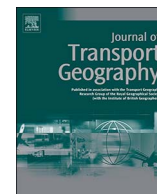




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Real estate production, geographies of mobility and spatial contestation: A two-case study in Santiago de Chile[☆]

Michael Lukas^{a,*}, Ernesto López-Morales^b

^a Department of Geography, Faculty of Architecture and Urbanism, University of Chile, Portugal 84, Santiago, Chile

^b Department of Urbanism, Faculty of Architecture and Urbanism, University of Chile, Portugal 84, Santiago, Chile

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ABSTRACT

This paper addresses the links between real estate production, transport infrastructure and class-related spatial tensions in the context of urban neoliberalism in Chile. As case studies we focus on two of the most intensely redeveloping areas in Santiago, the Estación Central municipality in inner Santiago which experiences rapid high-rise property-led redevelopment, and the peri-urban growth zone of Chicureo in the municipality of Colina. From the perspective of urban political economy and using mobility-related questionnaires, in-depth interviews with inhabitants and media analysis we detect important differences between inner-city and peri-urban dynamics. While the redeveloping inner area of Santiago, in spite of being an exclusionary space where lower income-oriented affordable housing is absent, is not a disputed space in terms of access to mobility means, the expanding fringes of the city show strong class-related differences among new and old inhabitants. It seems that with view to mobility opportunities urban neoliberalism has variegated geographies that at the same time might show temporarily positive (Estación Central) and very negative results (Chicureo). In terms of public policy these results indicate that the inner area of Santiago is an opportunity for locating social housing production, given the relatively equal access to mobility opportunity for the different income groups. In the meanwhile, the deepening of mobility-related inequalities on the urban peripheries is highly problematic and needs more scholarly and political attention.

1. Introduction

Since the early 1990s Santiago experienced rapid modernization and enlargement of its privately-built housing stock, along with the supply of public and private transport infrastructure and transformations in the institutional landscape of urban governance and planning (Zegras and Gakenheimer, 2000; De Mattos, 2011). In that regard, Santiago is not an atypical case for Latin American metropolises in times of neoliberal globalization where the influx and circulation of national and transnational finance capital and planning ideas related to urban form, transport and mobility are boosting the transformation of the built environment on the one hand and the implementation of new regulatory regimes of land use and transportation planning on the other (Roberts, 2005; Janoschka et al., 2013; López-Morales, 2016b).

While currently for Latin American cities there is literature available on the political economy of urban growth and the intensification of land use (Janoschka and Hidalgo, 2013), on transportation planning and Bus

Rapid Transit (BRT)-reforms (Figueroa, 2005; Paget-Seekins, 2015) as well as on daily mobility patterns (Jirón and Mansilla, 2014; Jirón et al., 2016), the functional and strategic links between real estate production, transport infrastructure and spatial contestation only recently have begun to be scrutinized. For instance, aspects that have been addressed are the relation between inter-urban highways and peri-urbanization through gated communities (Blanco and San Cristóbal, 2012), land value impacts of BRT implementation (Rodríguez and Mojica, 2008) and the empirical and conceptual links between gentrification, mobility and transport (Blanco et al., 2014; Apaolaza et al., 2016).

This paper brings a critical urban political economy perspective to the nexus of real estate production, transport infrastructure and spatial contestation. We ask how, by whom and for whom new real estate projects and transport infrastructures are developed, analyze the differential characteristics and possibilities held by incumbent actors to use transport infrastructure, and how real estate agents, transport

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* Corresponding author.

E-mail addresses: mlukas@uchilefau.cl (M. Lukas), elopez@uchilefau.cl (E. López-Morales).

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