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*El Viejo San Juan:
desarrollo económico,
turismo y explotación
del patrimonio*

EL VIEJO SAN JUAN: ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT, TOURISM AND HERITAGE EXPLOITATION

Figure 1. El Viejo San Juan has a distinctive character from the rest of the historic cities in Puerto Rico and the Caribbean. Intersection of San Justo and de la Luna Streets through San Juan Bay. (Photo: James Cogito Ergo Imago, 2006)

Keywords: urban conservation, urban heritage, gentrification, displacement, tourism, exploitation, San Juan, Puerto Rico

Palabras clave: conservación urbana, patrimonio urbano, gentrificación/aburguesamiento, desplazamiento, turismo, explotación, San Juan, Puerto Rico

ABSTRACT

Since the 1950s, with the emergence and development of several important economic projects, the government of Puerto Rico has viewed Viejo San Juan as a significant asset for economic development and tourism. This traditional model has led to raising urban issues that are amongst the most pressing problems facing the old city today—such as mass tourism, gentrification, displacement, and the rapid deterioration of its historic infrastructure. The island's economic depression, massive public debt, austerity measures, and the significant financial losses after the devastation of Hurricane María continue to contribute to the exploitation and mismanagement of the cultural heritage of the historic city in the name of economic development. As with natural resources, cultural heritage is a finite resource—irreplaceable and necessary for the urban character and sensibility of societies. In examining Viejo San Juan as an example, this case study will take a critical look at how past and current approaches to tourism and using built heritage as a resource serving solely for economic development pose a risk to cultural heritage by threatening its social character, sense of place, and the integrity of urban space. By examining current issues and considering alternative solutions, this essay serves as an invitation to question and challenge the established discourses that have privileged economic development at the expense of silencing its social implications and adverse impacts on the urban heritage. This essay is a proposition to go against the prevalent notions and think of alternative ways to rebuild our communities, while at the same time preserving our heritage.

RESUMEN

Desde la década de 1950, con el surgimiento y desarrollo de importantes proyectos económicos, el gobierno de Puerto Rico ha considerado el Viejo San Juan como un recurso importante para el desarrollo económico y el turismo. Este modelo tradicional ha propulsado una serie de problemas urbanos tales como el turismo masivo, gentrificación, desplazamiento de sus residentes y el deterioro rápido de su infraestructura histórica. La presente crisis económica, la deuda pública, las medidas de austeridad, sumadas a las pérdidas significativas luego del paso del huracán María, continúan contribuyendo a la explotación y mal manejo del patrimonio cultural de la histórica ciudad en nombre del desarrollo económico. Como los recursos naturales, el patrimonio cultural es un recurso finito, irremplazable y necesario para el carácter urbano y la sensibilidad de las sociedades. Al utilizar el Viejo San Juan como caso de estudio, este artículo presenta una mirada crítica de cómo los enfoques en el turismo y la utilización del patrimonio construido como un recurso exclusivo de desarrollo económico, tanto en el pasado como en el presente, ponen en riesgo el patrimonio cultural de la ciudad amenazando su carácter social, sentido de lugar e integridad del espacio urbano. Al examinar las problemáticas actuales que enfrenta la ciudad y considerar soluciones alternativas, este escrito es una invitación a cuestionar los discursos establecidos que han privilegiado el desarrollo económico a expensas del silenciamiento sobre las implicaciones sociales y sus impactos en el patrimonio urbano. Este escrito es una propuesta para romper con las nociones impuestas y pensar en maneras alternativas de reconstruir nuestras comunidades, conservando nuestro patrimonio.

Since its conception as a historic city in the 1930s-1940s, Viejo San Juan in Puerto Rico has been subject to diverse economic and political forces, which have, in turn, brought about detrimental consequences.

Founded between 1519 and 1521, it served as one of the strategic strongholds of the Spanish empire since the 16th Century, along with other cities in the Caribbean.

Its long history as a Spanish colony, and later with the United States invasion of Puerto Rico, has created a distinct character from other cities of the Caribbean and mainland U.S. (Figure 1). It was mainly in the early 20th century that these forces influenced the city's conservation policies and determination of value throughout the century. Since several critical economic projects in the 1940s and 1950s, the government of Puerto Rico has viewed the city as a significant asset for economic development and tourism.

Today, after different projects and economic changes over the decades, economic development through tourism remains a significant focus of the government, businesses, and the public. Rising urban issues—such as mass tourism,

gentrification, displacement, and the rapid deterioration of its historic infrastructure are amongst the most pressing problems that face the old city today. The island's economic depression, massive public debt, austerity measures, and the significant financial losses after the devastation of Hurricane Maria, continue to contribute to the *exploitation* and mismanagement of the cultural heritage of the historic city in the name of *economic development*. Still, there has been no discussion among the authorities, residents, business, and the general public about the consequences of these issues in relation to the city's urban heritage.¹

Within this context, certain questions arise: Is this a viable economically sustainable approach for the historic city? How do the city's present

challenges relate to past experiences (such as preservation and economic policies and its restoration project in the 1950s-1970s)? Are there other alternatives? In examining Viejo San Juan as an example, this case study will take a critical look at how past and current approaches to tourism and using built heritage as a resource serving solely for economic development pose a risk to cultural heritage by threatening its social character, sense of place, and the integrity of urban space. In deconstructing prevailing notions and suggesting alternatives, this paper explores their impacts on a tangible cultural fabric (architectural heritage) and how it ultimately affects intangible heritage (cultural and social practices), understanding them as dual processes.

Built Heritage and Exploitation

Cultural heritage is a public asset that often needs protection from the State. Cultural heritage can be used by the government and/or the private sector to incentivize a market economy, with tourism being one of the most well-known tools. The danger arises when profit becomes the primary target for both parties, privileging private interests, and, subsequently, when the State ultimately reneges (directly or indirectly) on its responsibility to manage and protect cultural heritage. This danger can manifest itself in different forms: softening, failing to execute or follow regulations and protections established by law, and developing projects and public policy that do not incorporate the best ways to preserve and protect cultural heritage.² When

consumption of a cultural asset is solely driven by market forces, it leads to the exploitation of that resource. Exploitation leads to mismanagement of that asset—thereby leading to its degradation.³

Cultural heritage, as a finite resource, is prone to being exploited. The most common example is the effect of mass tourism in historic districts, but also individual historic properties can be misused and mismanaged for commercial use, among others—all leading to a short-term financial benefit for their owners. The economic focus and the expansion of tourism in a heritage site, as Sunkul and Jachna mention, “rely ultimately on the attractiveness of the town's unique heritage environment.”⁴ The social and cultural repercussions of these notions and policies are not easily measured. The economic degradation of a cultural asset can lead to adverse effects on the surrounding environment of that asset: water and air pollution, noise pollution, visual pollution, overcrowding and traffic congestion, accumulation of waste materials, parking problems, problems in land use, and the disturbance of ecological equilibrium.⁵ The consequences of the degradation of a historic asset are both cultural as well as environmental.

The exploitation of cultural heritage as an economic asset not only affects its surroundings; it also has severe consequences for the monument itself. Firstly, it has a physical impact through the mismanagement and misuse of the cultural asset (maintenance, regulations, preventive

conservation), and the deterioration and loss of historic fabric. Moreover, it produces issues of physical accessibility for people (limiting the experience for some users/exclusivity) and even looting and vandalism. Also, if done improperly, the construction of new access infrastructure (ramps, bathrooms, and other features) can compromise the physical integrity of the site.⁶ Secondly, it has a social impact because it can lead to loss of significance for different social groups.⁷ This issue can also lead to significant questions regarding *who* has access to the asset and *what* values and narratives are mostly underlined. In that process, we must also ask ourselves which values are left aside, and which structures of oppression and cultural complexities are erased. The improper management of heritage is problematic as it encourages the environmental and socio-cultural degradation of the monument (whether the monument is a city or an individual site) and its surroundings.⁸

Over the last decades, international scholars and policymakers have found that these issues affect natural and cultural world heritage sites. Since the 1990s, there have been discussions on how traditional approaches to tourism and the management of cultural and natural resources have degraded their heritage and alternative practices have been proposed. One of the most well-known approaches internationally is sustainable economic development and sustainable tourism.⁹ Puerto Rico has enacted legislation recognizing the importance of sustainable tourism,

although it entirely ignores cultural heritage.

After an analysis of current tourism policies, in Puerto Rico, there are two tourism models designated *de facto* by law: one model that local lawmakers have labeled as 'sustainable tourism', which considers natural sources, and the traditional model, which usually contemplates cultural resources—all in contrast to international sustainable tourism practices that acknowledge cultural heritage and natural resources. After reviewing the Public Policy for the Development of Sustainable Tourism in Puerto Rico Act, it can be concluded that sustainable tourism has been enforced in an obscure way, given that its principles apply only to natural resources, and government officials often do not consider community involvement in decision-making processes, which is a key point element of sustainable principles. Viejo San Juan is the best example of how the Puerto Rican approach to sustainable tourism has led to the endangering of its cultural heritage and surrounding communities.

Viejo San Juan as a Case Study

Viejo San Juan, on the north coast of Puerto Rico, hosts a rich tradition of Spanish colonial architecture, merging it with revivals and modern architecture of the first half of the 20th century. As a heritage city for all Puerto Ricans and a National Historic Landmark District of the United States, the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) recognized

its importance by designating La Fortaleza and the Fortifications of El Morro and Castillo San Cristobal as World Heritage Sites. Despite its enormous importance to the world architectural heritage, there are no local considerations of the material, tangible, or intangible consequences of mass tourism and profit-driven management. Despite the trending shifts in the management of heritage sites and cities worldwide, in Puerto Rico, very few efforts have addressed this issue over the last two decades, none of which have involved extensive academic research.¹⁰ The city's past and current preservation policies, practices, and symptoms are essential to understanding this phenomenon.

In the 1940s, Viejo San Juan was a city in a state of considerable deterioration. Abandoned buildings, prostitution, and bars were central features of the city. As part of the economic and cultural programs of the Popular Democratic Party (PDP), known as Operation Bootstrap and Operation Serenity, different projects were developed to attract tourists, such as the construction of the Caribe Hilton Hotel, the Casino de Puerto Rico, the Luis Muñoz Marín International Airport, among others.¹¹

Along with these places to cater to tourists, el Viejo San Juan was thought as a "museum city" where tourists could go and enjoy the beauties of the islands within a "scenario" of sorts. Following these trends, in 1949, the Puerto Rico Legislative Assembly enacted the Historic, Ancient, or Tourist Interest Zones Act, the first and only legislation to create historic

districts in the islands.¹² Perhaps, the act's name hints at its purpose: the protection of built heritage for tourism. Like significant conservation projects in historic cities around the world in that era, Viejo San Juan was conceived as the "other city" that would support the modernity project in the islands.¹³

Amid the rapid socio-economic transformations in the islands, in the 1950s, these ideas were consolidated and implemented when Dr. Ricardo Alegría Gallardo presented the proposals for a full restoration project of the old city. Alegría was the executive director and one of the founders of Instituto de Cultura Puertorriqueña (the Institute of Puerto Rican Culture) in 1955, the state agency that oversaw the entire restoration project of Viejo San Juan. It was no secret that one of the main goals for the restoration project was to attract economic investment and tourism. In 1956, Dr. Osiris Delgado Mercado, assistant to the Executive Director, submitted a report that explicitly acknowledged tourism as an essential focus, pushing the restoration project of the city.¹⁴ These ideas determined the preservation policies in the historic city as if the only features to be considered for conservation were exterior elements; that is, the façades of the buildings. Indiscriminate changes to the interiors of the properties were allowed, among other aspects. Even questionable interpretation practices were allowed since a new color chart was developed to paint buildings that were traditionally painted in lime whitewash throughout the previous four centuries. (Figure 2) This way,



Figure 2. The Restoration project for El Viejo San Juan began in the 1950s and ended in the early 1970s. From left to right: Eladio López Tirado (Supervisor for the Restoration Works of the Instituto de Cultura), Dr. Osiris Delgado, and Luis Rodríguez Morales (second executive director of the ICP), presenting to the Club de Leones de San Juan the restoration plans for El Viejo San Juan historic zone. (Photo: "Hablan Sobre Zona Histórica de S.J." *El Mundo*, April 6, 1966. Biblioteca Digital Puertorriqueña, UPRRP)



Figure 3. The continued traffic over the historic streets in El Viejo San Juan is causing the collapse of the bricked streets and its underground tunnel systems developed in the second half of the 19th century. (Credits: Andrés Rivera, PRHBS, 2019)

preservation of the built heritage began to be molded comfortably to the different economic, cultural, and ideological projects—with tourism being one of these—and the needs of the market at the time.

The successive economic transformations over the decades, along with poor government practices in the management and maintenance of the built heritage brought about other problems. The National Park Services manages Castillo San Felipe del Morro, Castillo San Cristóbal, and the surrounding fortifications, with the remaining fortifications under the jurisdiction of the local and state government, which lack any resources for their maintenance. Therefore, there is no unified conservation management plan for the fortification systems around the historic city, and the Puerto Rican government improvises their management.¹⁵

In another example, the historic cobblestone streets remain under the authority of the San Juan municipal government, which has no preservation office and has developed questionable decisions regarding their restoration¹⁶ (Figure 3). The increasing deterioration of these streets has thus progressed with the continuation of traffic. Over the past few years, with discussions revolving around the impacts on the growing commercial district, proposals to convert Viejo San Juan into a walkable city have been left by the wayside without any further agreement.

Flexibility in zoning regulations is another concerning problem. A disproportionate rise in property values and problems related to the overcrowding of the city have displaced original tenants because they have found themselves no longer able to afford to live there. Residents complain about the rise of boutique hotels and properties used for short-term rentals, which are run without being subject to existing hotel regulations.¹⁸ Corporations and investors have bought dozens of historic properties for redevelopment, failing to comply with current preservation codes.¹⁸ Confirming the fears residents' fears, since 2016, these investors have been planning to open three large hotels and resorts in the core of the historic city.¹⁹ This particular issue is an example of the loss of the "living heritage" of a local community, when residents move out to be replaced by tourists and foreign entrepreneurs, a particular threat to the intangible heritage of the city.²⁰ (Figure 4)

Over the last few decades, the phenomenon of mass tourism has enhanced the number of tourists and people flooding the city every week, most notably every January during *Las Fiestas de la Calle San Sebastián*, attracting tourists and people from around the islands. In one weekend, over half a million people engulf the historic city day and night to attend live performances and drink in bars. Mega stages are placed along the different *plazas* of the city, while the establishment of pop-up kiosks and most businesses turn to sell alcohol.²¹ The high amount of stages, trucks, loud music, pop-up kiosks, and the



Figure 4. Zoning Plan of El Viejo San Juan in 2016 representing how residential areas (yellow) have been eliminated systematically by the expanding commercial areas (red). (Graphics: Cornelis P. Vlaar, 2016)



Figure 5. Stages are placed over the plazas of the City during Las Fiestas de la Calle San Sebastián, without any considerations or supervision related to the historic fabric of the city. Stage in Plaza del Quinto Centenario. (Photo: Periódico Diáspora Dominicana, 2012)



Figure 6. San Sebastián street crowded during the annual Fiestas de la Calle San Sebastián. (Photo: El Canario Lagoon Hotel, 2017)

number of people certainly harm the city's architectural heritage. (Figure 5) The Municipal government has some control, but the focus on the enacted ordinances for the celebration of the festival only takes into account commercial and residential demands. Meanwhile, enforcement of the existing protections or additional regulations for the built heritage are lacking every year.²² The small residential community complains every year about how these festivities, part of the city's cultural heritage, started out as a local festival, and have now changed the entire character of the city to become one giant bar at night. (Figure 6)

The Puerto Rico Tourism Company has boasted that four to six cruise ships dock at the port, bringing in over 12,000 tourists a day during high season.²³ For several decades, significant cosmetic renovations to the city's south port entrances have been made without any considerations regarding the historic landscape.²⁴ Still, the economic impact of these tourists falls short of the expectations of local businesses and restaurants.²⁵ With the promise of economic activity, it all mostly rings hollow in the end.

What Remains

“Over the long term, places with strong, distinctive identities are more likely to prosper than places without them. Every place must identify its strongest, most distinctive features and develop them or run the risk of being all things to all persons and nothing special to any. [...] Livability is not a middle-class luxury. It is an economic imperative”. –Robert Solow, Nobel Prize Laureate & Economist²⁶

As a bankrupt government enforcing austerity measures continues to cut funding from the principal agencies that manage cultural resources in the islands, only one person oversees all restoration and construction decrees on projects throughout Viejo San Juan and the metropolitan area. The difficulty in overseeing the built heritage in the islands is alarming. What is more, the continued displacement of residents and the shrinking of the residential district are among the most pressing issues faced by the city. Several efforts have been made to include Viejo San Juan as a UNESCO World Heritage City in the past decades, without any agreement among all stakeholders in the city. The degradation of a heritage city leads to the loss of its authenticity and integrity, both necessary for inclusion on the UNESCO world heritage cities list and to continue to captivate tourists.²⁷ (Figure 7)

In recent years, the international press has highlighted the closure of different world heritage sites to the public because of conservation and restoration projects. These projects

have come thanks to the alarming deterioration produced by the high number of tourists, illustrating how delicate and fragile heritage can be. A study that analyzed data from 52 European cities has found that efforts to attract tourists have enacted short-term economic measures, ignoring the fact that “...tourism needs to be expertly controlled in order to remain successful and sustainable over time.”²⁸ Some cities such as Dubrovnik, Croatia, a world heritage city where thousands of tourists arrive in cruise ships, enforced tracking the amount of tourists entering the city and enacted maximum occupancy limits. The creation of new attractions for spatial dispersal and limitations on hotel growth are also other measures that European cities have taken. Venice is now proposing to limit the number of tourists that visit the city, and Barcelona is limiting the number of tourist accommodations due to increasing environmental problems leading to degradation.²⁹ Despite several international studies enlisting alternative practices and the social and economic impacts of short-term rentals, Puerto Rican state lawmakers intervened against the regulation of Airbnb, thereby confirming that the policy mindset in Puerto Rico still privileges private interests over best management practices.³⁰

Throughout the Caribbean, similar problems related to traditional approaches of economic development and heritage have arisen in the past decades. Since the early 2000s, slow tourism, an alternative approach, has been considered as an antidote to mass tourism.³¹ Dominica has taken the

lead in incentivizing low-density and smaller-scale activities and prioritizing small businesses development around tourist areas. In Treasure Beach, Jamaica, an ordinance limiting the number of hotel rooms per acre was approved after continued negotiation among local stakeholders.³² Some other policies in the Antilles have integrated partnerships with Caribbean islands to enhance sustainable tourism, as well as to control foreign capital leakage to limit environmental pressures and promote equitable socio-economic benefits.

According to the World Travel & Tourism Council, tourism contributes 6.7% of the Puerto Rican economy, and over 72,000 new jobs related to the industry are forecasted to be created through 2029.³³ Mass tourism or “overtourism” is not an issue that will magically disappear, but it can be managed wisely by mitigating the negative effects and ensuring the protection of the city's cultural and natural resources along with the communities that make it up. Lawmakers and stakeholders must recognize the prominent role that cultural heritage can play in developing sustainable economic development. Community engagement and consideration of the needs of communities in decision-making processes are not only an alternative, but they are also a moral imperative since “they have a long-term stake in the city's success.”³⁴ New policies must aim for a balance between heritage conservation, economic goals, and social impact. Some economists, such as Arezki and others, have pointed out that mass



Figure 7. La Fortaleza street collapsing after questionable reconstruction processes enabled by the Municipal Government of San Juan. (Photo: Andrés Rivera, PRHBS, 2016)

tourism and heritage exploitation will not generate sustainable growth, but rather that the key is combining economic development with other sectors.³⁵

Following sustainable principles of community engagement as an essential tool for alternative economic planning and management of the historic city, channels of communication among all stakeholders (residents, businesses, local, state and federal government) must be successfully established. A management plan focused on conservation activities can increase the city's appeal to attract other types of economic investment, such as investment in knowledge-based

capital, enhancing the city as a dynamic urban environment.³⁶ The alternative plan should aim to develop a holistic approach and an emphasis on the social and cultural fabric to mitigate the negative impacts of mass tourism. The process of developing this plan requires participation and the legitimate interest of all groups involved. In seeking to propose specific policy targets and goals, a critical target in the plan should be the identification of a carrying capacity of the city to manage tourists. Other suggested strategies are the evaluation of traffic-control policies, enabling the use of low-impact transportation and bicycles, rent controls, and how the business sector can develop integrated activities that respect residents. Heritage is valued by many stakeholders. A historic city has a special significance not only for the people who live there but also for a whole nation.

In conclusion, since its conception and the restoration projects in the 1950s, economic development and tourism have been the focus of attraction in Viejo San Juan. The current challenges revolve around how to transform the embedded structures that have been in place for almost seven decades, which foster hierarchies among the cultural and natural resources in need of protection and conservation. There must be a shift in the ways people view heritage.³⁷ Overall, this is an invitation to question and to challenge established discourses that privilege economic development at the expense of silencing its social implications and adverse impacts on

the urban heritage. It is a proposition to go against the prevalent notions and think of alternative ways to rebuild our communities, while at the same time preserving our heritage.

Overall, the most important lesson is that the value of heritage is not necessarily measured by the amount of revenue it can create. Cultural heritage possesses an increasing number of symbolic, political, religious, and cultural values for different societies. It is an expression of history beyond books and documents. As with natural resources, cultural heritage is a finite resource—irreplaceable and necessary for the urban character and sensibility of societies. The lack of a sustainable model to facilitate the equitable management of these resources makes them even more vulnerable. Without real preventive protection management plans and regulations, the beautiful and distinctive characteristics of Viejo San Juan will disappear.

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Notes

- ¹ Smith points out that heritage within the "authorized heritage discourse" is defined as either materially based (sites, places or buildings), or as intangible cultural practices that include music, traditions, festivals and so forth (Smith, 2006, pp. 85-191).
- ² The issue with conservation solely driven by market forces is as L. Dearborn and J. Stallmeyer point out "... redevelopment follows opportunity rather than a well-organized plan... the focus will be mainly on financially viable projects" (Dearborn and Stallmeyer, 2016, p. 43).
- ³ Agisilaos, 2012, p. 70.
- ⁴ Suntikul and Jachna, 2013, p. 61.
- ⁵ Agisilaos, 2012, p. 73.
- ⁶ Agisilaos mentions that the massification of tourism reinforces the tendency to commercialize and, accordingly, tourist development creates a market of commodities and services exclusive to visiting tourists. In many cases, the infrastructure consists of development of hotels, roads, shops, among other facilities. (Ibid., p. 72).
- ⁷ There are differences between significance of heritage for locals and heritage for tourists as Dearborn and Stallmeyer state "Thus heritage functions to define who is part of that identity and who is an outsider. Sites connected to this heritage become revered places to those who take on the associated identity. Heritage tourism, however, puts such heritage on display for others". (Dearborn and Stallmeyer, 2016, p. 20).
- ⁸ Dearborn and Stallmeyer mention that the designation and maintenance of many cities "...rely on the erasure of particular pasts or inconvenient heritages that are seen as potentially divisive to the local populations,

unpalatable for tourists, incongruent with contemporary development, or that do not serve the political needs of the state party's government. These erasures take place in both the physical and the sociocultural realms. It seems important to understand the process of erasure, the motivation for erasure in any particular case, and who has decided what aspects of heritage will be erased, what will be maintained, and what will be augmented. Finally, it can be quite revealing to examine what in particular has been left out or removed". (Ibid., p. 28).

- ⁹ The World Tourism Organization has defined sustainable tourism as: 1) To make optimal use of environmental resources that constitute a key element in tourism development, maintaining essential ecological processes and helping to conserve natural heritage and biodiversity; 2) Respect of the socio-cultural authenticity of host communities, conserve their built and living cultural heritage and traditional values, and contribute to inter-cultural understanding and tolerance; 3) Ensure viable, long-term economic operations, providing socio-economic benefits to all stakeholders that are fairly distributed, including stable employment and income-earning opportunities and social services to host communities, and contributing to poverty alleviation. (World Tourism..., 2005, pp. 11-12).
- ¹⁰ After an extensive literature review, few pieces addressing this issue in Puerto Rico were found. (See Del Cueto, 2016; Collado Schwarz, 2014; and Maldonado Vlaar, 2018).
- ¹¹ Torres Santiago, 2000, p. 150.
- ¹² Law No. 374 of May 14th, 1949 as amended. The name of the act in Spanish is Ley de Zonas Históricas, Antiguas o de Interés Turístico, Ley Núm. 374 de 14 de mayo de 1949, según enmendada. Translation by the author.
- ¹³ In the developing of the notions of a historic city in the early 20th century, Lampraos mentions that since the Athens Charters in the 1930s, the historic city was thought as a the 'other city' one that would complement the modern project. In this scenario the historic city positions itself as a complement and opposition at the same time (Lampraos, 2014, pp. 10-11).
- ¹⁴ Instituto, 1956, pp. 4-5.
- ¹⁵ On August 2013 after public outcry, the Government of Puerto Rico halted the implementation of a scheduled questionable cleaning plan for the fortification walls under its jurisdiction. The informal plan was never consulted with experts from state agencies or the federal authorities of the National Park Service. See Acevedo Denis, 2013.
- ¹⁶ See Delgado Rivera, 2018a.

- ¹⁷ Dr. Carmen Maldonado-Vlaar, Professor of the University of Puerto Rico and resident of Viejo San Juan argues about the dangers of the continued expansion of businesses over the residential district in the city. See "El Viejo San Juan: una comunidad en peligro de extinción" (Maldonado Vlaar, 2018). Also, see Vera Rosado, 2019.
- ¹⁸ One of the notorious companies is Morgan Reed Corporation, which was established in Puerto Rico in 2014 and has since bought over 30 historic properties in the old city and many more in other areas of San Juan. After committing demolitions without permits in historic properties and public outcry, the company settled a lawsuit with the local government and paid a minor fine. See Díaz Alcaide, 2015.
- ¹⁹ On May 13, 2016 Alberto Bacó, Former Secretary of Economic Development and Commerce of Puerto Rico, mentioned on a radio interview at local station WKAQ 580 that Morgan Reed Corporation planned to open three hotels and a grocery store in the zone.
- ²⁰ Suntikul and Jachna argue that the loss of "living heritage" is a threat to the intangible aspects of heritage in a local community, because people move out to be replaced by tourists and non-local entrepreneurs (Suntikul and Jachna, 2013, p. 59).
- ²¹ One of the pressing problems of the Festival is the amount of waste generated. Over 372,530 pounds of garbage was recollected alone this past year ("Recogen...", 2019).
- ²² See "Llegaran...", 2019.
- ²³ See "Puerto Rico anticipates...", 2016.
- ²⁴ See Pérez Méndez, 2018.
- ²⁵ Delgado Rivera, 2018b.
- ²⁶ Cited from O'Brien, 2012, p. 2.
- ²⁷ The UNESCO Operational guidelines for the implementation of the world heritage convention mentions that "any listed cultural site is expected to exhibit the essential qualities of authenticity, defined as the extent to which the heritage property credibly and truthfully expresses its Outstanding Universal Value, and integrity, referring to the wholeness and intactness of the heritage asset" (United, 2005).
- ²⁸ The study conducted by Austrian Hotelier Association (ÖHV) and directed by Roland Berger, gathered and analyzed data from 52 European cities to examine the tourism situation across the continent.
- ²⁹ Coldwell, 2017.
- ³⁰ In Puerto Rico, the Municipal Assembly of San Juan considered an ordinance recently to regulate short-term rentals and Airbnb around the historic city. The state government, along with businesses owners, struck

down the ordinance in the State Legislature, claiming the economic impact of regulations. See De Jesus Salamán, 2018 and Bivens, 2019. Also, as an alternative community-centered approach, in 2016, a group of residents from Venice created a crowd funding project -Fairbnb.coop- a "community-centered alternative to current vacation rental platforms" such as Airbnb, in coordination with residents from other heritage cities suffering from the same issues. In Barcelona, Airbnb represented a significant problem, and after several strict regulations four years later, they manage to reverse their effects. See "Mass...", 2018.

³¹ Conway and Timms define slow tourism as "...a visiting experience that is more authentic, slower-paced and flexible, which also meets the host communities' favor as best practices for themselves and their guests. It can be better planned and comanaged at the community level, and can be pro-poor, participatory and 'bottom-up', rather than 'top-down' in its organizational forms" (Conway and Timms, 2010, p. 340). In Puerto Rico, slow tourism initiatives have developed in other parts of the island, with increasing alternatives such as medical tourism, eco-tourism. The concentration of tourism in Viejo San Juan and the lack of informed policies about sustainable tourism have limited its real possibilities in the islands.

³² Conway and Timms, 2010, p. 336.

³³ World Travel & Tourism Council, 2019.

³⁴ Dichter, 2017, p. 32.

³⁵ Arezki, Cherif and Piotrowski, 2012, pp. 183-212.

³⁶ O'Brien, 2012, p. 1.

³⁷ Agisilaos argues that in other countries there are alternative ways to see culture. In his words "... culture, in addition to be the object of research and aesthetic admiration, becomes also a commodity to be promoted, sold and bought" (Agisilaos, 2012, p. 72).

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*The Museum/
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Ode to Colonization
and Imperialism to
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Social Openness*

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