

Tierra del Fuego, Patagonia, Atacama Desert and the Pacific Coast: even today the apperception of Chile remains remote and indistinct. There is no doubt that its geographical location – confined between the Pacific Ocean and the Andes mountain range – has had a role to play in the relative nescience, although it was the former political situation that led to the country's isolation for almost twenty years.

In fact, it is only in these last fifteen years that Chilean architecture has appeared on the international stage, mostly owing to Mathias Klotz, Alejandro Aravena, Smiljan Radic and Pezo von Ellrichsauen, amongst others. Chile can take pride in having built some genuine modern masterpieces whilst having preserved a close relationship with its culture. During the twentieth century Europe provided Chile with sources of inspiration. Le Corbusier had a great influence on Chilean architects despite never having visited the country; his followers, such as Emilio Duhart, Roberto Dávila and the BVCH office, realised buildings which are today internalised deep in the Chilean psyche. The Bauhaus movement served as another influence for architects such as Sergio Larraín.

Overall, this book aims to be a practical reference source of the best architectural works of the twentieth and twenty-first centuries in Chile.

Architectural Guide Chile

Véronique Hours / Fabien Mauduit



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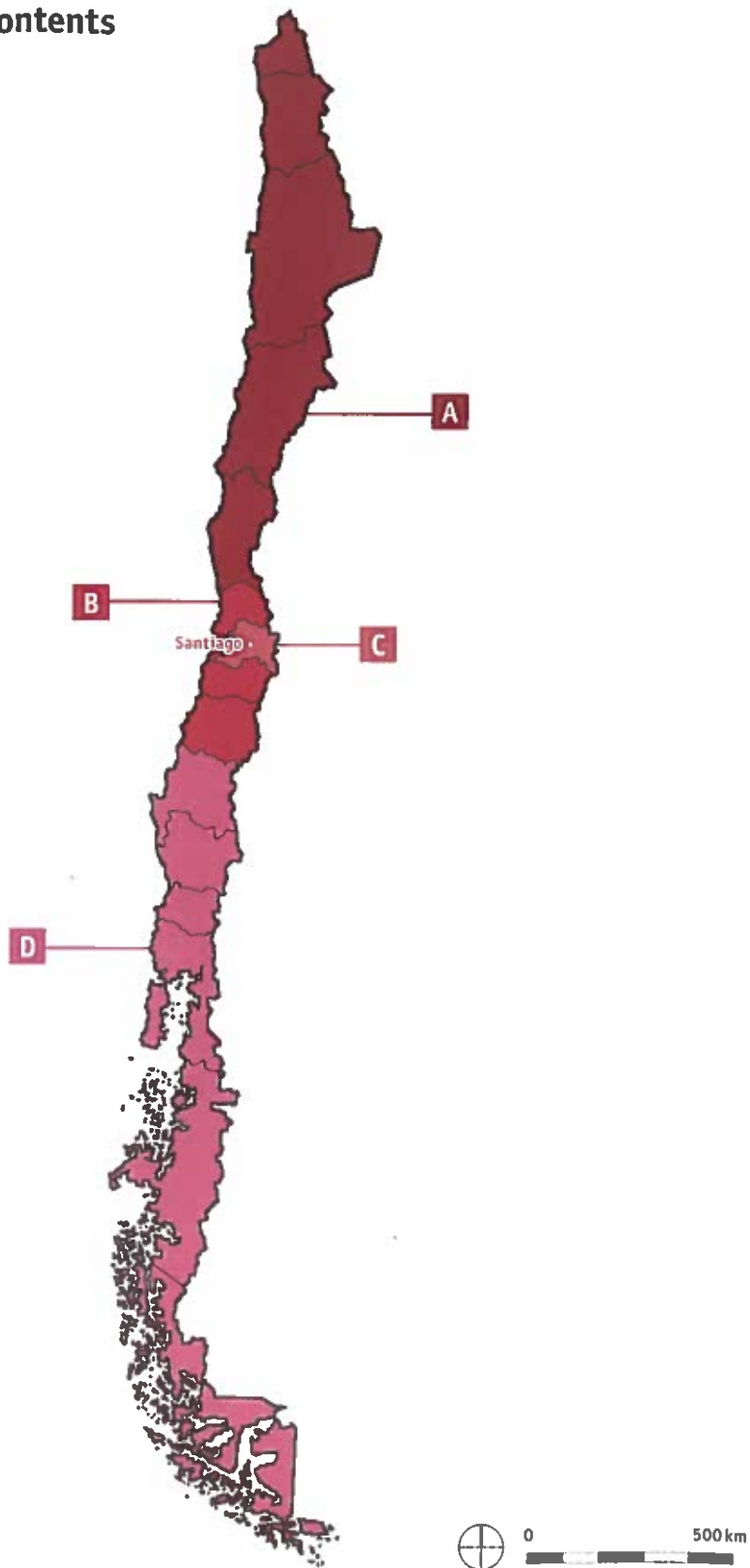
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Véronique Hours, Fabien Mauduit

Special Collaboration with Francisca Muñoz Méndez

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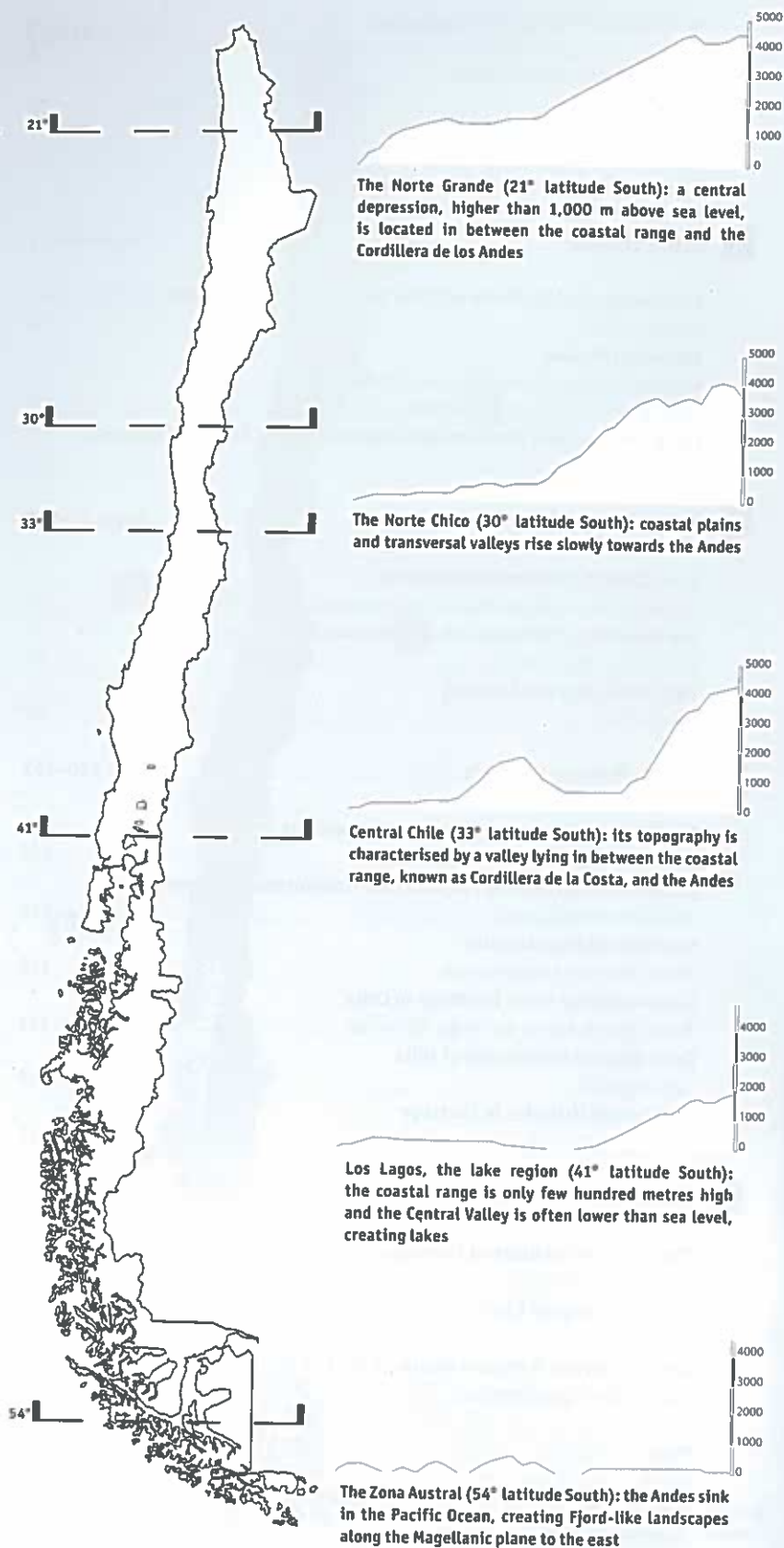
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Architecture in Chile: An Introduction

Véronique Hours, Fabien Mauduit and Francisca Muñoz Méndez

Chile and its architecture

Geographically, Chile is a stretched country, approximately in between latitudes 17°S and 54°S. Its maximum width is 445 km and minimum 90 km. It is limited by the Pacific Ocean on the west side and by the Andes Mountains and Argentina on the east side, beyond the Cordillera. Thus, the country remains isolated with numerous climate conditions. Its inhabitants called it the "End of the World". Because of its extreme location, the geography of this zone of Latin America is constantly changing and often has to cope with earthquakes that sometimes erase entire villages.

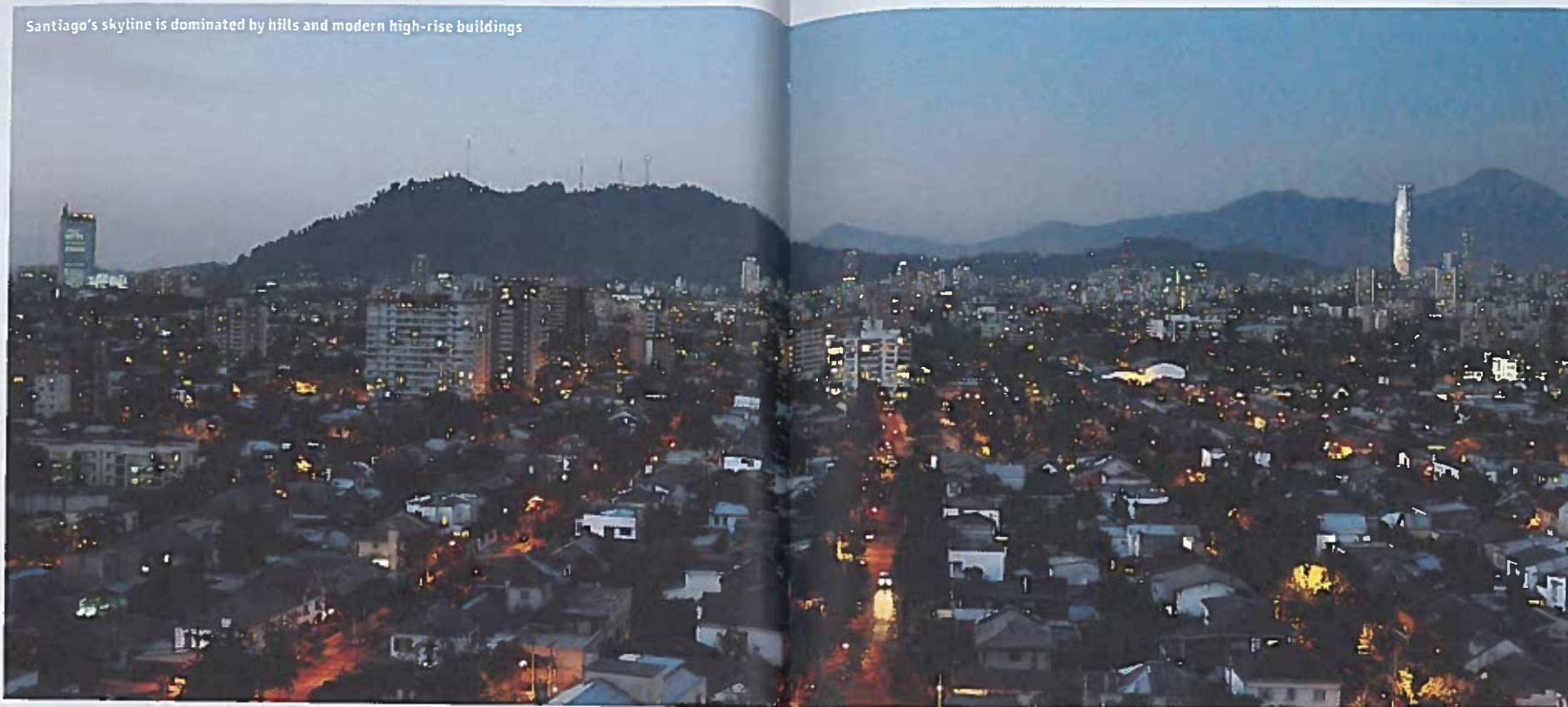
With its elongated shape, Chile's geography can be described as having five typical cross sections, therefore creating a wide variety of landscapes. The north can be divided into two zones, the Norte Grande and the Norte Chico. The Central Zone is noticeable for its particular section highlighting the Central Valley, while the south can also be divided into two zones: Los Lagos and Zona Austral. Politically, Chile is organised in fifteen regions, distributed from north to south. There are currently eighteen million people, six million of which are concentrated within the Metropolitan Region, in the centre of the country.

Chilean architecture developed spontaneously for several centuries. After the arrival of the Spanish troops in the sixteenth century, an urban structure from Europe was established. At this time, buildings were a mix of foreign architecture and local construction systems. The use of earth as a construction material in conjunction with the development of anti-seismic techniques using wood, then metal, are characteristic of Chilean architecture. Chile became independent in 1810. In the mid-nineteenth century, architects and professionals were influenced by European constructions, mainly from France. The goal was to modify the image of the city, such as the capital of Santiago, but also the harbour city of Valparaíso. It was also at that period that architecture became a profession and the first Chilean architect graduated from the University of Chile in 1862. The development of mining brought higher economic income that influenced architecture, changing austere colonial houses into large over-decorated houses with European furniture. At the end of the nineteenth century and start of the twentieth century, Chilean architects went to study in France as well as other European countries, bringing back historicist architecture. Between 1910 and 1915, several iconic buildings were inaugurated to celebrate the first centenary of



Traditional construction, Pisco Elqui Valley

Santiago's skyline is dominated by hills and modern high-rise buildings



Artequin Museum, Santiago

independence. During the twentieth century, Chile started to create its own architecture inspired by foreign models in general, but with its own signature. The country experienced an economic expansion that led to the emergence of able professionals and a better architecture. To this were added political decisions regarding public projects, such as large public buildings, important infrastructures, and housing politics, amongst others.

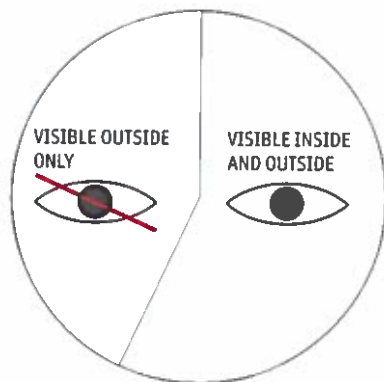
The constant expansion of urbanism and architecture ground to a halt in 1973 with the military coup. The dictatorship, which was to last seventeen years, ended the development of community housing managed by the State. The development was driven by private interests who bought important plots of land and built insignificant buildings. Urban regulations were also introduced, e.g. with regard to height, densification, isolated constructions, and natural light control, which are characteristics of Chilean architecture. The result was a series of low-quality buildings with neither aesthetic nor urban contributions. In the 1990s, with

democracy restored, new plans were developed regarding mainly housing, education, health, and justice that resulted in public and private competitions. From this point on, Chilean architecture finds once again a presence, with its own signature recognised around the world and acknowledged in various publications. Finally, the other important distinctive character of Chilean architecture is its connection to the seismic situation of the country. The frequent occurrence of earthquakes across the whole length of Chile forced the development of original construction techniques that are reflected not only in building shapes and materiality, but also the way in which the city is growing. Right now Chile has more than forty schools of architecture, with around 2,000 architects graduating every year. However, the economy is not able to cope with this figure; instead of architectural projects, many new graduates end up working on public constructions, mainly housing and district developments, or on private developments, such as office buildings and high-density housing.

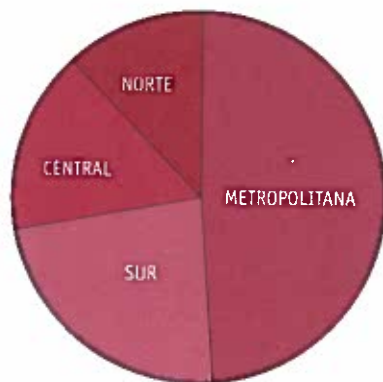


Regional Museum of Magallanes, Punta Arenas

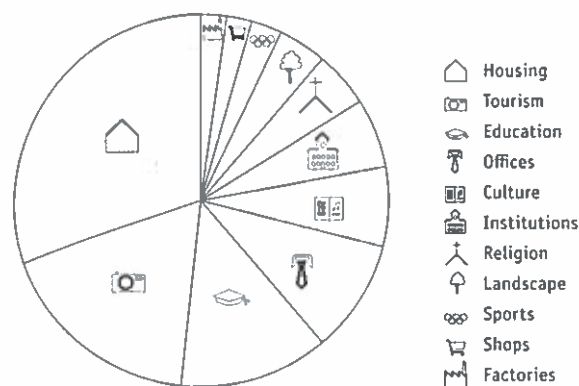
Visitability



Buildings per region



Types of programmes



A short presentation of the guide

This guide is in some way an external look at Chilean architecture. However, by living and working with local architects, our distant perception of this country morphed into inside knowledge. Contributions by local and foreign architects allow for a balanced and varied selection, representative of the last hundred years. The *Architectural Guide Chile* compiles 164 projects, spread all along the country. For an increased understanding, the works have been arranged in four geographical zones: North, Central, Metropolitan and South. Each zone is presented with a brief introduction and essays related to its architecture. The contributions of various authors on diverse topics complement the selected works by focusing on Chilean

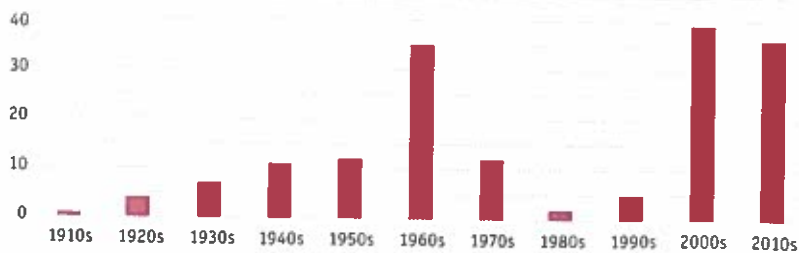
architecture and defining it in a better way. Like many capital cities throughout the world, Santiago is the centre of the country in all aspects. About 40 per cent of the country's population lives there. Therefore, almost half of the major Chilean projects are located in the Metropolitan Zone. The other half is evenly distributed among the three other zones: North, Central and South.

One of the main selection criteria was that projects should be accessible or visible from the outside. Therefore, more than half of the selected projects can easily be visited. Several interesting constructions had to be removed from the selection because they were not publicly accessible. One exception was made for Teresa Moller's project in Punta Pite, an interesting insertion into the landscape

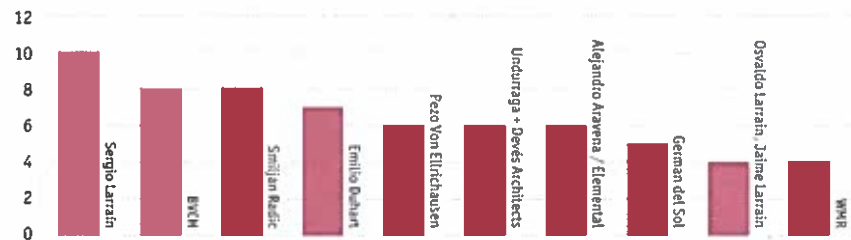
alongside the ocean waterfront, accessible only through a private property, or perhaps by the sea.

In terms of programmes, the selection is dominated by housing projects, including both individual and collective housing which represent a third of the works described here. Projects related to tourism, mainly hotels, are the second most represented type of constructions, before educational buildings. Other types of programmes such as offices, cultural buildings, or public institutions follow, covering less than 10 per cent each. Looking at the years of construction of the selected buildings, we can pinpoint – rising from the 1930s to the 1960s – the emergence of modern architecture in Chile. The following decades show a dramatic decrease in the construction of buildings, from the

1970s to the 1990s, due to the military regime. During the last two decades, the return of democracy is mirrored by a great number of projects shown in this book which highlight the vitality of today's Chilean architecture. Another fact to take into account relates to the authorship issue: 40 per cent of the selected works were designed by only ten architects, including several masters from the modern movement such as Sergio Larraín, the office of Bresciani, Valdés, Castillo and Huidobro, or Emilio Duhart, and contemporary architects, such as Smiljan Radic, Pezo von Ellrichshausen or Undurraga Devés. This final selection reveals a great diversity of architectures, the country's different socio-economic moments and the contributions of key architects all across Chile.



Buildings per decade



Buildings per authorship (top ten)