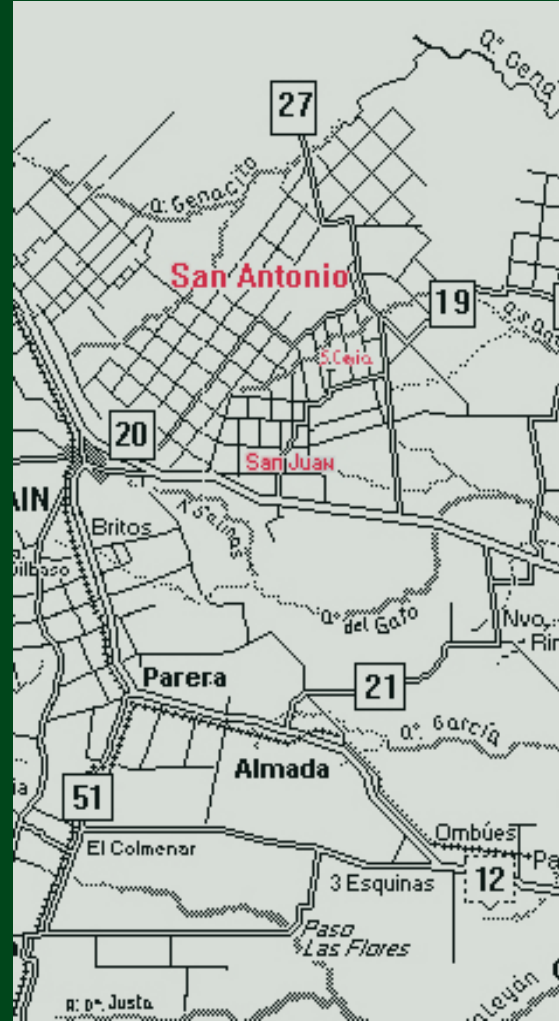


Tools for the development of New Cultural Tourist Circuits



Tangible and Intangible Heritage of
Volga German Villages in Argentina
(Department of Gualeguaychú,
Entre Ríos province)



UNIVERSIDAD DEL SALVADOR (Argentina)

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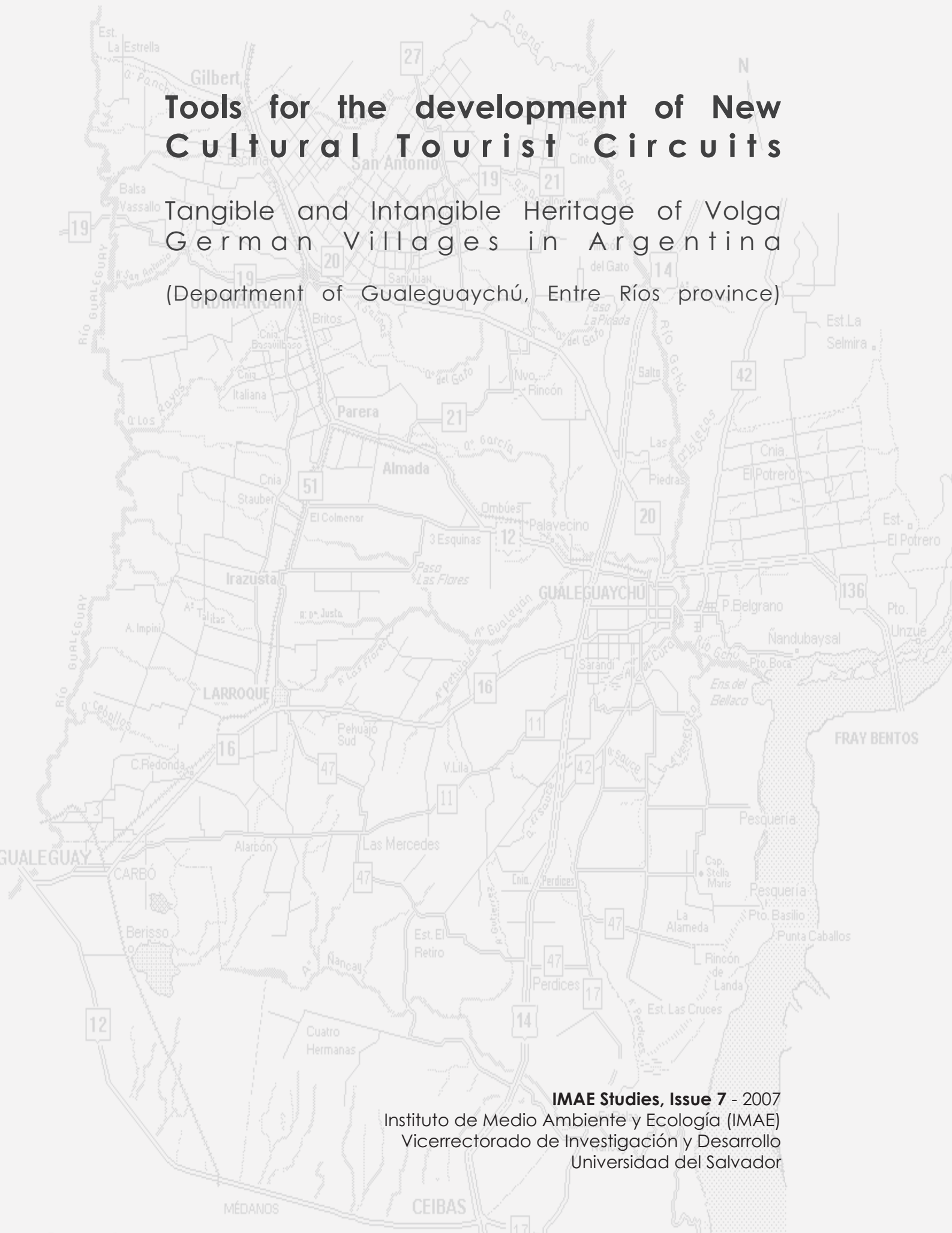
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PREFACE

There are many examples proving that cultural heritage, in its different manifestations, represents the basis for the design of tourist circuits likely to become focal point of local developments.

Therefore, the proposition of this project, specially applied to the Volga German Villages: San Antonio, San Juan and Santa Celia (Department of Gualeguaychú, Entre Ríos Province), not only tries to provide a technical vision, but it also has the ultimate objective of being a contribution to the development process of these communities. In this sense, this work could be base material for the creation of new ventures in the fields of culture or tourism at a local or regional level; or else, it could be submitted as antecedent for future tourist cultural cooperation and development projects within the context of the countries of the Mercosur or bilateral agreements with Germany.

In the field of tourist development, it will try to provide an external look on the condition of cultural tourism in the Villages. And it will propose the possible application of some instruments for the design of tourist circuits, such as inventory-making, tourist prioritization of resources and attractions of cultural heritage, and a preliminary proposition of evaluation indicators of cultural tourist circuits.

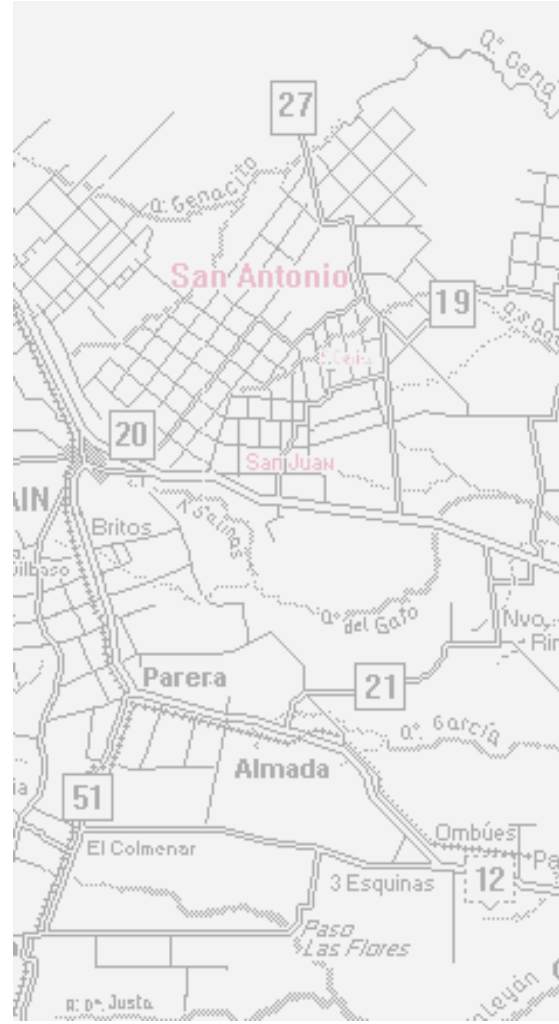
Its possible application could be a tool for the promotion of local culture based on the knowledge and acknowledgment of the existent heritage by its own inhabitants, as well as a model to be replicated in other small and medium size rural communities with a significant immigrant cultural heritage.

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1. INTRODUCTION



1. INTRODUCTION

More than a decade ago, Argentina saw the beginning of a transformation process characterized by the crisis of the economic model of the country, which encouraged municipal and provincial administrations to begin to study the diversification of their economies and to develop strategies for their subsistence.

These events coincided with the changes in tourist demands which sought "authenticity" and "the return to origins", and resulted in the rediscovery of some communities of a source for potential development in their tangible and intangible heritage.

Argentina is as a country of high syncretism, what makes it rich and diverse. Thus, many localities started a value enhancement process through the cultural tourism of their immigrant cultural legacy, mainly that of the late 19th Century and first half of the 20th Century.

However, in very few cases, specific methodology tools have been applied to the development of these cultural tourism "products", which is reflected in the absence of an integral analysis of the condition of cultural tourism, the absence of inventories of the cultural heritage and the inexistence of studies that determine tourist prioritization and evaluation of the resources or attractions of cultural heritage.

Therefore, the **objective** proposed for this thesis was drawing up a proposal of tools for the development of new tourist cultural circuits (tourist inventory and prioritization) based on tangible and intangible cultural heritage resources in small rural communities. These tools in particular would be applied to San Antonio, San Juan and Santa Celia Villages in the Department of Gualeguaychú (Entre Ríos Province, Argentina). These villages, located 230 kilometres away from the City of Buenos Aires, are small rural localities with a population predominantly made up of Volga Germans.

The pioneering spirit of this immigration flow has been preserved ever since their settling in the area in 1889 and it allows getting to know their forms of production and farm life. Its main attraction is the preservation of traditions and customs, especially related to gastronomy, songs and dances; as well as the diversity of churches, despite the small number of inhabitants; their peculiar "brick-built" housing constructions which hark back to original times, and the well cared for and neat surrounding of the streets and gardens.

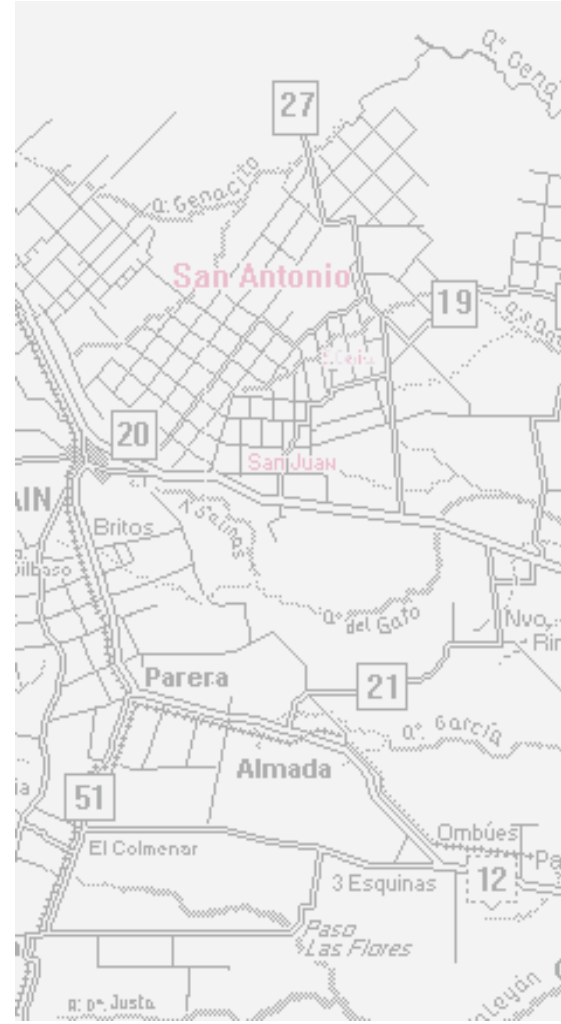
Within this context, this work posed a set of initial issues or questions, such as: What is the state of cultural tourism in the villages? Which are the aspects to be included in an inventory of the cultural heritage of the villages with possible tourist interest? How shall

tourist prioritization of the existent cultural heritage resources or attractions be determined?
Which are the indicators to be included in order to evaluate a tourist cultural circuit?

Considering the absence of reports about the current situation of tourism in said villages, the absence of a formal inventory of the resources of tangible and intangible cultural heritage; and the absence of a prioritization of the attractions or resources of cultural heritage, the work included the following stages:

- I) Survey of information and analysis of cultural tourism in the villages;
- II) Development of methodological tools for the application of inventories and tourist prioritization of attractions and resources of cultural heritage;
- III) Conclusions and recommendations.

2. THE IMMIGRANT LEGACY IN ARGENTINA AND ITS ATTRACTIVENESS FOR TOURISM



2. THE IMMIGRANT LEGACY IN ARGENTINA AND ITS ATTRACTIVENESS FOR TOURISM

As from 1990's, Argentina saw the beginning of a transformation process characterized by the crisis of the traditional local agro-productive scheme, the change of the strong agro-export economic model of the country, the change in production forms, farm technification, the setting up of large multinational companies and railway rationalization.

The latter, in particular, resulted in the isolation of many towns. For many years, the presence of the railway meant not only a means of communication, but also an important source of economic activity for Argentina. Most of the settlements in the interior of the country were born and developed on the edge of the railways. A century later, the closure of branch lines and the closing down of countless railway services resulted in unemployment, precarious employment, migration and, in some cases, the depopulation of certain areas.

Similarly, local space begins to restructure "according to what large overseas companies determine, a situation over which the State and organizations which used to have significant predicament, such as unions, practically cannot intervene (Villafañe, et al, 2002)

This encouraged municipal and provincial administrations to begin to study the diversification of their economies and to generate new development strategies. Some communities rediscovered in their tangible and intangible heritage a source of potential resources through tourism.

According to Vereda (2002) "cultural heritage has become an attraction of importance, which symbolic manifestations and material assets have increasingly gained social value, having a prominent place in the construction of thought. [...]. Currently, man is closer and closer to the vestiges of the past, maybe to find a source of personal identity in them [...]. Heritage is displayed, therefore, as an evident proof of the existence of links with the past; a growing interest among people towards knowing and protecting that past is more and more evident. Similarly, through the reading of the past, which must be authentically transmitted, fundamental aspects of the culture of the place and community which are referents for the creativity of present and future generations and enable the approach of local settlers to history are symbolized.

In parallel, there occur changes in tourist demand, evidencing a clear willingness to seek or be reunited with everything that represents tradition, evokes past habits and allows for the recovery of certain aspect of our ancestors' lives.

Concordantly with Millán Escriche (2001), this value enhancement of “old resources for new kinds of tourism” fosters the introduction of new tourist products that are based on the value enhancement of the resources of the heritage inherited from ancestors; therefore, they must be adapted and integrate them into a new offer. And this same author adds “that, currently, cultural heritage also includes ethnographic aspects, something that did not fit in the traditional term of historic-artistic heritage, as it answered to popular values and qualities which derived from uses and habits transmitted from generation to generation and which deserve to be preserved as typical manifestations of popular culture. Besides, there clearly are segments of tourist demand mainly attracted by this “popular” heritage and that what should not be forgotten when considering value enhancement of a resource is the degree of interest that it arises”.

Undoubtedly, cultural syncretism that occurred in Argentina through the settlement of different migratory flows reflects a defence of plurality and diversity. And this has enabled both small and medium-size communities, as well as rural communities, to seek the revaluation of their immigrant cultural legacy through tourism.

In this sense, it is interesting to briefly mention the **immigrant legacy in Argentina and its attraction for tourism**.

Towards the end of the 19th Century, Argentina needed “hands to plough the land” as it had vast extensions of uninhabited lands. This way, through the Immigration and Colonization Act sanctioned in 1976, a policy of territory population and occupation was orchestrated. Towards the second half of the 19th Century, Argentina had become the first destination in South America where European immigrants arrived at, consolidating a mid cultural and economic class which shaped country’s identity.

According to Padilla Dieste (2002) “this has been one of the facts that marked Argentina: the flow of immigrants that arrived between 1857 and mid 20th Century. Records show that between 1857 and 1924, a total of 5,481,276 people coming from Italy, Spain, France, Great Britain, Austria, Netherlands, Poland, Yugoslavia, Sweden, Turkey, Germany, Switzerland and Russia, among other countries, entered this country. Apart from the City of Buenos Aires, the new settlers would integrate focuses in other provinces of Argentina, such as Buenos Aires, Entre Ríos, Corrientes, Santa Fe, Córdoba, Mendoza and Tucumán; all important destinations where there were foundational projects and agricultural colony projects promoted by the State [...] More than a century afterwards it can barely be imagined what such huge movement of people across continents, across seas, crossing cultural borders, linguistic barriers, beliefs ad religious practices, moving away from their culinary habits and uses meant [...]”.

Within this context, it is important to highlight the first tourist cultural program at a national level, implemented between the years 2000 and 2001 by the National Secretariat of Tourism, introducing cultural immigrant legacy as a tourist attraction. The program was called "Argentina, Mosaic of Identities". This program was executed aiming at recover the arrival of the first settlers to the country. Its main objective was to strengthen, preserve and develop Argentina's cultural, ethnic and religious heritage. Under the "thinking global-acting local" criterion, the generation of strategies to develop and enhance the special features of each place was proposed. To such end, new sustainable products were created, with the understanding that those places could be a true alternative through cultural tourism. "This is a program created from the conviction that Argentina's true identity lies in its diversity. A country's modern identity is the result of the addition of the special features of its inhabitants. This concept differs from the so called "cresol of races", which imagined the national being as the product of the renouncement to the particular, in a mix or smelting wherein no distinction was drawn among its different components. That is why mosaic is referred to as a single piece, made up of many single pieces (Ministry of Tourism, Culture and Sports, 2001).

The first phase of this program was executed through the project "Shalom Argentina. Traces of Jewish Colonization", which, with the design of twelve circuits distributed in seven provinces: Buenos Aires, Chaco, Entre Ríos, La Pampa, Río Negro, Santa Fe and Santiago del Estero, proposed a trip along the Jewish colonies settled in the country, and evoked the experience of the agricultural colonization as a single and unique event.

At the time, the National Secretariat of Tourism spread in different media that the proposal was not for a conventional tourist circuit, but, instead, it was about "far away places, lost in immensity, and it does not include 5-star hotels. Those interested in these tours will discover that new luggage is needed to dive into the experience of this trip. Only that way will they be able to become surprised with century-old farms synagogues or old cemeteries surrounded only by farm and sky. Along the way, they will have the possibility to admire sacred objects and books, born far away from Argentina and from the 21st Century. They are survivors of a different time and other spaces. And, suddenly, tourists will also come across such heterogenic as unique mixes.

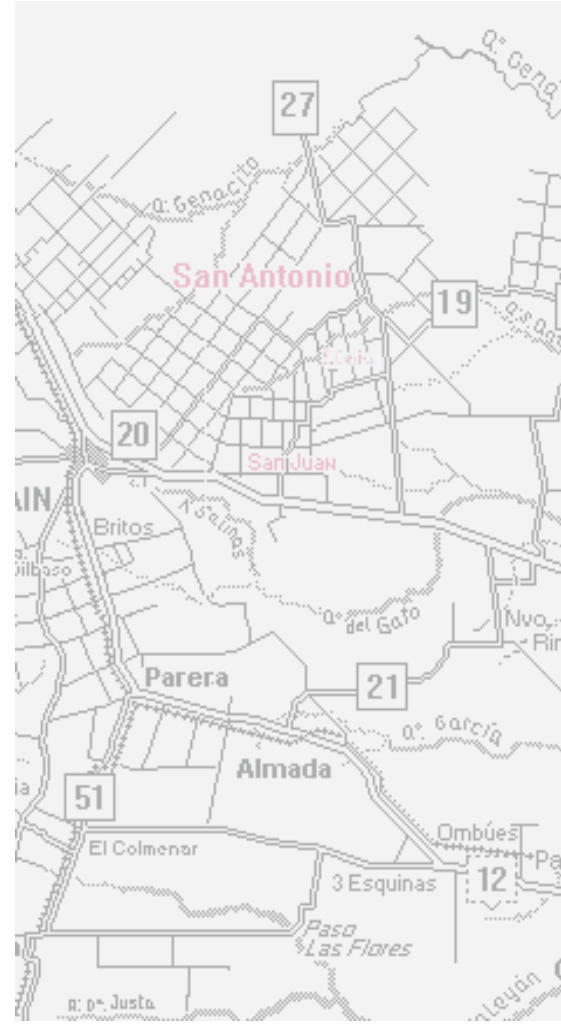
In Argentina, there are other destinations that knew how to give good use to the potential of their immigrant legacy-based attractions, as did, for example, Chubut and Misiones Provinces.

Chubut, in particular, towards the end of the 19th Century, received a strong immigration from Wales, leaving an imprint in all the southern margin of the Chubut River, right up to its source in the mountain chain, more precisely in the localities of Rawson, Trelew, Dolavon, Esquel, Trevelin and Gaimán. The latter is the most emblematic of all the colonies settled there, since it is there where Welsh culture and tradition have strongly been preserved.

In all its surrounding, the past can be relived through the ancient constructions, very well preserved, the museums hosting relishes and documents belonging to the first inhabitants, the traditional chapels located in the surroundings, and the traditional Welsh tea houses and typical housings that were refurbished to provide this service prepared according to old customs, which are its main attractions.

On the other hand, in Misiones Province, especially in the city of Oberá, there are 48 churches belonging to 26 different religious communities. For more than twenty five years, the National Immigrant Festivity has been celebrated there, and every September, different communities display their music, gastronomy and habits.

3. BRIEF ACCOUNT OF THE VOLGA GERMANS IN ARGENTINA



3. BRIEF ACCOUNT OF THE VOLGA GERMANS IN ARGENTINA

Getting to know the story of the Volga Germans in Argentina implies travelling back on time and space, beginning at their exit from their native country – Germany – across the Volga Russian steppes, until they found their definite home in Argentina.

In the 18th Century, Europe, particularly the territory currently part of Germany, was marked by countless disputes among the reigning houses of small territories (princes, counts, dukes), and especially by the war of the Seven Years (1756-1763). A large part of its population was under extreme poverty, highly indebted, and especially, with no hope of being able to reverse that truly hard situation. As consequence, there occurred a strong migratory flow from the centre of Europe, particularly from the centre and south of Germany, mainly towards Hungary, following the course of the Danube River.

The Russian empire was beginning to form as a modern state. In 1762, the German princess Catherine II, afterwards known as "The Great", comes to the imperial throne. As a stateswoman she, among other things, populated the vast Russian steppe with Western European farmers, what would, in turn, act as human barrier against nomad and wild tribes that invaded the empire from the East. Aware of the situation that the inhabitants of German territories were undergoing, as well as of the capacity for work her fellow country-people, Catherine II issued a Manifesto and spread it among these people, inviting them to immigrate to Russia, thus granting them attractive privileges".

The 1763 Manifesto of czarina Catherine II "The Great" offered religious and education freedom among other prerogatives for those who agreed to settle in the Volga area. The colonies were established with people who professed the same religions. This measure aimed at avoiding religion-related problems. The promotion of a particular religion in a village where a different religion was professed was prohibited. As regards education, each village had its own primary or initial level school. In there, elemental math, geography, history, etc, were taught in German.

The weather issue, imposing hard cold weather for almost 6 months, added to the issue of isolation, was determinant for the preservation of their own culture, and the absence of means forced them to develop a culture of practical use of all the available resources.

Some of the prerogatives published in the manifesto stressed that settlers would be able to maintain their birth language, practice their profession, be free to celebrate their religion, and be exempted from compulsory military service.

Thus, the migration flow began to change course towards Russia (Lübeck- Baltic Sea- Saint Petersburg – Saratov), and 27,000 emigrants settled in the low Volga steppes. They came from different European countries, most of them from Germany.

Although most of them were not farmers, they were ordered to work the land. These were hard times, regardless of the conflicts that the German settlement had to face, it prospered. The villages grew and their population increased ostensibly.

On seeing that a nation was being developed inside its own borders, the Russian government feared the continuity of its sovereignty, and began to implement restrictive measures. Therefore, in 1864, the Manifesto was reinterpreted, and its scope was reduced to 100 years instead of "eternal times". The *Russification* policy included several aspects, the main ones were: forcing them to comply with military service, spreading nationalist ideas incompatible with the reality of the foreign settlement, or avoiding the foundation of new colonies by not awarding any more lands in colonized areas, or else, offering them in Siberia.

This measure aimed at reducing the number of Germans in colonized areas for fear that they would attempt to rise up and declare independence, or ask for the protection of the German Federation.

These difficulties forced Germans living in Russia to emigrate; therefore, they favourably welcomed the news that was coming from America, where the governments were interested in receiving authentic farmers for their lands. Many of them went to Bremen port (Germany) to set out for the voyage from there to the different countries in America. The most significant emigrations arrived at Canada, the United States, Brazil and Argentina. The contingents that arrived at the latter were mainly made up of Volga Germans, more than of people from other areas.

In the end of 1877 precisely, they arrive in Argentina, and rural colonies were established in the provinces of Buenos Aires, Entre Ríos, La Pampa, Córdoba and Chaco.

There were two currents: one arrived directly at Buenos Aires port (the main one), and the other, coming from Brazil, unable to stand the severity of the weather or to find lands suitable for wheat cultivation, decided to move to Argentina. The Hinojo Colony was the first colony, founded in 1878 in the locality of Olavarría, Buenos Aires Province.

The main characteristic of this immigration was their solidarity. This was reflected in the fact that new groups of immigrants arrived at the already founded villages. Afterwards, these groups founded new colonies. People from one same village made up settler groups.

They become established in villages with a similar design to the one they had had in Russia. That is to say, the villages were designed with a 30-metre-wide and 800-metre-long main street. On that street, the lot division was done, which usually were 28-metre long in the front by 110-metre in length. Two plots of land were destined to the construction of the church and school. Then, the lots were distributed among the settlers. This disposition of the village favoured its defence against the attack from hostile tribes, which usually occurred in Russia (<http://www.alemanesvolga.com.ar>, 2005).

Outside Buenos Aires Province, the most important nuclei of Volga Germans was settled in the Department of Diamante, Entre Ríos Province, in General Alvear Colony, settled as from 1878 in fertile lands over the Paraná River, similar to the Volga that had sheltered them for more than 100 years. From there, they spread along the territory of Entre Ríos Province, in other villages, attracting a significant flow of Russian-Germans. Towards the end of the 19th Century, they made up the second most important group among the foreign landowners of agricultural and livestock exploitations in the province.

That is to say, mother colonies worked as "irradiation centres"; where groups of settlers gathered and purchased a farm or large farm (known as "estancia" in Argentina) in order to found new colonies. San Antonio, Santa Celia and San Juan villages, located in today's Gualaguaychú Department, Entre Ríos Province, arise as a detachment of Protestante Village located in the same province.

These villages, on the whole, were established in thriving communities, pioneers in productions such as aviculture, rabbit-breeding and craftsmanship. Today, they are the most important German community in the country, and the city of Crespo, Entre Ríos Province, hosts the "National Festivity of the German Community". Their culture, deeply religious, has made them base their social and cultural life on their Christian faith. In every village, a temple has been erected which stands out for its architecture and history.

Each family keeps their household according to the style: wide patios and gardens. The old large houses are some kind of "timeless museums" worthy of admiration. This, added to their peculiar cemeteries, and to the possibility of finding a minority still speaking a Volga dialect that came out of use almost two centuries ago, made these villages attract the attention of German historians and researchers.

3.1. Some antecedents about projects on Cultural Tourism in Volga German Villages in Argentina

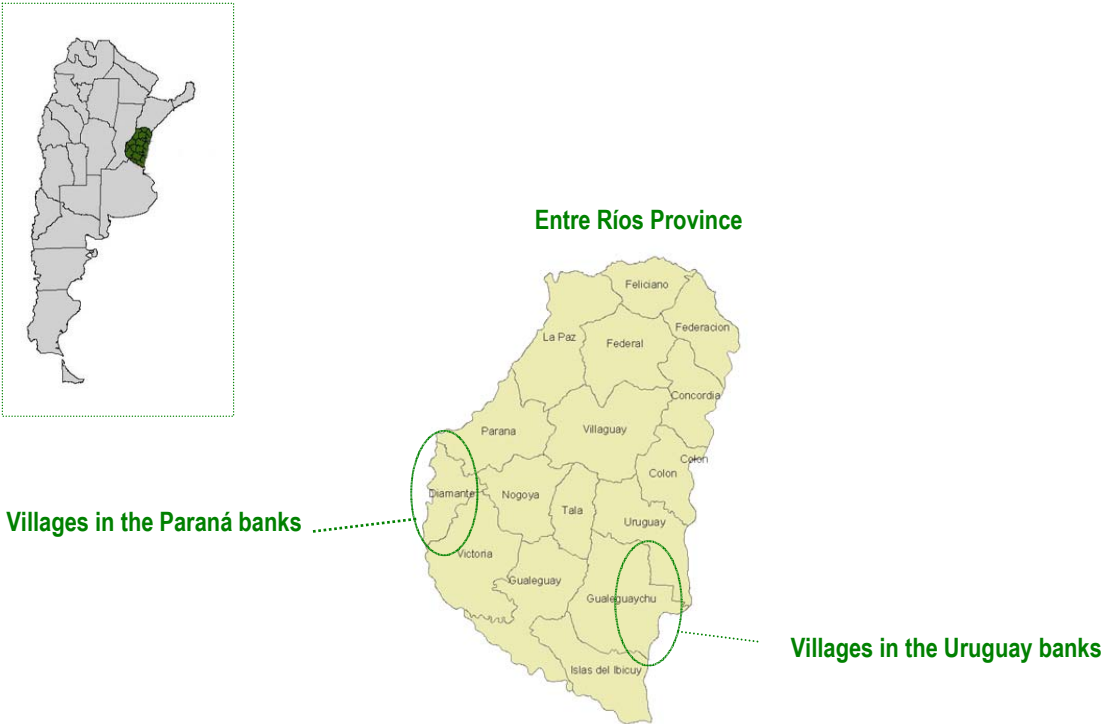
Several projects that relate tourism and cultural heritage of the Volga Germans have started to be developed in Argentina.

Currently, in Buenos Aires Province, in the locality of Olavarría, visits are offered to the Volga German Colony of Hinojo and San Miguel. According to Paz (2005) “this resurgence of the identity features of the Colony, is partly based on the *subjetivization* made of them by social actors, settlers, and under these special socio-historical conditions where the State, whether municipal or provincial, strengthens them as instruments of a possible exit from a chaotic socioeconomic situation”.

The Núcleo Regional de Estudios Socioculturales (NuRES) of the Social Sciences School of the Universidad Nacional del Centro of Buenos Aires Province (UNICEN) has begun to conduct studies for the implementation of the “Road of the Settlers” into a cultural tourism project. For example, “the municipal secretariat of tourism organizes tours around the Colony, and the Museum of Settlers is set up in the house donated by one of the families, subsidized by the Municipality, the Province [Buenos Aires] and the people from Olavarría; the very same settlers are surprised to have become so “interesting”, that the old abandoned stone houses are being restored, that what used to represent a setback, now is displayed as something exotic” (Paz et al, 2005). There, paradoxically the same State that once wanted to erase their language and traditions, has implemented a series of initiatives to recover the “cultural heritage” of the “Volga Germans” (Villafañe et al, 2002).

With respect to Entre Ríos Province, in 1998, the Consejo Federal de Inversiones (Federal Investment Board) developed the work “Proposal study of tourist development in an area determined by the immigrant communities of Entre Ríos Province” (Sendons et al, 1998). The objective of this work was to determine the tourist space considering the concentration and diversities of the different immigration flows, among them, that of the Volga Germans. In this study, besides, the localities with higher number of cultural elements for their value enhancement and the potential attractions that could complement the current tourist offer were indicated. The two areas that were identified extend in the mid circuits of the tourist paths in Entre Ríos Province. one by the Uruguay River banks– bordered by the cities of Concordia, Gualaguaychú, Basavilbaso and Villaguay - and the other by the Paraná River banks – bordered by the cities of Paraná, Diamante, Crespo and Viale.

Figure 1 – Location of the Volga German Villages in Entre Ríos Province



Source: In-house preparation, 2005.

In 2004, in Entre Ríos Province, in the Villages on the Paraná River banks, the **Tourist Circuit of the Volga German Villages** in the Department of Diamante began to be implemented, encouraged by the Sub-Secretariat of Tourism of Entre Ríos Province. The project was managed by the Argentinean Association of Volga German Villages and was supported by the Tourist areas of Diamante and Crespo, Presidents of Government Boards, and referents of the different Volga German Villages of Entre Ríos Province (Secretariat of Tourism of Entre Ríos Province, 2004).

Figure 2 – Settlers of German Villages of the Paraná River Banks Entre Ríos Province



Source: Sub-secretariat of Tourism of Entre Ríos Province, 2005.

This group of villages is located in a kind of triangle whose vertexes are the cities of Paraná, Diamante and Crespo. Each attraction is located within short distance and the circuit can be travelled in a day. The villages included are Brasileria Village, Salto Village, Spatzenkutter Village, Protestante Village, Crespo, San Rafael, San Miguel and Santa Rosa.

Figure 3 – Location of the Volga German Villages on the Paraná banks

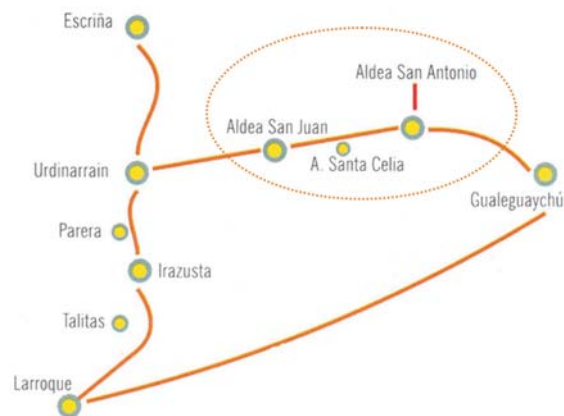
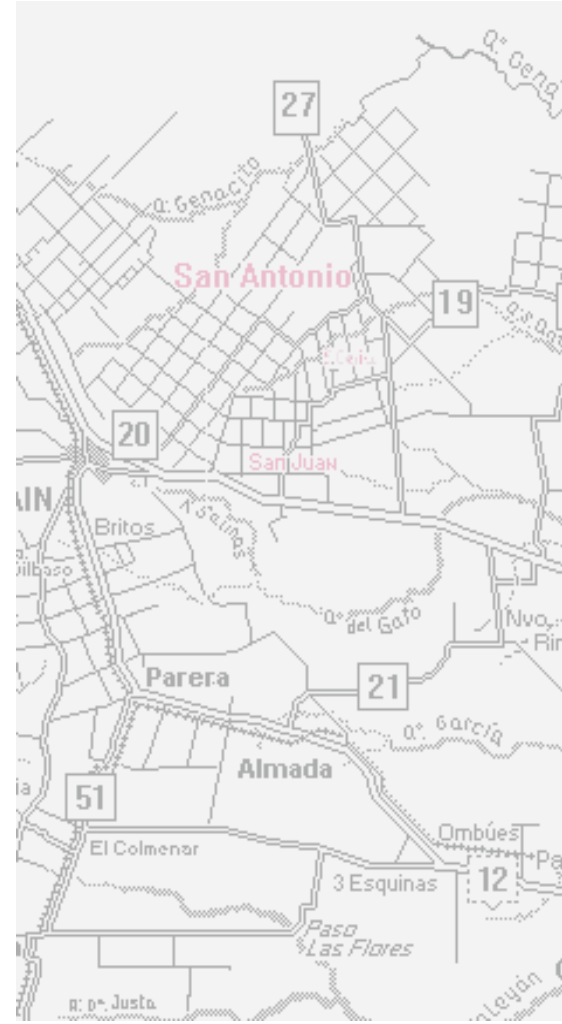


Source: Drawn up based on the Sub-Secretariat of Tourism of Entre Ríos Province, 2005.

In all these villages, some further developed, others smaller, some original and others erected at later times, there are churches reproducing the German Gothic and the oldest cemetery in the community that can be visited or trips in carts can be enjoyed. In these villages, the German uses and habits are preserved, such as, for example, their dialect or gastronomy based on exquisite dishes of recipes transmitted throughout the generations - among which home-made bread and the German pie stand out-.

Inside the **villages on the Uruguay River banks**, in the Department of Gualeguaychú (Entre Ríos Province), the San Antonio, San Juan and Santa Celia Villages are located, where this proposed work is focused. These are included in the "Southern Towns of Entre Ríos" circuit, which links several localities of the above mentioned Department through the value enhancement of immigrants' customs and rural traditions, still in force in these people's everyday lives, in their festivities and typical dishes. The next chapter will tackle this matter.

4. THE TOURIST-CULTURAL CIRCUIT OF VOLGA GERMAN VILLAGES, Department of Gualeguaychú



4. THE TOURIST-CULTURAL CIRCUIT OF VOLGA GERMAN VILLAGES - DEPARTMENT OF GUALEGUAYCHÚ

4.1. Description of the study area

San Antonio, San Juan and Santa Celia Villages are located in the Department of Gualeguaychú (Entre Ríos Province), in the southeast of Entre Ríos Province, Argentina, 230 kilometers away from the City of Buenos Aires.

On February 27, 1889, San Antonio Village was founded by a group of Volga German immigrant settlers who, up to that moment, had been settled in Protestante Village, Department of Diamante, and who had arrived in the country in 1887, coming from Huck Village, in Russia, on the Volga River banks.

They arrived there through a German official of the province government, named Spangenberg, owner of the lands where they settled, on the banks of San Antonio stream. The latter divided the lands into three parts, and named them after his children. San Antonio, San Juan and Santa Celia Village.

Brief historical outline of the setting up of San Antonio, San Juan and Santa Celia Villages

In 1888, 19 families arrived at Diamante Port from the Volga region. Most of them came from Huck Village, Saratov Province. They arrived at Diamante Port very late at night. Guided by a rider, a party of them walked to Protestante Village. They arrived after midnight. They received a warm welcome, and the next morning, seven carts were ready to pick up the families waiting at the port. For two weeks they were guests of the villagers. They worked the fields in that Village and some rented a neighbouring farm for flax and wheat cropping, inhabiting precarious houses on said lands.

As perspectives were not good due to the shortage of lands, a committee was created to seek new lands. Four men arrived at the Northern Pehuajó area, Department of Gualeguaychú, in September 1888. They were: Pedro Michel, born in Huck on the banks of the Volga River on January 31st, 1855; Mr. Felipe Huck, also born in Huck on May 28th, 1861; Mr. Jacobo Bauer, born in September 17th, 1855 and Mr. Andrés Müller, who was 30 years old.

They contacted Jacobo Spangenberg, who owned a farm. This gentleman, of German origin, helped settlers to purchase land. Three groups were formed, first, the Huckres, who founded San Antonio Village, second, the Bauers, Shimpfs and Reichels, who founded Santa Celia Village, and the third group, made up of several families, larger than the previous ones, who founded San Juan Village. 35 plots of land were measures for San Juan Village, 14 plots for Santa Celia, 22 for San Antonio and 10 for a fraction called "Chacras" in the measurement scheme.

Source: Volga Germans in Argentina, 2005.

In order to understand the insertion of these villages in the provincial and regional context, it is necessary to know the political-administrative composition is necessary. The Department of Gualeguaychú is made up of three first rank Municipalities: Gualeguaychú, Urdinarrain, Larroque; one second rank Municipality: San Antonio Village (which has absorbed Santa Celia Village in terms of its administration); and twenty Government Boards: among which San Juan Village is included¹.

As from the execution of major road works, the Department of Gualeguaychú has become a strategic area for Mercosur², where two backbones cross, linking capital cities of the region with other main cities: North-South Axis (San Pablo, Brazil - Asunción, Paraguay - Buenos Aires, Argentina); and the East-West Axis (Montevideo, Uruguay - Santiago de Chile, Chile).

Figure 4: Entre Ríos Province, Argentina, within the context of Mercosur



¹ This difference in categories is based on the number of inhabitants. That is to say, those localities with fewer than 5000 inhabitants are second rank, and those with between 300 and 1500 inhabitants are Government Boards. In these latter, the President is chosen by the Governor of Entre Ríos Province.

² Common Southern Market, made up of by Argentina, Brasil, Paraguay and Uruguay.

To the former, its insertion into an area of great wealth in terms of flora and fauna such as the Mesopotamia and its nearness to the industrial cord La Plata- Buenos Aires- Rosario is added, apart from its significant natural areas for recreation and leisure activities.

4.2 Analysis of Cultural Tourism in the villages

The three villages are very limited populated groups, with a fully agriculture-and-cattle based economy. They are predominantly inhabited by descendants of Volga Germans, and they boast the special feature of having churches of various cults and preserving a number of traditions and customs, especially related to gastronomy, songs and dances, as well as part of the movable tangible heritage, which has been preserved until today, rendering them truly unique.

The influence of the city of Gualeguaychú, head of the department, is very significant within the context of these villages. According to the last National Population Census, it has 73,330 inhabitants (INDEC, 2001). The consolidation of the four fundamental pillars, whereby its development is supported is: agriculture, industry, commerce and tourism. As regards its tourism, being doubly riverine – since the Gualeguaychú River and the Uruguay River run past it – makes it one of the main tourist destinations in Entre Ríos Province.

It is mainly renowned by two historical tourist products: “beaches and river” and “carnival”- which for some years now has been known as “The Carnival of the Country”, due to the national significance that has increasingly acquired. This celebration is prepared all year long, and includes a parade of carnival “*comparsas*” belonging to different clubs of the city. Across the Carnival Facility -an old train station recycled for this end- an exhibition of music, choreography and customs specially prepared for this event is displayed. The parade is competitive and scores are awarded. Each *comparsa* has its own special theme, generally taken from stories, mythology and legends, recreated through an artistic interpretation that combines different stage arts.

On the other hand, it should be highlighted that the city is framed within an agreeable coastal landscape, where its main tourist attraction, the river, is complemented with countless green spaces inside the city, beaches and natural places in its surroundings; apart from having a scheduled calendar of events, such as, for example, the Carriage Parade (declared of provincial interest) and the Communities Fair, to name a few.

The city has a marked seasonal tourist demand in summer – mainly January and February – with high influx, if the number of inhabitants is taken into account, which accounts for 400,000 tourists (Municipality of Gualeguaychú, 2005). This influx mainly comes from the City

of Buenos Aires and Buenos Aires Province, with a significant increase, in the last few years, of tourist from Santa Fe and Córdoba Province (Municipality of Gualeguaychú, 2005).

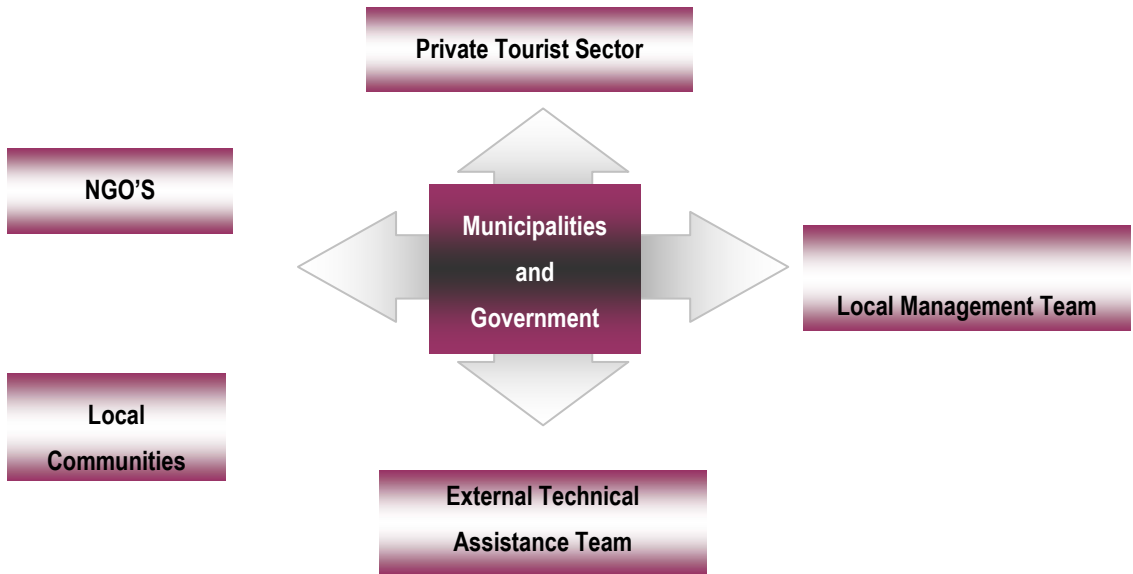
This kind of tourism does visits to the villages complementarily, which began to articulate with the tourist offer of Gualeguaychú through the tourist-cultural circuit **Southern Towns of Entre Ríos** in 2000.

This circuit begins to be offered in 1999, taking the head city of the Department, Gualeguaychú as starting point (or as issuing centre). At the beginning, under the name "Rural Paths", five tours were offered that joined farm areas, small settlements and villages, and where the milestones or most significant attractions of the tangible and intangible heritage were pointed out (Flejas, 2001).

The idea began to gain force, and in the year 2000, by the initiative of the Direction for Tourism of the Municipality of Gualeguaychú, and the Area of Culture and Tourism of the Municipality of Urdinarrain, it was proposed that there be an organized and joint work with the Municipalities of San Antonio Village, Larroque Village and the Government Boards of San Juan and Irazusta Villages for the creation of a tourist circuit based on the revaluing of local cultural heritage, which would allow the offering of a new tourist alternative.

The project was supported by the local NGOs, "Gewonheit" German Association and the Grupo de Amigos of Larroque Station; as well as with the technical assistance of the Environment and Ecology Institute (Vice-Deanship of Research and Development, Del Salvador University) and the Centro Internacional para la Conservación del Patrimonio (CICOP, Argentina).

Figure 5: Players implied in the design of the tourist-cultural product "Southern Towns"

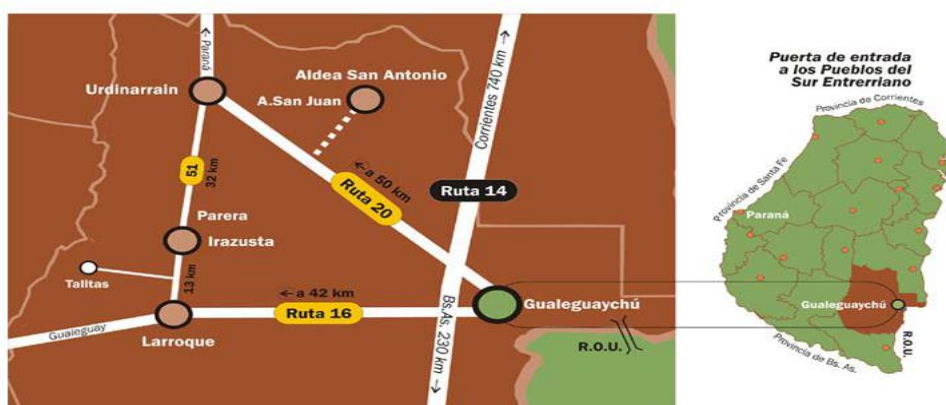


Within this framework, the “Southern Towns of Entre Ríos” tourist-cultural circuit is created, which links several localities of the above mentioned Department through a value enhancement of the customs of immigrants and rural traditions, still in force in these people's everyday lives, in festivities and typical meals.

As it can be seen, the offer of cultural tourism by the Department of Gualeguaychú is articulated through a tourist stay centre, in this case Gualeguaychú, with a series of rural localities or settlements that act as excursion centres (Boullón, 1990 4:40), located in a 60-kilometre maximum radio from the stay centre.

According to Boullón, “stay centre” is a centre that depends on a main attraction the characteristics of which encourage average stays of five or more nights. The “excursion centres” are those that receive tourists for periods shorter than 24 hours, originated in other tourist centres located about two hours away in time-distance. These operate as attractions of the main centre and depend on it, since the latter acts as “issuing market”.

Figure 6: Southern Towns of Entre Ríos – Location within Entre Ríos Province



Source: “Southern Towns”, Secretariat of Tourism, Entre Ríos Province, 2002.

This articulation would allow the head city of the Department to work on the diversification of its traditional tourist product, historically associated with “river and beaches” and “Carnival of the Country”. But, it would also help modify or improve three core issues: a) doing away with seasonality (which is very marked in January and February, as it is summer time and the celebration of the Carnival festivity); b) providing supplementary alternatives to the main attraction (for example, providing tourists with tour and entertainment options, especially on rainy days); c) increasing stay average, by offering other alternative circuits.

The circuit begins in Larroque and ends in Gualeguaychú or vice versa. It can be totally independently done as there is signalling and support brochures.

Approximately 130 km are covered and the time this trip may take varies according to the places visited, but the complete tour with all the activities being offered can take up to two days.

Figure 7: Volga German Villages in the circuit called “Southern Towns of Entre Ríos”



Source: Web site of the Mixed Committee "Gualeguaychú Tourism", 2006

In order to understand what the insertion of the villages is like in this tourist-cultural proposal, the localities included in the circuit are hereinafter detailed.

Chart 1: Localities included in the circuit called “Southern Towns of Entre Ríos”



1. **Gualeguaychú.** Being the capital city of the Carnival of the Country makes it the entry gate to the circuit. Its rich heritage is evidenced in its architecture, museums and well-known poets and artists.



2. San Antonio, San Juan and Santa Celia Villages. In these villages, it is possible to come into contact with the idiosyncrasy of the Volga Germans, settled in these lands since 1889. The visit to San Antonio Village allows getting to know forms of production and life in the farm; the diversity of its cults and beliefs, and a unique gastronomy. On the other hand, San Juan and Santa Celia Villages, with their characteristic architecture, are ideal for a photographic tour.

3. Laroque. This locality is the birthplace of a very well know writer in Argentina, María Esther de Miguel. There, her summer country house "La Tera" is preserved as a creative space, with a wide park and a nourished library with more than 3000 volumes. It also hosts the "Station Museum", a space to preserve a large part of the region's history in the local memory.

4. Talitas. In this small settlement the "Pulpería de Impini" is preserved, the only one in the south of Entre Ríos. This general store built towards 1889, is preserved intact, both in terms of its rooms, patios and sheds, which were rescued by a local family, therein preserving stories of the native tradition.

5. Urdinarrain. This locality, born on the edge of the train transformed "The Station" into a unique Cultural Complex. In this construction, typically of the English architecture of the end of the 19th Century, recovered as heritage by the municipality in 1998, objects and scenes of the town's life are displayed, apart from art exhibitions and traditional local and urban craftsmanship. The visit is complemented with large green spaces, such as Paseo San Martín and the open air Agricultural Museum



6. **Escriña.** A privately-run rural complex which offers a place with great groves and horses. It is located next to a fundamental historical reference for the area: the "Santa Clara" Chapel, and very close to the old Jewish colonies settled in Entre Ríos.



7. **Irazusta / 8. Parera.** In Irazusta, inhabitants lodge visitors in their own homes, and there, it is possible to share with them breakfasts and home-made delicatessens. Besides, recreational activities are organized, horse rides and walks. On the other hand, Parera has preserved recipes and tastes of the old days in rural handmade food stores. It has, moreover, a railway museum, complemented with roads available for trekking and flora and fauna watching.

Source: Own preparation based on the brochure Southern Town of Entre Ríos (2005) and the official web sites of "Southern Towns of Entre Ríos" (2006) spread by the Municipalities of Gualeguaychú and Urdinarrain, Respectively. Pictures: J. Broggi, 2003.

With regards to the **tourist offer**, San Antonio Village boasts the greatest infrastructure and services for tourism. In the Direction of Tourism, Culture and Sports has recently been created. Similarly, it is the only one where local tourism-oriented private ventures have been developed, such as for example, the German Association "Gewohnheit"³ and the establishment "Die Sonne".

³ The German Association "Gewohnheit" is the institution in charge of rescuing the traditions of ancestors. It boasts a venue, ballet of children and teenagers who represent German music and dance; and a group of women in charge of preparing and displaying grandmother recipes. It carries out a tourist-cultural venture where visitors are offered the possibility to get to know the history and traditions of Volga German immigration to this area, and to enjoy German tradition and confectionary.

The main theme or themes of the circuit offered in the villages are gastronomy, general history, music and dance, and festivities. The circuit is done either walking or on Russian carts.

The whole tour across San Juan Village can take about half an hour, ten minutes in Santa Celia, and in San Antonio Village, the length of time depends on whether the tour is only around the city or whether there is attendance to other shows or activities.

With regards to the existence of some **legislation** that protects the cultural heritage of the Villages, according to consultation to several key referents, it can be confirmed that there is no particular legislation in that respect. However, the bell tower in Santa Celia Village has been recently restored, but not as part of a municipal or provincial program.

As regards the inventories of cultural heritage, there are partial lists, photographic record-like, of the tangible and intangible cultural heritage of the Department of Gualeguaychú, where these villages are located. Nonetheless, it is not thorough, and neither does it have a structured format that allows gaining organized information.

Figure 8 – Local festivity



Author: Broggi, J., 2003.

The **spreading** of the Villages is mainly inserted within the joint promotion of the Southern Towns circuit. Brochures are mainly distributed through the House of the Province of Entre Ríos located in Buenos Aires (main issuing centre of tourism towards the Department of Gualeguaychú). Partly, these brochures have been subsidised by Casinos of Entre Ríos province.

On the other hand, specific actions are being executed, even if sporadic, to promote the Villages through the tourism supplements of the main newspapers distributed nationally. Significant effort is made for the assembly and maintenance of two official web pages⁴ where the circuit, lodging, food, activities and schedules are described in detail.

As part of the "Southern Towns" proposal, they annually participate in the FIT, the most important International Tourism Fair in Argentina, which, in the last few years, has acquired a significant positioning in the tourism fairs in Latin America. Also, participation in different tourism workshops that are organized is being recorded, mainly in the City of Buenos Aires.

As regards the **roles played, both the public and the private sector** in the development of the tourist offer of the villages, they become inserted in the Southern Towns circuit, and depend on, also in terms of its spreading and promotion of the articulation with the Municipality of Gualeguaychú, and of Urdinarrain.

At the beginning, the public sector motivated the offer. However, for some time now, it has become evident that the spreading and maintenance of this proposal is, basically, due to the work and initiative of the private activity. In this circuit, the willingness of the public and private local sectors to work jointly, implying the agreement among several localities must be highlighted. This initiative, which started more than six years ago, despite changes in the political management, has been acknowledged by the provincial government as an example of joint effort and joint work.

The **demand** or profile of tourists visiting the place is characterized for being adults, who come with their partners or family. Generally, these people are interested in German culture, or else, they are looking for different, quiet places.

They arrive there as a result of the publicity given by the House of Entre Ríos in the City of Buenos Aires; or else the suggestion by the Directions of Tourism of Gualeguaychú and other neighbouring municipalities.

This influx comes from the City of Buenos Aires and the Great Buenos Aires, and lately there has been a significant increase in the number of tourist visiting from Santa Fe and Córdoba Provinces (Municipality of Gualeguaychú, 2005); therefore, the type of tourism visiting this place is clearly within the category of domestic tourism or internal tourism (Tresserras and Yáñez, 2005).

⁴ Municipality of Gualeguaychú: http://www.gualeguaychuturismo.com/mas_info_pueblodelsur.htm and Municipality of Urdinarrain: <http://www.urdi.com.ar/>

Generally, there is an "intuitive" awareness of the demand, but there are no statistics either from the public or private sector. According to some opinion polls privately-conducted, warm attention, gastronomy, and the uniqueness of the "Russian carts" rides for touring the village stand out.

With regards to temporal **accessibility**, when the circuit of the Southern Towns was launched, there existed certain differences in terms of the opening times of establishments or of the services provided. On several occasions, the Office of Tourism of Gualeguaychú informed the performance of a certain activity or a certain opening time, and when the tourist arrived at the place the establishment was closed.

These disruptions made it vital for service providers of the Villages to agree on a commitment with respect to days and times, something that has improved greatly lately. A sample of the efforts with regards to this matter is, for example, the recommendation in the official web page of "Southern Towns" about the importance of contacting and previously booking with service providers, at the addresses and phone numbers therein indicated. Besides, several establishments specify opening days and times to avoid inconveniences for tourists.

The circuit is opened in summer holidays, at long weekends and weekends. The highest number of visitors occurs in summer.

The spatial accessibility issue is, today, a critical point of discussion and debate between the private and state sector. With the exception of San Antonio Village, the other two villages can only be accessed by dirt roads, which become impassable when it rains.

Visitors are warned in this respect in the official web page of "Southern Towns". For the time being, this is a contradictory issue, since the visit to the villages is offered as an alternative for rainy days, and precisely, these localities cannot be visited when this occurs.

The only means of public transport is a few buses with a very low daily frequency, what makes private vehicles practically the only way to access these villages.

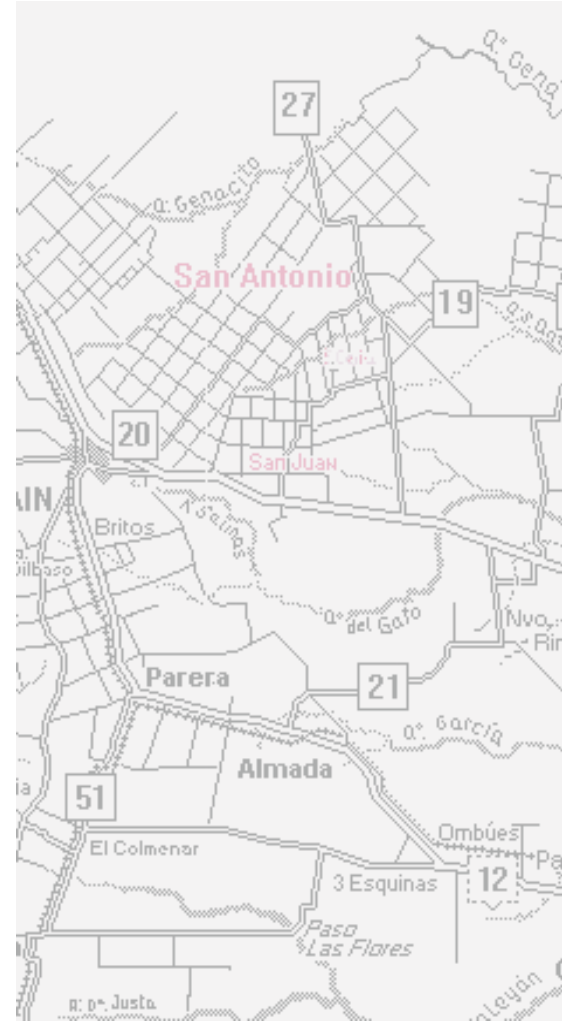
As regards economic affordability, there is no price policy. Prices are fixed by the private sector, but in general, they are affordable for the local public and, even more so for foreign visitors.

Figure 9 – Local gastronomy



Author: Broggi, J., 2003

5. DEVELOPMENT OF METHODOLOGICAL TOOLS



5. DEVELOPMENT OF METHODOLOGICAL TOOLS

5.1 Inventory form of the cultural heritage of the Villages

Considering that the heritage of the Villages is very rich in its different manifestations, three forms were drafted:

File I) Inventory of the Real Estate Tangible Cultural Heritage;

File II) Inventory of the Movable Tangible Cultural Heritage;

File III) Inventory of the Intangible Cultural Heritage; herein below reproduced:

Forms applied by governmental organizations and research teams from universities in Argentina were considered as base for the drafting of this file.

The forms that were consulted are:

-Form "Inventory of National Museums Program" (National Committee of Museums, Monuments and Historical Places – National Arts Fund - International Council on Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS, Argentina).

-Guide form for the drafting of "Inventories of immaterial cultural heritage" (Direction of Heritage of the Ministry of Culture, Government of Colombia, 2005).

-Inventory form of Representative Buildings (General Direction of Heritage, Sub-Secretariat of Cultural Heritage, Secretariat of Culture of the Buenos Aires City Government, 2001).

-Form Dissemination and Awareness Raising Program "Buenos Aires: Patrimonio de Todos", Subprogram of Survey and Mapping of Buildings and Elements of Heritage Value of the City of Buenos Aires (General Direction of Heritage, Sub-Secretariat of Cultural Heritage, Secretariat of Culture of the Buenos Aires City Government, 2001).

-Form "Integral Inventory of the Urban Architectonic Heritage" applied to the Municipality of Vicente Lopez (International Centre for Heritage Conservation, 1999).

-Form "Survey and mapping of heritage and leisure resources – Tangible, Intangible and Leisure Heritage", "Local community, heritage, leisure and sustainable development" Program (Environment and Ecology Institute-IMAE, Vice-Deanship of Research and Development, Del Salvador University, 2002).

-Form "Arquitectura, Industria y Progreso: Las Bodegas vitivinícolas de Mendoza en el Centenario" (Girini, L., Architecture, Urbanism and Design School, Universidad de Mendoza, 2002).

-Form "Ruta Cultural de la Industria Harinera del Norte Sanjuanino" (Márquez, E., Gómez, R.; Romero, A., Regional Institute of Planning and Habitat, Architecture and Design School, Universidad Nacional de San Juan, 2005).

Form I – Inventory of Tourist Resources: Property Tangible Cultural Heritage (immovable)

TANGIBLE AND INTANGIBLE HERITAGE OF THE VOLGA GERMAN VILLAGES (DEPARTMENT OF GUALEGUAYCHÚ, ENTRE RÍOS PROVINCE, ARGENTINA)	File #	Code
INVENTORY OF THE PROPERTY TANGIBLE CULTURAL HERITAGE (IMMOVABLE)	Date:	

IDENTIFICATION OF THE PROPERTY	(PICTURE)
Name:	
Province:	
Department:	
Locality:	
Address:	

PROPERTY INFORMATION	(LOCATION IN MAP LOCALITY)
Author:	
Year:	

EVALUATION OF CURRENT CONDITION	Very good	Good	Regular	Poor
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USES			
	Original	Current	Possible tourist uses
Household			
Education			
Religion			
Cultural			
Recreational			
Industrial			
Commercial			
Productive (rural)			
Administrative			
Other			

DOMAIN		TYPE OF PROTECTION	
Public	Private (specify)	Existent protection	N#
National		National Regulation	
Provincial		Provincial Regulation	
Municipal		Municipal Regulation	

HERITAGE EVALUATION							
Evaluation							
	High	Med	Low		High	Med	Low
Historical-testimonial				Level of deterioration			
Aesthetic-architectonic				Level of risk or danger			
Landscape – Environmental				Degree of Transformation (architectural, structural, etc.)			
Value of Cluster or Group				Degree of singularity			
Level of protection				Degree of Adaptability (to new uses)			

ASSOCIATED PROPERTY TANGIBLE CULTURAL HERITAGE (amovable) (if so, specify)

ASSOCIATED PROPERTY INTANGIBLE CULTURAL HERITAGE (if so, specify Comment, among other things, on history, customs, festivities, traditions, events, etc. that took place in the site, and the symbolic value for the community, if applicable)

LINK OF THE PROPERTY WITH THE VOLGA GERMAN LEGACY

OBSERVATIONS:
SURVEY:
PHOTOGRAPHS:

Preparation: Toselli, C., 2005.

Form II – Inventory of Tourist Resources: Property Tangible Cultural Heritage (movable)

TANGIBLE AND INTANGIBLE HERITAGE OF THE VOLGA GERMAN VILLAGES (DEPARTMENT OF GUALEGUAYCHÚ, ENTRE RÍOS PROVINCE, ARGENTINA)	File #	Code
INVENTORY OF PROPERTY TANGIBLE CULTURAL HERITAGE (MOVABLE)	Date:	

IDENTIFICATION OF THE PROPERTY	(PICTURE)
Name: Province: Department: Locality: Location (name of the site or address): Author (if applicable): Year:	

EVALUATION OF CURRENT STATE	Very good	Good	Regular	Poor
------------------------------------	-----------	------	---------	------

USES			
Domestic		Industrial	
Educational		Commercial	
Religion		Productive (rural)	
Cultural		Administrative	
Recreational		Other	

DOMAIN		
Public		Private (specify)
National		
Provincial		
Municipal		

HERITAGE EVALUATION							
Evaluation							
	High	Medium	Low		High	Medium	Low
Historical-testimonial				Degree of authenticity			
Aesthetic				Degree of singularity			

ASSOCIATED PROPERTY TANGIBLE CULTURAL HERITAGE (immovable) (Specify original or current place or site where the property is located)

--

ASSOCIATED INTANGIBLE CULTURAL HERITAGE (If so, specify Comment among other things on history, customs, celebrations, traditions, events, etc. that took place in the site; and the symbolic value for the community, if applicable)

--

LINK OF THE PROPERTY WITH THE VOLGA GERMAN LEGACY

--

OBSERVATIONS:

SURVEY:

PHOTOGRAPHS:

Preparation: Toselli, C., 2005

Form III – Inventory of Tourist Resources: Intangible Cultural Heritage

TANGIBLE AND INTANGIBLE HERITAGE OF THE VOLGA GERMAN VILLAGES (DEPARTMENT OF GUALEGUAYCHÚ, ENTRE RÍOS PROVINCE, ARGENTINA)	File #	Code
	Date:	

IDENTIFICATION	(PICTURE)
Name (name or names with which the expression is known)	
Geographic location: Province:	
Department:	
Locality:	
Site or address:	

TYPE OF EXPRESSION			
Culinary knowledge (Gastronomy)		Dance, musical and sound expressions	
Celebrations, rituals, ceremonies		Languages and oral expressions	
Costumes and beliefs		Traditional forms of social, legal and political organization	
Elaboration of objects, instruments, wardrobes, constructions and ornamentation		Other	

CHARACTERISTICS

Carriers (social group that practices and transmits the expression)

Origin (reason originating said expression and time)

Spatial and temporal context (in which moments and in which places this expression is carried out. If applicable, detail a special date. State so should this expression be associated to another one)

Language (in what language the expression is)

Specialty (Specify whether it can only be practiced by a group in particular, for example, only by women, men, elderly people, etc.)

Influence area (other nearby places where this expression is shared)

Learning: (in which ways and in what places it is taught and/or it can be learnt)

Description (write all the details of the expression: order of the actions and the preparation included; subject-matter and argument; songs, music and movements; costumes, instruments, objects and food; materials, ingredients, tools, etc. The function of the different parts and objects).

Transformations (mention the changes that the expression has undergone, in what times and which the reasons for these changes have been, if any)

VALUATION OF THE EXPRESSION							
	High	Medium	Low		High	Medium	Low
Symbolic value (importance of the signification and sign of community identity)				Degree of authenticity			
Risks (danger represented should the expression be no longer practiced)				Degree of singularity			
Support (number of organizations or institutions that support the practice of this expression)				Degree of accessibility (availability and acceptance by the community to show their expression to visitors)			

LINK OF THE PROPERTY WITH THE VOLGA GERMAN LEGACY

OBSERVATIONS:
SURVEY:
PHOTOGRAPHS:

Preparation: Toselli, C., 2005

5.2 Tourist prioritization of attractions and resources of the cultural heritage

For the tourist prioritization of the resources or attractions of the existent cultural heritage, a “Matrix of qualitative-quantitative evaluation of the tourist potential of cultural heritage” was drafted.

According to Domínguez de Nakayama (1994) the tourist potential of a site is a complex interpretation based on the junction of aesthetic or emotional values, the conditions of the environment and the accessibility, thus "the inclusion of the cultural heritage into a tourist product requires that it be **attractive, suitable and available**".

This way, the proposed matrix would allow, fundamentally, evaluating the potential of a tourist attraction or resource considering the following attributes: attractiveness, suitability and availability.

Each one of the hereinabove mentioned attributes includes a series of indicators; they are evaluated as from a previously assigned rating scale [e.g. high rating (10 points), mid (5 points); low (0 points)]. The sum of all the points results in a value that, through the comparison between different evaluated resources or attractions, allows to determine the potentiality and prioritization in order to be included, or not, in a tourist-cultural circuit proposal.

The proposed matrix was drafted considering the methodology proposed by Domínguez de Nakayama (1994), Daverio et al. (2001) and Flier et al. (2005).

Chart 2: Qualitative-Quantitative evaluation matrix of the tourist potential of resources of cultural heritage

ATTRIBUTES	INDICATORS	RATING			RESULT/ SCORE
		HIGH (10 points)	MID (5 points)	LOW (0 points)	
ATTRACTIVENESS					
	1.Singularity				
	2.Authenticity				
	3.Diversity				
	4.Emotional value				
	5.Degree of preservation				
	6.Ability to integrate or thematize				
	7.Supplementary tourist resources or attractions				
	TOTAL ATTRACTIVENESS				/ 70*
SUITABILITY					
	1.Type of possible tourist activity				
	2.Temporality				
	3.Load capability				
	4.Available tourist services and equipment				
	5.Support service				
	6.Degree of protection				
	7.Security				
	TOTAL SUITABILITY				/ 70*
ACCESSIBILITY					
	1. Temporal accessibility				
	2. Physical or spatial accessibility				
	3. Administrative accessibility				
	4. Economic accessibility				
	5. Information/interpretation accessibility				
	6. Cultural accessibility				
	TOTAL ACCESSIBILITY				/ 60*
	TOTAL ATTRACTIVENESS + SUITABILITY + ACCESSIBILITY				/200**

Source: Preparation Toselli, C. (2006), based on Nakayama (1994), Daverio et al. (2001) and Flier et al. (2005).

* Top rating granted to each attribute.

** Top score for the resource or attraction to be evaluated.

With regards to the proposal for the application of an evaluation matrix of the tourist potential, it is important to consider that “all these aspects require an integral evaluation, therefore, an exercise that helps establish values for each one of the considered aspects, plus some others that arise by comparison is proposed. Actually, the sequence of necessary reasoning to base a value is more important than the value itself”, (Dominguez de Nakayama, 1994).

Both the application of inventory forms and of the evaluation of tourist potential matrix require team work, especially the matrix, since it requires the discussion among a professional team, and in practice, it is necessary to consider the various interpretations to reach reasoned and agreed conclusions.

5.2.1 Concept definition of attributes and indicators

a) Attractiveness

Attractiveness depends on the intrinsic qualities of the tourist attraction or resource, or else, of the preferences of users, or changes in the tendencies of tourist demand. In both cases, this situation has the ability to generate certain tourist influx, whether at a local, regional, national or international level. It is important to consider, in particular, that the “attractiveness” attribute must be evaluated according to the market it seeks to target said attraction or resource.

This attribute includes the following indicators:

1. Singularity: unique feature, notoriously different in the country/ region, or else, exceptional due to its quality or strangeness.
2. Authenticity: real, indigenous, original from the place.
3. Diversity: set of different elements that enrich the resource or attraction.
4. Emotional value: preferences of users with respect to the inner, subjective, and therefore individual motivations that determine the preference to visit certain places.
5. Degree of preservation.
6. Ability to integrate/ thematize: “in the field of culture, man is who has to harmonize the constitutive elements, stressing the common theme of the relationships of its ancestors and its contemporaries and considering the idea that nothing is accidental: each product of humanity is the expression of multiplicity of factors that influence and are amalgamate with the creative capacity of each individual or the community as

a whole. In the field of tourism, integration of cultural resources with other analogous ones or with its natural environment, it is important to provide the tourist with a more complex image, that allows to have a more full understanding of the territorial heritage" (Domínguez de Nakayama, 1994).

7. Other supplementary tourist resources or attractions.

With regards to the "emotional value" indicator (within the "attractiveness" attribute) it is important to highlight that "it is probably the least suitable aspect to be tackled for its evaluation since its acceptance or rejection is not related to human motivations and these are part of the subjectivity of people. Therefore the importance of incorporating measurement methods among users where preferences and feelings can be evaluated, relating these experiences with age, experience, genre, curiosity, memory and mood. This depends on the sensitivity of the subject, their education, value scheme. This way, it is possible to make out both the potentially capable tourist profile and the arguments to be used for such end" (Dominguez de Nakayama, 1994).⁵

b) Aptitude

The **aptitude** of the resource or attraction corresponds to the conditions that favour its insertion into tourist activity.

The indicators to be considered within this variable are:

⁵ On this point in particular, it is interesting to relate what Bonet (1998) poses in relation to cultural consumption: "in order to truly know the main factors that explain cultural consumption, it is necessary to ask people about the reasons that have led them to consume a certain cultural product". This way, he considers necessary to gain insight into the aspects that make up the formation of human capital of individuals – inside which the "cultural capital" is included – that is to say, the experience that targets the preferences of consumers towards the asset they know best. In this sense, family surrounding and former experience are keys that explain behavior and formation of the preferences of the public. These concepts are also applied in the cultural tourist field, allowing the differentiation of different cultural tourist typologies, as well as the design of promotion strategies, at different scales.

1. Classification of possible tourist activities: appreciation resulting from considering both the conditions of the physical and/or built environment and the performance of certain activities (observation, photography, long walks, horse riding, etc.)
2. Seasonality: Period or time more suitable to visit the resource or attraction due to weather conditions. It is important to consider within this indicator if the environment be suitable for an activity only in certain times of the year, or that its performance be more advisable at certain times or moments of the day.
3. Load capability: this indicator is directly linked to the vulnerability of the asset. According to Cevallos Lascurain (1994) "the tourist load capacity is the load capacity of the biophysical and social environment in exclusive relation to the activity and the tourist development. It refers to the maximum level of visitors and infrastructure that an area may stand without causing detrimental effects on the resources or decreasing the quality of satisfaction of visitors or that there occurs an adverse impact on the society, economy or culture of an area". Therefore, the load capacity can be measured not only in ecological terms, but also in psychological and sociocultural terms. That is to say, there will be a physical-environmental boundary in an area (square meters, water, soil, air pollution; flora and fauna impact, etc.) which poses the need to consider the intensity of usage of the resource or attraction, for which end it is necessary to bear in mind the number of people that can simultaneously enjoy the resource or attraction, as well as the frequency. Similarly, there is a psycho-social boundary that determines in what way the development of the activity can affect the local community and tourists themselves.
4. Available tourist services and equipment
5. Support services: basic infrastructure available for usage by visitors (bathroom fittings, potable water, etc.)
6. Protection degree: whether the area is legally protected.
7. Security: it is related to all those aspects that do not imply risks or dangerous situations for visitors.

c) Availability or Accessibility⁶

According to Juan Tresserras and Matamala (2005 a) "the transformation of a heritage resource into a cultural product has three stages: identification, conceptualization, creation and management of the cultural product. [...therefore] guaranteeing accessibility is central for the creation of cultural products susceptible to become integrated into a cultural tourist offer". In this sense, it is then important to consider availability, or accessibility to the resource or attraction for visitors, whether in its temporal, physical/spatial, economic, administrative, information and cultural dimension.

1. Temporal accessibility: It is related with the possibility of accessing the place during the different times of the year, days of the week or hours of the day. There might be limiting factors of a natural or whether character (water level rising, rains, snowfalls, etc.), or artificial (restrictive regulations imposed by the competent authority).
2. Physical or spatial accessibility: It refers to the possibility of accessing to the resource or attraction, as well as to the mobility in the resource or attraction. Therefore, there is an "external physical accessibility" (existence and possibility of using the physical access roads as well as resource and tourist centres, or else, places where basic tourist services are provided, the state of access roads (type of road, maintenance, signalling, etc.), means of transportation and their frequency, considering the possibility of giving a lift to those users who do not own a vehicle.

"Internal physical accessibility" refers to the existence and possibility of using roads, internal paths, etc. In this respect, as was the case in the previous point, it is important to consider their condition, a proper signalling that allows visitors to properly move around inside the place, and the means and frequency of transportation, should they be necessary to move around "in situ" in the place.

Just like in the previous indicator, physical or spatial accessibility can have factors, both natural and artificial. Similarly, in this point, evaluating mobility for people with different capabilities is important.

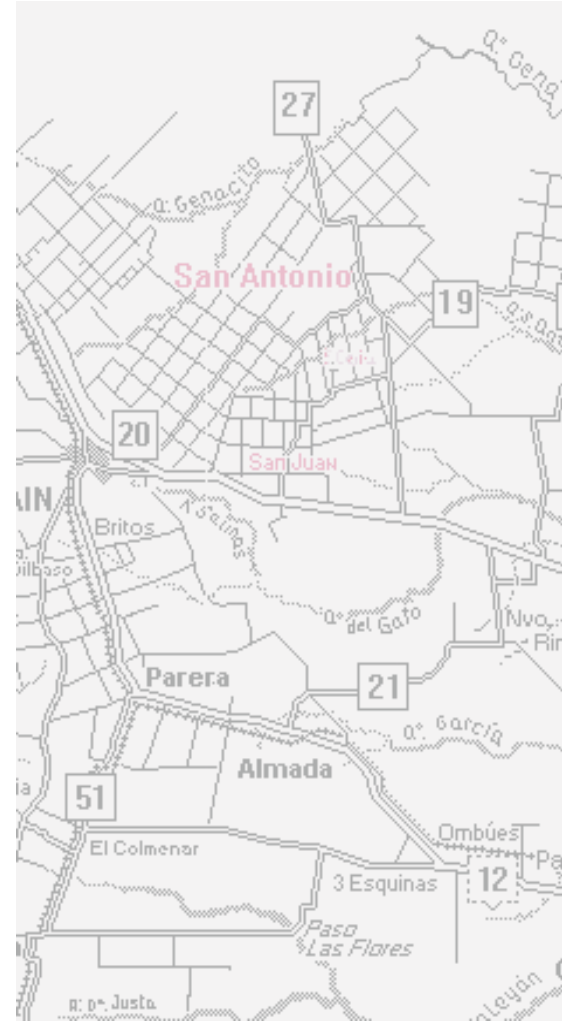
3. Administrative accessibility: It refers to the authorization needed to access or enter the resource or attraction. There shall be various degrees according to who the property owner is (state or privately owned) and to the regime it is submitted. It is

⁶ Economic, information and cultural accessibility indicators will be included in the Evaluation Matrix, in the case of an attraction but not of a tourist resource (since the former is considered to have certain tourist influx, offers certain services, marketing systems, etc., whereas the latter does not).

important to bear in mind that should the resource or attraction meet the conditions of attractiveness and aptitude, but there is a disposition, for any reason, that prevents the access to the resource, the latter shall be excluded. In this sense, there is a wide range between prohibition and absolute accessibility, which ranges from a visit with a prior authorization, paying a fee, presentation of certain documentation, or else, a pre-determine behaviour (no smoking, no pictures, etc.).

4. Economic accessibility: It is related to price policy. According to Juan Tresserras and Matamala (2005 a), if the importance that the public have access to the heritage is considered "it its necessary to develop strategies with a defined price policy of the appropriate services and products, both for the citizenship and for visitors".
5. Information accessibility: It refers to the availability of information for the visitor, both prior to the trip, and once in the place. "The main need of any type of tourist is to access to the proper information, both before beginning the trip and during their stay in the place of destination; in both cases the use of information technologies is growing in importance. And, evidently, the basic points demanded by this type of tourists are: how to get there, where to eat, where to sleep, and the cultural activities offered in the area" (Juan Tresserras and Matamala, 2005 a).
6. Cultural accessibility: It is important to communicate "basic rules that enable visitors to interpret the cultural resource with their prior education or formation. Those responsible of the value enhancement of the resource must get through an educational message adapted to the profile of visitors, and present signage in agreement with them and with their access and usage form... Differences in religion, values, ethical codes may easily interfere, thus communication is necessary to prevent conflicts [...] The information offered must not only be generic information and information related to access to the resource, instead, it should warn, from a point of view of respect to intimacy, when visiting patios and private houses, and should issue indications for photograph-taking in certain cultural manifestations, as well as indicate the appropriate dress code when visiting religious buildings and groups or even explain what a certain meal or gastronomic product is made of. On other occasions, the cultural product itself requires further efforts to contextualize and situate visitors" (Juan Tresserras and Matamala, 2005a). However, as Morales Miranda (2001) suggests, in interpretation techniques it is important not to hurt the sensitivity of the inhabitants.

6. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS



6. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

According to the categorization proposed by the Organization of American States (OAS), the villages correspond to the "Cultural Manifestation" and "Scheduled Events" category, since it is possible to find tangible and intangible heritage therein, as well as cultural expressions, such as celebrations, traditions and customs belonging to the Volga Germans, brought into our country in the 19th Century, and preserved to present.

Their insertion and articulation inside the "Southern Towns of Entre Ríos" circuit is of vital importance for their development as a cultural tourist product. This allows them, both the main localities (Guauguaychú, Urdinarrain) and the smaller one, in this case the villages, to mutually strengthen. In the case of Guauguaychú, the circuit contributes added value, since it provides it with the possibility of differentiation and/or diversification in its offer of a "river and beach" and "carnival", as well as allowing them to think new strategies as they are in the "mature destination" stage (Juan Tresserras and Yáñez, 2005; André, et al., 2005). In the case of the villages, this situation represents an opportunity since, as Bonet says (2003) in his strategies of possible development "frequently, an isolated element [...] has very little chance to survive in the media market of tourist offers. That is why, it is convenient to become integrated in the promotion of different regional itineraries or in theme networks, or to become associated with other points of tourist attraction points seeking supplementary offers (alternative activity or road outside a large city or for rainy days in a beach area)". Therefore, even if inserted as a supplementary product in the offer of a head city of the Department, Guauguaychú, this allows them a greater spreading and development of their tourist possibilities, which would otherwise not be possible, or would mean greater promotion and commercialization efforts.

The tourist visiting these villages is inside the domestic tourism or internal tourism category (Juan Tresserras and Yáñez, 2005) and the "proximity tourism" category, since they come from urban and metropolitan areas, taking short trips (a one-day visit, weekends). On the other hand, according to Bonet's (2005 aa) classification on cultural tourism, it could be stated that we are facing a "curious" and "enthusiastic" tourist typology. Nevertheless, in the past two years, significant efforts have been made to attract a more specific tourist segment -the "passionate" tourist - characterized by coming from the great city (in this case Buenos Aires, main issuing centre) seeking tranquillity, authenticity, kind treatment, and with a great need to "return to one's origins". In this point, it is interesting to highlight that in the case of San Antonio Village, the latter has been lately visited by European tourism (among them German, French and English people) even if sporadically. However, a possibility to open these destinations to a type of consumer coming from industrialized markets, more

and more widely informed, more demanding, aware of environmental and cultural sustainability could be seen herein.

With regards to the tourist offer, San Antonio Village is much more developed in comparison to other villages, whether due to its accessibility, infrastructure, basic services, or the existence of tourist ventures in the private sector.

On the other hand, San Juan Village is the village that best preserves its infrastructure and original layout, with "brick" constructions, which date back to its foundation and which are true historical relics. Possibly, it is the most attractive of the three for cultural tourists. However, its tourism is not organized at a public or state level. And in it as well as in Santa Celia Village, the equipment and service for tourists is inexistent, there is no specific tourist area, and neither are there private initiatives targeted at providing tourist services, so that they are offered as a supplementary trips for those visitors arriving at San Antonio Village.

It is important to highlight the efforts that have been made in relation to the seasonal accessibility since a scheduled visiting program is provided, with prior booking, and the spreading of previous contact with operators to prevent inconveniences, as well as the efforts related to the spreading and promotion.

In order to synthesize the aspects drawn up in the analysis of the state of cultural tourism in the villages, a SWOT chart (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats)⁷ has been drafted.

Chart 3: SWOT on cultural tourism in the Villages

Strengths	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Preservation of a rich tangible and intangible cultural heritage based on the immigrant cultural legacy and quite pace of life, coincident attractions with the new tourist demands. -Location nearby to issuing urban centres. -Conviction from certain sectors of the community regarding the importance of preserving and making the cultural legacy of ancestors known. -A community with a will to work, with perseverance and dedication. -Group of villages that present a geographic unit and homogeneous culture.
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⁷ According to Gregorio (2005) "strengths and weaknesses is understood as those characteristics of the establishment/organization itself [... and of] the opportunities and threats those external characteristics or situations that favor or difficult the meeting of objectives of the establishment / organization".

Weaknesses	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Inexistence of local inventories or survey of cultural heritage. -Inexistence of recovery programs or ordinances for the protection of cultural heritage. -Lack of a joint work strategy between the public and private sector to develop the Villages as an integrated tourist-cultural product. -Lack of local policies that support tourist micro-enterprises or initiatives of the private sector. -Diffuse tourist awareness among inhabitants. -Difficulties with regards to spatial accessibility, signalling, access roads.
Opportunities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Articulation with the tourist-cultural circuit "Southern Towns of Entre Ríos", allowing for greater dissemination and promotion of its offer. -Increase in tourist demands targeted at rural and cultural tourism. -Strategic location with respect to Mercosur, and the closeness to the main issuing centres of domestic tourism in the country, such as the City of Buenos Aires and the Great Buenos Aires. -Possibility to make local human resources professional through specialized careers in tourism and hostelry located in the region.
Threats	<p>At provincial level:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Lack of legislation, inventories and/or programs for the preservation of cultural heritage in rural towns. -Lack of a program of cultural heritage preservation or recovery. -Inexistence of a program of improvement of paths and roads. -Existence of similar products in the tourism market.

It is important to highlight, as De Gregorio (2005) states, that the strengths and weakness are dynamic aspects, therefore, a same characteristic shall be a strength or weakness depending on the evolution of the surrounding and the performance of the rest of the similar products or offers in their environment. In this sense, for example, the issue of spatial accessibility, even if considered by its inhabitants and by several key referents as a weakness, has possibly favoured the preservation of its heritage till the present, and, in fact, it is what provides the villages with their current charm or attractiveness.

With respect to the possible contributions to the application of the tools proposed in this work for the drafting of inventories and the tourist prioritization of the resources or attractions of the cultural heritage, it is important to consider that the villages' heritage is very rich in its different manifestations. A part of it has been value enhanced, but another

part is completely unknown, as there are significant gaps with respect to this type of information.

Therefore, the application of these tools would allow:

- designing an integrated cultural-tourist product among villages, where each one's own attractions would be highlighted, but which, in turn, would be complementary;
- establishing the financing request to recover or preserve certain assets of the cultural heritage of high significance for the local community;
- establishing the need to implement a legislation that protects the heritage of villages;
- gaining insight into the aspects related to the local heritage for its spreading in the local community.

And in terms of what is strictly related to tourism, it would allow:

- rediscovering in the existent cultural heritage new attractions that allow widening the current tourist offer;
- collaborating with the processes of increase of the average tourist stay, as well as attenuating seasonality, a fact from which not only the villages could benefit from, but also nearby urban centres, such as Gualeguaychú, head city of the Department and tourist centre, or Urdinarrain, among other;
- providing base information to incorporate in brochures, maps, and/or promotion and advertising material;
- proposing the possibility of developing site museums.

On the other hand, the proposed methodology could be replicable in other similar characteristic places of Argentina, whether because their population are descendants of Volga German immigrants, or other migratory flows, or else, because they are located in rural areas, or in cross-border regions (due to proximity to the neighbouring country, Uruguay)

6.1. Recommendation and possible future proposals

In the exploration carried out in order to improve the application of methodological tools for cultural tourist circuits, this work, apart from proposing the drafting of inventories and an evaluation and prioritization matrix, seeks to propose a third tool: evaluation indicators of tourist-cultural circuits.

Hereinunder, some criteria is proposed that could be considered when designing a form of evaluation indicators, considering some indicator criteria prepared within the framework of the HICIRA project, financed by Culture Program 2000, European Union⁸:

Chart 4: Preliminary proposal of evaluation indicators of cultural tourism circuits

General features of the circuit	Name of the circuit; inventories in which the design of the current circuit was based on; authors that designed the circuit; inclusion in any tourist package; characteristics of the visitor doing the circuit; time and schedules when it is done; moments of higher affluence of visitors; distance from where they travel to enjoy the circuit; main drivers of visitors; length of stay.
Specific features of the circuit	Main central theme or themes; starting and finishing place, modality (tourist guide, self-guided, previous talks, etc); type of printed material provided to visitors; mean or means used to cover it; degree of participation of visitors during the trip; length of time it lasts; length or km covered; signalling available in the visited sites.
Content of the tourist-cultural circuit	Sequence order in which the different attractions are visited; places to shop, sightseeing stops, etc.; objects of local cultural heritage (tangible movable property) shown to visitors during the trip; tasting of typical dishes commenting their most relevant characteristics or ingredients; aspects related with intangible cultural heritage (legends, stories, songs, celebrations, etc); supplementary natural resources or attractions included in the circuit.
Local participation	Degree of participation and management forms of local authorities in the development of the circuit. Degree of implication and forms of participation of the local population.

⁸ Form "Evaluation Indicators of heritage equipment" and form, "Evaluation Indicators of Interpretation Centers of heritage" drafted by JuanTresserras and Matamala Mellín (Barcelona University) and Zanna (Università degli Studi di Palermo), HICIRA project, Culture Program 2000, European Union.

According to Juan Tresserras and Matamala (2005 a) "most destinations are developing thematizing or multi-thematizing strategies in their territory for the presentation of cultural tourism products targeted at both proximity tourism and international tourism. Cultural heritage is usually the base over which most proposals are structured. This type of realizations generally gathers different equipment or facilities under once same common theme, which allows knowing the historical evolution of the city, as well as a chronological period that allows to stress some differential or unique aspect or a certain character internationally renown".

In this sense, the drawing up of a strategy could be suggested that allows the installation of the brand or cultural tourist product called "Volga German Villages", as a theme circuit, which could include various instances:

-at a provincial level, the design of a cultural-tourist product could be imagined promoting the group of Volga German Villages in the province, synergically interacting with the proposal of the villages of the Department of Gualeguaychú and that of the Villages of the Department of Diamante and of Paraná.

-at a national level, bearing in mind that there is a flow of German tourists coming to Argentina, the possibility of attracting them within this segment could be considered, the tourist more specifically interested in cultural tourist, and the drafting of a similar program to the one belonging to the Jewish colonies, "Shalom Argentina Program", could be proposed, what would enable to rescue and spread the cultural legacy of the German people in the country, thus preparing a differentiated cultural product, very specific, but which, integrated at a country level, could help promote and spread the proposals issued individually by the very same localities.

On the other hand, articulating this proposal within a national program could be considered, a fact that at a certain point was suggested inside the National Secretariat of Tourism, articulating all the sites of the immigrant cultural legacy of Argentina as an integrated cultural tourist product, which links the heritage of the different flows that arrived at the country in the 19th Century and the beginning of the 20th Century.

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