

Griesser, Philip

**Department VI
(Geography/Geoscience)**

University of Trier

**Following the award of the academic title
Doctor of Philosophy (Dr. phil)**

**-Engaged Community Participation by means of Responsible
Tourism Development
Exemplified at the National Park 'La Campana'-**

Supervisor: Univ.-Prof. Dr. Andreas Kagermeier

**Date of Application for the Initiation of Promotion Procedures
22. May 2013**

Summary of the Dissertation

The aim of this dissertation is to demonstrate that the development of a management model for National Parks Management in Chile that is based on the principles of responsible tourism will increase economic, social and environmental benefits for the communities living in and around Chilean National Parks.

In addition to a detailed analysis of the National Park administration system in Chile, the state of research for Responsible Tourism development and community engagement has been indicated. Apart from the investigation of the exemplifying National Park 'La Campana', two further protected areas are being assessed in reference to international best practice. As a result, the consequent issues have been revealed that need to be addressed in/at National Parks in Chile and conclusively, the deriving hypotheses from the issues and best practice analysis have been pointed out.

The theoretical basis of the work is characterized by the differentiation of definitions for the identification and evaluation of relevant determinants. In addition to behavioural decision theories derived from the marketing science, further micro-economic theories and sustainability models are used for the clarification of the prerequisites for an enhanced community engagement. Theories of the cognitive dissonance, attitude theories, the concept of the resilience cycle, as well as sustainability theories, are brought together into a common explanation model.

An essential result of the thesis is that the undertaken empirical analysis clarifies that the general willingness by stakeholders is obtained to engage in responsible tourism- related processes in order to benefit the local community. These benefits will improve the livelihood of the local residents in terms of economic, environmental and social determinants. The thesis reveals, in addition, that the National Park 'La Campana', including the defined stakeholders, can be an internationally attractive responsible tourism product in reference to the introduction into the international market.

However, particular prerequisites are indicated and identified and positive effects can be derived, depending on the particular stakeholders.

In this case, the methodological approach of the thesis is based upon a primary onsite research of about 430 surveys with particular stakeholders. In this case, tourists, community members and local authorities have been questioned, using quantitative and qualitative semi-structured interviews, open-dialogs, workshops and discussion groups. A data set of socio-demographic and behavioural data of a visitor and community member cohort

constitutes the derived basis. Distinctive scales, motives and socio-economic profiles and the significant determinants of community engagement and visitor travel motives have been revealed.

In the empirical part of the thesis proceeds an investigation of the issues and hypotheses by means of statistical analyses. In this case, the objective has been to empirically verify the previously indicated theoretical constructs.

The discussion of the work serves for the response of the posed research questions, issues and hypotheses. In addition, limitations of the empirical evaluation and the further need for research have to be considered. Within this process, conclusions and implications are discussed in further reference to internationally conducted studies. The thesis concludes with a brief definite conclusion, emphasizing on the previously mentioned prerequisites for a responsible tourism development, as described in the following.

In addition to the understanding of the various issues in and around the NP 'La Campana', also the understanding of the particular travel motives of domestic and international tourists needs to be considered. Conclusively, the legal framework, the legislative basis for the protected area management, is characterised as an aspect that needs to be adjusted in order to create a social equilibrium in which the community can strengthen its position and its engagement in the tourism development.

However, the thesis revealed that one major consideration needs to be pointed out. The success of such an initiative for engaged community participations predominantly depends on the time dedicated by the other stakeholders to making community members aware of tourism-related impacts and how this affects their life and livelihood.