

Art Walks and their Impact on the Attractiveness of the City

Case Study: From Chillida to Plensa on Madrid's Paseo de la Castellana

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KEYWORDS

City
Art
Culture
Identity
Impact
Time

ABSTRACT

Art walks play a vital role in fostering shared values and enhancing a city's unique character. This study examines the artistic sculptural route along the Paseo de la Castellana in Madrid, specifically the stretch from Plaza de Colón to Plaza de San Juan de la Cruz, assessing its influence on the city's attractiveness and its impact on the life of its citizens.

The itinerary is interpreted in the light of López Quintás' philosophy of realms, evaluating its contribution to the city's branding and personality, both of which are crucial to urban attractiveness. A temporal framework is employed to explore this analysis, structured into three realms: Urban Identity (Past), Urban Dynamism (Present), and Urban Strategy (Future).

The findings reveal that such artistic itineraries play a significant role in shaping the identity and magnetism of a city, generating value and enhancing the quality of life for its inhabitants.

Received: 24 / 09 / 2024

Accepted: 27 / 12 / 2024

1. Introduction

The relationship between culture and the city has been a focal point in urban studies, notably highlighted by Richard Florida's introduction of the "Creative Class" concept. Florida posited that cities thrive economically when they attract individuals engaged in creative professions, emphasizing the synergy between cultural vitality and urban prosperity (Florida, 2005). This idea has continued to influence modern urban concepts like Smart Cities ((Batty et al., 2012; Giffinger et al., 2007) and the 15-minute city. (Moreno et al., 2021) Smart Cities integrate technology to enhance the quality of urban life, often leveraging cultural assets to foster innovation and community engagement. Similarly, the 15-minute city model promotes accessibility to cultural and essential services within a short distance, reinforcing the integration of culture into daily urban life.

Cities have focused on art and creativity as a branding strategy to become more attractive (Cudny et al., 2020). "Art walks" and "artistic itineraries" play a crucial role in enhancing city attractiveness by fostering cultural identity, inspiring creativity, driving economic opportunities, improving quality of life, strengthening city branding, and facilitating community building. These factors make the city more appealing to talented citizens, who are often drawn to environments that nurture and celebrate creativity.

The conventional approach to evaluating the impact of culture within the city typically emphasizes the presence of cultural assets within the city, as an indicator included in different city indexes (Akande et al., 2019; Cohen, 2014; EY, 2016; Giffinger et al., 2007; Hartley et al., 2012). However, this paper shifts the focus toward the significance of itineraries that connect these individual cultural elements. By examining the spatial and thematic links between these points, this study explores how these itineraries enhance the overall cultural impact and strengthen the relationship between culture and urban life. Furthermore, it investigates the potential of such interconnected cultural networks to elevate the attractiveness of the city, thereby contributing to its branding and appeal as a vibrant, culturally enriched urban environment.

Madrid is the capital of Spain, and a center of financial and economic power (being among the 50 top financial centres in Europe (Euronews, 2024) but also a center of culture where cultural capital of the country is concentrated, and according to some authors even recentralized (Rius-Ulledemolins et al., 2021). This research focuses on the city of Madrid as a case study, select a specific itinerary that combines art and culture with representativeness and a key economic role, in Paseo de la Castellana. The description of the elements of the itinerary and the methodology used for its analysis aims at putting into value the specific itinerary in the framework of urban magnetism and attractiveness but also generating an analysis methodology for urban features based on the concepts of Urban Identity (Past), Urban Dynamism (Present) and Urban Strategy (Future).

This paper approaches the relation of artistic itineraries or "art walks" with the urban characteristics that enhance city attractiveness. For this purpose, in section 2, the objectives and methodology of this research are described in detail, defining the research hypothesis and objectives (2.1.), and focusing on the methodology and research structure (2.2.). The third section describes the framework of this research focusing on three key elements: the impact of urban walk on attractiveness (3.1.), Madrid existing urban walks (3.2.) and the North-South Axis of Madrid (3.3.). After understanding this framework, the fourth section exposes the results of this research: the selection of the case study (4.1.), its description (4.2.) and as the core of the research, the Realm analysis. This analysis is organized according to three key concepts, as introduced in the previous paragraph: Urban Identity (Past), Urban Dynamism (Present) and Urban Strategy (Future). Finally, the fifth section includes the discussion and conclusion of the research, highlighting the link of the proposed itinerary and the research analysis with city magnetism and attractiveness.

2. Research objectives and Methodology

2.1. Hypothesis and Research Objectives

Urban walks can help increase city magnetism and attractiveness by enhancing their specific urban realms: identity (past), dynamism (present) and urban strategy (future) (Ondiviela, 2021).

The section Colón-San Juan de la Cruz is a high potential urban walk that can contribute to increase the city Magnetism and attractiveness of La Castellana Axis and the city of Madrid, becoming one of Madrid's main urban walks.

The objectives of this research are:

1. Describe the benefits of urban art walks for city magnetism and attractiveness.
2. Analyse the section Colón-San Juan de la Cruz unearthing its identity (past), dynamism (present) and urban strategy (future).
3. Describe the correlation between the selected itinerary and its impact in city magnetism and attractiveness under the light of the three described aspects.

2.2. Methodology and Paper Structure

This study employs a systematic approach divided into key stages to assess the art walks and their impact on branding and attractiveness. The first stage is a literature review, which involves gathering and analyzing existing academic literature on urban planning, public spaces, and urban attractiveness and branding strategies, related to creativity and art. This review provides a theoretical framework to guide subsequent stages and helps in identifying relevant case studies, methods, and key concepts. The case study of Madrid, and an area of interest in this city is selected, and the research of the case study combines academic literature with data from the local and regional government.

The next step is the definition of the specific itinerary to be studied. Based on the literature review, an urban route is mapped out that reflects significant cultural, architectural, and urban features of the area. The main uses of the building are mapped, and public space and mobility data is collected, using online sources and maps. This itinerary is essential for understanding the relationship between spatial arrangement and the city's branding potential.

Following the literature review and the selection of the itinerary, a site visit is conducted to gather empirical data and perform direct observation, focusing on the selected topics. This stage enables the researcher to gain firsthand insight into the spatial characteristics, social dynamics, and environmental conditions of the area.

Taking as a basis the combination of the literature review and the site visit, the research is organized into three aspects of the realm identified through literature:

a) Urban Identity (Past),

a.1. A selection of relevant buildings and urban elements is also made, emphasizing the most iconic or historically significant structures, bridges, and notable pieces of urban furniture. These are analyzed for their aesthetic, functional, and symbolic contributions to the itinerary.

a.2. Additionally, the selection of sculptures and other forms of public art, including museums, is included to understand their role in enhancing the cultural identity of the space.

b)Urban Dynamism (Present)

b.1. Online research on the uses of the main buildings in this section of Paseo de la Castellana provides the data for understanding its key role in finances, gastronomy and representativeness.

b.2. The information about mobility and walkability is collected through different official sources and projects, and onsite data collection, for analysing its impact in the case study, highlighting positive and negative aspects

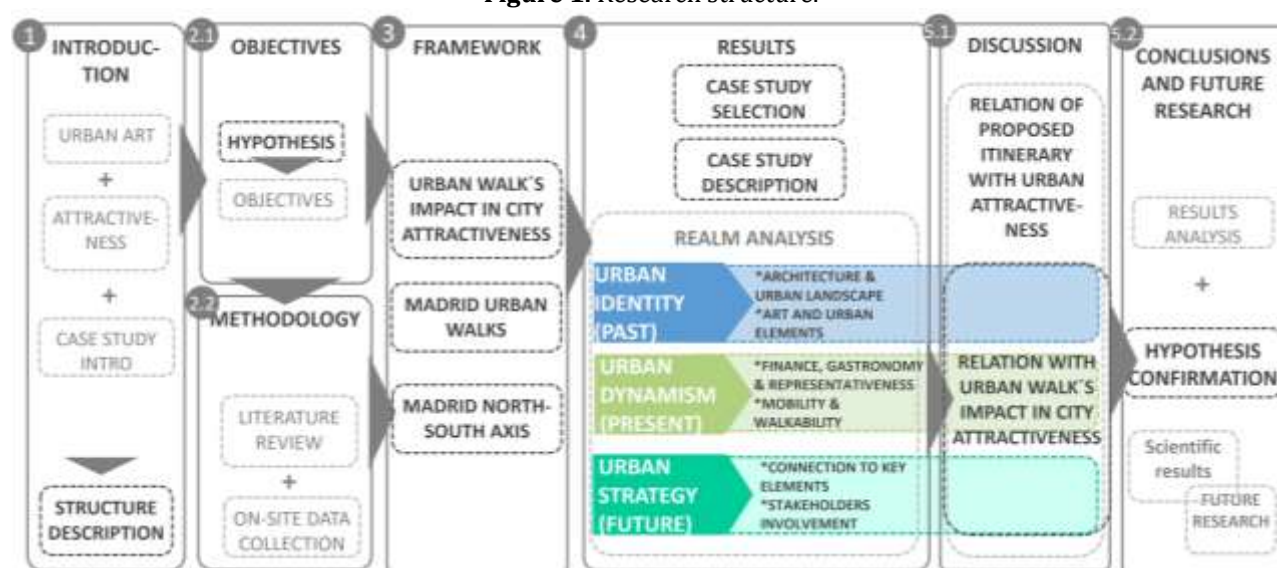
c)Urban Strategy (Future)

c.1. The strategic character of the area and the connection to key elements in the north-south axis will be key for the definition of the future strategy of this itinerary

c.2. Another key element for the definition of the future strategy of the itinerary is the key stakeholders involved, including a variety of agents and local population.

Finally, the relationship between the itinerary and the generation of brand and attractiveness is described highlighting how these elements shape the perception of the area as a destination or a landmark and extracting the final research conclusions.

Figure 1. Research structure.



Source(s): Authors' elaboration, 2024.

3. Framework

3.1. Urban Walks and their Impact in the City Magnetism and Attractiveness

"Art walks" or "artistic itineraries" are important tools for building city attractiveness, especially for talented citizens, as well as for existing neighbors, for several key reasons:

3.1.1. Cultural Identity and Community Engagement

Art walks help define and highlight a city's cultural identity (McCarthy, 2006; Simic, 2003) by showcasing local artists, galleries, and public art installations. For talented citizens, particularly those in creative fields, being part of a vibrant, culturally rich environment is highly appealing. It fosters a sense of belonging and provides opportunities for networking, collaboration, and creative inspiration. Moreover, art walks often involve community participation, which strengthens social bonds and creates a more inclusive and dynamic urban environment (Pinder, 2005).

Art Walk: Santa Fe, USA Canyon Road Art Walk. Santa Fe is known for its rich cultural heritage and vibrant arts scene, deeply rooted in Native American and Hispanic traditions. The Canyon Road Art Walk is a prominent example, featuring over 100 galleries and studios in a half-mile stretch. This art walk fosters community engagement by highlighting local artists and connecting them with residents and visitors, reinforcing the city's cultural identity (SantaFe Art Tours, 2024).

Art Walk/Itinerary: Dublin, Ireland James Joyce Itinerary. The James Joyce Itinerary in Dublin takes visitors through locations that were significant in the life and works of the famous Irish author, particularly those featured in his masterpiece, *Ulysses*. This itinerary is a deep dive into Dublin's literary heritage, reflecting the city's cultural identity and its rich literary history. By engaging both locals and tourists in the exploration of these historically and culturally significant sites, the itinerary fosters a strong sense of connection to the city's literary roots (James Joyce Centre, 2021).

3.1.2. Creative Inspiration and Innovation

For artists, designers, and other creative professionals, being surrounded by diverse forms of art and expression is a source of continuous inspiration, and art can enhance urban social innovation (Strom, 2019). Art walks allow for regular, direct engagement with contemporary art, which can spark new ideas and innovations (Pinto, 2017). A city that promotes artistic itineraries demonstrates its commitment to creativity and innovation, making it a more attractive place for talented individuals who thrive in such environments.

Art Walk/Itinerary: Berlin, Germany. Berlin Art Week. Berlin is a global hub for creativity and innovation, attracting artists, designers, and tech professionals. Berlin Art Week, which includes

numerous gallery openings, exhibitions, and public art installations across the city, serves as a significant source of inspiration for creative minds. This event encourages experimentation and avant-garde thinking, making the city a magnet for those seeking fresh ideas and creative stimulation. (*Berlin Art Week*, n.d.)

3.1.3. Economic Development and Opportunities

Artistic presence in cities is linked to economic development (Markusen & Schrock, 2006). Art walks can contribute to the local economy by attracting tourists, increasing foot traffic to businesses, generating economic revitalization (Grodach, 2010) and supporting the creative economy (Goldberg-Miller et al., 2021a). For talented citizens, this means more opportunities for employment, collaboration, and entrepreneurship. A thriving arts scene can also attract related industries such as design, fashion, media, and tech, further enhancing the economic appeal of the city to skilled professionals.

Art Walk/Itinerary: Miami, USA. Wynwood Art Walk. Miami's Wynwood Art Walk, held monthly in the Wynwood Arts District, has been instrumental in transforming the area into a thriving cultural and economic hub. The walk attracts thousands of visitors, boosting local businesses and supporting the creative economy. The success of the Wynwood Art Walk has made Miami an attractive city for talented individuals looking for opportunities in the arts and related industries (Wynwood Art Walk Tours Official, n.d.).

3.1.4. Quality of Life and Well-being

A city with a strong artistic presence is often associated with a higher quality of life (Michalos, 2005). Public art and cultural events contribute to the aesthetic appeal of the city, making it more enjoyable to live in. This aspect impacts equally neighbours and talented citizens, especially those who might be considering where to settle, as the availability of rich cultural experiences can be a deciding factor. Furthermore, the interaction of walkable spaces with creative locations, enabling urban walks, promotes physical activity and social interaction (Bereitschaft, 2019). Art walks create spaces where people can relax, explore, and connect with others, contributing to overall well-being.

Art Walk/Itinerary: Melbourne, Australia. Melbourne Laneways. Melbourne is renowned for its high quality of life, and its laneways are a key part of this. The city's network of laneways is filled with street art, small galleries, and creative spaces, offering residents and visitors alike a unique urban experience. Exploring these laneways provides a daily dose of inspiration and beauty, contributing to the overall well-being of the city's inhabitants and making Melbourne an attractive place to live (Walk Melbourne Tours, n.d.).

3.1.5. Branding and Global Appeal

Artistic itineraries help in branding the city as a cultural hub, a creative city (Andron, 2018), which can attract not only tourists but also talented individuals from around the world who are seeking vibrant and dynamic places to live and work. A city that is known for its artistic vibrancy is more likely to be seen as a forward-thinking, culturally progressive place, which is particularly attractive to those in the creative and knowledge-based sectors.

Art Walk/Itinerary: Venice, Italy. Venice Biennale. The Venice Biennale is one of the most prestigious cultural events in the world, held every two years across various locations in Venice. It showcases contemporary art from around the globe, reinforcing Venice's brand as a cultural capital. The Biennale attracts artists, collectors, and art enthusiasts from all over the world, enhancing the city's global appeal and making it a desirable destination for talented individuals in the arts (La Biennale di Venezia, 2023).

3.1.6. Networking and Community Building

Art walks provide natural settings for networking among creatives, cultural enthusiasts, professionals and neighbors. These events often bring together diverse groups of people, fostering connections that can lead to collaborations, projects, and new opportunities (Goldberg-Miller et al., 2021b). For talented citizens, especially those new to the city, art walks can be a gateway to becoming part of the local creative community and engaging with neighboring communities.

Art Walk/Itinerary: Portland, USA. First Thursday Art Walk. Portland's First Thursday Art Walk in the Pearl District is a key event for networking among artists, creatives, and professionals. Galleries, studios, and art spaces open their doors to the public, creating a vibrant atmosphere where ideas and collaborations flourish. This event not only showcases local talent but also fosters a strong sense of community, making Portland an appealing city for creative professionals looking to connect and collaborate (Urban Art Network, n.d.).

3.1.7. *Equity and accessibility to art*

It is key to highlight that art walks, unlike many other art elements such as museums, are not surrounded by physical barriers or require any economic spend for access. Therefore, art walks have become powerful tools to promote equity and engagement by bringing art to public spaces, democratizing access to creativity, and fostering community participation (Simic, 2003) focusing on their link to public spaces (Grodach, 2010). Both to open-minded talented citizens and to neighbourhoods and citizens from other areas, Art walks can become a door to creativity and an attractive asset in which people with different origins and incomes can mix-up. There exists the risk of gentrification and displacement too (Grodach, 2016), and strategies should focus on diminishing possible negative impacts.

Art Walk/itinerary: Seattle, USA. PhinneyWood Art Walk. This art walk showcases local artists, particularly highlighting those from underrepresented groups such as BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, and People of Color) artists, LGBTQ+ artists, and women. It is designed as a community-building exercise, where residents, local businesses, and artists come together to share and experience art in their neighborhood, encouraging accessibility and inclusivity (Phinney Center, 2023) .

3.2. *Madrid Urban Walks (Vicky)*

Madrid offers a vibrant range of art walks and cultural itineraries, ideal for art lovers and cultural explorers. Some of the top experiences include:

- **Paseo del Arte (Art Walk):** This famous route connects three of Madrid's most iconic museums—the Prado, the Reina Sofía, and the Thyssen-Bornemisza, forming a “Golden Triangle of Art.” Along this stretch, you can enjoy a journey through centuries of European art, including masterpieces from Velázquez, Goya, and Picasso.
- **Apertura Madrid Gallery Weekend** (September 12–15, 2024): This event brings together numerous art galleries and museums in the city with special exhibitions, extended opening hours, and guided tours, creating a dynamic atmosphere for contemporary art.
- **Open House Madrid** (September 26–29, 2024): This event explores Madrid's architectural beauty with special itineraries, including a unique art and architecture tour through Carabanchel, a neighborhood that has evolved into a creative hub
- **Special Museum Visits:** You can explore more niche options like the Sorolla Museum, which houses the works and personal items of Spanish impressionist Joaquín Sorolla, or the Lázaro Galdiano Museum, which features an impressive private art collection.

These itineraries showcase both historical and modern aspects of Madrid's art scene, from world-renowned masterpieces to contemporary galleries and vibrant street culture.

Research on the official itineraries of Madrid Regional Government (Turismo Madrid, n.d.) and Madrid City Council (Ayuntamiento de Madrid, n.d.-e) presents a wide coverage of the main areas of the city. The Regional government offers 13 groups of itineraries (including from 4 to 10 separated itineraries in each group) providing geographic information for all of them (see Figure 2), and none of which includes the selected case study totally, even if some of them are adjacent to it, given the relevance of the area. The webpage of Ayuntamiento de Madrid (Esmadrid) gathers information of itineraries proposed by different entities, through diverse programs of which maybe one of the most relevant, being proposed by the City Hall, is “Pasea Madrid” (Ayuntamiento de Madrid, n.d.-d) a program of eight routes visiting the key heritage of the city, none of which had already included the selected itinerary.

This wide offer leverages the potential of the city itineraries for the city branding but also provides an overview of the potential of certain areas that are not currently being included in these itineraries and can significantly impact city branding and talent attraction, connecting the existing itineraries with key elements.

Figure 2. Mapping of the city main itineraries according to Comunidad de Madrid



Source(s): Authors' elaboration from data of Turismo Madrid (Turismo Madrid, n.d.).

3.2.1. Landscape of Light, a Successful Urban Walk

Madrid's "**Paisaje de la Luz**" (**Landscape of Light**), recently recognized as a UNESCO World Heritage Site, is a prime example of how cultural heritage and urban planning can merge to create a space of immense cultural, educational, and artistic significance. The "Paisaje de la Luz" includes the Paseo del Prado and El Retiro Park, areas rich in history, art, and science. This recognition highlights the cultural and intellectual contributions of Madrid over centuries, and the area serves as a vital hub for both locals and visitors (Ayuntamiento de Madrid, 2022).

3.2.1.1. Cultural Identity

The "Paisaje de la Luz" is deeply embedded in Madrid's cultural identity. The area includes iconic institutions like the Prado Museum, the Royal Botanical Garden, and the Cibeles Fountain, which are central to the city's artistic and intellectual heritage. By preserving and celebrating these spaces, Madrid strengthens its identity as a cultural capital, reflecting its historical significance and its ongoing contributions to art, science, and knowledge.

3.2.1.2. Community Engagement

The area is not only a tourist destination but also a beloved space for locals. El Retiro Park, in particular, is a green oasis in the heart of the city where residents engage in leisure, cultural activities, and public gatherings. The Paseo del Prado, often referred to as the first tree-lined urban promenade in Europe, has historically been a place for public gatherings and intellectual exchange. The recognition as a UNESCO site encourages continued community engagement through cultural events, exhibitions, and educational activities, fostering a strong connection between the people of Madrid and their city's heritage (UNESCO, 2021).

3.2.1.3. Urban Relevance

- **Cultural Significance:** The “Paisaje de la Luz” embodies Madrid’s rich cultural history, blending art, science, and nature. This area has been a focal point of intellectual and cultural activity for centuries, contributing to the global reputation of Madrid as a center of learning and creativity.
- **Sustainable Urban Planning:** The integration of cultural sites with green spaces like El Retiro reflects innovative urban planning that values both heritage and sustainability, enhancing the quality of life for residents and the attractiveness of the city for talented individuals.
- **Educational and Inspirational:** The concentration of museums, monuments, and green spaces in this area makes it a living classroom, where locals and visitors alike can engage with the city’s history, art, and nature. It inspires creativity and intellectual curiosity, making Madrid a more appealing place for those in creative and academic fields.
- **Global Recognition and Appeal:** Being recognized as a UNESCO World Heritage site adds to Madrid’s global appeal, attracting not only tourists but also artists, scholars, and professionals who are drawn to cities with rich cultural landscapes.

3.3. Madrid North-South Axis: Prado-Recoletos-Castellana

The Prado-Recoletos-Castellana axis is one of Madrid’s most significant urban developments, representing the city’s evolution from the 17th century to the present day. This corridor has not only been a space for urban growth and expansion but also a symbol of the social, cultural, and political development of the Spanish capital.

In its early days, the promenade was a small stream that served as a natural boundary between the Villa of Madrid and the Gardens of Buen Retiro. It was during the reign of Carlos III that a series of urban and architectural reforms were carried out, consolidating the Paseo del Prado as a tree-lined promenade frequented by the bourgeoisie and the nobility. The Paseo de Recoletos emerged as a natural extension of the Paseo del Prado towards the north, following the course of the Castellana stream, and became lined with palaces and residential gardens on both sides of the avenue.

In the 19th century, the strong migration from the countryside to the city significantly increased the demand for housing and the need for urban expansion. Architect Carlos María de Castro designed an expansion project that proposed the city’s growth based on a rational grid. This plan extended the Prado-Recoletos axis northward, into what is now known as the Paseo de la Castellana. The proposal followed the course of the stream to its source at the Castellana Fountain, abruptly ending at the racetrack, near the current Nuevos Ministerios. The Castro Plan was fundamental to the modernization of Madrid, providing an orderly framework for urban growth and laying the foundation for new infrastructure and services in the capital.

The 20th century marks another important stage in the expansion of the Paseo de la Castellana. The Zuazo-Jansen Plan of 1929 proposed its extension from the racetrack to Plaza de Castilla, consolidating the North-South axis as the main structural corridor of Madrid. This stretch also included the construction of the underground railway line that connected Chamartín Station with Atocha Station, integrating the railway into the urban structure and improving the city’s connectivity.

The Castellana was extended to the Madrid ring road (Nudo Norte) in the 1970s. Finally, the 1997 General Plan proposed extending Madrid’s structural axis beyond the Nudo Norte, proposing the urbanization of unprotected land across the entire municipal area. This plan gave rise to what is now known as Madrid Nuevo Norte, the latest development of the Castellana, still awaiting urbanization.

The historical evolution of the Prado-Recoletos-Castellana axis is a testament to Madrid’s development over more than three centuries. From its beginnings as a simple path alongside a stream to becoming the great north-south corridor of the capital, this axis has witnessed the political, social, and urban changes that have shaped Madrid into a dynamic and cosmopolitan city. Through its different sections, one can observe Madrid’s transformation, reflecting the aspirations and challenges of each era (Irastorza, 2012).

4. Results

4.1. Case study selection

The initial section of the Paseo de la Castellana, stretching from Plaza de Colón to Plaza de San Juan de la Cruz, has been selected for this itinerary due to its relevance in the urban and cultural transformation of Madrid into a city with a calling to become a major capital (Chueca Goitia, 1974). This route not only offers insight into the city's historical evolution but also invites visitors to explore and appreciate a vital part of Madrid that has significantly contributed to its actual identity. The following points highlight the unique features of this section of the Prado-Recoletos-Castellana axis:

4.1.1. Integrated into the main axis of Madrid (Prado-Recoletos-Castellana).

A detailed analysis of the genesis and evolution of the Prado-Recoletos-Castellana axis reveals the historical and cultural significance of this Madrid artery, which has played a key role in shaping the city from the 17th century to the present day (Irastorza, 2012). The proposed itinerary is a fundamental part of this axis. It marks the beginning of the modern city, and from it, one can almost entirely view the North-South axis, as the line of sight extends south to Plaza de Cibeles and north past the Financial and Business District AZCA.

4.1.2. Continuity with the Cultural Itinerary of Prado-Recoletos "Paisaje de la Luz".

This section of the Castellana provides a natural extension to the Prado-Recoletos itinerary, which has been designated a UNESCO World Heritage Site as part of the ensemble "Paseo del Prado and Buen Retiro, a landscape of arts and sciences" or "Landscape of Light" (Ayuntamiento de Madrid, 2022). The Paseo de la Castellana, by extending this axis northward, maintains the connection between the city's cultural past and present, offering a new perspective on Madrid's historical and cultural reality.

4.1.3. Breaking the Limits of the Historic City.

This section marks a fundamental transition in Madrid's urban history, as it represents the point where the historic city begins to expand beyond its traditional boundaries. During the 19th century, with the development of the Madrid expansion initially projected in the Plan Castro (Castro & Bonet Correa, 1978), the city moved beyond its old core and began to evolve into a modern metropolis. The stretch of the Castellana from Plaza de Colón to San Juan de la Cruz is, therefore, a living testament to this expansion and Madrid's evolution into a larger and more complex city.

4.1.4. Bridging the gap.

This itinerary along Paseo de la Castellana leads to the further development of Madrid in the 20th (Zuazo Ugalde & Jansen, 1986) and 21st Centuries (Irastorza, 2012) and bridges the gap between two of the bourgeois districts of Madrid, Salamanca and Chambery districts, but also across East and West of Madrid at a higher scale. They are areas of significant historical representation in Madrid, encompassing important cultural and economic elements. However, they are currently divided by the physical barrier of Paseo de la Castellana (Ezquiaga Domínguez, 2018a).

4.1.5. Confluence of representative, economic and artistic identity.

This itinerary represents the confluence of different aspects that are related to the Attractiveness and Identity of cities. Firstly, the cultural aspects, through the location of different art and architecture elements along the itinerary. Secondly, the economic dimension is represented by the location of the headquarters of multiple national and international companies. And thirdly, the representative aspect, being this zone of Paseo de la Castellana the location for multiple national entities and international embassies (Gea Ortigas, 2010).

4.1.6. Integration of Disciplines and Valorisation.

The selected section offers a unique integration of disciplines, encompassing urban planning, civil engineering, architecture, art, and landscape design (Fernández Ordóñez & Navarro Vera, 2009).

Despite being one of the most heavily trafficked areas in the city, the section of the Castellana between Colón and San Juan de la Cruz remains relatively unknown in terms of its artistic and cultural richness. This stretch can be seen as a strong synthesis of what the 20th century represented for the city, but also, a challenge of what the city aims to become.

4.1.7. Short Description of the Proposed Itinerary

The Plaza de Colón marks the starting point of this itinerary. Named in honor of the navigator Christopher Columbus, Plaza de Colón is a place of great historical and cultural significance in Madrid, which has been refurbished in several times. The sculpture "Julia" by Jaume Plensa (Turismo Madrid, 2024b) serves as the most recent landmark, intending to impart a new significance to this eclectic location.

The journey continues along Paseo de la Castellana, an extension of the Prado-Recoletos axis. Along this avenue are some of the capital's most iconic modern buildings, such as the Bankinter Building by Rafael Moneo and Ramón Bescós, and the Catalana Occidente Building by Rafael de la Hoz and Gerardo Olivares (García Germán & Abril, 2006). In addition, several 19th-century mansions, which have withstood the test of time, stand alongside these modern structures (Gea Ortigas, 2010).

At the intersection with Eduardo Dato, stands the Eduardo Dato Bridge, designed by engineers José Antonio Fernández Ordóñez and Julio Martínez Calzón (Fernández Ordóñez & Navarro Vera, 2009). Beneath the bridge lies the Open-Air Sculpture Museum, featuring works by Eduardo Chillida, Eusebio Sem-pere, and Joan Miró, among other prominent 20th-century Spanish artists (Turismo Madrid, 2024a).

The route passes through Plaza de Emilio Castelar, which pays tribute to one of the great orators and politicians of the 19th century. Plaza de Gregorio Marañón, located at the junction of Paseo de la Castellana and María de Molina Street, features a statue honoring the distinguished physician and writer, a highly influential figure in the history of Spanish science and culture. This section of La Castellana is more residential and includes several architect Gutiérrez Soto's bourgeois housing buildings (Baldellou, 1973).

The itinerary ends at Plaza de San Juan de la Cruz. Surrounding this plaza are the Museum of Natural Sciences, the Nuevos Ministerios complex designed by architect Secundino Zuazo and engineer Eduardo Torroja (Ayuntamiento de Madrid, 2024) —which houses the Casa de la Arquitectura—and the High Command headquarters, designed by architect Luis Gutiérrez Soto (Baldellou, 1973). In addition to the large central fountain, the plaza is home to several sculptures, including the monument to Isabella the Catholic, "The Hand" by Fernando Botero (Turismo Madrid, 2022a), and the Monument to the Constitution by architect Miguel Ángel Ruiz Larrea (Turismo Madrid, 2022b).

This itinerary, spanning just under two kilometers, presents numerous points of interest, encompassing art, architecture, history, finance, gastronomy, and public life. In the subsequent section, we will examine each of these elements integrated into three urban realms which represent the past, the present and the future of the city, to understand how they contribute to the development of an appealing city that fosters value creation and enhances the quality of life for its inhabitants.

4.2. Realm Analysis

For the analysis of this section of the Castellana, we draw on Alfonso López Quintás' Theory of Realms (López Quintás, 2015). López Quintás' methodology activates and connects the ethical and aesthetic dimensions (López Quintás, 1977), enabling us to relate the presence or absence of certain values in the city and urban theory to the human reality that arises from them.

In his philosophy of realms, López Quintás proposes a type of analysis that transcends mere objectivity to enter the super-objective realm, becoming closely linked with the realms that shape the realities under study. To achieve this, it is necessary to contemplate reality in its various dimensions with a creative approach, seeking deep knowledge by engaging with realms of increasingly profound levels.

The city can be studied and understood from this dual perspective: on the one hand, as a realm-based reality and a convergence of multiple meaningful realms. On the other hand, as a place where human encounter and dwelling occur, connecting the city with human values and elevating it to the status of a

super-objective reality. The qualities of the city significantly influence the potential for human life to flourish.

Urban analysis, from this perspective, activates the humanist dimension and the concern for the people living in cities, recognizing that the city is one of the great structures for human coexistence created by culture. It highlights the need to link the interpretation of the city to the values of beauty, truth, and goodness, based on the hypothesis that, beneath different viewpoints and historical realities, there are common values whose vital integration is of utmost importance for our personal, social, and historical existence.

Alfonso López Quintás' theory of realms, when applied to the analysis and interpretation of the city, brings the ethical dimension to the forefront and connects urban reality with the lives of the people inhabiting it. This approach centers on the person, operating on the principle that the dignity and holistic development of the individual should be the aim of all human endeavors.

Humans leave imprints of their existence, experiences, efforts, and history within the city. These imprints take the form of monuments, neighborhoods, trees, buildings, public spaces, parks, churches, libraries, institutions, universities, and more. Together, they form the collective legacy of the city, fostering a sense of continuity for its residents, helping them understand their origins, and allowing them to envision their future. As a result, City Magnetism emerges from human activity and encompasses three realms of human action: past, present, and future. This perspective allows us to view the city's evolution as a fundamentally human process (Ondiviela, 2021).

In this section, we will analyze the three realms in which human action appears:

- Urban identity (Past)
- Urban Dynamism (Present)
- Urban Strategy (Future)

4.2.1. Urban identity (Past)

4.2.1.1. Architecture and Urban Landscape

After the wall was demolished to facilitate Madrid's expansion, the extension of the Paseo de Recoletos toward the north, between the future neighborhoods of Salamanca and Almagro marked the creation of the first section of Paseo de la Castellana. It stretched from the northeastern corner of the old city, where the Convent of the Augustinian Recollects once stood, now Plaza de Colón, to the present-day Plaza de San Juan de la Cruz, where the Castellana originally ended at Madrid's former racecourse.

In discussions of this section of Paseo de la Castellana, authors frequently refer to the palaces lost during the developmental boom of the 1960s and 1970s. Together with the palaces, statues, fountains, and the once-idyllic promenade atmosphere were replaced by heavy traffic and the headquarters of major banks and corporations (Chueca Goitia, 1974). This urban transformation led to a new form of urbanism that has often been criticized (Capitel, 2018), yet it has indisputably allowed the Castellana to become Madrid's most emblematic thoroughfare. The palaces typology, which is unfrequent in the city of Madrid, will later favor the morphological transformation of the area, allowing for the speculative replacement of the original buildings with larger freestanding office buildings. (Ezquiaga Domínguez, 2018b) Although modern office buildings dominate the area, they were executed with architecturally interesting designs. In most cases, the spatial arrangement, with sufficient gaps between detached buildings, mitigates the stylistic contrasts, creating a new sense of balance and order despite the apparent eclecticism (Gea Ortigas, 2010).

Paseo de la Castellana is sometimes criticized for generating environmentally desolate spaces, particularly with underutilized boulevards. While this criticism is valid to some extent, it is not solely a result of heavy traffic but also due to the low residential use of its buildings, contributing to a depopulated human landscape at the heart of the city (Ezquiaga Domínguez, 2018b). Some authors also criticize the lack of urban vitality in the area due to the lack of commerce and the irregular configuration of the street frontages, alternating isolated buildings with traditional closed-block constructions (Ezquiaga Domínguez, 2018b). The Paseo de la Castellana, conceived with an aspiration for modernity, has successfully integrated a range of artistic, architectural, and engineering elements.

4.2.1.2. Art and Urban Elements

The strive of the Paseo del Prado-Recoletos to represent the illustrated city evolved into the aspiration of the Paseo de la Castellana to become a symbol of modernity and contemporary life. This has created a unique collection of art that enriches the area and allows for a highly interesting art walk.

The art walk would start at the piece *Julia* (Turismo Madrid, 2024b), a sculpture by Jaume Plensa, installed in Plaza de Colón in 2018. The 12-meter-tall artwork was created specifically for this location and sits on the pedestal once occupied by a statue of Christopher Columbus. The sculpture was modeled after a young girl from San Sebastián, whose head was scanned to achieve an exact volumetric representation. Plensa digitally manipulated the figure to elongate and stylize it while retaining anatomical accuracy. Positioned to face west, *Julia* interacts with the surrounding environment, casting a shadow across the square, and visually connecting with the nearby National Library. According to Plensa, the work seeks to prompt personal reflection amid the public square's bustling activity, offering a "poetic and virtual mirror" where viewers can reflect on their inner questions.

After some blocks to the north, we find *La Sirena Varada* by Eduardo Chillida (Turismo Madrid, 2023), installed in the Museo de Escultura al Aire Libre (Turismo Madrid, 2024a) along the Paseo de la Castellana. Created in 1970 and permanently installed in 1978, it was the first concrete sculpture by Chillida. Positioned beneath the bridge that connects Juan Bravo and Eduardo Dato streets, this nine-ton work appears to float, suspended by four steel cables anchored to the bridge's columns. The white concrete structure reveals its wooden formwork, characteristic of brutalist architecture. The sculpture consists of two extended arms and three additional elements, with the lowest resembling an anvil—a recurrent theme in Chillida's work, symbolizing his poetic exploration of space, material, and mythology.

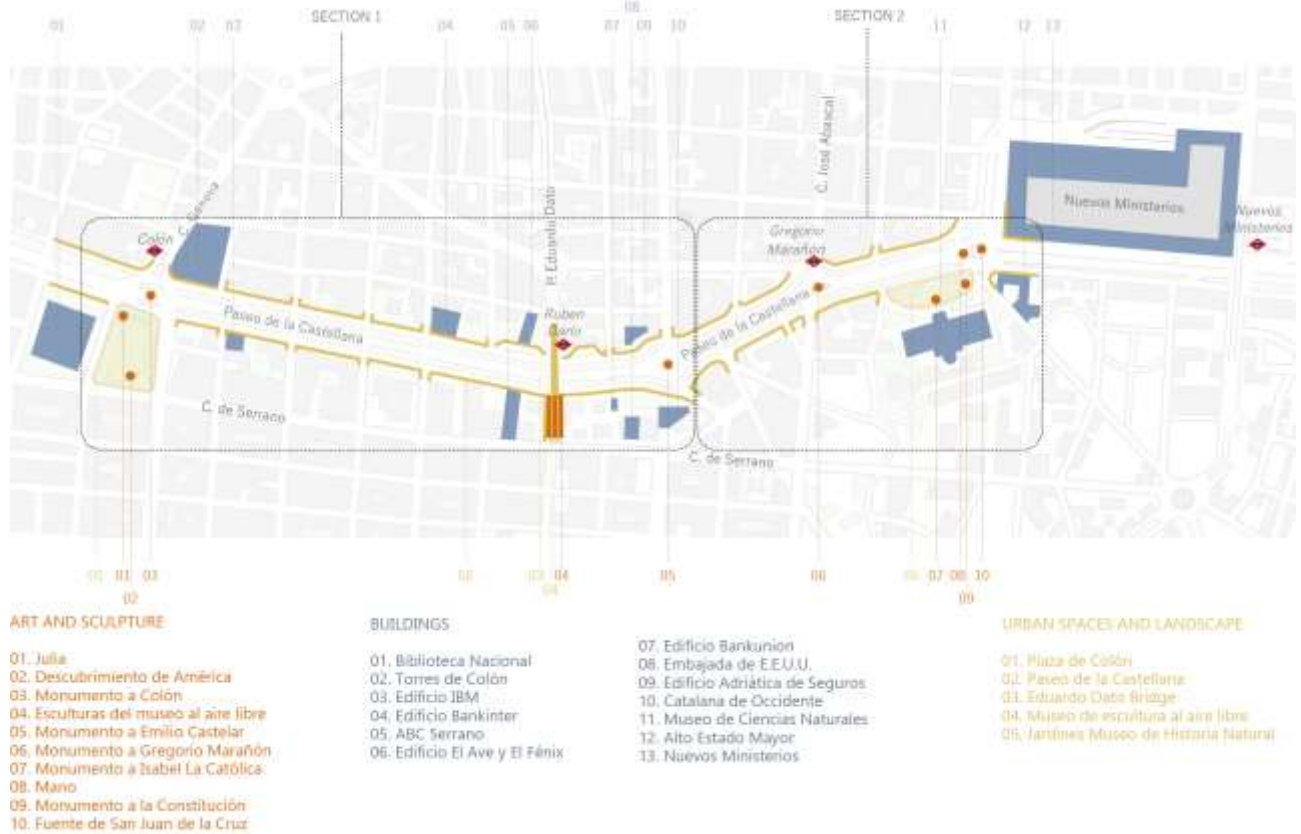
The *Museo de Escultura al Aire Libre* was conceived alongside the construction of the bridge *Puente de Juan Bravo* (Fernández Ordóñez & Navarro Vera, 2009), designed by engineers José Antonio Fernández Ordóñez and Julio Martínez Calzón, with contributions from artist Eusebio Sempere. Opened in 1972, the museum initially featured a small collection of avant-garde sculptures, including works by the generation of artists from the 1950s who had gained international recognition by that time.

Arriving at the end of the walk *La Mano* by Fernando Botero (Turismo Madrid, 2022a), located in Plaza de San Juan de la Cruz. Installed in 1994 as part of a temporary exhibition of Botero's work along the Paseo de Recoletos, **La Mano** was one of three pieces the Colombian artist left in Madrid after the exhibition's success. Made of 500 kilograms of bronze, the sculpture exemplifies Botero's admiration for Rubens' opulent forms and the sensuality of exaggerated curves, rendered with his characteristic naive and excessive style.

Finally, *Monumento a la Constitución de 1978* (Turismo Madrid, 2022b), designed by architect Miguel Ángel Ruiz Larrea, is located near the National Museum of Natural Sciences. This minimalist cube, constructed in 1982, is made of reinforced concrete and clad in white marble. The sculpture features pyramidally recessed faces and a hollow interior, symbolizing openness and rationality, reflecting the democratic values of the 1978 Spanish Constitution.

These works, along with the broader design of the Paseo de la Castellana, represent the aspirational values of an era, that range from the openness and desire for progress of the early democracy years, to the search for intimacy and meaning in more recent years.

Figure 3. Mapping of the main art pieces and architectural elements of the itinerary



Source(s): Paola Cuitiva, 2024.

4.2.2. Urban Dynamism (Present)

4.2.2.1. Finance, Gastronomy and Representativity

This section of Paseo de la Castellana (from numbers 1 to 80) is very significant due to its concentration of financial institutions, cultural landmarks, government offices and leisure spots. Its relevance lies in the interplay between economic activity and social dynamism, creating a vibrant atmosphere where professionals, tourists, and locals engage with the city on multiple levels. The avenue represents Madrid's blend of business, culture, and social life, making it a cornerstone of the city's urban fabric.

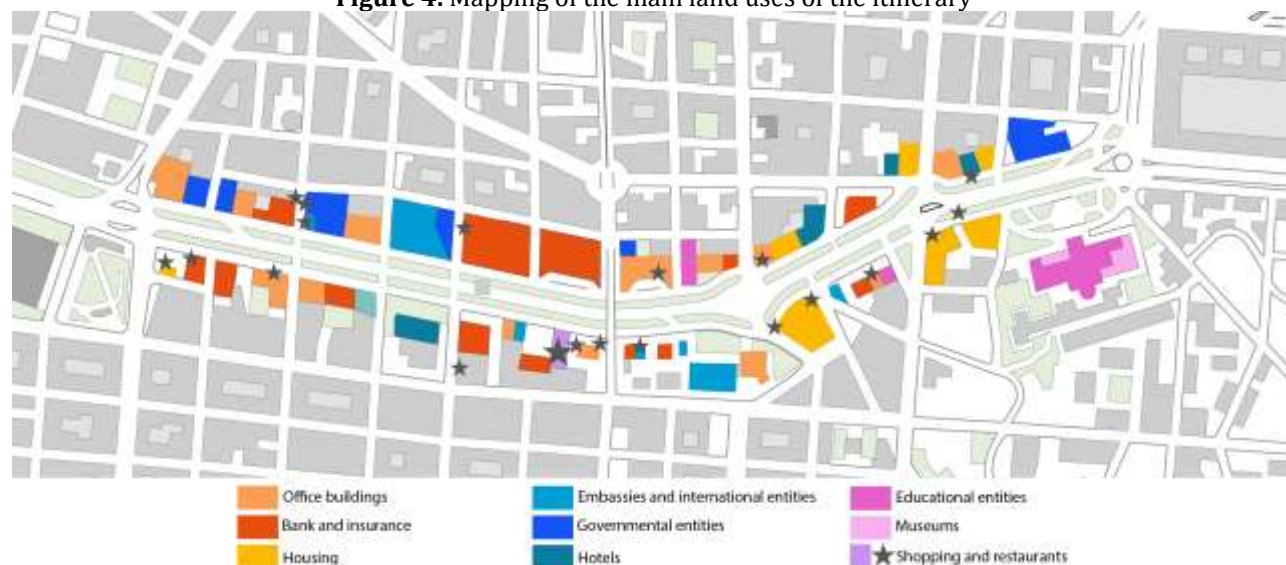
If we look at the similarity of the Paseo de la Castellana with the spinal column of Madrid as the capital of Spain, we could say that this area is the brain stem of that column. If the brain stem includes in just 1 cm all the vital functions such as breathing or heart rate, we can say that this area includes the majority of Spain banking entities, insurance companies, and ministries of the Spanish central government. In addition, it includes an extensive collection of embassies (USA, Italy, EU Commission and Parliament, Germany, Japan, UK Chamber of Commerce, Korea...) meaning an important share of the world's GDP.

This area forms part of Madrid's "Golden Mile of Finance," making it a strategic location for national and international business activities. The proximity of these institutions encourages a concentration of professionals, fostering economic activity in the form of high-end retail, hospitality, and services.

But it also includes very important museums, famous restaurants, top hotels and even the more traditional University of Engineers. This is undoubtedly an area for competitiveness and creativity at the present time, generating dynamism and action. An area subject to strong changes between night and day, between work days and weekends. There are hardly any residential buildings, more than 90% of the buildings are offices, government entities, institutional or cultural locations. On a workday during the hours of entry and exit and lunch times, we can see flows of white-collar workers rushing to get to the office quickly. These are the most vibrant hours. At night, hardly any restaurants show life. During the weekend, walkers with their families and pets can enjoy the area. And tourists (many of them in transit between the iconic areas of the south - Recoletos-Prado and North-Santiago Bernabeu Stadium)

walk along this itinerary at any time and are surprised by the cultural elements and museums that can also be found here.

Figure 4. Mapping of the main land uses of the itinerary



Source(s): Authors' elaboration, 2024.

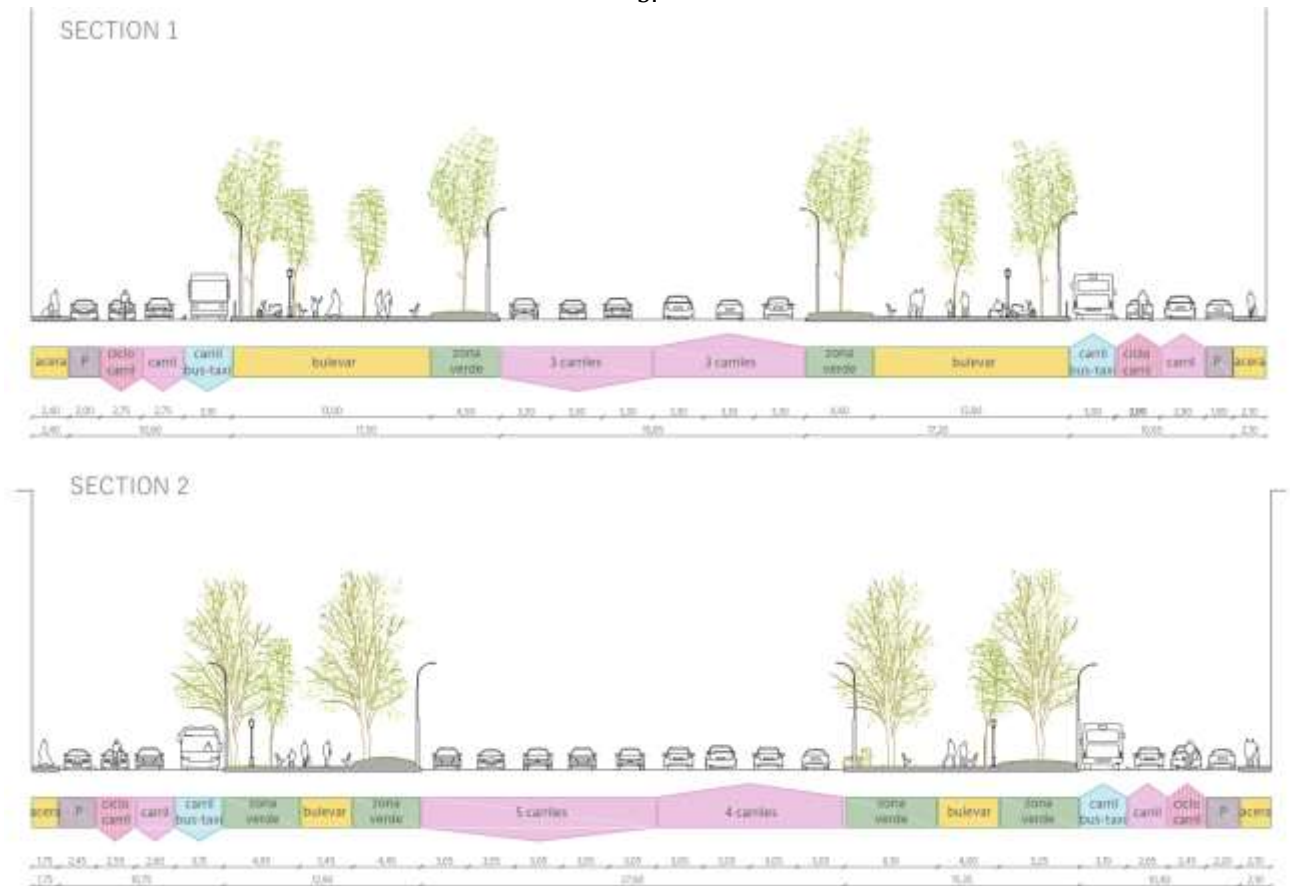
4.2.2.2. Mobility and Walkability

Paseo de la Castellana is a twofold element regarding urban mobility, as reflected by different authors and in urban proposals and plans. Paseo de la Castellana can be understood as a linear urban park superimposed on an urban highway (Capitel, 2018), and therefore it can be understood from the Link and Place approach (Jones et al., 2007) or Movement and place (Porto Schettino et al., 2016). This contradiction determines the perception and usage of Paseo de la Castellana in the proposed itinerary.

On the one hand, we can analyze its configuration as a highway. In the section where we are located, the Paseo de la Castellana has three central lanes, which increase to four. The distribution of Paseo de la Castellana complements those central lanes with two side lanes and a bus lane in each of the laterals. IT is key to highlight that it is also a railway highway, with commuter trains running below, connecting Atocha and Chamartín stations, with a major intermediate station: Nuevos Ministerios, which exemplifies the intersection of architecture and infrastructure. This supposes a difficulty for the interaction with the transversal axis such as Eduardo Dato, previously mentioned, solved through bridges with an important impact in the perception and the permeability.

Paseo de la Castellana presents primary circulation mainly North-South, with an average of 107,000 cars passing through the Paseo de la Castellana daily (Vega, 2021). acting as a barrier not only physical between the two sides, but also a barrier for all kinds of mobility connectivity, as reflected in Indicator 31, "Neighborhood Connectivity in Public Transport," from the 5th Report on the State of Mobility in Madrid (Ayuntamiento de Madrid, 2012) that shows how the relationships between neighborhoods around Paseo de la Castellana occur primarily from north to south, with hardly any connections from east to west, and without significant changes in the last decade. The width of Paseo de la Castellana in this section varies slightly, 80 to 81m, but significant variations take place in the traffic occupancy of public space, which varies from 43,5 % to 52,6% while in Paseo del Prado and Paseo de Recoletos is a 10% less (Porto Schettino et al., 2016). Central circulation is complemented by 2 lateral lower-speed lanes, one of them being a bicycle-friendly lane (of 30 km/h maximum speed, frequently exceeded by cars) and a Bus-taxi lane. The bus stops generate islands between these lanes that are difficult to access.

Figure 5. Street sections of Paseo de la Castellana. Selection of Section 1 and Section 2 as indicated in Figure 3.



Source(s): Esquema funcional Eje Norte-Sur (Porto Schettino et al., 2016)

On the other hand, Paseo de la Castellana is an urban park, partly maintaining its initial character and representativeness. This aspect should be put into value as it supposes its main potential as a public space for becoming an important Art Walk. It combines tree-lined walkways, permeable surfaces, and gardened buffers to separate the pedestrian areas from the central high-intensity traffic lane. These boulevard walkways vary from the generous initial 13 meters in width to get drastically reduced after the Gregorio Marañón square. Even if the proximity of the high-speed traffic can generate discomfort (noise, pollution, heat), it is a place for climatic comfort due to vegetation, permeable soils in part of it, and shadows of neighboring buildings. The boulevard is quite homogeneous in its design, but it presents a certain lack of identity of the spaces as it hardly includes children's playgrounds, options for exercising, fountains, or differentiated garden spaces is also significant and characterizes the open spaces design approach. The itinerary starts and ends with two significant plazas and gardens: Gardens of Discovery and Gardens of the Spanish Transition, both centers of culture and representativeness providing access to cultural and educational institutions. In the middle point of the itinerary, as mentioned in the previous sections, the Museo de Escultura al Aire Libre is a significant space in the itinerary regarding culture, but also integrating shadows and water. When it comes to smaller plazas and significative spaces the initial public squares became now inaccessible roundabouts crowned by monuments, and there is also room for improvement in this aspect.

The mix of this highway and park, link and place, is often unbalanced in this itinerary and the potential of the urban park is diminished by conflicts that should be addressed. The first conflict, already mentioned, is the reduced perception of comfort in the park due to the proximity of the traffic. The second identified problem is pedestrian and active modes connectivity, truncated by central traffic but also lateral traffic and its connections. For a pedestrian, to cross la Castellana from one side to another supposed a cycle of 3 to 5 different pedestrian crossings with different durations. The walkways on both sides are insufficient (from 1,75 m to 2,40 at certain points (Porto Schettino et al., 2016) and the Boulevard walkways generate discontinuities. There is a lack of exclusive bike lanes, just a shared lateral

lane that seems insufficient. The third identified problem is the characterization of public space, which is quite homogeneous and lack of different uses for different ages and profiles. Urban design and public spaces need an integrated approach for the success of the proposed itinerary.

4.2.3. Urban Strategy (Future)

4.2.3.1. Connection to key elements in the future of the North-South axis

When looking to the future, the strategy for this area is tightly linked to the future of the complete extension of Paseo de la Castellana. The importance of Paseo del Prado and Paseo the Recoletos at the beginning of this central axis of Madrid, with the importance of “Paisaje de la Luz” (Ayuntamiento de Madrid, n.d.-c) and the cultural and representative elements of this area, has already been mentioned in this article. When looking at the future of Paseo de la Castellana it is necessary to look at the north of this axis. One of the most important urban developments in Europe, Madrid Nuevo Norte (Crea Madrid Nuevo Norte, 2021) with 3.35,6 ha, will have a significant impact at the end of la Castellana and the intervention will involve the coverage of the traffic connections and pedestrianization of the last part of Paseo de la Castellana, as reflected in the Plan Parcial de Reforma Interior of APR 08.03 (Ayuntamiento de Madrid, 2009). At a lower scale, the section of Paseo de la Castellana selected for this itinerary serves for the connection with AZCA a business area that will suffer an important urban intervention (Renazca, n.d.). Regarding the cultural connection, this axe will connect two of the most visited Museums in Madrid, Museo del Prado, which has reached the top10 of Worldwide museums with 3.337.550 visitors in 2023 (Lee, 2024), and Santiago Bernabeu Stadium and Real Madrid Museum, which after its recent re-opening is receiving almost 6000 visitors per day (Dondiaro, 2024). This strategy of physical connection could be complemented by the digital connection, as Madrid is also developing different initiatives through its Digital Transformation Strategy (Ayuntamiento de Madrid, n.d.-a), such as its own Digital Twin (Ayuntamiento de Madrid, n.d.-b), in which urban economy and planning play a key role, but becomes also an opportunity for art and architecture representativeness and diffusion.

This article highlighted the importance and uniqueness of the architectural and artistic patrimony present in the area. It becomes a walk through the work of some of the most important artists, architects and engineers of Spain in the XX century that need to be put into value.

The possibilities of the rehabilitation and redesign of the public space in the area were already described in the previous section. This area has already been the subject of different proposals, already not developed, such as the proposal of Paseo N-S led by Ayuntamiento de Madrid (Porto Schettino et al., 2016). This proposal aimed to increase the walkability and connectivity of the area through active modes and public transport, focusing mainly on its design. An urban intervention of this kind, involved in a strategic plan and with significant changes will boost the area's transformation facilitating pedestrian connection and walks. The inclusion of new uses in the public space, such as commerce or restaurants, would also have a significant influence on the development of this itinerary.

4.2.3.2. Strategic planning process and stakeholders' involvement

The process of strategic planning is complex and requires an organization in time. A strategy for the area that is included in this itinerary should be strongly tight to the different Madrid Urban strategies, and could be developed as part of a complete strategy for the North-South axis, as suggested in the previous sub-section, but also as part of other urban strategies for art, for the neighboring districts or the complete city.

The stages of urban strategic planning (Fernandez Güell, 2006) would include a Launching period, the Characterization of the development models (physical, economic and social) and a series of in-depth analyses (environment, demand, urban systems and supply analysis). After this the Generation of the Strategic vision of the area would take place, attending to the different relevant aspects.

This strategy for the definition of a new itinerary and the possible interventions will start with a process of multi-stakeholder involvement with a quadruple helix approach (Lombardi et al., 2012) due to its importance and representativeness, including:

- Public sector: especially the local government, but also the regional and national government and international entities, due to the location of representative buildings at those levels.

- Public companies, with a heavyweight in the occupancy of the land uses that delimit the area and the opportunities this could mean.
- Civil society: due to the importance of the connection of the neighborhoods around it and the services it could provide, reaching goals of increased livability.
- Universities, for the knowledge they can bring within the different involved fields.

The relevance of the stakeholders involved provides an idea of the magnitude of the impact of this itinerary and the impact on the generation of branding and the attractiveness its development could mean.

5. Discussion and conclusions

5.1. Relationship of the itinerary with the generation of branding and attractiveness

City art walks and cultural itineraries play a vital role in building a city's brand and attractiveness for the reasons described in section 3, "Framework" of this article, and the selected itinerary, analysed according to the aspects of the urban realm Urban identity (Past), urban Dynamism (present) and Urban Strategy (future) contributes to these different aspects as follows:

5.1.1. Cultural identity and Community Engagement:

Art walks help cities differentiate themselves by showcasing their unique cultural assets. Cities with well-curated cultural experiences highlight their artistic heritage, contemporary art scene, and local creativity, which distinguishes them from other destinations. This itinerary, through its artistic and architectural Identity (past), along with its current usage for representational purposes (Dynamism, Present) plays a pivotal role in shaping the cultural identity of the city. Urban strategy (Future) should prioritize enhancing community engagement by providing a diverse range of activities and spaces for a variety of citizens' profiles.

5.1.1.1. Creative inspiration and innovation

This section of Paseo de la Castellana enhances the city's attractiveness through its Urban Dynamism (present) featuring a mix of offices and headquarters from important financial companies, embassies and governmental institutions, but also from Museums and educational institutions, and even co-working spaces and offices for renting. These entities benefit from their interaction, enriching the area's attractiveness. As discussed later, this interaction should extend to citizens, especially through the physical integration of public spaces. Such initiatives would foster an innovative environment, thereby increasing the city's attractiveness.

5.1.1.2. Economic development and opportunities

Cultural itineraries attract tourists who seek meaningful, authentic experiences. Art and culture are key drivers for tourism, contributing significantly to the local economy. But this itinerary also presents a potential to influence not only tourism, but valuable workplaces and representative spaces for institutions and private companies more attractive and integrated into city life, as reflected in the analysis of the Urban Dynamism (present) aspects of the itinerary.

5.1.1.3. Quality of life and Well-being

Both the presence of art and the existence of green and open spaces for expansion in congested areas contribute to an enhanced quality of life. This Itinerary potentially merges these two aspects. The analysis of the Urban Identity (Past) and Urban Dynamism (Present), highlights the role of Paseo de la Castellana as a linear urban park that incorporates art. Urban strategy (Future) should aim to amplify this potential, reducing pollution and creating spaces for public enjoyment, thereby improving overall well-being.

5.1.1.4. Branding and global appeal

A robust cultural offering elevates a city's global image. Madrid has made significant strides in this regard, earning international recognition. This not only boosts its prestige but also attracts investment, new residents, and cultural collaborations. The itinerary, through its historical Identity (past), its Dynamism (present), and its forward-looking strategy (Future), has the potential to play a key role in strengthening Madrid's brand and global appeal by connecting cultural, urban, and stakeholder development.

5.1.1.5. Networking and community building:

Art walks and cultural events often activate public spaces, encouraging engagement with the local environment. By integrating art into everyday life, these initiatives make cities more liveable and attractive, turning them into vibrant hubs of activity for all citizens. The selected itinerary lays the groundwork for such development through its Identity (Past) and its current usage (Present). However, a strategy (Future) is needed to improve public spaces and the activities within them, enhancing the role of this section of Paseo de la Castellana as a linear park.

5.1.1.6. Equity and accessibility to art.

Street art, accessible without financial barriers, has the potential to reach diverse citizen and visitor profiles. This itinerary offers an open-air experience accessible to all. Although located in a high-income area, its central location, proximity to major transportation hubs (Nuevos Ministerios), and extensive transit connections make it highly accessible. Future urban strategies should focus on broadening its reach to different social groups by developing a variety of engaging activities.

Furthermore, a **strong correlation between art walks and City score is reflected at the Worldwide Observatory for Attractive Cities** (UFV, 2023). Those cities which hold these cultural scenarios and activities enjoy top positions in Branding, City Identity, City Magnetism indicators from that Observatory. This strongly builds recognition from the emotional ("I like that City") decision-maker criteria. Together with the rational ("That City is a good deal") criteria, the talented citizens are choosing the best city in the world to develop their full potential. Since 2023, Street art is one of the indicators included into the methodology of the ranking, but this itinerary is also related to several other indicators in the field of City Magnetism, such as History and Culture, Natural space, Gastronomy, cultural events, Competitiveness, Expat social experienter or Civic engagement; but also on the field of profitability, where Sustainability in the city, its role as city destination, Urban planning quality or urban mobility play a key role. According to the 2023 edition of this ranking, Madrid is already in the Top5 cities regarding City Identity (UFV,2021). Putting into value this itinerary could help the city to enhance its performance in other areas.

6. Conclusions

This study highlights the importance of an itinerary in the city of Madrid that presents and enormous potential, but that is not currently developing a core role in the city. One of the main conclusions of this research is the need to bring value to the studied itinerary. Regarding the analysis, the relation of the area with the Urban Identity through art and culture presents strong foundations, through its aspirations to become a symbol of modernity and contemporary life, and the importance of the art pieces and architecture of the 20th century. When analyzed through the perspective of the Urban Dynamism (present) the importance of the itinerary for finance, gastronomy and representativity is supported by the presence in different uses that generate an interaction between economic activity, institutional representation and social dynamism. However, regarding this approach focused on Urban Dynamism (present), the aspects of walkability and mobility should be addressed, as many important services are missed to enhance its connectivity, like a bike lane, and wider sidewalks while reducing space for cars, pollution reduction, etc. This improvement would serve to put this space in value, make it more useful and enjoyable for the citizens and visitors and contribute to enhancing the city's attractiveness. Thirdly, regarding the aspects of Urban Strategy (future) the possibilities of the area for the linkage with key elements of the North-South axis, from Paisaje de la Luz to Madrid Nuevo Norte, is

highlighted, as well as the role that key stakeholders could present in a medium-term process for the development of a strategy for the area that includes this art walk as a key point.

Further than the research developed on the selected case study, an important conclusion of this study focuses on the replicability of the methodology applied for the analysis of the realm through the visions of Urban Identity (Past), urban Dynamism (Present) and Urban strategy (future). This methodology is not limited to the analysis of this itinerary, nor the analysis of art walks or itineraries of any kind. The research develops a methodology that could be used for the analysis of different urban elements in different contexts and open the door to future research. The proposed qualitative analysis could be balanced with quantitative analysis applying/adapting the indicators proposed in the Worldwide Observatory of Attractive Cities to a lower scale, to increase the comprehension of the impact of the itinerary and help to make comparative studies within one or several cities. This use could also help local decision-makers and have an impact on the design of specific areas of the city, enhancing the importance of art walks, but also for other kinds of urban interventions.

Overall, city art walks contribute to building a city's cultural brand, making it more attractive for visitors, talented citizens looking for the “best city for living” and residents alike, while fostering economic growth and community engagement. We can conclude by saying that these art walks or cultural itineraries are, at the same time, a consequence of the cultural and artistic wealth of a city, and a scenario that reinforces that leadership and power as an iconic city, with a strong personality and identity and extraordinary magnetism to attract talent. Clearly, an intelligent arrangement of different artistic elements enhances the whole. In creativity, 1+1+1 is closer to 111 than to 3 and this concept applies strongly to these itineraries, making the sum of their elements build an environment, a complete image, and an integral and harmonious proposal for the city.

7. Acknowledgements

Author's would like to acknowledge Jesús Llamazares Castro, PhD. Architect and professor at Escuela Técnica Superior de Arquitectura de A Coruña, for his support in the bibliography research, and Paola Cuitiva for her support in the elaboration of the images of this research paper.

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