

## **The Importance of the International Positioning of the Markawasi Stone Forest as a Tourism Destination in Peru**

Pedro G. Gonzáles Mantilla<sup>a</sup>  
Miguel Bahl<sup>b</sup>

### **Abstract**

The Markawasi stone forest, located in the Peruvian Central Andes, is an imposing plateau that shows traces of a pre-Inca culture, where the weather modeled the giant rocks in anthropomorphic and zoomorphic shapes, creating a unique landscape. Its scientific, scenic, and cultural value, as well as its accessibility from the Peruvian capital (Lima), place it as a site of great tourism potential. This article is a reflective work that justifies the importance of the international positioning of such geological heritage as a tourism destination in the Andean country, both through bibliographic and documentary research as through direct observation. It was found that the international positioning of Markawasi would allow the consolidation of Lima as an important tourism destination in Peru, boosting a greater permanence of foreign tourists, fostering the multi-thematic tourism offer of the country, and promoting the conservation of Markawasi through the rational use of tourism activity, bringing benefits to the local population.

**Keywords:** Positioning; Tourism destination, Geological Heritage; Markawasi Stone Forest; Peru.

### **Resumo**

#### **A Importância do Posicionamento Internacional do Bosque de Pedras Marcahuasi como Destino Turístico no Peru**

O bosque de pedras Marcahuasi, localizado nos Andes centrais do Peru, é um imponente planalto que apresenta vestígios de uma cultura pré-incaica, onde o intemperismo modelou rochas gigantes com figuras antropomórficas e zoomórficas, criando uma paisagem singular. Seu valor científico, cênico e cultural, assim como sua acessibilidade desde a capital peruana, Lima, colocam-o como um lugar de grande potencial turístico. Este ensaio é um trabalho reflexivo que justifica a importância do posicionamento internacional deste patrimônio geológico como destino turístico no país andino por meio de uma pesquisa bibliográfica e documental e observação direta. Constatou-se que o posicionamento internacional de Marcahuasi permitiria consolidar Lima como um destino turístico importante no Peru, impulsionando uma maior permanência dos turistas estrangeiros, fomentando a oferta turística multitemática do país e promovendo a conservação de Marcahuasi por meio do aproveitamento racional da atividade turística, trazendo benefícios à população local.

**Palavras-chave:** Posicionamento; Destino turístico; Patrimônio geológico; Bosque de Pedras Marcahuasi; Peru.

- a. Doctorate student in Tourism, Economy, and Management in the Doctoral School of the Universidad de Las Palmas de Gran Canaria (ULPGC), España. Master's degree in Tourism, Society, and Environment by the Graduate Program in Tourism of the Federal University of Paraná (UFPR), Brazil. Curitiba, Paraná, Brazil. E-mail: [pgmxxx@hotmail.com](mailto:pgmxxx@hotmail.com)
- b. Ph.D. in Communication Sciences by the University of São Paulo (USP). Professor of the Undergraduate course in Tourism and of the Graduate Program in Geography of UFPR. Curitiba, Paraná, Brazil. E-mail: [migbahl@ufpr.br](mailto:migbahl@ufpr.br)

## Resumen

### **La Importancia del Posicionamiento Internacional del Bosque de Piedras Marcahuasi como Destino Turístico en el Perú**

El bosque de piedras Marcahuasi, localizado en los Andes centrales de Perú, es una imponente meseta que presenta restos de una cultura preincaica, donde el intemperismo configuró muchas rocas gigantes en formas antropomórficas y zoomórficas, formando un paisaje singular. Su valor científico, escénico y cultural, y su accesibilidad desde la capital peruana, Lima, lo colocan como un lugar de alta potencialidad turística. Este ensayo es un trabajo reflexivo que justifica la importancia del posicionamiento de este patrimonio geológico como destino turístico de Perú a través de una investigación bibliográfica y documental y de observación directa. Se demostró que el posicionamiento internacional de Marcahuasi permitiría consolidar Lima como un destino turístico importante en el país, impulsando una mayor permanencia de los turistas extranjeros, fomentando la oferta turística multitemática del país desde la capital y promoviendo la conservación del bosque a través del aprovechamiento racional de la actividad turística, generando beneficios para la población local.

**Palabras clave:** Posicionamiento; Destino turístico; Patrimonio geológico; Bosque de Piedras Marcahuasi; Perú.

## INTRODUCTION

Peru is a country that is internationally known for its authenticity, biodiversity, and historical heritage, and for being the birthplace of one of the oldest civilizations on the planet (Perú, 2013). According to the Sociedad Mercantil Estatal para la Gestión de la Innovación y las Tecnologías Turísticas (Segittur) (2015), Peru is considered a country with immense tourism potential. Its most visited attraction is the natural protected area of Machu Picchu Historical Sanctuary, located in Cusco, southern to the Peruvian Central Andes (Perú, 2005) (Figure 1). Machu Picchu is considered one of the seven wonders of the modern world and, in 2013, it was visited by more than 1 million tourists, being little more than 800,000 of them foreigners (Perú, 2014). Despite the diverse and multi-thematic potential of the country, Machu Picchu, and the Colca Valley in Arequipa, are the only areas suitable for international tourism, mainly due to the absence of infrastructure and basic services in other places that would be appropriate for the construction of hotels (Segittur, 2015). However, according to Segittur, the Peruvian government is implementing a policy of infrastructure construction that will show results in the coming years.

One of the main potential tourism attractions of the Andean country is the Markawasi stone forest, a geological heritage located in Lima, elected in 2008 one of the seven wonders of Peru in a national contest of a major Peruvian television chain (Perú, 2015). The site is considered enigmatic and mystic due to the giant granite rocks shaped in the most curious forms and designs, such as animals and human beings (Zavala Carrión, 2006). Markawasi, according to Zavala Carrión, is one of the many areas of geological, landscaped, and scientific value that has the necessary characteristics to be declared a protected natural area. Given this fact, the Geological, Mining and Metallurgical Institute (Ingemmet – *Instituto Geológico, Minero y Metalúrgico*) devised a project to integrate this heritage in the Global Geoparks Network (GGN), maintained by the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (Unesco). In addition to its natural and

cultural wealth, its beauty and the mysticism of its dominions, the stone forest is located just a few hours from Lima, favoring the development of tourist activities. However, tourism in the region is carried out spontaneously, without adequate structure or State protection (Perú, 2009).

**Figure 1** – Map of Peru



**Source** – Esmeraldo, 2013

According to the research of tourism markets conducted in 2013 by the Committee for Promotion of Peru in Exportation and Tourism (Promperú – *Promoción del Perú para la Exportación y el Turismo*, 2015), 65% of the foreign tourists entered in the country through the International Airport Jorge Chávez, located in Lima, the Peruvian capital and, therefore, main tourism destination of the country. Most tourists, however, has as main destination the Historic Sanctuary of Machu Picchu, whose nearest airport, the Velasco Astete, is in the city of Cusco (Perú, 2005). On the other hand, according to a profile of the foreign tourists produced by Promperú (2015) in 2013, international visitors stayed in Lima for an average of 6 days, while they remained for an average of 13 days in Peru.

Thus, the objectives of this work were: to reflect on the factors justifying the visit of a foreign tourist in Lima, and to discuss the importance of the international positioning of the Markawasi stone forest for local, regional, and national tourism.

## **METHODOLOGICAL ASPECTS**

For the development of this theoretical and reflective case study, we adopted as data collection the literature review, document analysis, and informal direct observation, held between September and October 2013. In the bibliographic review, we used studies and articles in Peruvian and international scientific journals, bringing updated discussions of the reference authors about the concept of tourism positioning and about Markawasi. For the documentary analysis, were compiled virtual documents of tourism entrepreneurs, of the Ministry of Foreign Trade and Tourism, of Promperú, and of international and Peruvian newspapers, in addition to promotional printed and virtual material, with information

about tourism in Markawasi, in Lima, and in Peru. A direct observation, of an informal character, was held during a visit to the Markawasi stone forest, with a brief period in the community San Pedro de Casta, which oversees managing the tourist activity on the site. According to Yin (2001), observational evidence serves to provide additional information on the topic under study.

## **TOURISM POSITIONING**

To visit a country, region, or a specific tourism attraction, tourists see the destinations under dissimilar categories and perceptions, positioning them according to the degree to which they feel represented by them. Hence the importance, in recent years, of creating a trademark or advertising logo to identify the tourism potential and quality of such destinations (Soto, 2011).

However, due to the great diversity of destinations in the market, tourists encounter difficulties in differentiating them (Mazón, 2002). According to Barrera (2014), the differentiation strategy can influence the tourism positioning of a destination and vice versa: on one hand, the strategy improves in tourists' minds the choice for a destination in comparison to another; on the other hand, to recognize the positioning of a destination allows the development of a more appropriate differentiation strategy. Mazón (2002) states that the goal of positioning is not to create a completely new destination but to manage the image the tourists have of it. The fundamental difference is that the image is the way consumers perceive the product, while positioning refers to how the consumers perceive the product regarding the competition (Barrera, 2014).

According to Kotler (2000), quoted by Soto (2011), the positioning in the place a product or service occupies in the mind of customers. Ries and Trout (1997), also quoted by Soto (2011), says that positioning refers to how the product is located in the minds of potential clients, noting the fundamental approach of positioning is not to create something new and different, but manipulate what is already in mind, linking the existing connections again.

On the view of the publication *Marketing of tourism destinations*, "positioning is the strongest, simplest, and the most powerful strategical concept of the communication realm" (Brazil, 2010, p. 38). Chias (2007) sentences that positioning, along with segmentation, are the most important techniques for marketing strategy and action. The author says this happens for two reasons: on the one hand, for its internationally recognized value of comparative image formulation and, therefore, of competitive offer to the market; on the other hand, for its value in expressing key elements that define the public analysis as for the set of offers received by a sector.

Cerveró, Iglesias, and Villacampa (2002) define three fundamental steps in the process of positioning: first, the identification of positioning attributes, establishing the basis for analyzing the strategic position of the destinations from the market point of view and compared with competing destinations. Second, the analysis of the current positioning, evaluating the destination position regarding the competition. And, third, the proposal of positioning considering the decisions of public administrators concerning key attributes.

The importance of positioning lies in the fact it encourages the consumers to develop considerations about a brand or company, in addition to contributing for the target audience to differentiate competing brands or companies, and to choose those they understand as to be of greater value (Toledo & Hemzo, 1991).

## **SITUATION OF TOURISM IN PERU**

In the last few years, tourism has been recognized as one of the main economic activities in Peru due to its positive impact in generating foreign currency and its increasing contribution to the gross domestic product (GDP) and to direct and indirect employment, being the fourth currency-generating activity in the country (Perú, 2013).

According to the Strategic National Plan of Tourism in Peru (Pentur) 2011-2021, tourism in the country has grown steadily: between 2002 and 2012, the number of international tourists grew from 1.1 million to 2.8 million, and the generation of foreign currency almost quadrupled, going from 837,000 to 3.3 million dollars. The growth potential of the tourism sector is high, both in receptive as in domestic tourism. As reported by Pentur, in receptive tourism, Peru has an increase of 8.1% in the arrival of international tourists and travelers, higher than the region (3.7% for Latin America) and the world (2.2%) averages. On the other hand, the domestic tourism is growing intensely, driven by the increase in purchasing power of the middle class and the considerable increment of leisure, recreation, and business travelers in the country (Perú, 2013).

Among the prospects, according to Mincetur, it is estimated that by 2021 the international tourists' arrivals will reach 5.1 million in Peru, and the generation of foreign currency will be of 6.8 million dollars, bringing about employment for 1.3 million people, and a direct contribution of 4.24% to the national GDP. According to the Level of Satisfaction of the Foreign Tourist in 2012 (Promperú, 2013), the main tourism destinations of Peru were: Lima, Cusco, Arequipa, Puno, Puerto Maldonado, Tacna, Chiclayo, Trujillo, Huaraz, Pisco, and Nazca. In 2013, according to the Tourism Market Investigation of Promperú (2015), 81% of the foreign tourists visited the Andean country to perform cultural tourism, 31% for nature tourism, and 18% for adventure tourism. Studies also stated that 30% of the foreign tourists remained from 1 to 3 days, 29% from 4 to 7 days, and 25% from 8 to 14 days. The level of satisfaction for the tourists visiting the Andean country was, in 2013, 65% of totally satisfied, and 35% of satisfied (Promperú, 2015).

In 2014, Peru triumphed in the regional edition of the World Travel Awards, being acknowledged as the best culinary destination, the best destination with historical legacy, and the best cultural destination in South America (Lira, 2014b). These awards are the result of major publicity campaigns of the Government to position Peru as the birthplace of an important legacy to humanity. However, it turns out the planning, managing, and monitoring of tourist activity are conducted, in most of the country, without technical or professional involvement, exhibiting a weak public policy for tourism. Given this, the consequences of tourism impact can be negative for natural, socio-cultural, and historical resources, with the risk of an irreversible loss in the values the sites offer.

## **TOURISM IN LIMA**

During the Spanish occupation of Peru, Lima was named the City of the Kings and considered the capital of the South-American Viceroyalty; nowadays, it is recognized by its colonial history (Promperú, 2015). In this metropolis, one can enjoy and learn in the historic center, with preserved colonial buildings declared as Cultural Heritage of Humanity by UNESCO, the most important museums in the country, and some pre-Hispanic archaeological sites, among which Caral is highlighted, the capital of the most ancient civilization of America, also considered a Cultural Heritage of Humanity (Go2Peru, 2000).

In recent years, with the gastronomic and economic growth, new attractions have arisen, such as important culinary fairs, high-quality restaurants, and great commercial centers (Promperú, 2015). Lima is recognized as the gastronomic capital of Latin America since in 2014 it was the highlight of the award for the 50 best establishments of the region, promoted by the magazine *Restaurant*, with nothing less than seven representatives among the 15 best restaurants in Latin America (Award, 2016). The country's cuisine stands out for its diversity, result of the merger between indigenous native traditions and customs brought by Spanish, African, Chinese, Japanese, and Italian immigrants (Valderrama, 2009).

Lima has a lot to offer to foreign visitors; thus, more than 70% of the tourists arriving at the country remain for at least six days in the capital, as shown by a recent study of Promperú (Centeno, 2014). According to the Tourism Market Investigation of Promperú (2015), in 2013, 87% of the foreign tourists who visited Lima performed cultural tourism, 40% did nature tourism, 24% adventure tourism, and 11% beach tourism. The study also states that the importance of the economic impact of tourism, whereas the average spending of a foreign tourist who visited Lima for six days was 1,300 dollars.

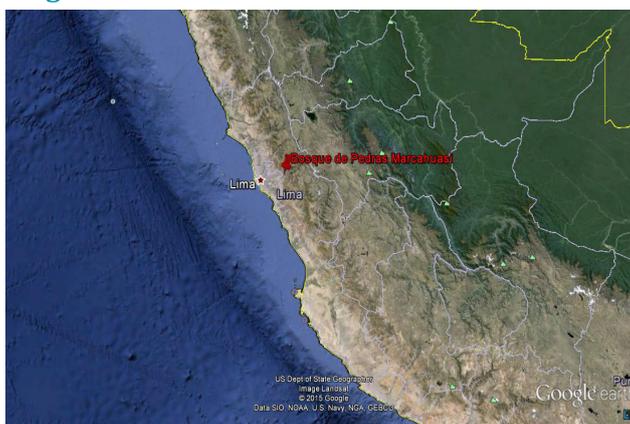
## **MARKAWASI, NATURAL AND CULTURAL HERITAGE**

The Markawasi plateau is situated in the province of Huarochirí, politically in the department of Lima, about 90km from the capital center, at an altitude of approximately 4,000m, between the valleys of Santa Eulalia and Rímac and occupying an area of 4km<sup>2</sup> (Perú, 2009) (Figure 2). Markawasi is located near the village of San Pedro de Casta, inhabited by 300 families (Zavala Carrión, 2006). San Pedro de Casta is, according to Zavala Carrión, a small agricultural village, with narrow streets and houses made of adobe and stone, with balconies and crosses on the roofs. Local services infrastructure is insufficient, but the proximity to the capital makes it an accessible tourism destination (Perú, 2009).

The first references to the Markawasi plateau are found in chronicles about myths and in notes of illustrious explorers such as Julio César Tello (Paz, 1985, quoted by Salazar & Iannacone, 2007). But the researcher who exhaustively studied Markawasi, making it known worldwide, was the historian Daniel Ruzo who, from 1952, photographed hundreds of sculptures made by the rocks erosion, to observe them from a certain angle, when the sun is in a determined sector in the sky (Ruzo, 1980, quoted by Salazar & Iannacone, 2007). In 1942, Ruzo publishes his book *Markawasi: the fantastic story of a discovery*, where he argues

about the protohistoric origin of the site, which would be more the 85 centuries old (Salazar & Iannacone, 2007). The author affirms that in the location inhabited men of the masma culture who, near an unavoidable planetary catastrophe, wanted to leave a series of signs and indications to the old caves where seeds, domestic animals, and mystic and scientific knowledge were safeguarded, which would allow the survival of humankind (Markawasi Tours Perú, 2005).

**Figure 2** – Location of the Markawasi Stone Forest



**Source** – Elaborated by the author from *Google Earth*, 2016

The main attraction of Markawasi is the so-called Monument to Humanity, a giant boulder of about 40 meters high, with several faces or profiles, depending on the angle of view and the time of the day (Zavala Carrión, 2006). Between the zoomorphic and anthropomorphic figures are the lion, the seals, the turtle, the Chinese, the woman with a child in her arms, the cabin, the llama etc. (Perú, 2009). There are also traces of pre-Inca citadels belonging, according to the archaeologist Julio Tello, to the huanca culture - ruins in the northern side (Huacracocho), a pre-Hispanic cemetery, *chullpas* (pre-Hispanic funerary houses) etc. (Salazar & Iannacone, 2007). In the rainy season, a set of twelve lagoons decorates the landscape, including the place known as *Amphitheater*, which consists of a clearing surrounded by huge rocks in gray and white tones (Zavala Carrión, 2006). Four ponds are highlighted: *Waqra Qocha* (fish and otters), *Taki Qocha* (corner), *Kachu Qocha* (horned) e *Wiska Qocha* (closed) (Universidad Nacional de Educación Enrique Guzmán y Valle, 1994).

Markawasi, as a geological heritage, is a scientific, cultural, and tourism resource, whose use represents an effective tool for conservation of geodiversity, rural economic development, and for the natural countryside environment (Mondéjar, 2004). The Geological, Mining and Metallurgical Institute of Peru, under the Institutional Operational Plan of 2006, in the subprogram Heritage and Geotourism, is leading a project called National Geopark Markawasi to be part of GGN (Global Geoparks Network) (Zavala Carrión, 2006). UNESCO and GGN develop models of better practices and quality standards for the territories that integrate the conservation of geological heritage, with strategies for the sustainable economic growth of the region (Global Geoparks Network, 2015). The establishment of a geopark, according to GGN, aims to bring sustainability and economic benefit to local populations, usually through the development of sustainable tourism and other economic and cultural activities.

## TOURISM IN MARKAWASI

The Markawasi stone forest is visited by domestic and foreign tourists all year round, especially in April and July holidays (Markawasi Tours Perú, 2005). The site is one of the choicest tourist attractions in Lima to visit during the vacation, being a path for long walks, with scenery ideal for a detailed observation of geology. About 4,000 meters above sea level, the ice plateau of Markawasi is located within and in between several valleys of the same origin (from the geomorphological point of view), whose volcanic rocks make it a privileged site to observe several cliffs, large flat areas, and lagoons. There is also the mysticism of the abundant rocks, sculpted by glacial abrasion, rain, and wind (Zavala Carrión, 2006). Inside this plateau, it is possible to perform diverse types of tourism, such as scientific, cultural, natural, adventure, mystic, esoteric, geotourism, ecotourism, among others.

To climb to the first plateau, known as the Amphitheater and where the camping area is located, it is necessary to walk for about 3 hours in the upper slope (Figure 3). It is also possible to rent donkeys for the luggage and horses for the people (Markawasi Tours Perú, 2005). There are two paths: a short one, which leads to the cabin and the *chullpas*; and a long one, leading to the Amphitheater and the Fortress (Figure 4).

**Figure 3** – Visit to the Markawasi Amphitheater



**Photo** – Pedro Gonzáles Mantilla (2013)

Services available in the village of San Pedro de Casta are: luggage carriers, rentals of donkeys and horses, rooms with private bathroom, basic service (municipal hostel), local bus mobility (San Pedro de Casta – Chosica), special transport (San Pedro de Casta – Atogolpo, 1km from the plateau), rental of camping equipment (tents, mattresses, sleeping bags, blankets, ecological bathroom), local guides, typical restaurants, and food stalls (Markawasi Tours Perú, 2005).

To climb the Markawasi plateau, it is only necessary to register in the Communal Office of Tourism of San Pedro de Casta and to perform a payment: for students, three soles, for domestic tourists, five soles; and ten soles for international visitors (Perú, 2009). However, due to the absence of protection or surveillance (Rangers), some figures and landscapes scenes may be affected (Zavala Carrión, 2006). Around the Amphitheater, there are inscriptions on the rocks and trash thrown by tourists and/or visitors (Perú, 2009). Despite its tourism, scientific, and cultural relevance, Markawasi still does not have the protection of the Peruvian State, endangering the integrity of the heritage in which the tourist activity is developed, spontaneously managed by local authorities of San Pedro de Casta.

Since 2014 the Ministry of Foreign Trade and Tourism of Peru (Mincetur), through the Copesco Plan, along with the regional government of Lima, has been developing the project “Conditioning for improvement and creation of tourism public services of access and complementary on the tourist route of the Markawasi plateau”, whose objective is to provide proper infrastructure to promote and improve the quality of the tourist services, and to create a tourist corridor (Perú, 2015).

**Figure 4** – Road sign on the climb of Markawasi plateau



**Photo** – Pedro Gonzáles Mantilla (2013)

## **PERSPECTIVE OF THE INTERNATIONAL POSITIONING OF MARKAWASI STONE FOREST AS A TOURISM DESTINATION**

We found that tourism in Peru will continue to grow, and has an enormous potential due to the multi-thematic offer to domestic and foreign tourists, being cultural tourism the most important modality and Machu Picchu, the most important destination of the country (Lira, 2014; Perú, 2005, 2013; Promperú, 2013, 2015). Machu Picchu represents a destination without competitors within the Andean country, with a very strong international positioning in the minds of tourists visiting Peru (Barrera, 2014; Soto, 2011).

Lima is the greatest national tourism destination, for receiving most foreign tourists arriving by air since it has the only international airport in the country.

However, although counting with a cultural, historical, and gastronomic offer, in addition to a proper infrastructure due to the economic growth of the city, Lima has no tourist attraction that can compare to the international positioning of Machu Picchu (Centeno, 2014; Go2Peru, 2000; Promperú, 2015).

Markawasi is deemed to have enough potential to become one of the main tourism destinations of Peru, placing itself as an important product in the international and national tourism market. To do so, however, certain points must be improved (Perú, 2009; Salazar & Iannacone, 2007; Zavala Carrión, 2006). According to Ignarra (2003), quoted by Bahl (2004b, p. 53), tourism does not depend only on the existence of tourist attractions, being also established on a set of services that, in principle, exist because the very presence of them; hence the need to look to it from the perspective of a product, as a sum of tourist attractions and services, the basic infrastructure and the urban services created to support tourism. The current project "Conditioning for improvement and creation of tourism public services of access and complementary on the tourist route of the Markawasi plateau" will promote the tourist development when finished and properly implemented.

The international positioning of Markawasi as main tourism destination in Lima is doable due to the following factors: the international positioning of Peru as a country to perform cultural and nature tourism; the tourist growth in Peru in the coming years; the fact of Lima being the biggest tourism destination of Peru; the authenticity of the geological heritage of Markawasi; the implementation of tourism infrastructure in Markawasi; and the cultural, historical, and gastronomic tourist offers of Lima. According to Bahl (2004a), once drawn to the destination (in this case, Lima), tourists are interested in knowing the surrounding areas, in search of other (unknown or diverse) attractions. This is what the author defines as an expansion of the tourist space, what ends up stimulating the offer of other services and products through the action of the market, creating alternatives and variants for the sake of increasing the permanence of tourists in the region, thus increasing the consumption.

We identified the Markawasi international positioning attributes as a tourism destination and analyzed its current position. As stated in the theory, the next step is the preparation of a positioning proposal based in the adequate management of the image the tourist has regarding the Markawasi stone forest, as a strategy of action and marketing that encourage consumers to develop this preference in comparison with other competitors or to integrate the destination in the travel agenda of tourists who visit Peru (Cerveró et al., 2002; Chias, 2007; Mazón, 2002).

If such positioning is not considerably consolidated, the international tourism in Lima may decrease in the coming years due to the creative project of the new International Airport of Chinchero, in Cusco, which would receive international flights directly, without a stopover in Lima (Lira, 2014a). Once in operation, as reported by Lima, the new airport will have direct international connections with the main cities of America; in a first step, it will be possible to mobilize up to 4.5 million passengers and to operate 24 hours a day, without restrictions on takeoffs and landings.

In this case, the planning has a key role in preventing that a growth opportunity in tourism for one region means a threat to others. According to Ferreira (2005), the tourist planning as an oriented process should be able to minimize potential

negative impacts, to maximize economic gains of a given tourism destination, and to encourage a more positive response from local communities regarding the tourist activity on the long term.

Tourism managing agencies in Peru, in terms of governance, should prioritize this case since Lima, being the Peruvian capital, is the major tourism destination of the country and represents a center of national tourism offers, considering the wide variety of attractions and the lack of international positioning of such diversity when compared to Machu Picchu. As stated by Vera (2011), governance influences on the rules and institutions that set the limits and incentives for establishment and functioning of interdependent networks of stakeholders (government, private sector, and civil society) that act on certain social spheres and, in this case, allow to discover the possible ways to strengthen the management of destinations on a more effective and inclusive manner.

## **FINAL CONSIDERATIONS**

It can be said that the Markawasi Stone Forest is a natural and cultural heritage of the most authentic ones. Rock formations, lagoons, biodiversity, the archaeological remains in the fortress, the pre-Hispanic *chullpas*, the observation center, and the Amphitheater make Markawasi a natural observatory of great tourism potential, in which history, nature, sculptures mystery, landscapes, and geological heritage can be found.

Markawasi, as a tourism destination, represents an opportunity to complement the offer of tourism in Lima, leading to a greater national and international tourism development. The visitors' permanence for more days in the Peruvian capital also incentivizes the opening of other important tourism destinations for the country, which are not internationally promoted.

First, Markawasi needs protection from the Peruvian State or from international organizations such as the Global Geoparks Network, prioritizing the preservation of natural and cultural heritage. For its tourism development to happen sustainably, the region needs a planning drafted by a professional team from research and new investigations and, in particular, it needs a governance that fosters a strategic and articulated policy to achieve the goals of local socio-economic development and conservation.

In conclusion, the importance of the international positioning of Markawasi as a tourism destination in Peru is based on several factors, such as the consolidation of Lima as an important tourism destination in Peru or the increase of staying days of tourists in there, thus generating further spending during the period and, consequently, more income for direct and indirect participants in urban and, especially, rural areas. Other factors are the advancement of multi-thematic tourist offer in the country, since the capital; the incentive to the preservation of the Markawasi stone forest through the rational exploitation of tourist activity, generating local economic development; and the promotion of other cultural, historical, and gastronomic attractions of the capital, with high-quality services of international standard, within the typical infrastructure of a large metropolis.

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