

ANALYSIS OF URBAN STRUCTURES IN A COMPANY TOWN¹

BEGINNING, DEVELOPMENT, AND DECLINE OF THE “NEW CAMP” CASE, CHUQUICAMATA

ANÁLISIS DE ESTRUCTURAS URBANAS EN UN COMPANY TOWN
INICIO, DESARROLLO Y DECLIVE DEL CASO “CAMPAMENTO NUEVO”, CHUQUICAMATA

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La presente investigación aborda el análisis de los distintos periodos históricos del Campamento Nuevo Chuquicamata, de la Región de Antofagasta, profundizando en la evolución de su estructura urbana, es decir, en el inicio, desarrollo y declive del campamento cuprífero. Su objetivo es examinar las mutaciones del espacio urbano construido, caracterizando las interacciones y lugares de encuentro de las personas residentes en el Company Town. Para ello, se realiza un barrido bibliográfico y se desarrolla un levantamiento de material planimétrico correspondiente a las distintas etapas históricas. Entre las principales conclusiones, se ilustra el proceso de declive, comparando las mutaciones del espacio urbano en las distintas etapas históricas del campamento cuprífero y enfocándose en el fenómeno de priorización de un sistema de producción y de crecimiento económico a costa del bienestar residencial y de las condiciones de habitabilidad.

Palabras clave: estructura urbana, asentamientos industriales, obsolescencia, patrimonio industrial.

This research addresses the analysis of the different historical periods of Chuquicamata's "New Camp", in the Region of Antofagasta, looking closely at the evolution of its urban structure from the inception, development, and decline of the copper camp. Its purpose is to analyze the mutations of the built urban space, characterizing the interactions and meeting places of the Company Town residents, with the characterization of the different historical periods of Chuquicamata. For this, a literature review is carried out, and urban planimetric material is developed and collected from the different historical stages. Among the main conclusions, the process of decline is illustrated by comparing the mutations of the urban space in the different historical stages of the copper camp, analyzing the prioritization phenomenon of a production system, and the economic growth at the expense of residential well-being and living conditions.

Keywords: urban structure, company town, obsolescence, industrial heritage

I. INTRODUCTION

In the 20th century, Chile grew industrially with the arrival of foreign companies, mainly investors like the Guggenheim brothers, oriented to the exploitation of raw materials, given the wealth of the territory in that sense (Méndez, Prieto and Galaz-Mandakovic, 2020). Through several settlements nationwide, these were left as testimonies of mining towns of the coal, saltpeter, and, currently, copper industries. These spaces were equipped with facilities designed to meet workers' needs, eventually forming autonomous towns (Cerdeña and Puentes, 2019). They established *ex novo* settlements in mining territories to handle industry-controlled production, residential, and amenity roles, with the goal of achieving efficient production (Garcés, 2003).

These are known as *Company Towns*, which were centers built by companies in spaces close to the production sites (Gutiérrez-Viñuales, 2008). The companies acted not only as entrepreneurs but also as owners, ensuring social harmony and providing services and consumer goods (Cisternas, 2015). Currently, the context of the *Company Towns* is somewhat different, their initial functions have transformed, and in Chile, several have been abandoned. The fact that the inhabitants of these settlements migrate has caused inevitable neglect of the facilities (Layuno, 2012), which remain as living vestiges of a culture, a population, and an urban space. These heritage vestiges contribute to a legacy or inheritance, which acts as a testimony to our ancestors (Chilean National Monuments Council [CMN], 2000). For this reason, it is of great interest to analyze transformations of the built urban space, starting with the case of Chuquicamata, characterizing the interactions and meeting places of the people residing in this *Company Town*. To this end, a historical analysis of the *Town* has been made, comparing its different stages and manifestations (demographic rise, urban expansion, installation of public buildings). This is accompanied by a planimetric survey of the urban fabric, urban layout, and social stratification, which is complemented by information obtained from holding three *focus groups* with former *Town* residents.

II. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Company Towns and their Heritage Value

In the 20th century, with the expansion of multinational companies and foreign investments, several, mainly Anglo-Saxon mining companies arrived in Chile. The result of this phenomenon was the creation of so-called "camps⁵", which expanded national economies into sparsely populated spaces and extended the frontiers of industrial capitalism, to the extent that lands, resources, and people were under the control of these companies (Dinius and Vergara, 2011). These spaces had some particular dynamics from their foundation until their abandonment, linked to the presence of a resource or mineral, experiencing stages of growth and obsolescence (Fernandez, 1982; Garcia-and-White Gutiérrez, 1988; Beatty and Fothergill, 1996, Prada-Wheat, 2011), understood as the non-viability of living optimally in a built space (Layuno, 2012).

These settlements have a traditional setup, with a central area surrounded by facilities or services. In this way, they kept their hierarchy, with the homes of workers and relatives around them, an aspect that reduced commuting times between home and work (Garcés, O'Brien, and Cooper, 2010). *Company Towns* are reflected, urbanistically speaking, as a social creation oriented to a single productive activity, which generated a social group that was limited to any other urban diversification. This is a phenomenon manifested in different countries but is also related to the territory where it is located, which is of great interest for its study from Architecture and Urbanism (Garcés, 2005).

In this way, these spaces have been understood as divided cities, whose double productive and living component was also projected in the social differentiation that arose within the camps (Garcés, 2003; Silva, 2013). Often, the productive fabric is the one that articulated, supported, and changed the urban structure, being the key component of life in these spaces (Sánchez-Montañez and Castilla, 2020). As a result, landscapes appeared that were closely linked to the stages of the productive space itself, as well as to the political and economic development of the territory that, sometimes, marked milestones or key stages in its evolution (Sánchez-Moral, Méndez, and Prada-Trigo, 2015; Cano, 2012). For this reason, the life and dynamics of these spaces were articulated around the productive sector in question, linking their fate to its evolution.

⁵ Residential centers built by companies in spaces close to extraction and industrial production sites (Cisterna, 2015). These allude to an ephemeral settlement, which could transform as the context so required (Vilches, 2018, p. 12)

The heritage vestiges of these camps contribute to a heritage that operates as a testimony to our ancestors, their practices, and ways of life (CMN, 2000). Within this category is industrial heritage, which has a historical, technological, social, architectural, and scientific value, linked to buildings, machinery, mines, and sites for processing and refining raw materials. In these places, social activities related to the industry emerged, such as housing, religious worship, and education (ICOMOS, 2003). However, to understand this fabric, one must first look beyond the physical remains, understanding their contextual environment according to the time they were developed. This approach seeks to avoid the invisibility and disappearance of their meanings, bonds, and original contents, associated with being a ruin, whose management has usually led to demolition, a complete transformation, or a reconstruction that is difficult to articulate (Layuno, 2012). The value of these constructions transcends the character of mere containers, as they constitute the expression of the work and the place in a given period (Sánchez-Montañés and Castilla, 2020).

III. CASE STUDY

Chuquicamata in the Context of Chilean Copper

Chuquicamata is one such *Company Town*, located 16 kilometers from Calama, in the Antofagasta region, in the north of Chile. This settlement was born out of the interest of exploiting copper, a task that continues to this day. At the beginning of the 20th century, the *Chile Exploration Company* began to build the settlement, attracting a new population to a relatively inaccessible geographical sector. The settlement was set up with three macrozones close to each other: the New Camp, where Chilean workers would live, the American Camp, where foreigners, mostly North Americans, would live, and the productive sector (Garcés, 2003). In 1917, the construction of public and residential buildings began, although each camp would have its own services, which denotes a clear limit in terms of social stratification.

This settlement has an accidental nature, which was transformed and changed as the context required (Vilches, 2018, p. 12). At the beginning of the New Camp, housing conditions and public spaces were not so great. Despite this, community life was ever-present, the spaces left between houses were used as yards, and there was permanent communication between neighbors. In 1923, the settlement became part of the *Anaconda Copper Company* (Gutiérrez-Viñuales, 2008) and copper began to gain a position on the international market, starting the connection of copper mining with the Chilean economy, while the salaried and unionized workers model gained strength (Lavandero, Frei, and Núñez, no date). The role of the worker began to change

within the settlement, leading to negotiations and demands to improve living conditions within the camp. As a result, the public structure would gradually see progress (Garrido, 2018; Zapata, 1975).

In 1966, the Chileanization of copper took place with its subsequent nationalization, in 1971, with the State taking over the management of the camp. In 1973, after the coup d'état, Chile went from owning 100% of national copper production to only 30%, with 70% of production returning to private hands (Caputo and Galarce, 2008). Three years later, the National Copper Corporation (Codelco) was created, which took control of Chuquicamata; a situation that continues to this day. In 1984, the American Camp was closed, covering it with slag, leaving just the New Camp in operation. In 1992, Chuquicamata was declared a saturated breathable particulate matter zone, and the growth of the mine forced extending the industrial dumps into the urban area, meaning the camp needed to be dismantled (Astorga, 2011). Codelco, faced with this situation, instigated the "Transfer Project" in 1996, which consisted of migrating the entire population to the city of Calama. This was completed in 2007. Since then, the city remained just from the industrial point of view, literally leaving an important portion of the town buried (Mayorga, 2004).

IV. METHODOLOGY

This work includes a historical analysis that aims to assess the different stages of the *Company Town* and to gain a more comprehensive understanding of the phenomenon of obsolescence. In this framework, a qualitative methodological design was chosen that begins with a historical analysis, which is carried out through a general survey of information from secondary sources, to compare the different stages of the *Company Town*. In this, the growth of the camp and the installation of productive and service spaces are mapped. Then, a comparison of the plans of the urban fabric, urban layout, and social stratification is made, considering what Solá-Morales (1997) indicates regarding that, to understand the development, occupation, and growth of an urban system, three material and physical operations must be identified: partitioning, urbanization, and building.

In parallel to this use of secondary sources, communication has been kept with forums of former residents to collect primary data regarding the growth and decline of the Chuquicamata camp. This allowed us to unearth more subjective information, which was not found in official documents and that referred to the identification, sense of belonging, and attachment of people to a place (Lyon, 2014).

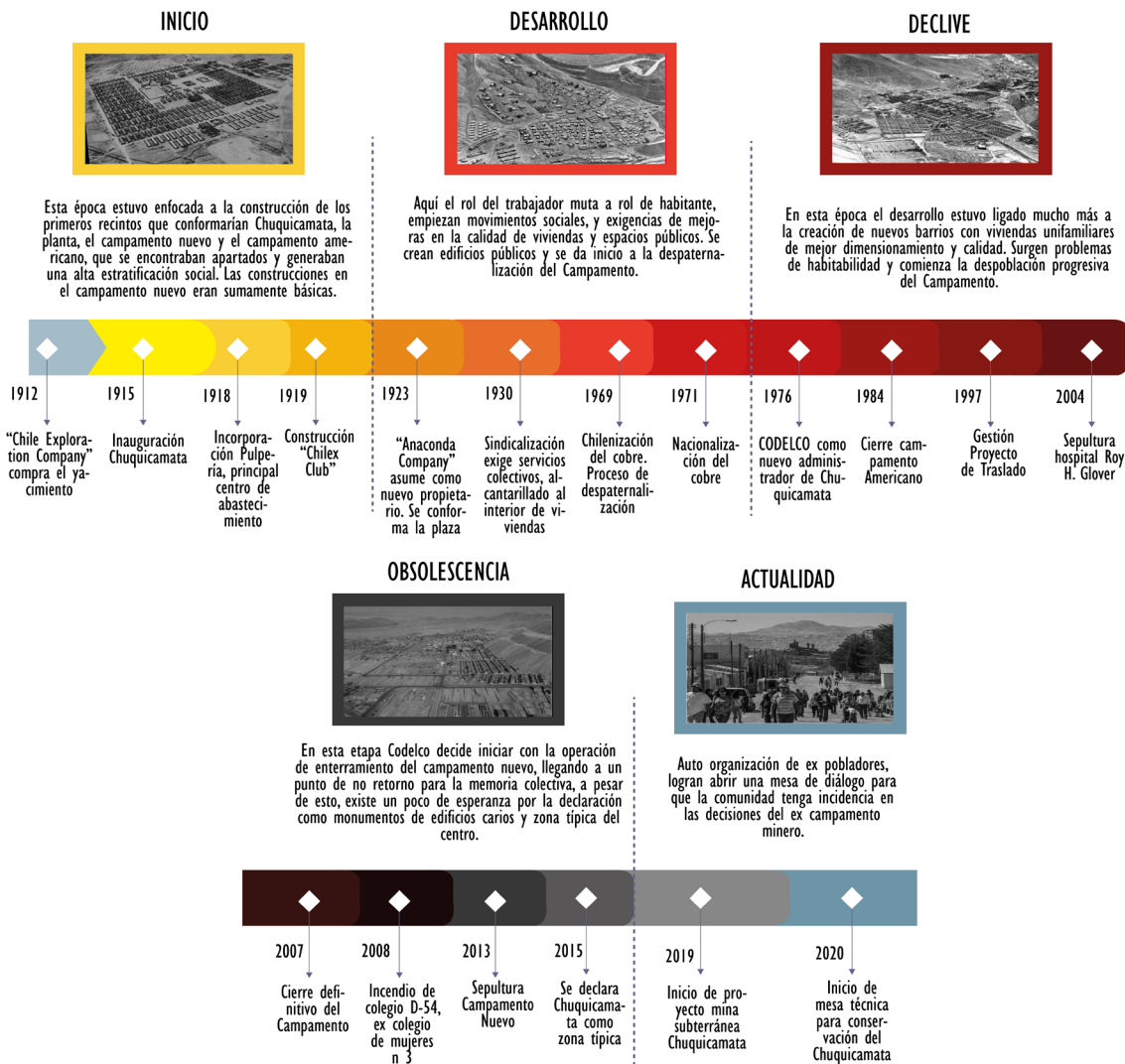


Figure 1. Chuquicamata Camp Timeline. Source: Prepared by Fabiola Olivares Contreras.

Meanwhile, alongside taking part in discussion groups of former residents, three *focus groups* were held with former inhabitants of the Chuquicamata Camp in March 2021, with a total of 12 participants. Each of these groups was linked to a different profile of former Camp residents: workers, child/youngsters at the time of closure, and women who lived in the camp. This made it possible to gather information complementary to the physical evolution of Chuquicamata itself, which helped to enrich the analysis of the Camp's evolution. As this is accessory information to the purpose of this article, and due to space limitations, this is integrated as part of the text, without highlighting individual quotes or specific opinions from the interviews conducted in the *focus group*.

V. RESULTS

The history of Chuquicamata can be divided into three stages of urban development and two other stages after the transfer. The logic that explains these periods is based on the administration that was in charge of the *Company Town* (Figure 1) at given times. The first stage, "The beginning" (1912-1922), lasted 10 years and coincides with the acquisition of the land by the "Chile Exploration Company". The second, "The Development", (1923-1975), lasted for 52 years and covers the purchase of the site by the "Anaconda Company" and its subsequent nationalization. The third, "The Decline" (1976-2004), lasted for 31 years and

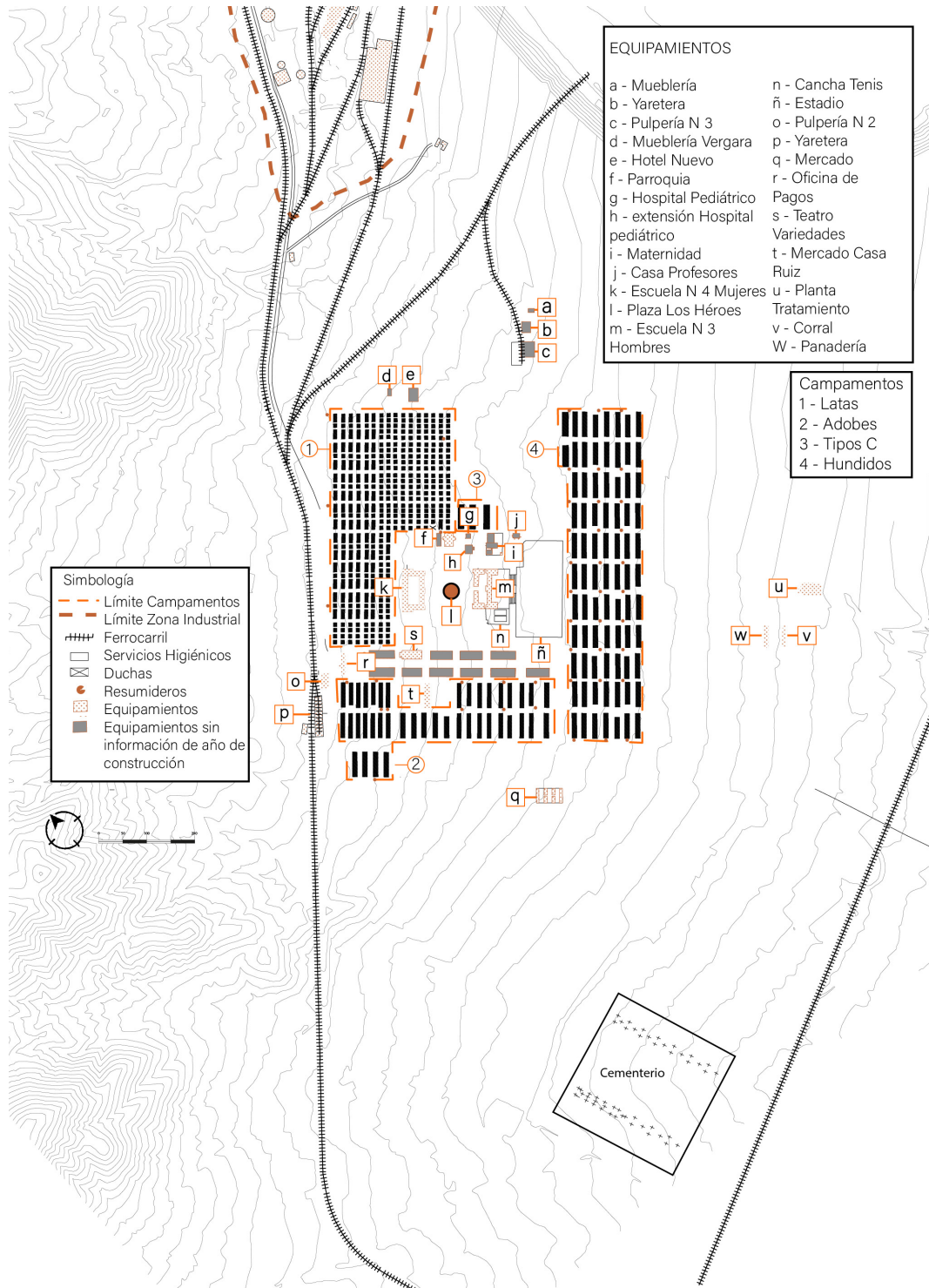


Figure 2. Beginnings of the new camp of Chuquicamata (1922). Source: Preparation by Fabiola Olivares Contreras using the Foundational Plan (Vilches, 1946).

arose with the creation of Codelco after the military coup. The stage of "Obsolescence" (2005-2015), the following 10 years, was marked by the partial burial of the camp. Currently (2016-2021), the last stage is being developed, where technical meetings are held to make a decision about the camp. Each stage has a different construction and structuring approach, responding to different contexts, but under the same productive logic.

Stage one. The Beginning: Camp Layout

In its beginnings, Chuquicamata comprised two macro groupings of houses, connected by a railway line, which transported the American Camp and New Camp to the industrial zone. The first houses executives from the United States (Mayorga, 2004) with hierarchical supervision and leadership positions. While the second was inhabited by lower-income workers, with their own socio-spatial order and stratification.

In the New Camp, the buildings were laid out around a central void (a square), with the common use facilities located around this. Among these are the parish church (Figure 2, letter f), Variety Theater (Figure 2, letter s), Girl's school number four (Figure 2, letter k), and corner store number three (Figure 2, letter c). The company installed several basic services to meet the needs of workers and their families. These policies were the result of an economic axiom: investment in the workers' quality of life increased productivity and intensification of working relationships, creating "harmonious" communities (Cisternas, 2015).

Stage one. The Beginning: Urban Structure

Urbanization was conditioned by ephemeral thinking typical of the notion of camp, with detachable constructions as needed. Likewise, the partitioning was seen in a macro way, mostly small-sized houses were built, with basic fittings and shared facilities such as bathrooms and laundry rooms (Astorga, 2011), which caused overcrowding, establishing a hierarchical center where the equipment was installed, which in the end would be immovable. The buildings were mainly small orthogonal constructions, due to their detachable nature and hermeticism, which reflects a denial of the environment (Sánchez-Montañés and Castilla, 2020). At this time, community activities were scarce, since the population was inserted into a new territory with the sole function of working for the company, with the use of the facilities mainly intended for families and not for the worker.

The urban structure was set up with a monocentric orthogonal organization, which placed Los Héroes Square at its heart (Figure 3). The only established streets were those around the camp, while the interior ones were dirt and were understood more as a residual space between facilities. There was a difficulty in establishing them, as the camp was subject to change. In this phase, four neighborhoods were built: the first was called "Las Latas", whose houses built in 1916, were small, without yards or sanitary facilities. The "Los Adobes" neighborhood (1917) was a terrace style typology, with access from the front and back, and had two passages, one for the neighbors and another for services. The so-called "Type C" area (1920) were also terrace-type dwellings but intended for foremen, so they were larger and had electricity and bathrooms. And, finally, the "Los Hundidos" sector, built in 1921, had houses with small yards that also had an access passage and another for services. These were intended for workers with large families (Figure 4). Here the unpaved streets had an important role within the dwelling, as they were home to the collective and neighborhood life activities (Vilches, 2018, p. 34).

Stage one. The Beginning: Social Stratification

Although the New Camp was for employees and workers, there was also a stratification, since progressing in the company implied obtaining better housing. The employees had a higher scale than workers, which had an impact on the way of designating housing for the workers. At this stage, "Type C" dwellings were inhabited by employees. They had a yard and were at the same level as the downtown, so they had direct connectivity between the services, housing, and railway for their daily commute.

Stage two. Development: Consolidation of the Camp

In this stage, copper demand went up on the international market, leading to a greater need for labor and an increase in population. With this, there were new urban challenges for the settlement, such as the need to build more housing, causing consolidation. Unionization began, with demands for greater benefits and stability for workers and their families. At first, a request for pay raises, but gradually a claim for more space, both housing and public. By 1930, Chuquicamata had become consolidated as a settlement, with public services and greater urban infrastructure.

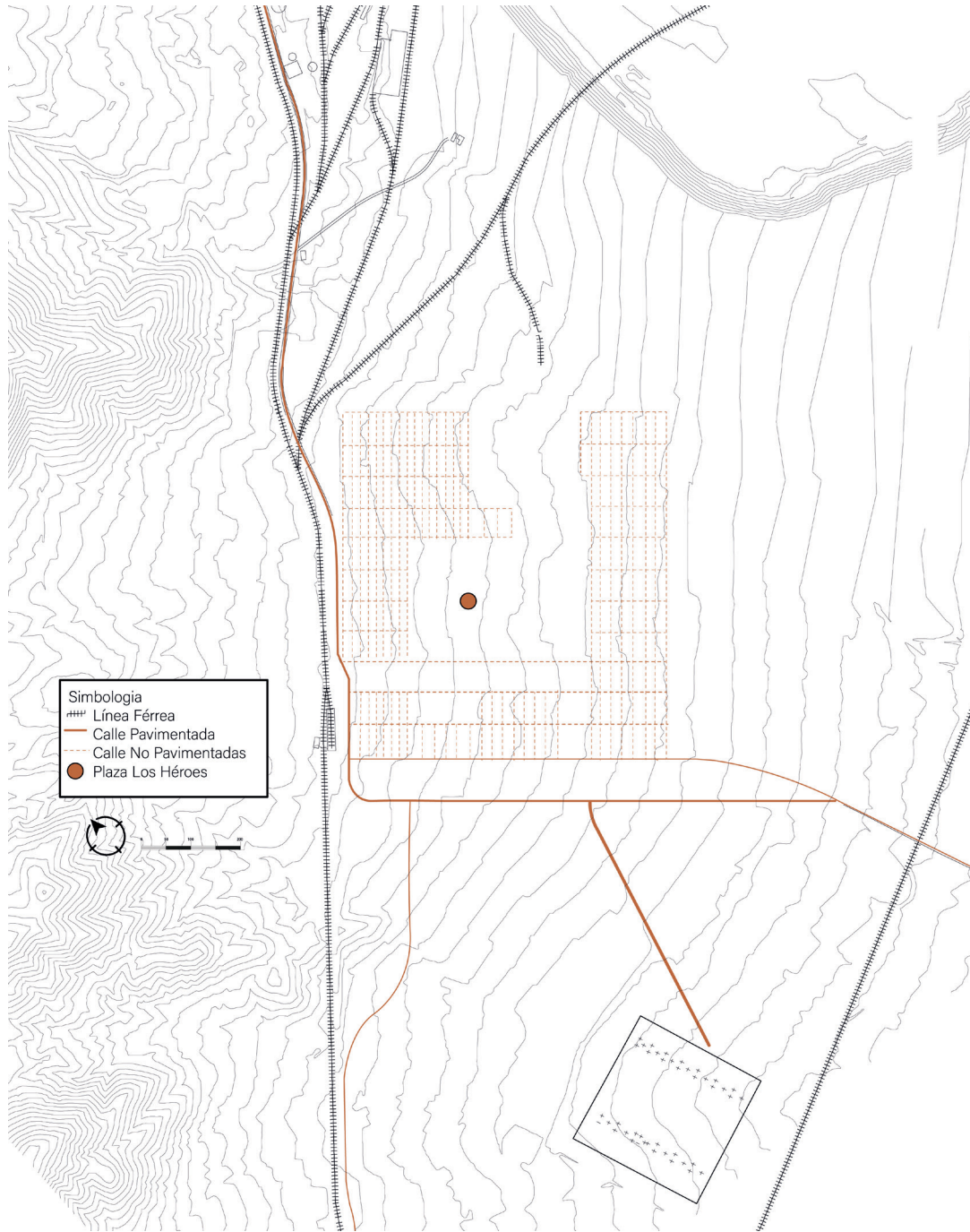


Figure 3. Urban structure at the beginning of the new camp of Chucucamata (1922).
 Source: Preparation by Fabiola Olivares Contreras using the Foundational Plan (Vilches, 1946).

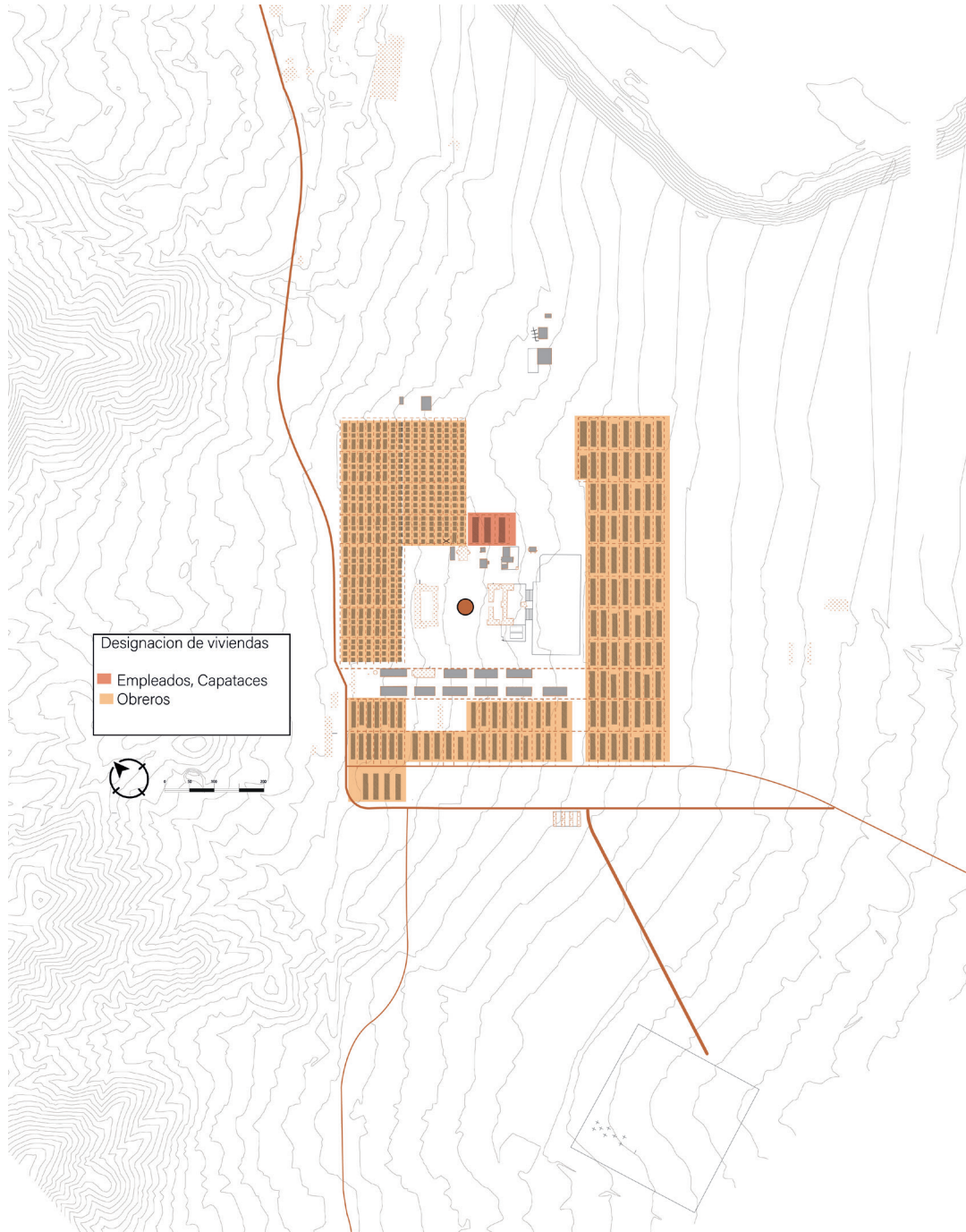


Figure 4. Social stratification at the beginnings of the new camp of Chuquicamata (1922). Source: Preparation by Fabiola Olivares Contreras using the Foundational Plan (Vilches, 1946).

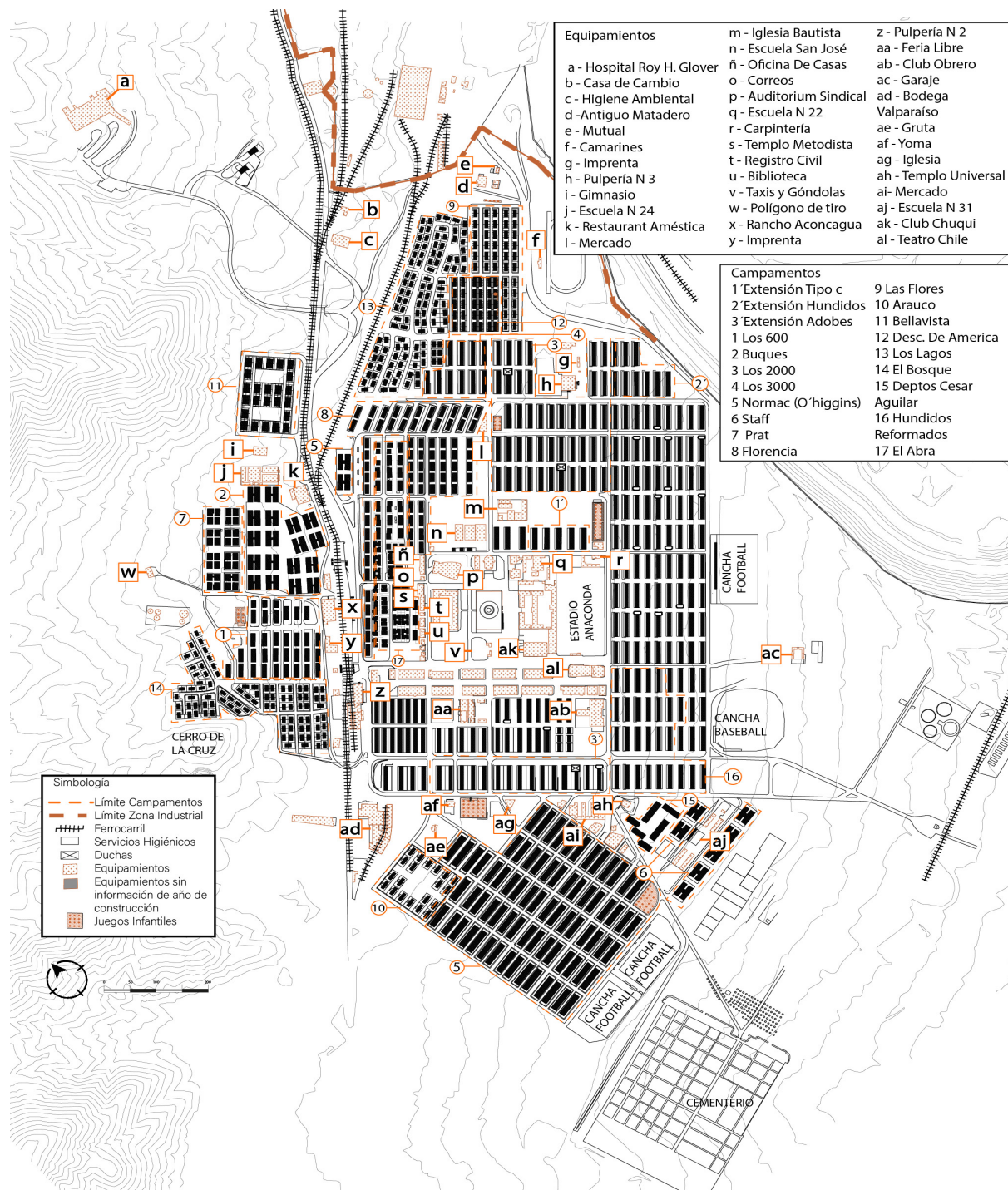


Figure 5. Development of the new camp of Chuquicamata (1975). Source: Preparation by Fabiola Olivares Contreras using the Expansion Plan (Vilches, 1969).

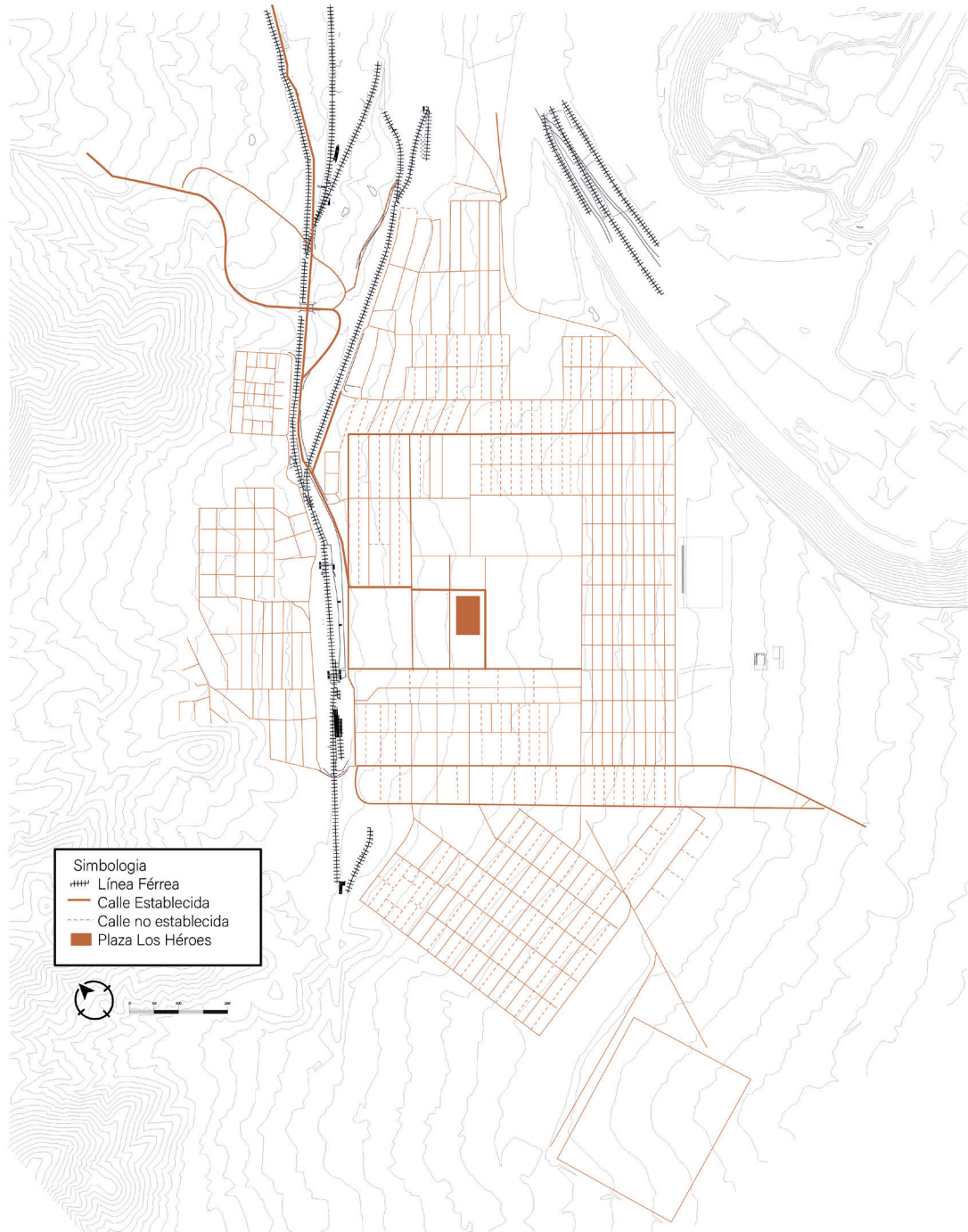


Figure 6. Urban structure. Development of the New Camp of Chuquicamata (1975).
 Source: Preparation by Fabiola Olivares Contreras using the Expansion Plan (Vilches, 1969).

The expansion required, mainly took place towards the west, expressing a clear break with the initial orthogonal layout. The new houses connect in a better way to the geography, respecting unevenness and adapting to the contours. There is great progress in the quality of public spaces and housing. The first single-family homes are built, and the creation of more complex infrastructures arises. As a result, community activities are transferred to collective facilities, parks are created, and the square is consolidated.

These significant changes within the settlement were mainly the result of the economic boom for copper and the need to increase the workforce, an important factor behind increasing the quality of life within the Camp, as unionization had already begun and simple workers who were providing a service, became inhabitants who began to appropriate their physical space.

The most emblematic public buildings were the following: The Chuqui Club (Figure 5, letters ak), built in 1925, which had a covered gym where several sports and gatherings for activities were held. The Chile Theater (Figure 5, letters al), built in 1943, where plays and films were shown. In fact, on its first floor, there were several shops facing the street. The Trade Union Auditorium (Figure 5, the letter p), from 1957, was used for emblematic ceremonies. And the Roy H. Glover Hospital (Figure 5, letter a), which was inaugurated in 1960, had state-of-the-art technology, making it the best hospital in South America.

Stage two. Development: Urban structure

In this phase, there is an effort to urbanize Chuquicamata: a layout is consolidated that is still subject to change, but, one that targeted a permanent settlement (Figure 6). The housing in the heart is released, retracted perimetrically, and located in the eastern sector, creating outskirts and freeing up the square, in which different traditions are generated (Figure 7). The new houses break from the orthogonal layout, adapting better to the terrain. Despite this new constructive criterion, the Camp follows the logic of a monocentric city, concentrating services in the central space. At the same time, the surrounding streets acquire a distinctive role within the community, as traditions are associated with them during certain celebrations, within the framework of collective memory. One of them is linked to the creation of “stalls” for the National Holidays. Every year the square was decorated with Chilean flags and the surrounding streets became a row of stalls for buying and selling.

The same thing happened at Christmas: a nativity scene was created in the square with live animals typical of the area and it was decorated with lights. In this way, the atmosphere of each celebration was exported to the surrounding area. Close to New Year, each neighborhood was organized to follow the “burning monkeys” tradition, where mannequins were built wearing old clothes, staked to the ground, before being set on fire. The Spring Festival was another great event, where emblematic floats that would travel around the Camp were prepared. It should be added that playgrounds were also built during this period.

Stage two. Development: Social stratification of the Camp

This phase saw the greatest diversity in housing typologies, as it included a new classification: apartments for single workers, which were smaller in size. These buildings formed Los Buques, Los Staff, and Los César Aguilar Apartments. At the same time, there was an increase in the worker and foremen population given the labor needs, which began with the challenge of providing housing. For this reason, several construction projects were started, with better sizes, sanitary services, and spaces to relax nearby. Although these neighborhoods were mixed in terms of their layout, social differences remained as neighborhoods for foremen, workers, and single men continued to exist.

Stage three: Decline of the Camp

Nationally, the State attempted to acquire the industry. Several bills and motions were frozen, but legal norms such as the “New Deal” law in 1955 and The “Chilenization” and the “agreed nationalization” (1964-1970), where Chile gained control of 51% of its copper in 1969, also emerged. By 1971, copper had been nationalized, without the State having had to compensate foreign companies. After this event, the Americans completely abandoned the Camp, generating internal social distancing (Vilches, 2018, p. 174). After the coup d'état, social polarization strengthened and the community life of Chuquicamata began to fade (Vilches, 2018, p. 175).

Many residential places become administrative spaces, while a new population was arriving. With the housing shortfall that was already clear in the previous stage, it was necessary to build new neighborhoods on surrounding land (Figure 8). Alongside this, the remnants of the most precarious first stage dwellings were being demolished: Las Latas, 600 (old), the 2,000, the 3,000, **part of Los Hundidos, and Los Adobes**

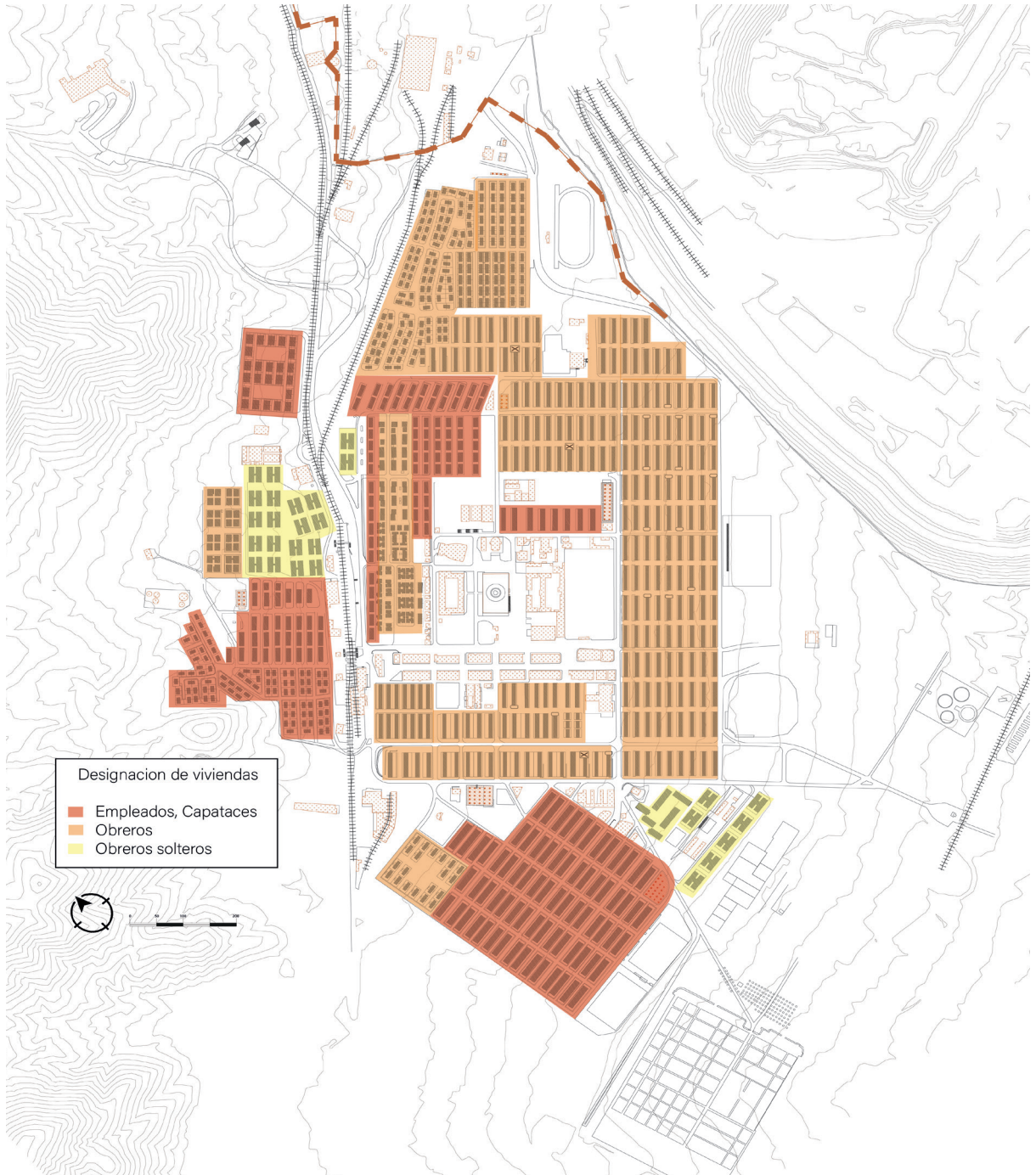


Figure 7. Social stratification. Development of new camp of Chuquicamata (1975).
Source: Preparation by Fabiola Olivares Contreras using the Expansion Plan (Vilches, 1969).

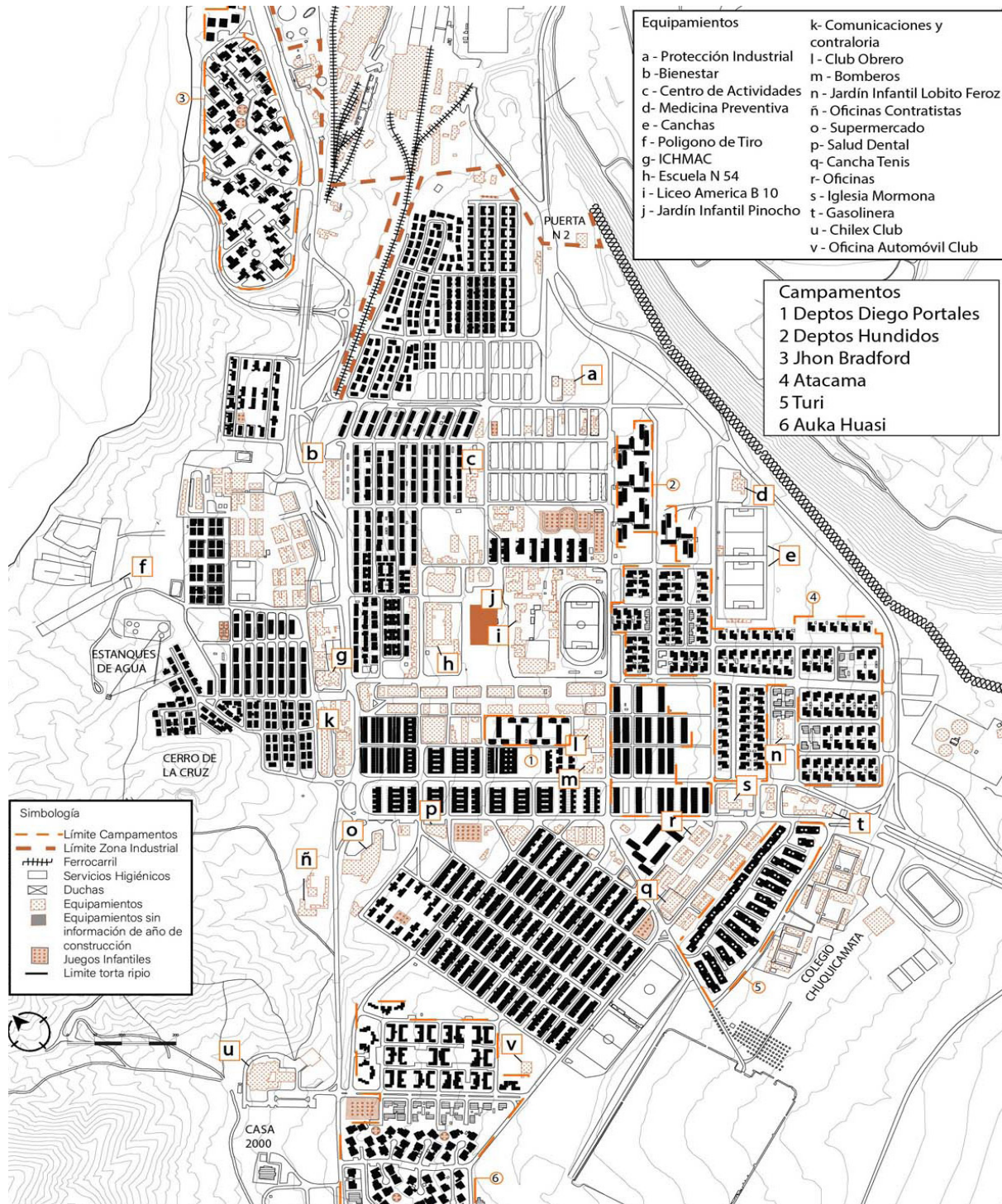


Figure 8. The decline of the new camp of Chuquicamata (2004).
 Source: Preparation by Fabiola Olivares Contreras using the Nationalization Plan (Vilches, 1997).

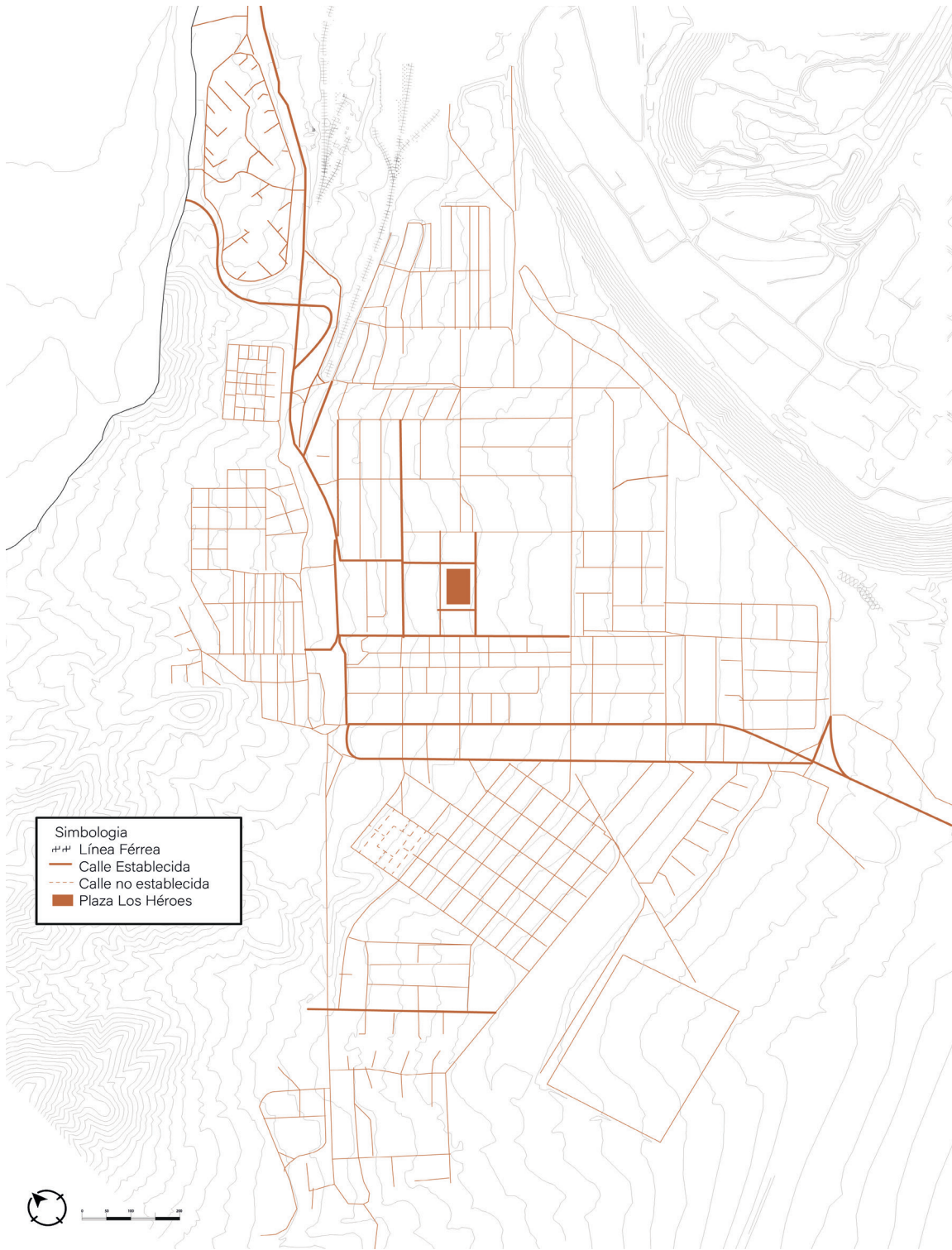


Figure 9. The urban structure of the new camp of Chuquicamata (2004).
Source: Preparation by Fabiola Olivares Contreras using the Nationalization Plan (Vilches, 1997).

(Vilches, 2018, p. 176). The new homes were larger, single-family homes of a good quality, some are called villas. Meanwhile, the industrial boundary was getting closer to the Camp, encapsulating it amid the production waste.

With all the industrial progress and the sustained position of copper on the international market, the industrial zone always needs more space to develop, and after approximately 80 years, in 1992, Chuquicamata was declared a zone saturated with breathable particulate material. Under these circumstances, Codelco manages the “transfer project”, which consisted of migrating the entire Chuquicamatina population to the city of Calama (Mayorga, 2004; Juricic, 2011). An event that marked a real milestone for the population was the burial of the Roy H. Glover Hospital, in 2004 (Figure 9).

Stage three: Urban Structure “Decline of the Camp”

Despite the perimeter growth, the monocentric structure was preserved. The perimeter expansion was only allocated for residential use. These new sectors followed an adaptive logic to the geography. Thus, the streets were adapting to the remaining areas with serpentine-like shapes and on the slopes. At the beginning of this period, the construction process continued; an example of this is the “International Year of the Child Park”, popularly known as “Robot Park”, inaugurated in 1979. However, the waste would continue to advance towards the Camp and, with the burial of the first enclosure on the north side, Chuquicamata is trapped between two artificial hills.

Stage three: Social stratification “Decline of the Camp”

At this stage, the stratification by staff levels or roles develops, where the hierarchy is reinforced (Figure 10). Role A are workers with supervisory positions or are heads of sections and areas. Role B, foremen, master mechanics, craftsmen. Role C, new workers, without trades who enter the company to gain experience (Astorga, 2011). As the new better quality, larger residential complexes were built, the higher-ranking workers were opting for these new homes; and the ones they left were passed on, following the scale, to the workers below them.

Gradually, the New Camp began to be abandoned as its families migrated to the neighboring city of Calama, where Codelco was building neighborhoods for the workers (Mayorga, 2004). The Camp was finally

abandoned in 2008 when the industrial zone grew further still and the waste surrounded the Camp until it was encapsulated. After this process of abandonment, the company chose to dump waste on the Camp buildings, reaching a point of no return, where the ties linked to this settlement were ignored by operations erasing the memory of places and people, clearing all those aspects outside the scope of production (Daviet 2005; Daumas, 2006).

VI. DISCUSSION

For a city to have adequate development, the urban, social, and economic dimensions must be considered (Camagni, 2005). As long as these three factors are developed in parallel and are directly proportional, the city and its inhabitants will be able to have an ideal context to consolidate and form a suitable space for collective living. Chuquicamata has, at an urban level, a tangible space where habitability is formalized; at a social level, community activities and relationships among the inhabitants; and, at a productive level, the mine operation, which drives and governs the *Company Town*. Although at some point it could have been pretty evenly balanced, the constant growth of spoil tips, poor planning, and heavy pollution led to the economic aspect bringing the other two dimensions in upon themselves.

From an urban point of view, the initial Camp layout gives a hierarchy to the central space, made up of the square and surrounded by services such as the market, schools, church, and public buildings, being understood as a settlement given a functional autonomy linked to its productive targets (Garcés *et al.*, 2010). However, urban growth, dependent on internal company decisions, organizes and distributes social groups, stratifying them by job hierarchy and distinguishing neighborhoods by purchasing power. In the physical realm, as the Camp expands, the layout adapts to the territory, generating intermediate spaces between the private and public property, in addition to common areas, such as parks, recreational structures, etc. Thus, its value no longer consists of being just mere containers in a geographical space that is difficult to live in (Sánchez-Montañés and Castile, 2020), but rather clarifies an adaptation to the topography of the land, whereby the private space is integrated and connected to the public space.

From the social perspective, the Camp reflects the aforementioned stratification in housing quality, layout,

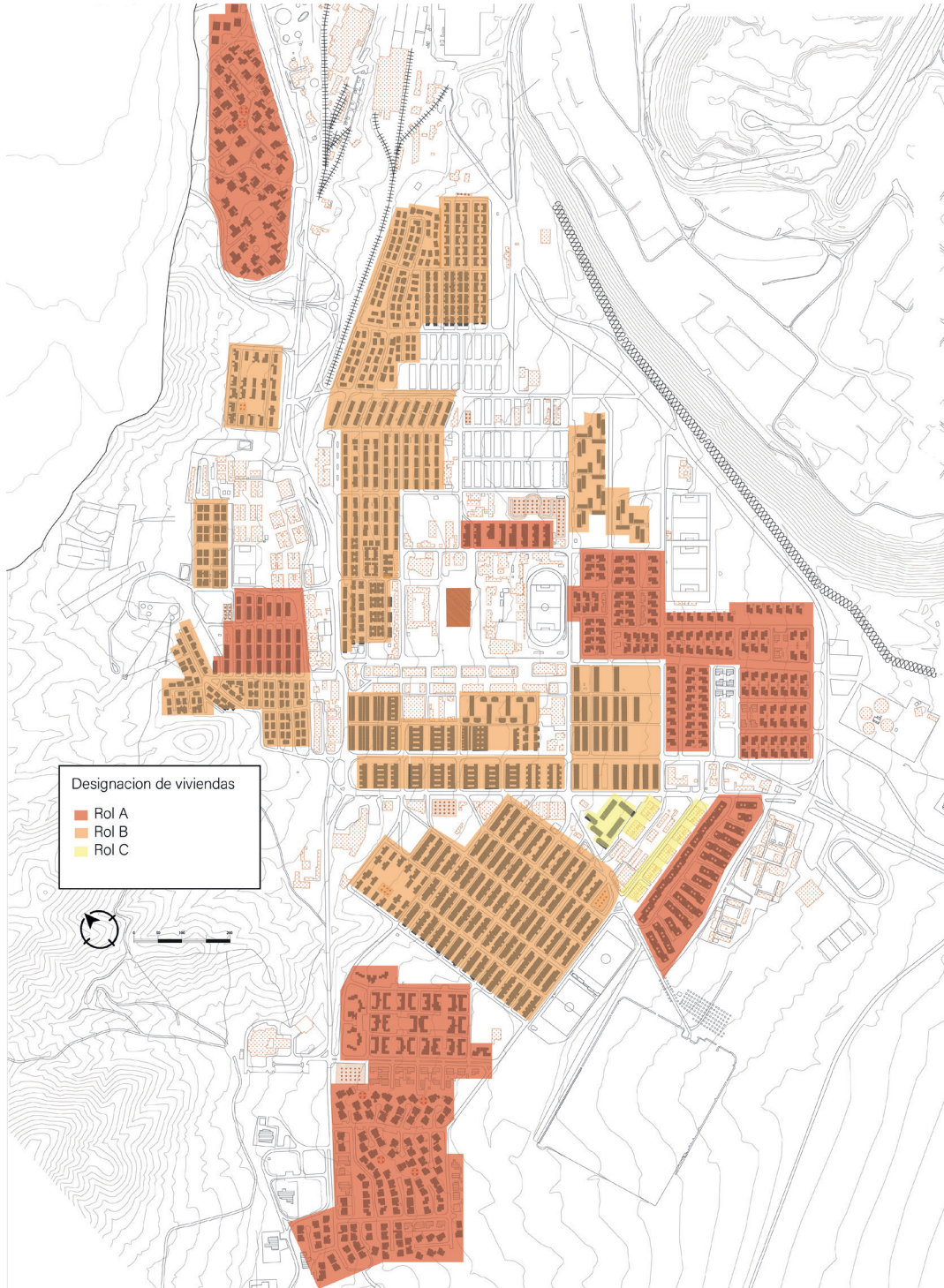


Figure 10. The social stratification of the new camp of Chuquicamata (2004).
 Source: Preparation by Fabiola Olivares Contreras using the Nationalization Plan (Vilches, 1997).

or size, a reflection of the job progress or stagnation of each worker for the rest of the population (Vilches, 2018), which could even be interpreted as a form of social discipline. Chuquicamata transforms and is identified as a divided city, where its growing internal socio-spatial segmentation stands out (Méndez, 2012), revealing an urban organization strongly tied to the position of each worker and family. Unionization helps to build better quality housing with a better provision of services, contributing to the worker's role change to that of a citizen (Camagni, 2005). However, since the 1990s there has been an involution again and a return to a purely productive role.

Finally, regarding the economic aspect, the whole Camp since its start was oriented to a single activity, seeking economic efficiency and labor discipline (Garcés, 2003), which closed off any alternative during times of the greatest residential boom. As economic activity gained greater momentum, the initial functions of many residential complexes cede their functionality to administrative roles for the company, the first signs of the residential role moving off the mining camp. This shows an industrial growth that denies the habitability factor, positioning the productive over the social and urban. The result is a rapid obsolescence of the habitat just as in other cases (Fernández, 1982; García Blanco and Gutiérrez, 1988), and that performs a memory erasure operation after the abandonment of the camp in the sense indicated by Daviet (2005), namely burying part of the tangible and architectural collective memory of the town. In this way, eradication has been recognized for the Chuquicamatinos as a painful and traumatic process, not just because of the transfer itself but rather because of what was left behind, everything lost, which has progressively become just memories (Rodríguez, Miranda, and Medina, 2012).

VII. CONCLUSIONS

The cases of the saltpeter or coal mining camps could suggest that the decline of these spaces is always linked to the devaluation of the material on the international market, as the industrial population is dependent only on this productive activity. But, in the case of the Chuquicamata camp, the opposite is true, since the copper boom led to greater extraction, and with this industrial progress and a greater environmental impact. The productive dimension is thus superimposed on the urban and social. This process decants into the obsolescence of living, the

transfer of residents, and the burial of part of the Camp, reducing the perception of the former inhabitant just to progressively weaker memories, causing a different way of understanding mining-industrial activity to be forgotten.

This industrial past was governed by a high social stratification from its origins until its decline. Even so, community life managed to become consolidated through festivities and traditions where the Chuquicamatina population came together, undermining the hierarchical roles established by the company. In these moments, there was a phenomenon called "differentiated equals", which is evident in the sense of belonging and collective memory of the Chuquicamatinos that remains to this day. Chuquicamata is a distinctive example within the subject of *Company Towns*, not just from the context of its closure, but by the broad union mobilization that characterized it, and that achieved improvements in the quality of public and private spaces, emphasizing the role of worker-dweller, as well as through the creation of traditions and customs it had and that persist until today. Even though the dismantling meant a "point of no return" for the tangible belongings of the Chuquicamatino town; the intangibles managed to remain thanks to its population.

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