

Article

Neoliberal Economic, Social, and Spatial Restructuring: Valparaíso and Its Agricultural Hinterland

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Abstract

The analysis of the neoliberal restructuring of Chilean port cities and their hinterland suggests there was a functional coupling of neoliberalisation, precarisation, reterritorialisation, extraction, and logistics. To address this process properly, we expanded the boundaries of our analytical scale to include not only the port city, but also its hinterland, and be able to examine the flow of commodities and labour. The analysis demonstrated that the effects of neoliberal restructuring of Valparaíso and its hinterland has had interconnected ambivalent effects. Although social and economic restructuring of agricultural hinterland and port terminals in Chile increased land and port productivity and economic competitiveness, this pattern of capitalist modernisation benefitted neither the increasing masses of temporary precarious workers in the countryside nor port cities such as Valparaíso, marked by territorial inequality, socioecological damage, urban poverty, and a growing sense of closure of the littoral and reduced access to the ocean. These negative externalities and frictions have triggered local political controversies, commercial and economic disputes, labour strikes, and urban and socio-territorial conflicts.

Keywords

agribusiness; Chile; port-city; social and economic restructuring; Valparaíso

Issue

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1. Introduction

Since the late 16th century, port cities have fulfilled essential functions for the rise and development of maritime commerce and the formation of capitalism and the world system. Port cities connected distant territories by channelling flows of commodities, migrants, money, and capital, and contributed to the diffusion of ideas and technologies (Braudel, 1982; Ciccantell & Bunker, 1998; Mah, 2014; Vormann, 2015). During the 19th century, some peripheral port cities, such as Valparaíso in Chile, became cosmopolitan places with vibrant lifestyles and internationalised economies. This romantic repre-

sentation of port cities is incomplete. Indeed, port cities were also scenarios for the darker aspects of modernity and capitalism’s expansion, such as slavery, forced migration, exploitation, violent forms of appropriation and extraction of natural resources, and ecological and political colonial and postcolonial imperialism (Costa & Gonçalves, 2019; Cuevas & Budrovich, 2020; Mah, 2014).

Similarly, after WWII, there has been a fascination with the restructuring of world production, the expansion of international trade and globalisation, technological improvements, transport, and the logistical revolution. This fascination, which coincides with the expansion of neoliberalism, obliterates some less

acknowledged social harms, inequalities, conflicts, and social and environmental injustices of neoliberal economic and social restructuring. Part of this fascination lies in the incomplete representation of this transformation as the natural development of autonomous economic forces. This article shows that the neoliberal economic and social restructuring of ports and territories was a political process. Section 2 further defines our study problem as part of the wider theme of development and neoliberal restructuring in Chile and identifies our analytical scope to include the port city–hinterland relation. Section 3 addresses the territories and restructuring logics within the wider context of the world system, conceived as a network of global supply chains that are continually reorganising the international division of labour and the global geography of capitalism. Section 4 highlights some of the historical transformation of Valparaíso and its hinterland and justifies its selection as an interesting and paradigmatic case study. Section 5 deals with the transformations of the Chilean economy and port regulations through the workings of these transformative logics, and Section 6 addresses our conclusions. We concluded that the functional and structural coupling of these logics has shown the limitations of neoliberal restructuring, producing social and economic conflicts, increasing spatial and social inequality, logistical frictions and underinvestment in port infrastructure, and a deterioration of the port city.

2. The Problem and Its Context

The international literature on port cities shows that urban coastal areas have been the object of economic, social, and spatial restructuring processes for decades (van de Laar, 2020). These were normally the urban answer to deindustrialisation, the abandonment of port sites, and other significant transformations since the 1960s. The somehow paradigmatic experience of Baltimore fascinated many with the possibilities of waterfront redevelopment projects in London, Barcelona, Liverpool, Bilbao, and Genoa, among others (Jauhiainen, 1995; Porfyriou & Sepe, 2017; Schubert, 2011). Despite some common features, mostly in the physical sense, significant historical, spatial, and cultural differences between cases made them differ in terms of social consequences. Whereas some port cities experienced dereliction, land speculation, destruction of heritage, gentrification, and social expulsions, others had more positive experiences of conservation of architectural heritage, port relocation, and waterfront redevelopment, and even of port expansion (Gastaldi & Camerin, 2017; Guibert et al., 2015; Jauhiainen, 1995; Mah, 2014; Miller, 2012; Porfyriou & Sepe, 2017; Wang et al., 2007).

In Latin America, important port cities have also been the object of neoliberal restructuring. In Buenos Aires (Argentina), neoliberal deregulation and the decentralisation of public ports made it possible for the Puerto Madero Corporation—a public-private partnership—to

bring about a large real estate operation in the old port district (Fedele & Domínguez, 2015). Rio de Janeiro, which was a major slave market in the colonial period, became in modern times an industrial hub and the centre of tourism in Brazil. In the last decades, its port did not adapt to new trends in industry and maritime trade, which had a negative impact and led to the decline of the Port district. This ruinous urban area became the object of real estate and financial speculation: the so-called Porto Maravilha Urban Operation, a real estate megaproject that aims at adding value to its historical and architectural heritage, establishing “a new standard of occupation for the waterfront area of Rio de Janeiro” (Urban Sustainability Exchange, n.d.). This recovery of an abandoned urban space has benefited the accumulation of private capital (Costa & Gonçalves, 2019; cf. Rolnik, 2019). The Port of Callao in Lima (Peru) is an interesting and contrasting case that shows how the neoliberal expansion of capitalism can be combined with an active and strategic function of the state to steer private investment in port infrastructure through regulation. The Peruvian Port Authority has been capable of steering port development and enforcing private infrastructure investment to secure compliance with the objectives of the export sector (Guibert et al., 2015). The literature on Valparaíso has mostly focused on the historical role of the port as an urban agent and the current controversies between different agents around the uses given to the coast: tourism, the heritage sector, port, sport, leisure, among others (Budrovich & Cuevas, 2018; Pizzi, 2017; cf. Aravena, 2020).

In our perspective, the most interesting research in the field highlights the ambivalences and difficult articulation between urban and port interests (Jauhiainen, 1995; Mah, 2014). The tensions between urban and port functions and the inherent contradictions of unequal development are present, for instance, in the defence of heritage and the recovery of urban areas that, in the long run, tend to turn into gentrification and heritagisation processes that create opportunities for investors at the expense of local dwellers. Previously abandoned spaces, such as industrial ruins and out-dated port facilities, have been reincorporated into new chains of value production within capitalism (Aravena, 2020; Costa & Gonçalves, 2019; Mah, 2014). More recently, some interesting research has been conducted on the role of logistical, financial, and informational infrastructures for production, circulation, and consumption in global capitalism (Arboleda, 2020; Martner, 2020).

Our approach aims at understanding the complex global connections that constitute port cities and their hinterland. We conceive port cities as complex urban socio-technical systems that function as nodes in global networks within the world system that contribute to the mobility of materials, goods, ideas, and people, thus connecting hinterland and foreland territories. From this network/relational perspective, port cities and regions such as Valparaíso and its agricultural hinterland in Central

Chile are “co-constituted by the global flows” of capitalism (Hesse & McDonough, 2018, p. 354).

Different from other theoretically laden studies, our ethnographic approach to the social and economic restructuring of the port city starts from the situation under study. Based on our previous research, we have carefully selected the case of Valparaíso and its hinterland due to its paradigmatic character. For one part, Valparaíso is the most relevant port connecting Chile’s agribusiness to its main consumer destinations in Asia, the Americas, and Europe. Together with this, it condenses some typical problems and tensions of port city development, embodying many of the complexities of neoliberal social and economic restructuring. This case-oriented fieldwork strategy allowed us to produce a more holistic understanding of the restructuring process. We started by using the categories of port city, territory, and economic and social restructuring as ‘sensitising concepts’ to define the situation and develop a referential research framework to plan and conduct our fieldwork with a basic sense of guidance (cf. Mah, 2014). We observed and talked to people in their natural settings in the port city; travelled and observed inland key places, such as dry ports, monoculture plantations and highways; and collected accounts of more than 50 interviewees of different backgrounds (city dwellers, local activists, local representatives and community leaders, casual and permanent dockworkers, professionals and managers of port, logistics and commercial companies, local officials and authorities, and academics). We talked to participants in their own environments, addressing their experiences and views on neoliberal restructuring, their work, daily practices, everyday life, and social worlds in Valparaíso and its agricultural hinterland. We also conducted three focus groups (one with dockworker representatives and two with city dwellers) and one participatory workshop with city dwellers and local leaders to discuss the different problems and positive experiences in Valparaíso.

These analyses made us realise the need to, first, widen our analytical scope to include the port city-hinterland relation and, second, to reconstruct, through an inferential process of retroductive reasoning (Glynos & Howarth, 2007), the complex configuration of transformative logics restructuring the port city and its hinterland. These logics are neoliberalisation, precarisation, reterritorialisation, extraction, and logistics. These analytical elements offer a justified heuristic to understand the restructuring of territories and a first step in the process of theory building (cf. Burawoy, 2009).

From what has been said until now, the reader should retain that, first, port cities function as hubs of global supply chains and networks of production and circulation in the unequal geography of capitalism. Second, rather than theoretically posited or deduced, the logics restructuring Valparaíso and its hinterland were empirically determined. We inferred them through observation and analysis of empirical evidence. This process involved

a back-and-forth movement between microscopic and macroscopic observation and analysis. In what follows, we present Chile’s neoliberal transformation as the immediate historical context of Valparaíso’s economic and social restructuring (a first macroscopic move).

3. Chile’s Economic and Social Restructuring

Since the late 19th century, Chile’s international economic insertion has been characterised by the relevance of a few extractive sectors, such as saltpetre and copper mining and, more recently, agribusiness, aquaculture of salmonids, and forestry (Ffrench-Davis, 2018). In the early 1980s, Pinochet’s dictatorship implemented a revolutionary project to transform the Chilean economy and society through a series of neoliberal policies to restructure the country’s productive base. The aim was to achieve market-oriented capitalist modernisation through the commodification and marketisation of vast spheres of society, including labour, land, and natural resources. After 17 years of authoritarian rule, Pinochet’s dictatorship was electorally defeated. However, structural transformations favouring free market and competition, a limited state, and the culture of possessive individualism and consumption were deeply installed. In this context, the new democratic elite decided to keep the pillars of Pinochet’s neoliberal capitalist modernisation intact. For years this seemed a sound development strategy: Chile experienced an unprecedented period of economic bonanza accompanied by social peace and democratic stability (Sehnbruch & Siavelis, 2014). Between 1990 and 2017, Chile’s economic growth was significantly higher than the world’s economic growth. During that period, the poverty rate dropped drastically, and per capita gross national income using purchasing power parity rates more than quadrupled, increasing from roughly US\$4.000 in the early 1990s to more than US\$20.000 in 2020. However, after the 2008–2009 global economic crisis, different indicators showed that the cycle of economic growth was slowing down (Figure 1).

The self-proclaimed successful development strategy was based on the benefits of an open economy and the export capacity of a handful of competitive economic sectors that extract value from natural resources or produce primary, intermediate, or finished products with little added value such as copper, pulp and wood products, salmon, and fresh fruits (Landerretche, 2014). Thus, the increase of Chilean exports to Europe, the Americas, and Asia has made the country recognisable for its relevance in a few global commodity chains, among these, fresh fruit production (cf. Cuevas & Budrovich, 2020; Goldfrank, 1994). In 2018, Chile was the ninth producer of table grapes, the tenth producer of apples, and the sixth largest producer of kiwis in the world.

This export-based development strategy requires low port tariffs and efficient logistical services to keep up the competitiveness of export sectors. We will come back to

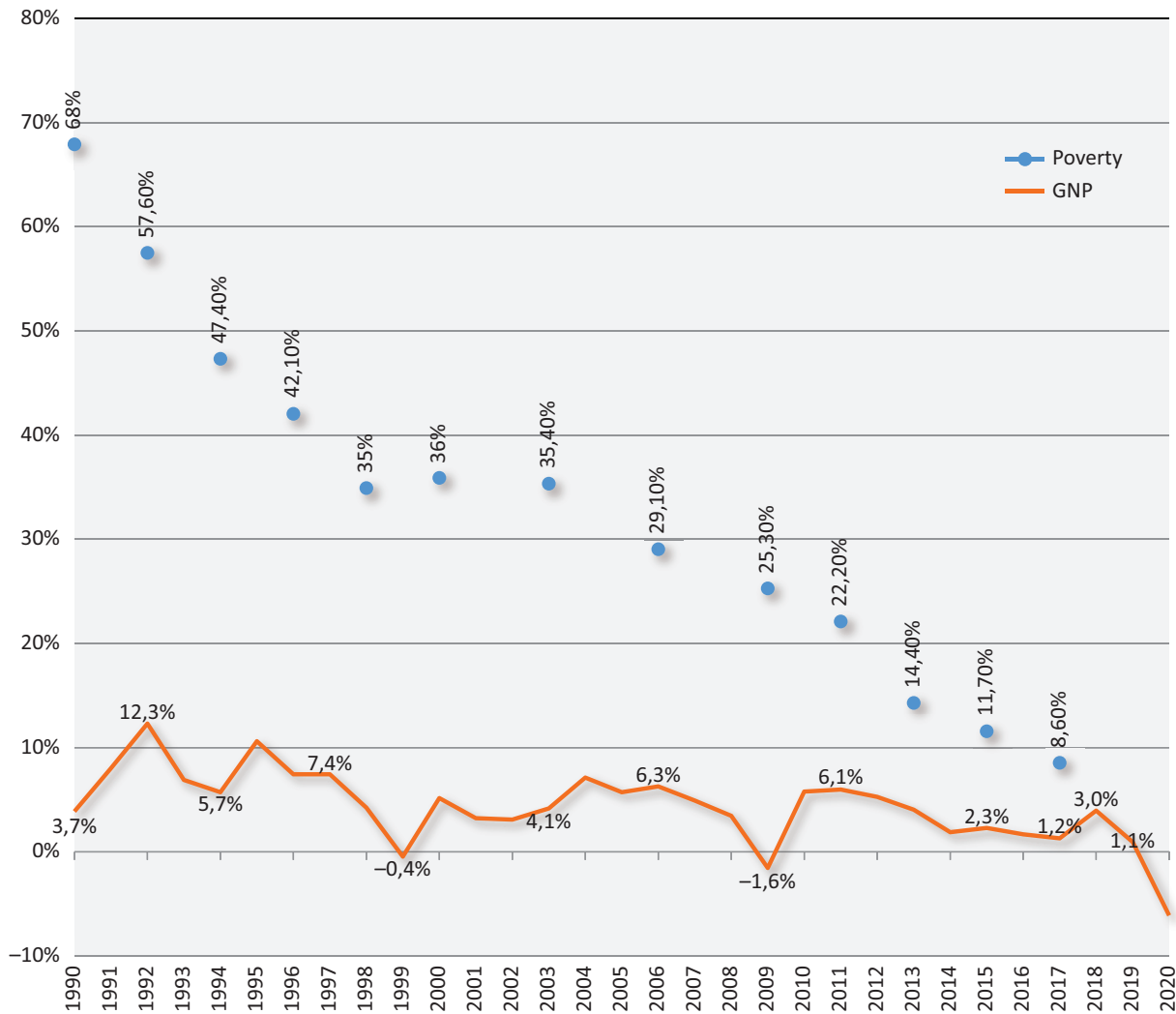


Figure 1. Evolution of poverty and Gross National Product (GNP) in Chile (%), 1990–2020. Source: Own elaboration with data from Ministerio de Desarrollo Social (2017) and World Bank (2021).

this later in more detail, but now we need to turn to some of the flip sides of this development strategy.

Chile’s economic growth has been heavily dependent on international trade and the demand of a few trade partners, most notably China and East Asia, the US and the Americas, and Europe. This makes the Chilean economy very vulnerable to international crises. Chile’s decelerating economic growth of the last decades has made social inequality and structural unemployment more visible. While economic growth was able to lift many Chileans out of poverty, it became clear that income inequality remained high, especially when compared to OECD countries. In this respect, the most telling indicator is wealth concentration: The top 1% of the Chilean population captures 33% of the country’s Gross National Income (Flores et al., 2020; United Nations Development Programme, 2017).

The Chilean experience disconfirms, against many expectations, that economic growth necessarily creates quality new jobs and reduces unemployment. Unemployment and precarious jobs have been relatively high, espe-

cially after the so-called Asian Crisis (1998). During the last decade, the unemployment rate oscillated between 6 and 10%, and in the three regions of Central Chile that constitute the hinterland of the port of Valparaíso, it was systematically higher than the national rate (Central Bank of Chile). Entrenched inequality and high and persistent unemployment are two of the most relevant structural problems of Chile’s neoliberal modernisation. These seem to be constitutive features and, to some extent, necessary conditions of this development strategy.

These ambivalences of neoliberal development are also evident in port cities and their hinterland. Whereas ports enhanced their competitiveness favouring investment in infrastructure and have modernised their operations, the cities and related territories that surround them suffer negative externalities and environmental and social injustices resulting from this development strategy. Given the critical role of seaports in Chile’s open economy and export-oriented development, it is relevant to study its most paradigmatic case—Valparaíso—considering this wider context of national development.

4. Case Study: History and Transformation of Valparaíso and Its Hinterland

Valparaíso is a port city located on the Pacific coast of Central Chile, 116km northwest of the capital Santiago. It was established in 1544 as the Official Port of Santiago. Between 1850 and 1914, Valparaíso became one of the most important ports in the Southern Pacific, as vessels moving goods between Europe and the west coast of the US were forced by the long journey around the southern tip of South America to stop off in Valparaíso. During this Golden Era, Valparaíso became a thriving and progressive city, a commercial hub, a financial node, an immigrant attractor, and home to some artistic movements. During the Golden Era of Valparaíso, there was a close spatial and functional relation between port and city and porosity between interlocking spaces used for leisure, sports, fishing, and local commerce circa 1900 as shown in Figure 2.

This Golden Era came to an end when the Panama Canal opened in 1914. Ships no longer needed to undertake the long transoceanic journey, causing the slow but steady decline of Valparaíso. Somehow paradoxically, these events coincided with the construction of the most ambitious investment project—a massive breakwater and new berths—and the rise of the port as an active urban agent. Around the 1920s, the new port works were renewing the city in a deep process of reterritorialisation of the coastline. The old wooden houses located on the waterfront disappeared. Numerous businesses that sold tea, coffee, food, and alcohol to the numerous seafarers, dockworkers, and other port workers that came to wash up and have fun vanished under the modern port facilities.

For most of the 20th century, the free flow between urban and port spaces favoured harmonious, organic, and symbiotic relationships between port, city, and local

community. During this period, port activity was labour intensive, which also coincided with the rise of a powerful dockworkers' movement that gained labour control for the workers (Aravena, 2020; Ortega, 2014). However, by the end of the 20th century, Valparaíso became a city in decadence, a living myth about the expansion of global capitalism in the periphery.

4.1. Valparaíso in the Context of the Reconfiguration of the Chilean Port System

During Pinochet's dictatorship (1973–1990), neoliberal policies fostered private investment in port infrastructure and administration. The immediate effect was the rise in the number and relevance of private ports. Of the total of 73 ports in Chile, 63 are private and operate based on public coastline concessions with little regulation. Private ports currently transfer almost 50% of cargo (estimation based on data provided by the Cámara Marítima y Portuaria de Chile, n.d.). The ten former Chilean Port Enterprise facilities are still among the most important ports in the country. These are managed by autonomous public port companies that form part of the Public Companies System (SEP). Of these, seven operate based on private concessions of terminals, which were transferred to private operators for 20 or more years based on competitive public bidding processes. In these ports, each public port company functions as a port maritime authority and manages the contracts with private port terminal concessionaires. Valparaíso is one of the first public ports subjected to this neoliberalised scheme of private-public partnership.

Additionally, Chilean ports lack an institutional planning and coordination agency that would incorporate them under a broader strategic gaze. The relation between Chilean ports can be better understood as a



Figure 2. Valparaíso: Paseo en el Malecón, 2 [Valparaíso: Promenade on the Waterfront, 2]. Carlos Kirsinger and Cía. Source: Chilecollector (n.d.).

dynamic of coordination in competition to favour logistical and economic efficiency and exporters' global competitiveness (Cuevas & Budrovich, 2020). These principles have organised the neoliberal modernisation of the port sector since the 1980s. Specifically, more competition was introduced between private operating companies through public bidding processes, competition for shipping line contracts and port tariffs, and also competition among workers through the liberalisation of the labour market (SEP, 2006).

This economic regime has been constituted as a hybrid that has been installed in a sociocultural and economic context that facilitated active intervention on the part of the state to promote, through active regulation, private investment, the creation of a logistics services market or quasi-market, and a public-private alliance in the port sector. In short, the state policy has favoured a process of neoliberalisation of the ports, applying measures that are less aligned with neoclassical orthodoxy, but that certainly continue to be coherent with market fundamentalism and with the principle of competition as the best mechanism for introducing economic efficiency and promoting the country's competitiveness.

4.2. Valparaíso and the Restructuring of Space

Historically, Valparaíso has been influenced by changes in port activity, technologies and infrastructure, and by its global connectivity and hinterland. The network of maritime routes and logistical circuits connecting Valparaíso to its agribusiness hinterland and the consumption centres in Asia, the Americas, and Europe is a materialisation of reterritorialisation on a global scale. This is a large-scale restructuring of capitalism's global geography and its international division of labour. Valparaíso's handling of containers is based on its efficient logistical model comprising a logistical forum of stakeholders (FOLOVAP), efficient transport infrastructure, a specialised dry port (ZEAL), and a port community system (the software and digital platform SILOGPORT) connecting port terminals with clients, such as fruit packaging plants, distribution centres, and shipping lines (Empresa Portuaria Valparaíso, 2012, 2020).

Valparaíso—Chile's second most important port in terms of freight transfer—is a small but efficient multi-purpose hub. Together with San Antonio, which is the most important port in the country, Valparaíso handles the trade generated by Santiago and the macro-zone of Central Chile and its nine million consumers that represent 60% of Chile's GNP. Valparaíso's two terminals transfer approximately 10,000,000 tons a year, of which 14% is general cargo and 86% is container cargo. Its small bay is protected by a 1,000-metre-long breakwater that reduces the risk of heavy storms that would otherwise disrupt transshipment services during the year. Terminal Pacífico Sur (TPS), its biggest operating company, specialises in container transshipment. Due to recent investment, its 740-meter-long quay can simultaneously berth

two Post-Panamax vessels. Its Quay 2 adds 266 meters for smaller vessels. Its terminal yard of 14.6 footprint hectares is just enough to efficiently mobilise up to 1,000,000 Twenty-foot Equivalent Units a year. Terminal Cerros de Valparaíso (TCVAL) is a much smaller operator. Its facilities count with a terminal yard of only 6.4 hectares and three quays for vessels between 125m and 235m long, mostly transporting break-bulk cargo.

Valparaíso is specialised in the export of fresh fruit. This is a seasonal activity that takes place between November and April which requires handling refrigerated containers (reefers), large areas of reefer racks, and massive energy consumption. The TPS terminal yard includes a refrigerated container stacking capacity of 3,000 units. This infrastructure forced the demolition of ten out-dated warehouse buildings, with only three of the original warehouses remaining due to their historical value. Valparaíso's small transshipment supporting areas in terminals led the state to steer private investment in inland ports to efficiently handle the increasing cargo. To facilitate this private endeavour, the Chilean state built a massively expensive logistical corridor, including tunnels and bridges, to connect the terminals to the inland port area, and from there to the main highway and railway transportation networks (Figure 3).

Similar to other industrial and post-industrial ports that have increasingly become more capital intensive through mechanisation, automatisisation, and digitalisation, Valparaíso has reduced its direct employees and become a specialised logistical hub separated from the city (cf. Hoyle, 1989; Schubert, 2011). As a consequence, the port-city relation has been controversial (Aravena, 2020).

4.3. Representations of the Port and Port-City Relations

During our research, we identified two schematic representations of the heterogeneous meanings that people attach to the port and its relationship to the city (these are summarised in Table 1 at the end of this section). These representations organise, articulate, and condense those meanings, either as a positive or as a negative evaluation of the port impacts on the city. According to the positive representation, the port is a symbol of development, modernity, and constructiveness. It fosters economic activity, economic growth, and creates many direct and indirect jobs for the locals. From this perspective, the port is also an entity that builds and spills positive effects over the urban fabric through its development plans, its best practices, and socially responsible interventions. The port is represented as a modern economic sector and an enclave of efficiency. In summary, the port enhances the life quality of the local *porteños* in what otherwise would be a rather nostalgic, dark, and declining city. The fluidity of exchanges between tourism, commerce, transshipment, and leisure co-exists through the porosity of spaces in the Prat Pier area (Figures 4, 5, and 6). As is shown in the figures below,

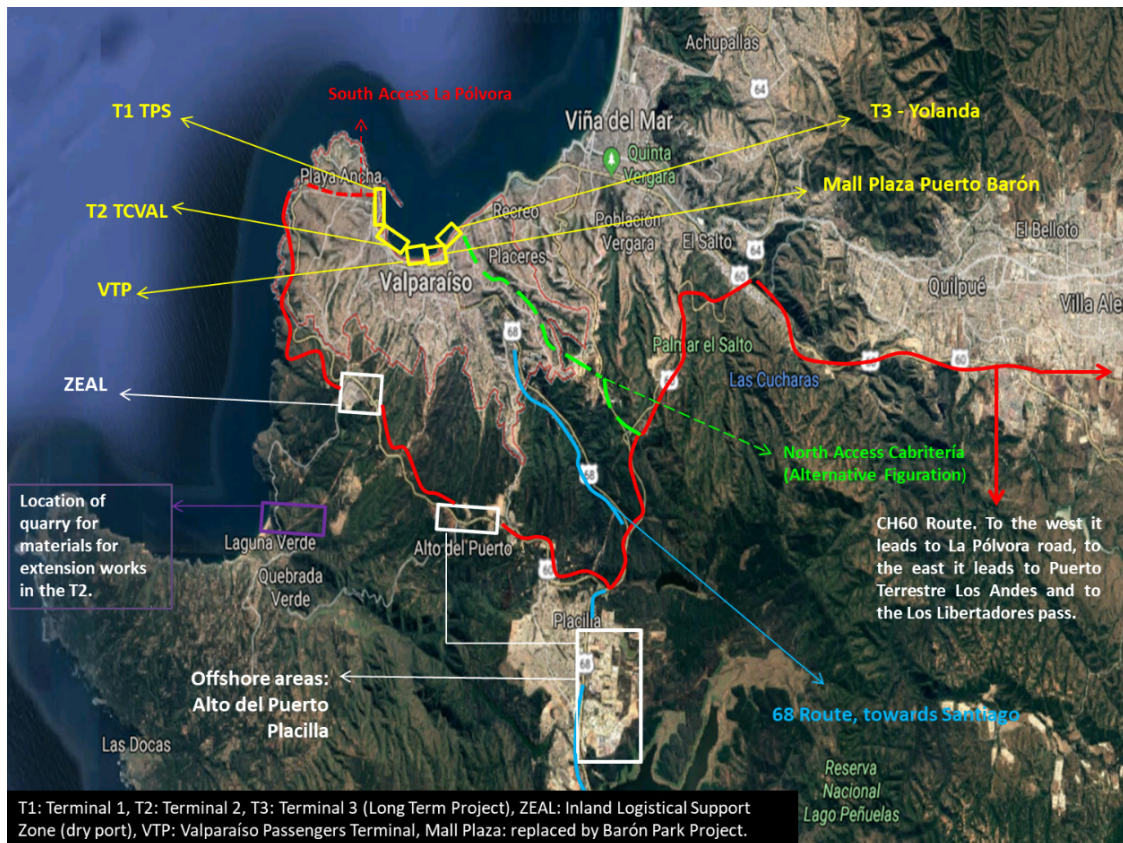


Figure 3. Logistical map of Valparaíso and its hinterland. Source: Own elaboration using Google Earth.

visual porosity and functional porosity are very much present in this section of the port separating the two terminals (Carta, 2012; Ellin, 2006).

This positive view of the port somehow hides the deeply controversial character of the city-port relation. Indeed, modern ports require space, and they prefer coastline-enclosed spaces. Hence, the use of the small

bay and littoral of Valparaíso is a controversial issue that has not been definitively resolved, nor can it be, since its character is structural. While the coastline, according to Chilean law, is public property, conflicting powerful private interests aim to commodify it for their benefit: real estate investors; private port concessionaries; tourism agencies and cruise tourism operators; historical heritage

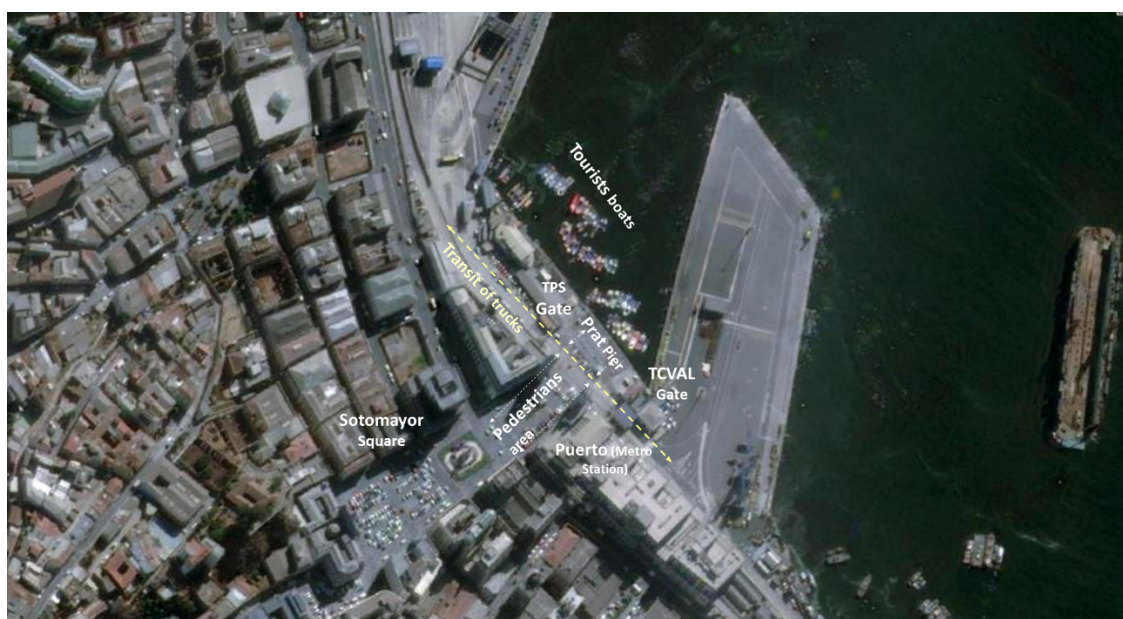


Figure 4. Prat Pier (Muelle Prat). Source: Own elaboration using Google Earth.



Figure 5. Muelle Prat (Prat Pier): A window to the sea. Source: Empresa Portuaria Valparaíso (2020).



Figure 6. Dockworkers and visitors in front of the TPS Gate and pedestrian crossing near the Prat Pier. Source: Hernán Cuevas (photograph taken circa 2016).

defenders; local fishermen, and local commerce, to name but a few. These conflicting lines of interests became visible when local activists and social organisations sued a real estate and commercial project to halt the construction of the so-called Barón Shopping Mall in a traditional

place of Valparaíso, the so-called Barón Park. Over the last three decades, this 12-hectare piece of land went through several phases of appropriation, abandonment, and reterritorialisation. Currently, the area harbours the ruins of the old Simón Bolívar Warehouses, and a few

small enterprises and activities, of which the most notorious is the almost inoperative VTP Passengers Terminal, a US \$9,000,000 underused modern facility recently built for receiving cruise tourists. It is expected that this urban space will soon become a park with a promenade; a place granting access and visual porosity for people's enjoyment (Figure 7). However, particular interests still lobby to reconfigure it as a cargo handling area.

The negative representation of the port constructs it as incomplete or underdeveloped. The so-called modern port deteriorates the littoral and the port cityscape, generating a noisy environment and a logistical enclave separated from the city by walls and piled containers, thus making the ocean inaccessible to city dweller (Figure 8). According to this representation, the port destroys old buildings, extinguishes traditional ways of life, and impacts forms of using and inhabiting the coastal border, such as fishery. In this perspective, the modern port destroyed the past organic relationship between city-dwellers, the old port, and the ocean, thus ruining the natural fluid exchanges between port and city spaces. A remainder of this previous organic interconnection between port, city, local community, and visitors is still vivid in the complex porosity of the Prat Pier area (Figures 5 and 6 above).

Each representation of the port constitutes a patterned cluster organised around pairs of categories that articulate meanings by linking them to longer sequences of argument. In the polarised political culture of Valparaíso, people attribute meanings to the port city and position themselves in the local controversies based on these binary oppositions: the port constructs/the port destroys; modern/backwards; developed/underde-

veloped; positive/negative. We reconstructed these representations that distil people's common ideas about the port-city relationship (Table 1). As with any analytical device, our stylised table misses some of the specificities of participants' accounts and meanings, their ambiguities, and contradictions.

Somehow paradoxically, as in Valparaíso, in many other Chilean port cities, efficient terminals coexist with precarious and impoverished urban areas. This creates social tensions and negatively affects the sustainability of the territory and the quality of life of local communities. Thus, port cities cannot be considered unquestionable factors of local, regional, and national development. Moreover, unexpected urban and socio-territorial conflicts have been emerging between port, city, and hinterland (Budrovich & Cuevas, 2018; Cuevas & Budrovich, 2020). Among these, we have identified the following types:

- Labour-capital conflicts in terminals (choke points, strikes);
- Logistical and commercial controversies between private companies (including logistical controversies);
- Disputes over the use of land in the littoral and port area;
- Socio-territorial conflicts in the hinterland.

Additionally, most Chilean port cities, such as Valparaíso, experience tensions between port and city governance. The lack of institutions of collaborative governance to promote joint master planning inhibits the formulation of a joint vision of port-city development.



Figure 7. Barón Park (Parque Barón). Source: Own elaboration using Google Earth.

Table 1. Cultural representations of the port-city relations.

POSITIVE REPRESENTATION OF THE PORT		NEGATIVE REPRESENTATION OF THE PORT	
More CONCRETE IDEAS (free codes)	More ABSTRACT categories	More ABSTRACT categories	More CONCRETE IDEAS (free codes)
	MODERNISATION/ DEVELOPMENT/ PORT CONSTRUCTS	UNDERDEVELOPMENT/ BACKWARDNESS/ PORT DESTROYS	
Port as economic and development agent Port as a driver of local economic development	Port as a symbol of development	Lack of coordination Underdeveloped institutions and regulations Inefficiencies	There is no coordinating institution Institutional chaos Too many procedures and disorganised services Inefficient use of time and space by the logistical sector
Advantages of regional infrastructure (breakwater, calm waters in Valparaíso Bay)	High productivity High competitiveness		
Efficient cargo transfer, efficient logistics model (FOLOVAP, SILOGPORT, ZEAL)	Transport efficiency and efficacy/ Cargo throughput	Lack of long-term strategic planning	Inefficient coordination of logistical activities (in the chain or logistical line) Lack of strategic view of the sector and the economy Short term planning Backwards technologies Backwards machinery
Perspectives of the steady growth of international commerce Sound port logistics and infrastructure investment plans	Projection of port logistics activity Increase of export Public and private investment	Slow investment in infrastructure Backwards infrastructure	Dodgy designs of motorways, tunnels, and bridges Backwards connectivity and infrastructures Lack of railroad, over-dependency on truck transport Job destruction through technological innovation and automation Labour precarity, flexible labour regime Labour deregulation to minimise costs Informality (<i>pincheros</i>) Uncertain lives Social precarity, social insecurity
Automation and technology as an opportunity for better, qualified jobs Cargo operators are the most stable employers, even in a time of crisis (during the pandemic) Port companies are good employers Port activity has a positive impact on direct and indirect employment (20,000 jobs)	Employment	Precarisation	
	Reterritorialisation	Reterritorialisation	ZEAL is almost empty Port as a closed enclave Port enclave: walled, closed area, port-city separation Port enclave: dramatic reduction of public access to the ocean Precarious urban infrastructure

Economic Dimension and Instrumental Rationality

Table 1. (Cont.) Cultural representations of the port-city relations.

POSITIVE REPRESENTATION OF THE PORT		NEGATIVE REPRESENTATION OF THE PORT	
More CONCRETE IDEAS (free codes)	More ABSTRACT categories	More ABSTRACT categories	More CONCRETE IDEAS (free codes)
	MODERNISATION/ DEVELOPMENT/ PORT CONSTRUCTS	UNDERDEVELOPMENT/ BACKWARDNESS/ PORT DESTROYS	
Port companies are locally prestigious	Positive image of port logistics business (including historical heritage)	Negative interaction between port and city	Port expansion plans increase pressure on the city and territories
Port companies have clean production agreements	Shared value, Corporate Social Responsibility	Risks	Wildfires (city and forestry wild fires). Pollution, floods, accidents
Budget for communitarian projects/ interventions	Best practices		Toxic and/or dangerous cargo
Narrative on Valparaíso's cultural uniqueness	Cultural identity	Cultural Identity	Abandoned cultural sites/buildings
Cruise Tourism Industry			The decline of traditional port culture
Strong port-city identity			Individualism
<i>Peñas</i> , local festivities, local culture, local history			Consumerism
Common culture and collective values			
Workers' solidarity			

— Culture, forms of life —



Figure 8. Walled port of Valparaíso. Source: Hernán Cuevas (photograph taken circa 2016).

4.4. Dock Work and Job Precarity

Historically, casual labour has been a characteristic of dock work worldwide (Davies et al., 2000; Philips & Whiteside, 1985). To guarantee some employment for each worker, Chile trade unions struggled to install a closed shop protection scheme and work regulations to stabilise the number of jobs, hours, and shifts for union members. The effect of this was an inefficient port and expensive transshipment tariffs due to an inflated workforce beyond the size that was needed at any one time.

These changes implied the modification of industrial relations and the role of trade unions and employers to the state, weakening the influence of trade unions and diminishing official welfare measures, manpower, and increasing subcontracting in the port. In sum, labour, the main traditional mechanism of port and city integration, has been weakened and its impact on the local economy reduced (Aravena, 2020; Budrovich & Cuevas, 2018).

Neoliberal labour reforms destroyed the closed-shop and social benefits scheme and implemented a heterogeneous labour regime that established a reserve army of unemployed and multiplied labour positions. Expanding the port labour pool further shifts the balance of power from labour to capital, reducing labour costs and favouring workers mobility and flexibility in the benefit of capital. Different from other countries where dock work modernisation guaranteed minimum wage in return for

greater regularity and discipline at work, in Chile, and in particular in Valparaíso, the majority of the workforce is still covered by a *sui generis* casual work scheme that institutionalises multiple labour positions and precarity (Figure 9).

The implementation of neoliberal policies in Chile between the 1970s and 1990s roughly coincided with containerisation, gigantism in container shipping, enhancement of crane technology, mechanisation, and computerisation. These advances in logistics increased port productivity, but also reduced and rationalised dock employment. Whereas in the 1970s Valparaíso employed roughly 3,000 dock workers, nowadays the two terminals together employ less than 700 workers (Budrovich & Cuevas, 2018).

4.5. Valparaíso and Its Agricultural Hinterland

During the military dictatorship, a selective neoliberal modernisation of rural territories was implemented to deepen the international insertion of Chilean agriculture in the world market according to its comparative advantages. Agribusiness have expanded in Chile since the 1980s under the promotion of a neoliberalisation process of unorthodox state-led policies that favoured the concentration of land property, large-scale monocrop production, and intensive use of energy, water, soil, and agrochemicals. This implied the reterritorialisation

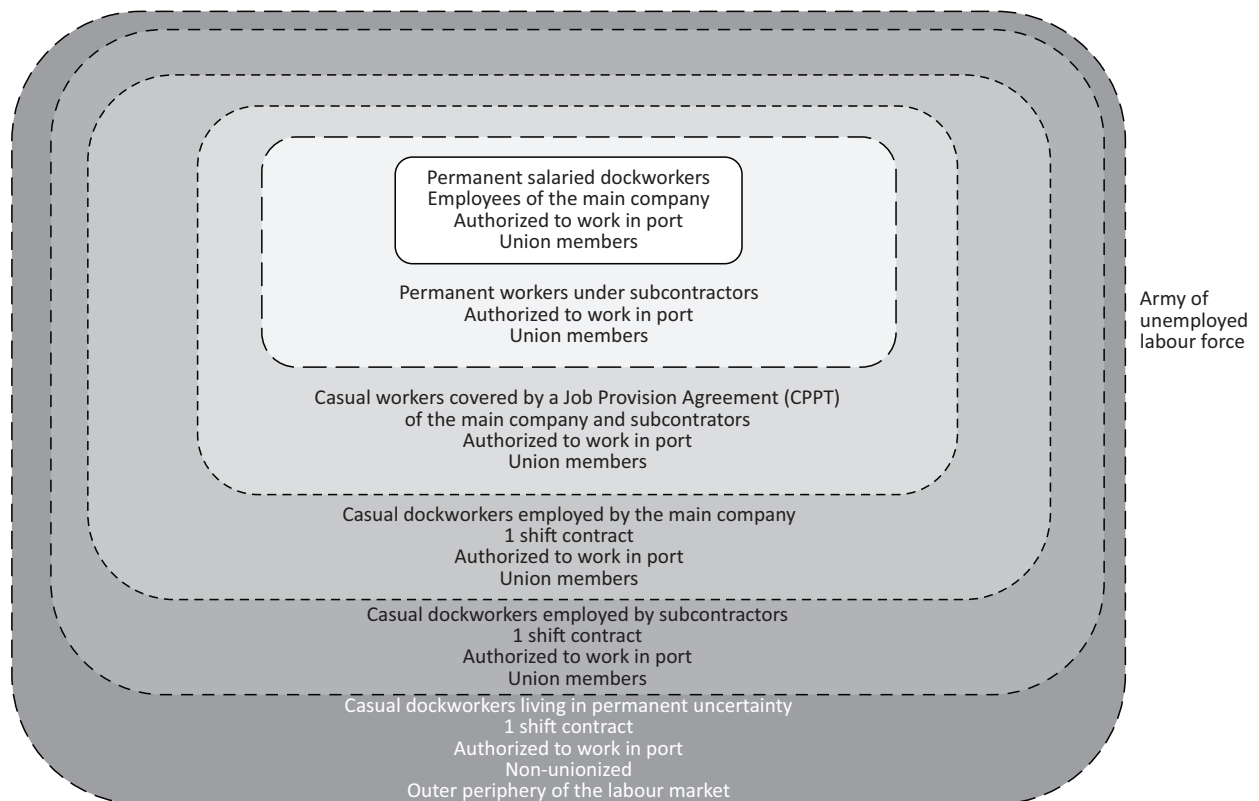


Figure 9. Multiple labour positions in Chilean ports. Source: Own elaboration.

of the countryside and the conversion of traditional local production to the monoculture of fruits for large-scale export. This was fostered by an increasing technification and use of chemical and biotechnological industries. This mode of production has initially favoured a new class of local entrepreneurs and lately to agribusiness transnationals dedicated to the export of fresh fruits. These new globalised producers displaced the local ones and replaced traditional crops and horticulture with fruits such as table grapes (Cavalcanti et al., 2018; Cerda, 2018; Pengue, 2006). This process of reterritorialisation expanded the agricultural frontier to include unproductive land beyond the normal irrigation level of canals and changed land use. The production of table grapes for export, especially in the Elqui and Limarí valleys, is illustrative of all these processes (Murray, 2011; Rovira, 1993; Venegas, 1992).

This authoritarian neoliberal restructuring of agriculture also included the precarisation of rural jobs, initially, through repressive means. In a subsequent phase of labour restructuring, private companies implemented a variety of contract modalities and other flexible and informal patterns of labour relation that segmented the labour force, thus multiplying labour positions. These different categories of workers have different income levels and differentiated access to labour and socioeconomic rights. This heterogeneous and cheap labour regime was functional for the extractive and export-oriented mode of production and the neoliberal regime of accumulation (Cerda, 2018).

Currently, the Chilean Ministry of Agriculture promotes a new development paradigm: transforming Chile into a worldwide agricultural and food power. Exporters associations together with the Chilean Ministry of Agriculture normally collaborate in applied research to improve fruits' features and carry out international marketing and advertising campaigns, like the famous '5 a Day' Programme to promote fresh fruit consumption (WHO, n.d.). Furthermore, Chilean elites backed by the state have successfully disseminated an ideological image of the agro-export sector as a sustainable industry. Hence, the monoculture of fruits cannot be reduced to a simple operation of extraction of raw materials. Instead, it is a sophisticated and technologised productive sector that produces final goods for human consumption, such as fresh seedless table grape. These varieties of grape have been modified to satisfy the global North consumer's insatiable desire for quality and freshness all year long. To match this opulent demand, fruits have to be produced on a large scale, consuming enormous amounts of water and minerals in the valleys of Central Chile (Figure 10), to be later harvested and selected, washed, weighed, stored, and refrigerated for export by some permanent qualified workers and a majority of temporary unqualified workers, most of whom are women and foreign immigrants.

In Chilean valleys, fruit production has a sequence of labour demand organised according to the different harvesting seasons and their respective windows of demand in the global market. A significant number of



Figure 10. Fruit plantations in the Central Valley, Region of Valparaíso, Chile. Source: Courtesy of Francisco Báez (photograph taken circa 2019).

these temporary workers follow this sequence, beginning with cherry, nectarines, plums, and finishing with table grapes. This labour force is made up of precarious workers subjected to a labour regime of induced mobility, flexible contracts, and piece-rate payment. This heterogeneous labour market constitutes many precari-

ous labour positions functional to the expansion agribusiness and the reterritorialisation of non-productive land. This precarious and heterogeneous labour regime institutionalised workers' instability, making them more prone to accept extreme flexibility, mobility, and low payment (Figure 11).

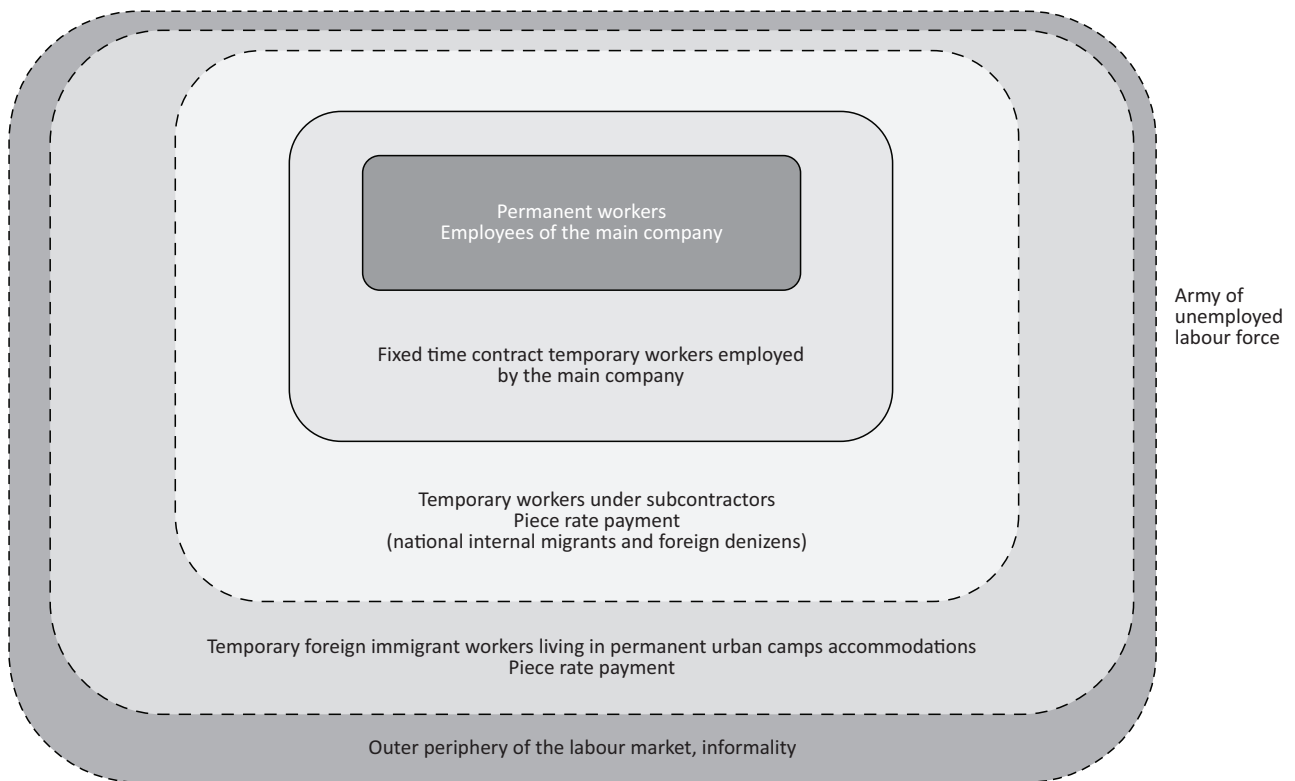


Figure 11. Multiplicity of labour positions in Chilean agribusiness. Source: Own elaboration.

Fruit commercialisation is usually carried out by transnational companies, such as Dole and Unifruti, which also take care of its packaging and labelling for dispatch. Grapes circulate in a logistical chain: they are loaded at origin in plastic unit packages (500g), organised together in cardboard boxes and pallets, or refrigerated containers to later be transported on trucks to one of Central Chile's ports, very likely Valparaíso, from where almost half of the fruit export is dispatched. When embarked, fruits are boarded and organised either in pallets on a reefer vessel (Figure 12) or in container reefers

in a container ship by longshoremen and gantry crane operators. In either case, a small crew of seafarers is responsible for the vessel operation.

Finally, depending on the destination, fruit arrives after approximately 12 days of travel to North America and in around 21 if the destination is Asia. This fresh fruit global commodity chain is a network of labour, production, and circulation processes whose result is the fruit as a finished commodity, ready to be commercialised and consumed (Figure 13).



Figure 12. Dockworkers embarking a reefer vessel in Valparaíso's Terminal 2 (TCVAL). Source: Hernán Cuevas (photograph taken circa 2016).

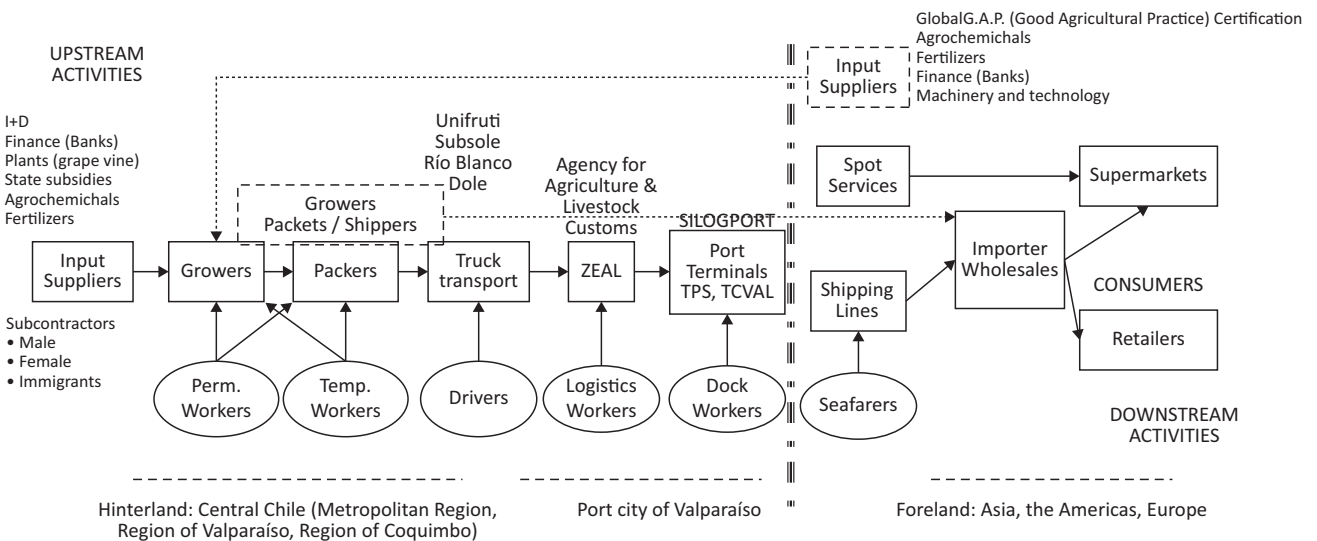


Figure 13. Global commodity chain of table grape. Source: Own elaboration based on Goldfrank (1994).

5. Distilling the Logics of Economic and Social Restructuring in Chilean Port Cities and their Hinterland

Our previous descriptions and analysis of this commodity chain reveal the workings of the interdependent logics of neoliberalisation, precarisation, reterritorialisation, extraction, and logistics. These are materialised in the geographically dispersed operations of capital that are part of the production, circulation, and consumption of fresh fruit. This process, represented as a successful development strategy by the Chilean elite, can also be interpreted as yet another instantiation of a historical asymmetrical exchange pattern involving material and ecological flows with consequences of degradation of natural resources and unsustainable exchanges between city and country, and between the core and the periphery (Clark & Foster, 2009). Through fresh fruit export, agribusiness directs water and minerals from the Chilean countryside, mountains, and basins to subsidise mass consumption in the core. Therefore, together with agricultural extraction, job creation, and wealth accumulation in origin, the Chilean countryside and its logistical hubs such as Valparaíso locally support and suffer the negative effects of this development strategy, namely environmental degradation, soil overexploitation, hydric stress, and social and labour precarisation (Cuevas & Budrovich, 2020). This extractive development strategy produces some less evident but equally related negative effects on urban inequality and port-city uneven development. This ensemble of transforma-

tive logics—neoliberalisation, precarisation, reterritorialisation, extraction, and logistics—provide a configurative explanation of the restructuring of the port city and its hinterland.

Such logics evoke an already existing concept. Our contribution has been to rework them based on, first, our empirical findings and, second, their inherent ambivalence. More importantly, these logics are not only analytical categories; they are also real abstractions (cf. Toscano, 2008) organising economic and social restructuring through their functional coupling. Again, this means that they are not isolated. Rather, they are a configuration or ensemble of multiple forces working together. In what follows, we briefly define these reworked logics (Figure 14). Although we cannot claim that our list is exhaustive, based on our research we can at least conjecture that they seem relevant and, therefore, have significant explanatory power.

5.1. Neoliberalisation

Neoliberalisation is a complex of processes, rationalities, and practices which intensify the commodification and mercantilisation of society and nature. Contrary to common knowledge on neoliberalism, we have found that state interventions play a key role in producing its characteristic unequal regulation of the economy (cf. Brenner et al., 2010). State interventions are pragmatic and always functional to the interests of the business sector. Indeed, Chilean neoliberal capitalism should be defined as hierarchical due to the determining influence of the

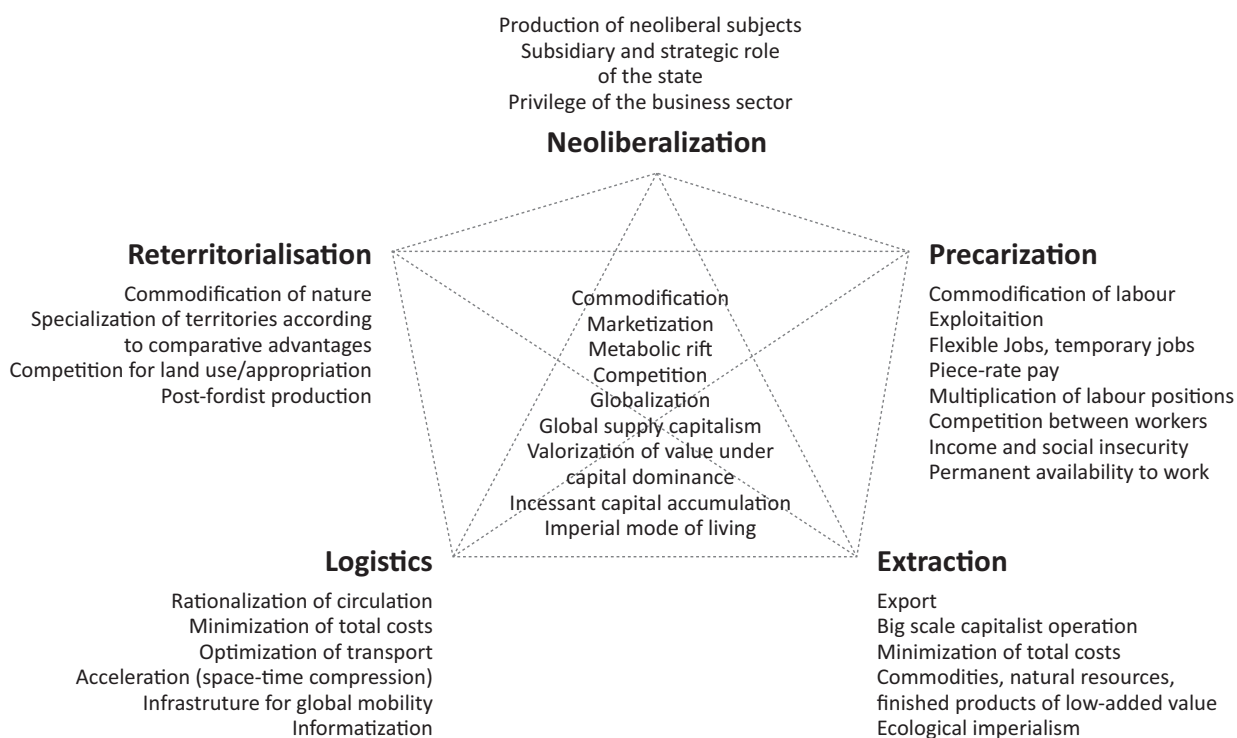


Figure 14. Logics of economic and social restructuring in Chilean port cities–hinterland territories. Source: Own elaboration based on Cuevas and Budrovich (2020).

national oligarchy's holdings and related multinationals (cf. Schneider, 2009). Port investment policies are a fine example of this existing and unorthodox neoliberalism: Whereas the majority of port activities and the construction of infrastructure have been privatised through public bidding, port and littoral property remains public. Somehow differently, (de)regulation of dock work increased its endemic flexibility, following the logic of mercantilisation and state rollback, but allowing a high degree of trade union control of the labour force through particular legislation. The deregulation of labour and the property of land and water in rural areas exacerbated marketisation in favour of agribusiness. Despite the particularities of each sector, a common feature is the expansion of competition as the economic rationality introducing efficiency in all economic processes. This strategy falls within the 1990s dominant discourse on global competitiveness, entrepreneurship, export-driven economy, market-oriented policies, and economic growth as instruments to secure socioeconomic development. This pragmatic neoliberalisation favoured the functional coupling of economic competitiveness with labour flexibility and adaptability, and the focus on natural resources' exploitation as Chile's comparative advantage.

5.2. Precarisation

Precarisation is the process of deterioration, erosion, or worsening of working and living conditions. It can be characterised by the diffusion of insecure low-quality jobs, labour flexibility schemes, multiplication of labour positions in the market, and availability of cheap labour (Dörre, 2009). In agribusiness and ports, precarious work is frequently based on productivity and piece-pay schemes with the effect of accelerating and intensifying work, and inducing competition among workers for payment and scarce jobs. Social inequality and competition work together as motivational engines of social mobility, individualisation, and worker self-reliance, thus promoting a culture of resilience and adaptability to face uncertainty and social change. These effects of labour precarisation go well beyond job quality, impacting negatively on the living conditions of workers and their families. Precarisation also fosters the mobility and flexibility of labour and the production of labour subjectivity that experiences life as rootless and vitally displaced.

5.3. Reterritorialisation

Reterritorialisation refers to the "reconfiguration and re-scaling of forms of territorial organisation" such as cities, productive enclaves, plantations, and logistical infrastructure, among others (Brenner, 1999, p. 432). Against the fascination with the disembedding dimension of globalisation and flow, our approach balances this by also paying attention to some relatively fixed forms of territorial reorganisation of local, regional, and national economies within global capitalism.

Reterritorialisation also takes place as a consequence of capitalist expansion in the form of appropriation of territories that were in the periphery or outside of capitalism, such as natural environments, or through the reincorporation of previously abandoned capitalist space, such as out-dated infrastructure and industrial ruins. Hence, reterritorialisation frequently involves the spatial transformation of operations of capital through successive reappropriations of territories. Port terminals expansion, highways and rail track construction, and land grabbing for intensive and extensive farming in the hinterland are all instances of territorial reorganisation lead by the state, agribusiness, and by port and logistical industries. This reterritorialization has involved a networked articulation of relatively immobile elements, such as infrastructure, land, and littoral through logistical planning and mobile elements, such as transport means. Together with this, the waterfront regeneration and port outdated infrastructures have been reappropriated for tourism, commerce, and leisure, redefining urban spaces and creating a porous waterfront, as the cases of Prat and Barón Piers show (see Figures 4, 5, 6, and 7 above).

5.4. Extraction

Extractive activities can be characterised by their exploitation of large volumes or high-intensity exploitation of primary materials or natural resources that depend on enclave economies and are exported as commodities (Gudynas, 2012). The most dynamic sectors of the Chilean economy, such as mining, agro-industry, fishing, aquaculture, and forestry, are representative of extractive activities that, although anchored locally, are connected globally as part of the global commodity chains that constitute the world geography of capitalism. The social logic underlying these extractive activities often involve the violent appropriation or procurement of the value of raw materials and forms of life that exist in the biosphere, including the surface and depths of the land and ocean (Mezzadra & Neilson, 2015). Although fresh fruit is a final product and not a raw material, the fruit growing sector should be considered an extractive activity under its general orientation towards production for large-scale export, characterised by its intensive and indiscriminate use of natural resources such as water and land (and minerals) at environmentally unsustainable levels (Cuevas & Julián, 2016; Gudynas 2012; Svampa, 2015).

5.5. Logistics

In managerial common language, logistics refers to the part of the supply chain that deals with the planning, implementation, and control of efficient circulation and storage of goods, services, and information from the point of origin to the point of consumption. In this strict sense, logistics refers to the economic sector of cargo transport aiming at the optimisation of freight

transference, and the related services and information. Chile faces important logistical challenges due to its complicated geography and distance from major consumption centres. Extractive activities in Chile are geared towards large-scale production for export, for which ports serve some crucial logistical functions: to ensure that maritime transport can be provided efficiently, securely, continuously, and cheaply to keep export operation costs and the prices of commodities competitive. Together with extraction, logistical operations assume a central position in articulating the intensive and extensive dimensions of global capitalism and how capital continually expands through them. From this wider perspective, logistics is a systemic logic based on calculative rationality aiming at the instrumental organisation and efficient circulation in space and time of materials, information, people, etc., to favour the acceleration of the capitalist operations of the global supply chain (cf. Chua et al., 2018; Cowen, 2014). Logistics can also be seen as a spatial practice that rationalises, organises, and articulates operations of capital in territories to maximise the benefits and minimise the total costs of capital. Logistics allows productive operations to be fragmented, externalised, and scheduled in a deterritorialised manner according to the competitive advantages of each local economy so that the parts and processes can then be articulated for the benefit of capital (Cowen, 2014).

6. Conclusion

We have described and explained the workings of the social processes and forces that gave form to the neoliberal restructuring of the port city of Valparaíso and its hinterland. We identified these as the logics of neoliberalisation, reterritorialisation, precarisation, extraction, and logistics. The functional coupling between these logics has shown positive effects in terms of logistical modernisation, but also some limitations, frictions, and ambivalent effects. Whereas on the positive side neoliberal social and economic restructuring of port terminals in Chile increased their productivity and economic competitiveness, on the negative side this pattern of capitalist modernisation did not benefit port cities such as Valparaíso, marked by territorial inequality, socioecological damage, urban poverty, and a growing sense of closure of the littoral and reduced access to the ocean. These negative externalities and frictions have triggered local political controversies, commercial and economic disputes, labour strikes, and urban and socio-territorial conflicts.

Interestingly, we have found that the driving force behind this logistical modernisation of the port was in the countryside. The productive restructuring of Chilean agriculture that favoured an internationalised and export-oriented agribusiness based on fruit production and the explosive increase of production for export demanded that port and logistical modernisation handle the cargo.

Similar to the ambivalences of neoliberal modernisation and its economic and social restructuring detected in the urban space, in the countryside, some collateral damage was provoked in the form of a high concentration of land property and the institutionalisation of a heterogeneous labour market and masses of precarious temporary workers. These interrelated processes run in parallel to more general privatisation and marketisation of society, land, and nature. The modernisation of the port increased the capacities and accelerated the operations of extraction, production, transportation, and circulation, thus facilitating the global consumption of fruits. These operations impacted urban and agricultural territories, redefining space and the uses of land in the countryside as well as in the littoral, intensifying work and social precarisation, and increasing the command of capital over natural resources, especially over land and water. Our exploratory analysis calls for further research to be conducted on port cities and their hinterlands to better understand how these territories function as integral parts of global supply networks and their relations within the world system.

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Conflict of Interests

The authors declare no conflict of interests.

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