

EXTENDED ABSTRACT

IDENTIFICATION OF IMPORTANT POTENTIAL TOURISM RESOURCES BY IDENTITY AND UNIVERSAL SINGULARITY CRITERIA. THE MUNICIPALITY OF UGÍJAR IN THE AREA OF LAS ALPUJARRAS (GRANADA, SPAIN)

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1. INTRODUCTION

The promotion of rural areas is a key issue to fight against their depopulation. Currently there are deficiencies in the perception of the value of own resources in many of these territories. Situation due to factors such as lack of territorial culture, local deepening and research dissemination of those which may have certain singularities or aspects of interest at different scales. The safeguarding of territorial identity makes possible an evasion before the banalizing processes while conserving the patrimonial wealth.

This article discriminates the singularity of every touristic resource mainly in two aspects; one for the distributive exceptionality of the characteristics of every resource and another for the outstanding importance at supranational level of one or several qualities of the asset. The purpose of this approach is to create an impact on the population based on these potential aspects with the intention of achieving, where appropriate, a revaluation of part of the heritage that their inhabitants possess or at least the raising of interest to know it. It is the time to rescue the concept of Territorial Heritage understood as a set of inherited natural and cultural assets in a specific territory, with a high degree of acceptance and social recognition (Ortega Valcárcel, 1999), using for it a balance in the environment that it allows maintaining ecological and natural processes in demarcations with an anthropised historical presence (Feria Toribio, 2010). Adding other details in which are sometimes included, such as international awards, architectural competitions, among others and recognitions of this type by different institutions or relevant organizations. In addition, these could be adhered to a tourism strategy, if they are not yet, acquiring through

the philosophy proposed by the Andalusian Sustainable Tourism Strategy determinations in favor of sustainable development and through Agenda 21 Andalucía.

2. METHOD

Based on the above, the main singularities of tourism resources are sought, through an analytical methodology, rigorous and based on geographical criteria; being applied in the context of a rural area, Las Alpujarras, within the province of Granada, in the south of Spain. First of all, in the office work any material that comes from a reliable source and that provides useful information is used. On the other hand, in the fieldwork, information has been obtained mainly through the municipality of Ugíjar and the interaction with the different territorial actors and agents. In order to discriminate the touristic assets, their features are valued by researching any exceptionality that can be extrapolated internationally or that give them a differentiated nuance of their own that differentiate them from the rest by identifying them with a specific territory. There is a great difficulty and complexity in discerning when the quality of a resource is truly exceptional within those that can be considered as own, something that is extrapolated, for example, to traditional crop varieties, where specific studies are usually lacking. Therefore, very original manifestations or with international recognition are sought.

3. MAIN TOURIST RESOURCES IN THE AREA AND CONTEXT OF ALPUJARRAS

The Alpujarras is a mountain area located in the southern slope of Sierra Nevada, formed by very deep valleys, and is shared between two provinces, Granada and Almería. Its first key element is the strong feeling emanating from the “lived-space” that was perceived by romantic travelers through the isolation suffered by the area, justified by its situation among four mountains, postponing its industrial development until the second half of the century XX. Historians such as Titos Martínez and Martín Vida (2007) attest to the extraordinary phenomenon showing the exponential increase in works written about this territory in this period. The rural exodus of 1950 and the incorporation of new settlers moved by tourism progressively since 1960 did not favor a greater conservation of the heritage environment. The protectionism of the regime, together with the previous issues, caused its people to live practically as they had before the industrial revolution, a very unusual issue that greatly impressed these foreigners. Such was the fascination, that they made with real detail biographies of the way of life and character of the Alpujarras people. These documents acquired a great value and soon began to visualize the Alpujarras from abroad as something extraordinary. The Swiss ethnologist and anthropologist Christian Spanhi in this work *L'Alpujarra: Secrète Andalousie* (1959) expressed a sentence that represents this situation: “The Alpujarras is the corner of the planet where life still have an explanation”. This assimilation of living has been lost, although there are still some villages where certain people, mostly retired, continue to perform traditional actions, cultivating with native varieties of seeds, using the animal force as transport and tilling the land with traditional techniques.

It is time to unveil the other great differentiating factor that comes precisely from that capacity for centuries to take advantage of endogenous resources as the only way to survive. This can be defined as a generalist cultural landscape. The polycultive systems with dry stone walls where there are abundant boundaries with trees of great subjection, have traditionally been an irrefutable part of the Alpujarras landscape. This alternative of terraces, ditches for irrigation and herbaceous crops adapted to the terrain form one of the deep-rooted features of the field being essential the medieval muslim irrigation culture in its configuration and uses (Trillo San José, 1999). But there is a key principle in this agrosystem that is unparalleled anywhere else with this level of efficiency and development (only Urcuquí is similar in the Ecuatorian Andes) other than Sierra Nevada with its main example in the Alpujarras being the base of this area. These are the so-called the channels of “careo”, a sophisticated way of moving waer from the peaks to the piedmont through hydraulic infrastructures of stones.

On the other hand, vernacular architecture emerges as a persuasive means, reaching universal exceptionality when it fulfills several considerations. These are collected in a later document that recreates the consultant Heritage (2015) for the Poctefex project. It is essential the flat form of the roofs, “terraos”, being composed on their surface of the “launas” with autochthonous composition of slabs, while the walls are white with the houses facing south. The walls must be of stone, clay, mortar and plaster, sometimes missing one of the last two. The roof must have wooden beams with “alfarjías” of this component in the northern part and hurdle in the south, on which rest stone slabs and the aforementioned compaction materials. In attention to the “veriles”, ton ame that they are normally slates balancing their weight thanks to a counterpie of strong stones where the parts with capacity of anointing before named are added. The holes that appear on the wall have small dimensions and a quadrangular shape with the objective of introducing some light to certain areas of the house, then Windows are developed in the homes that were normally made with wood and were always a bit taller than wide. The doors are made of wood and in their assembly process are used mainly, different proportions of “clavería”, those that had subdivisions in the high plot are usually circumscribed to the traditional doors of “corral” and mainly cattle room. In chimneys you can find differences between the north, conical with “punishing” of stone slab, and in the south, quadrangular with stony cover, both being flat.

4. CONCLUSIONS

These aspects go unnoticed in many cases due to ignorance and lack of territorial culture can and should be part of a rural tourism development strategy. The research approach allows to look for territorial differentiations at different scales, being useful to create an image of territorial presentation and distinction. This is a special way of discriminating, classifying and valuing tourist resources, since it only uses one criterion and dramatizes it in its maximum expression, which helps us to understand which elements are truly their own, which have some exceptional striking peculiarities and which are recognized by institutions and international organizations such as UNESCO. Aspects that come to collation and that are applicable to the issue of trivialization and loss of identity in the territories,

showing in which elements apply the maximum conservation efforts and/or protection against a possible definitive loss.

Lastly, it should be emphasized that the innovative practice of this own methodology, in the persistence of universal values and of great identity value justified under a comprehensive analysis, does not intend to belittle other resources that do not possess such features. Since an irrefutable basis within the management of the territory and specifically in the local endogenous development is sustained in the attempt of the creation of wealth taking advantage of all the possible potential that this offers. Maintaining the interpretation that all of them, all the resources, complement and contribute to the achievement of a final aim. In this case, a sustainable tourism development.