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WHEN FAMILY LIVES NEARBY: KINSHIP,
SOCIOECONOMIC CONDITIONS AND
RESIDENTIAL CONFIGURATIONS IN
SANTIAGO, CHILE.

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TITLE	When family lives nearby: kinship, socioeconomic conditions and residential configurations in Santiago, Chile.
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ABSTRACT	<p>The study of residential proximity within kinship in the Chilean urban context has focused particularly on household coresidence, a phenomenon locally called <i>allegamiento</i>. The emphasis on a political-scientific approach to <i>allegamiento</i> has contributed to viewing residential proximity as a "matter of poverty". In this paper I discuss this idea as a "self-fulfilling prophecy", caused by two sources of reductionism. First, household coresidence has been taken as the main unit of analysis for research on residential proximity. Second, empirical research has been conducted only within poor-family contexts. Carrying out (in progress) ethnographic fieldwork in Santiago, I propose to overcome these limitations by employing two strategies. First, by enlarging the unit of analysis of residential proximity through the concept of "residential configuration of proximity". Second, by widening the scope of socioeconomic life conditions through a comparison of "residential configurations of proximity" across heterogeneous socioeconomic settings. By a preliminary comparison between impoverished and wealthy families I met, I show that coresidence is only a partial aspect of the residential proximity phenomenon involving a variety of <i>quasi</i>-coresidence practices within kinship. Afterwards, I point out that the quest for residential proximity within close kinship, or <i>allegamiento</i> in its large meaning, is not exclusive to poor families, but is also a "matter" for Santiago's wealthy families. Finally, I suggest that this residential proximity takes place on different specific morphologies, unfolding trajectories and relational patterns, according to socioeconomic opportunities and constraints.</p>
KEYWORDS	Urban kinship. Residential proximity. Coresidence. Strategies of survival.

RESUMEN

En Chile, el estudio de la proximidad residencial familiar en contexto urbano se ha focalizado en la coresidencia entre hogares, fenómeno localmente llamado *allegamiento*. El énfasis en un enfoque político-científico del *allegamiento* ha contribuido a observar la proximidad residencial como un "asunto de los pobres". En este artículo, planteo que esta idea es una "profecía auto-cumplida", causada por dos tipos de reduccionismo. Primero, la coresidencia entre hogares ha sido considerada como la unidad de análisis fundamental de la proximidad residencial familiar. Segundo, la investigación empírica ha sido conducida sólo en contextos de pobreza. A través de una investigación etnográfica (aún en proceso) realizada en Santiago, propongo superar estas limitaciones por medio de dos estrategias. Primero, ampliando la unidad de análisis de la proximidad residencial, gracias al concepto de "configuración residencial de proximidad". Segundo, ampliando la heterogeneidad de las condiciones socioeconómicas en las cuales la proximidad residencial familiar es observada. Como resultado de una comparación preliminar entre familias santiaguinas pobres y acomodadas, muestro que la coresidencia es sólo un aspecto parcial de un fenómeno de proximidad residencial que comprende una variedad de prácticas de casi-coresidencia entre parientes cercanos. Luego, señalo que la búsqueda de proximidad residencial familiar, o *allegamiento* en un sentido amplio, no es exclusivo de las familias pobres, sino que es también un "asunto" de las familias ricas de Santiago. Por último, sugiero que esta proximidad residencial toma forma en morfologías, trayectorias de formación y patrones relacionales específicas, de acuerdo con las oportunidades y restricciones socioeconómicas de las familias.

PALABRAS CLAVE

Parentesco urbano.
Proximidad residencial.
Coresidencia.
Allegamiento.
Estrategias de sobrevivencia.

I presented this paper at OIKOS Seminar at the Department of Anthropology of Princeton University (May 14-16, 2015). It summarizes some insights of my still in-process PHD dissertation (at the École Normale Supérieure of Paris). My thanks to Benoît de l'Estoile and Felipe Machado for their support and stimulating suggestions for the writing process, and to William Gallagher for his generous help in correcting the English version. This work was financed by CONICYT (Government of Chile), the Pontifical Catholic University of Chile and IRIS (EHESS-CNRS France).

I. The "allegamiento approach": the influence of housing policies and survival strategy theories on family residential proximity research in Chile.

Studies on intra-kinship residential proximity in contemporary urban Chile focus exclusively on a phenomenon called *allegamiento*¹. The term describes coresidence between two or more nuclear families as the "the strategy used by households [...] to cope with the lack of housing by sharing a dwelling with another household"². Previous to becoming a technical concept, *allegamiento* was already an indigenous notion used since the end of 19th century in order to refer to a specific residential arrangement (Academia Chilena de la Lengua, 2010; Morales, 2006; Subercaseaux, 1986). During that period, Chile was undergoing a strong rural-urban migration movement (de Ramón, 1985) in which thousands of former tenant farmers (*inquilinos*) and their families settled irregularly in huge non-urbanized zones of Santiago's periphery (Hidalgo, 2002). In that context there emerged a new and more specific usage of the Spanish word *allegarse*, which generally means "to bring together persons or things" (Real Academia Española, 2012)³, to indicate those (the *allegados*) who are temporarily hosted by others (relatives, acquaintances) in the migratory process. This term gained a pejorative connotation associated with precarious living conditions such as overcrowding, lack of hygiene, and personal conflicts within a population highly impacted by unemployment, alcoholism and domestic violence (de Ramón, 1985, 2000; Hidalgo, 2002).

1. The political-scientific construction of *allegamiento*

This specific meaning of *allegamiento* is also used in others countries of Hispanic America⁴, but Chile seems to be the only one where it was adopted by the technical linguistic field. There, a standardized concept and measures of *allegamiento* are the outcome of a long-term collaboration between housing policy-makers and scholars that began in the 1980's, in the midst of a growing debate about the urban housing deficit among poor populations (Sagredo, 2013). At that time, and as a part of the political reforms of the dictatorship, previous government permissiveness to

¹ Arriagada, Icaza, & Rodríguez, 1999; Bustamante & Sagredo, 2009; Castillo, 2004; Centro de Investigación Social (CIS), 2014; Espinoza, 1993; Espinoza & Icaza, 1991; France, 1991; Green, 1988; Mayol, 1988; Mercado, 1992, 1993; Ministerio de Hacienda, 2008; Necochea, 1987; Peliowski, 1993; Prieto, 2001; Saborido, 1985; Santa María, 1988; Tapia, Araos, & Salinas, 2012; Torche, 1993; Urmeneta, 1993; Wilson, 1985.

² See: www.observatorio.ministeriodesarrollosocial.gob.cl/casen_def_vivienda.php (last consultation 18/03/2015). Free translation.

³ "Allegamiento: [...] Reunión o concurso de personas o cosas allegadas, [...] Aproximación, unión, estrechez [...]" (Real Academia Española, 2012)

⁴ In Argentina, Puerto Rico and Uruguay (Real Academia Española, 2012).

irregular land occupation and self-construction of housing came to an end. Programs of massive regularization and eradication of illegal settlements abruptly unveiled the lack of housing among thousands of urban families (Castillo & Hidalgo, 2007; Necochea, 1987; Santa María, 1988). *Allegamiento* was then depicted as an "environmental catastrophe" (Santa María, 1988).

Since then, *allegamiento* has become a synonym for housing deficit⁵ and since 1990 it has been systematically measured by the National Household Survey⁶. In spite of its descriptive character, the concept of *allegamiento* still bears pejorative moral connotations. In this sense, it can be considered as a "target notion" (*notion cible*, in French), a category that identifies a phenomenon as a problem that has to be eradicated (de L'Estoile, 2015, p. 11). As a consequence, analyses often go beyond the identification and measurement of a deficient situation in an economical-material sense and assume a moral qualification of *allegamiento* as a family morphology that obstructs the development of the ideal nuclear-family model (Mercado, 1992, 1993; Wilson, 1985).

Chilean academic research on residential family morphologies has been largely subordinated to political concerns about *allegamiento*. The same standardization of the concept is applied identically in quantitative and qualitative fieldwork. This fact has made it possible to gather cumulative knowledge regarding some long-term trends of co-residence, but risks seriously restraining the full scope of intra-kinship residential proximity in urban Chile. Consequently, most Chilean social research on the subject suffers from some important limitations, of which I highlight three.

The first limitation is related to the spatial scale and the unit of analysis used for observing spatial proximity between kin-related families: administrative delimitation of dwelling and household, respectively. Thus, household coresidence is taken as the main unit of analysis of family residential proximity and little attention is paid to morphologies that go beyond the physical boundaries of a given dwelling-place. The second limitation is the economic bias implied in this approach. On one hand, it overestimates economic aspects used to explain family residential proximity, both of deficient material conditions of life and economic rationality of individuals. On the other hand, it neglects the role played by kinship rules and practices. This limitation seems to be symptomatic of a very generalized blindness about kinship within housing policies and research in Chile (Araos, 2008; Tapia, Araos, & Salinas, 2012). The third limitation is that this perspective makes a judgment of *allegamiento* as a non-suitable family morphology. By opposing nuclear and extended families in moral terms, (as more and less suitable models, respectively), *allegamiento* is treated as a "target notion", that is, something to be measured and identified in order to be eliminated.

In summary, currently the narrow and pejorative understanding of residential proximity as *allegamiento* (or co-residence) predominates in the Chilean political and academic field (and also in the common use of the language). Cross-cutting these interrelated linguistic and social fields, *allegamiento* is the mainstream interpretative approach to studying family residential proximity in Chile. In doing so, as I show in the next section, researchers assume the association between family

⁵ In Chile, official measures of quantitative housing deficit add two components. The first is the estimated number of households and nuclear families that don't have an exclusive dwelling (named *allegados*) and that are supposedly able to hold a residentially autonomous life. The second is the estimated number of dwellings classified as materially "irretrievable" (Moreno, 2013).

⁶ CASEN is the National Survey of Socioeconomic Household Characterization, carried out by the Ministry of Social Development. CASEN is a probabilistic national, regional and communal representative survey, administered bi- or tri annually since 1990. For details, see: http://observatorio.ministeriodesarrollosocial.gob.cl/casen/casen_obj.php

residential proximity and poverty and embrace the postulates of household strategies of survival theories.

2. Household strategies of survival, residential proximity and poverty

Most Chilean research on *allegamiento* explains family residential proximity as a “household strategy of survival”, thus reinforcing some of the aspects mentioned above. This perspective was very influential in Latin America during the 1980s and 1990s. According to Wellace (2002), the “household strategies” notion was first used by research conducted in Latin America and Africa in the 1970s and 1980s dealing with economic behavior of the urban poor, notably in informal economy frameworks. Along the same line, Schmink (1984) maintains that Duke and Pastrana used the “family survival strategies” concept for the first time in 1973, in a study of poor families living in Santiago de Chile's periphery. According to the author, the household strategies of survival approach has been explicitly fostered in Latin America since 1978 by the Program of Social Research on Population in Latin America (PISPAL). Authors in this line argue that in order to cope with critical material scarcity, individuals turn to kindred in order to restructure residential morphology and to reduce living expenses at the household level. This viewpoint emphasizes the individual agency ruled by economic maximization rationality⁷ within a context of strong structural restriction (Fontaine & Schlumbohm, 2000; Schmink, 1984). Thus, residential choices that are apparently harmful at the individual or nuclear family-level (due to a lack of privacy and autonomy) appear to be rational in the light of the optimization of collective material well being (Arriagada, 2003; Schmink, 1984). I stress the important influence of the ethnographic work of Larissa de Lomnitz on survival strategies in a Mexican shantytown on later research in Chile and Latin America (Lomnitz, 1975, 1977). Lomnitz thoroughly describes the formation of “complex domestics units” as the neuralgic core of kindred networks, explaining them as “socioeconomic mechanisms” substituting lack of social assurance and “positively resolving adaptation problem in a hostile urban environment” (De Lomnitz 1975, p. 27–28. Free translation from Spanish version).

I propose to distinguish two stances within Chilean research based on survival strategies. The first has an economic-quantitative orientation, while the second is closer to social anthropology and ethnography. In the former, authors are often interested in comparing household morphologies throughout all socioeconomic settings, but consider family residential proximity strictly as coresidence. Nevertheless, it has been suggested for other neo-local residence's cultural contexts (Bonvalet, 2003; Bonvalet & Lelièvre, 1995; Pfirsch, 2008), in Chile sharing the same residence is more frequent among lower income households. Even if these results seem to support the survival strategies hypothesis, they are blind to non-coresidential morphologies of proximity (Araos, 2013). On the other hand, authors conducting socio-anthropological qualitative research are more interested in intra-kinship solidarity practices that go beyond shared dwelling boundaries. However, under “popular classes” or “urban marginality” frameworks, these observations are always restricted to poverty settings.

Therefore, either by reducing the definition of residential proximity to coresidence or by restricting the scope of analysis to families with low socioeconomic conditions, quantitative and qualitative

⁷ Nevertheless, this economic maximization rationality could be conceived differently, according to disciplinary orientations, with an oscillating stress on deliberated reasoning processes of individuals, at one end, and on implicit *habitus* reasoning process, at the other (Fontaine & Schlumbohm, 2000)

survival strategies stances end up confirming a "self-fulfilled prophecy" in which residential proximity is considered *a priori* as a "matter of poverty".

II. Overcoming *allegamiento*: the study of "residential configurations of proximity" across heterogeneous socioeconomic settings.

My research seeks to study intra-kinship residential proximity in Santiago by overcoming some of the limitations of the *allegamiento* approach. I propose to broaden the research subject in a dual sense: by enlarging the definition of residential proximity, and by comparing cases from heterogeneous socioeconomic settings.

1. Beyond coresidence: from "extended *allegamiento*" to "residential configurations of proximity"

During my first fieldwork among poor families living in two shantytowns in Santiago⁸, I reconstructed the "leaving-home" process (*décohabitation*, in French) of some families⁹. For each nuclear family, what seemed to be a process towards gaining residential independence at a narrow spatial-scale of dwelling, from a larger spatial scale turned out to be a reorganization of everyday relationships. By settling near to the former residence -e.g. in the same building, on the same street, or on a nearby street-, the members of kin-related families that had lived together under the same roof could still visit and interact each other on a daily basis. To account for this, I first proposed the concept of "extended *allegamiento*" (*allegamiento ampliado*). By following the principle of "the closer the better" (*mientras más cerca mejor*), some families leave the host home (usually, the parental home of one of the spouses or partners) to gain residential independence but in a "soft way"; that is, without a substantive disruption with the former configuration (Araos, 2008). In that same direction, some scholars propose the idea of *quasi*-coresidence: residential arrangements that allow and foster partial sharing of day-to-day life between relatives living in separate dwellings (Pfirsch, 2008, 2009, 2012) (Attias-Donfut & Renaut, 1994). The search for *quasi*-coresidence arrangements was one of the reasons that some individuals I met had refused or ignored social housing offers. Social housing opportunities were often a synonym of geographical remoteness and social isolation and individuals preferred to wait longer in order to be able to settle near their kinship networks. Aspiration for "extended *allegamiento*" suggests that opposing nuclear and extended family appraisal is not always suitable¹⁰. In fact, both nuclear family autonomy and "local

⁸ In 2006 and 2007 I met with fifteen poor family groups that were residentially related (mostly co-residents) who lived in two shantytowns of Santiago. For more details, see my Master's dissertation (Araos, 2008).

⁹ In the majority of my fieldwork cases, coresidence and *quasi*-coresidence practices take place between members of a "descendant group" of three or four generations, which Lomnitz and Lizaur (1986) call "large family" (*gran familia*, in Spanish).

¹⁰ In his classic work on Brazilian working class residential patterns, KlassWoortmaan (cf. Woortmann, 1980) showed that building a *casa*, as the residential space for a nuclear family, is not opposed to building a *moradia*, as the residential space for extended kinship. On the contrary, within the favela and social housing settings studied by the author, individuals often desired to settle their own family's residences within a network of kin members living nearby.

family entourage" (Bonvalet, 2003) could be simultaneously promoted through specific residential arrangements that allow a compromise between them.

Pioneer ethnographic studies conducted within different contemporary urban settings have shown the inadequacy of reducing residential proximity morphologies to coresidence (Lomnitz & Lizaur, 1978; Mitchell, 1972, 1973; Willmott & Young, 1957). However, as with my own concept of "extended *allegamiento*", these studies do not propose alternative concepts to actually replace coresidence as the fundamental unit of analysis. Finding a new unit of analysis became inevitable when I conducted a second fieldwork among wealthy families in Santiago¹¹. In these cases, the concept of "extended *allegamiento*" was no longer appropriate since sharing the same residence was not the cornerstone of residential proximity, but rather exceptional and transitory. Residential proximity involving several separated dwellings was instead the salient morphology. In spite of that, individuals who lived in different dwellings preserved reciprocal and stable daily interactions and considered themselves to be "living together".

So far, the concept of "residential configuration of proximity" has allowed me to carry out an adequate analysis of my fieldwork. I have developed it based on two principal sources. In his research on Italian upper-class families living in Naples, the French geographer Thomas Pfirsch (2008, 2009, 2012) uses the concept of "residential configuration" based on Norbert Elias' concept of "social configuration" (Elias, 1991). Stating that "individual residential settlement and mobility are affected by residential localization and mobility of other family members" (Pfirsch, 2008, p. 205), Pfirsch stresses the spatial dimension of daily interdependent practices between kin-related domestic units. In his research conducted in a Brazilian popular-class zone in Bahia, Louis H. Marcelin (1996, 1999) proposes the concept of "configuration of houses"¹². He underlines the cognitive dimension of residential interdependence by defining it as "a set of houses linked by an ideology of family and kinship" (Marcelin, 1999, p. 33).

My own still in-progress definition of "residential configuration of proximity" takes into account elements from these two approaches. On the one hand, this concept describes the fact that a number of kin-related families reciprocally maintain a minimal geographical closeness that is not defined primarily by a given measurable distance but by a relational one: that of being able to easily visit each other on a daily basis. On the other hand, this concept captures the experiencing dimension of proximity inherent to families that share the same setting of common daily life. In other words, individuals do not just live "close to" others but rather "with" and "together". Even if their houses are not contiguous, the everyday face-to-face relationship creates a sense of unit that enables individuals to distinguish between "us" and "the others"¹³.

¹¹ In 2013 I met with eight residentially related groups of wealthy families (mostly non co-residents) living in the upper-class zone of Santiago, the "Northeast triangle". For more details, see my Master's dissertation (Araos, 2013).

¹² It is interesting to note that Marcelin's concept of "configuration of houses" is also in debt with Norbert Elias's concept of "social configuration", as Eugenia Motta has pointed out (Motta, 2014, pp. 127–128).

¹³ My own definition of "residential configuration" differs in a certain way from the reformulation of Marcelin's "configuration of houses" proposed by Eugênia de Motta (2014). As I understand it, Motta's concept depicts relations between houses "taking a particular house as a reference point", but where "houses related to each other do not constitute discrete units and the relations between them are not always expressed through the language of kinship" (Motta, 2014, p. 127). Considering specificities of my fieldwork, I prefer to call these latter situations "residential networks", distinguishing them from "residential configurations" in the Marcelin's sense. I think this distinction is especially relevant when studying very segregated urban settings,

Taking into account both elements, I propose residential configuration of proximity as a spatial, relational and cognitive unit of analysis. It can be drafted by observing practices that reveal the setting up of a living-together process between kin-related families, whether encompassing one or several residential units. By starting from this definition, I could consider as "equivalent" a wide range of family residential morphologies that so far Chilean research has taken as absolutely heterogeneous: several families living in the same dwelling; living in adjacent but separated dwellings; living in separated non adjacent dwellings, even sometimes distanced by some kilometers; or several combinations of these possibilities.

2. Beyond poverty: comparing across heterogeneous socioeconomic settings

Understanding intra-kinship proximity as "residential configurations" has allowed me to study this subject beyond poverty settings and has also pushed me to reinterpret the role of material constraints and opportunities. I propose that the comparison between different socioeconomic conditions of life must consider not just "factual" residential differences in themselves, but "factual" in the light of the "possible"¹⁴. More specifically, this implies an effort to distinguish between the "factual", the "feasible" and the "desired"¹⁵.

Poor families I met in Santiago were strongly dependent on social policies for access to single-family housing. Given the specific conditions of Chilean housing and urban development policies (Brain, Iacobelli, & Sabatini, 2006; Sugranyes, 2005), the "feasible" options of poor families in Santiago are often reduced to two opposing alternatives: overcrowded coresidence with ascendant family members or geographical remoteness from them. Even though intermediate alternatives were not easily available for the families I met¹⁶, to combine house independence with kindred proximity was still the "desired" scenario. As a remotely realistic but highly desired possibility, it contributes to shape the *de facto* residential morphologies. For example, families with the opportunity of access to social housing had chosen to take palliative decisions to cope with coresidence side effects in order to preserve the possibility of having a chance to move nearby in the indefinite future¹⁷. Based on this finding, I became interested in comparing the role of the "feasible" and the "desired" in shaping "factual" residential morphologies across families dealing with highly heterogeneous socioeconomic restrictions and opportunities. By conducting fieldwork with families belonging to the 5% wealthiest of Santiago and living in upper-class neighborhoods, I was able to carry out a preliminary exercise

such as the city of Santiago.

¹⁴ Eugenia Motta (2014) and Benoît de l'Estoile (2014) have recently proposed very suggesting analysis in a similar direction.

¹⁵ While "factual" corresponds to already realized possibilities, the "feasible" and the "possible" constitute a horizon of still unrealized possibilities which however, through anticipation (as a conscious project or "pre-reflexive *protention*"), shape present choices (Bourdieu, 2003; Schütz, 1973). As a part of a horizon of the possible, "feasible" corresponds to currently available alternatives that individuals face and evaluate at a given moment, whereas "desirable" corresponds to alternatives not presently available, but considered as someday feasible ideals.

¹⁶ The process of living-home nearby that I described above as "extended *allegamiento*" often occurs very late in the family-life cycle and is considered by them as a kind of "privilege".

¹⁷ People waited for a "stroke of luck" (as winning the lottery) or participated actively on *allegados* committees (*comités de allegados*) that were often supported by NGO's and local organizations that worked to "twist" the geographically expansive logic of housing policies (Bustamante & Sagredo, 2009).

of comparison between intra-kinship residential proximity configurations from two opposed socioeconomic settings¹⁸. I summarize below some of the principal findings of this first comparative exercise.

2.1. Loose and tight morphologies

First, among the wealthy families I met, I noticed a wide variety of spatial morphologies that enabled different degrees of arrangements between each nuclear family's intimacy (having a separated dwelling) and extended family proximity¹⁹. I call these "loose proximity" forms, as opposed to "tight proximity" forms of coresidence. Among such large typologies it is possible to find a wide range of morphological variations: more or less dispersed, coming from a unique piece of land then divided or rather from purchasing or renting independent dwellings; having more or less delimited barriers between dwellings; having or not having common areas, among other specific features there each kin-related nuclear family²⁰ had their own residence²¹. At the same time, these separated dwellings were (spatially) close enough to allow everyday face-to-face interactions between their residents, even if they would have to move by car²². Often, interviewees referred to non-contiguous proximity morphologies *as if* houses were adjacent (e.g. "we live all together"; "all my sisters and brothers had to buy side by side houses").

I found tight proximity forms among the residential configuration of wealthy families, but this was relatively marginal compared to loose proximity forms. Among poor families I found exactly the opposite; leading me to the hypothesis that there may be a sort of trade-off between tight and loose forms of residential proximity configurations as economic opportunities and expectations of families increase. That is related to both differential opportunities of access to separated dwelling (by renting or by owning) and to the urban mobility conditions of families.

2.2. Staying-forever and getting-close trajectories

Second, I noted that the path toward the formation of residential configurations of proximity is not the same in poor and wealthy settings. This difference can be well depicted by Attias-Donfut and Renault's distinction between "staying-forever coresidence" (*corésidence de toujours*, in French), and "re-cohabitation" (*récohabitation*) (Attias-Donfut & Renaut, 1994) or the "getting-close-again" process. The wealthy families I met had developed deliberate and expensive projects of intra-kinship spatial reunification, after a period of relative geographical dispersion and relational independence between former members of a descendant group. I called this the "conjugal phase" of adult children

¹⁸ At present, in my PHD dissertation I seek to go further into the cross-socioeconomic setting comparison. In order to do so, in 2014, I conducted a third fieldwork study with fifteen middle-class family groups living in Santiago and I re-contacted some of my former lower and upper-class cases. I will also conduct new fieldwork this year to fill some information gaps of all my previous studies. Since I haven't processed all the material from my last fieldwork, I don't include it in this document.

¹⁹ For both wealthy and poor contexts, almost all residential configurations include members of a single bi-lateral descendent group or "stock" (including from three to five descendant generations).

²⁰ Mostly, families issues from members of a same bi-lateral descendent group or "stock" (including since three to five descendant generations).

²¹ With some interesting exceptions of coresidence that I can't to develop here. For more details, to see (Araos, 2013, pp. 198–201)

²² The most "distended" forms of residential configuration of proximity within my study cases were three kilometers-distant dwellings.

and I found that it generally coincides with the beginning of adult children's own family formation and their professional and economic stabilization.

By contrast, I found neither this project feature nor this conjugal phase of children among poor families. Interviewees further depicted their residential morphologies as the result of a spontaneous or "natural" process in which offspring just "stayed forever" at the parental house, and so on for the next generations.

2.3. Parental (father or mother)-centered configurations

Third, both "staying forever" and "getting close again" configurations of proximity are possible because of the key role played by parents. Whether by playing an "active" role stimulating their adult children to come back close to them (as is the case in most of wealthy families), or a "passive" role by not pushing their adult children to leave home (as is the case in most of poor families), it is on the backs (and pockets) of parents that residential configurations of proximity lie. The parental residence works as the "anchor" around which children's families' residences crowd. For the same reason, the death of anchor-parents is often the event that precedes the end of a given residential configuration, even if it could be rebuilt around the children that take the place of anchor-parents²³. If that was true for both wealthy and poor families I met, I found that father played a more salient role in wealthy families configurations, instead that in poor families the role played by mother was more fundamental.

From what I could observe, the role of the father or the mother functions primarily through "practical generosity", a highly unrestricted disposition to give or to share a wide variety of goods (property, money, residential place, time) with descendants, thereby guaranteeing material conditions for spatial closeness and placing adult children in an ongoing in-debt position. In the case of wealthy families, parental generosity takes shape, among other ways, through purchase of land in a well-placed zone of Santiago and dividing it among adult children in order for them to build their homes; through money transfers for purchase or rental of a nearby dwelling; or even through temporarily hosting the families of adult children. This kind of parental generosity was sometimes presented by interviewees as a "subsidiary" one; that is, as a support accompanying or in exchange for, parental requests for their children's economic autonomy. This partially explains the "conjugal phase" I mentioned above, as a prior condition to living-together. In the case of poor families I met, parental generosity works through an almost unconditional disposition to host the families of adult children (which means first and foremost "do not expel them") and often to taking on their own shoulders most residential charges.

2.4. Useful, useful and conflictive interactions

Finally, it is possible to distinguish three types of relational practices concerning all forms of residential configuration of proximity. First, there are "useful" practices, which seek to solve any member's individual or collective problem, that is, interactions of cooperation and support²⁴. This primarily concerns vulnerable family member care arrangements and material and economic

²³ A similar pattern was depicted by Lomnitz and Lizaur for families living in Mexico city (Lomnitz & Lizaur, 1978, 1986)

²⁴ This aspect of residential proximity has been recently studied by some French authors using the "practical kinship" approach, through a renewed concept of *maisonnée*, defined as a group of individuals daily linked by a common goal (*cause commune*), who could live in separate residences (Gollac, 2003; Weber, 2003, 2005).

exchanges. Second, "useless" practices, which are not productive in the sense of resolving a practical problem but consist of socializing, specifically spending time together. Third, there are "conflictive" practices, which hamper both mutual cooperation and socializing practices among members of a residential configuration.

I found all of these three kinds of relational practices present to a relatively similar extent in the residential proximity configurations I studied, regardless of the socioeconomic setting of the families. This challenges strategies of survival approaches that generally overstress cooperation and support interactions and neglect socializing practices by modeling residential proximity as a function of the domestic production of utility²⁵. Regarding conflictive and anti-cooperative practices, I found that the tighter and more precarious the conditions of residential proximity, the more conflictive are the relationships. This probably contributes to widespread negative views about intra-kinship coresidence, as is implicit in the *allegamiento* approach. However, I observed that looser morphologies of proximity also constitute a fruitful field for conflict production, which especially concerns everyday processes of between-family boundary delimitation and intra-family problems due to filial-conjugal fidelity tension and the integration of in-law members.

III. Discussion

The concept of "residential configuration of proximity" has allowed me to overcome some of the limitations of the Chilean mainstream approach to *allegamiento*. During my fieldwork with poor and wealthy families living in Santiago, I observed different ways of constructing a residential morphology consisting of several descendant families that gather around their parental dwelling. Such a residential morphology can be spatially tighter or looser, follow different pathway formations, be mother or father-centered, and entail different kinds of relational practices. However, in all cases, it consists of a similar long-term spatial and relational configuration: that of members of descendant groups of at least three-generations durably living nearby and "together".

Paradoxically, the effort to overcome the *allegamiento* approach through a "residential configuration" perspective has led me to recover a broader and more ancient meaning of the Spanish word *allegamiento*, that is "to bring together persons or things" (Real Academia Española, 2012). In that sense, *allegamiento* is not a phenomenon that exclusively concerns poor families of Santiago, but is also a "matter" for Santiago's wealthy families. Thus, economic constraints that compel kin-related families to share the same dwelling are not sufficient to understand the search for daily living-together residential morphologies. Nevertheless, my preliminary findings also suggest that socioeconomic opportunities and constraints do play a key role in shaping morphologic specificities of such residential proximity. Unequal conditions of property, dwelling access, housing policies dependence and urban mobility, among others, seem to play an important role in shaping families' horizon of the "feasible".

My in-progress fieldwork seeks to delve more deeply into these research hypotheses. So far, my comparison exercise has been a simple and dichotomist contrast between "poor" and "rich" families.

²⁵ Otherwise, some authors have highlighted useless or socialize practices involved in intra-kinship residential proximity but just concerning upper-class family settings (Pfirsch, 2008, 2009; Pinçon & Pinçon-Charlot, 1989).

Therefore, the observation across family groups from a larger and more heterogeneous set of socioeconomic life conditions is one of my major concerns. In doing so, I seek to distinguish those elements that shape residential configurations of proximity that can actually be attributed to specific socio-economic conditions from those that are crosswise to families living in Santiago. In this sense, I think that distinguishing between the "factual", the "feasible", and the "possible" can be very fruitful.

IV. References

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