

## EXTENDED ABSTRACT

# TOURIST ACTIVITY IN CARTAGENA (MURCIA) THROUGH THE ANALYSIS OF INDICATORS AND PERCEPTION OF THEIR DIRECT ACTORS

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The recovery of the cultural, natural and landscape heritage of the city of Cartagena is a key element in the local development of this city, as well as a change in the model of economic development traditionally dedicated mainly to the industrial, military and port sectors. At present, the preponderance of tourism as a dynamic activity is generating the creation of many jobs both in the direct attention to visitors and the need to recover and show a cultural heritage in many cases hidden for centuries. The present work offers, from the statistical use of basic indicators and the own analysis of the survey, clarifying data about the current tourist activity in Cartagena.

Tourism has become one of the main sources of income in Spain, coexisting in our city object of study sun and plaza tourism, and cultural tourism (García Pérez, 2003). Cultural tourism has grown in recent decades, linked to new models of tourism behavior (Herrero, 2000), and is increasingly acquiring greater representation within the Cartagena economy, despite the economic crisis the tourism of the city he has not been so affected (Galiana and Barrado, 2006). Faced with the perception of tourism as a highly variable activity, it is becoming increasingly important and solid. The Region of Murcia, and therefore Cartagena, has experienced one of the greatest growths in tourism activity since the beginning of the century (Vera, 2005).

Cartagena is a city located south of the Region of Murcia, which houses a population of over 200,000 inhabitants, which makes it the second largest city in this Autonomous Community. The city was founded in a geographical enclave around the Mediterranean. This contact provoked influenced the development of the city as a commercial enclave (Andrés, 1982) and strategic civilizations of the ancient world (Morales, 2016). The passage of different civilizations through the city and its subsequent implementation, because until a few decades ago, economic activity was based on mining, industry and the presence of the army (Andrés, 1989). The bankruptcy of this economic model due to the oil crisis occurred after 1970, which plunged the city into a deep crisis, causing the degradation of

the city's central spaces (Grandal, 2010). Since 1990, its economic model began to change, due to the recovery of cultural values, the enhancement of heritage and its use led to a recovery of the city that is geared towards the economic development generated by tourism (Morales, 2016), despite the fact that there has always been a collective conscience about the wealth that the city had before its antiquity that spans three millennia (Soler, 2004).

In recent years, Cartagena has become a benchmark for local development based on the recovery of cultural heritage (De la Calle and García, 2016) and its tourist use, with heritage being the main reason for urban transformation in recent decades (Martínez, 1996). It has also been notorious the great investment effort that public institutions have made for the city to become an adapted and renewed city (Morales, 2016). The proximity to spaces highlighted by the tourism of "sun and beach" as the shore of the Mar Menor, La Manga, as well as more distant spaces such as the Almería and Alicante coast have caused the attraction of visitors interested in a heritage, cultural and landscape of the city (ICOMOS, 2010).

The city of Cartagena receives a large number of tourists from the bordering coastal areas who interrupt their sun and beach holidays to get closer to the cultural environment of the city, but return at night to their accommodations outside the city (Galiana and Barrado, 2006). This has led to an increase in hotel beds, an improvement in their quality and an important remodeling with the aim of promoting a higher rate of visitor permanence (Galiana and Barrado, 2006). The development of cultural tourism is of recent creation, which has caused that in just a decade the number of hotel supply has doubled, and an improvement in the creation of infrastructures (Vera, 2005). This renovation and differentiation of the traditional sun and beach tourist destinations has also been due to the improvement of the city's image and to the discovery and rehabilitation of the hidden heritage of the city, becoming a new tourist destination (Antón, 2004), reach the dimension of the current World Heritage cities (Troitiño, M. 2009) and (Troitiño, L. 2014).

He success of tourism activity will be guaranteed when seasonality is overcome (Vera 2005), so tourism competitiveness strategies should be developed with the intention of attracting customers (Foronda and García, 2009), thus converting tourism into a economic-territorial strategy of the city of Cartagena, taking the administration as a reference measures in pursuit of sustainability and competitiveness of the sector (Vera, 2005). These tourism development strategies have taken as a main measure a commitment to the quality and differentiation of their products to attract tourists, as well as the renewal of their heritage and landscape improvement (Foronda and García, 2009) and tourism sustainability (García Hernández, 2000).

Traditionally, destinations have been a specific place, but nowadays it is perceived as a set of things such as cultural formation, educational level, landscape or heritage (Bigné, Font and Andreu, 2000). The tourist resources and services that exist within this place must satisfy the tourist needs of visitors that will condition future visits, since this experience is based on the relationship they have with museums, green areas, territorial resources, heritage, etc. (Bigné, Font and Andreu, 2000).

At present, some tourist destinations use marketing, as if it were a product, through communication, press releases, publicity and common beliefs (Bigné, Font and Andreu, 2000). Proper attention to tourists are based on the existence of infrastructure and servi-

ces, but they can not threaten the integrity of the city's heritage resources, nor the needs of the resident population in the place (Bosque, 2014). The development of service infrastructures can affect the goods they intend to serve due to the complexity of current infrastructures (Bosque, 1995).

As we observed, the city of Cartagena needs to overcome many weaknesses and threats to prosper as a tourist city; In spite of this, it has a large number of strengths to overcome them and consolidate in the tourist market. In the face of tourism there are important deficiencies in relation to the lack of structure, the need to rehabilitate the heritage or the obsolescence of services, which causes a lack of competitiveness in relation to other nearby tourist cities and that leads to certain threats such as the decrease the average expenditure of tourists, the difficulty of exceeding seasonality, etc. Despite this, the city has important opportunities due to the existence of important monumental heritage, or the development of congress or sports tourism that generates a very important attraction in the city.

The aforesaid is affected by the landscape of the city; is affected by the existence of important places with poor environmental quality, or deformed by the absence of elements in visual shadow, despite this in recent years are emerging environmental conservation policies that seek to take advantage of the geographical location of the city due to the warning of the need for a beautiful landscape that directly influences the choice of the city. Influencing both tourism and landscape is the Territorial Organization, which is responsible for linking and developing all of the above. There is an important absence of vertebration axes that improve the communication of the old town, as well as a deficient interrelation of the different means of transport to the city, absence of land directed to the hotel sector, a resurgence of urban regulations, etc. Currently, coordination is being achieved by the administration with the associations of the city, as well as the development of the Special Urban Casco Plans, or projects linked to the city's tourism development, in order to alleviate the deficiencies and strengthen in the plane National and European tourism.

Cartagena is a city with great tourist potential that fortunately in recent decades has become aware of these potentialities and that through well-developed actions are positioned to the city and its surroundings as an important tourist and cultural reference within the Region of Murcia and of the Spanish SE. The quantitative analysis offered through the data as well as the references of perception made on the influence of heritage on the landscape, tourism and Territorial Planning in the Old Quarter of Cartagena has allowed us to reach a series of conclusions that we will expose to mode of action proposals and improvement plans:

1. Although there has been a significant increase in the number of hotel establishments in the city, it would be advisable to increase both the number of establishments and the quality of them, as well as a substantial improvement in the length of stay that has a very low average, less than four days of stay, which affects a tourism with little stay in the city and an important seasonality settled in the summer months.

2. The heritage of Cartagena through its enhancement is serving to revitalize the city, but its tourism development has not been produced solely by the rehabilitation of heritage but also by the conditioning of its urban environment, through transport services public, recreational activities, etc.

3. It is essential to try to overcome the seasonality existing in summer to develop more strongly the tourist activity at other times of the year. Cultural tourism has become one of Cartagena's main sources of income, as well as the engine of its local development in recent years.

4. The number of visitors due mainly to the growth of cruise tourism has been spectacular, not so much in the number of cruises but in their capacity. It is necessary to continue growing in this aspect, for this the collaboration of tour operators, and competitive prices will be the best allies in the consolidation of this novel tourism modality.

5. The Old Town of the city was a degraded and marginal environment, but with the discovery of the Roman Theater of Cartagena, as well as other archaeological resources such as the enhancement of the Forum and the renovation of numerous modernist and eclectic facades has led to the renewal of the environment and the enhancement of the heritage and landscape of the city. However, there are still many degraded areas that are difficult to access, such as the Molinete area or the necessary recovery of the Roman amphitheater without intervening.

6. Cultural tourism has become a model of economic development of the city thanks to the great wealth that it has. Territorial strategic planning has become an instrument of development based on numerous territorial strategies to make the city more competitive with the rest of the Mediterranean tourist cities. It would also be advisable to increase congress tourism through existing facilities in the city. as the Auditorium "El Batel" as it has been done in the city of Murcia (Ponce, 2006).

7. The landscape of Cartagena is one of the greatest riches of the city, the contemplation from the Cerro de la Concepción of the city and its port is a unique setting of beauty and idiosyncrasy of a large Mediterranean city, it is necessary to continue creating spaces for contemplation in other places of the city such as defense batteries, the arsenal, Cerro del Molinete or the Port.

8. The city of Cartagena does not have spaces for sun and beach tourism, but this tourist modality is very close in La Manga and Mar Menor itself, therefore the connectivity of the city with its beach spaces is necessary.

9. The proximity of other spaces and tourist modalities such as the Sierra Minera de La Union-Cartagena, the bay of Portman or the Natural Park of Calblanque, Monte de la Cenizas and Peña del Águila are worth integrating as a tourist, cultural offer and ethnographic of great attraction for Cartagena and its region.

10. Cartagena is also a city of great gastronomic offer, the existence of typical dishes and an important chain of catering establishments that should be growing are a great complement for the tourist development of the city and the creation of stable jobs.