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**INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION IN THE
FIELD OF HERITAGE AND CULTURE OF
CUENCA. CASE STUDY: CRAFTS AND
POPULAR CULTURE AS A COMPONENT
OF UNESCO'S NETWORK OF CREATIVE
CITIES.**

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DEDICATED TO:

I want to dedicate this achievement to God for being my light and my guide during this journey, to my grandmother María Rosa for being my daily support of strength and courage, and to my parents Hernán and Soledad, who are my example of perseverance, and who have always motivated me to achieve my goals.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

DEDICATED TO:	2
1. INTRODUCTION	1
1.1 OBJECTIVES	1
1.2 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK	2
2. LITERATURE REVIEW	2
2.1 WHAT IS A CREATIVE CITY?	2
2.2 UNESCO NETWORK OF CREATIVE CITIES	3
2.3 SAN CRISTÓBAL DE LAS CASAS	4
2.4 CHORDELEG	5
2.5 CUENCA CULTURAL HERITAGE	6
2.6 TRADITIONAL TRADES:	7
3. METHODOLOGY	9
4. RESULTS:	9
5. DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION	15
6. REFERENCES	18

TABLE OF FIGURES

Figure 1	3
Figure 2	10
Figure 3	10
Figure 4	11
Figure 5	12
Figure 6	12
Figure 7	13
Figure 8	14
Figure 9	15

LA COOPERACIÓN INTERNACIONAL EN EL ÁMBITO DE PATRIMONIO Y CULTURA DE CUENCA. CASO DE ESTUDIO: ARTESANÍA Y CULTURA POPULAR COMO COMPONENTE DE LA RED DE CIUDADES CREATIVAS DE LA UNESCO.

Resumen

La Red de Ciudades Creativas de la UNESCO, procura fortalecer la Cooperación Internacional entre ciudades que reconocen a la creatividad como elemento fundamental para su desarrollo sostenible. Cuenca, al ser una ciudad con un prodigioso patrimonio cultural material e inmaterial, cuenta con los elementos necesarios para formar parte de la red en el ámbito de la artesanía y cultura popular. El método utilizado fue, un estudio cualitativo aplicado a la metodología de investigación de escritorio, y entrevistas realizadas a un grupo de artesanos de la ciudad de Cuenca. En base a las evidencias obtenidas de dicha investigación, se evidenció que se debe reconocer a la cultura como el cuarto eje de desarrollo sostenible, del mismo modo que no se puede ejecutar una idónea Cooperación Internacional para Cuenca aislada de las políticas públicas que enfatizan a la cultura como su eje de acción principal para el desarrollo de la misma.

Palabras clave: cultura, Cuenca, artesanía, patrimonio, ciudades creativas.

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Abstract

Unesco's Creative Cities Network seeks to strengthen international cooperation between cities that recognize creativity as a fundamental element of their sustainable development. Cuenca, a city with a prodigious tangible and intangible cultural heritage, has the elements needed to be part of the network in the field of crafts and popular culture. The method used was a qualitative study applied to the desktop research methodology, and interviews which were conducted with a group of artisans from the city of Cuenca. Based on the evidence obtained from this research, it was evident that culture must be recognized as the fourth axis of sustainable development. In the same way, it is not possible to execute an adequate International Cooperation, if the city is isolated from public policies that emphasize culture as its central axis of action for its development.

Keywords: culture, Cuenca, crafts, heritage, creative cities

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1. Introduction

Cultural heritage is a set of tangible and intangible assets representing a population's identity. Therefore, the state must ensure the necessary mechanisms to promote development, cooperation, assistance, and organization in the field of heritage and culture; for this, it resorts to international cooperation, which allows to support of its public policies from a joint perspective, as well as to meet their needs and objectives (Plan Nacional de Desarrollo, 2017-2021). Cultural heritage as its role in peoples' identity and societies' development. Therefore, the protection of cultural heritage is duly linked to International Cooperation because although cultural policies are local, it is impossible to think of isolated actions that neglect joint efforts with different countries (Monsalve Morales, 2012). Today there are international organizations, such as the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), which work together to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals through international cooperation. In particular, Goal 11 is "to make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable" (Hosagrahar, 2021,p.1). These goals are present in the 2030 Agenda. It also strengthens links between nations to promote cultural heritage and the equality of all cultures. Assists countries in taking international standards and coordinates projects encouraging the free movement of ideas and the transfer of knowledge (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, 2011). This organization has a program called the Creative Cities Network, which aims to foster cooperation among cities that recognize creativity as essential for sustainable urban development (Ottone, 2020).

Latin America has been recognized for its cultural heritage symbolized in its legendary buildings, monuments, pre Columbian materials, customs, traditions, artistic, religious, and culinary expressions. For this reason, two Latin American cities have been chosen as case studies, which are already part of the Creative Cities Network program in the crafts and popular culture field. Chordeleg and San Cristóbal de las Casas, so the analysis will be carried out with Cuenca itself. As a city declared as a cultural heritage of humanity by UNESCO, it has the conditions to converge its creativity as a leading resource, materialize it and solve present challenges that have not been previously recognized (Monsalve Morales, 2012). This is why this article aims to present this quality for the city to become a member of the UNESCO Creative Cities Network in handicrafts and popular culture. This research was a qualitative study using the desk-based research methodology. To develop the research question, use was made of an electronic database, organizations such as governments and public sector agencies as well as charitable organizations, and a review of relevant literature was conducted by analyzing information found in articles, abstracts, reviews, monographs, dissertations, books, other research reports and electronic media (Robson & Cartan, 2011). In addition, interviews will be conducted with a group of artisans from the city of Cuenca, the type of interviews will be face-to-face since "it offers the possibility of modifying the line of research itself, to follow up on interesting answers"(Robson & Cartan, 2011, p. 286). And finally, this research was synthesized to demonstrate the results obtained from this research (Robson & Cartan, 2011).

1.1 Objectives

1. To highlight the importance of the relevance and implementation of UNESCO's network of creative cities.

2. To analyze the planning of the city of Cuenca and the spaces to develop creativity, arts, and crafts.
3. To finally, prepare to apply to Cuenca in the UNESCO network of creative cities.

1.2 Theoretical framework

For several anthropologists, the culture occurred when the human being could symbolize. For this reason, the human-animal has been determined as *Homus symbolicus*; this capacity that the human being has to illustrate allows him to differentiate himself from the other species since this capacity represents the core of human reasoning (Guerrero Arias, 2002).

Unlike the other members of the animal kingdom, man is a being in which creativity prevails over the instinct of his relations with the physical environment and with other men. By cooperating with his nature, he develops a whole system of ideas, behavior patterns, values, and beliefs. Which constitute a culture according to which it organizes its behavior [...] (Centro Interamericano de Artesanías y Artes Populares, CIDAP, 1990, p. 113).

In the second half of the XIX and XX centuries, the conception of a culture essentially changed with the development and strengthening of Cultural Anthropology. Previously it was conceived as the difference between man and the rest of animal species in capacity for reasoning. Today, culture is the work of the human being, which is organized as a whole, so it cannot be conceived as a product of genetic heritage. On the contrary, it is autonomous from its biological constitution but subordinated to it (Malo González, 2006).

Clyde Kluckhohn In his publication of Edward Tylor's Primitive Culture, he states that culture is: "Historically created, explicit and implicit, rational and non-rational models of life that exist at a given time as potential guides to human behavior" (Malo González, 2006).

Amadou Mathar M'Bow establishes the following definition:

Culture is what a community has created and what it has become thanks to that creation. What it has produced in all the domains, it exerts its creativity and set of spiritual and material traits that, throughout that process, has shaped its identity and distinguished it from others (Malo González, 2006, p. 33).

Cultures develop in different ways; some include characteristics similar to others. However, the differences that prevail among the others allow one to speak of cultural identity (Malo González, 2006). The human groups aim to create a perception, a concept of what constitutes them to be themselves and of the rest, to reaffirm the dominion over the cultural resources that, based on their practice, they have been able to originate. A person without an identity is not conceivable since, without it, social life is not achievable (Guerrero Arias, 2002).

The Declaration of Bogota 1978 establishes that "cultural identity, is the basis of the life of the peoples, springs from their past and projects toward their future so that it is never static but the historical one with a vision for the future, being always in motion toward its improvement and renewal" (Oruno D, 1984, p. 295).

2. Literature review

2.1 What is a creative city?

History has shown us that creativity has been the driving force behind human development for several centuries. A clear example is the creation of the bow and arrow, which allowed the human being to develop in complex circumstances and ascend to hierarchy within a social grouping (Herrera-Medina et al., 2013).

Richard Florida believes that creativity is fostered in the intellect of individuals who have endowed themselves with diverse experiences, their different points of view about reality, and their capacity for reasoning. This has enabled them to generate new notions and ways of acting (Herrera Medina et al., 2013). About this creative capacity, it is committed to:

Flexible, friendly working and urban environments that foster the encounter and exchange of knowledge and beliefs, the contrast of perspectives and approaches, which increases the emergence of new ideas; promotes the consolidation of multicultural and multidimensional atmospheres that encourage the flowering of creative processes.(Herrera-Medina et al., 2013, p. 16).

For Ana Carla Fonseca, creative cities can modify their urban socioeconomic aspect through cultural identity and creativity (Fonseca Reis, 2019). It also establishes that it is made up of three essential components: The first, the *connections* that are set at the local and international level, in these interact the knowledge, cultural manifestations, history, and customs, of the inhabitants. Second, *culture* comprises representations of material and intangible heritage, and creativity is seen as a means to be used economically to promote local development. And finally, *sustainability* in which it expresses that if a cultural property is not valued at present, it will not be possible for the city to develop (Fonseca Reis & Kageyama, 2009).

A creative city can be considered a smart city since its components recognize the architectural heritage and intangible resources, which, as part of the creative economy, are propellers of the development of a city. But, on the other hand, there are also elements of urban particularity where the inhabitants can exchange ideas, allowing knowledge in such a way that they are interested in their culture and identity (Fonseca Reis & Kageyama, 2009).

2.2 UNESCO Network of Creative Cities

The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO). It is a specialized agency of the United Nations in its global mandate in the field of culture; It expresses the use of culture to achieve the sustainable development objectives of Agenda 2030 (UNESCO, 2021).

The UNESCO Network of Creative Cities was born in 2004 as a grouping of exchange and cooperation. This is to promote its main element, namely creativity as a means of building sustainable cities into inclusive, recognizing goal 11, which aims to “make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable” (Hosagrahar, 202,p.1). The fourth goal of the SDG calls for “redoubling efforts to protect and safeguard the world’s cultural and natural heritage” (Hosagrahar, 2021,p.1). Creativity is considered a fundamental element of urban development since it "contributes to diversifying the economy and generating jobs, but also improves the quality of life of citizens by participating in the social fabric and cultural diversity of a city" (Ottone, 2020, p. 11).

The Network of Creative Cities is made up of 246 member cities from 80 countries, which join efforts to achieve their common goal of "putting creativity and cultural industries at the center of their development plans at the local level and cooperating actively at the international level, under the 2030 Sustainable Development Program and the New Urban Program” (Ottone, 2020, p. 11). The network covers seven different creative fields: "Crafts and folk arts, digital arts, cinema, design, gastronomy, literature and music" (Ottone, 2020, p. 11). Cities that are part of the same creative field cooperate energetically to foster joint alliances, allowing cities that are part of the network to engage in a transversal way in international meetings or conferences held every year in the network (Ottone, 2020, p. 11).

Figure 1



Source:
(Ottone, 2020, p. 11)

To achieve the objectives. The network employs different action areas at the city and international levels. These areas are the Exchange of practices, knowledge, pilot plans, alliances, and proposals relating to civil society's public and private sectors, projects, and networks of professional and artistic exchange. Analysis of the experiences of creative cities, provisions for sustainable urban development, dialogue, and awareness actions (Ottone, 2020, p. 11). The following is the case of two cities as cases of motion in the Creative Cities Network in crafts and popular culture.

2.3 San Cristóbal de Las Casas

San Cristóbal de Las Casas was founded by the Spaniards in 1528. The city is located in the southeast of Mexico, in the state of Chiapas; geographically, it is linked to 17 municipalities and comprises rural indigenous communities carrying out productive activities and handicrafts (Solórzano Gil, 2017).

Among the creative inputs of the city, there are its conservative neighborhoods in which its inhabitants carry out different activities such as: “The pottery, carpentry, saddlery, traditional gastronomy that includes bakery, sweets and typical dishes made with local products; the pottery or manufacture of candles and craft sailboats; as well as the manufacture of yarns and fabrics, and textile dyeing and embroidery, among others” (Solórzano Gil, 2017, p. 100).

Other activities they carry out are textile handicrafts in which, through their embroidery with different shapes, colors, and drawings, they express their identity, which allows them to differentiate themselves from other communities. Among their works are "skirts, shawls, coats, coats, and bags among other garments, and they also developed other traditional crafts such as wrought iron work, jewelry, amber jewelry, and pottery, etc” (Solórzano Gil, 2017, p. 101).

At the local and regional level, there are tangible resources such as urban ensembles of historical heritage value, heritage buildings, and public spaces embodied by a magnificent diversity of cultural products, such as temples, groups, and structures of relevant patrimonial value, public areas, as well as the patrimonial and contextual architecture of common interest with its own identity. In the neighborhoods of the city, there is a glorious architectural heritage as the allusion sites are: the characteristic temple and the square, as well as public places that

are the center of traditional celebrations of the different neighborhoods, which allows capturing the interest of the visitors. Intangible resources include traditional knowledge, inherited knowledge for arts and crafts, uses, customs, festivities, and traditional celebrations, embodied by cultural products such as the cultural agenda, made up of several festivals which are developed with different activities in different creative sectors such as "music, theater, cultural and handicraft activities, traditional gastronomy markets, parades of allegorical cars as well as events and music festivals, among others" (Solórzano Gil, 2017, p. 105).

These tangible and intangible resources contribute to creating a wide variety of cultural products, which, in harmony with plans and appropriate public policies, allow for the generation of efficient economic development for the city in general (Solórzano Gil, 2017).

The city, possessing a great resource such as creativity, joins the UNESCO Creative Cities Network to enhance its local, national, and international culture to promote and strengthen creative actions. The main element of an economic development model, the creative economy, encompasses goods, services, processes, and sectors where creativity is recognized "to generate locally and distribute globally goods and services with symbolic and economic value" (Solórzano Gil, 2017, p. 97).

NGOs are promoting these traditional activities since they have become a source of work, increased tourism, and become an essential means of local development (Solórzano Gil, 2017).

The nomination of San Cristobal de las Casas as a creative city allows for the identification of the importance of "local, regional and international networks of creative linkages and the strengthening of capacities at various levels to work with aspects of innovation based on the consideration of its tradition" (Solórzano Gil, 2017, p. 111).

2.4 Chordeleg

Chordeleg has located 44.2 km from the city of Cuenca in Ecuador. The canton is characterized by its creativity in "ceramics, gold and silver work, toquilla straw weaving and shoemaking"(UNESCO, 2017,p.3). According to the Inter-American Center of Crafts and Popular Arts (2020). In goldsmithing, artisans are distinguished by their silver or gold jewelry made using the filigree technique, which consists of "stretching, twisting and flattening the gold and silver into thin metal threads".(p.2) to transform them into different representations later.

Activities are transmitted from generation to generation through the dissemination of oral knowledge. This way, the preservation of their processes, the models of the designs used, and their identity, in particular, is guaranteed, and modern techniques are adopted in response to current circumstances. This production represents the main economic activity for the canton, so its local authority has established public places destined for elaboration and propagation. These places are: "Plaza Lúdica Artesanal, Municipal Museum, Centro Cultural Obrero and Casa Gonzalez" (Application Form, 2017, p. 3). "20 pottery workshops, 200 goldsmith workshops, 478 partners from 9 straw weaving organizations, and 110 shoe workshops" (Application Form, 2017, p. 5).

Since 2011 the "Carnival of Candonga" Festival has been held; this name refers to one of the most representative rings of the place where the Craft Fair is held where the most outstanding works in terms of "pottery, goldsmithing, toquilla straw, and footwear" (Application Form, 2017, p. 7).

Chordeleg applies to the UNESCO Network of Creative Cities, intending to strengthen international cooperation. "Between cities that have recognized creativity as a strategic factor in their sustainable development, through cultural exchange, transfer of skills, as well as the development of new initiatives for entrepreneurship and promotion of cultural assets within the Network" (Application Form, 2017, p. 15).

2.5 Cuenca Cultural Heritage

Santa Ana de Los Ríos de Cuenca was founded in April 1557. Later on November 3, 1820, Cuenca proclaimed the independence of the Spanish crown. Nevertheless, the historic center of the city encompasses a prodigious cultural heritage, so in 1982 it was declared a Cultural Heritage of the Ecuadorian State; then, in 1999, at the meeting of the World Heritage Committee in Morocco, it was declared a World Heritage Site (López Monsalve, 2003).

Cultural Heritage is defined as the tangible and intangible heritage bequeathed by the generations that preceded us" (López Monsalve, 2003, p. 12). It is substantial; we can perceive everything through what we see or touch. Among the main tangible heritage assets are: stone tools, ceramic utensils representing the different cultural stages of cañaris, the architectural evidence of the Inca empire in the Pumapungo, the Historical Center of Cuenca composed of:

Streets, parks and squares, public spaces of community life and historical events or experiences; The Tomebamba River, with its unique and typical built-up ravine, the churches and convents, with their walls and centuries-old religious houses, the community buildings built in the past for educational and charitable institutions; the museums with their heritage in ceramics, crafts, painting, sculpture, numismatics (López Monsalve, 2003, p. 12).

It is known as intangible, that which cannot be perceived by touch and therefore encompasses: values, religious beliefs, customs, traditions, fables, typical dances, and folkloric manifestations (López Monsalve, 2003).

In 1970, importance was given to the initiative to preserve, recover, and replace the properties with great patrimonial value to make better use of that value. Being so, in 1982, after the restoration of the property of what was "Casa de la Temperancia," it gave place to the "Museum of Modern Art," later in 1984, a section of the "Monastery of the Conception" was rescued, thus inaugurating in 1986 the "Museum of Religious Art." By the 90, the processes for restoring certain buildings are streamlined, such as:

The 18th-century house of the Carrion family (Calderon Park), the central premises of the Bank of the Pacific (Benigno Malo Street 9-75), the Diario El Mercurio Building (Padre Aguirre Street 9-57), the Inca Real Hotel (General Torres Street 8-40), the so-called Blue House (Gran Colombia Street 10-29) And others (Lopez Monsalve, 2003, p. 18).

In the Pumapungo museum, you can see signs of the buildings that were part of the Tahuantinsuyo, as well as the representations of ceramics and metal (López Monsalve, 2003).

Cuenca is one of the cities that still conserves the main indications of what it was in the Precolumbian period. Loja Avenue is less than one and a half kilometers long. Nevertheless, it maintains the same essence as the initial street and still preserves specific properties with classic entrances adorned with wooden columns (López Monsalve, 2003). On the other hand, there is also Rafael María Arízaga Street, which originated traditional trades such as the elaboration of the toquilla straw hat (Regional Government of Andalucía, 2007).

By the provisions of "the International Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage, meeting in Paris in October 2001, article 2 (e) establishes that traditional craft techniques are part of this heritage" (Malo González, 2008, p. 7). Therefore, handicrafts represent one essential expression of identity.

Cuenca and its surroundings are known for its wide variety of:

Crafts and popular arts are intimately linked to a territory's cultural, economic, and social development; they form an ecosystem rich in knowledge and techniques transmitted from one generation to another. They are processes of continuity that feed the social fabric and are printed in their memory to strengthen the identity that particularizes and differentiates human groups in the broad universe of cultural diversity (Ordoñez Almeida, 2021, p. 85).

2.6 Traditional trades:

The *toquilla straw* hat is closely adhered to in the towns of Azuay and Cañar. This artisanal practice expresses, strengthens, and preserves the province's identity since it is part of the clothing of the *mestiza* woman. "The Chola cuencana," which is distinguished by wearing two attractive *polleras* of different and bright colors embroidered with delicate flowers, along with the *pañó* of Gualaceo, the blouse enriched with colored sequins, and patent leather shoes (Ordoñez Almeida, 2021); thus reflecting its territoriality, its cultural sense, and identity. That is why "December 2005, the traditional weaving of toquilla straw was added to the list of Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity by UNESCO"(Ordoñez Almeida, 2021,p.87).

This handmade piece elaborates on three sections: "plantilla, Copa, and falda." It begins by weaving with a few straws in an instrument called "horma." Through weaving, the *plantilla* is formed, which has a round silhouette, and is pressed with a belt usually made of leather that helps to tighten the fabric; the fiber expands as more and more threads are added. Once this part is finished, they proceed with the section of the *company*, while *enjires* are included to culminate with the *falda*. During the elaboration of these sections, the straw must be wetted to achieve total malleability. Its creators' technique allows differentiating a certain peculiarity in each piece (García Aguilar, 2008).

Although this activity does not demand a large amount of raw material, money, or utensils, nor does it distinguish sex. Women mostly do it. It is difficult to determine the time used to make this piece since, usually, the artisans combine this craft with their daily activities in the household as agricultural, which allows them to supplement the family expenses (Aguilar García, 2008).

The processes of obtaining *ceramics* involve several phases that change according to the type of material used and the final objective of the artist. The clay used for its production is characterized by its malleability. Unlike kaolin, its consistency is more rigid, allowing the pieces to obtain a higher level of resistance and sharpness once finished.

The characteristic neighborhood of "Convención del 45" and its surroundings are distinguished by being a large and unusual place where you can find ceramics with a high level of iron, which justifies the reddish tone obtained after burning (Malo González, 2008). In Cuenca, its inhabitants still use brick and tile to construct their homes to preserve the city's identity, so from the top, you can appreciate the character of its reddish tones.

Over time, the number of artists dedicated to this activity has increased. As a result, a great variety of pieces serve as ornaments, such as the characteristic *platonés* that are distinguished by being handmade. Also, murals and monuments, such as the particular "The Tótems," are located at the traffic circle of Remigio Crespo Toral Avenue and Unidad Nacional (Malo Gonzalez, 2008).

The artists also draw inspiration from the city's religious devotion, depicting Jesus Christ, the nativity scene, saints, and other religious images in their creations. Culture is another important element within their emotional factors, which is why they express in their art the indigenous, peasants, and above all, the characteristic *Chola cuencana*, thus strengthening the value of cultural identity (Malo Gonzalez, 2008).

Goldsmithing has been a legacy protected by the ancestors of the artisans of Azuay. Today this activity is commercial since it represents an economic income for the artists. However, the documents of the city council at the beginning of the foundation express that the goldsmith meant an outstanding work within the craftsmanship (Aguilar García, 2008).

The jewelry was made with metals such as gold and silver, and most creations were dedicated to saints and the virgin. During the 19th century, jewelry and goldsmith works were made, which carried a significant part of the traditional history. These creations were used as the main elements in ceremonial clothing and wedding oblations, representing a social level of beauty (Aguilar García, 2008).

The process of elaborating the jewelry is meticulous and requires the artisan to use different skills depending on the work. Among these are: Casting, rolling, assembling, soldering, and finally, the amusement that sets the piece's

quality. On the other hand, we must highlight the Filigree technique, which stands out for the subtlety and roughness with which the gold or silver strands are used to make jewelry with a great diversity of designs inspired by nature (Aguilar García, 2008).

Several artisans produce files where they compile their authorship designs, which contain specific guidelines of the processes and the raw material to be used. All this is carried out with great reserve to prevent their plans from being reproduced by others. Instead, this file is provided to their successors, destined to continue this work (Aguilar García, 2008).

The *pañño of Gualaceo* is part of the traditional clothing of the Chola cuencana; it was also used as a garment to wear during mourning or Holy Week. They used the "*tinaco*" cloth, black and white, with a white tie. In contrast "the single people in the festivities used *pañños* of green cardenillo, electric blue, and pink" (Instituto Nacional de Patrimonio y Cultura, 2017, p. 21). It was also used to support strapping food or children on the back (INPC, 2017).

Although the garment is called *pañño of Gualaceo*, it is not made in this canton but is nearby in the Bullcay and Bullzhún areas (Moreno Aguilar, 2008).

The materials used are the thread and dye obtained naturally through aniline. Then, the line was generally obtained from sheep, but nowadays, alpaca thread or cotton is used more regularly (INPC, 2017).

The technique used is warp ikat, which is based on "tying the thread with cabuya or other impermeable vegetable fibers before dyeing" (INPC, 2017, p. 7). The final representation of the fabric is due to a comparison between the natural color of the yarns and those dyed (Moreno Aguilar, 2008).

As it is handmade, it is a long process; before proceeding to its elaboration, the craftswomen imagine what will be the design to be used in the cloth, generally inspired by nature or geometric shapes (Moreno Aguilar, 2008).

Currently, new opportunities have been added to take advantage of this traditional piece without the need to alter its standard process. Also, adding this technique to garments that have been exhibited on runways, used in handbags, backpacks, and wallets, and even in the manufacture of handbags, bags, and purses (Moreno Aguilar, 2008).

Among the most significant *wrought-iron creations* are the iron crosses, which represent the religiosity of its inhabitants; they are placed on the roofs of the houses. The tradition of celebrating the final placement of the top on the homes that have been under construction is called "*huasipichana*" in Quechua, which means "to sweep or clean house." It is attended by family members, friends, and compadres. The house owners choose who will be the compadres; they are the ones who must give a cross, which from the religious point of view must be blessed and under the notion that it will represent the shelter of the house. And on the other hand, from the traditional celebration point of view, it must be placed on the roof of the house; in the past, it was a tradition for the compadres to throw coins being, the "*capillos*," after drawing a cross on the floor as a sign of their goodness, at the moment that the owners of the house invite to the celebration, which is known as "*uyanza*" (Eljuri Jaramillo, 2008).

These wrought iron crosses "are part of UNESCO, of the crafts as part of the intangible heritage of the people" (Eljuri Jaramillo, 2008, p. 175).

Embroidery is present in the traditional clothing of the Chola cuencana, as mentioned above, especially in her emblematic *pollera*, which shows many colors and diverse designs, representing a form of cultural manifestation, identity, and tradition (Malo, 2008).

In its beginnings, the *polleras* were utterly hand embroidered, and a large part of this production came from Sinincay; most of the families from the area depended on the manufacture and embroidery for their economic subsistence (Malo, 2008).

What characterizes the *pollera*, in addition to its shape, is its exquisite embroidery "motifs such as roses in various expressions, buds, buttons, petals both loose and in branches are organized in undulating paths in the embroidered

ensemble" (Malo, 2008, p. 199). Decoration varies among *polleras*, depending on whether they are distinguished or more straightforward (Malo, 2008).

Today, the embroidery is done through a machine with a pedal so that the embroidery process can be controlled, allowing the garment to be elaborated in less time. However, this does not mean that the artisan part is lost since the knowledge of the craftswomen and their skillful hands prevail and allow the materialization of the designs used in one instance on fabric or paper in the embroidery (Malo, 2008).

The paper used to draw the design is silk paper, as it is the most suitable for copying and easier to handle. When embroidery is done on more than one fabric lining, the drilling technique is used, which consists of making tiny holes to determine where the embroidery is to be done (Malo, 2008).

During embroidery, you start by drawing on the fabric guided by the paper design with a white thread, and then complete it with the colored lines, "color and texture are obtained by skillfully mixing different shades and choosing chromatic ranges according to the backgrounds of the fabric" (Malo, 2008, p. 202).

Embroidery is not only used in traditional clothing, "organizations such as the Bordados Cuenca center" (Malo, 2008, p. 208); are made up of craftswomen who make and sell embroidered postcards or other garments such as shirts and blouses, which are very attractive to tourists (Malo, 2008).

3. Methodology

The present research work is a qualitative study that applies the desk-based research methodology based on the authors Robson & Cartan in their book "Real World Research". The guidelines to be followed according to this methodology are: 1) Define a research question and decide the type of review needed; To answer the research questions, and develop the theoretical framework of the article, use will be made of electronic databases that contain the field of interest, through specific references of authors that cover relevant information, use will also be made of the search engine which consists of "search engines developed by organizations such as government and other public sector bodies, as well as charities and others likely to provide information resources in your field of interest" (Robson & Cartan, 2011, p. 82). 2) Identify, select and review relevant literature which involves the systematic identification, location and analysis of documents containing information related to the research problem. These documents may include articles, abstracts, reviews, monographs, dissertations, books, other research reports, and electronic media (Robson & Cartan, 2011, p.82). In addition, interviews were conducted with a group of artisans from the city of Cuenca, the type of interviews were face to face since "it offers the possibility of modifying the line of research itself, following up on interesting responses" (Robson & Mc Cartan, 2011, p.286). And finally this information was synthesized to demonstrate the results obtained from this research (Robson & Cartan, 2011).

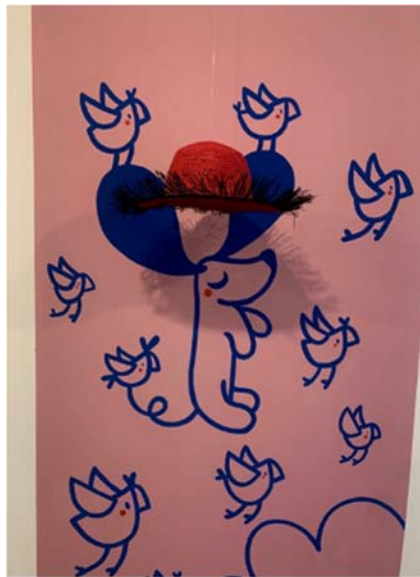
4. Results:

Toquilla straw hat - Rosa Salinas

To the artisan Rosa Salinas, who makes toquilla straw hats, what inspires her about Cuenca are its colors, culture, customs, and traditions; in her works, she tries to reflect the folkloric beauty, landscapes, and rivers that allow her to call it Santa Ana of the four rivers. Doña Rosa mentions that what makes her works different are the care, passion, dedication, and honesty with which she works; she comments that this activity is in her blood, as a talent that God, her parents, and her religious teachers inherited her (personal communication, June 3, 2022).

Doña Rosa decided to dedicate herself to this work mainly because of her vocation and later because of the needs of the children and the people who have needed her. The raw material to make the hats comes from the country's coastal region. First, it arrives in raw material. When it arrives, it is processed with sulfur, water, and detergent in its elaboration using scissors, a last, a container with water (personal communication, June 3, 2022). Her works have participated in local, national, and international fairs. Since she was 14 years old, she has worked with her community on different projects to strengthen the organization within the community. For Doña Rosa, this activity enhances the economy of her family and the community.

Figure 2



Note: Red hat (Toquilla straw and red dye), Artisan Rosa Salinas, Tesya Association, 2022

Ceramic - Pablo Cordero

Pablo Cordero, a ceramic artisan, says that what inspires him about Cuenca is its people, culture, customs, and architecture. What he tries to reflect in his pieces is the originality with which he makes them based on his inspiration and not on a copy (personal communication, June 3, 2022). Pablo was attracted to sculpture from a very young age, and since then, he began to model to sculpt, and over time, he has been perfecting his technique. The materials he uses in his ceramic sculptures are the clay. His pieces have participated in collective and individual exhibitions in local, national, and international fairs. Pablo believes this activity helps boost the local economy since it is a source of employment and apprenticeship for new artisans (personal communication, June 3, 2022).

Figure 3



Note: Boy with marbles (Ceramic, enamel, acrylic, and wax), Artisan Pablo Cordero, 2014).

Virgins, Cholas gummed fabric - María Isabel Calderón

María Isabel, who makes virgins and Cholas in gummed fabric, says that what inspires her about Cuenca are its streets, its markets, its plazas full of flowers and colors, but above all, its people; the Cholas dressed in their colorfully embroidered *polleras* while they walk so elegantly (personal communication, May 30, 2022). Maria Isabel represents in her works the Chola cuencana as a symbol of the woman and the mother. What differentiates her works is the care she makes them and the details she uses, such as the halos or earrings made of silver and gold plating (personal communication, May 30, 2022). Maria Isabel has university studies in plastic arts and has followed alternative courses such as jewelry, natural dye handling, silk process, weaving in looms, and glued fabric process, resulting in a combination of all this knowledge in her works. The materials used for the elaboration of the pieces are wire, cardboard, and glued fabric; the face, hands, and feet of the sculptures are made with alabaster following the technique that combines stone powder with resin, and the final details are elaborated with alpaca, silver, or gold plating in some cases. Their works have been part of exhibitions, have won awards, and have been for several years in the fair held by CIDAP. For María Isabel, this activity helps boost the local economy since several artisans are involved in the production of the pieces, from the packaging to the final details.

Figure 4



Note: Virgin-Chola (Wood, acrylic resin, and fabric), Artisan María Isabel Calderón, 2003

Wrought Iron - Miguel Cajamarca

Miguel is a wrought iron artisan; what inspires him about Cuenca are its landscapes, rivers, bridges, roofs, churches, and so he considers the city to be a bouquet of possibilities to create and recreate, and this is what he reflects in his works (personal communication, May 27, 2022). He learned to do this work through trial and error, experimenting and applying those adventures of the art of wrought iron. Miguel decided to dedicate himself to this activity because he discovered that wrought iron could be used to create beautiful works for professionals in design, decoration, and architecture.

The base material of his work is iron, along with different techniques used according to the design. These can be pointing, stretching, or bending. And to finish the work, he uses lacquers, oils, and beeswax. His works have been part of art festivals and exhibitions in different halls inside and outside the country. Miguel considers that this activity contributes to boosting the local economy because it can satisfy the needs of the inhabitants.

Figure 5



Note: Firefly (wrought iron), Artisan Miguel Cajamarca, 2018

Paño of Gualaceo, makana- César Rodas

César is an artisan who makes Paños of Gualaceo and makanas. Although he comes from the community of Bullcay in the province of Azuay, he has been doing this activity in Cuenca for several years. César is inspired by the colors, landscapes of nature, plants, animals, and clouds of the city, which he represents daily in his works through different shapes and figures (personal communication, May 28, 2022).

César also tries to reflect the craftsmanship. He has inherited it from his ancestors, as he considers that he carries this art in his veins. He is part of the fourth generation within his family to continue with the tradition. From an early age, he helped his mother wrap the thread while working on other household activities (personal communication, May 28, 2022). César considers that what differentiates his works from others is that the whole process is done by hand. Although, the technique he uses in his works is the Ikat technique, the materials he uses are: cotton, which is the most appreciated material by tourists, wool, and silk. Her works have been part of dance festivals and fashion shows abroad. César believes this activity helps boost the local economy since the income obtained is used to support his livelihood and finance his materials.

Figure 6



Nota: Makana (Técnica ikat), Artesano César Rodas

Andean wind instruments - Adolfo Idrovo

Adolfo Idrovo, a craftsman who makes Andean wind instruments, says that its traditions inspire him most about Cuenca. Because while he makes his tools come to his mind, the artisans who sold pinguyos in the rotary square. Therefore, in his works, he tries to reflect the tradition of each town of Ecuador, to continue to maintain the culture and transmit it to new generations that we must continue to fight for our identity (comunicación personal, 28 de mayo 2022).

For Adolfo, his works are different from the others because they are shaped more by love than by commercial sense. Adolfo learned from this work since he first heard the quena, which he identified with, leading him to explore this world of sounds. Adolfo is inspired by nature to use its resources and make their instruments because he uses materials such as reeds, doubt, the suro, which serve to make both whistles and quenenas, wind instruments are made with guadua cane, to develop the rattles used the seeds, coconuts from the park that allows the instruments sound faithful copy of what the ancestors did. Today, he works with recycled materials such as paper (comunicación personal, 28 de mayo 2022). Adolfo's instruments have traveled worldwide and been part of exhibitions, as in the house of culture in Quito and the National Institute of Heritage and Culture. He believes this activity partly helps boost the local economy since most of his customers are tourists, but he emphasizes that his goal is to allow the locals to value what is ours.

Figure 7



Note: Pingullo (Duda, bamboo family), Artisan Adolfo Idrovo, 2022

Masks - Vicente Flores

Vicente Flores is an artisan who makes masks. Vicente says that the different city festivities inspire him most about Cuenca, where the person is even shy, wears a show, and begins to enjoy themselves. He considers that it is something magical (comunicación personal, 27 de mayo 2022). For Vicente, each artist has different characteristics in each work. His works are other than the rest because he makes them with the heart and the different chromatics he uses. Vicente learned this art through the tradition of generations from his father, so at 6, he made his first mask.

For the elaboration of the masks, he starts sculpting in clay, then he prepares the dough and places it in the molds; he considers that they are laborious processes depending on the work he does; his works have been part of different festivities, exhibitions such as in the CIDAP, and in galleries such as one of the posadas. Vicente considers that this activity helped to boost the local economy. However, he was mainly primarily known in other provinces of the country, as he delivered 60 to 80 dozen masks to the areas of Oro and Loja.

Figure 8



Note: Masks (Paper and rubber), Craftsman Vicente Flores,2022

5. Discussion and Conclusion

Just in September 2015, the United Nations international development program mentioned culture for the first time in the context of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs); for this article, Goal 4 refers to ensuring "an education that values cultural diversity and promotes a culture of peace and non-violence, as well as a contribution of culture to sustainable development" (Hosagrahar, 2021, p. 1). Furthermore, goal 11 aims to "make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable" (Hosagrahar, 2021, p. 1); the fourth target of this SDG calls for "redoubling efforts to protect and safeguard the world's cultural and natural heritage" (ibid).

According to the World Organization of United Cities and Local Governments (UCLG), to implement the 2030 Agenda, the goals must be analyzed from "the means of implementation and the use of indicators to measure and monitor progress" (United Cities and Local Governments, 2018, p. 4). In addition, they consider the human being and the obstacles present as axes of action for sustainable development (United Cities and Local Governments, 2018).

Although the SDGs include culture within their purposes, this inclusion is not precise; the fact that culture is a component of the goals, it is not the protagonist because, among the 17 SDGs, there is no goal in which its action plan is rooted exclusively in culture (United Cities and Local Governments, 2018).

Figure 9



Source: (United Nations, 2015).

On the other hand, the World Organization of United Cities and Local Governments (UCLG, 2018).

Recognizes that culture is the fourth pillar of sustainable development. Therefore, it calls on cities and local and regional governments worldwide to develop a firm policy and include a cultural dimension in their public policies (p. 4).

In the first Culture Summit of the (UCLG, 2021) called culture and sustainable cities developed in 2015, *Culture 21: Actions* was implemented, which enables municipalities to include culture as a principle for sustainable development; under this same objective is also the UNESCO Creative Cities Network, which as mentioned above, aims to promote international cooperation between cities that are committed to creativity as the main element for their sustainable urban development (Ottone, 2020).

In Cuenca, the public policies applied by its Decentralized Autonomous Governments are focused on the protection of architectural heritage. Although there is a cultural policy agenda that establishes that since 1980 it has focused on the management of "immovable heritage and peripherally on the arts, intangible cultural heritage, and handicrafts" (Rodas Espinoza & Contreras Escandón, 2021, p. 104); for several years, the representatives of Cuenca have elaborated international agendas with various elements of action, leaving their implementation to the free consent of the local authority (Palacios Ullauri & Arce Bojorque, 2021); public knowledge of what should be defined as culture is still developing (Rodas Espinoza & Contreras Escandón, 2021).

Heritage has become a key focus of socioeconomic concern because of its relationships with history, nationalism, and tourism. However, the mechanisms through which such linkages occur have not been formalized in public policy (Rodas, P. & Contreras, C. 2021, p.106).

Under these events, it is essential to internationalize the city as Cuenca;

Has shown that local government can carry out technical exchanges with other cities, share experiences in public management, and seek and receive international funds for the development

of projects consistent with the city model that is desired to improve the living conditions of its inhabitants (Palacios, P. & Arce, S., 2021, p. 35).

To date, in terms of International Cooperation, work has been carried out in isolation from a public policy, as there has been no room for the interaction that should exist between its inhabitants and their representatives to meet local needs in terms of culture and International Cooperation (Palacios, P. & Arce, S., 2021).

It is necessary to reinforce the International Cooperation of Cuenca through the UNESCO Creative Cities Network to promote the exchange of ideas and experiences between cities that identify creativity and culture as the main element of their development, being possible to execute creative projects focused on handicrafts and popular culture (Ottone, 2020).

In addition, it is essential to integrate a prototype of the creative economy, making use of the material and immaterial heritage of the city, recognizing and respecting the knowledge of artisans. So, their identity, customs, and traditions are preserved and recognized, as well as taking into account that "all activities inherent to cultural and heritage governance must be participatory, considering all the actors involved" (Rodas Espinoza & Contreras Escandón, 2021, p. 104) so that there can be an exchange of ideas and practices to establish public policies. That responds to latent needs and benefits the objectives of cultural preservation (Rodas Espinoza & Contreras Escandón, 2021).

It is pertinent that the basis of public policies foster artisan skills, place heritage within education, and enable participation between the public and private sectors. This promotes "other generations that want to simulate this exercise of being an artisan, but if this is not done, artisan techniques will die out as artisans die out" (Bonilla Chumbi, 2022).

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