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## Post tourism in Seven Lakes Road, Patagonia: Mobility and innovation for Competitiveness

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“Seven Lakes Road” is a scenic route that links two iconic mountain resorts of Patagonia Argentina: San Martín de los Andes and Villa La Angostura in Neuquén Province. It has a total length of 110 km, where the typical characteristics of the Patagonian Andes region can be seen: vast forests, snowcapped mountains and lakes. The road goes across two national parks, from north to south, Lanín National Park and Nahuel Huapí National Park.

These destinations began to develop touristically a mid-century with the creation of the National Parks Administration, and now they are targets of amenity migration processes (Moss, 2006) and lifestyle migration (Mc Intyre, 2009) that have generated significant changes in their spatial and social patterns.

In the current context of globalization, the analysis of competitiveness of tourism is increasingly important for tourism destinations facing new processes of urban development and social product of residential migration within the posttourism scenario. Also, the largest number of competitors and a changing society with regards to taste, the purpose of travel and ways of moving are part of the challenges facing the search for competitiveness in these mountain villages.

The destinations of this corridor are being managed under a paradigm of unlimited growth, without interpreting its production model is based on an increase in

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residential tourism depleting available soil, which attracts a multiplier effect of low demand in the economy, marked by the construction and land speculation to the slowdown of tourism.

This presentation will discuss guidelines that should be considered for these mountain towns to generate improvements in sustainable competitiveness based on innovation. Understanding innovation as an added value according to environmental conditions generates substantial competitive advantages that improve business and destination strategies.

Innovation can occur in various ways, but they all share three common elements: a) creativity, b) an approach to solve problems, and c) new ways of thinking.

Hjalager (1997) argues that there is a tendency to associate innovation only to invention or creation of new products and that limits our ability to understand the potential of innovation in the tourism sector. Innovations include anything that generates improvements in the experiences of our visitors, and will vary on a spectrum from great inventions to changes or adjustments to our current products.

The configuration of the types of experiences to offer in a destination is a central aspect of discussion in tourism. The destinations are platforms for live meaningful experiences, which imply sharing stories and exploring myths. The same configuration is one of the discussions centered on establishing a new starting point for exploring important aspects of strategy development target. Culture is an essential element not only as part of the tourism product, but as part of the evolutionary process of the formation of the identities of the destination and its products. Its role is alive in any narrative of the village to the way assumed by the individual business and collectively.

## **Introduction**

Post-tourism broadly implies a change of status in the regions and in tourism practices in the context of globalization and postmodernity. San Martín de los Andes and Villa La Angostura as emblematic mountain resorts of Argentina bound by the "Road of the Seven Lakes" in the province of Neuquén are being crossed by a process of high mobility of goods, capital and people who have decided to

choose them as a place of temporary or permanent residence, given its natural and cultural features.

The Road of the Seven Lakes has a total length of 110 km, where it is possible to see the typical characteristics of the Patagonian Andes region, vast forests, snowcapped mountains and lakes. The road passes through two national parks, from north to south, Lanín National Park and Nahuel Huapi National Park.

Thus these villages which began to develop as mountain tourist centers in the middle of the last century with the creation of the National Parks are now tourist destinations with amenity migration (Moss, 2006) and lifestyle migration (Mc Intyre, 2009). These migration processes have generated significant changes in their spatial and social patterns.

The exceptional conditions of landscape and the small scale of these mountain locations generate in the collective imaginary, the vision of an area of villages that share certain common *public values* that offer better opportunities for human development. The value is related to the ability to generate joy, delight or well-being, and arises from the encounter between needs and wants and the opportunities that the villages offer for lifestyle or tourism experiences. Public value is distinguished from other types of value as being perceived by the public collectively.

This presentation discusses elements that should be considered by local administrators of these mountain destinations in order to enhance those public values and to *improve sustainable competitiveness based on innovation*. Local public value is understood as intangible and should be determined by the residents and recovered by the municipalities to establish its mission. Innovation is a value added to the base conditions of a territory that generates substantial competitive advantages that improve business and destination strategies.

### **Competitiveness and Innovation**

Sustained competitiveness in time can only be based on the creation and use of dynamic competitive advantages built from knowledge and innovation (Boisier, 2003: 14-25 in Otero, A. 2007:94) The current development agenda focusing on local building processes promotes productivity, trying to increase the overall value

through better coordination between business, the state and civil society. The central notion is that competitive advantage is generated not only within individual institutions, but by several factors external to them, which are of increasing importance.

This shift in responsibilities in the economic and social challenges primarily questions the role of the State, driving the process through different types of incentives, to a new role where the focus is placed on creating conditions for collaborative work.

Then, the new model involves developing a collaborative process that includes the State at different levels, businesses, educational and research institutions, and their intermediary organizations participating. These relationships and connections among social actors weave tourist destinations complexity, capable of generating synergies of joint efforts and complementing individual skills and create genuine social capital.

Social capital and culture are key components of these interactions. Individuals, families, groups and social capital and culture are essentially. They carry cooperative attitudes, values, traditions, visions of reality that are their own identity. This requires a leadership committed to the shared vision that involves the *committed participation of private sector executives, academia and government*. The consensus building process anchored in an open strategic dialogue in fact constitutes the architecture for social and economic development, generating from each locality an institutionalized structure aimed at formalizing process-building consensus and associated and integrated management. Then, it is time to work on building social capital at local scale and reproducing these linkages at regional level in order to generate strategic alliances based on trust that will make it possible to consolidate identity and capitalize on diversity to cope with external markets and a world's increasing globalization (Otero, A. 2007:98).

In a paradigm of sustainable competitiveness (Crouch and Ritchie, 2003), not only the economic dimension but also the social and territorial competitiveness matter in the integrated competitiveness of tourist destinations. As for the economic dimension, the effects of creating social capital in the generation of economic

competitiveness occur fundamentally to improve the links between companies and related institutions; it facilitates coordination among companies and enables a high-speed dissemination of best practices. It also improves the ability to perceive innovation opportunities and supports experimentation among them (Otero 2006: 5).

In the process of local development of SMEs (small and medium enterprises) local knowledge, usually identified as *tacit knowledge*, matters as much as the one transferred by educational institutions as *codified knowledge*. When this productive know-how is adopted by a precursory company and it is successful and therefore obtains profits, stimuli are produced for creating other initiatives. So it is important that those responsible for public policies support the generation of social conditions for the creation of new companies, and that they promote it so there will be an imitation effect, which causes the generation of horizontal companies that develop the same type of business. The dynamic also leads to processes of diversification of services from other needs for the same market segments, using the same technology base.

A political strategy that aims at developing successful groups of SMEs, should be based on the continuous exchange of views among policy makers and social partners, particularly with employers who know and understand their problems, growth opportunities, needs of requirements to upgrade and better market attention. Social competitiveness improves when the conditions for full participation in social change processes and institutional competition are created, when relationships between organizations and businesses are achieved and they allow the necessary changes to increase the quality of life of communities involved in them (Otero, A, 2007:99-100). In this new scenario, the companies that constitute the productive base of the tourist destinations are at the crossroads of merely continuing competing through a policy of reducing prices and wages, or understanding that the future lifespan of their companies is absolutely tied to insulation breakdown, and generating links with other organizations and companies in the territory that allow the production of knowledge needed to address the dynamics of globalization.

Territorial competitiveness is associated with what is referred to, in the literature, as growth management of tourist destinations, "... a dynamic process in which governments seek to anticipate and adapt the development of the community as much as possible to balance the objectives of land use and match competing local interests with regional ones ... "(Porter 1997: 24 in Otero, A, 2007:100). Some key aspects of this definition deserve to be highlighted:

- The growth management process provides a forum and a process to determine the appropriate balance between public interests and private property rights.
- Managing growth is a political as well as technical tool to guide the development of a community.

Based on the exposed views, a competitive destination is one that meets the demand and maintains a flow of communication and collaboration among the different actors involved in the destination: local entrepreneurs, population, and government. This is achieved by taking into account the principles of sustainability as a benefit in the short and long term, under State control, coordinating activities among these actors to achieve quality in tourism services at that destination. It is also necessary to use the attractions in a preserving way, to make the population aware of their attitudes when dealing with tourists, and an appropriate destination promotion plan, including training, communication and innovation as guiding principles. This involves businesses, host community and State working together. The key element in the formulation and implementation of competitive strategies should be first dialogue and, secondly, the promotion of institutions that encourage a culture of cooperation and institutional development as the base of a pyramid that improves competitiveness factors (Gonzalez, R. and M. Mendieta, 2009:126). The characteristics of tourism, with a strong presence of SMEs, and the idespread and growing use of information technology and communication have given innovation a central role among the new challenges that destinations and tourism enterprises have to manage. Innovations can take many forms, but they all share three common elements: a) creativity, b) an approach to solve the problems, and c) new ways of thinking. Hjalager (1997) argues that there is a tendency to associate

innovation only to the invention or the creation of new products and that limits our ability to understand the potential for innovation in the sector. Hjalager (1997) suggests that this is only one of several types of innovation. Innovations include anything that generates improvements in the experiences of our visitors, and may vary within a spectrum of great inventions or adaptations to change our current products.

Gonzalez, M. and C. Leon (2010:70) define innovation as any change in tourism based on the knowledge that generates economic and social value to the host society. The tourism sector is a paradigmatic case in the service sector, as it produces intangibles based on tourism experiences, consumption of which involves the active participation of consumers (OECD, 2006). The intangibility of this sector involves a high degree of risk and uncertainty about the value that the consumer gives the tourist experience. Also, the character of experience makes relations between company and customer interaction become extremely important, and often require qualitative indicators.

In a context of strategic competitiveness, innovations in tourism services are configured from the integration of three elements (Bilderbeek et al., 1998 cited by Gonzalez, M and C. León, 2010:73):

1. - The evaluation of the characteristics of existing services and the competition make way to the development of a new concept of service, or the emergence of a new way to meet the needs of tourists.

2. - The evaluation of the characteristics of current and potential customers introduces the possibility of developing new systems to interface with them through new, more flexible and efficient channels of communication.

3. - The evaluation of the skills, abilities and attitudes of entrepreneurs, and others involved in destination development leads to the development of new service delivery systems.

Hjalager (2002) considered a model of incremental innovation in tourism. This model, adapted from Abernathy and Clark (1985) considers four families of innovations according to two dimensions: the ability for innovations to change the

relationship between companies and the knowledge and skills used to produce goods and services.

The model-Hjalager Abernathy-Clark is a useful tool in taking into account the effects of innovation on relations with the immediate environment, that is, with the other competitors and customers, as detailed below. (Clavé, S. and Duro, J. A., 2010:8-11)

The innovations we all have in mind are those that Hjalager denominated *innovations in architecture*. These innovations not only involve changes in the tourism sector but also in the relationship with customers. The creation of new events and attractions that demand reorganization, redefinition of legal or physical infrastructure, or the creation of centers of excellence that create and propagate new knowledge based on research can be cited as examples of this type of innovation.

On the contrary, *regular innovations* are those that generate short-term limited effects both in the sector, as well as in the way it relates to their customers. Examples of such innovations include promoting new investments that increase productivity, owner and staff training to operate more efficiently, and gradual increase in quality and standards.

Niche innovations, such as the promotion for the entry of new entrepreneurs, supporting marketing partnerships between companies and even the simple combination of existing products with a new format, alter market structures, but without altering knowledge and skills.

Finally, and symmetrically, revolutionary innovations alter knowledge and skills radically, but maintaining the relationship with customers. Examples include the diffusion of new technologies to enterprises, the introduction of new methods that alter the composition of staff membership or traditional markets, but with new methods.

### **The need to encourage innovation Virtuosi**

To kick off a process of product innovation requires learning to share both successes and failures of the public and private sectors, to establish goals to

achieve and actions that may affect all services of the supply; viewing individual and collective benefits of generating changes in the way we do and interact, generating cooperation and partnership networks. Policies should be established to allow access to financing for entrepreneurs that are committed to innovation and technology transfer, emphasizing that these funds aim, according to Gonzalez-Leon (2010), to:

- **Product innovation**, developing a strategy of differentiation through the generation of new product lines based on significant or memorable experiences (Pine and Gilmore, 2000: 19).
- **Process innovation**, leading to changes in production processes and provision of tourist services, such as the incorporation of information technology and communication. Incorporating process redesign, i.e. improving the communication between business and the public sector, designing information systems to enable the exchange of information to develop demand profiles with tastes, preferences, etc.
- **Innovation management** through the development of innovations in information management and human resources, which leads to new forms of collaboration in organizational structures, in the direction and empowerment of workers, technicians and managers. It also requires innovations in role of the State as regulator to promote urban development. To be an urban promoter the local state should be based on assumptions of intelligent intervention in the real estate market, in order to generate a dynamic priority of the local economy and equities that promotes opportunities for middle and lower income.
- **Innovation marketing**, introducing innovations in distribution channels, advertising, sales practices, new markets, new product lines and tourist segments stimulate new innovations in the area of marketing, sales and tourist customer relations. These strategies will have to be done associative, which enhances the consumption of downstream services, and through public and private strategic partnerships.

- **Institutional innovation**, new organizational structures and encouraging collaboration among tourism stakeholders that can provide support in new legal or regulatory frameworks at local and regional, national or international, configuring a network able to generate synergies among the resources of the various actors involved in it. Such innovation also includes the generation of networks of entrepreneurs, in order to improve profitability by lowering costs, improving costs and seeking partnering with suppliers for joint purchase, participation in joint promotional activities, among other possible associative practices.

### **The problems associated with current competitive model**

#### **Territorial competitiveness**

Tourism as an industry has important benefits in mountain areas. But the positive impacts resulting from its development are only part of the story. Tourism has a tendency to destroy the foundations of their own development. The desire for profit in the short term is particularly present in all of Latin America. As a result the natural landscapes suffer impacts and degradation because of the excess of development, or what might be called incomplete developments. In the first case we refer to choosing types of development that take over disproportionately large portions of territory per arriving tourists in the area. Examples are second homes and the development of mountain country clubs that are highly inefficient production models themselves, not only from the territorial point of view, but also socially excluding. In these urban areas where demand is concentrated by a dynamic economic activity such as tourism, and captures the attention of higher-income families, the land has a property value that prevents access to it, or expels less dynamic economic activities and lower income families, promoting early displacements that are physical, but then also economic, social, psychological. This social fragmentation scenario deepens with the increasing segmentation of nonresidential spaces used for social gathering, the weak links of the lower strata with the labor market and the stigmatization of poor neighborhoods.

Secondly, by the so-called "incomplete developments" we mean subdivisions made under the logic of real estate speculation which does not consider basic criteria, such as occupying new areas of the destination as it increases the density of its urban map, but the cities grow so cluttered as to the criteria for locating tourist equipment, which not only takes up a large part of the state budget in terms of the provision of services in these remote areas, but they generate a dispersed urban image, anthropised, losing quality scenic resources, especially on the slopes and in areas near waterways.

Thus, in San Martin de los Andes and Villa La Angostura, in northern Patagonia, Argentina, the main urban ground pressure is exerted by real estate developers, seeking the best locations, whether in terms of the main attractions or of the nodal points of urban space, as the old town or the commercial area. But urban development ventures, which are a good deal for personal interests, should also be for the town. Far from this, local governments are in pursuit of growth of tourist lodging as well as for projects that may generate jobs for the town; they do not perceive that creating public value through tourism reflects a collective public-private effort, and that those values are being privately appropriated by other types of interests, related to real estate speculation. These types of interests do not generally protect public values associated communities, such as forest commons, drinking water sources, scenic beauty and wildlife conservation.

Differently stated, the municipalities do not capture the same values they generate and promote: there is private ownership of public values; as in the landscape, which is free for all. That is why we talk about *the shadow that tourism* generates in these communities, as it acts as a platform that promises local development in a first phase to end privatizing ownership of competitive elements of mountain destinations.

As stated in the previous paragraph, these processes are a typical product of the destinations' local authorities thinking: "Growth is good." Each year, there is a competition between destinations to boast the greatest amount of growth in square meters, the largest number of tourist beds available, the largest number of tourists

received and the highest percentage of occupancy, as a synonym for positive growth and development .

This scenario requires a change in thinking of the role of the state, from regulator to promoter of urban development. Promoting that role should be based on assumptions of intelligent intervention in the real state and housing market, in order to generate a dynamic priority of the local economy and equities that promotes opportunities for middle and lower income and to preserve the lives the place and its people.

### **Tourism Economic Competitiveness**

There is a paradox: Even registering a continuous growth in the number of tourists arrived and the amount of registered overnight stays, there is a drop in tourism business profitability derived from a progressive decrease in occupancy rates. (Gonzalez, 2009, 2011). This is the result of a clear oversized supply versus demand - which Landriscini, G (2008) calls an "exogenous growth bubble" - which attracted investments aimed at building hotel development which are no longer profitable. They have low employment generation, as most of them are family business, promoting a seasonal labor requirement. These small tourism businesses, representing nearly 90% of companies in the sector, face the ongoing challenge of continuing investment for the improvement of tourist services.

Additionally, there is the fact that many of these investors do not have the knowledge and experience required by the tourism sector, and only in rare cases have gone through an accurate study of market conditions and the technical and commercial feasibility of the investment, which is then translated into constraints on the implementation and the performance of their new businesses. Currently most of the services are concentrated on accomodation services, with a wide variety of types and classes that allows to choose between different demands of quality, price and location. Regarding the supply growth in Villa La Angostura, one of the paradigmatic destinations in terms of amenity migration processes in mountain areas in Argentina, the categories of accommodation increased over the period

2004-2009 were the 3 and 4 star apart hotel categories (110%) and cabins (30%), ie the higher classes.

Those who fell were the categories of 1 and 2 star cabins (10%). (Department of Tourism of the Province of Neuquén, Year 2010). This increase occurs because there was investment by the private sector, with emphasis on the modernization of services, incorporating aesthetic services linked to relaxation, such as massage parlors, saunas, hot tubs, heated pool and reflexology, among others. It has also begun offering leisure and recreational services in hotels of higher category, such as rooms and interactive games, libraries, etc., but there are small in scale and does not constitute a significant offer for the target. The supply of recreational services traditionally offered, is represented by activities organized and marketed by 10 travel agencies specialized in mountain and lake excursions, offering both summer and winter. Many are those that last 15 or 20 years have been offering, and only have changed their routes and duration. This means that changes have not been significant in terms of innovation.

Thus it is evident that in these destinations, private entrepreneurs are making efforts for product innovation within their own businesses, as a way to innovate and make the destination "less boring". However, a limited role of the State in innovation as well as lack of support from the private sector to implement this type of tools that would create synergistic innovation processes can be observed.

Lack of innovation affects economic competitiveness of the amenity migration destinations, since tourist demand is not repetitive, except for ski product during winter, and only visiting the destination during high season, when the limited supply of recreational services is even more notorious. The destination is perceived as "expensive and boring" (Otero, et al. 2009: 5) Therefore, the volume of tourists arriving at the destination is not growing, directly influencing the profitability of investments. Added to this, the labor supply is temporary and of precarious conditions, therefore there is no incentive to improve training in the visitor's attention, and the generation of quality services.

**Value building through innovation processes to generate tourist attractors**

It is convenient to start from the notion of *factors*, including those basic conditions of tourist destinations, consisting of natural and cultural heritage, and those capital and human resources that are crucial to local competitiveness. In parallel, it is worth considering that tourism produces a series of mobility-of people, capital, symbols, stereotypes, among others, that in the form of entertainment, whether recreational or tourist, finally end resignifying those places where mobilities occur (Urry, 2004).

Consequently there are a series of "stage settings" where it is desirable that they could promote identity values of host communities, thus constituting tourist attractors.

The attractors are those elements of both natural or cultural heritage of a destination that has been put in value through the application of human and capital factors that are currently on the market. They are, individually or with other elements of the destination, tourism products that motivate tourists or recreationists displacements. It is possible to observe a lack of appreciation of tangible and intangible cultural heritage in our destinations in Patagonia Argentina. To begin to change this vision requires, in principle, recognize that heritage is a source of value, where culture means a chance of social and economic development. But this is not just a statement and can do operationalized in particular, requires new ways of thinking and acting. It is essential then to promote that these attractors are mobilized in the process of product innovation and process.

Since a good visitor experience is a critical success factor, the destinations wishing to generate innovations should integrate customer experience in the product development process. In doing so, it is essential to have first hand information on relevant markets and thus the profile of the market segments and prospects, especially those aspects related to their basic needs, ie the motivations that lead to visit.

Many of the innovations in tourism occur as a result of the accumulation of small incremental changes, resulting in a slightly different conception of the benefit and enjoyment of tourism services. "(Gonzalez-Leon, 2010:70). You need to think of innovation not only products but also processes, management, logistics, marketing

and institutional. This requires a learning process that can "break the past routines" in order to face competition, reacting to new stimuli creating, or recreating, competitive advantages (Boscherini and Yoguel. 2000: 133).

From the point of view of this work, so called institutional innovations were of particular interest. They refer to new organizational structures or collaboration among tourism stakeholders that can support new legal or regulatory frameworks at the local, regional, national or international, configuring networking which are capable to generate synergies between different resources participants of the same agents.

Such structures or alliances are themselves, the driving forces of innovation, and are actively involved in the process of generation of other types of innovation.

We need to see then tourist destinations as laboratories and innovation business models where, based on experimentation and collaborative work, it would be possible to enhance local talent, recovering identity aspects and improving the quality of life of their communities.

In recent years, society has begun to understand the social value of intangible and tangible cultural property, as an important part in building and strengthening the identity of a community. This awareness must be promoted by the destination management. In doing so, we have gone from a hegemonic discourse that overvalues the monuments, "valuable" architecture, real "museum pieces", all monumental character, to an understanding of the cultural heritage as a result of processes of social construction. This concept is more inclusive than those conceptions centered on tangible heritage, allowing to recover heritage integrity. "The tangible can only be interpreted through the intangible" says UNESCO (1997). Intangible heritage must then be incorporated within cultural policies, illuminating the urban cultural expressions marked by cultural diversity. From this perspective, a city as a tourist destination is a producer and consumer of cultural diversity, where the intangible cultural heritage of the destination includes all the appropriate cultural expressions as significant by the various stakeholders, the natives, immigrants and visitors. This means that tourism is an active participant in

the processes of cultural hybridization catalyzing the different mobilities of "texts and contexts" not just those who are part of the initial staging, but of all those who, having been first tourists, want to "be part of the cast" and decide to stay and live in the tourist destination. In doing so, they deconstruct and reconstruct the images perceived, from their urban visions meanings for other new explorers (other tourists) to reinterpret the "new setting" to offer. (Otero, A. and R. Gonzalez, 2011:8-9)

### **The search of significant experiences as a new framework for tourism**

The determination of the basic functions, and from there, the delimitation of the relevant markets, are steps to go from a supply based vision to a more integrated supply-demand vision.

The notion of product-market defines the general structure of a tourism market, and is a key element to begin to understand attractiveness, in this case, the potential of cultural tourism. It starts by defining generic needs or demand basic functions.

How to understand what it means based function in a product? It can be defined as "what a customer has in his in mind, the main motivation for buying a product, service or experience." Examples of this can be satisfy curiosity regarding the lifestyle of indigenous communities, visit prestigious museums, experience the life of "field" on farms or ranches, observing and learning about lost civilizations, or even enjoying shows that serve as unique experiences.

Defining the relevant market means to identify the market where to act, and to decide a presence strategy for that market. Only once clearly basic functions are identified and analyzed – conceived as the set of experiences sought by visitors, and the tourist's central motivation - we can begin to identify groups of consumers, and then we can start defining technologies for the cultural tourism products that are intended for each identified segment.

As a global trend, more and more customers are seeking to identify with tourism products in a different way. Consumers are now opting to trips that can provide

them with unique experiences according to their interests. A search for new experiences rises, where full attention is no longer paid to tangible products and their features, or even to the services provided, since all of them are now aspects that the client assumes that must receive. The concept of experience has come to the heart of the definition of the basic functions of any market, also, of course, for cultural tourism.

When an individual purchases a service, which he gets is a set of intangible activities performed for him. But when he buys an experience, he actually pays to enjoy a series of memorable events set to involve him personally. There is then a transition from a service economy to an experience economy, where the economic function is no longer to provide services, but to set the stage of sensory experiences, the nature of the job are then, not just intangible services, but the remarkable facts of the visit, and where demand factors are not the only benefits sensations (Pine and Gilmore, 2000).

When we speak about experiences, we're not referring to its mere etymological sense, since almost everything is an experience in making tourism, but to the search, at a sensory level, of new sensations of various kinds, but different from everyday experiences. The experience is something memorable, able to contribute to the personal enrichment of the self. A tourism product may be considered an experience if it can be multisensory, responsible, unique and emotionally qualitative. A good experience will be one that makes that tourists, once they return to their places, tell, re-tell and repeat the experiences to new potential interested in visiting cultural resources to live their own new experiences.

In an experience economy, the definition of the market needs to consider that:

- You go from a service economy to an experience economy, where the economic function is no longer providing services, but the staging of sensory experiences;
- The nature of the work is not to provide intangible services, but to create memorable events of the visit.

Pine and Gilmore (op. cit.) stress that the moral emphasis in this economy of experiences, should be focused on the kinds of experiences that are to be dramatized: its focus is to promote experiences, while revaluing heritage interpretation as a dynamic concept. Thus, theming of the tourist experience itself, involves the creation of story script, where themes are intensified by creating multiple sites within a site. Opportunities for theming within the site with other sites are numerous, such as festivals, production circuits, cultural manifestations.

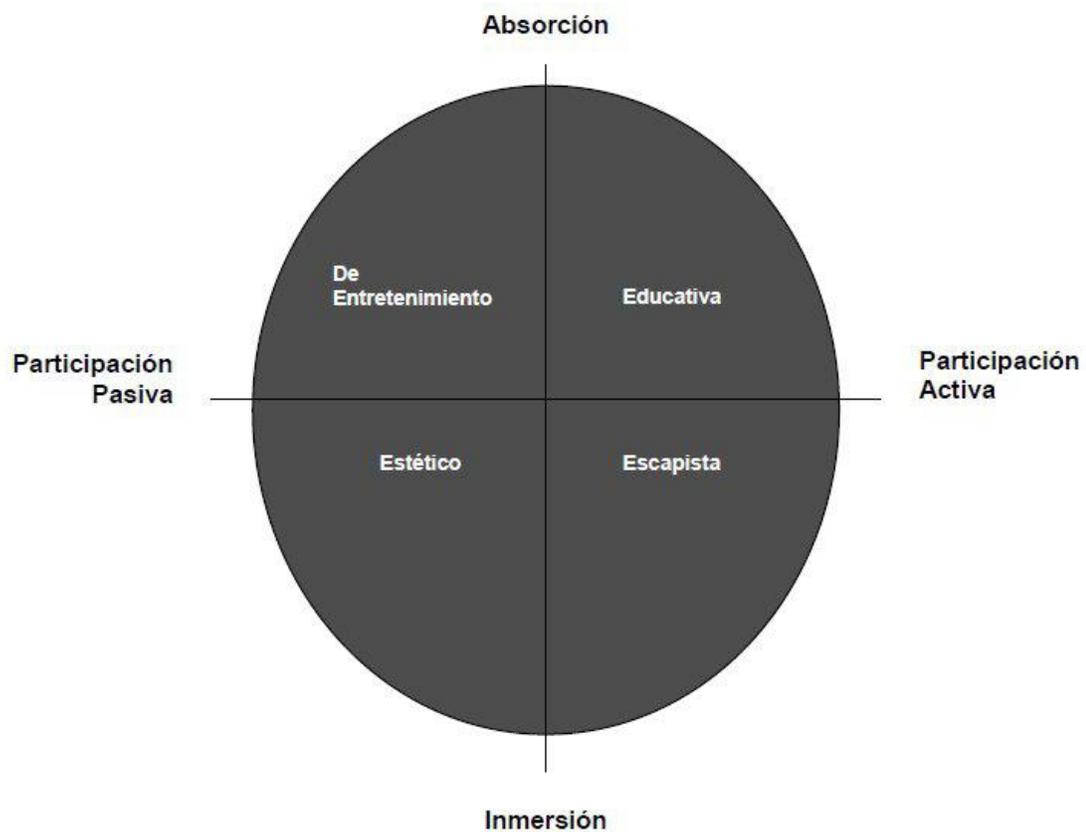
When considering the customer's search of experiences, it can be mentioned not only those sought on what is given, that is, what happens now. The search for meaningful experiences in the culture relevant markets, can also lead to the emergence of new products, through what was called the "assembly" or "staging" of historical and cultural events. This can occur with dramatic reenactments of historical events, battles, conquests, and so on. The inclusion of artistic expressions in the creation of experiences, it may be satisfactory when offering innovative cultural products for tourism. These settings, typical of the mobilities of tourism, are positive if they can help in re valuing local heritage and authenticity. Tourism projects that join this trend can find new commercial viability, and future loyalty factors.

The search for meaningful experiences relate to other pursuits and needs, which are emotional and linked with current or even intended lifestyles, and also, with most complex aspects of consumer psychology.

### **Enriching the experience**

According to Pine and Gilmore (2000) to dramatize the experience is not just to entertain but to engage tourists. An experience can engage visitors in several dimensions. Consider the two most important as shown in Figure 1.

Figura n°1: Los Dominios de la Experiencia



Fuente: Pine J. y Gilmore, J. (2000)

The first (the horizontal axis) corresponds to the degree of participation of the tourist.

*Passive participation*, in one end of the spectrum, is when the tourists do not directly affect the success or representation, or influence it. Such participation occurs in all activities where visitors are spectator, either street events, exhibitions, concerts and more. At the other end there is active participation, which affect tourists so the event staff or representation that generates the experience. It refers to all those activities where the tourist is the protagonist, such as sports activities in nature, such as fishing, skiing, or events of a cultural center whose skills or knowledge of participants, workshops painting, learning of all kinds, cooking, local crafts, interactive displays to name but a few.

The second dimension of experience (the vertical axis) describes the type of connection or environmental relationship that connects visitors with the event or performance. At one end of the spectrum you have then absorption: to bring to mind the experience of a person handles their attention. At the other extreme there is the dive: the fact become part of either material or virtual mode, experience itself. In other words the authors mentioned above, if the experience "goes to" the tourist, as when watching a show, he absorbs it. If, however, the tourist is who "goes to" experience, as when playing a virtual reality game, he becomes immersed or immersed in it.

The way these dimensions engage with each other define the four "domains": experience-entertainment, education, escapism and aesthetics-as shown in Figure 1. These domains are mutually compatible and often coalesce to enable the creation of memorable experiences.

The kind of experience that people associate with the entertainment takes place when people passively absorb the experience through their senses.

The experiences of the educational domain, unlike entertainment, involve the active participation of the subject, of his mind, in case of an intellectual learning, or even of his body, in the event of a physical training. Although education is a serious matter, it doesn't mean that educational experiences cannot be fun. In the world of tourism there are many examples of educational experiences, like interpretation centers and rural tourism experiences, just to name a few examples closer to our Latin American reality.

Memorable encounters of the third kind, the escapist experiences involve a much greater immersion than entertainment or educational ones. They are in fact, the opposite pole of pure entertainment experiences. The tourist is here an actively involved participant. Among the most typical examples of these activities, theme parks or adventure sports like river rafting rapids can be cited; also, those activities where the adrenaline feeling is so strong that you lose track of time. The escapist experiences not only mean to be away from something, but to move to a completely different location and a specific activity. For example, some want to escape with fortune or its concrete reality and want to be involved in tourism

experiences completely different from their reality, as those typical of volunteer tourism, where people are involved in a project, or spending their vacation helping a community for a limited amount of time, performing tasks which are usually completely different from their everyday reality.

The fourth and last is the aesthetic experiential domain. In these experiences the individual is immersed or immersed in an event or environment, but leaves its essence intact: no effect on the environment, even if it has an effect on him. Among the aesthetic experiences can mention all those connected with the "I was there" feeling, such as visiting the great capitals of the world, see places associated with global icons such as Che Guevara, Eva Perón or The Beatles, for example.

Destinations can enhance the real character of any experience by blurring the boundaries between the domains. While many experiences are lived primarily in one of the four domains outlined above, most of the experiences exceeds these limits. So the richest travel experiences encompass aspects of the four domains.

There are some important factors to consider regarding the management of tourist experiences:

1. The characteristics of the site where the experience takes place: this includes considerations about the environment and the type of service; they need to be attractive for the market segment that is expected to attract, for example for ecotourism segments, the pristine environment is a key form of production and service; if the provider is certified or is under a system of environmental management system, it brings added value to the product.
2. The importance of staff / customer interaction: Interested personnel can contact friendly addition to capturing the benefits sought from distitntos serving audiences and dealing within its capacity to respond to them in this regard help staff put some personality into their roles during the performance.
3. The experience should be integrated into its environment as if its moments were just different scenes of a stage setting. This means attending to the details of images expected by tourists for each product experiences that involve, for example a mountain breakfast, taking care not only about their components and ingredients,

but also the presence of a fire, a good view, attention to traditional elements of the mountain villages.

## **Conclusions**

The state has a substantial role in the tourism competitiveness of destinations with amenity migration in North Patagonia, Argentina. The analysis of the competitiveness critical factors points out the need to reverse the problems and development trends, guiding governance to encourage the realization of policies and actions.

Firstly, municipalities are required to capture tourist public values that themselves generate and promote through tourism development. To prevent private ownership of these common values, there must be a change in the role of the state, from regulator to promoter of urban development. This role should be based on an intelligent intervention in real estate market to prevent and avoid further private ownership of banks, human impact on forests and protecting the scenic beauty of the landscapes, and locating developments in inappropriate places. In doing so, the role of the State as a provider of public goods, protection mechanisms and social development, as well as its role as the creator of institutional conditions for human development more inclusive and equitable should not be forgotten.

It is also necessary to strengthen public managers, promoting capacity building for economic management and social-premise tourism competitiveness. This means adopting a comprehensive strategic vision of development and competitiveness, where policies at both medium and long term are to be established, that can permit implementing sustainable competitive tools in time.

This process of change and revision of those competitive factors, implies innovative thinking, that contributes to destination competitiveness. Innovation must be understood as a cross process that integrates destination management and that can encompass core resources and attractions in these mountain these spaces, changing the lens from "offering goods and services" to a focus on "the experience economy".

Thus, the State has the responsibility to create an enabling an environment that promotes sustainable tourism competitiveness through the implementation of

strategies and procedures to improve the quality of public policies aimed at generating significant experience in the destination, based on collaborative work with microentrepreneurs, that offer diversification of activities and memorable experiences at destinations.

The configuration of the kinds of experiences to offer is central in the tourism discussion. Destinations are platforms to live significant experiences, sharing stories and exploring myths. The configuration of the experience is one of new starting points for the exploration of the important aspects of the formulation of the destination strategy.

Culture is a key element not only as part of the tourism product, but as part of the evolutionary process in the formation of the destination identities and its products.

The culture embodied in the form of mental models, the dynamics of evolution and change in strategic direction.

In this paper we have discussed aspects related to culture and tourism in order to be considered from another perspective, involving a change of look that raises the question of considering culture as an opportunity for local communities, that is to say, to understand that it is possible to think that culture is capable of generating economic value, with human value in the center of the scene.

The concept of cultural heritage can be applied to the field of tourism, through the consideration of methodological tools that culminate in the construction of specific cultural products.

To reach that point, it is considered that logic that emphasizes the particular productmarket cultural tourism, linking the dynamics of tourism markets with a strong component of social responsibility - cultural identity that respects the values of the communities, should be adopted.

We propose a change of perspective that balances these forces inherent to the market, extending the analysis that usually focuses on the supply side, in order to seize opportunities related to the search for meaningful experiences that occur in the dynamic context of the tourism phenomenon. This change would imply the need to create links between culture specialists and tourism destinations

managers, to understand that they need each other to put culture at the center of the meaningful experiences for visitors.

Both State Intervention and political decision at different institutional levels, should promote an active participation of the actors who should be involved in the process of consolidation of these policies; communities themselves should be the central actors protagonists of the decision process regarding the expected destination profile. The change of view proposed means a strategic positioning that places the cultural heritage in the hub of tourism mobilities, and assigns a role as a factor of differentiation and development of tourist destinations, that can identify in these factor endowments real opportunities for endogenous development, requiring contextual capabilities to sustain and multiply.

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