

THE TOURIST

A NEW AGENT AT NEUQUEN' (ARGENTINA) RURAL FESTIVALS

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In this article two religious festivities will be compared: San Sebastian de Las Ovejas and Our Lady of Lourdes, in Ailenco, both held in the province of Neuquen, Argentina's Patagonia. This relationship comparison will show different levels and intensities that took place in the Catholic Church and provincial policies; particularly due to the promotion tourism development has received in the region during the last years. On the other hand, the heterogeneity of actors (priests, politicians, devotees, etc.) and of interests (economic, tourist, religious, etc.) of both events show its multiple facets, many time enhanced or constrained by the own actors. Finally, the analysis of the organization and the meaning of this celebration will agree to thing about certain categories such as tradition/innovation or conflict/harmony.

KEY WORDS: *celebration, religion, rural tourism, Neuquen.*