

Archaeological Rock Art Landscape of Northern Patagonia

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Abstract The territory that Patagonia comprises offers an important variety of landscapes. To proceed to its analysis, we will approach the landscape that refers to rock archeological heritage; hence we will talk about “rock art archeological landscape”. For this, we will build the project on the Convention of World Heritage, which in 1992 in its 16th Committee session established in its 1st Article the term “cultural heritage”.

Thus, in 2005 the Operational Guidelines that contemplates the subcategory of fossil cultural landscape was established, under which our subject of study would be circumscribed. Moreover, in November 2012, the contestants of the 2nd Cultural Landscape Encounter which took place in Cartagena de Indias, Colombia, elaborated the “Spanish American Letter of Cultural Landscape”. Being the aim of this letter: “to grant value to the resources that Spanish American cultural landscapes treasure and that are at the service of local development and, at the same time, of improving the quality of life of its inhabitants”; this is the letter to which we will circumscribe.

Recent years have been characterized by the development of an interesting variety of projects carried out with the communities within provinces of Patagonia, aimed at the local development as a means to improve their living conditions. In that sense, it is that we will approach the subject of rock archeological landscape of the north Patagonia, more specifically in Neuquén province. In it there can be found trace that correspond to its prehistoric moment, having as main representatives an important quantity and variety of archeological sites with manifestations of rock art. A specific case is one called “Colomichicó” (the biggest site of engraved blocks outdoors in Latin America) around which the first Archeological Park in the province has been organized.

Keywords Archaeological landscape • Rock art • Northern Patagonia • Tourism

JEL Classification Cultural landscape and tourism

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1 Introduction

Our study area belongs to the Transitioning Andes system and it is composed by two parallel ranges: the range that forms the boundary, which divides the waters, though it does not contain the major heights and the pre Andean formation separately located by the Neuquén river basin.

This current topography originated in the tertiary period (90 million years ago, approximately) and with it the process of elevation of the Andes Mountain Range concluded, which forces the sea to a constant regression and it imposes the region its distinctive plateau landscape. This area is part of the “Cuenca Neuquina” (Neuquén basin), whose sedimentary accumulation corresponds to Jurassic and Cretaceous periods, secondary era (80 million years ago). History of the settlement in Patagonia in its prehistoric period has its beginnings about 12,000 years ago. According to archeological data, in that moment men coexisted with Pleistocene mega fauna (mastodons, mylodons and American horses) and he had a way of life based in animal hunting and gathering of wild plants and fruit. These lifestyles persisted with some adaptations until the time of the contact with the “white man”. The groups who inhabited northern Patagonia were the upstate Tehuelches. Their wide knowledge of the resources (animals and vegetables) made them travel seasonally searching for those food sources.

In this territory there might have existed an incipient regionalization according to the use of a wide number of natural environments and of the seasonal and reproductive cycle of the guanaco, considered a leading resource. We accept that human groups are in a geographical ambit where relationships and activities are developed among their members (internal) as well as with other communities (external) without leaving the surrounding ecological environment aside. The settlement sites cover a wide geographical distribution among all provinces that form the Patagonian region (Neuquén, Río Negro, Chubut, Santa Cruz and Tierra del Fuego).

The lithic materials found from that moment are triangular projectile points, scrapers, needles and bone awls, etc.

From the contact with the Spanish man these societies experience changes in their traditional ways of life through the incorporation of the use of horses (for mobility and as an exchangeable good) and the beginning of the use of European species such as cows and sheep. This caused the transformation of hunter-gatherer communities to livestock and trader communities; activities that are still being developed today.

On one hand, the landscape environment of the study area has a specific esthetic value. On the other hand, it also constitutes a precious natural resource formed by multiple elements or components that contribute to stimulate the interest of visitors. Currently there is a growing demand from travelers to meet sites of cultural relevance where an element is not seen as an isolated case, but within a context that contains it and gives it meaning. This new condition of the heritage, considered

now a touristic product, highlights the need to develop actions that guarantee its protection.

Our work takes an interest in considering both aspects, but it also takes an interest in its preservation (meaning the maintenance of harmony as a system in which local people have a fundamental role when thinking about the recognition of the value that this cultural landscape has). Example of this is the development from February 2015 of the Management plan for the Cultural Landscape of the Middle and Lower Paintings River Basin, in Santa Cruz province in which surrounding communities have a wide participation.

This work is developed in the environment of the Cultural Resources professorship, dependent on the Department of Touristic Resources of the Faculty of Tourism, National University of Comahue of Neuquén and Río Negro provinces. This project will approach the subject of cultural landscapes, considering that the diverse cultures leave their mark in the territory creating layers from which it is possible to start revealing the history of how they developed in it. The landscape is fundamentally information that humans receive from their natural environment. Therefore, we consider that the traces of cultural heritage belonging to that moment in the prehistoric Patagonia in which (traces) men had a close relationship with its surrounding environment (rock art manifestations, archeological material, etc.) are one of the most visible material aspects, which allow us to interpret the evolution of the surrounding landscape related to its cultural aspects, and they allow to establish which its potentiality from the point of view of tourism management beyond interventions already made. Based on the wealth of experiences, information and worked methodologies, we will try to continue to articulate the construction of management models through which local communities are able to identify the relationship between heritage symbols and the community and its recreational and productive possibilities. It is also intended to collaborate in the establishment of strategies for the awareness, preservation and diffusion of Northern Patagonia heritage resources.

2 Literature Review

2.1 Current State of Knowledge on the Subject

During the 50s decade UNESCO, from policies of protection of cultural property and with the development of the concept World Heritage, contributes to the "Tourism versus Heritage" problem. Although tourism used to be considered as an activity that could have negative effects in terms of conservation, the appearance of the term Cultural Tourism softens that conception. That is why cultural tourism or, heritage tourism, used to be considered as a type of tourism that considered the conservation of monuments. In 1972, the Convention of World Heritage arises, which did not contemplate explicitly the issue of intangible heritage or the role of

the communities in the definition and management of its heritage, but a time later, the Convention on the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage makes reference to the value and the universal interest on its preservation.

It is in the year 1975, along with the creation of the World Organization of Tourism, when the idea of negative effects of mass tourism is considered, leaving aside the idea of tourism as a factor of economic development and its social and cultural issues begin to be observed. Then, in the year 1976, the ICOMOS Letter of Cultural Tourism poses the following as its major concern: the preservation of the universal value of the heritage without mentioning the local villages or tradition-bearers, and only referring to the public in general and to the tourists. On the other hand, the new ICOMOS Letter of Cultural Tourism from 1999 propounds a new definition of heritage, wider than the previous one, mentioning that it covers the notions of landscapes, biodiversity, regarding cultural practices it also mentions local people, indigenous people and host communities. Although implicitly, this letter alludes to the notion of intangible heritage and it recognizes the population as a fundamental factor of assessment and safeguarding.

The sustainable management of cultural heritage as an instrument of development, relating the actions over it not only to the cultural sphere, but also to the economic and social aspects, can contribute to the improvement of the living conditions of the population, promoting opportunities and capacities of the communities as essential elements of sustainable human development. The set of planned actions with the purpose of reaching its conservation and adequate use will also favor the development of cultural capacities and the preservation of the identity and the cultural diversity, ineludible components of integral human development. That is why from the diverse views with which it is possible to approach the heritage, the holistic one is the chosen one, which considers heritage as evidence of the identity of people and it contemplates itself as a resource for a sustainable development. In the particular case of archeological heritage, which is heritage property and which can be put in value from management policies in order to incorporate it from the implementation of a management plan to the productive sphere for the benefit of local people within, for example, programs of tourism of special interests, we will say that it is potentially a resource with an economic assessment (Ratto, 2013). Within the categories that integrate the concept of cultural heritage, we will approach the one of cultural heritage considering that it is a complex reality, comprising natural and cultural components, tangible and intangible components, which combination configures the character that identifies it as such (Committee of the Convention of World Heritage—UNESCO). Its complexity poses a type management composed by cultural landscape carried out not only considering the need for developing of the people that inhabits it, but also the need for protecting their identity.

Although there are various typologies of landscape, the one that interests us particularly is the type denominated as Organically Evolved Landscape, due to an initial imperative of social, economic, administrative and/or religious nature, and which has evolved to its current form as a response to the adaptation of its natural

environment. This process is reflected in different ways, so that two subtypes are set:

Fossil landscape is one that in its evolutionary process concluded sometime in the past, but its characteristic features are still materially visible.

Active landscape is one that has an active social role in the contemporary society, associated to the traditional way of life, and whose evolving process is still active.

Cultural landscape represents the efforts of generations of inhabitants which, shaping a way of settlement, influence every aspect of the life of a region. It is here where human presence is enhanced as an element that generates changes and also as a receptor of those changes.

From year 1992 the World Heritage Convention in its 16th Committee reunion acknowledged cultural landscape as the “combined works of nature and human kind” designated in the 1st Article of the Cultural Heritage Convention, encouraging various countries to approach this category of heritage. We have, hence, the European Territorial Strategy which includes cultural landscapes as part of cultural heritage of the European Union, which considers them an important economic factor for sustainable development, and which establishes a series of policy options for what they denominate the “creative management of cultural landscapes”. Continuing with this perspective, the Principles for Sustainable Territorial Development in the European continent of the Council of Europe (Hannover, 2000) also acknowledge cultural landscapes as a significant part of the European heritage; they incorporate the objectives of the European Landscape Convention and add the contemplation of landscape in international programs and in cross-border, transnational and interregional cooperation in matter of landscape (Spanish National Plan of Cultural Landscape, 2012). In Italy since 2004 there is the Code of cultural goods and landscape; in Spain, the Landscape Protection Act of Galicia 2008; in the UK the Historic Landscape Characterization program defines a methodology for the study of historic landscape; in Switzerland there is the Project carried out by the Federal Office for the Environment; Forests and Landscape, which defines the landscape policy for the following Paysage years 2020; in Germany, a web page Interaktiver Landschaftsplan (Interactive Landscape Plan) dedicated to development of landscape plan in the city of Königslutter am Elm, and which is an interactive project in which citizens are able to participate; among others.

In the case of Latin America, we have the Spanish American Letter of cultural landscape elaborated in Cartagena de Indias (Colombia) on instances of the 2nd Encounter of Cultural Landscapes, being one of its purposes to boost a Spanish American web of cultural landscapes with joint initiatives that conduct to good practices, the coordination of actions of the various agencies of the states involved, the integration and the development of Latin-American zones or regions committed to cultural and landscape heritage. In Colombia the government promotes the Coffee Cultural Landscape; in Argentina we can mention the case of “La Quebrada de Huamahuaca”, in Jujuy province, which was designated Protected Landscape according to provincial law N° 5260 and which constitutes the antecedent used by the national and provincial government to carry out the management for its

declaration as World Heritage by UNESCO. It is this way that the Quebrada de Humahuaca received this nomination in July 2003. If at first the Quebrada was submitted to a global terminology (through its declaration as protected landscape) for its, mostly ecological, preservation, now it is transformed into an object of protection (through its acknowledgement as World Heritage) in virtue of an also global conceptualization but which puts the role of culture in its constitution in evidence. Therefore, the Quebrada de Humahuaca was included as World Heritage under *cultural landscape* category, established by ICOMOS from documents elaborated by this international institution since 1992. Within the typology of landscapes set by the Operative Guide, the Quebrada de Humahuaca would be considered an evolutionary landscape (or organically developed). Moreover, the promotion of Argentinean cultural landscapes conducted by the National Ministry of Tourism should be taken into account, since in its web page exponents from different regions of the country are mentioned.

In the case at hand, northern Patagonia, it is a landscape inhabited, productive, alive and dynamic, which stands out for the culture of the ancestors of those who live there today as well as for the particular culture of its people, in themes that go from archeology, architecture and gastronomy to popular festivals. The interaction between the inhabitants and their surroundings allows us to have a systemic perception built from the landscape evidence and the subjective assessment of individuals, indissoluble part of this landscape, whose study and interpretation are fundamental for the establishment of management policies in landscapes of touristic value.

Cultural policies are crossed by ideologies and institutional issues that will have different characteristics within a village, region or country and they will be the sustenance/livelihood of the management actions to follow in which investigation, conservation and diffusion are the main objectives. These management actions must be circumscribed in the paradigm of sustainability which implies economical growth, environmental conservation and social equity.

Countries like Australia, France and Spain are the ones that lead in terms of implementing plans of management, which in more than one case have derived in programs of integrated heritage management. In the case of our country, we will say that we are in the development stage of those programs.

It must be acknowledged that cultural heritage is closely connected to natural heritage, since it cannot be conceived decoupled from its environment to the point that in 1992 it consolidates and establishes a new category as cultural landscapes are, so complex and enriching, which is incorporated to the World Heritage Operational Guidelines.

This allows a reading of the territory linking traditional knowledge with the adoption of new technological models, setting a landscape characterized by its natural surroundings, ways of territory occupation and every cultural and social manifestation developed and, in that, the overlapped changes that set the current cultural landscape of northern Patagonia, interacting in each of its moments: prehistoric, ethno historical, colonization of white man and its current population conformation.

The interest to visit rock art sites and the lack of control generated a series of damage due to human presence (vandalism, new process of deterioration, etc.) which determined the need to establish guidelines related to the conservation and administration of these highly fragile sites. Thus, from the 60s decade and later in the 80s and 90s there are many studies and associations related to its conservation.

Countries that are forerunners in the studies of rock art conservation are France and Spain. The most famous example is Lascaux Cave (south west of France), which after taking in visitors for more than 20 years had to be closed down due to the appearance of accretions called “white and green diseases”. This case caused commotion within the scientific community and sensitized the public opinion to heritage protection.

Many countries such as Australia (Kakadu National Park; Uluru National Park, Laura—Split Rock—Carnarvon Gorge—Cathedral Cave; Paroong Cave, etc.), Canada (Peterborough—Petroglyphs Provincial Park; Mazinaw Lake Bon Echo Provincial Park; etc.) and USA (Petroglyph National Monument; Irish Canyon, etc.).

Portugal, with the case of PROCÔA (Integral Development Program of Valley of C^oa), constitutes one of the best and clearest examples of the implementation of plans of management integrally handling this heritage, incorporating a very good policy of access to the site, considered the biggest opencast site in Europe with great rock art manifestations (petro glyphs).

This way the Regional Management Union, supporting PROCÔA Coordinator, is constituted by: the Coordinator himself, the manager of Program for Promotion of Regional Development Potential, the director of C^oa Valley Archeological Park and a representative of each of the municipalities involved.

PROCÔA is an undertaking which involves nine municipalities and which was created so that essential conditions for socio-economical development of C^oa Valley were combined.

The main target is to create jobs, invigorate the region and fight desertification and to promote people location.

One of the primal goals of PROCÔA is, without doubt, the creation of C^oa Valley Archeological Park. This initiative is responsible for the generation of a major part of the investigations and wealth, not only through activities directly linked to part of archeology, museum patents, investigation center and reception center, but also through traditional activities of the region which contribute to diversify its bases and living conditions.

These countries were the founders of organizations specializing in the subject, for example the Canadian Conservation Institute, Getty Conservation Institute, American Rock Art Research Association, Australian Rock Art Research Association, etc. (Podestá, 1996; Taboada, 1998).

In Latin America projects of conservation and administration of rock art sites have begun to be developed. The most prominent is located in Mexico (Sierra de Baja California—designed by Stanley Price); then there is Brazil (Sierra da Capivara—under the responsibility of Pessis) and Bolivia (Batea Cocha—Torotoro—promoted by SIARB), as well as Chile, the geo glyphs of Azapa Valley.

In Argentina the following records related to management plans of rock art sites are known: nationally, within the Program of Documentation and Preservation of Argentinean Rock Art (its acronym, D.O.P.R.A.R.A.) initiated in 1995 (Rolandi Perrot; Gradín; Aschero; Podestá; Onetto; Proaño; Wainwright y Helwing). There have also been developed management plans for other sites such as Cueva de las Manos and Cerro de los Indios (Santa Cruz) and the sites nearby the town of Antofagasta de la Sierra (Puna Medirional Catamarca); and the Comarca Andina del Paralelo 42 (the Andean Region of Parallel 42) (Podestá y Bellelli, 1995; Rolandi, Bellelli et al., 1997).

Recent work are being developed in La Pampa province as Valley Quehue Region, Cueva Salamanca (Salamanca Cave) (Gradín, 1975); Lihue Calel National Park (Gradín, 1975; Molinari, 1994–97).

In Chubut Province it can be found the Project of Conservation and Management on eaves in Los Alerces National Park carried out by María Soledad Caracothce and others; conservation and public use of Roca Lake in Los Glaciares National Park (Santa Cruz province), initiated in 1999 by María Soledad Caracotche and Claudia Manzur.

In another province such as Córdoba, we can find Cerros Colorados Archeological and Natural Park (Boelle, Weber, Wypyski, & Charola, 1995).

In Neuquén province, located in northern Patagonia Colomichicó Archeological Park is being run, which allows controlled access of visitors (Vega, Gelós, Bestard, & Marzari, 2000).

3 Methodology

3.1 Objective

To characterize the cultural landscape of northern Patagonia from de identification and valorization of its archeological resources, to favor local development.

Activities for the objective

1. Identification of archeological sites
 - 1.1. Visit, registration and documentation of archeological sites with rock art and its landscape surroundings.
2. Work with the communities.
 - 2.1. Identification of the communities which represent cultural heritage.
 - 2.2. Creation of workshops of sensitization among the members of the communities that convey cultural heritage.
 - 2.3. Realization of training on cultural heritage.
 - 2.4. Survey of tangible and intangible cultural heritage (architecture, sculpture, local activities, parties, gastronomy, historical sites, myths, legends, costumes, etc.) that historically identifies the communities in shaping the landscape.

- 2.5. Survey of state organizations and communal associations related to cultural heritage and community participation.
3. Interviews to key informants.
 - 3.1. Interviews to former inhabitants.
 - 3.2. Interviews to people who raise their animals practicing seasonal breeding (veranadas e invernadas).

4 Results

4.1 Expected Results

Since the present project is still developing, we will enunciate the expected results below:

That this project contributes to the conformation of an interdisciplinary team, including students, orientated to the approach of cultural heritage, to its esthetic and historical value, its conservation and management; to continue seeking curricular incorporation of the worked topics so that the awareness has institutional space in schools, colleges and teacher training institutes and that the input consists of the conformation and counseling of local teams for the approach of heritage legacy and its recreational and touristic possibilities.

It will be procured to progress in the current state of the knowledge through establishing basic conceptualizations in the form of a theoretical-methodological proposal for the integrated management of archeological heritage; susceptible to being a referent for the management and conservation of others sites indifferently to its location.

This work will allow the transference of new knowledge to the Professorship of Cultural Resources I and II of the Degree in Tourism; Professorship of Cultural Heritage I and II of the Major in Tour Guide, the Professorship of Regional Cultural Heritage and the Degree in Management of Tourist Service Companies in the contents and implications of the preservation, conservation and management of the Cultural Heritage in general and Patagonian Prehistoric Heritage in particular.

Our purpose is that the information generated is useful to elaborate a policy of rational protection of the resource and that this is incorporated to the projects of identity rescue and of Patagonian Cultural Heritage, considered of interest in the studies of the conformation of its population.

This project aims to give continuity to the mentioned aspects, pretending repositioning the regional economy from the revalorization of the cultural heritage of the area and its conservation considering the recreational touristic activity.

Together with the provincial culture institutions this project will complement regional archeological investigations that these entities develop and the results will be incorporated to the instances of dissemination of cultural heritage through diverse publications, television programs, video footage, etc. Furthermore, we

pretended to build workshops on the implementation of the management model which provides tools for the community to be active as well as making an input to educational institutions through spreading materials (documentaries, interactive CDs, videos, brochures and radial and television programs.)

The incorporation of the “Rock Art” theme to crafts, the development of traditional productions and regional gastronomy diversifies the production expanding the offer to local services. Hence, this contributes to the regional development.

In another ORDER, the previous articulations will contribute to municipal states with elements for the design recreational public policies linked to the use and enjoyment of the cultural heritage.

On another hand, the documental file (both visual and written or electronic) will be the basis for further studies creating also possible documentation and study centers.

5 Conclusions

Even though the current project is still being developed, the works hitherto carried out allow us to affirm that we have contributed to human resources education, from the training of local residents for the appropriation and use of their cultural resources for tourism development. It has been initiated a process of awareness of local authorities and technicians of governing bodies for the purposes of implementation of state policies considering these resources. The Provincial Boards of Education also made these trainings, several of which work in relation to cultural heritage and regional products, have been made.

The work with some communities of northern Patagonia allowed the awareness and to initiate the development of strategies for the management of cultural heritage, recreating and allowing the appropriation of rock art of the area with techniques learnt in different courses-workshops dictated with that goal. From this, a change began to arise in the local productive sector, evident en in new and different products related to the theme (textiles, ceramics, and candles, among others) and generating, hence, new alternatives to the regional economy.