

SETTING A TOURIST VALUE OF CULTURAL HERITAGE OF LA GUAIRA (VENEZUELA)

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ABSTRACT

The doctoral thesis presented has the objective to design a proposal for comprehensive performance of La Guaira and its historic center for identifying their attributes, threats, needs and opportunities, in order to put in tourist value their cultural heritage. To do this, we have considered three territorial areas: the state of Vargas, La Guaira and its historic center.

The work presented is part of a broader explanation within the research "Planning of tourist space and its relationship with the cultural heritage", developed over nearly twenty years. From the methodological point of view the research comprises three phases. The first, covering the formulation and research design. The second considers the characterization of the territory under study. The third presents an approach to a model local action for the implementation touristic value. To do this, there has been a comprehensive review of information sources of various kinds, comprising specialized books on the topics, journals, newspapers, newsletters, technical reports, publications, national and international legislation, theses and research projects, among others. In particular, they have consulted documents, projects, dissertations and other publications of the Research Group "Tourism, Heritage and Development", directed by Professor Miguel Angel Vinuesa Troitiño in the Department of Human Geography at the Complutense University of Madrid. The newspaper sources examination, through the revision of national and regional press has been critical to study, looking for how they have evolved areas covered by the investigation. Field work has been essential as a means of direct and participatory observation of the phenomenon under study and primary data collection, through data collection techniques: inventories, surveys, unstructured interviews and focus groups. The plurality of sources used has involved the use of triangulation as a research technique that seeks to compare the results that have been obtained by various media consulted.

The development of research, has been divided into eight chapters. Chapter 1 presents the approach of the research topic, its background, objectives and the structure and content of the investigation. Chapter 2 includes the theoretical framework, considering the cultural heritage and historic centers as research subjects, intervention and comprehensive management. Chapter 3, corresponds to the research process and the sources of information and techniques applied. Chapter 4 deals with the general characterization of territorial, urban and tourist context of La Guaira such as the Vargas state. Chapter 5, La

Guaira and its historic center: general characterization, presents three different blocks. First, the natural, historical, urban and cultural heritage of La Guaira described. Second, the legal and institutional framework responsible for ensuring the protection and conservation of cultural heritage of La Guaira and its surroundings is included. Third, the economic reality of the Guaira and its historic center is presented. Chapter 6 refers to La Guaira conditions for the development of tourism and recreation in their capacity as port of embarkation and cruise vessels. Chapter 7 includes an analysis of the environment La Guaira. Chapter 8, includes, first, a proposal for comprehensive performance of La Guaira and its historic center for start-tourism value of its assets. Finally, it presents a body of conclusions in response to the analysis of the results of the investigation and the proposed action for the implementation of cultural heritage tourism of La Guaira and its historic center.

The results of the research are aimed at finding options focused at start-social use of heritage of La Guaira. To do this, they have been considered, then the SWOT analysis (Weaknesses or Hazards, Threats, Strengths and Opportunities), a proposal for comprehensive action for the implementation of heritage tourism of La Guaira. It highlights the fundamental problem "Physical deterioration of La Guaira and its historic center", for which they have raised a number of objectives and actions to solve them.

The most important conclusion of the investigation indicates that the physical and geographical conditions of the area where it is located La Guaira, his past linked to the military and defensive use of the urban area, the linked commercial port with cargo traffic to and from the city Caracas through trails and roads that cross the Cerro El Avila attended by civilian and military buildings on its route (Camino de los Españoles) in a kind of cultural landscape; all equipped with stories and reminiscences of travelers (naturalists, painters and writers), it allows to consider La Guaira as territorial, environmental and landscape heritage and not strictly understood as the delimitation of the whole or urban areas, with a strong link to the environment are its historical and functional centrality, which also includes intangible values, social uses of tangible and intangible heritage and an important role of public space as a place of social and human interaction.

Keywords: Cultural Heritage Historic Centers, Put in Value, Integrated Management of Historic Centers, La Guaira.