



Norwegian School of Hotel Management

Master's Thesis

"Just thinking about it gives me butterflies": A case study of the benefits  
acquired by the Patagonian Expedition Race participants



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*"Patagonia!" he cried. "She is a hard mistress. She casts her spell. An enchantress! She folds you in her arms and never lets go". (Bruce Chatwin, In Patagonia)*

A warm thank you and hug...

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to Punta Arenas, its inhabitants, its streets, its stray dogs...

and to the endless,

*heartbreaking,*

beauty of Patagonia!

### **Abstract**

This thesis aims to identify the benefits acquired by the participants of the Patagonian Expedition Race participants, a multi-day adventure race that takes place in Chilean Patagonia, are in the hunt for in this setting. The interconnected domains of sports tourism, adventure tourism and serious leisure provide a framework for adventure racing. The benefits presented in the theoretical part are: The "flow" experience, the state of "play", exploration, the creation of "communitas", the felt self-change, the benefit of "transferability". The benefit-based theories utilized in the thesis draw on the study of Celsi (1992), more specifically on the transcendent benefits of high-risk sports, which are those benefits that "have properties capable of altering one's perceptions in terms of self, context, and others" (para 3). For this study, both primary and secondary data were used and collected in Chilean Patagonia prior to, during, and after the event in February 2012. Whereas primary data consisted of observations and interviews with single racers and teams, secondary data consisted of pre-race open ended questionnaires, video and audio material. The participants proved having received extensive benefits from participating in the Patagonian Expedition Race, which mostly had a transcendental nature. The racers experienced feelings of personal freedom, timelessness, playfulness, emergence of the true self, and harmony with the environment. Participating in the PER was said to give the chance to explore territories that would be hardly reachable otherwise and strong social bonds and team spirit were also identified. Feelings of personal development were associated by the racers with the Patagonian Expedition Race and previous adventure races in which they had previously taken part. Finally, the racers found the benefits acquired through the PER and previous adventure races to be applicable to daily life.

Keywords: Benefits, adventure racing, flow, communitas, self-change, Patagonia

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Adventure racing is an endurance sport that has grown in popularity in recent years and that consists of a variety of disciplines that the participants have to perform in a natural setting over a limited time span, which can range from a few hours to several days. In the course of the longer adventure races, which are known as expedition races, participants push themselves to their physical and mental limits, face sleep deprivation, extremely variable weather conditions, the possibility of facing serious injuries and lack food. This thesis, which is structured as a case study, aims at exploring the benefits experienced by the participants of the Patagonian Expedition Race, a multi-day expedition-length race that takes place in Chilean Patagonia on a yearly basis and that, for its remoteness and demanding nature, is also known as "the last wild race". The benefits considered in this study mainly have a transcendent nature, which means that they "have properties capable of altering one's perceptions in terms of self, context, and others" (Celsi, 1992, para 3).

More specifically, the question addressed is "what are the benefits that the race participants experienced by participating in the event?". Moreover, due to the paucity of studies conducted on the adventure racing phenomenon, this thesis also intends to provide a better understanding of the nature of such an endurance competition in the wilderness. The benefits that the participants obtain by participating in the Patagonian Expedition Race were considered as an interesting topic not only for the scarcity of studies in the field and for the amount of challenges that the racers have to face, but also for the fact that, as the racers are not paid for taking part in the competition and the winners do not receive any monetary prize, their involvement in the race is not "corrupted" by any economic purposes.

The theoretical part of this thesis is divided into three main sections. Firstly, a definition and a description of the phenomena of adventure racing and expedition racing, a description of the Patagonian Expedition Race, and a brief review of the previous research on adventure racing are provided. Secondly, the fields of sports tourism, adventure tourism, and

serious leisure, which in this thesis frame the adventure racing phenomenon, are presented in a dynamic perspective. Thirdly, the theoretical concepts that relate to the benefits experienced by the participants of the Patagonian Expedition Race are introduced. The benefit-based theories used revolve around the transcendent benefits that Celsi (1992), identified in high-risk sports. The study then continues with a description of the methodology used, which comprises the use of both primary and secondary data, a presentation of the findings, a discussion of the findings in relation to the theoretical concepts used, a critical analysis of the limitation of the study, and, lastly, a conclusion.

## Literature Review

### Adventure Racing

Adventure racing, henceforth "AR", can be found in different forms and, for this reason, it is difficult to define it clearly. However, Wilson (2007) describes AR as "a sport in which co-ed teams of two to four athletes cross large amounts of territory while engaging in a variety of physical, non-motorized modes of transportation" (p. 5). Even though the level of risk of AR varies from event to event, this sport was said to belong to the category of extreme sports, or "high-risk" sports, for testing the athletes both on a physical and on mental level (Schneider, Butryn, Furst, & Masucci, 2007).

In AR teams are usually co-ed and the race formats vary by duration, disciplines, regulations and remoteness of the event. Disciplines usually include a combination of paddling, rappelling, orienteering, mountain biking, trekking, rock climbing, swimming, problem-solving tasks and horse riding (Wilson, 2007). The course is undesignated and is scattered with several checkpoints through which the teams have to pass in order to progress in the race (Schneider et al., 2007). The only instruments that the participants are allowed to use for navigation are a map and a compass. At the checkpoints the teams can change gear and, sometimes, get medical support (Wilson, 2007). In order to participate in an adventure race teams pay an entrance fee and, sometimes, need to provide the organizers with an "athletic curriculum" that proves that each team member possesses the skills required for the competition (Wilson, 2007).

Based on their duration, Jamison, Moslow-Benway, and Stover (2005) identified three types of adventure races. In the first category we find "sprint races", which last between three and eight hours. The second category comprises mid-length races that last between 24 and 60 hours (Jamison et al., 2005). In the last category, which is also the category to which the Patagonian Expedition Race belongs, we find expedition-length races, which normally last

between four and 12 days (Jamison et al., 2005). Taking part in adventure races involves a high level of skills, commitment and risk, as well as the expenditure of a considerable amount of time and money, especially with regard to expedition races.

### **Expedition Racing and the Patagonian Expedition Race**

Expedition races are among the toughest endurance sport competitions and the hardest races to complete within the field of AR. Athletes need to master several outdoor skills, perform multiple sport disciplines through a variety of landscapes, "risk illness and injury, and to endure sleep deprivation, weight loss, extreme weather and harsh terrain" (Kay & Laberge, 2002b, p. 17). Expedition races are run all over the world and take place in extremely remote areas which vary in terms territory and climate. In 2012, for instance, the number of expedition races organized worldwide amounts to 15, although the number varies on a yearly basis (see Appendix C). Taking part in an expedition race implies being away from the daily work and family routine for several days, traveling to foreign countries most of the times and buying specific gear for the occasion.

The Patagonian Expedition Race (henceforth PER) is an expedition-length race that has taken place every February in Chilean Patagonia since 2004. For the remoteness of the area where the event takes place, the harshness of the territory and the extreme environmental conditions, the event is also known as "the last wild race" (Patagonian Expedition Race.com, 2012a; Siber, 2012). The competition, which is organized by the Chilean company Nómadas International Group SA and is the subject of a yearly documentary that is broadcast worldwide, includes several disciplines such as trekking, rope work, kayaking, mountain biking, climbing and backcountry navigation (Patagonian Expedition Race.com, 2012b). Teams consist of four members and are co-ed. The race course, the route length, and the amount of kilometers that the participants cover for each discipline change every year and the race route is always disclosed the day before the race start (Patagonian Expedition Race.com,

2012b). Until 2012 race duration and length have ranged from five days to two weeks and from 500 km to 1,100 km, whereas the number of participating teams has varied from nine to 20 (Patagonian Expedition Race.com, 2012a). In 2012, in particular, 19 teams took part in the event, with 17 different nationalities being represented (Patagonian Expedition Race.com, 2012c). The racers traverse swamplands, glaciers, native forests, lakes, rivers, channels, and mountains for hundreds of kilometers and, for the wideness of the territory, the participants often do not see other human beings besides the teammates for days (Patagonian Expedition Race.com, 2012b). The trailer of the 2012 edition of the race, which can be found in Appendix E, provides a hint of how the PER looks like.

### **Previous Research on AR**

AR is a relatively new phenomenon that has still not captured the attention of many researchers. While the topic has been studied mostly from the physiological and medical perspectives, a few studies approached AR also from the sociological, psychological and organizational behavior points of view (Edmonds, Tenenbaum, Kamata, & Johnson, 2009; Kay & Laberge, 2002a, 2002b; Kenworthy-U' Ren & Erickson, 2009; Schneider et al., 2007; Wilson, 2007) . No previous study, however, has been entirely dedicated to the benefits of adventure racers. Due to the small number of studies on AR in the fields of sociology, psychology and organizational behavior, which are the fields that mostly relate to this thesis, a brief review of all of them was incorporated in this section.

Kay and Laberge (2002a, 2002b) conducted two studies on the 1999 Eco-Challenge expedition race in Argentina. While one pointed out the stakes and struggles of the field of AR and placed particular attention on the authenticity and spectacularization of the sport product (Kay & Laberge, 2002a), the other suggested the emergence of a new social group that is common to both AR and the corporate world (Kay & Laberge, 2002b). The researchers found that the management-level corporate participants were overrepresented in the Eco-

Challenge competition and that they were more concerned with AR as a practice to enhance their overall work performance than with their mere performance in the field of AR (Kay & Laberge, 2002b). The Eco-Challenge was considered as an object of study also by Kenworthy-U' Ren and Erickson (2009). These authors saw in the race documentary an appropriate learning tool for their Organizational Behavior class, as the dynamics of the teams and the leadership skills showed by the racers were considered as a pertinent application of the topics normally covered in their course (Kenworthy-U' Ren & Erickson, 2009).

In the only quantitative study on AR, Edmonds et al. (2009) found that in an adventure race in Florida the collective efficacy of the teams, which is "a group's shared belief in their conjoint capabilities to organize and execute the courses of action to produce given levels of attainments" (Bandura, as cited in Edmonds et al., 2009, p. 164), was positively related with team performance. Teams' dynamics were also researched by Wilson (2007), who studied the micro-learning behaviors of AR teams in action. Finally, in a research conducted on the perception of risk among adventure racers, Schneider et al. (2007) found that the racers perceived risk to be under control, as they believed that their skills, experience, and the support received from their teammates would prevent accidents from occurring.

### **A Framework for AR**

The multi-faceted nature of AR makes it hard for this type of sporting event to be "mapped". Kay and Laberge (2002a) positioned AR in the field of sport practice and in a variety of external social fields. As for the field of sport practice, AR was considered to belong mainly to the sphere of "extreme/fringe sports", although its exact position represents a reason for debate among the community of racers (Kay & Laberge, 2002a). AR was also seen by the researchers as sharing values with social fields such as adventure tourism, corporate management, risk recreation and entertainment/media (Kay & Laberge, 2002a). For the purpose of this study AR is considered as belonging to only three fields, which are

interconnected and presented here in a dynamic perspective. These fields are: Adventure tourism and its subset of frontier tourism, sports tourism, and "serious leisure".

### **Sports Tourism**

Sports tourism is a heterogeneous phenomenon that lacks a universally accepted definition (Hinch & Higham, 2001; Weed, 2006). One of the aspects of sports tourism that has been commonly accepted by scholars is the distinction between active and passive sports tourism, i.e. travels aimed at actively taking part in sport events and travels aimed at watching sport events (Gibson, 1998; Hall, 1992; Hinch & Higham, 2001; Standeven & De Knop, 1999; Weed & Bull, 1997). As AR, and expedition racing in particular, is an activity that often requires the athletes to travel long distances to reach the spot designated for the race, which is usually a remote area, AR is here considered as belonging to the field of sports tourism.

Hudson (2003) considered sports tourism as a sub-set of overall tourism that includes a variety of subcategories such as: "adventure tourism, health tourism, nature tourism, spectator tourism, competitive tourism, recreational or leisure tourism, educational tourism, and business tourism" (p. 3). This broad view has been narrowed down by Hall (1992), who considered sports tourism as sharing commonalities only with health tourism and adventure tourism. In the field of adventure tourism Hall (1992) recognized sporting activities such as mountaineering, rappelling, sea and river kayaking, trekking, orienteering and mountain biking.

### **From Sports Tourism to Adventure Tourism**

Starting from Hall's positioning of sports tourism (1992), adventure tourism and health tourism, Hinch and Higham (2001) proposed a model that links sports tourism with hallmark events, outdoor recreation, health and fitness. More specifically, the authors

identified adventure tourism as a sub-set of outdoor recreation consisting of "recreational activities that occur within natural settings" (Hinch & Higham, 2001, p. 50). The boundaries between adventure tourism and sports tourism, due to overlapping aspects, have been subject to debate (Weed, 2006). On this matter Hinch and Higham (2001) suggest that, even though sports tourism and outdoor recreation, and consequently also adventure tourism, share many commonalities, they have to be considered as separate domains: Not all sports activities, in fact, take place in a natural environment setting and, conversely, certain tourism activities that do take place in the natural environment fall outside the commonly accepted definitions of sport. In accordance with Hinch and Higham (2001), in this thesis sports tourism and adventure tourism are considered as two separate fields.

### **Adventure Tourism**

Just as for sports tourism, the boundaries of adventure tourism are blurry. The lack of a universal definition for adventure tourism comes from the difficulties faced by scholars to define the very concept of "adventure". However, Hall (1992) defines adventure tourism as:

A broad spectrum of outdoor touristic activities, often commercialized and involving an interaction with the natural environment away from the participant's home range and containing elements of risk in which the outcome is influenced by the participant, setting, and management of the touristic experience (p. 143).

Besides being mentioned in this definition, the element of risk has been considered by several other researchers as a prerequisite for adventurous experiences to take place (Berno, Moore, Simmons, & Hart, 1996; Cloke & Perkins, 1998; Fluker & Turner, 2000; Morgan, 2000). Other elements such as adrenaline, exploration, exhilaration, stress and fear have also been identified as part of the "adventure" (Beedie, 2003, 2008; Gyimóthy & Mykletun, 2004).



Among the scholars who placed particular emphasis on the risk element, Ewert (1989) considered outdoor adventure pursuits and risk as being two inseparable phenomena and argued that people engage in adventurous situations with the specific intent of experiencing risk and the emotional rewards that the exposure to risk involves. Ewert's "risk-seeking theory" (1989) refers to Maslow's hierarchy of needs and asserts that risk is needed in order to achieve what Maslow defined as self-actualization (Maslow, 1968; Walle, 1997). Ewert's argument was challenged by Walle (1997), who thought that the risk-seeking theory was inconsistent with Maslow's hierarchy of needs (1968).

In order to overcome such inconsistencies, Walle (1997) proposed another less "shallow" view of adventure, which claimed that the ultimate goal of the adventurer is not to engage in risky situations, but rather to gain insight from performing the activity. In Walle's view (1997) risk only plays a marginal role in adventurous activities and is considered as a side effect of adventure. It has to be kept in mind, though, that Walle's "insight-seeking theory" (1997) does not imply the denial of a segment of adventurers who engage in adventurous activities for the mere sake of facing risky situations, but rather proposes that "a dual tradition of adventure tourism exists: some crave risk, others seek insight" (p. 277).

A more impartial perspective on the matter is given by Weber (2001), who sees both risk and insight as fundamental elements for an adventurous experience to take place. As previously mentioned, one of the few studies conducted on AR focused on the perception of risk among adventure racers (Scheider et al., 2007). The findings of this study suggest that the confidence that the racers had in their skills, experience, and teammates support made them have a distorted perception of risk and believe that accidents were unlikely to occur (Scheider et al., 2007).

A subset of adventure tourism that has been investigated in recent years by Laing and Crouch (2005, 2009, 2011) and that more closely relates to AR, and to expedition racing in particular, is the so called "frontier tourism", which involves high risks and takes place in extremely isolated areas. For this reason, and for the fact that frontier travelers are normally not aided by tour operators or tour leaders, this type of tourism can be imagined to lie at the very end of the adventure tourism continuum (Laing & Crouch, 2005). The uniqueness of frontier tourism, which was considered by Laing and Crouch (2011) as a "small but potentially important market niche" (p. 1516) that includes activities such as trekking, sailing, ballooning, deep-see diving and climbing, is that only a very limited amount of people engages in it.

Because frontier tourism requires travelers to be active in order to traverse remote areas, it can also be seen as sharing aspects in common with sports tourism. Activities at the "frontier" require a high level of commitment and are preceded by a demanding preparation period, which can be physical, psychological, or both, just as when adventure racers engage in an arduous training process before they take part in competitions (Laing & Crouch, 2005). As the areas where frontier tourism activities occur do not have any infrastructures, travelers have to carry their own food, shelter, and gear, and have to meticulously pre-plan their trip (Laing & Crouch, 2009).

### **From Adventure Tourism to Serious Leisure**

The element of risk in adventure tourism is also presented in a model developed by Brown (2000). Brown (2000) identified a continuum along which risk in adventure tourism activities can be controlled by an instructor, or facilitator, to four different degrees. To each degree of adventure corresponds a specific type of adventure-seeking individual (Brown, 2000). At one end of the continuum we find the so-called "passengers" who expect to feel completely safe and the instructor/facilitator to take risks and responsibilities for them

(Brown, 2000). Moving along the continuum, Brown (2000) identifies the "participants". These are individuals who are aware of some risky aspects, who accept to be alert and to do what they are told by the instructor (Brown, 2000). "Partners", on the other hand, are considered as peers of the instructor who share responsibilities with him or her (Brown, 2000).

Finally, at the other end of the continuum we find the "practitioners" (Brown, 2000). These are adventurers who no longer need the assistance of an instructor. They are completely independent and able to manage on their own whatever risks they might encounter (Brown, 2000). This last type of adventurers, which are similar to frontier travelers and adventure racers, seek deep engagement in the adventurous activities they are involved in, they possess high skills and are keen to face challenges (Brown, 2000). As suggested by Beedie (2008, p. 181), "the explanation for this type of engagement fits more closely with ideas of serious leisure", a concept developed by Stebbins (1982). The position of the adventure tourists is not always fixed. They can move back and forth along the continuum, from engaging in tourist activities that are more casual-like to activities that are more serious-like and vice versa (Beedie, 2008).

### **Serious Leisure**

The high level of commitment required by adventure racers and the growing popularity of the sport of AR, which suggests the presence of a community of people who share the same interest in this sport, recall two qualities of the concept of serious leisure (Stebbins, 1982). Stebbins (1992) defines serious leisure as "the systematic pursuit of an amateur, hobbyist, or volunteer core activity that is highly substantial, interesting, and fulfilling and where, in the typical case, participants find a career in acquiring and expressing a combination of skills, knowledge, and experiences" (p.3).

Serious leisure possesses six distinguishing qualities, which do not necessarily have to be all present at the same time for a serious leisure activity to occur (Green & Jones, 2005). These are: Perseverance, career, personal effort, durable benefits, unique ethos, and identity (Stebbins, 2007). "Perseverance" entails withstanding adversity such as fear, danger and embarrassment, with the purpose of gaining reward (Green & Jones, 2005; Stebbins, 2007). "Career" has to be intended in a long-term perspective and involves a step-by-step progression in the activity, as well as turning points and achievements along the way (Green & Jones, 2005; Stebbins, 2007). Long-term career relates to the personal effort that the individuals put in the activity. This "effort" can be seen in the form of willingness to acquire knowledge and skills as well as willingness to train (Green & Jones, 2005; Stebbins, 2007). The "benefits" acquired by performing the activity are of durable nature and deal with the enhancement of personal qualities. The durable benefits associated with serious leisure are one or more of the following: Self-actualization, self-enrichment, self-expression, renewal of self, feelings of accomplishment, enhanced self-esteem and self-image, and social interaction (Green & Jones, 2005; Stebbins, 2007). The quality of "identity" is closely connected with social worlds and refers to the social identification with the chosen activity (Green & Jones, 2005; Stebbins, 2007). For the individual involved in the serious leisure activity identity results in a sense of belongingness to the social world, which can be both emotional and physical (Green & Jones, 2005). Finally, the "unique ethos", also referred to as social world, is a subculture shared by the serious leisure participants (Stebbins, 2007).

Social worlds were considered with particular interest by Unruh (1980), who describes them as a "diffuse constellation of actors, organizations, events, and practices which have coalesced into spheres of interest and involvement for participants" (p. 277). As social worlds are not necessarily limited by boundaries, spatial territory or organizational memberships, they can exist at different geographical levels, from a local to international (Stebbins, 2007;

Unruh, 1980). Examples of social worlds can be the subcultures of surfers, kayakers, snowboarders and skateboarders (Green & Jones, 2005).

According to Stebbins (2007), performing a serious leisure activity has its costs, which should not be seen only in monetary terms, but also in terms of opportunity costs or disappointments that the activity might cause. In adventure racing these would be, for example, the cost of buying specific gear, of taking days off from work, especially with regard to expedition racing, and more "emotional costs" such as staying away from home for several days. An individual involved in a serious leisure activity sees these costs as insignificant, as the rewards associated with the activity pay off any possible downside (Stebbins, 2007).

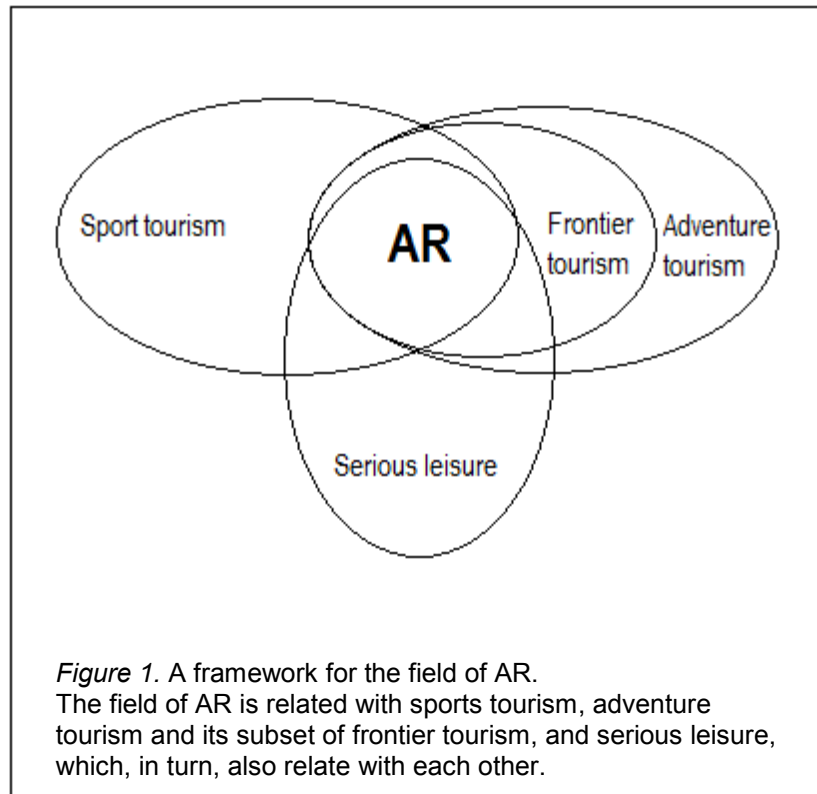
### **From Serious Leisure to Sports tourism**

Besides the scholars who focused on the relationship between serious leisure and sports (Getz & McConnell, 2011; Harries & Currie, 1998; Kane & Zink, 2004; Worthington, 2006), researchers dedicated attention to the relationship between serious leisure and sports tourism (Getz & McConnell, 2011; Green & Jones, 2005; Shipway & Jones, 2008). Sports tourism, especially when active, is an activity that requires "obligation, commitment and responsibility, often to a level equivalent to, or exceeding, that assigned to those 'work-like' activities" (Green & Jones, 2005, p. 166). When these criteria are met, individuals are said to be "serious sport tourists" (Getz and McConnell, 2011; Green & Jones, 2005). Green and Jones (2005) also suggested that serious leisure and travel to take part in serious leisure activity mutually reinforce themselves.

### **The Field of AR: A Visual Approach**

As the theoretical concepts presented so far suggest, the domains of sports tourism, adventure tourism and serious leisure relate with each other and with AR and, to a great extent, also

overlap. If we present these relationships on a visual level, AR can be imagined to lie at the very intersection of sports tourism, adventure tourism (and, consequently, frontier tourism) and serious leisure. The model appears as follows:



According to this perspective, AR is a multi-dimension sport activity that involves travel through and/or to remote areas where the event takes place and that requires "serious" engagement from the part of the participants.

### **Benefits Related to AR**

This section of the theory chapter draws on Celsi's research (1992) on the transcendent benefits of high-risk sports, which was considered to be particularly relevant for this thesis. A benefit was defined by Stebbins (2007) as: "an agreeable outcome, anticipated or not, of a person's participation in a leisure activity. That outcome may be anything appealing to the participant, whether physical, social, psychological, or something else" (p. 11-12). The term

"transcendent" employed by Celsi (1992) for the benefits identified in his study comes from their capability of "altering one's perceptions in terms of self, context, and others" (para. 3).

With the purpose of linking AR with Celsi's study (1992), it is useful to remind that AR was considered by Schneider et al. (2007) as a high-risk sport. Celsi (1992) identified three sets of transcendent benefits obtained by mountain climbers, BASE jumpers and skydivers: The "flow" experience, the creation of "communitas", and the felt self-change. In addition to these benefits, which are going to be presented in this section, this study proposes three more categories of benefits that relate to the field of AR, which are the state of "play", exploration, and "transferability".

### **The "Flow" Experience**

The feelings of personal freedom, timelessness, and emergence of the true self that were found in the respondents of Celsi's study (1992) refer to the concept of "flow" developed by Csikszentmihalyi (1975). In general terms, flow is experienced when harmony exists between an individual and the surrounding environment and when moments flow fluidly from one to another, with the individual being completely immersed in the situation (Csikszentmihalyi, 1975). The challenges faced are neither overwhelming nor "underwhelming", but rather within the range of the capabilities of the person (Celsi, 1992; Csikszentmihalyi, 1975). When challenges exceed the skills of an individual, an individual shifts from a state of flow to a state of anxiety (Csikszentmihalyi, 1975, 1990). Individuals in the state of flow act with absolute involvement and do not care about anything else but the activity itself and, contrary to what a person might think, oftentimes flow occurs when "a person's body or mind is stretched to its limits in a voluntary effort to accomplish something difficult and worthwhile" (Csikszentmihalyi, 1990, p. 3). Flow is hard to maintain for long periods and momentary interruptions are likely to occur (Csikszentmihalyi, 1975).

Csikszentmihalyi (1990), identified several prerequisites for the flow experience to take place. Flow is possible when challenges and skills are equal, concentration is at its highest and when the immersion in the activity is so deep that the individual perceives the task and the self as merging into the same entity (Csikszentmihalyi, 1990). The unpleasant aspects of life are left behind, goals are clear, feedback is immediate, and the individual is not worried about the possibility of losing control (Csikszentmihalyi, 1990). Finally, according to Csikszentmihalyi (1990), an individual who experiences flow feels that the self is at one with the environment and the sense of time is altered.

Researchers found that certain activities lend themselves to flow better than others, such as playing chess, rock climbing, dancing, art, games, rituals, extreme sports and adventure tourism activities in which the participants discover their limits (Celsi, 1992; Celsi, Rose & Leigh, 1993; Csikszentmihalyi, 1975; Gyimóthy & Mykletun, 2004). In more general terms, though, flow was found to be more likely to occur in serious leisure activities (Heo, Lee, Pedersen, & McCormick, 2010). Another central aspect in Csikszentmihalyi's study (1990) is the concept of enjoyment, which is said to contribute to flow experiences and to result in long-lasting feelings of novelty and accomplishment. Even though enjoyable experiences improve the quality of life, according to Csikszentmihalyi (1990) they have a side effect: They are potentially addictive as, after experiencing them, an individual might be unwilling to deal with the ambiguities of daily life.

### **The State of "Play"**

Although one might think that "play" is strictly confined within the realm of childhood, this concept is indeed applicable to the adult world and has been studied by scholars in a variety of contexts, such as adventure tourism, video games, sexuality, education, wilderness, and sports (Ackerman, 1999; Gyimóthy & Mykletun, 2004; Kerr & Apter, 1991; Pavlas, 2010). More than an activity, play has been defined as a state of mind or



a behavioral disposition that is pleasurable, enjoyable, and that provides those who experience it with a sense of freedom (Ackerman, 1999; Barnett, 2000; Kerr & Apter, 1991). For play to be experienced, activities do not have to be performed because imposed, but individuals rather have to engage in them on their own will (Kerr & Apter, 1991). When in a play mode, individuals leave worries behind and are very focused on the present (Gyimóthy & Mykletun, 2004). More specifically, while playing:

We seem to create a small and manageable private world which we may, of course, share with others; and this world is one of which, temporarily at least, nothing outside has any significance, and into which the outside world of real problems cannot properly impinge (Kerr & Apter, 1991, p. 14).

Kerr and Apter (1991), who focused their attention on adult play, maintained that individuals in a play state are not afraid to experiment, feel to have full control over things, to be confident, secure and unthreatened as if they were "encapsulated in a psychological bubble" (p. 15). For the sense of security that it generates, this psychological bubble has been defined by the researchers as "protective frame" (Kerr & Apter, 1991). The protective frame has a fleeting nature and in everyday life individuals constantly swing from a playful state, also referred to as "paratelic", to a serious, or "telic", state of mind (Kerr & Apter, 1991).

Kerr and Apter (1991) identified various stratagems that individuals recur to in order to trigger playfulness. Among these, we find the engagement in challenging activities, exploration of unknown territories, and facing danger (Kerr & Apter, 1991). Danger is faced within the protective frame and with a sort of adventurous spirit that makes the individuals trust their abilities or the fact that life-threatening moments are unlikely to occur (Kerr & Apter, 1991). When an individual stops experiencing such confidence, the bubble bursts and his or her state of mind shifts from paratelic to telic (Kerr & Apter, 1991).

This shift from the playful to the serious state of mind recalls the passage from "flow" to anxiety when the skills of an individual do not match the challenges that have to be faced (Csikszentmihalyi, 1975, 1990). As the characteristics of play mentioned so far suggest, play does only resemble flow in this sense, but has also other aspects in common with it. The fact that both in the play and flow states the focus is on the present moment, that individuals are not concerned with the possibility of losing control, and that they leave the unpleasant aspects of life behind are other aspects that the two states have in common. Despite these overlaps, play and flow belong to two separate realms.

Besides challenge, exploration and facing danger, a playful state of mind can also be triggered by competitions, whether these are against oneself or others (Ackerman, 1999). Play provides individuals with outcomes, or benefits, on an individual level, which will be described later on in the paragraph "the felt self-change" of the theory part (Kerr & Apter, 1991). Ackerman (1999) distinguished simple play, which is the one commented so far, from "deep play", during which individuals start focusing on their lives and experience moments of ecstasy. As a result of deep play, individuals test and redefine their limits, enhance their skills, and become adaptable to unpredictable events (Ackerman, 1999).

Just as for the "flow" experience, when performed, some activities are more likely to trigger deep play (Ackerman, 1999). Among these we find sports that take place in environments that are silent and remote, such as mountain climbing or, in this case, expedition racing (Ackerman, 1999). When in the wilderness senses are more alert, "and every sensation matters" (Ackerman, 1999, p. 21). In sports individuals in a playful state perform the activity for the mere sake of playing, and goals, although they serve to keep the motivation and the encouragement of the athletes high, have a marginal role (Kerr & Apter, 1991). The distinction provided by Ackerman between simple play and deep play, which can

be considered as a more intense and emotional version of simple play, recalls, to some extent, the one between casual and serious leisure provided by Stebbins (2007).

### **Exploration**

The exploration of unknown territories has always been an intrinsic desire of human nature, even though the purpose of exploratory journeys has varied throughout time. The most significant era in history for exploration and the discovery of new territories has certainly been the time span between the 15th and the 16th centuries, when explorers from the Western world, and from Portugal in particular, sailed towards unknown lands and seas with the main intent of pursuing economic benefits and finding new possible trade routes. According to Allen (1992), the Portuguese Magellan, for having set an end to "a hundred years of concentrated quests for waterways around the world" (para. 24) during his three-year journey around the globe in the first half of the 16th century, has to be considered the very last explorer in the proper sense of the term. After him, explorers soon turned into "simple travelers". Even though by the 16th century the majority of geographical discoveries had already been made, explorations continued even though the economic purposes of the journeys were replaced with a mere curiosity for the unknown and a pure "desire to explore for its own sake" (Duchesne, 2012, p. 87) and, by the 19th century, travelers undertook explorations to gain insight into themselves.

Exploration-like travels can still be found nowadays, such as the small group expeditions to Antarctica and the Arctic region (Atlis, Leon, Sandal, & Infante, 2004; Leon, List, & Magor, 2004). Frontier tourism and AR, as it was mentioned earlier on, because it requires the travelers to be highly committed, to carry their own food, shelter and gear, to traverse remote areas and face risky situations, can be seen to some extent as a modern version of the journeys that the explorers used to undertake in the old times, especially considering that frontier travels aim to retrace ancient expeditions (Laing & Crouch, 2009).

The journeys of frontier travelers can be highly intense on an emotional level and can, for this reason, trigger self-actualization, self-discovery and personal growth (Laing & Crouch, 2005, 2011). When engaging in frontier tourism travelers can experience "flow", which results in intense pleasure and enjoyment (Csikszentmihalyi, 1990; Laing & Crouch, 2005, 2009). Frontier journeys are described by travelers as possessing dream-like and fairytale characteristics and take place in "destinations that are resplendent in their natural beauty and largely unsullied by human contact" (Laing & Crouch, 2011, p. 1518). Once the journey is over, which is considered by the frontier travelers as having an epic nature, experiences are communicated in person, as well as on a visual level, such as with documentaries and presentations (Laing & Crouch, 2009).

### **Creation of "Communitas"**

The length of the PER and the remoteness of the areas where the race takes place make the dynamics of the teams an important aspect, as the racers live and face challenges together 24 hours a day for ten days. More generally, AR requires the combined efforts of the team members and "involves endeavors that require high system interdependence" (Edmonds et al., 2009, p. 166). Within the groups of skydivers, mountain climbers and BASE jumpers, Celsi (1992) identified a special type of bonding between the individuals who practiced these sports, which he referred to as "communitas". The term *communitas*, which was developed by Turner (1969), was defined by him as an unstructured, or relatively structured, society in which members are freed from their normal social roles, are equal in status and engage in camaraderie.

To Celsi (1992), *communitas* are not only an aggregate of individual flow experiences, as suggested by Belk, Wallendorf and Sherry (1989), but are rather characterized by a "conscious sense of team, common language, and shared responsibility" (Celsi, 1992, para. 18). The *communitas* identified in Celsi's study (1992) also manifested other characteristics

such as group involvement, sense of solidarity, common bond, suspension of daily life social orders, trust and shared understanding, just as a family would have. The individuals who belong to the same *communitas* experience a sense of egalitarianism, which also provides the ideal conditions for individuals to experience group play (Gyimóthy & Mykletun, 2004). Each member of the *communitas* brings his or her own share of experience and skills to the team, and contributes to shaping experiences that are sensational and profound, almost ineffable, and that are common to all members.

Besides the context of high-risk sports, the creation of *communitas* was also identified in adventure recreation activities (Weber, 2001). The detachment from the home environment involves a separation from everyday life and social groups that is both physical and symbolical and facilitates the disintegration of social orders in areas that are peripheral to their daily environment (Weber, 2001). When in remote areas, other benefits of social nature can be obtained besides the creation of special bonds typical of *communitas*. Garg, Couture, Ogryzlo, and Schinke (2010), for example, suggested social benefits such as "compassion, group cooperation, respect for others, communication, behaviour feedback, friendship and belonging" (p. 215).

### **The Felt Self-Change**

The last benefit identified by Celsi (1992) among the participants of high-risk sports is the felt self-change. The participants of his study experienced self-change at various levels, depending on their experiences (Celsi, 1992). Whereas senses of self-confidence and self-efficacy were felt by the respondents who had no or little previous experience of high-risk sports, more experienced respondents revealed profound and long-lasting changes such as changes in their world view, personal growth, and intense sense of fulfilment (Celsi, 1992). Just as Csikszentmihalyi (1990) believes that an enjoyable event induces self-growth, Celsi (1992) describes self-change as an accumulation of "flow episodes" and, consequently, self-

change as an outcome of flow. The perceived personal growth, acquired knowledge, and improved skills such as adaptability to the environment, teamwork, goal setting and trust reported by the adventure racers of Kay and Laberge's study (2002b) can also be considered as self change.

The transformation of one's self through extreme sports has received attention also from Brymer; Downey and Gray, (2009), Brymer and Gray, (2009, 2010), Brymer and Oades (2009), Garg et al. (2010) who, unlike Celsi's (1992) who focused on the benefits that the participants obtained from the very act of practicing the sports, emphasized the benefits that the participants gained from immersion in nature and their relationship with it. Brymer and Oades (2009), for instance, found that nature taught lessons of humility and courage to extreme sports participants and triggered a positive transformation in them. To be humble, in particular, individuals have to face realities that are larger and more powerful than themselves and their world view shifts from anthropocentric to ecocentric (Gerber, 2002; Brymer & Oades, 2009). The natural world facilitates the rise of deep consciousness and wellbeing in the individuals and its unpredictability forces them to adapt to it and, as a result of that, new forms of self-awareness are obtained (Brymer & Gray, 2009).

Another view on the transformational power of nature is provided by Scherl (1989), who believes that the challenges provided by the environment mirror in one's self and induce personal growth by making the individuals focus their attention inwardly. Other benefits stemming from the contact with the environment are confidence, well-being, personal testing and self-efficacy (Garg et al., 2010). Expeditions of small groups in the wilderness supervised by trip leaders were also considered as effective learning tools by educators (Allison & Wald, 2010). Allison and Wald (2010) argued that expeditions create the conditions for the participants to develop intra-team relationships, take pondered choices and decisions, and acquire a better understanding of the self.

Besides feeling changed by nature, extreme sports participants were found to have an intimate connection with it (Brymer et al., 2009; Brymer & Gray, 2009). Brymer and Gray (2009) described such connection as a dance that involves a harmonious and dynamic interplay between nature and individuals. When in the wilderness, the participants of a study conducted by Hinds (2011) experienced feelings that were ineffable, almost dreamlike. Despite such a dreamlike state, the revelations about themselves experienced by the participants were "very vivid and concrete" (Hinds, 2011, p. 201).

Finally, as mentioned earlier on in the paragraph on the state of play, engaging in playful activities provides adult individuals with outcomes, or benefits, on an individual level (Kerr & Apter, 1991). Individuals in a play state, by experimenting, can acquire problem-solving skills and creative skills, and develop new perspectives on life (Brown, 1991; Kerr & Apter, 1991). Once acquired in a playful situation, these benefits can be later applied to real life (Kerr & Apter, 1991). In Kerr and Apter's view (1991) the shift from the paratelic to the telic state is a necessary requirement for an individual to grow, as the place where individuals engage in playful situations is not only a mere playground in which they feel free to mess around, but it is also a training ground for dealing with everyday life situations.

### **The Transferability of the Benefits**

The study conducted by Kay and Laberge (2002b) mentioned that the participants of the Eco-Challenge acquired new knowledge, skills, and personal development from AR, although their main focus was on the fact that AR was seen by the racers as a "transferable learning opportunity" (p. 21) by the management-level corporate racers. Despite that, only "transferability" was expressively considered as a benefit by the researcher, which was only said to apply to the work life of the management-level corporate participants (Kay & Laberge, 2002b).

Kay and Laberge (2002b) found that the Eco-Challenge management-level corporate participants were overrepresented and that they were more concerned with AR as a practice to enhance their overall work performance than with the mere sake of AR. The benefit of "transferability" stood out as the major driving force to engage in AR for management-level corporate racers (Kay & Laberge, 2002b). In this view, the participation in the Eco-Challenge was seen as a return in investment for the physical, mental and monetary efforts required to complete the race. The participants of Holman and McAvoy's study of adventure tourists (2005) also demonstrated that the main ground of applicability of the benefits acquired by the participants in the wilderness was the work environment.

Since the early 1990s, big corporations recognized the power that nature had to develop new skills in the people who engage in outdoor activities and a great number of research focused on such recognition (Beard, 1996; Conger, 1993; Couch, 1991; Jones and Oswick, 2007; Macharzina, 1991; Watson & Vasilieva, 2007; Williams, Graham, Baker, 2003). As a matter of fact, it became popular for corporations to sponsor the so called "Outdoor Management Development" programs in which the employees perform activities in teams in order for them to develop, or improve, leadership and teamwork skills that would be transferable to the work environment (Watson & Vasilieva, 2007).



## Methods

This research has a case study design and employs both primary and secondary data. A case study is "an in-depth exploration from multiple perspectives of the complexity and uniqueness of a particular project, policy, institution, programme or system in a "real life" context" (Simons, 2009, p. 21). The phenomenon is studied in its natural setting and quotes, anecdotes, and narratives that refer to the participants are employed (Hancock & Algozzine, 2011). Although academic papers that relate to this case study were searched before data were collected in order to find relevant questions to ask during the interviews, as it was for the transcendent benefits of high-risk sports (Celsi, 1992), a great deal of the literature review was written while data were being analyzed. Such "circular process" allowed to identify theoretical concepts that were as relevant as possible for this study.

Primary and secondary data were collected before, during, and after the 2012 edition of the PER at the headquarters of the race in Punta Arenas, Chile. Whereas the primary data consists of observations, interviews with individual racers and teams, the secondary data consists of pre-race questionnaires filled in by the racers, video and audio material. A description of the race participants is provided at the beginning of the findings chapter.

Due to the complexity of the methodology employed in this study, Table 1 was created with the intent to provide an overview of the type of data used, the format in which the data were collected, how, when, in which year and by whom the data were assembled, etc. The reason why the number of units that refer to the video and audio material of 2011 and 2012 respectively is not reported in the table is that a great deal of the material analyzed did not consist of structured interviews in which single racers and teams were easily identifiable, but was rather a mixture of impressions recorded while the participants were in action, while participants of different teams were interacting with each other, and of audio recorded at

different checkpoints in which the exact number of single racers and teams involved in the conversation was difficult to determine with precision. Samples of each type data used in this study are provided in Appendices D and E.

## BENEFITS OF THE PATAGONIAN EXPEDITION RACE PARTICIPANTS

Table 1. *Summary of the Multiple Methods Used*

	Data source number	Type of data source	Data format	Assembled			Main purpose	Number of files analyzed	Number of units		Duration (hrs.)	How the material was used in this research	
				Where	At what stage of the race	By Whom			In which year	Individual racers			Teams
PRIMARY DATA	1	CPs (checkpoints) interviews	Digital (audio and video)	CP1	During the race	Researcher	2012	Race documentary and web news	4	4	0	0:04	Increased understanding of the "behind the scenes" of the event and of the experience of the racers along the course
				CP 5	During the race	Researcher	2012	Race documentary and web news	6	5	1	0:21	
	2	First set of post-race interviews	Digital (audio)	On the ferry from CP 20 to Punta Arenas	After the race	Researcher	2012	Thesis	7	0	7	4:18	Exploration of the benefits of the racers.
	3	Second set of post-race interviews	Digital (video)	Punta Arenas	After the race	Researcher	2012	Race documentary	5	1	4	1:41	Increased understanding of the experience of the racers and exploration of the benefits of the racers.
4	Observations	Paper	Punta Arenas, CPs, ferry from CP 20 to Punta Arenas	Before, during, after the race	Researcher	2012	Thesis	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	Increased understanding of the event	
SECONDARY DATA	5	Pre-race questionnaires	Digital (Microsoft Word Office® and online database)	Punta Arenas (PER headquarters)	Before the race	Race organizers	Racers' personal information collection	2009	34	34	0	N/A	The questionnaires were used to ask tailored questions in the interviews and to shape a profile of the racers (see paragraphs "primary data collection" in the methodology and "the PER participants at a glance" in the findings).
								2010	42	42			
								2011	46	46			
								2012	46	46			
	6	Video material	Digital (video)	Punta Arenas and race CPs	After the race	Race organizers	2010	Race documentary	8	12	6	0:51	Exploration of the benefits of the racers.
				Before, during and after the race	Race organizers	2011	Race documentary	180	N/A	N/A	14:16		
7	Audio material	Digital (audio)	Punta Arenas and race CPs	After the race	Race organizers	2010	Race documentary and web news	6	0	6	2:54	Exploration of the benefits of the racers.	
		Digital (audio)		During the race	Race organizers	2012	Race documentary and web news	93	N/A	N/A	6:47		

### **Primary Data Collection**

Interviews were conducted during and after the 2012 edition of the race, to which I participated as a volunteer. Conducting of these interviews was made possible by my inclusion, from the part of the event organizers, among the members of the communication team of the race. As a member of this group of volunteers I was also given the chance to attend as an observer a two-day pre-race interviewing session with the participating teams, which was conducted by an experienced interviewer. Of the 19 teams that took part in the 2012 edition of the PER, only two did not attend the pre-race interviewing session. The main questions asked dealt with the daily life occupation of the participants, their training for the race, their concerns and expectations of the race, and information on how the teams created.

Although the video recordings of these pre-race interviews were not available, I could take notes of my observations and impressions and learn useful techniques that I had the chance to put into practice later on, when my turn to interview the participants came. Other observations that were written down consisted of personal thoughts on the event and on my experience as a volunteer, impressions on the participants, and of notes taken during informal conversation with the race organizers. Finally, before the race started and the interviews were conducted, the 2012 pre-race questionnaires were read carefully in order to get acquainted with the background of the participants and to formulate a few interview questions that were tailored-made.

### **Checkpoint (CPs) Interviews**

During the race I was given the chance to travel to checkpoints one, five, and 20 (CP1, CP5 and CP20 in the race course map, Figure 3.). At CP1 and CP5, while the racers were changing gear from the mountain bike to the kayak portion of the race and from the kayak to the trekking portion of the race respectively, I could ask questions to a few individual participants,

which mainly focused on their impressions on the race course that far, how they felt after the mountain bike and kayak sessions, whether they faced any difficulties or had any injuries along the course, and whether they had any strategy for the upcoming part of the event.

The reason why the interviews at these stages of the race were short and not directly related to the research subject of this thesis is that, during the very limited amount of time that they spent at the checkpoints, they were concerned with changing gear and preparing for the following race discipline. Despite that, being able to travel to three different CPs and to ask the participants short questions greatly increased my understanding of the "behind the scenes" of the event and of the experiences of the races in the course of it. More detailed individual-racer interviews, which fall under the category of "audio material" in Table 1., were conducted and recorded by the race organizers at nearly every other checkpoint of the race.



*Figure 2.* Racer being interviewed at CP 5. Photograph taken by Saldivar, V. (2012a).



Figure 3. Course map of the Patagonian Expedition Race 2012. Retrieved from: [http://www.patagonianexpeditionrace.com/en/map\\_2012.php](http://www.patagonianexpeditionrace.com/en/map_2012.php)

### First Set of Post-Race Interviews

Table 2, in which each team interviewed in the first set of post-race interviews was assigned a fictional name, summarizes the information on the first set of post-race interviews that will be provided in this section of the methodology.

Table 2

#### *First Set of Post-Race Interviews (Ferry Interviews)*

Teams	Nationalities	Completion of race course	Language spoken by the researcher during the interview	Language spoken by the team members during the interview	Number of team members who spoke English fluently	Duration of the interview (hrs.)
Whale Riders	Homogeneous	No	English	English	4	0:24:12
The Completos	Mixed	Yes	English	English	4	0:34:44
Stray Dogs	Homogeneous	Yes	English	English	4	0:23:14
Wind Guts	Homogeneous	Yes	English	English and native language	1	1:14:49
Pisco Sour	Homogeneous	Yes	English	English and native language	2	0:39:18
Flood	Mixed	Yes	English	English	4	0:17:42
Waldo	Homogeneous	Yes	Spanish	Native language	0	0:29:23

A first set of post-race interviews was conducted on the ferry that took the racers and the race organizers from the finish line (CP20) to Punta Arenas. As it was during these interviews that the topic of benefits was investigated, particular attention was put on their planning. Before the interviews (which in the findings are also referred to as "ferry interviews") were conducted, a study of qualitative interviewing methods was required. More specifically, a method known as "responsive interviewing" was employed (Rubin & Rubin, 2012). This is "a specific variety of qualitative interviewing. It emphasizes flexibility of design and expects the interviewer to change questions in response to what he or she is leaning" (Rubin & Rubin, 2012, p. 7).

On the ferry were found all the teams that completed the race course, which were 10 out of 19, and two teams that went close to completing it. Of the 12 teams that were on the ferry, only seven were interviewed because of time constraints. Among these seven teams, of which only one did not finish the race, 10 nationalities were represented, which cannot be disclosed due to confidential reasons. In fact, the teams, and consequently the team members, that were interviewed would be easily identifiable by visiting the official website of the PER. Of the seven teams interviewed only five were homogeneous in terms of nationalities. Team interviews were preferred over interviews with individual participants not only for time constraints reasons, but also to give the team members the chance to complement each other's points of view and to bring up new ideas through mutual interaction. The interviews were semi-structured, audio recorded and lasted between 24 minutes and one hour and 14 minutes, for a total time of over four hours. In addition to the audio recordings, personal observations were written down after each interview.



*Figure 4.* Racer being interviewed on the ferry from CP 20 to Punta Arenas. Photograph taken by Saldivar, V. (2012b).



During the interviews English was used as the main language both by the researcher and the racers. Despite that, as the teams were highly diverse in terms of nationalities, communication also occurred in Spanish and in the native languages of the racers. The languages spoken during the interviews are summarized in Table 2. For the teams Wind Guts and Pisco Sour, who had only one and two members respectively who spoke fluent English, the English-speaking members had to first translate the questions from English into their respective native languages and then from their native languages back into English. As for the interview with team Waldo, which was the only one that had no members who spoke fluent English, questions were asked in Spanish, which all the racers said to understand, and answered back in their native language, which was understood by the researcher to a great extent. All the interview questions were double-checked both in English and in Spanish by native speakers. For the transcript and the analysis of the interview with team Waldo it was needed the help of a person who was at the same time fluent in English and whose native language was the same as the one spoken by team members'.

The semi-structured interviews were designed prior to the race in such a way as to explore the themes of flow, creation of *communitas* and self-change that Celsi (1992) identified as benefits among high-risk sports participants, which at that stage of the research process were the only theoretical concepts that were found to be applicable to the PER participants. The teams were mainly asked how time passed during the race, what kind of relationship they had with the environment, how they would describe being in the wilderness, how the relationships within the teams were, and whether they had noticed any change in themselves after they got involved in AR (the list of the main questions asked in this set of interviews can be found in Appendix A).

However, as the race and the interviews evolved, new themes such as "exploration" and "transferability of the benefits" emerged and were further explored.

### **Second Set of Post-Race Interviews**

A second set of post-race interviews, whose average duration was approximately 15 minutes, was performed once the teams and the organizers returned to Punta Arenas after the race. The total number of these interviews, which were entirely conducted in English, was five, four of which were with teams and one with an individual racer. Of the four team interviews, two were conducted with teams that had not been previously interviewed on the ferry. The individual racer who was interviewed, too, had not taken part in the first set of post-race interviews.

The questions that the teams and the individual racer were asked were prepared in advance by the race organizers, as the interviews were planned to be used as potential material for the race documentary 2012. Even though these interviews were mainly concerned with identifying the most emotional and difficult moments experienced during the race, the experiences of the racers at specific stages of the race, such as the difficulties encountered at the river crossings, and any possible return of the teams to future editions of the race, in their answers the participants spontaneously mentioned some themes that had been explored in the course of the first set of post-race interviews and that were considered in this study as benefits of the racers. Moreover, one of the questions asked, which was about teamwork, was found to be particularly useful for the exploration of the theme of "communitas" that Celsi (1992) identified in the high-risk sports participants of his study. It has to be pointed out, though, that not all the teams/racer were asked all the questions that were prepared in advance, which can be found in Appendix B, and that at times questions were modified in order to better follow the conversation.

## **Secondary Data Collection**

### **Pre-Race Questionnaires**

A total number of 168 pre-race questionnaires that referred to the 2009, 2010, 2011 and 2012 editions of the PER were collected at the headquarters of the race. These were open-ended questionnaires that were prepared by the race organizers and distributed to the participants mainly to get to know their demographic characteristics, AR and personal backgrounds, relationship between AR and daily life, and preparation for the event. The fact that only minor changes were made to the questionnaire distributed to the athletes before the 2009, 2010, 2011 and 2012 editions of the race made them easily comparable throughout the years. The questionnaires had 14 questions and their average length was three pages.

### **Video and Audio Material**

The video and audio material was accurately selected among thousands of raw files that were made available by the organizers. Only the videos and audio files in which the racers spoke were considered appropriate for the data analysis. These were recorded in different settings and mostly comprised interviews with individual racers, team interviews, conversations between the racers and the organizers, conversations between racers of the same team or different teams, and impressions on the race course of the participants in action. These files were recorded and stored by the organizers with the purpose of using them as potential material for the 2010, 2011 and 2012 editions of the race documentary.

### **Data Analysis**

The steps that the data analysis of which this study consisted were found to coincide with the four "steps involved in qualitative data analysis" described by Hesse-Biber and Leavy (2011,

p. 302). These are: 1) data preparation phase, 2) data exploration phase, 3) data reduction phase, and 4) interpretation. The data preparation phase refers to preparing the data for the analysis and in this study consisted of the transcription of the first set of post-race interviews, which were considered as the main interviews for the exploration of the benefits of the race participants. The transcription only occurred for this set of interviews and the transcripts were later proof read by an English native speaker and by a native speaker of the language spoken by team Waldo.

As suggested by Hesse-Biber and Leavy (2011), the data exploration and the data reduction phases worked "hand in hand". As the transcripts, the questionnaires, and the observations were being read and the audio and video files were being listened and watched, the themes that in this study were considered as benefits of the racers emerged, were coded and sorted into several sheets of a Microsoft Excel® file, which were eventually printed out in order to gain a better overview of the results. During the data analysis, moreover, the quotes of the racers that were found to be significant for this study were written down and each racer and team was assigned a correspondent fictional name for confidentiality reasons. The interpretation of the data collected was an ongoing process that occurred simultaneously to the previous three phases.

In the coding process no distinction was made between the teams that completed the race course and the teams that did not, and in the data analysis the racers who participated in more than one edition of the race were considered as one single person. Although a saturation point was soon reached after the analysis of the transcripts and the video material of the 2011 race, and no new information was acquired after that point, it was still chosen to proceed with the analysis of all the data available in order to avoid the possibility of missing out on any important aspects that might have come up.

**Reliability and Validity**

Reliability and validity are "important and complex issues in qualitative studies" (Hesse-Biber & Leavy, 2011, p. 53). Whereas in this type of studies reliability mainly deals with the internal consistency of the observations gathered in the course of the research, validity, which can be both internal and external, has to do respectively with the credibility and trustworthiness of the results and with the possibility to generalize the results to other populations and settings (Hesse-Biber & Leavy, 2011; Lapan & Quartaroli, 2009; Marshall & Rossman, 2006). In this section only the issue of internal validity is treated, as the discussion of reliability and external validity were considered to better fit the findings and the conclusion parts respectively.

In this study different data sources were used, which is a technique that in qualitative research is known as "data triangulation" and that is employed with the aim of enhancing the validity of the research findings (Hesse-Biber & Leavy, 2011). By making it possible to compare and analyse data from different sources, the use of data triangulation allowed to notice easily whether any discrepancies existed across the different types of data used. Besides data triangulation, another aspect that is expected to increase the credibility, or trustworthiness, of this study is the original, non-edited, form in which data such as the pre-race questionnaires, the transcript of the interviews, the video and audio material were analysed. On the other hand, the fact that the communication between the researcher and the racers interviewed during the first set of post-race interviews did not occur in the most straightforward way possible due to the variety of languages spoken might represent a threat to internal validity.

**Self-Reflexivity**

At this point it has to be mentioned that, during the race context, my involvement was not as detached and critical as it would have been preferable for a researcher. As a matter of fact, my

stay in Chilean Patagonia for research purposes in February 2012 was preceded by my participation in the event as a volunteer in 2010 and, due to my acquaintance with the places and the race organizers of the 2012 edition of the race, my involvement in the PER was more emotional rather than critically objective. For this reason, extra efforts were required in later stages of the research process in order to present and discuss the data in the most objective way possible.

On the other hand, the pre-knowledge I had of the event and the acquaintance with the race organizers turned very helpful in the data collection phase, as the organizers allowed me to access secondary data such as questionnaires, video and audio material, and to attend and conduct the interviews with the racers, which would have been more difficult for somebody who had not been previously involved in the organization of the event. During my stay in Chilean Patagonia in 2010, moreover, I had the opportunity to learn Spanish, which allowed me to feel more integrated in the overall race context in 2012 and communicate with the only team who did not speak English during the first set of post-race interviews.

### **Findings**

The benefits of the PER participants that emerged from the data analysis are: 1) the "flow" experience, 2) the play state, 3) exploration and tourist aspects, 4) the creation of "communitas" and other social aspects, 5) the felt self-change, and 6) the transferability to daily life of the benefits acquired. In the course of the data analysis it was found that, whereas the first three benefits experienced by the race participants entirely related to the PER, the social aspects, the felt self-change, and the transferability were also partly related to other adventure races in which the racers had participated prior to the PER.

In the course of the findings the source of each racer quotation is reported after the fictional name of the participants and the teams, and refers to Table 1. For instance, "Data Source 3" as written in the citation of Lou R. from Team Penguin Huggers at p. 49, refers to the second set of post-race interviews performed by the researcher in Punta Arenas after the race in 2012. Although the quotations reported in the findings mostly refer to the Data Source 2 and 6 due to the fact that the analysis of these data, and consequently the annotation of significant quotes, occurred first, similar quotes were also found in the course of the analysis of the other type of data. The data analysed, in fact, were found to be consistent across the different data sources used, as well as across the ages, the genders, and the nationalities of the race participants. The internal consistency of the data suggests that the findings can be considered as reliable.

### **The PER Participants at a Glance**

The PER participants varied significantly in terms of nationalities, age and sport career path. Since 2009 athletes from 21 nationalities have taken part in the race, whose age ranged from 22 to 56 at the time of competing and, in 2012, the racers who had previously participated

in the race at least once were 29 out of 76. The most popular types of sports practiced by the racers in their daily life were climbing, running, kayaking and mountain biking. Surprisingly, the number of participants who practiced team sports was irrelevant if compared to the number of those who practiced individual sports. Basically all the racers claimed to be more concerned with completing the course than with winning.

The ways through which the PER participants got acquainted with AR were found to be limited in number. The racers got acquainted with AR either because they were introduced to it by friends or because, since they came from "adventurous" families that took them to outdoor trips, they claimed that adventure had always been part of their lives and therefore considered their engagement in AR as having occurred naturally. Interestingly, a significant number of PER participants got acquainted with AR and decided to start practicing the sport by watching the race documentaries of expedition races such as the Eco-Challenge, Primal Quest and Raid Gauloises. The path that took the athletes to participating in expedition races started, in most cases, with small local adventure races and, after "getting hooked" on the sport, gradually continued with bigger international events. The number of international expedition races in which the PER participants took part on a yearly basis normally ranged between one and four.

The majority of the participants were outdoor sports instructors or guides, physical education teachers, militaries, or corporate workers, among which engineers were overrepresented. In most cases the racers described their employers as understanding when it came to giving free time for training and participating in adventure races, and claimed either to use their vacations time to adventure race or to take pay cuts to do that. On the other hand, the number of racers who were self-employed or worked as free lancers and who, therefore, had more flexibility with training and AR participation, was significant. In a few cases the racers



changed their full time job for a part time one or started their own business as their involvement in AR became more intense. Finally, in all the cases, the PER participants claimed to have supportive families and life partners who were either adventure racers themselves or who were active and sporty.

### **The "Flow" Experience**

The participants of the PER alternated moments of concentration, when they stayed silent, kept walking, had no sense of time and were deeply immersed in their activity, moments of excitement and fun with their teammates, when jokes were made and games were played, and moments of suffering and frustration. The relationship that the participants had with the surrounding environment was also full of ups and downs. Overall, the PER appeared to be a rollercoaster of emotions that lasted not only for the mere duration of the race, but also after the race was over.

### **Involvement in the Activity**

Several racers reported a total immersion in the activity during the competition. Such a deep involvement made distances seem much shorter than they actually were and made them fall in a state that was almost trance-like:

The second mountain bike section went like that (he snapped his fingers). I don't know if I was oblivious or what but it was 140 kilometers long and seems like we did it in no time. That was enjoyable. (Lou R. - Team Penguin Huggers - Data Source 3)



*Figure 5.* Team biking in Torres del Paine National Park. Photograph taken by Hoare, T., (2011a).

Another racer reported a similar of state of mind: "I was really...I had my mind just like absorbing everything around me. It was just so beautiful. I don't know where my mind was to be honest, I was just traveling". (Belinda C. - Team Whale Riders - Data Source 2) The feelings described by this racer were almost contrasting. While she seemed very conscious of herself and absorbed everything around her, her mind seemed to be detached from the real world. Nothing else seemed to exist but the activity itself. During this total immersion in the activity the racers also forgot about their daily life, which they claimed to be far away.

Goals were clear during the race, whether these were the checkpoints or the finish line, and the efforts put to achieve them were high. As another racer suggested, such a deep involvement in the race did not necessarily occur right after the start. Before they reached a complete involvement, the racers might have gone through sorts of warm up stages, whose length could vary:

I'm just looking forward to day three. The first two days are training days, right? And then you're ready for to start racing. That's a warm up. You take this two-day training and then day three we're all into it. (Frank Z. - Team Penguin Huggers - Data Source 6).

Due to the extended length of the competition, the athletes found to be impossible to stay focused the whole time and their level of concentration appeared to differ within the team. When navigating, for instance, the racers needed a higher focus compared with the other teammates who were just following along. One participant, for instance, explains how his focus changed from the time he was leading the race to the time he only needed to keep up with the other teammates.

When I'm leading with the trekking I have to do route finding so I would be always looking for the best place to walk on, but when I'm at the back I don't have to think. about that, I only have to follow. (Stevie W. - Team Wind Guts - Data Source 2)

### **Alteration of Time**

The most evident phenomenon that occurred while the participants were deeply immersed in the activity was the alteration of time. All the racers who were asked to describe how time passed while racing claimed that time switched from being very slow to being very fast

throughout the whole race and that, at times, there was no sense of time at all. Generally, time was described to pass slowly during the daylight but, as soon as the night would start to fall or a checkpoint would be approached, hours went extremely quickly. The quote of this racer summarizes it all:

Sometimes time passed really slow. Normally, you know, at the beginning of the day time passes slow but at the end of the day when you run out of daylight it's always very fast because you try to do as much as possible until the sunset and in those moments time passes really really quickly (Tracy C. - Team Pisco Sour - Data Source 2)

Moreover, when during the ferry interviews the racers were asked about their perception of time, the memories of a few were fuzzy and they really could not tell that they spent so much time on the race:

Looking back at it it's hard to remember that we actually spent so much time on the race. We spent so much time in the moment that our minds were just focused on the race, it feels like it's been a parallel life or universe that we spent some time in. I don't have any sense of time when it comes to being in the race (Boy G. - Team Stray Dogs - Data Source 2)

In the quote above, not only are the alteration of time and the fuzziness of the race clear, but so are other aspects previously mentioned, such as the deep involvement and the high focus. Blurry memories were manifested also in the course of the race: "Suddenly you've been out trekking for four days and you can't even remember what you did the day before, except that you walked a lot". (David B. - Team Stray Dogs - Data Source 2)

### **The Relationship of the Racers with the Environment**

Another aspect identified was the contrasting feelings that the participants experienced towards the surrounding environment. The area traversed by the racers was described as a land of extremes: It was wild, breathtaking, fantasy-like, with overwhelming sceneries, but also harsh for the nature of the terrain and for the unpredictability of the weather conditions. The PER participants, especially during the longest treks, happened to see no humans for days and had the feeling to be, as one racer observed, "as far from civilization as it is humanly possible to get" (Lionel R. - Team Ear Wigs - Data Source 6). The race environment was described as "proper wilderness": No trails, no foot prints, no signs of civilization.



*Figure 6.* Landscape of the Land of Fire. Photograph taken by Redcliffe, C., (2012a).

Nature was not seen, overall, as something to race against, but rather to race and to accomplish things with, even though feelings of harmony and frustration towards it were

identified. Being "out there" and trying to reach the goal was described as a very natural thing to do and being in harmony with nature was said to be an unalienable aspect of AR. In certain cases the natural environment seen during the PER was even described as a "pain killer" because it gave the racers relief from their pain and suffering. Nature generated feelings of freedom, peace, and enjoyment, and triggered emotional reactions. The senses, for a few racers, were more alert while immersed in nature and their attention was more focused on the colors and textures around them. In this episode described by a participant, which he claimed to be his favorite throughout the entire race, the harmony with the environment is evident:

Coming down from (checkpoint) five, rushing down towards six, we ended up getting tangled up in the bushes, it was in the middle of the night and we couldn't move any further so we said "Ok, we need to find some high ground" and we found basically this spot on top of this little turbal mount that had four perfect little cocoon-shaped things and we all picked our own one and laid down...and the clouds parted for 10 minutes and we just had this perfect, in the middle of nowhere, moment of peace and quiet and it was really spectacular. There were more stars that I had seen anywhere else. (George M. - Team Ear Wigs - Data Source 6)

The words of this racer suggest a true intimacy with nature. While the "cocoon-shaped things" seemed to be just there waiting for the team to stop and rest, the parted clouds, the remoteness and the stars gave the racer moments of peace and quiet. The relationship with the environment was also described in terms of love and attachment "to nature and its essence, almost like an animal" (Freddy M. - Team Ear Wigs - Data Source 6), and at times the participants who could not finish the course looked back at their experience with melancholy for having left the

wilderness. One of them, for instance, said to have dreamt how the fjords to which he did not get the chance to go and how paddling through them would have been like.

On the other hand, impenetrable areas, long bushwhacking sections, swamps and encounters with beaver dams and ponds generated in the racers feelings of frustration and anger. The frustration of the participants was caused many times by the exhausting bushwhacking sections, during which the ability of the team to keep a fast walking pace as in other races was considered useless. The athletes claimed in fact that when the terrain of the PER was particularly tough the maximum speed reached was two kilometers per hour.

The relationship that the participants had with nature during the race was a topic explored in the course of the ferry interviews. When during one of the interviews a team was asked how their relationship with nature could be described, the racers all looked at each other and laughed: "It depends who you ask to" (David B.. - Team Stray Dogs - Data Source 2). Right after, one of them clarified:

For me, I mainly enjoyed the nature when I was in the mountain pass. I just like the mountains, but as soon as we would get to swamps with all the beavers I nearly got crazy. (...) Sometimes I just stopped and yelled. (Boy G. - Team Stray Dogs - Data Source 2)

In this case, the racer experienced a contrasting relationship with nature during the race, which changed from being enjoyable to being frustrating, and, as the comment of another member of the team suggests, such relationship also varied from person to person within the team. A further example of frustrating feelings triggered by the challenging environment is given by another racer:

About half way through from CP 10 to CP 11 when the rain started to hit harder, the wind started to come, and we hit the "forest of doom", we did start to get edgy with each other (...) We 'd call a little short things to each other and kind of get pissed...but mostly we were pissed at...nature. And I've never been so pissed at nature before. I was like screaming out at it. I wasn't screaming out at my team (...) I told them "I'm not screaming at you, I'm just so pissed!" (emphasis put). Because you are bushwhacking and these thorns, they are this thick, and I'm small...I'm 5.1 and so I can't like crawl above or anything...I am in it from head to toe. So I'm just fully in it and it's in my eyes and all I could do to get through was screaming at it and get so pissed! (emphasis put). I felt like I was going to war, you know. (Dionne W. - Team Ear Wigs - Data Source 6)

Feelings of harmony with nature followed moments of frustration due to the challenges that nature presented. Overall, though, nature was seen more as a companion rather than a rival and the stories that the participants told about the race were far more imbued with a sense of intimacy and harmony with nature than with feelings of frustration towards it.

The athletes generally considered the PER as a survival experience and as a chance to "go back to the roots". When out in the wilderness, the racers lived in a simple way as they divested themselves of the excesses of daily life and dealt with the elements of nature. Some participants experienced a sense of belongingness to nature, they felt very alive when passing through it and literally felt as if they should really go back to the wilderness. The following quotes were selected to better explain the concept:

Out in the wilderness you feel very alive. You're back to the basic instinct in your existence, it's pure survival...Where's the next water, where's the next



food, so it's just...Yeah, you feel like back to your instincts and basically hunting. (Elton J. - Team Stray Dogs - Data Source 2)

What is special about this race is that you abandon the technology of daily life and you go out with friends, food, just being yourself and the natural elements (...) For me the race means going back to the roots, to the earth. (Michael J. - Team Selknam - Data Source 6)

A couple of racers also argued that there has been a growing trend for people to go more and more out in the wilderness and to discover themselves. The primal lifestyle experienced by the racers was accompanied by a deep sense of humility, appreciation, and respect towards nature. By living on the premises of nature, the racers recognized the power of it and became aware of their weaknesses and the smallness of human kind in comparison with it.



*Figure 7.* Racers and the vastness of Patagonia. Photograph taken by Alvial, W. (2012a).

The athletes claimed that during the competition they learnt how to move according to the nature, to adapt to unpredictable weather and situations, and to accept things as they came:

There were times when we were out there looking for an easy way. When there were huge valleys, turbal and forests and not trails we wanted to be a trail. We were like "we want to find the easy way!" and go back and forth and then some of the other teams came along in a different mindset. They were like "there's no easy way, you just go". So when we get in that thing in life, you know, many times we look for the easy way out instead of setting our sight on something and just doing it. (Lionel R. - Team Ear Wigs - Data Source 3)

A sign that the racers acquired an adaptable mindset during the race is the fact that, before the competition started, the teams had no fixed strategies that they planned to follow during the race, as they claimed that their strategies would be constantly reviewed along the course.

### **The State of "Play"**

Racers laughed, made jokes, played games along the course and generally described the race as a fun experience. During these moments of light-heartedness, which involved the whole team, the PER athletes left the worries of daily life behind. Some "just went slowly and enjoyed" (Otis R. - Team Flood - Data Source 2). Laughter was even present in difficult times, such as when a team along the course was telling how their map got lost in a river-crossing and their only way to navigate was by zooming in a high resolution picture of the map that they had taken before the race. Another team had high spirits and danced samba even though they got eliminated from the race for missing a cut-off time. At times, the course was even described as a playground where the racers could play around freely:

I feel like a kid just playing. Just being out of nowhere, you know, no grocery shopping, no getting gas in the car, just playing in the woods for days. That's it! (emphasis put) We just gotta move, play...Love it. No worries. (Belinda C. - Team Whale Riders - Data Source 2)

This is how a racer described her feelings when out in the wilderness without any people around but her teammates: Simple life and sense of freedom. A similar feeling was experienced by another participant:

My love for the sport and nature is so immense that I find it difficult to think that the race was hard, painful, challenging, body and mind punishing or anything like that. For me, it is just a blast. It is like being a child again. I get to run around, get dirty and play with my friends. (Marvin G. - Team Pachamama - Data Source 6)

Here, the bodily and mental suffering was irrelevant if compared with the positive energies acquired from being out in the wilderness. It can be noticed that, as stated by the racers quoted, nature has the power to make them go back to a childhood-like state of mind. An additional example of playful behavior is that of another racer who impersonated a beaver behind the trees to make his teammates laugh. Enjoyment was also mentioned as a more long-term experience, such as when a participant felt it a couple of weeks after the race when, with the help of pictures, she had the time to assimilate what she had been through during the competition.

The "play state" was also found in the form of games, which sometimes the team resorted to as stratagems to keep the spirits high in challenging times:

We played a game out there, especially after checkpoint 11 where there was the major turn of trek. George M. and I had played this before in races and

we pretended to be in a video game and we called it the "tubal master" and there were different levels and so we were trying to go on a straight line as fast as possible and not think of your weight (...) You're jumping from pile to pile and the colors mean different things (...) We were joking the whole time, it's like "Sweet! It's level four!" (emphasis put). And then at the high out pile we got when the snow storm came in, that day it was like inches of snow and ice over the tubal so it was like we unlocked the secret stage because nobody else got to do it except for a few teams. You know, it was fun... (Lionel R. - Team Ear Wigs - Data Source 6)

Not only do these words reveal the playful nature of the experience, but also suggest a harmonious relationship between the racers and the environment and other aspects previously mentioned, such as the childhood-like state of mind and the idea of nature as a playground. Moreover, based on the words of this racer it seems that the exclusivity of the experience, for not being accessible to every team, contributed to the playfulness of the moment. In another occasion the same team swam down a river on their camping pads to get some relief from the long bushwhacking section. Although risk was involved in the decision to take such a shortcut, watching one another going down the river on their bellies was described by them as a game and as the highlight of the whole race.



*Figure 8.* Racer floating down a river on a camping pad. Photograph taken by Staudigel, D. (2011)

Moments of fun and play hardly lasted throughout the whole race. Data analysis showed that ups and downs came one after the other. When down moments occurred along the course, which was for instance in risky or challenging situations when strengths were low, the racers would think of their homes and families and had second thoughts regarding their participation in the race:

In risky situations my heart beats fast. I don't know, I think about home. It's like somebody bursts the bubble a little bit. When I'm out there I don't really think of all those things but then every once in a while, after something that I'm uncomfortable with happens, I think about home, kids and responsibility.

(Belinda C. - Team Whale Riders - Data Source 2)

This racer, who was the same that earlier on expressed her joyful feelings when out in the wilderness, sees risky situations as a threat to the childhood-like state she experienced during the race.

As for risky situations, the 2012 participants claimed that the risks faced in the course of the PER were low if compared with other adventure races in which they had previously taken part and, in a few cases, no serious risky situations were associated with the PER. The racers appeared to be highly aware of the potential risks involved in the race and claimed that dangerous situations were kept down:

We were pretty conservative when it came to river crossings, we spent a lot of time every time trying to find the best place where to cross. We were so concerned about the cold, it's just so exhausting being cold. We tried to be as safe as possible. (Suzanne V. - Team Guanacos - Data Source 6)

In a few other cases the PER participants admitted to feel relieved for having avoided a potentially risky situation when they were informed by the race organizers that the very last section of the 2012 course, which was supposed to be a paddle to Cape Horn, was no longer going to occur. When risky situations did occur, on the other hand, the athletes appeared to be confident in their skills and claimed to have overcome the challenges with teamwork. The rare times when risky situations were sought on purpose, such as when a team decided to swim down a fjord and to leave the recommended route marked on the map, the confidence that the teammates' abilities would make the team escape unharmed was considered higher than the likelihood that accidents would occur.

An example of successful teamwork in dangerous situations and of a down moment that was soon followed by a cheerful mood was provided by a 2012 participant who was interviewed at CP 5. The athlete claimed that, while paddling in the ocean, he and his teammates worked together and kept their spirits high as their kayaks were sinking after the waves had filled them with water. Even though the racer said to have "almost died" in the ocean, to have got hypothermic once he reached the shore and to have been unconscious for several hours, during the checkpoint interview, which occurred only a few hours after the accident, he felt back in good mood and expressed his desire to continue racing.

The next two quotes express in a more evident way the rollercoaster of emotions experienced by the racers during the PER: "This is day two and a half and day two and a half is kind of like 'Why do I do this?' and then by tonight...I'll hope it never stops but...right now...I'm struggling just to keep up" (Cat S. - Team Penguin Huggers - Data 6). This participant seemed to be aware of the fleeting nature of his feelings and considered the moment of struggle as a temporary phase. A little later the same day, one of his teammates expressed her sensations in an opposite way:

I feel awesome! Actually yesterday was a really bad day for me. I did not have fun AT ALL! (emphasis put) Today...today is day three. Day three is always magical. Magical day...I love the rain, I love the clouds...(laughs). Good feeling. (Whitney H. - Team Penguin Huggers - Data Source 6)

The use of the word "always" also hints at the fact that the racer is used to her changing mood. The pain and the memories of the down moments dulled also once the competition was over, as some claimed that the bad parts of the race are easy to forget.

In some cases, though, down moments were experienced even after the race. Besides the disappointment felt by the teams who did not finish the course, disappointment for the fact that "everything was over" was also experienced by some racers who did complete the course. A female participant who finished the race in the podium even claimed that, right after an adventure race ends, every athlete goes through what she called a "post-race depression":

Because your whole goal in life is to get to the next CP, to the next CP, to the next CP and for me it just feels like we just got cut off (...) I wish there was something else, I don't know. I can't put a word to it... (Dionne W. - Team Ear Wigs - Data Source 6)

This quote reminds, to some extent, of the nostalgic feelings triggered by the return to civilization that were mentioned earlier on and that were experienced by the participants who did not finish the race. These feelings have something ineffable and the description of them hints at something that cannot be grasped, as if part of the racers was still competing out in the wilderness.

At times pain and enjoyment were both mentioned in the testimonials of the racers. For instance, while a participant along the course affirmed to feel in good spirits and to have fun although her feet were very blistered, another one claimed that the race was enjoyable even though she had to face obstacles that she hated.

### **Exploration and Tourist Aspects**

The PER participants were found to be significantly mobile on an international level when it came to participating in expedition races and, especially those with jobs and families, claimed to be very selective when it came to deciding the expedition races to take part in. In the decision



process, location was considered as a factor playing an important role and contributing to the uniqueness of a race. Expedition races, moreover, were seen as a great way to see a country.

In the specific case of the PER, the remoteness of the Chilean Patagonia areas where the race takes place, the wildness of the territory and the improbability to run into other people along the course were considered by the racers among the most appealing factors of the competition:

The PER takes place in a completely isolated area, out of this modern world and participating in it will be in some ways like landing on the Moon: no civilization, no “hello pizza” signs, no mail or mobile phone to waste time with. It will be like going back to the roots of adventure or like joining the Mother of all Adventures. (Tina T. - Team Cachai - Data 5)



*Figure 9.* A participant reaches one of the remote glaciers along the race course. Photograph taken by Alvial, W., 2012(b).

As a matter of fact, at the end of the competition many participants claimed that, while advancing through the race course, they had the feeling that nobody had ever passed through those areas. The racers often described their experience as an epic journey and racing in an untouched environment generated in them feelings of discovery and exploration:

You really couldn't tell that anybody was in front of you, you couldn't tell if you were following somebody's footsteps, there weren't people who had been there camping before you so you felt like you were the first one who was there. That was the supercool part about this race, it was just new. (Bruce S. - Team Whale Riders - Data Source 2)

Sometimes the "exploration spirit" was also purposely generated by the very participants, such as when a team abandoned the recommended route marked on the map to see what and where that might have led them to. The possibility to pass through areas that were far away from civilization even had novel-like features and was associated with the journeys that explorers undertook in the old times:

One of the things that strikes me is that we were racing in the Magellan Strait, the Darwin Range, the Beagle Channel and these are places that you've read about in books of explorers and things but...It's quite a cool thing to come and do a race here, at the end of the world. It's been really neat. (Rod S. - Team Completos - Data Source 2)

A few racers even mentioned the fact that, once in the wilderness, they could access places that are "as far from civilization as it is humanly possible to get" at no costs. Besides the location of the PER, the design of the course was also mentioned as an aspect that shaped the experiences of the racers, and having a wide variety of terrains in the course of the competition was seen by

them as an asset. The participants also claimed that the race provided them with the unique opportunity to see places that are hardly reachable for "normal" people and visiting areas that only a few people get to go to was considered by them as an exciting aspect of the sports event:

If we had visited Patagonia as tourists we would have seen some interesting glaciers, some mountains, but not more. We wouldn't have felt it on our skins, which is a very important thing. Adventure racing gives this opportunity to everyone, but you need to be quite strong to make it through. (Phil C. - Team Pisco Sour - Data Source 2)

Although the athletes claimed that, as adventure racers, they had the chance to see places from a perspective that was different than if they had gone to the same places as "ordinary" visitors, some racers still considered themselves as tourists.

### **The Creation of "Communitas" and Other Social Aspects**

Earlier on the elements of fun and play were mentioned. These be considered to some extent as social aspects, since they were feelings shared by the whole team. In this section of the findings, though, the focus is placed on the feelings of trust, reciprocal understanding, support, shared suffering, and social bonding experienced by the participants in the course of the race. Moreover, the themes of extra-team socialization and networking within the AR world are also presented. Teamwork and, more generally, social aspects were ubiquitous themes throughout data analysis and were mentioned by every single team, whether that was in the ferry interviews, in the audio and video material, or questionnaires.

### **Keys to Successful Teamwork**

Having "people that if you don't get back where you're supposed to be they'll come look for you" (Diana R. - Team Brave Interns - Data Source 6) was considered as one of the prerequisites

for successful teamwork. Besides trust in the teammates and confidence in one another's capabilities, respect, compassion, empathy, and emotional understanding were also identified among the elements at the basis of a solid teammates relationship.



*Figure 10.* Teammates emotionally support each other when they realize that their race is over. By Hoare (2012b).

Support and team synergy were just as important. Support, for example, was found to be both emotional and physical. In the following quote a participant explains how moral support was given within the team during the race:

Everything to keep the mind off from what's currently hurting is the best. Just staying with that person emotionally. 'Cause, you know, sometimes when you hurt and you're going slow you're the last person on the trail you don't feel like

you're the last person on the trail, you know, you want to comfort that person and let know that we're still moving as a team versus the three of us and that person, so...I think this is kind of where we worked really well. (Bruce S. - Team Whale Riders - Data Source 2)

Physical support, on the other hand, occurred when teammates carried weight for each other or provided first aid when small injuries occurred:

When we finally saw the glacier and the lake we had to climb up that slope, it was unbelievable. We went free climbing on a rock face exposed and I was carrying two packs because one of my teammates' feet were absolutely trashed. To help facilitate his pace I was carrying the pack, two packs, climbing up that slope... (Lou R. - Team Penguin Huggers - Data Source 3)

This racer, whose feet he claimed to be also blistered, saw shared suffering as a way to relieve the pain felt by the teammate as well as to keep up the walking pace. While telling this story the racer seemed to find it challenging to express verbally what he and his team had gone through.



*Figure 11.* Racer being helped by a teammate to cross a pond. Photograph taken by Alexandre Buisse (2012).

A more explicit view on shared suffering is provided by another racer: "This is good, you know, to share everything as a team. My pain is their pain" (Cindy L. - Team Wind Guts - Data Source 6). Support was most of the times described as being mutual. Team synergy, which was manifested as working as a unit to achieve common goals, overcoming obstacles, facing unpredicted events and taking wise decisions along the way, was achieved through the combination of different factors.

Besides the "prerequisites for successful teamwork" mentioned earlier on, such as trust, respect and emotional understanding, having a team composed by diverse and compatible members who communicate effectively was also considered by the racers as contributing to team

synergy. Communication within the teams was both verbal and nonverbal. When racers communicated verbally they shared thoughts, opinions, decisions, and feelings. Open communication, for instance, was particularly important for this participant: "I try to be as open as possible. I tell them (her teammates) everything I feel, every little detail of what I feel" (Cindy L. - Team Wind Guts - Data Source 2). Communication also occurred in a nonverbal form, such as when during the race one's needs or limits were identified and taken into consideration by the teammates. The next quote can be considered as an example of how shared leadership, which was a common theme throughout data analysis, occurred through nonverbal communication: "I'm maybe the captain right now, but when we're out there we're all the leader at some point or another, depending on how we feel and it's just comes naturally. It's unspoken" (Whitney H. - Team Penguin Huggers - Data Source 6). Despite the fact that every team had a leader, or captain, this role was often described as a formality. The previous quote provides an example of fluid team communication and how leadership was not considered as a mere exclusivity of the team captain.

### **Inter-Team Relationships**

Strong social bonds within the teams were reported in the majority of cases. The strength of these bonds varied depending on whether the teammates already knew each other from before the race and further strengthened their bonds in the course of it, or they teamed up for the occasion without previously knowing each other. In either case bonds were tight and the events that occurred on an individual level, whether they were positive or negative, were generally described as affecting the whole team with a sort of domino effect. Emotional involvement of the whole team was reported, for instance, when one member changed mood or when he or she was in needs.

Not all teams waited until they would be racing in the wilderness 24/7 to strengthen their bonds. Some of them also spent a great amount of time together prior to the race, "getting used" to each other and preparing physically and mentally for the competition. One team, for instance, besides being together all the time in the course of the PER, spent about five days before and five days after the race sleeping in the same room and doing everything together, for a total time of approximately one month. As a result of it, as well as of the time spent together training prior to the PER, a member of the team claimed that for the time being of the race she considered her teammates as a family: "They're like my brothers, my dad sort of..." (Cindy L. - Team Wind Guts - Data Source 2). Although spending as much time as possible together is certainly an asset, some teams that did not have the chance to train together, and sometimes not even to meet before the race, performed just as successfully as teams whose members had been close prior to the event.

When out in the wilderness, some participants were in a state of mind that was similar to the one experienced when the immersion in the activity was high, which was described at the beginning of the findings. The daily lives, the performance of other teams, and even the race itself, were considered by the participants as far away. When recalling his team reaching the top of a mountain, a racer expressed his feelings as follows:

There was no race anymore, the race seemed so far away. There was nobody to help us, you know, just the four of us and the beauty. It was pretty impeccable, those moments... (...) In a lot of other races we do for four or five days we're always concerned with racing. In this Patagonia race we always start off racing but there comes a point every time in where it stops being about racing and it's about survival, teamwork, and just figuring out how to make it. (Lionel R. - Team Ear Wigs - Data Source 3)



The bond building effect of racing in the wilderness was also mentioned by another participant: "You forget everything about your day job and you're just there with these four people you become very tight and close with and you're very focused on things" (Bryan A. - Team Occasional Robbers - Data Source 6). The last two quotes describe the teams as being separate worlds that move in parallel with the race, as sorts of "bubbles" that traversed the wilderness.

### **Extra-Team Relationships**

Racers from different teams got in contact with each other in many occasions during the PER context, such as during the mandatory pre-race gear check, kayak test, opening and closing ceremonies, on the means of transportation that took the racers from Punta Arenas to the race start and from the finish line back to Punta Arenas, and, occasionally, along the race course. These moments were considered by many athletes as an opportunity to share experiences and to build bonds with other participating teams from all over the world. During one of the ferry interviews, a racer affirmed: "You get to know people from other countries, I mean here you get people from all over the world...Like, concentrated right here (...) They experienced the same things, so that's a great way to know people" (Aretha F. - Team Stray Dogs - Data Source 2). Besides the desire to build bonds with other teams, a sense of sportsmanship among the race participants was identified in the PER context.



*Figure 12.* Racers from different teams hugging each other. Photograph taken by Redcliffe, C., (2012b).

The eagerness of the racers to meet new people and to socialize was not exclusively addressed to the other participating teams, but also to the race organizers, who were met almost in the same occasions as the other participating teams.

Encounters of different teams in adventure races such as the PER represent also an opportunity to meet potential teammates for future races. A great deal of participants, in fact, got to know each other as competitors in different adventure races and ended up racing in the same team in other occasions. The following quote is only one of the many examples: "I met my teammates at adventure races and learned by competing against them that I wanted to race with them" (Diana R.- Team Brave Interns - Data Source 5). Another common means through which racers teamed up was by word of mouth. When a team was lacking a member, for instance, friends involved in AR would be likely to be contacted and asked about any recommendation for

a possible teammate. In the course of the 2012 edition of the PER it was noticed that several racers from different teams knew each other from before or at least recognized each other from previous AR events. This observation was later supported by some participants during the ferry interviews. In the following quote, for instance, a racer talks about the world of expedition racing as a small community:

We're a small community that does the very big races. So in most of the cases, if somebody's not available, you can call other people to see if you are available 'cause you really want people who you know can finish the race. (Bruce S.- Team Whale Riders - Data Source 2)

Similarly, another racer affirmed: "When you're racing so much and for so many years you kinda get to know all the really great guys and the great people" (Whitney H. - Team Penguin Huggers - Data Source 6). During a ferry interview another athlete who had not taken part in any other AR competition before the PER made a similar observation: "I noticed that all of the people here have seen each other in different races" (Otis R. - Team Flood - Data Source 2). When during the ferry interviews the teams were asked whether they knew any adventure racer from their same country who had taken part in the same or in any previous edition of the PER, the answer was always positive. In some cases, when friends and acquaintances took part in previous editions of the PER, they were contacted by the PER "newcomers" to acquire more information about the event. As for life partners, a relevant amount of racers described them as either sharing the same interests in sports or training together or, in a few cases, as being adventure racers themselves. For instance, three couples of life partners were identified in three teams that participated in the 2012 edition of the PER.

Generally, the PER participants who had acquaintances, friends and life partners involved in AR were extremely high. Sometimes friends and acquaintances were even said to represent a big share of the entourage of the racers: "Basically, most of my friends are adventure racers (...) Everyone kind of knows each other in adventure racing" (Tracy C. - Team Pisco Sour - Data Source 2).

### **The Felt Self-Change**

Earlier on in the findings it was mentioned how nature made the racers become more adaptable to unpredictable situations and made them aware of their own weaknesses. This paragraph, on the other hand, focuses on the changes that the PER and the sport of AR triggered in the race participants.

To become an adventure racer is a life changing choice you make. It takes all the sweat and dedication you have. It does not spare you of nothing. On the other hand, it gives you all back. (Marvin G. - Team Pachamama - Data Source 5)

The progression as a person was said by the participants to come with experience and in the course of the data analysis different degrees of self-change were noticed in the racers:

What AR has taught me I could have never learnt anywhere else. It forced me to become more patient, less selfish, to value the moment and to be in the moment. AR has taught me about all of my weaknesses and forces me to be better (...) With every race I gain a better understanding of all the things that I need to improve. (Whitney H. - Team Penguin Huggers - Data Source 5)

Whereas deep feelings of self-confidence and self-awareness were mentioned by the more experienced racers, the athletes whose first expedition race was the PER, such as a racer interviewed on the ferry, claimed to have gained new ambitions and to have learnt things about themselves that they did not know before. On a more general level, AR was said to generate introspection and contribute to personal growth in a variety of ways. In the specific case of the PER, self-changes were noticed by the racers both during and after the event.



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The participants claimed that during the race "everything came up" and that the true colors of a person were much more likely to be identified than in everyday life. Teammates who did not get along well could not avoid each other, one's emotions would come on the surface and the true self would emerge:

You have the tendency to expose a lot more of your inner self and you're definitely more vulnerable to somebody who really sees how you express yourself in a race such as this. It strips you down pretty quick. (Bruce S. - Team Whale Riders - Data Source 2)

The racers claimed to have learnt about teamwork to a great extent during the PER and, more specifically, how to make a team work under difficult conditions and how to immediately recognize when a teammate is in need. The athletes also noticed that their innermost strengths came out during the competition and that they developed a sense of appreciation not only for nature, as already mentioned, but also for simple things. At one checkpoint one participant affirmed: "This race is purifying me. You start to be happy about small things, you start to appreciate a warm bed, a nice meal, a dry pair of shoes..." (Barry W. - Team Cachai - Data Source 6). Interestingly, the view that this racer provided of the PER has characteristics that are almost religious-like. Learning to think simple outside the race context was also mentioned as another outcome of racing.

The self-changes triggered by AR were mostly said to have come after a race is over and, in the specific case of the PER, the participants interviewed on the ferry claimed that the race would give them the chance to improve themselves by looking back at the mistakes done and by overcoming the weaknesses that they discovered about themselves during the competition. This racer, for instance, considered the PER as a unique opportunity for self-introspection:

Through this race I think I've learnt...I think I'm learning a lot. Like now that I've done the race I think there's gonna be a lot of things that I'm gonna realize about myself...We'll see what it is. But that's something that you can never get to experience in anything else. I think that's why adventure racing is so

attractive to me, you know...It's a chance for myself to grow. (Cindy L. - Team Wind Guts - Data Source 2)

The changes occurred through AR were described by the participants as having long-lasting effects. As a matter of fact, the racers claimed to have changed their mindset through AR and to have acquired a new view of the world as well as a new approach to problems and coping skills. This athlete, for instance, affirmed: "I have a different approach to problems, with whatever it's in my work or it's my private life. And it's all experience that I got from racing competitions like this....It (adventure racing) has changed my life" (Elton J. - Team Stray Dogs - Data Source 2). AR was literally said, by a few participants, to make almost everything possible in daily life, as well as to make lives easier and to make them tougher as persons:

After racing a lot of problems in daily life seem like nothing and actually life gets more simple after racing. After I learnt about adventure racing, and after I've done it a few times, I think that my life is much more simple now. (Cindy L. - Team Wind Guts - Data Source 2)

Other feelings experienced by the participants through the PER and AR in general were a sense of fulfillment and accomplishment for reaching the goals, awareness of one's limits and possibilities and, by using the words of a participant, a feeling of being in tune with the world, which was said to grow stronger as new experience in AR was acquired.

### **Transferability of the Benefits**

The subsets of the benefit of self-change that the PER participants acquired through AR, such as self-awareness, self-confidence, teamwork skills, coping skills, adaptability, and a different approach to problems were found to be applicable to both their private and work life. Data analysis revealed that the most experienced participants considered their lives to have

become easier after they started racing and that AR brought moral values, fun, excitement and passion to their everyday life. In more general terms, the racers claimed that AR provided them with a "toolbox" for daily life:

You learn how to tackle problems, you get a huge toolbox for dealing with issues, whatever it's in your work or it's in your private life. You can use these tools everywhere in your life and I share these tools with people and...It works really well, absolutely. (Elton J. - Team Stray Dogs - Data Source 2)

While the PER participants claimed that, in their private life, AR provided them with the energies to deal with their kids and life at home in general, in their work life, the teamwork skills and the different approach to problems acquired through AR were probably considered as the biggest asset. A few racers even found similarities between their occupation and the sport of AR. For instance, while a participant employed in the field of consultancy compared the consultant-client relationship with the relationships between the members of an AR team for the fact that in both cases one has to hear the needs and the opinions of others before taking a decision, another racer who worked as an organizational developer found her task of building high performance teams in the organizational context to be very similar to the efforts that the racers make to keep their team cohesive and effective. The benefits acquired by the racers were not always found to be exclusively applicable from the AR world to daily life, but also the other way around, as several racers claimed that some of the skills necessary for succeeding in AR were developed through the performance of their job:

As an aerospace engineer, the ingenuity and concentration level required in my day to day job are definitely good qualities to have in an expedition adventure race. However, being part of a huge company with over 17.000 co-



workers, the abilities in human relations necessary at work are the real assets I bring into adventure racing. Team working, conflict management, planning, strategy, goal orienting and other common business necessities are true parallels in both of my life activities, as an engineer and as an adventure racer.

(Marvin G. - Team Pachamama - Data Source 5)

The benefits that the PER participants acquired through racing were also communicated verbally to people who did not necessarily belong to the AR world. A few athletes claimed that their experiences as adventure racers have been recognized within the company for which they work as well as by different companies as having value from a corporate perspective and, for this reason, presentations and workshops in the organizational context were encouraged. During this type of presentations some racers spoke about motivation and high performance teams.

In my company I have, from time to time, been asked to present to my co-workers my experiences as an adventure racer. Through these opportunities, I have developed workshops and speeches where I talk about teamwork, team building, planning and strategizing techniques as well as how to achieve success in life, all from my experiences gathered from previous races. (Marvin G. - Team Pachamama - Data Source 5)

Experience sharing was a topic explored during the ferry interviews. There, most participants claimed to share their AR experiences with family, friends, other racers back home or in other AR events, as well as with people outside the AR community or who were totally unaware of the sport of AR. The racers shared their AR experiences through informal conversations, parties, presentations, which in one case were said to be attended by an amount of people that ranged between 100 and 200, social media, websites, in the form of team race reports, and, in one case,

even television programs. A couple of racers, on the other hand, said that they do not use any of the previously mentioned means of communication to share their experience. As "common" people would not have understood what they had gone through in the wilderness, they preferred to keep the AR experience to themselves.

### **Summary of the Findings**

The PER participants are committed, internationally mobile individuals whose engagement in AR started with small races and continued with expedition-length events, which were attended on average between one and four times per year. A rollercoaster of emotions was experienced during the PER. During the up moments "flow" and "play" were both experienced: The race course was seen as a playground where the participants felt a sense of release from everyday life obligations, where games were invented, jokes were made and total immersion in the activity was experienced along with a sense of alteration of time and a general sense of harmony with the environment. The down moments, on the other hand, mainly coincided with feelings of frustration towards nature and with the moments when the racers realized that risky situations might have occurred. Despite such feelings of frustration, the environment was seen overall as an element to race with rather than to race against and harmony with it was identified. The racers did not generally associate the PER with risky situations, which they tried to avoid most of the times.

Expedition races were considered as an opportunity to visit a country from a "off the beaten track" perspective. When in the wilderness the PER participants felt as if they had gone back to their roots and experienced feelings of discovery and exploration. The PER was considered as exclusive tourist experience, as the places that the racers traversed were described as inaccessible for "common" people. From a social point of view, the PER strengthened the

bonds both within and outside the teams. Within the team a strong sense of unity was identified, as well as a synergetic behavior, feelings of trust, respect, compassion, and open communication. At times the teams were even considered as worlds of their own. The race also represented a meeting for the expedition racing community, where friends could be made and potential teammates for future adventure races could be encountered.

The experience of the participants had at times something ineffable that could not be transmitted or understood by "common" people and feelings of self-change were often associated with the PER. For the most experienced racers, though, the feelings of self-change started in previous AR events. The PER was considered as a chance for personal development and introspection and as a training ground for daily life: The participants generally became more aware of themselves and developed skills such as teamwork skills, coping skills, adaptability to unpredictable environments, and different approach to problems, which were said to be applicable to both private and work life.

### Discussion

The findings revealed that the race participants obtained a variety of benefits by participating in the PER and, to some extent, to previous adventure races. Before discussing these benefits in detail, a few considerations need to be made on the fields that frame AR, such as sports tourism, serious leisure and adventure tourism.

As already mentioned in the theory chapter, a great deal of sports tourism scholars distinguished between spectators and active sport tourists, who are the individuals who travel to participate in sport competitions (Gibson, 1998; Hall, 1992; Hinch & Higham, 2001; Standeven & De Knop, 1999; Weed & Bull, 1997). The fact that the PER participants did not only, in most of the cases, travel from other countries to Chilean Patagonia to partake in the competition, but also traveled through the territory designated as race course, suggests that the distinction between active and passive sports tourism should be further extended when it comes to the PER and expedition-length races in general. In the specific case of the PER, in fact, active sports tourism assumes a double-dimension, as it involves both traveling to the destination of the adventure race and traversing the environment where the race was set. Moreover, due to the high level of commitment that taking part in the PER involves, the race participants can be said to belong to the category of "serious sport tourists" proposed by Getz and McConnell (2011).

The findings also supported the position of AR within the field of serious leisure. The efforts of the racers to train for and to complete the race, the perseverance in reaching the set goals, the progression in the athletic career that took the racers from small AR events to international expedition races, the durable benefits acquired through the PER and previous adventure races, the existence of a community of adventure racers and their identification with

the sport were all aspects that were present in the findings and that coincide with the qualities of serious leisure identified by Stebbins (1982).

With regards to the specific quality of "unique ethos" of serious leisure, the PER served as a meeting point for the international AR community, or social world (Unruh, 1980), where experiences could be shared, socialization could take place, social identities could be strengthened and possible racing teammates could be discovered. The relatively small number of expedition races organized on a yearly basis and the number of years of involvement in expedition racing indeed increase the chances of racers running into one another at some point of their expedition racing career. Furthermore, the fact that the most experienced PER participants argued that the athletes who take part in the "big" races are likely to know each other suggests the existence of different geographical levels of the AR community.

Another aspect that is consistent with Stebbins' concept of serious leisure (1982) is that the costs that the PER participants associated with the practice of AR were considered to have a marginal role, as the racers were willing to take pay cuts or to switch from full time to part time jobs to have more time to dedicate to their passion. The gradual progress from small AR events to expedition races also strengthens the "serious" nature of racing and can be considered as a movement of the PER participants within the "practitioners" section of the continuum of adventure tourism activities proposed by Brown (2000).

Although risk was considered as the unalienable aspect of adventurous activities by a great deal of scholars (Berno et al., 1996; Cloke & Perkins, 1998; Ewert, 1989; Fulker & Turner, 2000; Hall, 1992; Morgan, 2000), the findings showed that the main purpose of the PER participants was not, unlike suggested by Ewert (1989), to engage in risky situations, but rather to

gain introspection and personal development, just as suggested by Walle (1997) in his insight-seeking theory. Moreover, consistent with the study of Schneider et al. (2007), the few racers who purposely sought risky situations were confident in their own skills and in those of their teammates. This finding suggests that, since they felt immune to danger, the racers were acting within the protective frame that individuals experience when they feel in a playful state of mind (Kerr & Apter, 1991). The fact that these PER participants faced risk with an "adventurous spirit" is also consistent with the theory of flow, which argues that individuals in such a state of mind are not concerned with the possibility of losing control (Csikszentmihalyi, 1975).

The absolute involvement and immersion in the activity, the alteration of time, the general harmony with the surrounding environment, the emotional distance from daily life, and the playful state in which the participants fell at certain points of the race hints that flow and play were both experienced at some stages of the PER. The fact that flow was said to be more likely to occur in serious leisure activities (Heo et al., 2010), moreover, further strengthens the position of the PER within the realm of serious leisure. The alternation of flow and play with moments of frustration towards nature and moments of a more serious attitude, which have to be attributed to the expedition-length and the demanding nature of the race, is an aspect consistent with the studies of Csikszentmihalyi (1975) and Kerr and Apter (1991). In fact, whereas the first researcher argued that flow, for the high level of concentration it requires, is hard to be experienced for long periods of time, the other two claimed that individuals constantly switch from a paratelic to a telic state of mind as the protective frame typical of playful moods comes and goes. This switching from paratelic to telic mode represents the idea at the base of the so-called "reversal theory of play" (Kerr & Apter, 1991).

Although it is expected that other expedition races around the globe, due to the demanding nature of this type of AR competition, also generate in the participants feelings of frustration towards nature at some stages, this feeling might be particularly marked in the PER due to the frequency with which the race terrain was described as being more impenetrable than in other races, which at times required them to advance through the wilderness at an incredibly slow pace. As for the down moments experienced after the race, the feelings of disappointment and "post-race depression" that were identified in a few PER participants recalls the possibility that, according to Csikszentmihalyi (1990), enjoyable activities become addictive for those who experience them.

Just like the individuals who, according to Kerr and Apter (1991), tend to create their own small universe when they are in a playful state of mind, the racers often saw their teams as being worlds on their own. These worlds were separate from reality and at times the detachment from the real world was purposely made starker by the participants, such as when the recommended route was abandoned or when games were invented. For the fact that during the PER the participants were more adaptable to the environment, had senses that were generally more alert, and enhanced their skills, such as coping skills and teamwork skills, the state of play experienced along the course would be considered by Ackerman (1999) as a form of "deep play". Even though flow and play were evident aspects in the findings, it is difficult to determine how long exactly these states of mind lasted.

Besides experiencing flow and play, through their participation in the PER the athletes could reach places that would have been hardly accessible otherwise. The fact that the territories crossed during the competition were described as epic and fantasy-like and for the modality of sharing their experience, such as with presentations, the PER athletes can be associated with the

frontier tourists studied by Laing and Crouch (2005, 2009, 2011). As for experience sharing, the fact that a few racers preferred to keep to themselves the feelings they experienced is indeed an indication of the intensity of the emotions experienced throughout the competition. Even though, unlike frontier travelers, the racers did not expressly compare their journeys to the expeditions undertaken in the ancient times, the fact that racing was considered as an opportunity to explore a country in a back-to-the-roots mode reflects their desire to experience a land just how explorations occurred in the old times, i.e. in a way that is as authentic as possible and that does not involve the use of modern comforts typical of today's mass tourism.

The reason why the back-to-the-roots aspect was presented in the findings under the "state of play" is that the sense of release and simple life experienced by the participants during the race might have contributed to making them fall, at some stages of the race, into a playful state of mind. For the great variety of natural settings traversed by the participants and the disciplines performed in the course of the competition, the PER can be considered to some extent as a tourism package that gives the opportunity to individuals with excellent endurance skills to experience Chilean Patagonia in a primal and emotionally intense way. The aspects of flow, play and exploration of new territories in a "primal mode", since they generate an immediate sense of well-being and release in the racers, might be considered as the short-term benefits of the PER experience.

Throughout the findings the characteristics typical of *communitas* were identified among the PER participants. Although camaraderie, equality of status, and freedom from everyday social norms, which are the main elements of *communitas* according to Turner (1969), were identified in the teams, the type of social bonds that characterizes the racers, such as trust, mutual understanding, solidarity, and family-like relationships, are more closely related with the more



comprehensive concept of *communitas* that Celsi (1992) found to be applicable to the high-risk sports participants of his study. On the other hand, even though Celsi (1992) considered the idea of *communitas* as "shared flow" suggested by Belk et al. (1989) as restrictive, this concept seemed to apply to the PER teams in times such as when they were described as bubbles in the wilderness. In these times the racers forgot about their everyday life, cared about nothing but the activity itself, and considered their teams to be far away from reality as sorts of microcosms that traversed the wilderness. It is expected that the strong bonds that were identified within the PER teams strengthened the protective frame so that the racers who purposely sought risky situations would consider accidents to be unlikely to occur (Kerr & Apter, 1991).

The bond building effect of the PER was not only noticed between the members of the same team, but also between the other participating teams and, more generally, within the broader context of the AR community. Expedition races with international participants such as the PER do not only represent a meeting point for the AR community, as suggested earlier on, but also contribute to the conjunction of different cultures, as athletes from all over the world get together, share thoughts and life experiences, and are immersed in the culture of the country hosting the race, which is sometimes unknown to the racers. Moments such as the 2012 post-race trip by ferry that took the race organizers and the PER participants back to Punta Arenas, during which people were "forced" to socialize as the trip was long and the space limited, might encourage social interaction and be seen as an asset by the racers.

The profound emotions that the PER triggered in the racers resulted in ultimate and long-lasting benefits such as the felt self-change, which mainly consisted of feelings of personal development that the racers experienced throughout the PER and previous AR events, and the possibility to transfer the "new" self into everyday life. The long-lasting personal development

experienced by the racers recalls the durable benefits such as self-enrichment, renewal of self, feelings of accomplishment, and social interaction that Stebbins (2007) identified as a quality of serious leisure activities.

Consistent with Celsi's study (1992) on the transcendent benefits obtained by high-risk sports participants, the level of felt self-change varied among the racers depending on their level of AR experience. The personal development reported by the PER participants resulted from a learning process and mainly consisted of increased levels of self-awareness and self-confidence, changes in the world view, sense of fulfillment, improvement of knowledge and skills, as identified by Celsi (1992) and Kay and Laberge (2002b) in high-risk sports participants and adventure racers respectively, as well as of a development of intra-team relationships and better understanding of oneself, as suggested by Allison and Wald (2010) for the members of the expedition object of their research. Moreover, the racers claimed to have become more humble by being immersed in nature, just like the extreme sports participants studied by Brymer and Oades (2009).

Although self-change through personal development emerged from the findings as an important benefit of the racers, it is difficult to determine exactly which factors triggered the change. As a matter of fact, self-change might be attributed to being in touch with nature (Brymer & Gray, 2009, Scherl, 1989), as well as to play, during which individuals learn through experimentation (Kerr & Apter, 1991), to flow, whose accumulation of episodes, according to Celsi (1992), results in a transformation of the self, or to additional factors that did not emerge from this study. What the participants did expressly attribute to their contact with nature, though, is their adaptability to unpredictable situations, humility, and the increased awareness of their weaknesses.

Even though the racers claimed to have found the benefits acquired through AR applicable to their everyday life, they did not consider such applicability to be strictly confined within the corporate world, unlike the management-level corporate racers subject of Kay and Laberge's study (2002b). As a matter of fact, the findings of this research suggest that the PER athletes rather considered their work and the practice of AR as two mutually beneficial activities, where the skills and knowledge acquired in each of them could be applied to the other in order to achieve a successful performance in both fields. Moreover, the benefits that emerged from this study were not exclusively experienced by the corporate workers who took part in the PER, but also by participants with a different occupation (Kay & Laberge, 2002b).

According to the definition of transcendent benefits provided by Celsi (1992), four out of the six main benefits that emerged in this study can be considered as being entirely transcendent. These are: the flow experience, the state of play, the creation of *communitas*, and the felt-self change. The remaining benefits of exploration and of "transferability", on the other hand, might be considered as transcendent only to a certain extent. The exploration benefit experienced by the participants can be seen as a state of mind that provides the racers with a sense of release and of return to the roots and, from a more "concrete" perspective, as well as a physical exploration of unknown territories. Transferability, on the other hand, can be seen as an extension of the transcendent benefits acquired by the PER participants. In this view, then, a transferable benefit might be defined as set of skills or attitudes that transfer to another sphere of one's life.

The findings of this thesis have implications that might be taken into consideration by both race organizers and corporate world. As for the first group, the benefits that were identified might be used when it comes to promoting the event. The organizers, for instance, might want to stress the fact that the PER was considered by the racers as a meaningful life experience that

provides them with the chance to reach places that are inaccessible for "common" people, to feel a sense of release that is triggered by their return to the roots, to grow on a personal level and, finally, a chance to gain a toolbox of skills that can be also used outside the AR context.

The fact that the participants considered expedition racing as a way to visit a new country suggests that the race was seen a sort of "sample" of Chile and that the course design plays a key role in shaping the participants' perception of the country. Furthermore, a study conducted by Wöran and Arnberger (2012) on mountain hikers suggests that landscapes that are "rich in fascinating natural structures" (p. 111) provide the optimal conditions for hikers to experience flow. For this reason, the researchers considered the course design as an important aspect that destination managers have to take into consideration to make the hiking experience as enjoyable as possible (Wöran & Arnberger, 2012). In accordance with the findings of Wöran and Arnberger's study (2012), and with the theory of the flow experience, (Csikszentmihalyi, 1990), the race course should be designed so as to match the skills of the participants in order to make the race experience as enjoyable as possible.

The applicability of benefits such as the personal development acquired through the PER and previous adventure races has implications that might also be considered by the corporate world and companies might want to recognize the mutual reinforcement of work and adventure racing. Certain skills developed by the racers throughout the PER and other adventure races, such as the adaptability to unpredictable environments, teamwork skills, coping skills, open communication, and approaching problems in a different way, might be of particular importance for corporations. As a matter of fact, racers could be invited to corporate events to present the relationship between the AR and the corporate world and the skills they have acquired through

racing, which might serve as an inspiration for the employees and result in a better work performance of them.

On the other hand, as the personal development felt by the racers was not exclusively related to the PER, but also to other adventure races in which the racers took part, corporations might consider to encourage their employees to participate in AR events or even to organize their own, which might be seen as a return in investment for the work performance of their employees. Although companies that provide AR services to corporations are currently sprouting on the Internet, corporations that are willing to recur to AR as a sport that develops skills in their employees might consider "safer" to ask for the expertise of the organizers of an established event such as the PER, which has recently been appointed by National Geographic as one of the "ten great races in amazing places" (Siber, 2012). Moreover, as the most significant changes in the racers were found to come with experience, corporations might decide to invest in multiple AR events for their employees.

Limitations of this study were encountered in the course of the interviewing process on the ferry from the finish line to Punta Arenas during the 2012 edition of the PER. Firstly, as mentioned in the methods part, although the sample of teams was chosen such as to be as diverse as possible in terms of nationalities, adventure racing background and race performance, such a variety was achieved at the expenses of a straightforward communication with the racers during the interviews, as both the interviewer and the racers had to recur to different language skills. In fact, as the researcher and the majority of the participants who were interviewed communicated in English, and in one case in Spanish, as their second language, there is the possibility that a small number of nuances was not fully grasped in the course of the conversations, even though the questions asked were proofread by native speakers before the interviews started. There is also

the possibility, for the two interviews that required the team members who were fluent in English to translate the questions into their native language and then back into English, that that emphasis might have been put by the translators on certain aspects more than others based on the degree of involvement that they felt with a particular topic, or that certain nuances could not be effectively communicated from the native languages of the racers into English.

Secondly, even though Rubin and Rubin (2012), whose guidelines for effective responsive interviewing were followed for the ferry interviews, recommend that the researcher listens to every interview before a new one is conducted, in this study such a procedure was omitted due to time constraints. This choice prevented the researcher from doing a critical evaluation of each interview right after it was conducted and, therefore, from improving the overall quality of the upcoming ones (Rubin & Rubin, 2012). Finally, even though the researcher got acquainted with Rubin and Rubin's responsive interviewing guidelines and techniques (2012) prior to the interviewing session on the ferry, she still lacked the readiness and expertise that an experienced qualitative researcher would use to make an interview go the "smoothest" way possible.

### Conclusions

In the end, there are no real words for this race, I come up speechless. Just thinking about it gives me butterflies. ( Dionne W. - Team Ear Wigs - Data Source 5)

The PER emerged from this study as an enriching and at times ineffable experience and can be considered as a highly complex and heterogeneous phenomenon due to the variety of sport disciplines and terrains that it comprises, the different cultures that it gathers, and the emotional aspects that it involves. The race participants went through a rollercoaster of emotions that took them from feeling a sense of release from everyday life constraints, a high involvement in the activity, as well as a playful state of mind, to experiencing a sense of frustration for the challenges provided by the environment. Not only was the race an exploration of pristine territories in a "primal" mode, but it was also an exploration of the inner self and a chance for personal development both in the race context and in everyday life. The findings of this study, which mostly have a "transcendent" nature, might be taken into consideration by both the race organizers and the corporate world. Whereas the PER organizers might consider to promote the race as a deeply enriching experience for those who participate in it, corporations might decide to organize corporate activities in the field of AR in order to benefit from the personal development acquired by the participants.

The complexity of the PER was not only manifested in terms of disciplines, logistics, rules, and gear needed, but first and foremost in terms of the emotions experienced by the racers. On a metaphorical level, the PER participants experienced a give-and-take relationship with the AR: If, on the one hand, the racers showed high dedication to the sport by engaging in arduous

training sessions, staying away from home and work for several days without receiving any financial compensation, AR, on the other hand, provided them with the possibility to experience intense feelings and to grow on a personal level. As for AR in general, it is expected that, if the role that this sport plays in the personal development of an individual keeps being communicated outside the community of racers, such as in presentations addressed to corporate workers, acquaintances of the racers, etc., there will be higher chances in the future for people to engage in the sport.

The findings might be generalized to other adventure races only to a limited extent. In fact, even though the racers did not exclusively attribute their personal growth to the PER, but also to previous adventure races in which they took part, the PER, for its peculiar characteristics such as the unlikelihood to meet other racers on the course, the particularly demanding nature of the competition, the impenetrability of certain areas, and the sense that nobody else had passed through those areas before, might have generated feelings in the participants that other races might have not.

For this reason, future research might wish to investigate the benefits obtained by the participants of other adventure races to see whether they are consistent with the findings of this study. Another topic that might be considered for future research and that, although not presented in the findings because not directly related with the benefits of the racers, emerged in the course of the ferry interviews is the role covered by female members in AR teams and the differences in performance between female-only, co-ed, and male-only teams. Moreover, in order to overcome the issue of determining which factors such as a contact with nature, flow, and play, as well as which race discipline had more weight in triggering the self-change experienced by the race participants, future quantitative research is suggested. Future studies in the field of AR would



provide a better understanding of this growing sport and would be of a great value for the overall, and currently scarce, academic literature in the field.

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## Appendices

### Appendix A

The main questions asked in the first set of post-race interviews (ferry interviews) are:

Which sports did you practice before AR?

How did your interest in AR start?

Was there a person in particular who introduced you to AR?

In how many expedition races do you participate each year?

Do you know other racers who come from the same countries as yours and who participated in this edition of the PER or in previous ones (If there were any)?

Did you come here as tourists as well?

How was your sense of time when you were racing?

How would you describe your feelings when you were racing in the wilderness?

How would you describe your relationship with the environment?

How do you feel in risky situations?

How were the relationships within the team during the race?

Do you feel that AR has changed your life to some extent?

### Appendix B

The list of questions prepared for the second set of post race interviews are:

To the teams that finished the race: How does it feel to cross the finish line?

Which memories from Patagonia will you take with you?

What was the most emotional moment for you?

Which section of the course did you enjoy the most?

What was the most difficult moment?

What aspect of Patagonian nature impressed you the most?

What was your expectation of the race?

How did you work together as a team?

Will you come back? If so, why?

What is your advice for other teams?

To the returning teams: What makes you come back?

How was the river crossing at PC12?

### **Appendix C**

Table A1.1 and Table A.1.2. (pp.) provide an overview of the expedition races that were organized in the world in 2012. The races were selected from the calendar of events of the website [www.sleepmonsters.com](http://www.sleepmonsters.com), which was appointed by both race organizers and racers as the major website for the sport of adventure racing. According to the description of expedition racing provided at pp. 9-10, this type of adventure races lasts between four and 12 days, comprises multiple disciplines and has co-ed teams of three to four participants (Jamison, Moslow-Benway, & Stover, 2005; Wilson, 2007). Only the races that complied with such description were inserted in the tables.

Table A1.1 *Expedition Races in 2012*

Race name	Location	Month	Duration (days)	Disciplines	Approx. course length (Km)	Team composition	Prize for the winning team	Official website
Timex Winter Raid 360	Poland	February	4	Orienteering, running, cross-country skiing, special tasks	400	Co-ed teams of four	Non monetary	<a href="http://www.zima_2011.team360.pl/en/node/1863">www.zima_2011.team360.pl/en/node/1863</a>
Patagonian Expedition Race	Chile	February	8	Navigation, kayaking, trekking, climbing, rope work, mountain biking	560	Co-ed teams of four	Non monetary	<a href="http://www.patagonianexpeditionrace.com">www.patagonianexpeditionrace.com</a>
Huairasinchi	Ecuador	February	4	Orienteering, kayaking, trekking, rope work, mountain biking	350	Co-ed teams of four	Monetary (5,000 USD)	<a href="http://www.proyectoaventura.com/3_90_inicio.html">www.proyectoaventura.com/3_90_inicio.html</a>
Tierra Viva	Argentina	February	6	Kayaking, trekking, mountain biking	500	Co-ed teams of four	Monetary (10,000 USD)	<a href="http://www.tierraviva.com.ar">www.tierraviva.com.ar</a>
Orion Health GODZone	New Zealand	April	7	Navigation, kayaking, canoeing, trekking, mountain biking	500	Co-ed teams of four	Not specified	<a href="http://www.godzoneadventure.com">www.godzoneadventure.com</a>
Costa Rica Adventure Race	Costa Rica	April	5	Kayaking, rafting, trek/run, rope work, mountain biking, caving	Not specified	Co-ed teams of four	Monetary (6,000 USD)	<a href="http://www.arcostarica.com">www.arcostarica.com</a>
Expedition Africa	South Africa	May	6	Orienteering, kayaking, trek/run, rope work, mountain biking, swimming	500	Co-ed teams of four	Monetary (value not specified)	<a href="http://www.kineticgear.co.za">www.kineticgear.co.za</a>
Réunion d'Aventures	Reunion Island	May	6	Orienteering, kayaking, mountain biking, canyoning, rope work	Not specified	Co-ed teams of three	Monetary (3,000 EUR)	<a href="http://www.authentiqueaventure.com">www.authentiqueaventure.com</a>

Table A1.2 *Expedition Races in 2012*

Race name	Location	Month	Duration (days)	Disciplines	Approx. course length (Km)	Team composition	Prize for the winning team	Official website
The APEX Race	Switzerland	June	6	Navigation, paddling, rafting, running/trekking, mountain biking, rope work	Not specified	Co-ed, men and female four-member teams	Monetary (5,000 CHF)	<a href="http://www.theapexrace.com">www.theapexrace.com</a>
Untamed New England Adventure Race	USA	June	4	Orienteering, paddling, packrafting, trekking, mountain biking, rope work	320	Co-ed teams of four	Monetary (5,000 USD)	<a href="http://www.untamedne.com">www.untamedne.com</a>
Endurance Quest Adventure	Finland	July	3-4	Kayaking, canoeing, packrafting, rowing, running, mountain biking, kickbiking, rope work, coastaleering, inline skating, sailing	600	Co-ed teams of four	Monetary (10,000 EUR)	<a href="http://www.endurancequest.com">www.endurancequest.com</a>
Mother Lode Gold Rush	USA	August	5	Orienteering, hiking, running, paddling, mountain biking, rope work	Not specified	Co-ed teams of four	Nature of the prize not specified	<a href="http://www.goldrushar.com/event/s/mother-lode-5-day-expedition-race.html">www.goldrushar.com/event/s/mother-lode-5-day-expedition-race.html</a>
The Sting in Stirling	Scotland	August	5	Canoeing, running/trekking, mountain biking, canyoneering, rope work	500	Co-ed teams of four	Non monetary	<a href="http://www.adidas-ar.com/2012/terrex">www.adidas-ar.com/2012/terrex</a>
Raid in France (Adventure Race World Championships)	France	September	8	Orienteering, kayaking, rafting, trail running, mountain trek, mountain biking, rope work, canyoning, swimming, caving, via ferrata	520	Co-ed teams of four	Monetary (total prize money pool of 50,000 EUR)	<a href="http://www.raidinfrance.com">www.raidinfrance.com</a>
Lycian Challenge Adventure Race	Turkey	October	4	Navigation, kayaking, canoeing, trail running, trekking, mountain biking, rope work, swimming, canyoning	400	Co-ed teams of four	Monetary (value not specified)	<a href="http://www.lycianchallenge.com">www.lycianchallenge.com</a>

## Appendix D

Example of a pre-race questionnaire from the 2010 edition of the PER. All the names mentioned in the questionnaire are fictional and the personal data of the racer were omitted.



**WENGER PATAGONIAN EXPEDITION RACE®**  
2010 *The adventure at the end of the world*

## Competitor Questionnaire

### TEAM: Guanaco Airlines

Please fill in parts 1, 2 and 3 of this questionnaire electronically possibly in English or if necessary in your mother language, providing as much detailed information as possible. This information will form part of the WENGER PATAGONIAN EXPEDITION RACE® 2010 Press Pack.

Please e-mail back to: xx@xxx.com

#### PART 1: PERSONAL DETAILS

Full Name	Janis Joplin
Birth date (dd/mm/yyyy)	dd/mm/yyyy
Occupation (full detail)	X
Nationality	X
Birthplace	X
Places you have lived	X
Current town of residence	X
Local media (if known)	X



## WENGER PATAGONIAN EXPEDITION RACE® 2010

The adventure at the end of the world

### PART 2: PREPARATION

1. What made you decide to enter the Patagonian Expedition Race?

It's viewed in the adventure race community as the world's toughest race and the only race which is a true wilderness experience. I've done many expedition races but most of them are a safe, controlled environment where every possibility is rehearsed. Patagonia seems to be more 'real'.

2. How have you prepared and where have you trained in your local area?

As adventure racers we keep ourselves at a high level of fitness anyway so training has revolved around working with different gear, carrying heavy backpacks and climbing lots of hills.

3. What activities will you excel at and which will be a challenge for you?

The race will be challenging as it will be like no race we have ever done. We're good navigators but expect it to be a challenge with big scale maps and lots of open spaces. We're all good hikers and bikers but have less experience in high seas kayaking.

4. How did you meet your team-mates?

I've raced with Michael Bolton for several years. We both know Tom Waits through racing side by side together and Tom knows Brian Eno having met at Primal Quest a few years ago.

5. What are you most looking forward to about the event? The wilderness

experience and stunning scenery.





## WENGER PATAGONIAN EXPEDITION RACE<sup>®</sup> 2010

The adventure at the end of the world

1. What is your greatest fear about the event?  
The cold weather. I live in California!

2. What will be your personal objective for the race in February?  
To finish.

3. What will be your team's strategy?  
Keep moving and keep warm and dry.

### PART 3: PERSONAL BACKGROUND

9. What first interested you in adventure and what is your adventure background?

I got in to adventure racing about 10 years ago when a friend signed me up for a 6 hour race without telling me. I had to learn how to kayak and buy a bunch of gear but amazingly we won. After that we were completely hooked and started to do longer races. I prefer longer races as the pace suits me better than a sprint. I've done races such as Baja Travesia, Raid the North Extreme, Primal Quest and Moab Extreme.

10. What are your hobbies and interests?

Adventure racing!



## WENGER PATAGONIAN EXPEDITION RACE<sup>®</sup> 2010

The adventure at the end of the world

11. What is your BMI, heart rate, weight & height?

Don't know what my BMI is.

HR - 55-192

Weight - 130

Height - 5'7"

12. What specific adventurous and sporting activities have you done before - other adventure races, explorations, expeditions, climbs, top sporting events? Some mountain climbing and lots of competitive triathlons but nothing extreme.

13. Do you have a family, and what do they think of you participating in these kinds of events - are they excited, nervous, proud...? I'm married to a very supportive husband. He doesn't race but understands why I like to do it. He's proud of me racing but I think he would secretly prefer that I spend more time in the kitchen cooking his dinner!

14. What is the scariest adventure experience you have had? Baja Travesia 2007. The kayak portion was terrifying. We had 40 knot winds and 25 foot swells. The Mexican navy had trouble launching their rescue boats and we had 10 boats smashed against the rocks. We capsized but were fortunate enough to get back in without the boat sinking.



## WENGER PATAGONIAN EXPEDITION RACE® 2010

The adventure at the end of the world

We continued with the race and finished well but we all thought we were going to die in the kayaks.

15. Where is the most interesting place you have ever been to? The most interesting place non-adventure racing was Inle Lake, Burma (Myanmar). It was a place where the people lived in poverty with no personal possessions yet were the friendliest, kindest people you could ever meet. The most interesting place during a race was Prince Rupert, Canada where the scenery was stunning.

16. What is your greatest personal adventure achievement? In 2007 my mom was diagnosed with breast cancer so I raced for charity and raised over \$10,000 for the American Cancer Society.

17. What does your employer think of your adventures - how do you combine career, training, family and race participation? It's always a challenge to balance work, family and racing. I get up at 5am and train for a few hours before getting in to work at 9am. My company has a flexible work program so as long as the work gets done it's easier to train around the hours. At weekends I'll go out for 5-6 hours at a time and my husband will join me on bikes and treks. I try to think of it as having fun rather than training which makes it an easier part of my life to manage.

18. Who are your main sponsors and how did you find them? Still looking and open to offers!

[WWW.PATAGONIANEXPEDITIONRACE.COM](http://WWW.PATAGONIANEXPEDITIONRACE.COM)

[INFO@PATAGONIANEXPEDITIONRACE.COM](mailto:INFO@PATAGONIANEXPEDITIONRACE.COM)

TEL: +56-61-613893

[WWW.WENGERNA.COM](http://WWW.WENGERNA.COM)



**Appendix E**

Appendix E consists of a CD attached at the very end this thesis. In the CD can be found five folders, which contain:

- Folder 1: 2012 PER documentary trailer;
- Folder 2: One checkpoint audio interview;
- Folder 3: One audio interview of the first set of post-race interviews;
- Folder 4: One video interview of the second set of post race interviews (divided into three files);
- Folder 5: Two examples of video (Y) and audio (Z) files that were examined in the data analysis.