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Town Planning Review

Resisting the neo-liberal neighbourhood's straitjacket: relational neighbourhood geographies in Chile and Spain

- [Letelier, Francisco](#)
- [Irazábal, Clara](#)
- [Benach, Núria](#)
- [Tapia, Verónica](#)

Abstract

This article proposes a critical and complex reading of the configuration and reconfiguration of the neighbourhood (barrio) based on a comparative analysis of two case studies in Spain and Chile. Neighbourhood life is assumed to be organised around complex, open and dynamic relationships articulated in different relational geographies and not limited to a restricted space-time frame. We propose the concept of 'relational neighbourhood geographies', understanding it as an expansive and malleable socio-spatial field. In both case studies we observe that relational neighbourhood geographies exist beyond the limits of geographically narrow territories and can be expanded by constructing new geographies and territorialities. Consequently, the configuration of the neighbourhood is relationally conditioned by the forms and dynamics that weak and strong ties adopt in given spaces and times. The historical analysis of our case studies shows ways in which relationality is context-sensitive and how bottom-up resistance produces relationality. Although the importance of the relational is observed in both cases, their characterisation, intensity and complexity are different, which creates distinct capacities to produce territorialities and engage and impact city politics.

Clara E Irazábal Zurita, Arch., M.Sc., M.Arch., Ph.D.

ADVANCE Professor, JEDI Officer

Director and Professor

Urban Studies and Planning Program

Affiliate, National Center for Smart Growth

School of Architecture, Planning and Preservation

University of Maryland

1244 Architecture Building

3835 Campus Drive

College Park, Maryland 20742

301.405.6290 | C: 917.539.9828

irazabal@umd.edu | www.arch.umd.edu



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