The politics of public construction in a globalized world

*Imagining urban space in Ecuador*

Espinosa Andrade, J.A.

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Chapter 4
The Ice Cream, the Tuna and the Chair: (Un)conventional monuments and multi-temporal identities

Introduction
Continuing my analysis of the interests and imaginaries guiding the authorities when transforming the urban environment, in this chapter I focus on the planning process and construction of three eye-catching monuments: the Ice Cream, the Tuna and the Manteña Chair (Figure 0.1). The Ice Cream monument is located in the city of San Miguel de Salcedo and was constructed by the municipal authorities; the Monument to the Tuna is located in Manta city and was constructed by the Chamber of Commerce; the Manteña Chair, also located in Manta, resulted from an initiative by a group of entrepreneurs. Contrasting with the previous cases, these monuments, using striking colors and aesthetics generally conceived as “folkloric” or “popular”, are placed in plazas and roundabouts to accomplish, at first sight, a purely ornamental purpose. However, my analysis will show that, like the other case studies, the monuments materialize particular spatial imaginaries. Located in strategic places, each of them establishes connections between the local and the global, and presents a vision of the identity that, according to the local authorities, should be projected by the urban space. My analysis of these

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monuments focuses on three aspects: the planning and reception of the monuments, their relation to the space in which they are situated and their role in processes of local identity formation. By whom and with what objectives were these monuments constructed and how were they received? Which ideas about space and globalization do these structures reflect? And how do they influence cultural identities and their expression? To answer these questions, I present an analysis based on: interviews with local authorities and people involved in the construction of the monuments and the management of public space, conducted during fieldwork in December 2015 and January 2016; fieldwork observations, specifically of the monuments and their contexts; and a review of secondary sources such as newspaper articles related to the monuments.

Monuments are expressions of the relation between local government, local citizens and local space, as well as storytelling objects intended to send a message to passers-by, to make a statement about a particular space, period of time, person, event or practice considered relevant to and characteristic of its setting by the authorities and the citizenry. The monuments discussed in this chapter have a particular aesthetic; with their striking colors and forms, they are a flamboyant provocation to the eye of the passerby, who may not associate them with monuments in the strictest sense of the word. Despite their strong visual impact, these monuments are generally not considered an important element of urban planning in the Ecuadorian context. The purpose of my analysis is not to develop a new approach to understanding monuments in general, but to explore the ideals and visions about the city and the space held by the authorities and materialized in these markers.

While the previous case studies concerned large, multi-part structures mainly built and managed by the central Ecuadorian government, in this chapter I address interventions on a smaller spatial and administrative scale. These structures are designed to support a narrative that is built up from local realities, rather than founded on a national strategy. The motives for constructing them respond mainly to the perceived function of the local space in terms of identity construction. My analysis reveals that these local monuments reflect a desire to establish an identity for the space in which they are located and the people inhabiting it, an identity which displays a continuous tension between attachments to a precolonial/colonial past, a commercial present and a tourism-oriented future. Consequently, the monuments function as mediators between various possible anchors for identity in expanding urban environments, configuring and questioning what the managers of the public space perceive as the identity of the city. As I will show in my
analyses, each monument plays a role in the (re)production and reconfiguration of
identity, and reveals different perceptions of what local urban identity means.

In the first part of the chapter I briefly describe the general functions of
monuments as defined in existing scholarship, their role in relation to identity
construction, the differences between traditional and non-traditional monuments, and
their role in public spaces. In the second part, I explore the case of the Monument of the
Ice Cream, highlighting the way in which this monument was conceived by its mentors,
its relation with the globalized context and the place it was located, and the disputes about
identity generated by its installation. In the third part, I describe the monuments of the
Tuna Fish and the Manteña Chair, exploring the reasons given for their construction and
placement, and the role they play in the processes of identity construction related to the
urban space and its globalized context.

Monuments, Identity Formation and Public Spaces

In a general definition of the concept, a monument is defined as “[a] statue, building, or
other structure erected to commemorate a notable person or event […]. A building,
structure or site that is of historical importance or interest […]. An enduring and
memorable example of something” (Oxford Dictionary, 2017). Monuments are defined
primarily as structures that aim to prevent the past from being lost. In his classic essay
“The modern cult of monuments: its character and its origin” (1982), the Austrian art
historian Alois Riegl notes that: “A monument in its oldest and most original sense is a
human creation, erected for the specific purpose of keeping single human deeds or events
(or a combination thereof) alive in the minds of future generations” (1982, p. 21). In this
definition, the material structure offers the possibility of temporal continuity; situated in
the present, the monument evokes the past and guarantees a permanence in the future.
Andrew Hui also highlights the temporal aspect of monuments. For him, a monument
suspends everyday activity, is a reminder of the past and projects a trajectory towards the
future: “it is meant to endure and remind future generations of its legacy” (Hui, 2009, p.
21-22). James I. Porter argues that, although monuments can come in any number of
forms and can perform any number of purposes, “what all monuments in any form share
is an expression of permanence in the face of loss, or rather as I would prefer to put it,
[…] an expression of loss and permanence in a heightened form of tension” (2011, p.
685). All these definitions emphasize the importance of permanence, the way in which
monuments aim to keep the past alive in the present and to preserve it and take it into the
future. In addition to the temporal aspect of monuments, in this chapter I will focus on three other aspects of monuments: first, the relation between monuments and identity construction; second, the distinction between traditional and non-traditional monuments; and third, the role of monuments in public space. All these aspects feed into one another and are relevant to understanding the planning of local monuments and their relation to the space and community in which they are situated.

To begin with the relation between monuments and identity, for Sabine Marschall, an expert on memory and cultural heritage in South Africa, “[m]onuments always represent and to some extent construct group identities. They can represent existing communities, but they also have the potential to introduce new discourses and forge new group identities around them” (2009, p. 340). In this definition, monuments not only reflect a past or present, but have the capacity to create something new. In his paper “Landscapes, memory, monuments, and commemoration: Putting identity in its place” (2001), analyzing the construction of identity in nation-states, Osborne points out the importance of monuments as part of a “geography of identity”, understood as the relation between the “representation of national narratives in symbolic places, monumental forms and performance” (2001, p. 40) and the construction of collective memory and social cohesion. In this understanding, monuments reinforce a sense of mutual historical experience, collective memory and belonging. This perspective on monuments, in the same way as Marschall’s, alludes to the capacity of monuments to generate new meanings and relations between people and places. Following this logic, the construction of monuments is related to power; it opens the door to the possibility of an intentional production of identity by the authorities in charge. As noted by Osborne, for example, during the 19th and 20th centuries, monuments were used by governments to create “symbolic landscapes of power”, new national narratives and a national identity (Osborne, 2001, p. 9).

The relation between monuments, temporality and the intentional creation of a collective identity is further analyzed by Abousnouga and Machin (2013):

In cities, towns and villages around the world we find monuments erected to those our societies wish us to mark as somehow outstanding. Those are erected through official processes, sometimes drawing the public into their design, in order to celebrate the kinds of ideas values and identities we are to consider most, embody who we are at best, what we should ourselves strive
towards, those to whom we most owe and fundamentally to remind us who we are by signposting points and personalities from our shared national and local histories. (2013, p. 1, cited in Krzyzanowska, 2015, p. 4)

According to this statement, the relevance of monuments is determined by their proximity to the ideas and values that embody who we are at best, referring to the past as when we were best; what we should ourselves strive towards, meaning who we want to be in the future; and whom we most owe, which refers to what/whom we should remember from the past. Unlike Marschall’s and Osborne’s approaches, this suggests that monuments (and the performances around them) aim mainly to preserve established identities – from the past – instead of creating new forms – from the present and future. Another aspect that appears in Abousnouga and Machin’s statement is that monuments are erected through official processes, implying that authorities, and also sometimes members of the public, make choices about what ideas and values are represented. I will come back to the tensions between the kind of identities and temporalities incarnated in monuments when analyzing the discourses used by the authorities in relation to the construction of the Ice Cream, the Tuna and the Manteña Chair.

In addition to focusing on how these monuments play a role in the formation and consolidation of identity, I will analyze my cases in terms of the distinction between traditional and non-traditional monuments. According to Stevens et al. (2012), traditional and what they call anti-monumental monuments differ in subject, form, site, visitor experience and meaning. In terms of subject, “traditional monuments are typically affirmative: glorifying an event or a person, or celebrating an ideology” (p. 955). In terms of form, they emphasize a singular presence, solid materials, light tones and elevated and vertical figures. In terms of their site, they “are often prominent, highly visible, set apart from everyday space through natural topography, height or enclosure” (Stevens et al., 2012, p. 960). In terms of visitor experience, traditional monuments demand solemnity and deference; finally, in terms of their meaning, “[t]raditional monuments are didactic, imparting clear, unified messages through figural representation, explicit textual or graphic reference to people, places or events, allegorical figures, and archetypal symbolic forms” (Stevens et al., 2012, p. 961). Young (1992) incorporates the elements of time and identity into the definition of traditional monuments. For him, traditional monuments are mainly representations of past time, supported by the State to reinforce an established identity through the glorification of national values and national memory. In Young’s
monuments tend to naturalize the values, ideals, and laws of the land itself. To do otherwise would be to undermine the very foundations of national legitimacy, of the state’s seemingly natural right to exist” (1992, p. 270).

In contrast to traditional monuments, non-traditional monuments that do not fit into the previous parameters have been defined as anti-monuments/dialogic monuments (Stevens et al., 2012) or counter-monuments (Young, 1992; Krzyzanowska, 2015). Stevens et al. (2012) argue that the expansion of motivations for creating monuments has extended the scope of subjects that monuments address and the design strategies used. For them, the increasing number and variety of monuments and the contrasting intentions behind them suggest the need for a systematic analysis of the types of design strategies employed. In this way, they distinguish anti-monumental and dialogic monuments:

a monument may be contrary to conventional subjects and techniques of monumentality, adopting antimonumental design approaches to express subjects and meanings not represented in traditional monuments. Or it may be a dialogic monument that critiques the purpose and the design of a specific, existing monument, in an explicit, contrary and proximate pairing. (Stevens et al., 2012, p. 952).

In terms of their subject, “anti-monumental works generally recognize darker events, such as the Holocaust, or the more troubling side of an event that in other times might have been glorified, such as a war” (Stevens et al., 2012, p. 955). In terms of form, the figures are mainly abstract and made with less solid materials, with dark tones emphasizing the horizontal and sunken forms; “[i]n general, anti-monumental commemorative forms are more negative and more complex than traditional ones, like the issues they represent” (Stevens et al., 2012, p. 958). When analyzed with regards to their site, anti-monumental forms are “[…] designed to serve new purposes, […]]. Rather than being obvious destination sites, some anti-monuments are to be encountered by chance during everyday travels through the city” (Stevens et al., 2012, p. 960). In terms of visitor experience, anti-monuments invite for a close and bodily interaction, sensory engagement and personal contemplation. Finally, in terms of meaning, Stevens et al. argue that anti-monumental approaches offer no easy answers. Generally, “[t]hey remain ambiguous and resist any unified interpretation; their meanings are often dependent on visitors’ historical
knowledge, or supplementary information made available through signs, brochures, guides or interpretive centers” (Stevens et al., 2012, p. 961).

Also analyzing non-conventional forms and questioning the fixed figure of memory reflected in traditional monuments, Young (1992) analyzes contemporary Holocaust monuments designed by artists and proposes the concept of the counter-monument. For the author, counter-monuments are understood as “memorial spaces conceived to challenge the very premise of their being” (1992, p. 271). The designers of these monuments, instead of seeking to capture the memory of events, remember only their own relationship to them, since they were not part of these events:

…the counter-monument thus flouts any number of cherished memorial conventions: its aim is not to console but to provoke; not to remain fixed but to change; not to be everlasting but to disappear; not to be ignored by its passersby but to demand interaction; not to remain pristine but to invite its own violation and desecration; not to accept graciously the burden of memory but to throw it back at the town’s feet. (Young, 1992, p. 277, emphasis in text)

Natalia Krzyzanowska (2015), in her article “The discourse of counter-monuments: semiotics of material commemoration in contemporary urban spaces”, points out that, since the second half of the twentieth century, monuments have gradually stopped being marks of the city and have started to question and critique the social order and “the (allegedly) universal values at the core of the society”, as well as the “elite-driven nature of public commemoration” (2015, p. 6). Among other aspects, Krzyzanowska describes counter-monuments, following Umberto Eco’s definition, as “open works”, in which different potential meanings coexist, leaving it up to the public to decide. Thus, counter-monuments contest the use of monuments as a means to reinforce power; she argues that “[c]ounter-monuments hence re-enact discourses of memory that were rejected, omitted or outright silenced by the (urban/local/national) collectivity and make virtue of what would otherwise be deemed difficult or inconvenient past” (2015, p. 7). Krzyzanowska also makes a link between counter-monuments and identity:

While possessing a wider interpretive scope, counter-monuments also allow for the identity-forging element to become more open, to not only official and

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collective narrations but also to their individual interpretations and re-descriptions. Counter-monuments hence not only commemorate or remind of people/places past, but also create an extensive interpretive plain that allows for that commemoration to be more multiple as well as more egalitarian. (2015, p. 7)

Complementing this, Krzyzanowska argues that in the idea of the counter-monument the spectator “is invited to interact in a novel way with the identity of the place and its history (genius loci) and collective memory, all anchored in a specific space” (2015, p. 7).

The definitions of the counter- and anti-monumental provided by Young, Stevens et al. and Krzyzanowska have in common the idea of going against the traditional monument’s presentation of a uniform, glorifying and often State-supported memory of past events that serves to reaffirm a certain ideology. Instead, they open up the possibility for monumental structures to provoke and communicate multiple meanings. With regard to the monuments analyzed in this chapter, I will argue that they bring together elements of traditional and non-traditional monuments, and examine how this affects their role in the process of local identity formation.

The third and final aspect I will focus on is the relation between monuments and public art. When analyzing a structure located in public places, it is not easy to define whether it should be characterized as an artwork or a monument. According to Malcolm Miles (1997), public art should be understood as works of art outside their conventional location in museums and galleries. Works of public art fall between the polarities of the traditional monument and the practice of art as activism and engagement, between being aesthetic objects and “ideologically aware processes” (Miles, 1997, p. 52). As public art, a monument plays both an ornamental/aesthetic role and an ideological one. From an economic perspective, public art has been perceived as contributing to the economic development of neighborhoods and cities by embellishing the spaces, operating as attractors to tourists and investors and constituting a lure for the creative class (Schuermans et al., 2012). From a more socio-cultural perspective, “public art can instill civic pride, foster social interaction, promote a sense of community, contribute to local identity, and tackle social exclusion” (Schuermans et al., 2012, p. 676). In my analysis, I will show how the monuments selected oscillate between these realms, operating simultaneously as economic attractors and identity boosters.
When placing an artwork in public space, in terms of Lefebvre’s (1974) categories, there are two possibilities: an artwork can be part of a *conceived space* as planned and designed by architects and authorities or it can be part of *lived space*, in the case of public art manifesting values, affections and personal associations (Miles, 1997). In the first scenario, public art consists of monuments and structures that are placed to be “appreciated”; in the second scenario, public art involves street life, as in street theater, street music and carnival (Miles, 1997, p. 36). The monuments selected for my analysis are part of public art as conceived by the authorities. In that sense, they are mainly part of the first scenario: they represent a form of public art that is not managed or mediated by artists or curators. Instead, the forms, colors and themes selected respond to the authorities’ notions of aesthetic quality and their plans and desires with regard to the transformation of public space. As a result, apart from being aesthetic entities, they also carry with them an ideological aspect.

Before continuing with my analysis, it is important to note that, in the past, monuments were used in Ecuador in traditional ways that mobilized them to support a national identity rooted in history. Seeking to consolidate the country as a modern nation-state, during the 19th and 20th centuries, the Ecuadorian State, the Catholic Church and the Army put specific efforts into the construction of meanings related to national identity (Andrade & Bravo, 2011). In this period, monuments were constructed mainly to commemorate national heroes. During this period (the 19th and 20th centuries), “[p]ublic art had a double function, this function emerged from an aesthetic proposal: to embellish the city and to communicate a social message” (F. Carrión, 2008, pp. 95-96, cited in Andrade & Bravo, 2011, pp. 1-2). The urbanization of the space was accompanied by the construction of iconographic elements with a patriotic spirit, representing, above all, the forces of order. Commemorative sculptures were placed in the central plazas of the main Ecuadorian cities, evincing the interests of the authorities in forging and enhancing national heroic figures. Examples include the monument representing Mariscal Antonio José de Sucre placed in the center of Quito in 1910 (Figure 0.2) and the monument of the heroes of independence, which was designed and constructed in Italy and placed in the Plaza de la Independencia (Independence Square) in Quito.

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33 In the introductory chapter of this study I explain Lefebvre’s categories of lived, conceived and perceived space in more detail. See pages 27-29.
In the present day, a completely different kind of monument, which does not follow the pattern of the traditional one, is appearing mainly in smaller Ecuadorian cities. These monuments take the form of quotidian objects, such as a hat (Figure 0.3), an airplane or a pitcher, and of animals or ordinary citizens. They are further characterized by the use of strong, striking colors and aggrandizing proportions.

Figure 0.2 Acto Inaugural, 1910 [Inaugural Act 1910]. Photo retrieved from Central Bank of Ecuador – General archive (Andrade & Bravo, 2011, p. 5).

Figure 0.3 Monument to the Hat (2015). Jipijapa, Ecuador. Retrieved from https://www.pinterest.se/pin/188940146844382250/
The cases I analyze in this chapter belong to this group of monuments, which fit neither the traditional nor the non-traditional definition. For this reason, I have decided to call them “(un)conventional monuments”. In contrast to Stevens et al.’s definition (2012) of anti-monuments, these Ecuadorian monuments do not refer to dark events and, in terms of form, they are very concrete rather than abstract, while the tone of colors used is far from being obscure; these monuments are also not secretly but openly placed. Nevertheless, what they share with anti-monuments is that, in terms of visitor experience, they invite the public to a close interaction and that, in terms of meaning, they do not impose a unified interpretation. When following Krzyzanowska’s (2015) definition of counter-monuments, it is also possible to find some similarities: the Ecuadorian monuments are a sort of “open works” that potentially have different meanings, resulting in a more open identification of the public with them and, consequently, a more open process of identity construction. In the next sections, what I show through my analysis is that the monuments selected are not just (un)conventional but also commercial. Conceived by the authorities to impact local identity construction and to fulfill a commercial intention by functioning as a sort of city branding instrument, they occupy an ambiguous position.

City branding refers to the process of creating an image in order to catch the attention of relevant stakeholders, in which a deliberately chosen vision, mission and identity play a role (Riezebos, 2007). As Aronczyk (2008, p. 43) notes, “corporate branding is a demonstrably effective way to assign unique identification by consciously highlighting certain meanings and myths while ignoring others”. Governments use this mechanism to promote national identity (or, in this case, local identity), while encouraging the economic activities necessary to compete in a modern globalized world (Aronczyk, 2008). Various authors and articles have commented on the relation between city development and city branding (Evans, 2003; Smith, 2007; Lui, 2008; Marschall, 2009; Dumbraveanu 2010; Muratovski 2012; Hiernaux and Gonzáles, 2016). Andrew Smith (2007), for example, analyzing urban development in Barcelona, explores how monuments and what he calls monumental architecture are mobilized as vehicles for tourism marketing and to communicate capital city status. He describes how, through the construction of large buildings such as the Torre Agbar and the exploitation of the image of others – such as La Sagrada Familia – during the periods 1888-1929 and 1982-2007, a “status is ‘manufactured’ through the deliberate manipulation of the urban landscape” (Smith, 2007, p. 80) prompted by Barcelona’s ambition to become a global capital. On
their part, Daniel Hiernaux and Carmen Gonzáles (2016) analyze how, through the construction and use of brands such as “patrimonial cities” and “smart cities”, the neoliberal state has successfully organized and appropriated urban space.

With the intention of exploring the role the chosen monuments play in the Ecuadorian context and the purpose with which they are imagined and conceived by their sponsors in more detail, in the next section I analyze the Monument of the Ice Cream, its relation to the national and globalized context, and the role it plays in constructing local urban identity.

More than ice cream
In this section I focus on the monument of the Ice Cream (Figure 0.4) located in the city of Salcedo. First, I analyze how it relates to the distinction between traditional and non-traditional monuments. Second, I explore its conception in terms of the motivations and imaginaries evoked by the responsible authorities, as well as the relation between these imaginaries and the globalized context. Finally, I describe how the installation of this monument raised disputes about the construction of local identity, reflecting tensions between an identity perceived as configured by elements of the past (mainly pre-Columbian) and an identity orienting itself towards a future of (global) commerce and economic development.

Figure 0.4 Monument of the Ice Cream in Salcedo (January 2016). Photo by the author.
The Ice Cream monument (Figure 0.4) is a seven-meter-high structure located at the entrance to the city of San Miguel de Salcedo (commonly known as Salcedo), which is a small city (58,216 inhabitants according to INEC, 2010b) located in the Cotopaxi province, in the center of Ecuador. As Marschall (2009) has argued, the site in which it is placed is a contextual factor that impacts on the meaning of any commemorative marker. In this case, the Ice Cream has been installed in a well-protected green area surrounded by a fence. This area is located at the main entrance to the city, reflecting the monument’s role as an image that offers visitors to the city a sense of what the city is about. Crucially, the Ice Cream does not stand alone. Two other monuments accompany it: one representing the archangel San Miguel and the other a general. Before returning to its spatial situation, I will analyze the features of the Ice Cream monument.


The Ice Cream is made of reinforced concrete and covered with ceramic tiles. The five colors of the ceramic tiles represent the typical flavors of the local-made ice cream: milk, *taxo*, berry, strawberry and *naranjilla*. Following the distinctions between traditional and non-traditional monuments, the Ice Cream can be defined as (un)conventional, since it has characteristics of both categories (as described by Stevens et al., 2012). It is traditional in terms of form and site: it is a singular presence, vertical and constructed with solid materials. It is also very explicit in what it reflects; there is no doubt that it represents ice cream and the history of its production in Salcedo. It is placed at the entrance to the city and highly visible, but also partially hidden by the monument.
of Archangel San Miguel (Figure 0.5), which occupies the center of the roundabout. At the same time, the Ice Cream is unconventional in terms of subject and meaning: it does not glorify an event or a person, celebrate an ideology or represent past time and national values. Due to its size and placement, the Ice Cream also invites the close, bodily interaction characteristic of non-traditional monuments (Stevens et al., 2012). In short, the Ice Cream transforms the urban landscape by exhibiting a non-traditional aesthetic.

![Figure 0.6 Ice cream shops (January 2016). Photos by the author.]

Crucially, when walking in the streets of the urban area, the image of the ice cream is everywhere (Figures Figure 0.6 & Figure 0.7). The relation between the city of Salcedo and the production of ice cream started in the 1950s, when the local Franciscan nuns decided to prepare home-made ice cream due to the difficult economic situation their order was experiencing. Expecting to increase the income of the order, a nun named Rosa María Durán mixed milk, fruits and sugar, all natural ingredients from the region, and created the now famous Helado de Salcedo (Salcedo’s ice cream). At the beginning, the ice cream was commercialized in the convent; after some time, the street vendor “José Trrutrrra” began offering the “ice cream with milk from the nuns” in the streets. Later on, some families with access to the nuns’ recipe continued the elaboration and commercialization of the product (Asociación de Productores, 2016). The following years, the number of shops and families selling ice cream increased, as did the fame of Salcedo, which started to be called the city of ice cream.
The construction of the monument was initiated in 1998 by the municipality of Salcedo, specifically by the then Mayor Guillermo Pacheco (Figure 0.8). With regard to the reasons for installing an aggrandized ice cream, Mr. Pacheco notes:

I did it – the monument – because Salcedo is the land of ice cream so (...) [it] was made to make the city more attractive so people can identify Salcedo as the land of ice cream. That was the objective, the aspiration, [to make it] for all the people that work in this industry. (Personal communication, January 5, 2016, author’s translation from Spanish)
Pacheco’s testimony reflects two main intentions behind the construction of the monument: on the one hand, the monument was meant to transform the urban space to attract tourists, while, on the other, it was supposed to honor those working in the ice cream industry. The architect Edison Carrillo, who was in charge of the monument’s design, refers to similar motivations: according to him, ice cream production is a tradition in Salcedo, so the municipality wanted to take advantage of this tradition to give an identity to the city by representing the daily life of a Salcedense (E. Carrillo, personal communication, January 5, 2016). Carrillo indicates that, initially, councilors and architects wanted to construct an even bigger ice cream:

The idea was to make it much bigger and to put a telescope inside… so the kids could go into the ice cream and watch the Cotopaxi [volcano] […] from that point is also possible to see the Illinizas [mountains]… so something a little bit touristic, but also for the kids, so they can appreciate those things. (Personal communication, January 5, 2016, author’s translation from Spanish)\(^{34}\)

What can be concluded from the statements of the people involved in the monument’s construction – the project’s mentor and its main architect – is that it was designed to function both as a monument honoring the people working in the Salcedo ice cream industry and as a city branding instrument installing an image of Salcedo, in the eyes of non-locals, as a city closely linked to ice cream production. Following Marschall (2009) and Osborne (2001), then, it seems that the authorities in charge of the monument were well aware of the public structure’s potential to construct a new collective identity. The Ice Cream was meant to reinforce an identity perceived as functional for both locals and visitors. In contrast to the traditional monument, the identity reinforced by the structure is not one evoking past heroes or personalities, but one that, taking advantage of the local ice cream making tradition, aims to aggrandize this industry and project it into the future to attract tourists and to be competitive in the national and global markets.

\(^{34}\) In the end, this design could not be constructed because of the sedimentation and soil in the area where the monument was going to be placed.
The use, in city branding, of an aggrandized, prominent local product to attract visitors and as a business card is not new and can be seen in other places, such as, for example, in Clanton, Alabama (US), where a water tower is combined with a big peach, the area’s major agricultural product, or in Detroit, where a giant tire decorates the entryway to the city known as the automobile capital of the world (Figure 0.9). There is even another monument to ice cream in Tocumbo, Michoacán, in México (Figure 0.10), which is also known for the production of this sweet. Other cities have taken prominent people as symbols representing their identity; for example, the city of Amsterdam has been promoted as the city of Rembrandt and Barcelona as the city of Gaudi.

Figure 0.9 The Peach Water Tower in Clanton, Alabama, and the Giant Tire in Detroit. Photos retrieved from https://becomingageorgiapeach.wordpress.com/tag/water-tower/ and https://www.flickr.com/photos/52676908@N02/7265159296.

Figure 0.10 Monument to the Ice Cream, Tocumbo, México. Retrieved from http://www.cambiodemichoacan.com.mx.
In the case of Salcedo, however, there is a tension between the monument as a marker of cultural identity and its commercial/branding function, which, I argue, transforms it into an (un)conventional structure. It straddles the line between monument and advertisement: on the one hand, as a monument, it reinforces a sense of mutual historical experience (Osborne, 2001) that continues in the present – the ice cream making tradition – but, on the other hand, there is a desire to aggrandize and exploit this tradition for commercial purposes and economic benefit. I say aggrandize because the ice cream industry is in fact not the biggest one in Salcedo; the share of the production and sale of ice cream in the canton’s economy is actually quite small. According to the statistics, in Salcedo, 49.3% of the population is involved in activities related to agriculture and livestock, and only 12.5% in commerce and food services (INEC, 2010b). Additionally, 78.5% of the canton population lives in rural areas (INEC, 2010b), whereas ice cream is a product produced and sold mainly in the urban area.

Despite this, the current municipal administration (2014-2017), with the idea of fostering the economy of the canton and the production of ice cream, is thinking about constructing an even bigger monument. As Clever Zapata, Director of Social Development and Culture of Salcedo’s municipality, expresses: “[The plan is to construct] a bigger one, more beautiful, more striking […] because the one we have now is not well located” (Personal communication, January 5, 2016, author’s translation from Spanish). According to him, they are also planning to organize a national exhibition and to design the park of the ice cream because “we need to foster that – the ice cream – because we cannot be blind, we are known because of the ice cream…” (C. Zapata, personal communication, January 5, 2016, author’s translation from Spanish). Thus, the monument represents a strategic move to construct a future in which the production of this item is not necessarily perceived as the main economic activity, but in which the image of the ice cream is supposed to be recognized and appreciated by tourists. The image of the ice cream is used to reinforce an identity that is partially made up and serves a specific and strategic purpose.

In line with Young’s (1992) and Krzyzanowska’s (2015) descriptions of counter-monuments as provocative and as “open works”, the implementation of the monument of the Ice Cream prompted diverse interpretations and triggered a discussion about what kind of local identity should be reflected and reinforced in this public structure. The monument was installed in 2000, without any special ceremony, and was not erected through an official process: only some officials from the municipality and people from
the neighborhood attended the event (G. Pacheco, personal communication, January 5, 2016). Once it had been put in place, people started to discuss it and to raise criticisms. As Zapata explains: “There was a discussion about it because – people – wondered ‘why?’ […] ‘If you – the municipality – made a monument to the ice cream you should also construct one to the horndado and the pinol [other typical foods] […] Salcedo is more than this’” (C. Zapata, personal communication, January 5, 2016, author’s translation from Spanish). Implicitly, this testimony shows that some sectors of the population felt marginalized and questioned the figure of the Ice Cream as representative of the canton’s economy and identity.

Another point of discussion triggered by the installation of the Ice Cream monument was related to the perceived disconnect between the Ice Cream and Salcedo’s cultural past. Wilmo Gualpa, historian and current General Secretary of the municipality, when referring to the Ice Cream, asks: “How is it possible that we simplify all our traditions and our historical and cultural richness by erecting the figure of an ice cream?” (personal communication, January 5, 2016, author’s translation from Spanish). As an example, Gualpa refers to the festivity of Inti Raymi, in honor of the sun god, which was forbidden (as were any other indigenous manifestations) during colonial times. Even though this festivity takes place in all Ecuadorian (and Latin-American) regions with an indigenous population, in Salcedo it has been adopted as an important symbol of the canton, as a step to recuperate ancient traditions and, according to Gualpa, as “a feature of our identity” (Personal communication, January 5, 2016, author’s translation from Spanish). From Gualpa’s words, it is possible to infer that the Ice Cream monument is seen to put the identity of the city in question (simplifying it) mainly because the activity it aggrandizes contrasts with other activities considered more traditional, principally those undertaken by indigenous people before the conquest. From this perspective, the monument is perceived in a more traditional sense, as a structure that should preserve established identities from the past and represent whom we most owe (Abousnnouga and Machin, 2013), in this case specifically pre-Columbian traditions and heroes.

Patricio Amaya, a lawyer, former General Secretary of the municipality and current councilor, expresses a similar viewpoint to that stated by Gualpa. For him, too, the discussion and polemic around the Ice Cream monument was originated because “other cultural values exist”. He does not specify what these “other values” would be, but indicates that it is necessary to construct monuments more relevant and consistent with Salcedo history. According to him, important people were responsible for Salcedo’s
development as a city and would deserve a monument, for example “an obelisk similar to the one in Buenos Aires, Argentina” (Personal communication, January 5, 2016, author’s translation from Spanish), which was constructed in 1936 to commemorate the fourth centenary of the foundation of the city. Amaya argues that an obelisk commemorating the people who founded the canton or important events in its history would be more suitable. For him, the Ice Cream monument “is an attempt against history, against everything! […] we are falling into folklorism” (Personal communication, January 5, 2016, author’s translation from Spanish). A specific relation between monuments and identity is made in this testimony: a clear opposition between history and folklore is affirmed, with folklore acquiring a negative connotation. Commonly, the term folklore refers to traditional cultural forms and folklorism to the attitudes, ideas and feelings implying a positive assessment or even veneration of these forms, including legends, architectural styles, clothes, music and dances (Martí, 1999). Thus, when Amaya says “we are falling into folklorism”, he is accepting Salcedo ice cream as a traditional product (an idea that some folklorists would reject, since the ice cream tradition is quite new and, in the classic definition, the more ancient the folkloric element is, the more genuine it is considered to be). Nevertheless, for him, a folkloric tradition should not be represented by a monument, which should instead commemorate historical events.

When analyzing the spatial context of the Ice Cream monument and its relation to the other monuments occupying the space in which it is situated, the relation between the monument and identity construction becomes more complex. Approximately two years after the construction of the Ice Cream and due mainly to traffic problems, the municipality decided to construct in the same area a roundabout and to install in the middle of it a large statue of the archangel San Miguel (The Prince, as he is called and known in Salcedo) “as the first image of Salcedo, its identity” (E. Carrillo, personal communication, January 5, 2016, author’s translation from Spanish). Besides this statue, the Ice Cream, at seven meters high, looks small (Figure 0.5). The archangel San Miguel is one of the emblematic symbols of Salcedo: according to local legend, in the 17th century a figure of San Miguel was being carried to the capital, Quito. During the trip, the people in charge of the effigy stopped on the land where Salcedo is now located. The next day, without any explanation, the figure of the archangel became so heavy that was impossible to continue the journey. Ever since, San Miguel has been the patron of the city. As the Director of Social Development of the municipality mentions: “The prince…that one is
According to former Mayor Guillermo Pacheco:

[When it was installed] the act was more emotional, more striking [than when the Ice Cream was installed], because here...people...we are believers in God. He is the patron San Miguel, the prince, so people were happier. [...] To place our patron at the entrance of Salcedo, can you imagine? [People said] “he is going to take care of us, our health, our life, he will multiply the faith”, those kind of things. [...] and I did it in the same way [as with the Ice Cream], with another councilor who supported me [...]. As you can see, it is beautiful, very striking. (Personal communication, January 5, 2016, author’s translation from Spanish)

Figure 0.11 The Ice Cream and the Prince (January 2016). Photo by the author.

The Catholic religion and its saints were brought to South America by colonialism, which violently eliminated indigenous traditions as pagan rituals. Consequently, this Catholic figure became representative of the canton, which was named San Miguel de Salcedo in his honor. During the main festival of the canton, called San
Miguel, the figure of the archangel is paraded around the streets of the city in a procession. It is not surprising, then, that the interviewed officials perceive the monument of the Prince as a reaffirmation of a local identity embedded in the Catholic faith and its values, and that the placement of the Ice Cream was so controversial, since it opposes a more traditional view of monuments as commemorating historical events or local/national heroes. Significantly, however, in Salcedo it is not unusual for the image of the ice cream and that of the Prince to appear together. They can, for example, be seen standing side by side in the office of the Asociación de Productores y Comercializadores de Helados de Salcedo [Association of producers and marketers of Salcedo ice cream] (Figure 0.11).

![Figure 0.12 The Ice Cream, The Prince and The General (2016). Photos by the author.](image)

The other monument placed near the Ice Cream is a bust of General Gonzalo Jiménez Rivas. One of my interviewees said that the bust was erected before the Ice Cream and the Prince by a former Mayor for personal reasons, as the General did nothing special for the canton and is known only because “he put some grass in the stadium” (W. Gualpa, personal communication, January 5, 2016). I did not manage to confirm this statement, and on the bust there is no information about the General. However, the statue is only one of the ways in which the General is commemorated in Salcedo: a street and a taxi company are also named after him.35 Although little information can be found on the General (I could not even ascertain the years of his birth and death), there is documentation that he was the director of Explocen, an explosives factory in Salcedo that,

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35 See [www.paginasamarillasecuador.ec](http://www.paginasamarillasecuador.ec).
in 2005, was accused by the Ecumenical Human Rights Commission of Ecuador (CEDHU) of abuses against a peasant family (“CEDHU”, 2005). Despite the lack of information regarding the precise importance of the General, his statue fits into the traditional view of the monument as commemorating someone considered important and expresses local identity by referring to the influence of the military on the city.

The spatial arrangement of the Ice Cream at the entrance of the city with the other two monuments located by its side thus expresses a clash of perspectives on local identity and offers visitors different images considered representative of the city. Observed in its immediate spatial context, the Ice Cream appears as a non-traditional monument juxtaposed with the more traditional monuments of the archangel and the General. The main purpose of the authorities when constructing the Ice Cream monument was to reinforce the association of the city with the production and selling of ice cream, and to use this association to make the city more attractive to tourists. In the ensuing discussions about the appropriateness of the Ice Cream monument as a marker of the city’s identity, this vision of commercial city branding came up against arguments supporting the commemoration of a past defined either historically or folklorically. Both sides of the debate see a monument as conveying a singular identity, either based on the past or based on the present and future. Nevertheless, a multi-temporal notion of identity does emerge when considering the combination of monuments at the entrance to the city: the Ice Cream, the Prince and the General share the same space, welcoming visitors and passers-by, and asking them to contemplate the city in its different facets – past, present and future – rather than as having a unitary identity.

In the remainder of this chapter, I analyze two other (un)conventional monuments, the Tuna and the Manteña Chair in Manta, with regard to their construction, the motives guiding their placement in the city and their role in the urban context.

**To be is to produce: the monument to the Tuna (and its can)**

Much like the Ice Cream, the Tuna monument in Manta city was conceived and constructed with the aim of marking a local identity by referring to a commercial industry. At the same time, however, this monument differs from the Ice Cream because, instead of being juxtaposed with separate, more traditional monuments asserting a competing local identity grounded in the past, the Tuna evokes an identity that joins the precolonial/colonial past, the commercial present and the tourism-oriented future.
On Friday 4 May 2007 the Manta Yacht Club was filled with authorities and Mantense personalities, congregated to inaugurate the Monument to the Tuna Fish (Figure 0.13). Present were Marcia Chávez, representing Manta’s Mayor, Bernardo Buehs Bowen, who, apart from being the monument’s mentor, is the owner of the enterprise Fresh Fish (among others companies); Freddy Platón, then President of the Ecuadorian-American Chamber of Commerce, who motivated the sector enterprises to finance the project; and Tamara Campo, the Cuban artist responsible for the monument’s design. The inauguration took place in the afternoon; as the sun was setting, the ribbon was cut and the Tuna, a 9.2-meter-long fiberglass structure, was officially introduced to the public (Figure 0.14).

As in the case of the Ice Cream, the Tuna is an (un)conventional monument in the sense that it unites characteristics of traditional and non-traditional monuments. Using the categories suggested by Stevens et al. (2012), in terms of its site, it resembles a
traditional monument since it occupies a highly visible spot in the middle of a roundabout close to Manta’s harbor and next to the Yacht Club. In terms of its form, the fact that the fish is placed on a pedestal twelve meters from the ground is traditional, but what is portrayed is more unconventional. Below the pedestal upon which the fish sits, there is a tuna can with the words *Manta Capital of The Tuna* written on it. Originally, there were also three boats arranged around the monument on the ground (Figure 0.13), but a few years ago the boats were removed to be repaired and never returned. In terms of visiting experience (Stevens et al., 2012) the Tuna does not demand solemnity and deference like a traditional monument. Nor does it invite the public to engage with it in a close and bodily interaction; nevertheless, when standing in front of it, there is a kind of sensorial engagement: visually, it is an imposing, rather strange structure, but at the same time seeing a fish right next to the beach feels common and familiar. It is this double aspect that makes the monument so striking and that turns it into a fantastic animal, difficult to tear your eyes away from. The Tuna’s anti-monumental aspect is due to the fact that it is a representation of a not usually monumentalized animal (unlike, for example, the lion) and, at first sight, does not represent important events or people of the past. The scale also makes it unconventional; it is not usual to find a 9-meter-high statue in Ecuadorian cities, and even less common to find one representing a tuna and its can. The fact that, despite its unconventionality, the monument was inaugurated in a highly official and public manner reflects its sponsors’ intention to celebrate and make visible the Tuna as something outstanding (Abousnouga and Machin, 2013), and suggests that it plays a role that transcends the decorative and ornamental aspect.

The Tuna Monument came about as a result of an initiative of the Ecuadorian-American Chamber of Commerce in Manta. According to Freddy Platón, who promoted its construction and was President of the Chamber of Commerce at the time:

> The idea came from a simple conversation between two [Ecuadorian] businessmen in the fishing industry in China [...]: [Capitan] Bernardo Buehs and Raúl Paladines. They went [to China] for a fishing congress [...] I think it was in 2005. [...] They said they were staying in a big and beautiful hotel and in front of it there was a monument of colored fish, a big one. And Capitan Berni [Bernardo Buehs] told me: “it would be very nice to make something similar in Manta”, and I said “I take your word for it, Capitan”.

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So we developed the project and started working. (F. Platón, personal communication, January 14, 2016, author’s translation from Spanish)

This testimony reveals, although on a very different scale, a first impulse similar to the one that triggered the construction of Yachay: Ecuadorian businessmen traveled to an Asian country, in this case not South Korea but China, were inspired by what they saw there and wanted to construct something similar in Ecuador. Back in Ecuador, Platón started to lobby, encouraging fisheries to donate money to construct the monument and contacting the municipality to obtain the construction permit. The construction was coordinated with the municipality, which was in charge of the public tender. The Cuban artist Tamara Campo won the tender and her project was constructed. A plaque next to the monument features the names of the twenty-six companies and people that financed the construction of the monument, almost all of them related to the tuna trade:

*The Ecuadorian-American Chamber of Commerce in Manabí thanks the enterprises that materialized this Monument to the “Industrial and commercial activity in Manta”, with special thanks to its promoter, Cap. Bernardo Buehs Noboa.*

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<td>ILUSTRE MUNICIPALIDAD DE MANTA</td>
<td>CORPORACION MARZAN</td>
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*Manta, May 4th, 2007*

*Signed by:*

*Freddy Platón Gonzáles (President)*

*Elizabeth Medranda Campos (Executive Director) (author’s translation from Spanish)*

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36 See Chapter Two.
When analyzing the statements about the monument made by the entrepreneurs and the municipality officials in charge of its construction and the history of the region, it becomes clear that the Tuna monument plays two roles in Manta: to reinforce an already established identity for the city related to commerce in general and fishery in particular; and to promote this identity to tourists in order to stimulate future economic development, based not only on commerce but also on tourism.

In relation to the first role, the plaque defines the monument’s aim as the representation of “Industrial and commercial activity in Manta”, or, in words of Platón: “the capturing of the fish which feed us, the canned tuna industry and the artisan fishermen who contribute to the development of the city of Manta” (F. Platón, personal communication, January 14, 2016, author’s translation from Spanish). This purpose is closely linked to the historical role of fish and commerce in the region.

The city of Manta has its origins in the Manteña Culture, which flourished during the period 1000-1526/1535 A.C. (Hidrovo, 2005). It was the main center of the Manteña Confederation, which was composed of different “señoríos” [jurisdictions] that, together, had around 500,000 inhabitants. Known as the first society of sailors, the Manteña Confederation was a society based on the trade in products such as spondylus shells, fish (which was also the main source of food), fabrics, emeralds, ceramics and objects made of gold and silver (Salazar, 2008). The name of the main lordship was Cancebí and its center (nowadays Manta) was called Jocay, which means house or entrance of the fish; it was also called golden door because small fish made of gold were used as a currency (Palma, 2012). Jocay (with approximately 20,000 inhabitants) was the place from which the merchandise was delivered to diverse regions within and beyond Ecuador, including Baja California and Chile. Fishery, commerce and the seaport were the three main elements of the Confederation (Hidrovo, 2005). Due to various epidemics, battles with the Inca Empire and the Spanish conquest, the Confederation and its trade system were dismantled and Jocay and the other villages declined (Salazar, 2008; Palma, 2012). In 1533, the name Jocay was changed to San Pablo de Manta by the Spanish conqueror Pedro de Alvarado. In the following years, in order to be articulated into the colonial market, the Spanish used the old sea routes to transport tropical products between Quito and Lima (Hidrovo, 2005). The centers of colonial power in the coastal region of Ecuador were established in Guayaquil and Portoviejo.
In the 19th century, after Ecuador gained independence, migrants from Montecristi (a city close to Manta) and Europe (mainly from Germany and Italy) came to Manta; a new seaport was officially constructed and a new commercial period started (Hidrovo, 2005). Products such as hats (known today as Panama hats) and tagua (the seed of a palm tree known as vegetable ivory) were exported in big quantities. With the creation of these industries, the consolidation of an economic elite came together with the consolidation of political autonomy and leadership (Palma, 2012). In the second half of the 20th century, the hats and tagua were replaced by the export of coffee and, later, fish. Fishery has been the most continuous commercial activity in the economic history of Manta; small fish were always caught by artisan fishermen and entrepreneurs, but in 1950 the large-scale export of fish started, with the export of tuna dating back to 1965 (Hidrovo, 2005). Nowadays, Manta has the largest fishing fleet in Ecuador, with the tuna as its primary product (GAD, 2015).

Given this history of commercial fishery, it is not a surprise that the promoters of the Tuna Monument were a group of entrepreneurs. According to Elizabeth Medranda, who was executive director of the Chamber of Commerce at the time of the inauguration, “the purpose [of the Tuna] is to give an identity to Manta, which is characterized by fishery” (“El atún”, 2007, para. 1, author’s translation from Spanish). According to both Platón and Medranda, therefore, the Tuna derives its relevance from embodying, with regard to the inhabitants of Manta, who they are at best, what they should strive towards and whom they most owe (Abousnnouga and Machin, 2013). In this case, the people whom
they most owe are identified not only as the past traders and fisherman, but also as the present artisan fishermen and fishery businessmen, expressing an identity grounded in the past and the present.

Like the Ice Cream monument, the Tuna monument has also been critiqued and interrogated. For example, Miguel Camino, former planning director at the Manta municipality and current rector of the Eloy Alfaro University, who was working for the municipality at the time the monument was placed, argues that, in expressing gratitude to an industrial sector that has contributed to the city’s growth, “the monument represents a good topic, but it mainly has an industrial expression […] there are some who question it because of the tuna can” (personal communication, January 15, 2016, author’s translation from Spanish). For some people, he adds, this focus on industry, as indicated by the can, is controversial. For Analía Navarrete, director of the municipality’s Culture Department, in contrast, to think that the Tuna monument represents only the industrial sector is a misunderstanding: “Some people say that the Tuna is a botched work, they do not appreciate the history of the tuna, they do not know the real meaning. [The monument] even has the can, and the can is the representation of what happens with the tuna when it is exported. […] We need to appreciate what we have” (Personal communication, January 14, 2016, author’s translation from Spanish). The Tuna (with its can) thus appears as an open work (Krzyzanowska, 2015) that invokes proud memories of the indigenous Manteña Confederation, while at the same time incorporating a reference to contemporary practices through the placement of the can. Significantly, the image of the tuna and its can has also appeared in a mural in Manta (Figure 0.16), suggesting that it has been accepted as representative of the city despite its internal tensions.

![Figure 0.16 Mural of the Tuna and its can (January 2016). Photo by the author.](image)
Apart from mirroring this “fishery” identity of Manta, the image of the Tuna is also meant to function as a magnet for tourists. The vice mayor of the city, Eduardo Velásquez, argues: “It is important to highlight elements that are striking for the tourists, such as for example the figure of the fisherman or the tuna […] to create an impact not only at the local level but also internationally […]” (Personal communication, January 12, 2016, author’s translation from Spanish). The argument sustaining this affirmation is that, due to the increasing competition in the fishing industry, the future of the city needs to include the development of tourism. Tourism is promoted not only by linking the city to fishing through the Tuna and other monuments, but also by emphasizing its cultural heritage, through the maintenance of patrimonial houses (E. Velásquez, personal communication, January 12, 2016, author’s translation from Spanish). Thus, as Velásquez notes, the municipality plans to construct various monuments on the city’s roundabouts, representing commercial fishery and ancestral symbols such as the Manteña Chair – which has already been placed – and the Goddess Umiña (Personal communication, January 12, 2016, author’s translation from Spanish). This effort of city branding follows the same principles as nation branding, a communication process through which governments, often in collaboration with the private sector, attempt to control the image they project in order to attract investment, tourism and trade, in competition with national and international rivals in an environment where “a wealth of information creates a poverty of attention” (Herbert Simon, cited in Aronczyk, 2008, p. 42). It is worth mentioning that, as described before, Manta as a city-port has a historical relation of trade and exchange with other countries. Consequently, the idea of positioning the city as part of the global market is, in this case (as opposed to in the earlier discussed case of Yachay), not so much a fantasy posited by the authorities as an achievable goal supported by a history of trade that started with the Manteña Confederation and still continues today. The big businesses located in Manta export fish and derivative products around the world, representing 7% of Ecuador’s GDP and constituting the third main national export product after oil and bananas (GAD, 2015). What the city is looking to do with the city branding effort, of which the Tuna monument is part, is to diversify its economy to be more competitive in the global economy.

About the current state of the Tuna monument, María José Pisco, Interim Director of Urban and Territorial Planning at the Manta municipality, has said: “It is necessary to do some maintenance, I don’t know… because something is missing, it is very simple. I think it is necessary to do something, maybe to paint it or to put other things with it so it
can be striking... it is missing something to make it more striking...” (Personal communication, January 11, 2016, author’s translation from Spanish). Her emphasis on the necessity to make the monument less simple and more striking indicates that it is not just intended to refer to the successful fishing industry, but also to draw attention in its own right, as a tourist attraction.

In conclusion, it can be said that the Tuna is an (un)conventional monument, representing a non-traditional form (a tuna and its can) and conceived by its sponsors to reinforce a past and present identity for the city linked to fishing and trade, as well as to promote this identity to the outside world, specifically tourists, in order to diversify the local economy. Like the Ice Cream monument, the Tuna is located in a strategic position and uses a local product to reinforce an identity perceived as capable of cementing and improving the city’s place in the national or global economy. Unlike the Ice Cream, which was built with public money, the construction of the Tuna was made possible by the financial contributions of private fishery enterprises. Moreover, where Salcedo’s ice cream actually had only a small share in the local economy, the export of tuna represents a significant portion of Ecuadorian GDP. In that sense, the past, present and future identities represented by the Tuna monument are not discordant with each other or with the actual situation of the city. Still, for some people, aggrandizing a commercial industry and linking the city’s identity to this industry (even if it stretches back in history) instead of to historical events or people remains controversial.

In this regard, it is important that, as in the case of the Ice Cream, the Tuna competes with other images seen to define Manta’s identity. Although it is the only monument on the roundabout, the Tuna shares the wider urban public space of Manta with another important figure: the Manteña Chair. In the next section I explore the monument of the Chair and the place it and other incarnations of the Manteña Chair occupy in the authorities’ vision of the city’s past, present and future identity.

The Manteña Chair: The power of the ancestors

As noted previously, the Manteña Confederation (1000-1526/1535 A.C.) was the origin of Manta city. It is described as a very well organized society, which was recognized for its commercial relations and its advanced navigation system. The artifact most representative of the Manteña Confederation is the Manteña Chair. Approximately 60 centimeters high, this type of chair had a U form and was made from a gray stone called andesita (Figure 0.17). Holding the chair was a human or animal figure (most often a
The chair had a political and religious function, and was used by priests and *Caciques* (Hidrovo, 2005). The Cacique or (male) boss, as in other pre-Columbian Latin American societies, was the mediator between men and gods (in the case of the Manteños, their main deity was *Umiña*, a goddess represented by an emerald with curative powers). The cacique was the head of the Council of Notables, which was composed of the heads of all the towns in the Confederation (Palma, 2012). Thus, to sit on a Manteña Chair meant having control and authority (Museo Arquelógico, 2016).

Figure 0.17 Manteña Chair. Retrieved from http://www.andes.info.ec/fr/node/2372.

Figure 0.18 Manteña Chair in Central Park, Manta. Retrieved from http://in-lan.com/viajes-es/manta-simplemente-deliciosa/.

There are two important monuments representing the Manteña chair in Manta. The first, a replica of the indigenous design in stone, is located in the main park of the city (Figure 0.18). The second is a modernized representation located at the entrance to the city (Figure 0.19). My analysis will focus on the latter, since this is the most recent representation of the chair placed in public space by the municipal authorities, synthesizing in a clear manner the relation between monuments and local identity.

At a cost of 56,000 US dollars, the modernized representation of the Manteña chair was inaugurated by Mayor Jorge Zambrano on 13 February 2015. It is a four-meter-high metal structure painted in blue and white. As in the cases of the Ice Cream and the Tuna, this monument has both traditional and non-traditional characteristics (Stevens et al., 2012). In terms of site and subject, it is traditional; it is located in a strategic place, on the median strip of the highway to the city, about two kilometers before the Tuna monument, and it is an imposing, vertical structure referring to local history. Nevertheless, while representing the history of the city, the monument does not follow the indigenous design of the Manteña Chair; the blue color and the metal give it a modern
aesthetic, converting the traditional chair into an ornamental object. In terms of visiting experience (Stevens et al., 2012), however, the chair is non-traditional, as it invites a close interaction rather than deference. As in the case of the Tuna, this monument was inaugurated with an official public event (Figure 0.20), but one that was much less solemn and formal than that for the Tuna. The event included musicians and dancers wearing colorful outfits, creating a playful and carnivalesque atmosphere in public space. In this way, the authorities made clear their intention of presenting the Chair to the public as something remarkable and to be celebrated, in line with Abousnnouga and Machin’s (2013) definition of the traditional monument.

Figure 0.19 Modernized representation of the Manteña Chair (January 2016).
Photo by the author.

In 2014, after a survey of citizens carried out by the municipality, the Manteña Chair was declared an accurate institutional image of the municipality, representing the significance of the history of Manta (Menéndez, 2014). The new monument of the Manteña Chair, then, can be seen as part of a municipal effort to reinforce this icon as representative of the city. But exactly what kind of imaginaries do the authorities endorse through the installation of this (un)conventional monument? During the inauguration of the modernized version of the chair, Analía Navarrete, the municipality’s Director of Culture, expressed the view that the Manteña Chair “is the maximum representation of the city and has a very important cultural significance” (“Inauguran”, 2015, para. 3, author’s translation from Spanish); Mayor Jorge Zambrano, too, emphasized that “[t]he most important thing is to preserve our identity and to honor our cultural roots, for that reason we thought it was important to give a key role to the Manteña chair” (cited in
Menéndez, 2014, par. 2, author’s translation from Spanish). These testimonies indicate that the monument aims to preserve established identities from the past (Abousnnouga and Machin, 2013). In general, the Manteña Chair represents a basic element of a Mantense identity mainly located in the past – referring to the city’s roots, without leaving open the option of including other elements, new group identities (Marschall, 2009) or, in Stuart Hall’s words, routes, meaning the different elements or “the different points by which they have come to be now” (Hall in “A conversation”, 1999, p. 2).

Apart from the monument, the way in which the symbol of the Manteña Chair is extensively present in public spaces around the city is a sign of the importance ascribed to this symbol by the authorities. For example, the Chair appears painted on walls, accompanied by the figure of the Cacique (the main chief of Manteña Confederation) (Figure 0.21). The Chair also appears in a double representation, painted and sculpted (Figure 0.21), forming a kind of main altar on Manta’s shopping promenade. Finally it appears as a decorative object, adorning shops, restaurants and hotels, among others (Figures Figure 0.22 & Figure 0.23).
These multiple incarnations, which appear throughout the urban space of Manta, can be seen as the diverse afterlives of the Manteña Chair. In her article “The Afterlife of Monuments”, Deborah Cherry analyses the screen video *Sleepwalkers’ Caravan (Prologue)* (2008), which focuses on two sculptures representing the Indian Yaksha and Yakshi deities. Examining how these figures – through the video – are showcased in different scenarios, Cherry proposes that monuments have afterlives that reconfigure their meaning:

To explore the afterlives of monuments is to investigate how, where, when, and why monuments have been remodelled, reused, remade, re-sited, cast aside, adapted, destroyed, defaced, forgotten, or abandoned. It is to investigate the diverse conditions in which objects and sites survive and the varying demands and claims made upon them. (2013, p. 3)

Cherry complements this definition by explaining that the term afterlives “is adopted here to suggest the restless multiplicity of co-existing versions, representations, imag(in)ings, and interactions taking place in widely distributed circuits of use, replication and interpretation” and that “in the afterlife monuments emerge as extraordinarily mobile, marked by material change, put to new uses and interpretations, and travelling through collections of texts, images and objects” (2013, p. 3, 4). Taking up this notion, it is
possible to explain how the figure of the Manteña Chair has been reused and adapted in different ways in Manta city.

In an act of spatial and temporal re-location, the masculine and ancestral power represented by the Chair constantly reappears in the urban public space. The caciques are not there anymore in flesh and blood, but their image and therefore the idea of power incarnated by them is still present in wall paintings, sculptures and little artifacts around the city. For Cherry, this reinvention is crucial to preserve memory. She argues that, in each specific afterlife, both the monument and the space where it is located are transformed and re-interpreted, and that different afterlives enter into dialogue with each other: “Where visible and material traces of revision and/or erasure remain, afterlives multiply, with claims and counter-claims over the site’s identity, history, and belonging” (Cherry, 2013, p. 7). With regard to the afterlives of the Manteña Chair, it is possible to see that the image has been re-used in different contexts, including commercial ones (it appears in the lobby of a hotel and is sold as a souvenir throughout the city). As a result, besides representing the city’s roots – its indigenous past – it has also come to reference the city’s present as a destination for tourism, making a counter-claim about its identity.

Figure 0.23 The Manteña Chair adorning the building of Manta’s municipality (January 2016). Photo by the author.

Figure 4.24 Sculpture of the Manteña Chair in the lobby of the Mayor’s office (January 2016). Photo by the author.

To understand the precise function of the Manteña Chair in the space of the city and in relation to local identity formation, it is necessary to return to Manta’s economic history. Because of its strategic position by the sea, the city has attracted migrants from different parts of Ecuador and from abroad ever since the Spanish conquest, making it culturally diverse. In the 19th and 20th centuries, the growth of the industrial sector
attracted new waves of migration. Since the beginning of the 21st century, the real estate and tourist sectors have rapidly expanded and this expansion carried with it the need for a more organized and more regulated form of urban planning (H. Cedeño, F. Platón & M. Camino, personal communication, January, 2016). In the wake of the recent national and international economic crises, one of the main goals of urban development in Ecuadorian cities is to promote economic diversification by expanding the tourism industry. As Analía Navarrete, director of the municipality’s Culture Department, notes: “the goal is tourism and culture, that is why we need to rescue tourism and our culture so we can sell this city to the world” (Personal conversation, January 14, 2016, author’s translation from Spanish). When talking about the Mantense identity, she further notes:

We are living in a globalized world, in which for us is more important technology and social networks, we do not even read the newspaper because we have twitter and we see the news there […] We are losing traditions of our city. Young people nowadays are living in globalization; globalization is consuming us. (A. Navarrete, personal conversation, January 14, 2016, author’s translation from Spanish)

It is in this context, in which globalization is perceived as a threat, that it is considered important to learn “how to sell this city” and that the Manteña Chair has been chosen by the municipality as an “identity mark” (A. Navarrete, personal conversation, January 14, 2016, author’s translation from Spanish).

The testimony of Vice-Mayor Eduardo Velásquez clarifies the relation between the city’s development and the proliferation of versions of the Manteña Chair in public space. For Velásquez, the Manteña Chair is perceived as a symbol of the city capable of distinguishing Manta from other cities and thus potentially contributing to the growth of tourism. He argues that tourism, together with industry, is the future of the city and that it is towards promoting tourism that the efforts of the municipality should be directed:

[A tourist] does not want to go to a big hotel because he comes with a cruise. Apart from that, in their country of origin, [the tourists] have everything. So they want other things, something more natural, something related to our customs. The tuna could be maybe… the icon of the tuna companies, but it is not an icon related to Nature. […] Apart from the beaches, I do not think
we have many attractions here [...] it would be more attractive to have indigenous customs, to develop our identity [...] the image of the Manteña chair gives an identity to the city. (Personal conversation, January 12, 2016, author’s translation from Spanish)

For Velásquez, tourism should be promoted by emphasizing customs and features related to indigenous culture, and by building a local identity based on the past. He considers heritage/folklore effective in drawing tourists. In his statement, the Manteña Chair is identified as a means of city branding – as a foundational element for a local identity that is mainly projected outwards, at tourists, and mainly has an economic purpose.

The Chair, formerly representing the power of the cacique, thus becomes an object to market the city, at the same level of, for example, the giant letters spelling the city’s name placed by the seaside (Figure 0.). The same strategy has been used in other cities like Amsterdam and Toronto (Figure 0.). Thus, even if the Manta sign incorporates some details that make it more local (including an image of the Manteña Chair), it signals the city’s participation in a “global trend” of city marketing, in which the prevalence of the Manteña Chair also fits.

![Figure 0.25](image1)

**Figure 0.25** Giant Manta sign (January 2016). Retrieved from https://cazhumatours.com/holiday/manta-city-tour/.

![Figure 0.26](image2)

**Figure 0.26** Giant Toronto sign (July 2015). Retrieved from http://globalnews.ca/news/2107650/pan-am-toronto-sign-will-become-permanent-attraction/.

The linking of Manta’s identity to the Manteña Chair, however, is not endorsed by everyone. Miguel Camino, former Director of Urban Planning in the municipality and Rector of Manta University, disagrees with the idea of basing Manta’s identity on indigenous heritage only. Stressing the city’s cultural diversity, he notes that it is
necessary to install in public spaces symbolic representations of both the ancestral culture and the contemporary cultures that make up the city:

Manta is a cosmopolitan melting pot with perspectives from around the world, but we are absorbed [with the idea of] defining an ancestral identity. I think that is a mistake. [...] If we don’t embrace [all these cultures], if we don’t construct a unique identity, we lose the strength that a strong identity should have. Monuments are the result of the explosion of things that do not end up integrated with each other [...] it is necessary to live together with the ancestral, the traditional, the technological and the futuristic because Manta is all of these. (M. Camino, personal conversation, January 15, 2016, author’s translation from Spanish)

Here, Camino argues for the construction of an identity based on Manta’s current reality instead of one based only on a disappeared past and indigenous culture. For him, it would be better to integrate the ancestral elements with all the other cultures that are presently part of Manta, asserting in that way the cosmopolitan status of the city. He describes the current monuments of Manta as reflecting, in isolation from each other, “the explosion of things that do not end up integrated with each other”. What Camino advocates is an image capable of including and reconciling all the temporalities that contribute to shaping the current Mantense identity:

The dream [of Manta city] is to finish the 21st century as a modern, cosmopolitan, pioneer and technological city, without losing its most important feature, which is to be part of an ancestral Manteña culture that influenced the entire Pacific, and that traveled to Asia, Oceania and all the American coasts. But today with a much more advanced interpretation. (Personal conversation, January 15, 2016, author’s translation from Spanish)

Significantly, in expressing his vision of the modern and cosmopolitan future imagined for Manta and its citizens, Camino does not detach himself from the past completely. For him, it is important that Manteña culture remains present, but reinterpreted in the context of present-day globalization. In line with this, he reinterprets Manteña culture from local
to global by pointing to the trade and travel routes, and the commercial spirit that characterized it.

The design and form of the contemporary monument of the Manteña Chair (Figures 4.19 and 4.20) could be seen as representing the city’s identity according to Camino’s vision. On the one hand, the modernized monument reflects the traditional past by replicating the form of the classic Manteña Chair, while, on the other, it renews this form through the use of metal and a striking blue color. Moreover, the design integrates both the chair and a tuna fish, indicating that commerce (past, present and future) and history are intertwined in Manta. In this way, the new version of the Manteña Chair integrates imaginaries of local identity based on past, present and future temporalities in a single monument.

In sum, the various afterlives of the Chair that appear in Manta’s urban space reflect how, in the authorities’ imaginaries, “heritage is a malleable, ambiguous concept, full of paradoxes, it lends itself to be utilized in multifarious ways, supporting sometimes contradictory political, economic, social and cultural agendas” (Marschall, 2009, p. 1). The multiple representations of the Manteña Chair in the city have been placed there by the municipal authorities with different intentions, from acting as an antidote against the possible oblivion of past traditions by globalization to serving as a city branding tool to attract tourists. These intentions, however, do not fix the Manteña Chair’s meaning; its different incarnations, especially the modernized version by the highway that incorporates the Tuna, can be read against the grain to represent different, less exclusive imaginaries of local identity, like that proposed by Camino.

Conclusions
In this chapter, I analyzed the planning of a specific type of monument I call (un)conventional, its relation to the urban space in which it is situated and its role in processes of local identity formation. The monuments analyzed are (un)conventional in the sense that they combine characteristics of traditional and non-traditional monuments (Stevens et. al, 2012). From my analysis of the conception and positioning of these monuments in public space, two main reflections emerge.

First, the discourses used in relation to the monuments by the authorities responsible for them mainly reflect a persistence of the traditional conception of the monument as a structure designed to reflect a singular, established local identity. At the same time, the conflicts that erupted about the monuments show that local identity is
always contested – most often between past-oriented and present- or future-oriented visions – and that different groups claim different elements (past or present local industry, historical events or figures) as essential to local identity. In the case of the Ice Cream monument in Salcedo, the mayor linked its construction to honoring the local ice cream producers and attracting tourism, but this vision was contested by other authorities alleging that prominent figures from the city’s history are more worthy of being monumentalized. In the case of the Manteña Chair, the Manta authorities tie local identity to indigenous tradition, but some feel this tradition should be reinvented, while others feel it should be maintained as in past times.

Second, what the three cases have made clear is that these (un)conventional monuments are not only intended to shape the identity of the inhabitants but also to present – or, rather, market – a local identity to people from outside Salcedo and Manta. Underlying the construction of these monuments is a clear desire for economic development that is seen to depend on the city’s ability to attract commerce and tourism, ideally on a global scale. In this perspective, local identity becomes something flexible, strategic and commodified that is continuously transformed according to the perceived demands of the surrounding systems (in this case, the globalized context). Ultimately, then, in terms of their intended function in relation to local identity, these monuments are designed to convey not so much who the inhabitants feel they are as what the municipal authorities or local businessmen feel is the most marketable aspect of the city for global trade or tourism.

When analyzing the monuments in relation to the site in which they are located, however, it becomes clear that the line between the role of the monuments in affirming a local identity, whether based on the past, present and/or future, and their role as city branding instruments is extremely blurred. The monuments do not have a singular meaning, but exceed the intentions of their sponsors; ultimately, they point to a multifaceted urban identity that draws, in complex ways, on the past, present and future, and on history, heritage, folklore and commerce. Thus, the Ice Cream’s juxtaposition with the General and the Prince, and the fact that the monument of the Tuna and its can is located less than one kilometer away from the modernized Manteña Chair, which itself incorporates the Tuna, reflects the presence of “not a single, but […] several, sometimes contradictory or unresolved identities” (Hall, 1996).