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Posted Date: 9 October 2024

doi: 10.20944/preprints202410.0563.v1

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Article

Neoliberal Urbanism in Chile: A Review

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Abstract: This paper examines the impact of neoliberal urbanism on socio-spatial inequalities in Chile, focusing on housing commodification and urban fragmentation. Utilizing a thematic analysis of key academic literature from the past two decades, the study explores the ethical challenges faced by urban practitioners in reconciling profit-driven urban development with the right to the city. The findings highlight how neoliberal policies have intensified segregation in cities like Santiago, where wealth and resources are concentrated in affluent areas, while peripheral, impoverished regions suffer from limited access to services. This dynamic perpetuates cycles of exclusion and marginalization, challenging efforts toward spatial justice. The paper also considers potential alternative frameworks for urban governance and policymaking that could foster more inclusive, equitable urban environments. Ultimately, the study calls for a redefinition of urban planning strategies to prioritize social equity over market imperatives, advocating for a more participatory and democratic approach to urban development.

Keywords: neoliberalism; urbanism; Chile; ethos; spatial justice

1. Introduction

Neoliberal urbanism denotes the market-driven paradigm of urban development that arose in the late 20th century. The phenomenon is marked by the growing influence of private sector entities in urban development (Jaffee, 2018; Perucich & Boano, 2016; F. Vergara-Perucich & Boano, 2020; J. F. Vergara-Perucich & Boano, 2019), frequently emphasizing profit at the expense of social factors (Señoret & Link, 2019). This method entails extensive urban development initiatives, frequently executed by extraordinary planning strategies and governance led by elites (Swyngedouw et al., 2002; J. F. Vergara-Perucich, 2018). Neoliberal urbanism pertains to the privatization of public services, deregulation, and the commodification of urban space (Pinson & Journal, 2016). This has resulted in heightened social polarization and gentrification in numerous urban areas (Brenner & Theodore, 2005; Speake et al., 2023). The transition to neoliberal urbanism has been shaped by conservative think tanks and free-market ideas (Peck, 2006). The execution of neoliberal policies can be inconsistent and contingent upon historical pathways, frequently intermingling with pre-existing institutional frameworks and informal practices (Varley & Salazar, 2021).

Neoliberal urbanism has fundamentally altered the creation of urban space in Chile, intensifying socio-spatial disparities and disrupting the city's cohesive structure (Encinas et al., 2022; Sabatini Downey et al., 2020; Toro & Orozco, 2018). Henri Lefebvre's concept of the right to the city provides a critical perspective for examining the inconsistencies inherent in neoliberal urban activities (Purcell, 2002). Lefebvre's revolutionary vision aimed to reclaim urban space for its residents, however neoliberal policies in Chile have predominantly integrated urban development within the framework of capital accumulation, emphasizing exchange value above use value (Francisco Vergara-Perucich & Boano, 2020; J. F. Vergara-Perucich & Boano, 2019). This has resulted in the degradation of public spaces, the intensification of housing disparities, and the emergence of energy poverty as manifestations of deprivation aggravated by market-oriented policies (R. A. H. Dattwyler et al., 2018; R. H. Dattwyler et al., 2019). Santiago, as the focal point of Chile's urban dynamics, exemplifies the conflict between the demands of neoliberalism and the communal right to inhabit the city on equal terms.

This essay aims to examine the conflicts between neoliberal urbanism and the principles of urban practitioners who increasingly face ethical issues in their professional responsibilities. The commodification of housing and the increasing geographical fragmentation of the city reflect the greater tensions inherent in neoliberal policies. The study examines the Chilean situation, utilizing diverse empirical and theoretical frameworks to evaluate how neoliberal urban government has exacerbated spatial inequity, favoring profit over the public interest. The study seeks to challenge the normalization of urban practices that perpetuate exclusion, dispossession, and inequality.

Urban practitioners and policymakers encounter difficulties in harmonizing neoliberal urban growth with just community development. Neoliberal ideology frequently influences urban planning, resulting in inequitable treatment, green gentrification, and exclusion from the decision-making process (Pratt, 2023). This contradicts the ethical responsibilities of urban practitioners and the concept of the “right to the city” (Pugalis & Giddings, 2011; F. Vergara-Perucich & Boano, 2020). Social innovation and community resilience efforts can mitigate these challenges, although encounter political obstacles (Horgan & Dimitrijević, 2020). Implementing citizenship and enhancing democracy may foster inclusion and mitigate marginalization in urban environments (Hintjens & Kurian, 2019). Political intervention frequently undermines planning procedures, endangering desired outcomes (Matamanda et al., 2024). Neoliberal urban restructuring has resulted in considerable socio-economic and geographical changes (Brenner & Theodore, 2005). Confronting these difficulties necessitates a thorough comprehension of the varied logics and negotiations among participants in urban governance (Fuller, 2019, p. 201). Given these significant conflicts, a critical question emerges: how can urban practitioners and politicians harmonize the neoliberal rationale propelling urban expansion with the ethical obligation to cultivate equitable, inclusive communities that respect the right to the city in Chile?

Para llevar adelante el estudio se realiza mediante una revisión exhaustiva de los artículos de investigación que han sido publicados y citados en referencia al urbanismo neoliberal en Chile. Se realiza un levantamiento de datos desde Web of Science y Scopus, desde donde se eligen los artículos más citados para ejecutar esta revisión en primera instancia. A partir de los resultados de la revisión se elabora una discusión de tipo de análisis temático para problematizar estas relaciones entre conocimiento y práctica, para avanzar hacia responder la pregunta previamente establecida.

2. Materials and Methods

This study employs a thematic analysis to critically examine the interaction of neoliberal urbanism and the right to the city within the Chilean context. The study aims to investigate how urban practitioners and politicians might harmonize the neoliberal reasoning underpinning urban development with the ethical imperative to cultivate equitable and inclusive communities. This research aims to address the fundamental question: How can urban practitioners and politicians reconcile the neoliberal impetus driving urban growth with the ethical duty to foster equitable, inclusive communities that honor the right to the city? The research is based on a qualitative approach, utilizing a meticulous selection of academic literature that directly addresses the core issues of neoliberalism, urbanism, and socio-spatial effects in Chile. The thematic analysis method was selected as the primary analytical framework for this research because of its ability to detect, analyze, and interpret patterns of meaning (themes) within the data. Thematic analysis facilitates an in-depth exploration of the persistent discourses and paradoxes inherent in neoliberal urbanism, particularly in relation to discussions on spatial justice and the right to the city. This paper examines how neoliberal policies have influenced urban development in Chile, highlighting the ethical challenges encountered by urban practitioners who must balance market forces with social equality. Thematic analysis is particularly pertinent for this research, as it allows for the discovery of prevailing narratives within the chosen literature, while simultaneously helping the researcher to recognize counter-narratives that contest or complicate these dominating frameworks. This research analyzes the most frequently cited academic works on neoliberalism and urbanism in Chile over the past two decades to trace the evolution of critical discourses addressing neoliberal urban practices and their effects on the social, political, and spatial aspects of urban life.

To establish a solid theoretical framework for this research, a comprehensive search was performed in the Web of Science (WOS) and Scopus databases, utilizing targeted search terms to identify pertinent literature on the topics of neoliberalism, urbanization, and Chile. The employed search terms were: TS=Chile, TS=Neoliberal*, and TS=Urbanism*. These phrases were chosen to cover the extensive literature concerning the interaction of neoliberal economic policies, urban planning, and the socio-political context of Chile in the past two decades. The choice to concentrate on Chile is based on its status as a quintessential example of neoliberal urban policies, especially in the post-dictatorship period when free-market reforms were integrated into the urban framework.

Subsequent to this preliminary search, the 20 most frequently cited works from the past two decades were retrieved and systematically arranged for study. The justification for choosing the most referenced publications is their significance and impact within the academic discussion on neoliberal urbanism. Citation measures served as a surrogate for academic influence, enabling the research to concentrate on the most esteemed and well acknowledged contributions to the discipline. The selected span of 20 years encompasses both the initial critiques of neoliberal urbanism in Chile and more recent evaluations that illustrate continuous transformations in urban policy and planning.

The selection of papers aimed to encompass diverse perspectives, including critiques of neoliberal urban policy and proposals for alternative urban development frameworks. Through the examination of the most frequently referenced books, the research interacted with pivotal discussions in the field and identified potential gaps or nascent themes that may not have achieved general acknowledgment.

This research is based on the notion that the neoliberal ideology, which emphasizes market-driven urban development, fundamentally contradicts the ethical responsibilities of urban practitioners and policymakers to foster equitable and inclusive urban environments. The hypothesis asserts that although significant efforts exist to reconcile these two objectives, the structural demands of neoliberalism frequently obstruct endeavors to establish cities that honor the right to the city. The thematic analysis aims to evaluate this idea by investigating how academic discourses have confronted the conflicts between market dynamics and social justice within urban settings, specifically concerning housing, public space, and urban government.

The principal aims of this research are as follows:

- To critically examine the development of academic discourse on neoliberal urbanism in Chile over the past twenty years, emphasizing how researchers have articulated the connection between neoliberal policies and urban equity.
- To discern the ethical challenges encountered by urban practitioners and politicians in reconciling the imperatives of market-driven urban growth with the necessity of cultivating equitable, inclusive communities.
- To investigate possible frameworks or techniques that may facilitate the reconciliation of neoliberal urbanism with the right to the city, based on a thematic analysis of chosen literature.
- To engage in the extensive discussions surrounding neoliberal urbanism and spatial justice, specifically examining the Chilean situation, while providing insights potentially relevant to other Latin American and Global South scenarios.

The selection of thematic analysis as the primary methodological approach is based on its flexibility and suitability for the qualitative nature of the investigation. The thematic approach facilitates the recognition of patterns in the data without adherence to a pre-established theoretical framework, so permitting the research to stay receptive to novel discoveries that arise during analysis. This is especially significant due to the intricate and dynamic nature of the study issue, which aims to explore the reconciliation of ethical imperatives with established neoliberal urban practices.

The emphasis on Chile as a case study provides a persuasive justification for this research. Chile has always been seen as a testing ground for neoliberal policies, significantly influencing its urban development. Urban practitioners and politicians in the country have had to maneuver through these policies while confronting escalating pressure to rectify socio-spatial inequities. The Chilean situation offers a valuable opportunity to examine the wider ramifications of neoliberal urbanism, both nationally and in the context of global discussions on urban governance and spatial justice.

To address the research question, the subsequent methodological procedures were utilized:

The initial phase of the research entailed performing a systematic literature evaluation utilizing the aforementioned search phrases. This guaranteed that the study was rooted in a thorough comprehension of the scholarly debate pertaining to neoliberal urbanism in Chile.

Citation Analysis: A citation analysis was performed to select the 20 most referenced papers, ensuring engagement with the most prominent work in the field. This selection process enabled the study to concentrate on the most credible sources while guaranteeing a comprehensive exploration of diverse viewpoints.

Thematic Coding: Following the selection of the 20 most referenced papers, the research utilized thematic coding to discern reoccurring themes, contradictions, and patterns throughout the literature. Thematic coding was conducted manually, enabling the researcher to retain significant interpretive control over the results.

Critical Discourse Analysis: Alongside thematic coding, the study employed critical discourse analysis to investigate the framing of neoliberalism within the chosen literature. This strategy allowed the research to investigate how language, ideology, and power dynamics influence academic discussions on urbanization and the right to the city.

The study was executed utilizing the library resources of the researcher's institution, guaranteeing access to an extensive array of scholarly materials. This work presents no conflicts of interest, and the research was conducted in compliance with ethical standards for academic inquiry. This methodological approach, integrating thematic analysis with citation analysis and critical discourse analysis, offers a robust framework for tackling the research issue and contributing to the broader discourse on neoliberalism, urbanism, and spatial justice in Chile.

3. Results

3.1. Neoliberal Urbanism and Its Impact on Spatial Inequality and Housing

Neoliberal urban policies have profoundly influenced spatial inequality and housing in metropolitan areas, with Santiago, Chile exemplifying this phenomenon. Following the 1973 coup d'état, Chile implemented extensive neoliberalism, establishing itself as the first site for the experimentation of neoliberal policies (Navarrete-Hernandez & Toro, 2019). These policies sought to create an "economy of dispossession" that reallocates resources from the impoverished to the affluent (Navarrete-Hernandez & Toro, 2019).

The monetization of housing has been a fundamental element of neoliberal urbanism in Santiago. The former system of centrally situated, high-quality social housing units provided by the state was supplanted by a subsidiary system of peripheral and underserved housing units (Navarrete-Hernandez & Toro, 2019). This transition was achieved through measures including the elimination of informal settlements in central regions and the implementation of housing vouchers that encouraged construction in more affordable periphery areas (Navarrete-Hernandez & Toro, 2019).

These measures have engendered a markedly uneven and segregated urban environment in Santiago. In 2009, Santiago was classified as one of the most unequal cities in Latin America, exhibiting a Gini index of 0.56 (Fernandez de Cordova et al., 2016). Spatial study indicates a distinct pattern of segregation, characterized by a concentration of affluent towns in the northeastern sector of the city, which exhibit elevated levels of wealth, education, and access to private healthcare (Fernández et al., 2016). This segregation functions as a mechanism that perpetuates inequality by concentrating lower-income inhabitants in regions with limited access to excellent education, healthcare, and other developmental resources (Fernández et al., 2016).

The neoliberal paradigm has significantly hindered inhabitants of impoverished neighborhoods from accessing possibilities in affluent parts of the city. In privately owned urban land markets, individuals in underdeveloped towns are unlikely to finance relocation to regions with superior services and opportunities (Fernández et al., 2016). Public housing initiatives have adhered to market principles, situating themselves on less expensive property at the peripheries of urban areas (Fernández et al., 2016). This results in a "double burden" for economically disadvantaged

municipalities—restricted budgets stemming from a narrow tax base, coupled with elevated expenditures for public services (Navarrete-Hernandez & Toro, 2019).

Although several initiatives, such as augmented social expenditure and housing subsidies during the 1990s and 2000s, have sought to alleviate inequality, they have not fundamentally transformed the neoliberal urban paradigm (Navarrete-Hernandez & Toro, 2019). The geographical configuration of inequality has demonstrated considerable resilience, with segregation patterns enduring despite initiatives aimed at alleviating poverty (Fernández et al., 2016). This resilience is ascribed to the profound integration of neoliberal principles in urban government and socioeconomic laws (Fernández et al., 2016).

Neoliberal urban growth has also affected the rural regions next to cities. In Chile, Decree Law No. 3,516 of 1980 diminished the minimum rural subdivision from 20 hectares to 0.5 hectares, so promoting residential utilization in rural regions (Jimenez et al., 2018). This resulted in the expansion of houses in rural regions, frequently linked to negligible or spurious agricultural purposes (Jiménez et al., 2018).

The neoliberal strategy for urban development in Santiago has established and solidified a framework of spatial inequality that is exceedingly challenging to surmount. Despite a reduction in overall poverty, the unequal allocation of resources and opportunities within metropolitan areas perpetuates socioeconomic disparities. Addressing this issue would likely necessitate more fundamental alterations to the neoliberal urban paradigm that has influenced Santiago's growth over the past several decades.

3.2. Urban Sustainability, Environmental Degradation, and Vulnerability under Neoliberalism

The studied literature offers a thorough examination of the intricate relationship among urban sustainability, environmental degradation, and vulnerability within neoliberal frameworks, especially in Latin American urban centers. Neoliberal urban policies have profoundly influenced the evolution of cities such as Santiago and Concepción in Chile, resulting in heightened socio-economic segregation and environmental deterioration (Carraro et al., 2021; Valenzuela-Levi et al., 2022). These strategies have led to the accumulation of wealth and political influence among the elite, concurrently undermining civic society and generating disparities in access to quality education and healthcare services (Fernández et al., 2016).

The privatization of essential services and the deregulation of urban planning under neoliberal regimes have intensified spatial inequalities, leading to the emergence of “precariopolis” - segregated developments situated distantly from city centers with inadequate provisions (Carraro et al., 2021). This spatial segregation significantly contributes to the perpetuation of income disparities by concentrating lower-income inhabitants in regions with restricted access to human development resources (Fernández et al., 2016). The neoliberal paradigm limits access to developmental resources for lower-income groups due to financial limitations and planning regulations that encourage spatial segregation (Carraro et al., 2021; Fernández et al., 2016).

Environmental deterioration constitutes a major issue in neoliberal urban areas. Santiago has endured more than thirty years of persistent air pollution, which has demonstrably impacted death rates (Valenzuela-Levi et al., 2022). The dangers linked to pollution exposure escalate according to geographical variations, underscoring the complex relationship between environmental deterioration and social inequality (Valenzuela-Levi et al., 2022). For instance, in the Metropolitan Area of Concepción, environmental degradation is linked to historical industrial activities, leading to soil contamination, concerning levels of air pollution, and issues with water resources (Valenzuela-Levi et al., 2022).

The notion of urban sustainability in neoliberal cities is intricate and multidimensional. Valenzuela-Levi et al. (2022) provides a definition of urban sustainability that enables humans to thrive within a community in concord with the urban environment. Their research indicated that contentment among residents of neoliberal urban regions is concurrently associated with their perceptions of personal opportunities, community, and environment (Valenzuela-Levi et al., 2022). Nonetheless, they found that pleasure is not correlated with adherence to pro-environmental

behavior (Valenzuela-Levi et al., 2022), indicating a disjunction between environmental policy and public perceptions of quality of life.

The susceptibility of neoliberal cities is intricately linked to spatial segregation and environmental inequity. The articles emphasize that the disproportionate allocation of environmental hazards and resource accessibility generates areas of susceptibility within urban environments (Carraro et al., 2021; Valenzuela-Levi et al., 2022). This vulnerability arises not just from financial differences but is also influenced by planning strategies that advocate for housing developments for low-income populations in distant regions with restricted access to services (Carraro et al., 2021).

Resolving these interrelated difficulties necessitates a comprehensive strategy. Fernández et al. (2016) contend that urban sustainability may necessitate dismantling the persistence of inequality and segregation. This may entail transformative politics driven by social movements, as seen by the student movement in Chile (Fernández et al., 2016). Participatory urban regeneration efforts may alleviate the physical, social, and environmental decline of impoverished communities, fostering community engagement and enhancing a sense of belonging (Valenzuela-Levi et al., 2022).

Interventions at the metropolitan level are essential on a larger scale. Establishing baseline standards for urban development to enhance access to green areas, facilities, services, and transportation throughout the metropolitan region is especially crucial in neoliberal cities constructed according to free market principles (Valenzuela-Levi et al., 2022). Furthermore, the integration of pro-environmental behavior with quality of life is crucial. Policymakers have to endeavor to reconcile conventional understandings of pro-environmental conduct with individuals' immediate views of quality of life and preferred urban experiences (Valenzuela-Levi et al., 2022).

The literature emphasizes the necessity for a paradigm shift in tackling urban sustainability, environmental degradation, and vulnerability within neoliberal frameworks. It necessitates a comprehensive approach that acknowledges the interrelatedness of these challenges and the significance of community engagement, spatial justice, and environmental equality. Implementing measures that contest the neoliberal urban paradigm and advocate for the right to the city can facilitate the development of more sustainable, egalitarian, and resilient urban environments.

3.3. Urban Governance, Democratic Contestation, and Alternative Approaches to Neoliberalism

The chosen articles for this cluster provide essential insights into urban government, democratic challenges, and alternative strategies to neoliberalism in urban settings. A prominent subject that arises is the conflict between top-down neoliberal urban policies and grassroots initiatives by citizens to restore democratic governance over urban environments and decision-making procedures. Numerous academics emphasize that neoliberal urban governance has resulted in heightened inequality, segregation, and relocation within metropolitan areas. Deregulation of land prices and privatization of urban development in Santiago, Chile, have produced a "intensely segregated city, accentuating the spatial distance between different social classes" (Angelcos & Méndez, 2017). This neoliberal urban development strategy endangers both working-class and middle-class inhabitants through "territorial disqualification," resulting in the erosion of their social standing and the personal and collective identities associated with certain districts (Angelcos et al., 2017).

The papers delineate diverse manifestations of democratic contestation and alternative strategies arising from citizens and social movements in reaction to these neoliberal urban policies. In Barcelona's Nou Barris district, community associations have mobilized to advocate for more investment in public services and infrastructure, contesting the neoliberal paradigm of austerity (Letelier & Valdovsky, 2019). Their synchronized efforts at the district level have afforded them "a voice of political significance to engage in dialogue with the authority" (Letelier & Valdovsky, 2019).

The documents reviewed on governance and democratic cities additionally examine more extreme manifestations of spatial contestation and appropriation by individuals. In Madrid, inhabitants unlawfully invaded a deserted private lot and converted it into a lively community-managed public area known as La Cebada (J. F. Vergara-Perucich, 2021). This activity contested concepts of private property and illustrated the feasibility of collaborative urban design and management (Vergara-Perucich, 2019).

Numerous scholars contend that these grassroots spatial actions exemplify a variant of “agonistic democracy” that undermines the consensual paradigm of neoliberal urban government. Vergara-Perucich (2019) asserts that urban design serves as a mechanism for “challenging the consensus of democracy through the actual practice of shaping urban spaces”. He advocates for concepts of an “agenda of urban design by dissensus” that would empower communities with enhanced authority over land use, financial allocations, and the design of public spaces (Vergara-Perucich, 2019).

Nonetheless, the documents also disclose constraints associated with these alternate methodologies. In Santiago, initiatives branded as “smart city” projects, such as the Paseo Bandera pedestrian route, are criticized as “urban placebos” that foster a façade of involvement and innovation while perpetuating neoliberal urban development (Jirón et al., 2020). The authors contend that authentic democratic urban government necessitates the acknowledgment of many types of contextual urban knowledge and the promotion of sincere communication between experts and residents (Jirón et al., 2020).

Based on the reviewed literature, there is a persistent conflict between neoliberal urban policies and citizens’ endeavors to democratize urban development processes. Although grassroots spatial practices present viable alternatives, actualizing their transformational potential probably necessitates more extensive structural modifications to urban governing frameworks. Subsequent studies may investigate methods to enhance and institutionalize more participative and egalitarian strategies for determining urban futures.

3.4. *The Commodification of Urban Planning and Professional Dilemmas*

The commodification of urbanization and the professional challenges encountered by urban planners within a neoliberal framework are essential themes addressed in the analyzed publications. These books provide insights into the influence of neoliberal policies on urban development and the practices of urban professionals, especially in Chile and other Latin American nations.

The inception of neoliberal urbanism in Chile can be attributed to the 1979 National Urban Development Policy, which initiated a market-driven paradigm in urban planning (F. Vergara-Perucich & Boano, 2020, 2021). This policy developed concepts that emphasized land profitability and market-oriented solutions to housing scarcity. The execution of these neoliberal policies resulted in substantial changes in urban environments, emphasizing advantages for commercial entities and restructuring cities to establish new urban peripheries. The commercialization of urban space is a fundamental element of neoliberal urbanism. In Santiago, Chile, this process has produced a metropolis marked by significant inequality and class stratification. The urban landscape has been influenced by market dynamics, resulting in the accumulation of wealth and the establishment of socially separated areas. This commodification transcends physical areas to include social ties, as urban development increasingly prioritizes profit reasons over social demands.

Urban planners navigating this neoliberal framework encounter considerable professional challenges. Vergara-Perucich and Arias-Loyola (F. Vergara-Perucich & Arias-Loyola, 2023) delineate three distinct habitus among Chilean urban planners: public, private, and academic. Each of these groups manages the conflicts between their professional ethics and the requirements of a market-oriented urban development paradigm. Public urban planners, despite their criticism of market-driven urban development, find it challenging to conceive urban forms that transcend the limitations of neoliberal technocracy. Private urban planners, entrenched in the commodification of urban environments, struggle to balance economic demands with their professional and ethical obligations. Academic urban planners, despite their comprehensive understanding of urban difficulties, frequently struggle to convert their critical insights into concrete urban developments.

The commodification of urbanism has resulted in substantial alterations in urban development patterns. In Valdivia, Chile, periurban areas have undergone swift transition due to the growth of parcelas de agrado and irregular loteos, propelled by market dynamics and facilitated by neoliberal policies. This approach has led to spatial fragmentation, socioeconomic segregation, and environmental concerns. A significant lack of post-neoliberal urban visions exists among

professionals, indicating the dominant impact of market-driven ideologies. The absence of innovative alternatives presents a considerable obstacle to tackling urban inequities and fostering more equitable and sustainable cities.

The monetization of urbanism under neoliberalism has significantly influenced urban development and the professional practices of urban planners. Despite increasing awareness of the limitations and adverse effects of this method, creating feasible alternatives continues to be a significant problem. The documents advocate for a redefinition of urbanism that transcends neoliberal principles, highlighting the necessity of recovering urban spaces for the populace instead of solely for profit.

4. Discussion

Reconciling the neoliberal principles that propel urban growth with the moral imperative to foster equitable and inclusive communities in Chile necessitates a sophisticated comprehension of the dynamics influencing modern urban development. Neoliberalism, with its emphasis on market efficiency and the accumulation of capital, has a historical tendency to marginalize lower-income populations. This dynamic often results in their displacement to peripheral, underserved regions, while simultaneously concentrating wealth and resources within affluent urban sectors. In urban centers such as Santiago, where the commodification of housing has led to entrenched spatial inequality, the challenge resides in reconciling profit-driven motives with the imperative of social equity and the fundamental right to the city.

The neoliberal paradigm has led to a fragmentation of the urban landscape, exacerbating socio-economic divisions via spatial segregation. The affluent neighborhoods in the northeastern sector of Santiago benefit from privileged access to high-quality services, including education and healthcare. In contrast, impoverished areas are systematically deprived of these essential amenities, thereby perpetuating cycles of poverty and exclusion. Fernández et al. (2016) emphasize that neoliberal urban policies have resulted in the concentration of wealth and opportunity, thereby entrenching the urban poor in circumstances that obstruct their potential for upward social mobility. Consequently, urban practitioners and policymakers are faced with the undeniable truth that neoliberal policies, although they may stimulate economic growth, intensify spatial injustices.

In order to effectively traverse this intricate landscape, urban practitioners are called to embrace a more discerning perspective on neoliberalism, acknowledging its shortcomings in meeting the needs of marginalized communities. This does not imply a complete abandonment of market-based mechanisms; rather, it suggests a reconsideration of their application to promote inclusivity. A promising approach involves reexamining housing policies to emphasize affordability and accessibility rather than profit maximization. Rather than confining public housing to remote peripheries, urban planners have the opportunity to advocate for mixed-income developments that seamlessly incorporate lower-income residents into more affluent, resource-abundant neighborhoods. These policies have the potential to alleviate the spatial segregation that has emerged as a defining characteristic of neoliberal urbanism in Chile.

Furthermore, it is imperative for politicians to adopt policies that confront the prevailing neoliberal paradigm by advocating for spatial justice and enhancing urban democracy. This may involve a critical examination of zoning laws that promote real estate speculation and deregulation, which contribute to the fragmentation of urban environments. Through the implementation of more stringent regulations concerning land use and the encouragement of developers to adopt more inclusive building practices, urban governance has the potential to address and dismantle the structural inequalities inherent in neoliberal urbanism. Furthermore, promoting participatory urban governance, in which local communities are actively involved in development processes, may serve to mitigate the top-down enforcement of neoliberal policies.

Ultimately, reuniting neoliberal urban growth with the moral imperative to foster inclusive communities necessitates a fundamental transformation in our approach. It is essential for urban practitioners and politicians to collaborate in developing innovative urban models that harmonize market dynamics with social justice, thereby fostering cities that uphold the right to the city for all

residents. How can Chile reconcile its deeply rooted neoliberal policies with the pursuit of a more inclusive urban future? This inquiry invites a reexamination of the convergence between economic systems, social equity, and urban environments, urging professionals to transcend the limitations imposed by conventional market reasoning.

5. Conclusions

The principal conclusions of the study indicate that neoliberal urbanism in Chile has exacerbated socio-spatial inequalities, especially through the commodification of housing and public spaces. The study underscores the manner in which these policies have led to a concentration of wealth in particular locales, while marginalized and impoverished regions experience a dearth of access to essential resources, including quality education, healthcare, and public services. Furthermore, the research highlights the enduring nature of spatial segregation in Santiago, where neoliberal urban strategies have exacerbated the geographic divide between affluent and impoverished neighborhoods, thereby continuing the marginalization of vulnerable communities. This dynamic challenges the ethical obligations of urban practitioners, who find themselves navigating the tension between market-driven imperatives and the fundamental right to the city, which calls for equitable and inclusive urban development. The thematic and critical discourse analyses substantiate these findings, illustrating that neoliberalism persists as a dominant force in urban planning, thereby limiting initiatives aimed at achieving spatial justice.

Nevertheless, it is essential to acknowledge several limitations inherent in the study. The dependence on secondary data, especially the emphasis on extensively cited literature, could potentially constrain the range of perspectives represented. While the most frequently referenced works contribute significantly to academic discourse, they may overlook emerging or alternative perspectives that contest prevailing neoliberal frameworks. Furthermore, the emphasis on thematic analysis within the study, though significant, might overlook quantitative aspects of spatial inequality that could enhance the robustness of its assertions. The research is predominantly focused on Chile, suggesting that its conclusions may not readily extend to other Latin American settings where the implementation of neoliberal policies has varied significantly.

This study presents intriguing avenues for future inquiry. A pertinent inquiry pertains to the possibilities of alternative urban governance frameworks that contest the prevailing neoliberal hegemony. What significance do grassroots movements and participatory urban planning hold in the transformation of neoliberal urban policies in Chile and beyond? A further avenue for exploration lies in the enduring viability of neoliberal urban practices amidst the rising tide of social movements advocating for enhanced inclusion and equity. Moreover, exploring the connections between environmental degradation and socio-spatial inequality within the framework of neoliberalism may illuminate the ecological repercussions of urban fragmentation in Chile.

Upon contemplation of the research question, the findings affirm that neoliberal urbanism in Chile persistently intensifies spatial and social inequalities. The thematic analysis reveals a tension between the market-driven approach to urban development and the ethical obligation to foster equitable and inclusive urban environments. While there are initiatives undertaken by urban practitioners and policymakers aimed at addressing these disparities, the inherent structural demands of neoliberalism frequently hinder meaningful progress. Consequently, the study effectively addresses its research question by illustrating the enduring presence of neoliberal principles in urban governance. Furthermore, it posits that a more significant transformation in urban planning methodologies and governance frameworks is essential to harmonize with the concept of the right to the city.

Funding: This research received no external funding.

Institutional Review Board Statement: Not applicable.

Informed Consent Statement: Not applicable.

Data Availability Statement: Not applicable.

Acknowledgments: Not applicable.

Conflicts of Interest: The authors declare no conflicts of interest.

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