



Urbano

ISSN: 0717-3997

ISSN: 0718-3607

Universidad del Bío-Bío. Departamento de Planificación y
Diseño Urbano

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Urbano, vol. 26, no. 48, 2023, June-November, pp. 84-95

Universidad del Bío-Bío. Departamento de Planificación y Diseño Urbano

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.22320/07183607.2023.26.48.07>

Available in: <https://www.redalyc.org/articulo.oa?id=19878423008>

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MANZANEDA IN THE GENERATIONAL MODEL OF FRENCH ALPINE RESORTS: ¹

AN INTERPRETATION OF THE ONLY SKI RESORT IN GALICIA (SPAIN)

MANZANEDA EN EL MODELO GENERACIONAL DE ESTACIONES ALPINAS FRANCESAS:
UNA INTERPRETACIÓN DE LA ÚNICA ESTACIÓN DE ESQUÍ DE GALICIA (ESPAÑA)

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El turismo se ha implantado en la montaña de múltiples formas y las estaciones de esquí son una de ellas. La mayoría de los trabajos realizados sobre el turismo de nieve en Europa se ha dedicado a los Alpes, donde se ha desarrollado académicamente un modelo alpino francés de generaciones de estaciones de esquí que utiliza el desarrollo urbanístico diferencial de cada generación como marcador. Se ha tomado dicho modelo como marco para este estudio con el objetivo de posicionar en el mismo a Manzaneda, única estación invernal de Galicia (España), la que, con más de 50 años de historia, parece tener un desarrollo turístico controvertido, problemático y ambiguo. Asimismo, el presente artículo analiza la gestión, los efectos del cambio climático y las visiones de futuro del complejo invernal por parte de sus principales actores y la población local de su entorno.

Palabras clave: turismo, montaña, urbanismo, nieve, esquí.

Mountain-based tourism has been established in multiple ways, and a ski resort is just one of them. Most European snow tourism research has focused on the Alps, where a French Alpine model of generations of ski resorts, which uses the differential urban development of each generation as a marker, has been developed academically. This model has been used as a framework for this study with the goal of positioning Manzaneda within it. However, Manzaneda is the only winter resort in Galicia (Spain), and with more than 50 years of history, it seems to have had a controversial, problematic, and ambiguous development. This article also looks into the management, the effects of climate change, and the future visions of the winter resort by its main actors and local population.

Keywords: tourism, mountains, urban planning, snow, ski.

I. INTRODUCTION

Ski resorts are a characteristic modality of the tourism development of mountain regions. They are characterized by making significant urbanistic interventions that alter the landscape and the socio-economic structure of the area where they are established. A large part of the studies on them in Europe has focused on the Alps, a region that has hosted several types of ski resorts over time. Starting from this line of research, a French alpine model of successive generations has been consolidated academically since the 1970s, and despite being debated and criticized, it has had broad acceptance. ⁴

Inspired by the work of López Palomeque (1996) when applying this model to the Catalan Pyrenees, the generational model of French alpine resorts has been adopted as a theoretical and conceptual basis for this research. In this way, the characteristics and the environmental, territorial, and socioeconomic implications of a specific resort can be analyzed from the general evolution of ski tourism.

The resort studied is Manzaneda, the only one in Galicia, located in the Sierra de Queixa, the westernmost range in Spain, and, together with the Serra da Estrela in Portugal, in all of Europe. This mountain area is an exceptional case in an extensive region that covers Galicia and Northern Portugal, with more than 6 million inhabitants and almost 10% of the surface of the entire Iberian Peninsula. Manzaneda, with more than 50 years of history, emerges as a relevant place to study due to its problematic and ambiguous evolution, which has been the subject of constant media controversies given its recurring problems. In short, this article aims to interpret the case study in light of the model of successive generations of alpine resorts in France. Finally, the aim is to provide a view of the Manzaneda ski resort in the context of international research in this field.

II. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The generational model of French Alpine resorts

The French Alps stand out as the main focus of research in the field of ski resorts, as evidenced by studies by Merlin (2002, 2006), Woessner (2010), and Bouron and Georges

(2019). These mountains constitute a preferred scenario to analyze the interactions between ski resorts and their surrounding territory and their evolution over time (George-Marcelpoil & Boudières, 2006; George-Marcelpoil *et al.*, 2010). The development of these resorts generally follows planning that conforms to the canons in force at the time of their creation or reform (Fablet, 2013). However, "there is no ski resort that is the archetype of the others, but only highly personalized situations," ⁵ as pointed out by Préau (1968, p. 139). Therefore, it is argued that each resort has its characteristics (Dansero & Puttilli, 2012), which hinders both its analytical grouping and any form of proposed typification, as they will always be inadequate (López Palomeque, 1996).

In the same vein, different typologies have been explored over the years. Préau (1968), for example, proposed a classification based on different temporal stages. A similar logic is evident in the proposals of Lozato-Giotart (1990), Merlin (2002, 2006), Batzing (2007), and Delorme (2014), among others. Together, these studies have contributed to the configuration of the well-known generational model of ski resorts in the French Alps, whose approach makes it possible to synthesize this matter and compare individual cases.

The following are the four generations of the model, initially established by Knafou (1978), as explained by Delorme (2014). However, it should be noted that the fourth generation does not appear in this seminal work due to chronological restrictions, as it turns out to be later than it.

The first generation begins with Chamonix, recognized as the pioneer resort, and has been developing since the late nineteenth century when snow tourism was still a marginal activity (Préau, 1968; Knafou, 1978; Bouron & Georges, 2019). The creation of these resorts usually arises in pre-existing populations at low altitudes (not exceeding 1,000 m) that already had some tourism, in general, summer thermal centers that had evolved beyond agropastoral and forestry activities (Lozato-Giotart, 1990; Merlin 2002, 2006). According to Knafou (1978) and Delorme (2014), the urban setup of this generation is heterogeneous, highlighting the introduction of mountain chalets as a distinctive architectural type.

The second generation, which emerged between 1930 and 1975, was developed thanks to the boom in skiing-related sports tourism, which resulted in the massification of the mountain (Knafou, 1978; Lozato-Giotart, 1990). At this stage, *ex nihilo* urbanization occurred from the optimal level, starting at 1,500 m altitude and away from traditional settlements.

⁴ Recently, an informed balance of the research on French rural territories by Bouron and Georges has been used (2019, pp. 275-277).

⁵ Translation by the author

According to López Palomeque (1996), this process was led by different promoters, with the participation of public-private joint ventures at local and regional levels being commonplace in France. Merlin (2002, 2006) highlights the exclusive dedication of these resorts to skiing, while Delorme (2014) points out a decontextualized urbanistic model for this generation.

The third generation refers to the resorts known as “integrated resorts” (*stations intégrées*), which developed from the 1960s onwards as a result of the “snow plans” (*plans neige*). These plans are configured as a planning and management paradigm of the mountain in France in the context of a particular way of understanding the territorial planning à la française (Knafo, 1978; López Palomeque, 1996; Merlin, 2002, 2006; Woessner, 2010). These resorts have no relation to the surrounding territory, and their high degree of urbanization is planned by a single business developer who places them in large, quite snowy spaces at altitudes of 1,500-2,000 m, with pistes facing north and constructions on plains to the south. In addition, they are described as “Fordist ski factories” since they seek to maximize the number of skiers and practice total highly specialized urbanization, with strictly economic objectives to monetize and commercialize skiing full-time (Lozato-Giotart, 1990). Regarding landscape integration, both Woessner (2010) and Delorme (2014) clarify that the urban planning models implemented, despite their massive nature, also sought some degree of linkage.

The fourth generation, which took place between 1970 and 1990, emerged to improve the relationship between tourism and the mountain (López Palomeque, 1996; Woessner, 2010; George-Marcelpoil & François, 2012; Delorme, 2014). This period is characterized by developing urban developments that are more respectful of the environment and local culture (Vlès, 2012; Delorme, 2014), presenting a model that is perceived as a hybrid between the first and the third generation (Fernández-Trapa *et al.*, 1987). The fourth generation manifests itself in a return to the resort towns, establishing agreements with local administrations and showing an apparent commitment to respecting traditional architecture and promoting local employment (Delorme, 2014). In terms of size, these resorts are modest and located at medium altitudes (around 1,500 m). In addition, they seek to provide complementary activities to skiing, becoming multipurpose resorts, according to Lozato-Giotart (1990), which actively pursue being open throughout the year, beyond the winter season (Woessner, 2010).

Typological studies on ski resorts in Spain

Currently, there are about 30 alpine ski resorts registered in Spain. On the other hand, according to figures provided by Woessner (2010, p. 48), there are more than 350 in France.

This significant difference could explain why there are few typological studies in Spain. Among the existing works, first of all, that of López Palomeque (1996) stands out, whose analysis classifies most of the Catalan Pyrenees's resorts in the second generation of the French alpine generational model, some in the third and does not register any in the fourth. On the other hand, Gómez Martín (2008) considers the emblematic Baqueira (commercial name of Vauquère in Occitan, located in the Catalan Pyrenees) as a third generation, and Lasanta *et al.* (2014) do not hesitate to compare Valdezcaray (La Rioja) with Chamonix, placing it in the first-generation model.

Another proposal is that of Gómez Martín *et al.* (2016), who propose a second typology for the resorts in the Catalan Pyrenees regarding the distinction between extensive, medium, or small resorts. In this sense, Font *et al.* (2018) classify the Gúdar-Valdelinares and Javalambre (Teruel) resorts as small.

Font (2023), on the other hand, has recently contributed a third typology by establishing three generations of ski resorts in Spain. The first ones date back to the 1960s and are mainly related to the demand of Barcelona (in the Catalan Pyrenees, including several accessible by rail and/or funicular) and, to a lesser extent, Madrid in the Central System, plus some other pioneers in the Aragonese Pyrenees. Thus, a second generation developed in the 1960s-1970s is proposed, which consisted of an explosion of resorts in almost all mountain ranges, usually at low levels (around 1,500 m), some of which have closed over the years due to the decrease in snowfall. Finally, the third generation, the most recent, is located at much higher elevations (above 2,000 and even 3,000 m in the Sierra Nevada).

Font *et al.* (2018) and Font (2023) highlight that, regardless of their territorial impacts, the considerable investments made in Spanish resorts have generated controversies, as there are numerous cases of generous public capital contributions whose argument is to seek the development of mountain areas perceived as “in crisis,” especially in recent decades. This way, an “obsession” with the resort-associated residential implementation is recorded, linked to the Spanish economic development model based on the real estate market.

III. AREA OF STUDY

The Manzaneda ski resort is located in the eastern part of the province of Ourense, in Galicia, Spain. It is located between the municipalities of Manzaneda and Pobra de Trives, with both hubs being the main access points. This winter resort extends along the northern and eastern slopes of the highest summit of the Sierra de Queixa, traditionally



Figure 1. Location of the Manzaneda resort in the Sierra de Queixa (Ourense). Source: Preparation by the authors.

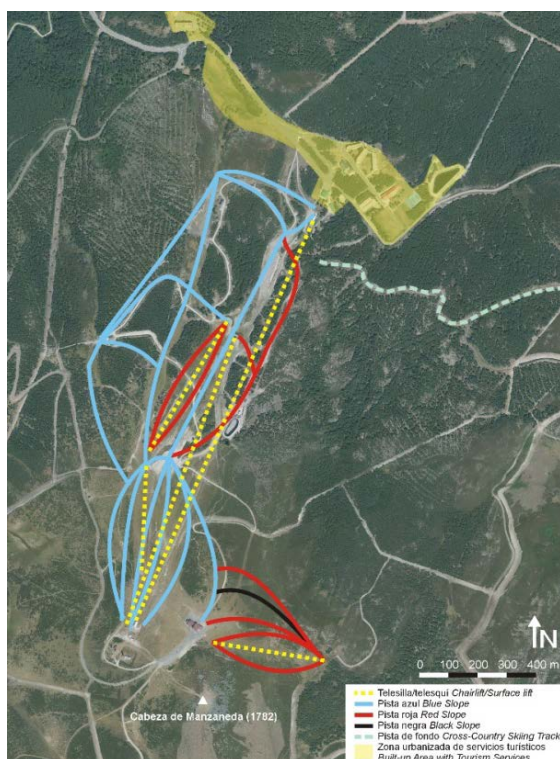


Figure3. Top Outline of the resort with slopes, accesses, and facilities. Source: Preparation by the authors using PNOA 2020 © National Geographic Institute.

Figure 3 y Figure 4. About is the is the upper area of the complex; below are the slopes, lifts, and chairlifts area. Source: Archive photos of the authors (10/12/2011, 16/04/2012, respectively).



Figure 5. The urbanization in the lower area of the resort. Source: Archive photos of the authors (31/10/2020)

known as Cabeza Grande and currently called Cabeza de Manzaneda, with an altitude that reaches 1,782 m (Figure 1).

The Manzaneda resort is small in size and is located at a low-medium altitude (17.55 km spread between 1,500 m and 1,760 m; Figure 2). It is equipped with two chairlifts and four ski lifts, which allows moving 7,600 people every hour (Figure 3). For the 2022-2023 season, it had a total of 24 pistes (1 green, 13 blue, 9 red, and 1 black). There is also a 1 km long cross-country piste and a snowpark area. The slopes were located in the northern part of the mountain range (Figure 4), and the urban developments (Figure 5) were oriented to the south in the intermediate plain, with two clearly differentiated areas where the different tourist services are concentrated. The most urbanized area comprises a reception center, accommodation, and services in sunny areas at the foot of the slopes. There are 377 beds (apartments and hostels owned by MEISA) and 450 in its area of influence (mainly rural tourism accommodation).

There is no official statistical series for the ski resort. However, the documentation analysis has allowed obtaining two significant inferences about the scattered data collected for the decades of 2000 and 2010. Firstly, the seasons show a significant variability that depends on the differential snowmaking conditions of each year, with declared records ranging from 200,000 visitors in some seasons to others that do not reach 100,000. The beginning

of some seasons is recorded in November, while for others, it is in February, and the closing is usually in April, although it is not uncommon for it to end in March. In any case, these are not continuous but somewhat intermittent. Secondly, for both decades, there is a general trend towards a decrease in the number of visitors, although the variability year after year should be considered.

IV. METHODOLOGY

This research adopts an approach consolidated in the Social Sciences in recent decades that seeks to understand the meanings that people attribute to specific social contexts, processes, or places (Jennings, 2005; Valentine, 2005). This approach is based mainly on analyzing the testimonies of different local actors, constituting the cornerstone of the results obtained. The main objective is to explore their experiences and subjective perceptions regarding the Manzaneda ski resort and, in this way, evaluate how this resort's characteristics can be aligned with any of the four generations included in the French alpine generational model. The mobilized methods include in-depth interviews and participant observation. Secondary sources are also included to contextualize the information, especially in the section dedicated to the study area.

As for the primary sources, a combination of participant observation, as proposed by Taylor and Bogdan (1984),

was carried out in different field visits and semi-structured in-depth interviews. Based on a technique that encourages an open dialog between the interviewee and the researcher, these interviews systematically cover the aspects under study (Jennings, 2005). A total of 15 interviews were conducted between October 2018 and March 2019, lasting approximately one hour each. The aim was not to obtain a representative sample, neither from a statistical perspective nor in terms of territorial representation, but rather to reflect different actors with significant knowledge about the study area or maintain a relevant connection with it (Valentine, 2005).

A script has been developed for the interviews to obtain:

- the description of the person interviewed;
- their perception of the territory;
- their opinion on the role of public administrations in the past, present, and future;
- their assessment of the role played by local actors so that the governance that operates in the territory can be understood;
- the detection of innovative projects or initiatives developed in the territory; and
- his vision of tourism and, especially, the role played by the mountain resort of Manzaneda.

All the people interviewed have local roots and/or a relevant role in the resort's history. More specifically, they fall under the following profiles:

- businesspeople from the tourism sector (E7 and E11);
- public officials with an impact on the territory (E3 and E9);
- mountain resort managers (E4 and E15);
- expert researchers in the area (E2 and E14);
- members of environmental groups and organized civil society (E6, E12 and E13);
- mountaineers, members of the Manzaneda Alpine Club (currently, Club Alpino Ourense) (E1, E8, and E10); and
- political representatives of the area (E5).

Some people interviewed could be from several established profiles, but they have been characterized according to their most representative role in the study territory. It should be noted that these interviews have been carried out within the framework of a doctoral thesis on the Queixa and San Mamede mountain ranges, in which more than thirty were made. However, only those who spontaneously mentioned the resort have been included here.

The "snowball" technique has been used so that the interviewees themselves can provide references about possible future people to be interviewed (Valentine, 2005). To guarantee anonymity, codes that protect the identity of the interviewees are used, represented by the letter E.

Gender neutrality is always used. Recordings were made, with informed consent, and subsequent transcripts of the conversations were kept to work on the collected material. The translation from Galician to Spanish was made during the transcription of the interviews.

The interviews were treated using a semiotic coding and clustering exercise as per Crang (2005) and Cope (2010). 13 *live* (2 are repeated) or *emic* codes, strictly related to the ski resort, have been obtained, which are considered relevant to this research. These have been grouped into three *etic* macro-codes. The results section is structured following this organization.

Secondary sources have been used to obtain information complementary to the interviews, enrich the research, and support the description of the study area. In this context, documents from the Ourense Deputation archive stand out, some of which are restricted and were consulted in 2018-2019 to understand the involvement of this institution in the resort. Also, press releases have been used, mainly from the Deputation above of Ourense and the Xunta de Galicia, as well as newspaper libraries of *La Región* and *La Voz de Galicia*. These sources have helped get an insight into the annual figures that the resort managers did not provide despite requests. Finally, the resort's institutional website (<https://www.ocahotels.com/hoteles/estacion-montana-oca-manzaneda>, consulted in 2018), as well as the website <https://www.infonieve.es/> (consulted in 2023), have also been helpful in this regard.

V. RESULTS

From the analysis of the conversations, three sets of topics are derived that articulate the exposition of this section. The purpose of this is to provide the perspective transmitted about the Manzaneda mountain resort, addressing the following aspects: (1) the origins, (2) the management of the winter resort, and (3) the future. Figure 6 presents the base codes that support these three sections.

The origins of the ski resort

The Sierra de Queixa had never been a winter destination for the Galician urban population, who used to head to other mountains in search of snow. In the mid-1960s, the Manzaneda Alpine Club (CAM) was born, and the idea of creating a ski resort in that location arose. According to the testimonies collected, CAM's members are the pioneers of skiing in these mountains. E8 states that "with the creation of the Alpine Club, people started to

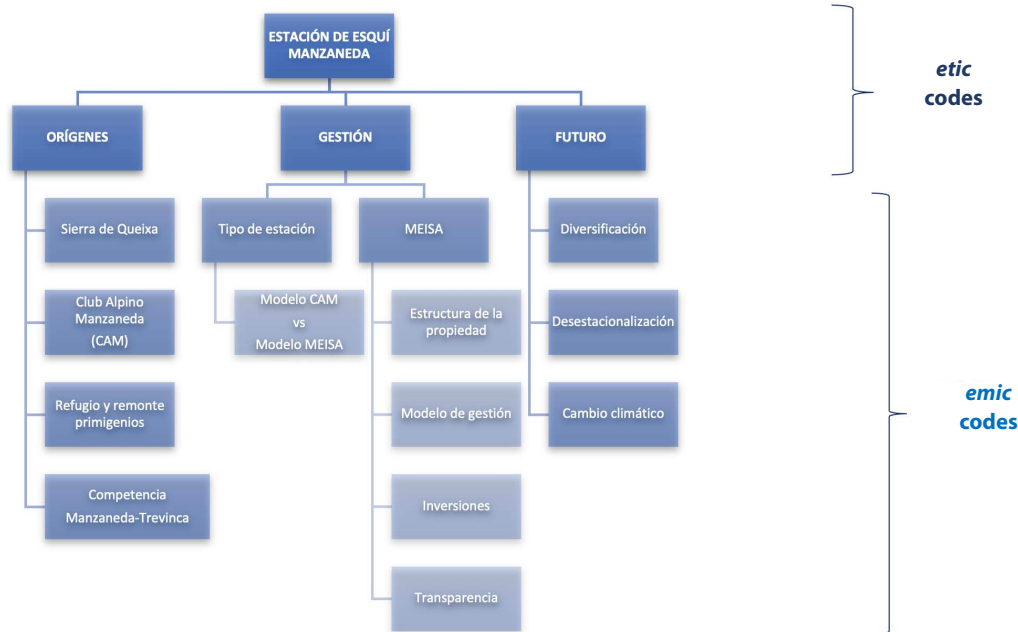


Figure 6. Outline of the main events the interviewees (emic) and researchers (etic) indicated. Source: Preparation by the authors.

look at Queixa” and, according to E1, “the first people to go skiing in those mountains, when there was no resort, were the CAM members.”

In a place where there was no previous tourist infrastructure, the interviewees refer to a CAM lodge that is still standing today (built between 1968 and 1969), located at 1,550 m, as well as a small ski lift (also acquired in the late 1960s), as the embryo of the current winter season (Figure 7). This is reflected by E7, who highlights that “before... there were no ski lifts or anything... they built the lodge, bought a small ski lift, and then another. That was all from the Alpine Club... who started that.” Moreover, for E8, “[the lodge and the ski lift] are the starting point of the resort... [And] skiing in Galicia is born from this Club”.

The management of the winter resort

Manzaneda Resort began its development in the 1970s. The low-impact project initiated by the CAM is surpassed by the Galician Ski Federation, which supports and promotes a more far-reaching model. For E8, “the Club was seen as a competition... Those of the [urban development] project dreamed of the entire northern slope of Manzaneda full of Alpine-style chalets.” This second option prevails, driven by the real estate interest of the local public sector, some private investors, and the bank, which then had significant resources from emigration.



Figure 7. CAM Lodge, considered the embryo of the current ski resort. Source: Photo from the authors' files (31/10/2020).

The institution that allows the resort to be implemented is the public limited company MEISA (Manzaneda Estación de Invierno), which was created in 1972. Initially, its ownership structure was predominantly public, with the participation of several local and regional administrations and private companies. Over time, it has evolved towards a mixed model, where private management has become more relevant. As E5 indicates “there have been different changes and ... today it is a private company that manages something public.”

Regarding MEISA's management, several interviewees highlight that it has focused on directing investments made with public funds, generating widespread criticism. There is consensus that considerable public funds have been spent during the more than four decades of the resort's life, mainly receiving unfavorable evaluations. E5, for example, indicates that management irregularities have been committed since "many investments were made ... [but] I disagree with how things are done. The [clientelistic] fingerprinting of the company, with a 99% public participation, is illegal." The idea is repeated that the considerable public money spent on Manzaneda has allowed a structurally deficient project to be kept afloat. This is the case of E10 when indicating that "the resort lives on subsidies and there is no interest in it stopping to live from that... The resort is not managed... Everything works terribly".

The decades between the inauguration and the 1990s are perceived as the "golden era" of Manzaneda. According to E15, "it [then] had a significant boom." New accesses were even being proposed from the south to facilitate the arrival of Portuguese tourists. For some, it would be something positive, as "the asphaltting of the track [...] created in the mid-1980s ... [could be] a development asset for the area," says E9, referring to a never paved forest track that runs over 24 km along the peaks of Queixa (Figure 1).

On the other hand, a perception of crisis has enveloped the resort since the 1990s, which leads to a primarily skeptical and pessimistic view. For example, E1 refers to the current resort as "decadence," and E14 highlights that "15 or 20 years ago, there was an attempt to do things that have now disappeared". In a revealing phrase, E2 feels that "Manzaneda is nothing now." In the words of E15, the resort "was very decadent [...]. Important investments were made... It was a lot of money." These have focused exclusively on tourism, as indicated by E14, for whom "everything has been focused and channeled to the resort, solely and exclusively." The expenses are considered disproportionate and unnecessary: "[today] the chairlifts for the resort are oversized" (E5). Therefore, it is perceived that with the new century, the problems have increased, and the demand has decreased.

The current debate about public investments revolves around artificial snowmaking by installing snow cannons (Figure 8), which generates different appraisals. In their favor, it is considered necessary for the territory, as E7 indicates: "They have realized what the ski resort means for the area." In contrast, E8 points out that "they have to be worked on." At the same time, for E11, it means "a lot of money, and let's see how it works." It makes no sense if "the resort is totally unviable" (E6). As E1 evaluates, "no



Figure 8. Snow cannons installed in 2018 and 2019. Source: Photo from the authors' files (16/08/2019).

matter how many cannons they put ... you can feed a couple of kilometers ... but not below 1,800 m"; for E14, in short, "the purchase of the cannons is wrong."

Visions of the future

There are different perspectives on the future of the resort. Some advocate abandoning the current resort model and "relating to the territory" (E11). More professional managers are also being requested for MEISA since "as long as they don't change [...], it won't be different" (E15). The interviewees highlight diversification as a critical element. One of them mentions that Manzaneda offers activities other than skiing: "Regardless of the snow, there are activities and tourism options" (E4). However, most believe that "the mountain resort continues to pivot 90% in the snow" (E11), which is seen as a mistake. Thus, the need for readaptation to new alternatives, especially other sports tourism practices, is raised. For E1, Manzaneda "has to rethink itself as a ski resort. Diversify or disappear."

Other comments highlight the need for the resort to interact with the medium in which it is inserted: "It should be oriented more to a mountain resort" (E7). This would imply transforming it towards conservation and environmental valuation. As E3 indicates, the complex could be "a Nature Center ... a dynamizer of the territory". Another interviewee even suggests it should be used to "enhance the massif as a whole" (E6). Additionally, deseasonalization emerges as another central element linked to future management. According to E5, it is necessary to overcome the "problem [of] supporting so many skiers on a single day

(between 7,000-8,000)" since, beyond the few winter weekends with snow, the resort is practically empty the rest of the year.

Finally, climate change is considered an essential aspect of future viability. The unanimous perception is that it is snowing much less. According to E6, "It's not snowing. There is a clear climate change." In the same vein is E1, for whom "climate change and other factors are causing the resort to have fewer and fewer skiable days per year." Some even remember the best years in terms of snowfall, with E9 highlighting "1964 as the year of the Big Snow. It snows much less now than before. The last big snowfall was in 1992." Some say these heavy snowfalls were "half a meter, and sometimes they reached almost a meter in some areas" (E14).

VI. DISCUSSION

The introduction of tourism in the highest part of the Sierra de Queixa in the early 1970s occurred with a delay of about twenty years compared to the first Spanish Pyrenean resorts and at least about fifty years compared to the Alps (Knafo, 1978; Lozato-Giotart, 1990; Lasanta *et al.*, 2007; Fablet, 2013; Delorme, 2014; Bouron & Georges, 2019), although it coincides with the time of development of the vast majority of Spanish resorts (Font, 2023). Therefore, it can be described as late compared to alpine or Pyrenean tourism and contemporary with the development of the Spanish resorts.

Thus, and in general terms, this research supports what was stated by both Fernández-Trapa *et al.* (1987) and Font (2023), who argue that in Spain, ski resorts can be considered an extension of the alpine model, although later. In the case of this study, no evidence was found regarding the first generation of the model proposed by Knafo (1978). However, there were only mentions regarding the alpine chalet with the initial developments. This construction, popularized with this first generation (Delorme, 2014), has become an urbanistic symbol of their establishment in a given place.

The will to establish a ski resort in the Sierra de Queixa starts from a local mountain association, the CAM. This club was founded simultaneously with the proposal for the resort and is separate from its parent organization, the Club Peña Trevinca-Mountaineers of Galicia, mainly due to the internal conflict between the resort's supporters in Trevinca and those of Manzaneda (Paül *et al.*, 2018; see Figure 1 for the location of both). Although mountaineering is the foundation of Manzaneda's initiative, it is marginalized in favor of other interests and the excessive presence of the public sector. Although mountain sports associationism can be considered crucial in the first steps of this season, in line with French alpine trends (Knafo, 1978; Delorme, 2014; Bouron & Georges, 2019), in the case study, there is an abrupt transition toward other dynamics led by MEISA. In this way, one quickly passes from a moment prior to the generational model proposed by Knafo (1978) to the second or

third generation, as will be discussed later. MEISA appropriates the initial idea and aligns itself with a unique, hierarchical promotion-management model, with little or no participation of local actors and, therefore, with a total absence of territorial governance, following what was stated by López Palomeque (1996), Macchiavelli (2009), or Lompech & Ricard (2019), in the context of other ski resorts.

Until the 1990s, Manzaneda seems to have experienced its best moment, coinciding with skiing becoming a mass activity in Spain (Font, 2023). However, the interviewees unanimously pointed out the negative influence that climate change has had on skiing in Manzaneda around the turn of the century. This local perception corroborates global trends regarding the decrease in snowfall (Vlès, 2012), where it is no longer a sufficient guarantee to ensure tourism in Manzaneda. Without going any further, the installation of snow cannons at low levels is presented in Manzaneda as a short or medium-term strategy, which is considered economically unsustainable and questionable from the ecological point of view, where its low altitude, orientation, and very open slopes limit its usefulness during the winter season, according to what is evidenced in the interviews.

Font (2023), on the other hand, provides other Spanish cases where this same process has been recorded, which is also noticeable in French resorts located in the Massif Central or the Vosges (Bordessoule, 2018; Lompech & Ricard, 2019). This evidence shows that ski resorts located on mountains that do not reach a sufficient altitude to be considered properly alpine but follow the alpine trail have a compromised future.

The analyzed resort, although it could be classified within one of the generations established by the model used as a reference, requires careful consideration due to the warnings of López Palomeque (1996) and Dansero and Puttilli (2012) about the typecasting difficulties. Manzaneda could be described as a resort conceived but not strictly planned because, despite there being an unpublished plan that placed it in this location in Galicia, which was found during the archival work of this research⁶, such a plan was probably not the optimal one nor did it place the resort at the best possible location. Therefore, it can be said that Manzaneda is ambiguously classified between the second and the third generation.

In terms of the second generation, Manzaneda emerges as a speculative consequence of the rise of skiing and the massification of the mountain tourist space, according to the approaches of Knafo (1978) or Lozato-Giotart (1990). On the other hand, regarding the third generation, the resort incorporates an urbanized, isolated, independent area close to the ski domain, as described by Merlin (2002, 2006) or Delorme (2014), among others. Consequently, this study confirms the observations of López Palomeque (1996) and Gómez Martín

⁶ MEISA (1973). *Cabeza de Manzaneda: present and future of the high mountain and ski tourist-sports complex*. La Región.

(2008) by indicating that the general pattern of ski resorts in Spain can be placed between the second and the third generation of the French alpine model.

In any case, Manzaneda never managed to become a third-generation destination. The total urbanization project of the mountain in Manzaneda was left incomplete, so the resort is limited to being a kind of family snow destination of Galicia and Northern Portugal for certain weekends. Even in the urban infrastructures developed in Manzaneda, Lompech and Ricard's (2019) considerations about the excessive and failed ambitions of skiing in Auvergne resonate. On the other hand, the excessive emphasis on real estate in Manzaneda, identified in this research, confirms the speculative construction nature of skiing in Spain (Font *et al.*, 2018; Font, 2023).

The alternative development model advocated by the CAM could have been a more respectful option with the nature of the Sierra, according to Vlès (2012), given that the vision of this club could be considered more aligned with the fourth generation (López Palomeque, 1996; George-Marcelpoil & François, 2012; Delorme, 2014). In any case, it is surprising to find this advanced perspective in an outermost region and the 1970s, possibly influenced by the trips of its members to areas of the Alps or the Pyrenees or simply as a rejection of the appropriation practiced by other actors. In short, Manzaneda is still far from integrating the local population, proposing greater protection over the surrounding mountain space, or offering a combination of activities that positions it as a fourth-generation multipurpose complex (Lozato-Giotart, 1990; Woessner, 2010; Vlès, 2012).

Finally, it is pertinent to point out that Manzaneda mainly resembles mid-mountain resorts, whether they are Spanish (Font *et al.*, 2018; Font, 2023) or French (Bordessoule, 2018; Lompech & Ricard, 2019; Font, 2023). A limitation of this study has been to have directed the similarities to the French alpine model. However, it is essential to emphasize that this model continues to dominate the current literature, even that developed in Spain (López Palomeque, 1996; Gómez Martín, 2008). Even in Font's work (2023, p. 90-92), there was no explicit generational model of ski resorts in Spain.

The only ski resort in Galicia still considers alpine skiing as a central axis, despite its efforts to diversify, whose evaluation is insufficient according to interviews. The resort has tried to break with the image of a closed resort and is nestled, hidden from the territory. However, it has not stopped persisting in monofunctional investments, such as the multimillion-dollar acquisition of artificial snow cannons. The resort continues without finding its own identity. It prolongs

a long period of stagnation in winter sports tourism that, according to Batzing (2007) or Font (2023), began in the 1980s and came to Queixa to stay.

VII. CONCLUSIONS

The future of Manzaneda should be conceived as a transition towards governance models that facilitate its territorial integration (George-Marcelpoil & Boudières, 2006). In recent years, the exclusive dependence on snow has persisted, so it is imperative to transform a strongly seasonal tourist space into a complete destination following the fourth generation of the alpine model. The resort must be redefined and assume territorial leadership through its development model because its mountain environment has an important natural and cultural heritage alternative to snow tourism, which is in decline. Given the irregular snow in the Iberian mountains below 2,000 m, aggravated by climate change (Font, 2023), high investments in winter sports infrastructures, such as those studied in this article, are risky and sometimes destined to fail.

The economic and environmental unsustainability of Spanish mid-mountain resorts described by Font (2023), mainly due to the continuous dependence on public aid to survive, finds in Manzaneda a new example that this author does not explicitly mention. Ultimately, Manzaneda must deseasonalize and diversify to attract new market segments and become a tourist center that covers the entire mountain environment where it is located, with the collaboration of the local population and not behind their backs. Ironically, during the analysis of the documents, a plan from more than 40 years ago pointed in that direction was found, but it was never implemented⁷.

In short, it is crucial to set up Manzaneda in Queixa, as suggested years ago, for another "enclave" managed isolated in this mountain range, the Invernadeiro Natural Park (Paül, 2009). Only in this way can it be avoided that the ski resort becomes a colossal ruin, as suggested by the shocking current state analysis of its Auvergne counterparts, carried out by Lompech and Ricard (2019).

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⁷ CEOTMA (1981). Summary of the special plan of San Mamed and Sierra de Queixa. MOPU.

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IX. ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This work is part of the doctoral thesis of Manuel Rodríguez Rodríguez, registered in the “Degree Program in History, Geography, and Art” from the University of Santiago de Compostela. It was presented for the first time in September 2019 at the “Initiatives for Inclusive Local Development in Mountain Regions” meeting of the “International Mountain Conference” held in Innsbruck, within the framework of the H2020 EXCELLENT SCIENCE - Marie Skłodowska-Curie project of the European Union HIGHLANDS.3 (“Collective Approach of Research and Innovation for Sustainable Development in Highland,” DOI: 10.3030/872328). As part of this project, Valerià Paül carried out a secondment in the Parc naturel régional Livradois-Forez in June, which was critical for the theoretical framework and discussion of this article.