

The Principal Urban Struggles of the Third Millennium

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THE CITY AS A MACHINE

A useful way to analyze how the contemporary city works, how the properties of its spaces are defined, and how its inhabitants' future is decided, is that of the "growth machine" proposed in 1976 by Harvey Molotch.¹ Even though some of his observations were made more than 20 years ago, and with reference to U.S. cities, the framework he provides continues to be valid and helpful for better understanding certain processes at work in cities in developing countries today.

Molotch argues that land is "the basic stuff of place" and, at the same time, that it is a market commodity providing wealth and power. Thus, "some very important people" have a keen interest in it. Growth is also the political and economic essence of any city or locality, and as such, it becomes a key issue for the local elite, on which (presumably) they need to reach agreements. How this growth (which triggers a chain of events) occurs is a fundamental issue for those concerned with their own locality, and who have the means to transform their concern into political power. For this reason, he argues, "the city is, for those who count, a growth machine."²

Eleven years later, John Logan and Harvey Molotch³ further developed this concept of the city as a growth machine, examining which people and organizations have an interest in which places, and how these interests affect "place." They postulate that for some, urban land has an "exchange value," while for others it has a "use value." The state intervenes at various levels in this distribution of use values and exchange values. But, in contrast with the use value rhetoric that usually marks government discourse, the policies

implemented tend to foster growth and drive up rents, rarely boosting use values.⁴ The local entrepreneurs, for their part, see the land for its potential exchange value, so they constantly endeavor to increase the financial value of their zone, attracting investment without taking into account the possible impact on urban residents. For city dwellers, this same land has a use value that is directly related to their quality of life, as will be seen below. Indeed, this dynamic is often the predominant trend of urban growth.

The impetus to drive exchange values up is such that the different sectors of a given city compete to attract investment. Cities are organized like businesses, geared towards increasing the aggregate levels of rent by intensifying land use. It is by this dynamic that a city becomes a "growth machine." This results in a "growth ethic" that permeates all aspects of local life, including the political system, the economic development agenda, and even the cultural organizations. Even though growth is generally presented as something positive for all residents, in reality the advantages and disadvantages of growth are distributed very unevenly.⁵

Analyzing the current Chilean situation, and specifically the situation in Santiago, one notes that a small yet very important group of individuals and/or firms runs the real estate market. For them, urban land and its development is a means of generating wealth that in turn gives them influence in national politics.⁶ This is the elite Molotch refers to, and for them, the city operates as a growth machine. As the owners of the entire periphery of Santiago, dating back decades before the city's burgeoning sprawl, it is in the elite's best interest for the city to grow as much as possible in surface area. This explains the strong pressures brought to bear by the real estate and construction companies on the State to extend the urban border of the city indefinitely. Growth in Santiago is also occurring through the renewal of the more centrally-located areas, where population density and total marketable square footage are both on the rise, presenting new opportunities to the real estate market. This is the case of the redevelopment of Santiago Poniente, the neighborhood just west of the city center, where crumbling, old seigniorial mansions are giving way to high-rise buildings offering subsidized housing.

How are decisions made in this urban machine?

Murray Edelman⁷ argues that there are two types of policy-making. First, there is "symbolic" policy-making, whereby resulting policies refer to

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prominent issues, such as public morality, and espouse the type of symbolic reforms often touted by public relations campaigns and reflected in daily headlines.⁸ Second, there is "implicit" policy-making, by which the real decisions are made that truly affect people. Implicit policy flows from private negotiations in high-level committees and commissions with the participation of "those who count." This elite circle makes decisions as to the distribution of goods and services among the various groups of society.

Much less visible to publics, often relegated to back rooms or negotiations within insulated authorities and agencies, this is the politics that determines who, in material terms, gets what, where and how.⁹

City dwellers' quality of life is largely a consequence of the decisions made through this growth machine. In a context of state and economic restructuring, in which the scope of state action is ever more diminished, urban quality of life comes to depend fundamentally on the decisions private investors make regarding a given parcel of land. As private investment focuses on those projects and parcels where the likelihood of profit is greatest, the result is sharp urban segregation, of which Santiago is one of the clearest examples in Latin America. The neighborhoods that concentrate the greatest economic capacity in Santiago are comparable to many upper middle-class and middle-class neighborhoods in the countries of the North. They are expansive residential zones in which green areas and beauty predominate, and which enjoy the modern services and malls that offer all the products of globalization and economic success. At the other extreme are the large expanses of the city where the poorest of the poor live in substandard housing, amidst a lack of green areas, non-existent or abandoned public spaces, limited and poor-quality infrastructure, etc. The private sector also plays a part in developing these areas (most low-cost housing in Chile is built by the private sector), but it is tailored to "what people can pay," and it appears that the poor cannot pay for more than poor quality, minimal dimensions, and ugliness.

In the United States, local governments have discovered that the only way to improve the living conditions of the population is by obtaining financing through the investments they make within their local jurisdiction. To this end, they negotiate with investors, from whom they seek certain offsets to address the direct infrastructure costs associated with their

Table 1
Differences between Wealthy and Poor Municipalities,
Metropolitan Region of Santiago, 1997.
Population, Income and Municipal Expenditures
per capita (in 1998 Chilean pesos)

Municipalities	Population	Income per capita	Expenditures per capita
Santiago	229,761	250,137	237,549
Providencia	109,324	248,139	226,122
Vitacura	83,510	193,525	187,646
Las Condes	222,886	160,873	158,889
La Granja	146,153	29,482	26,935
Cerro Navia	164,768	30,162	26,177
El Bosque	187,799	26,346	26,045
La Pintana	230,758	28,701	24,242
Promedio RM	—	66,592	63,158

Source: National Statistics Institute, 1997, Alfredo Rodríguez and Lucy Winchester, "Santiago de Chile, Metropolización, globalización, desigualdad: ¿Es posible gobernar la ciudad?" Table 9, paper presented at the seminar Ciudades del Mercosur, Buenos Aires, November 2000.

projects (like water, sanitation, and roads). These demands have expanded in the 1990s to include externalities, for example, what to do about traffic congestion caused by a project not in areas immediately contiguous to it. Of late, local governments have been demanding that investors offset certain social costs, for example, by building day-care centers in office buildings, youth hostels in luxury hotels, or low-cost housing alongside luxury condominiums. Some local governments go so far as to demand job training and/or the creation of new jobs for local residents. Although the current demands are quite low, they are tending to become more intense and widespread as their potential grows in importance for balancing out the endowment and quality of urban services.¹⁰

This system of demanding offsets from investors is one way to pay the social costs of capital investments, and an important instrument in the effort to control (or shape) growth and balance out living conditions in the community. Although this system,

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Table 2
Metropolitan Region of Santiago—Average Income per Municipality (Percentages)

MUNICIPALITY	Socioeconomic Group ABC1	Socioeconomic Group C2C3	Socioeconomic Group D y E
SANTIAGO	3.2	66.3	30.5
PROVIDENCIA	35	62	3
VITACURA	66.5	33.5	0
LAS CONDES	60.5	37	2.5
LA GRANJA	0	45.5	54.5
CERRO NAVIA	0	22	78
EL BOSQUE	0	42.5	57.5
LA PINTANA	0.6	16.5	82.9
SAN RAMON	0	21.5	78.5
PEÑALOLEN	0	27.5	72.5

Source: INE (National Institute for Statistics), 1992.

...is a flawed mechanism to compensate for the lack of responsible policies at state and national levels...it is certainly superior to the kind of immoderation that would occur if growth machines maintain their complete hegemony, providing no offsets whatsoever for development damage....¹¹

What is happening in Chile, and specifically in Santiago? As illustrated by Table 1, the wealthiest municipalities have the capacity to improve the quality of life of their inhabitants, yet the differences between the wealthiest and the poorest municipalities are abysmal.

The four poorest municipalities increased their revenues by 21% and their spending by 37% from 1992 to 1997, while the four wealthiest municipalities saw revenue gains of 98% from 1992 to 1997.¹² The municipality of Santiago (the original city center) spends almost 10 times more per inhabitant than the poorest municipality, and four times more than the average spending of all the municipalities of the Metropolitan Region combined.

If we observe the distribution of the population by level of income (Table 2), the major differences among the municipalities of Santiago

become all the more evident. Municipalities such as Vitacura, Providencia, and Las Condes have no more than 3% of their population in the lowest income strata, while at the other extreme, eleven municipalities have not a single resident from the upper income strata.

These data show the extreme economic segregation found in Metropolitan Santiago, which in turn suggest that different cities co-exist within Santiago. While a redistributive fund does operate in Chile (the FNDR, Fondo Nacional de Desarrollo Regional), whose objective is to diminish the inequities between municipalities by transferring surpluses from the better-off ones to the poorer ones, inevitably, poor communities still suffer from any number of unmet needs. Thus, the poorest municipalities have only low-cost housing, whose inhabitants pay no income taxes, and as the lower-income sectors are exempt from the payment of services, no revenues for services as basic as trash removal.

This makes it very difficult for Chile's poorest municipalities to attract investment that might provide important offsets. It is thus essential to either improve the FNDR so that it can truly serve as a redistributive instrument, or generate other mechanisms (for example, agreements between two or more municipalities) that make it possible to improve the living conditions of the neediest.

THE ACTORS: THE STATE AND THE PRIVATE SECTOR

The main protagonists in the dynamic that gives birth to, and then re-creates, the city are the state, private actors, and citizens. The state attempts to mediate the conflicts that arise between real estate developers and citizens, all the while seeking to carry out its own projects and meet its own development goals. We will look more closely at the different role each of these actors plays within the urban machine. In this section we will examine the state and the private sector, leaving the analysis of the citizens role for Section 3, which will address the battles citizens are waging in the city.

The State

The Chilean State, like most states in the region, has undergone more than two decades of restructuring, with a steady diminution in the size of the administrative apparatus as its tasks have been increasingly limited to supervising and rule-making for guiding development. Its key objective is

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Table 3
The Evolution of the Human Development Index and
Per Capita GDP, 1975—1998, CHILE and Latin America
(in 1995 dollars)

Chile	1975	1980	1985	1990	1998
HDI	0.702	0.736	0.753	0.780	0.826
GDP	1.842	2.425	2.345	2.987	4.784
America					
Latina	1975	1980	1985	1990	1998
HDI	—	—	—	—	0.758
GDP	2.200	3.650	4.090	5.040	6.470

*Including the Caribbean Region

Source: United Nations, Human Development Report (1999) Internet Search:
<http://www.undp.org/hdro/>

economic development, to which it accords a greater priority than to other demands, despite a discourse favorable to redistribution and the environment. It should be recognized, however, that the Chilean State has shown a greater capacity than other developing countries to enforce the rules. Moreover, despite political changes, it has maintained and improved a series of social policies that have resulted in the poorest of the poor generally having a better standard of living than their counterparts in other developing countries.¹³ One sign of this is the country's increased ranking in the United Nations' annual Human Development Index, by which Chile has become one of the four Latin American countries with a high level of human development, as reflected in Tables 3 and 4.

In a world open to globalization, wherein cities compete to attract foreign capital, urban development is a key concern for the state, which must create the conditions to make its cities attractive, especially its capital city. Even so, there does not appear to be a consensus or an explicit plan for the model city it wishes to attain, and thus a "fragmentary urban planning" ("*urbanismo fragmentario*")¹⁴ ensues based on megaprojects promoted by the private sector (i.e., large residential developments, commercial and industrial centers, and office complexes). At the same time, the state has focused on producing low-cost housing and basic infrastructure for the poorest

Table 4
Human Development Index, 1990—1999,
Comparison among Latin American Countries

Country and Year	1999	1998	1990
Countries with high levels of development			
Chile	34	38	38
Argentina	39	35	43
Uruguay	40	39	32
Costa Rica	45	48	40
Countries with medium levels of development			
Trinidad and Tobago	46	50	39
Venezuela	48	65	44
Panama	49	59	54
Mexico	50	55	45
Colombia	57	68	61
Cuba	58	56	62
Ecuador	72	91	77
Brazil	79	74	60
Peru	80	80	78
Jamaica	82	83	59
Paraguay	84	81	73
Dominican Republic	88	87	80
El Salvador	107	104	94
Bolivia	112	114	110
Honduras	114	113	100
Guatemala	117	120	103
Nicaragua	121	121	116
Countries with low levels of human development			
Haiti	152	150	125

Source: United Nations, Human Development Report, 1991, 1998, 1999. Internet search:
<http://www.undp.org/hrdo>

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sectors as it attempts to generate an environment for the private sector to take an interest in such construction projects.

Nonetheless, one must not forget the importance of the state's role in generating the infrastructure essential for making land accessible and available to the real estate market. In the 1990s, when it was accepted that the state, and therefore its resources, were steadily diminishing, a concessions system emerged as a way to build infrastructure using private capital. The private sector would recover its investment over time by charging for the use of the infrastructure it built. In Chile, this has resulted in the construction of some sections of inter-urban highway and a tunnel, and work is beginning on the construction of a road within Santiago called *Acceso Sur* which would provide quick access to the south of the country. One of the cases analyzed below has to do with the efforts to build the first urban highway by concession, a north coastal highway known as the *Costanera Norte*.

When we speak of "the state" it may seem that we are referring to a monolithic state that always acts in the same direction in shaping the city's development. It is important to understand that this is not so, and in particular, to discuss the workings of the Ministry of Housing and Urban Development, the Ministry of Public Works, and the municipal governments, as these are the institutions closest to the citizens.

In theory, the ministry responsible for urban development in Chile is the Ministry of Housing and Urban Development (MINVU). It is in charge of carrying out and/or approving the Urban Regulatory Plan, which is the main urban planning tool in Chile. Yet its capabilities are seriously limited and its position on urban development is very different from that of other state entities. The MINVU's provision of low-cost housing, its principal task, has had a significant impact on the city. The Ministry's siting of such housing has been guided by market forces since the 1970s creating low-rent, low-quality neighborhoods in a selected periphery of Santiago (preference being given to the south and northwest municipalities of the Metropolitan Region), thereby further segregating the city.¹⁵

In 1994, more than 30 years after the design of the last regulatory plan for Santiago, MINVU won approval of a new Inter-Municipal Plan. The main objective of the plan was to curb the city's growth in total area, by increasing population density, on average, from 100 inhabitants per hectare to 150 per hectare. This plan has provoked irate reactions from interests such as the private sector and the National Chamber of Construction, and

more recently, the Undersecretary for Housing and Urban Development made public statements on the "flexibility" with which this rule would be applied, treating each major project on a case-by-case basis.¹⁶ This has reinforced the notion of fragmentary urban planning - a city broken into pieces by means of large real estate projects that answer to the logic of the marketplace.

As the institution responsible for producing the country's infrastructure, the Ministry of Public Works (MOP) has the greatest weight today in what is happening in Chilean cities. Since the MOP is responsible for producing large infrastructure works such as airports, highways, primary roads, and bridges, among others, and since its power is directly tied to the size of its budget, the MOP has much more influence and power within the state apparatus than the MINVU. In a context where planning has been undervalued and resisted, large infrastructure works have defined where and how the city grows.¹⁷ The most emblematic case during the last decade in Santiago has been the Américo Vespucio peripheral highway to the airport, completed in the late 1980s. By connecting the previously isolated northern sector of Huechuraba and Conchalí to the eastern sector of the capital, where the wealthier population is situated, a whole new market opened up for real estate expansion. The municipality of Huechuraba went from a low-cost back room to the city (originally the squatter settlements of the 1960s), to being an extension for the *barrio alto* where, behind the modern strip of industries and services that line the highway to the airport, the upper-middle class residential areas of the new century are being built.

State versus Capital

The state, as an essential piece of the urban machine, generally has very complex and even contradictory relationships with the potential investors in the city, who, in addition to being made up of the local elite, in today's global economy may include international financial groups and companies.

In its drive to promote development, the state earmarks a large part of its resources to investment in infrastructure, airports, the siting of large industrial projects, etc. Since these investments are very important in defining the exchange values, or in other words, the rate of return of the land, different interest groups try to influence the state's decisions to ensure that these have a positive impact on the land that belongs to each

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of them. The principal state agency involved in this process is the Ministry of Public Works, making it the key interlocutor for the private sector, either through associations such as the National Chamber of Construction, or directly with large multinational corporations interested in investing in Chile.

Concurrently, the private sector sees other state institutions as the main obstacles to carrying out their projects in the city. The Ministry of Housing and Urban Development, for example, sets limits and determines the characteristics of potential growth for the different areas of Santiago through its Regulatory Plan. Other institutions seen as posing obstacles to development are the municipal governments, which define the nature of each municipality in greater detail through the *Plan Regulador Comunal*, or Municipal Regulatory Plan. More importantly, in Chile, municipal governments have the authority to issue building permits for new works through the Municipal Public Works offices. Sometimes the central-level MINVU and the municipal-level authorities don't see eye-to-eye, as the municipal government does everything possible to attract investment to its *municipio*, sometimes approving projects not consistent with the larger policy defined at the central level of government.

In the 1990s, the MINVU and municipal governments were joined by the National Commission on the Environment (CONAMA) and its regional offices, the Regional Commissions on the Environment (COREMA), in assuming the responsibility of approving, by law,¹⁸ projects with certain characteristics that demand either an environmental impact statement or study. In addition, the COREMAs play an important role when citizens' groups oppose a project and ask that it be evaluated for environmental impacts. This may delay project implementation and drive up its costs, as will be seen in the case of Plaza Perú discussed in the next section.

Within the complex mechanism that is the urban machine, the state must also relate to its citizens, with whom it needs to maintain a favorable relationship since they make up its electoral constituency. Although citizen participation figures prominently in the state's current discourse, in reality, it is generally limited to presenting projects that have been designed by "experts" to the persons who will be potentially affected, to ask their opinion. Meanwhile, the real decisions are made afterwards, and based on "technical" grounds, often provoking major clashes between cit-

izens and the authorities. Conflicts flare up from time to time, becoming a constant source of political pressure. For example, during the last decade, Santiago's citizens have refused to have garbage dumps installed near their place of residence and no resolution has been reached, while the costs of feasible solutions have steadily mounted.

The Private Sector

The private sector, which often owns the land and/or capital, seeks to maximize profits based on its own internal logic, to which end it seeks to continue the unbridled growth of the city, and thus must occupy peripheral urban areas. Real-estate developers seek to have the state create the conditions for their parcels to increase in value, mainly by improving access (new roads) and expanding or improving basic infrastructure. At the same time, the private sector seeks to avoid, to the extent possible, any checks on growth, by opposing restrictions on land use and population density. To this end, the private sector uses political pressure, by manipulating the building industry's potential capacity for generating employment, for example, a topic that weighs heavily at present as unemployment has become a major national concern. Due to its zealous effort to avoid limits on growth, the private sector has expressed interest in participating and having decision-making power in the design of the urban regulatory plans. Moreover, the private sector has waged a campaign of open opposition to the Inter-Municipal Regulatory Plan, approved in 1994, which it believes unduly limits its right to obtain profit from its land.

Capital, in the realm of real estate, is interested in obtaining, *as is to be expected*, the highest possible profit from the development of its land or project. The top rates of return will be in the most profitable projects, such as the large urban artifacts (malls, office complexes, specialized commercial centers)¹⁹ and exclusive neighborhoods or residential complexes. But in this case as well, it would be a mistake to consider real-estate capital as having a single orientation. Just as there are major differences among different state agencies, there are major differences among the interests of the various different real-estate groups who compete ferociously for shares within limited markets. Thus, the owners of land in different "localities" (i.e. different municipalities) try to garner state support to increase the potential (and value) of their land. This can happen by introducing or improving infrastructure, by loosening up regulations, or by offering spe-

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cial incentives to promote development. Indeed, this last mechanism has been used by the state in Santiago Poniente to jump-start urban renewal.²⁰

Recently in Santiago, giant residential and mixed-use large-scale projects geared to the upper-middle and upper sectors have been proposed. The potential supply far exceeds the possibilities of demand in the real estate market; indeed, many of these projects have remained at their initial phases. One credible hypothesis for this is that in the face of a regulatory plan that places a strict limit on growth, small projects have no chance of being approved at the higher levels of government. Even if the municipal government were to accept small development projects, the ministerial level is likely to hold them up if they are not governed by the regulatory framework approved for the Metropolitan Region. Megaprojects on the other hand, are likely to be accorded special treatment and have shown a much greater ability to be authorized on an exceptional basis.²¹ If one also considers the fact that holding approved permits sharply increases the value of land, and that the owners may seek loans based on the value of that land (yet need not necessarily use the funds to build the project), by deft legal maneuvering, real estate ownership can be used to obtain priority financing that can be invested, for example, in productive activities.

Although the private sector in Santiago traditionally has invested in very selected areas of the city, especially in the triangle formed from the center to the northeast where the greatest economic capacity is concentrated, the country's swift economic advance in the last decade has created new market niches that have led to the development of new commercial centers and new middle-class housing. The now more numerous middle- and upper-middle sectors have been expanding to the east and southeast areas of the city. In some municipalities, such as Huechuraba, there has been a complete economic turnabout since its development as an extension of the *barrio alto*. The community of La Florida, with the consolidation of a huge commercial and office complex (Plaza Vespucio Mall), the rise of other shopping centers (La Florida Mall), and backed by an extension of the Metro, has seen its population change from predominantly poor residents to largely middle-class residents. In addition, new lower-middle class sectors are burgeoning in the western part of the Metropolitan Region, around new large commercial centers whose development is occurring in a manner fully analogous to what occurs in the United States when new areas are opened to suburban development.

As seen above, the relationship between the private sector and the state is complex. While the private sector seeks the state's support and negotiates with its various institutions to maximize its profits whenever it invests in the city, it also pressures the state for actions favorable to its interests and constantly attacks it in the media for the barriers to development it puts into place.

In Chile, the private sector holds an ambivalent view towards the citizens. While the citizens are the private sector's potential clients, in principle, it also views them as possible adversaries. The private sector has to negotiate with the citizens and offer them ever-improved living conditions to convince them to buy their product. One experience that highlights the relationship among the various actors, and how it can change, is that of the construction of low-cost housing in Chile, which up to the mid-1990s was an attractive business for the private sector (thanks largely to the support of the state). When heavy rains destroyed a low-cost housing development in Santiago, a major political and public relations problem ensued for the private sector and the state. This incited the private sector, now faced with possible lawsuits over its poor quality constructions, to bow out of an increasingly unattractive business, an occurrence that is becoming more and more common.

The Obstacles

Before analyzing the third actor, the citizens, in more detail, we should visualize the forces that oppose the "urban machine" in its search for growth. One key enemy of growth is a lack of economic dynamism, which has a direct negative impact on the market for private projects, and leads to vanishing demand. This happened in Chile, and in Santiago, in 1998 when the Asian crisis shook the Latin American economies. The impact of the Asian crisis is felt to this day in the country's sluggish economic recovery. Another possible barrier to the city's growth is the lack of a budget for state projects (such as for building the infrastructure required of growth). An effort has been made to solve this problem by recurring to concessions, though what this means for the city remains to be seen.

Urban regulations are also seen by the private sector as a fundamental obstacle to its projects. In the public debate instigated by the private sector, the Inter-Municipal Regulatory Plan is presented as thwarting plans for expansion. Yet, sometimes it is the municipalities themselves who

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interfere with development, applying regulations that halt certain projects that Mayors and/or municipal council members deem harmful to the municipality (the San Luis Project in Las Condes is a good example).

New environmental regulations have also emerged in the 1990s as another force impeding growth or change in certain areas. Since the promulgation of the Basic Law on the Environment (1994) and the Regulation on Environmental Impact Assessment (1995), environmental impact assessments have become a potential barrier to the development of urban projects.²² There is no consensus on the type and scale of urban projects requiring an environmental impact assessment, thus all real estate developers seek to have their projects approved with a mere environmental impact statement, which does not require an in-depth study. Yet, a statement is not always accepted, and some projects are forced to perform an environmental impact assessment, which includes technical studies and citizen participation.

On certain occasions, projects promoted by some government offices meet the opposition of other public institutions. For example, a municipality may oppose the construction of a highway if it believes it will have a detrimental impact on its population. The most clear-cut case of such problems is in the Metropolitan Region of Santiago where Mayors and residents of several peripheral municipalities have rejected proposals for the siting of transfer stations and garbage dumps.

THE BATTLES

The third actor participating in this complex mechanism that constantly creates and transforms the city is the citizen, particularly the groups of citizens who organize to defend something they feel to be important in their urban environment by standing up to the growth machine. Through the struggles in present-day Santiago, we will see in more detail what leads them to organize, how they take action, and what results they are obtaining in this dynamic of opposition, conflict, and alliance that shapes the city.

Over the last decade, practically all of the important struggles that have been or are being waged by citizens groups in Santiago have been against some urban project they see as a threat to their quality of life, to the value of their property, and/or to their health. For them, the environment is so bound up with quality of life that these could be defined as movements for the urban environment. As Molotch states,

Attempts by citizens' groups to affect development represent an authentic grassroots effort to gain control over urban futures....²³

Most of the conflicts occur within the city limits, where a project (a highway, a new real estate development, a cell phone antenna, etc.) threatens to change the local residents' way of life. In recent years, the reluctance of local residents and municipal governments to accept a dump, a prison, or other similar projects is taking place in the municipalities of the periphery, even in those with extensive undeveloped areas. This repudiation of certain "undesirable" aspects of urban life, which are nonetheless necessary for the city to function, has become worldwide: in the United States it is alluded to by the expressions NIMBY ("not in my back yard") and LULUs (locally undesirable land uses). One of the most complex issues in urban management today has yet to be resolved in Santiago.

As soon as it is learned that there is an initiative for a sanitary landfill, dump, or transfer station, residents and local authorities organize to stop its construction.²⁴

One of the most publicized cases of the early 1990s in the Metropolitan Region of Santiago was that of a natural gas pipeline, which, in crossing the Andean range from Argentina, was to pass through the municipality of Pirque, where it traversed rural properties, and below towns peripheral to the urban area. For over two years, certain influential local residents along with groups of residents from the rural towns tried to resist having the gas pipeline run through their properties. After a lengthy dispute involving the central government, the company GasAndes, local governments, and the residents affected, the pipeline was built, but not until compensation had been duly paid to the persons affected.²⁵

Also in the early 1990s, the construction of a new Metro line threatened to destroy Parque Baquedano, a centrally located park in Santiago. The middle class neighborhood residents, with support from environmental organizations, sought to change the course of the Metro line to preserve the traditional park and its old trees, some more than 50 years old. After long months of debate, letters to the newspapers, meetings with the persons responsible for the project, and other activities, the course of the Metro line was not changed, but the company (which is state-owned)

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made a detailed study of the park's plant life and in many cases moved trees in order to save them. Even though part of the park was nevertheless impacted by the project, never before in Chile had a company as powerful as the Metropolitan Transit Company taken citizens' concerns so seriously.

Such movements have been on the rise, and new citizens' action groups are constantly forming. These are generally composed of middle- and upper-middle class people ("those who count"²⁶), who oppose interventions such as increasing the density of their single-family neighborhoods, changing land uses that would make their residential neighborhoods commercial, the installation of cell phone towers, and the like.

One of the movements that has become an exception to this scheme because its grassroots base involved the urban poor, formed in December 1995 when a fire at the Mathiensen Molypac chemical plant caused a toxic cloud in an area of low-cost housing in the municipality of Lo Espejo.²⁷ This group was the first to expose the problem of environmental equity and prompted a review of the very serious danger toxics pose to populations in urban areas; particularly since the areas affected are always low-income neighborhoods that have grown up around unregulated industries. Nowadays, the population and the authorities are much more aware, and any problem involving toxic substances, however small, is given extensive media coverage.

Opposition to cell-phone antennas by middle-class and upper-middle-class groups has become very strong in Santiago, to the point of harming companies' economic interests.

Such has been the scandal—with court action seeking constitutional protection and street demonstrations—that the cell-phone companies got together to create the Association of Mobile Telephone Companies (Atelmo)...²⁸

Another case involves a large-scale project in a middle-class, single-family neighborhood in the municipality of Vitacura. Residents are upset over a proposed complex of buildings, already under construction, that if completed according to plans will at least double the population density in their neighborhood, thus severely affecting its peace and tranquility. This complex is known as the "Parque Las Américas" and its first two towers, with 22 floors, are now being finished. These towers are to be

complemented by a series of other buildings, totaling 1,000 apartments in all. The neighbors who oppose it have formed an organization called *Furiosos Vecinos* (Angry Neighbors), which includes some well-known professionals. They are pursuing a series of legal remedies (including a constitutional remedy (*recurso de protección*), a motion alleging illegality (*recurso de ilegalidad*), criminal inquiries, etc.) to try to halt the construction. The case is constantly in the press, though thus far there has been no resolution, as the developer keeps building.

The implementation of this project will bring about the collapse of the few and already crowded access roads.... The buildings will have a shortfall of some 600 parking spaces; these cars will have to park in the surrounding streets.

In the face of this situation, a growing group of residents decided to organize to defend the neighborhood, and we have been pursuing several initiatives.... In recent days some residents have been subjected to pressure and threats in an effort to get them to desist from the noble and lofty purposes they pursue.²⁹

Recently, in a less noteworthy case but which was highlighted in the press as “unprecedented,” a group of residents of single-family units, also in the municipality of Vitacura, won a legal battle to stop the construction of a 14-story building.³⁰

A smaller-scale debate, but one that is creating a great deal of trouble for the Mayor of the municipality of Las Condes,³¹ is the residents’ opposition to a water fountain. A fountain was built as part of the refurbishing plan for Avenida Isidora Goyenechea, which is lined with very wide sidewalks and elegant shops. A local resident and architect donated the design for the fountain to the municipality. As the fountain’s excessive height happens to block the view of the facade of the Church of Los Angeles, situated at the end of this avenue, dozens of residents are airing their objections through the local media by calling for the demolition of the brand new fountain. Independent of the outcome, upper middle-class residents cherish the beauty of their neighborhood, especially symbolic places, but these strong feelings are only expressed when these places and values are threatened.

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Of all these struggles, some smaller-scale, others larger-scale, some longer and some shorter, some ending in success and others in failure, there are two particular situations we wish to examine more closely, both of which persist in Santiago to this day. The first, like most of the battles that receive publicity, is being waged in an upper middle-class neighborhood. The second, in contrast, has a heterogeneous socioeconomic composition and has become the most significant urban movement in the last decade in Chile.

PLAZA PERU

The polemic around Plaza Perú began in 1998, when the municipal government of Las Condes³² requested bids for the construction of a three-level parking garage under Plaza Perú, to be awarded in concession. Plaza Perú is a neighborhood plaza situated in an upper middle-class residential neighborhood but very near a commercial office center. Despite the relatively scant importance of the plaza, and the fact that it does not have unique plant life, the residents were able to voice their concerns through the local media and garner support from other citizens groups. This battle received significant attention for over a year and eventually led the Mayor to call a municipal referendum on the matter.

The residents opposed the parking garage by arguing the environmental cost of the project to their neighborhood, which consisted,

... not only of noise and emissions of particulate matter (pollution) during construction and operation, but in addition, an increase in situations of congestion and risk, and, what is most difficult for the residents to accept, the end of all the benefits of a consolidated green area.³³

The Committee for the Defense of Plaza Perú, led by Mrs. Amelia Rodríguez, collected 3,000 signatures from residents opposed to construction of the parking facility.³⁴

In June 2000, the local planning authority was asked its opinion on the residents' claims. This technical office of the Ministry of Housing and Urban Development determined that the construction was not causing "significant alterations to the life systems and customs of the human groups,"³⁵ thus all that was needed was an environmental impact statement, not a study. In July, the project was presented to the COREMA (Regional Commission

on the Environment), which, after hearing the residents' arguments, overturned the prior technical ruling and ordered an environmental impact study, which entails a set of detailed technical studies, higher costs, and delays. As a form of political pressure, the Mayor then called a referendum, which was held August 26 and 27 of 2000, calling on all of the more than 50,000 residents of the Municipality to vote. Of the 10,000 who voted, 85% voted for the construction of the parking structure, though this vote had no legal effect.³⁶ Of course, the project's opponents considered this consultation invalid and wanted to allow only the nearest neighbors to vote, about 3,500 in all. The Mayor and the Developer appealed the COREMA decision, placing the matter in the hands of the Council of Ministers who sit on the National Commission on the Environment (CONAMA). Two months later, the Executive Director of CONAMA announced its ruling on behalf of the parking facility, and the project was given the green light with groundbreaking set for November 2000.

The ruling is based on the fact that the intervention in the plaza will be temporary (13 to 20 months) and reversible; this will not produce significant alterations in the lives of the sector's residents.³⁷

The residents will pursue a final motion for constitutional protection in the courts.

CONSTANERA NORTE—CIUDAD VIVA

The battle over the *Costanera Norte*, which was to be the first urban highway awarded in concession in Chile, has been the most significant citizens' movement of the last decade as a whole host of community organizations have come together to oppose its construction.

In late 1996, a group of residents from the Bellavista neighborhood, meeting under the Ecological Committee of Bellavista, first heard rumors about plans to build a highway through their neighborhood.³⁸ Bellavista is an old, traditional neighborhood situated to the immediate north of downtown Santiago. After decades of abandonment and deterioration, it began a slow resurgence in the 1980s, coming to be known as a neighborhood of artists and bohemians, with restaurants, dance halls, studios, etc. Bellavista already had a history of struggle to improve local conditions, as its residents

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had worked together for six years on noise and garbage problems, and in so doing learned the basic elements of citizen action and participation:

... how to organize and run meetings that are both friendly and productive; how to investigate and prepare reports for any conflict; how to initiate contacts with the authorities and other relevant entities and follow up on those contacts; how to avoid becoming exhausted in the enormous effort required for each initiative and each effort to seek improvements.³⁹

Residents began to seek information on the project and called a meeting attended by some 300 people⁴⁰ who found themselves, "... struck by the news of the highway and concerned about the lack of information, which became a constant feature in the relationship between the developer and the persons affected."⁴¹ Officials from the Ministry of Public Works in charge of the project attended the meeting offering many promises but little concrete information. According to the plan, the highway would cut through the neighborhood underground, yet none of its urban impacts had been studied.

The neighbors educated themselves on the impact of highways on urban neighborhoods and in June 1996 launched their campaign "NO TO THE COSTANERA NORTE" at a rally held in a neighborhood plaza with considerable media coverage and with many residents and sympathizers in attendance. In addition to the direct impact of the highway on their neighborhood, the residents opposed the idea of building an urban superhighway that would further encourage automobile use in the already-crowded and polluted city of Santiago.

Other groups formed in the neighborhoods surrounding Bellavista to oppose the highway project, such as the Committee for the Defense of Recoleta and the Patronato Development Committee, in addition to the already-existing organizations at the Vega Central.⁴² As these groups studied the matter (through meetings with Ministry representatives, academic seminars, technical assistance programs), the Ministry of Public Works entered into agreements with groups of tenants from the Vega Central and other groups from Patronato, promising that these communities would derive a series of benefits from the project. The *Junta de Vecinos* (Neighborhood Committee) from Pedro de Valdivia Norte (No. 12), a middle-class neighborhood located immediately to the east of Bellavista,

and which would have been significantly impacted by the highway, came to be known for its combative stand.⁴³ Another very active group that emerged in early 1997, the Committee in Defense of Parque Metropolitano,⁴⁴ made common cause with the other organizations. They held rallies, and new organizations joined the struggle.

The call for bids for construction of the Costanera Norte began in April 1997. Residents managed to halt this process in the courts, which ordered an environmental impact study, while accordingly, the bidding developers sought more time from the Government. The residents organized a process of citizen participation with the Regional Commission on the Environment for the Metropolitan Region that ended up being unsatisfactory for the residents because

... the authorities try to impose a methodology based on the developer's criteria and mistaken theoretical concepts.⁴⁵

That was when the various organizations decided to create the Coordinating Body for the NO TO THE COSTANERA NORTE campaign, which brought together 14 citizens' organizations of different sorts, including the traders' associations of Tirso de Molina and Vega Chica, the Association of Merchants of the Periphery of Vega, and the Associations of Owners and Tenants of Independencia (a community threatened with expropriation).⁴⁶ With this action, the organization became very strong and highly visible, and found itself "... consolidating as an organization with great capacities, despite the always limited resources." By late 1998 the *Coordinadora* had brought together 20 community organizations, 18 of which were playing an active role in directing the opposition to the Costanera Norte. As the *Coordinadora*, these organizations participated in the environmental impact evaluation directed by the Regional Commission on the Environment, and, though very critical of the process, this enabled them to advance in the joint work:

On July 23, the day we were to give our response to the COREMA, was a great milestone in our process as the *Coordinadora*. We organized a press conference at an improvised site at Tirso de Molina.⁴⁷ The organizers were the traders' associations of the Tirso de Molina with the people from Independencia, while the Vega Chica chipped

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in with buttons, banners, balloons, and the like. There was good attendance on the part of the radio stations and daily papers. The leaders of each community spoke, [including] Ignacio Santa María, a renowned urban planner and our adviser,⁴⁸ and Mauricio Montecinos, the person in charge of the team that prepared our response. More than 300 people were there, and most of us marched downtown to the COREMA office and back.⁴⁹

The organization sent prepared delegations to the Senate Committee on the Environment, the seminar organized by the Committee on the Environment of the lower chamber, the Medical College of Santiago, the Commission on Environment of the Colegio Nacional, several commissions of the College of Architects and the College of Psychologists, and various environmental organizations, including RENACE, the *Instituto de Ecología Política*, and the *Observatorio Latinoamericano de Conflictos Ambientales* (Latin American Observatory of Environmental Conflicts). The group received support from the law clinic at the Universidad Diego Portales, the College of Engineers, and several prominent professionals. The Coordinadora was constantly producing informational packages and press releases, which were having an ever-greater impact on public opinion.

Gradually, we began to note changes in the attitude of the journalists and the press in general. Like all of us, as they became better informed, they became increasingly concerned about the implications of this project.⁵⁰

The municipal government of Providencia even commissioned an environmental consulting firm to perform an independent evaluation of the environmental impact study that had been prepared by the Ministry of Public Works, with extremely critical results. In June 1998, the Court of Appeals ruled against the motion for constitutional protection brought by the Coordinadora; the ruling was immediately appealed by the community.

The Coordinadora based its strategy on five points: turning to the courts, using the Environmental Impact Evaluation System (SEIA), mobilizing human capital, applying political pressure; and putting out information through the mass media and their own media (leaflets, posters, etc.). The residents spelled out their position in the following terms:

María Elena Ducci

From the beginning we have been told that the Costanera is going forward, that there's nothing to be done about it, that we should try to negotiate, to get something out of it for ourselves. But while we began by worrying about its impact on our corner of the city, we are continuing in this enormous and disinterested effort because we feel that we bear a great responsibility on our shoulders: to ourselves, to our communities, no doubt, but also to the whole city, and especially to all these children who fill our hospitals with cries and tears every time pollution gets worse.

We are not willing to hush up, much less to sell out. The effort is enormous, but the reality of the harm that would be caused by this urban model suited to the needs of the car, not of living beings, forces us to continue taking action, and we'll go all the way.

That, plus our conviction that this fight can be won and that the victory will be a real contribution to the creation of a green and friendly Santiago where one can breathe with gusto, walk and bicycle without fear, that's enough.⁵¹

It should be noted that the original project cost of approximately US\$ 180 million, rose to US\$ 300 million in order to address the demands and claims of the residents of the various neighborhoods (noise barriers in Pedro de Valdivia Norte, gas filters in Bellavista, etc.). The interested companies have thus demanded a series of additional guarantees from the government to ensure the business is on firm ground (for example, minimum revenues which, if not collected, would have to be covered by the government).⁵²

By late 1998, the project was declared "suspended" when the call for bids failed for lack of interest by developers. Nevertheless, in May 1999, the Ministry of Public Works once again announced the call for bids for the Costanera Norte, the Ministry taking charge of an extra US\$ 80 million in costs, as requested by the interested companies to make the project feasible. The new call for bids went forward and the project was awarded in December 1999 to a consortium of companies headed up by IMPREGILO, a large Italian construction company with a somewhat dubious record in works in other countries, based on the information collected by community members.

As of late 2000, several months after the project was awarded, the organization is relatively calm. The Coordinadora has held meetings with

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the construction company (at its invitation) and with the Bureau of Concessions of the Ministry of Public Works (at the group's request), and construction does not appear to be imminent. The consortium has suggested a change in the proposed route in the most conflictive zone (the neighborhoods of Bellavista, Recoleta, and Independencia), moving it below the bed of the adjacent Mapocho River. The Ministry of Public Works confirmed the proposal verbally, yet there has been no official statement regarding any possible changes. This is a thorny problem for the government since any change in route means new environmental impact studies, i.e. higher costs and more construction delays. Even so, in mid-November the Ministry of Public Works issued a call for bids for a new environmental impact study for the route proposed by the consortium. In addition, the company informed the residents that construction would not begin for at least one year, since the government is under a commitment to turn over the bridges and other complementary works that it offered, to make the project more attractive to the bidding companies. In the meantime, the residents are preparing to resume their campaign against the Costanera Norte. Clearly, none of the actors involved feel they have prevailed.

One incident that was very troubling to the Ministry of Public Works was the publication in a well-known local magazine in October 2000 of a brief note on one of the main leaders of the movement under the headline "The woman who stopped the Costanera Norte."⁵³ The journalist's misunderstanding, despite the later rectification, reflects a very widespread perception that the citizens have won the battle. Although legally the approvals granted to date suggest just the opposite, it is not yet known what will happen in the near future.

Of particular interest is that this movement has not limited its agenda to opposing the Costanera Norte. In tandem with the direct struggle to stop the highway, the organizations participating in the Coordinadora decided to continue working together with a broader vision and more ambitious aims. They have formed the organization *Ciudad Viva*, whose objectives reflect a vision of the sustainable city they hope to build:

... our unity has enabled us to attain a certain level of learning and effectiveness that none of the organizations, on its own, had ever achieved.⁵⁴

The Corporación Ciudad Viva, as it is formally known, has come to constitute one of the most visible citizens' organizations in Chile, winning the respect of politicians, academics, and citizens. In a persistent, volunteer effort, it has formed teams to study and tackle the problems or situations that affect them, such as noise pollution (a very serious problem in Bellavista), trash collection, protection of valuable areas, and effective community participation in drawing up municipal regulatory plans. It aspires to move from opposition to action by making its own proposals and working with different government agencies.

Recently (November 8, 2000), Ciudad Viva presented a Citizen Agenda for Sustainable Transportation to several authorities and citizens' organizations, with a set of concrete proposals developed over the course of a year with the support of technical experts and an open forum via Internet, by which comments were received. It entails a head-on assault to increasing car traffic:

In the current conflicts over the use of public space, the car is congesting the streets, the sidewalks, the plazas, and the places that are not built up that could be parks (it's like a gas, occupying all the available space), displacing the other users: cyclists, children at play, pedestrians, skateboarders, and rollerskaters.⁵⁵

In addition, they have pulled together a group of researchers who, together with the residents and organizations, are studying different issues they have prioritized in their struggle for a more livable city: transportation, noise, garbage collection, pedestrian and bicycle traffic, and preservation, among others. From a group of residents who came together to oppose a specific project, they have become a constantly-growing citizens' front devoted to thinking through how to live better in the city of Santiago, and making proposals to that end.

SELFISHNESS OR HEROISM?

The importance of, and perspectives on, the citizens' movements

One of the arguments most commonly used to dismiss citizens' movements is that they struggle for merely selfish reasons, seeking their individual or family well being. It is true that they generally fight for their own neighborhood and because they wish to maintain or improve their living

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conditions, and it is also true that many movements break up when the objective is achieved or when the battle is considered a lost cause. Nevertheless, supposing that the driving force behind these groups is merely one of personal interest appears simplistic at best.

The question as to what it is that leads people to decide to participate in a movement of this sort is not easy to answer. The economist Amartya Sen suggests that for centuries economics has sought to explain people's behavior in order to understand how each individual makes his or her economic decisions.⁵⁶ If we extrapolate this to the urban question, we may find some clues as to how and why citizens decide to take up the urban battles. Sen explains that in economic models, man is a selfish being always seeking to shore up his self-interest. This coincides with the perception, noted above, that urban residents are moved only by selfish interests. This raises a more important question that has concerned thinkers for centuries: how, and to what extent, can the pursuit of self-interest advance the common good?⁵⁷ We do not claim here to find a conclusive answer to such a complex question, but to better understand how and why people decide to act in a given way vis-à-vis threats to the place they consider their own.

Sen presents two concepts in considering the question of selfishness: sympathy and commitment. Sympathy as a basis for decisions would fall within the realm of selfishness, since "... conduct based on sympathy is largely selfish, because one enjoys it when others are pleased, and feels pain when others suffer." On the other hand, behavior based on commitment would not be selfish if we understand commitment as "...a person choosing an act [in a manner that] he believes will yield a lower level of personal welfare to him than an alternative that is also available to him."⁵⁸

Self-interest alone seems an insufficient explanation as to why city residents join these groups, and in some cases, devote a large part of their time to working with them as volunteers, without pay. On observing how these groups operate up close, one discovers that all have some members, generally very few, who, without necessarily being the most visible leaders, devote a large part of their energy and time to working on the issue that brings their group together. It is amazing to see how after long hours of work, day in and day out, the leaders and individuals most involved invest time in meetings and discussions to reach agreements and define strategies for their struggle. This is especially the case among the middle-class and poor sectors, who have a harder time making themselves heard and seen.

Some movements are only understood and maintained by the very high level of commitment and sacrifice on the part of relatively few people who give the struggle a central place in their personal lives. Those truly respected leaders capable of starting up a movement and keeping it alive are, in a sense, heroes (often heroines) in defending the quality of life.

It would appear that getting involved in defending one's own neighborhood has to do with the needs in question, which have to do with safety, stability, and one's sense of self. When safety and stability are threatened, residents come together in a highly functional manner. They understand that only by pooling their efforts can they defend their neighborhood (for example, from increased density, an invasion by other uses, drugs and gangs), and because of this they organize temporarily to resolve the problem that concerns them. In general, these movements do not go further than taking specific actions to achieve their specific goal.

Yet, when sense of self comes into play, it's different. When one's sense of identity is threatened, the strongest passions are aroused to defend the place where one lives or works. We find excellent examples of this in some of the groups that make up *Ciudad Viva*, including the traders of La Vega and of Pégola de las Flores (a flower market adjacent to Santiago's cemetery), who feel that the importance of their work goes beyond the neighborhood and the city. Indeed, the *pergoleras* take great pride in their symbolic importance as the persons in charge of bidding farewell, with showers of flower petals, to all illustrious persons who pass by on their final trip to the cemetery. Also noteworthy, in a city that appears so little beloved by its inhabitants as is Santiago, is the ardor with which the residents of Bellavista defend their neighborhood from the invasion of nighttime activities that threaten its peace and tranquility. They defend a bohemian and urban way of life, a neighborhood life that enjoys a mix of artists and social classes, where everyone knows the corner storekeeper and the old woman from the house at the end of the street.

The foregoing examples show that the material use of a space cannot be separated from its psychological use. People feel that their neighborhood is the place that best meets a complex set of conditions: from solutions to practical problems to the security and peace of mind one derives from knowing and trusting your neighbors (a "use value"). This is why when a neighborhood is threatened by outside aggression (for example a highway, a sharp population increase), its residents feel the need to defend it.⁵⁹

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In addition, for some residents, their neighborhood use values overlap with its exchange values since in many cases home ownership is the basis of an overall economic strategy. For such families, their home is not only a place of residence, but also represents potential capital and an insurance policy for old age. This increases the importance of struggling to maintain a neighborhood and its property values.⁶⁰

In today's world, where organizations based on class, employment, and the struggle for housing have lost strength, the sense of "us," of a community with a common destiny, is organized around the neighborhood. John Agnew explains why it is that people who feel their place of residence or work is threatened decide to join together to confront their common enemy:

... First, having control over one's private space gives people a sense of freedom from the control or interference of others. Second, and more important, people feel that by being in control in their own private space, they have the ability and the opportunity to make something of themselves, to be "more of a person," to achieve a kind of self-realization.⁶¹

The cases discussed above show how movements forming in Santiago are similar to the urban environmentalist currents in the countries of the North, which are spawning forces that tend to thwart the operation of the "growth machine." Even though their results are very uneven and unpredictable (even in the case of the Costanera Norte the issue is far from resolved), countries such as Chile, that seek to expand and deepen their democracy, will undoubtedly see such citizen responses continue to grow in importance and political weight.

What is the importance of these movements in countries striving to become more democratic? In a historical moment when people are less and less interested in traditional party politics, the issues that mobilize people now include threats to the places where they live. Even though most experts and officials, both state and private, view citizens as the worst obstacle they are likely to face as they seek to carry out a project, they cannot ignore them, albeit for different reasons. For the private companies, citizens' groups who stand in the way of a project being carried out in the pre-set terms and conditions, can lead, and are leading, to substantially increased production costs in many parts of the world. The state, in

its dual role, will try to control citizen reactions so as to facilitate implementation of the projects, yet on the other hand, it must answer to citizens' demands or pay the price in the next elections.

As has been extensively shown, no single or linear response exists. Nor can one predict, *ex ante*, the success or failure of a movement or the effects it may have on a given project (ranging from halting it to implementing other changes). As has been observed in the United States:

The outcome in each place thus represents a confluence of ecological, historic and economic circumstances, but tied to real choices that localities have to make through the political process.⁶²

The ultimate objective of this analysis is to detect how the battles being waged by citizens are impacting the city. Can it be postulated that citizens are on the vanguard of a movement whose weight cannot be ignored by the other actors of the urban social machinery? We have presented sufficient arguments to show that their weight in the play of forces that move the urban machine is growing. Some analysts argue that these are simply fundamentalist and reactionary responses to the necessary and constant changes that take place in the life of a city. While most of the movements oppose specific projects that have a detrimental impact on quality of life, the social dynamics that these battles are setting in motion do not appear to be reactionary in the least. To the contrary, they are giving rise to and sometimes proliferating solidarity and partnerships among distinct groups and different social classes,⁶³ who are quickly learning the value of collaboration and mutual support in advancing towards a common goal: a better quality of life in the city in which they live.

Another major concern for both the public and private sectors is that these citizen movements may mark the seed of a complete urban ungovernability in the near future. What would happen if citizen approval were required to make any decision in the city? It would be chaos, they say, the cities would be completely ungovernable. This is, no doubt, a possibility, but it will depend on how the process that leads to the creation and transformation of cities is handled.

We believe that it is no accident that these movements are growing and becoming stronger in cities. Residents are realizing that major changes are needed in the way decisions are made about what is to be done in the city

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and when. The urban movements highlight the fact that the traditional forms of planning must be adapted to the new times if they are to be effective tools for improving our cities. A mostly urban, and increasingly educated, population with access to more extensive knowledge, in countries that aspire to deepen democracy as a system of government, will of course demand more and more from those who build the places they live. Urban planners, administrators, and entrepreneurs for whom the city is the very center of their activity urgently need to take account of the opinions and aspirations of the population for which they work from the initial stages of any plan or project. Otherwise, they will face increasingly firm and coordinated opposition, and the city will be transformed into the main arena where political battles are waged in the new millennium.

Citizens' movements, which to date have been movements of opposition and struggle, can be transformed into forces that can propose and collaborate in defining change. To this end, it is imperative that citizens' groups be taken into account before decisions are made and before projects are implemented. They have the potential to be a valuable and most effective instrument in improving and bringing about a more gratifying quality of life for urban dwellers.

NOTES

1. Harvey Molotch, "The Growth Machine: Towards a Political Economy of Place," *American Journal of Sociology*, Vol. 82, No. 2 (1976), 309-330.

2. Molotch, 1976, 310. This is real for a country that operates with a not-very-polarized political scheme, such as the United States, but it is not working at this time in Chile, particularly in Santiago. The economic crisis of 1998, which echoed the Asian crisis, continued to be felt through late 2000. One valid hypothesis for explaining this situation is that the local elite are consciously generating economic pressures against the Socialist government of President Ricardo Lagos, putting off economic and urban investments, and therefore stalling an economic recovery despite the government's efforts to promote growth.

3. John R. Logan and Harvey L. Molotch, *Urban Fortunes, The Political Economy of Place* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1987), 13-15.

4. Harvey Molotch, "Urban Deals in Comparative Perspective" in *Beyond the City Limits*, John Logan and Todd Swanstrom, eds. (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1990).

5. Logan and Molotch, 1987.

6. Not only because of their economic capacity, but also because of the potential of the construction industry to create jobs, which is a fundamental

issue, as unemployment is the number one concern of a large part of the population.

7. Murray Edelman, 1964, as cited by Molotch, 1990.

8. One excellent example of a symbolic policy has been the recent publication of the Santiago Metropolitan Region's Urban Transportation Plan for 2000-2005, published in the newspapers on November 8, 2000. If one considers that a similar plan was published in 1994 for the 1995-2000 period, and that not even one-third of the measures proposed have been carried out, it can be expected that this plan will not go much beyond good intentions.

9. Molotch, 1990, 313.

10. Molotch, 1990.

11. Molotch, 1990.

12. Alfredo Rodríguez and Lucy Winchester, 2000, paper presented at the seminar "Las regiones metropolitanas del Mercosur y México: entre la competitividad y la complementariedad," Buenos Aires, November-December 2000.

13. IDH, 2000.

14. Javier Ramos, "Lo local y lo global en la lógica de localización del terciario avanzado," Master's thesis, IEU, Universidad Católica de Chile, Santiago, 1999.

15. Ana Sugraynez, "Consulta sobre las políticas habitacionales en Chile," RUDO USAID, IEU-PUC, Foro Hábitat, COVIP, 2000.

16. Sonia Tschorne, Undersecretary of Housing and Urban Development, statements in the daily newspaper *El Mercurio*, October 2000.

17. Planners such as Marcial Echeñique, a University of Cambridge professor and former adviser to two Ministers of Public Works in the 1990s, argue that the only planning is infrastructure planning. Lecture, Instituto de Estudios Urbanos, Santiago, Chile, September 8, 2000.

18. Fundamental Law on the Environment, adopted in 1994.

19. The concept of "urban artifact" has been developed by Carlos de Mattos, "Santiago de Chile: Globalización y expansión metropolitana" *Revista EURE*, Vol. XXV, No. 76 (December 1999).

20. To achieve the re-population of Santiago Poniente, the Municipality of Santiago made a deal with the Ministry of Housing and Urban Development that doubled subsidies for housing located in that area, thereby opening a new niche for subsidized housing construction for the lower-middle class. This program has succeeded in attracting investment to the area, though at a cost of the destruction of many of the historical structures and spaces of that zone.

21. Iván Poduje, "Expansión metropolitana bajo el modelo de los Megaproyectos Inmobiliarios: El caso de Santiago," working document, IEU, November, 2000.

22. For more details, visit www.conama.cl.

23. Harvey Molotch, "Urban Deals in Comparative Perspective," in *Beyond the City Limits*, John Logan and Todd Swanstrom, eds. (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1990).

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24. "Nadie los quiere cerca de casa," El Mercurio, November 2, 2000.

25. Patricia Ibáñez, "El concepto ambiental como ámbito de gestión ambiental municipal: Conflict Gas Andes S.A." Master's Thesis, Instituto de Estudios Urbanos, Santiago, Chile, 1996.

26. Molotch, 1976.

27. The organization that formed has published several documents presenting the problems that arose in the population. One such document is "Rebrota el incendio de la industria Mathiensen Molypac," public statement, Lo Espejo Citizen Action Commission for the Environment (ACPMMA: Acción Ciudadana por el Medio Ambiente, 1999).

28. "Nadie los quiere cerca de casa," El Mercurio, November 2, 2000.

29. María Teresa Infante, resident, in a letter to El Mercurio, October 29, 2000.

30. "El desafío es la calidad de vida," El Mercurio, October 17, 2000.

31. Las Condes is one of the four wealthiest municipalities in the Santiago Metropolitan Region.

32. A right-wing party currently controls the administration.

33. "Los vecinos del El Golf Norte a los profesores y estudiantes de Arquitectura: Plaza Peru: Hechos, Falacias y Verdades," leaflet distributed September 13, 2000.

34. "Plaza Peru: Hechos, Falacias y Verdades," leaflet distributed September 13, 2000.

35. Law No. 19,300, Fundamental Law on the Environment, Article 11(c).

36. Plaza Perú: ¿Qué hacer con los autos? Urbanismo y Construcción, El Mercurio, September 27, 2000.

37. "CONAMA autorizó proyecto Plaza Perú," Vecinos denuncian presión de "poderes fácticos," El Mercurio, September 23, 2000.

38. The project, designed by the Ministry of Public Works, consisted of an urban tollway, the first urban private concession, which then-President Eduardo Frei promoted as a way to link the more well-to-do northeast sector of the city with the northwest, passing to one side of the urban center.

39. Ricardo Araya and Lake Sagaris, *Costanera Norte, La Ciudad Que Queremos* (Santiago: Observatorio de Conflictos Ambientales, 1997). (The authors are leaders of the Coordinadora.)

40. Call put out by the Juntas de Vecinos Nos. 13 (Providencia) and 35 (Recoleta).

41. Araya and Sagaris, 1997.

42. Bellavista is a middle-class neighborhood, Recoleta and Patronato are poor neighborhoods, and the Vega Central is the largest fruit and vegetable farmer's market in Santiago.

43. The neighborhood of Pedro de Valdivia Norte (No. 12) is home to a professional middle class that is not all that secure economically, but enjoys social prestige, which is why they quickly emerged as a group with a much

greater capacity to make themselves heard by the press and even by right-wing sectors.

44. Made up of professionals and prominent persons who defend the main park of the Metropolitan Region.

45. Araya and Sagaris, 1997.

46. All these organizations are clearly rooted in the poor communities, have combative histories, are well respected, and enjoy prestige in the city, which they generally supply with fresh fruits and vegetables.

47. Traditional market.

48. Winner, National Urban Design Award, 1998.

49. Araya and Sagaris, 1997.

50. Ibid.

51. Ibid.

52. This system was used in Mexico City for the Mexico City-Acapulco Highway; the shortfall on the predicted revenues was so great that the government decided to take back the concession from the company so as to avoid paying the very high costs.

53. Revista Paula, October 2000, 37.

54. Araya and Sagaris, 1997. The organization "Ciudad Viva" is currently applying for its juridical personality; and as of late 2000, all that remains is for the Minister of Justice to sign.

55. Ciudad Viva, call to the Citizens' Agenda for Sustainable Transportation, September 8, 2000.

56. Amartya K. Sen, "Rational Fools: A Critique of the Behavioral Foundations of Economic Theory," in *Beyond Self Interest*, Jane J. Mansbridge, ed. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1990).

57. F.Y. Edgeworth, *1881 Mathematical Psychics: An Essay on the Application of Mathematics to the Moral Sciences* (London: C.K. Paul and Co.) as cited by Sen, 1990.

58. Sen, 1990.

59. John R. Logan and Harvey L. Molotch, *Urban Fortunes: The Political Economy of Place* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1987), 13-15.

60. Logan and Molotch, 1987, 20.

61. John Agnew, "Home Ownership and Identity in Capitalist Societies," in *Housing and Identity*, James S. Duncan, ed. (New York: HM Holmes and Meier Publishers Inc., 1982), 72.

62. Harvey Molotch, "Urban Deals in Comparative Perspective," in *Beyond the City Limits*, John Logan and Todd Swanstrom, eds. (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1990).

63. Including groups of activists, generally environmentalists, from other countries who provide support in the form of information and experiences.