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# The concept of extensification in Southern Patagonia

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## Résumé

concept of *extensification* in an archaeological perspective is not very usual. Furthermore, its definition is not very clear; more related with its opposition, the concept of *intensification*; a term well defined and used in Archaeology.

In this presentation, the main purpose is to clarify this concept in terms of its use in an archaeological example of Southern Patagonia. Also, the example takes into account a case of European precontact, previous to the introduction of horses in the Tehuelche society. The use of Binford's frame of references, like environmental information and Effective Temperatures (ET), were an useful tool to identify cases of the process of extensification in the study area.

The area corresponds to the southern extreme of the American continent in Santa Cruz Province, Argentina, and is characterized as a herbaceous and shrub steppe, with annual rainfall ranging between 100-400 millimeters

The extensification concept could be applied under an ecological perspective, more than a technological one. In the present case, it was very useful and important to calculate ET from different environments and altitude above sea level. Then, the different areas considered are viewed complementarily, where the guanaco mobility (*Lama guanicoe*) - the main resource for hunters - and its social behavior can be totally integrated with human mobility.

During the Late Holocene, when climatic conditions dramatically changed, in the highlands seasonal activities and logistical strategies undertook place in order to deal with the heterogeneously distribution of the primary and secondary productivity. This new strategy was related with an extensification process.

**Mots-Clés:** Climate change, Patagonia, Extensification

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