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# Barriadas and Housing Policy in the Aftermath of the 1950 Cusco Earthquake\*

Las barriadas y la política de vivienda en las secuelas del terremoto del Cusco de 1950

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## ABSTRACT

*This article examines the efforts to address the housing crisis in the aftermath of the 1950 earthquake in Cusco, Peru. Mid-twentieth-century Cusco served as an early incubator for ideas about affordable housing and development in Peru. Peruvian and foreign experts sought to rebuild Cusco as a beacon of modernity in the Andes. Still, for the most part, these global designs failed to come to fruition, leaving poor, working-class, mostly Indigenous cusqueños to improvise their own solutions. The article argues that this experience in Cusco helped shape housing policy in Peru more broadly.*

**Keywords:** *Housing, shantytowns, earthquake, disasters, developmentalism, Peru*

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**RESUMEN**

*Este artículo examina los esfuerzos por solucionar la crisis de vivienda a raíz del terremoto del Cusco de 1950. A mediados del siglo XX, esta ciudad sirvió como una incubadora de ideas en torno a una vivienda asequible y el desarrollo en el Perú. Expertos peruanos y extranjeros pretendieron reconstruir Cusco como una luminaria de modernidad en los Andes; sin embargo, la mayoría de estos diseños globales no se realizaron, y la clase pobre y obrera (indígenas cusqueños mayormente) tuvo que improvisar sus propias soluciones. Este trabajo propone que la experiencia cusqueña contribuyó en la formación de una política de vivienda nacional.*

**Palabras clave:** *viviendas, barriadas, terremoto, desastres, desarrollo, Perú*

In 1959, a team of researchers from the Ministerio de Salud Pública y Asistencia Social surveyed five *barriadas* located along the periphery of the city of Cusco, Peru.<sup>1</sup> The subsequent report raised alarms about conditions in the neighborhoods, which, according to the authors, emerged in the preceding years in an «anarchic» fashion.<sup>2</sup> The survey was about health and hygiene and included six hundred households comprising an estimated 3,491 residents in the barrios of Avenida del Ejército, Dolorespata, Belempampa,<sup>3</sup> Huayrupata, and Rosaspata. The leaders of the research team, Dr. Gustavo Hermoza Mariscal, Jefe del Área de Salud (local chief health officer), and Ing. Guido Acurio Velarde, Jefe del Departamento de Saneamiento Ambiental del Área (chief engineer of the local department of environmental health), predictably expressed concern about the limited access to fresh water and lack of sewage disposal facilities. However, the statistics compiled in their report reveal a

<sup>1</sup> The terms for these settlements shift over time and have different connotations. Although I mostly use the term «settlement» for consistency over time, I also use the terminology from the sources for precision when appropriate, including *barriada*, *barrio*, and *barraca*. For definitions of *barriadas* in the Peruvian context, see Matos Mar 1977; Driant 1991; Ludeña 2006; and Fernández-Maldonado 2013; and for the broader Latin American context, see de Antuñano 2020; and Fischer 2014.

<sup>2</sup> Hermoza Mariscal and Acurio Velarde 1959: Introducción (n.p.).

<sup>3</sup> Also referred to as Belempampa or Belen Pampa.

wealth of information about the residents of these «barriadas periféricas». Indeed, the report could be a snapshot of *barriadas* elsewhere in Peru, so why does it matter that this is in Cusco?

In this article, I aim to reinscribe twentieth-century Cusco as part of Peru's urban landscape. The *barriadas* described above emerged in the aftermath of the devastating earthquake that struck Cusco on Sunday, May 21, 1950. Although the casualties resulting from the quake were significant, the lack of safe housing quickly became the city's most pressing problem. One report estimated that damage from the earthquake left at least two-thirds of the city uninhabitable.<sup>4</sup> In this context, many residents had no choice but to erect improvised shelters throughout the city. Local and national leaders, and later international advisors, struggled to figure out long-term solutions.

The plans conceived by Peruvian and foreign experts to rebuild Cusco as a modern city often did not fit the reality of a city in the midst of a housing crisis caused mainly by the earthquake but exacerbated by migration from rural areas affected by drought that same year. The crisis was compounded further by a lack of building materials and financial resources. These challenges placed limitations on schemes to make Cusco a beacon of modernity, and subsequent development priorities created a context that helps us better understand the «anarchic» settlements that so concerned the Ministerio de Salud Pública y Asistencia Social. With finite resources, Peruvian and foreign officials had to prioritize who was worthy of an investment in the form of a safe living space. The article will examine the initial crisis, short-term solutions, and challenges of long-term solutions. It will take a closer look at the 1959 survey as a window into some of the successes and failures of the housing policies. Finally, it will suggest that the experience in Cusco shaped housing policy in Peru more broadly by serving as a concrete example of how, as historian Emilio de Antuñaño put it, «global designs are messily implemented» on the ground.<sup>5</sup>

<sup>4</sup> Kubler 1952: 3.

<sup>5</sup> De Antuñaño 2020: 936.

Although Cusco has earned much scholarly attention for its history as the seat of the Incan empire, the location of significant resistance to Spanish rule, and its current status as a major destination for international travelers, scholars have less frequently looked to the city as a subject for the study of urban history. Indeed, when one thinks of twentieth-century Peruvian urban history, Lima is understandably the first example that comes to mind. As the seat of the national government and as Peru's largest city, Lima historically has benefited from the fact that many of the nation's bureaucrats (heads of organizations and programs designed to develop and implement policy) live in the capital city. It makes sense that they often looked no further than their own backyard, which in their eyes, was rife with problems for their agencies to solve. Lima's extraordinary twentieth-century growth was both the result and the cause of migrations from other parts of Peru. Large cities like Lima are also more accessible and legible to foreign diplomats, technicians, and other observers. For all these reasons, Lima became a center for international study and debate about housing policy in the 1960s and 1970s.<sup>6</sup>

However, as this article will demonstrate, mid-twentieth-century Cusco served as an early incubator for ideas about affordable housing and development in Peru. As Mark Healey noted in his study of a 1944 earthquake in Argentina, scholars often «view disasters as windows rather than crucibles», and this article seeks to build on his efforts and the efforts of a growing body of scholars to focus on the crucible: what was there before and what was forged in the aftermath.<sup>7</sup> The devastation of the 1950 earthquake led to a transformation of Cusco's urban spaces. As historian José Tamayo Herrera explained, Cusco's first *barriada*, *Belempampa*, emerged due to the earthquake.<sup>8</sup> The aforementioned 1959 report inadvertently documents some of the successes and failures of Cusco's post-earthquake reconstruction efforts.

<sup>6</sup> For example, see Fernández-Maldonado 2013: 62; Kozak 2021.

<sup>7</sup> Healey 2011: 13. For a discussion of this historiographical trend, see Irwin 2021: 432-36. For other examples of this scholarship in the Latin American context, see Buchenau and Johnson 2009; Walker 2008; Carey 2010; Clarke 2015.

<sup>8</sup> Tamayo Herrera 2010: 166.

Several scholars have examined Puerto Rico's role in developing housing policies in the 1940s and 1950s, which were then exported to the Caribbean and Latin American nations, including Colombia and Peru.<sup>9</sup> Indeed, it is now a familiar story that Peruvians like Eduardo Neira were early adopters of this expertise.<sup>10</sup> But until now, scholars have overlooked the role of the 1950 Cusco earthquake in bringing international experts to Peru. In this case, it was precisely Cusco's peripheral, Andean location that made it compelling to international experts from the United Nations, UNESCO, and the American International Association for Economic and Social Development (AIA), a non-profit linked to the Rockefeller family. Experts thought they could develop plans to modernize this Indigenous city and export those plans to other parts of Latin America.

Framing Cusco as an Indigenous urban space is not as straightforward as it may seem. In recent years, scholars have increasingly insisted on re-examining Indigenous urbanism. In her study of contemporary Cancún, Mexico, anthropologist Bianet Castellanos calls on us to «unsettle cities by disrupting discovery narratives, imperial fantasies, and foundational fictions that have guided how we see and imagine Indigenous homelands».<sup>11</sup> Similarly, efforts have been made to foreground «Indigenous people as city makers and city dwellers», especially in the North American context.<sup>12</sup> However, the moniker «Indigenous city» can be more complex in the Latin American context. Even though Cusco undeniably has Indigenous roots, scholars have argued that historical uses of terms like «indio» and «mestizo» often render Indigenous actors less visible once they enter urban spaces. Castellanos makes the case that «as Indigenous migrants move to cities, they are no longer treated as Indigenous and instead become deracialized subjects».<sup>13</sup>

<sup>9</sup> Harris 1998; Kwak 2018; Healey 2020.

<sup>10</sup> Kozak 2021; Gyger 2021: 42; Huapaya 2015: 71 n9.

<sup>11</sup> Castellanos 2021: 6.

<sup>12</sup> Blansett, Cahill and Needham 2022: 2.

<sup>13</sup> Castellanos 2021: 7.

Similarly, Kimbra Smith, in her study of Ecuador, argues that discourses of modernization often erase colonized groups, who are seen as incompatible with or as impediments to progress.<sup>14</sup> And in her study of Cusco, anthropologist Marisol de la Cadena demonstrates that people with Indigenous roots often rejected the label «indio», which «carries a historical stigma of colonized inferiority», even as they embraced their Indigenous cultural heritage.<sup>15</sup> In other words, individuals who in different contexts might identify as Indigenous might choose not to do so in urban spaces.

The challenge is recognizing Cusco's Indigenous past and present while honoring historical actors' choices and strategies to reject those terms. Although there are significant differences in Cusco's racial geography over the centuries, by reinforcing divisions between the Indigenous Inca city, the Spanish colonial city and the Cusco of the present, we risk obscuring the many continuities that persist and shape Cusco to this day. These continuities serve as the basis for my characterization of Cusco as an Indigenous city, one organized according to the cosmologies of the Incan empire but also shaped by layers of colonial logic underlying the Incan empire, the Spanish empire, and the Peruvian state.<sup>16</sup>

Cusco's urban geography dates to the pre-Incan period, but the city's contemporary footprint reflects the Incan spiritual and political worldview. As the capital of the Incan empire Tawantinsuyu, Cusco was believed to be the center or «navel» of the universe. The city was bordered by two rivers, the Saphi and the Tullumayo, and took the shape of a puma, an important symbol in the Incan belief system. Cusco was divided into districts based on political hierarchies and arranged around sacred sites dedicated to the veneration of ancestors and deities, such as Qorikancha, the Temple of the Sun. Workers who often migrated from other parts of the empire lived outside of the urban core in peripheral villages. The Europeans built their city on top of the Incan city, incorporating the walls and foundations into churches and administrative

<sup>14</sup> Smith 2015: chapter 1.

<sup>15</sup> De la Cadena 2000: 5-6.

<sup>16</sup> I further develop this argument in Covert 2019.

buildings. In so doing, they reproduced the hierarchies built into the city's geography, but this time with the Spanish at the city center and Indigenous peoples relegated to the periphery. But they also constructed a new city on the coast that would serve as the seat of imperial power in Peru, creating a new hierarchy between the Hispanized coast and the Indigenous highlands. This way of imagining Peru, as divided between the Spanish and Indigenous, between the coast and the highlands, between modern and backward, persisted into the national period and is reflected in the way Peruvian officials and foreigners discussed and reimagined Cusco after the earthquake.<sup>17</sup> We cannot separate our understanding of Cusco's post-earthquake reconstruction and its broader contributions to Peruvian urban history from this context.

#### THE EARTHQUAKE AND ITS IMMEDIATE AFTERMATH

The earthquake struck on a Sunday afternoon on May 21, 1950. Observers attribute (perhaps apocryphally) the relatively small number of casualties to the fact that so many of the city's approximately 50,000 residents were outside watching a *fútbol* match.<sup>18</sup> The city's buildings suffered tremendous damage, which, when combined with fears of further damage from aftershocks, contributed to an exodus from the city.<sup>19</sup> The tens of thousands of residents who stayed behind spent those first nights in Cusco's central Plaza de Armas, Plaza San Francisco,

<sup>17</sup> On the pre-Incan and Incan city, see Farrington 2013 and Farrington 2018. On Cusco's organization under Spanish rule, see Julien 1998; Burns 1999; and Hajovsky 2018. For an overview of Spanish efforts to inscribe hierarchies onto the urban geography, see Rama 1996. For examples of and discussions about the persistence of these ideas in Peru into the national period, see Basadre 1947; De la Cadena 1998; De la Cadena 2000: Introduction; Degregori, Blondet and Lynch 2014: 21-22; Rice 2018: chapter 1. Puente examines how the highlands historically have been imagined as a space ready for capitalist exploitation (2022: chapter 1).

<sup>18</sup> Estimates place the number of deaths at around 100, with approximately 200 more injured. Kubler 1952: 3. The anecdote about the soccer game appears in many accounts of the earthquake.

<sup>19</sup> There are no accurate census records for this period. This figure is from Tamayo Herrera 2010: 164.



and Plaza Regocijo. Others sought safety in the plazas of Santiago and Belén, and along the banks of the Chunchulmayo riverbed.<sup>20</sup> Within days the plazas were filled with improvised shelters made of wood, cardboard, corrugated metal, and blankets, punctuated by conical green military tents that made up, as historian José Tamayo Herrera poetically described it, «un archipiélago dolorido y viviente» (a living archipelago of suffering).<sup>21</sup> The widespread damage has been attributed to the fact that most of the city's buildings were made of adobe, a cheap and accessible building material in the Andean sierra, where lumber is scarce. This was not the first time an earthquake nearly leveled the city. Three hundred years earlier, another earthquake caused great devastation to the built environment. However, it is worth noting that the remnants of Incan structures made of stones carefully placed together without the use of mortar largely withstood the tremors over the centuries.<sup>22</sup> In the days immediately following the 1950 quake, crews sent to Cusco by the Ministerio de Fomento, Servicio de Caminos, and armed with bulldozers and dynamite, demolished many partially damaged buildings, finishing the work that the earthquake started.<sup>23</sup> It was early winter in the Andes. Electricity and potable water, limited during normal times, were even more difficult to come by. Aftershocks continued until at least June. In short, the people of Cusco faced a catastrophe of an unimaginable scale.

Humanitarian aid poured into the city in the days and weeks after the earthquake. Individuals, businesses, foreign nations, and other organizations, large and small, contributed money, supplies, and in-kind assistance. The Peruvian government under General Manuel Odría also took action. On the afternoon of May 22, an emergency session of the Consejo de Ministros authorized funds to aid the victims and a commission to distribute aid and provide for the reconstruction of historically significant buildings. The Consejo also agreed to expedite a decree to provide loans for housing repairs and to arrange for the Corporación

<sup>20</sup> *Ib.*: 163-164.

<sup>21</sup> *Ib.*: 164.

<sup>22</sup> *Ib.*: 168. On the 1650 earthquake, see Hajovsky 2018.

<sup>23</sup> Tamayo Herrera 2010: 167.

Nacional de la Vivienda (CNV) to begin immediate construction of housing developments (unidades vecinales).<sup>24</sup> By May 23, the Peruvian government began constructing emergency housing units using corrugated metal, sheets of fiber-reinforced cement known as eternit, four thousand kilos of nails, five hundred barrels of cement, and tents.<sup>25</sup> Odría likely hoped that a swift response from Lima would also generate political support as he headed into an election later in 1950.<sup>26</sup>

Over time, however, several entities became involved in response to the housing crisis, and they often had different visions and motivations that resulted in an incoherent patchwork of solutions. There were tensions and disputes between the Peruvian Red Cross, the American Red Cross, and the International Federation of Red Cross Societies, representatives of the U.S. Embassy, and Peruvian officials in Lima and Cusco representing various government agencies and the military. Some of the disputes were quite petty. For example, Dr. Albert Giesecke, attaché from the U.S. Embassy in Lima, wanted to fly an American flag over a settlement built with tents donated by the American Red Cross, but local authorities would not permit it.<sup>27</sup> Other disagreements were more substantive. While some preferred using tents as a quick housing solution, others thought it made sense to use more durable materials for housing, as well as Quonset huts, because it was likely to be years before adequate permanent housing was available.<sup>28</sup> The important factors to consider here are that decisions were made in the wake of a

<sup>24</sup> «El Consejo de Ministros en sesión extraordinaria acordó diversas medidas para hacer frente a la situación creada por el Sismo ocurrido en el Cusco», *El Comercio*, 22 May 1950.

<sup>25</sup> «Barracas para la población», *El Comercio*, 24 May 1950.

<sup>26</sup> It is important to note that he was the only candidate but used the election to legitimize his rule.

<sup>27</sup> Elvira Morcillo-Cobo, «Report on the Cuzco Earthquake», 20 June 1950, International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, Box R510536893, Folder Disaster Earthquake - 1950-1951 (Part 1 of 2). On Giesecke's long history with Cusco, including his stint as mayor, see Rice 2018: chapter 1.

<sup>28</sup> Albert Giesecke, Memorandum for Ambassador Harold Tittman, Jr., 19 June 1950, National Archives and Record Administration of the United States (NARA), RG 59 CDF, 823.49/6-2050.

catastrophe by various actors who often had different outcomes in mind and that, in many cases, those decisions had lasting implications for Cusco's reconstruction and development. If the settlements emerged in an anarchic matter, it was largely due to the chaotic implementation of incoherent policies.

Cusco's poor and working-class residents, people who rented or had tenuous claims to the land where they lived and who also tended to be Indigenous, were not the priority for initial relief efforts regarding emergency housing. Discussions about emergency housing quickly shifted from focusing on meeting immediate needs to concerns about the size of the shelters and aid for rebuilding privately-owned properties. For instance, concerns about tent sizes were shaped by local leaders' notions of upper- and middle-class respectability. Many of the tents donated early on accommodated upwards of thirty people. In some cases, this enabled families to stay together along with their household servants, like the family of Hermila Yábar de Escalante and Nicolas Escalante, who explained in a thank-you note that twenty-three members of their extended family and ten unnamed servants were occupying a tent donated by the American Red Cross.<sup>29</sup> The emerging sentiment, however, was that most middle-class families preferred smaller tents designed to house eight to ten people and thus offered more privacy. Along those lines, the newly constituted Cusco Red Cross prioritized middle-class families for private shelters with access to potable water and sewage service.<sup>30</sup> Many middle-class homeowners used tents and other donated materials for shelter in the patios of their homes so they could continue to use the space as they worked on repairs.<sup>31</sup> The emergency loan program for housing repairs was also intended for homeowners and landlords. These priorities meant that Cusco's poorest residents found themselves in the most precarious living conditions.

<sup>29</sup> Hermila Yábar de Escalante and Nicolas Escalante, Letter to the American Red Cross, 14 June 1950, NARA, RG 59 CDF, 823.49/6-2050.

<sup>30</sup> Giesecke, Memorandum for Tittman, 19 June 1950.

<sup>31</sup> Albert Giesecke, Letter to Ambassador Harold Tittman Jr., 13 June 1950, NARA, RG 59 CDF, 823.49/6-2050.

In 1950, Cusco had a high degree of urban density, and residents from different socio-economic backgrounds, Spanish, mestizo, and Indigenous, lived in close proximity. This would change after the earthquake.<sup>32</sup> The initial changes involved efforts to relocate settlements from the city's central plazas to other locations. One of the larger settlements would emerge in the southeastern part of the city near the Universidad Nacional de San Antonio Abad del Cusco stadium. The Red Cross worked with the Peruvian government to establish another settlement west of the city center in the Chunchulmayo riverbed. This one was initially intended for middle-class residents, and most shelters had water and sewage disposal access, but it would expand beyond its intended capacity over time. The local government established another encampment nearby, which became known as Belepampa. All these locations were in the peripheral areas long understood to be Indigenous barrios, or places with predominantly Indigenous residents; thus, these settlements represented a return to the city's historic spatial hierarchy.<sup>33</sup>

We do not have many details about the residents of these settlements in the immediate aftermath of the earthquake. These were undoubtedly fluid populations in the early days. But we do know a few things that help us understand the settlements as they took shape over time. These were likely people who sustained total destruction to their property if they owned any or who did not have claims to the property where they lived. For example, they could not set up a shelter in the ruins of their former homes, as many homeowners did. Some of them might have been displaced by landlords attempting to rebuild with the help of emergency loans. Others were displaced from buildings that experts prioritized for historic preservation. A UNESCO report, for instance, claimed that the number of people crowded into historic buildings was straining the buildings and the infrastructure capacity of Cusco's historic center. Many of these buildings were eventually repurposed from housing to buildings with civic or commercial purposes.<sup>34</sup> Many of the settlement

<sup>32</sup> De la Cadena 2000: 35, 37.

<sup>33</sup> On the use and connotations of the word «barrio», see Konove 2019.

<sup>34</sup> Kubler 1952: 23.

residents were recent arrivals from the surrounding countryside, driven from their land by drought or drawn to the city by a large number of construction jobs. These factors increased segregation across the city, pushing the poorer, often Indigenous residents out of the urban center.

The extraordinary displacement and movement of such a high percentage of the city's population add a twist to Peru's specific history of land occupations and informal settlements. Many scholars have examined the twentieth-century history of Peru's rural and urban land invasions, particularly the politics of settlement formation in Lima.<sup>35</sup> This has also been a frequent theme in Peruvian literature.<sup>36</sup> The case of Cusco after the earthquake enables us to see these processes play out at an accelerated pace. People not only invaded or occupied open space, but in some cases, were relocated to it. As we will see, some of these relocations, made in the haste of post-earthquake recovery, laid the groundwork for claims to land later on.

#### **LONG-TERM CHALLENGES**

By late 1950, it was clear that the earthquake recovery process was still in its early stages and that the costs would be extraordinary. A March 1951 report from the United States Embassy in Lima to the U.S. Department of State described the recovery as «exceedingly slow from the standpoint of reconstruction of homes and public buildings».<sup>37</sup> Peru's highly centralized government left local officials without the resources or the autonomy to take control of the reconstruction efforts.<sup>38</sup> Meanwhile, outside aid slowed to a trickle. The city remained in a state of disrepair,

<sup>35</sup> For examples of scholarship that addresses rural land occupations in the Cusco region, see Tamayo Herrera 2010. For a recent study of land invasions in the central sierras, see Puente 2022: chapter 4. On the history of urban invasions in Cusco during the 1980s and 1990s, see Lund 2011. On urban invasions and the establishment of *barriadas* in Lima more broadly, see Matos Mar 1977; Collier 1975; Driant 1991; Zapata-Velasco 1997; Fernández-Maldonado 2013; Degregori 2014; and Gyger 2019: chapters 2 and 4.

<sup>36</sup> Thanks to José Chárvarry for this observation.

<sup>37</sup> Harold Tittmann Jr., Report to U.S. Department of State, 12 March 1951, NARA, RG 59 CDF, 823.49/3-1251.

<sup>38</sup> Dorich 1961: 282.

and the rainy season was coming again. Peruvian officials stepped in with some new resources and turned to international experts to chart a path forward. Even with new revenue streams, all the needs would not be met. Nevertheless, leaders at the local, national, and international levels understood the disaster as an opportunity to remake Cusco as a modern city; one report suggested the earthquake was a «blessing».<sup>39</sup> The implication was that the Indigenous Andean city could only become modern with outside help.

The first important step toward increasing resources for Cusco's reconstruction came from Lima. In December 1950, Congress passed Law 11551, a twenty percent tax on tobacco, with the revenues dedicated to Cusco's reconstruction efforts. The allocation of funding from the tobacco tax reveals that the wealthy and middle classes and the reconstruction of the city's historic center remained the priority. Half of the funds were allocated to a loan program administered by the Banco Central Hipotecario del Perú. They could be used for loans and technical services from architects and engineers provided at no cost to the loan recipients. The bank had broad discretion for the use of these funds, and the loans could be used for residential or commercial buildings partially damaged by the earthquake.<sup>40</sup> The loans, then, would benefit those already in a position to own property. Twenty percent of the funds were allocated to the CNV to construct new affordable government-owned housing that would be rented at a low rate for the city's poor residents. In early 1951, locations for this housing had already been selected, and plans for 1,500 units had been approved by the División de Urbanización del Ministerio de Fomento.<sup>41</sup> The final thirty percent of the funding was allocated for industrial development overseen by the Ministerio de Fomento.<sup>42</sup>

<sup>39</sup> Robert W. Hudgens, Informe relativo al desarrollo económico y social del Departamento del Cuzco, 25 July 1951, NARA, RG 59 CDF, 823.49/3-552: 7.

<sup>40</sup> *Ib.*: 17.

<sup>41</sup> *Ib.*

<sup>42</sup> *Ib.*: 17-18.

The allocation for affordable housing was welcome news, but it would be insufficient in the best-case scenario. Moreover, it would be several years before new housing was ready. In the meantime, cusqueños lacked access to building materials that could create more seismically-sound housing. Because much of the damage to housing was attributed to the widespread use of adobe, the Peruvian government initially prohibited reconstruction with adobe. But it was too expensive to transport cement and other materials from the coast, and there was not sufficient machinery to produce bricks locally. Officials in Cusco eventually asked the government to modify building codes to permit the use of adobe for one and two-story buildings, but only outside the city center.<sup>43</sup> Long-term proposals, like constructing a cement plant or planting trees to increase the supply of lumber for construction, would not meet immediate housing needs.<sup>44</sup> It was easier to allocate money for loans so that people could rebuild their own homes than to invest in new government-subsidized housing developments. Even then, the loan process was slow, with only 72 granted in the program's first year.<sup>45</sup> As a result, people who were not eligible for loans took matters into their own hands and built with adobe and using supplies from the initial relief efforts—corrugated metal, tents, and asbestos-filled eternit. Settlements intended to be temporary became a fixture in the landscape, *barriadas* that would be seen as a problem.

The Peruvian government also called on the United Nations and UNESCO to provide technical assistance.<sup>46</sup> The organizations were relatively new and were still developing protocols for technical assistance in the aftermath of a disaster. The United Nations delegation

<sup>43</sup> Junta 1955: 25.

<sup>44</sup> Hudgens, Informe: 19. Eucalyptus trees have been the main source of lumber in Peru's sierra since at least the mid-nineteenth century. See Dickinson 1969. For another example of the debate over adobe versus other building materials after an earthquake, see Healey 2009.

<sup>45</sup> Harold H. Tittmann, Report to the U.S. Department of State, 27 August 1952, NARA, RG 59 CDF, 823.49/8-2752: 3. The main reason cited for the delay was the lack of legal title deeds.

<sup>46</sup> For a discussion of the UNESCO findings, see Covert 2019.

arrived in February 1951 to evaluate the situation in the city of Cusco and the surrounding rural area. The group was led by Robert Hudgens, director of the American International Association for Economic and Social Development (AIA), a private non-profit established by Nelson A. Rockefeller. The other members were Bolivian diplomat Enrique de Lozada and U.S. engineer Lyall Peterson, who worked for the Rockefeller Foundation and AIA in Venezuela. Hudgens reported their findings to the Peruvian Senate in July 1951. Among the report's many recommendations are two overarching points. First, the report suggests that Cusco is not extraordinary but typical, and that the lessons learned from Cusco's reconstruction and development could be applied elsewhere. Second, the primary concern and focus should be rural rather than urban development.<sup>47</sup> This recommendation was consistent with the AIA's previous work in Latin America, particularly Venezuela and Brazil, which also had a rural emphasis and was inspired in large part by Depression-era programs in the United States.<sup>48</sup>

The Hudgens report was a clear example of midcentury theories about Latin America's underdevelopment. For example, Hudgens suggested that Cusco's indigeneity was a barrier to development, noting the apparent irony that Cusco had been home to one of the «most ancient civilizations in the Western Hemisphere». This observation comes immediately after explaining that Cusco's rural population was «predominantly Indian or almost Indian»; in other words, the juxtaposition of these observations makes clear that for Cusco to become more developed and modern, it

<sup>47</sup> Hudgens, Informe: 8-13.

<sup>48</sup> Hudgens, like many other U.S. experts working in Latin America in the post-WWII era, gained experience in rural development during the Franklin D. Roosevelt administration. Hudgens' experience working for the Farm Security Administration and the American Red Cross during the Great Depression surely informed his ideas about Cusco. American International Association for Economic and Social Development, Press release, 5 March 1948, Rockefeller Archive Center, Rockefeller Family Public Relations Department, FA789A, Box 11, Folder 100. For context on this phenomenon, see Olsson 2017; and Offner 2019. On the history of the Rockefeller Foundation and the AIA in Venezuela, see Rivas 2002.



must overcome this fact.<sup>49</sup> The comment is part of the broader discourse discussed earlier, where the Andean highlands serve as the poorer, more backward, Indigenous foil to Peru's modernizing coast. This discourse fails to recognize that much of the rural poverty in the midcentury Peruvian highlands resulted from modernizing processes. More specifically, the expansion of capitalism in the sierra led to what historian Javier Puente calls «socially-engineered impoverishment».<sup>50</sup> Instead of recognizing this complex and often violent history of the transformation of the Andean highlands, Peruvian officials and foreigners preferred to blame indigeneity for the region's so-called underdevelopment. This context helps us understand the rest of the report, including the implications for urban housing.

One of the main recommendations of the United Nations report was to create a distinct body to coordinate reconstruction and development in Cusco, the Junta de Reconstrucción y Fomento Industrial del Cuzco, created in early 1952.<sup>51</sup> The idea was to decentralize decision-making by giving local officials more autonomy over the resources from the tobacco tax. The report recommended that the Junta supervise four pillars of the reconstruction process, with support from the United Nations: reconstruction of churches and other public buildings, construction of public housing, urban planning, and industrial development. Under the purview of the Banco Central Hipotecario del Perú, the bank loan program would act as a parallel pillar.<sup>52</sup> Lima's agreement with the United Nations in April 1952 to bring in experts signaled a clear shift from urban reconstruction to rural development. The UN experts would specialize in the areas of hydraulic engineering, cement production, the industrialization of corn and other grain production, and administrative organization. Two additional experts would investigate other natural

<sup>49</sup> Hudgens, Informe: 20.

<sup>50</sup> Puente 2022: 40. See also Mallon 1983.

<sup>51</sup> Tamayo Herrera 2010: 177-178. Also, see Rice 2018: chapter 3 for additional details on the various government responses to the earthquake.

<sup>52</sup> Hudgens, Informe: 16, Cuadro No. 4.

resources in the region and how they might be utilized.<sup>53</sup> Although all the designated areas of expertise are in some ways connected to the urban population, housing was no longer a priority.

The UN report is one example of the shift from a concern for aid to victims to an emphasis on long-term development far beyond the scope of the earthquake damage. Whereas housing was one of the most pressing concerns in the immediate aftermath of the earthquake, only a year later the emphasis and purview of reconstruction efforts changed dramatically. This shift had enormous implications for Cusco's poor and Indigenous populations. The entire urban population, regardless of ethnicity or socioeconomic status, was victimized by the earthquake, but not everyone was a beneficiary of development in its various forms. Foreign experts saw the greater long-term potential for investment in the countryside. As a result, Cusco's urban population, particularly the urban poor, became less a priority than the urban middle classes and elite, and less a priority than the rural poor. The underlying assumption was that urban poverty was partly caused by rural migration, and if, through development, the surrounding rural areas become more stable and desirable, then it would eliminate a source of urban poverty. Peruvian intellectual Luis Valcárcel, who had deep ties to Cusco and would become a reconstruction Junta member, explicitly linked this to indigeneity. His early *indigenista* writings argued it was preferable to keep Indigenous people in the countryside because, the argument went, they were unable to adapt to urban life.<sup>54</sup> This narrative of dislocation was based on the idea that Indigenous people were inherently rural and incompatible with urban spaces.<sup>55</sup> The result for Cusco's urban poor was that they were no longer viewed as disaster victims worthy of assistance but rather as a problematic blight that was not worthy of investment.

Scholars have noted that the humanitarian and development objectives of disaster responses historically have overlapped. While the initial

<sup>53</sup> Rafael Picó, Informe Preliminar: Reconstrucción del Departamento del Cuzco, 27 August 1952, NARA, RG 59 CDF, 823.49/8-2752: 5.

<sup>54</sup> Valcárcel 1925, cited in De la Cadena 1998: 148-149.

<sup>55</sup> Blansett, Cahill and Needham 2022: 8-9.

humanitarian responses include providing food, shelter, and medicine, the development objectives often include a reassessment of the built environment, including infrastructure, urban layout, and economic priorities.<sup>56</sup> Although the sheer destruction often caused by earthquakes, hurricanes, fires, and other catastrophic events sometimes necessitate a complete re-evaluation of the built environment, as the aforementioned report indicates, many see these events as a «blessing» or opportunity to reconfigure a space according to new logics and priorities.<sup>57</sup> Indeed, as historian Mark Rice argues, for some local leaders, like intellectual and government official Luis Valcárcel, the aftermath of the Cusco earthquake provided an opportunity to optimize the city for the growing tourism economy.<sup>58</sup> This meant permanently relocating many of Cusco's poor and working-class residents out of the city's historic center and into more peripheral areas historically considered «barrios indios».<sup>59</sup> Rather than provide individuals with humanitarian aid and support so they could return to their lives as they were before the disaster, the development imperative meant a more transformative effort where the needs and priorities of society's most vulnerable are often overlooked in favor of more profitable schemes.

Correspondence regarding a trip by an official from the League of Red Cross Societies further illustrates the transition from humanitarian aid to development priorities. On the July 1951 trip, Fred Sigerist, Director of the Bureau of Information for the League of Red Cross Societies, had three main objectives. First, he sought to collect information on Red Cross relief efforts in the aftermath of the earthquake; second, he aimed to provide an accounting of donations from various Red Cross societies; and finally, he planned to assess the need for a longer-term investment in

<sup>56</sup> On the relationships between humanitarian aid and development, see Irwin 2018; and McVety 2018.

<sup>57</sup> For example, see Klein 2007, which coined the phrase «disaster capitalism». Mark Carey instead uses «disaster economics» for a more expansive view, Carey 2010:12. We see this phenomenon going back to the colonial period, see Walker 2008.

<sup>58</sup> Rice 2018: chapter 3.

<sup>59</sup> Covert 2019.

medical dispensary units. Of particular relevance to this study are Sigerist's observations on the housing situation. Photographs he sent back to the League headquarters in Geneva documented the living conditions in the settlements erected in the aftermath of the earthquake, specifically the university stadium and Belepampa locations. The captions for the photographs expressed concern about the conditions in the camps over a year after the earthquake, particularly the lack of sanitation facilities and weather-proof roofs.<sup>60</sup> One photograph revealed that some of the tents donated by the American Red Cross were still being utilized for shelter.<sup>61</sup> But notably, despite these observations, Sigerist and officials of the Peruvian Red Cross determined that the best use of additional donated funds would be for a medical dispensary unit at each of the largest settlements.<sup>62</sup> This decision reveals an acceptance of the existence of the settlements for the long term, as well as an acceptance of the dire, emergency living conditions as a new normal. The residents were overwhelmingly poor and Indigenous, unlike the middle-class residents who only a year earlier merited plumbing and privacy in their shelters. Therefore, the squalid conditions were naturalized. Rather than direct funds toward improving shelters with better roofs or running water, donors wanted Quonset hut medical facilities emblazoned with the Red Cross symbol to further generate interest in, and maybe gratitude for, the Red Cross in Cusco.<sup>63</sup> The medical dispensaries did not offer traditional profits to the Red Cross, but they did offer a degree of recognition and

<sup>60</sup> Fred G. Sigerist, Letter to Carlos de Luchi Lomellini, 14 July 1951, International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, Box R510536893, Folder Disaster Earthquake - 1950-1951 (Part 1 of 2). The photographs were in the same folder. It is not clear whether Sigerist or someone else wrote the captions.

<sup>61</sup> «Detail of the Santiago campsite», 1951, International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, Box R510536893, Folder Disaster Earthquake - 1950-1951 (Part 1 of 2).

<sup>62</sup> Carlos de Luchi Lomellini, Letter to Fred Sigerist, 12 July 1951, International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, Box R510536893, Folder Disaster Earthquake - 1950-1951 (Part 1 of 2).

<sup>63</sup> Fred G. Sigerist, «Les habitants de Cuzco vivent dans des baraques», International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, Box R510536893, Folder Disaster Earthquake - 1950-1951 (Part 1 of 2).

prestige to the donors that made little material difference in the lives of most settlement residents.

In 1952, Puerto Rican development expert and United Nations technical consultant Dr. Rafael Picó arrived in Cusco to survey the situation in Cusco and report to the newly constituted Junta. Like Hudgens, Picó saw this moment as an opportunity to bring development to the entire region that could serve as a model for the rest of the Americas. His report compared the possibility to something on the scale of the Tennessee Valley Authority in the United States, an example many across Latin America aimed to emulate.<sup>64</sup> Indeed, Picó was operating within the context of Puerto Rico's «Operation Bootstrap», an economic development program intended for replication across the so-called developing world.<sup>65</sup> However, he argued that the current budget allocations would not support Hudgens' grand proposals for rural development and that more centralized control under the leadership of the Junta would enable the prioritization of electrification, infrastructure, and building the city's potential for tourism.

Picó's report named the proliferation of «barracas», or *barriadas*, as urban Cusco's main problem. At the time of his visit in 1952, an estimated 1,900 households, or approximately 10,000 individuals, lived in these settlements.<sup>66</sup> He viewed the removal of the settlements as «essential» because it would solve urgent sanitation and social problems and it would eliminate «blemishes» in the city, allowing for a return to «uso normal» and an improved appearance.<sup>67</sup> In this formulation, the settlement residents were outside the norm, a problem to be remedied. Addressing the housing crisis, in other words, would alleviate health and social problems as well as the aesthetic barriers to Cusco's development as a model city and destination for tourists.

Picó was frank about the insufficient resources dedicated to combating Cusco's housing problems under the tobacco tax allocations. The extant

<sup>64</sup> Picó, Informe Preliminar: 6. See Olsson 2017 and Offner 2019.

<sup>65</sup> See Lefty 2021; Kwak 2018: chapter 3; and Chastain and Lorek 2020: 11.

<sup>66</sup> Picó, Informe Preliminar: 9.

<sup>67</sup> *Ib.*

CNV plans provided for the construction of fewer than 500 low-rent units on the city's outskirts rather than the 1,500 proposed in 1951. Picó recommended further reducing the scope to provide 250 units for middle-class families (which would bring in a higher rent). He calculated that the cost of these units alone would require the entire 20% budget allocation from the tobacco tax for the next three years, and that if current residents of the settlements occupied every new unit, it would only meet about 10% of the need. Therefore, he argued that the Junta needed to scrap plans for other developments like a theater and commercial center and develop an entirely new strategy to house the remaining settlement residents.<sup>68</sup> The Junta turned to the Catholic Church to obtain land for additional housing, but this would only yield eighteen housing units.<sup>69</sup>

Dr. Picó advocated for «directed» or «aided self-help» housing for the poor, a concept first popularized in Puerto Rico in the 1940s.<sup>70</sup> Given the budgetary constraints, he presented this as the only viable solution in Cusco. Essentially, the theory is that providing poor communities with the space, basic amenities, and technical assistance for housing but leaving the labor and, in some cases, the provision of building materials, to the communities themselves creates a more cost-efficient way to meet housing needs for low-income individuals. An additional assumption that often undergirded this theory was that it would force the residents to invest time and effort into their housing and, therefore, develop a sense of pride and accomplishment rather than fostering conditions of dependence.<sup>71</sup> One of the leading proponents of aided self-help housing in the Peruvian context, José Matos Mar, made the argument that the unpaid communal labor would be familiar to Indigenous peoples who were recent arrivals from the countryside due to what he referred to as «traditional “Indian” cultural patterns».<sup>72</sup> The appeal of aided self-help

<sup>68</sup> *Ib.*: 9-10.

<sup>69</sup> Covert 2019: 92-94.

<sup>70</sup> On the origins of «aided self-help» housing, see Harris 1998; and Ward 2012.

<sup>71</sup> Ward 2012; Harris 1998; Kwak 2018: 51-52; Gyger 2019: chapter 2.

<sup>72</sup> Matos Mar 1961:174. For another example of this rhetoric in the late 1950s, see Gyger 2022: 94.

housing in Cusco was that it allowed the Junta to prioritize other forms of development and drew upon centuries-long stereotypes about Indigenous peoples as a labor force.

Picó envisioned a collaboration between the CNV and the Fondo Nacional de Salud y Bienestar Social that would result in a plan for 1,000-1,200 small self-help units using locally-available materials to reduce the costs, and he urged the Junta to take leadership role in the process.<sup>73</sup> Although he foresaw a crucial role in international assistance funded by the UN or OAS, Picó emphasized the importance of training Peruvians to do this work.<sup>74</sup> Picó argued that the expansion of worker housing in Cusco «could serve as an example for other similar projects in Peru».<sup>75</sup> It would take several years, but ultimately, aided self-help became the predominant model in Peru and international development circles.<sup>76</sup>

Picó's advocacy for aided self-help housing came during a pivotal time for housing policy in Peru more broadly. At the national level in the 1950s, there were two competing visions for housing policy. One was championed by Fernando Belaúnde Terry, and the other by Pedro G. Beltrán. As scholar Helen Gyger details, Belaúnde envisioned strong, state-led urban planning, whereas Beltrán promoted private enterprise as the solution to housing problems. In 1949, a master plan for Lima embraced the *unidad vecinal*, or neighborhood unit model, a centerpiece of Belaúnde's vision to modernize and uplift its residents.<sup>77</sup> This was the model for urban housing that the CNV promoted in the early plans for Cusco's reconstruction, and that was included in the 1951 Plan Piloto (master plan) for Cusco's reconstruction developed by the Oficina Nacional de Planeamiento y Urbanismo (Belaúnde had ties to both of these government agencies).<sup>78</sup> The master plan for Cusco

<sup>73</sup> Picó, Informe Preliminar: 10-11.

<sup>74</sup> *Ib.*: 6 and 12.

<sup>75</sup> *Ib.*: 11.

<sup>76</sup> Kozak 2016.

<sup>77</sup> Gyger 2019: chapter 1.

<sup>78</sup> Oficina Nacional de Planeamiento y Urbanismo, 1951a and 1951b. For Belaúnde's role in developing these agencies, see Zapata 1995.

envisioned an orderly city with clearly defined roles for distinct areas: a historic district, an industrial zone, and separate residential zones. It was a textbook example of mid-century modern urbanism and a vision that would not come to fruition.

By the mid-1950s, it was evident that the massive undertaking of building master-planned residential communities in Lima would need to be financed through bonds, which shifted the focus from government-subsidized, affordable housing to profit-generating housing.<sup>79</sup> In this context, Beltrán's vision for homeownership through mortgage loans emerged as the main alternative.<sup>80</sup> Beltrán's plan benefited from the efforts of his friend Nelson A. Rockefeller, whom he likely met while he was Peru's ambassador to the United States in the 1940s.<sup>81</sup> Rockefeller, through a new private entity called the International Basic Economy Corporation (IBEC) that was run in part by his son Rodman, advocated for reforms to Peru's banking system to better support lending for housing built by private contractors. By the early 1960s, IBEC officials had invested in housing developments designed for Lima's middle classes.<sup>82</sup> When Peru embraced foreign technical assistance for housing in the late 1950s and early 1960s, the objective was to create middle-class communities funded through private loans rather than government largesse and to rely on aided self-help for *barriada* residents.<sup>83</sup> This tracks with broader trends in international development circles, and by the early 1960s, aided self-help for housing financed by private mortgages became the primary form of housing aid.<sup>84</sup> In most cases, residents needed either a title to land or the ability to qualify for a mortgage to benefit from this aid.

<sup>79</sup> Gyger 2019: 45. For an in-depth analysis of how the bond market contributes to urban inequality, see Jenkins 2019.

<sup>80</sup> Gyger 2019: chapter 1.

<sup>81</sup> Pedro Beltrán, Correspondence with Nelson A. Rockefeller, Rockefeller Archive Center, Nelson A. Rockefeller - Personal, Countries, Series E, FA341, Box 57, Folder 475.

<sup>82</sup> Correspondence, 1960-1962, Rockefeller Archive Center, Nelson A. Rockefeller - Personal, AIA-IBEC, Series B, FA 339, Box 33, Folder 310.

<sup>83</sup> Gyger 2019: 180.

<sup>84</sup> For examples in Latin America, see Offner 2019; Fischer 2014; and Healey 2020.



The calculation to prioritize the middle classes for housing solutions while stigmatizing the urban poor and leaving them to help themselves was cynical and took on a specific form in the context of the Peruvian Andes. While some, like Picó, framed what he saw as the challenge of the *barriada* residents as an opportunity for uplift, others, like Valcárcel, expressed disdain for Indigenous people in urban spaces. A reconstruction plan developed by the American Chamber of Commerce in Peru in the aftermath of a 1970 earthquake off the coast further illustrates this point. When establishing priorities for reconstruction, the report argued that the poor Indigenous people in the sierras were «traditionally removed from the mainstream of Peruvian life» and could just repair their homes with materials from their environment, therefore, housing assistance ought to focus on the coastal, urban middle classes.<sup>85</sup> This view was shared by Peruvians and foreigners alike.

The trend lines away from government-subsidized and planned housing developments for the urban poor would have existed without the 1950 Cusco earthquake, but the earthquake's aftermath helped shift the debate in key ways. There was recognition that housing was the most pressing concern after the earthquake and that there was a need for massive investment in working-class housing. But government officials and foreign technicians chose not to prioritize it. Cusco could not become a model urban space in their eyes, so instead, they focused on making it a tourist destination. These priorities would be further codified with Law 12350 in 1955, which reallocated the funding for Cusco's reconstruction to industrialization, private loans, and restoration of monuments and eliminated funding for government-subsidized housing.<sup>86</sup> The 1957 Law 12800 replaced the Junta with the *Corporación de Reconstrucción y Fomento* (CRYF). The legislative charge for CRYF included Article 3, which contains provisions that essentially support

<sup>85</sup> American Chamber of Commerce of Peru, *The Peruvian Earthquake of May 31st, 1970*, Rockefeller Archive Center, IBEC: General Information, Data, and Research, Series 5, FA084, Box 95, Folder 700: 7. This sentiment echoed earlier foreign technicians. For example, Gyger 2022: 89-90.

<sup>86</sup> Ley 12350, 17 June 1955.

self-help housing efforts by allowing «popular» neighborhood groups to submit proposals for construction projects and to incentivize private capital to invest in housing developments in areas where associations or cooperatives of residents have a legal claim to the land.<sup>87</sup> Self-help, privately-financed housing would become the default for Cusco's urban poor, as it would for Lima and other Peruvian cities in the years to follow. The parts of the Cusco where this was allowed were peripheral *barrios indios*, like Santiago and Belen.

#### A RETURN TO THE *ENCUESTA*

Historian José Tamayo Herrera notes that the few government-subsidized housing developments that did come to fruition in the aftermath of the earthquake significantly improved the quality of life for their middle-class inhabitants. For the most part, the professionals, bureaucrats, small business owners, and teachers who gained access to modern housing in the *unidades vecinales* of Mariscal Gamarra, Zarumilla, Santiago, and Zarguán del Cielo, constructed by the Fondo de Salud y Bienestar Social, had previously lived in large, rundown homes dating to the colonial period.<sup>88</sup> But to understand what happened to the settlement residents who were not placed in these units, it helps to return to the 1959 survey. At the time of the survey, the residents' relationship with the land had been formalized for the most part. The residents of Rosaspata were landowners, and the residents of Avenida del Ejército, Belemppampa, and Huayruropata were renting their land. The Dolorespata settlement emerged as the result of a land invasion, so the residents declared themselves the owners but had not gone through any legal process.<sup>89</sup> The picture that emerges from the survey gives a sense of where aided self-help housing was more successful and where it fell short.

<sup>87</sup> Ley 12800, 4 February 1957.

<sup>88</sup> Tamayo Herrera 2010: 190. Also see Gutiérrez Samanez 2006.

<sup>89</sup> Hermoza Mariscal and Acurio Velarde 1959: 1-2. The survey was conducted in February and March of 1959, with most of the work being completed on Sundays and holidays to catch people while they were home. It is not clear whether all the interviews were conducted in Spanish.

The survey provides numerous details about the origins and composition of the different settlements. The Avenida del Ejército settlement occupied the space along the Chunchulmayo riverbed, where residents occupied a combination of the emergency government-built units originally intended for middle-class families, and residents renting empty lots where they constructed homes using materials they acquired themselves. Because of the location, the settlement was frequently at risk of flood waters.<sup>90</sup> Belemppampa also dated to the immediate aftermath of the quake, with shelters intended for a temporary occupation that residents rented from a government entity, the Beneficencia Pública del Cuzco. By the late 1950s, many residents stopped paying rent and organized under the name Asociación de Damnificados 21 de Mayo. When the Beneficencia threatened eviction, they left and occupied land owned by the Beneficencia that became the Dolorespata settlement. At the time of the survey, they had yet to negotiate an agreement with the Beneficencia. The residents who remained in Belemppampa at the time of the survey were still under the constant threat of eviction because the land was intended for a middle-class housing development that would be out of reach for them economically.<sup>91</sup> The residents of Huayruropata were mostly displaced from other parts of the city or were recent migrants to the city, and they built precariously constructed homes on rented land. Finally, the residents of Rosaspata were mostly relocated from the university stadium settlement. They too established an association and pooled money to purchase the land in the northeastern part of the city. CRYF assisted with the planning and constructing of their homes, in line with the aided self-help model.<sup>92</sup> The experiences of the surveyed settlement residents, while varied, show that the Peruvian government and the local administrative bodies mostly abandoned efforts at low-income housing developments.

Rather than paint a picture of poor Indians unable to adapt to city life, the survey data reveals that the residents were integrated into the

<sup>90</sup> *Ib.*: 3-4.

<sup>91</sup> *Ib.*: 4-5.

<sup>92</sup> *Ib.*: 6.

life of the broader city. Most surveyed residents indicated that they were relatively recent migrants from the countryside, and therefore many were likely of Indigenous background.<sup>93</sup> The heads of households were employed in a number of different occupations, but the vast majority were artisans, construction workers, and industrial workers. The survey did not seem to include questions about whether other members of households were employed, but studies of other *barriadas* indicate that women often ran shops and small businesses within the *barriadas*.<sup>94</sup> In other words, they were contributing to Cusco's expanding urban economy, even if their incomes relegated them to precarious housing with inadequate space, lighting, and ventilation.<sup>95</sup>

Although experts worried that *barriada* residents needed help to build their homes, the survey demonstrates that residents really needed access to essential services. When asked about desired improvements, most respondents cited access to plumbing and electricity. Schools were also a priority, especially for Dolorespata and Rosaspata. Residents mostly agreed that the government, or one of its affiliated entities like CRYF or the Beneficencia, should be responsible for these improvements. Aided self-help was a less popular solution, probably because the «self-help» part had already been their reality. Even so, about one hundred respondents selected that or personal contributions to fix the problems, revealing that they were willing to dedicate time and labor when necessary.<sup>96</sup> Notably, several households in Rosaspata reported that the government was invested in their neighborhood, likely due to the involvement of CRYF in their housing arrangement.<sup>97</sup> In their final analysis, the research team agreed that the government should ultimately be responsible for providing basic services like sewage, potable water, and electricity. In

<sup>93</sup> *Ib.*: 13-14. The survey did not indicate ethnicity or whether the respondents' primary language was not Spanish.

<sup>94</sup> *Ib.*: 15. On women and employment in other *barriadas*, see Matos Mar 1961: 180-181; and Driant and Riofrío 1987.

<sup>95</sup> Hermoza Mariscal and Acurio Velarde 1959: 22-23, 26.

<sup>96</sup> *Ib.*: 35-36.

<sup>97</sup> *Ib.*: 33.

addition, they recommended that future housing developments should prioritize low-income residents like those in the *barriadas* rather than those at higher socioeconomic levels.<sup>98</sup>

The survey provides invaluable insights into the lives of Cusco's working-class residents and the successes and failures of the earthquake reconstruction efforts. Several areas designated for short-term emergency housing were, in many cases, occupied for up to nine years after the earthquake or more. The residents of these settlements were resourceful about using and reusing the relief materials supplied in the days and weeks after the earthquake.<sup>99</sup> Emergency settlements intended for middle-class residents were eventually occupied by the working classes after more permanent opportunities opened for the middle classes. Despite the resourcefulness of the residents, there was only so much they could do with limited disposable income and time. An earlier commitment by the Junta or the national government to provide services like plumbing and electricity might have prevented the haphazard or «anarchic» development of Cusco's post-earthquake *barriadas*.

The example of Dolorespata demonstrates how some residents took matters into their own hands when threatened with eviction so the government could build middle-class housing. Today, a street in Dolorespata is named 21 de Mayo, a tribute to their survival of the earthquake and the importance of organized resistance. Their efforts paid off when, in 1961, the government passed the Ley de Barriadas (Law 13517), which essentially legalized the status of settlements like Dolorespata, but with the intention of discouraging future squatters. The condition was that residents had to improve their houses to meet specific minimum requirements and contribute to upgrading services in the neighborhood within a seven-year timeframe. Nationwide the law became a bureaucratic challenge, but it was a welcome change for the residents of Dolorespata.<sup>100</sup>

<sup>98</sup> Ib.: 41.

<sup>99</sup> Ib.: 24.

<sup>100</sup> See Gyger 2019: chapter 4.

In the months and years immediately following the earthquake, there was a sense that experts could make Cusco a modern city for the rest of the Indigenous Americas to emulate. But the expansive vision for the state and internationally-led reconstruction quickly scaled down to a more straightforward plan for economic development. While some would benefit from the reconstruction plans, notably some of the middle-class sectors and those with stakes in tourism, Cusco's poor were left with the often ephemeral promise of aided self-help. It was not an accident that these same residents tended to be Indigenous and were displaced from the historic city center to the racialized geographies of the urban periphery. The lesson that some seemed to take from this was that poor Andean people were not worth the investment.

In many ways, the difficulties and debates that occurred in the aftermath of Cusco's 1950 earthquake were precursors to larger shifts in housing policy across Peru and the rest of the Americas. Policymakers, including John C. Turner, who arrived in Peru in 1957, opted for an aided self-help housing development model following a 1958 earthquake in Arequipa. Over time, however, even Turner, one of the biggest advocates of aided self-help housing, would come to question the role of outside experts.<sup>101</sup> Peruvians in need of housing did not necessarily need the designs or assistance from outside experts as much as they needed permission to occupy the space and basic amenities like plumbing and electricity. Instead, *barriadas* became normalized and even celebrated as evidence of popular resilience and initiative, thus providing a «pretext for the inaction of the state».<sup>102</sup> It became clear that the global designs for the future of Peru's urban working classes would be underfunded and inadequate. But the 1959 survey also shows that, despite the odds, these communities were resourceful, they were there to stay, and they were not going to stop demanding investment in a better future.

<sup>101</sup> Gyger 2021: 54.

<sup>102</sup> Driant 1991: 214.

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