Giulietta Fadda, Paola Jiron and Adriana Allen

Views from the urban fringe: Habitat, Quality of Life and Gender in Santiago, Chile

Introduction

In recent years, a broad range of contributions has fuelled the debate on the compact city. They have explored its merits and defects from an environmental, economic, social and physical point of view. However, particularly in the South, less attention has been given to the perception women and men have on the different quality of life[1] and livelihood opportunities that are attached to living in the inner or outer city. In this context, the freedom to choose a place to live is often highly dependent on income levels, state policies and, increasingly, on market forces.

Over the past 20 years in Chile, urban planning policies have contributed to a process of urban sprawl and the expansion of Santiago's ecological footprint. Between 1979 and 1995 the city's urban area expanded from 35,000 to 65,000 hectares. During this period, the population has increased from approximately 4 million to 4.8 million inhabitants. Thus the urban area increased by 85% and the population by 20%. Simultaneously, Chilean housing policies have managed recently to provide a significant number of housing solutions but this has only been achieved through a rapid expansion of the city's built area. Developments on the urban periphery often cause additional burdens both to local authorities (costs of incorporating amenities, infrastructure and facilities), and to local residents who now have to spend more time and resources to get access to the city as a place for exchange.

This chapter discusses the impact that an extended city can have on the quality of life of people in low-income sectors. It explores, on the basis of research findings from the District of Pudahuel in Santiago, the different factors that inform peoples' perception of their living conditions from a gender perspective. The main aim is to draw to the attention of policy makers the diversity of needs, views and realities of those who directly benefit from, or are affected by, the impact of extended cities. This will help to further inform the compact versus dispersed city debate.

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[1] For a detailed discussion of the concept of quality of life, see Fadda and Jirón, 1999.

The general move towards dispersal and location of growth on the peripheries or fringes of cities is becoming a world-wide phenomenon. This kind of process has been analysed in different countries. Indeed, the formation of vast and ever-expanding metropolitan regions is often portrayed as an inevitable feature of large cities in the developing world. Within the framework of current discussions on global transition, a new terminology has emerged, either making reference to a new kind of urban development (a new landscape of employment and other activity concentrations at some distance and independent from old urban centres), or stressing the processes underpinning the new developments (in particular the impact of flexibility in production systems and technology)[2].

However, all too often the advantages and disadvantages of suburban sprawl from the viewpoint of the inhabitants living in the urban fringe are overlooked.

The chapter argues that living on the urban periphery of an extended metropolis has important trade-offs that affect the quality of life of men and women, particularly the poor. These often come into play as a direct consequence of coercive government policies that favour peripheral locations despite the externalities they produce.

The chapter starts by examining the relationship between forms of urban development and the quality of life. It then analyses the impact that urban policies and the market have had on the city of Santiago. Finally, it assesses the impact of the urban expansion of Santiago on the quality of life of a group of residents located on the periphery of the city.

The relationship between the compact city and the quality of life
The compact city debate traditionally has focused attention on the crisis in the quality of life in inner city areas and on the new problems arising from the process of metropolitan decentralisation. The sub-urbanisation and counter-urbanisation of the 1960s and 1970s have been interpreted as being in part a consequence of a collective perception of declining quality of life in the inner city. In late 1980s Britain, this process was associated with NIMBYism[3] - the attempt by those people who have moved out of the city to maintain a higher environmental quality. However, in many European cities a parallel process of gentrification has shown that for some groups in society (particularly young urban professionals), the inner city is still perceived as offering a potentially high quality of life.

These simultaneous trends for residential centralisation and decentralisation indicate that peoples' perception of their quality of life tends to be informed by complex and sometimes contradictory values. Undoubtedly, quality of life factors shape and reshape different patterns of population movement. The assessment of these factors relates both to the objective conditions and subjective perceptions of urban quality, and the attendant levels of satisfaction or dissatisfaction. An effective assessment of quality of life cannot be arrived at merely in terms of the physical attributes of the living environment. It also demands a consideration of the social psychological and cultural attributes of that environment, such as a sense of identity, safety, and social representation and inclusion in the wider urban society.

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[2] In Western Europe, the debate on the new spaces in the fringes of the city and the spread of urban functions, lifestyles and ideology across a somewhat unified and common territory has given rise to a set of new concepts, such as *ville éparpillée* (scattered city)*, ville archipel* (Viard, 1994; Veltz, 1996)*, ville à la carte* in France*;* or the idea of the dispersed city (Monclús, 1998) in Spain.

[3] NIMBY stands for 'not in my back yard'.

The relationship between the quality of life and the compact city has frequently been understood in terms of the factors shaping satisfaction and dissatisfaction in a post-industrial society. The relationship between quality of life and urban deprivation has, however, been underplayed, and the determinants of quality of life and mobility within the city should not necessarily be identified as the expression of free choice over residential locations.

The principal reasons identified for Latin American urban sprawl include the choice of the upper middle classes for suburban environments, and the displacement of lower income sectors to newly urbanised environments. Indeed, this chapter argues that policies promoting a market-oriented approach to urban development have increased urban sprawl and the polarisation between those mobility trends based on choice, and those based on lack of choice.

Thus it can be argued that an adequate understanding of the recent process of urban sprawl in Latin America demands a thorough consideration of recent changes in the social structure and in peoples' living habits. Living on the urban fringe for many dwellers means not only living on the geographic edge of the city, but also on the edge of urban society. The conditions under which people choose, or are forced, to live on the periphery can greatly affect their satisfaction and their quality of life.

The assessment of quality of life is a matter of some controversy. Grayson and Young (1994) distinguish four main approaches in the evaluation of quality of life: the personal well-being approach; the liveability comparisons approach; the market/resident approach, and; the community trends approach. All are concerned with understanding well being, but each adopts different assumptions regarding the conceptual definition of quality of life.

This chapter takes up three dimensions from these approaches. The first is the consideration of objective conditions, such as physical environment, services and infrastructure provision, pollution, and social problems. Second is the way in which these objective conditions are experienced and perceived by people. The third involves notions of power and empowerment embodied in peoples' views and strategies in relation to their capacity to transform their living environments. The last two are critical aspects of the analysis in so far as they situate the assessment of quality of life in the broader political economy of the city, whilst recognising that experiences and responses are shaped by personally and socially constructed conditions such as age and gender.

A gender perspective to the study of quality of life opens a different perspective on understanding the advantages and disadvantages of compact or extended cities. It is clear that the problems and benefits of experiencing large cities affect the different perceptions that men and women, and girls and boys, have on their quality of life.

The evolution of Santiago's extension: the impact of urban and housing policies and the market

Despite official declarations over the past 20 years to deconcentrate the main Chilean public and private activities, Santiago continues to dominate most of the country's activities. Santiago's Metropolitan Region controls over 39% of Chile's GDP. Approximately 35.6% of the population in the country[4] lives in Greater Santiago[5], at a density of

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[4] The total population of Chile is 13,348,401 (INE, 1995)

7683.1 persons per km^2 (Schiappacasse, 1998)[6]. Although the consolidated urban area of Santiago covers only 41,215 hectares, the 1994 Metropolitan Master Plan assigned two thirds of the remaining land within the Metropolitan Area as suitable for urbanisation in the near future (MINVU, 1994).

A recent study of the ecological footprint of Greater Santiago revealed that its total footprint was 16 times larger than the Metropolitan Area, and 300 times larger than the built-up area (Wackernagel, 1998). The main determinants of the size of the footprint were energy and food consumption. Approximately 45% of the country's motorised vehicles were concentrated in the Metropolitan Area and food in Santiago is about 20% more expensive than in rural areas. However, Santiago's demand for natural resources was unequally distributed among the different social groups. Breaking down the distribution per capita of the footprint according to income levels, the lowest quintile of the population accounted for an ecological footprint of 0.4 hectares per person, whilst that of the highest quintile accounted for 12 hectares per person.

However, the concentration of capital and income in the Metropolitan Region, is an important force attracting residents from elsewhere in the country, who see in it great opportunities for improving their quality of life. Chile's economic restructuring, and its incorporation into the global economy has made Santiago an ideal location for the new economic sectors linked to the world economy – e.g. for the headquarters of the main service activities, particularly finance, and for a large proportion of new industry. It is also a main market for global innovations and products and has become a preferred place of residence for the most modern and wealthiest sectors in national society (de Mattos, 1996).

There are numerous explanations for the city's expansion and its physical and social effects. On the one hand a housing-centred approach has determined a pattern of rapid urban expansion. The reliance on the market to regulate land and housing allocation has also contributed to this process. Furthermore, the lack of articulation between the two and the institutions responsible for them has created a number of externalities which cannot be solved without having a broad vision both of the city, as well as of the quality of life of those living in it.

Although these externalities have become progressively more evident, their true origins have seldom been identified. Despite some discussion of the issues (Beyer, 1997; de Mattos, 1996; Sabatini, 1998) there is nevertheless a certain inertia limiting the effectiveness of existing mechanisms to improve urban environmental conditions - the overlapping of functions and mandates from different institutions, sectors and territories, makes the co-ordination of actions a difficult task.

In order to understand the way public policies have affected urban growth, an historical review is necessary of three periods of time: prior to 1979; between 1979 and 1985, and; from 1985 to the present.

The development of Santiago: policies and urban growth

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[5] The Metropolitan Region is composed of six Provinces. However, the urbanised area, designated as Greater Santiago is made up of 34 districts (32 from the Province of Santiago and 2 more from two different Provinces).

[6] Santiago's gross minimum density required is 150 inhabitants per hectare (15,000 inhabitants per km^2) (MINVU, 1994)

Policies prior to 1979

There were no significant measures for urban planning in Santiago until the early 20th century. In 1914, the Law for Plans and Urban Limits was promulgated, and in 1929, the Law of Urbanisation and Constructions was created as a reaction to the earthquake that destroyed the city of Talca in 1928.

At that time Santiago had a population of 700,000 inhabitants, and the Austrian urban planner, Karl Brunner, drew up Santiago's Master Plan which was approved in 1934. This Plan contemplated a maximum population growth for a city of one million people. By 1958, the city's metropolitan growth was considered as undesirable and an aberration and this had an effect on the quality of housing, infrastructure and transport facilities available. The growth was mainly a result of rapid rural-urban migration over a number of years. The effects of this growth were considered in the 1960 Master Plan for Santiago.

At the end of the 1960s, an unprecedented process of occupation of urban land took place in Santiago in the form squatter settlements - the *campamentos* or self-provided housing precariously established through land invasions. This phenomenon reached its maximum expression during Allende's presidential period. Over a three-year period more than 400,000 people settled in *campamentos* on Santiago's periphery, often exhibiting an unprecedented degree of social and political organisation (Fadda and Ducci, 1993).

This process was abruptly interrupted by the military coup in 1973. During the military regime (1973-1989), neoliberal policies privatising public utilities and stimulating the free market were established. At the urban level, the market displaced the state as the main force driving the expansion of the city. This process was legitimised through legislation, particularly the National Urban Development Policy of 1979 (MINVU, 1979), which adjusted all the instruments and norms of urban planning in Chile to the market economy. Gross (1991) noted that the main guiding principles of this policy were that:

- land was not a scarce resource, and that its apparent scarcity was due to the lack of concordance between the current technical judicial norms and the market conditions of supply and demand,
- it was necessary to apply a flexible planning system, with a minimum of state intervention and the use of generic technical norms,
- procedures should be defined and restrictions eliminated in order to allow for the natural growth of urban areas in line with market trends,
- the state should promote and support an open housing market, leaving the construction process to the market.

The years 1979-1985

The previous plans and 1979 policies had a direct effect on the expansion of Santiago (see Fig. 1). During the five-year period 1979-1985, the size of the Metropolitan Area increased from 36,000 to 55,000 hectares. The Plan, along with the coercive housing relocation methods used, had significant impacts, particularly in the social reorganisation of Santiago. Although one of the main objectives was to reduce land prices, the effects were the oppositeand land prices rose rapidly (Gross, 1991).

Fig. 1 The projected growth of Santiago, 1950-2010
Source: Mecsa-Inecon, 1993

Though some land invasions did take place in the 1980s in Santiago, most of them were quickly removed (Gilbert, 1993), and invasion

ceased to be a housing option. Land regularisation and slum eradication programmes were initiated in the 1979 Urban Development Policy to promote the harmonious growth of the city and peripheral housing development. The first programme allowed the legalisation of property on occupied sites and the installation of sanitation. The second encouraged the relocation of families from precarious settlements to conventional subsidised multi-storey structures on the outskirts of the metropolitan area. Between 1980 and 1987, 139 *campamentos* were regularised involving the construction of 53,322 units to relocate families away from the affluent northeast of the city towards the peripheral neighbourhoods (de la Puente et al. 1990).

Fig. 2 Residential relocation
Source: Morales y Rojas, 1986

Approximately 150,000 families were resettled to distant locations, in districts where local government had little capacity to provide infrastructure through this mechanism. This process exacerbated the socio-spatial segregation of the city, increased the distance between rich and poor neighbourhoods, broke social family links, and made travel to centres of employment very difficult (Jiron, 1995).

However, political pressure from those affected, and the negative consequences of these urban policies, forced the military government to modify the 1979 Urban Development Policy. In 1985, it was replaced by the so-called adjusted policy (MINVU, 1985), which reasserted urban planning as an exclusive function of the state, and declared land as a scarce resource which should be allocated according to its most productive use (Torres, 1999). However, the National Law of Urbanism of 1975 has yet to be modified, and the current Urban Policy can only be considered an ambiguous set of rules which, though theoretically interesting, has proven difficult to implement.

1985 to the present day
Since 1990, the democratically elected governments, far from changing the fundamental elements of the previous economic model, have continued to develop them (Daher, 1993). At the beginning of the democratic transition, there were great expectations about restoring urban planning, coordinating housing policies with urban development policies and decreasing urban segregation. However, housing and urban policies have more or less remained the same, providing few concrete responses to these expectations.

One of the main achievements of the democratic government was an impressive increase in rate of housing construction - to on average of 100,000 units per year (MINVU, 1996). This has halted the increase in the housing deficit, and allowed the government to concentrate on diminishing it through leveraging public resources with private ones. However, new developments have mainly been built in those areas of the urban periphery where land costs are the lowest, promoting a rapid process of urban expansion.

Fig. 3 Housing construction in Greater Santiago, 1990-1995
Source: Haramoto et al, 1997

The success of this housing policy has been counter-balanced by some problems. On the one hand a significant number of houses have been built, and a consolidated financial system established that is admired by many Latin American countries. Furthermore, the policy established a complex system that permitted people to wait in a

housing queue[7]. But the policy continues to leave few locational options for the urban poor. The peripheral location of these units causes serious problems, both to the residents' quality of life as well as to Santiago's overall quality of life. The high cost of land in the city centre forces the private sector to build in specific areas of the urban periphery where land is cheaper. Social housing is only available in a few very distant areas of Metropolitan Santiago. However, given that the externalities of building on the periphery are never internalised, the allocations for these new developments fail to include the costs of transport, distance, time, equipment, services and infrastructure (Edwards, 1995).

In Chile, urban planning and management continues to be seen in this segregated manner, without a holistic vision or a proposal for the city as a whole. One of the main reasons for this, in Greater Santiago, is the lack of articulation between the policies and practices of its 37 districts, and between the various housing, land and urban policy sectors which remain centralised and controlled by the national government through various ministries and offices.

There have been a few initiatives to curb urban expansion and to revitalise the urban centre. However, one such initiative was the Municipality of Santiago's Re-population Programme. The basic goal was to convert the District of Santiago into a Modern Metropolitan Centre and to regenerate the business centre and its residential character through a subsidised re-population programme (CORDESAN, 1996). The Municipality of Santiago initiated the programme in 1994, as a strategic management approach to Santiago's development. The three main issues addressed by the programme were poverty, quality of life and competitiveness (IMS, 1994, p.11). The programme can be considered successful in terms of the re-population and revitalisation of a deteriorated downtown area, but a gentrification process has also taken place where few options remain available for the poorer population (Jiron, 1998). The benefits of the inner city were appropriated, in the form of a better quality of life, only by those who could afford it, whilst those who could not were expelled to the periphery.

In general, urban policies and norms in Chile over the last two decades have generated a process of continuous physical expansion. This has resulted in a greater urban and social segregation; an increase in the disparity in access to urban services; a worsening of local living conditions; increased environmental contamination; urban security problems, and; the deterioration of urban and historic centres. Because these policies, (particularly for housing), are imposed from top to bottom, urban residents, especially the urban poor, have little option but to reside in the outskirts of the city. Their physical and social exclusion is the cause of a continuously deteriorating quality of life.

Impacts of Santiago's urban expansion on the quality of life of the residents of Pudahuel.
A research project entitled 'Quality of Life and Gender'[8] was initiated in 1998 in order to examine the conditions relating to a better quality of

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[7] In Chile, access to housing is a shared effort from the people (via saving), the state (via subsidies) and the financial market (via mortgage credit). The promotion and programming of projects as well as housing construction should correspond to the private sector (Etchegaray, 1993). In this context, housing policies enable the state as assignor of subsidies and designing adequate typologies and the market as the constructing agent. The government has set up various subsidised programmes to access housing. The subsidies are offered to the demand in order to fill the affordability gap (Jirón, 1995).

[8] FONDECYT-Chile financed Research Project # 1980865/98

life for low-income groups in Metropolitan Santiago (Fadda and Jiron, 1999) including two neighbourhoods in the District of Pudahuel on the western periphery of Santiago (see Fig. 4). Both neighbourhoods were built as part of a public housing programme during the first democratic period (1990-1994). The research aimed to assess the quality of life in these neighbourhoods and focused on the residents' perception of their quality of life on the urban periphery. This research is of particular relevance to the quality of life aspects of the compact city debate. It consists of an analysis of a set of objective indicators; residents' subjective perceptions of the quality of life in their neighbourhoods, and; the levels of empowerment for residents generated by these objective and subjective conditions.

Fig 4. The location of the Disctrict of Pudahuel in Santiago
Source: Fadda and Jiron, 2000

Objective and subjective assessment of the quality of life

Objectively, the expansion of Greater Santiago has created marginal environments in peripheral areas such as Pudahuel. The most serious problems created by urban expansion into the District are pollution, poverty and social exclusion.

Santiago is considered the eighth most polluted capital of the world and, the Pudahuel District has the most serious pollution problems in the city (de la Paz, 1999). The contamination of its watercourses, the urban impacts, the building of social dwellings on a massive scale, are all part of what has been called a process of 'metropolitan aggression' (Suarez, 1999). The air pollution is partly attributable to the wind patterns that channel the accumulated smog of the city towards this part of the metropolis. Similarly, the watercourses that flow down from the mountain range, run through the city before reaching Pudahuel full of wastes that are hazardous for human health. The high levels of pollution concentration are countered by a lack of equipment and services available to counteract it.

Pudahuel is also the third poorest district of the city, with 32.1% of its population living below the poverty line[9]. The District has witnessed a rapid growth in population since 1970, mainly due to the rapid expansion of government housing programs. Between 1989 and 1994 more than 17,000 low income housing units were built in the District, attracted by some of the lowest land values in Metropolitan Santiago (see Fig. 5).

Fig. 5 Land Values
Source: Fadda and Jiron, 2000

Because of the Districts peripheral location access to other areas of the city is difficult, in terms of distance, time and money. Fig. 6 shows that the distance to high-income neighbourhoods like Las Condes, where many men and women work, demands daily trips of over two hours each way.

Fig. 6 Main roads
Source: Fadda and Jiron, 2000

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[9] Poverty is the per capita income of the household which is lower than twice the value of a basic food basket. Extreme poverty is the per capita income of the household which is lower than the value of one basic food basket (MIDEPLAN, 1999). As of May, 2000 the per capita poverty line is equivalent to US$70.00 and per capita extreme poverty to US$35.00 for urban zones (MIDEPLAN, 2000).

Given the different gender roles played by men and women, and their different access to, and control over, social resources, the inaccessibility and lack of facilities in the District is worse for women than it is for men. Women are responsible for childcare and child rearing and there is a high proportion (61%) of women who stay in the neighbourhood as housewives. Consequently, more women than men perceive the lack of schools, markets, parks, child and health care facilities.

Although the residents of these neighbourhoods considered the physical quality of their surroundings as positive, mainly in terms of housing and infrastructure, they nonetheless indicated their intention to leave the neighbourhood if they had the opportunity to do so. In addition to physical factors the natural, human and socio-cultural dimensions of quality of life in urban areas were also studied. Factors such as a sense of safety, identity, problems of drug addiction, social representation and access to the wider urban society were all rated highly in the subjective determination of quality of life. Here too there were significant gender-based differences in perception. This is certainly true for the problems such as lack of cleanliness, water pollution, flooding and disease that are present in the neighbourhood, which women perceive to be worse and a greater health hazard than men. This is explicable in terms of their greater contact with issues such as children's health, rubbish collection, water provision and flooding.

A major issue considered detrimental to the quality of life is the problem of drugs and alcohol addiction amongst youth. The district of Pudahuel is ranked 17th out of the 341 districts in the country in terms of its level of drug consumption (CONACE, 1998). The causes for drug addiction and alcoholism are many, but the lack of opportunities and expectations for a better future are minimal in these types of neighbourhoods.

The social housing programmes in the neighbourhoods were targeted at low-income groups and could be accessed either collectively or in most cases individually. Most families on these programmes came from other districts in the city and had few links upon arrival to the neighbourhood. Because of the selection criteria, most beneficiaries presented high levels of poverty, low education levels, few employment skills and in general, many social problems. The result is problem estates with a high concentration of social problems, feelings of despair and social exclusion, acutely felt by youth. With few opportunities for education, employment or a vision of a better future, drug and alcohol consumption is perceived as a possible escape mechanism.

The situation not only affects youth, but also their families and other residents, as the high drug trafficking and consumption are associated with a high rate of criminality and insecurity on the streets. Women express an unwillingness to leave their houses, they fear public spaces and prefer to remain indoors especially after dark. Men also perceive the problems related to drugs, crime and theft, but they do not fear the use of public spaces and sense that the possible solution lies in better policing. Both groups think that the neighbourhood is very unsafe, and that the levels of protection are minimal.

In addition, both groups agree that the public transportation available is adequate but women indicate that conditions are not always optimal. Buses are regarded as being overcrowded and dangerous because of driving speeds, and their passage through some areas considered dangerous, particularly at night. Men are affected more by the length of time involved in reaching the city than women, largely one suspects, because it is men who use transport on a daily basis more than

women. Reasons given to explain problems of access to work are both the distances to the city and particularly traffic congestion.

Empowering or disempowering strategies

Empowerment is a long-term social and political process aimed at redressing the imbalance in the power structures of society. It does this by strengthening the powers of civil society, by creating a more transparent state and by making the corporate economy more socially responsible (Friedmann, 1993). The empowerment of civil society is to be achieved through territorially- organised communities characterised by autonomy in their decision making, local self-sufficiency; direct (participatory) democracy, and social learning through experience. According to Friedmann (1993), poor households lack social power to improve their conditions. He recognises eight means of acquiring social power, including: a defensible life space; social organisation; social networks; surplus time; appropriate information; knowledge and abilities; instruments of work and livelihood, and; financial resources[10]. By identifying some of these means in Pudahuel, it is possible to assess the degree of empowerment or disempowerment involved in the policies being implemented.

In terms of a defensible space, and a physical space to identify with, the residents of the two neighbourhoods stated that ownership of their property was a life long dream and the main reason for them staying there. Both men and women agreed that their existing living conditions were better than in their previous dwelling. Property ownership can be seen as a form of empowerment. Housing policies aimed at lowering the housing deficit through ownership are a response to felt needs in the population. But the location and type of living space delivered by the policies, and displacement of the beneficiaries, have generally created other problems which inevitably disempower the individuals.

For instance, the way these neighbourhoods were originally formed, by beneficiaries from different parts of the city, with no previous knowledge of each other makes the social organisation and formation of social networks difficult. In the first place, the social capital involved in their prior place of residence can be lost given the distances to the former neighbourhoods. Moreover, the formation of new networks also becomes difficult, when the different interests, needs and backgrounds of the residents generate an attitude of indifference to each other. Both men and women asserted that improving the quality of life was greatly dependent on the participation of residents. But they also pointed to a strong tendency to inertia in social mobilisation, and the widespread belief that the chances of influencing change were minimal.

In general men were more optimistic towards the possibility of achieving improvement through the municipality and the mayor of the district. Women on the other hand felt abandoned by these institutions and the police. They also recognised the reluctance of the majority of neighbours to become involved in the improvement of conditions. Nonetheless, it is the women who organise themselves,(albeit in small numbers) whilst male attitudes rested on the belief that that someone (an outsider) should reach out to help them. This situation tallies with the idea of women being involved in a community- based role, often voluntarily and without much recognition, whilst men participated in other areas with political or economic rewards, or simply do not get involved.

The priority of maintaining a salary makes it difficult to achieve a surplus of time, especially because of time taken up by long distances

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[10] Because not all the means to access social power were fully studied, only five of them are considered in this analysis.

to work and domestic chores, and because of the lack of space for recreation and basic services. Some of these difficulties are attributable to the peripheral location of the neighbourhoods, and the shortages of equipment and services to compensate for these distances to the city centre.

Furthermore, the residents also found it difficult to gain access to information necessary for their social empowerment. The distance to the municipality, the city and most institutions made it difficult, and these institutions rarely approached them to offer information. In a few cases, when groups have organised themselves, they have been able to access available funds or services to improve their living conditions. However, in general residents are disempowered in developing strategies that could improve their quality of life. This is not to say that it cannot happen, but that it requires a bigger effort from the community.

Conclusions

From the analysis above, it can be gathered that the different types of urban and housing policies and strategies implemented in Chile throughout different governments have stimulated urban sprawl. This sprawl has generated various impacts on the city's residents, affecting more negatively those living in the lower income peripheral areas. Santiago's urban sprawl has a global impact at the level of the city and its surroundings, and a local level impact on the district and neighbourhood.

Amongst the global impacts affecting the city are, social segregation of metropolitan space, the worsening of local living conditions, an increase in environmental contamination, urban security problems, and the deterioration of historic centres. Local impacts include extreme contamination, high poverty rates, lack of facilities, increased insecurity, high indices of drug addiction, and the lack of access to urban amenities. These externalities affect men and women in a different way. Due to the fact that women spend more time in the neighbourhood, their perception of the problems and their impacts is more acute.

The urban expansion policies implemented have had a disempowering effect on the communities affected. This is due to the relocation element in each programme, as the beneficiaries lose the social networks they previously had and simultaneously find it difficult to articulate new ones. Additionally, the lack access to citizen participation and other means of social power in daily activities, makes the initiation of empowering strategies difficult to achieve. From this research it is clear that policies for, and market forces determining, peripheral urban expansion in large cities such as Santiago, lead to problems of social exclusion and increased inequalities. This lends weight to the need to consider the potential benefits of urban containment and compact city policies.

In the context of Latin America, the social and economic disparities between urban centre and urban fringe have tended to limit the debate to 'traditional' terms, all too often assuming that socially homogeneous groups encompassed these changes. The rural-urban migration has virtually ended, the poor classes having contributed in the large majority of cases, to the creation of a poor class peri-urban fringe around main cities during the 1950s and 1960s. The case study of Santiago shows some of the changes that took place during the 1980s and 1990s in the urban growth pattern. These changes have been related to the segregation of the lower-income sectors of the population in extensive and precarious peripheral areas, where market-oriented policies have allowed them to settle and become 'home owners'.

This spread of the poor to the periphery has been favoured by the way in which metropolitan space was produced, the result being the buffering of social conflicts. The three main indicators of the new change are:

- a socio-economic diversification of the peripheral areas, thus reproducing the centre-periphery pattern within themselves;

- the spread of poverty throughout the metropolitan network;

- the emergence of segregation by middle and upper class segments of society.

These changes have led to the formation of a more complex urban fringe than the one described in the 1970s. The urban fringe has ceased to be an open space, and in this sense it ceased to be a frontier, whose growth logic led to the spread of urban land ownership. This trend has thus coexisted with a diametrically opposing one: the production of privileged residential neighbourhoods, whose target owners belong to higher-income groups, territorially separated from the rest of the city. In the context of the compact/dispersed city debate, this complex and heterogeneous urban structure challenges professional perceptions and knowledge, raising questions about the necessary adaptation of the urban and regional planning set of conceptual and practical tools to cope with the new territorial and social reality.

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