

# Creative tourism. A differentiating proposal for the promotion of the tourist destination Santiago de Cuba

El turismo creativo. Una propuesta diferenciadora para la potenciación del destino turístico Santiago de Cuba

**Dra. C. Kirenis Milián-Borges**

<https://orcid.org/0000-0001-5343-8688>

milan@uo.edu.cu

Universidad de Oriente, Santiago de Cuba, Cuba

**MSc. Rubén F. Maymir-Pacheco**

<https://orcid.org/0009-0005-5799-9446>

maymir@uo.edu.cu

Universidad de Oriente. Santiago de Cuba, Cuba

## Abstract

The tourist destination Santiago de Cuba is characterized by the development of the traditional modality of sun and beach, nature, history, heritage, as well as cultural and city tourism (Ministry of Tourism, 2019). The latter is one of the main sources of motivation for international tourists who arrive in the city. However, there is no differentiating proposal for the destination in relation to other destinations in the region, by offering events and cultural itineraries, which need to be rethought from the sociocultural values that characterize it as a welcoming destination given the idiosyncrasy of its people. The markedly Caribbean cultural expressions; intangible heritage values that make it stand out among the destinations of the eastern region and the rest of the country's tourist cities. In this way, the bases are offered to promote the work of integration of the social actors linked to tourism and consequently, the weighting of the attributes of the destination.

**Keywords:** Creative tourism, social actors, tourist destination, local development.

## Resumen

El destino turístico Santiago de Cuba, se caracteriza por el desarrollo de la tradicional modalidad de sol y playa, de naturaleza, histórico, patrimonial, así como un turismo cultural y de ciudad. (Ministerio de

Turismo, 2019). Este último, constituye una de las principales fuentes de motivación para los turistas internacionales que arriban a la ciudad. Sin embargo, no existe una propuesta diferenciadora del destino en relación con otros destinos de la región, al ofrecer eventos e itinerarios culturales, que necesitan ser repensados desde los valores socio culturales que lo caracterizan como un destino acogedor dada la idiosincrasia de su gente, las expresiones culturales marcadamente caribeñas; valores patrimoniales intangibles que le hacen distinguirse entre los destinos de la región oriental y del resto de las ciudades turísticas del país. De este modo, se ofrecen las bases para potenciar la labor de integración de los actores sociales vinculados al turismo y por consiguiente, la ponderación de los atributos del destino.

**Palabras clave:** Turismo creativo, actores sociales, destino turístico, desarrollo local.

## Introduction

The growth of tourist activity and its notable benefits in boosting the global economy have given rise to a greater number of studies aimed at territorial strategies that promote the development of tourist destinations.

The tourist destination for this researcher is conceived as an appropriate structural space for the agreement of a plurality of actors that influence tourism development, and where structures, places and scenarios, meanings and interpretations in which these actors are related acquire distinctive features. From this point of view, the tourist destination must be understood as a concept that goes beyond the product and the territory.

The debate at this time is focused on the choice of a supply model by territories in recession, which must assume the impact of tourism on the local economy, reconfiguring a new structure for their productive system. At the same time, they must strive to preserve their social and cultural identity as a fundamental value, avoiding the danger of tourist folklore, which would imply the denial of their singularity and the destruction of their resources in the medium term, or also the risk of the so-called, and less visible, a fusion of cultures, usually with a clear advantage for the dominant culture, that of the tourist (Rodríguez, 2006).

From the above perspective, tourism planning implies a high degree of social control over activities and their effects on resources. In

the same way, it should be sought that most of the economic benefits are transferred to the community as a whole in its various forms: increase in income and revenue, job creation, equipment, infrastructure, creation of recreation and leisure areas (Ricardo, 2022). In this sense, tourism planning should be understood as part of the local development strategy, integrated into the productive system and in no case should it constitute an isolated and autonomous element in the development of the locality.

The unit of analysis, the tourist destination Santiago de Cuba, has sociocultural values that characterize it as a welcoming destination given the idiosyncrasy of its people, its heritage values, the markedly Caribbean cultural expressions, among other aspects, all of which makes it stand out among the destinations in the eastern region and the rest of the country's tourist cities. Known as the "Cuban Capital of the Caribbean". Santiago de Cuba is distinguished by the cultural heritage of its people that makes its surroundings a happy, bustling, extroverted and supportive city. Such authentic features allow the destination to be identified as a cultural city, not only for its structures but also for the sense that Santiago gives to its city.

Cultural events and happenings such as the Caribbean Festival, the Carnivals, the Bolero and Son Festival, among others, become substantive spaces for the articulation of actors who have to favor a developing tourism.

Despite the attributes mentioned, according to the report of the National Statistics Office (ONEI, 2022) the destination Santiago de Cuba is not among the tourist poles that stand out for its attractions and tourist facilities in the country.

The destination is defined and positioned as a product of the city "according to the fact that its main attributes are found in its cultural, historical wealth and in its people" (Marketing Strategy of the Santiago de Cuba tourist destination, MINTUR, 2020). This makes the aforementioned city product stand out from the rest of the tourist products that the destination has. However, the strategy does not state the actions or strategic lines aimed at an important group of social actors that characterize and define this type of tourism. This reveals an acute contradiction, since despite the notable presence of sociocultural, architectural, historical and patrimonial attractions that identify Santiago de Cuba destination, there is no significant presence of international tourism.

Based on the above theoretical treatment, the objective of the research is stated as follows: To argue the theoretical and methodological elements offered by the creative tourism proposal to the tourist development of Santiago de Cuba destination from an integrating vision, in order to enhance the authentic values of the territory.

The new trends in tourism show the growing need of modern man for the diverse and deep knowledge of cultures through contact with the environment and the historical, patrimonial and socio-cultural elements they possess, in order to highlight the most genuine and authentic elements that identify them. This sector and all the relationships that are established are associated with the human condition, so it is not possible its successful development without the organic presence of culture as part of the tourist attraction.

Creative tourism or orange tourism is a modality that has recently been incorporated as an object of scientific research, even though its practice has preceded it. Authors such as Richards and Raymond (2000) define it as tourism “that offers visitors the opportunity to develop their creative potential through active participation in the learning experiences (Fisher and Santana, 2020) that characterize the vacation destination to which they are taken”. According to these authors, it is a new form of tourism development, where the tourist seeks to learn about the culture of the place they are visiting, and demands active participation in their trip.

“Creative tourism is travel focused on an engaged and authentic experience, with participatory learning in the arts, heritage, or specific aspects of a place, and provides a connection with those who reside in that place and create this living culture.” (UNESCO, 2006)

Even though creative tourism may be considered by some authors as a sub-modality of cultural tourism, its practice is evidence of an evolution, of a qualitative leap within a new model of tourism development, where sustainability and deseasonalization are its main foundations.

From the analysis of the modality of creative tourism within the positions of the Sociology of Tourism, the following dimensions have been noted: Authenticity dimension of tourist destinations, creativity, integration of the actors, are the expression of the studies on this subject carried out by its main representatives.

However, their positions are limited to a very narrow vision of the phenomenon without the involvement of the environment and the appropriation of these distinctive values by the host community, which includes tourism managers, service providers, tourism trainers, tour operators, etc. that influence the development of tourism in the regions. The social actors involved in their work of managing the activity are responsible for connoting the true essence of the destination and disseminating them with the most creative strategies within their reach, which is the basis for this study.

Molina (2011) states that “creative tourism is a modality that values the participation of the local community in the development of a destination, with a strong presence of the State as regulator and planner.

The author warns that such a proposal should be a reflection of the community, instead of being dictated and imposed by private or public agencies, which should be based on a creative and truly authentic proposal. “Creative tourists are not looking for an escape from everyday life, but rather for personal growth and learning, which drives them to take an interest in the way of life and the particularities of the communities they visit” (Ibid., p. 18).

Osorio (2013), defines creative tourism as an alternative model to the cultural one, as a proposal to place greater emphasis on identity and authenticity in mass tourist destinations in the first world. The novelty of it seduces for its flexibility compared to other tourism models and for its discourse of social inclusion and appreciation of the cultural, by proposing tourism as a means of inclusion and social equality between tourists and the host community. As well as, the foundation of the virtues of creative tourism in tourist destinations, among which they mention: the valorization of the material and intangible heritage of the territory, authenticity and sustainability, strengthening of local cultural entrepreneurship with emphasis on authenticity, tradition and identity, among others.

No investigations properly referred to creative tourism have yet been noticed in Cuba. Authors such as Machado (2013) propose an integration strategy in destination management in the central region of Cuba for the design of new tourism products. In turn, Castellanos et al (2014) present a study on the factors of tourist competitiveness of the Destination Villa Clara, Cuba, aimed at its effective management.

Aspects that allude to the differentiation of new proposals that manage to position Cuba even more.

The proposal of the city of Trinidad as a creative artisan city must be highlighted. However, there is no theoretical work that supports this proposal. From the use of the perspective that creative tourism offers us.

In this area, the city as a destination restructures a new look at the self-management of its attributes from the seven creative areas promoted by the movement of creative cities through a global network created in 2004, these are: crafts and popular arts, design, cinema, gastronomy, literature, music and digital arts, and Santiago de Cuba, which intends its integration into the mentioned network for having a cultural and natural heritage that makes it a UNESCO creative city through the project “Santiago Creative City,” but in the field of music.

In this sense, the project incorporates the City into the network of creative cities; with a view to reinforcing participation in cultural life and its integration into urban development policies until 2030, being the scene of favorable changes that allow concerting new discourses and integrating strategies that, from the differentiation of values, promote cultural and heritage elements through political will and the new governance context.

The creative tourism proposal is based on a development model that overcomes the negative impacts of the modality of cultural tourism, in achieving higher levels of integration of tourists with the destination based on the intangible values that emerge from the particular culture of the receiving communities. This new look proposes that integral development is based from the local on a complete symbiosis of governments and the design of public policies that achieve an adequate articulation in the treatment and use of existing tangible and intangible resources from new perspectives.

Although the previous criteria guide the elements that identify creative tourism, they do not express what are the relationships that must be established between the diversity of local actors and the quality of the attributes which are increasingly differentiating and contributing to a greater value of the experience during the stay at the destination.

The authors of the work define creative tourism as a differentiating proposal that is based on the active and committed participation of social actors from an integrating vision, which discovers ways of thinking

and doing different from the traditional ways of doing tourism; promoting those attributes and authentic cultural attractions of the destination capable of satisfying the most dissimilar experiential motivations of the tourist during their visit.

Our country, in order to solidly defend the native and genuine attributes that identify it as a nation in the practice of tourism activity in the “Guidelines of the Economic and Social Policy of the Party and the Revolution”, articles 163, 260, 264 and 265, reflect the need to constantly promote and preserve the cultural and authentic values of the nation, as a safeguard and defense of our conquests.

Hence the urgent need to implement actions that favor the creation of inseparable links between the culture-tourism fronts, which contribute to guaranteeing the visitor a unique and incomparable tourist offer that defends the identity values of Cuba destination.

The tourist destination Santiago de Cuba is characterized by the promotion of cruise tourism, the development of the traditional modality of sun and beach, nature, history, heritage, as well as cultural and city tourism. (Ministry of Tourism MINTUR, 2019).

The latter is identified as a product that defines the destination contemplated in the Marketing Strategy of the Santiago de Cuba tourist destination (MINTUR, 2020), and constitutes one of the main sources of motivation for international tourists who arrive in the city.

However, there is no differentiating proposal for the destination in relation to other destinations in the region, by offering exhibitions, events and cultural itineraries, which need to be rethought from the sociocultural values that characterize it as a welcoming destination given the idiosyncrasy of its people. the markedly Caribbean cultural expressions, among other aspects, intangible heritage values that make it stand out among the destinations of the eastern region and the rest of the country’s tourist cities.

It is necessary to creatively project the relationship between the resources available to the destination and the needs and preferences of the tourist. In this sense, the increase in tourist groups interested in learning to dance salsa stands out, especially during the summer season, an experience that makes the destination an exceptional place for this practice. (Milián, 2017).

According to the report of the National Statistics Office (ONEI, 2022) the destination Santiago de Cuba is not among the tourist poles that stand out for its attractions and tourist facilities in the country.

The arrival of foreign tourists in 2022 was 1,074,814, which represents 894,079 fewer tourists compared to the previous year. (ONEI, 2021). This shows that the tourist influx rates are still insufficient in relation to the rest of the destinations, especially due to the scourge worldwide and in the country by Covid-19. Which supports the need to bet on new views that manage to position, diversify and differentiate Santiago de Cuba destination from the empowerment of the most authentic values.

The key to promoting creative tourism is to identify those activities that are closely linked to a given region. (Richards, 2003, p. 12). Hence, a differentiating proposal of tourist actions and activities in a more active way could generate new dynamic relationships in the knowledge of the destination and its local population and, as a consequence, cause changes in the demand for tourism.

On the other hand, most of the visitors are in transit and stay between 3 or 4 days at the destination. This demonstrates the insufficient articulation of actions and strategies by the social actors that promote the development of tourism, aimed at creating new products in innovative ways that allow a longer stay of tourists in the destination; attending to its main attractions where culture and history, the hospitality of the residents, customs and traditions, the cultural heritage of its people that make its surroundings a happy, bustling, extroverted and supportive city.

At the destination, the existence of an intangible cultural heritage is of great importance, which has its particularities in being from Santiago, distinguished by its hospitality, cheerfulness, gesturing of the hands, its religiosity, the accent of the language and the rhythmic movement of the steps of women and men through the topographic characteristics of its narrow and undulating streets are suggestive attractions that make the city unforgettable.

In fact, it is the only region of the country that contains 3 expressions of cultural heritage declared by UNESCO of Humanity, these are: the San Pedro de la Roca del Morro Castle and its Defensive System, the Archaeological Landscape of the first coffee plantations at



Southeast of Cuba located in the area of Gran Piedra and the French Tomb of Caridad de Oriente declared the latter as Intangible heritage.

It is notorious to highlight, music as an important square in the tourist destination Santiago de Cuba. Cradle of the Son, of the traditional Trova (both the old and the new), carrier of the oriental conga with its typical traditional expression the touch of the Chinese bugle; as well as the presence in the city of troubadours and soneros that interact with the heterogeneous public, which adds its own musicality to its streets, which are collected through representative events of the most unique of Santiago culture such as Festival del Caribe, Carnival, Matorros Son Festival, Festival of Choirs, Festival of Boleros, genuine expressions of traditional popular culture and its ancestral musical-dance manifestations that are promoted from its different cultural focuses. It is at the destination, the manifestation most recognized by the people of Santiago and by those who visit it.

Such authentic features allow the destination to be identified as a cultural city with the potential to introduce a unique proposal in the tourist destination due to the meaning that Santiago gives to its city and thus becomes an innovative way for tourism development.

On the other hand, there is a diversity of cultural offers that show the distinctiveness of the Santiago culture, among which stand out: visits and exchanges with community and socio-cultural projects, exclusive dance music presentations, dance classes, among others. However, there are no new different and creative proposals capable of encouraging a greater number of trips by this new type of tourist in constant search of unique experiences in much more direct contact with the local community and its living heritage.

The identity cultural values and attributes of Santiago de Cuba still lack a greater renovating integration in the new look that creative tourism can offer, which turns them into a renovating strategy in increasing visitor flows.

The Commercial Strategy of the tourist destination Santiago de Cuba, is part of the commercial policy of the Mintur aimed at achieving a sustained increase in visitors through efficient commercialization. Even when the revitalization and repositioning of the Santiago de Cuba destination and the differentiation of the product from the diversification of the offer are part of its strategic objectives, making better use of the attractions and native values of the destination; Temporary

actions are not drawn up, nor are integrative alternatives supported by the different actors that are inserted into the activity to reverse the current situation.

The strategy as a normative document lacks an inventory of the attractions and patrimonial values considered as autochthonous in a deep way, capable of concretizing the commercial actions in the declared modality of cultural historical tourism. Such a limitation affects a weak projection in its strengthening where the choirs, the symphony, the ballet, the galas and the conga exposed as examples of the Santiago culture are not based as the most representative expressions of the destination nor the tourist guidelines to be specified for the sake of to expose the essentials of heritage.

On the other hand, the Communication Policy for the Tourism System, created on October 23, 2014 as the governing document for communication processes and an important standard for the rest of the tourist practices, aimed at drawing up a comprehensive communication strategy, such as mediation process, which takes into account institutional communication in its internal and external spheres, as well as all the components of the tourism system. (MINTUR, 2014, p. 9). From its own definition, the diffusion of heritage and socio-cultural values is limited in the dialogical participation with cultural institutions, policies that promote recognition of the authentic sociocultural context during tourist practices, singling out the development of the tourist destination.

## **Results and discussion**

The analysis of the object of study and, consequently, the introduction of the results in the following section fulfills the purpose of analyzing the proposal that creative tourism offers to the tourist development of Santiago de Cuba destination from an integrating vision in order to promote its authentic values. To this end, the most significant results of the study presented will be addressed. It means the difficult obtaining of data by the MINTUR Delegation, the limitations to access information from some actors involved in Santiago de Cuba destination. All of this required resorting to sociological reflexivity in the research as the main resource for the analysis that are shown.

The tourist destination Santiago de Cuba has a set of attributes and values that make it a cultural city destination for tourism. Linked to the attributes and values, there is a group of social actors that facilitate the knowledge of it; But how are the actions of these actors produced in these scenarios to promote creative tourism in the tourist destination? How do they intervene in the development of tourism in the destination?

What perception of the destination's offer does the tourist actor have? How does he interact with the rest of the social actors? How is the tourist reality of the destination built? These and other questions that derive from the verification of the research hypothesis guide the methodological procedure.

The methods and techniques applied confirm that the development of a tourist destination responds to the will of the actors to get involved in a joint and articulated way in the promotion of a type of tourism. For this, it is necessary to delve into the spaces and scenarios where they come together, interact and build the tourist reality in the projection of tourism in the destination.

The scenarios under analysis (Carnival, Fiesta del Fuego, Festival del Bolero) reveal that the destination can be used as a configuration element of high rates of arrival of tourists to the city, in correspondence with the attractions it has. These are identified as motivations for international tourists who arrive with the purpose of expanding their cultural references, looking for other cultures that are exotic or distant from their reality.

The cultural expressions marked by the Caribbean provide the city of Santiago de Cuba with a set of authentic attributes that are promoted as exponents of cultural tourism and universal city; from its rich historical, patrimonial, social and cultural traditions. (Baths, 2009). This element is of great significance if we take into account the continuous growth of a type of tourist who, in recent years, worldwide, has the aforementioned attributes as the main motivation for their trips.

The recognition of the presence of the social actors that contribute to the development of this type of tourism was corroborated in the first instance in the document Commercial Strategy Tourist Destination of Santiago de Cuba of MINTUR (2019). This document indicates the potentialities of the destination and it means a group of actors who undertake, from their spaces, actions to promote and foster their at-

tractions, of great singularity for the territory. These actors are: MINTUR, UNEAC, Casa del Caribe and the Municipal Government who promote cultural scenarios such as: Bolero Festival, Caribbean Festival and the Santiaguero Carnival in the city.

The tourist destination Santiago de Cuba is considered one of the four poles of the least developed country, but with great tourist potential in the cultural field. However, accurate actions are not developed with more attractive tourist offers for the tourist, which shows the lack of synchronization or participation of the actors in the projection of a tourism. (Martin, 2013).

We highlight that the problem of the integration of the social actors involved in the tourist development of the destination is identified in the Update of the Commercial Strategy of the tourist destination Santiago de Cuba and the Bank of Problems of MINTUR in the territory collected from the content analysis carried out to the documents. This confirms that the rate of development of tourism from arrivals to the city, are still low and the causes are varied.

For the authors, the data obtained allow us to assert that the absence of relations of subordination to MINTUR does not make it possible to generate other dynamics that favor various actions that come from different actors whose role is to make their institutions spaces for the enjoyment of city culture. The MINTUR actor cannot offer alternatives that allow solving on its own the complexity of the sociocultural framework in which Santiago de Cuba is inserted as a destination for cultural tourism.

Despite contemplating this link in documents that confirm their work, the results obtained in one of the interviews show that “there is a lack of coordination between the institutions, the government focuses the actions but there is no focus on tourism development in the territory, by the social, cultural entities that influence the promotion of the attributes of the tourist destination” (Commercial Director. Provincial Delegation of MINTUR).

From another actor also involved in the processes of the cultural city as a tourist destination, it is asserted: “it has not been possible to promote this type of tourism or implement the stated objectives due, in the first place, to the lack of budget of MINTUR in Santiago de Cuba to carry out actions that promote this modality in the destination” (President of UNEAC).

We believe that a distinction of the work of integration of the social actors involved in the tourist development of the destination can provide a solution to the existing problems in tourism. For this, an effective articulation is required through a mechanism capable of making viable and promoting the management of the actors in the promotion of tourism.

From the interview carried out with the Deputy Director of Casa del Caribe, it is stated: “tour operators, agencies, MINTUR cannot be seen as the great protagonists of these cultural scenarios. The great protagonists are the actors who gestate, who create, who invent the cultural product; shown in the Caribbean Festival, the carnival, without these actors what can tourism sell?”

The social actors linked to the tourism development of the destination are in charge of establishing a synchronization to promote tourism potential, based on practices and communication networks that make tourism development possible. However, the complexity of the tourist reality makes it more difficult to achieve this synchronization.

From the survey applied to tourists, the most important characteristics of the selected sample are stated. In this sense, the age ranges that most predominate in the tourists surveyed are between: 40-44 (15%), 45-49 (18%), 50-54 (9%), 55-59 (19%) ) and 60 or more (21%).

From this can be deduced the trend towards an increase in elderly tourists who visit the destination, they travel accompanied and require a specialized offer in tune with the activities carried out by this age group. This will require further examination of the social actors that promote and generate the city’s tourist spaces.

Another significant data of the chosen sample is gender. Among the 100 respondents, the female gender predominates with 65%, while the male occupies 38%, which shows a greater preponderance of women than men in the tourists who visit the destination. At the same time, a high educational level could be appreciated where the university level prevails in 87.4%. This makes it possible to establish a relationship between the high level of education that tourists have and their preference for cultural experiences, by showing interest in visiting historical and patrimonial places and public spaces that identify city culture: galleries, squares, town halls.

Regarding occupation, there is a predominance of entrepreneurial workers (38.8%), followed by professionals (36.9%) and retirees in. one (24.3%)

According to the results obtained, it was verified that of the tourists surveyed (80.6%) have not visited Santiago de Cuba before (see annex 4.8). In this sense, we refer to the type of tourism that comes to the city, which is a tourism or circuit program. Its fundamental peculiarity is the tour of various tourist destinations in the country where Santiago de Cuba appears and the accommodation is in hotels. These facilities offer services to tourists for stays of two to three days in the city and guarantee the tourist influx to the destination by attracting more and more customers. However, the offers are not capable of retaining tourists for a long time, which is why the average stay of tourists who arrive at the destination and their hotel accommodation is low.

We emphasize that this type of program is the modality that is most developed in the tourist destination. But it has its disadvantages: it does not allow the exchange, loyalty and repeat business of the tourist staying in hotels, since the client on the one hand practically does not interact with the hotel, and on the other is not able to visit the attractions of the destination in just two days.

In correspondence with this idea, the result of some interviews contrasts the previous statement: "Staying in rental houses allows us to interact more with the city, its people, get to know the heritage and historical places that the city has" (Foreign tourist staying in rental houses). Others value: "Upon arriving in the city we come with multiple expectations and interests, to the extent that we interact with the city, with the family that welcomes us, our perception gradually changes" (Foreign tourist staying in rental houses).

In turn, he considers himself: "I have come countless times, I have been coming to Santiago de Cuba for 23 consecutive years, and in recent years I have come for the friendship with the owners of the rental house, I feel good here" (Foreign tourist staying in rental houses)

When analyzing the information related to the repetition and the characteristics of the visit, it can be said that the tourist who arrives in the city of Santiago de Cuba has preferences for wandering the streets, interacting with the people who welcome him, moving around the city making use of the local means of transport (taxis, rented transport) and

the gastronomic services of the locality, enjoying the nightlife of the city, for which reason “walking on foot” is a distinctive feature of the tourism that visits us .

In this sense, the work of the social actors for the tourism development of the destination must include not only the offers of the tourism sector, that is, state and private facilities (hostels), spaces or tourist sites that identify tourism in the city, among others; but also to broaden its gaze towards those non-tourist spaces that are highly attended and identify the culture of Santiago, in order to offer a better offer not only for the national but also for all the variety of tourists that visit us.

These non-tourist spaces -they are not structured as spaces where tourists gather: beaches, hotels, public squares, places where the tourist and the population meet- structure practices and carry meanings. The way in which they are understood by each one makes them distinctive of the city culture.

Regarding the content analysis carried out on the document Update of the Diagnosis of Information Needs of the tourist destination Santiago de Cuba of MINTUR (2019), it is noted that there are no actions aimed at better logistics and infrastructure of tourist interaction spaces that are not included: within the hotel and non-hotel infrastructure, nor as a support infrastructure for the tourist offer in the destination.

On the other hand, the analysis carried out on this document allowed us to observe that the arrivals to the city of tourists staying in rental houses, fundamental actors for tourism development, are not considered, taking into account that this is the one that favors due to its uniqueness, a closer interaction of the visitor with the population, in order to satisfy their expectations and motivations. We highlight that of the tourists interviewed, (80%) have reiterated their visit to the city, they stay in rental houses or family houses with whom they have bonds of friendship created over time.

This type of tourist prefers to move around the city freely, without formal tour guides who have designed a predetermined program of visits to previously chosen sites. The tourist who visits the city is characterized by wanting to know places that offer authentic or extraordinary experiences, that are typical of the locality, rich in meanings that are not available in their environment (cultural, historical, natural attractions, motivations for dancing , etc.). In this regard, he stated: “I like

to go out at night, sit in Céspedes Park, start a conversation” (Foreign tourist staying in rental houses).

This was verified in those surveyed, as cultural and historical attractions (25%), the hospitality of residents (24%), and security levels (24%) were among the main reasons for visiting the destination.

The results of the empirical data exposed and focused on the work of integration of social actors linked to the destination of the city of Santiago de Cuba and, particularly, those whose actions are strongly structured to promote the visit of tourists such as MINTUR, Casa del Caribe, the National Union of Writers and Artists of Cuba, and the Government of the municipality of Santiago de Cuba demand mechanisms that condition dialogic relations of horizontality as the proposal that is elaborated.

The methodological proposal offered below is based on the perspective of an Integrating Sociology that favors the work of integration of social actors from adequate communicative practices, capable of promoting the development of the destination. Its theoretical construction intervenes to respond to the object of study.

In this sense, we propose a group of actions designed in three stages. For its coordination, we understand that it corresponds to the Municipal Government and MINTUR actors in their role of actors leading the tourist development of the destination.

The phases of the proposal are: diagnosis of the levels of interaction of the social actors involved in tourism, evaluation of the communicative practices of the social actors involved in the tourist development of the destination, in the cultural spaces and empowerment of the work of interaction with the social actors involved in the tourist development of the destination.

### **Phase I. Diagnosis of the levels of interaction of the social actors involved in tourism**

In this phase, the state of the levels of interaction and the communicational relations among the social actors involved in the development of the type of tourism to be promoted is diagnosed. In the case at hand, the cultural spaces that dynamize the cultural life of the city are selected; with the purpose of measuring their actions in correspondence with the role they play in the promotion and enhancement of the attributes exhibited by the destination. To this end, it is necessary to:



(a) Identify and select the social actors that are relevant to the study in the tourism development of the destination.

Tourism is a multidimensional phenomenon, the result of the interaction of several social actors in diverse sociocultural spaces. In the case of the destination Santiago de Cuba, there is a group of social actors involved in tourism that work in its empowerment. Therefore, we understand that it is up to the MINTUR, as the actor in charge of the destination's tourism development, to identify and select the group of actors required for the promotion of creative tourism in the territory.

b) Select the tourism spaces or scenarios that promote tourism in the destination.

Likewise, the selection of cultural scenarios should be the responsibility of the MINTUR, taking into account the level of tourist affluence that these spaces have in the promotion of tourism and the characteristics of their resources and attributes. For this purpose, it should be assisted by Infotur and the Provincial Culture Directorate based on the information they offer in relation to the destination's annual program of events and the previous choice of these events by tourists, through social networks such as Facebook and Twitter.

## **Phase II. Evaluation of the communicative practices of the social actors involved in the tourist development of the destination, in the cultural spaces**

Once the results of the diagnosis are known, we proceed to evaluate from the cultural scenarios and events that define the destination Santiago.

Here we evaluate how the actors see themselves in the daily dynamics of tourism development; how they organize themselves effectively and efficiently for the promotion of cultural spaces. To this end, it is essential to find out if they are aware of the roles that correspond to them for the promotion of tourism activity; their levels of integration through joint actions for the development of events and feedback mechanisms between them.

## **Phase III. Empowerment of the interaction work of the social actors involved in the tourist development of Santiago de Cuba destination**

a) Proposal of actions aimed at an effective integration of social actors and, consequently, the enhancement of cultural scenarios and tourist spaces that identify the destination.

This step aims to introduce actions that facilitate the articulation of the social actors who have the responsibility to plan, manage and promote tourism in the destination, from their cultural scenarios and from the role of each actor. These are:

### **Mintur Actor:**

- Incorporate the social actor Casas de Arrendamiento in the destination's marketing strategy, as well as its promotion on the territory's tourism website.

- Direct actions aimed at strengthening the infrastructure of non-tourist areas, which are of great tourist affluence and which identify Santiago's culture together with the rest of the stakeholders.

- Contemplate in the Marketing Strategy the new actors that re-configure the tourist reality of the destination, from articulation actions that promote the spaces of the city.

- Develop meeting and discussion groups with the social actors Casas de Arrendamiento, UNEAC and Casa del Caribe, in spaces of consensus and dialogue. These groups will jointly evaluate and make decisions on strategies or actions designed to promote the destination, led by the MINT.

- Incorporate in the destination's marketing strategy specialized offers for senior tourists arriving in the city, as well as the promotion of the offer on the destination's websites.

- Incorporate the updating of the promotion of the Cuba Travel web page of the Santiago de Cuba destination, as well as the promotion of cultural events that take place in the city in conjunction with the Infotur agency in the territory.

### **Actor Municipal Government:**

- Implement actions for the synchronization and articulation of the social actors involved in the destination's tourism development in the cultural sphere through periodic meetings throughout the year.

- To strengthen coordination mechanisms between the Municipal Government and the Mintur around the promotion of the Carnival Santiaguero and the Festival of the Caribbean as cultural events of great tourist attraction in the city and that can foment the potentiation of a creative tourism.

- Legitimize the relationships and structures that are established through the new actors that reconfigure the tourist reality of the destination: informal promoters and tourist guides, renters of private transportation; based on their relationship of interaction with the tourist, as well as the meaning that the tourist assigns to their relationship.

### **Actors UNEAC and Casa del Caribe:**

- Strengthen the work of interaction between UNEAC and Casa del Caribe actors from the role they play in the promotion of their events, through communication actions.

- To create spaces for coordination and feedback mechanisms among the actors that dynamize and strengthen the cultural life of the city, its customs and traditions, from a simultaneous and reciprocal relationship.

## **Conclusions**

The necessary look towards more attractive forms such as creative tourism from communication platforms can offer visitors the opportunity to develop their creative potential through participation in the experiences that characterize the destination.

Although currently, the city has a diversity of cultural offers that show the distinctiveness of the Santiago culture as typical expressions of the city; They are not defined as creative tourism practices, having the potential to be so. In both cases, tourists who are interested get involved on their own initiative, in order to meet their expectations and motivations, so we believe that greater planning and organization of these activities could easily turn them into options for this type of tourism.

The social actors of the destination are the protagonists of the cultural spaces by creating new opportunities for tourism in the city, by expanding the offers of attractions, attributes and values that make it a cultural city destination, using innovative criteria, from new ways that allow to integrate the broad spectrum of the tangible and intangible cultural offer of the City of Santiago de Cuba.

## Bibliographic references

- Castellanos, M. C. A. (2014). La competitividad del destino turístico Villa Clara, Cuba. Identificación de sus factores determinantes mediante análisis estructural (MIC-MAC). *Estudios y Perspectivas en Turismo*, 23 (2). Retrieved from [http://scielo.sld.cu/scielo.php?script=sci\\_arttext&pid=S0252-85842015000100011](http://scielo.sld.cu/scielo.php?script=sci_arttext&pid=S0252-85842015000100011)
- Fisher, E., & Gonzalez, Y. S. (2020). Qualifications and Certificates v Practical Knowledge and Experience: Is There a Winner? *Business and Economic Research*, 10(2), 1-21.
- Machado, Ch. E. L. (2013). Integración y diseño del producto turístico. Aplicado a la región central del destino Cuba. *GeoGraphos*, 4 (35), 69-92. Retrieved from <http://web.ua.es/revista-geographos-giecryal>.
- Martín, R. J. L. (2013). Cultura del trabajo, población y turismo: impactos del reajuste de los 90. La Habana, Cuba: Editorial CEDEM.
- Milián, B. K. (2017). Actores sociales y turismo cultural. Reflexiones en el destino turístico Santiago de Cuba. *Revista Santiago*, (Número Especial), 7-19.
- Ministerio de Turismo. (2019). Estrategia comercial del destino turístico Santiago de Cuba para el período 2012 – 2020. Santiago de Cuba.
- Ministerio de Turismo. (2014). Política Nacional de Comunicación. Resolución No. 186.
- Molina, S. (2011). Turismo creativo. El fin de la competitividad. Santiago de Chile: Escritores.
- ONEI (2021). Turismo internacional. Indicadores seleccionados. Edición 2020.
- ONEI (2022). Turismo internacional. Indicadores seleccionados. Edición 2021.
- Osorio, G. M., Vázquez, R. D., Arellano, H. A., y Torres, N. J. (2013). El turismo desde el pensamiento sistémico. *Investigaciones turísticas*, (5), 1-28. Retrieved from [http://rua.ua.es/dspace/bitstream/10045/29118/1/Investigaciones\\_Turísticas\\_05\\_01.pdf#page=3](http://rua.ua.es/dspace/bitstream/10045/29118/1/Investigaciones_Turísticas_05_01.pdf#page=3).
- Ricardo Jiménez, L. S. (2022). Dimensiones de emprendimiento: Relación educativa. El caso del programa cumbre. *Región Científica*, 1(1), 202210. <https://doi.org/10.58763/rc202210>
- Richards, G. (2003). Turismo creativo. ¿Una nueva dirección estratégica? Madrid, España: en Ortega, E. (ed) *Investigación y Estrategias turísticas*. Editorial Thomson.
- Rodríguez, F. R. (2006). Gestión de destinos turísticos. (Monografía). Centro de estudios turísticos. Universidad de La Habana. Cuba.

Sosa, M. R. (2017). Turismo creativo. Caso Ciudad Buenos Aires. Retrieved from <https://econo.unlp.edu.ar/meran/getDocument.pl.id>

### **Conflicts of interest**

The authors declare that there are no conflicts of interest.

### **Contribution of the authors**

Dra. C. Kirenis Milián Borges: Contributed to the argumentation of the theoretical and methodological reference that is assumed, was in charge of advising the scientific writing.

MSc. Rubén F. Maymir Pacheco: He participated in the information management, led the interpretation of the information.