

Experience of good practices

## Cultural governance. A challenge for cultural management in the municipality of Florencia, Cuba



**La gobernanza cultural. Un reto para la gestión cultural en el municipio Florencia, Cuba**

**Governança cultural. Um desafio para a gestão cultural no município de Florencia, Cuba**

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### ABSTRACT

This article analyzes the concept of cultural governance within the framework of sociocultural process management and the cultural development program in the municipality of Florencia, located in the province of Ciego de Ávila, in central Cuba. A mixed-methods approach was used for a case study focused on the community of Los Ramones Viejos and its traditional storytelling practices. Quantitative and qualitative techniques were applied, including the analysis of documentary sources, participant observation, and semi-structured interviews with 15 key informants, yielding significant

results. An analytical framework for studying governance from a sociocultural perspective is introduced, and proposals are developed to improve the work of local actors in promoting the cultural development of the territory. It is confirmed that, under current conditions, cultural governance faces challenges in the implementation of cultural programs and the management of local institutions, highlighting the need for training and improvement of territorial policies, as well as the urgent need to make visible and safeguard the traditional storytelling of Los Ramones Viejos, whose survival is at risk.

**Keywords:** cultural governance; management of sociocultural processes; cultural development programs; territorial policies; intangible heritage.

## RESUMEN

El artículo analiza el concepto de gobernanza cultural en el marco de la gestión de procesos socioculturales y del programa de desarrollo cultural en el municipio Florencia, ubicado en la provincia de Ciego de Ávila, en la región central de Cuba. Se empleó una metodología mixta y de complementariedad para un estudio de caso centrado en la comunidad de Los Ramones Viejos y su práctica de cuentería campesina. Se aplicaron técnicas cuantitativas y cualitativas, entre ellas, el análisis de fuentes documentales, la observación participante y entrevistas semiestructuradas a 15 informantes clave, lo que permitió obtener resultados significativos. Se introduce un marco analítico para el estudio de la gobernanza desde una visión sociocultural y se elaboran propuestas encaminadas al perfeccionamiento de la labor de los actores locales en la atención al desarrollo cultural del territorio. Se corrobora que, en las condiciones actuales, la gobernanza cultural se enfrenta a retos y desafíos para la implementación de los programas culturales y la gestión de las instituciones locales, evidenciando la necesidad de capacitación y perfeccionamiento de las políticas territoriales, así como, la urgencia de visibilizar y salvaguardar la cuentería campesina de Los Ramones Viejos, cuya supervivencia se encuentra en riesgo.

**Palabras clave:** gobernanza cultural; gestión de procesos socioculturales; programas de desarrollo cultural; políticas territoriales; patrimonio inmaterial.

## RESUMO

Este artigo analisa o conceito de governança cultural no âmbito da gestão de processos socioculturais e do programa de desenvolvimento cultural no município de Florencia, localizado na província de Ciego de Ávila, na região central de Cuba. Uma abordagem de métodos mistos foi utilizada para um estudo de caso focado na comunidade de Los Ramones Viejos e suas práticas tradicionais de contação de histórias. Técnicas quantitativas e qualitativas foram aplicadas, incluindo a análise de fontes documentais, observação participante e entrevistas semiestruturadas com 15 informantes-chave, produzindo resultados significativos. Um quadro analítico para o estudo da governança a partir de uma perspectiva sociocultural é apresentado, e propostas são desenvolvidas para aprimorar o trabalho dos atores locais na promoção do desenvolvimento cultural do território. Confirma-se que, nas condições atuais, a governança cultural enfrenta desafios na implementação de programas culturais e na gestão de instituições locais, destacando a necessidade de capacitação e aprimoramento das políticas territoriais, bem como a urgência de dar visibilidade e salvaguardar a contação de histórias tradicional de Los Ramones Viejos, cuja sobrevivência está em risco.

**Palavras-chave:** governança cultural; gestão de processos socioculturais; programas de desenvolvimento cultural; políticas territoriais; patrimônio imaterial.

## INTRODUCTION

For the authors of this study, the concept of cultural governance refers to the structures and processes designed (or yet to be designed) to ensure responsibility, transparency, responsiveness, equity, inclusion, stability, accountability, and broad participation among actors in the cultural field (municipality, institutions, government, cultural entrepreneurs, among others). Therefore, it is directly related to the agile and effective response by local government agencies to make public sector management efficient. The creation of legal frameworks to promote spaces for collaboration between the state, civil society, and the market is essential to achieving stable economic, social, and institutional development.

Governance refers to "the systems and processes designed to ensure the overall direction, effectiveness, oversight, and accountability" of an organization (Carty et al., 2017, p. 6). It essentially concerns the way in which decisions are made, implemented, and reviewed within an

organization. It also refers to the processes and structures through which decisions are made regarding the cultural life of a given context (macro/micro), and includes the production, distribution, and consumption of cultural goods and services. This concept involves the active participation of various stakeholders -such as governments, nongovernmental organizations, communities, and citizens- in the planning and management of cultural policies. Its goal is to foster an environment in which cultural diversity can flourish and be accessible to all, thereby ensuring the preservation of cultural heritage and the promotion of creativity.

Among the distinctive elements of cultural governance are transparency in decision-making processes (genuine participation), the inclusion of diverse voices and perspectives, and inter-institutional collaboration. Furthermore, it emphasizes the sustainability of cultural initiatives, aligning them with the social and economic development of communities. Cultural governance is also concerned with equitable access to cultural services and resources, which involves an effort to reduce existing inequalities and ensure that all people can participate in and benefit from cultural life.

Cultural governance serves as a fundamental tool within the cultural system; it provides the necessary legal and administrative framework for interaction and collaboration among various cultural actors, including governments, institutions, artists, and civil society. Through governance, policies and strategies can be developed that not only foster the creation and dissemination of cultural products but also promote inclusion and diversity. This results in a more dynamic and accessible cultural system, one in which the voices and expressions of different communities are prioritized. Furthermore, cultural governance enables the coordination of interests and resources, thereby facilitating the implementation of initiatives that promote sustainable cultural development in communities where the cultural system -cultural centers, galleries, libraries, movie theaters, theaters, and bookstores- fosters mechanisms for dialogue and cooperation. In this sense, cultural governance not only improves people's quality of life by fostering access to culture but also strengthens cultural identity and a sense of belonging within communities.

The importance of cultural governance in cultural management processes lies in its ability to integrate diverse voices and perspectives into the formulation of cultural policies and practices. This inclusive approach ensures that marginalized communities and groups are adequately represented, thereby enriching the cultural landscape. Through effective governance, platforms can be created to facilitate collaboration among artists, cultural institutions, and civil society, resulting in more effective and

equitable cultural management. This not only optimizes the use of resources but also strengthens cultural identity and a sense of belonging among citizens.

Applying the concept of governance in the municipality of Florencia requires an understanding of its legal and institutional framework. The article "The Governance of Cultural Heritage: A Perspective from the Cuban Legal System," by González Ruiz (2023), provides a solid conceptual foundation for this analysis. The research examines in depth the Cuban legal system and heritage protection mechanisms, establishing a direct connection between governance and local development (González Ruiz, 2023). For Florencia, a region with a strong rural identity and a history of tobacco production, this framework is essential for proposing management models that protect its traditions in a participatory manner.

For its part, the article "Assessment of the Local Development Process in the Municipality of Florencia, Ciego de Ávila, Cuba," by Castillo Arzola et al. (2021), is an indispensable source because it identifies the problems that cultural governance seeks to resolve. The study reveals that, while local actors do participate, their involvement is often "formal" and lacks real decision-making power. It also identifies barriers such as "poor government management" and a low impact on citizen satisfaction. Therefore, an effective cultural governance system in Florencia must build on this assessment to strengthen grassroots decision-making.

To complement this analysis, the work by Polanco Noy and Caballero Rivacoba (2020), "The Management of Culture in Local Development: Approaches Based on Capacity Building," outlines a clear roadmap. The authors note a recurring pattern in Cuban municipal planning: the partial or total absence of culture as a strategic resource for development. Their proposal, based on case studies in three Cuban municipalities, focuses on the need to strengthen the capacities of local actors to integrate the cultural dimension into development, an essential step toward transitioning from centralized management to shared governance at the local level (Polanco Noy & Caballero Rivacoba, 2020).

The analysis is enriched by a perspective drawn from institutional policy. The articles "Revisiting Cultural Management Through Cultural Development Programs: A Necessary Reflection" by Martínez Tena et al. (2023) and "Community Cultural Development Programs and Public Cultural Policies: Successes and Discrepancies in Cuba" by Carrasco Pérez et al. (2024) critically evaluate the most important cultural management tool at the local level: the Cultural Development Program. These

works analyze the "discontinuities" and "tensions" that have led to dysfunctions in the program's territorial implementation and outline the new challenges that cultural management must address in light of the diversity of local practices and actors. These sources help link the article's objective to the need to rethink existing cultural policy instruments in Florence.

Regarding cultural management and its relevance to the study of orality, it is essential to recognize that orality constitutes an invaluable means of transmitting knowledge, traditions, and values within communities. Cultural management helps preserve and promote these oral practices, ensuring they are not lost in an increasingly digitized world. By fostering the documentation, interpretation, and dissemination of oral narratives, spaces are created where the stories and voices of communities can be valued and passed on to future generations. This contributes to a better understanding of cultural diversity and to the construction of a rich and multifaceted collective memory (Martínez Tena & Expósito García, 2026).

In the municipality of Florencia, Cuba, cultural governance faces structural and operational challenges that limit the effectiveness of managing sociocultural processes, particularly with regard to safeguarding the intangible heritage associated with rural storytelling. Although the community of Los Ramones Viejos constitutes one of the country's most important repositories of oral tradition, there is a progressive loss of spaces for socialization, a breakdown in intergenerational transmission, and a lack of formal recognition by cultural institutions. This problematic situation highlights a gap between the normative discourse of Cuban cultural policy and its effective implementation at the local level.

The literature on cultural governance (Carty et al., 2017; Chávez Rodríguez, 2023) has highlighted the importance of participatory, transparent, and inclusive structures for decision-making in the cultural sector. In Cuba, studies such as those by Martínez Tena et al. (2023) and Martínez Tena and Expósito García (2026) have addressed the governance of cultural heritage from legal and sociocultural perspectives. However, there is a gap in the research regarding how these principles apply to specific cultural expressions, such as rural storytelling, in highly vulnerable rural contexts.

The objective of this research is to analyze the concept of cultural governance in the context of the management of sociocultural processes and cultural development programs in the municipality of Florencia, identifying the limitations and challenges it faces in addressing folk storytelling in the community of Los Ramones Viejos. The importance of this study lies in providing an analytical

framework that highlights a heritage expression that is at risk, as well as proposing actions for its effective inclusion in regional policies. The scope is limited to the municipality of Florencia, with an emphasis on the community of Los Ramones Viejos, and its results may be extrapolated to other rural contexts with similar manifestations of oral tradition.

## MATERIALS AND METHODS

The research was conducted using a mixed-methods approach that combined qualitative and quantitative perspectives, allowing for the triangulation of data and enriching the analysis of the phenomenon under study. The criteria for selecting methods were based on the need to address both objective dimensions (regulatory documents, demographic indicators) and subjective dimensions (perceptions, experiences, and testimonies of local actors). The unit of analysis consisted of the cultural management system of the municipality of Florencia and, specifically, the community of Los Ramones Viejos, as it is the main repository of rural storytelling in the region.

The following techniques were employed:

1. Analysis of documentary sources: A systematic review of documents was conducted at the macro (national) and micro (municipal) levels, including: the municipality's Territorial Development Strategy, the national and municipal Cultural Development Programs, the National Council of Houses of Culture (CNCC in Spanish) Program, the Heritage Action System, the Report of the 9th Congress of the National Union of Writers and Artists of Cuba (UNEAC in Spanish), and the 2023 UNEAC Assessment Report for Ciego de Ávila. The objective was to identify explicit or implicit references to cultural governance, attention given to rural storytelling and its practitioners, as well as control and evaluation mechanisms.
2. Participant observation: This was conducted between September 2022 and February 2023 in the community of Los Ramones Viejos, with two visits per month. Community dynamics, social spaces where storytelling is practiced, and the cultural programming offered by local institutions were observed.
3. Semi-structured interviews: These were conducted with 15 key informants intentionally selected based on the following inclusion criteria: a) being an active bearer of the oral tradition in the community of Los Ramones Viejos; b) being a cultural manager with direct responsibility for the planning and implementation of cultural policies in the municipality of Florencia; c) being a researcher or official with specialized knowledge of rural culture or territorial statistics.

Informants who did not meet these profiles or who did not reside in the territory were excluded. The sample consisted of: 8 storytellers and bearers of oral tradition from Los Ramones Viejos, 4 cultural managers from the municipality of Florencia, 2 researchers specializing in rural culture (affiliated with the Chair of Rural and Traditional Storytelling), and 1 official from the National Office of Statistics and Information (ONEI in Spanish) in Florencia. The interviews were designed to explore perceptions of institutional support, obstacles to the transmission of storytelling, and proposals for improvement from a governance perspective.

The methodology employed ensured theoretical saturation of the data and credibility through the triangulation of sources and techniques.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Cultural governance faces significant challenges that are reflected in the work of the system of Cultural Centers in implementing cultural policy through the Territorial Development Strategy, cultural development programs, and community initiatives. The search for data and information in policy documents and testimonies has made it possible not only to characterize cultural governance in terms of the processes and structures through which decisions are made regarding the cultural life of the residents of Los Ramones Viejos, but also to identify obstacles and future prospects.

### Los Ramones Viejos: sociocultural characterization and its relationship to rural storytelling

The documentary and field analysis allowed to identify several relevant findings regarding cultural governance in Florencia. Below, we present the main results, organized thematically, and discuss them in light of the specialized literature.

The community of Los Ramones Viejos, located on the border between the provinces of Ciego de Ávila and Sancti Spíritus, had a population of 103, with a notably aging population (21 people over the age of 65) and a predominance of men (84 men compared to 19 women). Thirty-six percent of the homes had guano roofs and 18% had dirt floors; only four homes had sanitation facilities. The classification as a "scattered" settlement meant there were no detailed official records at ONEI, resulting in statistical invisibility. The main source of employment was subsistence farming, with minimal services (a store, a grocery shop, a video rental shop, and a school) that did not meet the needs of the entire population.

These data align with the literature on the relationship between conditions of isolation and the preservation of intangible cultural heritage (UNESCO, 2022). Indeed, the isolation of Los Ramones Viejos has fostered the preservation of oral traditions, as the impact of mass media and globalization has not succeeded in completely dismantling traditional social networks. However, a contradiction became evident: while the community possesses enormous cultural potential -recognized by the Chair of Rural and Traditional Storytelling as the country's largest repository of rural storytelling- the state of its infrastructure and services is deplorable.

The impact of the media and globalization has not been able to dismantle its social networks, which largely retain features of a social dynamic that contributed enormously to the formation of a distinct cultural heritage, based fundamentally on spaces for social interaction and on storytelling, not only as a cultural practice but, above all, as an element that cuts across all social processes in this community, thereby making it a defining aspect of its identity.

Rural storytelling in this community is practiced exclusively by a group of families concentrated in an area known as Finca San Manuel. There is a notable difference in sociocultural practices and the use of time between the residents of Hoyo de los Martínez and the rest of the families. In the past, this division was shaped by an ethnic component, with racial prejudices maintaining the separation. It is particularly evident from an economic standpoint, as arable land and lifestyles have determined the sources of wealth.

In the economically better-off area, traditions are lacking, as the residents themselves say: "The wealthy whites are tone-deaf and clumsy dancers", that is, they do not know how to dance, and they are called tone-deaf because, furthermore, they do not sing punto guajiro. In stark contrast, the people of El Hoyo are typically good singers and poets, with a talent for dancing. Even today, storytelling is the cultural practice par excellence, with a strong component of intergenerational transmission within families; this explains to some extent why it endures as a form of cultural resistance in the face of limited opportunities. Storytelling fills existential voids and serves as a resource drawn from memory that keeps them active. From the perspective of oral tradition, it is in these spaces that the reinterpretation of content takes place; events are imbued with meaning and become part of the community's heritage.

As historian and researcher Carlos Padrón Montoya of UNEAC states: "Traditional peasant storytelling is an expression of intangible heritage that preserves the wisdom and knowledge acquired by our

people, a reservoir of beliefs, customs, daily practices, and ways of life, which in turn reflects the relationships established in specific geographical spaces and historical contexts. The gradual loss of spaces for storytelling as a social activity, rural depopulation, the failure to preserve storytelling in cultural programs, and the breakdown in its transmission within families are issues that concern researchers, practitioners, and cultural managers today".

As reflected in the testimonies: "There are various social and cultural factors contributing to this loss; on the one hand, this practice has not been passed down from generation to generation, and there has been no cultural policy to encourage it, as is often the case with other practices in the country; for example, those who write stories are encouraged, but these rural oral storytellers receive no such encouragement; the aging of the storytellers and their loss of memory; migration to urban areas; and other factors" (García Pérez, Researcher); "Among the factors that may be contributing to this gradual loss are: the failure to pass this practice down from one generation to the next, migration, and the diverse forms of cultural consumption among younger people; leaving this practice to chance, that is, failing to give deliberate attention to the preservation of storytelling and oral tradition" (Blanco Zamora, Cultural Manager). "One of the causes, in my view, has been sociopolitical changes, migration, the economic context, and no small number of foreign influences, which have prevailed and continue to prevail through new technologies, including, without a doubt, the abandonment of the 'family lineage,' as the bearer of ancestral traditions that have underpinned the accumulation of Guajira wisdom and heritage, a process that has also led to de-ruralization. This, in turn, has contributed to the neglect of the institutions created to prevent this phenomenon from occurring, or at least to ensure that such a drastic change did not take place" (Vega Falcón, National Prize for Community Culture).

### **Implementation of cultural policy regarding peasant storytelling**

In this document, rural storytelling has been analyzed in relation to the factors that have led this cultural practice, deeply rooted in local, regional, and national culture, to its current state. That is to say, the exodus of rural families to the city, the gradual decline of primary socialization spaces, the ruptures in the chain of transmission and in the convention represented by the fictional pact, and the effects of globalization as a new model of colonization of peoples and their cultures have shaped the current state of rural storytelling in Los Ramones Viejos.

However, all of the above is also the result of neglect and a passive stance, particularly on the part of the cultural institutions tasked with safeguarding this expression of intangible cultural heritage. The Ministry of Culture's (Mincult) Cultural Development Program highlights specific shortcomings in heritage protection:

- Lack of a comprehensive strategy for addressing cultural heritage across the various institutions that hold it and are responsible for preserving and promoting it.
- Insufficient implementation of the Program for the Preservation of Historical Memory, led by the president of the Council of State and the Council of Ministers.
- A lack of awareness, risk perception, and social recognition of the values of tangible and intangible heritage and the need for its protection.
- A funding shortfall to address the tasks of preserving and conserving cultural heritage in its various forms (Mincult, 2018).

As can be seen, Mincult explicitly acknowledges its shortcomings in advancing actions that would enable the identification and proper management of cultural heritage. On the other hand, rural storytelling does not appear explicitly in the policy's guiding documents and tends to be subsumed under other general concepts such as identity, heritage, or cultural memory, which, from a methodological standpoint, represents a gap that has repercussions on the level of action or priority.

Something similar applies to the methodological guidelines issued by the National Council of Cultural Centers: "The focus on intangible cultural heritage is directed toward the development of strategies and measures for its safeguarding in each community, a process that encompasses measures aimed at ensuring its viability, including the identification, documentation, research, preservation, promotion, enhancement, transmission -primarily through formal and non-formal education- and revitalization of this heritage in its various aspects" (National Council of Houses of Culture, 2022). The CNCC's methodological guidelines clearly articulate this institution's mandate as a system operating through its cultural centers and provincial offices.

A thorough review of the documents that serve as the basis for implementing concrete actions at the microsocial level -such as the Local Development Strategy of the Municipality of Florencia, the Cultural Development Program, and the work objectives of the House of Culture- reveals that rural storytelling is not considered a distinctive element and, therefore, is not given any priority. This

becomes all the more evident in other documents, such as the socio- n assessment of Los Ramones Viejos and the cultural programming implemented in this area.

"Although it forms part of the discourse on cultural activities within the Provincial Center for Houses of Culture and its network of counterpart institutions in the municipalities, there are insufficient opportunities for it within the programming of cultural and scientific events. Many of these are due to insufficient budgets in the local areas. Others are limited because the support provided is confined to identifying practitioners and inviting them to the culture festival in their home territory; yet these actions do not prevent the practice from disappearing upon the death of the speaker or storyteller" (Rodríguez Pérez, researcher, personal communication, 2022).

The above leads to the conclusion that there are significant gaps in cultural policy as a tool for achieving change or transformation, which, in this case, would lead to greater recognition of storytelling as an expression of daily life in the community of Los Ramones Viejos. Furthermore, there is no evidence of government actions to support the practitioners and bearers of this tradition.

"At a time when everyone, from cultural institutions to the community, is so committed to preserving and safeguarding traditions, it is necessary to rethink the attention given to this art form, which, while it may not be the most talked-about, promoted, or highly regarded today, is undoubtedly one of the most vibrant, not only in our rural areas but also beyond our borders" (Castillo Mojena, researcher, personal communication, 2022).

"Now, in my opinion, Cuban cultural policy is not addressing, I wouldn't say 'rescue,' not just 'rescue', but rather encouraging, to one degree or another, through concrete initiatives to revitalize, identify, and preserve this tradition, the loss of which would be a great loss for Cuban culture. In fact, I don't think there are any efforts underway aimed at preservation, so I believe this is a significant gap" (Carlos Suárez, creator, personal communication, 2022).

### **Limitations of cultural governance in addressing storytelling**

The analysis of regulatory documents and interviews revealed the following limitations, which constitute concrete obstacles to effective cultural governance:

- Lack of formal recognition: rural storytelling does not appear explicitly in the guiding documents of cultural policy (the Mincult Cultural Development Program, the CNCC's

methodological guidelines, Florencia's Local Development Strategy, the Municipal Cultural Development Program, or the work objectives of the House of Culture). Instead, it is subsumed under generic concepts such as "identity," "heritage," or "cultural memory," which, from a methodological standpoint, creates gaps in prioritization. This finding confirms Chávez Rodríguez's (2023) observation regarding the need for governance to translate broad categories into specific actions for each cultural expression.

- Limited citizen participation: storytellers are not systematically invited to cultural planning forums in Florencia. Local governance operates predominantly in a top-down manner, without mechanisms for consultation or co-management with the bearers of oral tradition. One interviewee noted: "They invite us to the culture festival, but they don't ask us what we need to keep storytelling alive" (Rodríguez Pérez, researcher, personal communication, 2022).
- Limited financial and material resources: There are no specific budget allocations for workshops, festivals, training new storytellers, or documenting oral narratives. Most initiatives depend on the individual initiative of certain organizers or researchers, as reflected in the testimony of PhD. Ramón Luis Herrera Rojas.
- Lack of adequate spaces: The community lacks its own cultural infrastructure (cultural center, community hall). Activities take place under precarious conditions (private homes, outdoors), which discourages youth participation and limits intergenerational transmission.
- Absence of training and capacity-building programs: No systematic efforts have been identified on the part of the Florencia Cultural Center or the Provincial Center for Cultural Centers to train the next generation in the practice of storytelling. Transmission is left to the spontaneity of the family lineage, a factor that, given the aging of storytellers and the migration of young people, leads to an imminent risk of disappearance.
- Globalization and cultural homogenization: Although the Ministry of Culture's Cultural Development Program (2018) acknowledges "the lack of a comprehensive strategy for addressing cultural heritage," "the funding shortfall," and "the lack of social awareness and recognition," no concrete actions have been derived from this in Florencia's Territorial Development Strategy to counteract the effects of globalization on storytelling. Interviewees agree that new technologies and hegemonic cultural consumption are driving young people away from traditional oral practices.

## Potential solutions derived from the analysis

The findings point to the need to introduce changes in local cultural governance that would allow for: (a) the inclusion of rural storytelling as an explicit category in planning instruments (Territorial Development Strategy, Cultural Development Program, and the Casa de Cultura's work plan); (b) design a training program for community facilitators to transmit oral traditions; (c) allocate recurring financial resources for festivals, gatherings, and audiovisual documentation of storytellers; (d) create a physical or traveling space for the practice of storytelling in Los Ramones Viejos; (e) establish mechanisms for periodic consultation with bearers of oral tradition as part of policy design.

These proposals align with the arguments put forth by Martínez Tena et al. (2023) regarding the need for cultural heritage governance that integrates the legal framework with community dynamics, as well as with UNESCO's (2022) guidelines on the flexibility of governance to adapt to contexts of isolation and vulnerability.

Cultural governance in the municipality of Florencia reveals significant limitations in integrating diverse community voices and perspectives into the formulation of cultural policies and practices. Although the national regulatory framework recognizes the importance of intangible cultural heritage, at the local level this does not translate into concrete actions that ensure the visibility, institutional support, and transmission of rural storytelling in Los Ramones Viejos. The main finding is the absence of explicit recognition of this cultural expression in planning instruments, which results in a lack of resources, spaces, and training programs.

The scope of this research is limited to the municipality of Florencia and the specific community of Los Ramones Viejos; therefore, its results cannot be directly generalized to other contexts, although they offer a transferable analytical framework. Among the methodological limitations is the difficulty in accessing official statistical records due to the settlement's status as a dispersed community, which required a manual reconstruction of demographic data.

The significance of this study lies in its demonstration that effective cultural governance cannot be reduced to programmatic statements, but must operate within specific categories, with adequate funding, and with the meaningful participation of heritage bearers. It is recommended that future research address the implementation of the proposals outlined here, as well as the evaluation of participatory governance experiences in other rural communities with oral traditions at risk.

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### Conflict of interest

Authors declare that they have no conflicts of interest.

### Authors' contribution

Nelson Amey Aragón Martínez: data analysis, interpretation and curation.

Alicia de la Caridad Martínez Tena: design and development of the research structure.

Elpidio Expósito García: article review and final editing.



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