



URBAN TRANSFORMATIONS IN THE CULTURE OF SANTIAGO'S BARRIOS.

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Abstract

Within Santiago, Chile's capital city, Barrio is a fundamental urban concept: an identity of place that defines a social space more than the territorial boundary of a designated area. Nearly 30 years of sustained, economic growth have positioned Chile, and Santiago with 40% of the country's population, as a tourist, financial and investment centre for South America. After a general decline of the inner-city area during the time of dictatorship (1973-1990), three inner-city residential barrios are being re-defined by their social and urban heritage as part of the "coolest" city of South America. These residential barrios possess the social characteristics of an urban unit within the concept of an ethical city—autonomy, conviviality, connectivity and diversity—and, in form and use, the basis of urban cultural tourism, a living heritage of residential architecture, public space and urban culture. The spatial and economic transformation of these barrios shifts the existing dynamic between the residents' social capital and the barrios' symbolic capital to the question of whose rights and interest should prevail. Through a literature review, policy review and an analysis of morphology and land use of three barrios, this article draws lessons to assist a re-thinking of the development of this urban, social-spatial unit of Chilean cities.

Keywords: Place, Residents, "Barrio", Urban Transformations, Cultural Tourism

INTRODUCTION

The evolution of the barrio as an urban, social-spatial unit is a feature of Chilean cities and those of many countries of Latin-based culture outside of Europe. In Santiago, barrios have been central to urban development since Chilean independence (1810). In 1820 there are references made to the Mayor of the Barrio (DE LA CAVAREDA, 1820). What were known as barrios later became the communes or municipalities of metropolitan Santiago and within these are now at least 97 officially recognised barrios. In the public imaginary there are many barrios identified as local and international tourist attractions. The barrios of Lastarria, Bellavista and Italia are located just outside the historic centre, are socially and historically part of the first modernisation of the republic and each is being reinvented and re-valued through their social and urban heritage. In this article, this immaterial and material heritage is viewed as social capital in terms of space and social relations of the residents, and as symbolic capital (BOURDIEU, 1984) in terms of the distinction of place, people and things for cultural tourism.

In this article, we firstly establish a working definition of the traditional residential barrio to qualify and quantify what is possibly being changed through the current transformation of Santiago. The definition of Ethical Cities by Correa Casanova (2019) is used as a baseline to define the foundation of the residential barrios. We then trace key social-spatial features in the foundation, decline and re-valorisation of barrios Lastarria, Bellavista and Italia.

Secondly, through policy and literature review and site analysis we interpret the revalorisation of the

three specific barrios in relation to their traditional use and form. From this interpretation we develop a classification of each as neo-residential barrios. According to Correa, the form of urbanization that we see today represents an unsustainable reality that should be addressed as a matter of urgency in social, political, economic and environmental terms (CORREA CASANOVA, 2019). We establish principles and methods to understand how the barrio might retain its residential status during revalorisation.

Lastly, in reflection about these neo residential barrios, we identify key indicators in the current transformation, in form and use, as they relate to their material and immaterial heritage. Can the revalorisation of the residential barrios of Lastarria, Bellavista and Italia, respectively based in heritage, culture and industry, maintain the social capital manifest in the symbolic capital underlying their transformation?

BARRIOS

The meaning of barrio is often assumed as self-evident in urban public policies dealing with cities, but a clear definition is generally absent. The barrio has a preeminent role in public policy concerned with urban regeneration and reducing poverty (TAPIA, 2013) and is a sociological and urban phenomenon involving identity of place and people and a sense of proximity and familiarity at a pedestrian scale (MARCHI et al., 2017). The barrio is not primarily defined by physical boundaries but by its connection to the idea of the city, its social spaces and a morphological coherence that provides, and is built by, an urban way of life (MATURANA, 2016). In relation to the city, barrios have the capacity to maintain social connection in conditions of

anonymity, link different socio-economic areas of the same city, create space and time for conviviality, and recover the relation of cities with nature.

Each barrio has a different emphasis, ranging from industrial barrios, cultural barrios, and business and commercial barrios, and each has a resident population that gives its urban life cohesion. According to Amaya Irarrázaval, the social spatial urban unit of the barrio can also be key in activating local entrepreneurship (IRARRÁZAVAL Z. et al., 2018). However, unrestrained growth of commercial activity can also threaten the essence of the barrio, the resident community (RODRÍGUEZ-NEGRETE & HIDALGO-DATTWYLER, 2018).

WHAT IS THE STORY WITH THESE THREE BARRIOS?

The establishment decline and revalorization of the barrio can be mapped by its social and cultural institutions, architectural and urban forms and the founding and shifting social and economic activity as related to the resident population. Lastarria, Bellavista and Italia are each residential barrio founded during the first urban modernisation of Santiago 1872 – 1910 (CASTILLO FERNÁNDEZ, 2008) and were, in their formation, respectively aristocratic, bohemian and industrial. Each of these barrios suffered urban decline during the military dictatorship (1973-1990) and each barrio has experienced a revalorization through a different combination of government policy, market forces, gentrification and cultural tourism.

Unlike the global decline of industrial cities in Europe and North America after the second world war, the mass urbanisation of Chile in the 1940s and 50s and the modern planning as a response in the 1960s precipitated the social, urban and economic ramifications of the Cold War that came to a crisis for Chile in the 1973. During the following 17 years of dictatorship, the relocation of poorer urban populations to the periphery of Santiago and the domestication of urban public life emptied out the city (SABATINI et al., 2014). The country faced an economic crisis in 1982 which, in part, initiated the long return to democracy in 1990. The decline of each of the three barrios is staggered across this period.

In the decade of the 1990s, in what has been called the “transition to democracy”, Chile began a process of re-establishing its public institutions and entered a sustained period of economic growth that continues until today. In the 21st century, this unique, political stability and economic growth in South America has positioned Santiago as a destination for investment and tourism, created a domestic market for inner city living and has been the catalysts for rapid urban transformation. The barrios of Lastarria, Bellavista and Italia are examples of residential barrios in Santiago subject to a revalorisation based on their material and immaterial heritage as cultural tourism.

REVALORIZACION AS BARRIOS:

Barrio Lastarria experienced the first urban renaissance in the 1990s with a focus on heritage and living culture as part of this heritage. Most notable was the early private investment in this residential barrio with the Museo de Artes Visuales (MAVI) and Anthropological Museum that opened in 1996. In 1997, Lastarria was declared part of a heritage pro-

tected zone. The Gabriela Mistral Cultural Centre opened in 2010, making Lastarria the cultural barrio of Santiago.

Bellavista's revalorization is highlighted by the commercial development of Patio Bellavista in 2000—a type of bohemian mall of Chilean culture. This begins a process of re-establishing Bellavista as a bohemian residential barrio, but with a shift to entertainment rather than the existing visual, literary and performing arts production. A new, 10 storey “innovative technologies” building opened in 2019 that includes a multi-use theatre and builds upon the social and symbolic capital of the barrio's creative production and bohemian heritage. This corner site entrance to Bellavista, viewed when crossing the Mapocho River via the heritage-listed bridge, blocks the view to Cerro San Cristóbal, as steep hill that at is the barrios natural northern limit.

Barrio Italia experienced initial urban revalorization in the 1990s with a mix of public and private intervention. Firstly, in the municipal government's redevelopment of the antique dealers' area, the conversion of the privately-owned millinery factory, *Sombreros Girardi*, into a cultural centre. Secondly, the foundation of a museum by an NGO for the Presidency of Frei Montalva, in his former home. Finally, the introduction of Italian cuisine in the opening of the first Italian restaurant, Danoi. The period 2006-2008 saw an exponential growth in the number of commercial licences in Avenida Italia. The formation of the *Corporation Barrio Italia* in 2011 and the self-proclaimed and officially recognised Barrio of Design in 2012 re-established the barrio based in the design industry.

PHYSICAL LIMITS, THE BARRIO AND THE PUBLIC IMAGINARY

Junta de Vecinos (resident associations) were established in 1968 and they have legal recognition as official resident consultative bodies to government (DELA MAZA ESCOBAR & CORVERA VERGARA, 2018). The network of Junta de Vecinos across Santiago is extensive and active in preserving the form and structure of barrios, their definition and physical and social limits. Many barrios contain more than one Junta de Vecinos that extends the barrios boundary in the residents' imaginary, and many barrios sit across more than one *Comuna* (municipality) dispersing the administration of this concept of the barrio for residents. In other barrios there is a distinct physical limit, as is the case of Lastarria. In either case, each of the three barrios is perceived in the public imaginary as having different limits based on social-spatial classifications.

With an area of 17 ha and a resident population of approximately 4,200 habitants, Barrio Lastarria projects itself further afield from this physical area in the public imaginary. The vast majority of Barrio Lastarria sits within the larger built heritage protected zone. The distinction and conflation between the two are that the latter includes the public spaces of two parks and a river and their infrastructure and buildings. For example, the *road* along the eastern boundary of the heritage park Cerro Santa Lucia is the barrios western boundary. To the east, the border is one block west of Plaza Italia. To the south of Barrio



Figure 1. The blue line shows the boundaries of Barrio Lastarria and the orange line is the axis of land use in site audit (Source: Authors).

Lastarria is a definitive limit in the Alameda Avenue and to the north, the southern limit of the heritage park, Parque Forestal that borders the river (Figure 1).

Barrio Bellavista is 120 ha and has a population of approximately 12,700 inhabitants. The physical limits of barrio Bellavista to the north are the curved line of the base of the hill of San Cristóbal, to the east it is a wedge between the base of this hill and the Mapocho River in the municipality of Providencia, to the south it is the northern edge of the Mapocho river. In the public imaginary, Barrio Bellavista is embraced between these two natural features. Its three-kilometre river frontage has five bridges that connect this limit over the river and symbolically and functionally unite the north and south of the city. To the west, the barrio is defined by a meandering line through houses in the second, poorer municipality of the barrio, Recoleta (Figure 2).

Barrio Italia sits across two municipalities and its limits are defined by: to the north Rancagua street, to the east Salvador, to the south now as far as Irarrázaval street and to the west Bustamante, a linear park opened in the 1940s. This is an area of 108 ha with a resident population of approximately 7,400 inhabitants. The Barrio del Diseño (Barrio of Design), recognised by the National Council of Culture and the Arts in 2012, was initially established within a narrower sub-set of the physical limits of Barrio Italia. Barrio of Design is constantly conflating the public imaginary of Barrio Italia with the attractor of a “cosmopolitan skin” (Rodríguez-Negrete and Hidalgo-Dattwyler, 2018) based in a commercial, local design industry. The Barrio of Design symbolically builds upon the implied design in the barrio’s Italian social and urban heritage— Factoría Girardi (1910), Theatre Italia (1930), other millinery and hosiery factories (1940s), the Italian embassy (1950s)—followed by the furniture workshops established in the 1960s and the antique stores set up in the 1980s (Figure 3).

SOCIAL AND SYMBOLIC CAPITAL IN THE MAKING OF IDENTITY

The foundation of each of the three barrios’—cultural

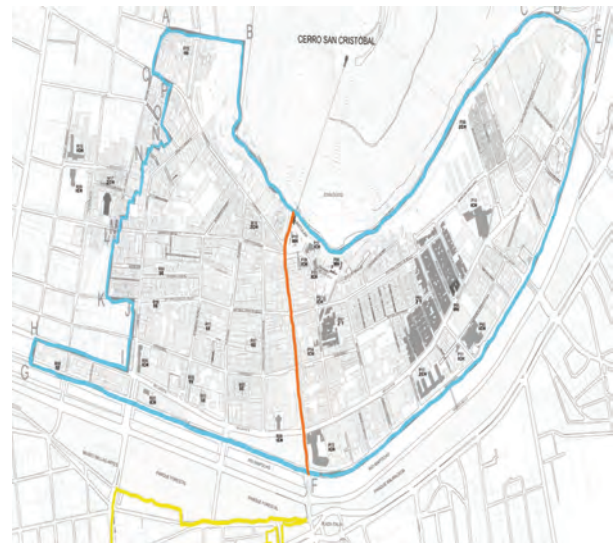


Figure 2. The blue line shows the boundaries of Barrio Bellavista and the orange line is the axis of land use in site audit (Source: Authors).

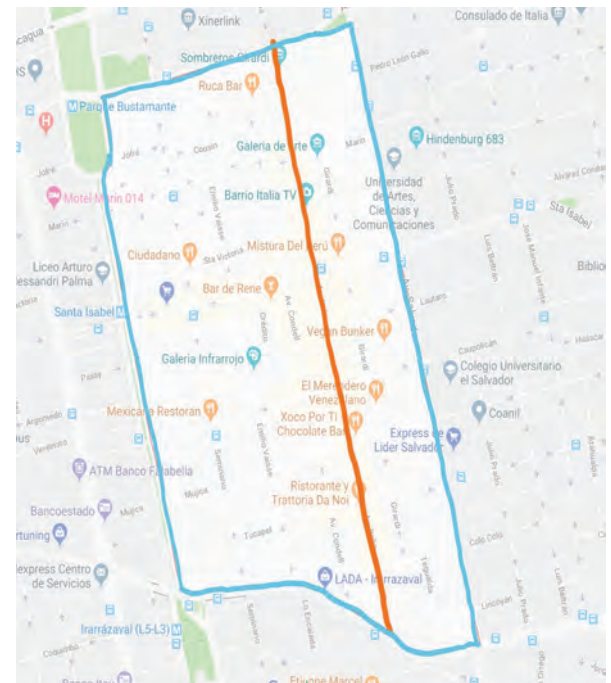


Figure 3. The blue line shows the boundaries of Barrio Italia and the orange line is the axis of land use in site audit (Source: Authors).

residential barrio (Lastarria), a bohemian residential barrio (Bellavista), industrial residential barrio (Italia) — holds the ingredients of its cohesion and, paradoxically, the transformation of barrio life. The barrio is based on an autonomous and self-sufficient social spatial structure that has “horizontal and rhizomatic connections” to the larger idea of the city and “its high-density random social encounters” (DOVEY, 2005). The continuity of barrio life, the perpetuation of this “art of living in community” (ESTEVA, 2012) resides in the material and immaterial heritage of a residential barrio, its use as much as its form and location, that evolves over time.



Figure 4. Lastarria Street, street life and architecture make this a cultural centre for Santiago (Source: Authors).

The symbolic capital of the traditional residential barrio that generates the new hybrid form during revalorisation—cultural-tourism residential barrio Lastarria (Figure 4), bohemian-entertainment barrio Bellavista, design industry industrial residential barrio Italia—manifests in architectural modification and construction of a new or additional type of residency and the generation of new services or commercial and related economic activity. The re-vitalisation, re-location or re-invention of local and national enterprises and traditions sits side-by-side the international investment in tourism of an authentic experience of place. In Lastarria, “traditional” Chilean food franchises, “Lastarria” brand shoes and renovated apartment living, sit next to Starbucks and luxury hotel chains. In Bellavista, high quality Chilean craft, food and music are around the corner from the Coca-Cola theatre and the innovative technologies building (Figure 5). The Antique collectors and cultural uses of the former Millinery factory in Barrio Italia are part of the design industry that includes the mega development project in the restored Theatre Italia. At the other end of Avenida Italia are the 18-storey apartment towers of this manly low-rise barrio (Figure 6).

The sustained economic growth and process of transformation (1996- 2019)—in tourism, the demography of residents and changes in land uses—is fuelled by the different heritage values of each barrio and translates into a rapid rise in land and symbolic value and a lessening in the mix of different income groups (RODRIGUEZ-NEGRETE & HIDALGO-DATWYLER, 2018)

On the one hand this urban transformation takes the form of the creation of new place icons—assimilated or otherwise into the barrio’s identity. An example from each barrio will illustrate this co-created symbolic capital. Two luxury hotels were built in Lastarria. The Singular that opened in 2014 (which has a sister luxury hotel in remote Patagonia) and the Hotel Cumbre that opened in 2014 (and has a sister hotel in the upper-class suburb of Vitacura). The architectural form of the former respects and mimics the footprint, height and frontage of a historic building in the same street. Hotel Cumbres markets itself on the urban and contemporary heritage of the area and boasts sustainability certifications including 50% of produce and services from local suppliers, recycling of water and renewable energy. This, behind the façade



Figure 5. Barrio Bellavista the colourful streets and bars define their bohemian life (Source: Authors).



Figure 6. Barrio Italia, the continuous façade of former workers housing gives coherence and character to what was an industrial residential barrio that is now design industry, workshops and boutiques (Source: Authors)

of the only postmodern architectural form in the barrio.

In Barrio Bellavista, symbolic capital appears in the two private universities opened in 2006. Andres Bello University, Campus Creativo (architecture, art and design), built inside the perimeter of a historic factory, also builds on the barrio’s creative/bohemian reputation. The San Sebastian University, diagonally opposite the Faculty of Law of the University of Chile, built in 1934, capitalises on the heritage and prestige of the oldest and most respected public University in Chile established in 1842. However, the imposing form of Universidad San Sebastian obscures the view of the historic church of the barrio’s foundation.

In Barrio Italia, a different scenario presents in that the renovation of the Theatre Italia becomes simultaneously the public face of the barrio and a mega commercial development that includes a community centre for innovation. Like the Singular in Lastarria or Campus Creativo in Bellavista, it draws on the material heritage of the barrio and creates new services, delivers a social and economic dividend to the barrio, and protects some of the built heritage of the barrio.

On the other hand, these urban transforma-

tion manifest in the occupation and modification of existing architectural and urban forms—ranging in heritage protection from none, to height limits and partial protection to classification under the National Council of Monuments. However, in each case, the large, historic, family homes and multi-family apartment blocks of these three barrios are subject to a change in use. The architectural and urban features of the streetscapes of continuous façade and the traditional commercial use at the ground floor of residential buildings, opens these buildings to easy adaptation for commercial use of the entire land or building. Since 2014, Barrio Lastarria has witnessed the occupation of complete low-rise residential buildings by commercial activities. These clusters of new commercial activity form a vertical shopping gallery. In Barrio Bellavista, the inside of traditional buildings has either been opened up for nightclub and music pavilions or demolished and replaced with precarious structures for the same purpose. In Barrio Italia, the deep blocks of former family homes and automotive workshops have been opened laterally to create horizontal commercial shopping galleries.

Commercial activity is not the only change of use of residential buildings under the guise of a revalorisation of the residential barrio. Since its foundation in 2008, Airbnb has become the textbook example of what has been called the “Collaborative Economy”. This economic model is based on a form of hospitality services associated with the values and experience of traditional friendship (staying at a friend’s place) that is marketed as providing the experience and courtesy of local knowledge and identity of place while stimulating the local economy (BOTSMAN & ROGERS, 2010). The global trend to implement legislative limits on the operations of Airbnb would say otherwise. While the number of Airbnb households is not at a critical point—Barrio Bellavista 160 and Barrio Lastarria 46—the threat that Airbnb poses to the idea of a residential barrio being revalorised through cultural tourism, is in the fact that the built and social heritage that attracts the stay is the predominantly residential form of the barrio.

The alternative travel guide, Lonely Planet, promoted Chile as the no.1 country to visit in 2018. This followed Santiago being promoted the previous year as the “coolest” city in South America by the Guardian, The New York Times and the Telegraph. The Barcelona daily newspaper Vanguardia, listed Barrio Lastarria as one of the 12 “most cool” barrios in the world. Barrio Italia is the latest barrio to be included in Santiago’s new cool image as a “Hidden Hipster Haven on the Rise” (RODRIGUEZ, 2018). The barrios of Lastarria, Bellavista and Barrio Italia are keys to the image of Santiago’s culture of authentic, place experience of traditional residential barrios and this sets a specific context to consider the future impact of Airbnb.

SITE ANALYSIS

The identity of the barrio is based in its self-sufficiency and can be considered in terms of the daily life as it relates to land use.

Site visits were made to document the land use of the ground-floor-level of the main axis of each barrio—Calle José Victorino Lastarria, Calle Pío Nono Bellavista and Av. Italia (see Fig. 7, 8 & 9). Six cate-

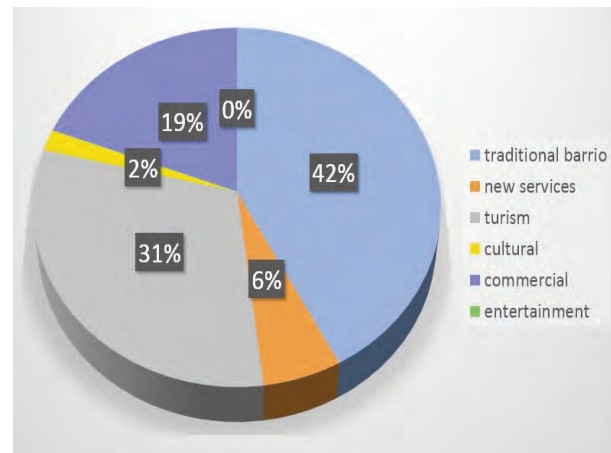


Figure 7. land use in Calle José Victorino Lastarria, in Barrio Lastarria (Source: Authors)

gories of land use were identified—Barrio Traditional, Tourist, New Services, Culture, Entertainment, Commercial.

In the category of Barrio Traditional are included the residential and commercial land used for residency and those goods and services needed for this self-sufficiency—apartments and housing, schools, churches and medical services, general stores, bakeries, chemists, traditional family restaurants, banking services, mechanical repairs and repair shops of clothing and footwear. Tourist use includes traditional services that have been skewed towards the tourist market. The balance between commercial life and the life of residents, as a presence in the street, and how these both influence the character and future of the barrio, is distorted by cultural tourism. As documented by the resident group El Barrio Que Queremos, (The Barrio that We Want) in their publication *Somos Patrimonio 2018* (We are Heritage) the percentage of commercial permits issued to Tourist services (2.7%) gives no indication of the impact of tourism as a presence in the street. For this reason we have included under New Services the bars, restaurants and hotels in the three barrios targeted to cultural tourism. Each barrio has a different form of this New Service—design workshops, commercial shopping galleries, tattoo parlours—that relates to their respective revalorisation as culture tourism, bohemian entertainment, or design industry. Culture as distinguished from entertainment is similarly convoluted through the tourist economy. Each barrio has an example of private or public investment in cultural centres and spaces. While licenced nightclubs as entertainment are becoming tourist attractors, most notably in Barrio Bellavista, their contribution to culture is generally an antagonism of residents through hours of operation, associated behaviour and noise. For this reason we have separated entertainment from culture, which may include live music. Commercial includes existing commercial activity that sits outside of the daily needs of residents.

Calle José Victorino Lastarria, has no land use associated with entertainment, in terms of licenced nightclubs. The dominant land use is Traditional Barrio (42%) with the next largest being Tourism (31%). However, with the above qualifiers, it could be argued that 56% of the land use of main street is Tourism—if 19% Commercial and 6% New Services are included

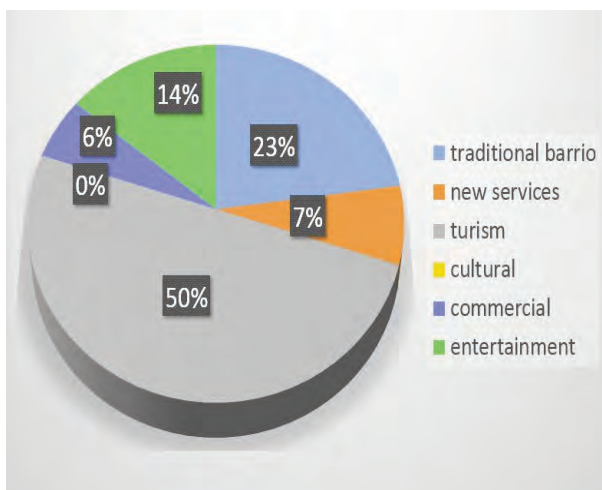


Figure 8. Land use in Calle Pío Nono, Barrio Bellavista (Source: Authors)

in the revalorisation of cultural tourism (Figure 7).

Calle Pío Nono, Barrio Bellavista, has no land use for Culture, 50% of the land use is Tourism, while only 23% of land use is associated with Traditional Barrio. If the licenced Nightclubs are included with tourism, 64% of the land use is for Tourism in the revalorisation of the Bohemian as Entertainment Residential Barrio (Figure 8).

Avenida Italia, Barrio Italia, like Calle Jose Victorino Lastarria, has a dominant land use of Traditional Barrio (42%). Land use for Tourism is only 19%. However, the making and selling of design products that formed the revalorisation of this barrio based on cultural tourism falls under the land use of Commercial (35%) Together they represent 54% of land use (Figure 9), similar to Calle Lastarria.

CONCLUSIONS

The revalorisation of these residential barrios under an overarching theme of cultural tourism is based on authenticity of place and locational distinction. Each of the three barrios presents example of the risks to the residential barrio and each shows hints of possible remedies to maintain a balance between the life of residents and commercial life. These risks include those to the immaterial heritage as it translates into the practice of the everyday and the commercial activity and services needed to sustain a resident population. Under revalorisation of residential barrios based on their material heritage, the risk to the residential barrio is primarily in the immaterial heritage maintained through residents use of the public spaces. The conservation of buildings, or of their façades, does not protect their use nor their social space.

The administration of the life of the residential barrio is a combination of Municipal Government, Resident Associations and other NGOs and the private interests represented by Business Associations. In each of these elements are the ingredients necessary to coordinate the continuity of the residential barrio. Similarly, planning and regulation are not the sole concern of government and involve these same parties in the maintenances of the unique qualities that afforded the initial revalorisation of the barrios. Residential barrio heritage and cultural tourism as the

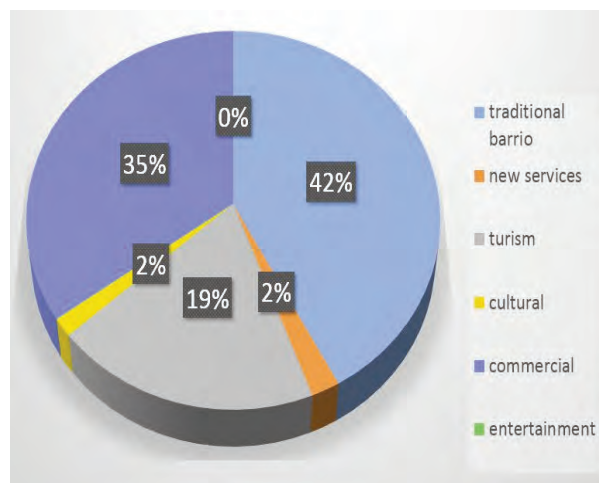


Figure 9. Land use in Avenida Italia, Barrio Italia (Source: Authors).

base of local social and economic activity cannot, by definition 'kill the goose that lays the golden egg', but it can change the residential population. Public and private investment in the restoration or creation of public spaces improves and strengthens the amenity of the residential barrio, but is often usurped by the consequent increase in cultural tourism.

The different sizes, residential densities and physical shapes and limits of the three residential barrios present different scenarios for the impacts of revalorisation based on the residential barrio's heritage and the form of cultural tourism. While the limits of Barrio Lastarria in the public imaginary are extended by the protection of the heritage zone, the residential can only be maintained by limits of commercial activity aimed at cultural tourism and the protection of long-term rental properties. Barrio Bellavista, with its mountain back and river frontage, has the buffer of extensive residential areas to the east and west that can protect residential barrio life from the social, environmental and heritage menace of entertainment. However without legislative protection and regulation, the degradation can only be contained by those parts of the barrio that hold a critical mass of material heritage. Barrio Italia, as being re-defined by the Barrio of Design, holds the best possibility of turning the invented barrio into a reinvention of the industrial residential barrio for the 21st century. With a focus of local design, the creation of new social spaces and investment in innovation there holds a possibility of low-impact, social-environmental, commercial activity as the economic base of the residential barrio, founded as an industrial barrio, that is combined with cultural tourism. Barrio Italia holds good examples of planning and regulation to protect streetscapes and public space.

Barrios that sit across two municipalities hold a vexed position. As demonstrated in Barrio Italia, the Municipality of Providencia has positively intervened with planning and investment to preserve and promote material and immaterial aspects of the residential barrio's heritage. The same municipality has been either unable or unwilling to intervene in Barrio Bellavista's main street, one side of which sits within its jurisdiction. Barrio Bellavista is not declared as, nor given the protection of, a Typical Zone as the area is too vast and diverse. By default, this diversity identifies the key strength for the protection of the residential barrio in

its material and immaterial heritage—the large areas of traditional residential housing, whether they be vertical or horizontal, and the associated daily life in the public spaces of the self-defined and self-sufficient barrio.

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