

TOWARDS THE UNDERSTANDING OF THE DYNAMIC AND STRUCTURE OF THE INTERACTIONS PEOPLE-NATURE AS SOCIO-ECOSYSTEM AT THE SOUTHEAST OF THE AUSANGATE GLACIER (CUSCO REGION, PERU)

DINA FARFÁN FLORES^(1,2)

⁽¹⁾ Pontificia Universidad Javeriana, Bogotá, Colombia. e-mail dina-farfanf@javeriana.edu.co

⁽²⁾ Asociación para la Conservación y Estudio de Montañas Andinas-Amazónicas (ACEMAA), Cusco, Peru. e-mail: dinafarfan.acemaa@gmail.com

ABSTRACT

The Quechua communities located in the surroundings of the Ausangate mountain chain have managed, transformed and used the landscape for hundreds of years. Signs of it are, e.g., the trails and different edaphic, hydraulic and pasture/grazing structures; many of them are still in use. In this geographic space, impacts on the natural system directly affect the quality of life of the Quechua people. During the last decade, this socio-ecosystem has been submitted to major pressure, caused by different internal and external drivers of environmental and social change. The Ausangate area has become an object of interest and has been intervened by different socio-economic and environmental projects. In this context, the local Quechua communities have not been able to follow the rhythm of change, and as a consequence, their cultural and socio-economic organization system got transformed precipitously, what impacted the natural environment at different temporal and spatial scales. The current model of environmental management and policies of the Municipality of Pitumarka and the communities at the southeast of the Ausangate glacier is separated/unlinked in two lines of action: one targeted on economic-productive aspects and another one directed towards health and environmental issues. Furthermore, the actions taken so far have been focused on the limitation or the compensation of negatively impacting, anthropogenic activities. Sustained by the integral concept of a so called “socio-ecosystem”, and assuming that the local Quechua communities and the natural environment of the High-Andes are co-evolving, this research project proposes to develop a characterization of this socio-ecosystem, with the aim to understand the inherent processes that take place in the interrelation between the local communities and their natural surroundings, and to evaluate their management tools, in order to complement them and/or to generate new ones. First, preliminary results of the characterization process of the Ausangate socio-ecosystem will be presented.

Keywords: resilience, adaptation, socio-ecosystem, Quechua communities, Ausangate