

Struggling with globalization challenges: addressing the oversupply of cultural facilities in the world heritage city of Cuenca, Ecuador

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Abstract

Purpose – Cuenca, a World Heritage City, faces urban expansion as residents move to the outskirts, leaving the historic center abandoned and deteriorating. The challenge now is to relocate these spaces into sustainable and cohesive nodes. This research aims to identify cultural facility oversupply in the city center and understand the required usage for heritage buildings to promote a habitable, sustainable and cohesive historic center.

Design/methodology/approach – The study consisted of two phases. Firstly, a georeferenced spatial analysis and monthly usage frequency of each facility is proposed. Secondly, interviews explored the criteria for designating heritage buildings as cultural facilities. Additionally, a survey assessed urban habitability in three historic center parishes, measuring aspects like coverage, satisfaction and security from residents' perspectives.

Findings – The underutilization of cultural facilities demonstrates both inefficient heritage management and a lack of resident interest in cultural activities and neighborhood decision-making. Thus, ensuring collective ownership of heritage assets becomes crucial. Additionally, the municipality's approach to heritage must be reconsidered. While implementing a cultural program may seem faster and cheaper, the long-term cost-benefit of maintaining a cohesive historical center outweighs that of a dispersed city.

Originality/value – This paper calls for a fundamental reimagining of the concept of built heritage, emphasizing the need for a more inclusive and integrated approach that goes beyond museum and tourism-driven strategies. This perspective recognizes the importance of social, cultural and environmental sustainability in revitalizing the historic center, considering the broader context of the city and its diverse inhabitants.

Keywords Globalization processes, Cultural facilities, Heritage buildings, Urban habitability, Residence facilities

Paper type Research paper

1. Introduction

Cuenca is a city located at the south of Ecuador, within the Andean Region, considered as a world heritage site there is a general concern about the sustainable administration of the town. In general, the public stewardship goal is to meet present needs without jeopardizing

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those of the future. In this context, “Cuenca sostenible (2015)”, is a general diagnosis which evaluates the public management of the city, and it consists of 144 indicators divided into three areas: “urban sustainability,” “environmental sustainability” and “fiscal sustainability.” The mentioned study allows us to recognize the exponential evolution of the city and point out urban areas that planners should focus their efforts to mitigate future problems. According to this evaluation, it can be stated that, within the majority of analyzed sections, the city of Cuenca has indicators in good condition. However, the most alarming is the one related to “the expansion of the urban footprint”; that is, the growing average of the city is at a rate higher than the required for its population, and for a standard sustainable city presents an unmanageable conflict due to the urban, natural and future supply limitations for Cuenca population as it is shown in [Figure 1 \(Cuenca sostenible, 2015\)](#).

Several studies have indicated that the main reason behind the building/citizens have migrated to the peripheries, seeking to satisfy functions that, supposedly, within the historic center could not be carried out adequately, are due to land cost compared with the urban area. In addition to the aforementioned, the public legislation has constantly deepened this notion, not allowing almost any interventions to satisfy daily life functions within the historic buildings all over the historic city center through the last decades ([Heinrichs et al., 2009](#)). Moreover, [Serrano et al. \(2019\)](#) assert that this phenomenon is linked to the fact that the Historic Center of Cuenca (CHC) managers focus their effort and strategies in order to aim a city mainly for tourism. It is also reflected in the main budget investments, directing most of its resources on the tourist figure, leaving aside the needs of housing for the local population. From this perspective, [Pauta \(2019\)](#) indicates that the development of housing in the CHC is affected by this perspective and points out some facts that confirm the low urban habitability in the CHC, such as a housing deficit, the increase in rent in the area, the distance from collective facilities and work.

Urban habitability, according to [Jacobs \(1961\)](#), lies in the communication of the community through spaces capable of evolving and reinterpreting the transient needs of a particular society. Likewise, the Urban Ecology Agency of [Barcelona Urban Ecology Agency \(2018\)](#) indicates some factors that must coincide in a livable model: it must be compact in its

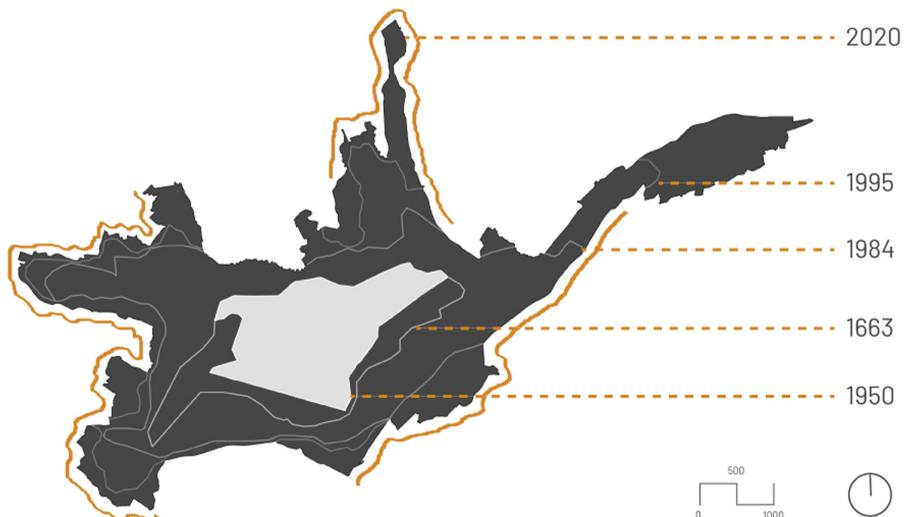


Figure 1.
Map of the city of Cuenca showing the expansion of the urban footprint

Source(s): Cuenca Sostenible (2015)

morphology, sustainable with its resources, efficient in its routes and socially cohesive. In other words, compact places that guarantee collective appropriation, with mixed services, universal accessibility and popular attendance (Discoli *et al.*, 2010). Additionally, Project for Public Spaces (2012) argues that to talk about urban habitability, factors such as the quality of available spaces for constructing or rehabilitating buildings must also be considered. Thus, faced with the emergence of new areas that absorb the functions of centrality, the historic consolidated areas are subjected to a process of degradation. Planning sustainable cities that promote connection and interaction among inhabitants and with their historical urban area becomes one of the most crucial challenges for coming planners nowadays (León Rodríguez *et al.*, 2019).

Furthermore, another problem that strongly arises in historic areas, is gentrification, a phenomenon that for some authors is generally understood as the displacement of the original population or the conversion of residential uses into commercial ones. Eventually, in other cases, it is the result of a process of spatial displacement of a historical population by another with higher economic income and cultural capital (Lees, 2008 cited in Hiernaux-Nicolas and Gómez, 2014, p. 58). In the local context, Cabrera (2019) affirms that in recent decades, heritage urban areas in Latin America have undergone public and private interventions with the objective of physically conserving heritage and enhancing their touristic appeal. These urban decisions have generated gentrification processes. Through a reference framework applied to the city of Cuenca, the author concludes that gentrification in heritage areas is a process where positive aspects, common in these areas, do not exist. Meanwhile, policies, programs and projects promoting rehabilitation and regeneration of heritage urban areas with museum characteristics continue to be promoted. In line as before, the historic center of the city of Morelia, Mexico, a site inscribed on the UNESCO World Heritage List in 1991, was the object of a study about tourism and gentrification carried out by Ettinger Mcenuity and Mercado López (2019). The authors used a methodology of qualitative and quantitative data, collecting information on land uses in 99 heritage buildings over 3 years, contrasting these results with surveys conducted with local residents. They conclude that while there is a higher use of the central space for mainly cultural leisure activities, the decline of the original population deepens, as well as its aging and, eventually, abandonment. In addition to the constant decrease in basic facilities in the area and the low proximity to main services that promote a habitable environment. But these are not isolated cases, other studies in world heritage sites have demonstrated that tourism has become the cornerstone of their economy, for instance in Mexico the states of Quintana Roo, Yucatán and increasingly in Campeche, in less than half a century the tourism industry is the main economic income. Consequently, the rise in the number of tourists is accompanied by an exponential growth in the number of tourist destinations. Thus, this research used technical cartography to compare different layers of information but mainly to understand the complex processes of changes in time, organization and reorganization of social, economic, political, cultural and environment life, linked to tourism as a lead element of capital accumulation of its whole territory (García de Fuentes *et al.*, 2019).

This reality is not far from the city of Cuenca, which in 1999, obtained the title of “World Heritage Site” (UNESCO Decree 05/99). This recognition allowed the historic city to be validated as a heritage area of mainly contemplation, recreating a purely touristified panorama (Carofilis and García, 2015). Within this context, in Cuenca, the historically applied model of compact city, that once was the main reason why it gets its global recognition, is now at risk, due to the excessive consumption of land and its inefficient use (Peiser, 2001). Consequently, the CHC transitioned from a compact sustainable model to a dispersed one, starting in 1950 and multiplied in recent decades (Hermida *et al.*, 2015). According to Garcés (2004), this is because these spaces have become maintained as large museums with tourist and cultural focuses, and as a result, residents seek more comfortable alternatives.

Thus, the management of the CHC becomes of vital importance; preserving its memory and promoting its consolidation without turning it into a museum devoid of inhabitants are the defies to restore the sustainability of the area. In this aspect the [Burra Charter \(1999\)](#) supported the previous statement as it broadened the conception of cultural significance that includes not only the fabric but also use, associations and meanings of a site. In addition, social discourse as an important input for the discussion is also placed within the complex discussion. Therefore, this research emphasizes the transformation of decadent historic areas into sustainable “nodes,” assuming that the low “urban habitability” of the CHC is an intrinsic consequence of “gentrification,” “touristification,” and “heritage nominations”. In light of these reflections, this research aims to answer: ¿what are the cultural/museum facilities that must remain in the heritage space, and which ones must change their use? And, as a consequence; ¿what uses should be implemented in the facilities that change in order to promote a more habitable, sustainable and cohesive historic center?

In the following paragraphs different phases that describe the used methodology, main results and findings.

2. Methodology

As it is shown in [Figure 2](#), the methodological proposal was divided into two phases. To effectively identify the number of cultural facilities within Cuenca that present usability problems, it is essential to first understand where the surplus of museum installations is concentrated. A georeferenced spatial analysis of the influence areas and monthly usage frequency of each facility is proposed to establish where the overabundance of cultural offer is located and which programs are underutilized. Therefore, a series of interviews are conducted with workers in the areas related to the management of built heritage in CHC, in order to understand the selection criteria by which a heritage building becomes a cultural facility.

On the other hand, the second methodological phase is focused on the neighbors requirements and the relationship they have with nearby facilities. Surveys are used to analyze the level of benefit that neighbors find in the selected cultural facilities in their parish. At the same time, urban habitability is evaluated by questionnaires that include indicators such as the perception of coverage/satisfaction, security, among others. This is corroborated thanks to the evaluation of the same indicators through on site observation. Likewise, the most required activities and/or services are proposed in each parish according to its own inhabitants. Additionally, this is intended to be validated with a series of interviews to four

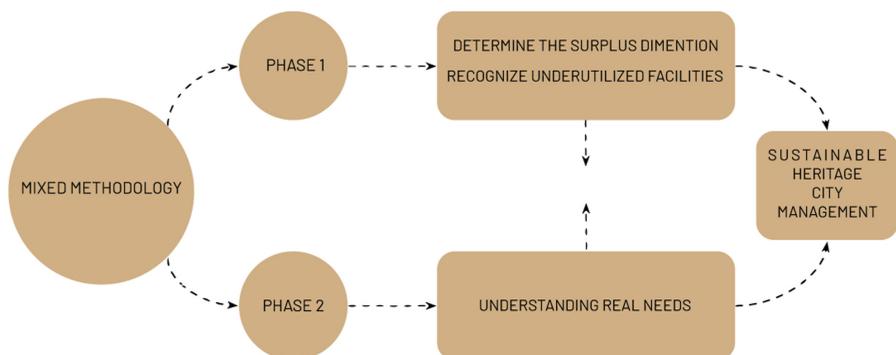


Figure 2.
Scheme for the used
research methodology

Source(s): Authors (2022)

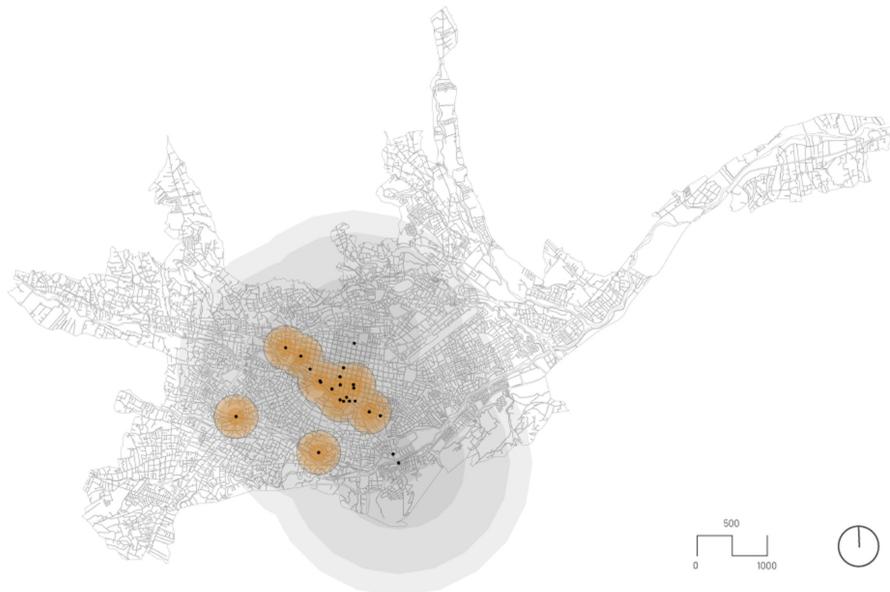
professionals related to heritage conservation. The following schema (Figure 2) shows the proposed methodology.

3. Results

The results are also described in relation to two phases. For the first part, technical selection criteria were used, establishing areas of influence around existing facilities and determining the frequency of visits to them. In this way, assets whose areas of influence overlapped and whose monthly user frequency was very low could be identified.

The existing cultural facilities were divided into two groups according to their scale: (1) neighborhood facilities (those whose scale is not greater than a regular CH home) and (2) urban facilities (those whose scale and scope are clearly greater than neighborhood facilities). This differentiation is made to assign corresponding areas of influence to each property, recognizing that within the urban area, the surplus is evident. For neighborhood facilities, an area of influence of 500 m was used, referring to the methodological proposal for selecting the best use of built constructions in the research by [Sánchez and Roca \(2021\)](#). While for urban facilities, a circular area of influence of 3,000 m is used, as these are the areas of influence assigned to museums by the Municipality of Cuenca. As a result, each cultural facility within the historic center is identified, assigning its respective area of influence according to its previously specified scale (neighborhood or urban). This is how, graphically, the over-offer of cultural facilities can be recognized as concentrated, as it is shown in [Figure 3](#).

According to the maps, it was demonstrated that over 95% of the influenced areas of the facilities overlap with each other, clearly confirming the surplus state of cultural installations. This denotes deficient management of these buildings, along with poor planning that does not take into account the location and possible social effects of cultural concentration. As it can be assumed, this accumulation of cultural facilities in the same parishes does not allow



Source(s): Authors (2022)

Figure 3.
Map of Cuenca, where
the cultural facilities
are located with their
influence areas

soil use diversification, and, on the other hand, neighboring residents do not make constant visits to these facilities, leaving them completely abandoned. In this case, the first protection line of the CHC, limiting the study case to its main 3 parishes: “San Sebastián”, “Gil Ramírez Dávalos” and “El Sagrario”, where, evidently, the surplus deepens (see [Figure 4](#)).

Apart from this spatial analysis, the monthly visit frequency for the entire range of cultural facilities was determined through the measure of attendance for each facility. The guestbook records and user counts on site were used for this objective. The results established in [Table 1](#) were alarming as they show an insurmountable disparity between the studied buildings. Concluding that the cultural facilities which, besides been part of the established surplus, consequently, presents the highest level of underutilization are: “Casa de las Posadas”, “Casa de la Lira”, “CIDAP”, “Salon del Pueblo” and “Museo de la Ciudad”.

For the second phase of the methodology, a sample of 270 surveys is proposed within the three aforementioned parishes. Based on the 2010 population census, a sample of 10% of residents of San Sebastián (90), Gil Ramírez Dávalos (90) and El Sagrario (90) was calculated with a confidence level of 95% and a margin of error less than 10%. A questionnaire, based on the study of [Cabrera \(2019\)](#), is composed of 3 sections that are dependent on each other. The first section evaluates general data, the second aims to determine the level of participation and interest that residents have in the selected facilities within their parishes. Finally, the third section evaluates the respondent’s perception of the coverage/satisfaction level by mentioning the aforementioned activities and/or services necessary to promote urban habitability.

[Figure 5](#) shows the main results regarding local participation of some sort of public participation/socialization about the planning of public buildings in their area, 3 out of 4 weren’t part of such a process. And it is corroborated with [Figure 6](#) which shows that 7 out of 10 neighborhoods have no interest in cultural activities while the majority of equipment located within the city center offers only cultural activities.

Likewise, the reasons for not attending vary mainly between: the lack of promotion of cultural activities, the existence of other facilities with more interesting programs and the

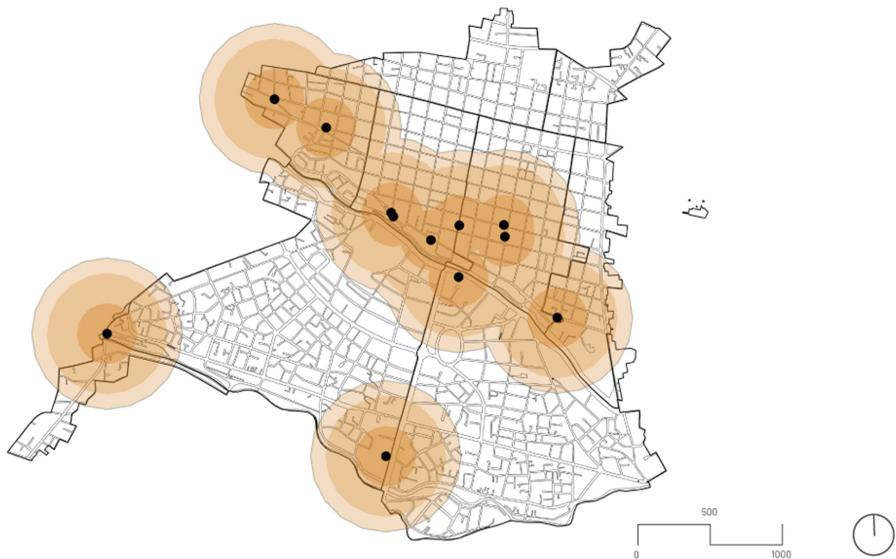


Figure 4.
The cultural facilities
within the historic city
and their
influence areas

Source(s): Authors (2022)

Challenges of urbanization

Cultural facilities	Parish	Public facility	Part of the surplus (based in its influence area)	Number of monthly users
Museo de las Conceptas	El Sagrario	No	Yes	No register
Museo de las Culturas Aborígenes	San Blas	No	Yes	1,700 monthly users
Museo de Arte Moderno	San Sebastián	Yes	Yes	6,200 monthly users
Museo de Esqueletología	San Blas	Yes	Yes	Closed
Museo del CIDAP	Sagrario	Yes	Yes	810 monthly users
Museo del Sombrero de Paja Toquilla	Sucre	No	Yes	3,000 monthly users
Museo Municipal Casa del Sombrero	El Vecino	Yes	No	2,400 monthly users
Museo municipal Remigio Crespo Toral	Sucre	Yes	No	Closed
Museo Sociedad Historia de la Medicina	Huaynacapac	No	Yes	No register
Museo y Parque Arqueológico Pumapungo	Huaynacapac	Yes	No	5,000 monthly users
Museo de la Ciudad	El Sagrario	Yes	Yes	300 monthly users
Salón del Pueblo	El Sagrario	No	Yes	180 monthly users
Centro cultural El Alfarero	San Sebastián	Yes	No	No register
Casa de las Posadas	San Sebastián	Yes	Yes	120 monthly users
Casa de las Palomas	El Sagrario	Yes	Yes	No register
Museo Manuel Agustín Landívar	San Blas	Yes	Yes	Closed
Chahuarchimbana	Huaynacapac	Yes	No	1,300 monthly users
Casa del Artista	Yanuncay	Yes	No	1,700 monthly users
Quinta Bolívar	Huaynacapac	No	No	1,300 monthly users
Museo de los Metales	Sucre	Yes	No	No register
Museo Universitario	Haynacapac	Yes	No	1,060 monthly users
Casa de la Lira	Gil Ramírez Dávalos	Yes	Yes	93 monthly users
Casa Márquez	Gil Ramírez Dávalos	Yes	Yes	No register

Table 1.
Number of monthly visitors of the different cultural facilities in the city of Cuenca

Source(s): Authors

activities not being focused on their interests. Eventually, locals consider that activities related with commerce and culture are the ones which have coped with the area. Results are shown in [Figure 7](#).

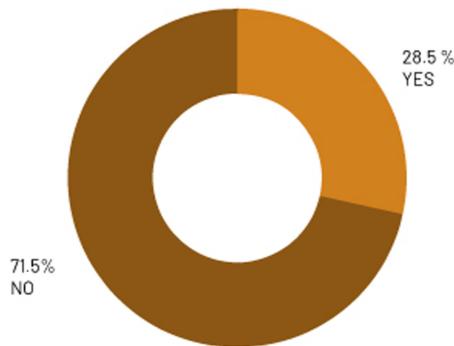
Additionally, the results indicate that the main concerns of the inhabitants are security, supply commerce on a smaller scale, education, recreation, health and transportation, as well as the lack of programs related to health. To a lesser extent, the need for facilities related to sports and social assistance appeared. As it is shown in [Figure 8](#).

On the other hand, as it was mentioned before, a survey that evaluates the habitability conditions of the selected facilities and the satisfaction with the activities and/or services was applied in the selected area. The evaluated indicators that were taken into account were grouped as follows: the first deals with the implantation conditions, physical state, road system,

accessibility and transportation. Another group called infrastructure includes the provision of basic networks, and the last corresponds to the offer of different facilities. It is pertinent to highlight that the base model by [Stivale and Falabella \(2006\)](#), in their research: "Methodology for evaluating social residential habitat", was modified to adapt to the parameters developed above.

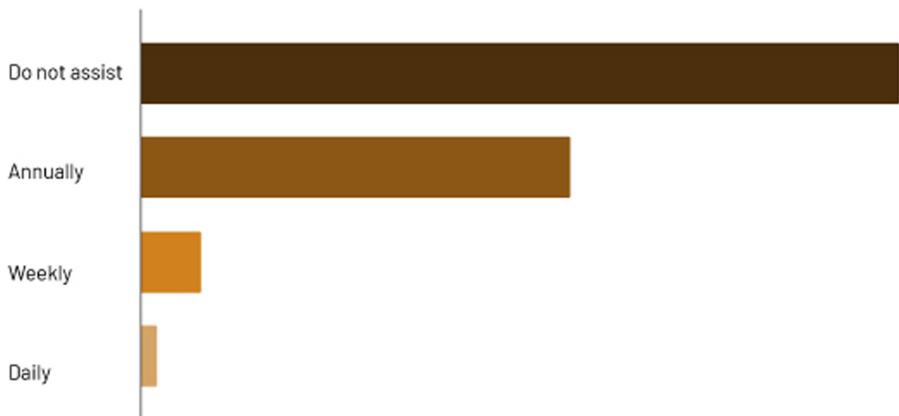
The obtained responses, shown in [Figure 9](#), demonstrate that indeed these properties and their surroundings are very well served when it comes to indicators related to their implantation and urban infrastructure. However, when it comes to referring to the essential facilities for daily life, it is found that none of the analyzed properties meets a minimum acceptable rating. In other words, the analyzed properties and their surroundings do not have a minimum of required facilities that promote housing and address the low level of urban habitability in the area.

Finally, as part of the validation process, four interviews were conducted with technical personnel of public institutions related to heritage management, in order to understand the management processes and selection criteria through which a municipal heritage house is designated as a cultural facility. In addition, information is sought regarding the management of heritage properties and the opinions about the use of heritage as buildings. The main ideas stress about the life dynamics needed for the historic center, the ideal of balance between residential and complementary commercial uses is always



Source(s): Authors (2022)

Figure 5.
Local participation during the decision making process of cultural projects within the historic center



Source(s): Authors (2022)

Figure 6.
Graph showing the inhabitants level of attendance to the different cultural facilities

Challenges of urbanization

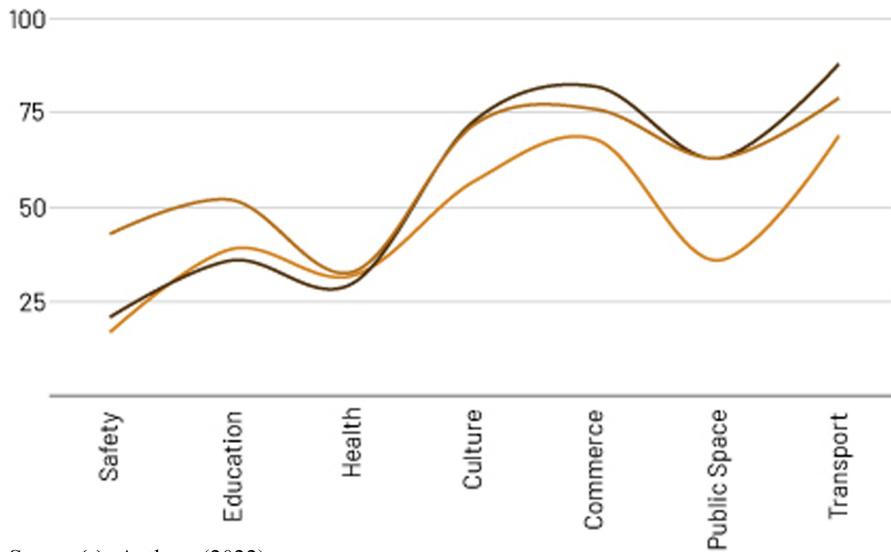


Figure 7. Graph showing the services coverage according to the inhabitants

Source(s): Authors (2022)

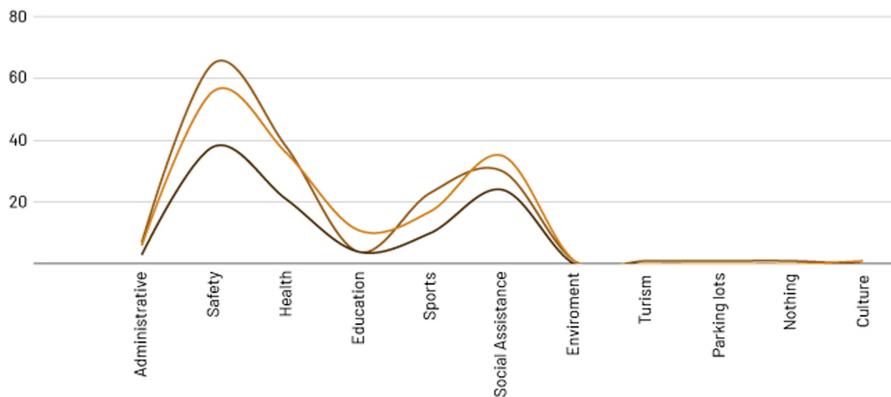


Figure 8. Graph showing resident's opinion on what uses they would like to see in their parishes

Source(s): Authors (2022)

mentioned by the interviewees Likewise: “the dynamics of life involve other needs besides the cultural program” . . . “We (*as a Municipal Institution*) must proceed in parallel, prioritizing housing first. Without people living in the area, what is the point of having other facilities and amenities?” - (Interviewee 02, 2022). Moreover, from the interviews the lack of communication between departments of the same institution has been evidenced some actors mentioned different methodologies for the selection of a building program, meanwhile other states: “I don’t remember that such a process has been carried out, but rather once a decision is made, justifications are sought . . . it’s the other way around, it’s not about seeing or analyzing what is needed by areas or spaces, but rather deciding and then proposing the program . . . ” (Interviewee 02, 2022). Unlucky in Cuenca, there is an inconsistency between the approved management models, their actual implementation and its application. The political intentions behind urban renewal, according to Marin (2017), are not neutral and often prioritize



Figure 9.
 Evaluation of habitability conditions of the analyzed cultural facilities

Source(s): Authors (2022)

commerce over the well-being of residents. On the other hand, the intention to recover degraded spaces for residents often results in their expulsion as they search for more affordable areas. Therefore, with the application of all the research tools it is evident that a more equitable distribution of museums and cultural centers is necessary, not only within the historical center, but also throughout the city. Currently, the urban planning within the historic center of Cuenca has no connection with cultural planning and citizens requirements.

4. Discussion

From the previous results it can be stated that there is a surplus of cultural facilities within the historic center of Cuenca, heritage buildings that are owned by the Municipality are mainly used for cultural activities and they currently evidence problems of attendance. In addition, according to the results of the INVI survey, the CH has low urban habitability, as well as a clear housing deficit, the latter displaced in recent decades from the historic area. In this process, Cuenca's heritage is turned into a touristy scenery without inhabitants, focused on different daily life requirements than those required by neighbors. This is confirmed by technicians of the Historic Areas Department at the Municipality of Cuenca that state: "today the city center has no activities, this area is dead at night; in a neighborhood, you need: the store, the restaurant, the hospitals, the parks, they hardly exist in the historic center . . ." (Interviewee 01, 2022). Likewise: "the dynamics of life involve other needs besides the cultural program" and "Culture is a complement, but other types of facilities are needed. It's like a circle, if there is no housing supply, there is also no demand for other complementary facilities" (Interviewee 02, 2022). "We must proceed in parallel, prioritizing housing first. Without people living in the area, what is the point of having other facilities and amenities?" (Interviewee 02, 2022).

Moreover, the interviews have demonstrated the tendency to focus on the creation of museums and galleries, neglecting the necessary facilities to maintain and promote livability in the historic center. This predisposition may be due to a lack of a management model that involves prior site

analysis and the use of tools that ensures a critical selection of the use of a heritage building, as it was mentioned: “They should always operate with a backup and management plan, but for various reasons, that management plan is not always executed.” (Interviewee 02, 2022).

Although the need for a management plan in Cuenca’s historic center is not a new requirement (Cuenca sostenible, 2015), it is curious that in the last decade, other alternatives for reusing heritage buildings has not been implemented. This may also be a consequence of a lack of collaboration between departments within the same institution. Therefore, the research clearly shows that heritage management depends on the management by the responsible entities and the successful relationship between each of the actors involved. In this scenario, an approach to cultural planning is necessary to propose museums, galleries and cultural centers that improve the sustainability of urban city areas. Corroborating the importance of cultural planning in urban design, Grewcock (2006) states that culture has not been taken into account in planning, both applied and theoretical. Leaving aside the potential of the idea of a museum as a space for encounter rather than admiration. Changing the meaning of museums to city museums, where they respond to urban changes and population needs. It demonstrates that the voice of social actors within the studied neighborhoods are not pragmatically included. Their opinions, needs and living experiences are not part of the future plans for the city managers; according to Smith these opinions are not part of an “Authorized Heritage Discourse” which promotes a consensus approach to history, smoothing over conflict and social differences (Waterton *et al.*, 2006).

In addition to the above mentioned, there is an alarming situation for heritage managers related to the low average monthly attendance of certain cultural facilities that was confirmed through surveys of local residents. When asked how often they visit cultural facilities in their parish, it was found that 8 out of 10 locals do not visit the studied facilities at all, or simply visit them only once a year. Therefore, a question arises: ¿What is the reason for the low occupancy of certain properties that are related to cultural programs? The survey process allowed us to evaluate the degree of interest that local residents have in the cultural activities offered in their parish. It was found that 7 out of 10 people have no interest in cultural activities. Likewise, the reasons for not attending vary mainly between: the lack of promotion of cultural activities, the existence of other facilities with more interesting activities and the activities not being focused on their interests. Additionally, the results indicate that there was little participation from local residents during the decision-making process. I was also confirmed during the interview that states: “. . . As part of the socialization process . . . Once we are installed here, we talk to the people in the neighborhood . . . In this case, (Casa de la Lira), we informed the neighbors that the culture department was coming . . . ” (Interviewee 01, 2022). “. . . But at the end of the day, the same people from Cuenca don’t know about these houses. We have Casa Tienda and Casa de la Lira here, so I can keep making empty exhibition rooms, keep spending money . . . ” (Interviewee 01, 2022).

Different assumptions can be made around the low participation and interest of the inhabitants of the historic center, one of them can be seen as the result of growing gentrification, and in this case, the touristic and heritage-driven development of the historic center. By ignoring the needs of the local population and not creating spaces for socialization, suitable environments for necessary social interactions in everyday life are also omitted. In accordance with Cruzz and Isunza (2017), elements such as wide coverage of basic infrastructure, basic equipment, spatial accessibility and open spaces are essential for collective recognition and appropriation. Therefore, during the research process, the question arises to understand the reasons behind the trend of the Municipality to convert consolidated heritage into assets dedicated to cultural uses. The answers are linked to decisions related to economic issues where the reintegration of heritage requires large expenses, which lower-income classes cannot afford and which the municipality does not prioritize (Rey-Pérez, 2017). As a consequence, the gentrification phenomenon is once again produced as an intrinsic result of heritage designations (inscribing buildings in heritage inventories) and touristification to which the historic center is subject and is supported by the local government.

As a response to the described phenomenon urban strategies such as pedestrianization of the historic center and plans for mixed-land uses can be seen as possible solutions to increase in ethnic diversity, population density, income equity and increased frequency of public transport (Shehata, 2022). Even if this is not a unique and perfect solution it can give important results (Geyer and Quin, 2019).

5. Conclusions

This research has demonstrated that the world heritage site of Cuenca has an important number of underutilized cultural facilities. It has demonstrated on one hand the inefficient heritage management of the city, and on the other indicates that residents have little interest in cultural activities and participation in the decisions that occur in their neighborhoods. Thus, it is necessary to ensure collective appropriation of heritage assets, and the only way to achieve this is by effectively involving the local residents. Historical memory that recognizes a building as a property of general interest cannot be achieved artificially or by force, but is reached through time. The municipality's heritage concept needs to take a new approach, even though a cultural program may be faster and cheaper to execute, the cost-benefit of maintaining a cohesive historical center in the long term will be much higher compared to a dispersed city with uninhabited historic buildings.

Furthermore, the lifestyle within the city of Cuenca has moved away from traditional ways of living, yet the preservation and rehabilitation methods have remained unchanged. This has led to a series of social and urban problems that must be addressed to recover the historic areas in a sustainable way different from an approach based on museum and tourist-oriented concepts. It is necessary to change the current concept of built heritage to allow the historic center to once again become part of the urban fabric of the city of Cuenca, a place with a real multi actor governance project.

Based on the results indicating an oversupply of cultural facilities in Cuenca, it is pertinent to pose the following questions: ¿which cultural facilities should remain in the heritage area and which should change their use? And consequently, ¿what uses should be implemented in the facilities that change in order to promote a more habitable, sustainable, and cohesive historic center? While these could be questions for future research, on one hand the local government should take management decisions not exclusively for the historical areas, but also for an entire city. On the other hand, as long as the citizenry promotes civic organization, they will be able to sustain and influence decision-making processes.

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