ABSTRACT

This article analyzes urban planning and historic preservation following Cusco’s 1950 earthquake through a case study of the Templo de Santiago. Reports and correspondence from various organizations reveals how budgetary decisions and planning goals shaped preservation and development in Cusco. The case of the Templo de Santiago illustrates the challenges faced by neighborhoods affiliated with historic sites that were not priorities for reconstruction or tourism after the earthquake. This case also demonstrates how the language of historic preservation facilitated an economic transformation that went far beyond the scope of post-disaster relief, and that those transformations had long-term implications for cusqueños.

Keywords: cultural patrimony, disaster recovery, urban planning, economic development, UNESCO.

RESUMEN

Mediante un estudio de caso, se analiza la planificación urbana y la conservación histórica del templo de Santiago, después del terremoto de Cusco ocurrido en 1950. Las decisiones presupuestarias y los objetivos de planificación dieron forma a la conservación y el desarrollo en la ciudad de Cusco. Es así que el caso del templo de Santiago ilustra los desafíos que enfrentaron los barrios afiliados a sitios históricos que no eran prioridades para la reconstrucción o el turismo posterior al sismo. Este caso también demuestra cómo el lenguaje de la preservación histórica facilitó una transformación económica que fue más allá del alcance del socorro posterior al desastre, y las implicancias a largo plazo para los cusqueños.

Palabras clave: patrimonio cultural, recuperación de desastres, planificación urbana, desarrollo económico, UNESCO.
Introduction

When people think of the city of Cusco, what usually comes to mind is a historic tourist destination with distinctive, preserved architecture, and that serves as a gateway to Machu Picchu. This image speaks to the successes of urban planning and economic development strategies that emerged in the aftermath of a devastating 1950 earthquake. But Cusco’s bustling modern residential and commercial sectors also demonstrate the successes, and the limits, of those strategies. The 1950 earthquake was undeniably a major turning point for the city of Cusco, Peru. The disaster damaged or destroyed thousands of buildings in the city, leaving tens of thousands of residents homeless and much of the city’s architectural patrimony in peril. As is the case for many disasters, some seized on the devastation as an opportunity to transform Cusco in the interest of more thoroughly integrating the region into the midcentury capitalist economy. Through a combination of zoning and infrastructure projects, local political figures and outside technical advisors aimed to impose a modern logic on the city while at the same time preserving the architectural inheritance that made the city unique. Many of the imagined benefits from the reconstruction effort never came to fruition. In particular, the plans for a robust housing program and a more diversified local economy fell far short of the lofty visions. One of the main sectors to benefit was the tourism industry, which after a period of growth had seen a decline in government commitment in the early years of military rule under Manuel A. Odría (Rice, 2018, ch 3; Armas, 2017). Overtime, the potential for tourism development shaped the priorities of the local, national, and international organizations involved in reconstruction efforts and had an indelible impact on the city for decades to come.

This article analyzes urban planning and historic preservation priorities following Cusco’s 1950 earthquake through a case study of the Templo de Santiago. An examination of reports by international organizations like UNESCO, administrative bodies like the Junta de Reconstrucción y Fomento Industrial, and correspondence between members of the local Catholic hierarchy reveals how budgetary decisions and planning goals shaped preservation and development priorities in the city. The case of the Templo de Santiago illustrates the challenges faced by neighborhoods affiliated with historic sites that were not considered priorities for reconstruction or tourism after the earthquake. The post-disaster recovery plans pursued by the Junta significantly altered the urban landscape in the neighborhood surrounding the Templo de Santiago while limiting the funding allocated for the parishes’ reconstruction. Ultimately, the inclusion of the Templo and Plaza de Santiago on the UNESCO World Heritage inscription reveals that proponents of the Templo’s historic significance prevailed and that ideas about cultural patrimony are not fixed, but evolve over time. This case also demonstrates how the language of historic preservation facilitated an economic transformation that went far beyond the scope of post-disaster relief, and that those transformations had long-term implications for the residents of Cusco.

Beyond uncovering the details of a very specific case of post-disaster reconstruction and historic preservation, this study makes interventions in the scholarly literature on twentieth-century Peru and the history of post-disaster reconstruction beyond Peru. It shifts the focus of Peruvian urban studies from Lima to a peripheral neighborhood in Cusco, and in so doing gestures toward the numerous possibilities for future research in the field. It adds another layer of nuance to our understanding of Odría’s eight years in power, or ochenio (1948-1956). It examines a transitional moment in the history of post-disaster reconstruction and economic development, a postwar moment fueled by optimism in the power of the state, with the help of experts, to bring about positive
change on a monumental scale, and a time when new international institutions were figuring out their role in these processes. But this study also shows how this optimism waned, how institutions evolved, and how ordinary people insisted on a greater say in the plans and changes that would affect their lives.

A history of the Periphery

The Templo de Santiago’s location and the long history of that site as a peripheral area shaped the conditions of post-earthquake recovery. The Templo sits on a slight hill in an area once considered a suburban village called Chakillchaca, just over a kilometer from Cusco’s modern-day Plaza de Armas. Evidence suggests that when Cusco was the capital of the Inca empire, Chakillchaca’s residents likely included skilled metalworkers resettled from other parts of the empire as well as laborers from the nearby territory Kuntisuyu. The suburb also likely hosted foreign visitors, especially during certain rituals and festivals when outsiders were prohibited from entering the city center (Farrington, 2013, pp. 254-255, 264). Cusco’s political significance diminished after the Spanish empire established a viceregal capital in the new city of Lima, but it remained a critical city because of its symbolic importance and because it was a key area of Andean resistance to Spanish rule. In 1559 Cusco governor Juan Polo de Ondegardo began to implement a parish structure to provide the Andean population with more formal and consistent access to church teachings. It was highly unusual for the Spanish government to sponsor religious institutions directly, revealing the degree to which officials viewed these institutions as central to consolidation of control in the Andes (Burns, 1999, p. 24). The Templo de Santiago was founded in 1572 by the Spanish Viceroy of Peru, Francisco Toledo, as part of the reducciones indios, the forced resettlement of Andean people for the purposes of governance and evangelization in the midst of ongoing Andean resistance (Chara & Caparó, 1998, p. 129; Farrington, 2013, p. 99; Julien, 1998, p. 82). As historian Jeremy Ravi Mumford observed, in some cases the reducciones indios did not represent an extreme break from Inca practice, and the creation of the Santiago parish supports that interpretation (Mumford, 2012). The new parish comprised of urban Andean residents of Cusco, populations of Cachona and Choco of the Kuntisuyu territory whose labor had become part of an encomienda, or grant of labor and tribute, under Spanish rule, and Andeans referred to as yanaconas who were not part of a formal encomienda arrangement but nonetheless were granted to Spaniards as a labor force (Julien, 1998, pp. 86-87). The sparse records available indicate that Spaniards did not live in Santiago or the neighboring parish of Belén well into the seventeenth century (Julien, 1998, p. 94). Along with the Iglesia de Belén, founded in 1550, and the Templo de la Almudena, founded in 1698, the Templo de Santiago formed an important part of the indigenous urban periphery throughout the viceregal period, similar to the function of the village of Chakillchaca that it replaced.

Despite Cusco’s significance to Spanish colonial rule, over time the city experienced a decline that hit the parish of Santiago especially hard. A 1650 earthquake completely destroyed the Templo de Santiago and many other buildings in Cusco, but the subsequent reconstruction revealed that Cusco was still able to rebound (Chara & Caparó, 1998, p. 129). A series of factors beginning in the eighteenth century, however, precipitated a steady decline. The eighteenth-century Bourbon reforms and policy shifts into the nineteenth century diminished the influence of the Catholic church and contributed to financial hardships that left many of its institutions in Cusco unable to maintain their buildings (Burns, 1999, ch 7; Pike, 1967, pp. 38-39). Indigenous rebellions, most notably the Tupac Amaru rebellion, and Spanish attempts to contain them devastated the countryside and had a lasting
effect on Cusco and its religious institutions (Burns, 1999, ch 6). Cusco suffered a dramatic economic decline after independence, which was accompanied by a demographic decline. As a result, the Templo de Santiago fell into disrepair by the late nineteenth century. The suburb of Santiago in particular was practically abandoned during this period (Farrington, 2013, p. 111). It was not until Cusco’s economic fortunes rebounded in the early twentieth century that the Santiago neighborhood gradually repopulated.

This historical trajectory reveals a community that was at once integral and peripheral to Cusco. Residents of Chakillchaca/Santiago provided essential labor to the Inca and Spanish empires, but they were also considered outsiders, first due to their status as non-Inca, and later due to their status as indigenous or mestizo (Farrington, 2013, p. 254; Mumford, 2012, p. 50). The Chunchulmayo River, which ran a course between Santiago and the city center, created a physical separation that reinforced Santiago’s peripheral status even as bridges over the riverbed, and later over train tracks, connected the parishes of Santiago and Belén to central Cusco. As residents returned to the Santiago neighborhood in the early twentieth century, the preceding decades of neglect left the church building in a precarious condition. It was in serious need of repair, yet in a city full of historic religious structures it was not a priority for archdiocesan officials. The parish organized the Comité Pro-Construcción del Templo, Atrio, y Casa Cural to raise money for repairs. After a successful campaign in 1948 the committee raised approximately 30,000 soles. On May 21, 1950 when the earthquake hit Cusco, the money remained unused, deposited in the Banco Internacional de Peru (Rey, 1955). All of these conditions shaped the post-disaster response to Santiago.

Barrio Santiago after the Earthquake

The earthquake and subsequent reconstruction dramatically altered the neighborhoods of Santiago and Belén. In the immediate aftermath of the earthquake those with the means fled the city and many of those who remained, fearing aftershocks, spent those first nights in plazas and other open spaces, including in the Belén and Santiago neighborhoods and the Chunchulmayo riverbed (Tamayo, 2010, p. 163). The main encampment in the plaza of Belén evolved into a more formal settlement nearby called Belempampa (Tamayo, 2010, p. 166). The government used relief funds and donated materials to construct temporary housing for quake victims, who paid a modest rent to the Beneficencia Pública de Cusco, the public charity administering the site. Hundreds of families settled there (Hermoza & Acurio, 1959, pp. 4-5).

While meeting cusqueños’ basic needs was a primary concern, from the beginning local and national officials considered the earthquake an opportunity to transform, rather than to merely rebuild, Cusco (Tamayo, 2010, pp. 176-177; Rice, 2018, ch 3). These ambitions were the product of both Peruvian and international ideas about the relationship between economic development and disaster relief. In the Peruvian context, President Odría, who took power in 1948 following a military coup, looked to Argentina’s President Juan Perón as an example for how to use state-led initiatives to increase popular support (Carey, 2010, p. 72). Odría likely was aware of how the relief and reconstruction efforts following the 1944 earthquake in San Juan, Argentina gave Perón the national spotlight and facilitated his path to the presidency (Healey, 2011). Moreover, in the spring of 1950 Odría was heading into an election that he hoped would legitimate his rule as a civilian president (even though he was the only candidate). He therefore felt pressure to respond to the earthquake in a way that would
bolster his popular appeal, through swift action and the promise of government resources. He continued his strong state-led response after his election in the summer of 1950, and with subsequent disasters, like the October 1950 Los Cerros flood (Carey, 2010, ch 3). In both cases the Odría government envisioned bureaucratic solutions, tightly controlled from Lima, to bring development to the provinces. The funding and plans for this transformation would emerge gradually. On May 31, 1950 Odría decreed the allocation of ten million soles of recurring funds for the reconstruction of Cusco’s historic monuments (Law 11392), but over time it became clear that the government would not follow through on this promise (Junta de Reconstrucción y Fomento Industrial del Cuzco, 1955, p. 8). The Ministry of Development (Fomento) created the Oficina Técnica Permanente de la Reconstrucción de Cuzco to coordinate initial reconstruction efforts, which would be directed from Lima. In December of 1950, the Peruvian Congress enacted Law 11551, providing for a tobacco tax that would help fund reconstruction. Disagreements over reconstruction priorities, stemming from long-standing tensions between officials in Lima and those in Cusco, led the Peruvian government to turn to international organizations for assistance. Technicians from the United Nations conducted an evaluation of Cusco in early 1951, followed by a study by UNESCO later that year.

In the international arena, the creation of the United Nations, UNESCO, and other postwar multilateral institutions formalized a long tradition of using disaster response as an opportunity for transformative development (on this history in the early twentieth century, see Irwin, 2018; on earlier historical precedents, see Walker, 2008; Walker, 2015). Although these institutions were building on established tradition and collaborating with experienced private entities like the Rockefeller Foundation, the precise role and scope of their interventions was still subject to debate (McVety, 2018, pp. 36-38). UNESCO’s Cusco Mission was the first of its kind, as the mechanism for establishing this type of advisory body was only formed at the beginning of 1951 (UNESCO, 1951, p. 1). As a result, both the UN and UNESCO teams were charting relatively new territory. The investigations and policy recommendations of these international entities and their Peruvian counterparts created a framework for determining the subsequent reconstruction priorities in the city, from historic preservation and urban infrastructure to rural development. In early 1952 the government formed the Junta de Reconstrucción y Fomento Industrial, an administrative body that would assume control of the reconstruction efforts, in response to recommendations in the UN report (Junta de Reconstrucción y Fomento Industrial del Cuzco, 1953b). The 1951 UNESCO Mission report, created through collaboration between UNESCO appointees and Peruvian planning and public works officials, made a series of recommendations regarding zoning and reconstruction priorities that informed what would become the Plan Piloto, a plan for modernizing Cusco.

The UNESCO report would have the most significant ramifications for the Templo de Santiago. Of particular note, the Mission divided Cusco’s religious architecture into five categories according to degree of destruction and priority for reconstruction. Class I included severely damaged structures considered essential to Cusco’s cultural patrimony; Class II included buildings of significant value but that suffered less damage than Class I; Class III structures had, according to the Mission, varying degrees of «merit» and required only minor remodeling or repairs; Class IV buildings were extensively damaged and of «negligible merit», and the report recommended they be replaced by new structures; and finally, Class V structures were not damaged by the earthquake (UNESCO, 1951, p. 7). The report included the Templo de Santiago in Class IV, characterizing it as a «plain adobe» structure and concluding that «the generally ruinous aspect of Santiago is owing to long neglect and to
undistinguished form, rather than to the ravages of the earthquake» (UNESCO, 1951, p. 21). Map 4 of the UNESCO report, titled «Buildings to be restored in district A», excludes the Santiago neighborhood entirely. It is literally a blank space on the map, although nearby Belén and Almudena are included (UNESCO, 1951, p. 13). The report acknowledges that a new church should be constructed on the site because of demographic growth in the district (and that the archbishop and the parish priest agreed that this was the best path forward), but the claim that the damage was not earthquake related and the preference for building a new structure rather than restoring the old one created the opportunity to place the Templo outside the purview of reconstruction efforts. Santiago was also excluded from the Ministry of Fomento’s budget estimates of proposed repairs (UNESCO, 1951, p. 39).

The first page of the UNESCO report advances an interpretation of «the problem of Cuzco» that reveals how the experts’ values shaped the solutions offered in the report. The lead foreign experts, George Kubler, an art historian from Yale University, and Luis MacGregor Ceballos, an architect and restoration specialist from Mexico City, and the Peruvian architect Oscar Ladrón de Guevara had backgrounds in art and architecture during the period of Spanish rule in Latin America, and their evaluations of the relative value of various structures relied on visual appearance, materials, and location rather than on the deeper social and historical context for the structures. The report identifies «three cities» within Cusco: the Inca city, the colonial city, and the modern city. In their view, the Inca city is «inert» and could not be restored, whereas the colonial city «demands more than conservation», it «requires restoration», and the modern city «remains to be created» (UNESCO, 1951, p. 2). Anything that did not fit neatly into the category of inert Inca wall or part of the colonial city that demands restoration, then, was necessarily in the third category, waiting to be made modern. Their interest in the Inca and Spanish monumental past left little room to value social history or institutional legacies of the city’s other historic spaces.

The experts used words to describe the Templo de Santiago in the report like «plain», «undistinguished», and «neglect» which enabled the experts to define it outside of the category of colonial buildings worthy of restoration. The Templo lacked a baroque stone facade like the nearby church of Belén, and the UNESCO Mission did not consider it to be in a highly desirable location, like Almudena (UNESCO, 1951, p. 16). Two stone doorways were the only part of the Templo de Santiago that the Mission felt was worth preserving (UNESCO, 1951, p. 21). The Mission’s attention to outward appearance or physical location was accompanied by the neglect of other factors that might have shaped the historical significance of a site. For example, the more modest appearance of the Templo de Santiago was partly due to its historical function. Unlike the grand Cathedral and the convents and monasteries in the city center, which housed the religious authorities of the era, or even the Iglesia de Belén, originally founded as a convent for mestizas, the Templo was created for the city’s indigenous inhabitants. The entire neighborhood, often labeled as an «indian barrio» in the historic record, was considered less significant for this precise reason, a reflection of the historic role played by religious institutions to reinforce privileges and hierarchies that placed Spaniards at the top and aimed to contain indigenous and mestizo populations (Azevedo, 1982, pp. 48-49; Burns, 1999, ch 1). As evangelization became less of a priority, the mission of the institutions also shifted to the more mundane functions of parish churches for the city’s working-class residents. So although the Templo de Santiago was not as spectacular in terms of its architecture or artistic value as some of Cusco’s more famous religious structures, it nonetheless played a central role in
Cusco’s social and religious history, especially when it came to the Andean population. Moreover, the neighborhood’s pre-Hispanic past might have yielded important archaeological findings that would have shed light on the lives of ordinary Andeans. But all of this fell outside the purview of the experts’ interests.

The erasure of the Templo de Santiago’s history enabled urban planners to reimagine the space as they looked to the city’s future. The primary manifestation of that reimagining was the Plan Piloto, developed by a commission led by Peruvian architect Luis Miró Quesada Garland, one of Peru’s leading proponents of modern art and architecture. The Plan was based on the recommendations of the UNESCO Mission and extensive surveys completed by the Oficina Nacional de Planeamiento y Urbanismo. It laid out a vision for Cusco that drew from midcentury urban planning ideals, namely Le Corbusier’s *ville radieuse*, or «radiant city» (Azevedo, 1982, p. 103; Oficina Nacional de Planeamiento y Urbanismo, 1951a). Although many of its recommendations never came to fruition, its zoning and infrastructure plans would guide Cusco’s development in the decades after the earthquake. A map titled «Dinamica Propuesta», or dynamic proposal, portrays Cusco as a series of nodes, each with a distinct purpose and connected through curving roads and highways that imitate the waterways they often replace (Oficina Nacional de Planeamiento y Urbanismo, 1951b). Each part of the city would be developed according to newly proposed zoning requirements, with sections designated for historic preservation, industrial development, and modern residential developments. In this rendering, the channeled Chunchulmayo riverbed functions as a major transit artery, bordered by green space on either side. The Plan recasts the Santiago, Belén, and Almudena neighborhoods as an entirely residential zone, physically separated from the zone of historic monuments by the new roadway (Oficina Nacional de Planeamiento y Urbanismo, 1951b).

The emphasis on creating tidy residential zones was not merely a utopian ideal. It was prompted by one of the most pressing concerns following the earthquake: a lack of adequate housing. Thousands of residents left homeless by the quake found shelter in government-sponsored settlements like Belempampa and in ad hoc encampments that even several years after the quake remained and grew into informal settlements (Junta de Reconstrucción y Fomento Industrial del Cuzco, 1953a, pp. 35-37; Hermoza & Acurio, 1959). Ideas about historic preservation further compounded the housing shortage. The UNESCO report made the case that overcrowding of colonial-era dwellings strained «urban services» and contributed to the deterioration of historic buildings even before the earthquake hit. The report observed that a «dwelling built for one wealthy family and their servants now houses as many as 30 families, some lodged in single rooms without ventilation or sanitation» (UNESCO, 1951, p. 23). Construction of housing in new residential zones outside of the historic city center was an essential part of the plan to preserve historic buildings and, frankly, to move poor residents out of them and to the periphery. Marisol de la Cadena’s study of Cusco demonstrates that authorities also sought to impose order on market vendors during this period, revealing the depth of anxieties about Cusco’s poor and working classes (2000, ch 4). The Plan aimed to eliminate informality, whether that meant overcrowding or market practices in the city center or in settlements that emerged after the earthquake.

Although there was consensus about the urgent need for affordable housing, disagreement over the nature of this housing and the high cost of labor and building materials in Cusco after the earthquake stalled construction. Twenty percent of revenues raised from the December 1950 tobacco tax were dedicated to the construction of government-owned affordable housing, but a shortage of building materials, and the challenge of transporting
construction materials to the Andean city drove up the costs for all projects, making this budget impractical. Budgetary constraints led to debates about what affordable housing truly meant and who should be eligible. Planners knew they could generate more revenues from single-family housing developments targeting middle-class families, but this would exclude those most in need because middle and upper class families were already likely to benefit from government-subsidized reconstruction loans also funded by the tobacco tax (Pico, 1952, pp. 9-12). Foreign experts, shaped by a postwar ideology that embraced state-led development as a starting point rather than an end point, cautioned against too much government-owned or subsidized housing, for fear of creating a cycle of dependency. For instance, George Kubler, who returned to Cusco in 1956 to survey the progress since the UNESCO Mission, warned that the city needed to encourage more private property ownership, which in his view was more desirable than government-owned housing (Kubler, 1956). Dr. Rafael Pico, a UN expert from Puerto Rico, suggested that it was preferable to provide materials for the urban poor to build their own housing so that they would develop a sense of ownership and pride, a solution that became a more widespread policy prescription across the Americas into the 1960s (Fischer, 2014, p. 28; Pico, 1952, pp. 11-12). Finally, there was the problem of locating enough space to house thousands of residents. The Santiago neighborhood, close to the city center but separated by what would become the new bypass, and not deemed historical enough for protection under the strict new zoning standards, was an obvious place to begin the expansion of urban housing.

A Priest’s Gamble

In the months and years after the earthquake, Alejandro Palomino, the Santiago-Belén parish priest, found himself caught in a difficult situation. Between the human toll of the disaster, a damaged parish church, and a surging population, Palomino had to become a fierce advocate for his parishioners. Most urgently, many of his parishioners who were left homeless after the quake remained in precarious housing conditions. A number of quake victims in the Santiago neighborhood ended up in the Belempampa settlement. Despite the government’s efforts to create an orderly and temporary encampment, Belempampa soon grew beyond the intended size due to the persistent lack of affordable housing in Cusco and an influx of rural migrants, putting a strain on the settlement’s limited potable water supply and waste disposal capacity (Hermoza & Acurio, 1959, pp. 28-31). Palomino proactively sought assistance for his parishioners when the archdiocese dispensed relief funds. For example, when the archbishop received a sizable donation for earthquake victim relief, a committee determined the distribution of funds based on written testimonials and, at times, independent verification of the supplicant’s status. Their decisions were premised on the idea that aid should go to the worthy poor, in this case practicing Catholics, widowed or abandoned mothers, or the elderly. Most individuals seeking emergency funds wrote their own testimonial or had a friend or relative write it for them. Palomino was one of only a few priests who directly submitted testimonials on behalf of those families he determined most in need (Palomino, 1952).

Palomino also had to navigate the impossible situation of his parish church being relegated to the bottom of the reconstruction triage. According to the UNESCO report, by the spring of 1951 Santiago’s damaged upper tower was removed and the roof was covered with a temporary tile patch (UNESCO, 1951, p. 21). When the Junta de Reconstrucción y Fomento Industrial began operating in early 1952, it reinforced its commitment to follow the priorities established in the UN report, the UNESCO report, and the Plan Piloto. The Junta designated
some funding to the Templo de Santiago to reduce the size of the front patio and reposition the stone cross in front of the church to improve traffic flow (Junta de Reconstrucción y Fomento Industrial del Cuzco, 1953b, p. 29). The Junta’s first budget allocated 934,480 soles to rebuild the Templo de Santiago, but those funds never materialized (Junta de Reconstrucción y Fomento Industrial del Cuzco, 1953b, p. 32). That left the parish with two options: repair the damage to the current structure or rebuild a new structure on their own. The unused funds raised by the parish Comité Pro-Construcción del Templo, Atrio, y Casa Cural in 1948 further complicated the situation because there was not consensus about how to use the funds. Given this constellation of factors, Palomino made a gamble that, in retrospect, did not pay off.

The Junta’s inability to follow through with the funding promised to the Santiago parish was partly due to the parish’s peripheral status, but it was also symptomatic of the broader budgetary constraints of such an ambitious reconstruction and development plan. Overwhelmed by the cost of reconstructing and restoring religious buildings, the Junta urged the Catholic church to bring more funding to the table (Junta de Reconstrucción y Fomento Industrial del Cuzco, 1953b, p. 16). Cusco’s Archbishop Felipe Santiago Hermoza worked to raise money in Peru and abroad (Santiago, 1954). Although the church received several substantial donations, including the government of Spain’s offer to help repair Cusco’s Cathedral, many donations were designated for victim relief, and for the most part contributions slowed as the quake became a more distant memory for the world beyond Cusco. As a result, the Junta and the archdiocese had to make decisions about how to allocate funds. In this context, after negotiations with the Junta and the Archbishop, Palomino agreed to transfer land adjacent to the Santiago parish church to government authorities for the construction of eighteen units of worker housing, a development that would become known as Pasaje Primavera. The residents of these homes were selected from amongst the inhabitants of the settlements (Junta, 1953b, p. 36; Junta de Reconstrucción y Fomento Industrial del Cuzco, 1955, p. 26). Palomino made the agreement under the condition that the Junta would pay for the construction of a new church building, the repairs to the front patio area, and the construction of a Casa Cural, housing for the priest (Rey, 1955).

In theory, this was a fair exchange. The Junta needed land for affordable housing and, once constructed, the eighteen homes on the ceded property brought in revenues that could alleviate budgetary pressures. The reality was quite a different matter. The homes were constructed and rented by 1954, but by 1955 the Junta had not provided the promised funds to build a new church. In fact, budgetary pressures led the Junta to suspend reconstruction of all historic monuments in 1954 and funding for the reconstruction of the Templo de Santiago did not appear in the subsequent Junta budget (Junta de Reconstrucción y Fomento Industrial del Cuzco, 1955, p. 8; Junta de Reconstrucción y Fomento Industrial del Cuzco, 1956, Anexo A). Moreover, the rental income the Junta received from the houses was modest and would not cover the cost of construction for several years. The housing development failed to generate the anticipated revenues and it served merely as a salve for the housing crisis.

Palomino and members of the Comité Pro-Construcción del Templo, Atrio, y Casa Cural decided that they could not wait any longer for the Junta and came up with a new plan. They proposed using the funds collected in 1948 to build an investment property that they could rent to generate revenue for construction and maintenance. Parishioners were divided over the proposal. Some preferred to use the money to repair existing buildings, as
was originally intended in 1948. Others wanted to use the funds to create a park and a school. But, as Palomino explained in a 1955 letter to the archbishop, neither of these plans would meet the long-term needs of the parish (Palomino, 1955). Although the archival record does not include the archbishop’s response, it appears that he did not approve of Palomino’s plan because the archdiocese referred the issue to Doroteo Callo, who served as the Promoter of Justice in the diocese and who was responsible for determining how church policies affected the public good. Callo ultimately ruled that because the plan was developed only with the input of the Comité and without consulting the archbishop, that the funds should be used for repairs to existing buildings as originally intended, and only then could leftover funds be used for new construction (Callo, 1956). The Templo would receive some token funding from the Junta in 1956 (758 soles), but it received no budget allocation again in 1957 after the government reconfigured the Junta into the Corporación de Reconstrucción y Fomento, or CRYF (Junta de Reconstrucción y Fomento Industrial del Cuzco, 1957, Anexo 11). The 1955 Law 12350 also restructured the funding for Cusco’s reconstruction and development, allocating higher percentages to industrial development, the bank loan program, and to historic preservation projects in the Department of Cusco beyond the city including Machu Picchu (Rice, 2018, p. 89). This limited the funds budgeted for sites considered a low priority like the Templo de Santiago. As a result, the Templo de Santiago received only piecemeal repairs over the years. Meanwhile, the more immediate consequences of the lack of funding for the Templo de Santiago in the aftermath of the earthquake have long ripple effects into the present. The parish needed to direct money and attention to building repairs at the very moment when the neighborhood’s population was rapidly expanding. The ability to redirect those funds could have had a major impact on the parish itself, and would have freed up resources for parishioners’ other pressing needs.

**Long-Term Implications for Santiago**

Over time the Santiago neighborhood evolved to play a version of the role envisioned in the Plan Piloto, but its trajectory also reveals the limits to carefully drawn plans on maps. Perhaps in response to their marginalization within the vision for Cusco’s future, residents of Santiago organized and advocated on their own behalf. As Palomino was struggling to manage the financial needs of his parish, other Santiago residents, not content to wait on the charity of the church or promised government relief, had been working to convert the neighborhoods of Santiago, Almudena, Belén, Ccoripata, and Huancaro into a new administrative zone (Gutiérrez, 2006, ch 6). Law 12336, passed in 1955, officially created the Santiago District, which gave local residents greater autonomy over planning and budgeting. Although the new district still lacked adequate funding, a combination of donations and allocations from CRYF allowed the district council to invest in a variety of infrastructure improvements, including a large public park in Ccoripata (Gutiérrez, 2006, ch 7). The mid-1950s also saw the construction of new housing in Santiago. The Unidad Vecinal de Santiago, a three-story, eleven building development founded in 1955 near the Santiago plaza, housed many of the district’s political leaders as well as other middle-class professionals and for many years served as a center for civic life (Gutiérrez, 2006, ch 5).

Organizing was not limited to Santiago’s professional class. Even with a number of housing developments constructed between the 1950s and 1960s, the district’s population growth continued to outpace the availability of housing accessible to poorer residents (Municipalidad Distrital de Santiago, 1992, pp. 18-20). Thousands of people remained in what were intended to be the temporary post-quake housing settlements. Many residents of
the Belempampa settlement, faced with a 1956 threat of forced eviction, relocated to the nearby Dolorespata settlement (Hermoza & Acurio, 1959, p. 5). Their precarity was not only a result of their building materials, but also because government had other plans for their land, viewing the informal settlements as what Brodwyn Fischer called the «antithesis of the urban aspirations» of the elite (Fischer, 2014, p. 18). Belempampa residents formed the Asociación de Damnificados 21 de Mayo to advocate for their rights and worked to raise enough funds to purchase the land they occupied under the 1961 Ley de Barriadas, formalizing their claim to the space (Gutiérrez, 2006, ch 4; Hermoza & Acurio, 1959, p. 5). Through the creation of the District of Santiago and the efforts to formalize claims to land, residents of Santiago demonstrated that they would take matters into their own hands.

The residents of Santiago were not as successful when it came to benefiting from Cusco’s post-quake economic development. Today Santiago’s economic sector revolves around commerce and other services (Municipalidad Distrital de Santiago, 1992, p. 23) but for the most part it only benefits from Cusco’s tourism industry indirectly, through workers who commute to the city center. A legacy of the Plan Piloto was that its maps and zoning circumscribed the parts of the city that would become the primary tourist attractions. Whereas city maps of Cusco from the viceregal period through the early decades of the twentieth century included the Belén and Santiago neighborhoods, after the earthquake the Chunchulmayo riverbed often became a convenient border for delineating the historic city center (Azevedo, 1982, Anexo II). Once the riverbed was converted into the traffic bypass Avenida Ejército, many tourist maps ended there, if they even went that far. Some contemporary tourist maps do include the Santiago district, but do not label any sites of potential interest to tourists. One map, for instance, highlights a tourist-friendly medical facility but no other tourist sites in the district (Medical Network, n.d.). Tourist maps are not the only determinant of tourist traffic, but they do help make spaces legible and accessible for outsiders. The Santiago district is perhaps best known by tourists for its Saturday market, which does not appear in major guidebooks for foreign audiences like Lonely Planet and has a reputation as an «authentic» space where locals shop and pickpockets abound. Many Santiago residents are converting their properties into vacation rentals to benefit from the tourism industry, but the prices they can garner are quite low compared to other parts of the city due to the lack of tourist-oriented amenities in the district (www.Airbnb.com search, May 2019). While tourism is not an economic panacea, it was the main plan for development and the primary driver of economic growth in Cusco since the earthquake, and spatial exclusion from those development plans had consequences for Santiago.

In 1982 UNESCO added Cusco to its list of World Heritage Sites. The city’s historic zone, designated as such in the aftermath of the earthquake, formed the core of the protected area, but three other sites, the churches of Santiago, Belén, and Almudena, were also included and appear like isolated islands on the inscription map (Ministerio de Cultura, 2013). In fact, the UNESCO committee recommended the inscription of an even more expansive zone surrounding the city to incorporate «old Inca villages» (World Heritage Committee, 1983). In the end, then, it worked in the Templo’s favor that it had never been fully rebuilt. A report commissioned by UNESCO and compiled by Brazilian architect Paulo O.D. Azevedo in the late 1970s revealed how UNESCO’s methods and vision had evolved since its creation just a few decades earlier. Azevedo worked with local university students to survey cusqueños of different social classes about what they considered Cusco’s historic patrimony, including its most characteristic neighborhoods («los barrios más características»). Although the respondents
included many of the expected sites in the city’s historic district, Azevedo expressed surprise at the number of respondents who included some of the neighborhoods outside of the historic zone. Santiago, one of the more frequently cited neighborhoods, appeared in responses to 26.7% of the surveys (Azevedo, 1982, pp. 122-123). Azevedo explained that these results revealed that the supposedly long-dead memories of the Inca empire and the ruins of the viceroyalty live on in the daily lives in modern cusqueños (Azevedo, 1982, p. 123). A simpler explanation might be that the various parts of Cusco always carried different significance for the residents who lived there, and that historic exclusion from certain sites and areas meant that residents had to create meaning elsewhere. Azevedo’s study is representative of the broader shift in UNESCO’s interpretation of historic and cultural value over the course of three decades. This striking shift speaks to the evolution of its institutional mission to adopt a more inclusive view of protecting social, cultural, and other intangible qualities beyond monumental architecture. But Cusco’s tourism promoters remain behind the curve and are only now, well into the twenty-first century, working to incorporate the history of indigenous people and settlements beyond the Inca ruins. Although UNESCO recognition was an important step in affirming the Templo de Santiago’s historic significance, it did not help to promote tourism to the site or bring about a broader recognition. A casual observer walking through the neighborhood would not know that the church was a World Heritage Site. A UNESCO designation did not change the fact that many areas of Cusco, not just Santiago, remain left behind in Cusco’s tourism-centered economy (Rice, 2018, pp. 163-164).

Conclusions

Although several factors make the case of Templo de Santiago quite specific, from Cusco’s own unique historical trajectory to the earthquake reconstruction efforts, in other ways this case highlights important connections between urban planning, economic development, and decisions about cultural patrimony. First, it reveals how the language of preservation and reconstruction after the earthquake actually enabled a dramatic economic transformation, privileging investment in a specific vision for Cusco’s future rather than simply protecting its past. Second, it demonstrates how the training and values of certain key individuals can shape the possibilities for neighborhoods and dictate which spaces become tourist destinations and which do not. Finally, it shows how the spatialization of a city based on ideas about race and class dating all the way back to the Inca empire can have social and economic ramifications for centuries after the fact. Midcentury planners at times literally rendered the Templo de Santiago a blank space on the map, but they could not easily erase the church, its history, or the residents of the surrounding neighborhood.
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Lisa Pinley Covert


covetlp@cofc.edu