

Hermeneutics of Memory for Tourist Promotion: An Upcycling Process of Spanish Civil War Air Raid Shelters

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Abstract

This study delves into the transformative role of air-raid shelters from the Spanish Civil War in Alicante, Spain, highlighting their significance in the recovery and preservation of intangible heritage. Through a detailed hermeneutic analysis based on interviews and existing research, the investigation explores the shelters' contribution to cultural identity, memory, and sustainable urban development. It reveals how the hermeneutics of memory, applied via a rigorous scientific approach, serves as a vital tool for justifying, rehabilitating, and planning these historical sites for tourism aligning with the Sustainable Development Goals. The rehabilitation of these shelters not only acts as a conservation effort but also as a means to promote cultural tourism enhancing Alicante's cultural and tourist offerings. The study underscores the shelters' dual role as educational resources and tourist attractions, facilitating a deeper understanding and connection with the past, and fostering community development and sustainability.

Keywords: Air Raid Shelters; Hermeneutics of Memory; Sustainable Urban Development; Cultural Tourism; Spanish Civil War

Abbreviations: SDG: Sustainable Development Goals; IPA: Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis

Introduction

Preservation of Historical Memory and Cultural Identity

The preservation of historical memory and cultural identity is not only crucial for the local community but also for cultural tourism and sustainable development. Many cities possess a rich historical and cultural heritage that attracts visitors interested in exploring and experiencing their unique identity. The promotion and preservation of this heritage contribute to the economic and social development of the city, while safeguarding its identity and fostering respect for its history and culture. Preserving historical memory often involves conserving sites and monuments that bear witness to past events. This includes protecting and restoring historical buildings, commemorative monuments, and other relevant sites that represent key moments in a city's history. These sites serve as landmarks that help current and future generations understand and appreciate the evolution of the city over time [1].

In addition to tangible elements, preserving historical memory also involves collecting and conserving testimonies and narratives from individuals who have experienced significant

historical events. This includes conducting interviews, gathering documents and photographs, and establishing archives and museums to house this information. These testimonies offer a personal and emotional perspective on past events, fostering a deeper understanding of history and a closer connection with the cultural identity of a population. Preserving a city's cultural identity also involves promoting and valuing its traditions, customs, and artistic expressions. This is achieved through the promotion of festivals, cultural events, and activities that highlight the richness and cultural diversity of a community. Furthermore, education and the transmission of knowledge about the city's history and culture are encouraged, especially among younger generations, to ensure the continuity and appreciation of their cultural identity [1].

Historical Context: The Spanish Civil War Air-Raid Shelters in Alicante and World War II

The 1936 coup d'état in Spain, against the government of the Second Republic, triggered a civil war and subsequent dictatorship until 1975, under Francisco Franco. During the war (1936-1939),

Spain suffered bombings by Nazi Germany and Fascist Italy, with over 500,000 deaths and devastation in coastal cities. Alicante, due to its port significance, was a strategic enclave and witness to the brutality of the conflict [2,3]. However, Alicante only fell to the insurgent side in 1939, being the last province conquered. The bombings in Alicante began in November 1936, highlighting the “eight-hour bombing” on November 28. Due to the lack of air-raid shelters, these were constructed in densely populated and strategic areas, with surveillance and alarm systems. The distribution of shelters considered population density and proximity to essential services, equipping them with telephone communications. By August 1937, the city had 41 shelters, with a capacity of 24,020 people. The increase in number, quality, and capacity of the shelters throughout the war is indicative of the increasing number of bombings on the city, especially with the arrival of the year 1938 and, with it, the bombing of the Central Market executed on May 25, which necessitated the improvement of the city’s defense organizational capacity, leading to the construction of almost a hundred shelters [3].

The air-raid shelters were specifically designed to protect the civilian population from bombings [3]. For example, a study documents the design of private air-raid shelters to protect the civilian population, analyzing the materials, construction, and structural system of these shelters during the Spanish Civil War [4].

During World War II, a document was issued by the Architectural Research Group summarizing the effectiveness of different types of air-raid shelters and related precautions, based on European experience, particularly in Great Britain and Spain [5,6]. Both during the Spanish Civil War and World War II, air-raid shelters were key structures for the protection of the civilian population against enemy bombings. The following points summarize the protection and survival practices in relation to these underground spaces and how they represented the resistance and struggle of the civilian population.

Study Objectives

The primary objective of this study is to analyze how the hermeneutics of memory, through the implementation of a sophisticated scientific methodology, can serve as a highly beneficial tool for the subsequent justification that facilitates the rehabilitation and planning of memorial resources and their later exploitation for tourism based on the principles of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). In this regard, the role of air-raid shelters as tangible testimony to a significant historical period, specifically the Spanish Civil War, will be examined. Through interviews with “children of the war,” we will analyze how these shelters, through their restoration and public opening, become a tool for preserving historical memory and the cultural identity of the Alicante community.

Research Methodology

Research Approach

The research approach used in this study is of a mixed nature, combining both the collection of primary and secondary data [7]. This mixed methodology allows for a comprehensive address of the various aspects related to the rehabilitation of the Spanish Civil War air-raid shelters in Alicante [3] and their impact on the preservation and promotion of intangible cultural heritage [8]. Regarding the collection of primary data, interviews were conducted with witnesses of the Spanish Civil War who had direct experience in the air-raid shelters. These interviews aimed to obtain firsthand information on the protection and survival practices during the civil war, as well as insights from the witnesses’ comments and experiences concerning the need for restoration and opening of the shelters to the public [9,10]. These interviews were conducted in a structured manner, following a set of pre-established questions to obtain relevant and comparable data.

On the other hand, the collection of secondary data was based on documentary and bibliographic sources. Historical documents, restoration reports, academic studies, and other resources providing contextual information about the Spanish Civil War, the architecture of the air-raid shelters [3] and public management in the rehabilitation of these spaces [11].

The analysis of the collected data was carried out systematically and rigorously, using qualitative and quantitative analysis techniques as appropriate [12,13]. Patterns, trends, and relationships among the data were sought to address the research objectives. The findings are presented clearly and concisely, supported by empirical evidence and contextualized within the existing theoretical framework with hermeneutic analysis [14-16]. In the realm of interpretive qualitative research, hermeneutics, focused on analyzing the cultural context of texts and cultural expressions, plays a crucial role, as argued by Muganga [17]. Within this context, Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) stands out as a qualitative method of significant relevance, as documented [18,19]. The trajectory and practical application of this method have been studied in the work of Roberts [20]. Within the framework of IPA, the selection of texts relevant to the research, including press articles and technical reports, was analyzed in detail using ATLAS.ti. This process involves a dialectical interpretation, seeking deep meanings and linking them with existing theories and literature, reflecting the texts’ perceptions through direct quotes. Additionally, the critical reflection of the researcher to recognize the influence of their own experiences in the interpretation is emphasized. Combining textual, contextual, and cultural analysis, the study concludes with a comprehensive hermeneutic interpretation.

Primary Data Collection: Interviews with War Witnesses and Hermeneutic Analysis

Based on the conducted interviews, and to meet the initially set objectives of this research, we will perform a hermeneutic analysis that addresses the following elements:

i. Perceptions and Feelings about the Shelters: We will analyze how the interviewees describe their experiences in the shelters. What emotions and sensations did they convey? For example, fear, uncertainty, or the community that formed within these spaces. This is crucial for understanding the human impact of the shelters during the war. **Everyday Life During the War:** We will consider descriptions of daily life, such as children's activities, living conditions within the shelters (humidity, sleeping on benches, etc.), and how this reflects adaptation to a war situation. This can help understand the impact of war on the lives of ordinary people.

ii. Changes in Routine and Urban Infrastructure: The interviews mentioned how the war and the shelters altered the normal routine, such as the impact on education and changes in the urban landscape. Therefore, we will analyze how these descriptions reflect the transformation of the city and the lives of its inhabitants during and after the war.

iii. Relationship with the Physical Space of the Shelters: We will observe how the interviewees talk about the shelters in physical and spatial terms. What do their descriptions tell us about the structure and design of the shelters? This can provide a deeper understanding of how these spaces were intended to be used and how they were effectively utilized.

iv. Historical Memory and its Transmission: We will reflect on how the interviews contribute to the historical memory of the Spanish Civil War and the post-war period. How do these personal memories integrate with or contrast the official history? This is essential for understanding the importance of the shelters as memory sites.

v. Long-term Emotional and Psychological Impact: The interviews touch on topics such as trauma and long-term disturbing memories. We will analyze how these personal accounts provide insight into the lasting psychological impact of the war.

vi. Perspective on the Rehabilitation of the Shelters: Although the interviews do not directly address the rehabilitation of the shelters, we can interpret opinions and emotions towards these spaces and reflect on how their rehabilitation and preservation can serve to honor, remember, and educate about these experiences Figure 1.



Figure 1: Elements of the Hermeneutic Analysis Worked on in This Research.

By conducting hermeneutic analysis, we aim to understand not only what is explicitly said but also what is implied or underlies the shared experiences. This will help us relate these personal narratives to the broader objectives of our research, linking individual experiences with the collective and cultural

importance of air-raid shelters in the history and memory of Alicante.

For significantly enriching the hermeneutic analysis in the context of our study on the Civil War air-raid shelters, it is necessary to address the following issues:

i. Cultural Semiotics: This approach is useful for unraveling the meanings of symbols and metaphors in the interviewees' narratives [21]. For example, how they describe the shelters, bombs, etc., can reveal much about their perceptions and experiences. This helps understand how cultural meaning is constructed around these spaces and events.

ii. Cultural Comparison: Comparing the narratives of the interviews with other perceptions and expectations of the time [22] can provide a more comprehensive view of how the shelters were seen and lived in different cultural and social contexts. This allows understanding the various ways in which the war and shelters affected Spanish society.

iii. Proper Hermeneutics: On one hand, Contextual Interpretation, which is an essential approach to understanding the testimonies in their historical and cultural context [23]. For example, understanding how the Civil War affected Alicante and how this is reflected in the personal experiences of the interviewees. On the other hand, we will address the Reconstruction of Meaning, which seeks to understand the original meaning of the testimonies and the intentions behind them. What

did the interviewees want to convey with their stories? How does this relate to their experience of the war and shelters?

iv. Critical Reflection: On one hand, we will analyze the Questioning of Prejudices, as it is crucial to be aware of our own biases and perspectives when analyzing these interviews [24]. We will reflect on how our own experiences and beliefs might color the interpretation of the testimonies. On the other hand, we will analyze the Current Application, where we will consider how the results of our study might be relevant in the current context. For example, what can these stories teach us about collective memory, resilience in times of crisis, or the importance of preserving history?

Figure 2 Using these approaches in our hermeneutic analysis will allow us to obtain a deeper and more nuanced understanding of the testimonies, as well as their importance in the broader cultural and historical context. Additionally, it will enable us to connect these personal stories with relevant contemporary themes, which can be especially valuable for readers and scholars interested in Spain's cultural history and the lessons that can be learned from this period.

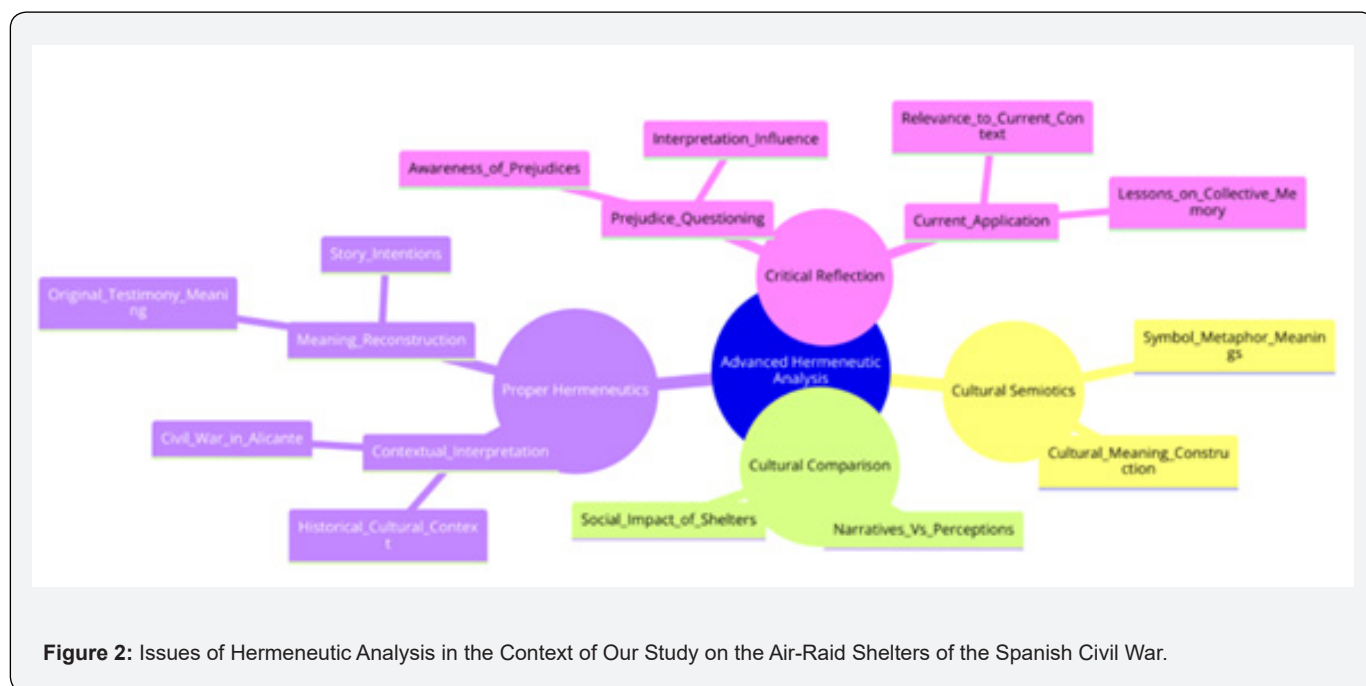


Figure 2: Issues of Hermeneutic Analysis in the Context of Our Study on the Air-Raid Shelters of the Spanish Civil War.

We have employed Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA), representing a qualitative method in the field of psychological and social research. This approach focuses on exploring how individuals interpret and understand their significant experiences [18-25]. IPA, rooted in philosophical phenomenology, focuses on studying the structure of human experience and consciousness, being particularly useful for exploring how individuals perceive and understand events and phenomena, allowing a deep understanding of their subjective

experiences [26,27]. In this approach, participants are selected, in this case, individuals by their experiences or characteristics relevant to the study phenomenon, with a small sample for detailed analysis. Data collection includes recorded interviews, followed by meticulous transcription of the same. Analysis begins with a deep reading of the transcripts, identifying concepts, ideas, and emerging patterns, and developing themes through an iterative and reflective process. The interpretation seeks deeper meanings and connections with existing theories and literature,

in a dialectical process that analyzes both the individual data and broader themes and theories. Results are presented reflecting the experiences and perceptions of the participants, often using direct quotes, and their relationship with existing literature and their contribution to understanding the studied phenomenon are discussed. IPA requires ongoing reflection by the researcher on their influence on data interpretation, emphasizing an interpretive and subjective approach [20,28]. Additionally, hermeneutics has been applied to decipher underlying meanings and contexts in the selected texts, employing textual, contextual, and cultural analysis methods, culminating in a comprehensive hermeneutic analysis.

To combine both approaches in our hermeneutic analysis of the interview on the Civil War air-raid shelters, we structured it as follows:

i. Integration of Cultural Semiotics in Perceptions and Feelings about the Shelters: Examining how symbols and metaphors used by the interviewee (such as descriptions of the shelters and bombs) reflect their emotions and sensations. We will analyze how these symbolic elements contribute to the construction of the cultural meaning of the shelters.

ii. Cultural Comparison and Everyday Life During the War: We will compare the narratives of the interview with other cultural perceptions and expectations of the time to better understand how everyday life in the shelters and war experiences were integrated into the broader cultural context.

iii. Contextual Interpretation of Changes in Routine and Urban Infrastructure: We will use the historical and cultural

context to interpret how descriptions of changes in daily routine and the urban landscape reflect the transformation of the city and the lives of its inhabitants.

iv. Reconstruction of Meaning in the Relationship with the Physical Space of the Shelters: We will seek to understand the original meaning behind how the interviewee describes the shelters physically and spatially, and how this relates to their experience and the broader story.

v. Historical Memory, Critical Reflection, and Current Application: We will critically reflect on how the interviews contribute to historical memory and how your interpretation might be influenced by your own beliefs. We will consider the current relevance of these testimonies in terms of collective memory and lessons learned.

vi. Long-term Emotional and Psychological Impact with Questioning of Prejudices: We will analyze the emotional and psychological impact described in the interviews, being aware of your own biases. We will reflect on how these perspectives may have been shaped by the interviewee’s cultural and social experiences.

vii. Perspective on the Rehabilitation of the Shelters and their Current Cultural Relevance: We will interpret opinions and emotions towards the shelters and their rehabilitation, considering how this relates to the current cultural and social context, and the importance of preserving these memory sites



Figure 3: Combination of Approaches in Our Hermeneutic Analysis of the Interview on the Air-Raid Shelters of the Spanish Civil War.

By combining these approaches, our analysis will be enriched, providing a deeper and more nuanced understanding of the interviews. This will allow us to connect personal experiences with broader themes of memory, culture, and history, and highlight the ongoing relevance of these narratives in the present.

Hermeneutic Analysis of Interviews with People Who Lived Through the War

Following the previously outlined methodology, we proceeded to conduct a hermeneutic analysis of a series of interviews with elderly individuals who, during the Spanish Civil War, were children in the city of Alicante. Due to space constraints in this work, we will only cover one of these interviews, performing an extensive hermeneutic analysis to demonstrate their significant scientific potential.

Document 1. Interview with a Woman from the San Antón Neighborhood. Shelter in orchards and market bombing

Voice 0: The shelter on La Huerta Street. Who made it? Was it made by the neighbors or did someone come to build it?

Voice 1: There was one that the neighbors built, which was the one we entered on the slopes of the castle, where I took shelter. The neighbors made it. But the real shelter, the one on La Huerta Street, was made by the City Council. They probably did it because there were refugees in many streets.

Voice 0: And were the children given instructions on what to do when the sirens sounded, or did each child already know what to do?

Voice 1: I don't know, because I certainly ran to the shelter. That's for sure. And that happened to me during a bombing. And then, shortly after, a few days later, there was another bombing, and a bomb fell on La Huerta Street, right above the shelter's door. And there was a relative of my sister's. Well, he was like mine too, this boy. They had three little ones, two boys, yes, two boys and a girl. And the woman had given birth two days before, so there were now four of them. And she tells him: Go ahead with the three, and I'll take the girl I just had, and I'll follow behind while she was getting ready to leave, as she had just given birth. Her husband goes to the shelter with the bad luck that a bomb falls at the entrance of the shelter where they were waiting, and kills the three children and the husband. No, not the husband, the three children. The husband was left disabled because they had him in the hospital for a long time, and he lost his memory. Well, he went crazy because he was carrying one of his sons in his arms and holding two by the hand, and one of them, Pedrín, couldn't be found. And, after everything had calmed down, they were looking to see where there might be any injured or dead. And one of the children they couldn't find was up on a roof, a very handsome boy! He was intact, a piece of shrapnel had entered here (points to the head), and I know because I saw it.

Voice 0: What can you tell me about the terrible bombing on May 25, 1938, the massacre it caused in the central market of Alicante, killing more than 300 people instantly and more than a thousand days later, mostly women, children, and the elderly?

Voice 1: Yes, on May 25, all the girls, myself first and another friend of mine, who always went together, as we lived in the San Antón Neighborhood, very close to the market, we went to see what had happened. "Look there!", Toni, who worked in the port. This gentleman worked in the port, and that day he was working, and like the rest of the men, they wore long underwear, with a hem that they tied inside to carry food, and on top, they wore their trousers. And so there they would put chickpeas they brought from the port, and they took them home. And this boy already had his underwear full of chickpeas because he was coming from work. And walking down San Vicente street, he was caught in the bombing. And there it killed him. He was whole, and all of us girls said: Let's go see if we can find Antonio!. And we went walking to the cemetery. They came down the cypress path. There were small houses there, little houses, for the peasants for work and that, but at that time if someone had a family member there, they went to live or sleep there because we believed that they were not going to bomb there, and we went to sleep there and that's it. We stopped taking shelter in the shelter and went there to sleep. And when that bombing happened, the girl says, let's go to the cemetery to see how they pass the dead and see if we see Antonio, and we had the courage to be there, on the path inside where the dead passed on stretchers and carts, there looking. And I say: "look, look, Antonio". And the chickpeas he had in his trousers were still falling. That's how it was.

Integration of Cultural Semiotics in Perceptions and Feelings about the Shelters

i. **Shelters as Symbols of Tragedy and Loss:** The interviewee's narration of the bombing and the tragic losses at the shelter on La Huerta Street reflects how these spaces, intended to be sanctuaries of safety, become symbols of tragedy and loss. This duality in the perception of shelters illustrates the unpredictable and cruel nature of war.

ii. **Shelters in the Context of the Community:** The mention that neighbors built some shelters highlights community solidarity and collective effort in times of crisis. These shelters represent not only physical places of protection but also the spirit of cooperation and mutual support among neighbors, a key element of resistance and survival during the war.

iii. **The Impact of Sirens and Bombings:** The description of sirens and bombings highlights the constant threat and fear that characterized life during the war. Sirens become a symbol of imminent danger, marking the transition from everyday life to a state of alert and emergency.

iv. **Shelters and the Loss of Innocence:** The experience of children in shelters, especially in the context of bombings, reflects

a loss of innocence and an abrupt introduction to the realities of war. The description of how children learned to seek shelter on their own underscores how even the youngest were forced to adapt to the harsh realities of the conflict.

v. **Construction of the Cultural Meaning of Shelters:**

These narratives enrich the cultural meaning of shelters, extending it beyond their physical function. They transform into complex symbols that encapsulate the experience of war, including aspects of community, fear, survival, and tragedy. These personal stories provide a deeper understanding of life during the war and the importance of preserving these accounts in historical memory.

Cultural Comparison and Everyday Life During the War

i. **Cultural Expectations vs. Reality of War:** During the Spanish Civil War, cultural expectations of safety and normality at home were drastically altered, as the interview reflects. Shelters, which might not be necessary in normal times, became an essential part of daily life. This contrasts with the usual perception of life in peacetime, where safety in one's own home is taken for granted.

ii. **Life in Shelters:** The narrative about life in shelters and the response to bombings illustrates a forced adaptation to a new reality. The need for even children to understand and react to sirens shows how the war invaded all aspects of life, forcing continuous adaptation to a persistent threat.

iii. **Community Response to War:** The mention of shelters built by neighbors highlights an important aspect of the culture of the time: solidarity and community cooperation in times of crisis. This may contrast with contemporary perceptions of individualism or self-sufficiency, highlighting how extreme circumstances can strengthen community bonds.

iv. **Impact of Bombings on Urban Perception:** The experience of bombings in urban areas like the central market of Alicante changed the perception of spaces that are normally considered safe or neutral. These tragic events altered how urban spaces were lived and perceived, injecting a sense of fear and caution into everyday life.

v. **Change in Family and Social Dynamics:** The personal stories of loss and survival reflect how the war altered family and social dynamics. The war imposed a significant emotional and psychological burden, affecting relationships and social interaction within communities.

Contextual Interpretation of Changes in Routine and Urban Infrastructure

i. **Transformation of Everyday Routines:** The interview reveals how everyday routines were deeply affected by the war. The need to run to shelters at the sound of sirens and the experience of bombings near places like markets, traditionally considered safe, show a significant disruption of daily life. This reflects how the war imposed a constant state of alert and a

change in normal activities, replacing routine with a new "normal" marked by urgency and danger.

ii. **Reconfiguration of the Urban Landscape:** Bombings and the construction of shelters altered the urban landscape of cities like Alicante. Spaces that were once centers of community and commercial life became areas of risk and destruction. This physical reconfiguration of the urban environment symbolizes the invasion of war into all aspects of city life.

iii. **Impact on Infrastructure:** The destruction caused by bombings and the need to build shelters reveal how urban infrastructure was adapted or damaged in response to the conflict. This not only affected the architecture and design of the city but also how inhabitants interacted with their environment, altering movement patterns and areas of activity.

iv. **Changes in Social and Community Dynamics:** The construction of shelters by neighbors and the collective response to bombings show a strengthening of community ties. These dynamics reflect how, in times of crisis, communities can come together to support each other, a contrast to interactions in times of peace.

v. **Perception of Safety and Vulnerability:** The experiences recounted in the interview underscore a changing perception of safety and vulnerability within the urban environment. Familiar and everyday places, such as streets and markets, were now perceived as potentially dangerous, transforming the experience of living in the city.

Reconstruction of Meaning in Relation to the Physical Space of Shelters

i. **Shelters as Spaces of Protection and Tragedy:** The interview describes shelters not only as places of physical protection but also as scenes of personal and collective tragedies. This duality underscores how shelters, despite their purpose of safeguarding life, could not always fully protect from the horrors of war. Thus, shelters become complex symbols encapsulating both safety and vulnerability.

ii. **Construction of Shelters and the Community:** The mention of shelters built by neighbors and others provided by the City Council reflects different forms of community and governmental response to the crisis. These efforts show how the community and local authorities tried to adapt to the imminent threat, highlighting the interaction between individual initiative and collective action in times of conflict.

iii. **Emotional Impact and Personal Experience:** The interviewee's narrative, including stories of loss and how children learned to seek shelter, reveals the emotional impact and psychological burden associated with these spaces. Shelters, in this sense, are remembered not only for their protective function but also for the intense, often traumatic, experiences they hosted.

iv. Shelters in the Urban and War Context: The integration of shelters into the urban landscape during the Spanish Civil War altered how inhabitants interacted with their surroundings. Shelters became a crucial part of the urban fabric, modifying the perception and use of space in the city.

v. Historical Memory and Meaning of Shelters: These descriptions of shelters enrich historical memory, providing a deeper understanding of everyday experience during the war. They offer valuable insight into human resilience, adaptability, and the emotional cost of conflict, aspects that are fundamental for a comprehensive understanding of history.

Historical Memory, Critical Reflection, and Current Application

i. Enrichment of Historical Memory: The interview provides personal accounts and experiences to the historical memory of the Spanish Civil War, complementing official history and historical records with concrete human experiences. These personal testimonies offer a more complete and nuanced view of the impact of the war on people's everyday lives, beyond political and military events.

ii. Critical Reflection on Interpretation: When interpreting these interviews, it is important to be aware of how our own experiences, beliefs, and cultural context may influence our understanding. This includes preconceptions about war, resilience, and human nature in crisis situations. It is crucial to approach these testimonies with a balanced perspective, avoiding projecting our own experiences or current values onto past experiences, and instead trying to understand them within their specific historical and cultural context.

iii. Current Relevance of Testimonies: In the current context, these testimonies hold significant value in terms of education and historical awareness. They offer lessons on the human impacts of war and the importance of collective memory to avoid repeating past mistakes. These personal stories can foster a deeper understanding of the consequences of past and present conflicts, providing valuable perspectives in a world where similar challenges remain relevant.

iv. Impact on Collective Memory and Lessons Learned: Keeping alive the memory of individual experiences during the war contributes to the collective understanding of history and helps forge a shared cultural identity. This is crucial for future generations seeking to understand the legacy of conflicts like the Spanish Civil War.

Reflection on these accounts can encourage dialogue on how societies can learn from their past, especially in terms of resilience, adaptation, and solidarity in the face of adversities.

Long-term Emotional and Psychological Impact with Questioning of Prejudices

i. Identification of Emotional and Psychological Impact: The interview reveals a profound emotional and

psychological impact from living under constant threat during the war. The stories of tragic losses, such as those of the children in the bombed shelter, highlight the trauma and grief that affected individuals. This account underscores how traumatic events can leave lasting scars, affecting mental and emotional health.

ii. Questioning Personal Prejudices: When analyzing these narratives, it is important to recognize and question any personal bias, including preconceived notions about resilience and people's ability to cope with trauma. It is crucial not to minimize the emotional impact of these experiences or assume that people simply "get over" such events. We must avoid projecting contemporary norms of understanding trauma and mental health onto past experiences, recognizing that ways of processing and expressing grief may vary according to cultural and temporal context.

iii. Influence of Cultural and Social Experiences: The experiences and narratives of the interviewee are shaped by the cultural and social context of the time. Cultural norms about expressing grief, mourning, and resilience, as well as social expectations of the time, may have influenced how individuals experienced and later remembered the war. Understanding and managing trauma in the context of the Spanish Civil War might have been different from current expectations, which must be considered when interpreting these testimonies.

iv. Reflection on Perspectives Shaped by Experiences: Recognizing that the perspectives of the interviewee are influenced by their cultural and social environment helps to contextualize their accounts. This allows for a more nuanced understanding of their experiences and how these were influenced by the environment in which they lived.

Reflecting on these narratives in their historical and cultural context provides a better understanding of the emotional and psychological impact of the war, highlighting the complexity of human responses in extreme situations.

Perspective on the Rehabilitation of Shelters and Their Current Cultural Relevance

i. Opinions and Emotions Towards Shelters: The interview reflects a complex mix of emotions towards shelters: on one hand, they are remembered as places of safeguarding and community solidarity; on the other, as scenes of profound tragedies and losses. This duality underscores the importance of shelters not only as physical structures but also as spaces loaded with historical and emotional memory.

ii. Rehabilitation of Shelters in the Current Context: The preservation and rehabilitation of shelters in the current context can serve as a powerful means to remember and educate about the Spanish Civil War. These spaces, transformed into museums or memory sites, can help new generations understand the complexities and human impact of the conflict. How these shelters are treated today reflects society's attitudes towards its past and the importance given to historical memory. The preservation of

these sites may indicate a commitment to truth, acknowledgment of past suffering, and the need to learn from history.

iii. Importance of Preserving Memory Sites: Maintaining shelters as memory sites contributes to a more complete historical narrative, including not only political and military events but also personal and collective experiences. These places are tangible testimonies to history, fostering a deeper and more empathetic understanding of the past. The preservation of these spaces can promote reflection on relevant contemporary issues, such as the effects of war, resilience in times of crisis, and the importance of peace and solidarity.

iv. Cultural and Educational Relevance: The rehabilitation of shelters holds considerable educational value, providing a tangible context for teaching about the war, its consequences, and the importance of avoiding future conflicts. These spaces can serve as tools to foster critical and constructive dialogue about history and its lessons.

Conclusions from the Hermeneutic Analysis

The interviews reflect how the Spanish Civil War radically transformed everyday life. Changes in daily routine, alterations in childhood, the reconfiguration of urban space through shelters, and

adaptations in food and survival illustrate a profound disruption of normality. The experiences narrated by the interviewees reveal a significant and long-term emotional and psychological impact. The trauma of living under constant threat, the loss of loved ones, fear, and uncertainty have left lasting marks, emphasizing the importance of recognizing and addressing the psychological consequences of conflicts. Despite the hardships, the interviews highlight people’s resilience and adaptability. Solidarity within shelters, survival strategies, and mutual support in extreme situations show human strength in the face of adversity.

Air-raid shelters emerge not only as physical structures of protection but also as powerful symbols of the wartime experience. Their rehabilitation and preservation as memory sites are crucial for keeping history alive and educating future generations about the impacts of conflict. The war prompted significant changes in social and community dynamics. Survival practices, modifications in social and gender norms, and the strengthening of community in shelters reflect how crises can redefine social interactions and structures. The experiences narrated in the interviews have important contemporary relevance. They offer lessons on crisis management, the importance of solidarity, and understanding the long-term consequences of conflicts. These stories can inform and enrich the current understanding of similar challenges.

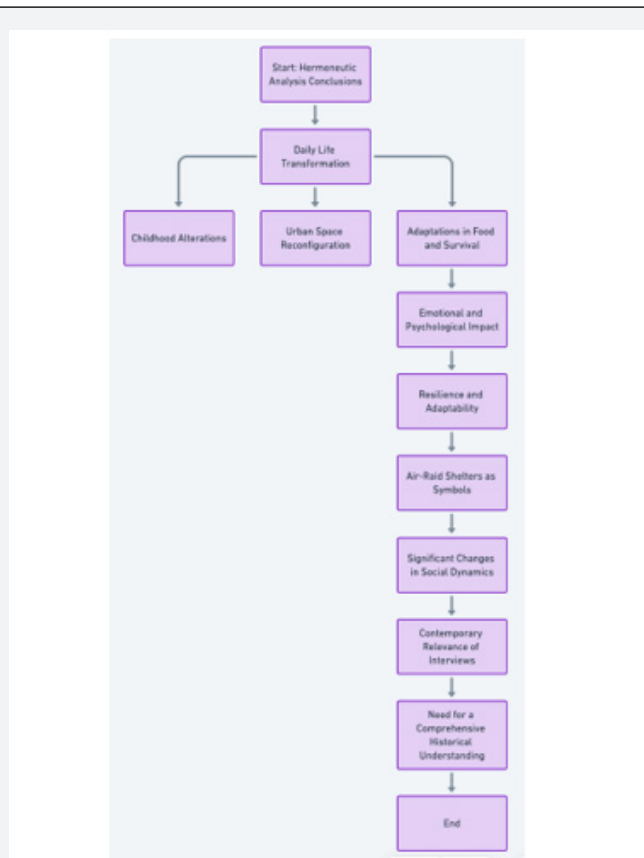


Figure 4: Conclusions of the Hermeneutic Analysis.

The interviews underscore the need for a more comprehensive understanding of history that includes personal perspectives. These accounts enrich the official historical narrative, providing a more human and nuanced view of past events. Understanding these circumstances is essential for fostering a form of tourism that is closer to people, incorporating emotions and empathy into the discourse of guides towards visitors, and transforming the shelters into a symbol of human resilience in the face of adversity (Figure 4).

Air-Raid Shelters as Promoters of Recovering the Heritage of Lived Memory of the Spanish Civil War

Heritage encompasses current interpretations and symbolism about objects, environments, myths, memories, and customs inherited from the past. It constitutes an essential factor in the formation of identities, especially in societies characterized by their increasing cultural diversity [29-31]. The past is crucial in creating identity narratives in the present. The significant influence of monuments and cultural landscapes as spaces of cultural heritage is very important. The view of certain places and constructions with historical value has evolved, as well as their role in forming and reformulating specific identities [32]. The air-raid shelters from the Spanish Civil War are an example of this, playing a crucial role in recovering and preserving the intangible heritage associated with this historical conflict [2-3,33-34]. These underground spaces, used as shelters by the civilian population during bombings, are tangible witnesses to the experiences and lives of that period, and their rehabilitation and opening to the public allow us to relive and understand the history and culture of that time [34-36].

Firstly, the air-raid shelters are places that evoke the protection and survival practices that took place during the Spanish Civil War. These underground spaces represent the resistance and struggle of the civilian population against bombings and the violence of the war [35]. By rehabilitating and opening these shelters to the public, it allows current and future generations to learn about and understand the strategies used by those who lived through that time, as well as the emotional and psychological impact they had on society [36-37]. Secondly, the air-raid shelters are places of memory and testimony of a significant historical period. Through their restoration and public opening, the preservation of historical memory and the cultural identity of the Alicante community is promoted. These spaces allow people to connect with their past and understand how the Spanish Civil War has influenced the shaping of their society and culture today [38]. Furthermore, visiting the air-raid shelters can generate a sense of empathy and solidarity with the people who lived through those difficult times, thus fostering appreciation and respect for the intangible heritage of the civil war [33-37].

Lastly, the rehabilitation of the air-raid shelters and their opening to the public contribute to the promotion of cultural

tourism and the dissemination of the history and culture associated with the Spanish Civil War. These spaces become tourist attractions that draw visitors interested in learning about and understanding the history and culture of Alicante during the civil war. This, in turn, generates economic and social benefits for the local community, promoting sustainable development and the valorization of its cultural heritage [39-49].

The Upcycling Process of Civil War Shelters: A Public Management Approach to Recovering Lived Memory

The upcycling process of space refers to the creative and sustainable transformation of an existing space to give it a new purpose or function. Rather than discarding or demolishing a space, upcycling seeks to maximize the use of available resources and minimize environmental impact [39]. The air-raid shelters from the Nazi era in Szczecin, Poland, have been recognized as a planning challenge for the city due to their history associated with World War II [44,45]. The space upcycling process involves rethinking and reusing the materials, structures, and existing features of the space in an innovative way. This can include remodeling an old building to turn it into housing or workspaces, transforming a warehouse into an event space, or renovating an abandoned garden into a community park [39,43,47].

Space upcycling can also involve the incorporation of sustainable technologies, such as installing solar panels, rainwater collection systems, or natural ventilation systems, to make the space more energy-efficient and environmentally friendly [49]. In short, the space upcycling process is a creative and conscious way to give new life to an existing space, making the most of available resources and reducing environmental impact [49].

The Specific Case of Alicante

Within the framework of the FEDER Operational Program "Sustainable Growth 2014-2020" (CCI: 2014ES16RFOP002, Priority Axis: 12 Urban Development), the City Council of Alicante, under the supervision of the General Sub-directorate for Urban Development (D.G. of European Funds, Secretary of State for Budgets and Expenses, Ministry of Finance and Public Function), promoted the DUSI Alicante Strategy "Área Las Cigarreras". This initiative, co-financed by the European Commission and framed in the Order HAP/2427/2015 of November 13 (BOE No. 275 of 17/11/15), is aimed at sustainable urban development, integrating the recovery of industrial, religious, and military heritage of historical and tourist relevance.

The project focused on the rehabilitation of Civil War air-raid shelters, located in the neighborhoods of Carolinas Bajas, Mercado Central, San Antón, and Campoamor, as part of the cultural and tourist revitalization of the area. The operational objective included improving universal accessibility to these spaces, considering their deteriorated state and the difficulty of access inherent in their military design.

The DUSI Strategy, part of the Thematic Objective 6 (OT 6) of the FEDER Operational Program, focuses on the protection, promotion, and development of cultural and natural heritage, especially in areas of tourist interest. It is directed at infrastructures or monuments in the DUSI area of Alicante that require restoration and reuse to promote local development.

The operation, with a budget of 600,000 € and an execution period of five years (01-01-2018 to 31-12-2022), included two main components: rehabilitation and valorization of the air-raid shelters and studies and activities to reconstruct Historical Memory.

The key indicators of the project were the increase in sustainable tourism and the improvement of surfaces belonging to non-tourist cultural heritage. The first phase of the project consisted of drafting a project for the opening and accessibility of six air-raid shelters in the EDUSI area of Alicante.

The Project was to be on the following six shelters:

- i. R35: Paseo Marvá, next to the steps of the IES Jorge Juan.
- ii. R5: Marqués de Molins (former Maestro Bretón street).
- iii. R4: Padre Mariana street.
- iv. R38: Hermanos Pascual square.
- v. R3: Central Market.
- vi. R69: Tobacco Factory.

Cultural Tourism as a Vehicle for Transmitting Lived Memory

Since 2021 and throughout 2022, several activities have been implemented at these sites. These include permanent installations inside the shelters, such as a video mapping representing the bombing in Tordera, an exhibition on the history of water in Palmeretes, and a display of historical photographs in Tabacalera, where a detailed model was also placed. These initiatives are part of a broader effort to revitalize and make known the historical heritage through interactive and educational means. In addition to the permanent installations, specific events have been held inside the rehabilitated shelters. These include short theater performances and shows combining music, poetry, and dance in Tabacalera, as well as architecture-focused performances in Marvá. These one-time activities are part of a comprehensive strategy to enrich the cultural and educational experience in these historical spaces, offering a variety of artistic expressions that complement and enhance the value of the rehabilitated heritage.

Guided tours to the air-raid shelters have been organized, conducted by the Professional Association of Official Guides of the Valencian Community, as well as to other historical sites in the area, including some dramatized tours. The production of short films has played a significant role in disseminating local history, focusing on themes such as the history “between the two castles”

and memorable events like the “8-hour bombing” and the “day of memory.” Outreach activities have also included the publication of materials aimed at different audiences. For the youth audience, a comic book narrating the history “between the two castles” has been created, while for a broader audience, books have been published on citizen and educational participation in the neighborhoods, as well as on the diaries of the bombings.

To expand the reach to a global audience and facilitate virtual access, a website (<https://refugiosalicante360.com>) has been developed, providing general information about the shelters in Alicante. This site focuses especially on the shelters in the EDUSI area, including photographs, plans, and a virtual tour using 360° images, thus allowing for an immersive and educational experience from a distance. In the Marvá shelter, educational activities by student groups have been implemented, such as those of the tourism training module and history classes of the IES Miguel Hernández. The center’s students, especially from 2nd GIAT, have developed guided tours and exhibitions, including one on the Holocaust. These activities, which include narratives and surprise elements, such as poems by Miguel Hernández recited by 1st ESO students, have enriched the educational experience. In addition, the exhibition “How Was It Humanly Possible?”, loaned by the Yad Vashem Museum in Jerusalem, focused on the events of 1933-1945 in Nazi Germany, toured educational and municipal centers in the Valencian Community.

Conclusion

Through a detailed hermeneutic analysis based on interviews and studies on the Spanish Civil War air-raid shelters in Alicante, this research has delved into the complexity of historical memory and its promotion for tourism. The study has revealed how the hermeneutics of memory, applied through a rigorous scientific methodology, becomes an essential tool for the justification, rehabilitation, and tourist planning of these spaces, in line with the postulates of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The transformation of air-raid shelters in Alicante stands out not only as an act of heritage conservation but also as a strategy for sustainable urban development. The research underscores the importance of these spaces as tangible testimonies of civilian resistance and survival, which, once rehabilitated and made accessible to the public, promote historical memory and the cultural identity of the community.

The implementation of permanent installations, specific events, and educational activities in the rehabilitated shelters has significantly enriched Alicante’s cultural and tourist offerings. These initiatives not only attract visitors and encourage sustainable tourism but also provide local communities and new generations with tools to understand and reflect on their past. The research highlights how the air-raid shelters, integrated into the urban fabric and history of Alicante, have become key points for cultural tourism. Guided tours, outreach activities, and the production of educational material have proven effective in conveying the

city's rich history to a wide audience, including both residents and visitors. The activities carried out in the shelters, such as educational projects by student groups and thematic exhibitions, reflect a commitment to education and community engagement. These initiatives have allowed young people to actively engage in the recovery of their historical heritage, promoting a sense of belonging and responsibility towards their culture and past. The development of online resources, like the dedicated website for the air-raid shelters, represents a significant step towards democratizing access to historical memory. Virtual tours and

educational material available online allow a global audience to explore these spaces and their stories, overcoming physical and geographical barriers.

In conclusion, this hermeneutic study of the Spanish Civil War air-raid shelters in Alicante illustrates the potential of memory and historical heritage as resources for cultural, educational, and tourist development. The research highlights the importance of approaching heritage preservation not just as an act of conservation but as an opportunity to foster understanding, respect, and reflection on our collective history Figure 5.



Figure 5: This visualization emphasizes key aspects such as heritage conservation, sustainable development, community engagement, educational impact, and digital outreach. It also underscores the role of these shelters in promoting historical memory and cultural identity, reflecting the study's conclusions on their significance for cultural, educational, and tourist development.

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