

University of Chile
Faculty of Architecture and Urbanism

2021, Second academic semester (Springtime)

Post-neoliberal Housing and Urbanism

Information

Teacher: Ernesto López-Morales
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Email: elopez@uchilefau.cl
Place: (online by Zoom)

Guest speakers proposed (TBC):

Tom Slater (U. Edinburgh); Mayra Mosciaro (U. Leuven), Yunpeng Zhang (U. Leuven), Javier Ruiz-Tagle (PUC); among others.

Course's summary

This course invites FAU Architecture students to critically discuss urban development and housing in Chile and look for a change from the current neoliberal scenario. We will consider the present Constitutional Convention as a context open to new rules and ideas. We will study housing and urban development in Chile and provide comparative cases from the United States, Europe, Asia, and Latin America. We seek variegated forms of housing and urban neoliberalism and ways to regulate or overcome it – also experiences, visions, and voices from students. There are two assessments, each consisting of individual research essays that draw on bibliographic and web analysis. The first essay addresses a housing problem in Chile, and the second one explores global cases to find possible solutions or utopias. The course is also a training opportunity in English for students. The reading load is a minimum of one paper per week and the course demands minimum 80% attendance.

Keywords

Housing, Urban Development, Neoliberalism, Post-neoliberalism, Right to Housing, Right to the City

Presentation: Chile's Housing problem

Housing in Chile is in an affordability crisis, and currently, we have an opportunity to change this policy. There is a deficit of more than half a million households without the right to housing. For the last ten years, *allegados* have doubled, likewise the growing number of informal settlements and deprived population living in inadequate conditions. Meanwhile, housing rent prices surge while people spend higher shares of their income on housing rent. Young households have no choice but to rent and share flats, live segregated in the periphery, or live as *allegado*. Currently, buying a home in Chile has become “severely unaffordable” as new housing units decrease to tiny sizes as small as 18 m² per unit. New high-rise buildings invade old, low-rise neighborhoods as much of Chile's urban and architecture patrimony is smashed and replaced by modernist high-rise buildings, sometimes as a dystopian image of hyper density. We architects have a great responsibility in this part. Chilean urbanism responds to a false dichotomy between hyper-dense development or urban sprawl with abandoned central urban areas, there are no alternatives in-between.

On the flip side, private developers argue that planning laws are too restrictive, uncertain, contradictory, and changing, so they do not help massify housing construction but conspire against housing deficit reduction. Private developers claim that urban land near public goods and transportation is scarce; however, available evidence shows the contrary (e.g. Chile's economist Pablo Trivelli claims that land is sufficiently available). Private developers also claim that the recent international immigration makes housing scarcer. Mid-income immigrants massively use the new housing in central areas and displace low-income Chileans. Other immigrants live marginalized, occupy land risking environmental disaster, seize public land, or live segregated in peripheral (usually stigmatized) social housing estates.

In Chile, the most affluent 10% accumulate housing and land (*super inversionistas*), profit with their lease loans, or collateral values, and obtain 43% of the annual housing production. The remaining 57% of the housing supply goes to first-time buyers, many of them using a housing voucher (a subsidy). Based on subsidies or vouchers, Chile's housing policy has ineffectively met market prices, hence the growing deficit that pushes households to pay ever-higher costs for shrinking housing.

Kicking questions for the class:

1. How should a land policy be feasible and ensure the Right of everyone to decent Housing and the City in Chile?
2. How does the diversity (scale and products) of real estate developers (*inmobiliarias*) enable market efficiency and competitiveness?
3. How have business interests been articulated with the formulation of legislation and planning instruments?

4. What do we mean when we say “urban heritage”? What do we want to keep and why, in our neighborhoods?
5. What examples of good practice should we look at in other countries?

Teaching goals

1. To train in urban and housing policy analysis using material, social and cultural variables.
2. To co-build a regularly functioning, respectful, and enjoyable academic space.
3. To learn about housing in Chile and different regions of the world.

Assignments and grading

Grading scale: (1 to 7 pts.)

Primary assignment: Two essays written in English +/- 2,000 words included bibliography. One national and one international case will be addressed respectively — **submission dates: Weeks 6 and 12** (80%)

Secondary assignment: Mid-phase memos plus participation and attendance (20%)

Products

- State-of-the-art understanding of housing and land issues, covering different world regions.
- Basic knowledge about different cities, their socio-economic features, architecture, urban spaces, and urban/housing policies at play.
- Training in academic reading and discussion, logical analysis, and philosophical reflection.

Preliminary schedule/outline

Week	Topic
1	Welcome / Chile’s neoliberal housing 1: From 1954 to 2000: Inception of Cámara Chilena de la Construcción, the State institutional apparatus, lots and service programs, the 1979 Urban Policy, the housing voucher policy, and the birth of <i>campamentos</i> . Building hope: Historical housing movements in Chile. Milton Friedman’s letter to Augusto Pinochet. https://genius.com/Milton-friedman-letter-to-president-augusto-pinochet-annotated

2

Chile's neoliberal housing 2:

From 2000 to present: market housing private production, gentrification, and financialization. The EGIS system and its failure. The housing voucher programs and Social Integration. Current housing movements (MPL, UKMAU). The Social integration problem in the USA, cases of Chicago and the HCV and HOP programs.

3

The land and housing affordability problems:

Land rent and land price. Why land rent is higher in central land. How scarce is urban land? Why high-rise buildings create so many externalities and what can we do about it? Dystopian images of hyper density, revisiting Blade Runner. Rent control policies in Vienna, Berlin and New York, pros and cons.

4

Neoliberal urban segregation:

Suburbanization in the US and Latin America. The myth of neoliberal urban expansion. Urban segregation in Chile and abroad. Territorial stigmatization by Wacquant and Slater. How State policies segregate? Urban limits and green belts, effects. China's current urban sprawl.

5

Financialization of cities:

The real estate financial complex (REFCOM) by Manuel Aalbers. Effects of housing accumulation in global cities. Urban State entrepreneurialism in Chile, US, Europe, and Asia.
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0SwRDXDkDuk>

6

Gentrification:

Creative destruction and urban renewal. Types of gentrification by Lees et al. (2016). Gentrification in Chile, an ongoing discussion. Urban heritage (*patrimonio*) as use and exchange value, the loss of heritage by real estate. Heritage protection movements: from 1960s Jane Jacobs to "Ñuñoa's massacre."

7

Housing informality and *campamentos*:

Cases from Chile, India and Brazil. Housing informality: the porous boundary between illegal and legal housing. Informal housing and social movements. Global immigration and informal housing.

8

Rest week

9

New housing actors:

Platform-capitalism and housing: the airbnbization of cities. Transnational consumerism and fifth-wave gentrification. Local networks of care and sharing in the post-neoliberal world, international cases. The new urban grassroots: UKAMAU, MPL and housing and urban feminism.

10

The right to the City revisited:

What right and a right for whom? Current interpretations of Henri Lefebvre's production of space, and spaces of reproduction. What type

of housing for what type of society? Why we need post-neoliberal, transdisciplinary, paramodernist architecture.

11

Post-neoliberal futures:

Revisiting Modernist and post-modern architecture utopias. Revisiting the neoliberal utopia. What is next? A role-playing exercise.

12

Conclusions and feedback

About the lecturer Ernesto López-Morales:

Since 2005, Ernesto has engaged in theoretical and empirical research on urban neoliberalism. He has focused on deprived areas of Santiago, Chile, adopting a critical approach to urban redevelopment and the lack of housing rights. Later his work has gone against established orthodoxies in Latin America and abroad, such as neoclassical explanations of the extreme appreciation of value in central areas and other common assumptions that serve state bureaucracies and private real estate elites. Further comparative empirical research into the Mexican, Brazilian, and Argentinean cases has been carried out systematically since 2013 through collaborative research with scholars from UK, USA, Argentina, Mexico, Brazil, and complemented with fundamental inputs from local activists. Ernesto's published works are here:

https://scholar.google.com/citations?user=5w40_sYAAAAJ&hl=es

Lecturer's commitments

Accessibility (office hours to be defined – meetings previously appointed); quick response to emails; prompt return to grades and detailed feedback on the assignment; tolerant, respectful, and participative classes.

General bibliography

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