

An Exploratory Approach of the Latin American Migrants' Urban Space Transformation of Antofagasta City, Chile

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Abstract : Since mid-2000, the migratory flows of Latin American migrants to Chile have been increasing constantly. There are two reasons that would explain why Chile is presented as an attractive country for the migrants. On the one hand, traditional centres of migrants' attraction such as the United States and Europe have begun to close their borders. On the other hand, Chile exhibits relative economic and political stability, which offers greater job opportunities and better standard of living when compared to the migrants' origin country. At the same time, the neoliberal economic model of Chile, developed under an extractive production of the natural resources, has privatized the urban space. The market regulates the growth of the fragmented and segregated cities. Then, the vulnerable population, most of the time, is located in the periphery and in the marginal areas of the urban space. In this aspect, the migrants have begun to occupy those degraded and depressed areas of the city. The problem raised is that the increase of the social spatial segregation could be also attributed to the migrants' occupation of the marginal urban places of the city. The aim of this investigation is to carry out an analysis of the migrants' housing strategies, which are transforming the marginal areas of the city. The methodology focused on the urban experience of the migrants, through the observation of spatial practices, ways of living and networks configuration in order to transform the marginal territory. The techniques applied in this study are semi-structured interviews in-depth interviews. The study reveals that the migrants housing strategies for living in the marginal areas of the city are built on a paradox way. On the one hand, the migrants choose proximity to their place of origin, maintaining their identity and customs. On the other hand, the migrants choose proximity to their social and familiar places, generating sense of belonging. In conclusion, the migration as international displacements under a globalized economic model increasing socio spatial segregation in cities is evidenced, but the transformation of the marginal areas is a fundamental resource of their integration migratory process. The importance of this research is that it is everybody's responsibility not only the right to live in a city without any discrimination but also to integrate the citizens within the social urban space of a city.

Keywords : migrations, marginal space, resignification, visibility

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