



## Chile

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## 1 Present status of planning

Urban planning in Chile includes regional, inter-municipal and municipal planning instruments. These apply the “**principle of territorial subsidiarity**”, according to which **higher levels of administration are not responsible for any given issue if the lower levels of administration are capable of resolving it**. This principle is connected to processes of decentralisation in Chile. Although urban planning experienced significant stagnation and setbacks during the military dictatorship (1973–1990), starting in the 2000s, the state has made efforts to update existing plans, create new ones and establish more stringent standards for urban development.

The Urban Regional Development Plan guides development of urban centres and regions, establishing the roles of urban centres, their areas of reciprocal influence, gravitational relations and growth goals, among other aspects. On the inter-municipal level, the Inter-Municipal Regulatory Plan and the Metropolitan Regulatory Plan represent instruments that establish a set of norms and actions in order to guide and regulate the physical development of urban and rural areas in different municipalities, which due to their spatial and functional relations constitute an urban unit.

When more detailed research is required for the application of a Municipal Regulatory Plan, such research is carried out through **Sectional Plans**, which establish the exact routes and widths of streets, detailed zoning, areas for obligatory building, remodelling and harmonic ensembles, and land for expropriation, among other elements.

On the other hand, during the past decade, and especially after the 2010 earthquake and tsunami, strategic planning instruments have come to the fore. The objective of such instruments is to generate, strengthen and/or recover the capacity of territories affected by such catastrophes to become integrated areas with higher standards of urban quality.

Chile has built its great cities on the basis of a governability that is anchored by directives and guidelines defined by the central government. Despite the regional decentralisation processes starting in 1974 on the initiative of the National Commission for Administrative Reform (Spanish acronym, CONARA) at

the onset of the dictatorship, in addition to the reforms made during democracy in 1993 through the passing of the Organic Constitutional Law on Regional Government and Administration (Spanish acronym, LOGCAR), **the presidentialist and centralist model of the Chilean state leads it to intervene in high-impact projects regarding the transformation of cities**. This form of state intervention has not substantially changed, despite the decentralisation efforts.

**Starting in the 1990s, several significant transformations can be identified**, all of which were formulated and politically supported from within the central government either by presidential decrees, ministerial initiatives or public companies. Examples of such transformations are the development of urban highways in the Metropolitan Area of Santiago through the Law of Concessions, the Transantiago project and the extension of the public company Metro S.A., concessions to the ten Port Companies of Chile starting last decade, the development of Stage IV of the Regional Metro of Valparaíso Project for Greater Valparaíso in 1999, and the BIOTREN for Greater Concepción. With only a few exceptions, all of these projects were decided upon without any relevant political participation by regional or local governments.

## 2 Discourses about planning

**Land-use zoning today constitutes the most extensive sphere of action for urban planning**. However, currently it is widely questioned due to the rigidity and incapacity of existing zoning instruments to adapt to the rapidly changing dynamics of urban transformation. They are neither capable of becoming integrated into urban investment decisions nor public management related actions. After the creation of the new National Policy of Urban Development in Chile (2014), the concept of integrated urban planning has become a relevant topic on the public agenda. **Integrated planning includes three dimensions: territorial, sectorial and decisional**.

In general terms, in Chile there are no journalists who specialise in issues related to cities and urban planning. However, as urban and territorial development has produced an in-

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creasing number of conflicts with local populations, in which everyday citizens feel that their quality of life is threatened both in urban and rural areas, organisations have emerged within civil society, such as *Ciudad Viva* (Live City), *Defendamos la Ciudad* (City Defence), *Defendamos el Barrio Yungay* (Yungay Neighbourhood Defence), among several others, which defend the public interest of local populations. In this context, the media has incorporated the issue into its news-making agenda, due to the media attraction that it generates. On the other hand, behind every public conflict there is also a political opportunity to be seized by an up-and-coming candidate or in order to blame the authority figure that is ultimately responsible. As a result, **the focus is more on accusations or making the emerging conflict visible**, while less attention is paid to the plans or projects that seek to improve quality of life.

### 3 Theory and practice

**At the initial stage of urban planning in Chile** during the 1920s, certain disciplinary currents led the way, such as “academic urbanism” or “scientific urbanism”. This is to say, there was a convergence of ideas on urbanism as an art and urbanism as a science (Almandoz 2007; Pavez 2012). Cultural transference came mainly from Europe, and especially Austria and Germany. For example, Rodolfo Oyarzun, president of the Institute of Urbanism for several years, had studied modern architecture at the Academy of Fine Arts of Vienna and attended Professor Karl Brunner’s “Urbanism Seminar”. As president of the Institute, he organised a visit by Brunner to Chile in order to teach and assess the government on issues related to urbanism. The 1960s and the beginning of the 1970s was the period when planning theories were most extensively developed in Chile, with an emphasis on regional planning. This tradition was interrupted by the neoliberal reforms that took place towards the end of the 1970s under the dictatorship.

In terms of planning practice, beginning during the military dictatorship and continuing on into the 1990s, the focus of urban and territorial development was placed on projects rather than plans, as the country had to fulfil the goal of reducing significant deficits in housing, equipment and infrastructure. This focus generated a series of negative externalities, mainly in terms of urban segregation and low quality of life in the new urban neighbour-

hoods that were created along the peripheries of Chile’s primary cities.

Starting just this past decade, evidence has been produced regarding the fact that these externalities have led to conflicts that are unsolvable in the context of existing mechanisms and frameworks, and the theory of planning has returned to the debate on urban and territorial development. From the public, private and civil society spheres, the need to reflect and interpret such phenomena in light of international theoretical debate has emerged. This has made it possible for university-based research centres to take a more leading role in the current reforms that are underway.

**Influence from the Anglo-Saxon world has been more relevant in urban than in planning research and theory.** During the past two decades in Chile, the literature that has served as a reference for university professors and researchers in the area of urban and territorial development has mainly focused on the analysis of debate surrounding processes of urban expansion and land use generated by globalisation, especially focused on the implications of such processes in terms of segregation, mobility, metropolitanisation and governance. In this context, contributions from several authors have been key: Harvey, Sennet, Baumann, Brenner, Soja, Lynch and Jessop, among others.

From the point of view of urban planning instruments, Chile has been more open to references from French, Spanish and even German experiences. Only in recent years has there been a significant level of interest in English literature and experiences in order to form a more solid knowledge base on the issue of planning. This is because, in general, the Anglo-Saxon model is perceived as being more foreign to the Chilean model in terms of political-administrative structure. **However, the growing need to train urban planners in Chile, due to the fact that for decades the country has been developing under a more project-based than planning-based logic, means influences from the American Planning Association (APA) have begun to take on more prevalence within teaching and research.**

### 4 Social, economic and spatial disparities

Currently, planners utilise a mostly obsolete planning tool in terms of its capacity to reduce urban inequities. Regulatory plans (land-use zoning plans) as the primary normative instru-

ment should be the best possible tool for development of urban areas and become integrated with other public and private actions in order to provide for higher levels of justice and equality. However, given the insufficient mechanisms for public participation in the formulation and approval of normative planning instruments (in which participation is basically reduced to providing information on such reforms) and the increasingly active and involved nature of the Chilean public in decision-making processes regarding urban environments, the approval of new planning instruments is more closely tied to certain political agendas than the authorities are willing to admit.

However, current professional training of urban planners seeks for these young professionals to be able to take on the newly emerging challenges of national development, and to demand a more sophisticated and complex land-use and urban planning structure from the country than the current system provides. This reformation must promote economic development that is balanced with environmental protection, achieving social cohesion and integrating public participation, as well as strengthening Chilean cultural identity.

### 5 *Planning education*

Traditionally, urban planning has been taught in schools of architecture through urbanism courses. Urban planning is also taught, although obliquely, in graduate programmes in urban studies. This convention has resulted in a pronounced emphasis on the spatial dimension of planning, which has fallen short of the demands required by the growing complexity of urban conditions (social segregation, sprawl, environmental degradation, among others), along with the newly emerging political-administrative scenarios that the country's adopted development model – primarily market-based – has provided for its cities today.

Recently, the Pontificia Universidad Católica de Chile created a professional undergraduate degree programme for urban planning. This programme is unprecedented in Chile, and seeks to fill a historic gap regarding the urgent need for specially trained professionals. Although architects and geographers both play a relevant role in urban development, the training of urban planners takes on the challenge of a professional and disciplinary approach within its own field, characterised by the integration and articulation of the complex system of re-

lations (spatial, political, social, environmental and economic) that are established among the various actors and agents that interact and determine the development of cities and their surrounding territories. The urban planner must be capable of interacting and leading multidisciplinary teams in order to achieve both technical and political objectives, knowing how to identify and strengthen the contributions from all disciplines, which are needed to deal with the complexity of city-regions.

### 6 *Planning knowledge exchange*

Sharing experiences and knowledge transfer in Latin America within the field of urban planning has been, since the 1960s, a fundamentally academic exercise, which has not included the participation of the public sphere. In the case of Chile, the emergence of the Interdisciplinary Centre of Urban Development (Spanish acronym, CIDU) in 1966 within the Pontificia Universidad Católica de Chile served as the predecessor to the current Institute of Urban and Territorial Studies. In addition, the Institute of Housing, Urbanism and Planning (Spanish acronym, IVUPLAN) of the Universidad de Chile served as the predecessor for today's Institute of Housing (Spanish acronym, INVI). In the same way, the Centre of Urban and Regional Studies (Spanish acronym, CEUR) of the Universidad de Buenos Aires is today housed in the Torcuato di Tella Institute. These, together with CENDES in Venezuela and CEED in Mexico, among others, generally constitute the institutions that, from an academic standpoint, have established the basis for a Latin American focus on urban and regional planning. Many of these institutions were even initially provided with both financial and technical support from organisations such as the Ford Foundation as part of American efforts to leverage their position in the region as part of the Alliance for Progress, initiated under the J.F. Kennedy administration. Nonetheless, most of these foci succumbed to processes of economic reform undertaken by the military dictatorships of the 1970s and 1980s, or to pressure from agreements reached as part of the Washington Consensus (1975), which promoted the weakening of the state as a facilitator of economic growth.

Currently, Chile has consolidated a series of city observatories throughout the country. These are mainly housed within universities, research centres or government agencies, and are focused on generating and geo-referenc-

ing urban development indicators that measure and influence quality of life. On this point, it is worth pointing to the joint effort between the Institute of Urban and Territorial Studies of the Pontificia Universidad Católica de Chile and the Chilean Chamber of Construction since 2011 to create and maintain a **yearly Urban Quality of Life Index** that provides information on both a municipal and metropolitan scale regarding quality of life as measured through six territorial dimensions.

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