




Las Parrandas del Centro de Cuba: un recurso para la diversificación de la oferta turística y el desarrollo local

The Parrandas of central Cuba: a resource for the diversification of the tourist offer and local development

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Palabras**claves:**

Parrandas,
Patrimonio,
Diversificación,
Oferta,
Desarrollo.

Resumen

Introducción: Las Parrandas del Centro de Cuba declaradas Patrimonio Inmaterial de la Humanidad surgen por primera vez en 1820 en Remedios y son fiestas celebradas por dieciocho pueblos de tres provincias del país: Villa Clara, Sancti Spíritus y Ciego de Ávila. Del total de dieciocho parrandas solamente la de San Juan de los Remedios, por ser la cuna de las mismas es explotada como un atractivo, dando prueba de ello, los antecedentes de la presente investigación que solo analizan el potencial turístico de la festividad de la Octava Villa de Cuba y no así el del resto de las parrandas. **Objetivo:** El objetivo de la investigación es demostrar las potencialidades de las Parrandas del Centro de Cuba como un recurso para la diversificación de la oferta turística y el desarrollo local. **Metodología:** Dentro de los métodos empleados están los del nivel teórico como el análisis y síntesis de documentos que fundamentan la investigación, además se utilizaron métodos empíricos como la observación directa y entrevistas a la población local y funcionarios de varias instituciones vinculadas al patrimonio inmaterial. **Resultados:** La inclusión de estas dentro de la oferta turística generaría resultados positivos como mayores ingresos a la población de acogida reflejados en el desarrollo de la artesanía, la cultura gastronómica, así como mejoras a la infraestructura de dichos territorios. Para ello se hizo necesario esclarecer las distancias con los principales destinos consolidados en la región, las vías de acceso, se crearon canales de información para el conocimiento de dicha tradición dado la influencia actual de las redes sociales y se orientó el cálculo de una adecuada capacidad de carga para evitar consecuencias negativas relacionadas al turismo cultural. **Conclusión:** Esta investigación constituye un antecedente para la elaboración de La Ruta de las Parrandas como un futuro producto integrado de la Región Central de Cuba. **Área de estudio general:** Turismo. **Área de estudio específica:** Turismo Cultural

Keywords:

Parrandas,
Heritage,
Diversification,
Offering,

Abstract

Introduction: The Parrandas of Central Cuba, declared Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity, first emerged in 1820 in Remedios, and are festivities celebrated by eighteen towns in three provinces of the country: Villa Clara, Sancti Spíritus, and Ciego de Ávila. Out of the total of eighteen parrandas, only that of San Juan

Development. de los Remedios, being the birthplace, is exploited as an attraction, as evidenced by the background of the present research, which only analyzes the tourist potential of the festivity of the Eighth Villa of Cuba, and not that of the rest of the parrandas. Objective: The objective of the research is to demonstrate the potential of the Parrandas of Central Cuba as a resource for diversifying the tourism offering and local development. Methodology: The methods employed include theoretical methods such as document analysis and synthesis that underpin the research. Additionally, empirical methods such as direct observation and interviews with the local population and officials from various institutions linked to intangible heritage were used. Results: Results The inclusion of these festivities in the tourism offering would yield positive results, such as increased income for the host population reflected in the development of handicrafts, culinary culture, as well as improvements to the infrastructure of these territories. To achieve this, it was necessary to clarify the distances to the main established destinations in the region, the access routes, establish information channels for the knowledge of this tradition given the current influence of social media, and calculate an appropriate carrying capacity to avoid negative consequences related to cultural tourism. Conclusion: This research serves as a precedent for the development of "La Ruta de las Parrandas" as a future integrated product of the Central Region of Cuba.

Introduction

The meaning of the term “cultural heritage” has changed considerably in recent decades, partly due to the instruments developed by UNESCO. Cultural heritage is not limited to monuments and collections of objects, but also includes traditions or living expressions inherited from our ancestors and transmitted to our descendants, such as oral traditions, performing arts, social customs, rituals, festive events, knowledge and practices relating to nature and the universe, and know-how and techniques linked to traditional crafts.

“Cultural heritage is a specific set of tangible, intangible and natural assets that are part of social practices, to which values are attributed to be transmitted and reinterpreted, from one era to another, or from one generation to the next. Thus, an object becomes

heritage or cultural asset, or ceases to be so, through a process and/or when someone – individual or collective – affirms its new condition” (Dibam, 2005, p. 8)

Intangible cultural heritage refers to the uses, representations, expressions, knowledge and techniques – together with the instruments, objects, artefacts and cultural spaces inherent to them – that communities, groups and in some cases individuals recognise as an integral part of their cultural heritage. It is transmitted from generation to generation and is constantly recreated by communities and groups based on their environment, their interaction with nature and their history, instilling in them a sense of identity and continuity and thus contributing to promoting respect for cultural diversity and human creativity (Unesco, 2001).

According to the UNWTO, cultural tourism is a type of tourism activity in which the visitor's essential motivation is to learn, discover, experience and consume the cultural attractions/products, both tangible and intangible, of a tourist destination. These attractions/products refer to a set of distinctive material, intellectual, spiritual and emotional elements of a society that encompasses the arts and architecture, historical and cultural heritage, gastronomic heritage, literature, music, creative industries and living cultures with their ways of life, value systems, beliefs and traditions.

“According to various studies, between 5 and 10% of travelers can be considered 'specific cultural tourists' while between 40 and 50% is the percentage of tourists who participate in cultural activities” (UNWTO, 2018) (cited byThick-Molinero, 2019).

The most pronounced change we are witnessing is the growing interest in intangible cultural manifestations. As a concept, “intangible heritage” barely appeared in tourism programming until the beginning of this century, however, it is increasingly dominating the articulation of the cultural offer in all destinations (Roigé, del Marmol, & Guil, 2019).

Traditional popular festival: “Collective activity of a family, neighborhood, communal or social nature in general, which the participating population organizes and prepares for their own enjoyment. It survives from one generation to another for a long period of time. It is generated by some collective event, whether social, economic, religious, linked to the annual, vital or other cycle. It is characterized by the sense of belonging that the participating social group grants it” (Mejuto and Guanche, 2008: 5).

Tradition is a regularity that characterizes the durability over time of cultural manifestations and expressions in their systemic dimension, but also expresses indicators of development from a process of assimilation, denial and renewal towards new traditions (Mejuto, 2014: 48) (cited by Pérez Rodríguez, Basso Rodríguez, 2019).

The Central Region of Cuba has one of the five Cuban elements present on the lists of Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity: the Parrandas.

The Parrandas of the Central Region of Cuba are considered one of the oldest festivals in Cuba. (UNESCO, 2018). They emerged in the town of San Juan de los Remedios in the first half of the 19th century, specifically in 1820. Around 1892 they began to expand to nearby towns. It is known that there were more than 40 parrandas throughout the territory. Today, the parranda takes place in 18 towns in three of the central provinces of Cuba.

List of the 18 party towns by province, with the year of start and the respective rival neighborhoods of each one.

Villa Clara (12)

- Remedios (1820) Neighborhoods: El Carmen (Gavilan) and San Salvador (Gallo)
- Caibarién (1892) Neighborhoods: La Loma and La Marina
- Placetás (1894) Neighborhoods: Zaza and Fortún
- Zulueta (1894) Neighborhoods: Guanijibes (Toads, blue) and La Loma (Chivos, red)
- Camajuaní (1894) Neighborhoods: Santa Teresa (Chivos) and San José (Toads)
- Returns (1900) Neighborhoods: Jutíos and Ñañacos
- Buena Vista (1901) Neighborhoods: La Sierra and La Loma
- Crossroads (1910) Neighborhoods: Chivos and Sapos
- The Saint (1923) Neighborhoods: Carraguao and Pavo Real
- Taguayabón (1923) Neighborhoods: El Gallo and El Gavilán
- Calabazar de Sagua (1924) Neighborhoods: Toads and Goats
- Burning of Güines (1949) Neighborhoods: La Puya and El Perejil

Sancti Spiritus (4)

- Yaguajay (1896) Neighborhoods: Sansaricq and La Loma
- Mayajigua (1904) Neighborhoods: La Campana and Puerto Arturo
- Zaza del Medio (1917) Neighborhoods: East (Goats) and West (Dogs)
- Guayos (1935) Neighborhoods: Cantarrana and La Loma

Blind of Avila (2)

- Punta Alegre (1913) Neighborhoods: El Yeso and La Salina
- Chambas (1935) Neighborhoods: La Norte (Gallo) and Narcisa (Gavilán)

The Parrandas of Central Cuba are known for their spectacular displays, including parades, music, dancing and fireworks competitions. These festivities are an important part of Cuban culture and attract both local residents and tourists from around the world. (Espinosa, JA, 2006)

It is important to highlight the parrandas for tourism and focus on the cultural elements that distinguish them and make them unique, which are representatives of the most indigenous aspects of this region of the country. There is a need to exploit the rest of the parrandas for tourism and culture and not only highlight the Remedios parranda, the only one positioned as a tourist product, being a necessity for the expansion of the tourist offer of the country listed on several occasions as the main cultural destination of the Caribbean. From the above, the scientific problem of the research arises: How can the Parrandas of Central Cuba contribute to the diversification of the tourist offer and local development?

The aim of this research is to establish guidelines for carrying out other research related to the topic and to parrandas as a tourist resource.

The objective of this research is to demonstrate the potential of the Parrandas of Central Cuba as a resource for the diversification of the tourist offer and local development.

Methodology

The research is of a basic nature according to its objectives, which means that its purpose is to generate theoretical knowledge and not necessarily apply it to practice. In this case, the aim is to understand the characteristics and particularities of the Parrandas of the Central Region, as well as their cultural and social importance. On the other hand, the methodology is classified as qualitative, which implies that it focuses on a deep and detailed understanding of the phenomenon studied, instead of seeking statistical generalizations. In this case, the aim is to explore the experiences, perceptions and meanings of the cultural phenomenon.

The data sources used in the research were fieldwork and documentary study. Fieldwork involves direct observation and interviews with local people and officials from various institutions linked to intangible heritage. Documentary study involves reviewing existing documents and literature on the topic. The research is classified according to its time as longitudinal, meaning that it is carried out over a long period of time with the aim of observing how the variables of interest change over time, allowing for the observation of patterns and trends that develop.

According to its scope, the research is exploratory since it seeks to explore a topic studied in depth.

Results

The Municipal Development Initiatives (MDI) aim, among other objectives, to increase the Standards of Living of the Municipal Population; however, this must be done in a planned manner and taking into consideration the most depressed localities or municipalities. The increasingly active participation of municipal actors in the process of shaping the national economic plan and especially the Municipal Administration Councils as leading articulators, makes it possible to mobilize the resources and forces of the territory (Delgado Méndez, Feijóo Lloret, 2012).

Firstly, the main access routes to the provinces to which the parrandas of the Central region belong were determined:

- Northern Circuit
- Santa Clara “Abel Santamaria” International Airport.
- “Jardines del Rey” International Airport (Ciego de Avila)
- Central Highway
- National Highway

Then, after performing a geographical analysis of the party towns, the distances between them and the main destinations in the region were calculated using Google Maps (See Table 1).

Table 1

Distances between party towns by province, the main nearest tourist destinations and international airports.

<i>Villa Clara Province</i>					
Party towns/Destinations	Sagua the Great	Saint Clare	Remedies	Villa Clara Keys	Abel Santamaria International Airport
Burning of Güines	22km (23min)	73km (1h 17min)	106km (1h 46min)	156km (2h 27min)	(1h 18min)
Sagua squash	33 km (33min)	30km (34min)	51km (50min)	101km (1h 31min)	20km (21min)
Crossroads	38km (39min)	30km (33min)	46km (45min)	97km (1h 26min)	19km (19min)
The Saint	64km (1h 9min)	55km (1h 1min)	50km (55min)	101km (1h 36min)	44km (48min)

Table 1

Distances between party towns by province, the nearest main tourist destinations and international airports. (continued)

<i>Villa Clara Province</i>					
Party towns/Destinations	Sagua the Great	Saint Clare	Remedies	Villa Clara Keys	Abel Santamaria International Airport
Turns	63km (1h 3min)	38km (41min)	20km (20min)	71km (1h 1min)	35km (33min)
Camajuani	73km (1h 14min)	28km (30min)	19km (18min)	70km (59min)	25km (23min)
Taguayabon	73km (1h 13min)	36km (38min)	11km (10min)	61km (51min)	33km (30min)
Remedies	84km (1h 23min)	47km (48min)	- ()	50km (42min)	44km (41min)
Zulueta	98km (1h 40min)	49km (51min)	16km (20min)	65km (1h)	58km (57min)
Good View	101km (1h 46min)	59km (1h 5min)	20km (25min)	69km (1h 6min)	62km (1h 3min)
Placetas	86km (1h 24min)	36km (34min)	29km (36min)	78km (1h 17min)	46km (43min)
Caibarien	94km (1h 34min)	57km (59min)	9.8km (12min)	43km (34min)	54km (51min)
<i>Sancti Spiritus Province</i>					
Party towns/Destinations	Sancti Spiritus (city)		Trinity		
Yaguajay	58km (58min)		130km (2h 9min)		
Middle Zaza	13km (16min)		84km (1h 26min)		
Guayos	14km (15min)		86km (1h 26min)		
<i>Ciego de Avila Province</i>					
Party towns/Destinations	Ciego de Avila (city)		Ciego de Avila Keys (Cayo Coco and Cayo Guillermo) "Jardines del Rey" International Airport		
Jobs	61km (1h 9min)		97km (1h 32min)		
Punta Alegre	90km (1h 46min)		126km (2h 9min)		

Source: Prepared by the authors based on the calculation of approximate distances in km (min by car) using Google Maps.

Figure 1

Map of the party towns of the Central region of Cuba



Fountain:(UNESCO - The Parrandas of the central region of Cuba, n.d.)

In addition, information channels were created to raise awareness of this tradition given the current influence of social networks, as well as promotional videos and brochures. The results included the calculation of an adequate load capacity to avoid negative consequences related to cultural tourism, which were identified by the authors:

- Commodification of culture
- Banalization of culture, when mass tourism leads to the staging and dramatization of local traditions and customs, exclusively for consumption by tourists, the parrandas have to continue being the essence of the towns.
- Gentrification is the process by which, as a result of urban regeneration, the original population of a deteriorated area or neighborhood (which has improved) is displaced by another population with a higher purchasing power, as the area is renovated. Cultural oversupply.
- Lack of coordination, where in many destinations there is a lack of coordination between public institutions related to culture and those related to tourism, which reduces the potential for international positioning. Public-private collaboration must also be encouraged to generate synergies and greater international projection. Loss of identity.

With respect to local development, it was determined that there are local businesses related to crafts and typical gastronomy which could expand due to the influx of visitors to these festivities. Work is being done to achieve communication about the parrandas

from the hotels located in the parranda towns, an action that would bring the necessary information to a number of people. The goal is to create awareness in the popular governments to achieve maximum support for the development of the parrandas as a tourist resource.

Consolidated tourist destinations by province

Villa Clara:

- Saint Clare
- Remedies
- Sagua the Great
- Villa Clara Keys

Sancti Spiritus:

- Sancti Spiritus (city)
- Trinity

Ciego de Avila:

- Ciego de Avila (city)
- Keys of Ciego de Avila

For each destination mentioned above, as well as for the region as a whole, it would bring benefits such as:

- To revive the interest of the inhabitants of these towns in their culture, especially in those where tradition poses a threat to their subsistence.
- Provide added value to these already consolidated destinations.
- Contribute to mitigating seasonality or, in some cases, increasing the flow of visitors within it.
- Necessary strengthening between the tourism and cultural sectors, linking to travel agencies such as “Paradiso” or La Agencia Cubanacán.
- Generate resources for the maintenance, protection and improvement of localities
- Recover new resources for new forms of tourism by integrating them into local development projects.

After analyzing the parrandas as a cultural phenomenon of great tourist attraction, the proposal for future research is to develop an integrated product of the central region of Cuba between the territorial delegations of the Ministry of Tourism (MINTUR) of the provinces of Villa Clara, Sancti Spíritus and Ciego de Ávila.

Conclusions

- The tourist potential of the Parrandas of Central Cuba was assessed as a tourist attraction as a whole and the main characteristics of the parrandas towns as settings for this festivity were determined, guiding the calculation of an adequate load capacity to avoid negative impacts on intangible heritage, the local population and the visitor themselves.
- The potential impacts on the economy and local development that would be generated by the inclusion of Parrandas in the tourist offer were estimated.
- The foundations were established for the development of La Ruta de las Parrandas as a future integrated tourism product for the Central Region of Cuba

Conflict of interest

The authors of this research declare that there is no conflict of interest that could influence the content of this research. There are no financial or employment relationships that could unduly bias the content of this research.

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