

The Bus of Inequality: Public Transportation and COVID in Santiago

HÉCTOR BAHAMONDE ^{*1},

ANDREA CANALES ^{†1}, and

FELIX MODREGO ^{‡1}

¹Assistant Professor, Instituto de Ciencias Sociales, O'Higgins University

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^{*}hector.bahamonde@uoh.cl; www.HectorBahamonde.com.

[†]andrea.canales@uoh.cl; <https://sites.google.com/view/andrea-canales-g/home>.

[‡]felix.modrego@uoh.cl; <https://www.uoh.cl>.

Authors are listed in alphabetical order. Carolina Rodriguez provided excellent research assistance.

Abstract

This paper explores a digitalized population dataset on daily public transportation and COVID contagion in Santiago de Chile, the capital city of one of the most unequal countries in the world. Using publicly available information on daily contagions of all municipalities in Santiago de Chile and a novel cellphone dataset to capture individual mobility, we exploit hazard models and spatial analyses to show that low-income municipalities systematically bore the cost of the COVID pandemic. Substantively, these findings go in line with the recent “politics of weakness” literature. This area of study focuses on highly strategic political decisions that lead political entities (in our case, the state) to systematically overlook certain situations (such as COVID contagions) according to some municipal characteristics (in our case, average municipal incomes). We believe that working-class municipalities have systematically higher COVID contagions rates keeping everything else constant due to loosen policies aimed to restrict mobility—i.e., looser policies relative to white-collar municipalities.

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Keywords— COVID; inequality; survival analyses; spatial analyses.

I. INTRO

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II. APPENDIX

I. Appendix 1