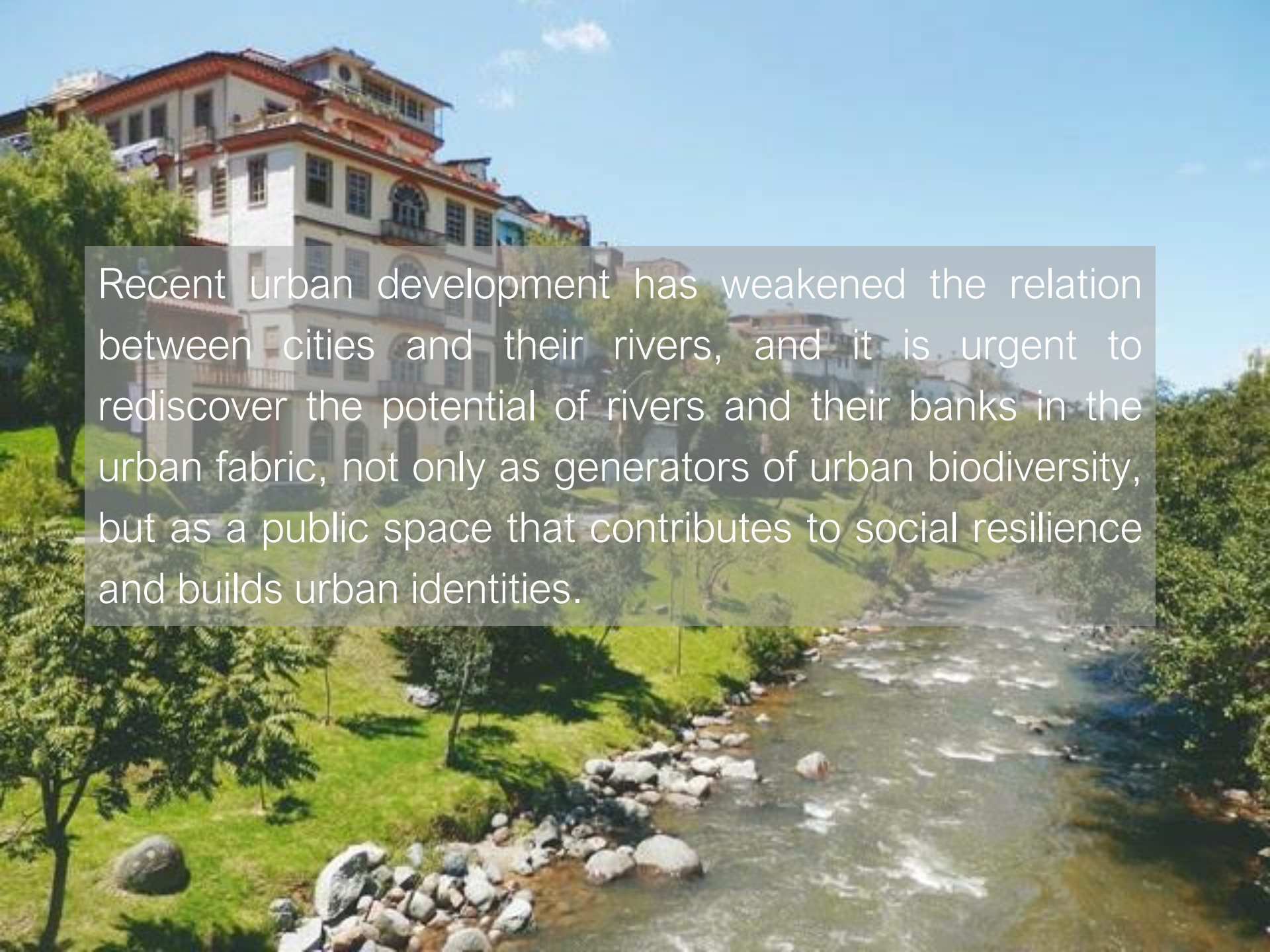


# HISTORIC RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN URBAN DWELLERS AND THE TOMBAMBAMBA RIVER

Pablo Osorio, Mateo Neira, M. Augusta Hermida

PhD. Arq. M. Augusta Hermida  
augusta.hermida@ucuenca.edu.ec  
@augustahermida  
llactalab.ucuenca.edu.ec

A scenic view of a river flowing through a lush green park area, with multi-story buildings visible in the background under a clear blue sky. The river is surrounded by green grass and trees, and the buildings are multi-story with balconies and windows. The text is overlaid on a semi-transparent grey box in the center of the image.

Recent urban development has weakened the relation between cities and their rivers, and it is urgent to rediscover the potential of rivers and their banks in the urban fabric, not only as generators of urban biodiversity, but as a public space that contributes to social resilience and builds urban identities.

# CUENCA - ECUADOR



- Cuenca is located in the Andes, 470km south of the equator, at 2.530 meters above sea level.
- The city has experienced expansive growth, passing from 288,29ha in 1950 to 7.248,23ha in 2010
- Four rivers run through the city. This geographical corridors marked by rivers and streams determined its growth.



## OUR QUESTION:

Is there a relation between morphology and perception, and the way it generates urban identities in the historical relationship between dwellers and the river in Cuenca?



## CONCEPTS: PERCEPTIONS OF IDENTITY AND MORPHOLOGY IN THE CITY

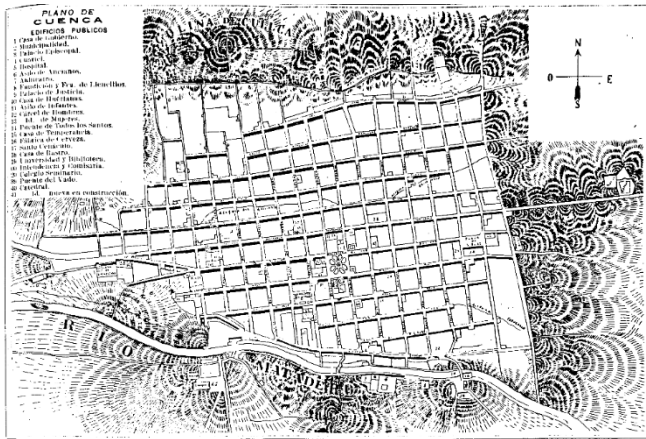
Urban spaces have been recognized as important elements for identity. It is defined by the space and the activities that take place there.

Morphology refers to the relationships between different elements; it is based on the idea that "the way things are assembled matter" (Hillier, 1996).

# METHODOLOGY

## Historical maps

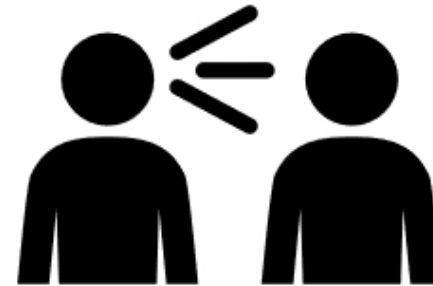
Historical maps, which identified changes in patterns, uses and connectivity,



Fuente: Albornoz, B. (2008)

## Semi-structured interviews

Historical and current perceptions of the Tomebamba River  
Town historians and elders (70-85 years old). Residents and users of the Tomebamba River.



Organisers:



International Co-owners:



Sustainable Buildings and Climate Initiative  
Promoting Policies and Practices for Sustainability



# RESULTS: CHANGES IN MORPHOLOGY

The way in which the space around the river is 'built' is crucial to the way we relate to it, and contributes in the construction of identity of the place.



Organisers:



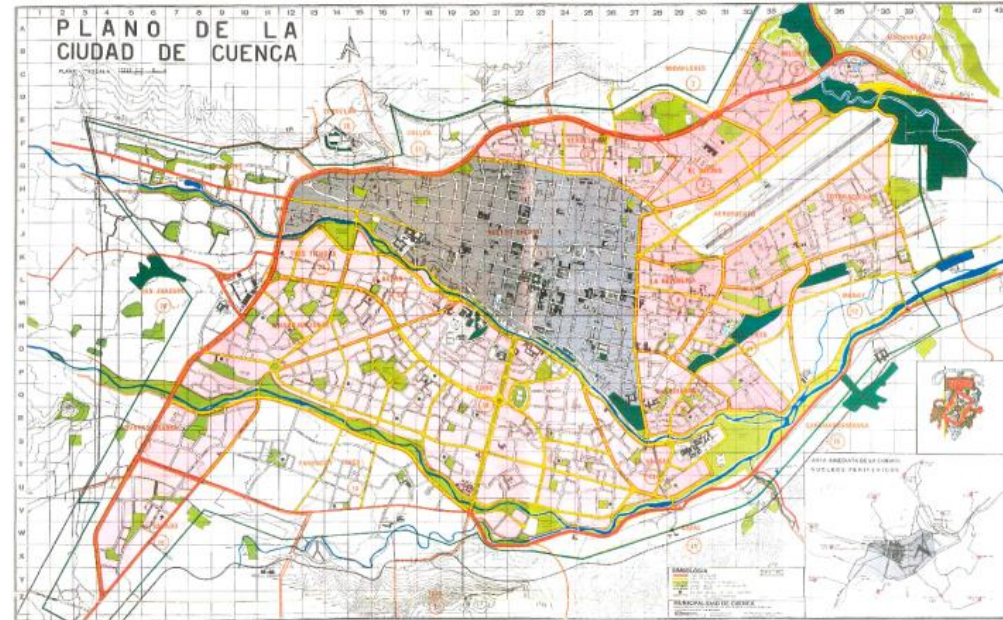
International Co-owners:



Sustainable Buildings and Climate Initiative  
Promoting Policies and Practices for Sustainability



# RESULTS: CHANGES IN MORPHOLOGY



Cuenca de 1910 a 1930. Fuente: Albornoz. B, 2008

Plano de la ciudad de Cuenca (1974). Fuente: Albornoz. B, 2008



Organisers:



International Co-owners:



Sustainable Buildings and Climate Initiative  
Promoting Policies and Practices for Sustainability





# RESULTS: CHANGES IN MORPHOLOGY

## XX Century:

- The water was a mean of production that provided hydraulic power to move mills and generate electricity, and as a means of getting rid of solid and liquid of city.
- The river was a fun place to swim and have collective games, keeping a completely different dynamic in the creation and use of collective spaces around the river space.
- The consideration of the river as a barrier between the rural and the urban part of the city.



Organisers:



International Co-owners:



Sustainable Buildings and Climate Initiative  
Promoting Policies and Practices for Sustainability



Global Alliance  
for Buildings and  
Construction

# RESULTS: CHANGES IN MORPHOLOGY

## XXI Century:

- In contrast, at the beginning of the twenty-first century the identity of the river is determined mainly by the use given to its banks. It is a social meeting place and is used for economic exchange.



Organisers:



International Co-owners:



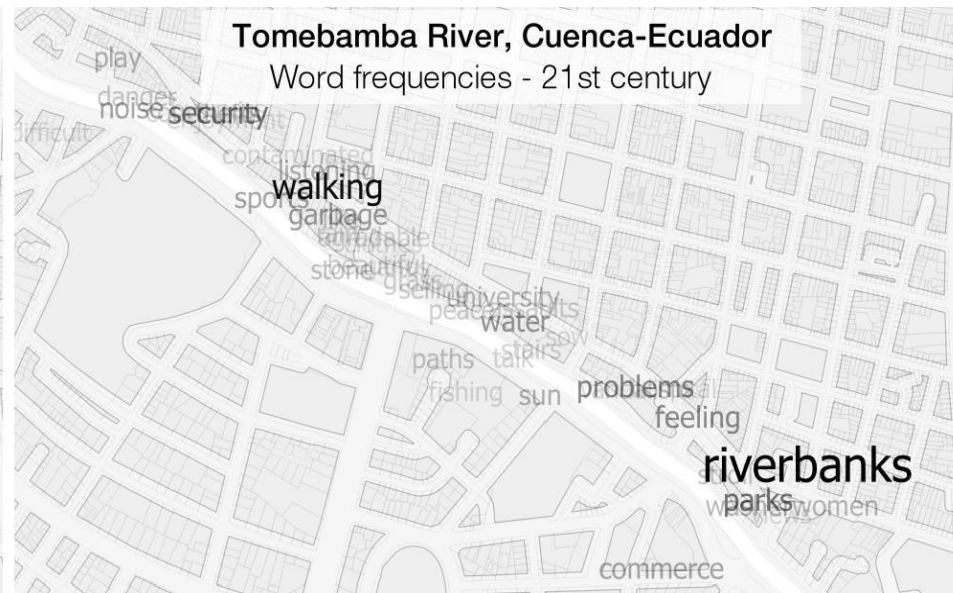
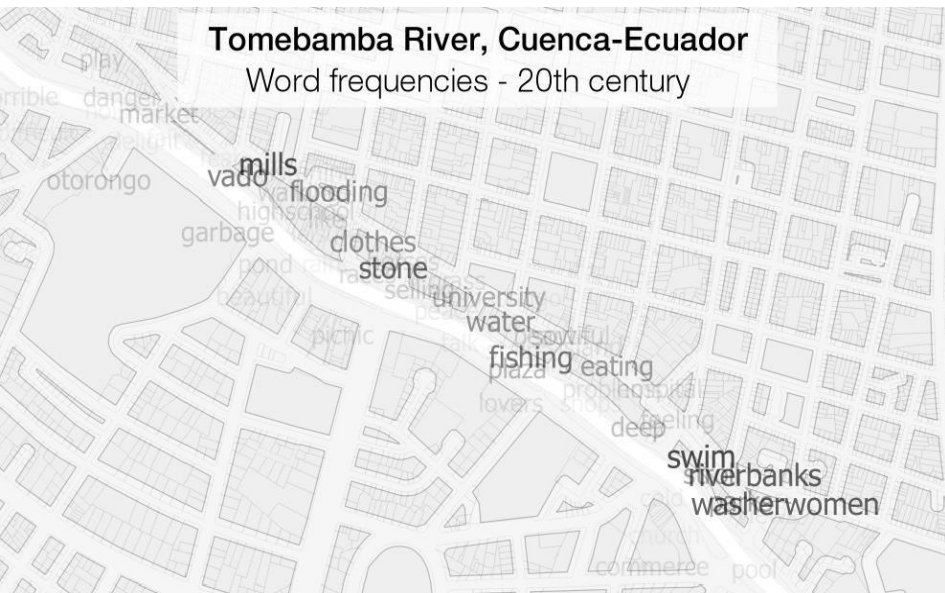
Sustainable Buildings and Climate Initiative  
Promoting Policies and Practices for Sustainability



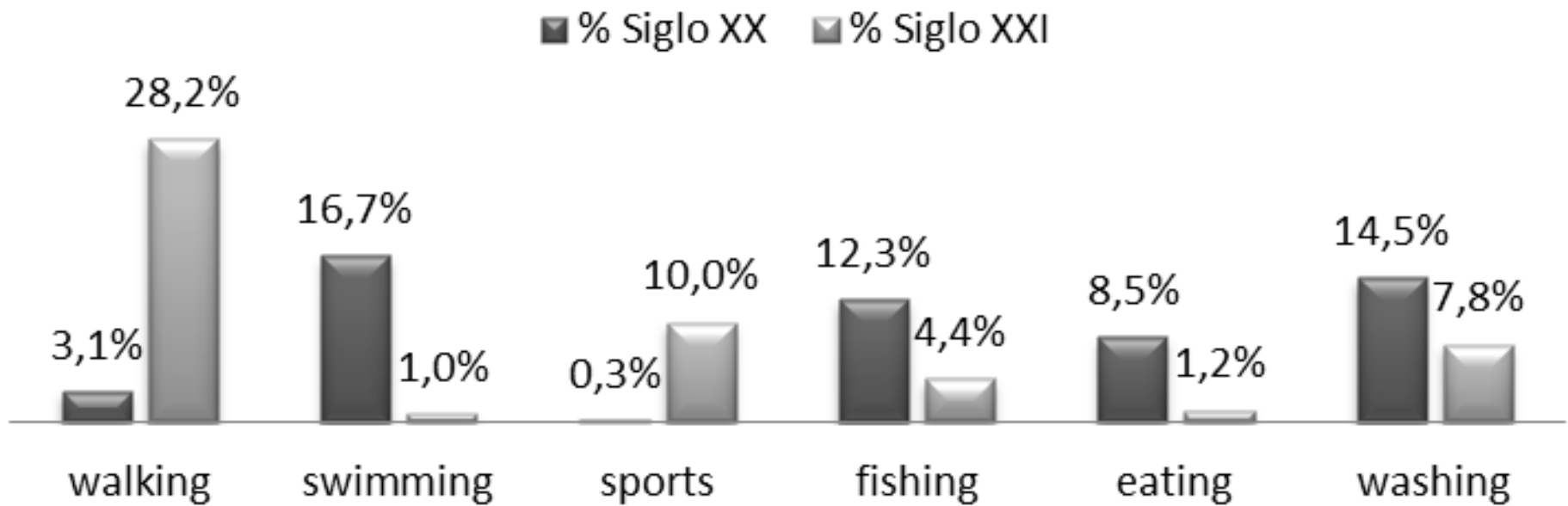
Global Alliance  
For Buildings and  
Construction

# RESULTS: CHANGES IN PERCEPTION

100 keywords that refer to: Uses (26 words), perceptions (42 words), natural environment (11 words) and built environment (21 words).



# RESULTS: CHANGES IN PERCEPTION Uses of Tomebamba River



Organisers:

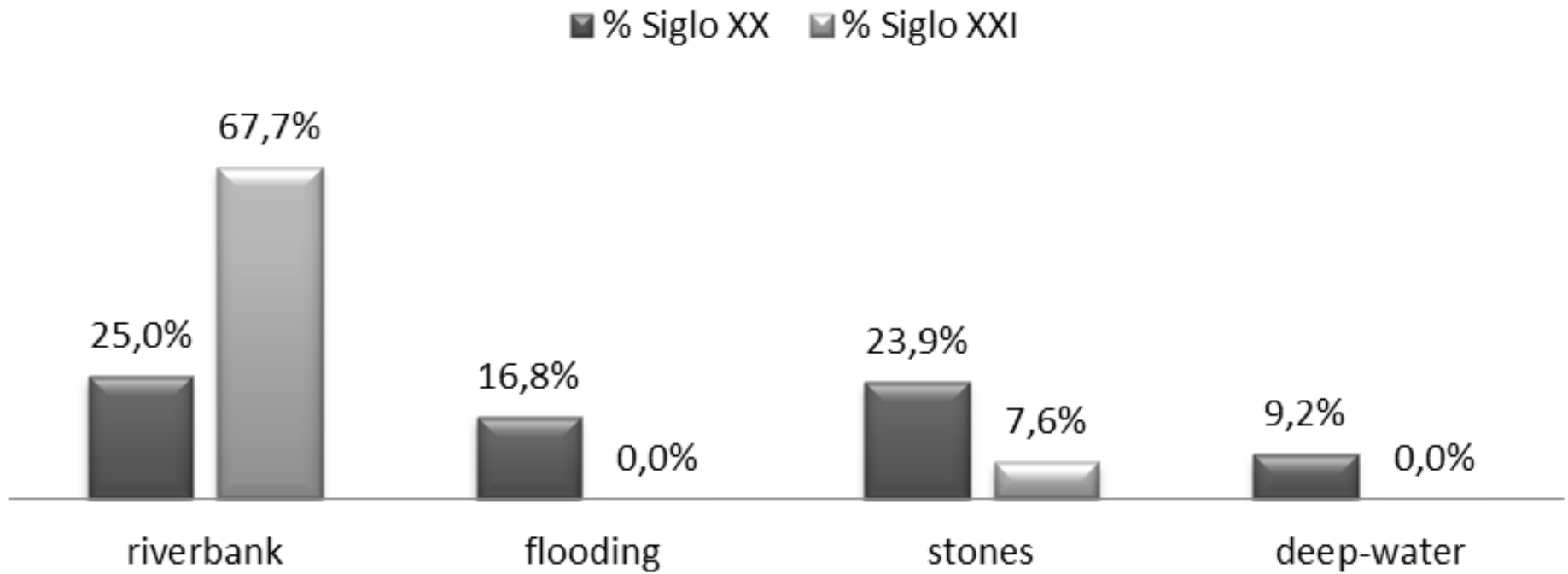


International Co-owners:



# RESULTS: CHANGES IN PERCEPTION

## Natural environment of the Tomebamba River



Organisers:



International Co-owners:



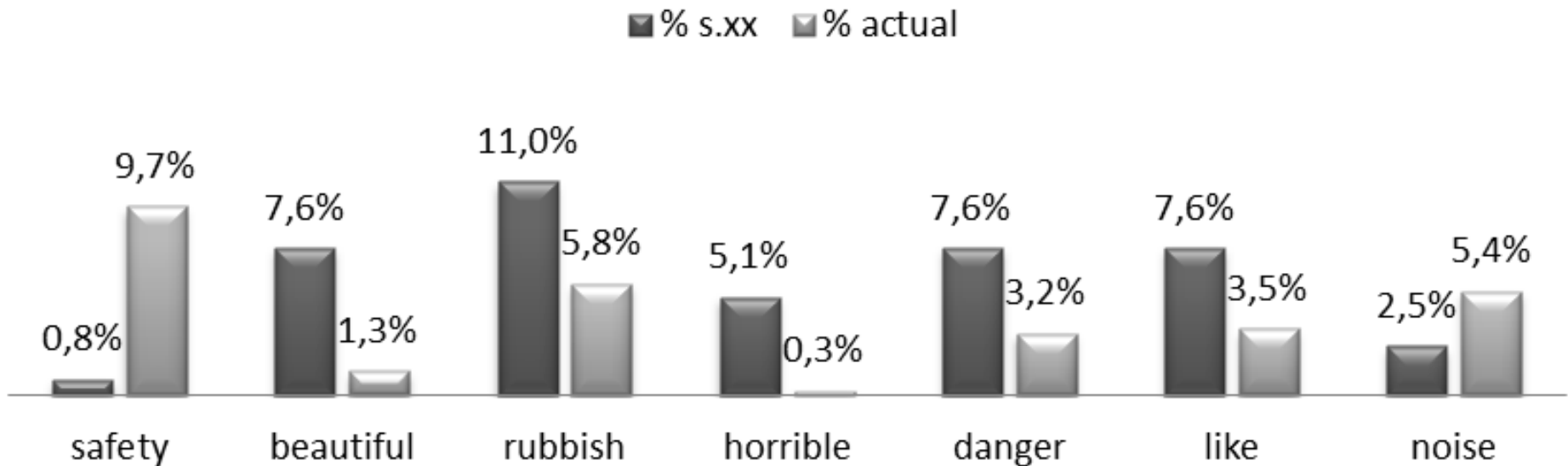
Sustainable Buildings and Climate Initiative  
Promoting Policies and Practices for Sustainability



Global Alliance  
for Buildings and  
Construction

# RESULTS: CHANGES IN PERCEPTION

General perceptions associated with Tomebamba River



## CONCLUSIONS:

- The relationship of a city with its main river is close-knit, and the city of Cuenca is no exception.
- The main changes in perception regarding the river arise precisely through the uses it allows, and the uses that we allow ourselves in relation to it.
- The changes cannot be understood isolated from its context: the production system has changed in Cuenca, and this influence on how we relate to the river.
- Public spaces are places of encounter and exchange of ideas and have a potential to increase the social capital and productivity of a city, a subject worth exploring in greater depth in future research.



Organisers:



International Co-owners:



Sustainable Buildings and Climate Initiative  
Promoting Policies and Practices for Sustainability



Global Alliance  
For Buildings and  
Construction

# Thank you



Organisers:



International Co-owners:



Sustainable Buildings and Climate Initiative  
Promoting Policies and Practices for Sustainability





# HISTORIC RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN URBAN DWELLERS AND THE TOMBAMBA RIVER

Pablo Osorio, Mateo Neira, M. Augusta Hermida



<http://llactalab.ucuenca.edu.ec>



[augusta.hermida@ucuenca.edu.ec](mailto:augusta.hermida@ucuenca.edu.ec)



[@augustahermida](https://twitter.com/augustahermida) / [@llactalab](https://twitter.com/llactalab)



**UNIVERSIDAD DE CUENCA**  
Educamos para el desarrollo



Organisers:



International Co-owners:

