

New Neighborhoods in South Lima:

For an Integral Urban Renovation Action

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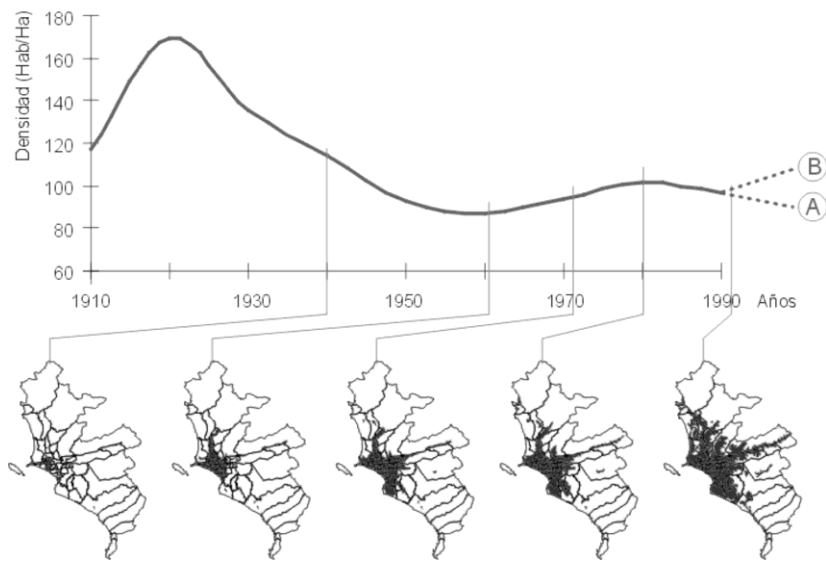
New Neighborhoods in South Lima:

desco / programa urbano / Lima Peru

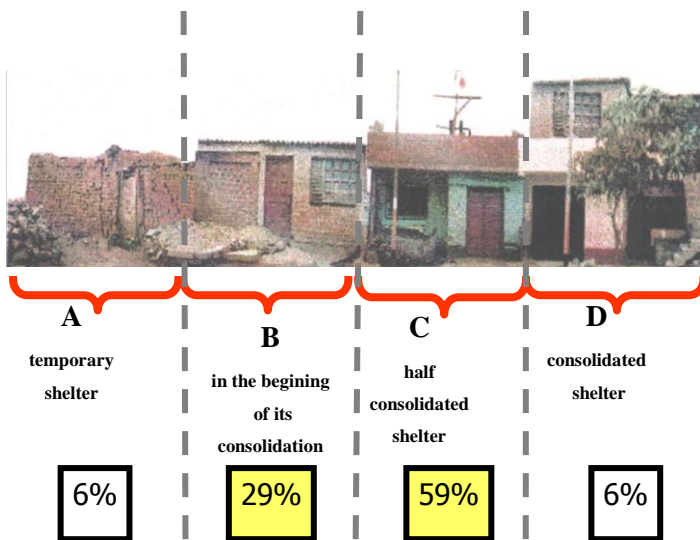
1 Shelter Situation Analysis

As most Latin American metropolises, the city of Lima's immigration processes from the country to the city had begun from the Forties of XX century. They have generated demographic explosions that have defined its present urban characteristics where the quarters have occupied almost all their expansion areas. This phenomenon has been reflecting urban growth in a very low density way and housing and urban space scarcity and very bad living conditions. This modality of growth has been very hard questioned now that Lima has extended itself almost sixty kilometers from north to south, having multiplied by four its population in a 40 year period (its present population density is half as it was 80 years ago). This new city is made up by self-produced or self-constructed architecture (settlers without any type of attendance from design or construction professionals who build their houses progressively in a process where people inhabit first and then build). Because of that our cities are in a constant process of construction. In Peru more than 65 percent of the construction is made in an informal way, without the presence of any architect or professional technician.

Population Density Evolution in Lima



We have built a general typology for defining the shelter consolidation process that is defined in a very long term way. The indicators for the 10 poorest districts in Lima are:



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Type A with no permanent walls. Brick walls in our particular case.

Type B with no permanent roof. Made of concrete

Type C with permanent roof

Type D with a second floor or more

We can see that the main problem is not on segments B and C. We have many shelters just built. The question right now is how these shelters are built and what we need to do for improving them.

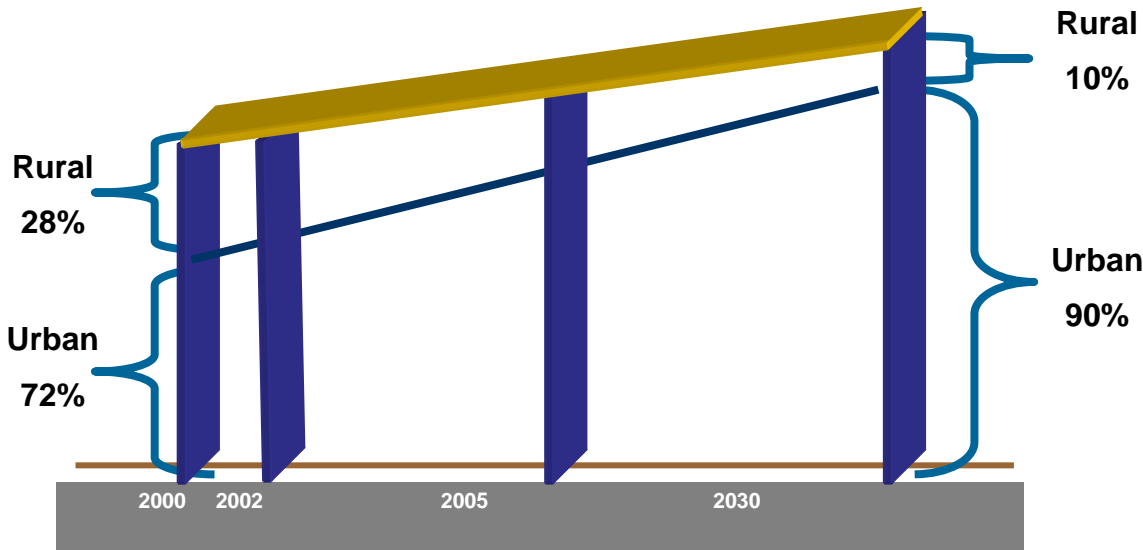
To 2007 we had a shelter deficit of 326,000 and what the government has done for the last 5 years is to provide a little more than a hundred thousand. But our real problem is defined by our qualitative deficit.

We need to improve almost a million shelters and only fifty thousand have been improved for the last 5 years. Only 6 percent has been done and also only 23% of the supposed budget has been invested.

The city has been built but in which way? That's our main problem now and that's something we are just about to see. The recent 7.8 degree earthquake has been a dramatic advice of what kind of cities we had just built.

From the Peruvian State, providing housing and city for poor people have been reflected on giving land for being occupied and then being habilitated. People just wanted a vital space for progressively build their houses. Most of the massive land occupations were promoted by the own authority that understood that occupying the land in an ordered way was more sustainable for the future and did not represented much hard work (neighbourhoods just needed to have an approved plan on a piece of paper to be recognized, and have an effective security on the land possession). There was so common until the eighties, to see massive urban interventions and basic services campaigns promoted by the State. The population was also more interested on developing the city than on obtaining a land property title –as on these days- where the characteristics of the State Intervention in the city from the poor population are completely different.

Urbanization rate



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Although the law recognizes in some way the problem, it does not define the action to take... **there is actually the law but it does not guarantee a right to being part of the city for many people.**

After the first Slums law (1961) the norms that could permit to do something for the self help constructed city are just a few, and of course can not see the specificity of the problems from the new neighbourhoods. The law since the nineties is subordinated to the property formalization process that as most of us know can not guarantee any kind of development in unequal markets like ours.

The action from the State use to be so easy against the precarious situation of the families, and it reflects the fact that it does not count with any real alternative of providing housing or at least decent land provision.

Also there is the invisibility and the lack of control of the authorities (that rises from the lack of planning) over possible occupation areas. It has permitted a clandestine land market that takes advantage from the necessities of the people. This finally makes the city continuously grow beyond unexpected natural and cultural frontiers.

The action from the State

| FIRST CONDITIONS | INTERVENTION OBJECTIVES | MECHANISM |
|---|--|--|
| Precarious situation (specially in the accesses) | Improving physical conditions Mostly stairways, parks in a few cases. | Urban infrastructure construction (Metropolitan and local governments) |
| Weak insertion in the employ market. Employ demand | Generating temporary employment - building sector. | Urban infrastructure construction (national government) |
| Poverty, social-economic exclusion | Access to the market. Access to credit. | Providing land property titles and registering them (national government) |

2 Organisation

DESCO Centre for the Development Studies and Promotion is a non governmental organization from the Peruvian civil society, that has been working from the past 40 years in order to promote of social development and capacity fortification of the excluded sectors from the Peru. DESCO has been working in South Lima since 1990, formulating policy contributions and offering technical, institutional and financial support, to the densification of poor urban housing.

The 5 theme lines of the Urban Program are:

- Neighbourhood improving
- Local management
- Local economic development
- Housing and habitational densification
- Urban Observatory

The territory where we work is conformed by 4 districts in South Lima: Villa El Salvador, Villa María del Triunfo, San Juan de Miraflores and Lurin. In this territory live more than one million people in an area of 312 km².

Lima is a so low density city that needs many actions to generate a height consolidation that may stop its continued horizontal expansion¹. One of the most interesting answers to this problem is the one of the Habitational Densification (Densificación Habitacional). The previous experiences of Habitational Densification have occurred in the district of Villa El Salvador² by DESCO.

"DESCO defines Habitational Densification as the process where new housing units are added in the upper or flank areas of a produced or producing house. In most of the cases, taking ahead of this task diminishes the existing levels of over-occupation in the original house and lodges the population growth of next generations, with a more efficient use of space."³

3 Shelter Problem

New neighbourhoods in South Lima

Since the late eighties, the city occupation and city expansion processes have taken a different direction.⁴ We can not talk about massive, well organized and State supported settlements anymore. Right now we talk about tiny areas occupied by reduced groups of families that conform a fragmented scenario of isolated neighborhoods- Isolated one from each other and isolated from the rest of the city.

¹ In fact all the zones of possible urban expansion were already occupied. The last occupations have been happening in the Andean mountain spur zones (extremely difficult territories), as well as in more central areas that were separated for equipment for other consolidated zones (the occupation of the land for the Technological University of South Lima is a present and paradigmatic case of this condition).

² **Villa El Salvador** is one of the 4 districts that conform South Lima, that began to be occupied from the first half of the seventies. The interesting issue of Villa El Salvador as a case is that it was urban planned as a system of self-sufficient residential groups conformed by lots of same dimensions but with constructive and architectonic diversity (this structure is completely useful to the strategy that appears lines down). From the first year Villa El Salvador instituted itself as an Urban Self-Management Community (CUAVES – Comunidad Urbana Autogestionaria de Villa El Salvador), paradigm of the popular participation and organization in Latin America, that still persists in the organizative capacities of the its population.

³ In: **TOKESHI**, Juan; **ZOLEZZI**, Mario; **NORIEGA**, Carlos. *DENSIFICACION HABITACIONAL, Una propuesta de crecimiento para la Ciudad Popular*. Desco 2005. p. 11

⁴ The Peruvian case is so particular because of a particular kind of planning for the self constructed city (Ley de Barriadas 13517). Even though the State did not provide housing but land, it was so important (specially in the seventies and eighties) for the development of these neighborhoods. This “helped slums” planning way (barriada asistida) reserved enough space for urban infrastructure, roads, and public spaces... with all its limitations permitted a **city** to grow. Right now we can not say that what is growing along with this new settlements might be a city someday.

A research prepared by the Urban Program shows that since 1992, only in South Lima, these new neighborhoods are 365 (40,000 shelters and 164,660 inhabitants). They occupy 8.84 km² area just in 3 districts (San Juan de Miraflores, Villa María del Triunfo and Villa El Salvador). It represents about the 15.5% of the whole South Lima population.

These settlements are defined by so many low urban consolidation levels, lack of basic services and urban infrastructure, unhealthy and unsafe housing, and an imminent disaster risk, which comes from the topography limitations (very inclined terrain); in an extreme poverty context that becomes in unsatisfied basic necessities.

From this particular condition arises a new rationality from these families that build their shelters in zones that years ago were unthinkable. These new conditions are different from those from the past in at least 3 relevant topics:

- the characteristics of the terrain
- the poverty fighting strategies
- a different relationship between the state and the Civil Society (organization and participation).

The new neighbourhoods in South Lima

Number of new settlements occupied since 1992 - population

| | San Juan de Miraflores | Villa María del Triunfo | Villa El Salvador | Total South Lima |
|-----------------------|-------------------------------|--------------------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------|
| neighbourhoods | 138 | 168 | 59 | 365 |
| houses | 10,470 | 16,730 | 12,961 | 40,161 |

| | San Juan de Miraflores | Villa María del Triunfo | Villa El Salvador | Total South Lima |
|---|-------------------------------|--------------------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------|
| Total population | 335,236 | 355,757 | 367 432 | 1,058,425 |
| Aproximate total population of the new settlements | 42,927 | 68,593 | 53,140 | 164,660 |
| Percentage | 12,81% | 19,28% | 14,46% | 15,56% |

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Urban situation

The land where these neighborhoods were built is so similar to the land that were occupied in Lima during the forties and fifties (landfill areas and very inclined hills). They are so close to more consolidated zones that may offer public services (schools, hospitals, markets), but they stayed vacant because of its adverse conditions. We can mention:

- **Topography.** Occupation in gaps, slopes and tops of hills that in many cases exceed 45 degree inclinations.
- **Bad quality of the soil.** Rocky and sandy terrains show an imminent risk.
- **Bad weather and sanitary conditions.** Respiratory, digestive and skin diseases are a common problem. One of the main causes of these is the non access to a decent public water service.
- **Lack of a road system.** There are 365 isolated neighborhoods connected by precarious earth roads, transited by water providing trucks, motorcycles and by walking.
- **Lack of urban infrastructure.** With a special emphasis in the public space issue (parks, trees, access stairs to the neighborhoods on these difficult areas).
- **Lack of public services.** Garbage recollection, security and health.

More than 60% of the people from these neighborhoods have come from another place from South Lima; 42% come from the same district and 15% come from the closest neighborhood. A 76% of the land demand in South Lima until 2015 is satisfied by these ways.

These neighborhoods are mostly composed of young families (second and third generation of the first migrants) that occupy the closest hill to its parents house, paying a land dealer for a site in any gap in an informal urbanization process near to the original neighborhood.

The city they want it's the same that their parents and grandparents got many years ago... but the present conditions can guarantee a consolidation process in a same way?

Housing issues

Self constructing constitutes the most important way of accessing to a house in Peru, and they have become traditional in many ways (operating for more than 50 years). But right now these ways can not be considered adequate because both the land conditions and the interests and possibilities of the families have changed. The most used material in this new housing patterns is wood. Wood is traditionally considered as a provisional material (first period of the housing consolidation process). But the precarious situation of the neighborhoods makes this material become permanent.

The houses on the hills are built upper medium sized piled rock structures (pircas in Spanish), for leveling and stabilizing the land. These structures can not guarantee minimum security conditions in case of an earthquake for example. Another relevant problem from this structure comes from the moisture of the soil because of the lack of a drainage system (families build precarious latrines). The rock structures get moist and eventually fall down, damaging the dwellings that are settled on low areas.

It is also common to have dwellings settled on sandy inclined terrains that should be built with special techniques but are also built by precarious ways (above structures made by tires and bags full of more sand).

About the access to basic services

Even though 131 of the 365 established neighborhoods since 1992 count with legal recognition, and most of them are going to get it soon, only 16 have fresh water basic services.

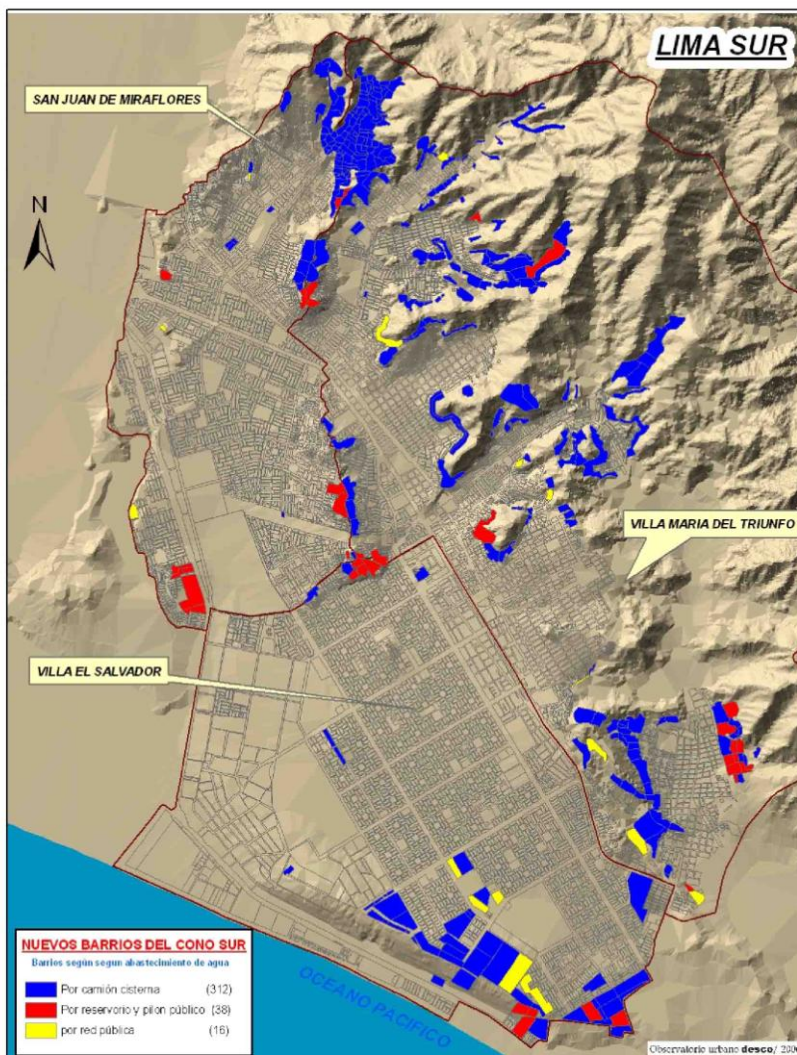
In almost every neighborhood, the water service is supplied by water trucks (managed by private dealers that provide very bad quality water that is seven times more expensive than that that comes from the public waterlines). The sewage is disposed of by using latrines or spilling it to the streets.

The action of covering these services has not been focused in an integral way, with policies that could benefit everyone. They have been focalized without seeing the whole problem, and responding demands from the own population in extreme cases (disasters for example).

It is common to find 2 neighborhoods, one next to each other where the first one has basic services and the other one does not.

The electric energy service is provided by a private enterprise that covers more than 40% of the new neighborhoods in South Lima. During the past ten years, it was not necessary to have a property title for getting access to this service –the own State promoted this policy-. In so many cases the installation of the service represented a kind of legalization of the unacceptable (most of these “legalized” neighbourhoods were necessary to be resettled).

Public water service access map



Urban Program desco 2006

The grassroots organizations in the new Lima social and urban configuration

More traditional organizations that were very important since these districts foundation period, have right now so many difficulties, since they are not able to articulate and negotiate peoples demands, and have lost political representation.

These political ways have been losing space since the city started to develop and consolidate itself and it was not necessary to be organized anymore. The local governments (most of them formed in the eighties) assumed the responsibility of managing, “finishing” the city, and politically represent the population.

Finally, the actual social heterogeneity has substituted the relative homogeneity from the past (poor families with similar origins, inhabiting a city where everything was expectant). Also the national laws permit non organized population to participate, making weakening the organizations in its political spaces.

The political pressure mechanisms to the authorities (local and national) are not effective anymore. These historic channels have been replaced by liberalized punctual assistance mechanisms that do not permit any “collective” idea to grow, leaving the processes to be regulated by the market. The social policy action mechanisms have become dispersed in so many “attention windows” that not attack the problem in a global way.

In a wider way, this situation reveals a new way of getting organized for satisfying necessities: family nets that do not articulate itself around a city collective project anymore; but around individual and immediate necessities solving.

These new neighbours are not anymore this pioneers that occupy the desert for funding and building together a new city... they just camp in the city. The same territorial fragmentation makes the people not be able to show themselves to the State as a strong political force –it was actually the motor of the development of the poor population city and the State participation-.

Each neighbourhood has its particular demands an ways of managing them, without seeing neighbourhoods that are settled next to each other above the same hill. Each inhabitant is circumscribed to his more immediate space (house), and finally loses an interest for collective work and thinking the city as an integral issue.

The action from the State in the New Neighborhoods Territory

- It doesn't exist any plan for the city and its urban expansion. There is no strategy for attending or stopping the new settlements situation that continue producing an irregular expansion. There is not a law that may define this new kind of urban dynamics also –the slums law comes from 1961-.
- As the fragmented configuration of these settlements in the city, the focus and the interventions from the State are also fragmented. The main action since the nineties has been a combination of extremely focalized interventions from many governmental instances that work in an independent and also conflictive way, and a property formalization process that reduce the intervention of the national government only to provide and legalizing the land (not habilitating it anymore); without a link to any territory ordering logic, and in most of the cases without any participation from the local governments, reducing their role of being the urban planning and managing main instances to almost nothing.

Local Governments

They do not usually have any presence in the new neighbourhoods territory –that is reflected in the lack of planning, basic services coverage and prevention for new occupations-. The local government managers recognize that is so difficult to include the new neighbourhoods in an integral program because of their disordered and sporadic occupation and growing up processes. The intervention from the local governments are around poverty fighting actions and economic subsistence programs as popular dinners and breakfasts, or immunization campaigns.

City participation established mechanisms (participative funds for example) can not receive the credibility they need because they not constitute themselves as effective decision spheres, and there is not a public policy that may guide the inhabitants to construct and then manage their own development projects in a capability development way.

Lima Metropolitan Government

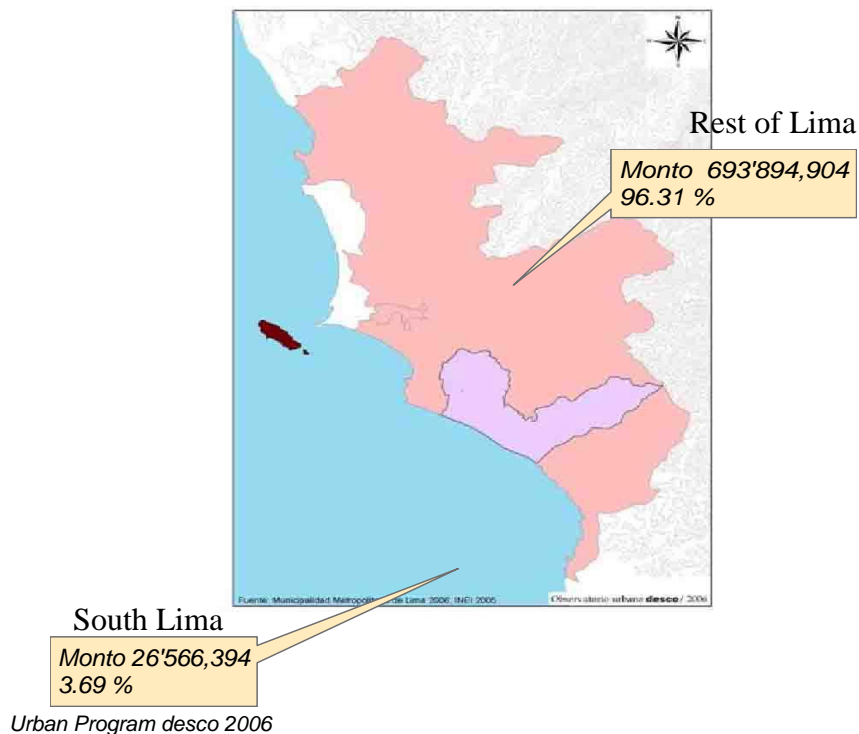
Maybe the biggest action from this instance in order to attend the self constructed city is the construction of stairways for accessing the neighbourhoods settled on the hills and gaps. Although they are absolutely necessary, they connect only the houses

with the street, but not the whole neighbourhood. This does not generate an idea of city and finally contributes to their fragmentation.

The other big action from this instance is road construction, that finally connects important points of the city (in order to other private interests), but forgets what is happening between these points.

This pragmatic way is also visible in the public space implementation policy: large infrastructure buildings and parks for the rich city and mini soccer courts for the poor one.

Metropolitan government invest in Lima



COFOPRI (Informal property formalization process)

This “Peruvian styled” land formalization process (not the house), does not attend in any way the neighbourhoods development and is not related with an urban public policy of neighbourhood attention or housing providing or upgrading. There has been done a regularization of the property but nothing has been done in order to generate city conditions. The biggest problem is that COFOPRI has given titles in high risk zones already, without understanding the real problem and its future consequences.

The housing consolidation depends more on different factors like the physical, social and economic conditions, than on having a property title.

It is obvious that these families have not been attended by the governmental sale of housing subventions from programs (Techo Propio, Mi Barrio) that supposedly should attend the poorest families in our city. It is necessary to say that there is no a public policy for giving houses to poor people in Peru, and right now the State is unable to give at least decent land.

National Government

- INDECI institute (prevention against disasters)

Punctual actions against physic risk and emergencies. Not too much prevention.

- Work Promotion ministry Local Infrastructure construction / Temporary employment.

- Housing and construction Ministry

→ Local infrastructure construction / Mi Barrio program

→ Basic water services / Agua para Todos program

4 Proposal for Change and Improvement

The actions for improving these 365 neighbourhoods, in order to include them in the city system can not be left to each ones initiatives. The metropolitan government does not count with an integral diagnosis and registry of the whole group of settlements; and the Metropolitan Urban Planning Institute do not assume this as maybe the biggest problem of the urban consolidation in Lima.

This situation tells us that it is absolutely necessary to generate new conditions for an action to solve in a simultaneous way a problem that affects the whole city.

We need to put together all the actors (National government, metropolitan government, local governments and the social organizations) with a strategic planning and managing logic; with a special emphasis in the population initiatives in order to make the proposal organic and sustainable.

We must start from two necessary actions:

1. Mapping and identifying the whole new neighborhoods territory.
2. Promoting a political and technical decision between upgrading and resettling the neighborhoods.

The conditions for this decision depend on the following baseline data:

1. Vulnerability issues: risk in case of disasters.
2. Geographic issues: Quality of the soil, terrain inclination.
3. Climatic issues: Extreme humidity - 100% in few places.
4. Possibilities of being communicated with the rest of the city.
5. Enough reserved space for infrastructure.
6. Possibilities of access to basic services (mostly because of the altitude).

Physical Vulnerability issues

Considering physical vulnerability as our main priority it is necessary to build a risk map that would cover all South Lima's new neighborhoods extension. This map must cover all the risk mitigation issues, from two specific possible disasters specially: earthquakes and land slides, considering two different scales of diagnosis and action: neighborhoods and shelters.

Since Desco does not count with enough funds or logistics for building the whole risk map we propose to build a first level of diagnosis (as a model to be replicated by the local actors in a participatory way afterwards). This model will work as a typological matrix that would help to identify the different problems of the different territories in a systematic way.

In general, the South Lima geographical areas can be synthesized in two generic types of territory and settlement patterns:

- a. Occupations over Andean mountain spur zones and gaps with rocky terrains and high inclinations - **risk of falling rocks and land slides.**
- b. Occupations over dessert dune zones with sandy terrains - **risk of liquefaction and land slides.**

Then we have a different type of risk, not generated by natural causes but human ones:

- a. The presence of latrines moist the soil – **risk of land slides.**
- b. The bad quality of already built sustain walls.

We propose to build a methodology for building a risk map of South Lima's new neighborhoods, based on this typological matrix. This matrix will cover the following aspects:

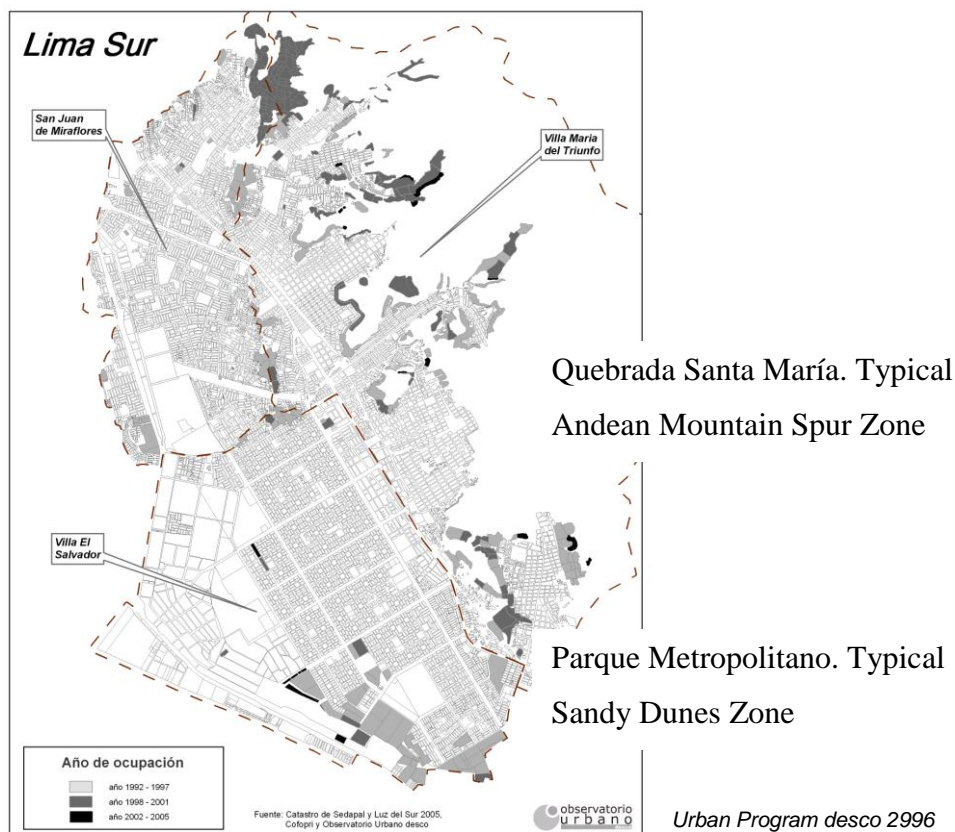
1. In a neighborhood scale

- Quality of the soil, topography
- State of pathways (terraces, stairs)
- risk zones on the upper sides (rock falling)
- presence of security zones for neighborhood evacuation
- social organization in case of disaster

2. In a shelter scale

- Quality of the soil
- state of Foundations
- state of structural core
- state of roof and wall materials
- settlement terraces
- location of latrines

We have chosen two specific territories of South Lima for this first diagnosis and risk typology development (that actually represent our 2 risk zone types). They are “PARQUE METROPOLITANO” in Villa El Salvador and “QUEBRADA SANTA MARÍA” in Villa María del Triunfo. We also propose to build a Geographic information system that could permit to put and analyze all the information gotten by the actors afterwards, according to the previously designed matrix.



After putting in practice the methodology, it is necessary to complete the risk map of South Lima. Local governments should identify the territories and follow the methodology. The finished map would help to decide resettling or upgrading the neighbourhoods.

The resettling process must be done according to the habitational densification proposal. As we know there is no more available space to be occupied in a horizontal way. Building above the existing urban fabric, will also help to dense it, improving their present consolidation process, and avoiding urban sprawl.

Of course, the ideal scenario tells us to resettle almost the totality of these neighborhoods, but what can we do if many of them already count with land titles and electricity services? Many of the families have also invested lots of their savings on improving their shelters and have established strong social networks, and of course are not planning to move away.

The upgrading process must start from a scale of priorities, in order to achieve the integral development in a sustainable way; and because we do not count with a real capacity of managing a project of that magnitude yet.

The upgrading priorities must be:

1. risk mitigation
2. basic services
3. roads
4. urban infrastructure and roads.

The risk mitigation must cover the following topics (in both shelter and neighborhood scales):

| Shelter | Neighborhood |
|--|--|
| Improve Foundations and structural cores | Build terraces for pathways |
| Relocate latrines | Build stairways |
| Rebuild sustain walls, terraces | Avoid rock falling from the upper side |
| Avoid rock falling from the upper side | |

The proposal is inserted into a larger institutional plan for this year. Desco has a good background about political incidence processes. Issues presented are taking

more part of local and national agendas. On October 2007 we signed with 11 municipalities of South Lima a pronouncement about the necessity of managing physical risk. The development of this methodology represent the next operative step of this new joint.

There is no legal framework about preventing disasters, and normally the actions from the government take part very far away from the population's interests and strategies. The recent 7.8 degree earthquake has opened a relevant discussion into a high political sphere, about vulnerability and risk management issues.

The relationship between the relevant actors (technical and political) is weak, specially between the central, metropolitan and local governments. Even local governments are the most interested actors already, they do not have the capacity nor the budget even for the initial diagnosis.

The upgrading project must unite all the relevant actors in the process, specially the local governments that must recover their planning functions and also work as a pivot between the other ones, since they are closest to the territories and to the people specially. It is strictly necessary to design an action plan that would be based and would respect the own people's initiatives in order to promote an organic process.

The identified roles of the different actors for achieving our objectives are:

- **Central Government:** Fund provider, policy maker
- **Metropolitan Government:** Must unite all the local governments order to achieve a metropolitan scale intervention.
- **Local Governments:** They must provide the detail of the preliminary information and being in constant contact with the population.
- **Population – CBOs:** CBOs are very important in a project of this kind, because most of the actions will depend on the organization degree of the neighborhoods. Participatory mechanisms are necessary in order to reduce costs and let the proposal be appropriated by the people.
- **DESCO:** As a preliminary action, we have put in practice an incidence plan, to communicate the problem and to promote an agenda about the actions to take and the responsibility of each actor.
- **Universities:** They must provide knowledge, technology and the participation from young professionals.