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**El Augustino Zone III, Lima.** Peruvians redevelop their inner-city settlement.

Building Community: a third world case book, Ed. Bertha Turner, Building Community Books, London, 1988

# Peruvians redevelop their inner-city settlement

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## El Augustino

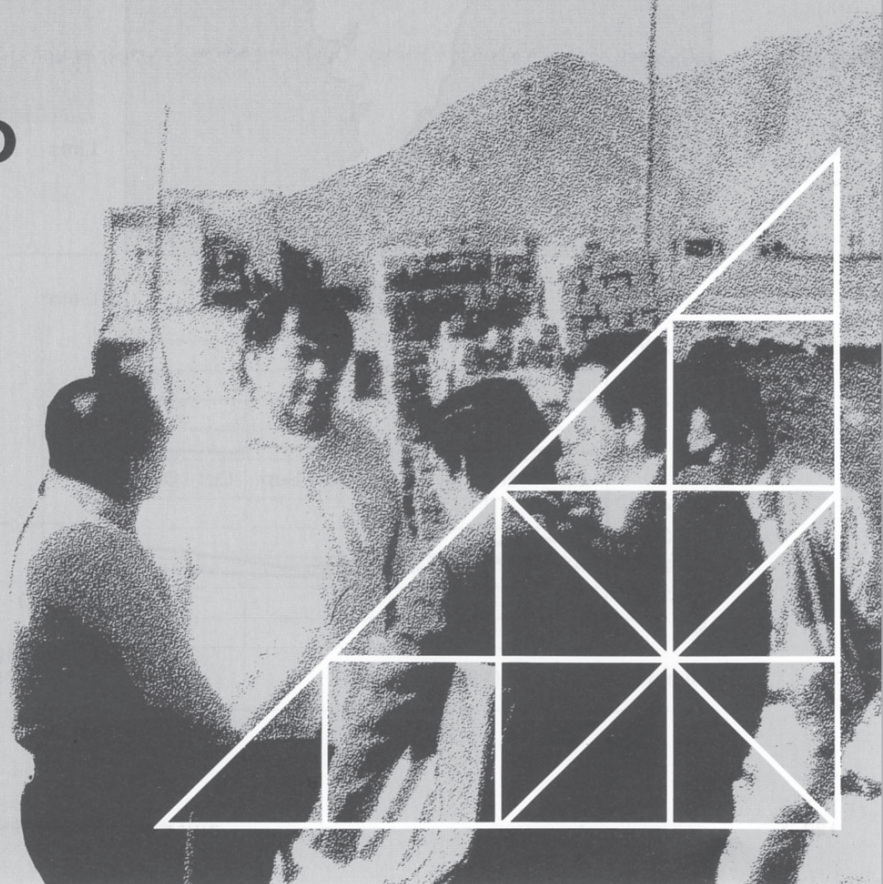
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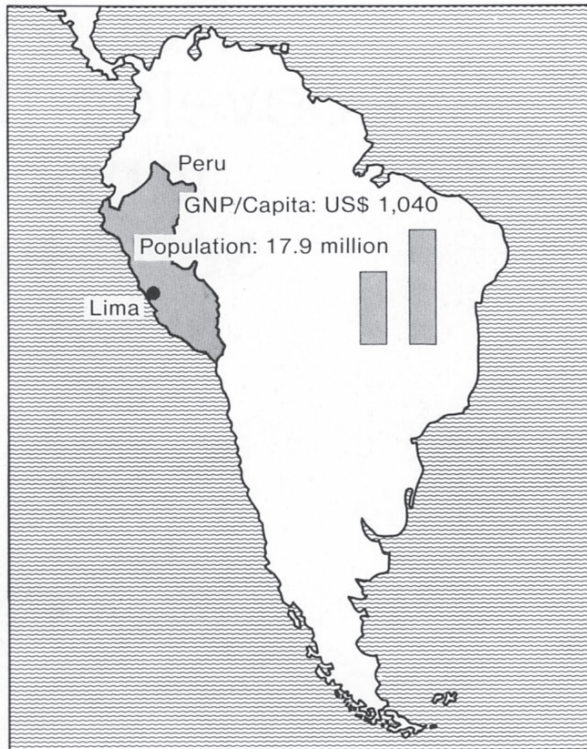
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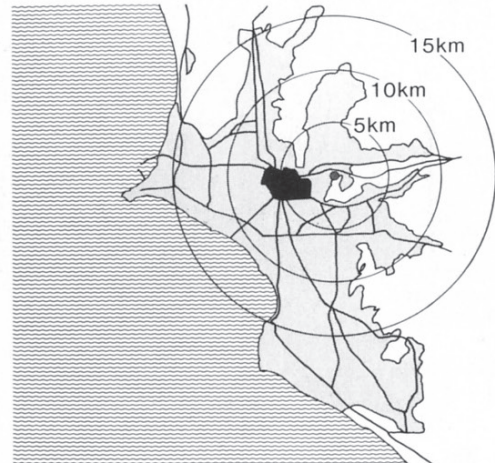
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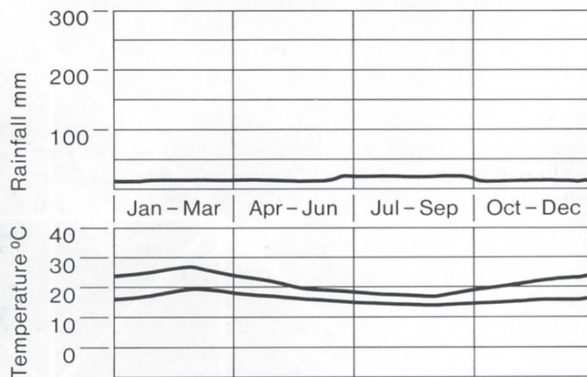


Population Lima (1981): 4.6 million  
Population El Agustino (1983): 6,000

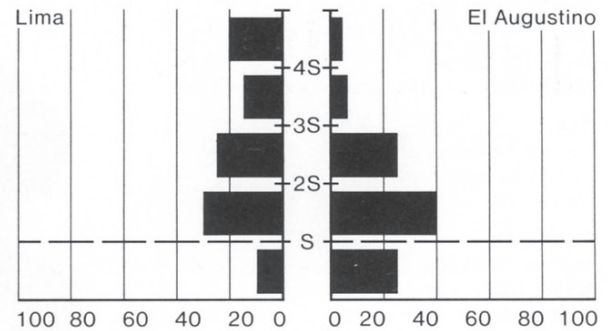


Lima

□ Built-up Area  
● El Agustino  
● City Centre  
— Main Traffic Lines



Climate Graph Lima (128m)



Percentage Distributions of Population by Income Level  
S=when 85% of household income must be spent on food



PHOTO: JOHN F.C. TURNER

The area in 1964 showing the illegal selling of market garden land for housing (the area in the middle distance

and to the right of the main road is the principal city cemetery).

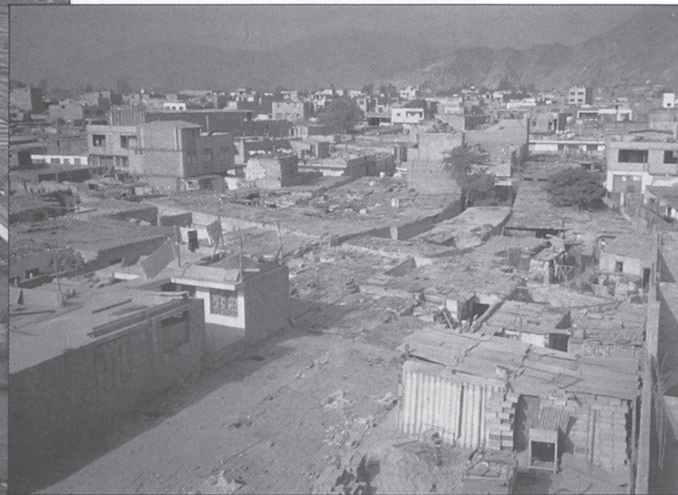


PHOTO: CIDAP

EL AUGUSTINO

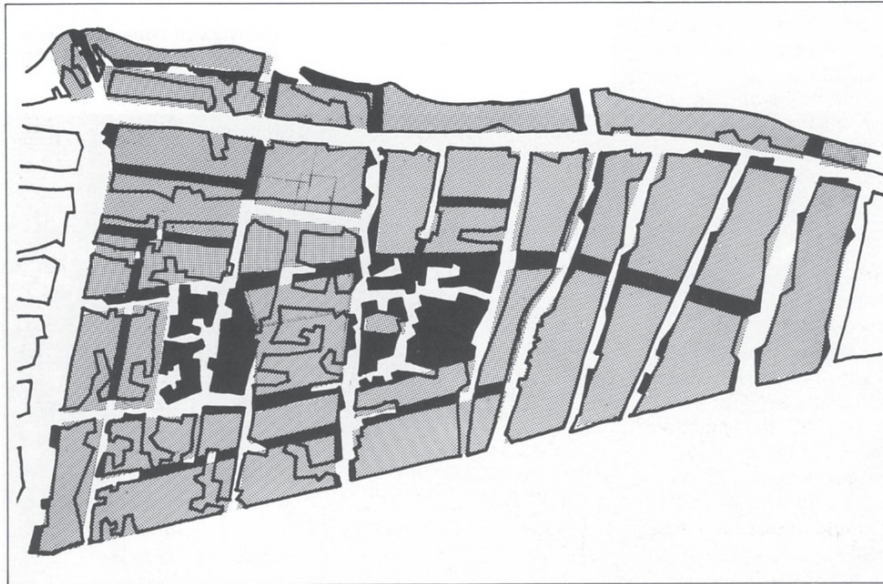
Abbreviations:

CIPUR	Centro de Estudios y Proyectos Urbanos
JNV	Junta Nacional de la Vivienda
ONDEPJOV	Oficina Nacional de Desarrollo de los Pueblos Jóvenes
SINAMOS	Sistema Nacional de Apoyo a la Mobilización Social
COPRODE	Comité de Promoción y Desarrollo

El Augustino is one of the oldest of Lima's 'barriadas' (self-managed and self-built settlements) or 'pueblo jóvenes' (young towns) as they are now called. Zone III is one of the six zones into which the large area is divided. Most 'pueblos jóvenes' were formed through the invasion of publicly-owned desert land. El Augustino, however, had its origins in the illegal subdivision of agricultural land. Originally on the periphery of Lima, the city's rapid expansion soon surrounded it, and El Augustino developed into an overcrowded, unplanned inner city area.




El Augustino has been the scene of an interesting and unusual process of settlement remodelling or replanning. In Zone III, the aggregate effect of numerous small subdivisions meant that plots were of irregular shape and size and had been further subdivided over time. Circulation and access were haphazard and the settlement lacked open spaces and community facilities. Remodelling involved drawing up a new layout plan, improving access, regularizing plot sizes and providing open spaces. It also meant reducing density by relocating some of the residents on nearby areas of land.

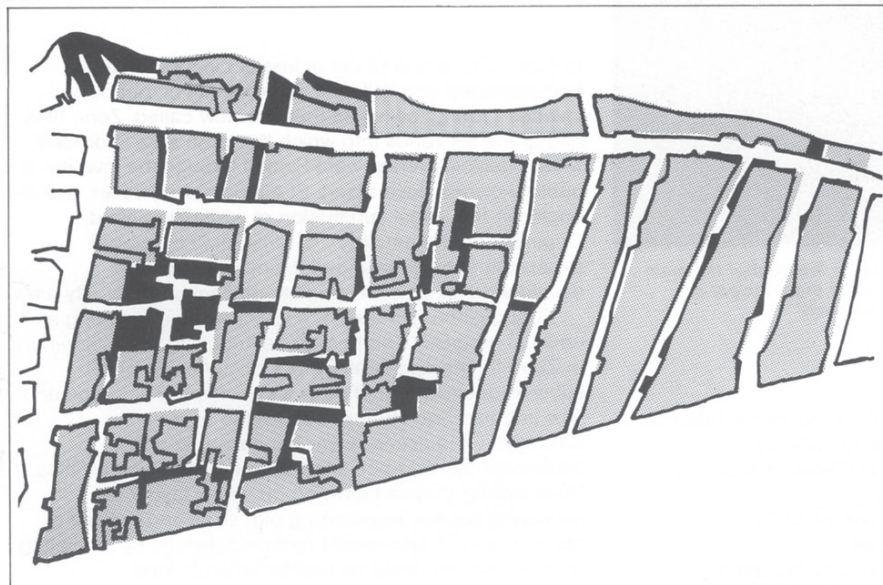




*The government agency's remodelling plan:  
Rejected by the community  
mainly because it involved an  
excessive and unnecessary  
amount of demolition.*

Key:

-  outlines of built-up areas before any remodelling took place
-  built-up areas in the remodelled layouts
-  areas of building to be demolished or private plots to be taken for streets or open space in the remodelled layouts



*The alternative remodelling plan  
worked out by the community in  
collaboration with CIPUR:  
Far more carefully planned  
minimizing demolition and  
relocations.*



### Residents take over remodelling process

Originally, a government agency promoted the remodelling process, with a passive participation from the residents. Yet when the plan was finally produced, it was rejected by the community. A change of government meant that official support changed to apathy and opposition. In 1979, the residents reorganized themselves and reinitiated the process under their own direction, contracting the assistance of a local non-governmental organization (NGO), the Centre for Urban Projects and Studies (CIPUR).

Although people and their organizations participated actively in drawing up the new plan and in its implementation, the remodelling process stumbled on various obstacles. The lack of support and commitment from government and the difficulty in expropriating the land required for relocating the residents eventually defeated the community's efforts. In 1986, the remodelling process, only 30 per cent complete, ground to a halt.

Despite these set-backs, the experience is both an outstanding example of what low-income people can achieve through their own organization and resources, as well as a demonstration of the need for support from central and local government. It also shows just how effective NGO participation can be, when it is under the direction and control of a community organization.

### Rural migrants come to Lima

In the 1950's, Lima grew rapidly, with the modernizing of the urban and the destruction of the rural economies. Lima's wholesale market, established in 1945 at the eastern limits of the city, was a focal point, due to its commercial activities and because it was the terminus for the many bus lines which brought newly arriving migrants from the provinces. Many migrants found work in the market and made their home on a nearby rocky hill, Cerro el Agustino. The demand for housing land soon encouraged tenant farmers, cultivating the fields surrounding the hill, to sell off parcels of this land for housing plots, often in opposition and conflict with the actual landowners.

### Selling land you do not own

These subdivisions were illegal, given that the vendor was often not really the owner of the land. Land was 'sold' without planning, urban services or infrastructure. In the area which became Zone III, the northern part was formed



PHOTO: CIDAP

*The NGO was approached by the resident's Promotion and Development Committee (COPRODE) who contracted them for advice and technical assistance.*

from one single subdivision with regular plots of 150 square metres sold mainly to traders in the market. The southern part was subdivided irregularly and piecemeal, according to the amount each family could afford to pay.

### Replanning an existing settlement

Peru has considerable experience in dealing with the formation of new settlements. But it has very little experience of remodelling and improving older settlements. Since 1961, Peru has had legislation specifically designed to deal with existing settlements. The Law of the Marginal Settlements (1961) was intended to stop the formation of new, unauthorized settlements in two ways: existing pueblos jóvenes were to be legalized remodelled and upgraded, while new popular settlements were to be planned to serve the needs of low-income urban families, who could otherwise have no choice but to invade land. Unfortunately, neither of these policies were properly implemented.

The law established that once an existing settlement was officially recognized, government agencies would carry out the following actions: survey the site boundaries;





expropriate the site, which would then be divided into plots for each family; assess the families on a points system to determine who stays in the settlement and who is to be relocated elsewhere; those who owned other property in Lima would have no right to a plot; design a new layout plan; remodel the settlement according to the plan, and reduce density by relocating some families elsewhere; grant legal property titles.

### Peru's first official marginal settlements

El Augustino was one of the first pueblos jóvenes to be officially declared a marginal settlement. In 1962, the National Housing Board (JNV) began the registration of resident families and initiated expropriation of the site. This gave the residents security of tenure and meant that they stopped paying 'rent' or other 'quotas' to owners and their agents. Over the next few years, the Zone III Coordinating Committee (combining what are now Zones II, IV and V) was actively contracting their own professionals to carry out a topographical survey and to draw up a plan of the area. The actual remodelling process did not really begin until 1972.

### Pueblos jóvenes become respectable

The military regime of Velasco Alvarado seized power in 1968, giving positive support to community organization in the 'barriadas', which were then made more legally acceptable by their new name: 'pueblos jóvenes'. Two government agencies, the National Office of Pueblos Jóvenes (ONDEPJOV) and the National System of Support for Social Mobilization (SINAMOS) promoted block or street committees. These local groups elected in their settlements a Promotion and Development Committee (COPRODE). In 1972, the COPRODE of Zone III was formed. In the same year, SINAMOS decided to implement the remodelling of El Augustino, starting with Zones II and VI.

### Reduced density means some must leave

Deciding which residents could stay and which would have to relocate should have stimulated the interest of the people of Zone III. Instead, local participation was passive, leaving the authorities to take the initiatives. The COPRODE leaders worked with the authorities, taking

decisions on behalf of the residents without consulting them. This generated discontent when the outcome was known, especially amongst those who would have to move.

### Creating space for the remodelling

The key to the success of the remodelling was in acquiring land to relocate the excess families. SINAMOS had already earmarked land: Parcelas A, B, C, D; and the residents of Zone III began negotiating with the owner to buy Parcela A. They even opened their own communal savings account at the bank. At one point, there were enough savings to buy the land outright, but SINAMOS insisted on expropriation, which was accepted by the residents.

Zone III's proposed new layout sought to improve the circulation pattern and to provide plots of regular dimensions. It also sought to avoid demolition of permanent brick and concrete houses, wherever possible. However, the plan generated resistance from the residents. They felt that it clearly favoured the better-off northern sector, which would be left almost untouched. Large areas of the overcrowded southern sector were to be demolished, displacing many families to make way for areas of educational, recreational and community use.

### Conflict with authority

From 1976, a new military government sought to repress community organization, first using SINAMOS and then de-activating that agency altogether. The residents began to organize against the remodelling and against the existing leaders, who were collaborating with the authorities. This activity was risky in the context of official repression. Nevertheless, the residents' 'Defence Committee' managed to stop the process and to denounce the leaders for mismanagement of funds.

### The residents take charge

From 1979 onward, the residents themselves took charge of the remodelling process, with help from CIPUR. A new COPRODE was elected, which soon had to its credit the following achievements: legal approval of the expropriation of Parcela A, which was later found to have legal errors, making it invalid; update of the registration of residents; invasion of Parcela A to occupy and secure it until the expropriation was completed; tenders invited from professionals and accepting the services of CIPUR.



### The community as client

Unlike other NGOs, CIPUR did not approach the residents for altruistic or benevolent motives. It was contracted directly by COPRODE to update the settlement plan, prepare a new layout plan and to supervise the implementation of the remodelling. CIPUR also had to co-ordinate with the government and the municipality who still held legal responsibility for the process. The differences between a conventional consultancy in the private sector and working for a settlement organization were understood by CIPUR. The client group would require lengthy debates for each decision taken, have different technical needs and very limited financial resources.

The settlement plan was updated through a series of lengthy meetings with each of the 27 committees of Zone III. This allowed detailed information to be collected, and also established the confidence of residents in COPRODE and in the professionals whom they had contracted. The new layout plan was jointly worked out, stage by stage, in the presence of each committee. Eventually, the total proposal was developed, acceptable to all the residents, including those of the northern sector.

### Planning the layout and remodelling

The definitive layout plan incorporated further changes proposed by the residents. These were approved by the authorities as a modification of the earlier SINAMOS plan. In 1983, the community obtained a grant from MISEREOR, the German Catholic aid agency, which was administered through the local parish, to cover the cost of plans and designs and to initiate the implementation.

The remodelling implementation was planned in four stages, spread over six months, to consist of: adjusting plot sizes to the new layout; relocating excess families and installing temporary sanitary services; demolishing construction which did not fit into the new layout; final adjustments and official handing over of the plots to families by the Municipality of Lima.

Of 1,000 families in Zone III, 848 would remain in the settlement after remodelling, while 152 would move to Parcela A.



PHOTO: CIDAP

*After setbacks and the take-over of a less supportive government, the residents*

*reinstated the process of remodelling with NGO assistance.*

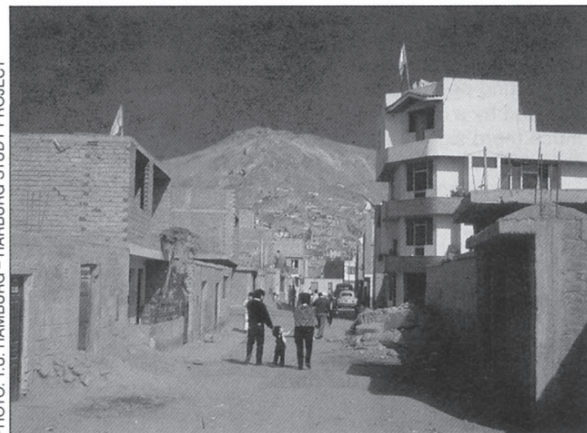


PHOTO: T.U. HAMBURG - HARBURG STUDY PROJECT

*Despite set-backs, arising mainly from the unfulfilled promise of adjacent land acquisition by government for the relocation of displaced by*

*the improvements, much has been achieved by the residents with their own resources.*





#### **Implementation brings people problems**

Problems emerged in the first stage of implementation. Families scheduled for relocation to Parcela A refused to move there, instead occupying public areas. The legal situation of Parcela A was still ambiguous: although the Municipality had officially declared it a 'pueblo joven', the expropriation was still incomplete.

Despite the efforts of COPRODE, the situation deteriorated further as the other stages of implementation went ahead. It became impossible to keep to the original layout and timetable. The families who refused Parcela A began building in public areas, using permanent materials. Others felt the remodelling was damaging their interests and sued COPRODE leaders for violation of private property.

The end result was the paralysis of the process in 1985, with a complete loss of credibility and prestige for all the people and institutions involved in the remodelling.

#### **Why the project broke down**

The two very different experiences of remodelling in El Agustino's Zone III show how much more can be achieved when people themselves are actively in control, rather than being passive beneficiaries of a government programme. They also show that when NGOs are supporting people's programmes and are contracted and directed by a community organization, the NGOs play a much more significant role than when they are acting in a paternalistic way.

Unlike remodelling and upgrading processes carried out in other countries and contexts, in El Agustino government's participation was minimal. The people and

their organizations took on all responsibility for a process for which the state was legally responsible. Apart from the grant from MISEREOR, the very low-income people themselves financed the entire programme, including paying the professionals, without even having access to credit.

The eventual failure of the process, however, shows the limits of people with few resources acting on their own. Community organization resolved internal differences to arrive finally at the necessary consensus to start the remodelling. But it was powerless to overcome external constraints. In particular, the problem of land for relocating families and the failure to complete the expropriation of Parcela A was the single most important factor in the breakdown of the process. The length of the remodelling process and the intensity of the involvement required were additional factors which put undue stress on community leaders and the organization as whole, and eventually wore them out.

#### **Partnership between people and government**

The experience shows the vital importance of co-operation between government and local people. The remodelling of El Agustino would have been different if government agencies, such as the judicial system and the police, had supported the people instead of working directly against them.

The story of El Agustino points to the need for a new relationship between people and their government. People should have the responsibility for their own projects, while government provides the necessary and appropriate support. If the roles could be redefined in this way, processes of urban improvement could be carried out which are both highly replicable and cost effective.