

**Tourist development in mountain centers in the Andes of Patagonia:
Summary of the thesis on the degree of doctor in geographic sciences**

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INTRODUCTION

Mountains are often considered a metaphor for force and stability. Paradoxically they constitute fragile systems, even more fragile the more powerful they seem. The major characteristics of mountain landscapes are intimately tied to the topography, which constitutes the main factor of control in the organization of space. The altitude and the slope determine many environmental characteristics and the uses of the soil and, especially, they condition the appearance of limits or thresholds for the occurrence of different processes. Topography is responsible for the two most outstanding characteristics of mountainous landscapes: heterogeneity and instability.

The mountain was until the XVIII century feared and avoided. It becomes fashionable in the XIX century, as a result of the appearance of an aesthetic of the grandiose, of the sublime, it is the moment in which mountain climbing is born. Mountain climbing in its beginnings was developed specially in the central Alps (Engadin, the Ötz valley, and the Dolomites of the South Tirol area). At that time, in addition to the appearance of new technologies associated to the Industrial Revolution, they opened a series of mountain communities to tourism. With the development of the railroad, some cities attractively located, such as Meran and Bozen in the south of the Tirol or Kitzbühel in the north of the Tirol, became the main centers of tourist traffic.

This tendency was not only confined to Europe and the Alps in particular, but the development of the industrial revolution also extended to other mountainous regions, like those of India and Sri Lanka, where English colonialism developed "mountain resorts" for healthy well-being and to escape from the heat of low altitudes. This represented the introduction of a new type of tourism in the mountains of India, where peregrinations to religious centers have had a long history (Singh, T.V., 1991).

Thus, until the first half of the XX century, the development of tourism in mountain areas was restricted to a limited number of communities that people visited for religious, sport, health and aesthetic reasons. The courses of these

first phases of tourism are an illustration of a tendency that has continued in different parts of the world.

In the mountainous regions, as in other destinations, the period after World War II has been marked by the growth of massive tourism. In industrialized countries, this growth has been associated with the construction of systems of high quality roads and to the introduction of new technologies that have led to the fast expansion of winter sports. Thus, in many destinations that only had a summer use, accessibility given by means of mechanical climbing allowed their winter use. The passage from an extensive use in the summer to an intensive use of the natural tourist patrimony in the winter has been a phenomenon repeated at different times in Europe, the United States, New Zealand and South America. Nevertheless, it is necessary to note that in the mountains of developing countries, massive tourism in mountain localities began later than in industrialized countries.

Different mountain areas in the world have undergone undesirable transformations derived from the lack of planning of tourist developments or on other occasions, when such plans existed, there was a lack of political will, or of financial resources to put them in practice. The intensity of the changes has varied according to the region. In Switzerland for example, it is difficult at the moment to find landscapes that are not intersected by the silhouette of one or more hotels, or by the presence of mechanical means of transport to the summit, of roads or electrical energy lines. In the provinces of Tyrol and Salzburg in Austria, more than 1,000 hectares of forest disappeared between 1964 and 1975 for the development of ski runs (Singh, T.V., 1991).

In the European Alps analyzed globally, tourism at the moment exceeds the 100 million days/tourist. Every year more than 250,000 pilgrims visit the Himalayas, 25,000 trekkers and 75 mountain expeditions scale the sacred source of the river Ganges, the Gangotri Glacier, depredate the native forest for their use as firewood, overstepping the vegetation and scattering refuse. In the United States, since 1945, visits to the ten most popular National Parks in mountainous regions have increased twelve times (Derek, D. 1996).

Considering these few examples which are only the tip of the immense iceberg that constitute the processes of human intervention in mountain landscapes, and considering the consequences of this intervention in mountains described as 'tourist par excellence', it is necessary to explore the possibility of finding some models of operation that are economically productive, environmentally sound and socially responsible.

At a world-wide level there has been as strong a growth in the function recreational tourism in the high mountain as in the average mountain. The average mountain, that is to say the sector that is developed below the timberline or line of vegetation, is in general, the territory where settlements

are located and where the majority of the recreational-tourist activities are developed. Therefore the landscape takes the imprint of the socioeconomic history, although anthropic intervention tends to adapt to the heterogeneity that topography creates.

In the Andes, this has been reflected in the intensive use of some Parks, for example Nahuel Huapí in Argentina and Huascarán in Peru, by the tourists as by the nearby residents.

Thus the growth of alternative tourism, closely tied to the existence of a natural, and a cultural patrimony and to the local communities, generates new possibilities for the operation of mountain resources, with the corresponding generation of direct and indirect economic benefits for the populations related to this activity, inside and outside of areas protected within the Andean region.

Latin America as a tourist global mark, (that is to say as an element of differentiation for the selection of a trip), and in terms of service life of the product, is in a growth stage. For that reason the development of its tourist mountain centers has not acquired the extent and intensity of use as in the European or North American traditional centers.

The main objective of this thesis has been to emphasize the theoretical and methodological aspects that affect the possibility of a sustainable tourist development in mountain centers. The general approach was first to understand this development as the process able to respond in an integrated manner to the economic and social needs of the populations involved, while at the same time conserving the natural and cultural patrimony of these areas and secondly, to consider that the planning of the development implies necessarily a valorized ideological frame, a method and a process of management.

Considering the structure of the territory of the Patagonian Andes on a regional scale, and the tendency to organize its tourist spaces in smaller portions of greater complexity, it was decided to center the analysis on tourist centers.

Assuming the tourist development of the centers as the axis of this study, the critical revision developed in these last five years in the academic and tourist planning field has allowed presenting different case studies. These case studies constitute relevant examples to be considered in the development of a practice of planning in this type of space. Thus, considering how, with whom and for whom to plan the forms of systematic evaluation of the tourist patrimony and the definition of guidelines and operational criteria of recreational tourist activities, constitute different phases or critical moments of the process.

Approaching the subject from different disciplines, a definition can be advanced which makes it possible to redefine the role of tourist space as a

productive space- the result of a new type of relationship between economic agents and social actors.

The emphasis on tourist centers has been advanced from the classification developed by R. Boullón (1985), has been completed with initial ideas of regional potentiality proposed by S.Boisier (1993), to arrive at a conception of a material tourist center and its relationship with its projected commercial image. This last point is inferred by the strategies of positioning tourist destinations as trademarks in the market.

Participating management has been valorized in the thesis as an important fact or to obtain sustainable tourist development. The intention has been to treat sustainability from the point of view of a functional plane rather than to extend its theoretical base. Thus the focus was on how to obtain sustainability in the context of the present capitalist model in Argentina and in the specific frame of the Andean patagonic space.

Recognizing that the need for research applied to management and the operation of the environmental patrimony is indispensable in approaching the sustainable development of tourism, emphasis was placed on the relationships between man and natural space as a result of the recreational activities. In this sense, the analysis was centered in the variables that take part in defining different opportunities in recreational tourist use to accomplish a suitable management and operation.

Load capacity was studied, incorporating socio-psychological and operation variables as central elements of the analysis; trying to describe its main conditioners, and how these affect the spacial needs of man and his satisfaction in the accomplishment of recreational tourist activities in selected environments.

In the regional plane, emphasis was placed on the aspects tied to the historical evolution of Andean tourist centers within the Patagonian frame.

This analysis also includes tourist use (public land use) of the existing National Parks of the area in study as well as the main problems that this use presents, considering the importance of the landscape from both the scenic and the functional points of view.

The thesis has been organized in three chapters that follow a logic that goes from the general to the particular, according to the following guidelines.

The first chapter been has centered in the theoretical and methodological aspects of the study of tourism in mountain areas.

The second chapter analyzes spatial configuration and tourist development of the Patagonian Andes, emphasizing the diachronic approach. This approach has made possible to characterize territorial strategies of the area's main socio-economic activities of and their attachment to the process of tourist center development.

The third chapter presents four case studies considered paradigmatic markers of the main processes that affect the development and administration of mountain centers.

HYPOTHESIS OF WORK

In order to incite the investigation, to define the basic categories of analysis and to stimulate descriptions and explanations, the following hypotheses were formulated:

Understanding sustainable tourist development as being able to generate positive socio-economic changes without jeopardizing the ecological and social systems. It is considered that the application of this paradigm in mountain areas is possible from a participating management that integrates policies, planning and the aspects of development and improvement that affect the population's quality of life. Its political viability stems from the consensus that can be obtained from those directly affected, brought about by governmental action, by private activity or by the representative social institutions.

Another indispensable component to approach a sustainable tourist development in mountain areas is recognizing the necessity of the investigation applied to management and operation. This would make possible on the one hand, a better articulation of tourism with other productive activities, the evaluation of the environmental tourist patrimony and its potential, as well as the supervision and control of the critical variables that negatively affect the relationship between the ecological, economic and social systems.

OBJECTIVES

MAIN OBJECTIVE

The main objective of this thesis is to formulate an alternative theoretical-methodological proposal for the planning of the sustainable tourist development of the mountain centers in the Andean-patagonic region.

PARTIAL OBJECTIVES

To evaluate the effectiveness of planning as a tool for tourist development in mountain centers

To attempt a participating management experience of the communities involved in tourism development, as an instrument of social economic transformation of mountain centers

To determine the main problems of public use (tourist) of the more important National Parks in the Andes of Patagonia.

To establish methodologies for the present and potential evaluation of tourist patrimony in tourist mountain spaces

To formulate criteria for the establishment of policies to limit the development of the main tourist activities with potential in the area, considering the environmental units where they exist from an interdisciplinary perspective.

To establish criteria for the commercialization of tourist mountain centers in the Andes of Patagonia, taking care of their sustainable development.

METHODOLOGY

The methodology used for the formulation of this thesis has been approached from a geographic perspective that included a synchronous frame and a diachronic one. The synchronous frame corresponded to the analysis of planning according to different scales or conceptualizing spaces, so that the regional scale included the Patagonian Andes, the sub-regional scale, tourist zones, and the local scale corresponded to precise problems in certain provincial tourist spaces (for example, Pehuénia Circuit in Neuquén Province).

The diachronic vision corresponded to the retrospective study of the evolution of existing tourist mountain centers in other places of the world, and in the Andean Patagonia in particular. The emphasis has been placed on the main changes operated in them, with the intention of identifying and characterizing critical factors and existing relations between ecological-landscaping particularities and their tourist development.

Due to the stage of early development of the scientific study of tourism as a phenomenon, especially here in Latin America, the research framework corresponds to an exploratory design. This design is characteristic of a time marked by the need of research and interdisciplinary work for the construction of theoretical markers, new conceptual syntheses, and reality re-interpretations. All this in light of different paradigms that make possible a better understanding and explanation of the contrasting difficulties that affect the study of tourism.

This thesis is the product of planning experiences, investigation and consultancies undertaken by the author in the last five years, during which numerous field excursions in the different selected areas were made as field

studies - including tourist centers of the Patagonian Andes, in Argentina as in Chile. An ample variety of study and investigation techniques were used.

From the beginning a flexible position was adopted as far as the gathering of the information is concerned, trying to maintain an open position in order to enrich the conceptual frame. Among the techniques of data collection used during this period the following can be mentioned: documentation analysis - (technical reports, statistics, topographic charts of different scales, thematic maps and air photographs, among other secondary sources), interviews to key informants, participating and nonparticipating observation, perception of tourist behavior and interviews with users.

The same techniques were applied in different types of jurisdictions, inside the National Parks, as in municipal and provincial areas, which allowed operating in different levels of analysis, according to the possibilities in each one of the approached thematic.

Taking into account the spacial configuration in study -the main tourist mountain centers of the Andean zone in the Patagonia are inserted within the National Parks- the question of public use in the protected areas on a regional scale was emphasized. Thus, it was possible to delineate difficulties, from the point of view of supply and demand, which occur in the different Parks, in the north as in the south end of the Patagonia.

The logic that has given rise to the inclusion of the selected case studies, attempts to present different existent elements in the formulated hypotheses regarding the conception of sustainable tourist development in the Patagonian Andes; so that these elements would operate as paradigmatic referrals of the main processes that affect its development.

Many of the conclusions of each one of the cases try to integrate a perceptive approach (Whyte, A. 1987), through the collection of more objective data. Different techniques were combined to obtain crossed controls, which were of particular importance in the determination of critical variables of tourist use in the different territories.

The perceptive approach deals with people's identification and evaluation of their particular situation with respect to a given whole. The central idea of the perceptive approach is that the best way to explain decision making and human behavior is to refer them to the subjective frames of our perceived reality. Perception, that is to say the point of view or perspective of the different people consulted, was analyzed in terms of concepts such as values, attitudes, preferences and satisfaction, among others.

In spite of the conceptual and methodological difficulties that were faced in the use of this approach, it is useful to remember that an important criterion

be considered valid so that management strategies, public policies (in which man and the landscape are compromised) and even science can be evaluated, is by means of "perception" (of those actors involved in the process). Perception articulated by the values, expectations, public opinion or by the revision of peers, finally defines the position to take for decision making.

The direction has been to confront experiences, personal and academic, of people involved in 'the daily activities of each one of the analyzed centers and tourist zones' (either because they take part in the production of tourist spaces or because they enjoy them). This confrontation of theoretical and practical criteria provides an assembly of elements to be considered by governors, development and private investment managers, at the time of taking part in the development of these types of tourist mountain spaces.

PRACTICAL MEANING

The accomplishment of this thesis provides an assembly of instruments, which can be used in the following ways:

- As a better understanding of the relationship between the different factors (ecological, economic and social) that intervenes in the process of development planning of tourist centers in the Patagonian Andes.
- As a base of discussion for workshops and meetings, where the objective is to forward strategies of tourist development for the next years in destinations in the Patagonian Andes.
- As a foundation for the creation of "Codes of Conduct and Practice Agreements for the different providers of services that take part in the operation of the tourist sector in the Patagonian Andes".
- To develop criteria and guidelines of environmental operation that contributes to the creation of tourist products in integrated Argentine-Chilean circuits in the Patagonia.
- To propose alignments for the commercialization of tourist products in mountainous landscapes, within the frame of international, national and regional competition.
- To forward the need of new lines of research applied to mountain centers of the Patagonian Andes.
- To act as a foundation for the development of new curricular lines in the centers of human resources instruction for the tourist sector in the Patagonia region.
- To contribute to the decision making that would enable a more effective economic operation of these territories, an operation that at the same time contributes to the improvement of the quality of life of the populations involved.

WORKS PRESENTED IN EVENTS

Part of the content of this report has been presented and approved in the following scientific events:

- * 1993 VII Canadian Congress of Leisure Research, Winnipeg. Canada. May '93
- * 1994 III Scientific International Congress of Urban and Regional Planning. Tourism Commission. La Havana. Cuba. Nov '94
- * II International Congress of Tourism Professionals. Tourist Development Panel Planning. La Havana. Cuba. Nov '94.
- * 1996 International Congress of Geography and Planning in Tourism in Panel of Ecological Tourism. San Pablo. Brazil. - July '95
- * 5E Meeting on Environmental Policies in the frame of the Global. Insertion. CIPMA Temuco. Chile. Aug '95
- * 1996 III International Congress of Tourism Professionals. Ecoturism Table. La Havana. Cuba. Oct '96
- * 1997 I Latin American Congress of National Parks and other Protected Areas. Santa Marta. Colombia. May '97.

PUBLICATIONS

The content of this thesis has given rise to five publications in magazines of investigation and scientific dissemination.

- * 1995 ' Publication "Standard for the environmental sustainability of the sector tourism ". Magazine: ENVIRONMENT and DEVELOPMENT Vol XI nE4. December 1995. Santiago de Chile.
- * 1996 ' Publication " Standard for the Activities of free time - Applications in the Patagonia Argentina ". Magazine: LES CAHIERS DU TOURISME. Series C, nE 201-May 1996. Centre des Hautes Etudes Touristiques. Université de Droit, d'Economie et des Sciences. Aix in Provence. France.
- * 1997 ' Publication " Planning of tourist development in the Patagonia: The case of the Province of the Neuquén- Argentina " in the Magazine for INTER-AMERICAN PLANNING. Vol XXIX. N° 113 . Quito. Ecuador.
- * Publication " Perspective for the Sustainable Tourist Development in Argentina: The case of the Patagonia " Magazine: Tourism XXII. Buenos Aires. (in process of editorial revision)

* Publication "Environmental Threshold Limits for tourist activities in the lake Huechulafquen-Parque Nacional Lanín " Magazine: STUDIES AND PERSPECTIVE IN TOURISM. Buenos Aires (to be publish in Vol. 7 EN2 - April 1988)

* Publication "Strategic Management of Protected Wilderness Areas in Latin America" Magazine: ENVIRONMENT AND DEVELOPMENT. Vol XIII n°4. Santiago de Chile.

VOLUME OF THE THESIS

This thesis consists of 125 pages distributed in three chapters, with 135 bibliographical entries. It contains a section of Annexes with 27 Charts and 15 Figures.

CHAPTER I: THEORETICAL ASPECTS OF THE PROBLEMS OF TOURISM IN MOUNTAIN AREAS

1.1. - Tourist space as geographic space

Tourist space is a productive space. Once tourist attractions are valued, that is to say, on one hand there is a market ready to consume them and on the other hand, a supply of recreational tourist activities are created from them, they have a specific functional value from their use for recreation and tourism. The implantation of facilities, equipment and infrastructure that make possible the supply of services is then necessary in greater or smaller measure.

This functional criterion of defining tourist space by the presence of tourist attractions (Boullón, 1985), also includes the relationships of commercialization, communication and administration that are derived from their existence. Although this conception is useful for a first approach to the dissection of tourist space from the total geographic space, it must be completed by notions that assume the tourist space as a new social space, resulting from a new type of relationship between economic agents and social actors. Considering that the dynamics of the territory are the result of the social relationships that take place in it, the development of tourism produces certain changes in spatial configuration; it generally reconverts the initial space, generating tertiary productive specialized spaces. The modalities of use and appropriation derived from it generate changes in the patterns not only of use, but of land ownership as well. These considerations help understand the conflicts that arise among the different groups, for questions fundamentally attached to changes in values, and from the 'different losses' of dominant groups before the transformation of the previous social space into a new productive social space. These losses have to do in many cases with cultural identity, with relations of interchange or with social status.

The power that the different social actors and economic agents exert as far as the production and management of the tourist space appears then as a central aspect. The articulation of power in each territory has its reflection in the resulting social space.

Therefore, the following must be analyzed:

- * The strategies of intervention and management of the different producers of space,
- * The alliances between the different types of social economic agents,
- * The mechanisms of territorial hierarchical structuring that happen fundamentally through the price of the land as territorial strategy.

Among the main producers of space in the tourist centers in analysis are, the State, through for example it's Administration of National Parks; the Municipalities and provincial governments; since according to the circumstances these institutions fix the criteria of zoning and use of tourist space.

It is appropriate to complete the conceptualization of tourist space with the contribution made by Callizo Soneiro (1991) when he defines it as a 'new socio-spatial formation' composed of two types of spatial products: material spaces (lodgings, transport networks, recreational facilities) and immaterial spaces: the images that stem from mercantile connotations that tourist promotion applies to the material space'. Landscapes become "images", sealing the systemic operation of the tourist space.

1.2 - Geo-ecologic Perspective of Mountains

Mountains and high land represent approximately a 36% of the surface of our planet. In them, according to Messerli's calculations (1983), lives 10% of the world population, although a very superior number depends in some way on mountain resources. These numbers allow placing the importance of mountain regions in a planetary context, although they only reflect the quantitative aspect of the problem. In addition, its ecological role per se and its role in relation to the general organization of the territory must be considered.

The major characteristics of mountain ecosystems, can be expressed schematically as follows: relatively low air temperatures; high precipitations in comparison with the surrounding plains, to a large extent in snow form; decreasing atmospheric pressure with altitude; high wind speed in comparison with the plains; low number of degrees-day, which tends to shorten and to make difficult the vegetative period; steep and unstable slopes; common presence of solifluxion and frozen ground; high endemism in plants and animals; little or null manmade influence in the evolution of the ecosystems of high mountains, high aesthetic values, which attracts tourism, high coefficients

of run-off; great lumber and forage resources; availability of important mineral reserves. Almost all these characteristics are closely tied to the topography, which - on different scales- constitutes the main factor of control in spatial organization in mountainous regions. Topography is responsible for the two major characteristics of mountainous atmospheres: heterogeneity and instability (Billings, 1985).

Heterogeneity can be contemplated at two levels or different scales: globally, considering the mountainous landscape, or considering the different elements that constitute that landscape. In their global form, mountain regions can be perceived as a complex mosaic. It is in the mountains where the pieces of the mosaic are of smaller scale; the role of altitude and slope contribute decisively to it. Altitude is in charge of creating a first scale of diversity, manifested in the presence of different biogeographic, morpho-climatic and land use levels.

On this first scale other levels fit, controlled by the slope and by all the topographic conditioners that this scale creates. For that reason the mountain can be perceived as an altitudinal succession of crudely horizontal bands, whose definition is marked by temperatures and precipitations, based on altitude. Within each one of such bands smaller pieces of the mosaic exist controlled by slope and exposure, which contribute to explain most of the diversity of the mountain in a medium and small scale (García Ruiz, 1990).

As it has been indicated, heterogeneity is also shown when the elements that are integrated in the landscape are analyzed individually. Small variations in exposure or in slope introduce great variations in the incident energy, in the same way that a multitude of breezes favor a greater availability of environmental humidity, or on the contrary a greater local dryness. The vegetation reacts in the landscape to the topo-climatic and geomorphologic variability, in the structure as in the composition of the different communities.

The other great characteristic of mountainous environments, instability, is related basically to the great energy of the relief and to the fragility of certain fauna and flora communities. The energy of the relief acts on slopes and their length and multiplies the role of gravity in several orders of magnitude. This phenomenon favors sediment transference from high areas to low areas. The importance of certain extreme events, favored intrinsically by the orographic and climatic characteristics of the mountain, such as abundant liquid, snowy precipitations or fast fusions, are accelerating factors of geomorphologic processes of great intensity and repercussion in the landscape (García Ruiz, 1990).

1.3 - Sustainable Development in Mountain Areas

The proposal of an alternative development, a human scale development (Manfred Max Neef, 1993) is centered on and it is sustained in the satisfaction

of the fundamental human necessities, in the generation of increasing levels of autodependency as well as in the organic articulation of human beings with nature and technology, of global processes with local behaviors; of individual with social, of planning with autonomy and of civil society with the State. From this perspective, human necessities, autodependency and organic articulations are the fundamental pillars that sustain human scale development.

This new paradigm of development aims towards a necessary democratic emphasis. When facilitating a more direct and participating democratic practice this paradigm can contribute to revert the traditionally paternalistic role of the Latin American State, into a role stimulating creative solutions that emanate from down upwards and are, therefore more congruent with the real aspirations of the people.

The main obstacles that exist to apply a strategy of development founded on the principles of environmental rationality and human scale arise from institutional rigidity, as well as from the political and economic interests that are sustained by and benefit from the prevailing productive rationality. Nevertheless, even when these obstacles are surpassed, the consolidation of this rationality must go through a period of transition based on the historical conditions of its construction, execution and legitimation.

Unfortunately, it is difficult to balance the need to protect the environment with the promotion of economic development. This is thus, since the forces of the market that are short term undermine the environmental consequences that by nature are long term. These criteria of the short term determined by the market affect the service life of mountain centers, since they perpetuate the evils of massive tourism. This kind of tourism reduces the duration of the total cycle of such centers, by means of a smaller control of the activity on the part of the local population, a change in the profile of the original demand, a smaller contact between the residents and the visitors and the proliferation of impacts that are in some cases irreversible.

In the search for strategies to provide suitable answers to the needs of tourist development today, it is important to rescue the role of good administration and management of the centers, because it is clear that the failures in the implementation of proposals of sustainable development in many cases are associated to a lack of prioritization of actions that affect the environment in a critical way. With this, one tries to emphasize the importance of management, supervision and the control of predicted operations as well as the importance of implementing remedial actions and penalties to force economic agents to recognize the limits for the internalization of environmental goods and the costs to pay if these limits are surpassed.

CHAPTER II: SPATIAL CONFIGURATION AND TOURIST DEVELOPMENT IN THE PATAGONIAN ANDES

2.1. - The Patagonian Andes

Under the generic denomination of Patagonian Andes it is included the great snow-covered mountain range that continuously extends from Colombia to Tierra del Fuego. It is obvious that so extensive morphologic unit does not constitute necessarily a structural unit and that if it is observed in detail, further morphologic units are discovered that justify a specific denomination.

Thus to the south of the source of the Grande river, head of the Colorado river considered the northern frontier of the Patagonia, a zone of transition between the mountain range of the dry Andes and the Austral mountain range can be distinguished.

This north-south development that includes more of 20E of latitude, naturally involves the existence of climatic changes derived from the declination of the sun. Further changes emanating from altitude variations are added as well as the exposure to diverse air flows. All these changes are reflected in the contour and the vegetal carpet. To this latitudinal component, a longitudinal component is added which responds to structural, climatic and phytogeographic variations.

From the sources of the Grande River to Pino Hachado, an area of gradual transition develops from a barren landscape similar to that of the northern Andean range towards a completely different one that arises as precipitations increase. This area concludes in a typically alpine landscape characterized by dense arboreal vegetation that surrounds lakes, rivers and streams. The range is transformed in its physiographic aspect as in its geologic structure.

In the North the characteristics are those of a desert: sharp slopes, narrow valleys, rough reliefs, local accumulations of detrital rocks, scarcity or absence of the effects of great glaciers and an elevated height with permanent snow. The western chain, which determines the Argentine-Chilean border, forms a compact mountainous body whose medium altitude oscillates around the 2,500 mts. Average precipitation, varies between 1,200 and 1,500 mm annually, with the rainy season during the summer. Average temperatures oscillate between 4EC and 18EC. The vegetation is typically Andean: shrubs of reduced height, xerophile plants and resistant grasses.

The area east of the pre-cordillera comprises the highest altitudes in a series of chains delimited by longitudinal valleys. The highest peaks are in the Cordillera del Viento chain, forming a whole crest whose highest area takes the characteristic appearance of a landscape of glacial demolition, in the inner slopes fluvio-glacial accumulations are found. In the North end of the chain, the volcanic massif of the Domuyo reaches the 4,710 m. The precipitations that take place fundamentally in winter vary between 800 and 1300 mm annually, diminishing towards the Southeast; snow accumulations provide water to an intense network of drainage.

Towards the south, the escarped slopes worked by glaciers, alternate with glacial and glacio-fluvial deposits at the bottom of the valleys, allowing the formation of zonal soils. Precipitations increase arriving at an average of 1000 mm annually in the most humid areas, providing water to a great amount of torrents that descend the Cordillera to feed the characteristic cross-sectional valleys of the Patagonian cordillera. The water that infiltrates fluvio-glacial deposits constitutes a reservoir of underground water. In the low areas and abutments, the sub-Antarctic forest begins to appear, specially represented by small woods of ñire and araucarias in the Copahue area. The high meadows of this area have been used from antiquity for cattle raising. From ancestral times the Araucanos have pastured their cattle in this area during the summer, a custom still practiced by the area's rural settlers.

The Austral range begins at 38ES in the environs of the source of the Agrío River and extends to the South end of the Patagonia. It presents a different aspect from the barren look that characterizes it from the Paso de Pino Hachado (Neuquén) towards the north of the country.

These Patagonian Andes do not form a continuous chain: they appear as blocks separated by cross sections, some of which are occupied by great and deep lakes, others form low passes that offer easy access to Chile. They are, in addition, lower mountains, with heights usually under 3,000 mts. For this reason, instead of blocking the clouds traveling from the Pacific, they cause them to ascend and to cool, triggering them to precipitate their humidity as snow or rain.

This precipitation reaches annual averages of 2,500 mm - and up to 4,000 mm in some areas like Puerto Blest or Laguna Frias -, but it decreases steeply towards the east, being reduced to only 300 mm in a space of 75 km; and to the south, where precipitation is even less. Due to this abundant humidity the slopes of those mountain chains are covered by dense forests furrowed by torrents that feed the lakes in the valleys, or the rivers that empty in the sea.

Over the forests, there is a herbaceous vegetation of Andean meadow, that in the major summits gives place to a permanent snow crown. In these latitudes, the snow crown appears at 2,000 mts. The relief denotes its condition of young

mountains due to successive erogenous movements during the Tertiary or Cenozoic Era, the intense volcanism that accompanied the most recent tectonic movements and originated the highest peaks (the Lanín volcano of 3,776 mts. or the San Lorenzo of 3,706 mts.) and the intense glacial action during the Pleistocene (Quaternary Era).

Thus trimmed pinnacles and acute edges alternate with perfect examples of volcanic cones: lava dumps cooled with glacial tongues. The vast and thick ice layer (several hundred and sometimes thousands of meters thick) that advanced and receded on austral land in successive glaciations, occupied the tectonic depressions and pushed forward between the chains eroding them, creating rough slopes and sculpting U valleys.

With later climate warming, the masses of ice receded - they persist in the Province of Santa Cruz- or disappeared to leave in their place extensive and deep lakes of elongated and dendritic contours, closed to the east by terminal moraines. In these lakes great east flowing rivers are born: they cross the Extra-Andean Patagonia and they empty into the Atlantic, although some make a shorter journey to the Pacific.

Those great masses of water, along with the waters of the neighboring oceans, act also like moderators of the extreme temperatures, since - in those latitudes and heights- the climate is moderately cold, with average temperatures that vary between 14EC and 3EC (North portion) and between 10EC and 2EC (South portion), with frosts through all seasons.

A singular strip, the extensive but thin strip of the country's territory covered by the Patagonian Andes, is characterized by a tempered humid climate, abundant in precipitation (superior to 800 mm/year) and it constitutes the Sub-Antarctic Province. Its width does not surpass 75 km because precipitation diminishes towards the east, once the prevailing western winds from the Pacific exhaust their humidity. In these conditions, the climatic community is comprised of forests adapted to a winter rest. During this season, the cold determines the diminution of plant activity and water remains blocked in snow or ice, therefore only a small portion is available for the roots. In the summer, on the contrary, water melt offers adequate liquid supply for the plants which coincides with their biological reactivation. The plants most apt for these environmental circumstances are resistant coniferous, other perennial plants of small leaves and deciduous plants, that drop their frost vulnerable foliage and become dormant to bear the winter.

2.2. - Tourism Territorial Frame in the Patagonian Andes

When a space is barely populated and settlements density and human action are poor, physical characteristics become of greater importance as factors of regional configuration. As society expands, the mesh of spatial interactions and

functional aspects acquire a decisive importance in the organization of space, relinquishing a tenuous relevance to physical aspects. In Patagonia, a density of occupation that does not reach one inhabitant by square kilometer emphasizes the importance of the physical medium as an chief factor of spatial configuration.

Tourism as economic activity has had influence as an organizing factor of space. Tourism has promoted the growth of important urban centers, as it is the case of San Carlos de Bariloche, San Martín de los Andes, Junín de los Andes, El Bolsón, Lago Puelo, Esquel and El Calafate, to name some of the most important centers of the cordillera area.

Tourist localities, in most cases, have developed their economic activity in close relation with wholesale operators in Buenos Aires, who direct towards these localities national and international tourism. In this activity, the pattern of strong dependency is repeated where the different tourist destinations in the cordillera abide by the decisions and requirements of the capital of the country.

The Patagonia as tourist space has a recent history. From the gestation of the first Law of National Parks (12.103) of 1934, the intention was to create a tourist center to remove the Patagonia from its lethargy. Thus, due to the colonizing spirit imprinted in the Law of National Parks, it was envisioned to place and sketch population centers and agricultural or pastoral lands within the Parks, in locations not affected by public domain designations.

The attention was centered in the Nahuel Huapí National Park. With a similar landscape to the Alps as an attraction, it elaborated a tourist product oriented to the foreign market, as to the Argentine tourist of high income who annually made a pleasure trip to Europe. Access transportation was its first preoccupation. At that time, the railroad was the quickest and most comfortable means of transportation; therefore in 1934 it managed to prolong the laying of the rail line from the rail end in Pilcaniyeu to San Carlos de Bariloche. The second step, in 1938, was the construction of a luxury hotel adapted to the objective demand. The LLao-Llao hotel was build in the vicinity of that city in an exceptional enclave. Thus, infrastructure works undertaken by the Direction of National Parks and intense promotion, were instrumental in the arrival of 10,900 tourists towards the end of the 1930's (R. Schlüter, 1997).

In the 1940's, National Parks continued its effective action of valuing the attractions of the cordillera. This created, especially in the Park Nahuel Huapí and San Carlos de Bariloche areas, a channeling and consolidation of massive use. The policy, implemented until 1955, was to take care of the needs of sectors of smaller resources. In San Carlos de Bariloche Union hotels arose and tourism subsidized by the State was stimulated. Until then, tourism had only

appeared in the Patagonia region as a consequence of few marine cruises to the "Channels of Tierra del Fuego".

Analyzing the history of another main mountain center of the north Patagonia: San Martín de los Andes, it is discovered that at the beginning of century, flour milling was the main economic reference of this small town. With the arrival of the railroad in 1910 to the city of Zapala, the Humid Pampas became more economically viable for this line of product and San Martín de los Andes switched to lumber activity. At the same time, at the beginning of the century in a well-known estancia (farm) of the area, the first red deers were let loose, to promote hunting for sport. In 1937, with the creation in San Martín de los Andes of the Lanín National Park's headquarters, lumber operation decreased and tourism began to develop.

At the beginning the 1960's, Argentina was clearly different from the rest of Latin-American countries due to its inhabitants high participation in internal tourism. Some measures taken by the government of the time determined a better standard of life for certain classes of the population. Among them, an incentive to industrialization took place, the absorption of foreign capital and the foreign operation of petroleum deposits. Thus Argentineans began to imitate the lifestyle of industrialized countries. A series of conditions occurred to enable the appearance and maturation of tourist activity in the southern area of the country. This is the product of a conjunction of factors, the most important being:

- * an improvement of road and communications networks which allow faster and safer journeys from the great northern urban centers.
- * a fast motorization of important sectors of the population - in 1961, 870,000 vehicles were produced (R. Schlüter, 1997).
- * the activity of the Argentine Automobile Club, an institution dedicated to the promotion of internal tourism; its development of hostels, campgrounds and gasoline stations in the most remote places of the country; its informative work (maps and tour guides of the different areas), publicity and promotion.
- * the natural growth of the main localities in Patagonia had already equipped them with a minimal service infrastructure
- * the granting of credit for the construction of hotels, encouraged by the Provinces, who in some cases build them themselves
- * although winter sports were born around the scenery of San Carlos de Bariloche, when in the 1930's the Club Andino was founded, the lack of resources arrested its growth and it was only in the 1960's that winter sports were exploited commercially. This begun a second period of tourist use of plant and facilities in the Cerro Catedral, Chapelco and El Hoyo, which until then had only had a summer use.
- * a Regional Entity was created: "Tourist Patagonia", dedicated to make consistent the interchange of information, promotion and commercialization of tourist products in different destinations.

Until the end of the 1960's, skiing was a sport reserved exclusively for people of high income. Due to its high costs, it became an indicator of social prestige. Starting in the 1970's the airline Austral, through its tourist operator Sol Jet, gave a great impulse to this sport, organizing excursions within reach of people of medium spending power and making as well an intense promotion in the country and abroad. Towards the end of the decade, the Cerro Catedral, Chapelco and El Hoyo were the most important centers of the Patagonia. In that period, intense promotion began in Tierra del Fuego of a type of activity not very well-known in the country: cross-country skiing.

Skiing became an important alternative for tourist centers in the Andes. Beginning in the 1990's, great investments have been made in diverse winter centers to improve the facilities for the practice of sports (for example enclosed and faster means of elevation, machinery to make snow, among the most important), for the construction of lodging and nourishing equipment.

For the present analysis of the situation of tourism in the Patagonia, it is required in the first place to study questions related to global models of development, environmental impacts of tourism policies and the social conception of free time and recreation. This frame of reference allows examining how the tendencies of economic and social policies are crystallized in the regional scope and, in particular, in the sector tourism. It is, therefore, necessary to make reference to the structure of the sector, its operation and its relationship to tourism on the country's scale.

At a national level, the strategy of the sector concentrates in the relaxation and liberalization of economic, legal and institutional conditions in order to attract private investments and to increase the flow of tourist currents towards the country. Simultaneously, an aggressive international campaign of commercialization and tourist promotion has been implemented. Basically Argentina is presented as a destination characterized by its natural beauty, its cultural inheritance and the urban image synthesized in the city of Buenos Aires.

Of the six macro products that integrate national supply, the tourist centers in the Patagonian Andean are located in the Forests, Lakes and Glaciers; the policies of tourist development are oriented towards the areas located in the promoted regions. The projects of private investment presented through the National Registry of Projects of Tourist Investment (Undersecretary's office of Investments, Ministry of Economy of the Nation), are in their majority lodging projects. In fact, the model of tourist development at a national level at the moment reproduces the characteristics of the current model of economic development in the country.

Although all the Argentine regions have natural resources considered valuable for potential and, even competitive, tourist attraction, the Patagonia is

multiplied in a supply differentiated in each one of the provinces that comprise it and in particular in the scenic value of the varied lacustrine zones of its geography. In the Andean Patagonia sector, there are eight National Parks of the twenty-eight zonal units that comprise the system of protected areas of the Administration of National Parks. From north to south they are: Lanín, Nahuel Huapí, Arrayanes, Lago Puelo, Los Alerces, Perito Moreno, Los Glaciares and Tierra del Fuego.

It is interesting to emphasize a relative geographic coincidence between the area of parks and national reserves with Chilean protected areas near the binational border, whose accessibility through projects of bi-regional tourist integration is possible, if the existing frontier passes were equipped with complementary road infrastructure, circulation conditions and better access from both sides of the border. Chart nE 1 - Annex shows some examples.

In the last years, technical and political efforts have been forwarded to make the circuits that tie Argentina with Chile a binational product on the basis of their shared tourist resources, an example are the conclusions of the Committees of Boundaries that have created since 1993 a Sub-commission of Ecotourism Patagonia. This entity tries to generate a common framework between the Argentine Patagonian provinces and the IX, X, XI and XII Chilean regions to design and develop combined products for this type of tourism.

In the Patagonian Andes, there are 43 frontier passes with binational rating, plus others that are not considered so. Practically, almost all of the qualified passes are deficient in access and crossing road infrastructure, on both sides of the border.

To discuss tourism in the Patagonia within the Mercosur, a Specialized Meeting of Tourism of the States was established in 1991, partially to propose to the Common Market Group measures to coordinate their respective tourist policies. According to the report of the Federal Council of Investments already mentioned, until 1995 thirteen meetings had been held. The main subjects discussed were: 1) the creation of an ad-hoc Ecotourism Commission, 2) the creation of an ad-hoc Marketing Commission, 3) a study on the existing asymmetries in the hotel sector in the Mercosur, 4) a request to the Specialized Meeting of the Environment to include in its Agenda the subject Tourism, 5) norms relative to the transit of pleasure land vehicles for tourists' personal use.

2.3. - Evaluation of the effectiveness of Planning as a Tool for tourist development in the Patagonian Andes Mountain Centers

As a synthesis, a series of characteristics that have defined the great majority of tourist planning interventions in the studied region in the last years appear next.

* A divorce between the objectives and postulates of the plans and concrete policy. In many cases, the problems of the conjuncture, generally under the influence of a compromise between the political objectives of the government, the interests of predominant private groups and financial conditioners leave the plan as a dumb witness of the good intentions of the government at the beginning of its mandate.

* Decisions based on a sectoral tourist diagnosis, with little relevance of socio-cultural, political-institutional, economic and environmental variables, that altogether would allow to obtain an integral interpretation and to establish the relationships that give origin to problems that go beyond tourism

* A lack of prognoses to establish the objective image to accomplish, as to create the conditions for a questioning that leads to a structural change of the sector

* Expectations of the population of main tourist centers are not represented sufficiently, since agreement policies have been centered at political levels and at the level of the more important enterprise organizations. The participation of other social actors should be extended, to ensure that decisions remain democratic.

* Changes in economic policy at national and provincial levels, of aperture, liberalization and greater flexibility, are not accompanied with a role of the State that prioritizes control and reorients the income of the sector to those regions less developed.

* The sustainability of tourist development proposals is merely declarative. The objectives that sustain the policies and strategies emphasize more and more currency captivation, generation of employment and local economic development. Such aspects as the efficient allocation of financial resources, the equitable distribution of income, the preservation of the cultural, historical and natural values, the integration and social inclusion and environmental protection, are mentioned but there are not concrete actions to assure the fulfillment of these objectives. This generates in many cases, the non-legitimation of the proposals by the involved community.

* The new forms of non-conventional tourism (adventure tourism, ecotourism, rural tourism, tourism of estancias) lack a normative frame of planning and operative orientations, to allow them to be incorporated for a structural change of the model.

* The necessities of regional demand are not sufficiently considered, diminishing the possibility of diversification of markets and segments. Because of this, tourism establishes a great dependency in the behavioral change of extra-regional tourist currents and does not accomplish a structural relationship as a sector in each one of the Patagonian provinces.

There is not effective financial support for the suitable operation of the different protected provincial areas, of the historical and cultural sites, of swimming facilities and recreational sites in urban and peri-urban areas. This has given rise to conflicts derived from the saturation of use in some cases and the depredation of tourist recreational patrimony in others.

CHAPTER III: ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT AND OPERATION OF THE TOURIST PATRIMONY: FOUR CASE STUDIES IN THE PATAGONIAN ANDES

The logic that has given rise to the inclusion of the following case studies tries to explain different elements present in the formulated hypotheses with respect to how the development of sustainable tourism in the Patagonian Andes is conceived; so that they operate as paradigm referrals of the main processes that affect its development, considering the statements in the section dedicated to theoretical aspects.

3.1. - Evaluation of present and potential Public Use of the main National Parks of the Patagonian Andes in Argentina

The first case includes greater territorial extension, since it includes the main National Parks of the Andean Patagonia. The reason for its inclusion in this thesis has been to account for the enormous potential that our protected Patagonian areas contain, as well as to delineate their main difficulties related to Public Use and to formulate some proposals of how to make the management and operation of visitors more effective.

In Chart 2 - Annex, the National Parks studied in synthetic form are characterized. Emphasis is placed on those aspects that make them excellent for public use in the Patagonian framework.

Next, the main difficulties related to tourist development in the studied Parks are outlined. Although each Park presents a different configuration, according to its environmental, economic and social particularities, the problems described here are not precise, but some examples have been rescued that are paradigms of the kinds of problems that affect the operation of attractions as key elements to satisfy basic motivations that give origin to the trips to the region.

- congestion in areas of intensive use produces disturbances that cause the experience of their visitors to be of low quality
- excessive urban development is another cause of imbalance, since it generally creates processes of excessive speculation of land use, which result in a chaotic evolution of the centers, with loss of urban images and many problems of visual contamination
- high dispersion of camping areas with limited resources makes their maintenance and control impossible, with the consequent degradation of the landscape

- the lack of a planning of trails adapted to the needs of different visitors, provokes an excessive use of the available trails and their consequent erosion, which in some cases is really critical
- lack of visitor information of available alternatives, services, security and restrictions of use
- Lack of control is another serious problem that affects protected areas. This lack of control is not only restricted to access to certain sites, but to the performed activities and their modality
- Inadequate implementation of projects. A good project is not only a product of good design, or suitable location, but a product of correct instrumentation as well.

In conclusion many of the described problems can not only be solved with a greater budget, but it is also necessary to modify a series of stagnant current structures that exist within the administration of protected areas which do not allow in many cases the synergy of the whole to operate.

Conclusions

- Policies of tourist development of Protected Areas should be articulated with national, regional and provincial tourism policies
- Due to the diversity and complexity of sectoral interests that entail the operation of Protected Areas, it is necessary to create alternative mechanisms of management, to allow different development actors to participate in an active manner, defining roles and functions to obtain consensus that make possible a continued administration. These mechanisms should be flexible and simple to improve the quality and the efficiency of the administration of public use, obtaining the necessary articulations with other uses and conservation values.
- The creation of a Department of Services to the Visitor should be encouraged in all those areas where it does not yet exist. This Department should be classified in budgetary terms and in the provision of personnel and vehicles where it already exists.
- As public properties, Protected Areas must assure access to present and future society. Economic uses should not interfere with this basic principle. In practice, this is possible applying adapted zoning to ensure the existence of public use areas. Also it is necessary that society as a whole establishes the economic value of National Parks natural resources, through its disposition to pay to conserve them.
- The administrations of protected areas in general have underestimated and underestimate user's will and ability to pay for services offered in National Parks. The same economic situation that brings a multitude of visitors to the Parks, allows them to pay for the services they receive. Insisting in a gratuity criterion, the situation becomes a redistribution of value in favor of the visitors and against those that do not visit, and in general this last category includes the people who do not have

disposable income to visit protected areas. Thus the subsidized use of national parks discriminates against the poor. Therefore, to be fair and to obtain proper allocations for the administration and operation of the parks for popular use, it is necessary to impose rights or tariffs to at least cover the areas administrative costs.

- As per administration policies, the tendency should be to obtain enterprise management of the administration of protected areas. This way each unit in the system would require having the maximum level possible of decision power to formulate its strategic planning of how to operate economic and financial resources. Also, it should be ensured that part of the income collected by access rights and by the surplus of the operators is reinvested in services to the visitor.
- On the other hand, more resources should be assigned to the parks used the most, and to the ones with more environmental conflicts. These extra resources should then be applied to projects that are complementary to those developed by private activity.
- Positive yield of investments would be obtained if selected projects generate services with greater added value than the amount of assigned resources.
- As per the congestion in areas of intensive use, in those cases where the critical level attained imposes the need to limit access, it is considered that different alternatives exist to solve these situations. For example: measures of auto-limitation based on the price of service fares; the closing of sites with high levels of degradation so that they can begin a reconversion stage; the induction to shorten stays by surcharging the tariff as the sojourn augments; or the encouragement of use between peak seasons by reducing the tariffs.
- To control the effects derived from the proliferation of camping areas, it is considered that a general redrawing of these areas is due as well as of the dispersed sites of diurnal use in the different Parks. This way there would be fewer amounts of small areas and a tendency to concentrate the supply of services in areas of high stability, already degraded and of easy accessibility, which would allow organizing better answers to this problem.
- With respect to inadequate planning of trails according to the necessities of different visitors; a system of pedestrian, mountain bicycle and equestrian trails should be developed, taking care of the possibilities of maintenance for each administration, but taking into account the needs of visitors.
- As per the lack of systems to inform the visitor of available alternatives, of services, and other conditions, it is essential to correct this in the short term, for being considered high-priority to the development of products tied to alternative tourism in general and to eco-tourism in particular. In other countries outside the region, the system of protected areas is dedicated to product research, so that the institution investigates the possible sites to offer according to the motivations of

different users. Also and as a result of this task, a message by segment is structured that is coherent throughout the process of product consumption, this permeates through different promotional supports including informative panels, visitor centers, or in the speech of different tour guides of the destination.

3.2. - Territorial Organization of tourism: Plan of Tourist Development of the North Pehuenia Circuit: - A Participating Management experience

The second case study corresponds to an experience of territorial planning and organizing that took place between January, 1993 and April, 1994. In that occasion, I was in charge of directing of a group of 15 professionals from different disciplines and organisms of the Province of Neuquén. Together, we developed a form of intervention different to the current mode of tourist planning in the region; pursuing together the construction of a critical regional culture able to reconstitute and reconstruct the cultural memory of our regions. From this regional culture, it would be possible in addition, to implement productive processes oriented to assuring a material development in agreement with the preservation of the environment. At the same time, these processes would enable growth and diversification of society's spiritual needs.

The North Pehuenia Circuit is located in the lacustrine zone south of Neuquén Province. The circuit contains several population settlements in its route: Villa Pehuenia, Villa Unión and Moquehue. The two first ones are located in the north bank of Aluminé Lake, approximately 350 km from the Neuquén Capital and 1550 km from Buenos Aires, whereas Moquehue is located 15 km from Villa Pehuenia in the north bank of the same lake.

The studied circuit is of circular shape and of a length of approximately 140 km, non-paved. It constitutes a landscaped corridor, where a great diversity of natural attractions can be observed, for example: Aluminé lake, Moquehue lake, Norquinco lake, Nompehuen lake, Pulmarí lake, laguna de los Giles, Aluminé river, Litrán river and the presence of vegetation formed by araucaria, lengas, ñires and coihues forests, among others.

From the basic premises of intervention associated with auto-management, during the time elapsed for the construction of a diagnosis and for the elaboration of proposals for this development plan, a series of actions intending to obtain community participation were devised. This action intended to consider the multiplicity of initiatives and of governmental institutions tied to economic and social development; for this reason the superposition of projects has tended to be avoided, promoting what was already being done and the idea of common task. To revalue the expectations of the different social actors involved in the development process, such as the providers of services, community leaders, local authorities, indigenous communities, traders and the

representatives of State organisms with interests in the area, a community workshop was arranged in one of the tourist villas that comprise the circuit.

Chart 3 - Annex presents the general results of this participating diagnosis. Problems as the potentialities have been ranked, according to the frequency that they were mentioned in the workshop, so that the order in which they have been enunciated gives an idea of their relative importance.

Some of the development proposals that follow try to advance solutions to the problems identified in the community workshop; technical criteria was contributed by the working party.

- To obtain the harmonic development of the area with an approach of strategic marketing
- To incorporate the permanent population to the tourist development of the area with the intention of improving their economic ability, this will allow as well furthering its own development. To integrate the supply of attractions with the necessities of the demand in the frame of the conservation of nature
- To implement activities that encourage the affiliation of the permanent population with the space that belongs to them, and that help tourists understand regional idiosyncrasies.
- To promote the attraction of investors to tourist development projects this would enable the offering of services according to the market position of the area.
- To promote a spatial organization of the area that takes care of its incipient configuration as a sojourn corridor.
- To promote a credit and technical advising system for investors, whose projects respond to the following priority criteria:
 - Projects regarding a need not covered today in the area.
 - Projects that incorporate local manual labor.
 - Projects whose location coincides with the area of the North Circuit where there is greater contribution of the Provincial State in relation to internal and external infrastructure: Villa Pehuena.
- To encourage a supply of equipment on small scale to make possible its integration to the landscape of the area, its organization and management by means of small and medium investments of area settlers; this to allow the optimization of direct and indirect benefits of the activity.
- To create an image of quality trademark, guaranteeing customized services at reasonable prices.
- To develop the instruction of human resources to gradually allow a greater amount of population of the area to be incorporated to the work force that manages tourist services.

Considering these premises, strategies of Positioning and Trademark, Product/Service and Participation were developed which enabled to make them a reality.

3.3. - Evaluation of the Tourist Patrimony of the Andean Regions in the Chubut Northwest Province

The third case study responds to the need of emphasizing the evaluation of the patrimony's potential, to be able to determine what is necessary to conserve. Thus, an example of regional tourist space is analyzed, starting in its delineation, zoning and ranking up to the evaluation of its supply of attractions and tourist infrastructure, in relation to its demand. It is possible then to arrive at a diagnostic synthesis of its main competitive and comparative advantages with respect to other tourist mountain spaces, and to its most important weaknesses and threats to compete in the national and regional market.

The region in study is located to the northwest of the province of Chubut, in the Argentine Patagonia. Its borders are to the North, the 42E parallel that separates it of the province of Río Negro; to the West, the line of high summits that coincides with the border with the Republic of Chile; to the East, the 71E meridian; and to the South, an imaginary east-west line defined by the river Tecka, the river Carrenleufú or Corcovado and a section of provincial route nE to 44.

Tourist Attractions

Different techniques were used for the compilation of data of the area's tourist patrimony. First, personal visits to the attractions allowed, by means of direct observation, to know the aspects related to their characteristics, their capacity of support, environmental impacts, and conditions of security and operation of their facilities and/or equipment. In those cases where the characteristic of the attraction or the type of activity prevented its visit or its accomplishment (for example activities such as mountaineering, extended trekking, or fishing), consultations with key informants were pursued. Among them tourist guides, vaqueanos, providers of tourist services in general, park rangers or local amateurs dedicated to the practice of tourist activities.

The methodology used for the registry of the information was the tourist inventory of CICATUR-OEA (1983), modified and adapted to the needs of the kind of problem to analyze.

Secondly, the attractions were ranked, according to the capacity that each one has individually to attract demand. The ranks vary from one to four, being one the lowest. To sharpen the evaluation, each one of the four main ranks were in turn subdivided in three levels that indicate within that value the ones that are placed in the superior, central and inferior plane. Thus a scale of twelve ranks

is obtained. The four main ranks are indicated with Roman numerals and the intermediate levels with Arabic numbers. This way the maximum value is IV.3 and the minimum I.1.

The analyzed tourist space presents a strong predominance of the category Natural Sites (81%), it follows in importance the presence of attractions classified as Contemporary Scientific or Artistic Accomplishments (12%), whereas the categories Folklore, Programmed Events and Historical Cultural Manifestations have a representation that only reaches 3%, 3% and 1% respectively.

Although the area in study has fundamentally natural tourist attractions, it is possible to emphasize that there exists an important diversity of represented genres (lakes, mountains, scenery trails, among others). This results in a landscaping heterogeneity that presents a high potential for the development of activities of alternative tourism in general, with special possibilities for ecotourism and adventure tourism. The existence of cultural attractions offers a variety of travel alternatives that constitute a tourist supply apt to develop products on the basis of agrotourism and the tourism of estancias. The possible combinations of these types of tourism present the region as highly competitive with respect to the other mountain centers of the north-Patagonian area.

To deepen the analysis, the area was divided in two great zones (Z1, Z2). The criteria used to construct the zones were, in the first place, the proximity between the attractions and for Zone 1, the association between the municipalities with the objective of presenting their products to the market. This way, the first zone includes all those attractions within the radius of influence of the municipalities of the Andean Region of the 42^eparallel (non-including El Bolsón), that is Lago Puelo, El Hoyo, Epuyén, El Maitén and Cholila. Zone 2 includes all those attractions in the radius of influence of Los Alerces National Park, Esquel, Trevelín and Corcovado. Despite that Zone 1 has 46% of the attractions, they are highly concentrated, which appears as an advantage with respect to Zone 2, that although it has 54% of the attractions, they are generally more dispersed; the greater concentration in the Comarca de los Alerces (Z2) is placed in the north area of Los Alerces National Park. The strong presence of natural attractions that presents the Regional Plan becomes more noticeable in Zone 2, since in the Comarca de los Alerces, 96% of the attractions belong to this category. Although in Zone 1 this category also registers the most important concentration (65%), the category Contemporary Scientific or Artistic Accomplishments presents an interesting amount of attractions which make possible that the Andean Region of the 42^e Parallel be positioned in the market with a differential mark.

The zones, in which the tourist space of the region was divided, constitute the major analysis units and are a function of a minimum amount of attractions and

of the proximity between them. This results in natural groupings to be managed from different tourist centers.

Quality of Lodging Supply

In a second phase of the analysis, it was considered advisable to appreciate the quality of the supply of accommodations. For this analysis, a two stage stratified sample was designed, the first stage was tied to the supply type (hotel and other types of lodging) and the second stage was related to the ranking of the establishments by category. The definitive size of the sample was of 63 establishments, of which 27 belonged to the hotel type and 36 to the non-hotel type.

The results obtained are representative of the studied universe, since the investigation has practically a census character because it included 93% of hotel establishments and, 64% of the non-hotel cases analyzed. The selection of the analysis units (establishments) was in some cases intentional (when there was previous information relative to the present types and hierarchies) and in others, accidental. The sample was distributed and applied to the eight tourist centers of the region in study.

The applied instrument constituted a guide of observation to measure the quality of the establishments considering their size, design, equipment, decoration, maintenance and cleanliness. Although it is recognized that these aspects are only one part of what constitutes hotel service, they are observable parameters in an annotated investigation that make it possible to give indications on a systematic base of comparison to assure the judging of quality conditions in an equitable manner.

The different aspects were evaluated for the main components of the establishments, according to case, for example, the reception, lobby, the dining room, the room, the bathroom, the garden and the facade, among others. Chart nE4 - Annex gives account of an example of the card filled in for each one of the investigated establishments and Figure 1 - Annex shows the results obtained in one establishment.

Figure 2 - Annex displays the results on a regional scale for the hotel type. From its observation, it is possible to see that 29% of the establishments are good and very good. On the other hand, the percentage of establishments within the rank considered 'worst' is really high, which is frankly a negative signal, with the aggravating fact that the distribution of the curve does not respond to the shape of a normal curve, because in the opposite end, establishments catalogued as excellent are not registered, which would partly compensate considering the system as a whole.

The typical problems registered in this type of lodging are fundamentally related to the design and the decoration of the different rooms, as to the smallness of bathrooms and of some common spaces, for example the lobby and the dining-room. Questions related to the design become critical with respect to the facade of most of the hotels and hostels which do not correspond to the image that the demand has of what constitutes a hotel in a mountain center.

In relation to other types of tourist lodging, the situation on a regional scale is more favorable than for the hotels, since 50% of the establishments are almost concentrated in the superior ranks. This advantage relates to the fact that a great portion of the establishments that integrate this type is of recent construction, their state of maintenance is in general terms better and as far as the design, it responds in a more satisfactory way to the needs of the tourists (see Figure nE3 - Annex).

The described problems for the hotel supply are also repeated for the cabins, which is the most frequent subtype within the studied sample. Nevertheless, design disadvantages in this case become critical in the resolution of the supply of services of bathrooms and the kitchen, and in the lack of closet space in the rooms, as well as in their reduced space. On the other hand, the great majority of the assemblies of cabins does not have a reception, but this need is solved, assisting customers in the owners' house, which is generally located in the same estate; or in the worst of cases, the tourist must go to another address - indicated in the entrance to the assembly of cabins- to contact a person in charge of the lodging.

On the other hand, Lago Puelo has in addition a 7% of their supplies within the category 'worst', which is not very flattering considering that great part of these establishments, are of very recent construction. If remedial actions for the short and medium term are not undertaken, it is possible to infer the growth of low quality lodging supply for this tourist destination, the product of a development of spontaneous type, as a result of the economic situation of the country in general and of the region in particular.

3.4. - The standards for recreational mountain activities as a guideline of operation of the experiences of Leisure time

The forth case study attempts to account for the importance of the research applied to the operation and management of main recreational mountain activities. The main objectives of this investigation have been to establish criteria for the determination of standards of use and to identify the multiplicity of variables that must be considered in the relationship space-user in relation to the development of the activities of free time in the Patagonian Andean spaces. The studied activities were those practiced the most, that is to say: trekking, landscape observation, aquatic activities and within them,

swimming activities in rivers and lakes, fishing and hunting for sport, skiing in its different modalities, camping and picnic.

The investigation was advancing in the process of constructing a theory of load capacity of the natural space for the development of activities of free time. In a first stage, the objective was to try a theory on the generalization of standards by analyzing interrelations of man and environment.

After having made an advance in the bibliographical revision and conducted the first field trips, it was decided the accomplishment of this objective might not be feasible, since the load capacity for the activities of leisure time must be determined for each site, according to its natural and socio-cultural conditions.

This way, in later field trips, activities were analyzed under this perspective according to the type of jurisdiction. The search for differences between the cases enriched the analysis, since the differences allowed comparisons on the basis of the similarities that made them belong to a same category (for example: primitive viewpoints).

As a product of this process, one thinks that the main contribution of this investigation is to have tried to surpass the state of the art in relation to the load capacity, incorporating the socio-psychological and operational variables as central elements of the analysis; trying to describe its main conditioners, and how these affect the spatial needs of man and his satisfaction in the accomplishment of recreational activities.

The first of these variables are fundamentally tied to the satisfaction of the users. When the satisfaction is analyzed, the opinion of the tourists and of those residents that participate in the process of production of the services for a certain activity is considered relevant. As far as the second category, and according to the analysis of some of the partial results by activity that appear below, the emphasis has been placed in those questions that at the time of planning are critical regarding the design and the maintenance of the facilities in order to offer quality over time.

In countries like ours, with great budgetary and organization problems, the aspects tied to the maintenance and control of facilities are really a decisive issue to control in the programming and operation of activities in the natural space. For this reason, although this investigation arose in the search for standards, and thus its name, today it is believed proper to talk about operation guidelines, understanding by this term the assembly of conditioners and critical factors that define the limits of change or thresholds for the implementation of a certain activity in an environmental configuration in particular.

Thus these operation guidelines should be constituted in evaluation parameters that specify the type of experience to offer in terms of the suitable parameters of impact from the point of view of the users and of the environment. Chart nE 5 - Annex synthesizes the multiplicity of intervening variables in the determination of tolerance thresholds for the studied activities. Also, the concept of loading capacity that best responds to the needs of planning, is the one of environmental limit thresholds (Kozlowski, 1993), since it allows to register in the planning process in an ex-before manner the criterion of evaluation of the effects of the proposed development; this is to say it raises from the first stages of the planning process questions related to the location, the scale, the type of development and the times in which the final sizes will be reached.

From this point of view, the threshold concept is very appropriate and realistic since it imposes the notion of final size for tourist centers, not in a determinist manner, but in an integral form considering all the variables that respond to the questions enunciated before for each analyzed case.

Within the practical connotations come off from this approach, certain aspects must be considered, for example the fiscal control and supervision to which tourist travel agencies and operators must subject, as far as the type of experiences and the level of information about the natural landscape that they offer in their products.

Also, future investigations will have to emphasize the crystallization of the norms; this is the agreement of the users with the guidelines of operation implemented to consider critical aspects of the environment.

On the other hand, and considering the activity of the planners, it is recommended to incorporate from the beginning of the planning process the conditioners that can have critical impacts and make them explicit to the different types of involved actors, as a means of finding common alternatives of action to reach the desired conditions or alleviating measures to the proposals to implement.

This methodology implies an analysis of the present conditions and the desired ones, identifying the best way to reach them and incorporating to this process the industrialists and authorities in charge of the control and operation of different activities so that they have an active role in the definition of criteria and value judgments for the establishment of conditions of tourist development.

For this to be possible, industrialists and management authorities will have to support those research groups that generate basic information from which it is possible to make decisions. If the different groups who hold power are not conscious of the critical importance of the investigation for the suitable

operation of the natural patrimony, the estimation of desirable conditions will continue to be a result of subjective appreciations according to the partial

CONCLUSIONS

The alternative theoretical methodological proposal for the planning of sustainable tourist development of mountain centers in the Andean-patagonic region developed in this thesis is centered in:

The epistemologic plane:

Environmental rationality is an instrument to analyze the consistency of the principles and practices of an alternative position to the logic of the market to look after of the economic, social and cultural dimensions of the development.

Contradictions between environmental rationality capitalist rationality occur through a confrontation of interests, rooted in institutional spheres and knowledge paradigms, and through legitimation processes faced by different actors and social groups.

This alternative proposal of planning is constructed articulating and giving content to the four domains of environmental rationality: value, theory, culture and technique.

The values on which this proposal is based are: biological diversity, cultural heterogeneity, political plurality and participating democracy.

The theoretical plane:

The sustainable development of tourism in mountain centers in the context of a capitalist economic policy suggests a complex process, where each decision must be negotiated to satisfy the immediate needs of settlers and visitors, without jeopardizing the possibilities of future generations.

The understanding of the organization of mountain spaces is based on a precise interpretation of the dialectic process between the shapes, structures and functions of its landscape throughout time.

Tourist space as productive space is non-continuous, tourist activities that are generated from tourist attractions consume space but the resource is not consumed. Its conservation or degradation depends on its type of management. This conditioner forces to take in consideration the characteristics of its components, their level of fragility and the degrading factors when producing tourist space for its economic exploitation.

The individual perception of the landscape and its components is conditioned by cultural factors. The landscape is interpreted as a dynamic code of symbols, whose decoding in any case is bound to the culture that produces them.

The participation of the tourist is important when defining sustainability. The perception that the different segments of the market have of mountain centers constructs their image as tourist destinations. The image that tourists have of these spaces is a critical variable to understand their necessities and to be able to generate products that respond to them in coordination with local and conservation needs.

Mountain centers, equipped with natural and cultural values par excellence, must encourage more human development formats, appealing to the application of policies that allow for conserving them without overdeveloping them. For this, it is important that different sectors of society go from the theory, to the application of negotiation proposals based on the pragmatic knowledge of the actors that take part in the process and their interests.

The situational planning recognizes the existence of conflicting opponents, for this reason it is essential to generate spaces for the transaction between the parties involved in the process of tourist intervention. This spiral conception of the process, allows going from a general level of perception or agreement, to a level of execution with clear and specific agreements and treaties between the actors of tourist mountain centers.

The acceptance of the existence of development limits determines that, from the beginning of the planning process, it is accepted that growth involves definitions on a local scale. The plan and its products (specific projects) constitute thus a 'system guiding' the implementation of the community vision regarding the desired growth. The great challenge of this premise lies in conciliating the different value systems to the desired conditions.

This proposal of integral planning of mountain destinations is locally centered, considering the global scene. This position implies the need to ensure that decision making with respect to tourism, must occur without losing view of the regional scale. The configuration of the Patagonian space, with immense empty spaces and relatively small concentrations of population, forces the rethinking of the regional scene from a virtual conception, to give value to these marginal spaces, starting from their identity, and the advantages derived from the complementary nature of their tourist destinations.

The concept of total quality applied to mountain destinations must be understood not only by the change of internal practices in each company, but also understanding the systemic condition of tourist centers, in which the success of aspired quality standards will only be a product of the group's synergy.

Tourism development policies in the Protected Areas should be articulated with national, regional and provincial tourism policies. Inter-institutional management in each territorial scale should assist in acquiring more economic resources for public use.

The Methodology or instrumental plane:

The auto-management of each community's resources, to satisfy its fundamental needs and aspirations of development, is seen as a valid route. It gives significance to economic and social practices, framing them in each community's system of social representations. Tourist development implies strong changes in mountain communities, changes in land use, the value of land, tertiarization of their economies, migrations and changes in social and value models.

The proposed approach of planning as adapted for sustainable tourist development is of a strategic nature; therefore the concept of planning is tied to the concept of marketing. Therefore and from the methodology point of view, it is considered proper that the diagnoses are synthesized in matrices of the S.W.O.T. type.

The type of management of tourist attractions is as important as the question of number of visitors who seasonally use them. The definition of its capacity of welcome must be made individually for each one of them.

The definition of standards for the practice of tourist activities in mountain centers is a function of a series variables tied to the type of attraction, market characteristics and the type of management.

Enterprise operation must be centered in the search for internal efficiency in the processes used, to be able to guarantee quality in terms of clients' perception of these tourist destinations. One of the variables qualified to provide a service that makes "the experience" significant is the personal care of clients. The scale of the enterprises of the area in study in general, allows their owners or administrators the possibility of making clients feel "at home".

In those tourist mountain centers, where the main attractions are located within National Parks, mechanisms should be implemented so that the operators and companies that benefit with the volume of visitors to these areas, support them financially to improve the management of tourism and to contribute to the economic success of the sector.

The instruction of human resources would allow industrialist and civil employees to recognize the need to study the market better, to change management style, to adopt new guidelines of service and commercial policy and to obtain a greater specialization of tourist operators.

For the development of sustainable tourism, the planners would have to act in a way that allows each one of the main actors in the process to play his role:

Government: the role of the State to balance strategies of tourism territory as productive space is of vital importance to resist or solve distortions between private interests and the needs and well-being of all. The creation of policies, specific laws, the exercise of policing power to control the norms, the generation of incentives and the articulation of education conducing to a better insertion of local manual labor, constitute missions not to be delegated to other actors in the process.

The tourists: encourage them to use the patrimony appropriately, avoiding destructive and polluting use, and making those contributors of the considerations regarding the care of the environment and controlling their satisfaction

The local communities: create a conscience of the value of defending their land and culture, promoting a commitment to respect it and preserve it.

According to the arguments presented, it can be asserted that the possibility of sustainable tourist development in mountain centers in the Patagonian Andes depends on the possibility of a good articulation of public policies and private sector policies and on understanding the complexity of the tourist system as a productive sector.

As a conclusion, it can be asserted that tourism as an economic activity is a powerful tool of positive change in mountain areas, since if tourism is well managed and administered, it permits the reiterated use of resources without depleting them, as is the case with other productive activities, for example, the use of the forest resource.

Sustainable tourist development in the Patagonian Andes is not imaginable without the explicit creation of a policy that counts with regional consensus, and that is promoted at national level. This policy should start off recognizing sub-regional and micro-regional particularities, considering inter-jurisdictional aspects; which are constant elements, sometimes due to physical territorial configurations, and in other occasions because it is necessary to optimize resources and to rationalize efforts. Thus, the Patagonian tourist space would have the possibility of competing, making its marginal location in the confines of America, the trigger of its advantaged position in a global market.

Once these basic conditions to remain in the market are established, the creation of environmental operational guidelines for the activity that allow a sustainable use of the patrimony through time is the exclusive responsibility of their direct participants.

As a synthesis, one considers an analysis of strengths and weaknesses to identify the opportunities and dangers of the environment in which tourism in mountain centers of the Patagonian Andes takes place.

Strengths

- * Tourist attractions unique at a world-wide and continental scale.
- * Eight National Parks.
- * Tourist products integrated with Chile.
- * Environmental conservation of the area in good condition.
- * The Mercosur favors Argentine Chilean integration.
- * Tourist centers with strong positioning in the market that they act as 'hooks' to generate visits to other patagonian Andean centers.
- * Incipient development of integrated spaces for local and micro-regional commercialization.
- * Diversity of topics for the development of environmental interpretation.
- * Socio-cultural conditions apt for the generation of models of alternative tourism: rural tourism, agro-tourism, among others.

Weaknesses

- * High cost of air travel from the main market centers.
- * Bureaucratic problems that affect the ease of tourist traffic between Argentina and Chile. Relative isolation of some tourist centers due to deficient terrestrial accessibility.
- * Lack of competent frameworks to take care of the administration and production of
- * tourist services.
- * Strong influence of Buenos Aires' wholesale tourist operators about development strategies of these patagonian Andean spaces.
- * High level of indebtedness of a great number of providers of tourist services.
- * Erratic communication actions go against the consolidation of "trademark images" of tourist destinations in the market.
- * Lack of informative bases for strategic decision making.
- * Lack of coherence between operation objectives and control practices of tourist attractions in protected areas.
- * Strong seasonality of tourist activities generates labor instability.
- * Highly fragile ecosystems.
- * High vulnerability of the economies of many mountain centers by their almost exclusive dependency on tourist activity.
- * Stagnation and recession of the area's regional economy.
- * The demand for alternative tourism increases more and more regarding the relationship price/quality.
- * Lack, in most of the tourist municipalities, of tourist information bureaus with knowledgeable personnel and precise information on things to do, services and prices.

RECOMMENDATIONS

A series of criteria and general strategies of management and commercialization of the area's tourist products are considered as follows.

That mountain centers are recognized as cities or tourist villages and are assumed as territorial systems, whose function defines this role, generating management instruments to allow them to operate as such.

That the national government in coordination with provincial ones, and the government of Chile assure the accomplishment in the medium term of road paving projects and improvement of certain routes whose importance is historically recognized because they would make possible a better articulation of the centers in tourist circuits, inter-provincial and binational, making possible, for example, tourist integration of the lake region and of the Austral Andean Patagonia.

Those different area destinations adopt positions of cooperation with other mountain destinations of Argentina and Chile, or with other Patagonia marine centers, with which they can be combined to obtain competitive price advantages, programs or quality of tourist attractions. These alliances, whose objective is to cooperate or to obtain economies of scale, are constituted in true "virtual tourist spaces"; which would augment their complementarities through different products, especially for the incoming market.

That a policy is advanced to promote the financing of the evolution of small air travel companies than have begun to operate in the Patagonia in the last years. The design of the routes should be a function of the strategy of the chosen virtual tourist space as adapted for a better competition in the distant markets.

To promote, beyond the design of these air routes that these flights enter in Amadeus and other reservations systems, since this would enable sales through travel agents of distant markets having schedules, availability and price on their computer screens.

To promote management and planning measures that include the consideration of a final size for mountain destinations to take into account their ecological and scenery limits, the image that positions them in the market, the characteristics of their product-market and their abilities of administration and operation.

That the State readapts to exert its competency to control the negative effects generated by the companies in its search to improve competitive conditions, which follow a logic of benefit internalization and cost externalization.

The State manages to retain instructed human resources within its technical and policy establishment to exercise efficiently its role of controller. If this does not happen, reality will continue in a parallel course to planning and integrated management, and of course the environmental patrimony of tourist space will continue to degrade.

That different spheres work together to obtain an institutional and legislative articulation between Tourism and Environmental Management, to encourage the development of consensual legal instruments that promote the conservation of the environmental patrimony, beyond jurisdictions.

That more effective ways of generating systems of management, operation, evaluation and control of the tourist environmental patrimony of the Patagonian Andes are promoted, creating "Codes of Conduct and Practice Agreements" between the main actors in charge of the operation of the sector on a national, regional and local scale.

That tourist mountain centers and rural spaces of the Andean region that offer the best conditions to present socio-cultural differences, harness their individualities; through their ability of individual management and the strategic alliances that they establish according to market objectives. So that within a certain zone (for example: Andean region), each tourist center (Lago Puelo) is a sub-trademark or model of the main trademark, consequently they would have to participate in common programs to endorse the trademark, without resigning their freedom to undertake particular actions to increase their sales to the maximum and therefore their gains.

The supply is conditioned to develop products "to size" that harness a more rational and satisfactory use of the tourist patrimony available. For this to be possible the businesses would have to sharpen the imagination to generate cost alternatives that are adapted to the necessities and possibilities of the different "target" market segments.

That agreement to obtain necessary financing are promoted, so that the institutions in charge of management and operation of tourist attractions can address projects to improve their use, counting on technical assistance for designing the facilities needed.

That messages about the comparative advantages and singularities of the region are centered in target market segments, so that Patagonian mountain destinations can be distinguished from the competition and be positioned as eco-tourist destinations. These messages should emphasize aspects such as the existence of protected areas minimally disrupted, rough landscapes, glaciers of spectacular size (Perito Moreno), the existence of forests unique in the world (Bosque de Arrayanes) or the millenarian presence of trees like the araucarias and the larches.

That mountain centers in the short and medium term, concentrate their strategies of marketing to generate offers especially for the summer and intermediate seasons. Therefore, the option should be a positioning strategy based on the differentiating elements of spring and autumn landscapes. During these seasons in this region, changes in color extend the variety of landscape hues, offering ideal scenery for the programming of recreational activities in the natural space.

That the competitive advantages derived from differentiated seasonal landscapes are promoted. These advantages appear as especially apt to extend the participation of incoming tourism in the global demand of Patagonian mountain centers, and to improve the yield of the installed capacity; since the present predominance of internal tourism, and its noticeable seasonality severely limits the economy of the region's businesses.

That a policy of adjustment of lodging supply is promoted, through remodeling and construction projects, whose location and design, consider the tastes of these consumers. All these product actions should be completed with a revision of price policies, to adapt them to those of the competition. This task could bring about a crisis of businesses operation, but it is known that operational costs of the tourist sector in Argentina in general and in the Patagonia in particular, are absolutely amplified and act as a pillow that compensates in many cases the inefficiency in the companies' global management.

The supply of winter products is reviewed, to include alternative recreations beyond the alpine skiing product. This recommendation is based on having alternatives of "things to do" when there is no snow, a critical aspect during the 1996 season in most of the destinations of the studied area; and on believing advisable to promote tourist use of mountains in winter through other activities that allow recreation in these spaces, for example hikes, trekking, trips in special vehicles (all terrain, snowmobiles), and cross-country skiing.

That the conception of total quality on a tourist center scale is based on the redesign of processes of service production or their optimization from the point of view of consumer satisfaction. The relative importance of different variable parameters in terms of the functions of the competitiveness model should be established on the basis of the end users.

The public sector and private activity are professionalized with the objective of fomenting a real development that benefits the present tourism actors. The program should be oriented in two senses, on the one hand to take care of the need to create change consciousness, since they are one of the main social actors of change; and on the other hand to organize practical courses, that approach subjects of administration of small service companies, operation and training of personnel, dealing with the client, productivity criteria, and knowledge of service marketing.

The programs of tourist awareness in the different tourist centers of the Andean region are promoted. The purpose of this promotion would be to circulate ideas such as: 1) providing service is not degrading for people, 2) the future of each tourist center is tied to the form in which its population administers that destination, 3) authorities, local leadership and the providers of services are the people responsible for the economic yield of the tourist destination as productive spaces, 4) daily actions and decisions for the sector's operation affect the use of the environmental patrimony, 5) the state of conservation of tourist attractions is everybody's problem, since these attractions are the main reason for the trip that tourists lodged in the center make.

That a reconstruction of curricular approaches of middle schools is promoted and that the abilities and professional profiles of the tertiary and university centers tied to the sector are redefined, so that they better prepare personnel based on the needs of the region's tourist centers.

That the different projects are generated from a plan of regional, provincial or local development, having the public sector the role of promoter of integrated enterprises that, even when belonging to different proprietors, respond to a basic need of some of the defined segments as an objective for the zone (an example of integrated project could be: construction of an assembly of cabins, purchase of a vehicle for excursions, qualification of vaqueano (local guides) and purchase of boats for fishing tours. Thus municipalities' management of the administration and control of tourist projects has a fundamental importance in the development of control, avoiding the generation of asymmetric interchange relations, as is the case of a single company in charge of developments, which have proven to be barely effective and efficient in fulfilling the needs requested.

That a statistical common base for the measurement of the main variables of the tourist sector in the different Patagonian provinces is created to generate information that allows strategic decisions for the destinations as a whole. It is essential to promote the generation of common criteria at the tourist municipality level, since minimum gathered data stems from them, and to tend to a methodological homogenization for obtaining the information.

Those lines of credit oriented to maintain and to finance new tourist PYMES (small and medium companies) are implemented, considering the reality that medium and small companies constitute the spine of the sector in the Patagonian mountain destinations. The necessity to support many small and micro companies run by families is recognized, since they are in a critical state due to accumulated debts or because due to the shortage of soft credit, they have not found the means to improve the conditions of comfort of their establishments, to renew very old furniture, to landscape and to take care of the look of their immediate surroundings and - in the best of cases- to extend

the size of their business. The political content of this type of projects would also be to privilege the creation of local companies.

That the alluded to financing considers the concept of "Integrated Projects"; awarding a global number for a certain center or tourist zone; the awarding would only be made if the presented projects are integrated, through commitments of permanent commercial involvement on the basis of certain qualities, during at least, the period of loan payment.

That offices of investor counseling are created, whose purpose would be to offer technical support about projects variables such as: type of project, location, size, and amount of investment, demand objective, tariffs and prices according to standard of quality, internal rate of return, architectural design and scenery.

That "institutionalized spaces of discussion" by tourist zone are promoted, (for example: Corredor de Los Lagos, Austral Patagonia) in the space of the Patagonian Andes, to discuss action strategies to confront common problems of the different economic domains of the region's tourist centers, considering strategies of work distribution for these Andean spaces nationally and internationally.

That research development in the field of the economic effects derived from tourism is promoted. If it is possible to demonstrate the economic importance associated to this activity, it will be more feasible for decision makers to take development measures to maximize benefits. This would allow disposing of financing for evaluating its potential in a systematic manner.

That the **PARTICIPATION OF THOSE INVOLVED IN TOURIST DEVELOPMENT PLANNING** is considered a strategic factor, since it should be the basis for the definition of the conditions of space occupation where the tourist activities are located, taking into account the environmental conditions of the receiving medium.

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Notes to readers

This paper is a Ph.D. thesis.