

Knowledge and Action in Rural Development Planning through Rural Tourism: Ayacucho a Case Study (Buenos Aires, Argentina)*

Conocimiento y acción en la planificación del desarrollo rural a través del turismo: Ayacucho, un estudio de caso (Buenos Aires, Argentina)

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Abstract:

This paper explores multifunctionality in rural areas. To plan a sustainable development based on rural tourism, we performed a study about the potential conditions of the Ayacucho rural community. A methodology based on Working With People (WWP) model was applied to that end. This initiative is supported by four principles: respect and primacy for the people, a guarantee of social well being and a sustainable development, bottom-up planning, and an endogenous approach; and also by a horizontal community engagement which allow to identify key factors for regional development and to reach consensus about priorities and future action plans.

Keywords: endogenous development, rural areas, rural tourism, social learning, territories.

Resumen:

Este trabajo explora la multifuncionalidad en las áreas rurales. Para planificar un desarrollo sostenible con base en el turismo rural, llevamos a cabo estudio sobre las posibles condiciones de la comunidad rural de Ayacucho. Para tal fin, se aplicó una metodología basada en un modelo de "Trabajar con la gente" (TCG). Esta iniciativa está sustentada con cuatro principios: respeto y prioridad para la gente, garantía del bienestar social y un desarrollo sostenible, planificación de abajo hacia arriba y un enfoque endógeno. También está sustentada por un compromiso con una comunidad horizontal que permita identificar factores claves para el desarrollo regional y llegar a un consenso sobre las prioridades y futuros planes de acción.

Palabras clave: desarrollo endógeno, áreas rurales, turismo rural, aprendizaje social, territorios.

Introduction

It has become extremely difficult to produce diagnoses, prognoses or social proposals, without assuming a position with regards to the range of conflicting interests in society. Throughout several decades, many researchers and planners thought that it was legitimate to adopt a technocratic discourse in the name of abstract development, without topics or well-defined goals, and fundamentally for technical reasons (Coraggio, 2004). This vision of planning, linked to the post modernization of the 1990s, is highlighted by various authors (Gilles Deleuze, Jean Baudrillard, Jean-François Lyotard, Jacques Lacan, Michel Foucault, Gianni Vattimo, Jacques Derrida, Gilles Lipovetsky, Alain Badiou, Durkheim, Basil

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Bernstein, Pierre Bourdieu, Peter Koslowski, Buenaventura Sousa Santos, and Roberto Unger) as a new cultural and ideological focus with different values and tendencies than the new ways of thinking and acting. It is a contrast to the dominant trends of the modern era, with a technocratic style executed in a top-down approach by the leaders (Ballesteros, 1989).

As a result, the concept of social learning appears in international literature as a way of developing an alternative planning concept to the existing planning models in the modern era. In 1973, Friedmann published a book called *Retracking America: A theory of transactive planning*. The book criticized distributive planning, which prevailed during that time and involved the distribution of a series of scarce resources amongst different beneficiaries. This was supported by innovative management planning, with a key element: The personal relationship that should exist between the expert and the client (Cazorla, 2001). The planner should be the professional responsible for mobilizing resources and combining public and private efforts to find innovative solutions to difficult problems in the public domain (Friedmann, 1993). The proposal of planning as social learning was based on the idea that any effective learning comes from a real experience of change. As a result, the population involved in a project actively participates in the planning through their own behavior, attitude and values. These create actions aimed at combining their knowledge with the planner's expert knowledge of providing mutual learning (Azgyris & Shn, 1978). In this regard, working with this proposal has enabled the development of participatory methodologies, negotiation and profound ethical focuses which have resulted in relevant professional and academic success, supported by published scientific work (Cazorla, De los Ríos & Salvo, 2013).

In this context, this research was carried out with an understanding of the main problems faced by a rural community such as Ayacucho (in the Province of Buenos Aires, Argentina). As a result, the community's strengths were established, which are of strategic value for planning sustainable development in the medium and long term.

Therefore, the objective of this study is to validate a methodology based on the Working with People (WWP) model (Cazorla et al., 2013) for revitalizing rural areas through rural tourism, based on an experience which took place in Ayacucho (Argentina).

This will facilitate planning, which in turn can form a process in search of feasible solutions to meet the current and future needs of the population. As such, certain proposals were suggested which together form the finished product: a) Create participatory spaces for meetings, discussions and negotiations between the different agents within the area and; b) Establish short, medium and long-term strategies which contribute to improved conditions for social, cultural, economic and environmental development within the region being studied.

Multifunctionality and Reassessment of the Rural Environment

In postmodernity, the rural environment is no longer simply seen as a space destined exclusively for production activity. Environmental conservation values are highlighted, and these have also become political concerns (De Souza, 2012). In some regions there is a question of how to keep people in the region, whilst in other places the countryside becomes more attractive, in comparison to the cities. This reassessment of what "rural" is means that the gap between city and countryside becomes narrower, with a more diverse correlation which includes new activities and changes (Tonon & Castro Solano, 2011). A multifunctional rural space is not considered as a production space but as a space in which agricultural value is not only defined by the goods produced but also by the social and environmental benefits it creates, such as the rural landscape and traditions preservation, biodiversity protection, soil maintenance, work employment, contributions to health and food safety increase (Guinjoan, Badia & Tulla, 2016). Recent multifunctionality and reassessment of the rural space derive from the strengthening of previously disregarded characteristics resulted from the

adaptation of the city and the rural areas to the new current and structural circumstances (Gordziejczuk, 2014).

Territorial Competitiveness as a Strategy for Rural Development

For various authors, the territory is perceived operationally as a space in which there is interaction between social and institutional actors and planning of combined actions between the State and society (Soto Baquero, Beduschi Filho, Diez de Sollano, Valenzuela Chadwick & Palma, 2007). In this line, García Álvarez-Coque (2006) argues that development's territorial approach shows us that there are many territory concepts used in order to facilitate the social, economic, cultural, political and institutional analysis of a specific geographic area; and it also forms the basis of creating public policies aimed at solving the problems identified within such dimensions. Although there is a general consensus that the territory is the result of a "social construction" process, its delimitation is carried out using many estimates (administrative borders, water drainage areas, ethnic and cultural identity, existence of economic development hubs, social criteria), and is the responsibility of public institutions. According to Schejtman and Berdegué (2004), the territorial dimension surpasses the more traditional definition of an administrative region, and incorporates all types of spaces. Under this new paradigm, the territory becomes the new public management unit in which the territory is not only seen as a physical or geographic space, but rather as a "social construction; that is, a group of social relationships which create and at the same time express an identity and a sense of shared purpose amongst various public and private agents" (Schejtman & Berdegué, 2004). Keeping with this paradigm, Meyer-Stamer (2008) points out that a territory's competitiveness can be defined as the region or area's ability to generate additional incomes and improve the quality of life for residents. The rural environment is not oblivious to this phenomenon in the sense that some territories are better positioned compared to others when it comes to certain factors, and not only in terms of the products they offer, the traditions, urban facilities, etc. Therefore, a territory's competitiveness involves much more than simply the competitiveness of its production sectors, and it is a fundamental strategy for rural development (Moyano Estrada, 2009; Stratta Fernández & De los Ríos Carmenado, 2010).

Rural development from a territorial focus

Based on this focus, a territory is a geographic space characterized by: The existence of specific natural resources; an individual identity (meaning local history and culture), social relationships, institutions and its own organizational structure, forming a socio-institutional framework (a result of the various interactions between actors and institutions) typical of the area and; specific production methods, trade and income distribution. All of these characteristics give the territory an identity, like a digital footprint, which makes it unique. This highlights the fact that the territory is not merely a geographic base of resources and economic activities, but rather a social construction which is a product of the relationships and decisions between local actors with regards to a development project that they have all set up (Boisier, 2006). Within this framework, territorial development is a process implemented by actors from the territory, which aims to strengthen local skills and exploit internal and external resources in order to consolidate the socio-institutional framework and the local economic-production system, whilst improving the community's quality of life (Farinós, 2016). Development should not be seen simply as something which creates a set of resources and environments, but rather as something which improves the quality of life. As a result, it makes sense to get close to the local population involved in the development, in order to gain an understanding of their history and traditions and plan the development with them, in a bottom-up approach in which the complexity of a territory's history and culture requires those aspects with the greatest impact on the development planning to be defined

(Cazorla, 2015). Systematic or territorial competitiveness is the process of constructing dynamic, competitive advantages in the territory, based on the existence of social competitiveness (or social capital), economic competitiveness, environmental competitiveness and the territory's external involvement. This vision of a territorial economy aims to move away from just thinking about a rural territory's economy in terms of sectors (i.e. simply as "agricultural") and instead recognizing that the economy is "territorial". This takes into account the multi-sector nature of the rural territories' economies, which requires all the activities (whether related to production or not) that generate revenue for rural families to be considered, based on improving local resources (Cazorla, De los Ríos & Yagüe, 2011).

Rural tourism as a sustainable alternative for territorial development

When the importance of tourism for the rural sector is considered, it is clear that rural areas play a new role in terms of generating income outside of farming (Barrado Timón & Castiñeira Ezquerria, 2006). As a result, taking into account the importance of a multi-sector and multi-purpose rural territory, efforts to strengthen the economy of this area should not only focus on the traditional production sector, but also on other areas such as recreational, residential, and ecological conservation or protection. Within this approach, and in relation to the rural environment's change of function, rural tourism (despite being small within the overall tourism market) provides an important contribution to rural economies (Meyer-Stamer, 2008). As a result, it is evident that rural tourism has become a development strategy for many areas, thanks to its important contribution to local economies and the positive impact it has on them. It is a form of development through which the local population seeks to improve its socioeconomic situation and maintain its territory's natural resources, establishing a direct link between supply and demand; that is, between the local community and the tourists (Cánoves Valiente, Herrera Jiménez & Villarino Pérez, 2005).

Case Study: Application in the Territory of Ayacucho, Province of Buenos Aires, Argentina

The territory of Ayacucho (in terms of administration we refer to this as a 'partido'¹) has approximately 22,000 inhabitants according to the National Population and Housing Census (Instituto Nacional de Estadísticas y Censos República Argentina, 2010). It is located in the Central-Eastern part of the Province of Buenos Aires (figure 1), with the main town of Ayacucho (the 'partido's namesake) located on the edge of the River Tandileofú. This can be described as an extensive plain which forms part of the River Salado's basin (Buenos Aires' main drainage basin). Its prevailing features include a predominantly flat topography, a mild and humid climate, an undeveloped water network, ground with limited drainage and hydromorphic characteristics, with limitations due to high sodium content, characterized by the presence of areas of wet soil which are historically subject to regular flooding and seasonal drought cycles. Therefore, the lands have fairly uniform characteristics: They are not very suitable for agricultural use, but they are mainly suitable for livestock. According to data from the National Farming Census (Instituto Nacional de Estadísticas y Censos República Argentina, 2008), only 18.14% of Ayacucho's land is destined for crops or forage, whilst 81.85% is destined for uses outside of farming or livestock. The 'partido's capital is Ayacucho which is located 324 km from the City of Buenos Aires. This area's economic conditions are very similar to the other 'partidos' which form the Salado Basin. The area's economic activity is predominantly focused on livestock activity, with other sectors having a very small impact on the total GDP. Large areas stand out in terms of economic importance and investment because small and medium producers are the ones who have been most affected in recent times by the lack of profitability and capital. Not only has their economic activity diminished, but also their

numbers have reduced too. In addition to this, there is a deteriorating sheep sector, whose production chain has broken up, which in turn has resulted in disappearing production chains. This situation has contributed to population stagnation, and above all, to an exodus from rural zones of particularly young people and families of producers who move to urban centers in search of a better future. This population decline in the rural sector is also generally associated with the loss of a large proportion of the workforce whose rural skills also disappear. There is no doubt that this situation is forming a complex social and economic landscape with an uncertain future, in the absence of policies and activities aimed at reverting this process of permanent decline.



FIGURE 1

Ayacucho territory, Province of Buenos Aires, Argentina

Source: adapted from the South American map - Mapas de Argentina [Maps from Argentina], 2017

Work Methodology

As previously mentioned, this study was focused on researching the potential conditions which a rural community such as Ayacucho has, and which are of strategic value for planning sustainable development in the medium and long terms with regards to rural tourism. Therefore, a methodology which is based on the Working with People (WWP) model was applied throughout the research (Cazorla et al., 2013). This planning model aims to replace the purely “technical” vision of projects, placing a greater emphasis on people’s behavior and on the context in which they work and carry out their activity (Cazorla et al., 2013; IPMA, 2010). As a result, the model has the following principles and values: A) Respect and primacy of people; B) guaranteed social wellbeing and sustainable development; C) bottom-up planning; D) an endogenous and integrated focus. In addition to these principles and values, the model is based on three key components which interact through social learning processes. These three components are: 1) The ethical-social dimension, which covers behaviors, attitudes and people who are involved in promoting or managing the project; 2) the technical-entrepreneurial component, which incorporates the fundamental requirements which enable the project to “function”; 3) the political-contextual component, which covers the project’s ability to “relate” to political and territorial organizations in the area (Friedmann, 1992; Cazorla et al., 2013; De Nicolás, 2016).

Through the components of the WWP model, social and economic capital as well as the population and agents who are driving change are involved in the planning process. As a result, the project is able to meet the territory’s needs and is able to transform it. Planning as social learning in the public arena represents an alternative to traditional top-down planning, where community participation gains importance, stimulating creativity and innovation amongst the people involved in the process. The combination of both processes in a specific territory enables actions to be coordinated, which tends to provide solutions to people’s specific problems (Friedmann, 1991, in Cazorla, De los Ríos & Salvo, 2004; Cazorla, De los Ríos & Salvo, 2007).

The purpose of this initiative is to identify key factors for the territory's development and to reach agreement on priorities and future action plans through community horizontal participation. As a result, it is critical that the local community adopts the initiative as its own and actively participates in creating proposals. In order to reach these objectives, the methodology consists of four stages. The first stage: Involves a diagnosis of the situation, carried out in the form of participatory diagnosis, which facilitates the gathering and analysis of information from the different representative groups in the community. The second stage: Involves the processing and systemization of the information gathered in order to transform this information into knowledge. This information enabled us to make an assessment of the situation across the territory's different sectors of economic activity through a SWOT² analysis, determining strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats. The third stage: The information gathered during the diagnosis is checked with the population through participatory workshops, following which a sector development area is prioritized to work on. In this case, the rural tourism sector was selected, and agreement was sought in terms of the actions that should be carried out. The fourth stage: Involved organizing, classifying and presenting the elements required to implement the strategic planning.

In parallel, since the start of the projects in Ayacucho, a process was carried out to train and provide the population with the necessary skills required in order to participate. This process of bringing together, motivating and raising awareness amongst the selected actors from the territory was based on participatory diagnosis, with the use of different tools which enabled: classification of problems and opportunities from the analysis of the territory's socioeconomic, political, productive, historical, cultural and environmental conditions; identification of available resources; identification of factors that are key to the development; achievement of consensus in terms of prioritizing the development initiatives in the territory based on endogenous resources; and implementation of projects which promote integrated development. A series of tools were used during the project's phases. These included four general and six themed workshops, surveys amongst key people in order to understand the community's development priorities and tools based on the planning criteria from Social Learning and the WWP model. This framework has enabled an ongoing dialogue with the population who has reflected on and has critiqued everyday life, the discovery of problems, their causes and their effects. Social learnings emerged from this process which enabled the community to act upon the territory's problems, transforming their own reality. As well as strengthening technical and contextual skills and competences in order to improve project management, this process also aimed at improving the personal skills (hopes, leadership, values, conduct) of all the involved agents.

There is no doubt that one of the elements required for carrying out this methodology is the population's participation. This is necessary in order to guarantee flexible planning, in which the link between knowledge and actions is beneficial by means of a landscape where science builds the reference framework which starts to take shape and change as the population carry out activities to defend their interests and use their knowledge to make an impact on reality (Herrán Gómez, 2015).

Results and Discussion

Principles and values (WWP)

Among the main principles and values that form the WWP model, we can highlight: a) Respect and primacy of the population are the key elements that should be considered in any development strategy and in the design of any technical innovation; The authorities and professionals who promote these projects commit themselves to respect people's basic rights, as well as their traditions and cultural identity. b) Guarantee social wellbeing and sustainable development through technical innovation and efforts carried out that should be aimed at meeting the rural population's needs, focusing on social wellbeing and sustainable development. c)

Bottom-up focus, strengthening people's skills, knowledge and experience, in order to ensure the permanent development of their territory and enable greater efficiency of public investments. d) Endogenous and integrated approach so that the WWP project acquires a global focus that takes into account all the aspects which enable the creation of new synergies and combinations, of new projects, and of new multi-sector interventions amongst socio-economic agents and managers (Cazorla et al., 2013). As a result, the work carried out in Ayacucho reflects each of the principles and values of the WWP model in the following way:

a) Respect and primacy of the population. In terms of planning the actions that would be taken in the area being studied, a participatory process was chosen. This was a catalyst for mobilizing the population within the territory in order to tackle the problems faced by the community. To achieve this, four general workshops were carried out (Positive and Negative Aspects in the Agricultural and Livestock Sector; Industrial Sector Relevance in Ayacucho: Challenges; Commerce Activity and Touristic Development in Ayacucho; Ayacucho's Potentialities), in which 21 institutions (Dirección de Turismo del Municipio de Ayacucho [Tourist Office of Ayacucho's Municipality]; Museo Histórico Regional Pura Diéz de Cordonnier [Regional Historical Museum Pura Diéz de Cordonnier]; Dirección de Producción Agropecuaria del Municipio de Ayacucho [Agricultural and Livestock Office of Ayacucho's Municipality]; Dirección de Educación del Municipio de Ayacucho [Education Office of Ayacucho's Municipality]; Dirección de Cultura del Municipio de Ayacucho [Culture Office of Ayacucho's Municipality]; INTA Ayacucho [National Institute of Agriculture and Livestock Technology]; Comisión de la Fiesta Nacional del Ternero y Día de la Yerra [National Calf Festival and Branding Day Committee]; Cámara Microempresarios Ayacuchense [Micro-entrepreneurs Local Council]; Cámara de comercio de Ayacucho [Ayacucho's Chamber of Commerce]; Sociedad rural de Ayacucho [Ayacucho Rural Society]; Hotel Plaza [Plaza Hotel]; Estancia El Cardal (Gato y Mancha) [El Cardal Ranch]; Asociación Productores de Miel [Honey Producers Association]; Reproductores ovinos de Ayacucho [Sheep Breeders of Ayacucho]; Organizadores de la "Fiesta Provincial de la Repostería Criolla" [Provincial Festival of Gaucho Pastry Organizers]; Paraje "Los Chilcos" ["Los Chilcos" Setting]; Escuela Rural, Udaquiola [Udaquiola Rural School]; Almacén de Campo, Languiyú [Languiyú Rural Store]; Establecimiento "Las Chilcas" ["Las Chilcas" Estate]; Estancia El Rosario paraje La Constancia (Martín Fierro) [El Rosario Estate located in La Constancia Setting (Martín Fierro)]; Centro Mutual de Jubilados y Pensionados [Senior Citizen Club]; Club Independiente de Ayacucho [Independiente of Ayacucho Sports Club]; agricultural and livestock producers and citizens of Ayacucho) and a total of 362 people participated, with an average of 90.5 participants per meeting. Six themed workshops about tourism were also held. They were open to the community and they took place in different institutions: Two in Udaquiola School, one in Udaquiola Social Club and three in the Town Hall, with 312 participants, with an average of 52 per meeting; b) Technical investment and efforts aimed at meeting the needs of the rural population. This is a group effort carried out by the municipality of Ayacucho, investing money and effort in order to lay the foundations for sustainable development in their territory, and in which all of the community's representatives took part. Hereafter, there are many projects carried out as part of the development strategy which are attractive for investment and development; c) Bottom-up and multidisciplinary focus: Rural development projects are the responsibility of the rural community's agents. In all cases, the community's needs and requirements were respected as they are the ones responsible for their own development. The strategy that was implemented reflects this sentiment; d) Endogenous and integrated focus: the creation of new synergies and combinations should be taken into account. All of the fundamental aspects of the strategy comply with this precept: In a rural community it is essential to create synergies in order to develop the area. Projects do not grow in isolation; in order to be sustainable they need synergies and territorial integration. Based on the information provided in the social participation process, the planning team carried out a SWOT analysis (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats) (table 1) of all the economic sectors in Ayacucho, in order to then focus on rural tourism as the sub-sector with the greatest development potential.

TABLE 1
SWOT analysis of Ayacucho’s touristic sector

Strengths	Weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ayacucho is located in the center of the Province of Buenos Aires. It is a strategic location which attracts tourists. It is two hours away from the beach towns, thirty minutes away from Tandil and three and a half hours from the City of Buenos Aires and its metropolitan area • Its main unique attractions are connected to its history and “gaucho” traditions such as Gato y Mancha, Martín Fierro, and the Calf Nacional Festival and Breeding Day • It is an established and well-known destiny for being the seat of the National Calf Festival • Its rich and varied cultural and natural heritage of the partido of Ayacucho is its business card • There are unexploited resources with historical interest for tourists 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of additional offers. There is not an all year round touristic product • Low-quality underdeveloped rural tourism infrastructure with unspecialized services • Lack of tourist signposting (on route 29, there is no signposting describing the tourist attractions of each town: Udaquila, Solanet, etc.) • Lack of good quality touristic services (accommodation, restaurants, leisure activities companies, etc.) • Conservative mindset that slows down changes and innovation • Poor popular participation in the search for alternatives of economic diversification and lack of new entrepreneurs • Lack of professional qualifications of some service providers
Opportunities	Threats
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Proximity to a established touristic center and to large cities • Increased segments of demand interested in rural touristic towns • Beautiful historical rural settings (estancia El Rosario, estancia El Cardal, Langeyú, Solanet, La Constancia, Udaquiola) • Residents from large cities tendency to make short weekend trips to nearby touristic destinies to enjoy and relax • As a national reference center of breeding pedigree (cattle sheep and bovine), Ayacucho could be the seat of an annual national breeding which will summon national and international experts 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inability to design and develop new touristic experiences connected with the endogenous resources of the territory • Difficulties to find private entrepreneurs who invest in tourism • Lack of awareness of Ayacucho citizens of its potential as the destiny of organized expeditions by residents of nearby partidos to its different attractions (to El Rosario Estate, to El Cardal Ranch, to Langeyú, to Solanet, to La Constancia, to Udaquiola, etc.). This can result in an out of control tourism alien to the interests of Ayacucho • Unwillingness and mistrust of local citizens and settings owners towards the arrival of rural tourists

Source: personal compilation, 2017

This resulted in a general overview of the realities faced across the territory, enabling new initiatives or solutions to existing problems to be explored and decisions to be taken in terms of the best way forward. Tourism is one of the few sub-sectors of the economy which has the necessary versatility and flexibility to adapt to the specific conditions of each territory and population, stimulating traditional economic activity and appreciating the distinctive local cultures (Álvarez Sousa, 2005). To achieve this, it is necessary for the territory’s inhabitants to recognize that there is a “Tourism Product”, which differentiates it thanks to its distinctive features and unique differences, over and above the shared geographic characteristics and cultural similarities within the region (Mikkelsen, 2008). This implies that as a result of the planning and implementation, the rural population can have access to complementary incomes, supported by public policies and private investments, enabling them to maximize all the attributes until they become the main source of income for the local economy (Midgley & Cazorla, 2012).

Working with People (WWP) Components

In addition to the previously mentioned principles, the WWP project can be summarized in terms of three components: ethical-social, technical-entrepreneurial and political-contextual. These interact through a social learning process. These three components include the four parts of the social relationship system: the political arena, public administration, private and business sectors and social society, as a summary of the society model (Friedmann, 1992). The apparent simplicity of the WWP project actually involves a lot of complexity due to the richness of the relationships and learning that take place between the three types of agents in the model (figure 2), in which the three components should be present in any project designed with

the WWP model, as well as the interactions and overlaps between them which arise from the social learning processes (De Nicolás, 2016).

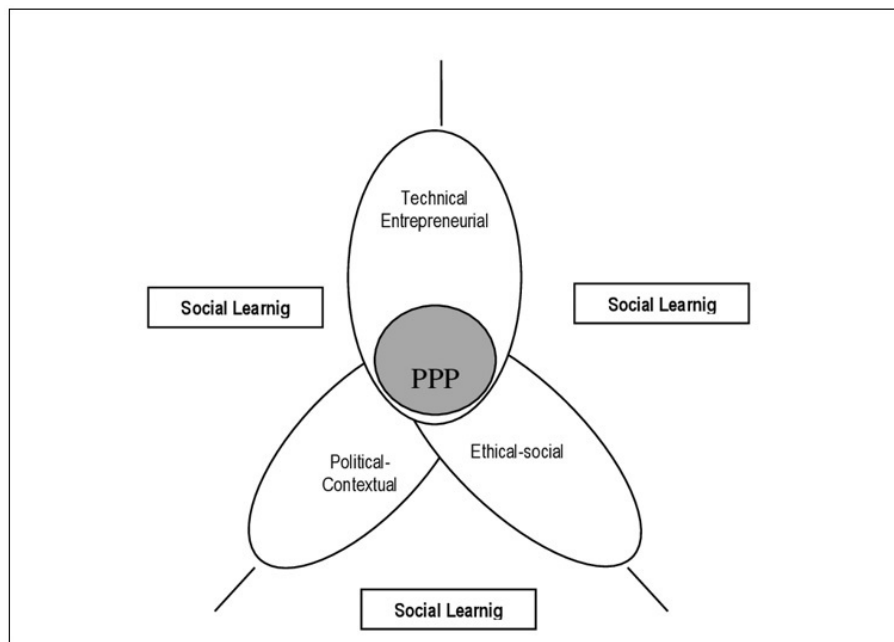


FIGURE 2
Working With People (WWP) components
Source: Cazorla et al. (2013, p. 147)

1) The ethical-social component: Covers the behaviors, attitudes and values of the people who are involved in promoting, managing or leading a project. This component is linked to the social subsystem as it is present in all of the interpersonal relationships which take place within society, in this case the society within the territory being researched (Ayacucho). Skills relating to ethical conduct and values are also included within this component, as suitable elements for overcoming possible moral conflicts amongst the parties involved in the project (IPMA, 2010). The technocratic vision of modern projects tends to exclude projects with a WWP vision, given that in the latter the aim is to strive for the best result for most of the people. For example, there could be a highway project to link a specific area. However, if a purely technocratic vision is applied, this means that the project should be carried out in the most efficient and low-cost way possible, which could mean dividing a neighborhood in half. The WWP project vision involves applying the ethical-social component and, as a result, the opinions of those people affected by it must be respected. This does not mean that the project should not go ahead; it should rather go ahead taking into consideration the best location and ensuring all parties are satisfied. The importance of this component means that this research has taken place in the territory of Ayacucho with this criteria and context, valuing the population's importance, their ideas and culture; and working together in order to achieve development in the territory of Ayacucho and benefit the society as a whole. Therefore, participatory workshops and conferences took place, in which each of the participants felt part of the project.

2) Technical-entrepreneurial component. This component incorporates the key factors required to ensure that the elements of the WWP project are adapted to be investment units and technical tools capable of generating a flow of goods and services, in order to meet certain objectives in accordance with the required quality standards (IPMA, 2010). From the point of view of social relationships this component relates to the business and private sectors, which includes all private initiatives. The WWP model adopts a "business function" (such as the mobilization of human, economic, public and private resources) which leads to willingness and negotiation amongst different actors and means a commitment to take responsibility for any

risk and then manage it. Taking this point of view into account, the mere commercial and financial aspects of the WWP project are surpassed, which not only serves to achieve “tangible” benefits, but also “intangible” benefits that allow increasing knowledge and social and cultural aspects. Therefore, the application of this model goes beyond that simply meeting objectives and requires suitable social integration from the start, in order to “reach” the people who would potentially be affected and work with them. The creation of the touristic development strategy for Ayacucho’s rural area is in line with this way of thinking. Within this there was an emphasis on valuing local resources, prioritizing projects which strengthen and add value to natural, cultural, environmental and craft resources as well as the local identity. Using this criteria, a series of actions were defined, in response to the needs identified in the territory of Ayacucho and in line with the expectations and aspirations of the local population. Based on this, 4 basic aspects were defined as part of the strategy, as following its implementation we understand that Ayacucho has a sufficient critical mass in order to start contemplating a touristic future. Basic aspects of the strategy: a) Introduce an existing historic train in Ayacucho which is not in use (Steam Locomotive 8.^a ex FCS – 3351 of English origin from 1883) for touristic purposes. In order to confirm this, it was necessary to establish a number of actions to control and develop the project, including: to create the “Ayacucho Ex-Railway Workers’ Association” to strengthen the *idée-force*; to establish agreements with the National Institute for Industrial Technology and with other railway associations with experience in restoring this type of machine to bring their vision and ideas; and to gather consultants and engineers who will carry out the project; agreements with the secondary school “Escuela Secundario Técnica Industrial N.º 1. Juan Labat de Ayacucho” were reached, so that the institution’s students and graduates could work together on the restorations, thus creating work in the area; agreements with companies such as foundries, machine shops, die-stamping, metal-works, and repair shops were reached because they carry out specific work during the repairing and restoring process of the different parts of the train’s machinery; contact between different voluntary organizations of ex-railway workers was established to support the assessment and refurbishment of the rails and stations along the line’s planned route which extends through rural villages which connect the towns of Ayacucho and Tandil, although it is not currently used; permits to operate on the lines were obtained from the national railway authority. The aim is to revitalize the activities that are carried out in the rural areas of Ayacucho. This involves promoting and raising awareness of traditional farming activities, quality food and agricultural products, facilitating an organized access to on-site visits to operation and transformation centers in order to establish direct links with small and medium producers. b) The creation of a customs and taste route under a common brand. The design of a touristic route is also linked to strengthening the Martín Fierro ‘gaucho’ culture (traditional local culture). The “El Rosario” and “La Constancia” Estates belong to this route. The first of these was Zoilo Miguens’ house (the founder of Ayacucho and where José Hernández wrote Martín Fierro) and the latter is linked to the horses Gato & Mancha. c) Development of green paths: This involves preparing pathways to be used by cyclists, walkers or horse riders tourists, in line with new social needs. This enables coordination between rural activities and other complementary activities, which because of tradition, quality or innovation can be revitalized in line with this touristic perspective and generate supplementary incomes. This is also linked to promoting a new leisure and outside sport culture within society, as well as non-motorized movement. d) Creation of a new pedigree breed center. This idea has arisen because the territory of Ayacucho is one of the few places in the region and in the country where there is a large variety of sheep genetics, as it was the birthplace for sheep and cattle breeding in the Province of Buenos Aires. This provides an opportunity to mobilize producers and breeders from across the country due to the importance of being seen at this event. It will have a great impact and it will position Ayacucho on the national agenda, for events of this nature place a high value on activity relating to sheep and cattle breeds.

3) The political-contextual component. This component provides a key element required in order to meet the needs of the context in which the project takes place. This area covers the model’s ability to establish relationships with political organizations and with different public administrations. Therefore,

the WWP model intends to serve the population, and its flexible and dynamic nature depends on the knowledge and any new information which is generated. Its application in Ayacucho is based on participatory diagnosis, organized through themed workshops, in which the problems faced by the community were really understood. While this was made, the most suitable priority areas, guidelines and development actions were identified so that they could be implemented in Ayacucho. The idea was to strengthen tourism in this area, through diversifying and specializing the offering, preserving natural environments and adapting them to tourism activity, restoring traditions and cultural roots and preserving indigenous architecture, amongst other actions. The territory of Ayacucho forms part of the extensive “Pampas” plains which are home to two important historical events from ‘gaucho’ culture: a) The birthplace of Martín Fierro (a narrative poem, written in verse by José Hernández in 1872, and a literary work considered as an example of the gaucho genre —the term used to refer to people from the rural traditions of the Pampas—), whose author had a strong friendship with the founder of Ayacucho, José Zoilo Miguens and he used his estate to write this literary work; b) The origin of a great epic with creole horses which took place around 1928. This is where the horses “Gato & Mancha” left from, and they united Buenos Aires in Argentina with New York in the United States of America, guided by Aimé Tschiffly. Based on these historical milestones, this territory has the foundations for developing significant touristic plans. In addition to this, the importance of the National Calf Festival should be considered, which has taken place every year since 1969. This event is full of activities which connect visitors to the activities of people from the countryside. However, the challenge is planning an all-year-round tourism, in which all of the territory is involved, represented by different villages and rural areas which make up the territorial architecture of Ayacucho, comprising men, women, rural workers and family producers who need to improve their incomes through diversifying their production.

Conclusions

In order to contextualize the rationale, we can say that the province of Buenos Aires has two very different structures: 1) The Greater Buenos Aires area (area of 3609.7 km², population of 10,701,712, population density of 2964.7 people/km²) and 2) the inner province (area of 303,961.3 km²; population of 4,923,372, population density of 16.19 people/km²). Based on this population and area data between the two “structures” in the Province of Buenos Aires, the characteristics of both spaces can be appreciated. The Greater Buenos Aires area is a highly populated area with predominantly industrial sectors. In contrast, the inner province of Buenos Aires has different characteristics such as a larger surface area, less population density and, in general, an economy broadly based on farming activity. Therefore, when we refer to rural communities that form part of this latter “structure” of the Province of Buenos Aires, we observe similar characteristics in the development processes of its secondary sectors as well as its tertiary sectors, but in all cases strongly linked to farming. The work carried out in Ayacucho is linked to this last category. Farming production is not always a profitable activity, and is affected by economic cycles and price variations of raw materials across the world. This means that this activity is permanently exposed to various risks, not just economic ones, and it has an unpredictable nature. Furthermore, modern planning adopts models which pay particular attention to urban/rural relations. Over the last two decades, these models have been based on a vision of planning built on technical reasons, which has been presented as a support tool for decision making and ahead projecting. It has been confirmed that this type of static planning leads to various problems and causes the majority of projects to fail, mainly due to the lack of flexibility and ability to adapt to certain changes in the external variables: political, environmental, legal, social and technological factors, etc. This means that developing a strategy with a common vision, should respond to certain objectives, directives, priority areas and necessary measures. It does not make sense to initially focus on a series of specific projects, given that these should continue to arise and be defined through participatory processes throughout the strategy’s lifetime. The planning process

followed when creating this strategy—in the context of rural areas of Buenos Aires, Argentina (and in line with planning trends and methods—) has been designed with the aim of achieving integrated and sustainable territorial development with the involvement of the affected population and other agents from the beginning. In this new context, planning in the public sector is carried out through what has become known as Social Learning, which serves as a social process: its main assumption is that all effective learning derives from experiencing a change in reality. As a result, ordinary people's knowledge is validated, and there is mutual learning between the planning expert and the affected population. It is therefore necessary to undertake dynamic and coherent planning, which involves much more than simply linking projects. Projects that might be seen as a priority today may no longer be convenient in the near future. Rigid planning might prevent (as a result of administrative restrictions) certain projects from following a strategy or plan which lead to other projects with greater feasibility or a higher priority; we would therefore misuse resources. Taking these trends and definitions into account, we can conclude that the strategy carried out in Ayacucho for developing rural territories, complies with these criteria and has the following characteristics: a) It defines a specific geographic area: the area of Ayacucho, based on the 'partido's borders which is how the province of Buenos Aires is divided in terms of administration. b) It defines development priorities (key areas), through a series of specific objectives with definite indicators. c) It sets out the means by which the development priorities can be implemented in a coherent and long-term manner. d) It connects the actions that can be carried out within the different sectors and development areas in terms of their interests and available resources. e) It considers the end beneficiaries—the inhabitants of Ayacucho—as the main agents, relying on them during the planning process.

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Notes

- * Research article The Ayacucho Project was carried out through an agreement between the Faculty of Agrarian and Forestry of the UNLP, the period of execution was between the years 2016- 2018 and was financed by the municipality of Ayacucho.
- 1 In Argentina, the provinces and the City of Buenos Aires are subdivided into second order territories called departments in all the provinces except for the province of Buenos Aires where they are called partidos due to historical reasons. Therefore, the province of Buenos Aires is divided for territorial and administrative purposes into 135 municipalities or “partidos.”
- 2 SWOT stands for Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats. It is an analytical tool that consists in evaluating both: Strengths and weaknesses to diagnose the internal environmental factors of an organization, and opportunities and threats to examine the external factors. It is considered a simple tool that allows a general perspective of the strategic situation of a given organization. Thompson and Strikland (1998) state that SWOT analysis estimates the effect that a strategy has to strike a balance between the internal capacity of an organization and its external context, that is the opportunities and weaknesses (Ponce Talancón, 2006).

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