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A geo-historical analysis of Antarctic tourism: practices and representations

Marisol Vereda and Marie Jensen

ABSTRACT

The first tourist voyages to Antarctica started in 1958 and since then the activity has been mostly reserved for a well-travelled elite. Tourism in Antarctica has increased significantly and expanded to embrace different ways of visitation. Considering Chadefaud's (1988) diachronic model of the evolution of tourist destinations, this contribution provides an analysis on the evolution of Antarctic tourism through Ushuaia as a gateway city, where most tourists arrive and /or depart. The temporal scope comprises the whole period from the first voyage in 1958 to the 2017/2018 tourist season. In this period, two phases could be clearly identified in the development of Antarctic tourism in accordance to Chadefaud's model: myth creation and maturation of the tourist product.

Key Words

Antarctic tourism, diachronic model, representations, tourist flows, tourist space.

Introduction

Antarctica has been transformed into an important destination for elite tourism, demonstrating distinct stages of growth and new modes of operation. Antarctic tourism can be defined as a commercial activity, where people travel south of 60° S (the Antarctic Treaty area), for leisure purposes related to wildlife, dramatic landscapes, scientific interests, or historic exploration (Jensen and Vereda, 2016). Several voyages include the sub-Antarctic regions north of the Antarctic Treaty Area, as well. Given the particular characteristics of the Antarctic continent, namely its remote location and isolation from major urban centers, tourism to the continent requires specialized gateways with specific operations regarding passenger changeover, logistics, and supplies, among others.

Various types of tourism have developed over the years, including cruise tourism, land-based tourism, flyovers, and combination tours of air and cruise transport. Among these, cruise tourism has grown most significantly. Antarctic tourist numbers reached 51,707 travelers during the 2017/2018 season (IAATO, 2018), a number that is expected to grow rapidly over the coming years. Most of the Antarctic cruise tourism originates from Ushuaia due to its relatively close proximity to the Antarctic Peninsula where most tourism activities are concentrated. In fact, Ushuaia has focused much of its economy to specializing in tourism services as a gateway to Antarctica. In the 2017/2018 season analyzed, 43,000 visitors traveled to Antarctica through the pier of Ushuaia.

The diachronic model of Chadefaud

Various authors have examined the history of Antarctic tourism (Reich, 1980, Enzenbaher, 1992, Headland, 1994, Jensen and Daverio, 2008, Jensen and Vereda, 2016). For this study, the diachronic model of Michel Chadefaud (1988) is used to consider the evolution of cruise tourism, and specifically the movement of passengers from Ushuaia as a gateway to the Antarctic. This model facilitates the analysis of the evolution of tourism through a systematic interaction between the social demand (the myth), the supply (the tourist product), and the space as a global projection of society. The purpose of this contribution is to offer an analysis of the evolution of Antarctic tourism by virtue of the type of practices developed and the representations of Antarctica achieved by the industry (visitors and tour operators). For this purpose, the sources include previous works (Jensen and Daverio, 2008, Jensen and Vereda, 2016, Vereda, 2005, 2010, 2016), statistical reports, promotional material, documents delivered on board ships, and testimonies from Antarctic visitors.

This model considers space as a social product from a systemic vision. The productivity of tourism is directly related to social demand, representing the projection in space and time of the ideals of the global society. This socio-spatial formation is made up of material spaces (accommodation, transport, activities) and intangible spaces (representations, images) (Chadefaud, 1988; see also Callizo Soneiro, 1989, Larrinaga, 2005).

The tourism product can be synthesized in a process that includes different phases:

1. Creation of the product: the first immaterial elements are generated that differentiate the binomial myth-product from the social representations about the space, which stimulates the generation of

material elements.
2. Maturation of the product: maturation is characterized by the expansion of the product and contains the different stages of its growth. It is defined by the accumulation of investments of offered material— essentially lodging, transportation, and practices.
3. Obsolescence: different changes appear, such as the emergence of other myths, new places of interest, other fashions, etc., where a period of inadequacy between supply and demand is evident.
4. Reconversion-mutation of the product: there is a possibility of generating new myths about the space in question that will make it possible to re-signify the tourist product.

Myth-creation phase

Attention is focused on the creation of the myth that gave rise to the development of tourism. The myth can be understood through a definition provided by Barthes (2012), which proposes myth as a language, a communication system, a message, and a mode of meaning. The myth refers to the mental representations that have their origin in different sources of information, such as texts, iconographies, photographs, and others, which confirm a communication system (Chadefaud 1988).

The initial moment of spatial localization of the first elements can be related to the demand expectations and the components of the product. The beginning, or the creation of the myth, is mainly given by the immaterial elements, generated by the mental representations.

In the case of Antarctic tourism, the myth starts from the dominant narratives in relation to the "heroic era". This is how collective representations about Antarctica are nourished by the travel logs of explorers, referring to Antarctica as a new space for discovery and exploration (Vereda et al, 2018).

In this sense, there was a first experience of "visitors" in Antarctica in 1933, aboard the ARA Pampa. More specifically, it was a survey voyage made by Argentina to Orcadas Station at South Orkney Islands. This voyage was accompanied by illustrious personalities: Juan José Soiza Reilly, the Buenos Aires journalists of the magazine Caras y Caretas, and his wife and daughter. The naval attaché was to travel with the family of Reilly, but the attaché stayed in Ushuaia, because he did not trust the ship to make the crossing (Soiza Reilly, 1933). A distinguished group from the University Club of Buenos Aires was also part of the expedition (Capdevila, 2001).

While this trip was not considered a tourist trip in the strict sense, it marked an initial moment of the "pre-tourist" phase, where a series of representations were already beginning to manifest themselves. In this sense, the description by journalist Soiza Reilly (1933: 22) was collected:

On the mystery of the Orkneys…
In reality, the Orkney Islands are often a mystery to those of us who live in big cities. The name of these fantastic islands suggests the image of a very white death. High peaks of silent ice, lost in a petrified sea of whiteness. Loneliness. Dantesque hell where the fire of snow burns in immobile flames.

The myth of Antarctica, which had already begun to take shape from the travel logs of the explorers, is nourished especially by the search for spatial alterity (Chadefaud, 1981), as seen in the description

made by Soiza Reilly, when mentioning the mystery suggested by the islands for those who live in big cities. Other elements stand out as well, such as the ideas of desolation and isolation.

Subsequently, the first tourist voyage to Antarctica took place in January 1958, aboard the ship ARA Les Eclaireurs, which marked the beginning of tourism to Antarctica. This first voyage was organized by the Argentine state, as well as the subsequent ones of this period, where the selection of eligible passengers for travel is notable: decisions were made based on nationality, occupation, and purpose of the visit (Jensen and Vereda, 2016). A passenger described the details of the selection process:

The news appeared in October 1957. The Command of Naval Transport in Argentina would study the requests of people interested in… interests? My wife and I jumped at the possibility. They would only accept one hundred passengers, they told us when we presented ourselves, due to the capacity of the transport, which would be used as a cruise ship. So that the voyage would have as much variety as possible, the selection would be based on nationality, occupation, and purpose. As for us, our purpose was purely and simply pleasure (which did not seem adequate enough): my nationality, American, my occupation, agricultural attaché of the embassy in Buenos Aires. Of course, we were overwhelmed by the news in mid-December that we were two of the three Americans chosen. We would fly on January 11 with the first contingent of forty-eight to Ushuaia, the southernmost city of the world, at 2900 Kilometers at the end of Tierra del Fuego. There, we would join the rest and embark on "Les Eclaireurs" (Nichols, 1959: 4).

In fact, the voyage was made up of Argentines and foreigners, with a large number of ambassadors, several newspaper correspondents, the governor of Tierra del Fuego, some artists and doctors, among others.

This selection of visitors highlighted the desire in having an "educated" class, with experience in traveling, and with the ability to disseminate the Antarctic experience. In this regard, the passenger and journalist Jutronich (1958: 2) expresses: ""(…) the trip should be useful to the primordial purpose of creating Antarctic 'consciousness'."

The remote destinations have a particular attraction, which Dann (2006) calls the anti-tourist attraction. That is, that there are few people who have actually visited these places is itself a form of attraction to visit the place. In some manner, a distinction is needed in the sense that Bourdieu (2012) proposes regarding tourists who visit massive places. These tourists with initiatives and innovators, who venture into new areas with little human intervention, often become the pioneers of tourism, motivating others to follow in their footsteps (Cohen, 1989). Through two fragments of Jutronich, a social distinction is made:

In terms of photography and cinematography, it is not an exaggeration to say that the value of the equipment amounted much more than one million pesos (…) he showed off a whole series of devices that ranged from a modern video camera to a tiny and perfect pocket camera (Jutronich, 1958:4).

Although this has essentially been a tour of tourism, it would be unfair to say that it was only for pleasure. Almost without exception, the travelers were men and women eager to expand their knowledge, to know the only region of the world that is forbidden to ordinary human beings

(Jutronich, 1958: 5).

The myth about the Antarctic journey is shaped by the idea of adventure and mystery, of a desolate and inhospitable place where death seems to threaten permanently. Also, masculinity is highlighted as an essential requirement to inhabit Antarctica, in reference to whom visitors met in the various stations visited.

From the very first tourist voyage to now, certain practices continue to be carried about, such as the logbook, called "The Tourist Penguin", and the issuance of a certificate indicating the completion of the trip. Stamp collecting was also an important group activity.

As for the components of the landscape, the sighting of the first iceberg stand out: "(…) and then the appearance of the first iceberg. The mass of ice rose majestically sailing slowly (…)" (Jutronich, 1958: 3); "(…) the icebergs began to appear. One was so big that it protruded more than forty meters and extended about three kilometers on each side, as if it were an ice bank rather than a part detached from a glacier." (Nichols, 1959: 2). "(…) and we went out to look at the marvel: the first floating iceberg that was drifting towards the north" (Cocaro, 1958). The presence of the fauna and its detailed description, especially of penguins, is also striking in the testimonies.

On the other hand, there is a clear reference to the "national feeling", a product of the Antarctic policy that the Argentine government was carrying out at that time, when the International Geophysical Year had just ended. This national feeling is expressed in the following way by one of the tourists:

The two hundred travelers who left Buenos Aires and crossed the Drake Passage to put their feet on Antarctic soil, saw with their own eyes how the Antarctic Peninsula and the swarm of islands that rise close to its shores are a simple extension of the mountain range of the Andes. They also checked with how much effort the Argentine sovereignty is maintained in places that are indescribably inhospitable (Jutronich, 1958: 1).

Between 1958 and 1959, three tourist voyages were carried out, transporting 456 passengers. They were characterized by having been made prior to the signing of the Antarctic Treaty and by having been organized by state agencies and with ships flying the flag of the organizing country. These trips were possible based on the experience gained through exploration, reconnaissance, hydrographic, meteorological, oceanographic and glaciological studies, and scientific research. They demonstrated both the technical feasibility of its realization and the interest of tourists in traveling to these remote regions, and the possibility of having logistical support forces. The itineraries were based on visits to scientific stations. Through the sensations of adventure and remoteness, the beauty of the landscapes, the diversity of the fauna, and the epic characteristics of these trips, voyages to the Antarctic managed to satisfy and exceed the expectations of tourists (Jensen y Vereda, 2016).

During the 1960s, tourist voyages began only in the 1965-1966 season. In January 1966, the company Lindblad Travel, with headquarters in New York, together with the tourism agency Astra of Buenos Aires, leased to the Naval Transport Command the ship Lapataia and organized the "First International Survey Voyage to Argentine Antarctic Sector" to the Antarctica in January

1966, constituting the first trip organized by the private sector. They departed from Buenos Aires to Antarctica on January 13, with stops in Mar del Plata and Ushuaia, later visiting the Brown, Decepción, and Esperanza research stations. This first Lindblad trip marked the beginning of private activity in relation to Antarctic tourism. A fragment of the newspaper La Nación evokes the moment (Diario La Nación, 01/14/1966: 7):

Antarctica is the destination of these 60 Americans who constitute the first "tourist contingent" that will reach the frozen continent .They left yesterday from Dock A of the metropolitan port, aboard the transport of the Navy Lapataia, commanded by Captain Zenon Bolino. The ship has a crew of 55 men, and special clothes, as well as technical and scientific materials, were loaded on board. These implements will be used by tourists -they belong to the high society of the United States - that are commanded by the explorer Finne Ronnes. During the trip, travelers will be dedicated to various research tasks, since the purpose of this unique journey is exclusively cultural. The scientific leader of the expedition that will conclude in the Argentine Antarctic is Mr. Lyman Sexton.

Once again, that the voyage was directed towards an elite and had a distinctive function, defined as "strictly cultural" and dedicated to "research tasks", is evident. Life magazine (Leatherbee, 1967) wrote an article about this experience, incorporating photographs of visitors interacting with fauna (Figure 1). As previously mentioned, Antarctic tourism had already begun at the end of the 1950s, and the Lindblad trip of 1966 marked a milestone that is still remembered today, likely due to the important international repercussions that it had at the time, as well as the continuity in the operations of the company under the same name. In this way, the "myth" about the Antarctic trip has been emphatically reinforced, especially by groups of tourists with high purchasing power and valued travel experience.

However, the myth continues to be filtered through certain elements that still characterize the Antarctic Journey. The logbook occupies a central place in the experience. In the case of these trips, they were written by renowned scientists and naturalists of the time, with drawings that gave an account of the sightings, made by renown artists, such as the example of Roberto Bateman (see Figure 2).

In 1967, Lindblad travel rented the vessel Lapataia again and organized two trips to Antarctica. During the next three seasons, he rented vessels to Chile and Denmark, experimenting with different itineraries not registered in Ushuaia.

The Lapataia ship, on the other hand, returned to make a trip with tourists to Antarctica in the summer of 1968.

During the 1968/1969 season, the National Tourism Directorate of Argentina organized a series of four cruises called "Cruceros Continent Blanco". The trips were made with the ship Libertad belonging to Empresa Líneas Marítimas Argentinas.

In total, throughout the 1960s there were 8 tourist trips to Antarctica. This decade was characterized by the continuation of voyages organized by public agencies of Argentina, as well as the beginning

of private Antarctic tourism through the company led by Lars Eric Lindblad, who hired ships from different countries, making different itineraries that departed from places as diverse as Buenos Aires and Ushuaia in Argentina, Punta Arenas in Chile, and Lyttelton in New Zealand.

To garner the participation of private activity in the organization of tourist activities in Antarctica the first Tourism Recommendation was approved (Recommendation ATCM IV-27) at the IV ACTM held in Santiago, Chile, in 1966.

During the 1970s, tourist activity was divided between private initiatives and initiatives promoted from different Argentine agencies.

In 1970, alongside the Lindblad Explorer voyages, a ship specifically designed to operate in polar waters was developed. The concept of expedition cruises arose, where trips to remote destinations that lacked support and infrastructure were organized, and where ships would allow both access and extended stay in the destination area, covering all passenger needs.

The National Directorate of Tourism was the Argentine state agency that promoted the continuity of tourism. Trips were made with the Río Tunuyán and Libertad vessels. As of 1974, and for two seasons, the Undersecretariat of Sports and Tourism of Argentina chartered the Regina Prima ship, under the Panamanian flag, and organized 6 trips in the 1974/75 season, as well as 7 trips during the following season.

During the following seasons of the same decade, the Lindblad Explorer (the ship designed to navigate in polar waters), made numerous trips. Notably, a 35-day trip took place in the 1973/1974 season, from the port of Bluff (New Zealand) to Ushuaia, marking the first tourist trip of Antarctic semi-circumnavigation.

In the 1972/1973 season, the Spanish company Ybarra made a trip called 1st Antarctic Cruise and Midnight Sun, aboard the ship Cabo San Roque, with a 720-passenger capacity distributed in two classes, completing 5 trips in the subsequent years.

In January 1973, the vessel Enrico C of the Costa Line arrived in Ushuaia with 888 passengers from Antarctica. Additionally, the World Discoverer vessel from the Society Expedition Cruises began operating in the 1977/1978 season, making two trips with 282 passengers.

In conclusion, during the 1970s, 63 voyages were made, transporting 16,824 passengers. In the 70's a "tourist boom" was generated, characterized by continuous activity during all seasons, participation by the Argentine State, as well as involvement from new private companies where larger ships were used in several cases. A vessel specifically designed for navigation in polar waters began operating for the first time and, in some cases, vessels carried convenience flags.

Although it is still an initial phase of Antarctic tourism, we observe how the myth is sustained and incorporates materials that indicate how to visit Antartica (see Figures 3 and 4) and reinforce the landscape components highlighted from the first trips.

In the 1980s the National Direction of Tourism of Argentina organized the last trip with the ship ARA Bahía Buen Suceso. From then on, private activity took the initiative in tourism, and in the 1980/1981 season, the Antartur company, based in Ushuaia, organized a trip aboard the ship ARA Bahía Buen Suceso, carrying 70 tourists. In the following season, it made two more trips, with 139 tourists. Antartur continued with Antarctic voyages in the 1985/1986 season, partially using the Polar Ship ARA Bahía Paraíso, organizing a series of trips during the following three seasons. From an organizational point of view, an emphasis was put on the "Antarctic Cruises Handbook", where rules of conduct exist that tourists must acknowledge in order to respect the legal provisions made by the Antarctic Treaty, The activities of foreign companies continued to develop with the Lindblad Explorer vessel and the Society Explorer; likewise, in the 1988/1989 season, the Antonia Nezhdanova vessel began operating, making 7 trips through Ushuaia, thereby anticipating in a way the sustained growth that would begin the following decade.

Once again, the importance of Antarctic trips with renowned personalities is noted. The Antartur company once invited the descendants of members of the Swedish Antarctic expedition 1901-1904, Larsen, Nordenskjöld, and Sobral, who were invited to hoist up the flags of their respective countries (See Figure 5). On another occasion, the grandson of De Gerlache was also invited, taking him by ship on the exact same date that his grandfather had embarked (Giró, pers. Com, 2017). Attention was likewise directed towards the learning and knowledge of Antarctica through lectures on board: "scientists, polar experts, and descendants of Antarctic pioneers illustrated the passage and historical aspects of the Antarctic Continent". (Giró, pers. com, 2017). In this regard, see figure 6.

In synthesis, it can be noted that during the 1980s 33 trips were made, carrying 3,017 tourists. In this period, the activities organized by Argentina ended, both by state and private initiatives, and tour operators began to engage in new itineraries.

With regard to Antarctic tourism operating through the port of Ushuaia, in the 1990s, it developed from private-activity initiatives of foreign origin due to exogenous and endogenous factors. For example, the greater availability of ships and specialized human resources in polar navigation can be highlighted. In particular, polar ships from the former Soviet Union became the most viable vessels of the time to be chartered, and thus expedition trips, without luxury, but with the possibility of having program activities that favored learning, were offered. In regards to endogenous factors, the infrastructure works developed in Ushuaia, made it possible to consolidate the Antarctic tourism activity. The construction of the international airport and the expansion of the commercial dock stand out. In 1995, longer runway (2,460 m) was inaugurated, favoring takeoff and landing operations. In 1997, the construction of a new passenger terminal was completed, thus providing the possibility of receiving a large aircraft. As a result, the frequency of flights to Ushuaia was increased, facilitating the operation of Antarctic tourists through charter flights that allowed the changeover of airport-port intermodal passengers. Additionally, in 1999, the length of the dock was extended to 520 m, allowing a greater number of mooring sights—a condition that added to the natural characteristics of deep-water and sheltered bay, optimizing the operation of Antarctic tourist vessels.
Antarctic tourism continued to reproduce the distinctive travel model, highlighting significant aspects of the Antarctic landscape (Figure 7). Likewise, Figure 8 shows the presence of personalities,

belonging to a membership and, in turn, a greater offer of amenities on board. The cruise season lasted 105 days and was on the rise until the 1996-1997 season, when the extension of the season reached 147 days.

During this period, commemoration trips were also carried out, such as the "Adrien de Gerlache Commemorative Antarctic Cruise", organized by the Belgian company Asteria, in 1997, 100 years after the Belgica expedition of Adrien de Gerlache to Antarctica. It was done aboard the vessel Professor Khromov, following the same route as the Belgian vessel at the end of the 19th century (Figure 9). In that same sense, commemorative trips, of the expedition of Shackleton, were also organized.

In this decade, there was an exceptional growth in both the number of ships and voyages and passengers, as a result of private initiative, also the International Association of Antarctic Tour Operators, IAATO, was created. This decade was also characterized by the use of boats with a capacity for between 50 and 100 passengers. Ushuaia was consolidated as a base port, and its share of total Antarctic shipborne tourism exceeded 90 percent.

In summary, during the 1990s, 585 voyages were carried out, transporting 55,013 tourists.

Maturity phase

This phase is characterized by the expansion of the product and by showing, in turn, different stages of growth. It is defined by the accumulation of investments that the material offer develops—that is, lodging, transportation, and activities. Accommodation was developed in the same cruises, although camping is also highlighted among the diversification of activities.

For Antarctic tourism the beginning of this phase coincides with the end of the XX century, at which numerous special programs were promoted, producing a significant increase in the number of trips, and especially in the number of passengers (more than 50% greater than the previous season).

Also in this phase, larger vessels operated, with a progressive increase in capacity that began to include Antarctic trips. Their itineraries originated in ports in South America, or were part of more extensive itineraries around South America or around the world, and would make a stopover in Ushuaia on their journey to or from Antarctica. In the 2006/2007 season, the first "Very Large Cruise Vessel" (VLCL) took place, called the Golden Princess, with a capacity for 3,100 passengers. South American participation was also added to the Antarctic tourist industry, with companies like Antarpply Expeditions, founded by Argentine businessmen with headquarters in Ushuaia, beginning to operate alongside the MV Ushuaia in the 2002-2003 season. Likewise, from the 2005-2006 season to 2011-2012, the MV Antarctic Dream of the Antarctic Shipping company, based in Chile, regularly operated a total of 88 trips.

The 2007/2008 season recorded the largest movement of this kind throughout the port of Ushuaia, with 44,605 passengers, while the following season was the most extensive, with a duration of 179 days. Concern for the preservation of the Antarctic environment and for enabling the development of tourism activity in a sustainable manner was presented in the agenda of the Antarctic Treaty

Consultative Meetings (ATCMs). Vessels with more than 500 passengers did not make any landings in the Treaty area due to the limit established by IAATO for its member operators. These limitations were adopted by the ATCM through Resolution 4 (2007) and in 2009, consensus was reached on Measure 15

Because of the amendments to Annex I of the MARPOL Convention (IMO), in force since August 2011, that prohibit the use and/or transport of heavy fuel south of 60 S, the presence of large vessels decreased in the 2011/2012 season.

From the 1999/2000 to 2009/2010 seasons, a total of 244,582 tourists visited Antarctica, while from the 2010/2011 season to the 2017/2018 season, 319,587 passengers visited Antarctica. Until the 2017/2018 season, the number of passengers in the 2007/2008 season had not yet been exceeded, reaching 44,605 passengers compared to the 43,000 in the last mentioned season, through the port of Ushuaia.

Also, there is a great diversification of activities, such as diving, kayaking, mountaineering, skiing, camping, among others (Figure 10). There are also groups with specific interests, such as birdwatchers and photographers, among others.

During this period of the 21st century, the characteristics of the Antarctic journey continue to be strengthened in its symbolic and material dimensions. In relation to the symbolic dimension, two works that were previously carried out based on surveys of Antarctic visitors on their representations (Vereda, 2010, 2016) indicate that visitors consider Antarctica as a special destination associated with a pristine landscape, remoteness, and exceptional wildlife. These attributes reinforce the idea of wilderness or wild nature, of Antarctica as the last place on Earth with unique environments that motivate tourist visits. The mention of explorers is related to difficulties (referring to the explorers of the heroic era), Shackleton occupies a leading position while the role of other explorers is sometimes subordinated to the nationality of tour operators and/or to the demand they address (Vereda, Obreque and Cohen, 2018).

Different factors exert great influence on the representations prior to the trip. It should be noted that high expectations a priori are mostly overcome during the experience. This process of satisfaction is achieved once the experience in the place is compared and evaluated based on those previous images.

The idea of a "once-in-a-lifetime experience" is particularly emphasized, as a unique experience itself. The purpose of a "learning experience" is highlighted, putting in perspective the content that is given to the trip from the conferences on board, the awareness of the importance of Antarctica, among others.

Several works that have highlighted the profile of Antarctic visitors (Bauer, 2001, Vereda 2005, 2010, 2016) show that visitors have a high income, are experienced in travel, and are mostly over 45 years of age. Most of the demand comes from the United States, followed by China, Australia, the United Kingdom, and Germany. China ranks second since the 2015/2016 season.
In sum, Figure 11 shows the evolution of Antarctic tourism from 1958 to the tourist season of 2017/2018, distinguishing the two phases identified: the creation of the myth and the maturity of

the tourist product.

Final remarks

The creation of the myth of Antarctic tourism has been based on dominant narratives related to the exploration trips of the heroic era, in which Antarctica is conceived as a new space of discovery and exploration, where the desolation and the difficulties were present in the representations of the visitors.

The first phase where the myth is created and fed back includes tourism practices in a remote and inhospitable place at the end of the world. Visitors recorded their experiences in their travel journals, gave an important value to Antarctic stamp-collecting, and those who organized the trips considered the "behavior of the cruise" through the issuance of manuals for compliance with certain standards, among other practices. The sense of distinction has always been present, throughout the processes of selection of visitors in the very first trips, the cost of those trips, and the incorporation of personalities that gave the trips or expeditions certain characteristics different from other trips, and the organization on board of conferences that gave trips an educational and awareness-raising quality. In this way, the activity was consolidated as the domain of an elite experience.

In relation to materiality, in the sense proposed by Chadefaud, during the creation phase of the myth, the materiality of Antarctic tourism was only made effective through the use of vessels that, as in the case of cruise ships, fulfilled the double role of transport and accommodation. During the first years, the ships did not correspond with boats designed for tourism, but for cargo and passengers, which belonged to the Argentine navy .

In 1970, with the start of the voyages made by the ship Lindblad Explorer, a boat was specifically designed to operate in polar waters. However, most of the ships used by the tour operators later had not been designed for an exclusive tourist purpose, since the ships that were available in the former Soviet Union were able to navigate polar waters but were not specially built for tourism.

The maturity phase begins once the creation of the myth stimulates the subsequent generation of material productions. This phase begins with the celebrations of the end of the Millennium. While Antarctic tourism shows its sustained growth over time, different stages occur due to the intervention of different factors. A significant diversification of practices takes place in the space, and the visits to sites in various areas are increased. Also, cruise companies with medium or large ships occupy a prominent place in the market that was previously reserved for tour operators that commercialized 'expedition cruise'.

In addition, at present, several companies are building new and modern ships, increasing their fleets, with important technological innovations regarding safety, environmental care, greater passenger capacity, and new options to provide varied experiences.

The model of Chadefaud foresees a next phase related to the obsolescence of the tourist product, which is considered also an instance of product reconversion. However, according to the current state of knowledge, the Antarctic tourism industry will continue to grow over the next few years, with products

aimed at an elite group that seeks to conquer the "once-in-a-lifetime experience". It is not yet possible to think about this last phase, given the visitor satisfaction continues to exceed expectations. However, there is the possibility of an increase in the flow of tourism, and that opening Antarctic visits to others might have a negative influence on the future, if a quality of experience is sought.

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Figure 1. *Visitors interacting with fauna. Source: Leatherbee, 1967: 80 y 81).*

Figure 2. *Travel diary of the first trip organized by Lindblad in 1966. Taken from: https://www.expeditions.com/globalassets/pdf/brochures/ANT-016_2ANTFUB6.pdf, recovered on 16/01/2019.*

Figure 3. *Letterhead and postmarked with motifs related to travels from the 70s (consulted at the Antarctic Documentation Center, UNTDF, Ushuaia).*

Figure 4. *Materials delivered on board of the ship Río Tunuyán, 1971. Courtesy by Ms. Posada.*

Figure 5. *Descendants of Larsen, Sobral and Nordenskjöld hoisting the pavilions of their respective countries in Base Esperanza. Courtesy by Ms. Giró.*

Figure 6. *Conference on board of the ship ARA Bahía Paraíso, 1980s. Courtesy by Ms. Giró.*

ANTARCTIC EXPEDITIONS ON BOARD
"AKADEMIK IOFFE"

Following the successful expedition last year on board the Soviet icebreaker "Professor Multanovskiy" [illegible] will offer four expeditions to Antarctica January/March 1995 onboard the "Akademik Ioffe".

These will be 13 day expeditions to explore the western coast of the Antarctic Peninsula with its unique scenery and wildlife, as well as to visit the scientific stations and historic sites scattered along its coastline.

Despite increasing tourism Antarctica remains one of least the visited of the world, a beautiful, remote and private world the size of Australia and China put together. Modern ice strengthened ships enable us to cruise safely past huge glittering icebergs and through floating sea ice and to walk surrounded by the solitary noisy penguins, seals, sea birds and sea elephants, etc. who live in splendid isolation on these rocky and snow covered shores.

We hope to have the opportunity to visit several historic areas, where Stockholm, Chilean, Gerlache, Dobrogliboom risked their lives in the pursuit of knowledge and whose many other have endured incredible hardships and sometimes death opening up the White Continent.

The modern scientific research vessel "Akademik Ioffe" will normally only carry 50 passengers (12 staff and 38 crew).

The expeditions will start and finish in Ushuaia on the following dates:

EXPEDITION 1	JANUARY	05	TO	JANUARY 17	1995
II	JANUARY	19	TO	FEBRUARY 02	1995
III	FEBRUARY	05	TO	FEBRUARY 16	1995
IV	FEBRUARY	16	TO	MARCH 02	1995

We enclose detailed information concerning the particulars of the vessel "Akademik Ioffe", the itinerary and the rates of the expedition. We also include a proposal concerning international flights and land arrangements from then on to Buenos Aires and Ushuaia.

We look forward very much indeed to seeing you on board the "Akademik Ioffe".

Figure 7. *Presentation of Antarctic trips during the summer of 1993 (taken from the travel catalog of Ute Hohn Travel and Tourism, January-March 1993: 1).*

Figure 8. *Part of the voyage program of the ship Illiria, summer 1992 (taken from the travel catalog of Travel Dynamics, 28 January-1 February 1992: 4 and 8).*

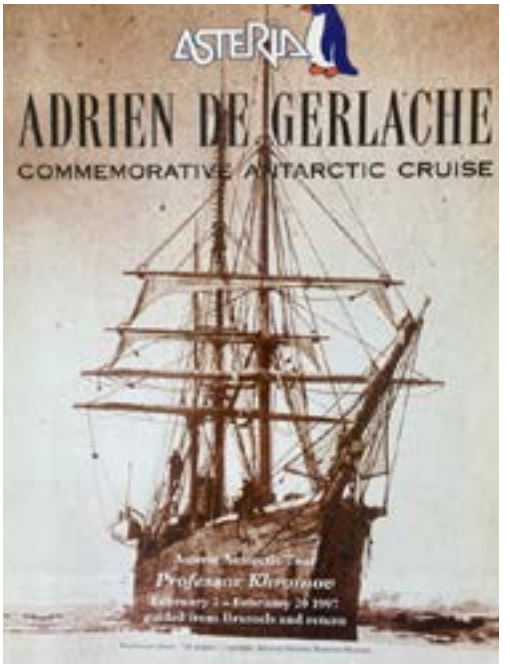

Figure 9. *Cover of the promotional material of the commemorative trip of Adrien de Gerlache, on board of Professor Khromov, summer of 1997 (Taken from the travel catalog of Asteria, February 2-20 1997).*

Figure 10. *Diversification of activities in Antarctica. Source: catalogs of Quark Expeditions and Oceanwide Expeditions, 2019.*

Figure 11. *Evolution of cruise Antarctic tourism through Ushuaia, period 1057/1958 to 2017/2018.*

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