works and addressed to the mayor of Las Condes in July 1965 highlighted the problems of some 250 families, which he describes as having “... a great number of persons of scarce resource who live in conditions of instability and misery.”<sup>297</sup> He suggested a study should be conducted that would examine the benefits of incorporation and the suitability of the community to mesh with the existing Las Condes residents.<sup>298</sup> A document dated December 1965 furthered the incorporation of the neighborhood, now described as a “satellite zone.” It was agreed CORVI would finance construction on the land, and that the 250 people would be organized into four cooperatives; the document referenced the General Building and Construction Ordinance as its rationale.<sup>299</sup>

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<sup>297</sup> Ibid.

<sup>298</sup> Ibid.

<sup>299</sup> Article No. 550, see Ibid.



**Figure 6.3.** Las Condes addition (MINVU Archives, author’s photograph)

In a document signed by Juan Parrochia and intended for the “Lead Architect” at the MINVU, he requested affordable housing be located on Avenue Las Condes, in front of Fernández Concha.<sup>300</sup> People like Parrochia had their eyes on large swathes of empty aristocratic land, as it appeared foolish to let it sit there unused, given that both the rural and urban poor were traditionally encouraged by the government to stakeout unused land.<sup>301</sup> In perspective this was a controversial request that implicated the general polarized class struggles of Chilean society. Parrochia utilized the speculative plans for Las Condes and the 1960 census

<sup>300</sup> Ibid.

<sup>301</sup> For example, the “back to the land” scheme discussed above, or as part of the 1940s and 50s land reform policies, where instead of redistribution the landowning aristocrats advocated for the poor finding their own plots of vacant land, which frequently had no potential for growing anything, see Wright, *Land Owners and Reform in Chile*.

to showcase empty land in a low-density community sparsely populated by the middle and upper classes whose "...population can be tripled within those same limits."<sup>302</sup> He envisioned the land could accommodate another 300,000 inhabitants, and that it would be relatively easy to provide these people with utilities, once they were concentrated in the neighborhood.<sup>303</sup> For Parrochia, it was common people who displayed more potential when it came to "geometric progression."<sup>304</sup> He wrote of communities that evidenced his assertions: "As an example it would suffice to visit the illegal and unhealthy population that carried out the Municipality of Las Condes in the case of the Mapocho River in this same sector, and another irregular population established along of this same river between Centenario Avenue and the Polo Club."<sup>305</sup>

However, the well-off residents of Las Condes learned early on that they could defend their interests, for example the class or racial character of the neighborhood, via the same types of actions and policies benefitting the poor. In February 1966, the mayor of Las Condes wrote the Director of Planning at the Ministry of Public Works, this time calling for the incorporation of houses considered tolerable and the eradication of those that were undesirable.<sup>306</sup> The neighborhoods of Puente Nuevo, San Enrique, and San Antonio, Vidal suggested, should be incorporated into Las Condes.<sup>307</sup> These three areas were selected for their solid construction, as "...those which already have good buildings do not affect the future tracings of parks, nor

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<sup>302</sup> MINVU Archives.

<sup>303</sup> Ibid.

<sup>304</sup> Ibid.

<sup>305</sup> As noted with the Hippodromo in San Miguel, the polo grounds attracted slum quarters, perhaps as they necessitated labor. Parrochia expected future canalization and covering of that section of the Mapocho near Las Condes would lessen issues in the poor neighborhoods, see Ibid.

<sup>306</sup> Ibid.

<sup>307</sup> Ibid.

avenues and previously established remodeling of the existing...”<sup>308</sup> The land was to be given to a “...group of appreciable communal workers...” who already lived there.<sup>309</sup> The middle and upper class approached planning in a way that appealed to the MINVU goals but contradicted the struggles of the poor: for example, they supported professionals (many of whom were their friends and relatives) in their quest for rationality and efficiency in order to skirt equality and redistribution, even though architects protested that the poor had more potential for order. Only some of the satellite communities materialized, such as that of Puente Nuevo, which existed on land primarily owned by Suc. Max. Ibáñez.<sup>310</sup> The 1960s were radicalized and progressive enough that it was not farfetched to trust the poor to engage in orderly planning and construction, even in a suburb with the reputation of Las Condes.

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<sup>308</sup> Ibid.

<sup>309</sup> Ibid.

<sup>310</sup> Ibid.

**Table 6.2.** MINVU Study of Housing in 60 Communities

| Year                            | Number of Homes | Cost in Escudos      | Portion of Construction Budget |
|---------------------------------|-----------------|----------------------|--------------------------------|
| <b>Private - 60 Communities</b> |                 |                      |                                |
| 1961                            | 9,970           | 52,990,000           | 77.82%                         |
| 1962                            | 19,346          | 137,219,000          | 87.84%                         |
| 1963                            | 14,203          | 118,909,000          | 82.53%                         |
| 1964                            | 11,838          | 154,326,000          | 73.85%                         |
| 1965                            | 13,861          | 204,894,000          | 79.53%                         |
| 1966                            | 13,132          | 244,031,000          | 78.07%                         |
| 1967                            | 14,191          | 353,941,000          | 77.82%                         |
| 1968                            | 17,728          | 582,587,570          | 87.07%                         |
| 1969                            | 20,400          | 771,753,772          | NA                             |
| <b>Total</b>                    | <b>134,669</b>  | <b>2,620,651,342</b> | <b>80.57%</b>                  |
| <b>Public - 60 Communities</b>  |                 |                      |                                |
| 1961                            | 21,978          | 64,167,000           | 87.65%                         |
| 1962                            | 15,584          | 55,052,000           | 75.82%                         |
| 1963                            | 10,137          | 77,564,000           | 83.00%                         |
| 1964                            | 5,788           | 79,451,000           | 65.97%                         |
| 1965                            | 30,945          | 351,930,000          | 84.04%                         |
| 1966                            | 11,387          | 132,663,000          | 56.81%                         |
| 1967                            | 21,073          | 316,006,000          | 73.10%                         |
| 1968                            | 25,525          | 603,871,774          | 86.47%                         |
| 1969                            | 9,158           | 427,026,686          | 68.37%                         |
| <b>Total</b>                    | <b>151,575</b>  | <b>2,107,731,460</b> | <b>75.69%</b>                  |

(Source: MINVU Archives)

MINVU took as its mission gathering comprehensive statistics on housing and construction, as had become technocratic custom across the board internationally for planners of this time. In a study of 60 *comunas* scattered throughout the country, MINVU tracked the number of homes built and total construction costs of both the private and public sectors during the decade. The category public sector depicted construction by any of the state-run organizations, mostly CORVI and CORHABIT. The data was gathered from the institutions themselves. The column labeled private sector showed construction not financed by the state,

and the numbers were gathered through municipal registries by observing building permits.<sup>311</sup> Self-help homes, as has been evidenced here, were built with construction materials delivered by either outside corporations (as in the U.S. company cited or Sert) or the Chilean state, thus ostensibly they are included in both columns. The archival material does not shed light on alternative methods for incentivizing housing construction, such as through tax breaks; the wide scope of the umbrella term private would encompass such efforts.

The numbers suggest that both the private and public sectors contributed about an equal amount of housing in the 1960s. The data gathered revealed some advantages of the multi-pronged response to the shortage that included pressuring the private sector into providing homes, though ultimately it exposed clear flaws with the scale of Chilean housing programs. The private and public sectors consistently through these years invested most of their construction costs (about 75 to 80 percent) on housing. This other portion was either spent on office, retail, and industrial buildings; or parks, roads, stadiums, etc. The private sector steadily increased its production of homes through the decade, while state-sponsored projects usually corresponded to U.S. aid—for example, in 1965, when the public sector saw a huge spike in spending and homes constructed. The data implies that overall Chile was making slow progress on its housing problem.<sup>312</sup> Rounding up, in the 1960s both private and public sources provided about 300,000 homes (some of whose beneficiaries might have been middle class) throughout the whole country. There was a shortage of about 450,000 in Santiago alone at the beginning of

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<sup>311</sup> Ibid.

<sup>312</sup> The above table does not represent complete numbers for the country, which are in fact higher than the above cited numbers. For example, in 1965 the study and the publicly-funded homes nationwide differ by about 5,000 units, making the above numbers suitable for making generalized assessments of the number of homes built, see Table A.3 in Appendix A: Tables.

the decade, making an increase in the shortage to nearly 600,000 at the beginning of the 1970s foreseeable.

MINVU centered its efforts on squatters and the homeless, who were regularly transferred to CORVI and self-help homes throughout the 1960s, but this did not manage to approach solving the housing crisis by any means. The prioritization of the poor proved more hortatory in nature than practical, as there was a very limited number of homes available. Some poorer people did upgrade their homes, though this was restricted to a small vocal population who could spare the time, labor, and money to pester officials via bureaucratic channels. Beneficiaries of public housing in previous decades were ensured a reliable transition into the new arrangement, as people rightly fretted over the possibility of invalidated titles and backpedaling on gains. Class divisions, however, were not magically erased once poor areas were included on a government map, and many lower-income people who merged into upscale neighborhoods, like Las Condes, felt the repercussions after establishing their properties legally. In resolute yet still anemic fashion, the 1960s continued the trends of Chilean affordable housing of previous decades.

### **ALPRO Crumbles, Chileans Recover**

The contradictions of economic aid and the social programs it produced in the late 1960s eventually thwarted the entire effort, ripping it apart at the seams: the aims of ALPRO and the IMF were not for Latin American economies to comprehensively recover, but rather just enough to repay loans and to further open countries to foreign business interests. The flow of dollars stimulated housing and construction but could not prevent radicalization, frustrating impatient

capitalists. The Chilean government simultaneously advocated for social programs while exercising its power to contain. For example, when workers organized and seized their workplaces during strikes at two Anaconda copper mines, the state intervened. The crackdown resulted in the arrest of 800 and death of 22 people.<sup>313</sup> The Frei administration took some steps toward nationalizing industries, but marched police into the mines, factories, and shanties at the first sign of a threat.

In 1966 alone U.S. aid totaled \$112 million. The U.S. ambassador, Ralph Dungan, took a hands-on approach, working in Santiago slums with residents in self-help assembly.<sup>314</sup> However the situation was beyond repair, as even President Frei, the beneficiary of ALPRO propaganda, had become disillusioned. In a 1967 *Foreign Affairs* article he declared that the “Alliance had lost its way” and that assistance favored elites over those in need.<sup>315</sup> The IMF and World Bank responded that austerity measures should be adopted, including cutting public housing, but Chile instead rejected U.S. aid altogether, taking issue with Yankee intervention in the Dominican Republic and Peru.<sup>316</sup> As a result the Christian Democrats were forced to drastically cut their budget in 1967, though home construction did not bear the brunt of it.<sup>317</sup>

In the late 1960s, leaders of government bodies resigned from their posts in acts of protest. Influential Catholic figures withdrew their support for Eduardo Frei and the Christian Democrats when they noticed a lack of results as to the poor, specifically those who had lived

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<sup>313</sup> The two U.S.-owned copper giants in Chile were both started in Salt Lake City, Anaconda (Standard Oil subsidiary) and Kennecott (owner of the world’s largest copper mine, El Teniente), see Michaels, “The Alliance for Progress and Chile’s ‘Revolution in Liberty,’” 89.

<sup>314</sup> *Ibid.*, 85.

<sup>315</sup> *Ibid.*, 88.

<sup>316</sup> *Ibid.*, 89-90.

<sup>317</sup> Murphy, *For a Proper Home*, 88.



and spent time amongst the *poblaciones*.<sup>318</sup> The general population followed suit, voting for more radical and progressive alternatives. The PDC fell particularly short when it came to its promises for land reform. Frei was stuck navigating a delicate balance—he was losing support from the more radical and progressive elements for not doing enough and attempting to keep order through violent crackdowns, while simultaneously fending off U.S. interests and demands.

Chile had urbanized at an astounding rate, generating unprecedented homelessness in its cities by the 1970s. The housing crisis could only be solved through comprehensive economic reform that prioritized equality, as well as the perpetuation of localized social programs. Frei made a valiant effort with ALPRO and other assistance; his administration constructed about 228,398 units during his six years, falling short of a stated goal of 360,000. However, many of those who benefitted were not the most marginalized, as his administration provided only 121,000 of the 213,000 houses projected to be needed by low-income residents.<sup>319</sup> Murphy concludes that this was largely due to pressure from the influential private Chilean Chamber of Construction. This housing deficit had risen to 585,000 by 1970.<sup>320</sup> In short, Salvador Allende inherited a nearly unmanageable situation from Frei.

### **Zenith of Land Invasions**

Self-help, *Operación Sitio*, Popular Promotion, programs intended to dampen radicalization and public discontent, in many ways energized common people to do exactly the

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<sup>318</sup> Bouvier, *Alliance or Compliance*, 31. Between late 1967 and early 1968, the Diocesan Synod of Santiago announced that the church would focus on social justice, in harmony with Vatican II, see Hutchison, *Labors Appropriate to their Sex*, 140.

<sup>319</sup> Murphy, *For a Proper Home*, 88.

<sup>320</sup> *Ibid.*

opposite, specifically in the sense that the actions encouraged bore a remarkable similarity to squatting, land invasions, and building shanties from found materials. In the middle of the decade, about 50 percent of the *pobladores* were unemployed.<sup>321</sup> Between 1963 and 1967 places like La Granja to the south of downtown and Conchalí to the north became important battlegrounds for the land invasion movement.<sup>322</sup> The narrative of the late 1960s became dominated by leftist *pobladores*, their conquered *tomas* serving as centers of culture and music, as with the Campamento Violeta Parra, named after the famous populist folk singer.<sup>323</sup>

All eyes were on the powder keg as it unfolded in public parks, unoccupied vineyards, and in the backyards of the elite; small numbers of people made an immense impact on policy. The most famous 1960s land invasion took place in the middle of the night in Renca on March 16 1967, led by Gladys Marín and the Barrancas homeless committees.<sup>324</sup> The *pobladores* were countered by police tear gas and water cannons, in what amounted to a seven-hour battle.<sup>325</sup> The squatters' struggle built the neighborhood of Herminda de la Victoria, named after a baby that died of sickness during the cold of night.<sup>326</sup> Two and a half months later the Christian Democrats made a deal with the bellicose homeless, and, conducting a survey through the Ministry of Interior, enrolled 642 of the 1,098 families in state housing programs.<sup>327</sup> Residents agreed to provide their own labor to construct their new community's infrastructure and utilities.

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<sup>321</sup> Murphy, *For a Proper Home*, 64.

<sup>322</sup> Schneider, *Shantytown Protest in Pinochet's Chile*, 52.

<sup>323</sup> *Ibid.*, 79.

<sup>324</sup> *Ibid.*, 77.

<sup>325</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>326</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>327</sup> *Ibid.*, 78.

There was no slowing down the drive for affordable housing and land invasions. This was buttressed by a sophisticated culture of architecture and planning, as well as organized working and lower classes, accustomed to the air of progressivism and leftism. Despite Frei's rejection of ALPRO, in 1968, after having funds withheld as a penalty, Chile opened back up to U.S. investments, receiving \$846 million,<sup>328</sup> though the same year land seizures in Santiago spiked to a high of 27 for the year.<sup>329</sup> By 1969 CORHABIT estimated that 45,000 people needed "housing solutions," totaling 23,000 units.<sup>330</sup>

Land invasions were violently repressed at the end of the decade, contrasting with the tolerance and even acclaim given them by some members of the political establishment. In early 1969 the army invaded a squatter settlement in the southern city of Puerto Montt, killing 11 homeless and injuring 70 with gunfire, setting off a chain of discontent.<sup>331</sup> Disgusted, the homeless orchestrated between 73 and 148 land seizures in response to the violence in 1969. *Poblaciones* were named after leftist figures like Marx, Lenin, Che, and Angela Davis.<sup>332</sup> One of the most revered invasions was the May 1<sup>st</sup> establishment of Población Primero de Mayo, when Renca's homeless committee prepared a march from the Communist Party headquarters to Recabarren, where they camped out on a portion of a vineyard.<sup>333</sup> Five days of police occupation followed, during which time only food, water, and temporary shelter materials were allowed into

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<sup>328</sup> Ibid., 87.

<sup>329</sup> In 1967 there were somewhere between 6 and 13 land seizures in Santiago, see Power, *Right-Wing Women in Chile*, 18; Schneider, *Protest in Pinochet's Chile*, 53.

<sup>330</sup> Alejandro Portes, "The Urban Slum in Chile: Types and Correlates," *Land Economics* 47, no.3 (1971): 246, accessed February 3, 2015, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/3145054>.

<sup>331</sup> Edward Murphy, *For a Proper Home*, 90; Schneider, *Shantytown Protest in Pinochet's Chile*, 53.

<sup>332</sup> Power, *Right-Wing Women in Chile*, 18; Schneider, *Shantytown Protest in Pinochet's Chile*, 54; Murphy, *For a Proper Home*, 114.

<sup>333</sup> Ibid., 73.

the encampment.<sup>334</sup> On May 5 one hundred protesters moved from Renca to the steps of the governor's building, amazingly succeeding in having the homeless committees elevated to a neighborhood council, and in turn attaining access to government architects and planners.<sup>335</sup> Murphy elaborates that for Renca "...MINVU organized the campamento into ten distinct sections, which eventually became city blocks. Each committee of the homeless occupied a different block, following a common practice that preserved the neighborhood identity that the pobladores had before the land seizure.<sup>336</sup>" The back and forth was fraught with physical danger, but even in this precarious context the poor and their champions proved unwavering. The grinding process was surprisingly effective despite obvious flaws, prefiguring the progressive 1970s, when significant strides would be made against homelessness.

### **Housing and Architecture of the Late 1960s**

The homes of the 1960s revealed the ambitions of the radicalized public. Construction increased with U.S. aid, but still could not scale with the explosive urbanization, as that was not materially possible. Now homes were packaged as mass earthquake-resistant concrete boxes, which was cost-effective and satisfied both the demands of Chilean professionals (quickly morphing into leftists) as well as U.S. consultants. Chileans once again considered investing in foreign professionals: correspondence at the end of 1962 took place between Chilean architect Sergio Larraín and Paul Lester Weiner, wherein the former sought to acquire technical assistance to build a 20-story plus multi-use project in the central plaza in Viña del Mar (which would

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<sup>334</sup> Ibid., 93.

<sup>335</sup> Ibid., 96

<sup>336</sup> Ibid., 97-98.

include in substantial part, affordable workers housing, as required of construction companies under Chilean law).<sup>337</sup> Lower income housing was encouraged by law, and, despite the pervasive presence of foreign lending, protectionist policies remained in place to safeguard national interests. In this instance a potential contract with Sert and Wiener disintegrated due to investment constraints. It illustrates, however, the adventurousness of the Chilean government and the willingness to invest funds in eminent leaders in the planning and architecture fields.



**Figure 6.4.** Villa Frei, 1965-68, by Jaime and Osvaldo Larraín and Diego Balmaceda (Source: <http://www.arquibus.cl/en/227-oriente/villa-presidente-frei/>)

Avant-garde and modernist architects, the product of educational reforms in the 1940s and 50s, and eager for a chance to display the value of their techniques, seized opportunities to design countless apartment complexes in the 1960s. CORVI sponsored several modernist

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<sup>337</sup> Paul Lester Wiener Papers.

housing projects in the early part of the decade, such as the 1960 to 1963 Olympic Village, Santiago, which "...was based on large blocks within which courtyards were formed."<sup>338</sup> It housed about 1,000 to 2,000 people.<sup>339</sup> Other bodies like CORMU (the Corporation of Urban Improvement) created in 1965, sponsored a large percentage of the modernist projects in Santiago between 1966 and 1976, but explicitly favored the middle class.<sup>340</sup> The organization ran parallel and often in partnership with MINVU. Projects, such as the remodeling of the San Borja neighborhood, in turn, were inspired by CORVI and CORHABIT.<sup>341</sup> Villa Frei (1965-68), depicted above, stands out as a sample of Chilean modernism, echoing Le Corbusier and other modernists with its noticeable zig-zagging outdoor staircases. Architects maximized the potential use of materials and space, as both were scarce. The city was once again extended upward; structures were erected to be monumental, representative of the communal struggle. The poor were to live vertically, to abandon single-family houses for multi-family apartments.

Emilio Duhart was one of the most distinguished architects to emerge from this class of Chilean modernists. He completed a master's degree under the influential modernist Walter Gropius at Harvard, and then became the Director of the Institute of Urban and Housing Planning in Santiago from 1953 to 1960.<sup>342</sup> In 1960 he was awarded the chance to design the

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<sup>338</sup> By González, Mardones, Hegedus, Bravo & Poblete, see Torrent, "Abstraction and Tectonics in Chilean Architecture," in *Chilean Modern Architecture*, 98.

<sup>339</sup> Ibid.

<sup>340</sup> Alfonso Raposo and Marco Valencia, "Modernidad, Diseño Urbano y Utopía: Notas sobre el fundamento político de las acciones de Remodelación Urbana en Santiago. El caso de la CORMU 1966- 1973. (Segunda parte)," *Revista de Urbanismo* 10 (2004): 79, accessed April 21, 2015, <http://revistaurbanismo.uchile.cl/index.php/RU/article/viewFile/5087/15232>.

<sup>341</sup> Ibid., 83.

<sup>342</sup> Damián Bayón and Paolo Gasparini, trans. Galen D. Greaser, *The changing shape of Latin American architecture: Conversations with ten leading architects* (New York: John Wiley & Sons, 1979), 109.

United Nations CEPAL building in Santiago, which was completed in 1966, with the assistance of Brazilian landscape architect Roberto Burle Marx, who planned the surrounding park.<sup>343</sup> The building is still celebrated internationally as an outstandingly brilliant piece of Latin American architecture.

Duhart explained the peculiar nature of Chilean architecture and planning in a 1969 interview following a UNESCO meeting in Argentina; while he had the opportunity to design the CEPAL building, he shared with most Chilean architects an inability to specialize in one type of architecture.<sup>344</sup> Duhart relayed an explicit take on low-income housing, especially within the context of Chile, which he considered ‘advanced’ among Latin American countries, along with Argentina:

“In the case of a public building, I think the architect makes himself, as in the traditional sense of the word, a true creator, an organizer of the functional, plastic, and constructional space. He really is the person in charge of the construction. In the case of housing projects I think the architect should be more of an urbanist, an organizer of the projects, than a designer of the house itself. I believe that, going back to a tradition that’s as old as cities itself, the houses should be built by the people who are going to live in them, and we should tend towards that, not because of a sort of populism, not only because of a sentimental populism, but because of simple logic and reason.”<sup>345</sup>

Duhart showcased a Chilean architecture practice with decades of affordable housing projects experience. He noted problems with mechanical inhuman apartments and cities, but did not see himself as opposing the likes of Le Corbusier, who he pointed out understood this need for self-construction in Algeria, as well as a Dutch group exploring similar issues.<sup>346</sup> The idea that housing and planning were inseparable was commonly agreed upon by Chileans. Decades of proficiency with planning and architecture, paired with a progressive political context, primed

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<sup>343</sup> Carranza and Luiz Lara, *Modern Architecture in Latin America*, 244.

<sup>344</sup> Bayón and Gasparini, *The changing shape of Latin America architecture*, 115.

<sup>345</sup> *Ibid.*, 114.

<sup>346</sup> *Ibid.*

Chile's professionals for a bold approach to affordable housing. Adaptiveness and effectiveness was paramount. Residential buildings were only there to serve the residents, so, for Duhart, an architect was to be a selfless tool of the people.



## Conclusion

To achieve development, industrialization, and a modern centralized state, the Chilean economy needed to locate natural resources and create industries to generate products for the global market. To those ends the Chilean elite and state pursued settler colonialism and expansion, yielding new territory and resource-rich lands. Initially the economy relied on nitrates and copper in the north, and in contemporary times in the south on the timber and fishing industries on land of the native Mapuche.

The explosive growth of mining in turn promoted infrastructure and urbanization. Chilean cities formed along the routes by which copper and nitrates left the country. Santiago and Valparaíso became the country's economic nucleus. Rural dwellers flooded into this central urban zone throughout the twentieth century in search of opportunities, however scarce. In 1930 after the depression and crash of the saltpeter industry, even miners packed up for the Santiago-Valparaíso area. At that time two thirds of the nation's population still lived in rural areas, where landlords reigned over huge agricultural plots exploiting native-descended *inquilinos* (a situation that continued well into the 1960s and 70s). But again, by 1970 two thirds of the population lived in cities, reversing these ratios.

Incentives led the wealthy and politicians to build or buy tenement-style *conventillos*. Landlords squeezed high rents out of the poor, and especially new migrants, while returning little in maintenance, utilities, or other services. Those unable to afford rent settled in makeshift shanties, first as *ranchos* along the Mapocho river, and later as *pobladores* invading large swathes of land who pitched up tents and constructed shacks, making their own unofficial claims

of ownership. Just as the availability of jobs could not adequately sustain the population, housing could not nearly maintain pace with its swelling ranks.

Urban Chileans nevertheless proved themselves to be imaginative and ambitious in the face of such limitations. The development of middle and professional classes, although they often maintained close relationships with the old aristocracy and shared kinship ties with it, resulted in stronger representation of the poor masses and consideration of their basic needs. Workers who formed unions and went on strike were emboldened and supported by popular opinion, and in turn carved out an influential voice for their causes. Grassroots organizations like neighborhood committees, women's clinics, and even soccer teams also substantially reflected the needs of their communities.

Populism and radicalism flourished, making serious electoral gains and demanding social assistance programs. Liberation theology unabashedly promoted the struggle of the poor. Reform broke through the constraints of those initially who promoted it, if only for purposes of maintaining the status quo of power and wealth. Influential sections of the elite increasingly turned toward development and social programs as a way of quelling popular discontent among the masses. At the heart of these efforts was development of adequate housing. Related efforts involved connecting all city dwellers to public utilities like potable water, electricity and transportation (as is vital to modernization), as well as sunlight, air, green public space, etc.

The idea that the state, with the assistance of private investors and organizations, could feasibly put a roof over every family and otherwise adequately attend to the basic residential needs of all seemed entirely plausible to Chileans in the middle of the twentieth century. Viewed through a contemporary lens these ambitions appear utopian, but an impressive history of

housing efforts suggests otherwise. This optimism was understandably partly rescinded when the realities of dependence and the globalizing economy set in around the middle of the century, not to mention the actions imperial forces used to defend a capitalist world vision. Between 1920 and 1973 housing assistance bodies and laws in Chile (including MINVU, CORVI, CORMU, CORHABIT, *Operación Sitio*, U.S.-backed self-help, and others) made striking progress in their capabilities for building and repairing homes. Initiatives were slow to gain steam, but as early as the 1950s the results of the decades-long commitment were evident in thousands of new houses. By the 1970s, in Allende's three years, the nation was arguably on track to largely eliminate urban housing shortages.

Although aspirations repeatedly far outmatched material possibilities and budgetary constraints, Chilean professionals took to heart the struggle of the poor. Planners and architects sincerely adopted the mission of ending housing shortages and inadequate living conditions. This type of utopic thinking made more reasonable gains plausible, as demanding the most comprehensive societal reforms resulted in more success than complying with minimally progressive proposals.

A strong correlation between developments in the Chilean professions of architecture and urban planning and the general political climate of the county existed, meaning that as progressivism, reformism, and radicalism made gains so did the capabilities and resources of technical experts. At the same time the government sought to replace what was once informal growth with government planning.

Schools of thought within professions adopted technocratic approaches to poverty that implicitly suggested technique alone could conquer housing deficiencies. Chileans turned to

importing technical assistance from abroad early in the twentieth century. They adopted the most innovative international practices, albeit filtered through the constraints of on-the-ground conditions. Urban design and modernism became the standard by the late 1960s, the most useful tools for attacking housing shortages and problems of urbanization.

While expressly aiming to assist poor residents, in practice planning under liberal capitalist structures segregated Santiago along class lines. Zoning and placement of affordable housing channeled the poor away from downtown to expansive poor suburbs. The rich established their own communities not far from the city center to the east and north, now a landscape dominated by luxury shopping and security complexes. The physical reshaping of cities, both intentionally and unintentionally, located barriers between the classes in the forms of freeways, parks, canals, train lines, etc.

The reformism of the early 1960s did not yield the results intended by foreign capitalists and ALPRO funders or the Chilean elite and sections of the middle class; indeed, instead of preventing discontent and activism the program provoked and encouraged it. Even Frei himself admitted to its failure. The poor, however, seized the moment and made monumental gains in standard of living. Land invasions in this era evidenced a clear trend that the *pobladores* did not intend to give up their relentless quest for adequate housing. They did not even abide by the Marxist Allende's plea for an end to the overnight encampments.

The Chilean history of affordable housing, shanties, squatting, and land invasions exemplified the possibilities of radical and progressive movements to make material gains within adverse capitalist contexts. Sadly, if not perhaps predictably, the democratic choice made in Chile to embrace a move toward real equality was met with organized violence by reactionary

forces. Conservatives and moderates organized to refuse socialism, as evidenced by the glorification of Pinochet still espoused by some in contemporary times.<sup>347</sup> Furthermore, the United States' view of Chile as fundamental to the ideological defeat of radicalism in Latin America, and globally, led to its backing of the collapse, and in turn establishing a trend of funding neoliberal governments and outright ruthless dictatorships in other parts of the world to prevent leftist threats.

The demand for adequate urban housing is however not a mere artifact of those times. It remains an issue of burning importance given the contemporary state of global megacities and their miles and miles of slums. Chile itself still struggles with shanties and homelessness—take for instance the ever-present threat of fire wiping out the sheds lining the hills of Valparaíso. One can hope that fragments of the prior Chilean devotion and optimism for providing affordable housing have outlasted the victory of anticommunists and a nearly complete withdrawal of interest in housing the poor on the part of financiers and the state. This long struggle is not a closed book.

Similarly, the techniques adopted in Chile to combat housing shortages and inadequacies over forty years ago should remain entirely relevant to these lingering and unsolved problems. The adoption by experts over decades of advanced methods for constructing affordable and adequate housing hopefully likewise have also outlasted neoliberalism's starving of housing assistance for the poor.

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<sup>347</sup> I can attest this was my own experience lodging in Santiago, see Power, *Right-Wing Women in Chile*.

## Epilogue: Allende through Today

Salvador Allende's administration (1970-73) remained committed to the housing and land reform promises of his predecessors, while encouraging additional experimentation within the planning and architecture community. Affordable housing gained strength with ALPRO funds and blossomed even further during the short Allende presidency, as his government invested trust, confidence, resources, and labor in technocratic professionals.

**Table 7.1.** Population growth in Santiago and in the suburb of Renca

| <u>Year</u> | <u>Santiago Proper</u> | <u>Renca</u> | <u>Greater Santiago</u> |
|-------------|------------------------|--------------|-------------------------|
| 1930        | 1 million              | 16,262       |                         |
| 1970        | 2.8 million            | 72,829       | 3.2 million             |

(Source: Murphy, *For a Proper Home*, 59)

**Table 7.2.** Percentage of Chileans living in cities

| <u>Year</u> | <u>Urban Population of Chile</u> |
|-------------|----------------------------------|
| 1930        | 49.42%                           |
| 1970        | 74.96%                           |

(Source: González Arriagada, "Surviving in the City," 47)

Between 1952 and 1970 more than half a million Chileans had moved to Santiago,<sup>348</sup> and most were women and children. About 3.5 million women and 3.2 million men lived in cities in 1970.<sup>349</sup> Out of a workforce of 3,189,000 only 191,000 were unemployed,<sup>350</sup> but many still could not find homes. The central urban corridor around Santiago consisted of densely populated semi-urban shanties, an area of rampant poverty rather than a single-family paradise. For instance, in November 1970, as Salvador Allende was being inaugurated, as many as

<sup>348</sup> González Arriagada, "Surviving in the City," 84.

<sup>349</sup> Power, *Right Wing Women*, 16-17.

<sup>350</sup> Michaels, "The Alliance for Progress and Chile's 'Revolution in Liberty,'" 77.

300,000 still lived in Santiago shanties.<sup>351</sup> In the 1970s, poor residents continued local organizing, working to secure housing rights, and erecting structures and claiming land as their own. Allende responded. Under the Popular Unity government in 1970 MINVU contracted for upwards of 73,000 new houses, while CORVI planned for another 30,000.<sup>352</sup> The new administration sought a complete overhaul of the city and the eradication for good of homelessness.

Grassroots organizing, moreover, gained even more importance in the Allende years. Neighborhoods were molded with the input and counseling of local organizations. A meeting representing eastern San Miguel in October of 1971, a group composed of "...fifteen cooperatives, eighty mothers' centers, eight women's groups, eighteen sports clubs, four primary schools, and a Christian parish,"<sup>353</sup> epitomized such efforts. Community-decided plans were transferred up the chain of command without being lost in a bureaucratic vortex.

The Allende government nationalized copper and seized banks in 1970, bringing access to credit, and enabling the government to distribute extensive amounts of housing loans. The government pointed to the 40,000 living in the mud in Santiago as its rationale for emergency measures.<sup>354</sup> Residents needed more than simply housing, so actions were taken under Allende to deliver milk and clothing, and to build needed infrastructure.<sup>355</sup> Even with such expanded capabilities and efforts, the housing shortage still increased to 800,000 by the end of his term.<sup>356</sup>

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<sup>351</sup> Oxhorn, *Organizing Civil Society*, 54.

<sup>352</sup> Elsey, *Citizens and Sportsmen*, 225.

<sup>353</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>354</sup> Murphy, *For a Proper Home*, 108.

<sup>355</sup> *Ibid.*, 109.

<sup>356</sup> McGuirk, *Radical Cities*, 92.

The material situation in Chile worsened in the 1970s, a collapse that economic planners were forced to watch run its course, try as they might to control it.

Several groups were not content with the new government and made their opposition known. Marxist parties to the left of Allende stepped up their struggles. The MIR (Revolutionary Left Movement) and the “maximalists,” for example, pushed their agendas in the shanties and *poblaciones*.<sup>357</sup> The MIR coordinated an invasion in the middle-class Las Condes neighborhood during the Allende years.<sup>358</sup> Brand new apartment towers intended for the middle class were seized and repurposed shortly after completion, or at times before. This was a bold challenge to the continuation of class divisions as they manifested physically.

Land invasions and demonstrations did not end during Popular Unity but rather increased. Between 1970 and 1973 invasions increased tenfold, accounting for a quarter of the Santiago shanty population—about 300,000 to 400,000.<sup>359</sup> Residents familiar with the living standards promised in the Frei years demanded nothing less, such as in 1970 in the May Day *campamento*, when residents chanted “let’s move on up” in protesting apartment downgrades.<sup>360</sup> By the time Allende called for an end to all land seizures, they were common practice: 14 percent of the population participated in them between 1967 and 1973 (279,000 people).<sup>361</sup> There were 560 land seizures between 1970 and 1971, with 350 staged in Santiago itself. A land

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<sup>357</sup> Murphy, *For a Proper Home*, 116.

<sup>358</sup> *Ibid.*, 117.

<sup>359</sup> Schneider, *Shantytown Protests in Pinochet’s Chile*, 68.

<sup>360</sup> Murphy, *For a Proper Home*, 110.

<sup>361</sup> *Ibid.*, 73.



seizure was organized nearly every day for a year.<sup>362</sup> The avalanche of new arrivals largely stunted the progress that was in motion or had been previously achieved.



**Figure 7.1.** Open City (source: <http://www.barqo.cl/v1/proyecto.php?tipo=275>)

By the late 1960s most notable Chilean architects were undeniably modern; by the early 1970s they were devising their own avant-garde aesthetics that posed challenges and pushed boundaries. Alberto Cruz and his Ciudad Abierta (Open City) group were awarded a blank plot in Ritoque about fifteen miles outside of Valparaíso, where the team was encouraged to materialize their desire to instill architecture with a poetic sensibility.<sup>363</sup> The project had been planned as a 270-hectare project along two miles of sand dunes along the Pacific shoreline, and

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<sup>362</sup> Ibid., 74.

<sup>363</sup> Carranza and Luiz Lara, *Modern Architecture in Latin America*, 258.

was initiated as far back as 1969.<sup>364</sup> As Pérez de Arce explains: “There is not a master plan for the Open City, but rather a concatenation of schemes devised within the horizon of a ‘non-plan.’ Yet each act of construction heeds the particularity of its setting.”<sup>365</sup> It was imagined as a fluid city, able to adapt to and learn from the wishes of its inhabitants. Ciudad Abierta took as its principle the grassroots bottom-up methods promoted under Frei and Allende.

Prefabrication remained a popular concept in Chile in the 1970s. Soviet influence, support, and aid was present, but limited. Brezhnev offered Allende the same benefits given to Cuba.<sup>366</sup> This included machines like cement mixers, and even an entire prefabricated housing factory.<sup>367</sup> The Soviets actively attempted to export a method of prefabrication used for housing blocks to the country, but it did not take hold.<sup>368</sup> There were several other Chilean attempts at prefabricated housing techniques under Allende, such as a program run out of an abandoned Citroën Chile SA factory, and another that utilized wooden frames with composite panels, but these floundered quickly.<sup>369</sup>

In 1971 Allende asked the head architects of CORMU, Miguel Lawner and Jorge Wong, to design a building for UNCTAD (the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development). The project had to be hurried to meet the scheduled date of May 1972 for the conference.<sup>370</sup> Architect José Medina was sent to Paris and New York to work with UN architects, in an effort

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<sup>364</sup> Pérez de Arce, “Landscape in Everything,” *Harvard Design Magazine*, 190

<sup>365</sup> de Arce, GSD, 179.

<sup>366</sup> Bergdoll, “Learning from Latin America,” in *Latin America in Construction*, 33.

<sup>367</sup> McGuirk, *Radical Cities*, 92.

<sup>368</sup> Rodrigo Pérez de Arce, “Material Circumstances,” *Chilean Modern Architecture Since 1950*, 49.

<sup>369</sup> *Ibid.*, 49.

<sup>370</sup> Daniel Talesnik, “Monumentality and Resignification: The UNCTAD III Building in Chile,” in *Latin American Modern Architectures*, 135.

to guarantee that the new structure had a cohesive look.<sup>371</sup> The UNCTAD project transformed several city blocks in the northern San Borja region of Santiago, and included the addition of twelve new CORMU-owned residential towers.<sup>372</sup> The UNCTAD building has been described as “Brutalist” in style, massive and undecorated.<sup>373</sup> A worker shared his feelings on the UNCTAD project: “It makes me proud, comrade, that in Chile we build luxurious things, and workers do not have to show an ID at the entrance. But one cannot feel like the owner of this huge mass, because one arrives home at night to a cabin in a shantytown, and it has always been like this.”<sup>374</sup> Poverty remained ubiquitous, even though such communal projects inspired solidarity in everyday people.

Organizations like CORMU that had frequently benefitted middle sectors of society were repurposed for constructing monumental socialist architecture. For the Allende administration, the rebooting of downtown Santiago was inseparable from housing the squatters. The same funding of forward-thinking buildings like the UNCTAD building was applied to apartments. In 1972 a competition was held for a plan to renovate the Santiago city center. As Liernur portrays it, the aim was “...to create housing for eighty thousand people, including the former settlers of the area and the working people living in shantytowns in the city and in the encampments at its outskirts. Construction of the winning entry, an ambitious urban network influenced by the idea of CIAM Team X, was interrupted, however, by the military coup...”<sup>375</sup> In the same year the city hosted the VIEXPO international housing exhibition, which included a competition for the west-

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<sup>371</sup> Ibid., 138.

<sup>372</sup> Ibid., 136-137.

<sup>373</sup> Ibid., 140.

<sup>374</sup> Ibid., 147.

<sup>375</sup> Liernur, “Architecture for progress,” in *Latin America in Construction*, 82.

central area of Santiago.<sup>376</sup> Near the end of Allende's term the shanties lingered and the state increased its attention to the problem.

U.S.-backed military general Augusto Pinochet and his followers partnered with the Christian Democrats to engineer an economic crisis, including manufactured food shortages.<sup>377</sup> Notoriously, the Nixon sought to "make the economy scream." In October of 1972 the head of the Chilean Truck Owners' Association called for a strike, freezing the circulation of goods.<sup>378</sup> The coup took place in June 1973. At that time the rich in Las Condes had been surrounded by the poor on all sides, provoking the wealthy into organizing committees for neighborhood defense.<sup>379</sup> Once Pinochet's forces took control, the military stormed into the shanties. The residents, hardened and radicalized from decades of experience protesting, fought back between 1973 and 1983 "...digging trenches, erecting burning barricades, and pelting military tanks with rocks..."<sup>380</sup> Poor neighborhoods like Herminda de la Victoria, La Lengua, Cerro Navia, and La Pincoya were mobilized and militant.<sup>381</sup>

While the poor tirelessly opposed Pinochet during the two decades of the dictatorship, they were consistently denied ground. Chile adopted neoliberal reforms beginning in the mid-1970s, which set the standard of cutting government projects and deemphasizing government hindrances on private business.<sup>382</sup> With the coup urban reconstruction and housing construction

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<sup>376</sup> Pérez Oyarzún, "Chile," in *Latin America in Construction*, 159.

<sup>377</sup> Power, *Right-Wing Women in Chile*, 5-6.

<sup>378</sup> *Ibid.*, 33.

<sup>379</sup> Schneider, *Shantytown Protest in Pinochet's Chile*, 70.

<sup>380</sup> *Ibid.*, 4.

<sup>381</sup> *Ibid.*, 11-12

<sup>382</sup> Hugo Marcelo Zunino, "Power Relations in Urban Decision-making: Neo-liberalism, 'Techno-politicians' and Authoritarian Redevelopment in Santiago, Chile," *Urban Studies* 43, no. 10 (2006): 1825, accessed February 3, 2015, doi:10.1080/00420980600838184.

in the slums was put on hold. The governments that followed Pinochet, while perhaps not outwardly hostile to the poor, did little to restore housing programs.<sup>383</sup> This situation has undergone little change to the present.

MINVU, suffering through forty years of market-friendly administrations, ended up a husk of its former self. Marcelo Zunino depicts the organization as leaning heavily on the private sector, as with its promotion in 2001 of the “Great Urban Reform.”<sup>384</sup> In the end, government policies fostered a context where the divide between private and public was blurry, allowing for private, moneyed interests to dominate most planning initiatives.<sup>385</sup> Political and social implications are tossed aside under this style of Santiago planning; what remains is a brittle skeleton of technocratic and scientific solutions.<sup>386</sup> MINVU’s contemporary approach to planning involves the creation of centralized administrative posts. Their appointees are ultimately reduced to convincing private investors to finance projects.<sup>387</sup> In this way the private sector dominates planning, aside from the single aspect of social housing, which is still the domain of MINVU.

The results of market-directed planning have been drastic, and lacking in significant aesthetic value, to say the least. In Santiago poverty is still rampant. The rich and middle class have resorted to fortifying themselves behind gates, security cameras, and doormen, usually on the northern end of the city or in newly created suburbs. As Borsdorf, Hidalgo, and Vidal-Koppmann reveal: “These are called *barrios cerrados*, *urbanizaciones cerradas* or *condiminios*

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<sup>383</sup> Presidents Patricio Aylwin 1990-94, Eduardo Frei 1994-2000, and Ricardo Lagos 200-06, see *Ibid.*, 1826.

<sup>384</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>385</sup> *Ibid.*, 1840.

<sup>386</sup> *Ibid.*, 1826.

<sup>387</sup> *Ibid.*, 1836.

and always feature walls and fences and a central entrance gate, often watch towers, 24-h security staff, CCTV, pass control and other systems.”<sup>388</sup> The staff for such compounds, as expected, is recruited from the neighbors just outside their limits.<sup>389</sup> Borsdorf, Hidalgo, and Vidal-Koppmann point to a 1980 decree, which essentially allowed for the bulk sale of agricultural plots to be subdivided and converted into fenced-in luxury condos. Many of these sprang up in the western and southern regions of Santiago.<sup>390</sup> They write: “Between 1994 and 2002 a total of 156,251 parcelas were created in c. 7500 fenced-in estates.”<sup>391</sup> Satellite towns like Pedra Roja, Valle Grande, Valle Norte, and La Reserva were designed to be entirely exclusive to upper-class residents.<sup>392</sup>

Social housing under Pinochet and subsequent governments has been concentrated at the periphery of the city, forcing the poor further and further out of view.<sup>393</sup> Peruvian immigrants have become the new lower class in much of Santiago, with the men working and living in the city center, and the women primarily working and even living as domestic servants in rich neighborhoods like Las Condes.<sup>394</sup> The privatization of communal space extends beyond the gated neighborhoods and out into the countless shopping centers, what Borsdorf, Hidalgo, and Vidal-Koppmann deem “urban entertainment centres.” For example, the Costanera Center in Providencia that towers above the whole city of Santiago, and from what I was told is the largest

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<sup>388</sup> Axel Borsdorf, Rodrigo Hidalgo, and Sonia Vidal-Koppmann, “Social segregation and gated communities in Santiago de Chile and Buenos Aires. A comparison,” *Habitat International* 54 (2016): 20, accessed May 23, 2016, <http://www.dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.habitat.2015.11.033>.

<sup>389</sup> Ibid.

<sup>390</sup> Decreto 3.516, see Ibid.

<sup>391</sup> Ibid.

<sup>392</sup> Ibid., 21.

<sup>393</sup> Ibid., 22.

<sup>394</sup> Ibid., 23.

mall in South America.<sup>395</sup> This trio of authors describes how the rich grew fond of the bohemian charm of the lower-class Bellavista neighborhood—packed with bars, clubs, and cheap Peruvian food—even taking up residence in the Lastarria quarter just across the river.<sup>396</sup>



**Figure 7.2.** Aravena’s half homes (Source: <https://www.pinterest.com/pin/565483296932034468/>)

Out of the *mélange* of luxury condos and gated suburbs has emerged the internationally celebrated architect Alejandro Aravena, who has carried the torch for both modernism and affordable housing in Chile. Aravena’s comments in a 2016 *New York Times* article by Michael Kimmelman suggest the architect sees Chile’s unique situation as having frozen his profession in time, to positive results. Kimmelman writes, quoting Aravena: “We were saved from

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<sup>395</sup> Ibid., 20.

<sup>396</sup> Ibid., 25.

postmodernism,” Aravena told me. “By default, we were left to find our own identity. Our professors were practitioners, not theorists, who taught how to get buildings built. It was, in retrospect, a very useful education.”<sup>397</sup> Left to their own devices, without the dismantling of modernism, technocratic neoliberal conditions in Chile have preserved a sentiment lost in much the rest of the world. Aravena prioritizes the needs of the poor and keeps alive Chilean traditions of prefabrication and self-help. His company ELEMENTAL builds “half-houses.” The homes are equipped with essentials in a concrete or brick shell—a bathroom, kitchen, etc.—with room for the building of new rooms when the residents have the money.<sup>398</sup> The residents do just this, filling out the second half of the house with whatever materials they can get their hands on, and completing the homes with their own personal styles.<sup>399</sup> Aravena’s approach has been criticized in many of the same ways modernist mass housing of the past has been. At the same time, the recognition he receives implies these debates over how best to house the urban poor have not necessarily been settled.

Chile’s fondness for the modernist past should be a reminder of a time when ambitiousness and inventiveness were encouraged, a time when “ending homelessness” was not some farfetched dream, but a practical approach to ameliorate a scientifically observed problem. One can only hope that the residue of the robust social housing that developed in Chile will pay some future dividends to the poor and society over all.

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<sup>397</sup> Michael Kimmelman, “Alejandro Aravena, the Architect Rebuilding a Country,” *The New York Times Style Magazine* May 23, 2016, accessed May 13, 2016, <http://www.nytimes.com/2016/05/23/t-magazine/pritzker-venice-biennale-chile-architect-alejandro-aravena.html? r=0>.

<sup>398</sup> Felipe Hernández, *Beyond Modernist Masters: Contemporary Architecture in Latin America* (Boston: Borkhäuser Verlag AG, 2010), 61.

<sup>399</sup> McGuirk, *Radical Cities*, 82.



## Appendices

### Appendix A: Tables

**Table A.1.** Strikes by City

| Years     | Strikes | Santiago and Valparaíso | Santiago | Valparaíso |
|-----------|---------|-------------------------|----------|------------|
| 1902-1925 | 380     |                         |          |            |
| 1916-1922 | 251     | 229                     |          |            |
| 1917-1921 | 229     |                         | 78%      | 22%        |

(Source: DeShazo, *Urban Workers and Labor Unions in Chile*, 165-166, see tables 6.1 and 6.3)

**Table A.2.** Strikes by Profession, 1920s

|                     |        |
|---------------------|--------|
| Leather             | 36.70% |
| Printing            | 8.40%  |
| Textile and Garment | 7.90%  |
| Construction        | 7.40%  |
| Furniture           | 5.20%  |
| Marine Transport    | 4.40%  |
| Food Processing     | 3.90%  |
| Metal               | 3.60%  |
| Tramways            | 3.10%  |

(DeShazo, *Urban Workers and Labor Unions in Chile*, 165-66)

**Table A.3.** Countrywide Construction of Homes in the 1960s.

| Year                   | Number of Homes | Cost in Escudos | Portion of Budget |
|------------------------|-----------------|-----------------|-------------------|
| Public - Whole Country |                 |                 |                   |
| 1961                   | 25060           | 72807000        |                   |
| 1962                   | 17615           | 59922000        |                   |
| 1963                   | 11988           | 88487000        | 79.90%            |
| 1964                   | 6938            | 91562000        | 66.16%            |
| 1965                   | 36486           | 396956000       | 83.70%            |
| 1966                   | 13433           | 204256000       | 75.57%            |
| 1967                   | 28285           | 383614000       | 72.62%            |
| 1968                   | Unavailable     | Unavailable     |                   |
| 1969                   | 11501           | 482221759       | 68.21%            |
| Total                  | 151306          | 1779825759      |                   |

(Source: MINVU Archives)

**Table A.4.** Homes by Month in 1965

| Month     | CORVI | CORHABIT - TOTAL |
|-----------|-------|------------------|
| January   | 601   | 641              |
| February  | 6154  | 6366             |
| March     | 2037  | 2329             |
| April     | 757   | 1489             |
| May       | 0     | 2091             |
| June      | 881   | 2290             |
| July      | 946   | 2137             |
| August    | 982   | 2400             |
| September | 3428  | 4683             |
| October   | 4017  | 5243             |
| November  | 4697  | 4738             |
| December  | 1694  | 2079             |
| Total     | 26194 | 36486            |

(Source: MINVU Archives)

**Table A.5. Homes by Month in the Late 1960s**

| <b>Private - 60 Communities</b> |      |      |             |      |
|---------------------------------|------|------|-------------|------|
| Year                            | 1966 | 1967 | 1968        | 1969 |
| January                         | 1112 | 1044 | 1104        | 1604 |
| February                        | 1031 | 719  | 682         | 962  |
| March                           | 1143 | 985  | 923         | 955  |
| April                           | 886  | 719  | 1199        | 1437 |
| May                             | 1725 | 992  | 1359        | 2230 |
| June                            | 921  | 1252 | 1402        | 1175 |
| July                            | 973  | 1244 | 1064        | 2573 |
| August                          | 855  | 1831 | 992         | 1522 |
| September                       | 726  | 837  | 1529        | 2054 |
| October                         | 1145 | 1035 | 1925        | 1277 |
| November                        | 956  | 979  | 1623        | 1589 |
| December                        | 1653 | 2552 | 3926        | 3022 |
| <b>Public - 60 Communities</b>  |      |      |             |      |
| J                               | 621  | 33   | 172         | 0    |
| F                               | 65   | 759  | 774         | 2    |
| M                               | 683  | 13   | 197         | 585  |
| A                               | 0    | 128  | 226         | 0    |
| M                               | 785  | 195  | 27          | 248  |
| J                               | 165  | 2200 | 589         | 88   |
| J                               | 349  | 519  | 409         | 0    |
| A                               | 356  | 1001 | 742         | 0    |
| S                               | 786  | 1680 | 78          | 0    |
| O                               | 851  | 2577 | 2264        | 1    |
| N                               | 209  | 6518 | 761         | 0    |
| D                               | 6517 | 5450 | 2919        | 20   |
| <b>Public - Whole Country</b>   |      |      |             |      |
| J                               | 1122 | 378  | Unavailable | 481  |
| F                               | 157  | 776  | Unavailable | 894  |
| M                               | 683  | 35   | Unavailable | 250  |
| A                               | 94   | 484  | Unavailable | 496  |
| M                               | 896  | 318  | Unavailable | 55   |
| J                               | 219  | 2280 | Unavailable | 719  |
| J                               | 430  | 662  | Unavailable | 409  |
| A                               | 358  | 1654 | Unavailable | 1343 |
| S                               | 875  | 1914 | Unavailable | 115  |
| O                               | 910  | 2828 | Unavailable | 2310 |
| N                               | 226  | 7616 | Unavailable | 845  |
| D                               | 7463 | 9340 | Unavailable | 3584 |

(Source: MINVU Archives)

## Appendix B: Names

**Benjamin Vicuña Mackenna** Vicuña completely reshaped Santiago in the 1870s using Paris as a model and echoing 1853, when Napoleon III hired Georges-Eugène Haussmann to broaden Paris streets, opening them up to sunlight and creating more sanitary conditions.<sup>400</sup>

**Carlos Carvajal** In 1906 Carlos Carvajal Miranda was named Inspector General of Architecture in the Chilean Public Works Department, and was tasked with "...designing inexpensive, earthquake-proof workers' housing."<sup>401</sup> For Chilean planners like Carvajal, sanitation, housing, and neatly planned cities were intrinsically linked. Between 1910 and 1912 he championed the Society for Inexpensive Housing for Employees', a never-materialized million-dollar project for "Los Leones," envisioned as a triangular community between a highway and a small mountain.<sup>402</sup>

**Ismael Valdés Valdés** Civil engineer who was tasked with sketching a new plan for the city and worked closely with Carvajal.<sup>403</sup> By 1917 Valdés Valdés was claiming the science of *urbanism*,

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<sup>400</sup> Pérez Oyarzún and Rosas Vera, "Cities within the City," 110.

<sup>401</sup> George R. Collins, "Linear Planning throughout the World," *The Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians* 18, no. 3 (1959): 83, accessed March 7, 2015, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/987932>.

<sup>402</sup> *Ibid.*, 83.

<sup>403</sup> Martínez Lemoine, "Santiago: los planos de transformación," 4; Walter, *Politics and Urban Growth in Santiago*, 79-80.

and in his *La transformación de Santiago*, fixated on neighborhoods built from scratch, such as Washington, La Plata, and Canberra.<sup>404</sup>

**Luis Muñoz Maluschka** Headed the General Law of Construction and Urbanization written as a response the 1928 Talca earthquake.<sup>405</sup> He was the disciple of Brunner and had a lasting impact on planning for several decades, heading various housing and planning organizations.

**Alberto Schade Pohlenz** In 1928 Alberto he taught a class on urbanismo at the School of Architecture of the University of Chile's Faculty of Economic Sciences and Mathematics with a syllabus clearly influenced by Camillo Sitte.<sup>406</sup>

**Karl Brunner von Lehenstein** Brunner was hired by the Chilean government in 1929 after the Talca earthquake and working there for the next decade<sup>407</sup> He inspired Chilean notables such as Rodolfo Otazún Philippi, Luis Muñoz Maluschka, Alberto Mackenna Subercaseaux, and Alfredo Prat Echaurren.<sup>408</sup>

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<sup>404</sup> Pérez Oyarzún and Rosas Vera, "Cities within the City," 123.

<sup>405</sup> Luis Valenzuela, "Mass housing and urbanization: on the road to modernization in Santiago, Chile, 1930-1960," *Planning Perspectives* 23, no. 3 (2008): 275-276, accessed March 12, 2015, doi:10.1080/02665430802102799.

<sup>406</sup> Arturo Almandoz "From Urban to Regional Planning in Latin America," *Planning Perspectives* 25, no. 1 (2010): 88, accessed March 6, 2015, doi:10.1080/02665430903514840; Arturo Almandoz, "Urban Planning and Historiography in Latin America," *Progress in Planning* 65 (2006): 88, accessed March 6, 2015, doi:10.1016/j.progress.2006.02.002.

<sup>407</sup> Arturo Almandoz, "Introduction," in Karl Brunner, *Manual de Urbanismo Volume 1* (New York: Roulledge, 2016), xiv.

<sup>408</sup> Isabel Pavez, "El archivo Karl Brunner," *Facultad de Arquitectura y Urbanismo de la Universidad de Chile, Resita de Arquitectura* 8: 33, accessed April 21, 2015,

**Rodolfo Oyarzún** Chilean Architect Rodolfo Oyarzún met Karl Brunner in 1927 while studying in Vienna, and suggested the Austrian visit his homeland.<sup>409</sup>

**Josué Smith Solar** Son of a North American engineer and educated in the U.S., he redesigned the public space in front of the Moneda.<sup>410</sup> Smith Solar collaborated with José Smith Miller to create the campus for the Valparaíso Universidad Federico Santa Maria between 1928 and 1931.<sup>411</sup>

**Emilio Duhart** Earned a master's degree under the influential modernist Walter Gropius at Harvard, and then became the Director of the Institute of Urban and Housing Planning in Santiago from 1953 to 1960.<sup>412</sup> In 1966 he completed the United Nations CEPAL building in Santiago with the assistance Brazilian landscape architect Roberto Burle Marx, a staple of Latin American modernism.<sup>413</sup>

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<http://repositorio.uchile.cl/bitstream/handle/2250/117993/el-archivo-Karl-Brunner.pdf?sequence=1>.

<sup>409</sup> Pérez Oyarzún, "Chile," *Latin America in Construction*, 157.

<sup>410</sup> *Ibid.*, 132.

<sup>411</sup> Pablo Fuentes Hernández, "Campus universitarios en Chile: nuevas formas análogas a la ciudad tradicional," *Atenea* 496 (2007): 121, <http://www.redalyc.org/articulo.oa?id=32849608>.

<sup>412</sup> Damián Bayón and Paolo Gasparini, trans. Galen D. Greaser, *The changing shape of Latin American architecture: Conversations with ten leading architects* (New York: John Wiley & Sons, 1979), 109.

<sup>413</sup> Carranza and Luiz Lara, *Modern Architecture in Latin America*, 244.

## Appendix C: Timeline of Housing Laws and Significant Planning Events

**1880s Laws** Two low-income housing laws were ratified: the first in 1883 offered incentives to private investors for the construction of worker housing within the municipality of Santiago, and the next in 1888 sought to regulate the conventillos.<sup>414</sup> An 1889 law commenced the assembly of Patronage Committees tasked with inspecting hygiene, improving worker housing, and promoting investment in savings—Hidalgo Dattwyler likens this to an earlier Belgian law.<sup>415</sup>

**1888 Directorate of Public Works** Undertook major projects like installing a new drainage system for Santiago.<sup>416</sup> Initiated the ability of the municipal government to build community projects.

**1891 Law of Autonomous Community** Prohibited the construction of ranchos in certain sectors of the city, as well as promoted the construction of hygienic dwellings.<sup>417</sup> The law dictated minimum urbanization qualifications for official incorporation as a neighborhood.<sup>418</sup> Hutchinson portrays the elite as having coordinated the 1891 Law of Autonomous Community to eliminate

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<sup>414</sup> Rodrigo Hidalgo Dattwyler, “La Vivienda Social en Chile: La Acción del Estado en un Siglo Planes y Programas,” *SCRIPTA NOVA Revista Electrónica de Geografía y Ciencias Sociales, Universidad de Barcelona* 1, no. 45 (1999): 2, accessed April 21, 2015, <http://www.ub.edu/geocrit/sn-45-1.htm>.

<sup>415</sup> Ibid.

<sup>416</sup> Hidalgo Dattwyler, “El papel de las leyes de fomento de la edificación obrera,” 15.

<sup>417</sup> Ibid.

<sup>418</sup> Rodrigo Hidalgo Dattwyler, “El papel de las leyes de fomento de la edificación obrera y la Caja de la Habitación en la política de vivienda social en Chile 1931-1952,” *Revista invi*. 15, No.39 (2000): 94, accessed April 21, 2015, <http://revistainvi.uchile.cl/index.php/INVI/article/view/257/772>.

the eyesore of the ranchos. It achieved this by allowing government bodies to purchase areas lining the Mopocho River<sup>419</sup>

**1905 Sanitary Convention** took place in Santiago and summarized earlier Inter-American Conferences of 1897 and 1902, bringing international attention to Chile's struggle with hygiene.<sup>420</sup>

**1906 Law of Worker Housing** Created local housing councils made up of "...officials from the central government, the municipalities, and the church, in addition to state-appointed representatives from worker societies," the 1906 law also helped make accessible banking and credit institutions to the poor.<sup>421</sup>

**1906 Mortgage Credit Fund** Initiated with the purpose of providing loans for housing projects. Murphy suggests this program eventually excluded the poorest citizens in favor of more lucrative and secure middle class residents, in a process eerily reminiscent of redlining in the U.S.<sup>422</sup>

**1908 and 1909 First Pan-American Scientific Conference** Santiago hosted the meeting covering issues such as sanitation, housing, and physical fitness.<sup>423</sup> Spanish planner Soria y

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<sup>419</sup> Elizabeth Quay Hutchison, *Laborers Appropriate to Their Sex: Gender, Labor, and Politics in Urban Chile, 1900-1930*, (Durham: Duke University Press, 2001), 28.

<sup>420</sup> Almandoz, "The garden city in early twentieth-century Latin America," 442.

<sup>421</sup> Murphy, *For a Proper Home*, 53.

<sup>422</sup> Ibid.

<sup>423</sup> Ibid., 74; Brenda Elsey, *Citizens and Sportsmanship: Fútbol and Politics in Twentieth-Century Chile* (Austin: The University of Texas Press, 2011), 35.



Mata was invited to attend the conference but was unable to, instead asking Carvajal to stand in and present his writing “Rational City Planning as a Practical Solution to Low Cost Housing,” which highlighted the atrocious infant mortality rates in Santiago—it was estimated two thirds of newborns died in their first year of life.<sup>424</sup> The presentation must have been well received, as Carvajal would prove very active going forward in his career.

**1910 Centennial celebration** Ignited a carousel of projects. Three new rail stations were constructed: the Mapocho, Central, and Pirque Stations.<sup>425</sup> Areas like Club Hípico and Cousiño Park were given the spotlight, and the Plaza Italia created a new landmark with its statue and circular roads.<sup>426</sup> The entire renewal plan was championed by the Central Society of Architects.<sup>427</sup>

**1915 Transformation Law** Mayor Ismael Valdés Vergara pushed for the “transformation law,” which gave birth to the Transformation Junta. It included civil engineer Ismael Valdés Valdés, who was tasked with sketching a new plan for the city and worked closely with Carvajal.<sup>428</sup> New neighborhoods were to be submitted to the board as neatly planned proposals. The committee regulated the heights and sizes of buildings, streets, and parks.<sup>429</sup>

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<sup>424</sup> Collins, “Linear Planning throughout the World,” 83.

<sup>425</sup> Pérez Oyarzún and Rosas Vera, “Cities within the City,” 121.

<sup>426</sup> Ibid., 127.

<sup>427</sup> Ibid., 123.

<sup>428</sup> Martínez Lemoine, “Santiago: los planos de transformación,” 4; Walter, *Politics and Urban Growth in Santiago*, 79-80.

<sup>429</sup> Ibid., 80-81.

**1925 Housing Law, or Decree Law 261** Protected renters from eviction for up to six months, giving an opportunity to prove they had met sanitary standards.<sup>430</sup> Inspections marked *conventillos* unsanitary, whereby the landlords would be required to reduce the rent by fifty percent.<sup>431</sup> Walter outlines the February 1925 law: “The law stipulated the establishment of housing committees (*tribunals de vivienda*) made up of representatives of the national and municipal governments and the tenant leagues.”<sup>432</sup>

**1925 Renters’ Law** Assisted in securing the state’s role in housing, as well as equipping housing programs with more regulatory oversight power.<sup>433</sup>

**1925 Law of Affordable Housing, or Law 308** Favored housing cooperatives for the granting of credit. Participants were offered such benefits on a conditional basis, to be revoked if they were shown to be partaking in “immoral behavior” such as alcoholism, gambling, prostitution, etc.<sup>434</sup> This law created the Social Welfare Council, which replaced the 1906 Superior Council as the teeth used to enforce housing laws.<sup>435</sup>

**1928 Law of General Urbanization and Construction** The 1928 earthquake in Talca furthered the burgeoning interest in planning, as law 4,563 of 1931 required that “...every city with a

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<sup>430</sup> Hidalgo Dattwyler, “El papel de las leyes de fomento de la edificación obrera,” 92; Hidalgo Dattwyler, “La vivienda social en Chile,” 3.

<sup>431</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>432</sup> Walter, *Politics and Urban Growth in Santiago*, 16.

<sup>433</sup> Murphy, *For a Proper Home*, 55.

<sup>434</sup> *Ibid.*, 56, 58.

<sup>435</sup> Hidalgo Dattwyler, “La vivienda social en Chile,” Hidalgo Dattwyler, “El papel de las leyes de fomento de la edificación obrera,” 92.

population over 20,000 must develop a General Transformation Plan.”<sup>436</sup> The law established nationwide urban standards, for example, for the widths of streets and the heights of homes.<sup>437</sup>

The 1931 Urban Development and Construction General Law also spawned the Central Board of Popular Housing, which in 1936 was rebranded as the Popular Housing Fund or CORHABIT, and offered loans with twenty-seven year terms and initial payment of mortgages.<sup>438</sup>

**1931 Law 4931** created the Popular Housing Junta to collaborate with the Social Welfare Superior Council, which had been operating since the 1926 Affordable Housing Law.<sup>439</sup> In March, Decree with Legal Force No. 33 replaced the Junta de Habitación Popular with the Popular Housing Central Junta, composed of representatives of several housing organizations, which had access to the Mortgage Credit Fund.<sup>440</sup> The president of the republic was to set the maximum price for land values in the cities of Santiago, Valparaíso, Antofagasta, and Iquique.<sup>441</sup>

**1932 Decree Law No. 402** The 1932 Housing Department—fashioned by the Decreto Ley No. 402, which enforced the 1931 Decree with Legal Force No. 33—was composed of five sections: Technique, Juridical, Mining and Exploitation, Social Economy, and Administration.<sup>442</sup> This

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<sup>436</sup> “Historia del ministerio de urbanismo y vivienda.”

<sup>437</sup> Hidalgo Dattwyler, “El papel de las leyes de fomento de la edificación obrera,” 96.

<sup>438</sup> “Historia del ministerio de urbanismo y vivienda.”

<sup>439</sup> Dattwyler Hidalgo, “El papel de las leyes de fomento de la edificación obrera,” 97.

<sup>440</sup> Ibid.

<sup>441</sup> Ibid.

<sup>442</sup> Hidalgo Dattwyler, “El papel de las leyes de fomento de la edificación obrera,” 98.

organization undertook all construction duties, which were transferred from the Public Works Department.<sup>443</sup>

**1931 National Institute of Urbanism** was formed to continue with the principles of scientific urbanism, as outlined by Brunner.<sup>444</sup> The Institute initiated the General Law of Buildings and Urban Developments, which was combined with various other laws intended to assist the poor and regulate urban growth.<sup>445</sup>

**1936 Law 5950** Championed by the Senator Alejandro Lira Infante, enacted the Popular Housing Fund or CORHABIT.<sup>446</sup> It was anticipated to supply 1 billion escudos for 166 thousand houses and a median value of 15 thousand escudos. With five people per family, the program was to benefit some 333 thousand people.<sup>447</sup>

**1935 Law 5579** Dictated that the President could issue plots in the name of the Housing Department, “las mejoras” or “arrendamiento a piso,” effectively self-help plots.<sup>448</sup> The President regulated prices and guaranteed documents; “compraventa de sitios a plazo” (trading of term sites), allowed people for the trading in of false documents.<sup>449</sup>

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<sup>443</sup> Ibid.

<sup>444</sup> Collins, “Linear Planning throughout the World,” 84.

<sup>445</sup> Almandoz, “From Urban to Regional Planning in Latin America,” 88.

<sup>446</sup> Ibid., 99.

<sup>447</sup> Ibid.

<sup>448</sup> Hidalgo Dattwyler, “El papel de las leyes de fomento de la edificación obrera.”

<sup>449</sup> Ibid.

**1943 Law 7,600** Restructured the way CORHABIT was funded. Required that companies build a minimum amount of worker housing proportional to profit.<sup>450</sup> Through this law taxes were levied on inheritance, legacies, and donations.<sup>451</sup>

**1944 Ordinance of Urbanization and Affordable Constructions** stipulated exact measurement standards for affordable housing: structures were to be placed on surfaces of between 36 and 100 meters squared, as to support a multitude of housing typologies.<sup>452</sup> The law regulated the minimum space between homes, the maximum height of buildings and number of floors, as well as minimum light and ventilation. Communities were required to be linked to potable water, sewage, public lighting, and industrial energy and gas. Neighborhood designs were required to include communal spaces and sufficient spacing and density.<sup>453</sup>

**1948 Pereira Law** Was intended to stimulate housing construction via state-backed mortgages.<sup>454</sup> Specifically geared toward the middle class.

**1958 Santiago Intercommunal Regulatory Plan** "...laid out the master plan for the city facing challenges of metropolization."<sup>455</sup> The capital's multiple municipalities were expected to benefit

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<sup>450</sup> Murphy, *For a Proper Home*, 61.

<sup>451</sup> Policy makers explicitly aimed to tax mine owners and chip off a piece of the most lucrative industry in the country, but this manner of tax reform, ironically, appears directed at the aristocratic landlords who would keep money within the nation and pass it through inheritance, see Hidalgo Dattwyler, "El papel de las leyes de fomento de la edificación obrera,"

<sup>452</sup> Ibid.

<sup>453</sup> Ibid.

<sup>454</sup> "Historia del ministerio de urbanismo y vivienda"; Murphy, *For a Proper Home*, 62.

<sup>455</sup> Pérez Oyarzún, "Chile," in *Latin America in Construction*, 159.

from the coordinated uniform plan, and citizens were used to the idea of inter-communal planning, which it was assumed would offer infrastructure and public services to disconnected regions.

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