

The Coastal Area as a Tourist Scenario: The Case of Villa Gesell (Argentina)

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In the late nineteenth century, on the coast of the province of Buenos Aires (Argentina) the city of Mar del Plata is positioned as the leading destination for sun and beach tourism. The success of the spa encourages and promotes the development of new coastal tourist developments. On the edges of the great maritime stays small seaside resorts originate; south : Necochea (1881), Miramar (1888), Mar del Sud (1889) and north: Ostende (1908), Villa Gesell (1931), Mar de Ajó (1934), San Clemente (1935), San Bernardo (1943), Pinamar (1943), among the most prominent. A new model of territorial organization, understood as a way to occupy and transform the space, incorporating different uses for existing and begins a process of human impact that leaves its mark on the environment arises.

The doctoral thesis "The coastal area as a tourist scenario. The case of Villa Gesell (Argentina)" based on the importance, the coastal area as a resource and stage in the evolution of tourism developments, applying geographic and historical method, analyzes the process of urbanization and the impact of tourism on the environment, posing potential mitigation measures based on responsible use of natural resources.

The party of Villa Gesell is located at 37 ° 22 ' south latitude and 57 ° 02' west longitude, on the edge of the maritime province of Buenos Aires, Argentina. It has temperate oceanic climate, with average temperatures of 22°C in January and 8°C in July. Its shores are low and sedimentary *medanosa* sits on a barrier with a width varying between 3 and 5 km. It has an area of 28,500 ha, consists of the towns. Villa Gesell, Las Gaviotas, Mar de las Pampas and Mar Azul. According to the National Census of 2010 its stable population includes 31,353 people in its 15,750 men and 15,603 women (INDEC, 2010). Integrates Buenos Atlantic tourist corridor, comprising: Partido de La Costa, Pinamar, Mar Chiquita, General Pueyrredon (Mar del Plata) and General Alvarado (Miramar) and linked by the Provincial Route 11 - Interbalnearia. It is a specialized tourism of sun and beach, with strong sales activity during the summer downtown. Tourism demand over a million visitors and is one of the main beaches and tourist attraction with national influx (Kirbus, 1995).

The future of Villa Gesell is linked to the figure of its founder Carlos Gesell, dealer engaged in the manufacture and sale of furniture and babies, who in 1931 to ensure the production of wood decided to plant a forest in a wide field of dunes (Gesell, 1993). Its history reflects the opportunity to purchase low-priced, followed by a strong intervention and transforming action of the natural resource that generated serious environmental problems to develop a holiday resort based on the development of the coastal zone.

Urban development has three phases of development: dune fixation, colonization and finding investors, and urban consolidation. The first (1931/1940) focuses on the task of afforestation with exotic wood to ensure the necessary industrial enterprise. The second (1941/1970) sees the potential of the forest and the possibility of creating a residential community with a first urban layout grid layout to achieve approval cadastral begins colonization and investors seeking to form a new society. Gesell open streets along the valley of the dunes, with a sinuous design that respects uneven ground and gives a singularity irregular urban layout and design of alpine village (houses of one or two floors and tile roofs). The complex was intended as a separate for people who love the

natural and simple life (Gesell, 1993) instead. In the decade of the sixties receives the Argentine hippie movement, takes a picture of bohemian freedom, it is time backpackers, stoves, tents and nightlife oceanfront (Masor, 1995). On the beach the first resorts built with wood to provide service and cuisine in the shadow arena arise.

The third phase (1971/2012) aims the development of the town from the value placed on the beach as a natural and economic resource. The alpine village envisioned by the founder, slowly adopts the features imposed by urban modernity, the chalet is replaced by apartment buildings and urban expansion is concentrated on the coastal area, adopting a longitudinal design, with the highest concentration of temporary housing on the waterfront.

Rapid urban growth from 1970 causes a strong anthropic pressure marked by the predominance of the economic paradigm of the environmental. Modernity requires building height on the waterfront and actions of social actors can not harmonize environmental conditions with economic requirements. Prevails a marked expansion of urban area, with a growing demand for space for different land uses.

The town grows without planning to structure urban sprawl, provide public spaces and the provision of infrastructure. Urban growth intensified in the 300 m. the waterfront and in the downtown areas of the city on median wall. The floor area increased soil impermeability and consequently evacuated overland flow directly onto the beach.

Environmental problems are exacerbated due to : the expansion of the tourist development, the development of equipment and infrastructure to support the recreational use of the dunes waterproofing, lack of runoff water, brackish water intrusion into the water table, the aquifer pollution, over exploitation of beach resort due to the presence of a greater number of resorts built with cement and marked coastal erosion especially in the downtown area, to alter the balance between the system of dunes and beach produced by urbanization. Negative effects reflect a deterioration of environmental quality, the trivialization of the coastal zone and landscape deterioration, a situation that leads to the loss of values and lack of uniqueness, decorating the coastal landscape with a design of equipment similar to other coastal areas regardless of the geographic location where you are (Benseny, 2010).

The thesis is divided into two sections, including the main conceptual axes of the perspectives of interpretation that guide the inquiry. The theoretical and

methodological approach based on the relationship between tourism and the environment is presented in the first part, analyzing the evolution of tourism in Argentina and environmental analysis of the locality under study.

Chapter 1 presents a review of the history of the topic, the research problem statement, formulation of hypotheses and the definition of objectives, together with the description of the methodological framework and explanation of the different data collection techniques used.

Chapter 2 introduces the basic concepts that form the theoretical framework of the research. It reflects on the evolution of tourism in the world and the transformation process that the coastal area emerges as a stage of tourism of sun and beach. Assume the characteristics of coastal tourist developments and analyze theoretical models of evolution of coastal areas, with emphasis on the environmental consequences of tourism in the coastal zone , reflecting on the need to assume a responsible compromise on destination management are discussed coastlines.

Chapter 3 discusses the development of tourism in the Americas and in Argentina, with emphasis on the mode of sun and sand. It reflects on the meaning that the term spa and analyzes the process of fragmentation of the sea coast of the Province of Buenos Aires , from a process of recovery of the beach as a leisure, favoring the emergence of tourism developments during the twentieth century, linked by Route 11 - Interbalnearia. Its tourism developments Villa Gesell is analyzed through three stages of development.

Chapter 4 presents the results of the application of geo - historical method, from an environmental perspective based on the study of biotic and abiotic aspects, the landscape, the socio-economic environment, tourism, areas of reserves, regional infrastructure and urban development, based on the comparison of the features in two stages: the initial (pre-development) and current (after 80 years of the first territorial transformation).

The second part of the thesis presents environmental problems in current holiday resort, then raised possible measures to mitigate the negative effects of tourism in coastal areas. Tourists, tourism service providers and residents, giving information on their environmental perception: the results of a series of surveys are presented. It reflects on a number of possible improvements to implement in the coastal zone analyzed.

In Chapter 5 the dynamics of the coastal zone is explained and reflects on the direct and indirect impacts of tourism in the coastal area, including a de-

scription of the tourist services of Villa Gesell. Destination management is analyzed and a question mark on tourism opens in the coastal area, considering three possible alternatives: dependency, degradation or dynamic.

Chapter 6 discusses and explains possible actions to be implemented to achieve harmony in the tourism -environment relationship. It reflects on the coastal zone from the discourse of sustainability, and describes the redevelopment of the waterfront made in the town of Villa Gesell. A tour of the legal framework governing coastal and tourism is presented. A new attraction paradigm arises and discerning about the future of the coastal zone as a tourist scenario.

In Chapter 7 the primary information that arises from a series of interviews with representatives of the public and private tourism sector, tourist surveys and study the locality is analyzed. The analysis of the data allows to make a number of findings that demonstrate environmental awareness of the population consulted, whether permanent or temporary.

Chapter 8 begins by considering solving the dilemma arising from the different human actions on the coast, both from land uses or from overlaps various activities. A series of proposals to improve the environmental quality of the destination, which arise from direct observation, analysis of data provided by different sources consulted is performed.

Finally, the general conclusions on the concerns that led to the research and partial interpretations developed in each chapter on the analysis of the coastal zone as a tourist scenario retake. It reflects, in particular, on Villa Gesell as coastal destination, its tourist development and responsible activity poses look.

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