

THE HERITAGE SCENE: TOWARD AN INTEGRATED MANAGEMENT OF URBAN VOIDS IN HISTORIC CENTERS ¹

LA ESCENA PATRIMONIAL: HACIA UNA GESTIÓN INTEGRADA DEL VACÍO URBANO EN
CENTROS HISTÓRICOS

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Este artículo presenta una crítica al paradigma tradicional de preservación patrimonial, centrado en el objeto estático y material, y propone, en su lugar, el concepto de “Patrimonio Escénico” como categoría analítica integradora. La investigación, aplicada en la Zona Típica de La Serena, Chile, sostiene que el vacío urbano no es un espacio residual, sino un dispositivo espacial activo donde convergen el espacio (lo material), el acto (lo inmaterial) y el tiempo (la memoria); es en esta interacción donde emerge el verdadero valor patrimonial. A través de una metodología mixta que combina el análisis espacial evolutivo con técnicas cualitativas como la etnografía arquitectónica y el fotomontaje escénico, se evidencia una brecha estructural entre la experiencia urbana viva y los marcos regulatorios actuales que separan lo material de lo inmaterial. Los hallazgos revelan que la comunidad local valora más los usos sociales y las escenas cotidianas que la monumentalidad aislada de los edificios, lo que valida el “acto” como componente primario del patrimonio vivo. Finalmente, se propone un modelo basado en una “ficha de evaluación escénica”, que aboga por una planificación urbana holística y participativa que fortalezca la identidad y la sostenibilidad cultural de los centros históricos.

Palabras clave: patrimonio escénico, vacío urbano, metodología mixta, etnografía arquitectónica, centro histórico, gestión patrimonial, patrimonio inmaterial

This article presents a critique of the traditional heritage preservation paradigm, which focuses on the static, material object, and instead proposes the concept of “Scenic Heritage” as an integrative analytical category. The research, applied to the Typical Zone (Zona Típica) of La Serena, Chile, argues that urban voids are not residual spaces but active spatial devices where the space (the material), act (the immaterial), and time (memory) converge; it is precisely within this interaction that true heritage value emerges. Through a mixed-methods approach that combines evolutionary spatial analysis with qualitative techniques such as architectural ethnography and scenic photomontage, a structural gap is revealed between the lived urban experience and current regulatory frameworks that separate the material from the immaterial. The findings show that the local community values social uses and daily scenes more than the isolated monumentality of buildings, validating the “act” as a primary component of living heritage. Finally, a model based on a “scenic evaluation form” is proposed, advocating for holistic and participatory urban planning to strengthen the identity and cultural sustainability of historic centers.

Keywords: scenic heritage, urban void, mixed-methods approach, architectural ethnography, historic centers, urban planning, intangible heritage

I. INTRODUCTION

This research addresses the structural gap between the lived urban experience and the regulatory frameworks governing heritage conservation in Chile. Despite the conceptual evolution of heritage towards broader approaches that recognize cultural, social, and territorial values, regulatory instruments continue to operate predominantly from a material and fragmentary logic. This tension creates a disconnect between protecting the physical support of the historical city and the social practices that give it meaning, resulting in management that protects built objects but fails to integrate the lived dimension of urban space fully.

In the disciplinary field, the understanding of urban heritage has shifted in recent decades towards perspectives that recognize the cultural dimensions of the landscape, collective memory, and everyday experience as essential components of heritage value. However, there are still methodological and operational difficulties in translating these theoretical advances into management instruments capable of integrating the material and the immaterial. This fragmentation between object and practice, between built fabric and urban life, continues to manifest itself in regulations that delimit the physical without systematically incorporating the social dynamics that shape the meaning of historical spaces.

In this context, the study is set in the Typical Area (*Zona Típica*) of La Serena, Chile, as a case study, because it is a consolidated historical center where high levels of material protection and intense daily urban life coexist. This territory constitutes a relevant scenario for examining the limitations of current regulatory frameworks and, at the same time, exploring conceptual alternatives that help overcome the dichotomy between physical conservation and social experience.

The research proposes redefining the value of the urban void as a central category for an integrated heritage management. In contrast to the traditional prioritization of the built environment, it is proposed that squares, atriums, and streets should not be understood as residual interstices between constructions, but as active spatial devices where material support, social practices, and urban memory converge. From this perspective, the urban void is configured as a dynamic container of meaning, capable of articulating spatial, temporal, and performative dimensions that sustain the local identity.

The study's general aim is to formulate a conceptual and methodological framework that integrates the morphological dimension of open space with the lived and symbolic dimensions of the urban experience in historical centers. It is hypothesized that recognizing the urban void as an

active scenario enables overcoming the fragmentation between object and practice by providing an operational basis for more holistic heritage management. The novelty of the study lies in systematizing the so-called Void Paradigm as a basis for validating the Scenic Heritage as a comprehensive analytical category that combines space, act, and time within a single interpretative structure.

This study provides an operationalization of the concept of Scenic Heritage through a triaxial model and a replicable qualitative-cartographic methodology, applied to historical centers, that translates the space-act-time relationship into urban management criteria.

Methodologically, the work combines morphological-functional analysis of open space with qualitative tools for observing and recording urban dynamics, enabling the identification of void typologies, the characterization of their spatial performance, and the analysis of their ability to structure routes and absorb activities. The manuscript is organized into four sections: firstly, the conceptual framework that supports the redefinition of the urban void is developed; secondly, the methodological strategy applied to the case study is outlined; subsequently, the results of the morphological and functional analysis are presented; and finally, the implications for an integrated heritage management in historical centers are discussed.

II. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

THE SCENE AS A SYNTHESIS: EPISTEMIC DIMENSION

The conceptual framework of this research proposes understanding the city not as a neutral or merely physical support, but as an active cultural construct in which space, memory, and social practice are intertwined. According to the social production of space theory (Lefebvre, 2013), the urban is understood as both the result and the condition of social relations that unfold through the interaction among perceived, conceived, and lived space. This lived dimension is manifested in bodily practices and sensitive experiences that configure the public space as a permanent field of negotiation (Madanipour et al., 2013; Concha Méndez & Avilés Arias, 2023). In this line, walking can be understood as an aesthetic and meaning-producing practice (Careri, 2021), inasmuch as the route not only connects physical points but also builds narratives, activates memories, and reveals the performative dimension of the urban void. This approach is reinforced by considering that displacement is carried out "with" urban materiality, where surfaces, textures, and objects participate in the experience of living (Martínez Rodríguez, 2023), and where everyday mobility can

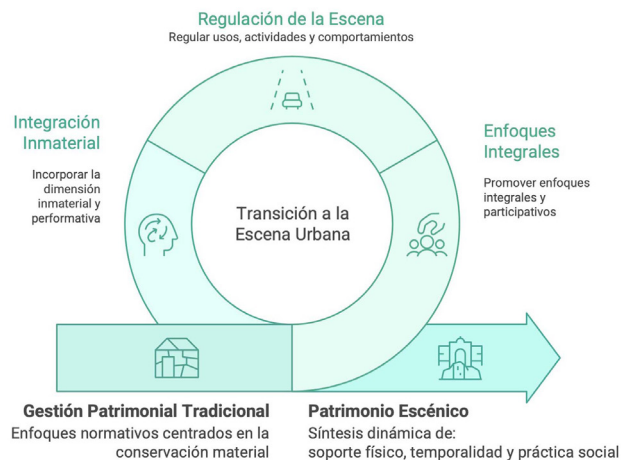


Figure 1. Integration of the Immaterial Dimension into Heritage Management. Source: Prepared by the authors, based on Gutiérrez (2010), Bandarin and Van Oers (2014), and Ortega (2021).

produce bonds of recognition and empathy in “traveling together” (Muñoz Zech, 2023).

The notion of territory as a palimpsest (Corboz, 2004) allows for interpreting the historical city as a superposition of temporal layers that acquire meaning through current use. This accumulation cannot be reduced to a formal reading, as the landscape has been redefined as a dynamic cultural construction that emerges from the symbolic relationship between society and territory (Berque, 2022). In the case of the Typical Area of La Serena, this condition becomes more complex when considering the configuration process of the so-called Serena Plan, whose identity construction has been analyzed under the category of thematic city (Torrent, 2021). According to Torrent, the thematic city is not only a coherent stylistic ensemble but a cultural project that organizes urban form, historical narrative, and collective imagery under a unifying intention. In continuity with readings on Ibero-American historical centers, this tension among projects, policies, and appropriations is inscribed in ongoing debates over management and regulatory improvisations in heritage cities (Gutiérrez, 2010). However, the thematic reading risks privileging formal coherence and the architectural narrative over the daily experience that updates these spaces. At this point, the Scenic Heritage category allows for the expansion of the notion of the thematic city, which incorporates the performative dimension of the urban void. La Serena’s squares, atriums, and streets not only express a compositional will but also serve as scenarios where traditional trade, religious celebrations, and daily meetings activate historical memory.

In line with approaches that integrate material and immaterial dimensions in heritage management (Bandarin & Van Oers, 2014; Ortega, 2021), the following conceptual outline is proposed to summarize this transition from regulatory approaches focused on the object towards an integrated understanding of the urban scene (Figure 1).

Urban vitality, understood as the density of social practices that structure public life (Gehl, 2020; Jacobs, 2011), thus becomes the mechanism that energizes the thematic form. This activation becomes especially legible when sensitive and atmospheric dimensions of urban living are considered, in which the experience of change, transition, and coexistence occurs in specific public spaces (Concha Méndez & Avilés Arias, 2023).

This understanding finds empirical support in recent studies conducted in Chilean urban heritage contexts, which demonstrate that manifestations of intangible culture are a decisive factor in the resignification of the built heritage (Paul & Valenzuela, 2024). Just as in the Quinta Normal heritage circuit in Santiago, in La Serena, the cultural value does not reside exclusively in protected architecture but in the continuity of social practices that consolidate identity and belonging. In this line, preliminary results from the traditional La Recova market show how everyday and commercial scenes serve as a support for heritage meaning beyond the material object (Ponce-Sánchez & Cifuentes-Pizarro, 2025). At the same time, these processes are related to approaches that understand the city as an iconic source of meaning, where certain spaces acquire symbolic depth through social reiteration and collective recognition (Rodríguez, 2017).

In the Latin American context, criticisms of traditional heritage management have evidenced the persistence of regulatory approaches focused on material conservation (Ortega, 2021). These tensions are in dialogue with international guidelines that promote integrated and participatory approaches to cultural sustainability (UNESCO, 2015), which emphasize the need to explicitly integrate the intangible dimension into planning instruments.

From this perspective, the transition from the urban landscape concept to the urban scene constitutes a key epistemological shift in reinterpreting the city. While the landscape privileges visuality and morphological coherence, the scene emphasizes the anthropic and relational dimension of space. In keeping with the Historical Urban Landscape approach proposed by Bandarin and Van Oers (2014), which extends the notion of conservation to the management of complex urban systems in which cultural, social, and environmental values interact, this research expands upon this perspective by situating the urban void as an active site of social practices. In this vein,



Figure 2. Construction of Scenic Heritage. Source: Preparation by the authors, based on Corboz (2004); Jacobs (2011); Concha Méndez and Avilés Arias (2023); Ponce-Sánchez and Cifuentes-Pizarro (2025).

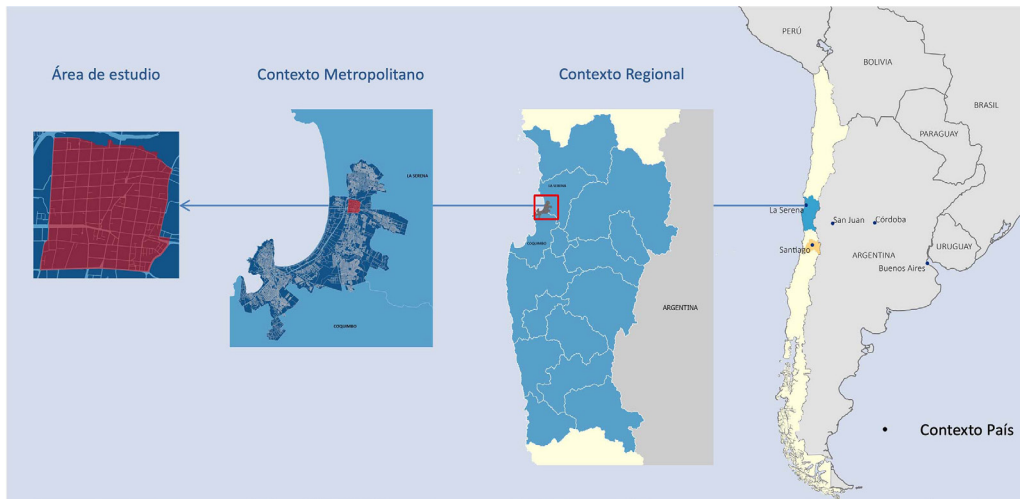


Figure 3. Geographical context of the study area. Source: Prepared by the authors.

the contributions of Fariña Tojo (2006) are fundamental in demonstrating that the urban scene is not only a perceptual condition but also a dimension susceptible to regulation, insofar as uses, activities, and behaviors configure the collective experience of public space.

From the perspective of the historical urban landscape (Bandarin & Van Oers, 2014) and the regulation of the urban scene (Fariña Tojo, 2006), the integration of physical support, historical temporality, and social practice allows the Scenic Heritage to be configured as a dynamic synthesis (Figure 2), but also as a challenge to current regulations. The morphological container, inherited from the La Serena

thematic project, acquires meaning insofar as it is activated by the daily interaction that updates it; however, such activation is not always reflected in regulatory instruments. The category of scene, therefore, allows not only for overcoming the divorce between form and urban life but also for the visibility of the need to expand regulatory frameworks to incorporate the immaterial and performative dimensions of public space. In La Serena, this articulation between formal project, social intensity, and regulation devices is particularly evident. The routes through the historic center not only connect points but also produce narratives and meanings in transit, which reinforce the subjective dimension of the lived space (Vergara Álvarez & Concha Méndez, 2023).

Similarly, public space is understood as a place of daily care and reproduction of the social, where practices that sustain urban belongings and identities are transmitted (Mora Rivera, 2023). These approaches allow situating the case of La Serena as a relevant laboratory for observing the connection among urban form, social practice, and heritage regulation.

III. CASE STUDY

Geographical Context and Identity

La Serena, capital of the Coquimbo Region (Figure 3), is part of a coastal metropolitan system located on marine terraces that produce undulating terrain that shapes its urban layout. The city's identity was forged by five religious orders that established stone temples and atriums within the foundational checkerboard.

Evolution and Protection

Between 1946 and 1952, the city underwent a radical transformation through the "Serena Plan", which unified aesthetics under a neocolonial style and prioritized empty spaces to highlight the architectural envelopes. In 1981, it was designated the second-largest Typical Zone in Chile, protecting a polygon containing 438,287 m² of public voids.

The Void as a Living Stage

The relevance of the case lies in the interdependent relationship between its open spaces, where 33 scenic containers linked to National Monuments are identified. Spaces such as the La Recova Square and the San Agustín Atrium function as active devices where the community values the "act" - everyday urban choreography - over physical monumentality, which positions the void as a key component of urban memory and vitality.

IV. METHODOLOGY

Design and Temporality of the Research.

The research was developed using a mixed approach, structured around a dual temporal dimension that allows it to approach the territory as a palimpsest. This temporality is divided into:

- Historical-Evolutionary Analysis (1713-1981): Review of 12 pieces of historical cartography to understand the evolution of the checkerboard and the consolidation of urban voids in La Serena.
- Contemporary and Ethnographic Analysis (2022-2025):

Period of primary data collection that included an intensive survey of seven consecutive days (n=7 days of systematic observation), aimed at measuring flows and acts in the selected scenic containers.

Stages of the Methodological Process

The study was carried out in four consecutive phases that allow articulating scales of analysis, from the territorial dimension to the inhabitant's experience:

- Identification and Diagnosis: Documentary review and systematic mapping of the Typical Area's 1,653,753 m² to locate heritage assets and their areas of influence.
- Characterization and Scenic Survey: Application of direct observation and architectural ethnography in 33 scenic containers, defined as units of analysis of the study.
- Structural and Socio-spatial Analysis: Using a typological classification procedure and comparative analysis of usage patterns, supported by GIS (ArcGIS Pro), the urban openings were categorized according to their dynamism (self-absorbed, extended atriums, box seats of the landscape, and expansion areas).
- Synthesis of Patterns and Validation of the Model: Integration of qualitative and quantitative results to build the Triaxial Model (Space-Act-Time), which consolidates the urban scene as an integrated management device.

Qualitative-Cartographic Triangulation

The research adopts a mixed-methods approach based on qualitative-cartographic triangulation, combining spatial analysis and lived experience. This design implies a shift in the researcher's position from "distant" (morphological-evolutionary analysis) to "immersed" (urban ethnography), enabling the capture of the complexity of the lived space.

This approach integrates quantitative and qualitative data through a combined analytical procedure to identify relationships of spatial configuration, social practices, and the temporality of use (Figure 4).

Integrating the results enabled the consolidation of the Triaxial Model (Space-Act-Time) as an interpretative and operational tool, serving as the basis for proposing a Scenic Evaluation Form focused on the dynamic management of urban heritage.

Quantitative Phase: Spatial Identification and Classification

The quantitative support focused on measuring morphological variables using GIS (ArcGIS Pro) and comparative historical cartography. The procedure included:

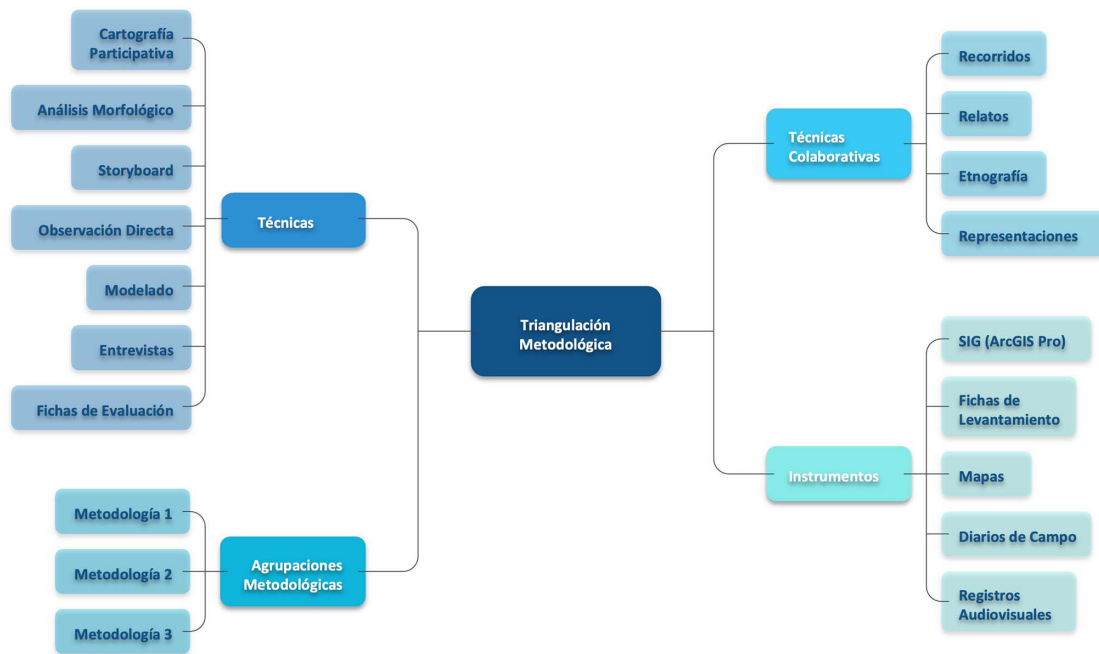


Figure 4. Qualitative-cartographic Methodological Triangulation. Source: Prepared by the authors.

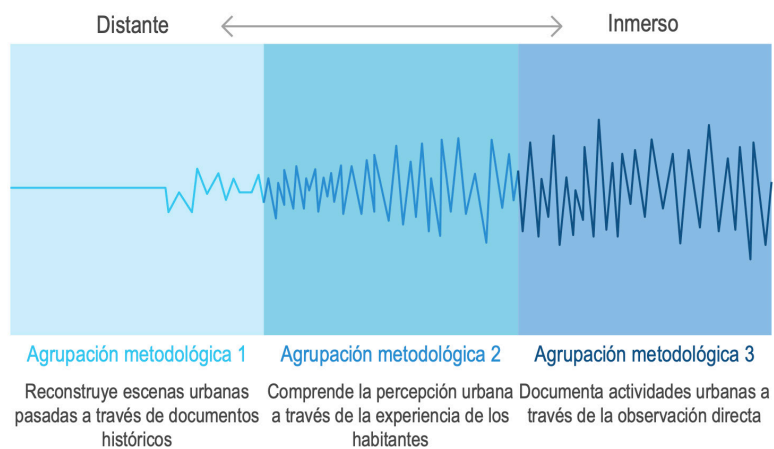


Figure 5. Initial methodological groupings. Source: Prepared by the authors.

- Identification of openings: Initially, 68 public openings were detected in the Typical Area; exclusive-vehicle openings were filtered out, resulting in 43 pedestrian spaces.
- Heritage ties: 33 scenic containers were finally selected according to the criteria of heritage relationship, pedestrian use, and activity dynamism, which maintain a direct visual or functional relationship with National Monuments (MNH) or Historical Conservation Buildings (ICH).
- Morphological typification: These spaces were classified into four categories according to their degree of closure and depth: *withdrawn, extended atriums, box seat of the landscape, and expansion areas*.
- Survey of uses: An intensive survey of seven consecutive days (n=7 days of systematic observation) was included to quantify flows, permanence activities, and diversity of acts (commercial, religious, artistic), selecting the cases with the greatest dynamism for the qualitative phase.

Qualitative Phase: Ethnographic and Collaborative Characterization

To capture the “living dimension” of heritage, the research was initially structured in three groups of three methodological (collaborative) techniques each, which addressed the Act, Space, and Time in a differentiated way (Figure 5).

However, after a validation phase in a pilot case, these were selected and grouped into four main collaborative techniques based on their relevance and ability to synthesize scenarios for analysis.

- Scenic Photomontage: A visual synthesis technique used as an analytical tool to integrate temporalities and record the overlapping of acts in the space, which allowed identifying the patterns of use, intensity of activities, and temporal overlap in the scenic containers analyzed.
- Architectural Ethnography: This is the final synthesis tool that includes spatial, temporal, and usage information. It graphically represents how inhabitants “parasitize” and re-signify historical envelopes, thereby understanding the dialectical relationship between the physical container and the lived space.
- Description of Scene and Stories: A technique that consists of the detailed recording of the activities, rhythms, and usual characters of each place. It provides a qualitative context and the atmosphere necessary to digitally reconstruct the space and populate it with the documented acts.
- Historical Photography: Its use allows adding a layer of critical temporal information to the analysis, which serves as the starting point of the urban palimpsest.

It allows comparing the evolution of the void’s use and the persistence of certain acts over the decades.

The Evaluation Model

Finally, the integration of these data allowed validating the Triaxial Model (Space-Act-Time), which serves as the basis for the proposal of a Scenic Evaluation Form. This instrument provides dynamic management that recognizes that the scene is not fixed but mutates over time, requiring periodic records to reflect the reality of living heritage.

V. CROSS-SECTIONAL FINDINGS: FROM MORPHOLOGY TO THE ACT (SYNTHESIS OF RESULTS)

The results of this research expand the heritage value of the Typical Area of La Serena, initially based on the presence of protected buildings, by incorporating a dynamic relationship between the void’s configuration and the social practices that occur within it. The cross-sectional analysis shows that urban form serves as an essential mediator, conditioning functional performance and enabling the emergence of collective acts and memories.

Activation typologies: the configuration of the void as a motor of urban life

The research identified that urban voids are not homogeneous; their morphology dictates a specific “urban choreography” through four main typologies of openings that condition the vitality of the historic center (Figure 6):

Withdrawn: Characterized by a high degree of enclosure and continuous facades, as in San Francisco Square, these create stagnant spaces for leisure, rest, and contemplation. The architectural works here are a backdrop that encourages stopping to admire and close interaction.

Extended Atrium: These act as connecting bimodal devices that run through the streets, as in the case of the Atrium of San Agustín and its facade. They act as visual finials of linear routes and as transitional spaces that organize pedestrian flow by connecting various nodes of the urban fabric.

Box seat to the Landscape: The uneven coastal terraces are used, as in the Tenri Square or the Pedro Pablo Muñoz Avenue, to link the city with its natural environment (sea, river, and hills). Their role is predominantly contemplative, offering a scale of perception that

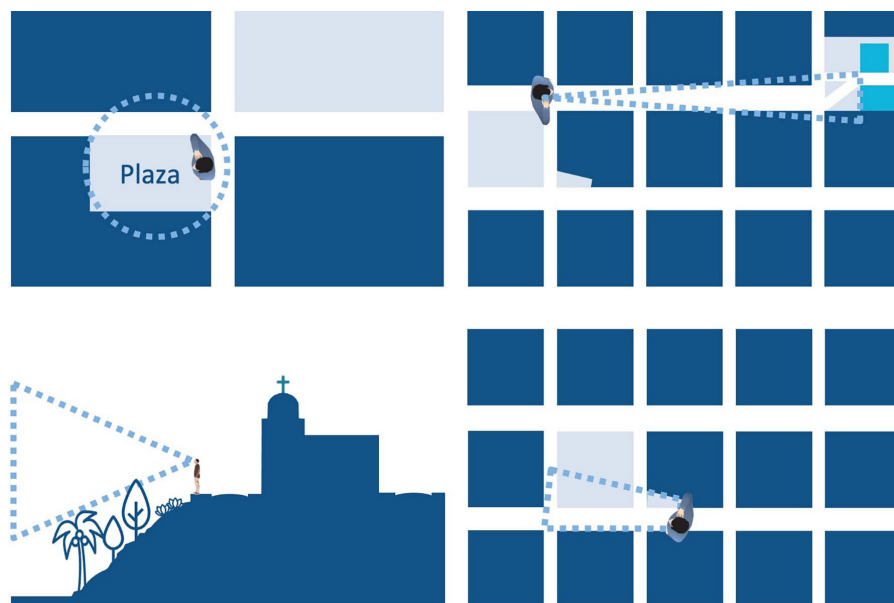


Figure 6. Types of openings. From left to right, above: Withdrawn, Extended Atrium, below: Box seat to the landscape, Expansion area. Source: Prepared by the authors.

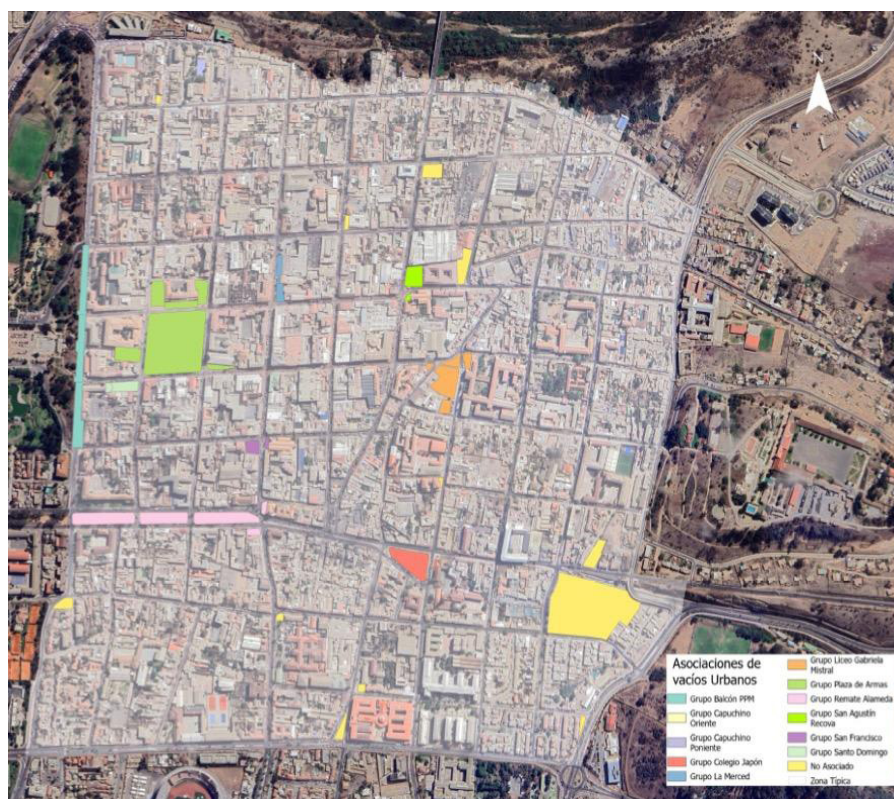


Figure 7. Associations of urban voids. Source: Prepared by the authors based on a Google Earth satellite image.

transcends the built limits and an environmental depth to the urban scene.

Expansion Area: These extensions of the road profile, such as those in Juan Pablo II Square, facilitate flexible, spontaneous appropriation. They are highly variable spaces that absorb large flows of movement, functioning as critical thresholds for commercial and social vitality.

Validation of the network of scenarios and the ignored urban hierarchy

The study of the 33 scenic containers linked to national monuments revealed a Network of Routes that supports the city's social structure. The results indicate that these openings do not operate in isolation but tend to associate with adjoining spaces, forming macro-openings.

These associations generate a real urban hierarchy based on use, which is often invisible to traditional planning instruments. While institutional regulations (CMN/SNPC) geo-reference fixed, static points, urban reality reveals spaces in transition, activated by the simultaneity of actions (Figure 7). The network of scenarios shows that the value of a heritage node increases in proportion to its ability to integrate into mobility and pause circuits, thereby creating a functional hierarchy that current regulations ignore by focusing exclusively on the protection of the "whole".

The voice of the inhabitant: The Act as a true heritage component

The final validation of the paradigm shift comes from urban ethnography, where the inhabitants' stories allow us to interpret that the sense of place resides in social interaction rather than solely in the monument's materiality.

"El Buho" (local inhabitant and observer) validates the dimension of the Act by stating: *"I like to sit here, because I found friends here"*, which anchors the value of the square for social connection and not in its protected facades.

"The Florist" brings the dimension of Time and transformation by showing how the change from a street to a pedestrian route allowed the space to become *"full of street vendors"*, which shows that memory and use constantly reconfigure the heritage meaning.

"The Waiter" and "The Painter" reinforce that the space is valued as Scenic Heritage to the extent that it serves as a social destination and as a means of acknowledging their daily tasks.

Taken together, these cross-sectional findings suggest that the scenic void is an active device whereby heritage is produced and reproduced through movement, allowing the community not only to preserve its past but also to project its identity into the future.

VI. DISCUSSION: THE GAP BETWEEN THE REGULATIONS AND LIFE

The interpretation of the empirical findings in the Typical Area of La Serena reveals a structural gap between the living urban experience and the regulatory frameworks governing heritage in Chile. While citizens' lives flow in a constant choreography of uses and affection, institutionality persists in a binary vision that separates the material from the immaterial, resulting in a management that protects the "stone", but remains blind to the "scene".

Contrast of Criteria: Institutionality vs. Scenic Dimension

The core of the conflict lies in the evaluation criteria. The current frameworks, represented by the National Monuments Council (CMN) and the National Cultural Heritage Service (SNPC), operate on the logic of tangible, static objects. In contrast, this research proposes criteria based on the space–act–time relationship, in which the urban void is interpreted as a living scene rather than a mere morphological remnant.

This divergence manifests itself in three critical lines:

- **Territoriality and Blindness to "Spaces in Transition":** Institutional regulations are based on the georeferencing of fixed points. However, the reality of La Serena reveals spaces in transition, such as the extended atriums and expansion areas, which are dynamically activated by social flow. The institution regulates the "fabric" (the built), but ignores the "skin" (public life).
- **Temporality: The Historical vs. The Cyclical:** Traditional instruments (technical datasheets and inventories) capture a historical/static approach. However, the scenic heritage validated in this thesis demonstrates that the value lies in the cyclical temporality — ritual acts, seasonal fairs, and recurring appropriations — that update the sense of place day after day.
- **Instrumentalization of the Management:** While the CMN uses descriptive sheets of the object, the scenic approach proposes tools such as perceptual mapping, storyboarding, and architectural ethnography. These allow capturing what is invisible for the current law: the "pulse of the people" and the collective memory deposited in the void.

Protected Property vs. Active Scenario: The case of St. Augustin Church versus La Recova

To illustrate what is being protected today and what should be protected under a new paradigm, it is necessary to contrast two spatial realities of La Serena:

1. **The Protected Property (San Agustín Church):**
Under the current regulations (Law 17.288, 1970),

this is a representative example of institutional success. Its limestone materiality, its stylistic unity, and its static volumetry are protected. It is a monument-object whose value is independent of whether the surrounding space is alive or deserted.

2. The Active Stage (La Recova Square and San Agustín Atrium): Despite its immense vitality, this space is managed under secondary criteria of “environmental conservation” (typical area), which, in practice, are insufficient to protect its essence. La Recova is not only a building-market; it is an active spatial device where characters such as “El Buho”, artisans, the painter, and the flow of tourists converge, and it also constitutes a spatial unit with the San Agustín church.

Under the current regulations, if the social activity in La Recova were to disappear, the building would remain as “heritage”. Under the paradigm of Scenic Heritage, the place would lose its essential value, because the act is the primary component that gives meaning to the container. Therefore, management in the future must move from protecting the isolated monument to safeguarding the dynamic macro-opening, ensuring that social uses and identity scenes have the same legal weight as the facade that frames them.

VII. PROPOSAL OF THE MODEL AND THE MANAGEMENT TOOLS

The final solution emerging from this research proposes a paradigm shift in the administration of historical centers, moving from the preservation of isolated objects to the integrated management of the urban scene. This proposal is operationalized through a robust conceptual model and technical tools designed to capture the vitality of the living heritage.

The Triaxial Model: The Basis for Comprehensive Urban Planning

The core of the proposal is the Triaxial Model of Scenic Heritage (Ponce-Sánchez & Cifuentes-Pizarro, 2025), represented in a diagram that links three interdependent dimensions that converge in the urban void (Figure 8):

- The Space (Material Axis): It is defined as the morphological container and physical-symbolic support. Its analysis is not limited to volumetry but to how the historical envelopes (facades, heights, and textures) frame and qualify the space where public life unfolds.
- The Act (Immaterial Axis): This includes the living dimension and social interaction. It includes everyday uses, rituals, social appropriations, and the “urban choreography” that activates the place.

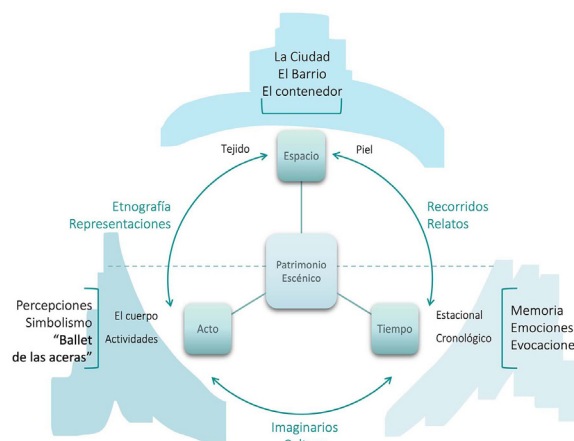


Figure 8. Triaxial Model of the Scenic Heritage. Source: Ponce-Sánchez and Cifuentes-Pizarro (2025).

It is the component that gives dynamism and “humanizes” the physical support.

- The Time (Memory Axis): This reflects the sedimentation of meanings and the cyclical repetition of scenes that reinforce the community's identity and sense of belonging.

This model is a tool with great potential to contribute to Comprehensive Urban Planning, since it allows urban voids—squares, atriums, and expansions—to be recognized not as remnants, but as essential social and cultural infrastructure. By balancing these three lines, the work can ensure that architectural conservation does not come at the expense of the sector's social vitality.

The Scenic Evaluation Form: An Operational Management Tool

To translate the theoretical model into concrete actions, a Scenic Evaluation Form is proposed as a standard for the holistic classification and assessment of urban elements (Figure 9).

Unlike the traditional inventories of the National Monuments Council (CMN), which are static and focused on the object, this form is defined by its cyclical and dynamic character:

- Cyclical Update: The research recognizes that “the scene is not fixed”; uses, rhythms, and social appropriations mutate over time. Therefore, the form functions as a living mechanism that requires periodic records to ensure that conservation policies reflect the territory's current reality.
- Integration of Criteria: The instrument simultaneously evaluates the integration between

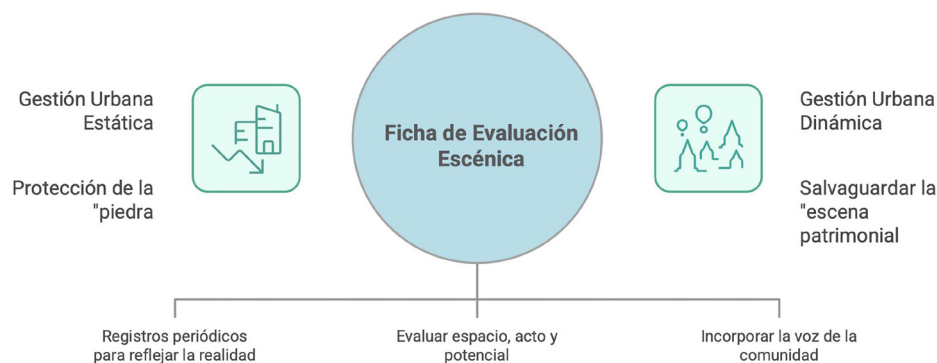


Figure 9. Scenic evaluation sheet. Operational Management Instrument. Source: Prepared by the authors.

- space and act, the evocative capacity of the place, and the general scenic potential.
- Inclusive and Participatory Management: The form incorporates the voices of the user community and the local cultural actors, validating that heritage value resides in the experience of the inhabitant and not only in the judgment of experts.

These tools allow urban management in areas such as La Serena to move beyond the protection of the “stone” and focus on safeguarding the “heritage scene”, which ensures cultural sustainability that nourishes local identity in the present and into the future.

VIII. CONCLUSIONS: CULTURAL SUSTAINABILITY AND THE FUTURE OF HERITAGE

The findings in the Typical Area of La Serena show that the heritage value lies not only in the protected architecture but also in the constant interaction of material support, social events, and memory sedimented over time. Given this, the research develops a new conceptual framework to define and validate scenic heritage as a fundamental analytical category for urban planning and heritage conservation. This paradigm allows overcoming the traditional divide between material and intangible heritage. It proposes a comprehensive vision that recognizes the urban void as an active scenario rather than a mere residual interstice. The consistency of this category is supported by empirical evidence from the triaxial Space–Act–Time model, which captures the complexity of the historical city as a living system. Empirical evidence from the 33 identified scenic containers showed that the lived space, where rites, trade, and everyday life converge, imparts meaning and value to the space defined by institutional

regulations. In short, the research shows that the scenic dimension has the potential to combine tangible and intangible values with environmental characteristics that shape place identity.

In this context, it is imperative to move from a vision of heritage focused on the static object to a dynamic, relational understanding of urban space.

The scenic heritage approach influences the disciplines of urbanism and architecture by providing tools for comprehensive, inclusive, and participatory urban planning. Recognizing that the community values uses and scenes more than the monuments themselves makes it possible for heritage management to shift from a technical imposition to a collaborative social process. This approach allows communities to project themselves into the future by strengthening their identity through cultural sustainability that avoids the fossilization of historical centers and allows living manifestations to evolve in the present; by strengthening the sense of belonging, on recognizing places with meaning and incorporating local voices in the heritage analysis, which reinforces the emotional bond between citizens and their built environment; and through dynamic management, supported by tools that propose planning sensitive to the ephemeral and capable of adapting to the transformations of social uses without losing the historical essence of the place.

Scenic heritage becomes a resource for building more resilient and inclusive cities, where protecting the past serves as a basis for nourishing the social and cultural life of future generations. From a conceptual point of view, the paradigm overcomes the static approach by integrating space, act, and time, offering a framework that recognizes the meaning residing in both the constructed materiality and the scene it inhabits. At the methodological level, a

mixed, replicable approach is proposed that uses tools such as scenic photomontage and architectural ethnography, which are effective in capturing the relationship between the ephemeral and the permanent. In the applied sphere, the research provides specific instruments, such as the scenic assessment sheet, that guide planning towards a more holistic and sensitive approach capable of simultaneously protecting the morphology and vitality of historic cities.

Ultimately, adopting this paradigm will promote cultural sustainability that not only preserves past forms but also strengthens the complex urban choreography that inhabits heritage spaces in the present.

IX. CONTRIBUTION OF AUTHORS CRediT:

Conceptualization, APS; Data curation, APS; Formal analysis, APS; Acquisition of financing, APS; Research, APS; Methodology, APS; Project management, APS; Resources, APS; Software, APS; Supervision, APS; Validation, APS; Visualization, APS; Writing – original draft, APS; Writing – revision and editing, APS.

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