Multiple Interpretations of a Single Heritage: Cultural tourism routes that celebrate the legacy of Simón Bolívar while reflecting contemporary agendas in Colombia, Ecuador and Venezuela

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Abstract:

Heritage tourism is one of the fastest growing sub-categories of the tourism industry—an industry that is often defined as the largest industry in the world. When communities and regions compete for a greater share of the heritage tourism market, the authenticity and integrity of a heritage can be compromised by the way it is represented.

In anticipation of the bicentennial celebration of independence from Spain, two cultural routes were separately inaugurated in 2009: the Ruta del Libertador in Ecuador and Venezuela, and the Ruta Libertadora in Colombia. This article draws upon a website content analysis to explore how national identity, cultural heritage and the legacy of Simón Bolívar are represented by the governments of Colombia, Ecuador and Venezuela.

These observations and analyses show that while both routes represent a shared heritage, the differences in their representations straddle the definitions of “authenticity” and “cultural heritage,” as the Ruta Libertadora in Colombia is a “cultural route” and the Ruta del Libertador in Ecuador and Venezuela is a “cultural tourism route”. However, when considered together, the Ruta del Libertador and Ruta Libertadora are a cultural route that more accurately represents a crucial moment in Latin American history: the liberation of South America from Spain, led by Simón Bolívar, “El Libertador.”

The Ruta del Libertador in Ecuador and Venezuela, and the Ruta Libertadora in Colombia appear to be two cultural routes representing one heritage. However, further investigation reveals this continues to only be partially true, as the routes emerge as two distinct types of routes with two distinct perspectives on a shared heritage.

The Ruta del Libertador and the Ruta Libertadora reflect what research has shown to be an increasing trend to use cultural heritage to promote national identity and economic development. Also, when countries compete for a market share in the international tourism industry by promoting cultural heritage, the way cultural heritage is represented can be manipulated to attract more tourists. The Ruta del Libertador in Ecuador and Venezuela, and the Ruta Libertadora in Colombia embrace a form of cultural heritage that appears to serve both political and economic purposes.
Biographical Sketch
George McQueen currently works as a consultant with Urban Development Services, of San Antonio, Texas; and is a Project Supervisor for HistoriCorps, based out of Denver, Colorado. Mr. McQueen recently completed a Master of Science in Community and Regional Planning, and a Master of Arts in Latin American Studies at the University of Texas at Austin.
One Heritage, Two Routes

*RUTA DEL LIBERTADOR AND RUTA LIBERTADORA*

In 2009, the governments of Venezuela and Ecuador inaugurated a new tourism travel route based on their common heritage: gaining independence from Spain almost 200 years earlier. This route, called the *Ruta del Libertador* (Route of the Liberator), was established to revive an authentic memory of Simón Bolívar and “the paths walked by our liberators” (Ruta 1a). Also in 2009, the government of Colombia inaugurated a *Ruta Libertadora* (The Liberator Route1) with the purpose of “promoting the places where the Liberator Simón Bolívar passed” (Ruta 2a; Ruta 2b). Although all three countries were once part of a region called “New Granada” as a viceroyalty of Spain—becoming The Republic of Colombia after gaining independence from Spain—these bicentennial routes were established separately and independently.

While the two routes celebrate a shared heritage among these countries, each takes a unique approach in interpreting this heritage and anniversary. The *Ruta del Libertador* in Ecuador and Venezuela focuses on Simón Bolívar as the primary protagonist of the route while using many monuments, sites and events as contributing symbols to the route. In contrast, the *Ruta Libertadora* in Colombia focuses on specific monuments and sites while evoking many historical people as contributing to the route, with Bolivar as the most prominent. In other words, the *Ruta del Libertador* emphasizes a specific person and a wide range of places and events, while the *Ruta Libertadora* emphasizes a wide range of people connected to a very specific place and event. However, both “the liberation,” spanning a period of 16 years (including the liberation of Perú and Bolivia) and “the liberator,” which is Simón Bolívar, are the common themes throughout the routes. The names *Ruta del Libertador* (Ecuador and Venezuela) and *Ruta Libertadora* (Colombia) appear to have a subtle semantic difference, and the development and implementation of these routes have very different origins and meanings.

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1 *Ruta Libertadora* may also be translated as “Liberation Route.” The implications of both translations are discussed later in this article.
Figure 1  Map of the *Ruta del Libertador* and *Ruta Libertadora*
**RUTA DEL LIBERTADOR IN ECUADOR AND VENEZUELA**

On July 24, 2009, Ecuadorian President Rafael Correa in Guayaquil and Venezuelan President Hugo Chavez in Caracas simultaneously hosted a ceremony to inaugurate the *Ruta del Libertador* between the two countries. The process of establishing the *Ruta del Libertador* had been a couple of years in the making, as discussions about establishing a bi-national tourism agreement date back to April 28, 2007, when a delegation from both countries signed the "Basic Agreement on Technical Cooperation between the Government of the Republic of Ecuador and the Government of the Republic of Venezuela" (Ruta 1b 2010, 2). The countries have agreed to dedicate two million dollars to the development of the *Ruta del Libertador* (Turismo 1c), and each have taken on distinct tasks in promoting the route: Venezuela developed an interactive website dedicated to the route and Ecuador developed a set of interpretive materials for tourists to use while visiting places along the route.

Upon inauguration, the *Ruta del Libertador* consisted of only 15 specific sites (8 in Ecuador, 7 in Venezuela). In Ecuador, the selected sites represent different characteristics of Simón Bolívar’s personality, including Simón Bolívar “the revolutionary”, “the passionate”, “the poet”, “the strategist”, “the friend”, “the politician”, “the environmentalist” and “the humanist.” The details of these “characteristics” will be discussed later in this article. The seven sites in Venezuela are less clearly related to Simón Bolívar: the sites include a house, church and waterfall near the Venezuelan city of Mérida; and another two churches, a museum and a fort in the town of Cumaná. The plan for the *Ruta del Libertador* in Venezuela is expected to expand into eleven more states, for a total of thirteen states with sites that contribute to the route.

According to both the Ecuadorian and Venezuelan ministries of tourism, the purpose of the *Ruta del Libertador* is to highlight the similarities in culture, history, geography and language these two “sister nations” share. The *Ruta del Libertador* was created as a bi-national commitment that emphasizes "the importance of sustainable tourism development as an inclusive activity, allowing the redistribution of wealth, involves communities and small and medium enterprises, promoting a more just, equitable and inclusive means of effective integration of our peoples" (Ruta 1b 2010, 2). The governments of both Ecuador and Venezuela view this route as an important tourist attraction that is “directly or indirectly related to historic steps of Simón Bolívar.” The governments also view the route as an important tool for promoting cultural heritage among their people, and also as a means of helping traditionally marginalized populations gain access to tourism resources (Ruta 1b 2010, 2). How those “tourism resources” and “attractions” are chosen and distributed is very different between Ecuador and Venezuela.

**Ruta del Libertador in Ecuador**

Since taking office in 2007, Ecuadorian President Rafael Correa has made the topic of national identity development a priority (Presidencia). For example, Correa has overseen the creation of several new culture-related ministries, and a new amendment was added to the Ecuadorian Constitution in 2010, called the *Ley de Cultura* (“Law of Culture”) (Cultura 1a). Among the new or reorganized ministries are the Ministry of Culture, National Institute of

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2 This ceremony was after presidents held a meeting on February 3, 2009 in Cumaná, Venezuela; and after the “fifth Ecuador-Venezuela presidential meeting” on May 23 and 24 (R. Carreño 2009).
Culture, Coordinating Ministry of Heritage (both natural and cultural), Ministry of Tourism, Ministry of Education and Ministry of Sports, among others. Despite all these culture-related ministries, the Ministry of Tourism is developing the *Ruta del Libertador*, with little or no input from these other ministries.

According to Ecuador’s Ministry of Tourism, the *Ruta del Libertador* was created to “promote and encourage sustainable, historical and cultural tourism between both nations; stimulate local economies through employment generation and extend the benefits of tourism to populations that have been historically excluded”\(^4\) (Ruta 1b 2010, 3).

It is unclear whether the intention is to make tourism more accessible to people who historically have not been tourists, or make locations more accessible for tourism development. Because tourism has typically been developed as an international import industry, one might assume the latter: that the *Ruta del Libertador* is promoting tourist access to locations that have had limited tourism. But since this route also represents a specific type of tourism development, which is focused on regional identity and interest, the former may be equally important by encouraging locals who have not traditionally been tourists to visit places of national interest. Therefore, the Ministry of Tourism in Ecuador has designed a series of modular kiosks that might appeal to local tourists.

In collaborating with the Venezuelan government—which developed the website dedicated to the *Ruta del Libertador*—the Ecuadorian government developed a series of interpretive materials with the intention of making *Ruta del Libertador* more accessible and more attractive to tourists. These materials included a passport and stamps, posters, reading materials that accompany each site and storybooks for children.

### *Ruta del Libertador* in Venezuela

Since taking office in 1999, Venezuelan President Hugo Chavez has sought to evoke the legacy of Simón Bolívar in countless ways, from renaming the country the “Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela” to calling his political movement the “Bolivarian Revolution.” Indeed, the *Ruta del Libertador* extends this effort to exploit the legacy of Simón Bolívar.

The Venezuelan motivation for developing the *Ruta del Libertador* is similar to that of Ecuador in that it uses this heritage as a form of tourism and economic development; however, Venezuela also adds another layer of political rhetoric in justifying the route. In an article published in the tourism section of a Venezuelan newspaper from Maracaibo, the *Ruta del Libertador* is introduced as a means of improving political ties among countries in the Bolivarian Alliance for the Peoples of Our America (ALBA)\(^5\) (R. Carreño 2009). According to the article, in 2008, 44,000 Venezuelans visited Ecuador, and 35,000 Ecuadorians visited Venezuela. To promote more travel between these countries, the article also mentions that flights between

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3 Another example of the President Correa’s enthusiasm for heritage was the national inventory of cultural resources conducted by the Coordinating Ministry, called the “Informe Decreto de Emergencia del Patrimonio Cultural 2008 – 2009”

4 Translated by author: “Impulsar y fomentar el turismo sostenible, histórico y cultural entre ambas naciones, dinamizando las economías locales a través de la generación de empleos y del acceso al disfrute de la actividad turística de la población históricamente excluida.”

5 ALBA Alianza Bolivariana para los Pueblos de Nuestra América (ALBA – Bolivarian Alliance for the Peoples of Our America) was founded in 2001 and has ten member nations, including Antigua and Barbuda, Bolivia, Cuba, Dominica, Ecuador, Nicaragua, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines and Venezuela.
Caracas and Quito will be more frequent and that people visiting the *Ruta del Libertador* will receive discounts (R. Carreño 2009).

Upon inauguration, there were only 15 sites officially listed as part of the *Ruta del Libertador*, in only two states, Mérida and Cumaná. Though the official *Ruta del Libertador* website still only reflects the original 15 locations in Venezuela, MINTUR (Venezuelan Ministry of Tourism) has expanded the route to include several other states, with the goal of connecting them into one contiguous “route” (Ruta 1c 2010).

Tourism seems to be a priority of the Venezuelan government, which is emphasized by the fact there are three agencies dedicated to tourism: the Ministry of Tourism (MINTUR), the National Institute of Tourism (INATUR) and the Venezuelan Tourism Office (VENETUR) (Turismo 2a; Turismo 2b; Turismo 2c). Despite also having a Ministry of Culture and a National Institute of Cultural Heritage (Cultura 2a; Cultura 2b), the Ministry of Tourism is the agency in charge of investigating, surveying, developing and promoting the *Ruta del Libertador* (Ruta 1c 2010). According to a presentation by MINTUR, the *Ruta del Libertador* was inaugurated in 2009 to commemorate 200 years since the beginning of the definitive and transcendental movement of emancipation of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela … [and to] … rescue/resuscitate and strengthen the collective conscience towards historical events, its protagonists, that determined the birth of our country and others in Latin America, which reaffirms the people’s rights of freedom and self determination. (Turismo 2a).

As of July 2010, MINTUR had installed 42 signs: 30 in the state of Mérida and the state of Sucre, with plans to install more in the states of Aragua, Bolívar, Nueva Esparta and around Caracas. These signs are placed in the principal plazas and near already prominent historic monuments. It is unclear, however, who these signs are targeting, as finding information on the *Ruta del Libertador*, while the author was in Mérida was almost impossible. In addition to the several *Ruta del Libertador* signs installed by the national government around the City of Mérida, the government of the State of Mérida is in the process of developing the statewide segment of a larger route called the *Ruta Bicentenaria*. Much like the *Ruta del Libertador* the *Ruta Bicentenaria* is being developed to commemorate the bicentennial of the fight for independence, but on a more local level. However, this heritage and tourism project is being directed by the Ministry of Culture and the Ministry of Information and Communication (Bicentenario; Cultura 2a), and is being implemented on the local level by Mérida’s own tourism office, called the Merideña Corporation of Tourism (CORMETUR). Figure 2, below, shows the types of signs installed by the different tourism offices.

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6 The city of Mérida is nicknamed “Ciudad Libertadora” because this is where Simón Bolívar was declared “El Libertador” in 1813.
Venezuela is also charged with developing and maintaining the website for both Ecuador and Venezuela. In part to emphasize the collaborative nature of the route, the website states the route represents a “grannacional” vision (Ruta 1c 2010). “Grannacional” is a concept that is similar to “international” or “transnational,” but in this case it reflects the notion that Ecuador and Venezuela are “nations that share a similar political ideology.” Therefore the rhetoric behind the Ruta del Libertador takes on an air of exclusivity, essentially stating that this route is meant to include nations of like-minded governments, regardless of their heritage. In other words, Colombia would not likely be invited to share this mission. Colombia, however, did not wait for an invitation and instead developed a very similar route of its own.

**RUTA LIBERTADORA IN COLOMBIA**

In 2009, the Colombian government inaugurated the Ruta Libertadora to celebrate the same event as the Ruta del Libertador: 200 years since the beginning of the struggle for independence. The Ruta Libertadora is one of four heritage routes called Rutas Bicentenarias developed by the Colombian Ministry of Culture. The other three routes are the Ruta de los

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7 Definition of “grannacional” is from the ALBA website: [http://www.alba-tcp.org/contenido/concepto-grannacional](http://www.alba-tcp.org/contenido/concepto-grannacional)
Comuneros, the Ruta Mutis and the Ruta de la Gran Convención. The Ruta Libertadora, however, was implemented not only as a cultural tourism route, but also as a cultural heritage route. The difference between a cultural tourism route and a cultural heritage route is that a cultural heritage route tends to be more authentic in that it is “discovered;” whereas a cultural tourism route is “created,” sometimes by connecting events that may not be historically connected (A. Carreño 2003).

Based on the unlikely campaign that Bolívar led to begin pushing the Spanish out of South America in 1819, called “La Campaña Libertadora” de 1819 (López 2006, 126–130), the Ruta Libertadora has been a significant part of South American heritage since that fateful battle. The “Campaña Libertadora” was “unlikely” because Bolívar marched his army through some of the most rugged terrain in the region, including sweltering Amazonian swamps and frigid Andean passes (Lynch 2006, 127-129). The campaign culminated with a victory at the famous Puente de Boyocá, which has been replicated and is preserved as a national landmark. There is an eternal flame and a large monument with a sculpture of Bolivar near the bridge as well, as shown in Figure 3, below.

The creation of the Ruta Libertadora was the result of collaboration among several government agencies, including the president’s office, the Ministry of Culture, the Ministry of Commerce, Industry and Tourism, the Ministry of National Defense, the Military and the National Police (Cultura 3a). The route is also part of a bicentennial cultural-heritage education campaign called “Por los caminos de La ruta libertadora: Una historia con futuro” (“Through the paths of liberation route: A history with a future;” translation by author) (Ruta 2c). Because the Ruta Libertadora passes through several communities, some of these have created their own Ruta Libertadora promotional materials including brochures and maps.
In a preliminary assessment developed by the Ministry of Culture called “The First Phase of the Cultural Tourism Route Ruta del Libertador” 8 (Comercio 2 2009), it is not only interesting to find the route being called a “cultural tourism route,” but this specific route is called “Ruta del Libertador.” This report is a survey of the many features of the region being considered for the Ruta Libertadora, including the history, geography, climate and cultural resources, which would be used to inform an elaborate tourism package that would enable “tourists” to travel the route with ease.

However, this information also helped a larger, more official reenactment to take place, once in 2009 and similarly in 2010. Between July 20 and August 7, 2010, 150 horseback riders from the army and 150 from the national police, along with dozens of walkers followed the route for 19 days from Pore to 24 towns in the “departments” of Arauca, Casanare, and Boyocá. The journey also included a reenactment of the battle of Boyocá. The report proposes that every municipality along the route create some kind of cultural exposition, because, as a television commercial for the Ruta Libertadora explains, “this commemoration will convert into a motor of development for these communities” (Cultura 3c, 5:26). This advertisement also suggests this will be an opportunity for economic development.

Because of its emphasis on the reenactment of a single event, the Ruta Libertadora appears to be more of a cultural heritage route than a cultural tourism route. Also, the brochures and press releases related to the Ruta Libertadora mention little about the economic benefits of this route, instead focusing on the significance of the cultural heritage. However, since much of the project is being led by the Ministry of Commerce, Industry and Tourism, economic development and tourism are, in fact, significant factors motivating the promotion of this route.

Findings and Analysis

In 2009, when Colombia, Ecuador and Venezuela began preparing for their bicentennial celebrations in 2010, press releases were being circulated about the new cultural heritage routes: the Ruta del Libertador in Ecuador and Venezuela, and the Ruta Libertadora in Colombia. As newspaper and magazine articles published the websites for interested readers to learn more (R. Carreño 2009), the websites became the primary medium for disseminating information about the details of these new historic routes.

By comparing the different routes as they are presented through their websites, any contrasting interpretations might demonstrate how cultural heritage can be used to promote a specific political bias or agenda. This analysis also refines the definitions that explain the difference between a “cultural heritage route” and a “cultural tourism route,” and also builds upon the definitions of “authenticity” and “staged authenticity” (MacCannell 1973), which has been a source of debate in the study of tourism since the early 1970s, and for cultural heritage preservation for generations.

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8 Translated by author from: “Primera Fase de la Ruta de Turismo Cultural Ruta del Libertador”
**WEBSITE ANALYSIS**

1. Website Comparison

**Accessibility**

The first obvious difference is that the *Ruta del Libertador* has a dedicated URL, “http://rutalibertador.mintur.gob.ve/index.php”, which means that more countries can be added to the route. Some of the original proposals suggest that countries in the ALBA (Bolivarian Alliance of the Americas) would be invited to participate. This would likely dilute any credibility that the route is adhering to an authentic interpretation of the liberation effort lead by Simón Bolívar. However, this does not seem likely since few governments so adamantly evoke the image and memory of Simón Bolivar as Venezuela.

The *Ruta Libertadora* website is embedded within the Colombian Ministry of Culture website and is presented as one of four Bicentennial Routes (Cultura 3b). This makes it difficult, if not impossible, for the casual tourist to stumble across this information. In fact, a Colombian weekly magazine, *Semana*, developed a more user-friendly website that gives a more accessible synopsis of the meaning and scope of the *Ruta Libertadora* (Ruta 2e).

**Usability**

The *Ruta del Libertador* website for Ecuador and Venezuela is designed in such a way that the online “visitor” can experience some of the route. The website is easy to navigate because it follows an intuitive, basic web-page format, with a header, left navigation, right navigation, center content and footer. The *Ruta del Libertador* website attempts to be a one-stop tourism website, with not only the details about the route, but also with links to travel agents, hotels, and local providers. However, the actual details of the route are limited, and it never mentions the distances between sites, or the amount of time one might need to visit the entire route. Furthermore, information from the *Ruta del Libertador* website is not easy to download or print out to be used as a guide.

The *Ruta Libertadora* website for Colombia, however, appears to be designed as a resource for information, rather than a virtual experience. The website is difficult to navigate, with page links that lead to more page links. The website has a video, a map, a short guide, a long guide and a series of booklets that the virtual “visitor” can see. However, considering much of this information can be downloaded and printed, the awkwardness of navigating this site suggests the website is less an effort to create a virtual interpretation of the route than a tool for encouraging real-life visits to the sites.

**Audience**

The target audience of the *Ruta del Libertador* website includes the people of the region. Because the website is only published in Spanish, this would be for Latin America, but more specifically South Americans (excluding Brazil, Guyana and Suriname), and in particular, the countries more directly connected with Simon Bolivar. However, the portable booklets that accompany each site in Ecuador target a very international, multi-ethnic audience, and a wide range of ages. The booklets are written in three languages (Spanish, English and Quechua), and
there is a children’s version that has a grandfather-like figure explaining the history, which is accompanied by animated, comic-book-like images that interpret what the grandfather-figure is saying to several inquisitive children.

However, the specific audience for the Ruta Libertadora website, or even this route as a whole, is difficult to determine. In very general terms, the Ruta Libertadora clearly targets Colombian tourists interested in cultural heritage. The downloadable guide details the daily itinerary of the reenactment (which took place in July and August of 2009 and 2010). However, since the route is also designed as a reenactment—in which the “expert” hikers and horseback riders from the army and national police have participated for two years—it excludes the average tourist because of the narrow window of time when the reenactment takes place, and also the apparent skill requirements. But considering that each site along the Ruta Libertadora hosts a series of cultural events (including musical performances, dances and theater), the more casual tourist can still participate.

The Ruta Libertadora also links to a series of booklets that correspond to each town along the route. This information appears to be for people who would like to visit some or all of the places in their own time (i.e. not participate in the reenactment). A series of tourist packages assembled by travel agencies and the ministry of tourism are available to facilitate shorter trips along the Ruta Libertadora.

2. Sites selected for inclusion

In order to get a sense of what types of sites have been included in the Ruta del Libertador and Ruta Libertadora, a basic content analysis was performed on their respective websites. This analysis was an empirical approach to assess similarities and/or differences between the two routes. This analysis also helped determine whether either route might be considered as more a “cultural route” or a “tourism route.”

Comparing Tables 1 and 2, we can see how different the site typologies are between the different routes. Eighty-one percent of the sites in the Ruta Libertadora were places where Bolivar had been, compared to only 45 percent in the Ruta del Libertador. Only 27 percent of the sites on the Ruta del Libertador were directly related to the liberation effort, whereas 73 percent of the Ruta Libertadora sites were directly connected to the liberation. This finding is reinforced by the fact than only one of the sites of the Ruta del Libertador was where a battle took place, whereas 46 percent of the sites along the Ruta Libertadora were battle sites.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 1</th>
<th>Content Analysis Results for the Ruta del Libertador</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>45% mention Bolivar had been there.</td>
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<tr>
<td>4% are where a battle took place.</td>
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<tr>
<td>27% are related to the Liberation.</td>
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<tr>
<td>32% were “Discovered” and 68% were “Created.”</td>
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</table>

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Table 2</th>
<th>Content Analysis Results for the Ruta Libertadora</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>81% mention Bolivar had been there.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>46% are where a battle took place.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>73% are related to the Liberation.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>81% were “Discovered” and 19% were “Created.”</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

The bottom row in Tables 1 and 2 refers back to the difference between a “cultural heritage route” and a “cultural tourism route”: a “cultural heritage route” is something that is
discovered, while a “cultural tourism route” is something that is created. Each site along both routes is categorized as either “discovered” or “created,” based on whether they were either historically connected or connected for the purposes of tourism. For example, the *Ruta del Libertador* site in Venezuela called the “Cascada de la India Carú” is described as a waterfall that was significant to indigenous leaders before the Spanish arrived. Though this site is indeed a form of significant cultural heritage, its inclusion in the *Ruta del Libertador* is more of a “creation,” as opposed to the site a few kilometers away, in Bailadores, where Bolivar inspired many of the men to become volunteers in the liberation army.

Based on this analysis, only 32 percent of the *Ruta del Libertador* was “discovered” to be part of the liberation, compared to 81 percent of the sites included in the *Ruta Libertadora* (see Tables 1 and 2, above). This analysis alone could lead to the conclusion that the *Ruta del Libertador* is a creation of many historically unrelated sites and therefore a “cultural tourism route,” and the *Ruta Libertadora* connects a series of sites that were discovered to be historically related, making it a “cultural heritage route”.

3. Determining site values

To better understand the nature of these two routes, this analysis employed an adaptation of a Preservation Discourse Matrix (PDM) developed by Christopher Koziol to improve the definitions of preservation and planning (Koziol 2008). Though the PDM was designed more specifically in the context of historic structures in the United States, the values that the matrix proposes can be applied in a much broader, international context, to include cultural heritage tourism.

As shown in Figure 4, Koziol juxtaposes the intrinsic value and associational value of heritage, and then bisects those values by their relationship to the market, which is defined as either “market indifferent” or “market oriented” (Koziol 2008, 43). These values are either “associational” based on the value people place on a given heritage, or “intrinsic” because a specific artifact—by being a form of heritage (which can be considered a type of “inheritance”)—is important for certain reasons. These reasons, or values, are divided into different quadrants within the matrix, defined as “populist”, “entrepreneurialist”, “essentialist”, and “privatist” (Koziol 2008, 42). The “populist” is more identity oriented, the “entrepreneurialist” is more symbolically oriented towards preservation and its indirect benefits, the “essentialist” is more objective and curatorial, and the “privatist” is more oriented towards the market or economic value of the cultural resource.
The PDM is especially useful because the values can be separated into different categories that may help better understand why a given heritage is represented in a certain way. It is an important exercise because heritage can be promoted or produced for many different reasons. Since tourism has become one of the largest industries in the world (Baud and Ypeij 2009; Mowforth and Munt 1998), cultural heritage tourism is an increasingly significant part of that industry (UNWTO 2011). As a result, the “intrinsic” and “associational” values of cultural heritage become challenged by their economic or market value (Koziol 2008, 43). In other words, all types of heritage are not created, or discovered, for the same reasons, and the PDM helps identify those different reasons.

In the cases of the Ruta del Libertador and the Ruta Libertadora, there are several examples in each that demonstrate both intrinsic and associational values. At a glance, both routes seem very similar: both have about two dozen sites that commemorate the liberation from Spain. However, by applying the PDM to each site, and aggregating the results for each route, there is a marked difference between the two routes’ values.

The PDM was applied to both routes by giving each location along the route a value. The value was given by judging the relationship between the market orientation and the intrinsic or associational value. Only the information presented in each of the routes’ websites was used in making this value judgment. For example, the Ruta del Libertador in Venezuela lists a site called “La Victoria” in the state of Mérida, which is described as a picturesque place known for its coffee production. However, this site has no apparent connection to either the life of Simón Bolívar or the history of the liberation. Therefore, this site is assigned “privatist” value because there are no apparent “populist” or “essentialist” heritage values here; and without knowing the
real reasons why this location was chosen, there are no explicit “entrepreneurialist” values, though it can be difficult to separate “entrepreneurialist” values from “privatist” values (Koziol 2008, 46).

On the other hand, the site in Ibarra, Ecuador included in the Ruta del Libertador is said to be the only place where Bolívar directly participated in a battle on Ecuadorian soil. The website description also details several unrelated cultural and natural sites tourists may also visit. The Ruta del Libertador in Ecuador ascribes popular “themes” to each site. In the case of Ibarra, this place represents “Bolivar, The Revolutionary,” which—by highlighting that the battle for independence was fought in Ecuador—appeals to very “populist” values; and by interpreting it near or at the location of the battle, also appeals to the “essentialist” values. Therefore, this site was considered both a “populist” and “essentialist” site. This type of qualitative judgment was applied to each of the sites on both of the routes; 22 sites in the Ruta del Libertador and 26 sites in the Ruta Libertadora (Table 3, below).

The results shown in Table 3 were obtained by dividing the sum of each orientation value (for example the sum of all the “populist” sites) by the total number of sites along the route, which shows what percentage of the sites share that orientation value. For example, as Table 3 shows, 71 percent of the Ruta del Libertador sites in Ecuador and Venezuela are “populist” oriented, 50 percent of the sites are “entrepreneurialist” oriented, 9 percent of the sites are “essentialist” oriented and 31 percent of the sites are “privatist” oriented. This gives the Ruta del Libertador a more “populist” and “entrepreneurialist” orientation, which suggests that sites along the route are more concerned with identity and general profit than authenticity or individual gain. On the other hand, as Table 3 also demonstrates the sites along the Ruta Libertadora in Colombia are 80 percent “populist” oriented, 15 percent “entrepreneurialist” oriented, 46 percent “essentialist” oriented and 8 percent “privatist” oriented. This suggests that sites in Colombia are more likely to be included for their contribution to national identity and to preserve the authenticity of the heritage than for reasons of financial gain.

Table 3 PDM Results

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ruta del Libertador</th>
<th>Ruta Libertadora</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(22 Sites in Ecuador and Venezuela)</td>
<td>(26 Sites in Colombia)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>72% Populist</td>
<td>80% Populist</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50% Entrepreneurialist</td>
<td>15% Entrepreneurialist</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9% Essentialist</td>
<td>46% Essentialist</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31% Privatist</td>
<td>8% Privatist</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3, left, shows the results for the Ruta del Libertador show many of the sites fall under the “populist” category, and half have “entrepreneurialist” orientations. Less of the sites are “privatist” and very few are “essentialist” oriented. At right, the results for the Ruta Libertadora also show a high “populist” tendency, while, in contrast to the Ruta del Libertador, almost half of the sites tend to be more “essentialist” oriented. The low “entrepreneurialist” and “privatist” results also contrast with the Ruta del Libertador.
Ultimately, the *Ruta del Libertador* has a much stronger “entrepreneurialist” orientation than the *Ruta Libertadora*, seeking “to realize a gain not from direct property ownership but from using peoples’ associations to heritage for economic gain” (Koziol 2008, 46). Instead, the Colombian website reflects a much stronger “essentialist” orientation, which suggests a view of heritage as “autonomous from the production and reproduction of identity, power and society” (Koziol 2008, 44). In other words, the *Ruta Libertadora* appears to be more concerned with authentic interpretation than the economic development potential of heritage.

These “orientations” are not conclusive, but merely suggestive of the different approaches in creating cultural routes, which also may be explained by the fact that one is administered by ministries of tourism, and the other is administered by a ministry of culture. However, this discrepancy is also very openly communicated, since one of the principal goals of the *Ruta del Libertador* between Ecuador and Venezuela is clearly economic development, while this appears to be a secondary goal of the *Ruta Libertadora* in Colombia.

Using website content to draw conclusions about places with varying histories and complex meanings is severely limiting. However, as a basic coding system and a matrix to organize re-occurring themes, the representation of the two routes using the Preservation Discourse Matrix reaffirms the differences between cultural tourism routes and cultural heritage routes. The *Ruta del Libertador* in Ecuador and Venezuela is more “populist” and “entrepreneurialist” and better fits the definition of a cultural tourism route because many of the sites along the route are “created” to form a linear route. The *Ruta Libertadora* in Colombia, as more “populist” and “essentialist,” better fits the definition of a cultural heritage route, because many of the sites were “discovered” in their linear form. In summary, the *Ruta Libertadora* follows the sequence of a path that is closer to the location and manner that Bolívar and his troops traveled than the *Ruta del Libertador*.

**AN “ENTREPRENEURIALIST” AND AN “ESSENTIALIST” ROUTE**

When compared side by side, the websites dedicated to the *Ruta del Libertador* and the *Ruta Libertadora* appear to be very different; their formats are very different and the way one moves through the website is also different. However, there are many unexpected similarities in their content, in both text and imagery. Religious symbols and natural landscapes are some of the most frequently displayed images in both websites. Church facades and mountain views define the virtual experience for the online visitor. The websites also share a very similar emphasis on using the words “Bolívar” and “Libertador” throughout the websites. Another similarity, as shown through the use of the Preservation Discourse Matrix, is that most of the sites along both the routes emphasize a “populist” orientation, which reinforces the idea that all three countries value their cultural heritage as part of their national identity.

There are also some very distinct differences in their content. The Preservation Discourse Matrix showed a very different secondary orientation, which for the *Ruta del Libertador* was an “entrepreneurialist” orientation, meaning that some of the sites were included on the route for reasons other than authentic interpretation, such as economic benefits. The *Ruta Libertadora* tended to have a more “essentialist” orientation by adhering to the historically significant places that were relevant to the route. This analysis demonstrates the differences not only in the content of the websites, but perhaps also the different approaches found between a cultural route that is created by a ministry of tourism, as is the case of the *Ruta del Libertador* in Ecuador and
Venezuela; and a cultural route that is created by a ministry of culture, which is the case for the *Ruta Libertadora* in Colombia.
References


Ruta 1b, Ministerio de Turismo - Ecuador. 2010. *Informe De Avances: Ruta Del Libertador*. This report was given to me during an in-person interview at the Ministry of Tourism in Quito, Ecuador; May 27, 2010.

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