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MUNICIPALITY OF IXTLÁN DE JUÁREZ, OAXACA MÉXICO**

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Abstract

Alternative tourism seeks to achieve social equity, the conservation of natural resources and the profitability of the social investments. The participation of communities in the management of alternative tourism projects represents an opportunity as an additional source of income and at the same time for the conservation of their resources. The community enterprise Ecoturixtlán, dedicated to alternative tourism, is located in the municipality of Ixtlán de Juárez, in the Sierra Norte region of the state of Oaxaca, an area with a high level of indigenous ascendancy. The project was founded by a group of 384 community members and their families and added to an already existing array of community enterprises. The purpose of this research is to assess the participation processes of the community in the management of the alternative tourism enterprise and how benefits generated are distributed among the different community groups. The methodological design combines quantitative and qualitative research techniques and takes into account an exhaustive literature review, the use of questionnaires as guides for semi-structured interviews for community members, in-depth interviews with key actors and informants as well as the implementation of a focus group among members of the community. The collected data were fed to qualitative and quantitative analysis software in order to create categories of analysis and a basic statistical treatment. The results indicate the existence of a complex community organization at agrarian unit level as well as the municipal level and the distinction between community members with agrarian rights and community members with residential status. This organization and structure determine the distribution of benefits and the decision making processes. In this sense, the participation of certain groups is limited; the most excluded being the residents. The results also show that the community enterprise is in a stage of decline in tourist arrivals and therefore the coming years will be decisive for Ecoturixtlán. As a conclusion, the limitations and constraints for the participation of certain groups are highlighted and some recommendations for possible mechanisms of inclusion are suggested.

Key words: Alternative tourism; community participation; sustainability; community organization.

Resumen

El turismo alternativo busca fomentar la equidad social, la conservación de los recursos naturales y la rentabilidad de la inversión social. La participación de las comunidades en la gestión de proyectos de turismo alternativo representa una oportunidad para generar ingresos diversificando la economía local y al mismo tiempo lograr la conservación de sus recursos. La empresa comunal indígena Ecoturixtlán, dedicada al turismo alternativo, se localiza en el municipio de Ixtlán de Juárez, en la región Sierra Norte de Oaxaca y fue fundada por 384 comuneros y sus familias, uniéndose a otras empresas comunales ya establecidas. El propósito de esta investigación es el valorar los procesos de participación comunitaria en la gestión de la empresa comunal y los beneficios que esta genera así como su distribución entre los grupos que integran a la comunidad. El diseño metodológico incorpora técnicas de índole cualitativo y cuantitativo y contempla una revisión bibliográfica exhaustiva, la aplicación de entrevistas semi-estructuradas utilizando cuestionarios a comuneros, entrevistas a profundidad a los principales actores de la comunidad y la realización de un grupo focal entre algunos miembros. Los datos recabados fueron tratados con software de análisis cualitativo y cuantitativo lo que permitió realizar categorías de análisis y un tratamiento estadístico básico. Los resultados indican la presencia de una compleja organización comunitaria tanto en un ámbito comunal y otro municipal así como la existencia de la distinción entre comuneros y vecindados de la comunidad, lo cual es un factor determinante para la participación en la empresa. Por medio de esta organización se determinan la distribución de beneficios y la toma de decisiones, dentro de las cuales la participación de ciertos grupos es limitada, como es el caso de los vecindados. Los resultados muestran además que la empresa comunitaria se encuentra en declive por lo cual los próximos años serán cruciales. Se concluye resaltando las limitantes de ciertos grupos para participar y se hacen recomendaciones en torno a posibles mecanismos para la inclusión de los mismos.

Palabras clave: Turismo alternativo, participación comunitaria, sustentabilidad, organización comunitaria.

Zusammenfassung

Alternativtourismus zielt darauf ab soziale Gleichheit zu schaffen sowie den Schutz natürlicher Ressourcen und soziale Investitionen zu stärken. Die Beteiligung von Gemeinden beim Management von Tourismusprojekten bietet für diese die Möglichkeit einer zusätzlichen Einkommensquelle und gleichzeitig dem Schutz ihrer natürlichen Ressourcen. Das lokale Unternehmen Ecoturixtlán, welches sich dem Alternativtourismus widmet, befindet sich in der Gemeinde Ixtlán de Juárez in der Sierra Norte Region im mexikanischen Bundesstaat Oaxaca, einer Region mit einem hohen Bevölkerungsanteil indigener Herkunft. Das Projekt wurde, von einer 384 Mitglieder zählenden Gruppe von Einwohnern sowie ihren Familien ins Leben gerufen. Das Ziel der Masterarbeit ist es die Beteiligung der lokalen Bevölkerung im Management des Tourismusprojekts zu bewerten und wie dessen Erträge generiert und unter den verschiedenen Gruppen der Gemeinde verteilt werden. Die Methodik kombiniert quantitative und qualitative Forschung, die intensive Auswertung von Literatur, Fragebögen in Form von halbstrukturierten Interviews für die Gemeindemitglieder, ausführliche Interviews mit Schlüsselakteuren sowie die Implementierung von Fokusgruppen innerhalb der lokalen Bevölkerung. Die gesammelten Daten wurden mit einer Software zur qualitativen wie auch quantitativen Analyse verarbeitet. Dabei wurden diese in Analyseketegorien unterteilt und statistisch aufbereitet. Die Ergebnisse belegen die Existenz einer komplexen Organisation auf Gemeindeebene und im Agrarsektor. Dabei kann zwischen lokalen Mitgliedern mit Agrarrechten sowie mit Aufenthaltsstatus unterschieden werden. Durch diese organisatorischen Strukturen werden die Verteilung von Gewinnen und Entscheidungsprozessen bestimmt. Dadurch ist die Beteiligung bestimmter Gruppen limitiert, welches überwiegend die Einwohner betrifft. Die Ergebnisse zeigen auch, dass die Touristenzahlen abnehmen. Dadurch sind die kommenden Jahren entscheidend für Ecoturixtlán. Zusammenfassend werden die Einschränkungen und Hindernisse bezüglich der Beteiigung bestimmter Gruppen verdeutlicht und Empfehlungen für mögliche Mechanismen der Beteiligung vorgeschlagen.

Schlüsselwörter: Alternativtourismus; lokale Beteiligung; Nachhaltigkeit; Gemeindeorganisation.

Chapter I: Introduction

1.1 Problem statement

During the last decade, tourism has become a keystone for the economy of México. In 2011, this activity represented 8.4 % of the country's Gross Domestic Product (GDP) and it is expected to grow in the coming years (CESTUR, 2013). The growth of the tourism sector has become a central strategy promoted by the state in its different levels because of its potential for contributing to economic growth by the multiplying effect and improving the overall social wellbeing (Hernández & Trujillo, 2008). However, much of the government's support is directed toward the traditional forms of tourism, mainly that known as beach resort tourism, without taking into consideration the growing tourism trends that seek activities that involve a greater interaction and closeness with the local ecosystems and communities (César & Arnaiz, 2002; OECD, 2008).

Alternative tourism represents an answer to these trends that are now being put into practice around the world. This different approach to tourism activities includes ecotourism practices, rural tourism and adventure tourism which involve the natural and the socio-cultural elements found in the local communities (SECTUR, 2004). The objective of alternative tourism is not only to improve the experiences of the tourist but also to improve the quality of life of the local population through their participation in the management of these activities and the distribution of the benefits that result from them. This principle is found in the Charter of Sustainable Tourism published during the Sustainable Tourism World Conference in Lanzarote, Spain in 1995:

“Tourism development shall be based on criteria of sustainability, which means that is must be ecologically bearable in the long term, as well as economically viable, and ethically and socially equitable for local communities.” (Sustainable Tourism World Summit, 1995)

It is also important to highlight that although alternative tourism is an option for sustainability, it should not be taken as a panacea for the development of local communities but as a complementary activity that together with other traditional economic practices or productive projects constitutes a palliative for the deficiencies in local rural communities (Ceballos Lascuráin, 1998).

Alternative tourism in Mexico has been favored because of the country's proximity to the main markets of tourists that are looking for this kind of experiences found in the United States and Canada and its great diversity in ecosystems and cultural expressions (Guerrero, 2010). This represents a great competitive advantage for tourism and most economic sectors in Mexico. However, local communities have not yet fully taken advantage of this situation in order to be the most benefitted (César & Arnaiz, 2002). A way to achieve this purpose and the above mentioned sustainability principles is to involve local communities and their knowledge on the natural resources found in their territory in tourism development (Singh, 2008).

The state of Oaxaca, Mexico, is rich in cultural expressions and local knowledge which can be appreciated in the great diversity of its indigenous population, represented with 16 ethnic and/or linguistic groups (González, 1998). This cultural richness is complemented also by the greatest natural diversity in Mexico, which taken together make this state a great attraction for alternative tourism. Ecoturixtlán is a community enterprise founded in during the 90s in the town of Ixtlán de Juárez, located in the northern region of the state. The company takes advantage of the natural richness and beauty of the environment in order to improve the quality of life of its employees as well as that of the community members and their families (Paz, Fuentes, Ruíz, & Aquino, 2012). This undertaking centered on alternative tourism is complemented by other initiatives or productive projects at the community level

among which are found a sustainable forestry project, the fabrication of furniture, a gasoline station, as well as the recollection and dehydration of fruits and mushrooms (Ortega, 2004).

The participation of this community in the decision making process is made in a traditional way. It is structured through the assembly of community members and a number of special committees, which approved the creation of the company dedicated to alternative tourism in their territory. A hired general manager administers this company and serves as its representative outside the community, and then he is in turn accountable to the assembly of community members (Paz et al., 2012). However, the overall community participation mechanisms in the decision making processes and in the benefits that result from the tourism activities as well as their role in the appropriation of the community's natural resources are not clear. These are the topics being approached in this thesis.

1.2 Objectives

The following general and specific objectives were established in order to guide the course of this investigation:

General objective

- To assess the community participation processes that characterize the indigenous Zapoteca town of Ixtlán de Juárez and that influence the dynamics of the community alternative tourism project Ecoturixtlán.

Specific objectives

- To recognize the characteristics of the natural, social and economic environment that are associated to the practice of ecotourism in the area of study.
- To define the importance of the community project Ecoturixtlán for the community of Ixtlán de Juárez in relation to other productive projects.
- To identify the particular characteristics of the work division and participation in the benefits generated by the community project among the members of the community.
- To analyze the mechanisms of appropriation of natural resources by the indigenous community in relation to the ecotourism enterprise.

1.3 Hypothesis

The community Project and alternative tourism center Ecoturixtlán, located in the indigenous community of Ixtlán de Juárez Oaxaca, allows for the involvement of its members in the decision making processes about their resources, this way accomplishing their more efficient and sustainable use thanks to the characteristics of the community structure such as the *tequio*¹ and mutual help among the community members. Furthermore, through these community participation processes, it is created among their members a sense of ownership and appropriation of their natural resources from which they depend, contributing to their conservation and protection.

1.4 Justification

Even though they live in an area of great natural richness, the inhabitants of Ixtlán de Juárez have a high level of marginalization and their opportunities for development are limited (Ramales & Portillo, 2010). Alternative tourism then constitutes an option in order to diversify the local economy and to encourage

¹Tequio is a form of work done for free and shared in the community. Communal and municipal authorities call the community members in order to do public work such as opening roads, constructing a public building or infrastructure, etc. Every man in the community must do tequio work, however more women are now participating but this changes from community to community (Maldonado, 2000).

the participation of the community in the management of their natural resources in a sustainable way. The case study for this investigation, Ecoturixtlán, is an example of one of these projects. However, it is necessary to determine the way and degree in which members of the community are involved in the decision making processes regarding the project. This is also true in terms of the economical, social and other benefits that result from the tourism activities. Taken together, these are determinant factors for the success of the company and for the generation of a sense of appropriation and identity with their natural resources thus contributing to the protection of their environment (Wood, 1998).

The community company Ecoturixtlán has been successful in the sense that it has generated direct and indirect jobs and opportunities of development for professionals in the community, it has allowed for the diversification of the productive activities part of the local economy and the appreciation of the cultural richness of the local indigenous people in regards to their traditions, uses and customs (Paz et al., 2012). It is therefore necessary to analyze more carefully this successful experience in the sense that this investigation is providing for, with the intent to contemplate its possible reproduction in other areas of the country where it is intended to encourage their development with productive projects related to alternative tourism and sustainable tourism through community participation. However, it must always be taken into account that those projects should be tailored according to the particular characteristics of the communities where they want to be put into practice.

Furthermore, much of the literature regarding community participation deals with the implementation of projects using participative approaches but it leaves out what happens with a community once a participative project has started or when the project is promoted by the community itself. In this sense, the question of whether it remains being participative or not is important to answer. This must also be addressed in the context of the study area and indigenous communities which by their nature (communalism) they have certain participative attributes (Ruiz, Manzano, Ruiz, & Aquino, 2012).

Although much has been written on how the social equity part of sustainable tourism and in particular alternative tourism should include participation as an underpinning of any project, it is assumed that this process continues once the outside promoters leave. This thesis explores this continuance in the context of an indigenous community with a well established alternative tourism community enterprise and very particular organizational capabilities. Also when this takes place within a greater “communally owned” array of enterprises with different stakeholders involved, different interests and different legal frameworks. The question that remains in this sense what the articulation between the projects is like and how the community, in its different segments fits in.

On the other hand, the development of this investigation is important because of its methodological scientific contribution regarding its approach to the topics of alternative and sustainable tourism through qualitative research methods, which in the case of Oaxaca and its indigenous communities has not been sufficiently analyzed.

1.5 Scope and structure of the thesis

The research made for this thesis is only targeted towards analyzing the issue of community participation in the case study chosen, which has its particular organizational structure. In this sense, the results, analysis and conclusions derived from this investigation are not to be generalized to other geographical locations or development projects with participative approaches; the fundamental differences in organizational culture are the result of a long evolution and adaptation of the community to its environment. In this sense, the research is designed for this community in particular.

Moreover, the thesis does not contemplate other important theoretical issues that could represent significant factors to be considered, such as the state of indigenous identity, social cohesion or livelihoods approach. The scope of the thesis is limited to assessing the state of a particular theoretical approach i.e. community participation, in the case of alternative tourism.

Having this in mind, the thesis is structured in the following way:

Chapter I presents the general problem statement regarding the theory in conjunction with the case study, proposing a general objective and four specific objectives to guide the development of the research. Furthermore, a hypothesis is stated for its later consideration.

Chapter II is concerned with the theoretical and conceptual background. Firstly, it deals with the current state of world tourism, the impacts of this activity and the transition to more sustainable alternatives. Secondly, the main concept is treated with views to provide a working definition and assessment frameworks for the thesis. Thirdly, it deals with indigenous people and their role in development and finally these elements are connected with a discussion of community-based tourism.

Chapter III discusses the methods chosen for the research. The chapter puts emphasis in the mixed nature of the approach, considering the quantitative elements of the questionnaires and the description of the qualitative elements, in particular the in-depth interviews and the value of the focus group as a participative research tool.

Chapter IV Presents a general description of the study area and uses the cartographic tool in the way of several maps using specialized software. It ends with the initial description of the community and the state of the alternative tourism enterprise Ecoturixtlán.

Chapter V deals with the organization of Ixtlan de Juárez. First the bases for this organization are presented and then turning to the details of the communal and municipal organization, including the structure of the community enterprises and that of Ecoturixtlán.

Chapter VI presents the results afforded by the qualitative and qualitative tools adopted in the research. The presentation follows the order of the tools and their target group.

Chapter VII analyses the results provided in the previous chapters, relying on the frameworks for community participation and those of tourism development stages.

Finally, chapter VIII provides the final thoughts and remarks based on the completion of the individual specific objectives. It then proposes a set of recommendations for three groups in the community and ends with a brief discussion of possible future research topics.

Chapter II: Theoretical and Conceptual Framework - From mainstream tourism to participative community-based tourism

This chapter focuses on the theory and concepts that underpin the development of the whole study. It begins with a general approximation on the topic of the tourism sector and its ever more important role on the global economy (UNWTO, 2012a), it proposes two models for destination and tourism area development and closes with a discussion on the impacts, both positive and negative, that mainstream tourism can have on the economy, society and natural environment of a destination.

The second part of this chapter continues with the discussion on tourism, in particular with respect to its relationship to sustainable development it explains how sustainable tourism and alternative tourism e.g. ecotourism, as its more representative form, are born out of this conjunction. The section closes with the provision of a working definition of alternative tourism for the use of this study.

The third section of this chapter constitutes the core conceptual and theoretical issue of the thesis. It begins with a definition of community participation in the context of other kinds of participation. It provides frameworks for the levels of depth that community participation can have and provides a very general framework for assessing it. The section ends with a brief discussion of the main critiques to participative approaches.

The situation of indigenous communities throughout the world and their role in development constitutes the topic of the third part of this chapter. This section ends with a brief discussion on the role that indigenous communities can play in the development of alternative tourism.

Finally, the fifth section addresses community participation in alternative tourism through the concept of community-based Tourism. This section represents the convergence of all the parts conforming this chapter. It closes with a discussion on community-based tourism as a platform for community participation in the management and benefits of alternative tourism activities.

2.1 Overview of the global tourism phenomenon

Tourism is a social and economical phenomenon that has changed the global lifestyle and cultural environment. Its presence has had impacts of economic, environmental as well as the social character that have changed public policies and strategies in both tourism destinations or tourist emitting countries, recognizing its importance as a strategy for development at a local, regional or even national level (OECD, 2008).

This all-encompassing and globalizing role of tourism is made clear by the wide range of aspects in which it can be related as it comprises all the activities of persons traveling to and staying in places that are outside their usual environment for not more than one consecutive year for leisure, and other purposes (UNWTO, 2012b).

According to the 2020 vision of the UN World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) the movement of tourists will reach the 1.6 billion international arrivals by the year of 2020, from which the American continent will have a share of 282 million as shown in **Figure 1**. By the end of 2012 it reached 1 billion and this does not take into account domestic tourism displacements within borders which would greatly *increase* that figure. All of these movements lead to a commercial exchange of great magnitude that accounts to up to 9% of the world's GDP (UNWTO, 2012a).

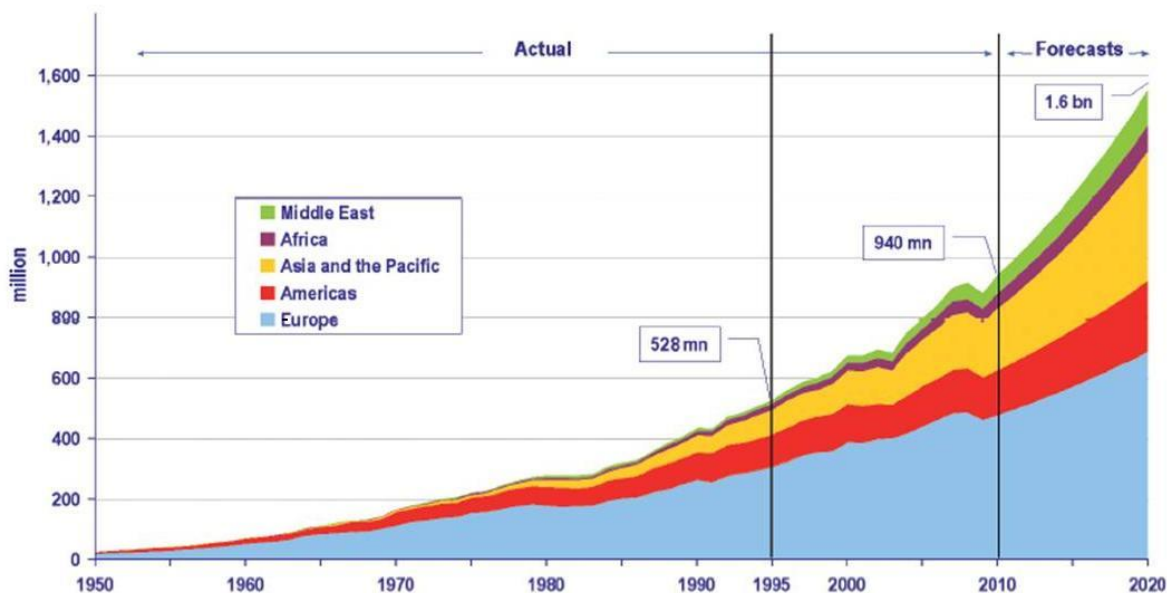


Figure 1 International tourist arrivals by region and forecasts (UNWTO, 2012)

Tourism activities are very dynamic and can be just as diverse as the purpose of a traveler in pursuing a trip. **Table 1** presents a typology of tourism based on the source and destination, its marketing approach, the purpose of the traveler and the planning approach, goals and management devised for the tourism enterprise or destination (SECTUR, 2004; UNWTO, 2012b). Many other types of tourism can be added to this typology but this helps to exemplify the complexity of the phenomenon in terms of motivations and expectations by the local communities, the government officials, international organizations and the tourists themselves.

Table 1 Typology of Tourism Source: Elaborated by the author based on UNWTO, SECTUR and Cesar & Arnaiz classifications

By source/destination	By marketing approach	
Inbound tourism Outbound tourism Domestic tourism	Mass tourism	
	Alternative tourism	Adventure tourism Rural tourism Ecotourism Cultural tourism
By travel purpose/motivation	By planning goal or management approach	
Medical tourism Business tourism Educational tourism Beach and Sun tourism Sports tourism, religious tourism, etc.	Community-based tourism Social tourism Pro-poor tourism Integrally planned tourism	

Moreover, tourism markets suppliers and destinations are continually reinventing and innovating their products, processes, management and institutions in order to remain competitive (Hjalager, 1997; Hojaghan & Esfangareh, 2011; UNWTO & ETC, 2011) all in all creating a complex and changing situation for this sector of the economy. In the case of this research, the management and marketing as well as activities carried out will be important for defining a working concept of alternative tourism to be used in the course of this thesis.

2.1.1 Role of tourism in developing countries

For developing countries, tourism is particularly important because it is seen as a national strategy capable of fighting poverty and encouraging sustainable development (SECTUR, 2007a). Tourism has been an economic sector that has grown even in the face of world financial crises, rising oil prices and economic uncertainty, which makes it an attractive option for foreign and national investment (UNWTO, 2012c). There are however certain impacts and limitations that have made governments in these regions and other stakeholders willing or reluctant to invest in tourism (Sireyjol, 2010). It is a very complex phenomenon that reaches in different levels and has particular features that make it different from other economic activities and make the planning of tourism destinations particularly difficult to manage (Liedtke, 2012). These features are listed and described in the context of developing countries in **Table 2**.

Table 2 Tourism sector characteristics Source: Author based on (UNWTO & ETC, 2011)

Characteristics of the tourism sector	Meaning for developing countries
Fragmentation of supply	The product sold in the tourism sector is a combination of different services provided by a set of suppliers, therefore making it hard to ensure all needs are taken care of.
Interdependence and complementarity of tourism services	Given the chain of suppliers that make up the tourism product, each one is connected to the other and complements it or even depends on it. Developing countries might have a hard time covering one of them, and therefore hindering all.
Rigidity of supply	Once the supply is set, it is hard to change it in response to the variations of the market, therefore waste can occur or inability to fulfill the demand resulting in revenue loss.
Long lead times	The whole planning of a tourism destination or center is a lengthy process, which for developing countries is particularly a problem, given the political and financial pressures.

Table 2 (Continuation) Tourism sector characteristics Source: Author based on (UNWTO & ETC, 2011)

Product planning based on realistic forecasts of demand	The planning process should be informed by a comprehensive study of the market and realistic forecasts which are expensive to make and depend on updated statistical information that is hard to get in developing countries.
Intangibility	The real products in tourism are intangible, meaning that what tourism actually sells are experiences and ultimately memories, which represents a challenge for advertising.
Price elasticity of tourism demand	Tourists are sensible to destination pricings and tourism demand reacts readily to changes in price. It is therefore important for destinations in developing countries to remain competitive.
Seasonality	The fluctuation of demand throughout the year also makes tourism a difficult economic sector for planning and managing.
Consumer as part of the tourism product	The perception of the tourists regarding their experience is also influenced by the presence, qualities and quantities of other tourists.
Importance of intermediaries	This aspect is of particular interest for destinations in developing countries because tour operators and travel agencies, many times outside the country, retain much of the revenues generated.

2.1.2 Impacts of mainstream tourism

2.1.2.1 Economic impacts

Tourism can be a distributor of wealth within a country, but it also brings some other benefits. Among the economic benefits of tourism are the money exchanges and earnings in the tourism destination, the creation of local employment, the tax input into the local and regional governmental institutions and most importantly the action of the multiplying effect which creates a cascade of indirect economic benefits (Hojeghan & Esfangareh, 2011; Honey & Gilpin, 2009; OECD, 2008).

However, there are certain limitations and even economic disadvantages of tourism, viewed from the local community perspective. In the first place, it is hard for the poorest of developing countries to get into the market of tourism in the first place because of the high initial investment costs, mainly due to the levels of comfort that tourist from developed countries are accustomed to (OECD, 2008). Another disadvantage on the economic aspect of tourism, but in part brought by the institutional policies of developing countries, is the specialization in tourism by destinations and dependence on it; tourism is a very volatile sector being influenced by external and internal factors and it is always advisable to make tourism a complementary activity and never a substitute for primary economic activities (Budeanu, 2005; López, Sánchez, & Pavón, 2011).

There are also limits to the benefits that developing countries can get out of mainstream tourism due its basic organizational structure in the market. According to Cater (1995), this is because mainstream tourism was designed to meet the needs of the affluent middle and upper classes in developed countries and as such the main tour operators, the main transporters as well as the hotel industry are based in those countries and thus the actual capacity of tourism to redistribute wealth to the communities that serve as hosts is severely hindered. Moreover, tourism can be disruptive in negative ways within the local economy in a tourism destination as it can increase the general prices in goods and services, this is especially true of the real state and property prices level, suddenly making local

communities unable to afford renting or buying property and therefore generating exclusion (Stynes, 1997).

2.1.2.2 Social impacts

Tourism involves the interactions between host and visiting populations which can trigger changes at the destination in social and cultural aspects, which are much harder to measure than economic impacts, but in the long run might be very dramatic (Stronza & Gordillo, 2008). Social and cultural impacts related to tourism have been described as the ways in which the interaction between tourists and local communities change the social value systems, behavioral patterns, community structures, quality of life and lifestyle at the destination site (Mendoza, Monterrubio, & Fernández, 2011). The extent of these impacts is related to many factors, including the number of tourists and capacity of the tourism center, the developing situation of the host country, the extent of the cultural difference between the host community and the visitors, and whether the center is in an urban or a rural context (Matina & Dimitrios, 2006).

Among these impacts there are some benefits for both the local communities and the tourists. The capacity of tourism to bring together different cultures and serve as an instrument of peace and stability has been much emphasized (Honey & Gilpin, 2009). It has also been argued that tourism can contribute to the preservation of local knowledge and traditions, this way revitalizing the culture of the host community (Matina & Dimitrios, 2006). The generation of jobs and infrastructure also helps to improve the quality of life and consequently the social well being of communities and at the very local and project management level, it can help to strengthen skills such as managing people and leadership (Stronza & Gordillo, 2008).

However, there are also certain social costs related to tourism development which can include among others the loss of cultural identity as the host community is influenced by the values and culture of the visitor over time and the immigration from other outsiders to the tourism destination attracted by employment opportunities which increases the pressure upon the local community and in some cases can even lead to the increase in crime, prostitution, drugs and change the moral values of the community (López et al., 2011; Matina & Dimitrios, 2006; Santamarta, 2000).

2.1.2.3 Environmental impacts

Although described as a “smokeless industry” (Gonsalves, 1996), tourism has demonstrated its capacity to generate detrimental effects on the very natural environments on which it depends, often even overshadowing its benefits (Budeanu, 2005; Hsieh & Kung, 2013; Sanagustín Fons, Fierro, & Patiño, 2011).

As a tourism destination evolves, the resources for supplying the needs of the growing floating population of tourists increase and therefore the pressure on the environment to get enough water, use ground for construction and energy to power infrastructure increases as well (Santamarta, 2000). This is perhaps the most noticeable of all the negative impacts of the sector on the environment as the intensive change of land use for tourist resorts usually takes place, in the case of beach and sun tourism, in the coastal areas which are the most important for biodiversity conservation. Other negative impacts are related to the deficiencies in planning and the overuse of the sector activities and include the solid waste management, water pollution, the introduction of exotic species and the alteration or otherwise degradation of ecosystems when their carrying capacity is not taken into account (Budeanu, 2005; César & Arnaiz, 2002; Santamarta, 2000).

Notwithstanding the variety and significance of these negative effects, tourism has the potential, not in all its forms but in some that fulfill certain preconditions and criteria, to be a safeguard for the environment against other more pernicious human activities (WWF International, 2001).

2.1.3 Tourism development frameworks: Tourism Area Life Cycle

Having explained the difficulties that tourism planning, organization and management represent and the impacts that tourism activities can have on the countries, regions and communities that already have been implementing it, a basic model for tourism development will be addressed. It is possible for this model to be applied to destinations at the regional level or even individual enterprises at the very local level, which serves for the purpose concerning the case study of this research work (Zhong, Deng, & Xiang, 2008).

The Tourism Area Life Cycle model was first developed by Butler in 1980 but has been continually examined. This model proposes that any tourism product or destination goes through a series of six distinctive evolutionary stages (Butler, 1980, 2006) and can be presented graphically with the number of tourists as the vertical axis and the passing of time on the horizontal axis, as can be seen in **Figure 2**:

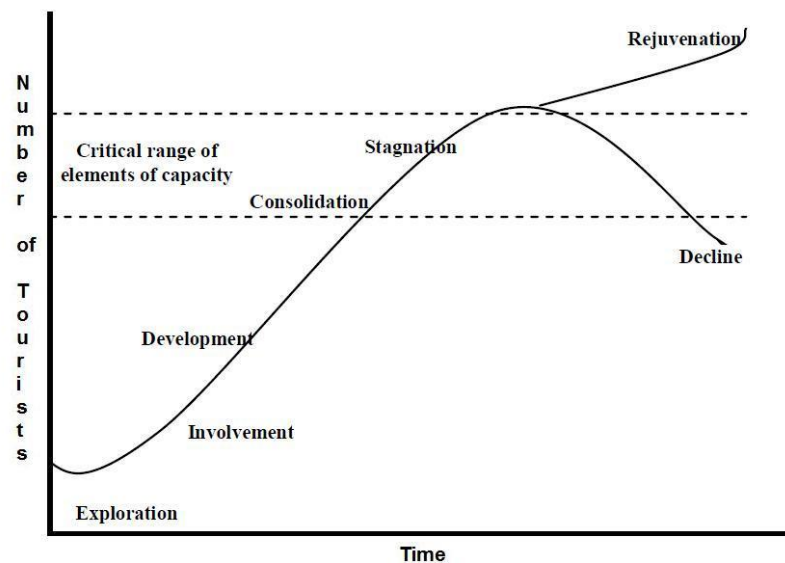


Figure 2 The six-stage evolution of a tourism destination. Source: Andriotis, 2005 based on Butler, 1980.

The first stage of exploration is marked by the very limited number of tourists in the area and the isolated appearance of the destination. During the involvement stage, more and more tourists as well as entrepreneurs become aware of the tourism attractions as they begin consuming and providing services respectively. During development, the number of tourists grows rapidly as well as the economic, social and environmental impacts. Consolidation occurs when the resort or destination reaches its capacity of supply and a well-established image in the market. Stagnation follows consolidation as the tourism demand reaches its peak as well as the impacts that result from it. Finally, two scenarios are possible:

- The tourism destination cannot compete with newer, less degraded destinations and as a result enters a stage of decline.
- It begins a rejuvenation stage whereby the destination gains a comparative advantage over the competitors or reduces the degradation on its attractions (Andriotis, 2005).

The Tourism Area Life Cycle has been used extensively in tourism research, varying from a destination level to the local, enterprise-focused context and for different purposes and variables of study, from the planning perspective to the study of tourism impacts generated over time (Andriotis, 2005; Zhong et al., 2008). In the case of this research, it can be adapted to the local-enterprise focus and for the purpose of examining local community interactions with the phenomenon of tourism. There can also be exceptions to the model, when stages are skipped because of government actions and policies or even outside influences that the destination is unable to control (Andriotis, 2005). Notwithstanding these deficiencies in the models and their overall simplicity, their advantage, from the perspective of this research is their applicability to different tourism units of analysis and purposes of study.

2.2 Towards a new vision of tourism: alternative tourism and community-based tourism

2.2.1 Sustainable development

Within the last decades, sustainability as a paradigm of development, has been discussed in all bodies of human knowledge and is subject to numerous proposals in terms of its application and instrumentality (Sanagustín Fons et al., 2011; Sharpley, 2000). The concept of sustainability has its roots in the 1970s, in the framework of the United Nations Conference on the Human Environment, held in Stockholm, Sweden in 1972, when a real concern for the surmounting environmental problems made clear by the report “Limits of Growth” was shown. This was a document prepared by the Club of Rome, a private association and global think tank consisting of a group of businessmen, politicians and scientists, and whereby the trends, environmental problems brought by economic growth and the threats to the society at large were exposed (Meadows, Meadows, Randers, & Behrens, 1972).

Having this as a background and coupled with a series of occurrences in the political, economic and social world arena that brought the need to propose a different and alternative model of development, that same year the Stockholm declaration was signed, whereby for the first time the environmental dimension was given a place in the international political agenda as a conditioning factor and limitative to the prevailing capitalist model of economic growth.

But it was until 1987 when the concept of sustainable development gains greater notoriety as it was then officially recognized in the Brundtland report “Our Common Future”, in which sustainable development is defined as “the development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs”(WCED, 1987). Within this greater framework are included the different environmentalist positions which had emerged since the sixties, among them the conservationist ecology and the moderate environmentalism (Foladori & Pierri, 2005), a characteristic that for some represents an oxymoron but for others is regarded as one of the concept’s strengths (Sharpley, 2000).

It is from this basic concept that came the array of definitions and proposals that was mentioned before, but all of them integrating the common elements of society, economy and environment as an interdependent system. This shift to the Triple Bottom Line paradigm, as it came to be known (Sanagustín Fons et al., 2011), was first appropriated by the scientific community, then from the political discourse to the official planning, and later it was included in the framework of national legislation down to the local level (César & Arnaiz, 2002). **Figure 3** shows the interrelations between the base lines of the sustainable development paradigm.

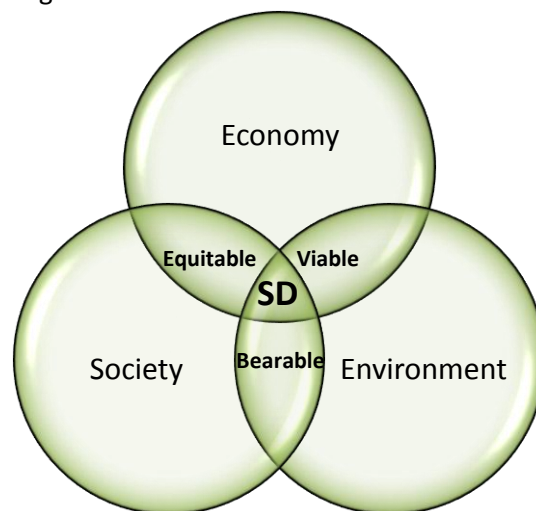


Figure 3 Triple bottom line sustainable development paradigm. Source: University of Michigan, 2002

2.2.2 Sustainability and tourism

As it was discussed in the first section of this chapter, the tourism sector is a very complex network of services and products and nowadays it is not anymore just a complement to many economies but has already gained the status of one of the most important economic activities in some cases it even surpasses the primary and secondary sectors, therefore it becomes necessary to make it fit into this new model of development (César & Arnaiz, 2002).

However it is not just the importance of the sector which made it a focus “industry” for applying sustainability concepts, but also the wide and interrelated negative impacts that the mainstream version of tourism, *i.e.* mass tourism can have on the destinations, which have already been discussed. Sustainable tourism is born out of the need to find the solutions to these problems based on the holistic approach of sustainability (Sharpley, 2000).

The UNWTO (2013) defines this new kind of tourism as “tourism that takes full account of its current and future economic, social and environmental impacts, addressing the needs of visitors, the industry, the environment and host communities”.

The same publication goes on to clarify that the sustainable management and planning of tourism applies to all kinds of tourism, even mass and mainstream tourism. This is important, as it is often a misconception that sustainable tourism can only take place at the very local level and with particular segments of the activity (UNWTO, 2013). It must then be viewed as an approach rather than as a kind of tourism, nonetheless some kinds of tourism are clearly based, at least on the theory level, on these principles while for others it represents a challenge (Dowling & Fennell, 2003). This however will be discussed later including some other critiques to the model of sustainable tourism. **Figure 4** presents a model of sustainable tourism based on the triple bottom line model discussed earlier.

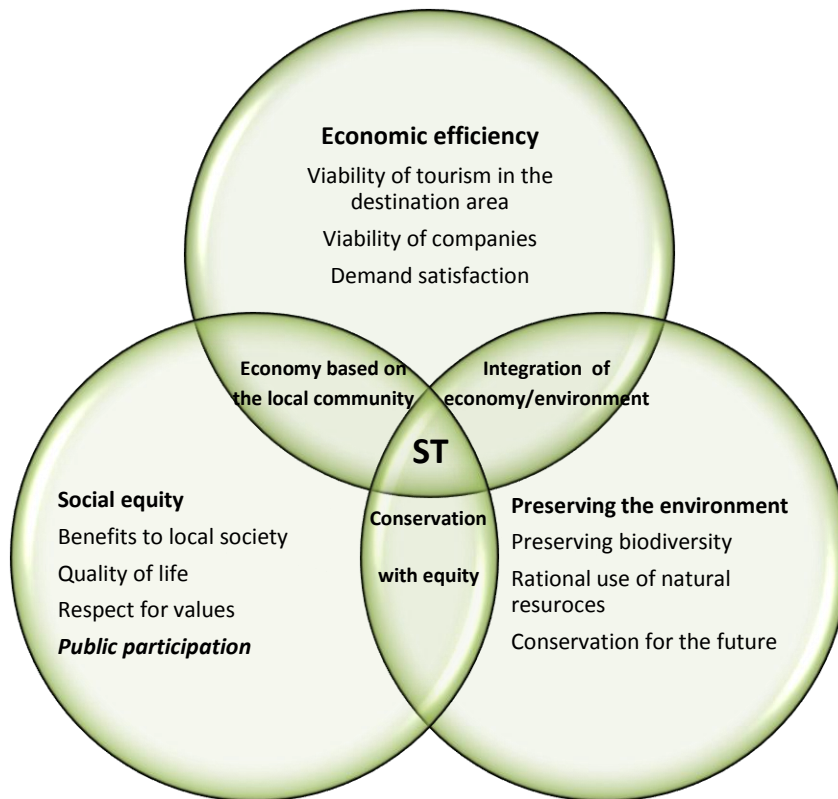


Figure 4 Sustainable Tourism Model. Source: Sanagustín Fons, 2011

The foremost and basic requirements that sustainable tourism should address, according to the Mexican Ministry of Tourism (SECTUR, 2004) are: the improvement of the quality of life of the local communities, the provision of quality services and experiences to the tourists, promotion of the conservation and sustainable use of the natural, cultural and social resources and the integration of the community in a participative manner into the activities. This, as a national strategy of tourism, which is already included in the sector policies of numerous countries, has considerable limitations.

It has been argued that sustainable tourism, although hailed in the public discourse as a strategy of development, is quite hard to actually achieve because of the very nature of the activity in general i.e. it is complex, fragmented, trans-sector, multi-level and profit oriented (César & Arnaiz, 2002). As a result, the approach of sustainability in tourism tends to focus on the development of localized, small-scale projects or on very specialized niches of the market (Sharpley, 2000). It is at this point that alternative tourism begins to be marketed as an alternative to the otherwise mass tourism to environmentally-conscious potential tourists (Dowling & Fennell, 2003).

2.2.3 The rise of ecotourism and other forms of alternative tourism

As mass or mainstream tourism became ever more affordable for the working classes of industrialized countries and its impacts became more visible in the destination areas, there was a movement towards more sustainable practices in tourism (César & Arnaiz, 2002). In this context, a new segmentation took place that started with the advent of what was first introduced as eco-tourism, a prefix that was a trend in those times. This way, first defined by Ceballos Lascurain:

“...traveling to relatively undisturbed or uncontaminated natural areas with the specific objective of studying, admiring, and enjoying the scenery and its wild plants and animals, as well as any existing cultural manifestations (both past and present) found in these areas” (Ceballos Lascuráin, 1998).

This became first and indeed most recognizable form of alternative tourism that was introduced globally. Since then, the term has been defined based on the motivations of the tourists, the characteristic of the ecotourism destination, the organizational structure of the project itself and the outcome and qualities of the trip (Diamantis, 1999). Also, other kinds of tourism also having a different approach to mainstream tourism have evolved. Such diversity can be seen in **Figure 5**.

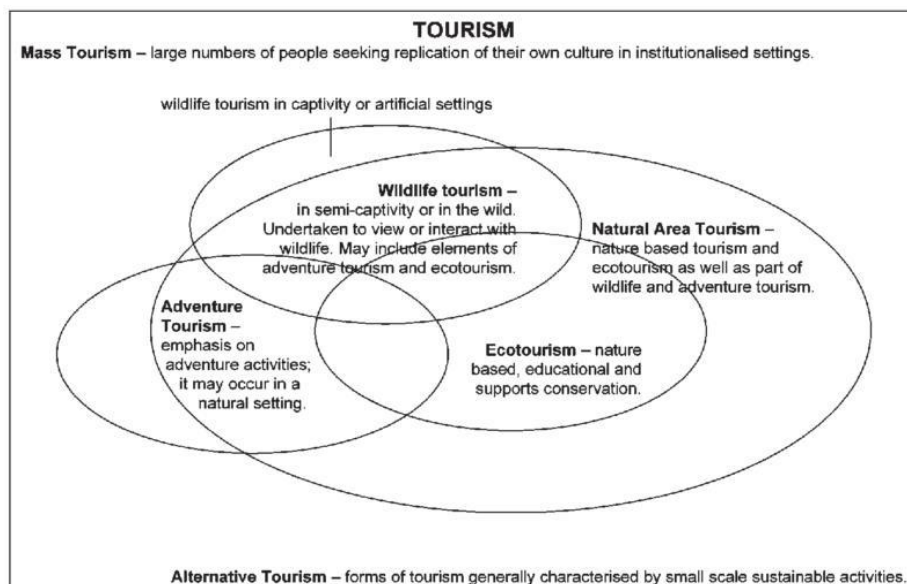


Figure 5 The relationship between ecotourism and other forms of tourism. Source: Gale & Hill, 2009

As can be seen in this conceptual map, Gale and Hill (2009) view ecotourism in a continuum between the mass and the alternative forms of tourism, and which reaches into other forms as well including the softer natural area tourism, the adventure tourism and the wildlife tourism. They go on to say that what all of these have in common is their small scale setting and sustainability. Rural tourism, cultural tourism, adventure tourism and ecotourism are some of the common kinds of alternative tourism mentioned in the literature. Ecotourism deserves a special recognition as it is one of the most common-used forms of alternative tourism in a community context-although sometimes overused as a marketing strategy (César & Arnaiz, 2002).

2.2.4 Towards a working definition of alternative tourism

It can be said that alternative tourism is a form of sustainable tourism which targets the new trends arising in the tourism market which is currently going through a process of diversification, offering new activities that take place in closer contact with natural elements and communities (César & Arnaiz, 2002). The term can cover a wide specter of activities and generally be defined as the trips made in order to participate in activities in close and direct contact with nature and the cultural expressions that are around it with an attitude and a commitment to get to know, respect, enjoy and participate in the conservation of the natural and cultural resources (SECTUR, 2004). This definition of alternative tourism is provided by the Mexican Ministry of Tourism (SECTUR) and is of special interest for the research as it is the official definition in the country where the case study is located. **Figure 6** shows this classification and where ecotourism fits in relation to rural tourism and adventure tourism and how they all take place in natural settings.

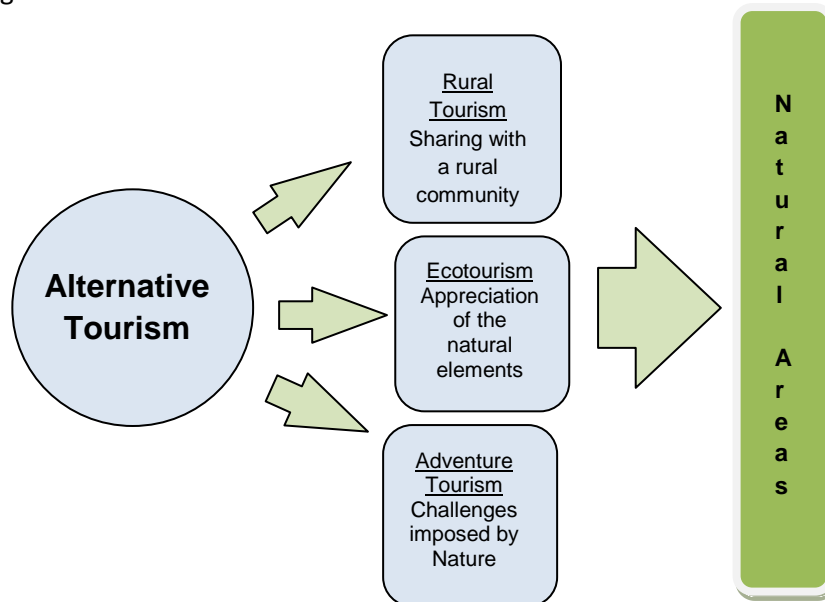


Figure 6 Classification of Alternative Tourism. Source: Author based on SECTUR classification, 2004

Taking into account this definition and also the definition provided by Gale and Hill (2009) and considering not only the motivation of the traveler but also the benefits that tourism should leave at the destination, the following working definition of alternative tourism is proposed for this research:

Alternative tourism comprises activities that take place in small, natural or rural settings motivated by the desire to learn, appreciate and/or enjoy the local culture and ecosystems and whereby the local community participates in the benefits derived from the activities and is involved in the decision making process from the planning to the monitoring stages.

2.3 Defining community participation

As discussed in the previous section, the triple bottom line model of sustainable tourism calls for the achievement of social equity and wellbeing as one of its principles and within it is listed the concept of social participation (Figure 4). This section constitutes the core of the conceptual framework and in it the concept of community participation is defined, first providing a classification and levels of participation in the general context of development and then in the context of alternative tourism.

2.3.1 Concept dissection: participation and community

2.3.1.1. Participation. The origin of the verb “to participate” can be traced back to the Latin *participare* which is a word composed of the root *pars* meaning “a part or piece” and the derivative *capere*, meaning to take. Its use was ultimately passed to other languages including English, forming the noun “participation” (Ferney, 2011; Oxford, 2013).

There is plethora of terms and verbs related to participation used in the literature, as synonyms or complements including but not limited to “involvement, engagement, sharing, empowering” (Ertuna & Kirbas, 2012; Ferney, 2011; Martínez, 2003), but they are always used in a social context and within democratic ideologies, and more recently within the concepts of citizenship and governance (Hickey & Mohan, 2003).

Participation then is in principle a social act and a democratic process in which two or more agents voluntarily partake in conjunction towards the same action and with a shared goal (Ferney, 2011; Hickey & Mohan, 2003). Although there are a number of definitions to this concept alone, it is in this sense that the word participation will be used in this study.

2.3.1.2 Community. As a social animal, humans have evolved depending on their kind for the basic needs of nurture, protection and sense of belonging (Krause, 2001). Communities then have existed since the begging of humanity, but even though they have always existed, the term itself continues to be elusive and hard to define (Salazar, 2012). Even more so in the modern world that thanks to technological improvements, obstacles have been lifted for the formation of a whole array of communities; the geographic variable is not anymore the only principle to define a community but also as a network of relationships and common values (Salazar, 2012; Vanwey, Tucker, & Diaz McConnell, 2005).

However, for the purpose of this study, this locality principle is quite important in defining a community. Taking the definition from the *Community Tourism Guide* a community is “a mutually supportive, geographically specific social unit such as a village or a tribe where people identify themselves as community members and where there is usually some form of communal decision-making” (Mann, 2000). However, with this definition as well as others, the problem remains with its ambiguity and also the connotations that it presents. As Salazar states (2012) “definitions of community allude to a collectivity fixed in time and space...an undifferentiated unit with a single voice”. A second aspect of importance is presented here for this study, the idea that *a community is not homogeneous* but rather a dynamic social entity that adapts and transforms according to its environment and which is made up of different interests groups, actors and stakeholders (Krause, 2001).

Another aspect that is important to mention is the “benign” connotation of the term community as Williams (1976) cited by Salazar (2012) puts it, “unlike other terms of social organization... community seems never to be used unfavorably”. However, contrary to this notion, communities can be the site of violence, political struggle and multiple hierarchies (Amit & Rapport, 2002).

Having these characteristics in mind, a community, in the context of this study, is a collectivity that shares a common location and some common values but can be a site of conflict, shifting alliances,

power, social structures and which is made up of different groups that may or may not pursue the same goals but who nonetheless identify themselves as its members ² (Cleaver, 2001; Krause, 2001).

2.3.2. Typology of participation

Several classifications of participation have been proposed in the literature and four of them will be discussed in this subsection, including community participation. Then a scheme portraying the different levels in which it can take place will be presented.

2.3.2.1 Social participation. Social participation can be defined as the social processes whereby the groups, organizations, the institutions or the different social sectors, including the community itself intervene in the identification of problems and unite in order to design, implement and monitor possible solutions (Ramos, 2001). What is evident from this very broad definition is the variety of “actors and stakeholders” which can play a role in participation. Social participation is organized between different institutionalized groups following formal procedures and among these groups there can be non-governmental organizations, clubs, civil societies for different purposes but can also be expressed at the individual level (Ferney, 2011). What can be gathered from these concepts is the possibility for the inclusion of the civil society in general in participation and therefore it can then be deduced that social participation is more common in larger geographic collectivities, i. e. not small villages but rather large cities where problems can apply to a large array of these organizations.

2.3.2.2 Public participation. According to the International Organization for Public Participation it means “to involve those who are affected by a decision in the decision-making process. It promotes sustainable decisions by providing participants with the information they need to be involved in a meaningful way, and it communicates to participants how their input affects the decision” (IAP2, 2013). This definition, however, does not provide who is the actor or stakeholder providing the means to participate and therefore it is assumed that the state is then responsible. Public participation is that which is promoted, organized and implemented by the state in its different levels, but always according to its interests and often serving as a legitimizing instrument (Ferney, 2011) and therefore it varies from government to government and institution to institution.

2.3.2.3 Citizen participation. As mentioned at the beginning of this section, participation has become more involved with governance issues and this has given citizen participation a special role. Arnstein’s article on the ladder of citizen’s participation equals it to citizen power and goes on to define it as “the redistribution of power that enables the have-not citizens, excluded from the political and economic processes, to be deliberately included in the future” (Arnstein, 1971). The have-nots according to this author constitute those minorities that historically have been oppressed, in this case in the context of the United States. Once again, as in the case with public participation, it is the state that is responsible to provide the avenues in order for socially disadvantaged groups to influence the outcomes of policy processes and decision making, something that at least in the discourse it has proposed (Gaventa, 2002). Perhaps the most important concept to be rescued from citizen participation for this research is that of “deliberative democracy” with which citizen participation is closely related. This describes a form of democratic decision-making process in which the space is open for citizens to participate in commissions and committees, but within an institutionalized framework (Ferney, 2011).

²Krause proposes that there are certain principles on which communities are formed. He first proposes the principle of **Belonging**, and defines this element as “to feel part of or belonging to a group, to be able to identify oneself with the group”. The second principle is that of **Interrelation**, by which he means “the existence of contact or communication, including that of the virtual type, among its members and a certain influence of one to another”. As a third principle of communities he proposes a **Common culture** whereby the members “have in common the existence of shared values”. This is of particular importance and will be further discussed in the indigenous peoples section of this chapter.

2.3.2.4 Community participation. This is the bottom-most type of participation since it involves the most locally based of all approaches. In general terms, community participation is concerned with the engagement of individuals who are members of a certain community in the decisions that have the potential to affect their lives, individuals who may or may not want to actually participate but who should have the opportunity to do it (Burns, Heywood, Taylor, Wilde, & Wilson, 2004) It is described also as an endogenous process that must be tailored to each community as their organizational capabilities, resources, power relations and hierarchies are different (Ferney, 2011).

There is a tendency in literature regarding participation in general to divide participants into the providers or project facilitators and the beneficiaries and this is often the case when participatory approaches are project oriented, but on the other hand as Vázquez and Gomez (2006) argue, true community participation and not just involvement is born and develops from within the community and this way it provides its own space for participation without interferences from outside. Despite the soft versions of community participation often utilized in health programs, development projects and government incentives contexts and compared with the rather hard ones whereby participation can only come from within, for the purpose of this study it is proposed as an active process that can start in both ways, from within or as a response from outside stimuli and whereby individuals, families, local institutions and the community in general assume responsibility for their own welfare and develop a capacity to contribute to their development (Mathbor, 2008a).

2.3.3 Frameworks for levels and assessment of community participation

2.3.3.1 Levels of participation.

Earlier during the discussion on participation typologies, the article by Arnstein on citizenship development was mentioned in regards to citizen participation. Arnstein (1971) also proposes different levels to measure the amount of participation by the community and devises an analogy using a ladder for higher or lower levels, each rung being a different amount of participation. The steps in this classification range from one to eight and begging with the lowest, she presents them in this order: Manipulation, therapy, informing, consultation, placation, partnership, delegated power and finally citizen control. This framework is, however, oriented towards citizen participation and therefore involves necessarily the state or another mediating institution. For this reason, it is necessary to use for the purposes of this study on community participation a more general classification, such as that proposed by Geilfus (2008), which fits the better the criteria mentioned in the community participation discussion. **Figure 7** shows the steps applied by Geilfus and **Table 3** provides a brief description to each one of them.

Figure 7 Levels of Community Participation. Source: Geilfus, 2008.

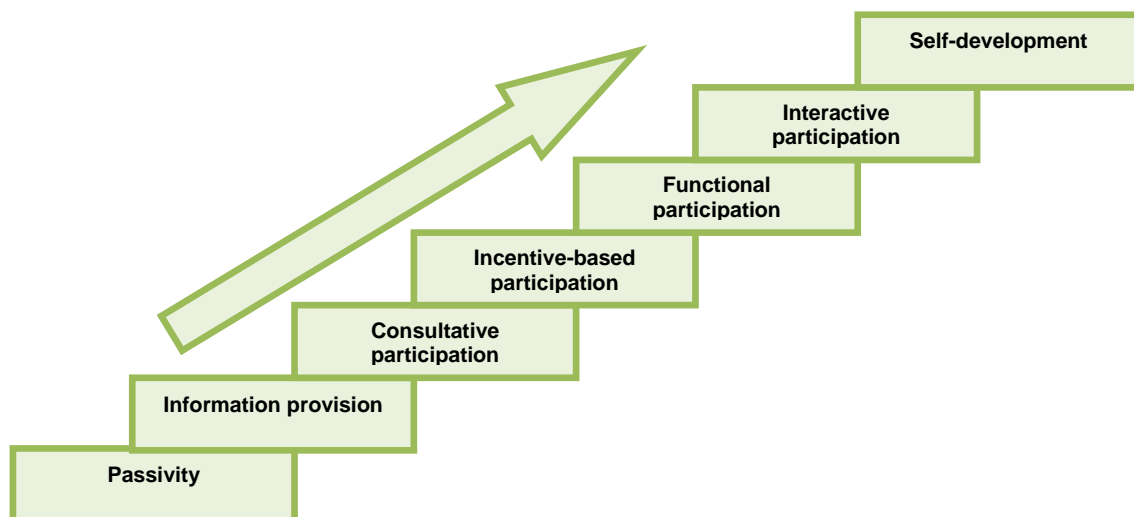


Table 3 Description of the levels of community participation. Source: Geilfus, 2008.

Level of participation	Description
Low level participation	
1. Passivity	People participate when they are told; they have no influence on decisions or project implementation.
2. Information provision	People participate by filling out survey questionnaires; they have no say in the use give to the survey data.
3. Consultative participation	People are consulted by external actors who listen to their opinions; however, they have no say in the decisions made as a result of these sessions.
Medium level participation	
4. Incentive-based participation	People participate mainly by supplying labor or other resources in exchange for certain incentives (material or social goods or training). While the project requires their involvement, they have no direct role in the decision-making.
5. Functional participation	People participate by forming working groups to meet pre-established project objectives. They have no role in project design but they are taken into account during the follow-up and adjustment process.
High level participation	
6. Interactive participation	Organized local groups participate in project design, implementation and evaluation. This involves systematic and structured teaching/learning processes, as well as in a progressive transition toward local control and management.
7. Self-development	Organized local groups take the initiative, without waiting for external input. External parties assume an advisory role, acting in partnerships.

2.3.3.2 A framework for assessment.

As any social process, community participation is hard to assess because it involves many factors and stakeholders in the intricate social fabric of the community. However, certain general indicators can be used to determine how and to what extent a community participates in their development projects.

A framework is proposed to evaluate this process, taking into account key considerations from the perspective of the partnerships and community members, the evidence that needs to be collected and all of this divided into topics important to participation (Burns et al., 2004) showed in **Table 4:**

Table 4 Framework for assessing community participation. Adapted from: Burns et al. 2004

Key considerations	Indicators
Topic: Influence and power	
Are all community members able to participate in decision making?	Evidence that effective action has been taken to ensure inclusion.
Who has determined the rules and priorities of key strategic partnerships and managing boards What is the balance power?	Evidence that the majority of board members are community based.
	Evidence that community-initiated decisions have been taken and acted on.
	Evidence that community members have as much power and influence as other key stakeholders on strategic partnerships and management boards.
Do community members have access to all decision-making processes?	Evidence that community members can influence all aspects of program development and delivery
Is the community control of assets and resources being enhanced?	Evidence of a sustainable transfer of resources to community ownership and control
Topic: Capacity building	
Do community members and institutions have the capacity to develop and sustain community-based programs?	Evidence that strong leadership, community development, management and administrative resources devoted to community practice
	Evidence of range and level of local community activity
	Evidence that institutions have the necessary information on different community groups and members in the area.
Is the community involvement process effectively resourced?	Evidence of investment in processes of community participation showing in the budget.
Do organizational structures, and ways or working, reflect a commitment to community participation?	Evidence that partner organizations can be locally responsive, organizationally aligned with community decision making.
	Evidence that institutional and community barriers to participation have been identified and steps have been taken to overcome them

Table 4 (Continuation) Framework for assessing community participation. Adapted from: Burns et al. 2004

Key considerations	Indicators
Topic: Communication and training	
Is there a coordinated approach to communication between partnerships, founding bodies and community members?	Evidence of mechanisms for informing community members about regeneration and for community members to inform institutions and partnerships.
Is there a coordinated approach to learning between partnerships, founding bodies and community members?	Evidence of participatory learning, peer learning and network learning strategies.
Topic: Impacts and outcomes	
What difference does participation make?	Evidence that real differences have resulted from community participation.
Are the outcomes of participation inclusive?	Evidence that the benefits of community participation are felt by all community members, not just a few.

2.3.4 Limitations and critiques to participative approaches

Although participation, and particularly community participation have been favorably discussed in literature and used extensively in developmental actions and in political rhetoric alike, during the last decade participative approaches to project implementation in development settings were criticized. The following are some of the main issues regarding participation that according to the authors, represent a serious challenge for these approaches.

Power and its *distribution within the community* is a feature that is not usually taken into account when implementing development projects using participative approaches, and sometimes this is even done on purpose, as it is a delicate topic to treat and it can be divisive and obstructive for the goals of the outside organization (Cleaver, 2001; Kothari, 2001; Mosse, 2001). This also takes us back to the mythical attributes given to communities discussed earlier, which from the euro-centrist perspective appear as harmonious and idyllic collectivities, ignoring or choosing to ignore potential conflicts and exclusion (Cleaver, 2001; Salazar, 2012).

Issues with the participative methods, the outside agency structure and the project organization itself are also an obstacle. It has already been mentioned that it is often the case that participation is used to legitimize governmental actions or policies (Ferney, 2011), but this can also happen when the agency is an ONG or private entity as they can not only facilitate participation but also influence it; they can have an effect on the decisions of participants, converting their objectives into community needs and objectives as they have a limited time for intervention and need to come up with a concrete action plan (Mosse, 2001).

Finally, coming from the field of social psychology, Cooke (2001) proposes a series of obstacles for community participation, this time in human nature itself and how humans behave in social context. First of all, the author alludes to “risky shift” whereby individuals, in the context of a group would take riskier decisions than if they were alone, which could lead to wrong decisions by the community. Then he mentions the Abilene Paradox, which takes place when communities take actions in contradiction to what they really want, because of misunderstandings and bad communication. Group thinking by which it is meant viewing themselves as invulnerable and superior to other communities can also happen. The fourth obstacle is the possibility of coercive persuasion, meaning basically that participation and the deliverance of a decision are conditionals of funding, technical help or other resources which creates anxiety in participants and forces them to participate and decide (Cooke, 2001).

These obstacles should be taken into account by development agencies when implementing projects but they can also be of use to this research, as they represent important elements to be assessed. Notwithstanding these critiques, participation remains an important topic in research and a relevant issue in public policy as it continues to be the most promising approach, especially when it takes into account community power structures and political systems and is well designed, be it from within the community or as an outside endeavor (Hickey & Mohan, 2004).

2.3.5 Evolution of the community's attitude towards Tourism: Doxey's Irridex

One of the factors influencing the participation of community groups in tourism development projects is their attitude towards tourism. In this sense, a significant approach to analyzing the responses of the community to tourism is provided by the Irridex model.

Doxey's model is a classification of the local community reaction to tourism development. Doxey (1975) proposed that the community goes through a series of sequenced reactions caused by the growing impacts of the tourism sector or project on their living space. These attitudes and their characteristics are further explained in **Table 5**:

Table 5 Doxey's Irritation Index Source: Adapted from Akkai and Postma's work based on Doxey's Irridex (Akkawi, 2010; Doxey, 1975; Postma, 2008)

Stage	Local community attitudes	Characteristics
First	Euphoria	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is a small number of tourists • The host community welcomes tourism • There is little planning on regards to the tourism activities
Second	Disinterest	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The tourists number increases • Visitors are taken for granted and contact acquires formality
Third	Irritation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is an increased competition for resources • Local residents become concerned with tourism
Fourth	Antagonism	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is an open hostility from the local community towards tourists

This model and the tourism area life cycle have been used simultaneously in a number of studies and both suggest that there is a change of attitudes and quality of the local population involvement in tourism over time (Andriotis, 2005; Mason & Cheyne, 2000).

There are, however a number of critiques to the model, as it has been argued that it assumes that the community is one homogenous entity and does not take into account the diversity of stakeholders and opinions of tourism development according to their roles (Mason & Cheyne, 2000). For example, the perception of tourism development from a tourism service provider will be much different from that of traditional fisher because their interests and stakes in tourism development differ from each other.

2.4 Indigenous peoples in participatory development

Development initiatives, especially those promoted by non-governmental agencies, are often small scale and focused on the most vulnerable groups of society. In this sense, indigenous peoples worldwide have been targeted as a culturally rich but at the same time marginalized sector.

2.4.1 A general overview of indigenous communities situation

With a population of more than 370 million and a presence in 90 countries, indigenous peoples in the world constitute a significant sector of society and contribute a large portion of humanity's cultural diversity, heritage and traditional knowledge (United Nations, 2009). These groups are present in virtually all continents, particularly in ex-colonial or provincial states. However, indigenous groups are also among the most marginalized, excluded and discriminated. Even in developed countries, the issue of indigenous peoples' lag behind the non-indigenous population is serious: their life expectancy is lower, unemployment rates are higher and education and health services are poorer (Hall & Patrinos, 2008; United Nations, 2009). This situation is worse in developing countries where the majority of the indigenous groups and population is situated and where economic and social conditions are less favorable. Despite these disadvantages, indigenous communities have endured a long history of abuse and exclusion and have prevailed assisted by their strong social structures.

2.4.2 Defining indigenous

The concept of "indigenous" as an adjective was not self-assigned by any of the today so called indigenous peoples. Taken in its widest definition, the adjective indigenous could refer to any person or thing that was born or originates in a certain place i.e. to be native from a certain place (Oxford, 2013). We find in this basic definition already the notion of territory as one of the main elements of "indigenesness". This way, a foreigner could call any inhabitant of Mexico an "indigenous Mexican" or a person "indigenous" from the Mexican nation. However, when speaking about indigenous peoples, it is usually taken into account a set of characteristics that puts them aside from the rest of the population. The problem of defining who indigenous peoples are has been a persistent one and is shown in the absence of a recognized standard definition (FMECD, 2006; Hall & Patrinos, 2008; Skoufias, Lunde, & Patrinos, 2010; United Nations, 2009), however the United Nations (2009) have adopted a working definition based on a previous work on the Problem of Discrimination Against Indigenous Populations. This working definition describes indigenous communities, peoples and nations as those which, "have a historical continuity with pre-invasion and pre-colonial societies that developed on their territories, consider themselves distinct from other sectors of the societies now prevailing on those territories, or parts of them, forming at present non-dominant sectors of society and being determined to preserve, develop and transmit to future generations their ancestral territories, and their ethnic identity, as the basis of their continued existence as peoples, in accordance with their own cultural patterns, social institutions and legal system" (United Nations, 2009).

Besides the repetition of the notion of territory in this definition, it is also worth noticing that indigenous communities have to identify themselves as such. This considers the feeling of identity a great importance; indigenous communities then identify themselves through their lands, their culture and their institutions. This is a central idea that will be retaken further on in the discussion of indigenous people in the context of the study area for the thesis. For now it is of interest to consider the historical context and current state of indigenous communities specifically in Latin America and Mexico.

2.4.3 Indigenous peoples: A historically disadvantaged group

The situation of indigenous peoples throughout time, in particular in the Latin American context has been marked by inequality since the arrival of the first European settlers and the beginning of the colonialism era; they brought with them new technologies, cultural values and above all a new political organization that destroyed their economic, politic and cultural native forms, reorganizing them only for the use and benefit of the colonial empire (Delfin, 2000; Korsbaek & Sámano, 2007). With the

independence from Spain and Portugal and the emergence of the first republics, this form of exploitation did not meet an end. Instead, the status of indigenous peoples in most states was now recognized as equal to non-indigenous, which was only meant in the commercial sense, meaning that now their land could be “bought” from them and a new relationship of interior colonialism emerged (Delfin, 2000). The result of this interaction is a historic trend of economic exploitation and of total political control and dependence that has its roots in what could be termed a “structural racism” within the state and its policies. This structural racism can be understood as the set of social policies and norms that favor a negative view and discrimination on certain social groups, in this case the indigenous population (Navarro, 2007).

The situation today is unfortunately not much different and has only been a continuation of the same policies and even a worsening in some aspects. Indigenous peoples are still largely excluded from political, economic, social and cultural life and as previously stated. Globalization, understood as the process of rapid integration among the nations of the world, has had a great impact on indigenous communities in Latin America, where due to their disadvantaged position in society they cannot get any benefits from the promises of increased trade, foreign investment and transfer of knowledge, on the contrary, their situation only deteriorates (Cesarotti, 2009). Indigenous territories are taken in the name of development for mining, oil production or infrastructure development, forcing them to migrate to urban areas or other countries (FMECD, 2006). In terms of basic provision of services and infrastructure, generally indigenous peoples are worse than non-indigenous as is shown in **Figure 8**, where the situation in the four most populous countries in Latin America in terms of the proportion of indigenous peoples is shown. In general, the non-indigenous population is better off in these countries and their situation has not changed much during the 20 year period taken into account in the figure.

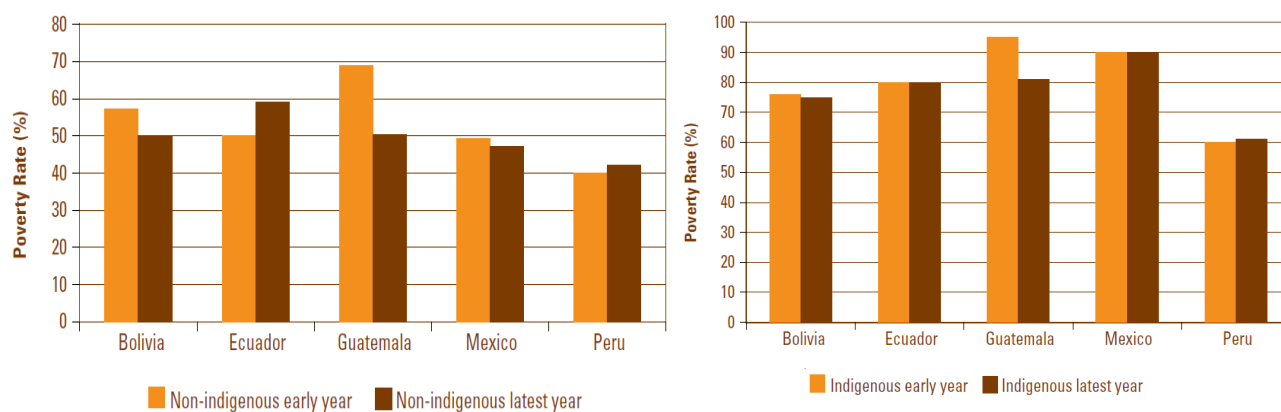


Figure 8 Poverty in indigenous and non-indigenous peoples for Latin American countries, 1980 to 2000. Source: World Bank, 2007

One of the ways that indigenous peoples have responded to this situation is by joining indigenous organizations. In many countries these organizations play a significant role through their influence in national politics (FMECD, 2006). This has been the case in Latin America, but it has been argued also that these federations have made things worse by deepening the divisions among different indigenous groups instead of integrating their efforts when they allied themselves with the state and its institutions of power, inhibiting a true indigenous leadership that promotes their real interests (Delfin, 2000). By a different approach, working from a down to top perspective, local efforts can be successful when they focus on a particular issue regarding indigenous people, for example legal irregularities by the state (Navarro, 2007).

2.4.4 Opportunity for development: alternative tourism in indigenous communities

Although generally straggling behind non-indigenous groups, indigenous peoples face the same globalization forces that affect the general society, and often these forces put more pressure on them because they are the most vulnerable. One of these forces of globalization is tourism. In the case of indigenous peoples and their territories, tourism can be an opportunity for them as an income generator and a motor for development (Azevedo, 2008; H. Morales, 2006; Pastor, 2012). The very characteristics of indigenous communities give them a special advantage. On the one hand, these communities are usually located in areas of great biodiversity that are attractive for alternative tourism. Such ecosystems have been well preserved thanks to indigenous peoples sustainable management of their natural resources (Sobrevila, 2008). On the other hand, given the great diversity of cultural expressions possessed by indigenous groups by way of their language, their art and organization, their music and traditions which can complement the natural elements of their territory to conform a solid alternative tourism proposal (H. Morales, 2006). However, any initiative must be carefully planned, as tourism can also affect negatively these communities, displaying them only as a showcase, undervaluing their artistic expressions and corrupting their culture (Tourism Concern, 2012). At this point is where community participation comes in, as a counteracting balance that could maximize benefits and achieve sustainable development.

2.5 Community participation of indigenous communities in alternative tourism

2.5.1 Community-based tourism (CBT) as a management approach to alternative tourism

Since the last two decades it has been argued that communities should be more involved in the management of their resources in order to ensure the principles of sustainability (Singh, 2008). Community-based natural resource management emerged first as a response to the need of conserving biodiversity at the local level and has gradually moved towards a more integrated approach that considers the well being of the communities and their development besides this conservation priority (Sebele, 2010). It is in this context that community-based tourism rises as a way to manage the natural resources and get benefits for the community while still complying with the requirements for sustainability.

2.5.2 Alternative tourism and community-based tourism

Alternative tourism can be promoted by the private sector but CBT on the other hand has been defined as “a form of tourism where the local community has substantial control over and involvement in its development and management, and a major proportion of the benefits remain within the community, where this involvement depends on the local institution and forms of organization” (WWF International, 2001). Other definitions focus on the property rights by the community, as defined by the North West Parks Board (South Africa); The ownership of tourism assets and enterprises, either wholly or in part, by the local community and which requires that communities are capacitated or empowered to participate meaningfully in the formal tourism economy (Mametja, 2006). This definition also takes into account the key concept of community participation and as a requirement for this process, a feature that is often left out of the discussion in mainstream tourism development.

Still another definition by the Thailand Community Based Tourism Institute defines it as “tourism that takes environmental, social and cultural sustainability into account. It is managed and owned by the community, for the community, with the purpose of enabling visitors to increase their awareness and learn about the community and local ways of life” (Goodwin & Santilli, 2009). From this definition we gather another principle which is that of education and awareness; a successful community based tourism project will create awareness or promote certain values not only for the people who are visiting the place as tourists but also for the host community.

Although CBT needs to rely on the same basic infrastructure as mainstream tourism, its approach is different as it seeks a larger contact with the host communities on the demand side and better benefits and greater capacity for management and decision making for the community on the supply side and can therefore be considered as a kind of alternative tourism, or more exactly the community management of alternative tourism.

For the purpose of this study, and taking into account the literature review on CBT, it is defined here as a the management and proprietary scheme of any alternative tourism project in which the community owns and manages in part or totally the related tourism assets with the purpose of managing their natural, social and financial capital in a sustainable way in order to provide tourists with quality learning experiences. This working definition gives space for a wide range of configurations and proprietary schemes that will later be commented.

2.5.3 Preconditions and partnerships in a CBT initiative

It is important to highlight that a CBT initiative is not an option for every community and not every community needs CBT. The basic requirements for a CBT project to be implemented are listed below, according the World Wildlife Fund (WWF International, 2001):

- Landscapes or flora/fauna which have inherent attractiveness or degree of interest to appeal either to specialists or more general visitors.
- Ecosystems that are at least able to absorb a managed level of visitation without damage, i.e. that the carrying capacity is enough to support feasible tourism.

- A local community that is aware of the potential opportunities, risks and changes involved and is interested in receiving visitors.
- Existing or potential structures for effective community decision-making
- No obvious threats to indigenous culture and traditions and
- An initial market assessment suggesting a potential demand and an effective means of accessing it, and that the area is not over supplied with other tourism offers.

Most important from these previous preconditions for the development of CBT in a community are the presence of natural or cultural elements that will attract the tourists in the first place, the local community close involvement and their ability to take advantage of these resources with their own organizational schemes. It must be added to these requirements the help and support of organizations or partners that will collaborate with the community in order to start the project. This is a very common occurrence in CBT initiatives in developing countries where the preconditions mentioned above are often met, but the community lacks the initial financial capital for the investment in tourism or the technical and commercial know-how to start the business (Goodwin & Santilli, 2009). This can be solved with the help of partnerships between the local community and some external agency (Gascón, 2012; Stronza & Gordillo, 2008):

- Partnerships involving the community and an NGO
- Partnerships between the community and private companies or tour operators
- Partnerships between a governmental program or enterprise and the community
- Partnerships between the community and a federation of communities (e.g. indigenous federations)

Another suggested partnership that is often not taken into account but which in developing countries has some relevant impact is the role of higher education centers and universities not only in providing higher educational opportunities and training to community members but also in doing research and providing solutions to technical and market problems that communities can take advantage of. All of these actors and stakeholders can collaborate in different timeframes and even simultaneously to create multi-partnerships or networks of which the community can learn and participate continuously.

From these arrangements the community provides the knowledge of the land and its resources, labor, the land and its natural resources and the social capital available. On the other hand the partners provide technical support, the financial capital needed for investment or at least a percentage of it, their business acumen especially in the marketing sector and their managerial experience in the field (Stronza & Gordillo, 2008).

The benefits acquired when a CBT succeeds can represent for the economy of the community new employment opportunities, net profits and diversification of activities. As for the social benefits of CBT they include the strengthening of the local institutions, the building of skills, having an expanded circle of contacts for the community in general and the building of social capital within the community.

2.5.4 Community participation in CBT initiatives and limitations

CBT projects are often carried out in developing countries with the help of international agencies and NGO's, companies or some governmental organization working to some extent with the community (Gascón, 2012). However, to what extent and when the community should be involved in order to still be considered "community-based" is another question. It is here when the issue of community participation becomes important for the planning and development of the project since the very beginning, not just for the democratic ethics behind the concept of community participation and ownership but also for the pragmatic reasons which have demonstrated that a project without the initial involvement of the community from the beginning often decreases its viability (Gascón, 2012; Tosun, 2000).

Community participation can be defined as a process mediated by voluntary action whereby individuals confront the threats, opportunities and responsibilities of community membership in order to improve the economic activities and maximize their benefits from the planning to the monitoring stages of the project (Mathbor, 2008b). It is an educational and empowering process in which people, in partnership with those able to assist them, identify problems and needs and increasingly assume responsibility themselves in order to plan, manage, control and assess the collective actions of the community in regards to tourism (Tosun, 2000). Applied to tourism development, this means the collaboration of different groups in a community working towards a common vision as a tourism enterprise, a feat that is in itself quite hard to accomplish since no matter where the community is, it is always heterogeneous in nature (Muganda, 2009).

Some of the limitations of community participation in tourism enterprises are characterized by Tosun and cited by Muganda (2009) in the following way:

- **Operational limitations** include the centralization of public administration of tourism development, the lack of co-ordination between involved parties and lack of information made available to the local people of the tourism destination because of insufficient data or poor marketing strategies
- **Structural impediments** include institutional, power structure, legislative, and economic systems but as can be seen most of these limitations are completely out of the power of the community to change.
- **Cultural limitations** which include the limited capacity of the poor to effectively handle development and the apathy towards unconventional or non- traditional development options such as tourism.

Furthermore, the importance of the knowledge of the tourism activities must be emphasized as without it “the communities ability to make decisions appropriate to their interests is practically nil..., they need to understand the complexity of the sector, how the tourist market works, the role of intermediaries, how demand is created, how to prepare a destination, marketing, management and planning” (Gascón, 2012).

2.5.5 CBT and community planning and development

CBT is promoted as a means for rural development and poverty alleviation for developing countries (Goodwin & Santilli, 2009; López et al., 2011) and in particular for indigenous peoples in these countries (H. Morales, 2006). However in order to ensure that these goals are achieved, the community must be involved not only in the implementation of the CBT project, but also during its planning and monitoring phases. The local knowledge becomes essential in the planning of the tourism infrastructure, activities, timeframes, etc. as the community can provide a lot of insight as to the best locations for each of these elements during the spatial planning at the local level, because being the primary source of knowledge on the local natural resources (Singh, 2008).

As to the role that CBT can perform in the rural and community sustainable development process, it can be a palliative for poverty and other social problems, as well as reduce the pressure on the environment. According to Molina et al (2008) , the use of natural resources in a sustainable way by communities rests on three principles:

- The **autonomy** of the community in regards to decision-making which means that the community must make its own decisions without external dependency but not necessarily lacking the option of support from outside help.
- **Self-sufficiency** to provide for their needs using their own resources.
- **Productive diversification** in order to widen the range of economic options; it is in this principle that CBT initiatives can provide a complement, not a substitute, to other traditional economical activities.

As a short conclusion for this section dedicated to CBT, it can be said this management approach to alternative tourism is an option that is not available to all communities and for those that have it, it might not be as easy to accomplish as it appears on the brochures and manuals. However, when implemented with the participation of the community from the beginning, it can help protect their natural resources while providing new options for different groups in the community, as well as being a tool for learning to the tourists and tourism service providers alike.

2.6 Chapter summary

What follows is a short description of the main points discussed in this chapter:

- Tourism has become a globalizing force that plays a major role in world economy, contributing the employment generation, distribution of wealth and the better understanding between cultures (UNWTO, 2012a)
- The complexity of the tourism phenomenon has generated negative impacts on its destinations including economic, social and environmental effects that need to be addressed (César & Arnaiz, 2002).
- Sustainable tourism and alternative tourism arise as options for more conscious travelers to counteract the negative effects of mainstream tourism.
- In the paradigm of sustainable tourism and sustainability, participation is an important issue necessary for the achievement of social equity and for which community participation is its most local and empowering option.
- Indigenous peoples have a history of disempowerment and marginalization especially in the Latin American context and alternative tourism is an option for their development.
- Community-based tourism is a management approach to alternative tourism that implies the participation of indigenous communities in the management of their natural resources.

Chapter III: Methods

This chapter presents the overall approach of the methodological choices made for the completion of this research project as well as the individual instruments and tools for the data collection and retrieval, the tools and software for the analysis of this data as well as the final interpretation and other issues of methodological interest.

The first section deals with the data needs and connects with the last chapter and the elements of community participation in alternative tourism. From these data needs, certain tools and instruments both qualitative and quantitative are proposed in order to create the data. Each instrument is described according to their capabilities and possible constraints. This whole methodological design is presented then in a chronological four-stage order according to the scheduled timetable that was proposed for the thesis and the details regarding the implementation of the data retrieval tools described before.

Following is an important parenthesis in regards with the relationship of the researcher, his background and the qualitative methodological implications in the data retrieval, analysis and interpretation of the data, a reflexivity exercise on the subjectivity of this research.

Finally, the value of the data and information resulting from the data retrieval and analysis stages, respectively will be discussed shortly and a table containing the summary of the methods in relation to the specific objectives of the thesis is presented.

3.1 Methodological approach

Early in the study of tourism, as the economical importance of the activity was realized by researchers, most methodologies used for tourism investigation were quantitative and focused on the socio-economic indicators at the macroeconomic level. However, during the past 20 years, the focus has shifted towards the sociological, environmental and anthropological issues in tourism and so more qualitative methodologies have been applied to tourism research such as ethnography, discourse analysis or participative approaches (Flick, 2002; Walle, 1997). Both the quantitative and qualitative approaches provide their own perspective but they can be limited by certain constraints.

For this research, the strategy followed was to combine both approaches incorporating elements corresponding to the qualitative research techniques as well as quantitative techniques, in order to get a better grip on the reality of community participation at the location of the study case. This was done having in mind the advantages and trade-offs that such a triangulation can bring to the study (Yoshikawa, Weisner, Kalil, & Way, 2008). This mixture can be appreciated both in terms of the data retrieval stages and the analysis of the results provided by the former.

3.2 Data needs and instrument design

As it was previously discussed in the theory and concepts chapter, the framework for assessing community participation calls for the evaluation of certain indicators, regarding their presence and quality. Recalling these key considerations, they included the information on the influence and power within the community, capacity building, communication and learning and impacts and outcomes of the alternative tourism community enterprise (Burns et al., 2004). However, in order to set the context for the core concept of community participation in alternative tourism, the description of the study area was also necessary. The following table presents the data needs that were identified:

Table 6 Data needs according to the specific objectives of the thesis. Source: Author

Specific objective	Data needs
1. Description of the study area in relationship to the alternative tourism community enterprise.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demographic information of the area • Ecosystem characteristics • State of conservation • Environmental problematic • Economic activities • Cultural characteristics of the community • National, state and regional tourism context
2. Importance of the community enterprise Ecoturixtlán for the community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Economic achievements of the enterprise • Profits figures* • Opinions and perceptions of stakeholders and community in general
3. Particular characteristics of community participation in the enterprise	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Structure of the community in general, influence and power relations • Structure of the community in terms of organization for the project • Articulation of community institutions • Distribution of responsibilities, benefits and decision making • Learning and leadership, capacity building among community groups

Table 6 (continuation) Data needs according to the specific objectives of the thesis. Source: Author

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Perceptions and opinions in terms of benefits and responsibilities • Mechanisms and avenues for participation for women, young people, residents and elderly
4. Mechanisms of appropriation of natural resources in the context of the alternative tourism enterprise	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Historical information on the participation of the community • Perceptions of the community in terms of sense of identity and ownership • Mechanisms for becoming a community member

As can be seen in **Table 6**, the bulk of the work for this study is concentrated in the third objective which deals with the core issue of community participation. The first specific objective was fulfilled for the most part during the literature review of this study, however in order to achieve the creation of the data regarding the other three objectives some tools were utilized. The following subsection deals with these tools, according the approach to which they belong.

3.2.1 Quantitative instruments

3.2.1.1 Quantitative items embedded in semi-structured questionnaire

Besides working with data from the literature review that was quantitative in nature, there were items embedded in the questionnaires in order to create a profile of the interviewees. When working with a mixed methodology, an important issue that comes up is choosing the correct balance between the sample for the quantitative and qualitative tools. This was achieved by nesting the qualitative sample among the quantitative sample (Yoshikawa et al., 2008). This means that as the questionnaires were filled out with quantitative items and more information of interest was known about the interviewee, he or she was then selected or discarded for a later in-depth interview. However, the questionnaire in itself contained items both quantitative and qualitative, so the nesting technique was only meant for the in-depth interview and questionnaire combination to one single individual. The following table provides the information on the samples taken for the quantitative approach.

Table 7 Individuals surveyed according to type. Source: Author

Type of individual	Sample of individuals surveyed/universe ³
Employees of the community enterprise Ecoturixtlán	10/10
Community members-decision makers in active status	41/242
Residents-non decision makers	10
	Total: 59

³ The universe of respondents for the employees group consisted of the total number of people employed in the community enterprise at the moment of the interviews, which was only **10** people. For the community members with agrarian rights, only those with an active status i.e. assisted regularly to the meetings, were taken into account, which amounts to **242**. There are no figures for the total number of residents in Ixtlán older than 18, however taking into account that the population of Ixtlán in 2010 was of 2718 people, then the number of residents in Ixtlán with no agrarian rights including children is **2325** people.

The profile items included in the semi-structured interviews using questionnaires addressed demographical variables and community characteristics such as: age, sex, civil state, number of children, education, and occupation and in the case of community members directly involved with the alternative tourism enterprise the salary or perceptions.

In addition to these items of quantitative nature present in all questionnaires, there were also a set of items design to gauge the participation of the community in the enterprise using a Likert scale. These were six items that were included in the groups of community decision makers and non-decision makers. Later on, these items were also analyzed using basic descriptive statistical methods.

3.2.2 Qualitative instruments

3.2.2.1 Semi-structured Interviews

As the objectives of the research are clear but the actual structure of the community was at first not very well known, semi-structured interviews were conducted, using a questionnaire as a general guide for questioning but then following other avenues as new insights were told (Westbrook, 1994). As it was discussed before, there were three kinds of questionnaires used to interview the members of the community of Ixtlán, based on the kind of relationship that they had with the communal organization structure of the town.

These included questionnaires for:

- The workers directly involved with the alternative tourism community enterprise
- The community members or “*comuneros*” that were active in their duties to the community (meaning they were up-to-date with their obligations and responsibilities) divided into the four neighborhoods of the town.
- Other members of the community that included: citizens that only lived in the town but were not members of the communal structure, community members that were not active in their duties because of old age and for citizens that were in the process of becoming an active community member.

3.2.2.2 In-depth interviews

In order to acquire more detailed data on the key processes and mechanisms driving community participation, a number of in-depth interviews with key stakeholders and other representative members of the community were held. In-depth interviews were chosen as they are more intimate and intensive data retrieval tool and involves a lower number of individuals, for the practical reasons of time limits and for the relaxed atmosphere with which they can be applied (Boyce & Neale, 2006).

Although this tool contributed the most to the bulk of data that was later analyzed, there were certain restrictions that are inherent to the technique and this was confirmed during the implementation. Such constraints included the difficulty of sometimes setting a time limit to the interview, the impossibility of generalizing the results and the possibility of the questions being too leading and provoking biased responses (Boyce & Neale, 2006).

A total of **17** in-depth interviews ranging from 15 minutes to 1:20 minutes were made to local key actors in the topics of the thesis. The interviews were recorded using a digital recorder and later transcribed to digital files for their analysis.

3.2.2.3 Focus groups

Considering the importance and possible gains of applying a participative qualitative methodological tool in this study, focus groups and discussion groups were taken into account. A focus group is a primary data collection tool consisting on in-depth discussion among members of a small group, usually 8-10 in number and are under the guidance of a facilitator whose role is to stimulate the discussion by

making strategic questions and statements (Khan et al., 1991). The discussion among the members of the target population is in this sense supposed to generate deeper insights into the process of community participation than otherwise individual interviews would generate, and this could also offer clues on the power relations, learning and capacity building in the community network.

One formal focus group and an informal discussion were recorded during the course of the field work for the thesis research. The latter one was an **informal discussion group**, meaning that at first it was a normal interview with one community member, but as four other members came and a discussion on the topics was started, the opportunity was taken to record the discussion with their permission.

The second focus group was formal in nature and it needed a previous announcement and permission from the local communal authorities. It was conducted with the help of the ecotourism administrative committee and consisted of a free discussion among 8 people of different ages and community status, one of them was also a woman that was active in her community duties.

3.2.2.4 Fieldwork observations journal

As a complement to the other instruments already mentioned, a journal was kept during the visits to the study area and the main research stages, with important annotations and observations regarding the alternative ecotourism project and community organization.

In the process of this observation it is important to mention the different roles in observing and the description of these observations, as they affect subjectively their nature. This way, a researcher observing and making annotations can be either a complete participant of the phenomenon being described, participant-as-observer, observer-as-participant and complete observer (Westbrook, 1994). This is not to say that the role cannot change as the activity changes, as it is a dynamic process. In terms of this study, the researcher tried to remain in the complete observer role.

3.3 Data retrieval: Chronological order of design implementation

3.3.1 First methodological phase

The **first methodological phase** includes an exhaustive bibliographic revision on the topics being approached. It is important to mention and this was a process that provided feedback as more material was found for most of the period which encompassed the development of this investigation. The literature review included the following:

- Thesis
- Reports
- Articles found in books or specialized magazines
- Books
- Presentations or proceedings in congresses
- Marketing material including brochures and other printed material
- Promotional videos and spots
- Cartographical information
- Statistical information from INEGI and CDI

As part of this first methodological phase, the ecosystem and socio-economic characteristics were described; in particular the current state of conservation of forests within the area of study, e.g. the communal lands, for which there was a surprising wealth of literature regarding this particular topic in the study area (C. Aquino, Ruiz, & Fuente, 2012).

The cartographical information used to make the maps for this study were retrieved from the ministries of the government in charge of geographical information databases as well as biodiversity conservation (CONABIO, 2012; INEGI, 2010). These basic maps were then treated with the geographic information

system software ArcGis and ArcMap in their version 10.1 in order to come up with personalized maps for better depicting the study area (ESRI, 2012).

3.3.2 Second methodological phase

The **second methodological phase** begins with the analysis of all the information on the community project that had been collected up to that point and the construction of a pilot questionnaire which was applied during the first visit to the study area in the first two weeks of July 2012. This questionnaire was to be applied to total number of the members of the community that work or are directly related to the alternative tourism project which was at the time 10 people, as it was a low season. The questionnaire can be found in **Annex # 1** to this thesis. The purpose of this questionnaire was to determine the state of the project, the members involved, the structure of command or participation processes and the key stakeholders that would later be interviewed in depth. Also, the data and experience gathered was used to design the main fieldwork questionnaire for the third methodological stage.

A field journal was also be kept during the visit to register the observations made *in situ*, which will include the conditions and quality of the facilities, the opinions and perceptions of the tourists, the experiences and anecdotes of the guides and other workers and any other even or information that could be useful for the construction of the next methodological sections. Taking all this information from the field journal and the pilot questionnaire to the members of the community, the methodological process of analysis was be fed during the third phase through the construction of categories of analysis and the identification of the main actors and stakeholders as well as a basic statistical analysis of the data as mentioned above.

3.3.3 Third methodological phase

The **third methodological phase** corresponding to the third specific objective of this investigation consisted of the main field work which supported the results, analysis and conclusions of the study and was supported by the preceding work. In depth interviews were conducted among the main actors and stakeholders who are members of the community which had been previously identified *in situ* and through the analysis of the first questionnaire. These sections of the methodological design, as well as the field journal that was kept represent the qualitative elements of the investigation and were made under an ethnographic touristic approach. Under such a qualitative approach it was intended to look for the subjectivity that lies behind each of the actors being interviewed, the approach seeks to understand the human phenomena from its historic-social dimension and to comprehend the motives, beliefs, power relations and structures that are behind the actions and interactions of the subjects that are part of the activity (Rico & Alucema, 2006).

Included within the third section of the methodology are two quantitative elements of the investigation: the application of quantitative elements in a survey-like technique was used in combination with a semi-structured questionnaire with a representative sample of 16 percent of the 242 commoners or active community members that are the owners of the Ecoturixtlán enterprise and regularly attend meetings. This questionnaire can be seen in the **Annex # 2**. The questionnaires were applied during two weeks before the implementation of the focus group and this was done according the neighborhood of residence of the individuals in order to get a better result. The following table provides a summary of the implementation of the questionnaires in terms of their sampling size in relation to each of the four neighborhoods of the town of Ixtlán de Juárez, as a stratified sample.

Table 8 Stratification of the questionnaire sample according the neighborhoods. Source: Author

Neighborhood	No. of active community members	Percentage of the total C. M.	Needed sample	Actual sample Interviewed Individuals	Percentage of the total number of C.M.
San Francisco	88	36.3 %	14.54	14	5.78%
San Pedro	79	32.6 %	13.05	12	4.95 %
La Soledad	43	17.7%	7.1	7	2.89%
Asunción	32	13.2%	5.2	8	3.30%
Totals	242	98.8%	Aprox. 40	41	16.92%

The total number of questionnaires amounts to 48 when including those of the other community members which were not stratified in this manner. In the case of the distribution among men and women active community members with rights on the land, the sample was taken having in mind the ratio of women participation to that of men in the assemblies and local committee as shown in **Table 9**:

Table 9 Composition of the sample between men and women members of the community Source: Author

	Men	women	Total	% Women of total
Active members	220	22	242	9.16 %
Sample taken	36	5	41	12.19 %

In terms of the focus group, it was conducted during the on the afternoon of the 12th of April 2013 and it was formed by a mix of individuals, whose information is provided in the following table.

Table 10 Characteristics of the participants of the focus group. Source: Author

Name	Age	Status or role in the community
Genaro Perez Pacheco	64	Retired community member, co-founder of Ecoturixtlán
Miguel Ángel Perez Sanchez	65	Retired community member, co-founder of Ecoturixtlán
Marcela Vargas	38	Active female community member, member of the administrative committee of Ecoturixtlán
Angel Santos Santiago	32	Active community member, member of the administrative committee of Ecoturixtlán
Iván Pérez Ruiz	32	Community resident and manager of Ecoturixtlán
Marta Elena Villegas Hernandez	22	Community resident and seasonal employee of Ecoturixtlán. Studies in the local university.
Rodolfo Juárez Garcia	24	Community resident (son of active member) and seasonal employee of Ecoturixtlán. Studies in the local university

It is through this third phase that the third specific objective of this investigation in terms of the work division and participation mechanisms in decision making and benefits was accomplished.

3.3.4 Fourth methodological phase

The **fourth methodological phase** consisted in the integration of the results obtained under the qualitative and quantitative approaches within the same set of results and which responds to the fourth

specific objective of this investigation. It took place during the months of April, May and June 2013. The information resulting from the interviews and the field journal was analyzed and classified into categories using systematization and qualitative analysis software.

3.4 Analysis and interpretation of the data

In order to analyze the data collected through the questionnaires, interviews, focus group and the fieldwork observation journal, the information was processed with quantitative and qualitative analytical approaches. In terms of the quantitative analytical approaches, the data generated was given a basic statistical treatment which in turn was correlated with the qualitative analysis results. The basic spreadsheet software Excel was used for this purpose.

For the qualitative analytical approach, the specialized software for qualitative data analysis MaxQDA in its version 11.0 (Kuckartz, 2013) was used in order to construct categories of analysis based in codes, attached to specific segments of the interview transcriptions (Dey, 1993). The main coding information is summarized in **Table 11**.

Table 11 Coding tree and retrieved segments for the qualitative data analysis. Source: Author

Codes	Sub codes	Number of segments in transcriptions
Interactions	Adaptation/change Power inequality/concentration Cooperation/collaboration Etc.	159
Attitudes and feelings	Interest Disinterest Apathy Responsibility and commitment Sense of inclusion, etc.	112
Community participation	Direct and indirect benefits Responsibilities Subgroup participation, etc	290
Community structure and organization	Community committees General assembly community General assembly residents Communal cargo system <i>Tequio</i> community Work Community enterprises Ecotourism company, etc.	417
Spatial references	International level National level Oaxaca city <i>Sierra de Juárez</i> región, etc.	121

Table 11. (Continuation) Coding tree and retrieved segments for the qualitative data analysis. Source: Author

Time references	Future references and goals Development of the project Beginnings of the project Historical/community Life	95
Total number of codes and sub-codes: 68 codes with assigned segments		1197

After the coding of the segments was completed, several data analysis tools were used that are included in the software toolkit, such as the retrieval of codes according to different specific criteria such as overlappings, intersection and closeness (Dey, 1993). This was done in order to detect patterns and trends in the data. Moreover, with the use of this information retrieved from the interviews, focus groups, observation and questionnaires it was possible to create a network or map of stakeholders and actors in terms of their participation in the alternative tourism community enterprise Ecoturixtlán.

3.5 Expected performance of tools, field constraints and information value

From the varied methodological approach to be applied at the study area, much was expected in terms of data retrieval. However, as with all research projects, certain unexpected situations and setbacks took place during the field work phase. There were certain preconceptions as to the actual state of the tourism enterprise and the cultural values of the community that were undervalued or overvalued and this meant that certain changes to the questionnaires needed to be made. Generally after these change either in the wording in the way of questioning or in the questions themselves, the instruments were easier to understand and performed as well as expected.

The greatest difficulty was posed by the actual culture of the community that is the object of the study. It was not possible to attend their closed meetings not even as spectators, as it violates their agrarian and communal statutes (Comunidad Agraria de Ixtlán de Juárez Oaxaca, 1999) and therefore this form of observation, very important for the researcher, could not be completed. This stiffness in their organizational culture was also a factor to be considered when implementing the focus group, as a very formal process of first writing a petition which was to go through certain bureaucratic steps. This significantly slowed down the process but it can also be argued that it helped to make it more trustworthy for the participants.

In regards to the actual value of the bulk of data resulting from this approach, it is as had been expected, the primary data are diverse and reveal more interactions that can be applied to the focus concept of study, but with the process of analysis, it was possible to debug the data and focus on the processes that are relevant for this study.

3.6 Subjectivity and reflexivity in the research

As it has already been explained throughout this chapter, there was a strong qualitative component in the methodological design. This section discusses the implications that this form of research has but not for its object of interest, but for the researcher himself, the subject. Qualitative research, in contrast to strongly positivist/quantitative methods is not concerned with measurement but with interpretation of a complex social realities from which the very researcher himself cannot be detached (de la Cuesta-Benjumea, 2011). In all this process of data collection through interviews, facilitating focus groups or otherwise analyzing and interpreting data, the researcher is always having an effect upon the results

and the exercise by which he or she recognizes this effect by looking back at him or herself and understanding it is called reflexivity (Mauthner & Doucet, 2003).

This should not be viewed as a disadvantage of the approach but as a tool that can actually be incorporated into their methodology and that enables the researcher to better understand the social reality (Mauthner & Doucet, 2003; Meneses, 2007).

To begin in this process of reflexivity, it is necessary to give a brief account in terms of the author's formation and theoretical-methodological positions that will help explain to the reader how and why the decisions regarding theory and methods were such. As the author has participated in the publication on a book about community-based tourism, his position in this regard is that tourism in communities, when well planned can be an excellent development option if complemented by other economic activities, that this is especially true for indigenous communities. In terms of the focus concept of the study, the researcher takes into account all groups in the community, believing that this should be so, as they must all be included, e.g. women, young people and elderly. At a certain point in the current research the author was confronted, for example, with the dilemma of making a choice in regards to what the composition of the community would be i.e. if only the community members that have rights on the land would be included or if all the people living in the community site would be and should be included, regardless of their community status or rights. The decision taken was to regard the *whole* community as such, although some members might not be considered such by others. This gives an insight into the kind of frame of mind regarding participation in community taken by the author. In methodological terms, the researcher has also been influenced by a certain preference for qualitative approaches in the sociological and anthropological study of tourism.

3.7 Methodological Summary Table

The following is a brief summary of the methodological approach presented in this chapter.

Table 12 Methodological summary table. Source: Author

Specific objective and keywords	Data sets	Kind of data	Retrieval methods	Analysis and interpretation
Objective 1. Theory and local context	Theory on CBT, participation, descriptive data	Qualitative/ Quantitative	Literature review	By relevance and up-to-date quality, cartographic tools e.g. ArcGIS version 10.1
Objective 2. Relative importance and success	Profit figures of projects, tourist arrivals/opinion of stakeholders	Qualitative/ Quantitative	Questionnaires and interviews	Qualitative data analysis coding categories,
Objective 3. Participation Process and Mechanisms	Perceptions, observations, numeric data sets form questionnaires	Qualitative/ Quantitative	Focal group, questionnaires, interviews, observations kept in a research journal	Qualitative data analysis with MaxQDA version 11 , statistical analysis with Excel 2007 , stakeholder mapping
Objective 4. Appropriation	Journal entries and interviews, recorded discussion	Qualitative	Interviews and focal group	Qualitative data analysis with MaxQDA 10.1 software,

Chapter IV: Overall description of the study area

This chapter provides the overall context in which the case study is submerged in order to obtain a better understanding of the constraints and obstacles as well as the factors facilitating the participation of the community in the alternative tourism enterprise.

It starts from the national level addressing the importance of tourism for the Mexican economy and how this is translated into the policies regarding tourism in general and alternative tourism in particular, ending the subsection with the role of governmental agencies in the provision of funds for alternative tourism local enterprises, especially indigenous.

Because the location of the case study in the most indigenous of the Mexican states and what is considered as one of Mexico's poorest, it is necessary to give a background on the general characteristics of Oaxaca, including the tourism as well as the situation of indigenous communities living therein.

Finally, the last chapter section deals with the case study region and the municipality where it is located, providing some general characteristics, maps showing the importance of the region and the description of the community alternative enterprise itself.

4.1 Overview of tourism at the national level in Mexico

Mexico has a long tradition as an international tourism destination since the beginning of the mass tourism revolution in the sixties and seventies. It was at this time that big beach and sun destinations such as Acapulco begin to attract great quantities of international tourists as well as national travelers from the urban clusters. The location of Mexico in the international context in terms of its closeness to the emitting markets of the United States and Canada has helped the sector and given it a comparative advantage in regards to overseas competitors (César & Arnaiz, 2002). Nowadays, tourism has become a mayor sector of the economy, even among the top three contributors to the Mexican GDP, the other two being the oil export industry and remittances of Mexicans working abroad to their families (CESTUR, 2013).

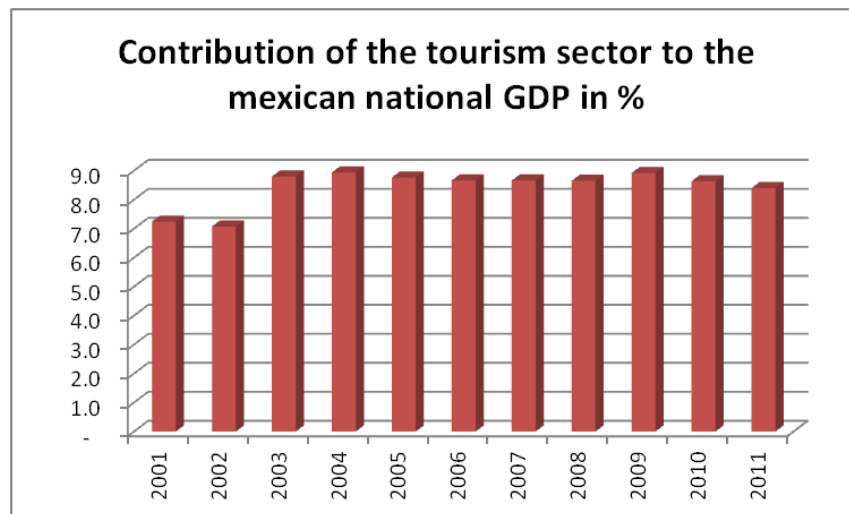


Figure 9 Contribution of Tourism to the national GDP of México 2001-2011 Source: This study using CESTUR, 2013 Database

As **Figure 9** shows, the contributions of the tourism sector have not varied much from 2001 to 2011, keeping in the range of 8 to 9 percent of the economy, but this can vary from state to state as some are quite more dependent on this sector, such as Quintana Roo (César & Arnaiz, 2002). Tourism activities seem to keep themselves with the rhythm of the general economy even though they are quite susceptible to outside and inside factors such as world economic climate and national security conditions. These influences have had impacts of the tourism demand; however the sector shows an overall stability, something that renders it very attractive for investments.

Figure 10 shows the evolution of international tourist's arrivals in Mexico and **Table 13** shows its position among the top 10 tourism country destinations in the world, although in the 10th place, rendering the country as tourism potency. However, international tourists are but a small part of the tourism sector in Mexico when compared to that of domestic tourism.

Table 13 Top world ranking of tourist destination countries.(UNWTO, 2012b)

International Tourist Arrivals						
Rank	Series ¹	Million		Change (%)		
		2010	2011*	10/09	11*/10	
1	France	TF	77.1	79.5	0.5	3.0
2	United States	TF	59.8	62.3	8.8	4.2
3	China	TF	55.7	57.6	9.4	3.4
4	Spain	TF	52.7	56.7	1.0	7.6
5	Italy	TF	43.6	46.1	0.9	5.7
6	Turkey	TF	27.0	29.3	5.9	8.7
7	United Kingdom	TF	28.3	29.2	0.4	3.2
8	Germany	TCE	26.9	28.4	10.9	5.5
9	Malaysia	TF	24.6	24.7	3.9	0.6
10	Mexico	TF	23.3	23.4	4.2	0.5

According to the Geographical and Statistical Information System in Mexico, domestic or internal tourism are all the activities of the people that reside and are part of the economy of reference, as part of a journey inside the country (INEGI, 2012).



Figure 10 International tourist arrivals in Mexico 2001-2012. Source: Author using data from CESTUR, 2013

As can be seen in **Figure 11**, the bulk of the economic transactions of the tourism sector take place among national tourists traveling to other parts of the country for different motivations, a fact that is often undervalued when giving priority to international tourism at the discourse, political and planning level made by the Ministries national or state-wise.

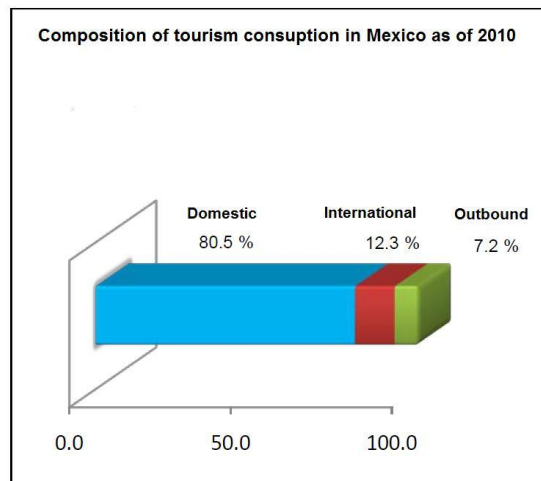


Figure 11 Composition of the tourism sector in Mexico as of 2010. Source: (INEGI, 2012)

4.1.1 Tourism as a national strategy: policies and planning

Because of the importance of tourism for the overall economy, the Mexican government considers the sector as a national strategy for development. According to the national development plan of the tourism sector, its objective is to:

“Make Mexico a leader in the tourism activity through a diversification of the market segments, products and destinations, and the development of competitiveness of the sector companies in order to render a service of international quality” (SECTUR, 2007a)

For Mexico, tourism represents an avenue for development and the official implementation of national policies in regards to tourism go back to the seventies as it was introduced as a way to develop very poor regions of the country (Sicilia, 2000). These policy-constructed and incentive-based tourism destinations were given the name of “integrally-planned tourism centers” and were the result of strong state intervention in development in chosen regions of the country, according to their attractiveness and marginalization status (Sicilia, 2000). Some of these government-planned destinations are now quite famous and others are until now not well known and among them are included: Cancun in the State of Quintana Roo, Ixtapa-Zihuatanejo in Guerrero, Loreto and Los Cabos in Baja California Sur and Bahías de Huatulco in Oaxaca. However, after 40 years experience shows that growth by tourism poles, as it was called did not work as expected and the local communities were not properly integrated into the operation of the destinations (Mendoza et al., 2011).

Nowadays, the government’s role in the policy towards tourism is not as active as before and it has been included into the general market deregulation or new liberalism (Enríquez, Osorio, Castillo, & Arellano, 2012). The government is now supposed to provide an appropriate economic and social environment and facilitates conditions for investment; however it does not have the strong initiative that it had before, letting the market forces determine which sites are to be developed (Mendoza et al., 2011). This new approach leads to faster flow of investments, but it also brings oftentimes more negative impacts that are hard to address in terms of policy.

Realizing these problems, the Mexican Ministry of Tourism has a program addressing sustainability in tourism, but it applies mostly to the mainstream tourism destinations as it involves mostly big destination topics such as urban image and precarious housing as well as competitiveness in the private perspective of the sector. **Table 14** shows what the biggest issues according to this program are:

Table 14 Tourism destination main problems for sustainability. Source: (SECTUR, 2013)

Topics	Problematic
Environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of water treatment capability • Lack of a proper landfill or solid waste treatment • Dangerous waste treatment
Urban development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No development plans • Lack of land use ordering • High index of precarious housing or slums • Lack of urban image statutes
Tourism	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Low participation of tourism service providers in competitiveness programs • Low participation of tourism service providers in environmental certification programs

Notwithstanding the efforts to combat sustainability issues in big destinations such as Cancun or Acapulco, the problems continue to be a challenge for the implementation of such strategies in Mexico with new issues arising such as the security conditions in some of these destinations.

4.1.2 Organizational structure of tourism ministries

The Mexican Ministry of Tourism (SECTUR as reads its Spanish acronym) is the governmental body responsible for the planning and policy making in regards to tourism at the federal level. Two of its more important organs are the Mexican Council for Tourism Promotion and the National Funds for Tourism Development. The first is in charge of promoting all the Mexican destinations both in markets abroad as well as domestic. On the other hand, FONATUR focuses on investment and incentives for the development of mass tourism projects throughout the country, working together with the private sector and local stakeholders in for major areas of action, as shown in **Figure 12** (SECTUR, 2012).

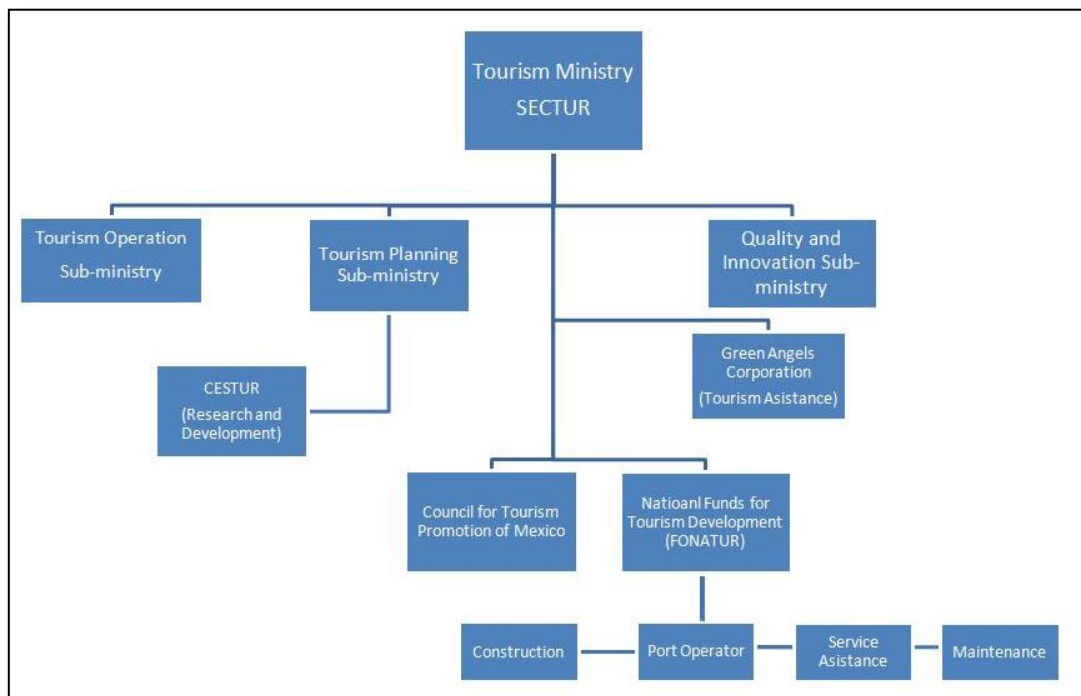


Figure 12 Structure of the Mexican Ministry of Tourism. Source: This study based on (SECTUR, 2012)

Tourism is coordinated and promoted at the state level by a corresponding State Ministry of Tourism and it is also encouraged for each municipality to have a committee or secretary of tourism in charge of the tourism promotion at the local level, however many municipalities don't have such an organ, as it is not considered a relevant economic activity in all of them. Moreover, tourism planning is still a centralized activity, taking place at the executive branch in top-down approaches even at state or municipal level, this way hindering possible participation of communities in planning activities (Tosun, 2000).

4.1.3 Alternative tourism at the national level

Alternative tourism in México has benefited by the richness of cultural expressions and ecosystem diversity found in its territory leading to the steady growth of the activities related to this segment of the tourism sector. The reason for this expansion, according to Guerrero (2010), has also been attributed to the change in the discourse in the private as well as the public sphere from mass tourism to ecotourism and other alternative tourism segments and the provision of logistical, marketing and financial mechanisms that have increased the tendency of tourists towards this form of tourism. Another transcendental reason that must be taken into account is the closeness of the biggest alternative tourist emitting countries of the United States and Canada, which has also stimulated the interior market towards the same tendencies (César & Arnaiz, 2002). Finally, as pointed out by Barkin and Pailles (1999), another significant factor to take into account for the development of this

segmentation of tourism in Mexico is the establishment of a well designed policy of Natural Protected Areas which has encouraged more alternative tourism initiatives coming from the private sector or the communities themselves.

Today numerous non-government organizations promote alternative tourism in Mexico and there is also a number of government agencies that address responsible alternative tourism from different perspectives (CDI, 2011; CONANP, 2007; SEMARNAT, 2003). A summary of some of these organizations is provided in the **Table 15**:

Table 15 Federal agencies that address alternative tourism Source: Author based on(CESTUR, 2007)

Government agency	Primary objective	Alternative tourism objective
SECTUR	Coordination of general tourism activities at the federal level	Defines alternative tourism standards in certification for guides, promotes Mexican ecotourism destinations in national and international fora
SEMARNAT	Natural resource management at the federal level	Defines the legal framework for the protection of the environment in regards to alternative tourism activities, which translates into the norm NMX-133-SCFI-2006 and others
CONANP	National commission in charge of the management of protected areas	Provides guidelines and restrictions for the implementation of alternative tourism in Natural Protected Areas
CDI	National organization for the development of indigenous peoples	Provides funds and technical knowledge for the implementation of alternative tourism projects in indigenous communities
CONAFOR	Management of the national forestry resources	Elaborated a guide for the development of tourism projects in forested areas and also provides funding for such projects

This variety of perspectives from different government organizations added to those of the state level and municipal level and the need to include the private and public sectors in the planning of these activities make it very difficult to achieve. The lack of institutional-cooperation and instruments capable of enforcing the laws and guidelines provided by the institutions have been constraining factors for the proper development of alternative tourism projects in México and developing countries in general (Guerrero, 2010; Tosun, 2000).

4.1.3.1 Requirements and regulations of sustainability in ecotourism

The legal framework for the standardization of tourism activities comprises several official Mexican norms which are mandatory for tourism establishments to follow and whose objective is to create specifications and procedures of technical nature in order to guarantee the quality of the services provided (SECTUR, 2012). Included among these are official norms on the topics of lodging quality, food management quality and specific activities such as diving.

On the other hand, there are the Mexican norms which have a voluntary character but which are nonetheless important. One of the most important in the context of alternative tourism is the Mexican Norm on sustainability in Ecotourism 133. This norm sets the requirements for any alternative tourism service provider, be it a private company or community-owned cooperative for the implementation of ecotourism according to certain sustainability standards such as water and solid waste disposal, protection of the flora and fauna, design of trails, etc. (SEMARNAT, 2006). This norm is important because although it is not mandatory to follow, it can be an instrument of certification which companies and communities can have and renovate in order to better market their services to the proper segment.

4.1.3.2 CDI's alternative tourism in indigenous zones program (PTAZI)

The National Commission for the Development of Indigenous Peoples (CDI Spanish Acronym) has implemented a program for helping indigenous communities or organized groups of indigenous people to begin their alternative tourism project or improve the one they already have.

This program targets specifically 871 indigenous municipalities in the country and provides up to \$1,500,000 Mexican Pesos (85,162 € - \$ 117,751 USD) for any of the following purposes:

- Elaboration and implementation of alternative tourism projects.
- Promotion, marketing and diffusion activities.
- External training events and exchange of experiences.
- Interstate or national events organized by SECTUR.
- Promote the participation of women in the development of these projects (CDI, 2013).

There are, however certain restrictions on this subsidies and barriers for indigenous groups to have access to them. On the one hand, indigenous groups must hand in a detailed proposal of the project with certain technical specifications with other documentation proving that they are organized into a cooperative or such a legal figure. For some communities, they do not have the capabilities or technical knowledge to do it if not for the help of NGO or specialized consultancies. On the other hand, once the funding is given, communities must also prove that they are giving a good use to the money as they are inspected regularly by the CDI as long as they keep providing funds.

4.2 The State of Oaxaca and Sierra Norte region as the context of the case study

Oaxaca, located in the south of Mexico, is considered the most biologically diverse state in México and one of the richest in indigenous culture. In terms of tourism, Oaxaca has two very important destinations: the city of Oaxaca which is a strong cultural attraction and the sun and beach destination of Bahías de Huatulco as part of the Mexican Pacific Riviera. These together with a host of other more national and regionally known attractions not only along the coast but also in the plains and mountains, make it a potential alternative tourism stronghold in Mexico (Reyes & Sánchez, 2005). On the other hand and quite ironically, Oaxaca is located in the poorest and most marginalized zones of Mexico, where the south contrasts sharply with the more developed center and north of the country.

4.2.1 Socio-economic Indicators for Oaxaca

The administrative and political division in Oaxaca is the most complex in Mexico, reflecting the nature of the territory resulting from its diverse community ethnical and historical roots: the state is divided into 570 municipalities, organized into 30 districts and 8 regions.

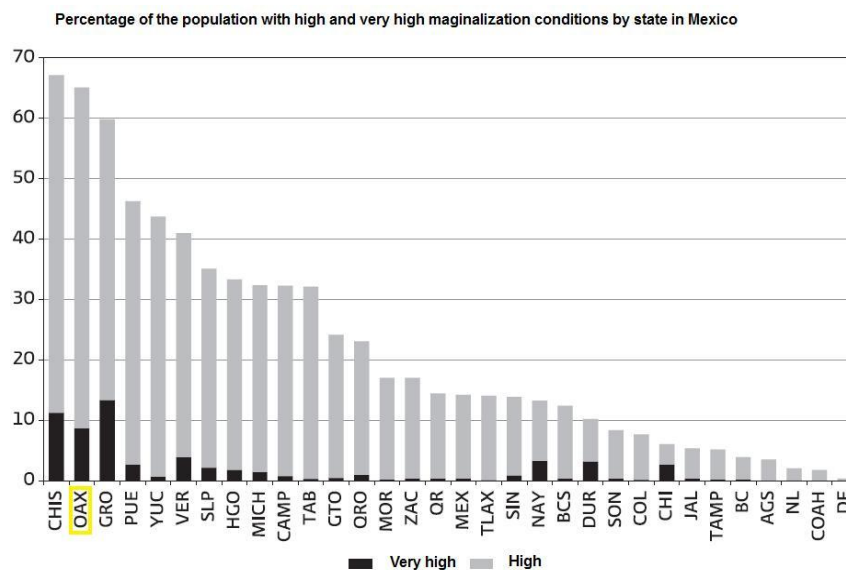


Figure 13 Marginalization of the population in Mexico by states. Source:(CONAPO, 2010)

Figure 13 puts Oaxaca in the second place of the most marginalized states in Mexico with 64 percent of its population being very highly or highly marginalized and second to Chiapas (67 percent), which is a neighboring southernmost state. In order to compute this index, the CONAPO (National Population Commission) takes into account eight main indicators distributed into the categories of education, housing and goods availability.

As a consequence of the lack of employment opportunities, high marginalization and poverty as well as the environmental deterioration, Oaxaca has become one of the most significant sources of emigrants, leaving the state to work the United States or in the urban clusters of the center or north of Mexico (Revilla, 2007). This has had an impact at the communities as the women are left to take care of the families and the social networks are damaged, however there is also evidence that social cohesion in these communities stays strong even when the community is divided internationally, as they construct networks between members and keep themselves informed and in constant communication (Revilla, 2007; Sánchez, 2006; Vanwey et al., 2005).

4.2.2 Indigenous ethnicities in Oaxaca

Oaxaca is one of the states with the highest proportion of indigenous population in Mexico, with 15 different ethno-linguistic groups. Approximately 34 percent of the population older than 5 years in the

state speaks an indigenous language the most important being zapoteco, mixteco, mazateco, chinanteco and mixe (INEGI, 2010). This represents the highest indigenous speaking population in all of México.

Perhaps the most striking display of this diversity is the festival of the Guelaguetza which is organized annually during the last two weeks of July in the capital of the state, the city of Oaxaca. It is during this dance and culture festival, considered to be the most important folklore exposition in Latin America, that the seven cultural regions of the state come together to showcase their indigenous roots and it is the most important tourist attraction event in the state. There are critics to this event however, arguing that the indigenous cultures are displayed only as a showcase and that little is made to improve their socio-economic conditions (Montes, 2005).

4.3 Municipality of Ixtlán de Juárez

4.3.1 General characteristics

The community of Ixtlán de Juárez is located in the southern area of the municipality of the same name, which can be found in the Sierra Norte region of the state of Oaxaca, also known as Sierra Juárez. The municipality of Ixtlán de Juárez limits to the north with Santiago Comaltepec and Ayotzintepec, to the south with Guelatao de Juárez, Santa Catarina Ixtepeji and San Miguel Amatlán, to the west with San Pablo Macuiltianguis, San Juan Atepec, San Juan Evangelista Analco and Santa María Jalteguis and to the east with San Miguel Yotao, Calpulalpan de Méndez and Tanetze de Zaragoza. **Figure 14** shows the location of the community and municipality of Ixtlán de Juárez in relation to the state of Oaxaca and Mexico.

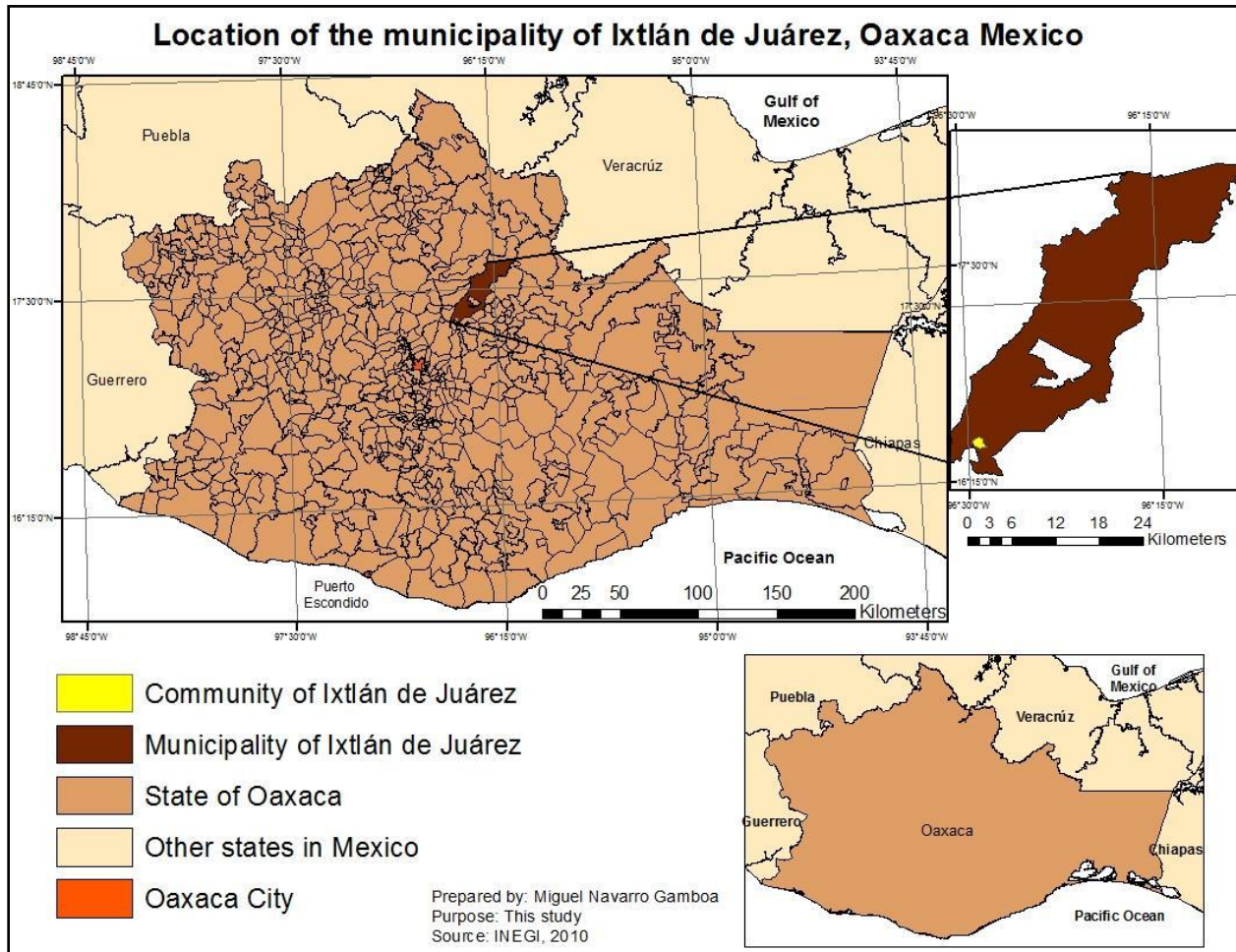


Figure 14 Location of the municipality of Ixtlán de Juárez. Source: Author using cartography from INEGI, 2010

Ixtlán de Juárez as a community is both the main settlement of the municipality as well as the capital town of the district of Ixtlán, which is composed of 25 other municipalities in the region of Sierra Juárez. The community is located 59 kilometers north of the capital of the state of Oaxaca and both are connected by the Federal Highway 75.

Because of its biodiversity conditions, the region in which the municipality of Ixtlán de Juárez is located constitutes a natural corridor with the best conserved forests of the country and is considered by the National Commission on Natural Protected Areas as a priority area for conservation (CONABIO, 2010), as shown in **Figure 15**.

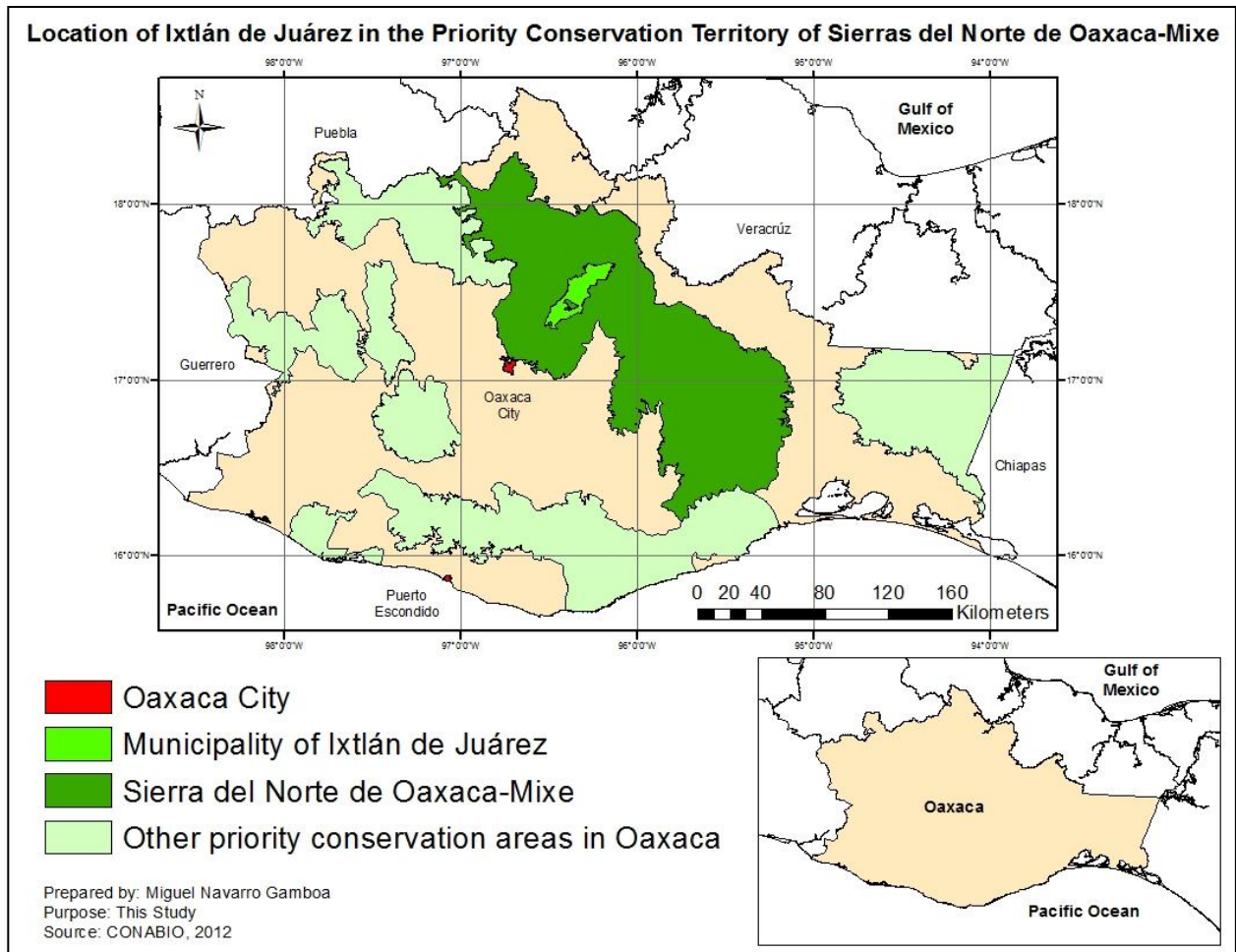


Figure 15 Location of the municipality of Ixtlán de Juárez within a priority conservation area Source: Author using cartography from CONABIO, 2012

This region is considered as one of the 16 most biologically diverse in the world (Ramales & Portillo, 2010) and a significant contribution for the preservation of the forests of this region can be attributed also to the fact that almost 400,000 hectares are community owned by more than 60 indigenous communities, among the ethnicities of Zapoteca, Chinanteco and Mixe (C. Aquino et al., 2012).

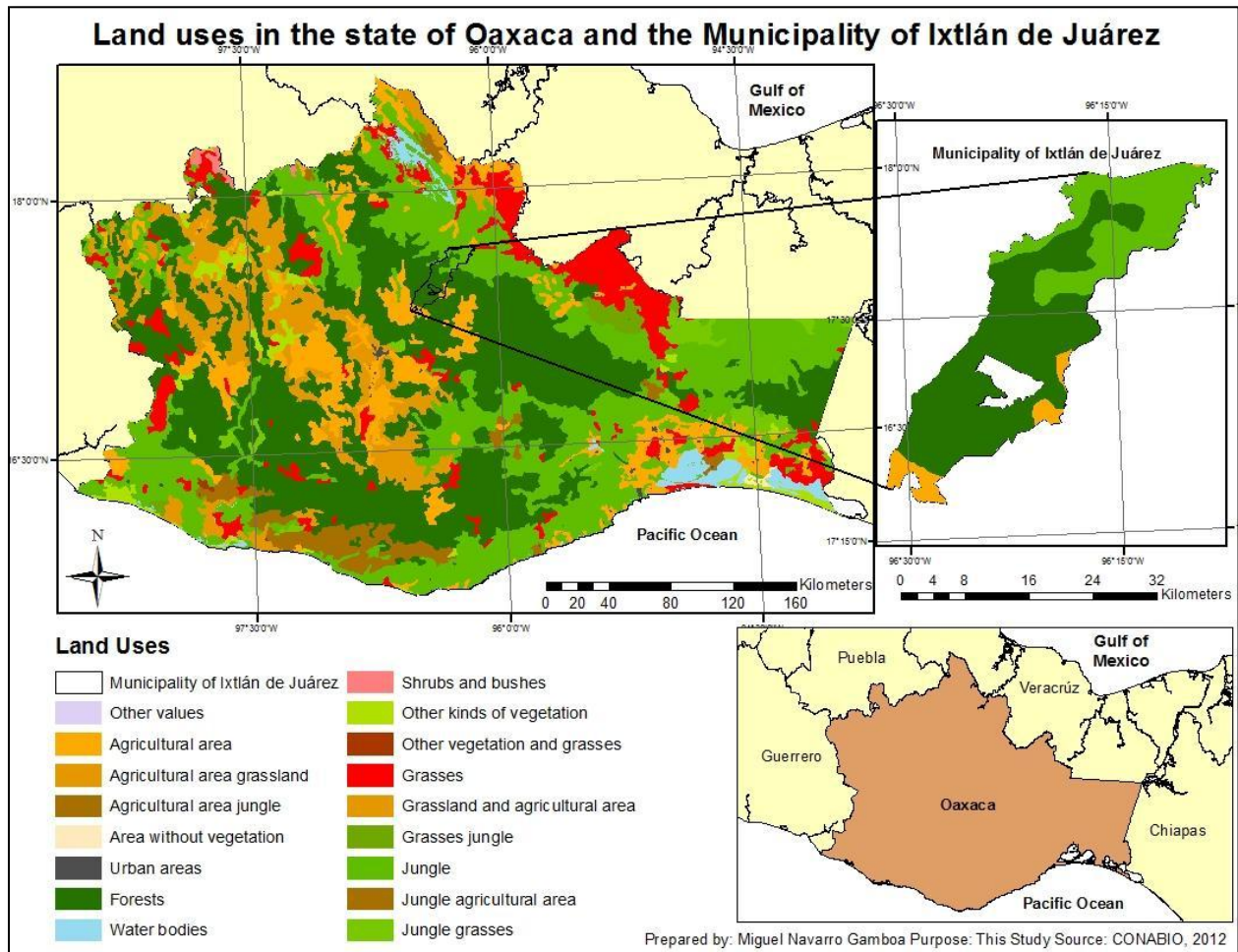


Figure 16 Land uses in the state of Oaxaca and the Municipality of Ixtlán. Source: Author using cartography form CONABIO, 2012

The climate of the region is predominantly temperate with the altitude being a determinant factor regarding the presence of warmer or colder climates. The annual average precipitation reaches 2,000 millimeters and the rainy season lasts from May to November (J. C. Morales, 2009). The altitude of the communal territory within the municipality ranges from about 1,800 to 3,200 meters above sea level.

The area is rich in natural resources, having great extensions of pine and oak forests at higher altitudes and jungles and rainforests at lower altitudes as shown in **Figure 16**. According to the Köppen classification of climates modified by García, the climate in the territory that belongs to Ixtlán varies from C(w''1) sub-humid and temperate to Af(m)w'', warm and humid with precipitation throughout the year (C. Aquino et al., 2012).

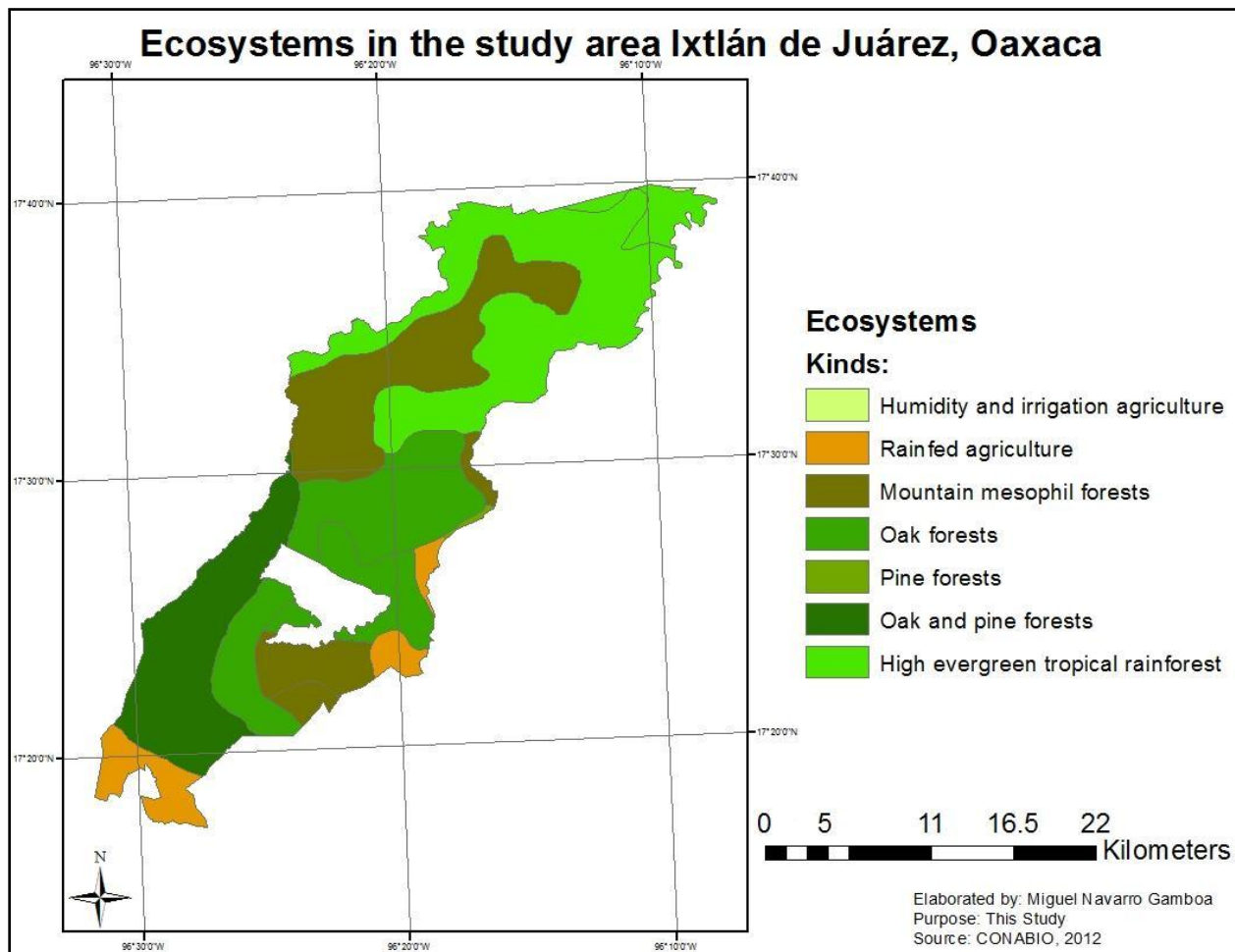


Figure 17 Ecosystems in the municipality of Ixtlán de Juárez. Source: Author using cartography from CONABIO, 2012

From the variety of climates in the region, result different ecosystems as shown in **Figure 17**. In these ecosystems endemic species of orchids, tree ferns, the radicalis palm tree, different kinds of flowering plants, bromeliads as well as lichens and fungi are found, all of which are utilized by the community through their productive projects (Fuentes & Barkin, 2012a). In regards to the local fauna, tropical species like the tapir, tamazate, the jaguar, monkeys as well as parrots and toucans stand out. In the most temperate areas, there can be found mountain lions, white-tailed deer and some species of endemic birds like the dwarf magpie among others.

The Sierra Norte region in overall is inhabited by different ethnic indigenous groups, being the Zapoteca the most representative of the town of Ixtlán de Juárez. The total population of the municipality was of 7,674 people by the year of 2010 from which 5,757 are indigenous people (CDI, 2010). From the total inhabitants, 65 percent speak Zapoteco as their main language, however the majority of them are bilingual (93 percent approximately).

In regards to the community of Ixtlán, the total population as of 2010 was of 2,718 from which 1,007 are indigenous people and the rest have indigenous ascendancy combined with mestizo blood. **Figure 18** shows this distribution among Ixtlán de Juárez and other communities that are part of the municipality of Ixtlán de Juárez.

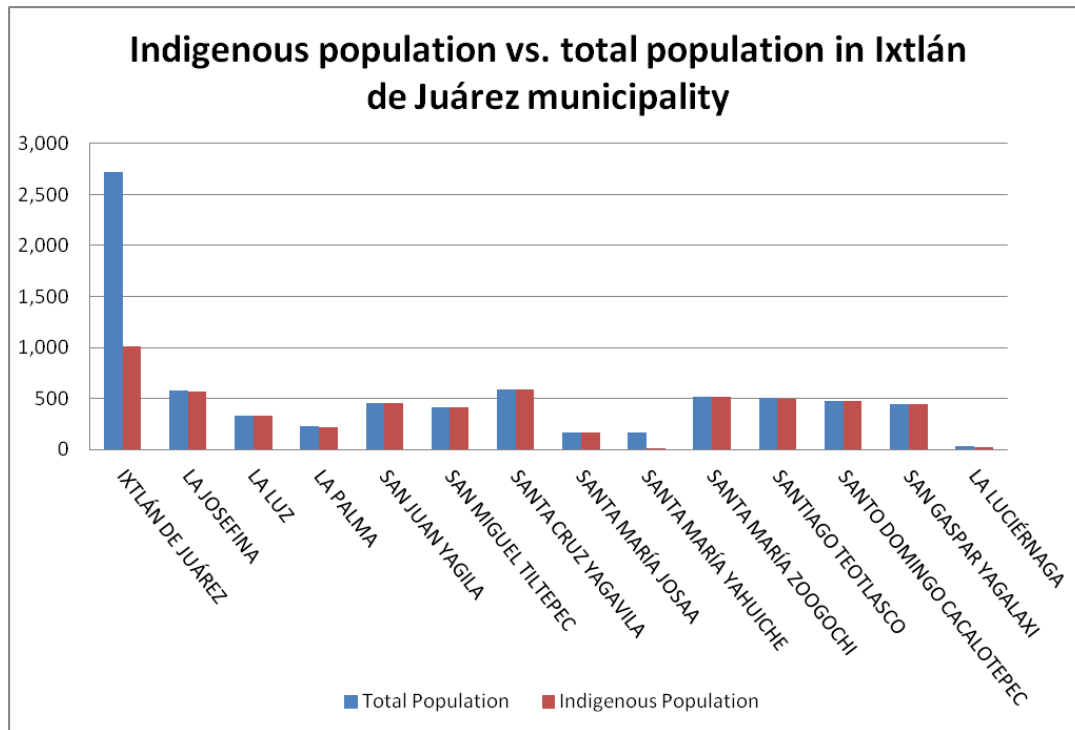


Figure 18 Composition of the population of the communities in the municipality of Ixtlán de Juárez. Source: This study using data from (CDI, 2010)

As **Figure 18** shows, Ixtlán is the most populous community in the municipality in terms of total population and also indigenous population but there is also a greater amount of people not considered fully indigenous. This can be explained by the fact that Ixtlán is the capital of the district and municipality and as the center of regional government has attracted more people and businesses towards it increasing the foreign population. The main economic activities in the municipality are the agriculture and forestry sector in the first place, the fish farm industry, and finally commerce and services among which is alternative tourism.

In terms of the community of Ixtlán de Juárez their communal territory has an extension of about 19,310 hectares and its use is divided among the next four main categories (C. Aquino et al., 2012):

- Water and soil conservation area: In these zones the community protects the soil using death barriers to prevent erosion and practices forestry.
- Forestry zones whereby natural regeneration forestry is practiced as well as using a particular method of forestry called “matarraza” in which a transect of forest is chosen to cut every tree in it, leaving a proportion of 3/1 of untouched forests in-between.
- Forest plantation areas where the forest is grown for later use.
- Multiple uses areas are utilized for different uses such as agriculture, housing, services, etc.

The area for conservation comprises some 4,460 hectares from which 1,300 hectares can be used for recreational purposes which includes alternative tourism as an official possible use, which is important

for the conformation of the alternative tourism community enterprise as a pillar for conservation efforts in the municipality and community of Ixtlán (C. Aquino et al., 2012).

4.3.2 Alternative tourism center Ecoturixtlán

This last subsection finalizes the description of the study area with the very object of study: the community enterprise Ecoturixtlán located in Ixtlán de Juárez. The project of Ecotourism Ixtlán was born as the initiative proposed in 1996 by of a pair of community members who had witnessed the positive effects of ecotourism abroad and realized the potential in their community for this activity. It is important to mention that this came in the context of the national wake of ecotourism of the 1990s which had also struck Oaxaca, with the political discourse behind it describing it as a way to develop the poor indigenous communities in the state, but with little efforts to have an inventory of tourism resources or a marketing investigation in order to effectively plan the activities (Ramos & Rodríguez, 2013).

Despite the lack of coordination in the context of ecotourism in the region, Ecoturixtlán was finally approved by the community members general assembly and founded in the late 1990s as an ecotourism community enterprise and throughout its development it has received funding from the National Commission for the Development of Indigenous Peoples and certifications and awards from the World Wildlife Fund (Paz et al., 2012).

The original objectives of the project were the following:

- Alternative tourism would help protect and conserve the ecosystems.
- The project would improve the image of the community.
- Tourism would generate employment fort the community.
- Guarantee a quality service.
- In overall contribute to the economic development of the community.

Today, Ecoturixtlán is a well consolidated alternative tourism service provider in the region which generates 13 permanent jobs and at certain high tourism seasons throughout the year this number can go up to 30. The facilities are located approximately 6 kilometers from the town but still within communal territory, in a forested area. The services provided by the company are listed in **Table 16** according to kind of tourism to which it belongs:

Table 16 Services provided at the alternative tourism center Ecoturixtlán Source: Author based on (Ecoturixtlán, 2012)

Generic tourism	Adventure tourism	Ecotourism
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lodging in 13 cabins • Traditional food • Temazcal service (spa) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Zip lines • Biking • Rappel • Climbing and Hiking • Mid-air games 	<p>Guided excursions to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cloud forest • Waterfalls • Temple of Santo Tomas • The caves nearby • River and geologic formation “El Arco”

The accommodation capacity of the complex is about 60 people in the cabins. However, it is also possible to camp in the premises renting camping gear or bringing own equipment and paying a small fee.

Chapter V: Community organization of Ixtlán de Juárez

This chapter deals with some of the results of the literature review and fieldwork carried out during the two visits to the community of Ixtlán and it describes its organization and structure which determine how the community utilizes their resources or appropriate them including those used for the alternative tourism enterprise Ecoturixtlán.

The first issue addressed as a basic component underpinning community organization not only in Ixtlán de Juárez but in most indigenous communities throughout Oaxaca is that of indigenous communalism and worldview and how the values originating from such a philosophy generate certain patterns of the appropriation of natural resources.

In order to understand the structure, resource management and the organization of the community and ultimately community participation (Fernández, 2011), the second section of the chapter provides a brief historical, political and legal background in terms of land and resource tenure, which is an important issue related to communities throughout Oaxaca.

The third section considers the authority figures in Ixtlán and the way that official power is distributed exploring the duality if not dichotomy between the community member and community citizen, in terms of both figures and organizations: the land-tenure and resources management at the community level and the official government organization aided by free of charge obligations at the municipal level.

The fourth section is concerned with the array of community enterprises or companies, how the community has changed the dynamics of their management in terms of legal and organizational issues and how it still continues to change it in order to adapt to the demands of the market.

Finally, the way in which this organizational structure translates into the dynamics of participation in the alternative tourism center managed by the community is presented which then becomes the foreground for the discussion of the following chapter.

5.1 The indigenous worldview and social contract

The foundation of the organizational structure of Ixtlán or of any of the many indigenous communities in the region is the “weltanschauung” through which they regard their resources, other communities and themselves. The social contract that binds them to their community, influenced by this worldview is essentially different from the westerner, Europe-centrist perspective in which citizenship is the focus private entity whereby each individual is entitled to certain inalienable rights; in the indigenous worldview, responsibilities to the community come first, often times without monetary rewards and then, when obligations are over, certain rights and prestige are won (Ramos, personal communication). However, although the indigenous worldview is similar in the region of Sierra de Juárez where Ixtlán is located, it must be pointed out that it is expressed differently in every community, some having very strict and others quite lax and more yielding communality frameworks.

The central element of any indigenous ethnological group is the community (Navarrete, 2008). This is the basic social entity into which they grow, meet their partner, celebrate their rituals and gatherings and it is also the community, in its spatial sense i.e. territory, where they cultivate their lands and the natural resources on which they depend are located. As the community constitutes the central nucleus of everyday life for the indigenous peoples in Mexico and specifically the Zapoteca in Oaxaca, the decisions regarding most aspects of governance are made through it. According to Díaz (2001) as cited by Navarrete (2008), there are five principles on which the management of resources and the decision making is done inside an indigenous community in Oaxaca: land as the “mother” and the territory belonging to the community, the consensus of the general assembly for making decisions, the free voluntary service as an exercise of authority, collective work known as “*tequio*” as an act of recreation and finally the rites and ceremonies as an expression of communality.

Furthermore, Rendón (1992) cited also by Navarrete (2008) enumerates four essential dimensions in which communality rests and a list of other aspects. For him the essential dimensions are constituted by: 1) the community territory 2) the community power 3) the community collective work and 4) community enjoyment. From these two classifications it can be seen that the difference resides in the inclusion of the community power dimension by Rendón in all its forms within the community, not just the general assembly, as there are other organs where communal power also resides. Each of these basic elements will now be discussed also briefly explaining its expression in Ixtlán de Juárez.

5.1.1 Community territory

Territory has been the source of livelihood but also of continuous conflicts for the *Zapotecas* in Oaxaca, on the one hand among different communities and ethno groups but also after the arrival of the Europeans; according to archival documents, the land property rights go back into pre-Hispanic times for the *Zapotecas* in the north of Oaxaca. However, in the framework of Mexican legislation, there are two kinds of land property related to indigenous peoples: the communal property and the “*ejido*” property. The latter one was the result of the revolutionary civil war process and was given to indigenous and non-indigenous poor farmers alike, while the former goes back to pre-Hispanic times, and works as a cohesion agent helping to strengthen the sense community or communality (Navarrete, 2008). However, the state can at any time, if the “interest of the nation demands it”, take the land or use it as it sees fit for specific purposes and when necessary.

5.1.2 Community power

Community power can be divided into three main bodies or organs in the community.

- **Assembly of community members.** First of all, the assembly of *comuneros* or community members as translated in English, and its consensus constitute the highest authority having the capacity to make decisions regarding issues about the community. It is headed by the *Comisariado de Bienes Comunales* (Committee of Communal Resources), which is a group of three selected community members. The assembly as a whole is made up by the male adults of

the community and also by the widows of deceased members (Navarrete, 2008; Vanwey et al., 2005). Traditionally women cannot be part of this assembly but there is ever more acceptance of their participation in the role of *comuneras*, but this varies from community to community. In the case of Ixtlán, it is now open for women membership with the same restrictions as for men. Another expression of community power of decision and consensus and related to the community members assembly is the assembly of citizens, where all residents in the community are welcome and where topics of general community wellbeing are addressed. The distinction between these two kinds of assemblies will be discussed later.

- **Council of elders.** Another organ of importance in many communities is the council of elders (*Spanish Cuerpo de Caracterizados*) which functions as the supreme authority when there are conflicts within the community. Traditionally, it is made up of elderly men that have a great prestige in the community. However, in Ixtlán this has been changed and now this organ is called the Assessor Commission and its members are selected not only in terms of experience and prestige, but also in terms of educational background and knowledge.
- **System of duties.** Finally there is also a system of duties and responsibilities that functions as the representatives inside or also to the outside of the community and is often related to political and also religious responsibilities. To serve in such a system of duties is considered a great privilege and a way to gain status inside the community. However, this is not always the case and in Ixtlán the system of duties is not always seen as a privileged to be obtained. Furthermore, just like with the assembly of community members and that of community residents, a distinction should be made between the system of duties at the community member level and the more general system of duties at the community resident level.

5.1.3 Community collective work

Obligatory for all members of the assembly is the collective work for the community known as “*tequio*”. The assembly of community members is responsible for determining what community work needs to be done and often includes the construction of roads, clinics, schools and bridges or the maintenance of other public buildings. This form of work can benefit individuals or households at a time as well when it feeds into a system of reciprocity, where the work that is done today for a family is expected to be repaid with the same alacrity and intensity later on. Individual livelihoods are improved and social capital is increased through this system of work. However, when there is no equal status between the members, e.g. a better schooled and richer *comunero*, they can refuse to serve the *tequio* because they can afford to pay the fee or to pay other members to do the work for them (Vanwey et al., 2005). This is also the case with Ixtlán de Juárez, as some community members are able to find escape routes to avoid community work by paying someone to do their *tequio* work.

Also in the case of Ixtlán, it is important to differentiate among three different kinds of *tequio* work being practiced to a greater or lesser degree that were identified during the course of the fieldwork :

- Community member *tequio* work: These activities include the responsibilities that members of the assembly entitled with the land tenure must do, such as the clearing of roads in the community territory, making trips to the boundaries with other communities to do delimitation work, conservation of soil and planting trees, etc.
- General community and residents *tequio* work: These activities include all the people living in Ixtlán, whether they are entitled members of the assembly or not and comprise work for the wellbeing of the community in the urban area.
- Community and residents *tequio* work organized by neighborhood: This is a subtype of *tequio* work whereby each of the four neighborhoods in Ixtlán organizes work for the benefit of all the people living therein.

5.1.4 Community enjoyment

Finally, celebrations are important in the sense that they help improving life in community and reinforce social cohesion. Celebration in this context are described as a “social escape valve” for letting out the tensions among members and most importantly as a way exercise community structure by organizing and controlling the celebrations (Rendón, 1992).

In the case of Ixtlán de Juárez, celebrations are intertwined with the catholic’s church traditions. There are five mayor celebrations, one involving the whole community and the other celebrated in each of the four neighborhoods in the community, as each neighborhood has its own Catholic temple. **Table 17** provides the details regarding each major celebration in Ixtlán.

Table 17 Dates and places of festivity in Ixtlán de Juárez Source: Author with information from (Ayuntamiento Municipal de Ixtlán de Juárez, 2005)

Date of celebration	Place and reason for celebration
29 th of June	San Pedro neighborhood; Patron saint festivity
15 th of August	Asunción neighborhood; Day of Virgin of Assumption
4 th of October	San Francisco neighborhood; Patron saint festivity
18 th of December	La Soledad neighborhood; Our Lady of Solitude day
21 th of December	Throughout Ixtlán; Main Patron saint Santo Tomas festivity

Among other elements of communality which may be included productive technologies, language, traditional medicine and exchange and distribution mechanisms within the community and the implementation of participative democracy (Fuentes & Barkin, 2012b; Maldonado, 2000). Despite their overall importance in the area, these are not sufficiently significant for the community of Ixtlán, save for the case of direct democratic participation, and for its social organization and structure which are relevant for the present research.

5.2 Historical, political and legal background of community organization in Ixtlán

This section provides an overview of the background regarding Ixtlán de Juárez viewed from the perspective of the territory and the resource management.

5.2.1 Historical stages in Ixtlán

According to the historical information on the community and their territory, the history of Ixtlán and its resource management can be divided in the following stages:

5.2.1.1 Indigenous pre-colonialism stage

This stage of Ixtlán’s history is characterized by the community’s full control of their territory taking place from the precolonial times to the coming of the Spanish to the region in the 16th century. The community of Ixtlán de Juárez was founded by a group of Zapotec indigenous military contingent after defending the region from an attack by the Zaachila or Mexicas in 1,487 A.C. They named the community “Layetzi”, a word in Zapotec which translates into “thick leaf of maguey” because of the abundance of such a plant in the region. Later, with the influence of the Nahuatl language, the word was changed to “Ixtlán” which translates into “place of Ixtle”. Ixtle was a fiber material harvested from the Maguey plant and was used to make clothing and ropes. Subsistence agriculture using the “milpa agroecosystem” as well as gathering and hunting throughout the territory were the livelihood of the

community during this early period of Ixtlán (Ayuntamiento Municipal de Ixtlán de Juárez, 2005; Sastre, 2008).

5.2.1.2 Colonial to post-revolutionary stage

This long stage can be described as a transition from the submission of the territory to a partial ownership from mid 16th century to the middle of the 20th century. During this period, the organization of the community changed dramatically first with the arrival of the first European settlers and the community's submission to the outsider's economic interests. One example of this is the production of purple and red dye with the *grana cochinilla* insect in Ixtlán for exportation, which had its height during the 17th and 18th centuries (Sastre, 2008) but slowly declined afterwards. The second change came with the independence and revolutionary movements in Mexico as the country fought for the formation of a national identity, in which the indigenous groups had to find their place. As a token of their significance for the country, indigenous territorial properties were recognized as such but little changed in terms of the actual appropriation of the resources and indigenous groups continued to be given a second place in decision making (Delfin, 2000).

5.2.1.3 Forestry concession to the private sector

The main characteristic of this state is the state concession to the FAPATUX paper factory which took place from 1956 to 1982. Early in 1940 the Mexican forestry law was reformed and this allowed for the exploitation of forests in Mexico through concessions to the private sector in what was named Units of Industrial Forest Exploitation. Such a unit was created in 1956 with the concession of a great extension of the Sierra Norte region, including the municipality of Ixtlán de Juárez to a Canadian investment company called FAPATUX (Fuentes & Barkin, 2012b). The concession of the land, which by principle was property of the community, was supposed to create jobs and generate monetary benefits for the "rental of the area", but the community was excluded as workers at first because of the lack of know-how and on the other hand the flow of resources for social benefits to the community was too cumbersome and went through many intermediaries which was a limiting factor for the development of the community (Fuentes & Barkin, 2012b). As described by Fuentes and Barkin (2012b), this exclusion of the community had many levels "on the economic because of unemployment and labor exploitation, on the political level because of the impossibility of the community to participate and the power concentration in federal institutions and in the legal aspect because they were legally but illegitimately excluded from their right to appropriate their natural resources". Slowly the pressure to change their situation increased and compelled the community to act and regain control of their resources.

5.2.1.4 Community management stage

This phase covers the years from 1982 up to now. After a long struggle against the federal government to end the concession agreements, the communities of the Sierra Norte achieved their goal and in the year of 1986 Ixtlán de Juárez was granted, through a presidential resolution, the "recognition and titling of their communal lands" which gave back to the community full power over their resources (Acosta, Sastre, & Ramos, 2010). It must be said that the long presence of the private sector exploitation of the forest served a purpose for the community as the company left important infrastructure for forestry and most importantly, they left the know-how already in the community and a certain forestry culture that was not there before the company arrived in the region (Fuentes, M., personal communication). This knowledge and infrastructure, combined with their organizational capabilities, gave the community a jumpstart in order to begin their forestry program, which has evolved through the years, going first through a joint project of several communities and then continuing with it only Ixtlán. Today, the community possesses the complete production chain from the extraction, to the wood processing and the production of furniture with the certification of the Forest Stewardship Council (FSC, 2001). Likewise, the community has diversified their economic activities and in this sense has started with other activities including the alternative tourism center Ecoturixtlán.

5.2.2 Legal background on land tenure and organization in Ixtlán

One of the factors that shapes and limits the organizational structure of the community the most is the legislation in regards to the land tenure regime in the communal lands of Ixtlán de Juárez. The law dictates the specific institutions and committees that must be included in a communal land regime and what are each of its attributes. A very significant contribution to the law in terms of organization and differentiation of people living in the community is the distinction between a community member with rights on the land and a resident. In terms of participation of each of the community members, it provides the basic responsibilities and rights as well as the mechanisms for the members to pass their rights to others after they die. In terms of the addition of new members to the community organization, the law does not provide the guidelines for this process but lets each community decide on the requirements for new members in a document called Community Statutes. Both the Agrarian Land and the Community Statues specific to Ixtlán de Juárez deserve a more detailed discussion.

5.2.2.1 Agrarian Law

The Agrarian Land Law (Spanish *Ley Agraria*) is a regulatory law of the 27th article of the Mexican Constitution which deals with land tenure, water and other resources in Mexico. The law defines an agrarian communal entity as a community organized around a common territory from which they can obtain economic benefits according to their internal statutes when not contrary to the law (Cámara de Diputados del Congreso de la Unión, 2012).

However, the law recognizes two kinds of people living in the community:

- Community members are those men and women with rights on the land tenure and any benefits coming thereof
- Residents in the community are those citizens who have lived one or more years in the community and are recognized as such by the general community assembly

The law gives a legal position to the community and provides the possibility to constitute community based companies, make agreements with other communities, and employ any organizational structure additional but not contrary to the already mandatory committees established in the law.

In terms of the community structure, the basic bodies listed as mandatory for community land tenure to have are:

- The general assembly. The supreme organ of the community in which all members are mandated to participate.
- The Committee of Communal Resources. The administrative body that represents the assembly and elected by the custom of the community.
- Committees of Vigilance. This body, as the name suggests, is charged with making sure that the Committee of Communal Resources does their job well and helps it in administration activities.

5.2.2.2 Communal statutes of Ixtlán de Juárez

It is one of the requirements according to the Agrarian law for each community land unit or *ejido* to have an internal statute providing the specific guidelines for their proper functioning (Comunidad Agraria de Ixtlán de Juárez Oaxaca, 1999). Some of the significant organizational regulations that are relevant for this study are the following:

- The statutes determine that the Committee of Communal Resources should be made up of three members, including a president, a secretary and a treasurer and a substitute for each.
- Likewise, the statutes define the Vigilance Committee as formed by three members, a president and two secretaries, each of them having a substitute.

- The statutes prohibit the use of natural resources by any non-community member of the assembly
- Community members should be given preference when applying for a job at any of the community enterprises if he or she has complied with their duties
- Defines an organ called the Assessor Commission which supports the Committee of Communal Resources and the Committee of Vigilance
- The statutes clearly define the rights that the community members are entitled to as well as the obligations they are accountable for.

These regulations play a significant role for setting the avenues and mechanisms and also even obstacles and restrictions for community participation in the management of their resources, through their community-owned enterprises.

5.2.3 Political division and background

The community of Ixtlán is the government center not only of the whole municipality but also of the 12th district of Oaxaca. The reasons for the political importance of Ixtlán as a community, municipality and district are historical as well as geographical. The political power of the region was reinforced during the historical period after the independence of México, when important political personalities were born here, such as the Latin American political figure of Benito Juárez, in Guelatao, district of Ixtlán.

The political institutions and ideologies, mainly the national unity ideology, introduced by the state during this time as well as the control and submission institutions introduced during colonization before have been critical elements in shaping the political organization in the region (Aquino, 2003). The dynamics of this interaction between state-indigenous peoples has been fundamentally different than in other states of México because in this region of Oaxaca the community indigenous organization was permitted to operate at some level and it mixed with introduced institutions and ideologies; each community developed its own identity linked to their communal lands, and the conflicts, mainly land-related, developed against other communities, not against wealthy landowners (Eisenstadt, 2010).

This transcendental fact helps to explain the very complex political division of Oaxaca in 570 municipalities and moreover, the complicated division even inside municipalities among several communities, each having their communal land and organized as a land unit as provided by the law. The municipality of Ixtlán de Juárez is not an exception to this and so it is divided into the community of Ixtlán de Juárez as the political center, and 11 other communities. Each of these communities has a well delineated communal land unit, organized communal authority and the assembly to administer it. They also have a municipal representative who serves as a contact between the community and the municipal president in Ixtlán de Juárez.

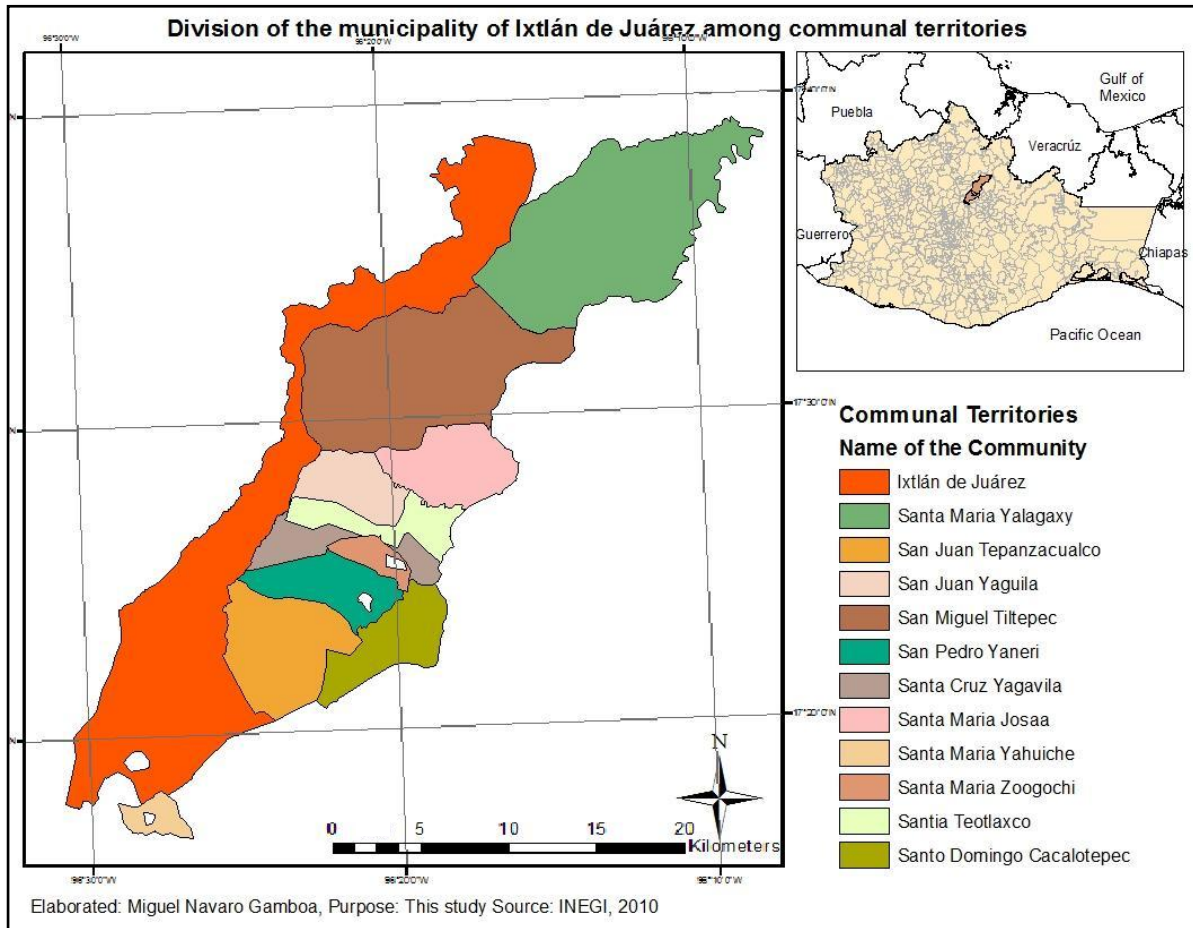


Figure 19 Communities and their territories in the municipality of Ixtlán de Juárez Source: Author using cartography from (INEGI, 2010)

Figure 19 presents the division of the municipality between 12 communities or communal land units. Ixtlán de Juárez has the greatest extension among the communal territories and it is also the longest, sharing boundaries with eight other communities inside the same municipality. The figure also shows that the communal land unit boundaries do not necessarily match those of the municipal boundaries; the north of the municipality, divided into the land units of Ixtlán de Juárez and Santa Maria Yalagaxy is also shared with an outside community from another municipality. This is an example of the complexity among the distinct aspects and expressions of territory, on the one hand the political municipal division and on the other hand there is the communal agrarian division, a distinction which also expresses itself in the social structure of the community.

5.3 Communal and municipal organization in Ixtlán

The structure of the community is divided into two basic ladders of power: the municipal and the communal agrarian. The municipal structure is concerned with all the citizens of the community, regardless of whether or not they are entitled as members of the agrarian communal unit. By living in Ixtlán, the citizens are able to elect and be elected in the system of “municipal duties and positions” which is arranged in a ladder structure having at the very top the position of municipal president. On the other hand, the communal agrarian structure concerns strictly only those citizens having the status as “*comuneros*” or communal land owner. Having such status grants them the right to be elected

and elect other fellow members to the “communal system of duties and positions”. This system of duties is not necessarily organized as a ladder and so a member can be elected to a position of greater responsibility without having been elected to a previous position.

Both systems of duties were at one time united; however with the designation of the official land titles to the community they were divided. Communal duties as well as municipal duties are seen as a process of prestige and respect accumulation in the community and therefore most of the positions are not paid, they are considered a service from the individual to the community (A. Aquino, Aquino, & Ruiz, 2012). Usually these systems work together and there are no cases of overlapping but when that happens, the individual must inform the assembly electing him, be it the municipal or communal assembly in order to prevent having double duties. Moreover, some of the positions are closely related to the Catholic Church and come from a tradition of serving the community through serving the church, another institution that shaped the current organization of the community.

5.3.1 Municipal authority and duties

The municipal duties traditionally begin early in the life of the citizen, however, in the case of people who have recently moved to Ixtlán, they can be elected once they integrate into the community to a higher position that is not church-related (usually *Topil*). **Table 18** summarizes the different traditional municipal position and the duties that come with them.

Table 18 Municipal system of positions and duties. Source: This study adapted from (Aquino et al., 2012)

Name of the municipal position	Duties
Acólito	Catholic Church-related, four children are selected to help with religious ceremonies
Topilillo	Catholic Church-related, this person is in charge of helping the priest with anything he needs
Sacristán	Catholic Church-related, is in charge of the priest’s clothing for mass and preparing religious celebrations
Llavero	Catholic Church-related, ringing of the bells and helping in religious festivities and ceremonies
Topil	Non Church-related, in charge of helping in the community with cleaning activities, running errands, etc.
Police director	This person organizes the work being done by the <i>topiles</i> ,
Major	In charge of the municipal prison and of taking care of the prisoners
Treasurer	Chosen among the citizens in Ixtlán, he or she is in charge of the accounting in the municipality
Regidor	Six <i>regidores</i> are elected, and they are in charge of managing certain aspects of the community, e.g. health, education, treasury, infrastructure, sports and culture and environment (Sastre, 2008)
Alcaide	When the <i>síndico</i> is not present, this person has the authority as judge to deliver justice
Síndico	An important elected command position which is in charge of acting as a judge and solving conflicts between members of the community
President	The most important position chosen by the citizens assembly, this person is in charge of administering the municipality

These positions are further divided into positions of service and those of command. It is necessary for a citizen to complete his duties of service in order to be eligible to command duties. Furthermore, each the command positions have substitutes in case the person is not available for service.

The total number of positions in the municipal sphere is of 54 and the time served for each position is 18 months for most of them (Sastre, 2008). Furthermore, there are other forms of organization at the municipal authority level including the organization of committees responsible for certain aspects of community life, e.g. Committee for the Development of Families, the Health Committee, the Patriotic Council and a Committee of Festivities. These positions can be considered secondary positions and there are about 45 of them (Sastre, 2008).

5.3.2 Communal authority and communal duties

Serving communal related duties is also considered a service to the community, but this system of positions and duties only applies to community members of the communal land unit (*Comunidad Nucleo Agrario*) and therefore only they are able to be elected to such responsibilities.

The most important body of communal authority is the general assembly. The composition of the assembly is summarized in **Table 19**.

Table 19 Composition of the general assembly of community members in Ixtlán de Juárez. Source: Author

Status of the community member	Number in this category
Active	242
Retired	151
Suspended	4
On permission	2
Total	399

Active community members are those who have completed their duties and assisted to the general assemblies. When a member of the community reaches the age of 60 years, they are excluded from communal *tequio* work and from the communal duty system. When a community member does not show up at the assemblies or does not comply with their duties, he or she is suspended from their duties. It is also possible to ask for special permission to travel outside the community, however when they come back they must still comply with their responsibilities (Sastre, 2008).

The Agrarian Law in México gives liberty to the communities to organize themselves according to their needs, as long as the basic structure provided by the law is not changed (Cámara de Diputados del Congreso de la Unión, 2012). Ixtlán de Juárez has been able to take advantage of this in the administration of their resources and has created more positions and committees to better manage the communal companies and cooperatives.

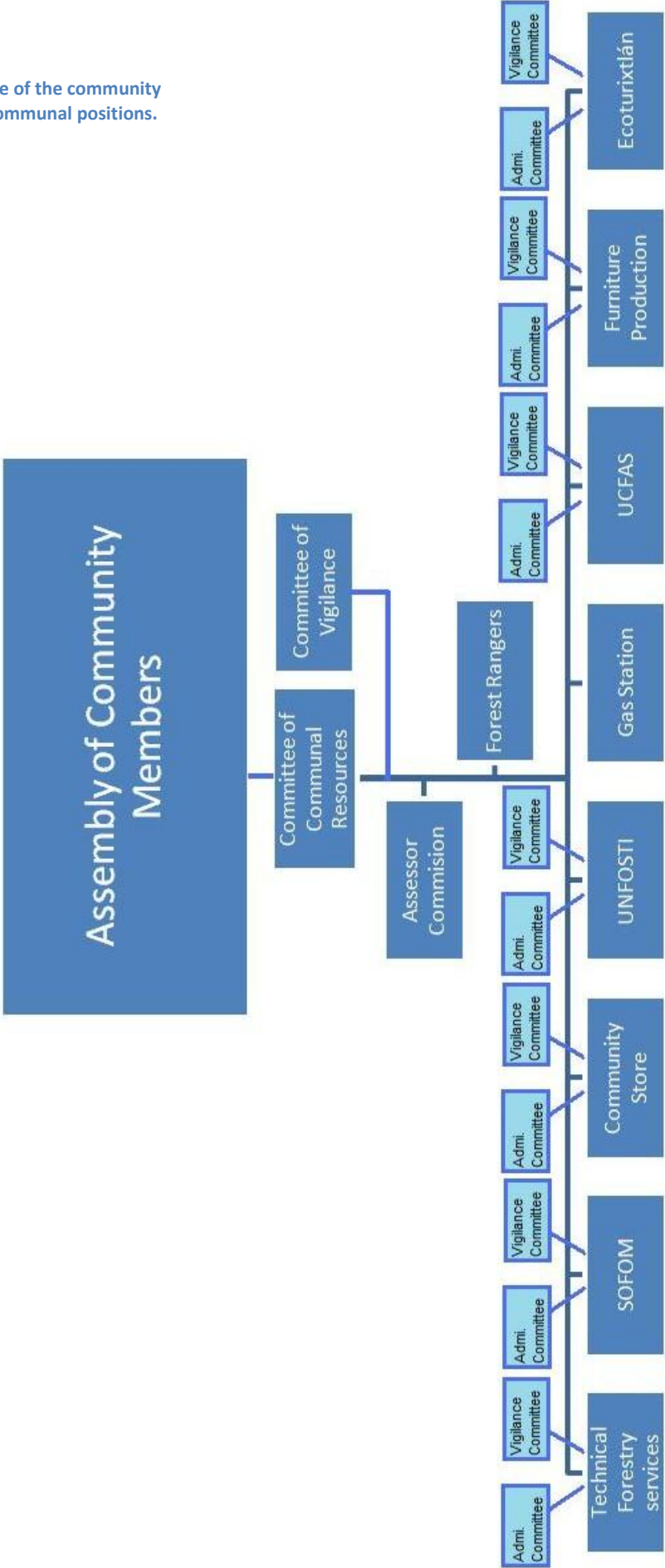
In this sense, beside the mandatory bodies of the Committee of Communal Resources and the Committee of Vigilance with their respective members, e.g. president and secretaries, the community has created a body of 20 forest rangers for the protection of the forest from fires and other threats and a body of 20 selected community members to help the Committees of Communal Resources with important decisions regarding communal resources (Sastre, 2008).

Moreover, the community organized a series of committees charged with supervising the operation of each of the eight different community-owned and managed enterprises. Each community company has an Administrative Committee that supervises directly the performance of the company as a whole and of the manager. Likewise, there is a Vigilance Committee similar to the general Vigilance Committee but

focusing on the functioning of the company and making sure the Administrative Committee follows the Statutes and policies of the community.

Together, all the positions amount to 88 and represent 36 percent of the active members of the community, however some members have two or three communal positions at the same time and this is not prohibited in the Communal Statues. **Figure 20** shows the total structure of the community position system together with the eight enterprises property of the community. It must be said that the administration of the gas station property of the community is done by the Committee of Communal Resources itself and does not have special committees like the other enterprises.

Figure 20 Structure of the community enterprises and communal positions.
 Source: Author



5.4 Community-owned enterprises in Ixtlán de Juárez

The Agrarian Law provides for the formation of Rural Production Companies for the development of *ejido* or communal units of land (Cámara de Diputados del Congreso de la Unión, 2012). The community realized the potential of its resources and has implemented a strategy of rural production starting from their forest resources and ending with the provision of services to outsiders and also members of the community. In this sense, the community has the whole production chain for furniture which was one sole company before, but now they are going through a process of disincorporation (Fuentes & Barkin, 2012a). The community members with land rights also own other companies not forest-related but still community-based, such as a gasoline store and a store of materials for construction and their own bank providing loans for community members as well as residents. A brief description of each of the companies is provided next.

- **UCFAS.** This company, before disincorporation, consisted of the whole production chain of forestry products. Now it is only concerned with cutting the pine trunks into planks, drying the wood and selling it.
- **UNFOSTI.** This enterprise is in charge of cutting the trees and transporting them to the UCFAS sawmill. It was part of UCFAS before disincorporation.
- **Technical Forestry Services.** As the name implies, this company elaborates the technical studies of the areas to be utilized for forestry and does reforestation.
- **Furniture Production.** They take the wood from UCFAS and construct furniture for national distribution.
- **Community Store.** Constituted as a cooperative, this company sells material products to community residents, community members and to the other companies as well.
- **SOFOM.** This financial company serves as the banking institution for the other community enterprises as well as providing loans to community members and now also to community residents.
- **Gasoline Station.** The community owns a franchise of the PEMEX. According to the President of the Committee of Communal Resources it is the most productive company in terms of profits.
- **Ecoturixtlán.** Alternative tourism center near the community.

Table 20 provides some more details into the number of workers for each of these companies as well as the legal figure under which it functions⁴.

Table 20 Legal figure and number of employees of each of the communal enterprises in Ixtlán de Juárez. Source: Author

Community enterprise	Legal figure	No. of employees
UCFAS	Unión Comunal Forestal Agraria y de Servicios S.P.R. de R.I.	30
UNFOSTI	Unión Forestal Santo Tomas Ixtlán S.P.R de R.I.	52
Technical Forestry Services	S.P.R. de R.I.	25
Furniture Production	S.P.R. de R.I.	53
Community Store	S.C. de R.L. de C.V (Cooperative)	6

⁴ The Agrarian Law in Mexico provides a legal framework for the formation of production societies within communal or *ejido* land units. These work under three regimes of responsibility for the partners: a) R.I. or unlimited responsibility are those in which each partner is answerable for all obligations in solidarity b) R.L. these production societies are those in which the partners are only answerable according to the amount they each provided to the society or business and c) R.S. are those in which the partners, besides responding with the amount they provided, will provide with an additional amount specified in the constitution of the society.

Table 20 (continuation) Legal figure and number of employees of each of the communal enterprises in Ixtlán de Juárez.
Source: Author

Community enterprise	Legal figure	No. of employees
SOFOM	Sociedad Financiera de Objeto Múltiple S.A. de C.V.	3
Gasoline Station	Comunidad Agraria	9
Ecoturixtlán	S.P.R. de R.I.	13
Total number of employees		191

It is important to mention that although community members and their family have preference in the employment for any of the community owned enterprises, this is not necessarily a rule (Comunidad Agraria de Ixtlán de Juárez Oaxaca, 1999). There are workers in the industries that are not members of the community (as in land ownership) or related to any of them, but they can still work for the companies.

5.5 Organization in the alternative tourism center Ecoturixtlán

At the beginning of the alternative tourism project in Ixtlán de Juárez, the accommodation of the tourists took place in the town itself. However, at the end of the 1990s and early 2000s the community was able to build a cabin complex in the outskirts of the town in a forest area, with the help of outside funding, mostly through the Commission for de Development of Indigenous Peoples and their PTAZI program (CDI, 2011) and other federal and state funding. The result was a reconfiguration of the tourism activities which no longer, for the most part, took no longer place in the town, but were transferred to a more “natural” setting (Ramos, personal communication). In this sense, tourism’s focus went from the cultural to the ecotourism and the tourists only had to go through the community in order to check in at the reception.

5.5.1 Organization inside the alternative tourism community enterprise

The structure and organization required, with the spatial change mentioned before, adjustments so that it could better adapt to demands by the tourists and in order to improve the financial performance. The community decided to implement a more managerial private company-like structure, with general manager, unlike most other projects in the region (Ramos & Rodríguez, 2013). **Figure 21** presents this structure.

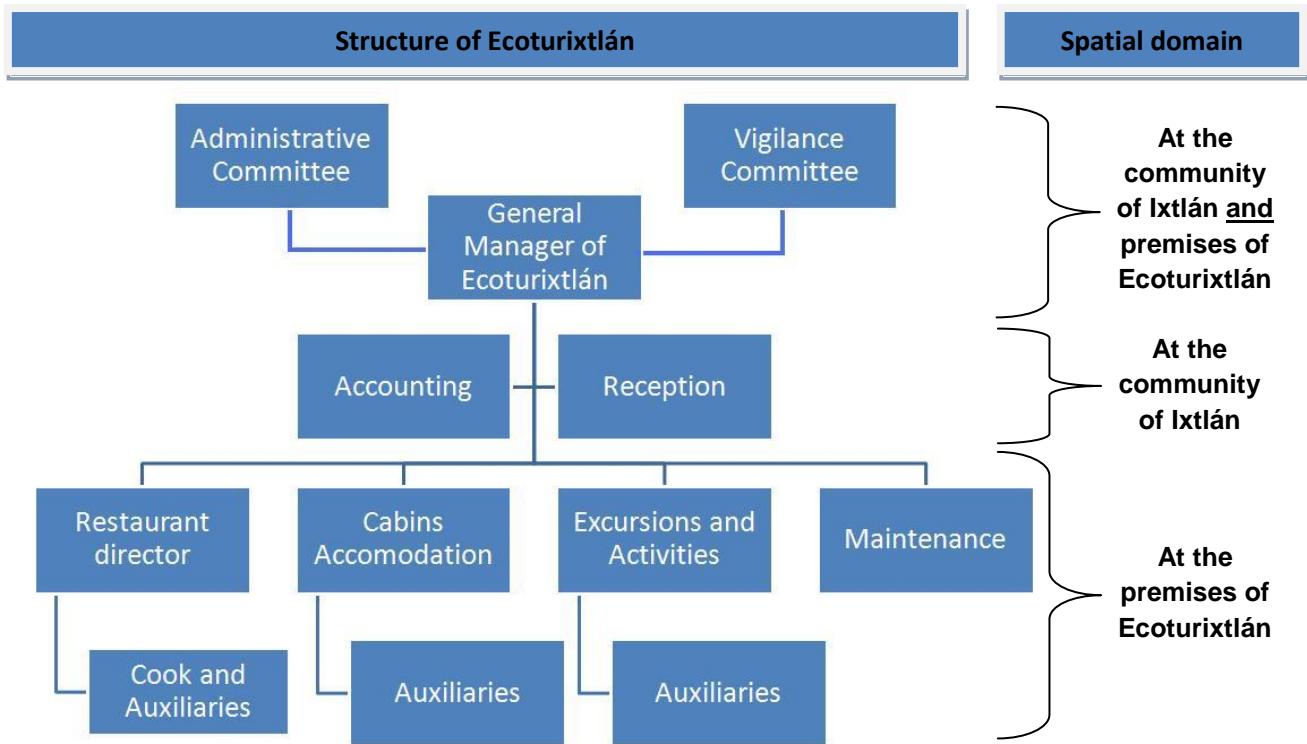


Figure 21 Structure of Ecoturixtlán and spatial context. Source: Author

5.5.1.1 Description of positions and responsibilities

Following is a brief description of each of the jobs or positions created by Ecoturixtlán, according the research made:

- **General manager.** The manager of the company, much like in a private company, oversees the performance of the communal company as a whole and reports to the Administrative Committee as well as to the Vigilance Committee who in turn assess his performance. This position is open community members preferably, but it can also be filled by a resident of Ixtlán if

he or she complies with the requirements and is accepted by the General Assembly. By the time of this study, a resident in the community was the general manager.

- **Accounting.** This position reports to the general manager and is in charge of the accounting of the company. It requires a degree in accounting preferably and as of the time of the study it was filled by a woman member of the communal land unit. The job is performed in the offices of the enterprise in the town of Ixtlán.
- **Reception.** This is generally a job for two people and the responsibilities include making appointments for the general manager, distributing the accommodation in the cabins for the guests and answering and making calls. The receptionists report to the general manager and the vacancies are usually filled by young women who are daughters or granddaughters of community members, sometimes as summer jobs or as more permanent jobs.
- **Restaurant and cooks.** This part of the structure consist of the boss of the restaurant, the main cook and his or her helpers, sometimes there are also waiters or waitresses involved as well, depending of the demand, but these other jobs are more temporal. The cook answers to the boss of the restaurant who in turn reports to the general manager. In the time of this study, a resident was the boss and the cook was the wife of a community member.
- **Cabins and accommodation.** This part of the structure is a person who is in charge of making sure that the guests have everything they need, providing wood for the fireplace and cleaning the cabins when the guests leave. A community member is in charge of this job.
- **Excursions and activities.** The most jobs are included in this part of the structure. There is a boss who is in charge of this section and reports to the general manager. The guides are usually young people that are related to community members or are community members themselves. During high season tourism season (usually spring break and winter vacations), the number of people in this section of the structure can increase to up to 20, many of them still students who take advantage of the free time during breaks at the local high school. It is important to highlight that guide work, unlike other community enterprises in the area, is not compelled by *tequio* or communal duty, instead guides are hired just like they would in a private company (Ramos & Rodríguez, 2013).
- **Maintenance.** There is one person who is responsible for fixing any problems with the plumbing or electricity in the cabin area.

5.5.2 Insertion of Ecoturixtlán in the community structure

When the project of alternative tourism was first proposed at the general assembly, there was certain skepticism among the community members as to the actual possibility of success of such an enterprise. In the words of a community member founder of the company:

“We looked at our forests and saw nothing special that would make people come and visit, we didn’t know that this was special for other people, but once we saw them it was curious to us”

When the project first began, the Committee of Communal Resources was in charge of its administration, but this scheme was later changed together with the location of the accommodation for the tourists. The ecotourism project served to fill a gap in the forestry production chain as the final link in the management of the community forests (Paz et al., 2012) and the importance of this link was realized by the community members and the other companies.

Today, the ecotourism company has gained its place among her sister projects and it is a well established communal project that pioneered alternative tourism in the region.

5.5.3 Organization of Ecoturixtlán to the outside of the community

In order for the company to be successful as an alternative tourism destination, there have been alliances made with other similar communal companies in the Sierra de Juárez region. This union was made with the help of the National Commission of Forestry (CONAFOR) and the Oaxaca Ministry of Tourism as mediators (Ramos & Rodríguez, 2013) and the idea was to create a network of community owned alternative tourism companies in the region to cooperate with each other.

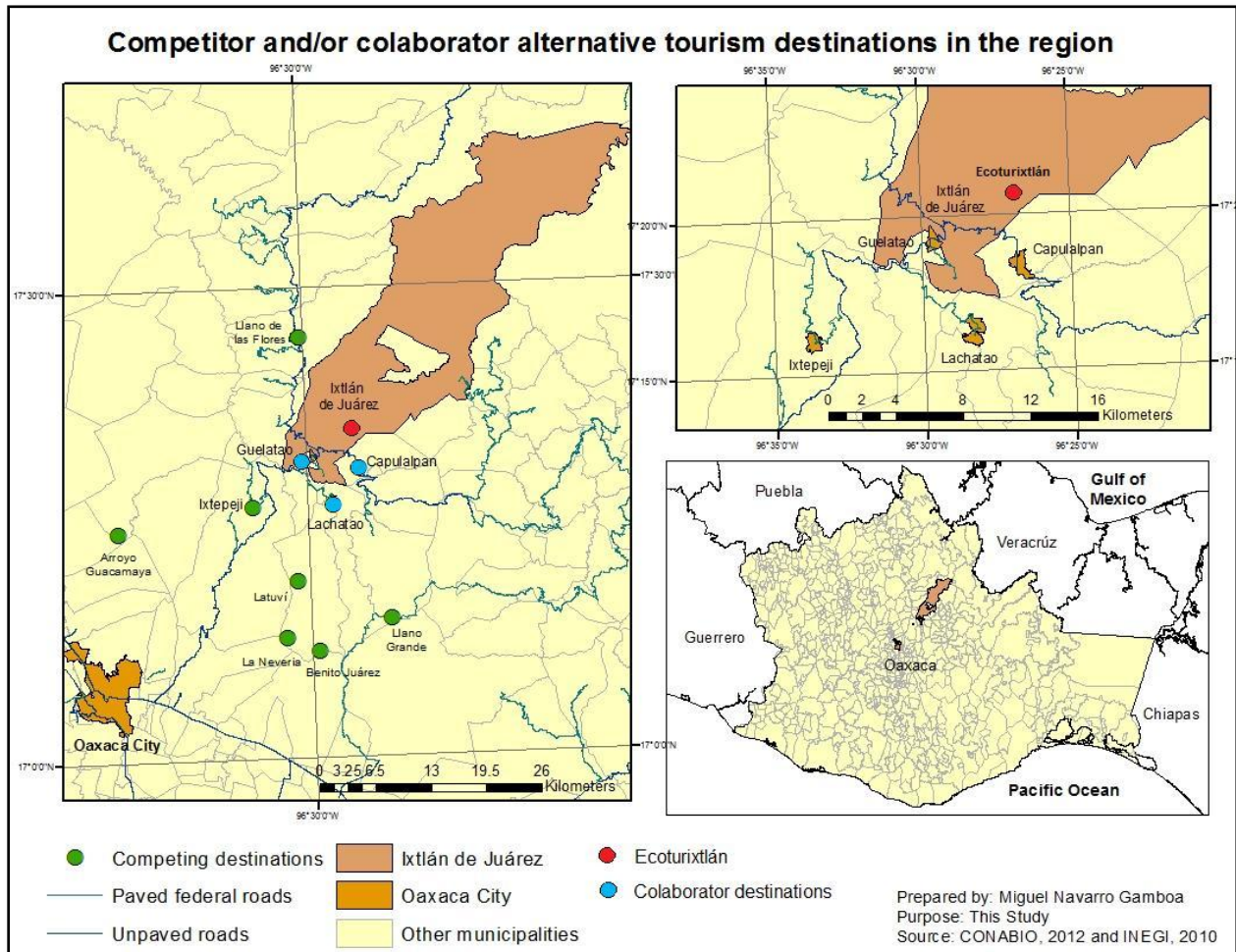


Figure 22 Location of other alternative tourism companies in the region and Ecoturixtlán. Source: Author

The meetings for conform the network began in 2006 but it was not until 2009 that the network gained a legal status as the Integrated Network of Ecotourism of Sierra Juárez, Oaxaca S.A. de C.V (*Red Integradora de Ecoturismo de Sierra Juárez de Oaxaca S.A. de C.V*) and is made up of the community projects of Ixtlán de Juárez, Capulalpan de Mendez, San Juan Analco, Santa Catarina Lachatao and the private companies of “Loma Orgánica de Santa Maria Yaguiche” and La casa de la Montaña de Santa Maria Jaltianguis (Ramos & Rodríguez, 2013). **Figure 22** shows the location of some of these alternative tourism companies as well as Ecoturixtlán in relation to the city of Oaxaca.

This network was also an attempt to compete with the Pueblos Mancomunados network which is a destination brand, managed by an actual travel agency in Oaxaca and includes the destinations of Benito Juárez, La Neveria, Llano Grande among others.

Having this in mind, what they have been able to achieve is the establishment of an office in Oaxaca where they market their packages, both individually and with cooperation from the network as a circuit package. The Sierra de Juárez network, however, has had little impact in terms of increasing the number of tourists or groups in the region by visiting all of the communities in a circuit as the products that they offer are very similar in nature (Ramos, personal communication). Ecoturixtlán is trying to get away from this disadvantage through innovation, according to the manager and is now offering more activities and planning on building new cabins and other attractions, but the community needs more involvement in this process in order for this innovation to work. The next chapter will deal with the results of the questionnaires and interviews as well as the focus group carried out in Ixtlan de Juárez in an attempt to assess the level of participation of the community in Ecoturixtlán.

Chapter VI: Participation of the community in Ecoturixtlán

This chapter presents the results of the fieldwork instruments applied during the visits to the study area in the months of July 2012 and March 2013

As a starting point, the socio-demographic profile of the groups interviewed is presented, beginning with the Ecoturixtlán employees, the community members and then the subgroup of residents. The results from the close ended questions in the questionnaires first for the employees of the community enterprise and then for the communities members sample are presented, followed by the results in the open questions for the three groups.

The next section of the chapter focuses on the results derived from the in-depth interviews to the key actors and other community members and those of the focus group and discussions that took place during the fieldwork.

Finally, the focus group's results are presented with an emphasis on the conclusions that were derived from the discussion.

The following table presents a summary of the outputs by each group of respondents:

Table 21 Outputs from different respondent groups. Source: Author

Topics/outputs	Group of respondents					
	Employees	Community members	Community residents	Key actors	Focus group	Local researchers
Benefits distribution	X	X	X	X	X	
Structure and organization	X			X	X	X
Decision making processes	X	X		X		X
Power relations and interactions	X	X	X	X	X	X
Capacity building and learning	X	X		X	X	X
General attitudes toward Ecoturixtlán	X	X	X		X	
Expectations and goals of Ecoturixtlán	X	X	X	X		X
Constraints and limits to participation		X	X	X		X

6.1 Socio-demographic profile of respondents

In order to better understand the dynamics of participation, there were a series of items in the questionnaires to the Ecoturixtlán employees as well as the community members concerning economic and socio-demographic characteristics. The last chapter focused on the political and structural factors that could encourage or hinder community participation, however, the social and economic circumstances of the people as well as the heterogeneity at the community level can give insights into the participation process and the distribution of benefits and responsibilities and are often the primary drivers for participation at the local level (Roberts, 2011; Tosun, 2000).

6.1.1 Ecoturixtlán employees sample

The first set of questionnaires belongs to the people who are actually directly involved in the project working for the enterprise. **Table 22** shows the characteristics of this group of respondents.

Table 22 Profile of respondents working for the community enterprise Ecoturixtlán Source: Author

Item	Categories	No. of respondents (n=10)
Marital status	Single	6
	Married	4
Gender	Men	5
	Women	5
Status in the community	Community members	4
	Relatives of community members	4
	Residents	2
Education level	University degree	4
	High school	2
	Secondary school	3
	Elementary school	1

This small group of respondents was working at the Ecoturixtlán's premises and at the offices in town, according to their responsibilities. As shown in **Table 22**, the group is evenly divided among men and women. The age of the people working at the alternative tourism company is in the range of 19 to 44, however if the caretaker who works in the night shifts is also taken into account the range goes up to 74. This makes the average age of the people working there around 34.9 years. The study only took into account those employees working in a more permanent way and it did not take into account the group of teenagers and young adults that get a temporary job, usually one week long, and this would significantly lower the average age of the workers in Ecoturixtlán.

The fact remains, nonetheless, that the company is administered and operated mainly by young people, which is also reinforced by the other variables of their profile. For example, more than half of the workers are single and they are the ones that are either only relatives of community members or having a resident status in the community. The people that are married are usually the community members as this provides them more security in terms of land tenure and other rights (more regarding this topic will be discussed in the next chapter). The official policy for the community companies related to hiring people of the community can also be appreciated here (Comunidad Agraria de Ixtlán de Juárez Oaxaca, 1999), as most of the people have some sort of relation to the community and have therefore preference, but surprisingly the people not related to the communal land rights are those who have the highest positions (e.g. general manager and restaurant director). In terms of education, as the nature of the services provided by the enterprise requires certain knowledge and preparation as well as affinity towards working with people, the level is quite high, 60 percent of them having a high school education

or a university degree. Another explanation for the high level of education is the young age of the workers, belonging to a generation that has had better access to education than their parents working for the other community companies.

6.1.2 Community agrarian unit members' sample

The sample taken from the community members that are active and up to date in their duties according to their neighborhood of residence and proportion of men and women in the assembly official census was of 41, corresponding to 16 percent of the total (see the sample's methodology). The exact age of the community members in the general census was not available but the number of community members per each category e.g. active, retired, etc. was retrieved, as can be recalled from the last chapter. It should be noted that the sample was taken from the active community members and not retired members, as they were taken into account for the in depth interviews and will be discussed in another section. No community member that had been suspended was to be found at the moment of the field work but one community member on permission was interviewed. The overall profile for this sample of 41 community members is presented in **Table 23**.

Table 23 Profile of community member respondents Source: Author

Item	Categories	No. of respondents (n=41)
Age	30-40	16
	41-50	11
	51-60	13
	60 or older	1
Marital status	Single	4
	Free union	4
	Married	31
	Divorced	2
Number of children	None	7
	1-2	16
	3-4	13
	5 or more	5
Education level	No schooling	3
	Elementary school	11
	Secondary school	9
	High school	7
	University/technical education	9
	Graduate degree	2
Occupation	General employee	20
	Merchandiser	8
	Taxi driver/transportation	5
	Retired	2
	Other	6

In terms of age, it was more or less evenly distributed in a range of 30-60 years of age, the average being 46 years old. What comes to attention is that community members of young age are not as common as expected. The majority of them inherit their rights as community members once their parents pass away or when they settle down and get married, but there has been a movement among young people to apply for their rights as a community land owner and according to their laws and statutes, which require

to have ascendants that were community members at some point (Comunidad Agraria de Ixtlán de Juárez Oaxaca, 1999).

Also related to the age and maturity of the community member population is the marital status, which for 85 percent of them is either married or living in a free union. Marriage is also one mechanism for participation in the benefits of the agrarian rights in the case of resident marrying either a community member or a daughter or son of a community member. For that reason there were also cases in which the community member was not actually from that community in the first place but performing the service for his wife. Such instances are allowed by the statutes of the community.

As to the number of children, the average number of children was of 2.5 per family household, which when multiplied by the total amount of the sample and also taking into account espouses, it amounts to 184 household members as being represented by the sample, out of 1,089 of the total active population, using the same average child figure.

The level of education and training, being part of people's capacities and skills, is an important constraint or facilitator for community participation and must be taken into account (Tosun, 2000). The education level for this sample was divided in six categories, ranging from "no schooling at all" to "graduate studies" which include masters and further degrees. The category of elementary school was the most common with 11 members equivalent to 26 percent of the total sample, although this does not necessarily mean that they finished their elementary school education as some community members only attended school for three or four years and then dropped out, but they are still counted in this category. Following in relevance of education level categories for the sample are the secondary school education and high school education with nine and seven members respectively. Nine of the respondents declared to have a technical or university degree and only two have graduate studies degree.

Finally, the occupation of the interviewees varies from being a general employee, which includes public, private and communal institutions with almost half the sample in this category (48 percent) and merchandisers who were usually self-employed. Taxi driver or transportation was also a significant occupation in the sample having five interviewees in that category. In the last category described as "other", there were occupations such as housewife, peasants and an unemployed person, which could not fit in any of the other categories.

6.1.3 Community member resident's group

Although not statistically relevant as a sample, a small group of community members with resident status, according to the Agrarian Law was interviewed in order to get an insight into their points of view regarding their participation in Ecoturixtlán and their relationship with the community members who have rights on land tenure and therefore on the community enterprises. **Table 24** provides a summary of the characteristics of this group of interviewees.

Table 24 Profile of community members with resident status Source: Author

Item	Categories	No. of respondents (n=8)
Average age		46.7
Gender	Men	1
	Women	7
Marital Status	Single	3
	Married	4
	Widow	1
Education	Elementary school	4
	Secondary school	2
	High school	1
	Technical degree	1
Occupation	General employees	3
	Housewife	3
	Retired	1
	Merchandiser	1

The average age for this small group of respondents was similar to that of the other community members. There are other similarities in terms of marital status and education, the majority of them being married and having only elementary school level, respectively. What varies in this group is the number of women participating in the interviews, being only one man and seven women and also the occupations, this time housewife being a relevant occupation.

6.2 Results derived from quantitative items in the questionnaires

Following the logic of involvement in the alternative tourism community enterprise, this section presents the results of quantitative items starting from the individuals most involved i.e. the employees, followed by the sample of community members that have agrarian rights, and finally the group of community members that have only residential status in Ixtlán de Juárez.

6.2.1 Ecoturixtlán employees

The quantitative items of importance in the employees' questionnaires to be discussed are presented in **Table 25**.

Table 25 Quantitative items in the employees' questionnaire Source: Author

Item	Categories	No. of respondents (n=10)
Monthly salary	\$3,800-4,050 (€225-240 \$298-318 USD)	4
	\$4,920-5,000 (€292-297 \$386-392 USD)	4
	\$9,000-10,000 (€535-594 \$706-785 USD) ⁵	2
Perception on benefits from tourism	1. None	2
	2. Low	0
	3. Acceptable	1
	4. High	5
	5. Excellent	2
Reports to	General manager	7
	Coworkers	1
	Administrative committee	2

Generally salaries earned in Ecoturixtlán can be considered competitive for the region, which has a minimum daily wage of \$59.08 (€3.50 -\$4.64 USD) (Oaxaca State Government, 2013) and the average operative wage is of \$150.00 (€8.92-\$11.78 USD) which is almost three times the minimum wage. However, the difference in salaries from the direction position to the operative positions is quite high. This implies that the community enterprise is being operated as a private company also in terms of wage policy i.e. low salaries for employees and high salaries for managerial positions, in an effort to attract the best candidates for these positions (Paz et al., 2012) .

It is not coincidental that employees perceiving that they are reaping little or no benefits from alternative tourism have the lowest wages and those with the medium and highest earnings have the opinion that their benefiting well from the operation of tourism in the area as is shown in **Table 24**.

On the other hand, when asked to whom they report or turn in case they need help or have questions regarding their work, the majority of employees turn to the general manager for such matters. Only one of the workers declares that he would ask other coworkers for help and two other mention the Administrative Committee of Ecoturixtlán as their superiors. These last two are in fact the general manager, also considered another employee, and the accountant.

6.2.2 Community members

The results concerning the quantitative items in the questionnaires applied to the community members sample are presented next starting with the knowledge and relationship to the communal structure and

⁵ Using currency as of July 2nd, 2013 €1 is equal to \$16.82 Mexican pesos and \$1 United States Dollar is equal to 12.74 Mexican pesos

following with a section on perceptions regarding their involvement in decision making, ownership and benefits specifically related to Ecoturixtlán.

As a starting point, all respondents were asked whether they had participated in the decision-making processes, be it at the assembly or as part of duty-work in a Committee, to which they all responded in the affirmative. Likewise, they all declared they knew about Ecoturixtlán when asked about it. These questions, although offering no statistical value in the end, were important to set the respondents in the mood of the interview and also to gauge reactions (Iarossi, 2006). **Figure 23** shows the respondents relationship to the community productive projects.

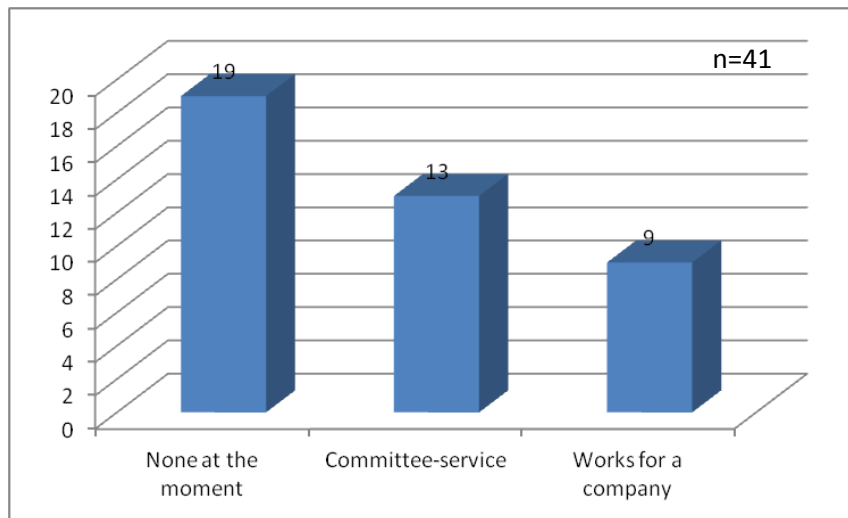


Figure 23 Involvement of respondents to the communal enterprises. Source: Author

Almost half of the sample has no relationship to any of the communal companies save for the information they get when attending assemblies. A third of the respondents is currently part of a committee overseeing one of the companies. As was explained in the previous chapter, there are two of these committees per company, except for the gasoline store. Having a deeper level of involvement with the companies is reported by nine community members as they actually work for one of them.

When asked whether or not they knew about Ecoturixtlán they all replied in the affirmative, but the difference was in terms of how much they declared to know about the company, as can be seen in **Figure 24**, while half of the respondents think they know more or less what is needed to know, a fourth of them are, according to them, totally informed on matters pertaining Ecoturixtlán.

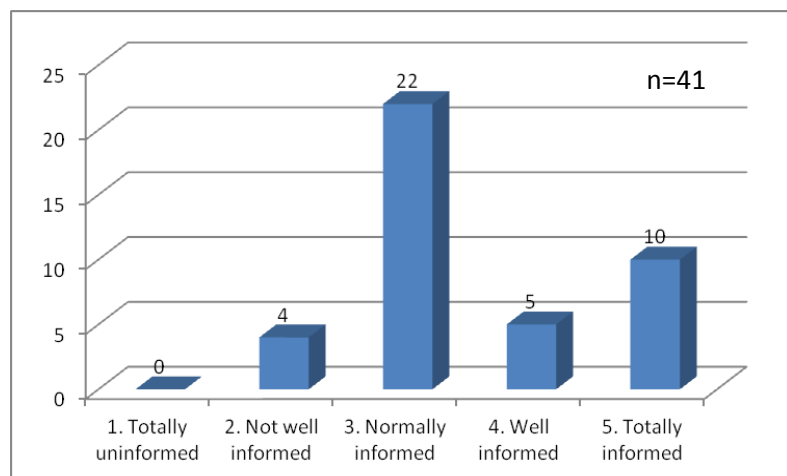


Figure 24 Perception of how informed the community is. Source: Author

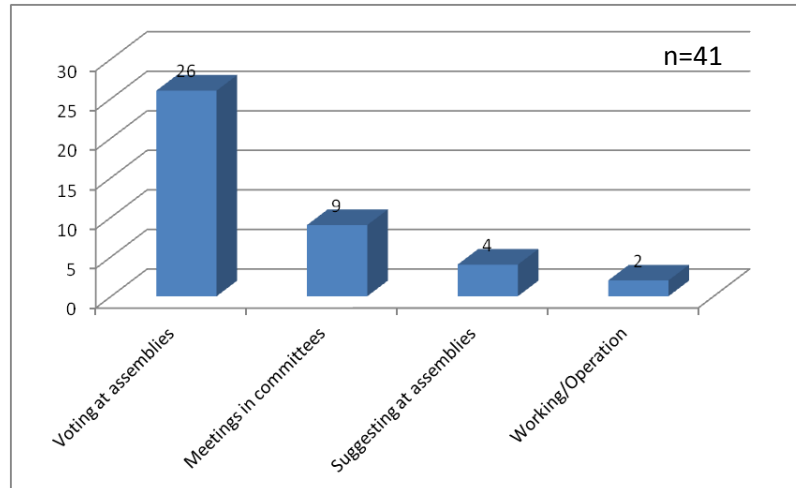


Figure 25 Reported forms of participation in decision making for Ecoturixtlán. Source: Author

Figure 25 shows the way respondents participate in decision making in regards to Ecoturixtlán. While all of them by being active community members must attend and vote in assemblies, only nine report to attend committee meetings and four also make use of their right to talk during assemblies. Only two of the interviewees report to participate in decision making in the operational level of the company which implies that these two respondents are also employees of the company.

The perception of the community concerning the sense of inclusion and value of decisions at the individual level are important factors mediating community participation and affecting the performance of tourism development (Aref, 2011). This was assessed through the next six items.

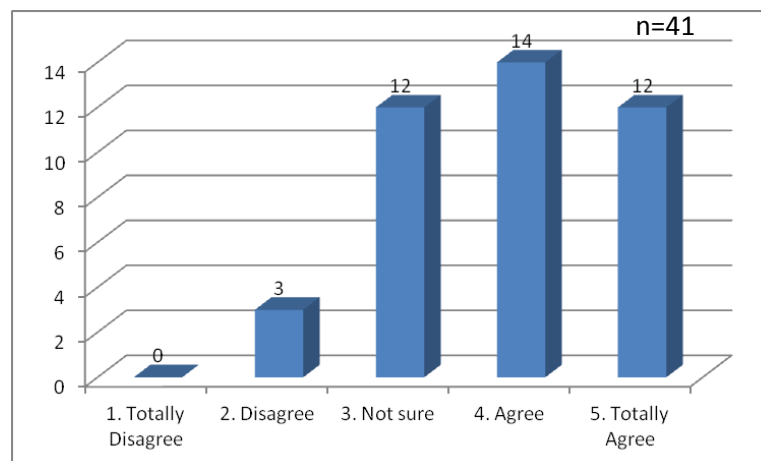


Figure 26 Clarity of participation mechanisms for community members. Source: Author

Figure 26 is concerned with the degree to which each member knew how his decisions could effectively impact the community enterprise. In the field this was also defined for interviewees as the clarity with which each regarded his or her avenues to participate. More than half of the respondents considered that their participation mechanisms were clear to them, agreeing or strongly agreeing with this affirmation. On the other hand, a significant group (15) was not sure how they could have some impact in the alternative tourism enterprise, beyond their vote in the assembly.

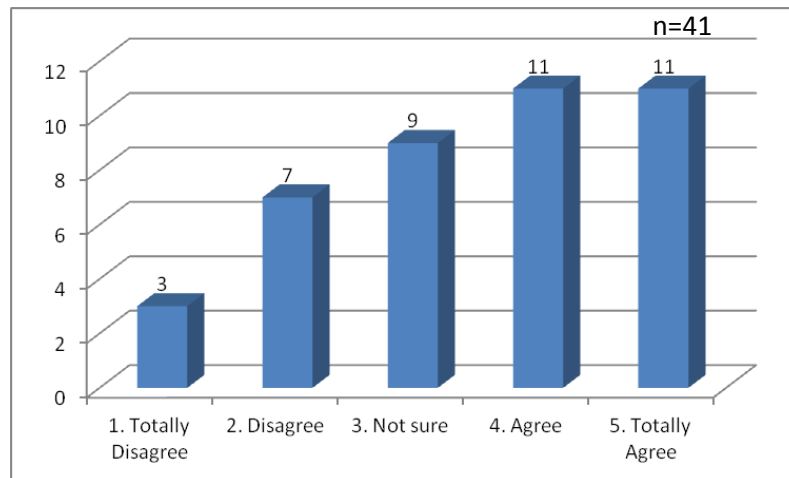


Figure 27 Perception of value given to individual participation by the community. Source: Author

The perception of the community members in regards to the utility of their participation is shown in **Figure 27**. About half of the sample feels that their participation is important and valued by other community members, however the other half is either not sure or disagrees with the statement, feeling that their input is somewhat lost because of the numbers of community members attending the assemblies is too high in order for it to matter. As a community member states:

“I feel that we’re just too many people when we meet, then it doesn’t matter what I decide, because I’m just one against a lot and my participation is lost in all of that”

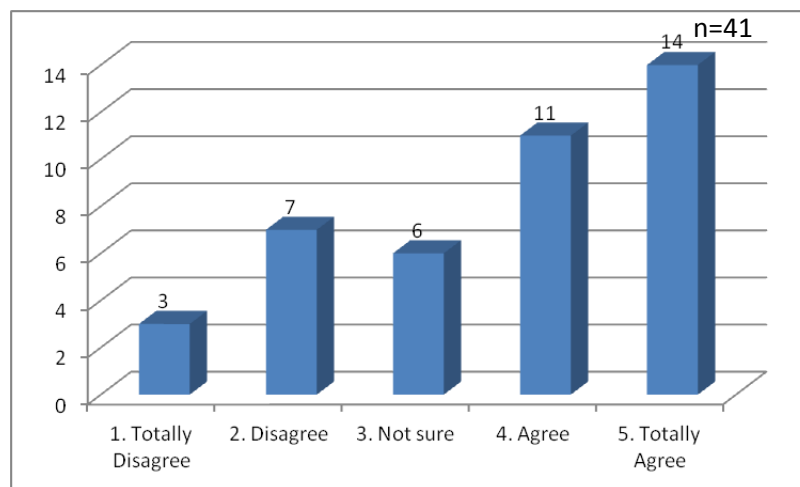


Figure 28 Commitment felt towards the communal company Ecoturixtlán. Source: Author

The level of commitment felt by the community members towards the communal company of Ecoturixtlán was assessed as shown in **Figure 28**, whereby more than half of the sample, 60 percent agreed with the statement of feeling responsible for the company, whereas the rest was not sure or disagreed with the statement altogether. For them, the structure of the company, managed as a private scheme with a manager in charge, was a reason to feel that he was to be responsible for the success of the company and not them (Navarro, 2013).

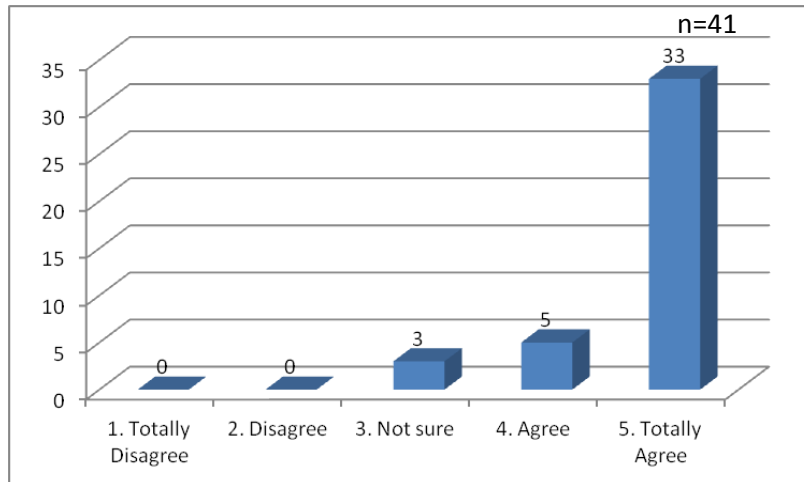


Figure 29 Feeling of ownership felt by the community members. Source: Author

The next item was aimed at assessing the feeling of ownership of the community members towards their resources and Ecoturixtlán. Here, as shown in **Figure 29**, the majority of the respondents were in agreement with the statement, being 92 percent of them. Only three respondents were not sure as to really how much of those resources belonged to them, since, they argued, much of the equipment and infrastructure in the company had been built using governmental funding and with the help of outside agents. They also claimed that since they cannot make use of them directly, they could not say that it was totally their property.

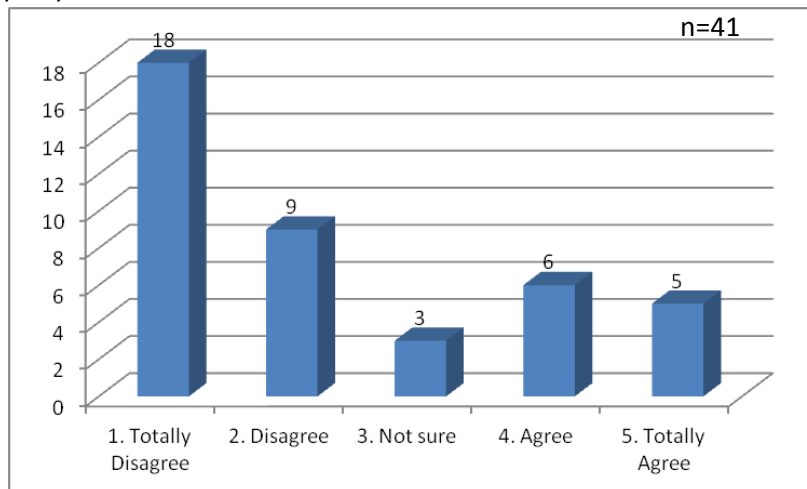


Figure 30 Perception of direct economic benefits by the community. Source: Author

Finally, the participation in the outcomes of tourism in their community was assessed as to how direct and indirect benefits were felt to be received by the community members. **Figure 30** addresses direct economic benefits from Ecoturixtlán. These could take the form of either having worked in Ecoturixtlán, or having received profits at the general assembly when the yearly distribution of profits generated by the community enterprises takes place. Here 73 percent of the respondents were either not sure or in disagreement with the statement, as they had received no economic gains from the enterprise. Only a fourth of the community members declare to have received at some point of its operation direct economic benefits from Ecoturixtlán.

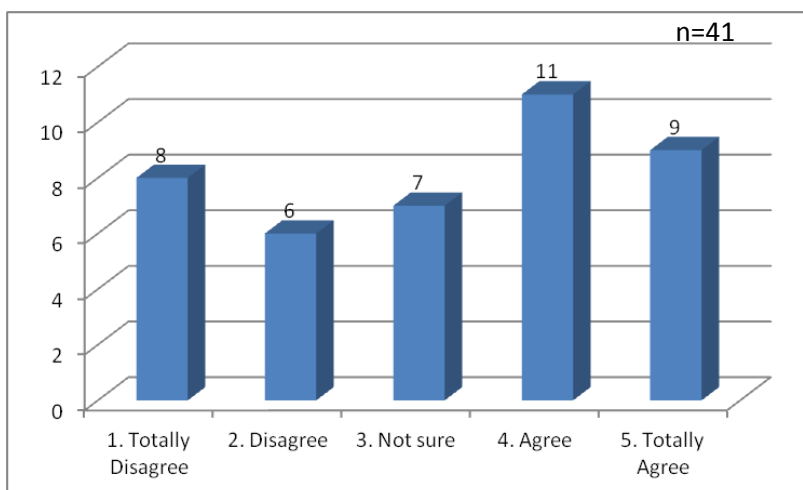


Figure 31 Perception of indirect benefits by the community. Source: Author

On the other hand, the perception of the community members regarding indirect economic is shown in **Figure 31**. These benefits were defined by the interviewer as those gains not translated into direct monetary gains such as the employment of a relative in the company, the conservation of the forest or the encouragement of the town's overall economy (Paz et al., 2012). Half of the respondents believed that they had benefited indirectly by the community enterprise, many of them referring to good image of the town promoted by the company and conservation as reasons. Nonetheless, the other half of the interviewees were not sure or in disagreement with the statement, saying that the company has had no impact in their life yet.

6.2.3 Community residents

As a final group of respondents to quantitative items in the questionnaires, the results from the residents interviewed are presented by way of comparing them to the mean values of the community members having rights according to the Agrarian Law. The respondents in this group are not able to participate in decision making in assemblies or to have a say in any committee regarding Ecoturixtlán according to the statutes of the community (Comunidad Agraria de Ixtlán de Juárez Oaxaca, 1999), in this sense, only items not concerned with decision making are compared in **Table 26**.

Table 26 Comparison between mean values in quantitative items from community members and residents. Source: Author

Item	Members' mean values	Residents' mean values
Information about Ecoturixtlán	3.51	1.75
Feeling of commitment	3.63	2.25
Views on the ownership	4.73	3.50
Views on direct benefits	2.29	2.12
Views on indirect benefits	3.17	2.75

As can be seen from this comparison, the community members with only residential status have significantly lower mean values for all the questions presented. As community residents, they are not permitted to enter meetings and therefore they do not know much about the company. There is also a much lower level of commitment felt by the community residents than by those having agrarian rights, which is explainable due to the fact that they do not have a say on the decision-making process

(Roberts, 2011). What is surprising is the opinion on the ownership felt by the residents, standing at 3.5 compared to 4.7 of the community members. Moreover, the views on direct and indirect benefits are very similar for both groups. Direct benefits are supposed to be distributed by either working for the company, something that residents are allowed to do or by the distribution of profits in the assembly, which Ecoturixtlán, according to the community members, has not been able to do. On the other hand, indirect benefits, such as conservation, better image of the community or a more diversified economy, are accrued by all the people living in Ixtlán, regardless of their status as agrarian unit members or residents.

6.3 Results derived from the open questions in the questionnaires

Results from the qualitative elements in the questionnaires for employees, community members and residents are presented using the graphic tools offered by the qualitative data analysis software MaxQDA (Kuckartz, 2013), according to the coded segments found in the answers provided.

6.3.1 Ecoturixtlán Employees

When asked about the liberty with which they can decide about operative issues in the community company, they talked mainly about little possibility for their own input in decision making. Most employees showed their approval or at least tolerance of the scheme as they regarded it as being part of the organization. Their answers were divided among interactions of subordination and submission to authority, feelings of powerless and references to the structure of the company with a high emphasis on the decision-making process coding.

In terms of their opinion of the alternative tourism company, the employees regarded Ecoturixtlán mainly as a source of employment and good image for the community and displaying interest for the activities they take part of. There were also references to possible improvements and the economic benefits that the company provides as well as some constraints they find. As one of the employees declares:

“The community project has been in operation for more than 10 years in the community and now it needs more dedication from us ...to be working here is an opportunity for me”

The employees were also given the chance to express suggestions for the improvement of the community company. Their answers emphasized the need to improve the service so that more tourists visit Ecoturixtlán. There were some concerns with the organization of the company in the operative level and better leadership, in a way that the committees could give more liberty and bestow their trust in the general manager. One of the employees said:

“What we need now is for the administrative committee to trust in the general manager and also they (the committee) need to get more involved”

6.3.2 Community members and residents

6.3.2.1 Description of Ecoturixtlán

Community members were asked to describe in their own words what Ecoturixtlán was or what it meant for them in order to assess their level of awareness about the enterprise. **Figure 32** provides a visual map of their answers to this question, where the thickest lines represent more importance of that particular code in relation to the total coded interviews.

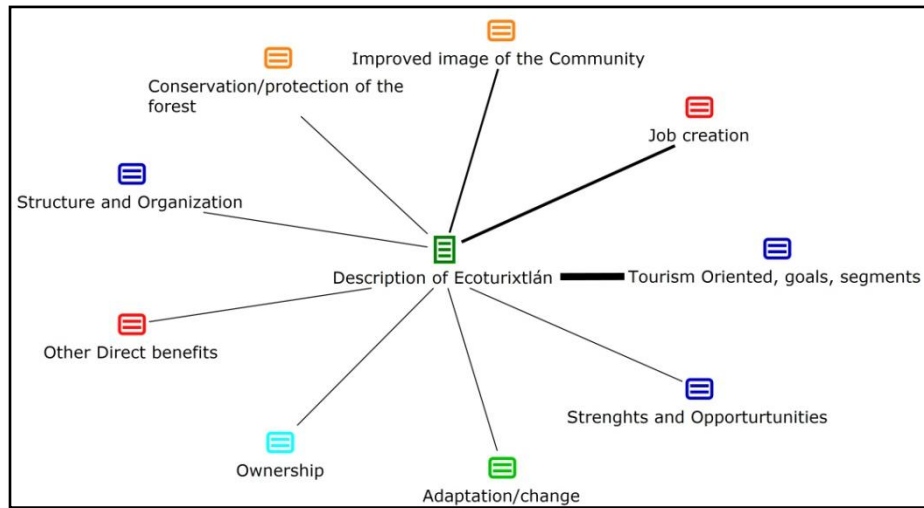


Figure 32 Map of significant codes in the description of the company by the sample. Source: Author

Most of the respondents answered with definitions of what the company does, i.e. what tourism, or alternative tourism is for them. In this sense the answers varied from “visiting and enjoying” to more complete definitions and activities as one individual said:

“The company (Ecoturixtlán) gives an oppourtunity to other people to come to this community so that they can about our flora and fauna”

As second and third most important codes in the answers, the references to job creation and the improved image of the community were also significant as part of what people think Ecoturixtlán is actually doing.

Still others described it in terms of it belonging to the community, a defining factor for Ecoturixtlán “it is a tourism zone that belongs to the community”. Other significant codes included in the interviews were the conservation mission of the company and the provision of other benefits such as improving the quality of life. In general, community members are aware of what Ecoturixtlán is at least in a basic level, although the majority could not give more details.

6.3.2.2 Benefits of Ecoturixtlán

Community members explained how the community enterprise Ecoturixtlán has improved their lives. Their answers included the elements shown in **figure 33**.

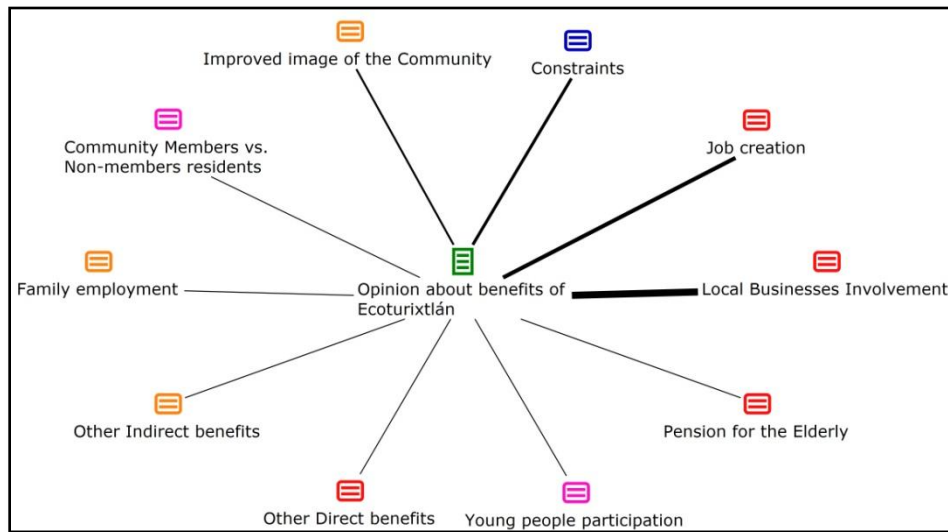


Figure 33 Map of significant codes in opinions about benefits of Ecoturixtlán. Source: Author

What was deemed most important as a benefit for the community overall was the involvement of local businesses in tourism development. They included not only transportation businesses such as taxis but also local markets and small convenience stores. As one of the interviewees said:

“Here in Ixtlán tourism benefits a lot the small (convenience) stores because the company always tries to buy what it needs here and not in the big department stores in Oaxaca, so that the money stays here in Ixtlán”

However, not everyone thought that tourism leaves benefits behind; one of the respondents was of the following opinion:

“We haven’t seen any money or a building for the benefit of the community, to the contrary we have to provide resources so that the company keeps going, and there are no tangible benefits, only the people that are there are benefited (employees) and they ask for too many requirements”

Another significant elements mentioned in the answers included the portrayal of a good image of the community towards the outside and also the issue of participation of residents in communal companies. In this regard, one of the residents in Ixtlán mentioned:

“They as community members with agrarian rights (*comuneros*) do have a lot of support (from Ecoturixtlán) but we don’t have many rights as they do”

This clash between haves and have-nots was often the topic discussed during interviews.

6.3.2.3 Future expectations of community in regards to Ecoturixtlán

To finalize this section of the presentation of results, community members gave their views in terms of what was to be expected of the community tourism company in the future. The summary map is shown as **Figure 34**.

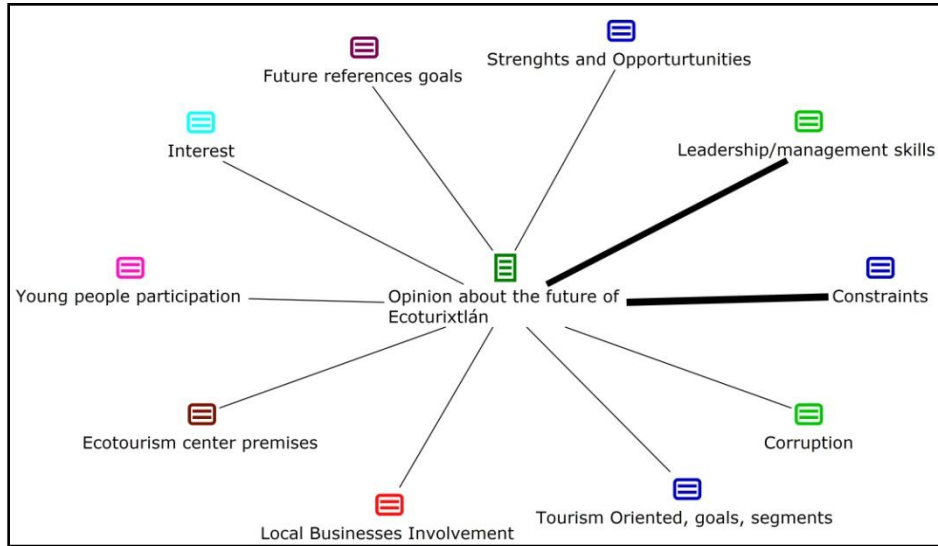


Figure 34 Map of significant codes in the views of the community towards the future of Ecoturixtlán. Source: Author

As shown in Figure 34, what was most significant in the interviews regarding this topic are the constraints of Ecoturixtlán as a company, followed by leadership and management skills as a conditional for success.

This rather negative expectation of the company in overall is related to the lack of several factors deemed important according to community members: lack of diffusion and promotion, not having a trained labor force for the company which undermines the quality of the services provided, the lack of a committed leadership and the existence of too many projects that are similar in the region. As one of the respondents pointed out:

“I think that it would have a better future if they gave it better publicity and diffusion and improved the training of the personnel, with all the costs involved”

Despite the overall critical way in which community members and residents assessed the future expectations of Ecoturixtlán as a company, there were others who were more hopeful. Perhaps what sums it up in this section is this answer from one of the community member:

“I see actually a good future for Ecoturixtlán and I am convinced that what is needed is the participation of everyone...we are letting them do everything by themselves (employees and manager of the company) in the operation and administration when we could also be participating”

6.4 Key actors and stakeholders interviews: summary of results

This section presents the results from the in-depth interviews with key actors and other stakeholders and community members. **Table 27** shows the key actors involved in tourism activities or having a

significant role for the development thereof that were interviewed as well as some of their corresponding importance for the subject:

Table 27 Key actors interviewed for this study and their roles. Source: Author

Key Actor	Roles and significance
President of the committee of communal resources	A major political power in the community, he oversees the management of resources at the community agrarian unit level
President of the municipality of Ixtlán de Juárez, Oaxaca	The official political power of the municipality, head of the municipal organization and assembly of citizens
President of the administrative committee of Ecoturixtlán	Participates in the management of the community company and oversees the performance of the manager
Community member who first proposed of the company and founder	A biologist who brought the idea for developing alternative tourism in Ixtlán de Juárez
Historian of the community	Provides knowledge about the history and culture of Ixtlán as well as the organization of the community
General manager of Ecoturixtlán	In charge of daily operation of the company and provides a resident's view of participation
Accountant of Ecoturixtlán	In charge of the accounting for Ecoturixtlán and provides the point of view of the woman as a community member

6.4.1 Participation of the community in benefits of Ecoturixtlán

The expectations of community members on benefits and shares of responsibilities has not been met in the economic level as was mentioned before. This can be a misunderstanding from the onset of the project when the objectives of Ecoturixtlán were established (Paz et al., 2012; Roberts, 2011). On other levels, Ecoturixtlán has been successful, as pointed out by Ecoturixtlán's accountant:

“Something important that I want to highlight is that people see Ecoturixtlán as a company that is not financially successful, but when a careful assessment is made, we give a lot of indirect benefits, profits that never go into the company, because the tourists need to hire taxi drivers, they go to small businesses, they go to the bank,... these profits are not made by Ecoturixtlán but benefit the whole community”

An outsider evaluation of the matter is provided by the president of the municipality, by saying:

“The communal companies have different considerations, they function through another logic than a normal private company would, that is fundamental, and it seems that the community members or the agrarian unit have not yet understood this logic”

Notwithstanding the perceived little success in economic terms, the company is seen as a keeper of traditions and protector of the environment, a way of safeguarding the forests belonging to the community and then showing this to the exterior of the community, in this regard the president of the administrative committee points out:

“I think that alternative tourism is more than just the economic part, we need to see what function it performs in the inside of the community and the image it is showing on the outside, in terms of keeping traditions, protecting the natural and cultural heritage, that is what ecotourism is all about”

Moreover, people do have the chance to participate in other benefits that are often unknown by the community members themselves and not exploited:

“People don’t know it, but they (community members) can come to Ecoturixtlán and can be here all day using the facilities for free and they have a discount in the restaurant and later on we want to show movies for them for free, and conferences, and free packages”

However, not all the benefits are distributed equally, because some groups such as resident men and women in the community have little to do with the activity and are currently in the margin, becoming mere spectators of the activity as they don’t have a say in decision making either.

6.4.2 Mechanisms for participation of women, residents, young people and elderly

These four groups were identified having the most limitations in their possible participation in Ecoturixtlán both in terms of benefits and decision making. As for women, the opinion of the interviewees is that Ixtlán de Juárez is now becoming more tolerant to their participation in the assembly, as the woman in charge of Ecoturixtlán puts it:

“In 2007 they opened the process to become a community member for men as well as for women, this was a great help, a great sign of aperture so that women could participate as a community member because before it was only men...28 women took the opportunity and became community members, this was an important date for the women of Ixtlán”

The process of applying to be a member is now open for women. These applications are then reviewed by the Assessor commission and after that they must be accepted by the general assembly. However, women are expected to serve duty work and *tequio* work just as men do, notwithstanding their normal house working load. It is for this reason that most of the active women community members are single or widowed, according to the interviews. Despite this opportunity, women are still outnumbered nine to one in the general assembly, and the reasons for this are more cultural than otherwise, as men are still seen as the head of the family and therefore the representative of the household for the assembly (Ramos, 2013 personal communication).

For residents, entering the agrarian unit is quite hard and can only happen when they assembly judges the applicant as worthy of the privilege. This does not happen often but there have been instances of such cases. Another avenue for entering the agrarian unit is through marriage as was already explained, however, an easier way of participating for community members with resident status is to work in Ecoturixtlán or one of the community companies. As the historian mentions:

“There are well educated residents who can participate, for example in 2004 we changed the manager of the UCFAS company, it was a veterinarian who wasn’t a community member, we hired him and he did a good job... we want people who live here and want to improve the community”

Perhaps the young people are the ones who participate the most in Ecoturixtlán, if not in the decision-making process, at least in the daily operation of the company. On this topic the general manager further explains:

“I saw the enthusiasm of the young people that work with us, they don’t do it so much for the money...but because they like the activities, they like to be up there and they sacrifice themselves three or four hours in the zip lines...besides the interaction with the people is very good for them”

Their role in the company is not coincidental as when it was founded, it was hoped that the young would be the most interested in the project (Paz et al., 2010). On this topic, the biologist who proposed the project to the assembly mentions:

“Above all, it is a project that was designed for the young people, as an option of employment for the young members of the community, because they forestry resources has been declining after the forestry concessions that they government gave to the external companies...”

As to their participation as community members, there has been interest in their part to participate but not as was expected. During the opening call for accepting more members, many enlisted but their interest waned after a time, as the president of communal resources points out:

“... we want to include more young people in the assembly but we don’t want a situation like the one we had before, in which many young people applied for a place as community members but from 80 only 20 of them stayed”

In regards to the elderly, they are not forced to go to the assembly but they can do it, as their rights as community members are for life. Many of them still do it because they like to participate in the affairs of the community. As the president of the administrative committee of Ecoturixtlán says:

“...there are many old people attending the assemblies, they are interested and tuned to what is going on in the community and they have a say and vote and are taken into account... they can stand up and talk and defend their arguments, it is their right to do so”

Another possible avenue for the participation of the retired community members is to provide their knowledge for improving the quality of the tourism services in terms of traditional practices, names of places, history and myths of the territory (Aquino et al., 2012). In this sense, the general manager declares his point of view on the matter:

“Yes, using the knowledge of the senior population is part of what we are planning to do”

The attitude of the senior population towards such an initiative, if applied, is summed up by one of the retired community members in this way:

“For me it would be very good to transmit my knowledge to the younger generations because this way I can also learn, there are many things that one ignores, even though I am old”

6.4.3 Attitudes of the community towards Ecoturixtlán

Community attitudes ranged from feelings of commitment and sense of community to the disinterest and apathy, and were shown by different groups inside the community. Many of these attitudes are tied to the benefits or lack thereof related to Ecoturixtlán and even the location of the facilities, meaning that there is a sentiment of detachment of the activities from the town. In this sense, the general manager of the company points out:

“...but because Ecoturixtlán is a little away from what constitutes the town of Ixtlán, sometimes the people are just not interested, sometimes the tourists themselves are immersed in their activities and do not take the town into account”

Apathy has been caused when expectations of what Ecoturixtlán was supposed to do in the beginning and what it is doing now with the current administration (Paz et al., 2010). This disillusionment and apathy is best expressed by the historian of the community, who is now skeptical to the possible gains of Ecoturixtlán, at least during the current administration:

“Sometimes I don’t even promote it anymore, because I liked to do it, I had brochures and I was sharing them with friends from outside Ixtlán, until one of them told me, what happened? You said it would be good but the quality of the services is very bad, what can you do? Now I don’t promote it”

More troublesome is the general disinterest towards going to the assembly shown by many of the community members, even when there are benefits when they do. The president of the communal resources committee describes this situation:

“We have realized that people don’t want to go to the assemblies anymore, every time we need to make secondary callings for each assembly because people just don’t show up, I’m telling you that this can be a general disinterest of the community for the decision making process”

The participation of the community in the actual outcomes of tourism is crucial, but in the view of indigenous communities, benefits come after responsibilities have been fulfilled (Navarrete, 2008). In this sense, when the community members do not attend the general assemblies, they are not eligible for economic distribution of benefits and they cannot be part of the decision making process.

6.4.4 Political influence and power in the agrarian and municipal spheres

The importance of the community’s inside political environment is emphasized for the successful participation of every group (Cleaver, 2001; Reed, 1997). Communities are not homogeneous groups, but rather a complex network of actors and groups with different interests. The findings of this study indicate the existence of two political power bases in the community, the municipal authorities and the communal authorities. However, there are fragmentations of power inside these structures. Even in the agrarian unit, there were different groups exerting pressures to get more political power, in this regard, the president of the Committee of Communal Resources adds:

“There are people who are interested in power and they are doing personal campaigns to advance their interests, they even talk about giving away money, but once inside of the structure it is very hard to do it”

To the outside of the community agrarian unity and its members, other community members with residential status regard the whole organization as shut to the rest of the community and taking care of its own interests. As mentioned by an important resident in the community:

“Inside the agrarian unit there are many family interests. The families that have their access to the political power begin making power niches and they control who goes in and who goes out”

In contrast, although elected in a similar way as the heads of the community member assembly i.e. the Committee of Communal Resources, the municipal authorities of Ixtlán have no jurisdiction over land matters or the community enterprises. The systems of duties, municipal and communal, rarely overlap. The president of the municipality explains:

“the municipal and community duty services do not overlap because there is an understanding whereby if someone was already elected for a communal duty, he is not given a municipal duty and vice versa, because this would mean that the person would not comply with both duties fully, because they need time and dedication”

In general, the communal authorities oversee land proprietorship and community enterprise topics whereas municipal authorities are in charge of general infrastructure, administration of justice and the official relationships of the community to the outside governmental entities, including other communities in the same municipalities. In this sense, even when tourism is a priority at the national and state level in the executive branch of the government, at the local level in Ixtlán, the agrarian unit has a monopoly on tourism. That is to say, there is not any municipal liaison, committee or institution that oversees tourism development and works in collaboration with the agrarian unit.

6.4.5 Capacity building

Participative approaches to development, including those of alternative tourism, must improve the skills of the community in a meaningful way, this is to say, community participation should be also a learning experience (Burns et al., 2004). In this sense, the community of Ixtlán has been involved since the beginning in the alternative tourism project as it had an endogenous development and has adapted new schemes and approaches for managing the project along the way (Ramos & Rodríguez, 2013). This way, the company has proved to be a learning experience for the community, mostly for the agrarian members; this is especially true for leadership skills in the community, which are crucial but many times lacking in the local context. Providing an insight into this, one of the founders of the community points out:

“one of the topics that has hindered quite a lot the development of community enterprises not just in the region but also in the whole country is the development in the community members of managerial capacities and skills...it has been in some cases but has been in isolated instances”

This lack of managerial qualities is many times missing in the community members and that is the reason why the application for managerial jobs is also open for residents of the community who have experience and knowledge. The president of the Committee of Communal Resources explains this constraint:

“Many times we don't have the knowledge to interpret an accounting statement of the company and therefore we cannot make decisions based on good information”

In this respect, the leadership capabilities of community members who aspire for managerial positions were deemed to be crucial for the success of the community enterprises. In the case of the tourism company, the leadership constraints were a major limitation to achieve better financial results according to some interviewees. Managerial positions in the companies are not they only places where leadership qualities and knowledge can or should be developed, according to the president of the Administrative Committee of Ecoturixtlán:

“One of the ideas that we have is that each administrative committee that will be on duty has to go through training, every member of the committee must go through training which can happen in some education institution, for example at the university campus nearby”

Training and improved skills and knowledge about the community’s tourism attractions and resources were identified as key elements that are needed for the improvement of the tourism services. This task corresponds to the guides, most of which are young and have limited knowledge about the community, but the help of senior community members and the will of the manager and administrative committees is needed.

6.5 Results from the focus group

The focus group that took place with representatives from each of the groups mentioned in the previous subsection is presented here i.e. retired community members, women, residents and young people. A summary map with the most mentioned topics is presented in **Figure 35**.

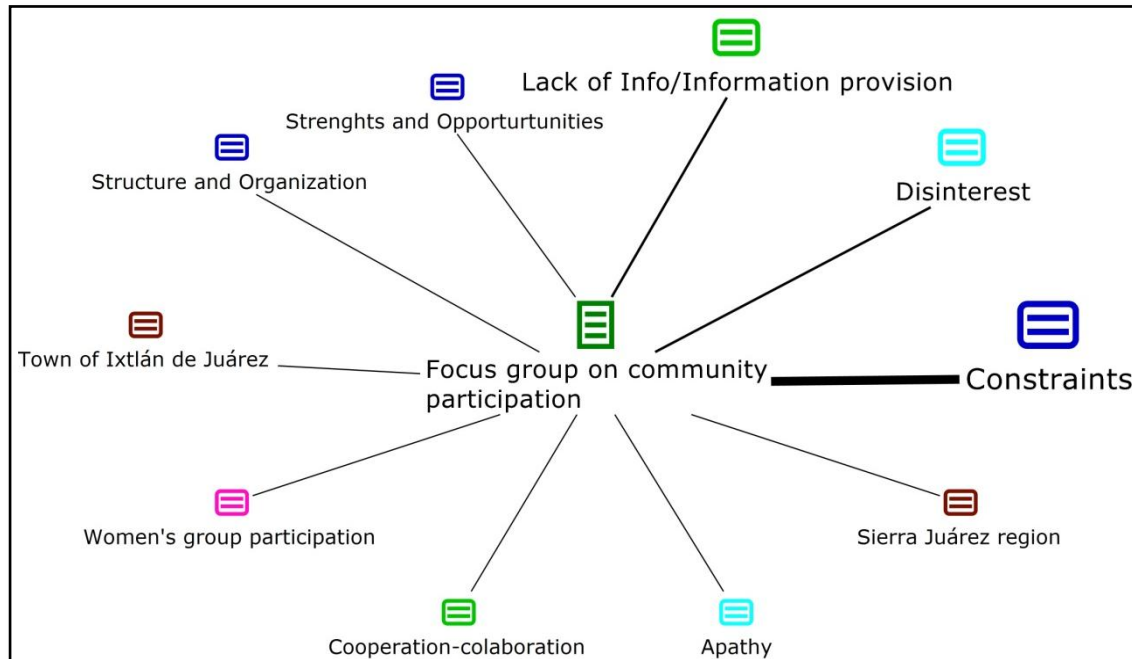


Figure 35 Significant topics discussed during the focus group. Source: Author

The major topic of the discussion was the constraints to participation and to the development of tourism in the community. The decision-making process is long and difficult, even when the assessor commission has already presented possible alternatives for the community members to choose. Approaching this topic, some of the comments by the participants in this way:

“Everyone has their own opinion about anything and therefore this complicates when we want to make a decision and by this process, it is very bureaucratic”

When the facilitator proposed as a discussion the attitude of the community towards tourism development in Ecoturixtlán, there were comments as to what the reason for the current disinterest of the community in this regard. One of the respondents mentioned:

“We can say that Ecoturixtlán until now hasn’t been able to provide good economical results for the community, why do I say it? Because if it were a company that actually provided profits for the community and those profits were distributed among the community members, then they would all be very interested”

Another often mentioned topic during the focus group was the lack of information or information provision mechanisms. The participants argued about the role of the administrator and how free he is to make his own decisions based on his experiences in the company, to which the manager said he did not have as much liberty as he needed to make it work. A community member replied in this way:

“it is not that we don’t want to give you more liberty, it’s just that the information does not exist, the appropriate communication to have a comprehensive knowledge or specific to the case, so that the committee can say yes, this will work , go ahead with your plan”

However, the group found points of agreement in terms of the strengths of the company as to the current structure; pointing out that it was the best structure they have tried in order to manage the company. In this regard, a member of the administrative committee pointed out:

“in many of the communities around Ixtlán that have similar community companies, they do everything using the system of duties, and that is something that Ecoturixtlán has gotten over, well in the case of us in the administrative committees, we still do it, but with the manager, he doesn’t have to be a community member and he is paid like another employee to do his job”

At the end of the focus group and as a result of the free discussion mediated by a facilitator (Khan et al., 1991), the members of the group had agreed on a number of issues and even proposed follow up with an objective to be achieved. Here are presented the points of agreement:

- Ecoturixtlán has the advantages of its organizational structure and diversity of activities for the tourist which other communal companies in the region do not have.
- Participation of women is important for the general assembly and for the community alternative tourism company and they are generally well accepted by their fellow community members.
- In order for Ecoturixtlán to be financially successful, the leadership of not just the general manager but of its overseeing committees is crucial.
- There needs to be better communication and understanding between the committees and the general manager, not just for Ecoturixtlán but for all the community companies.
- Seniors in the community have knowledge and information that could be helpful to the guides of Ecoturixtlán in order to improve their services.
- It was decided that Ecoturixtlán could be a way to rescue the knowledge and traditions in possession of the senior members and that a meeting between the guides and senior community members to discuss this topic should take place.

Chapter VII: Analysis and discussion of results

In this chapter, the results presented in the previous chapters are analyzed in terms of the theoretical elements of community participation.

First, the framework for assessing community participation proposed by Burns *et al* (2004) is applied in the case study. As a complement to this framework, the constraints for community participation in alternative tourism ventures proposed by Tosun (2000) are analyzed in the case of Ecoturixtlán, taking into account the local and regional structure of the tourism sector.

Following, a section discussing the value of Ecoturixtlán as an efficient platform for participation for the community of Ixtlán is presented.

The next section explores the actors and stakeholders involved in Ecoturixtlán, dividing them into two categories of analysis and finally providing a network map of relationships.

Finally, the state of the tourism enterprise itself analyzed with the help of Butler's Tourism Area Life Cycle, taking into account statistical information and qualitative elements of the results and this in turn is coupled with the Irridex proposed by Doxey by evaluating the attitudes of the community towards the alternative tourism company and the tourism sector as a whole.

7.1 Assessing community participation in Ecoturixtlán

As a community with indigenous ascendancy and background, Ixtlán de Juárez presents a certain set of peculiarities to take into account in order to assess its participation in tourism development. At the same time, the tourism sector and in particular community-based alternative tourism enterprises suppose certain organizational capabilities for the community. The conjunction of both contexts is analyzed using the four major dimensions belonging to the framework for community participation discussed in chapter II. However, this is not done through an outside agent perspective implementing a participative intervention, but as an endogenous development project proposed by a member of the community and adopted in consensus as it was the case in Ixtlán de Juárez (Paz et al., 2012).

7.1.1 Influence and power

Two basic power bases were identified in Ixtlán de Juárez, each having their specific aims and jurisdiction clearly defined. On the one hand there is the agrarian unit with its general assembly as its highest authority and organized in different committees and institutions controlling communal territory resources such as the forestry products, biodiversity and the land tenure itself through their eight different community companies (Aquino et al., 2012). On the other hand, there are the municipal authorities in charge of public administration, provision of infrastructure, representation to the exterior of the community, etc (Sastre, 2008).

Unlike other municipalities elsewhere in México, where territorial planning is largely coordinated by the public municipal authorities, in Ixtlán de Juárez this has been largely left to the communal institutions. Nonetheless, the complexity of the tourism sector concerns in some measure the participation of both power bases, but it has not been a pluralistic process in all the stages of its tourism development as the influence of each base is unequal. In order to provide a better picture of the power relations influencing in Ecoturixtlán, **Table 28** divides the policy and influence into the developmental, allocational and organizational arenas for the agrarian unit power base and the municipal power base.

Table 28 Policy arena level of influence on tourism development and description for each power base in Ixtlán
Source: Author, adapted from Reed, 1997

	Developmental	Allocational	Organizational
Community agrarian unit	Very high influence	Medium influence	Very high influence
	Provided the land for the project Requested and negotiated the funding from CDI and other organizations	Has helped support infrastructure Benefits are distributed in terms of membership	Has committees administering Ecoturixtlán The general assembly votes to accept or reject a general manager
Municipal authorities	Very little influence	High influence	Medium influence
	Offers only token political support Grants food selling permits at the local level.	Manages the budget for roads schools, sewage and other services in the town but not in the Ecoturixtlán premises	Organizes festivities using committees People in charge of education and environment in committees

In major tourism destinations in Mexico, the local authorities, that is to say the municipal power instead of state or national, has the control and responsibility for tourism development. The reason for this is that the activity itself takes place at the local level and therefore the decision making has been decentralized (Enríquez et al., 2012). The difference between such municipalities and Ixtlán de Juárez is the land regime; while in other municipalities, land is under the “small private property” regime, in the case of Ixtlán it is all community owned and any decision on these resources belongs solely to the community land unit, i.e. the general assembly (Paz et al., 2012).

In this sense, as shown in **Table 28**, the development of alternative tourism in Ixtlán was largely a communal initiative as it was done on their part, having only a symbolical support from the municipal government. The infrastructure in the town of Ixtlán is a responsibility of the municipal authorities through the funding of the state government that is provided to them. However, the communal authorities have provided funds for the completion of roads as well. Also the municipal authorities must ask for permission when community land is utilized for some infrastructural purpose. Moreover, the allocation of tourism benefits is also largely a communal jurisdiction. Finally, in organizational terms related to tourism development, the agrarian unit wields the most influence as it generates and decides on the structure for tourism management. On the other hand, the municipal authorities organize local festivities through special committees which can be also tourism attractions in the region (Aquino et al., 2012).

There are other actors wielding some measure of power and influence over tourism development in Ixtlán. Although Ecoturixtlán is the major tourism business in the town and the only community-owned, it is certainly not the only business catering to the tourists who stay in Ixtlán. There are a number of restaurants and two hotels that are currently providing services in Ixtlán and which can exert some influence on the development of tourism, although none of them is specialized in alternative tourism.

7.1.2 Capacity building

Since the first stages of Ecoturixtlán as a community company, there has been a process of education of the whole community as to what and how the implementation of alternative tourism can provide support to the community. The historical passage from an agricultural livelihood and from there to the forestry programs of the eighties has helped the community to learn managerial skills useful in the current transition to tourism service orientation that is going on (Fuentes, personal communication). However, leadership qualities in the community are still scarce and sought after as they have had to change their hiring policies in order to be able to get people with better managerial qualities. This kind of outsourcing from the agrarian unit community members to the residents living in Ixtlán has been helpful for the integration of both groups of the community and the inclusion of residents into the decision-making process at the operational level of the community enterprises.

On the other hand, although there are intentions of establishing a program for developing managerial capacities in the community, particularly those members to serve duty in a committee, this has not been accomplished. Training programs have not been implemented on a regular basis either, with only certain cases where outside agents have supported training seminars. The interest of some community members for self-learning and the support of the local university for the development of tourism not just in Ixtlán but the whole region must be highlighted as they are important factors for the improvement of the community’s managerial capacities (Paz et al., 2012).

7.1.3 Communication and training

There was evidence of problems with the provision of timely information for the decision makers of the project i.e. the committees, the general assembly and the general manager of Ecoturixtlán. As one community member noted:

“What we have always requested is that there is information, that we are always informed, sometimes the information is delayed, it is not on time to make an informed decision”

The information flow is contained inside the committees and the general manager or the general assembly at the most. This information is regarded as restricted to the members of the agrarian unit and is by no means shared with non-community members with the exception of the general manager who does not have agrarian rights. Another important issue in regards to information provision is the possibility of misunderstandings between the manager and the committees overseeing him, as it was mentioned in the last chapter, whereby the manager does not trust the committees or vice versa and therefore retain important information.

Alternative tourism can also be a learning experience for the community itself, and this was discussed in the focus group, one of the participants pointing out:

“many things that we didn’t care about before now we can give it its value, its nutritional and scientific value, then this is lacking in Ecotourism here, to let people know about their biodiversity so that they are more interested... giving them information...I think that’s what we need, to have environmental education for us”

This knowledge that alternative tourism can provide to the community should be coupled with the traditional knowledge that was also present in the community, but which recent research shows that it is slowly dying with the older generations (Aquino et al., 2012). In this sense, alternative tourism could provide an avenue for rescuing this knowledge (Paz, 2013).

Moreover, even though there were not any apprenticeship programs being officially implemented, high seasons of tourism demand provide opportunities for hiring up to 15 temporal employees, most of them young students from the local high school and university and which work for a week or two, being enough to learn about the basics of the dynamics of alternative tourism (Wood, 1998). Finally, the transference of knowledge among community enterprises, be it through active collaboration or through the indirect transfer when workers change their employment from one to the other was found to be important in the dynamics of participation. In this sense, one former employee of Forestry Technical Services pointed out:

“I worked 11 years for Forestry Technical Services and this has helped me a lot for giving talks to the tourists and explaining to them how we use our forest, mostly when we walk through areas that have been used for forestry”

It is in this sense that the rotation of personnel among companies is a beneficial factor for the community, however when this process is too fast it can also be detrimental.

7.1.4 Tourism impacts and outcomes

For the purpose of analyzing the allocation of impacts and distribution of benefits in the community, this study divided these in two categories: direct and indirect benefits. In order to further analyze these findings, **Table 29** presents a matrix summarizing the allocation of benefits among the different community groups identified during the study:

Table 29 Matrix of distribution of benefits among community groups. Source: Author

		Community groups benefited						
		Active community members	Retired community members	Community members residents	Local schools	Local business people	Young people	Women
Direct benefits	Job creation	Highly benefited	No benefits	Low benefits	No benefits	Low benefits	Highly benefited	Moderate benefits
	Local business involvement/improved overall economy	Low benefits	No benefits	Low benefits	No benefits	Highly benefited	Low benefits	Low benefits
	Profits distribution	Highly benefited	Moderate benefits	No benefits	No benefits	No benefits	No benefits	Low benefits
	Pension for the elderly (partially supplied)	No benefits	Highly benefited	No benefits	No benefits	No benefits	No benefits	No benefits
	Free access to facilities and discounts	Highly benefited	Highly benefited	Low benefits	Moderate benefits	No benefits	Low benefits	Low benefits
	Support for festivities and infrastructure	Highly benefited	Highly benefited	Highly benefited	Highly benefited	Highly benefited	Highly benefited	Highly benefited
Indirect benefits	Improved image of the community	Highly benefited	Highly benefited	Highly benefited	Highly benefited	Highly benefited	Highly benefited	Highly benefited
	Conservation/protection of the forest	Highly benefited	Highly benefited	Low benefits	Low benefits	Moderate benefits	Low benefits	Low benefits
	Employment for relatives	Highly benefited	Highly benefited	Low benefits	No benefits	Low benefits	Moderate benefits	Moderate benefits
	Capacity building and learning opportunities	Highly benefited	Highly benefited	Low benefits	Highly benefited	No benefits	Highly benefited	Highly benefited



No benefits



Moderate benefits



Low benefits



Highly benefited

The division of groups in **Table 29** is by no means exclusive in relation to each other, since very clearly they can overlap, i.e. a young resident woman who participates by working for Ecoturixtlán as a receptionist is possible and in fact there are such cases. From this analysis it is clear that the most benefited groups in any respect are the members of the community with agrarian rights. This is not surprising, since it was them who fought for the end of concessions and the establishment of the legal rights on the land (Fuentes & Barkin, 2012b). However, the residents of Ixtlán have an active participation in the job creation benefits and the involvement of local businesses in the development of tourism, that is to say, the exclusion of this part of the community in the appropriation of resources has not been a hindering problem for Ixtlán de Juárez, as it has been in other communities of the region (Ramirez, personal communication). Local school children and teenagers are also benefited through the access to the facilities, learning from the guides and participating in conferences. As to the local businessmen, they can get involved through two mechanisms, first they can be directly approached by Ecoturixtlán for supplies and other products and second, they can be approached by the tourist themselves who either need lodging or supplies. Young people's participation is crucial at the operational level working for Ecoturixtlán, as was explained in the previous chapter but they also get strongly benefited with learning and capacity building.

In the case of the retired community members, a monthly pension consisting of approximately \$350 Mexican Pesos (€21.4-\$28USD) is given to about 150 people. The funds for these payments do not come directly from Ecoturixtlán, instead, they are administered by the Committee of Communal resources and are the result of *all the community enterprises*. Although Ecoturixtlán has been in a difficult financial situation, it still pays the monthly rent of approximately 30,000 Mexican pesos (€1,833-\$2,400 USD) to the community agrarian unit for the use of the premises. This contribution as well as the salaries for the 13 permanent jobs and the involvement of local businesses comprises the main economic inputs of Ecoturixtlán to the community.

As for women, their participation is still limited, like that of young people to operational issues in the most part, but unlike young people, they can get better profits distribution in an indirect way when they are part of a household with an active community member. This is better explained as a cultural issue whereby men represent women at the household level (Ramos, personal communication).

In general, the findings of the study indicate the existence of important direct and indirect benefits, however the perception of the community reveals an emphasis on the possible economic gains for the community and an opinion that this has not been accomplished, at least not with the last few years of the company. Nonetheless, as shown in Table 28, indirect benefits are far more reaching than direct benefits, but seldom taken into account by the community members. The most important indirect benefits resulting from Ecoturixtlán are the promotion of a better image of Ixtlán as a community to the outside and the conservation of the forest; these benefits are the most encompassing of all, together with the support of the local festivities by Ecoturixtlán and its sister companies through the Committee of Communal Resources (Aquino, personal communication).

7.2 Constraints and limitations to participation

Obstacles in the process of participation in tourism development for the community of Ixtlán de Juárez were analyzed in the perspective of the typology of limitations to community participation proposed by Tosun (2000) which include structural constraints, associated with institutional, power structures, legal background or the economic organization, the operational constraints, related to the actual management and organization of the tourism enterprise itself and finally cultural constraints, concerned with the inherent traits of the community that translate into obstacles for meaningful participation. The analysis presented here however, is only taking into account the local level in Ixtlán de Juárez and the actors and stake holders with a local base.

7.2.1 Structural constraints

The communal companies of Ixtlán de Juárez are currently going through a process of disintegration, from the main chain of forestry processing, into different and autonomous companies managed by a single director and overseen by committees. Ecoturixtlán represents the end of this chain for the appropriation of the forest as a servicing enterprise and whose mission is to help to protect the forests owned by the community i.e. agrarian land unit, and improve the economy of the community (Ecoturixtlán, 2012). In this sense, the managing approach chosen by the community for their communal companies is not a traditional cooperative-like structure, but for most of them it is a hybrid of private company practices and socially owned enterprises (Paz et al., 2012). This approach is also a little away from the management structures found in community-based ecotourism enterprises, whereby the participation of the community is more direct and has not been so formalized as with Ecoturixtlán (Guerrero, 2010; Wood, 1998). As was mentioned in the chapter dedicated to results, this hybrid structure is seen by the community members and the general manager alike as an advantage of Ecoturixtlán, when compared to other regional community-owned enterprises which still have more cooperative-like managing approaches. However, this also poses serious problems for the inclusion of the community, especially in the decision-making process, by which it becomes more centralized around the manager and the administrative committees. In this sense, what constitutes an advantage for quicker and more efficient decision making process also becomes detrimental for a wider inclusion through participative democracy.

Another structural constraint to take into account is the lack of involvement of the municipal authorities in the tourism sector in a formal way. In this sense, tourism management is solely contested at the community agrarian level and the municipal authorities are left out in the decision making process. Even in policy, the municipal government does not have any sort of liaison or committee overseeing the activities and collaborating with the community company (Aquino et al., 2012). As it is, there is a break in the public sector involvement in tourism, with a heavy emphasis at the federal and state level but non-existent at the local level, at least not in the municipality of Ixtlán de Juárez.

7.2.2 Operational constraints

On the operational level, it was found that the actual location of the alternative tourism enterprise outside of the settlement represented a constraint for the participation of the wider community. Only some of the routes and packages offered by Ecoturixtlán contain a visit to the town itself, and the focus of this visit is limited to the church, an attraction because of its historical legacy for Ixtlán (Ecoturixtlán, 2012). There are also guided visits to the town during the main festivities but this takes place only once a year. In this sense, the wider community is to some degree put aside at the operational level, as the tourism activities do not have an influence of their daily lives.

Another manifestation of a constraint at the operational level of the tourism activities is the lack of knowledge. This is visible in two levels, on the one hand the guides, who constitute the main mediators between the community and the tourists (Wood, 1998), generally have a limited knowledge of tourism activities and the history and organization of their community. This is not only in detriment of participation but it also affects the quality of the service provided. As it was pointed out by the general manager of Ecoturixtlán himself:

“When you go to the premises of Ecoturixtlán and participate in an excursion, you’ll see that we have serious maintenance problems, we have serious training problems, our personnel is not properly trained in an optimal way, and therefore the quality of the service is now in a medium level, but we are trying to address all these problems”

On the other hand, another level where the lack of information and knowledge is manifested as an operational constraint to participation is in regards of the knowledge of the community, what

Ecoturixtlán is and what it does. The findings of this study indicate that the community members have a general idea of what Ecoturixtlán is all about, but it is still vague and in general does not offer any details in terms of specific series such as which excursions they have, which packages they offer, etc. This is an indicator also of the lack of interest showed throughout the community in the general for what alternative tourism can provide to them (Roberts, 2011). In any case, the low awareness showed by the community is a constraint also to the possible promotion of the tourism activities taking place in the town.

7.2.3 Cultural constraints

Completing the constraint analysis, certain cultural limitations were found to affect community participation in Ecoturixtlán. On the very basic level, their organizational model, being a result of their historical, political and legal background and adapted to a culture of indigenous ascendancy, poses limitations for the inclusion of all groups into the decision making process and the allocation of benefits. In this sense, what is desirable from a theoretical perspective of community participation is not always possible or even suitable for the community in a practical approach. This is clear in terms of the role of women in family nucleus as taking care of the household, that of seniors as community members who deserve to be undisturbed as they have already served their duties and of young people as inexperienced members who must watch, learn and serve their duties to increment their privileges and participate more (Aquino et al., 2012). Although many of these roles have been changing in part by outside influences, they are still present and represent in a sense a constraint to be taken into account. Finally, besides these role limitations for certain community groups, the traditional resource appropriation by the community also plays a role in influencing certain attitudes and preconceptions of what tourism can provide. Accustomed as they have been to forestry as a mayor community economic activity, tourism has been met by some with certain skepticisms and disdain which has led to disinterest or downright apathy towards the development of the activity. This is also the result of not setting clear objectives as to what bidding for tourism development could provide to the community, generating false expectations in some, followed by disillusionment and finally disinterest (Ramos & Rodríguez, 2013; Roberts, 2011).

7.3 Strengths of Ecoturixtlán as a platform for participation

As a complement to the discussion offered in the previous section, the capabilities of Ecoturixtlán as a medium for community participation must also be taken into consideration, based on the findings of this study.

Although certain disinterest is present among the community, the dynamics of the tourism sector can be an avenue for changing local attitudes towards tourism. The segments of the tourism market to which Ecotourism has been catering are varied and have different interests, including the desire to learn more about the community and its organizational forms which at the moment is not well addressed. The possibility of an intercultural dialogue between tourists and the community can persuade some members of the community to give alternative tourism a chance (Azevedo, 2008).

On the other hand, Ecoturixtlán has also been a way to link the new generations of young community members with the richness of their territory and the prospect of learning from the traditional knowledge that is left within the senior population (Paz, 2013), which was also the conclusion of the focus group during this study.

Finally, the long establishment of Ecoturixtlán as a serious community company that has been struggling to withstand pressures from within and without is also one of its strengths in order to keep serving as a participation platform. As pointed out by a community member serving in the administrative committee:

“After 15 years, Ecoturixtlán is a company that cannot go back to what it was before, it is a consolidated company because of all the infrastructure that it has, and the human and financial capital that it manages, we cannot just say now 'it didn't work, we better try to do something else', it is a process that is already on its tracks”

The implementation of adaptation strategies in order to keep up with the demands of the tourists and the involvement of new generations of community members is manifested in the opening of their newly designed web page and its presence in important social networks, where both community members and possible tourists can interact.

7.4 Actors and stakeholders in relation to Ecoturixtlán

The relationships and participation of all groups, actors and stakeholders is important for analyzing the dynamics of the process in Ecoturixtlán. This is relevant considering that for the development of tourism, the community itself is a “set of multiple actors with formal and informal rules and norms that shape their interaction in local level processes” (Muganda et al., 2013). However, outside agents are also affecting these processes, providing funding, technical support, making policies and enforcing laws and should be taken into account for a more holistic analysis. For the purpose of this study, the significant actors and stakeholders involved in Ecoturixtlán have been classified into three categories, inside groups in the community context, the regional stakeholders and finally national/international agents.

7.4.1 Community context groups and stakeholders

Local actors and stakeholders have either a direct or indirect or not yet established relationship to the alternative tourism enterprise. According to the findings of the study these include:

- Communal resource committee, administrative and vigilance committees, the assessor commission, the manager and employees of Ecoturixtlán and the general assembly. These actors and stakeholders have leading roles and are directly involved in the community enterprise.
- Community members who are retired, women, young people, local schools, local businesses, other community enterprises and residents of the community have minor roles in alternative tourism in Ecoturixtlán.
- Municipal authorities including the president of the municipality, *síndico* and *regidores* figures of authority, municipal committees, neighborhood organizations, the local churches and priests and the House of Culture, a local institution involved in saving the cultural heritage of Ixtlán. These stakeholders are currently only spectators in the tourism development of the community but are included as possible links for the future development of the activity.

7.4.2 Regional context

In the regional level, having in mind not only the Sierra de Juárez region but also the city of Oaxaca, the actors and stakeholders include:

- The tourism market demand including the local, national and international tourists having a direct relationship to Ecoturixtlán.
- The state ministry of tourism, the local university UNSIJ and other universities in Oaxaca, the Network of Ecotourism and a coordinator who acts as a contact for getting large groups of tourists.
- Marketing consultancies involved in making commercials and other promotional material for the company.

- Other alternative tourism companies that have similar tourism products and compete for the same segments of the markets in the region (Ramos & Rodríguez, 2013).
- A group coordinator which is the link between travel agencies in the national market and the local enterprises in Oaxaca.

7.4.3 National and international stakeholders

At the national and international there are governmental and non-governmental organizations providing funding and technical help and a structural background for tourism organization, as it was described in chapter IV. Among these institutions are the following:

- Governmental organizations such as the national tourism ministry (SECTUR), the CDI, SEMARNAT which is in charge of natural resources and environmental issues, the tax collection agency in México SAT and CONAFOR which is related to the management of forests at the national level (Paz et al., 2012).
- Non-governmental organizations that have been involved include the World Wildlife Fund and the Forest Stewardship Council.
- Universities at the national and international level that have made research and continue to do it in Ixtlán de Juárez (Sastre, 2008) and the civil association in charge of certifying companies that comply with the norm NMX-133 on sustainable tourism management.
- The national and international tourism market stakeholders which include tour operators and travel agencies, national organization of certified ecotourism enterprises, and the demand side of the market.

According to this typology of actors and stakeholders, the following map presented as Figure 36 shows the different interactions, from a direct involvement, indirect, collaboration, competition or non-involvement in Ecoturixtlán and considering different context of relation.

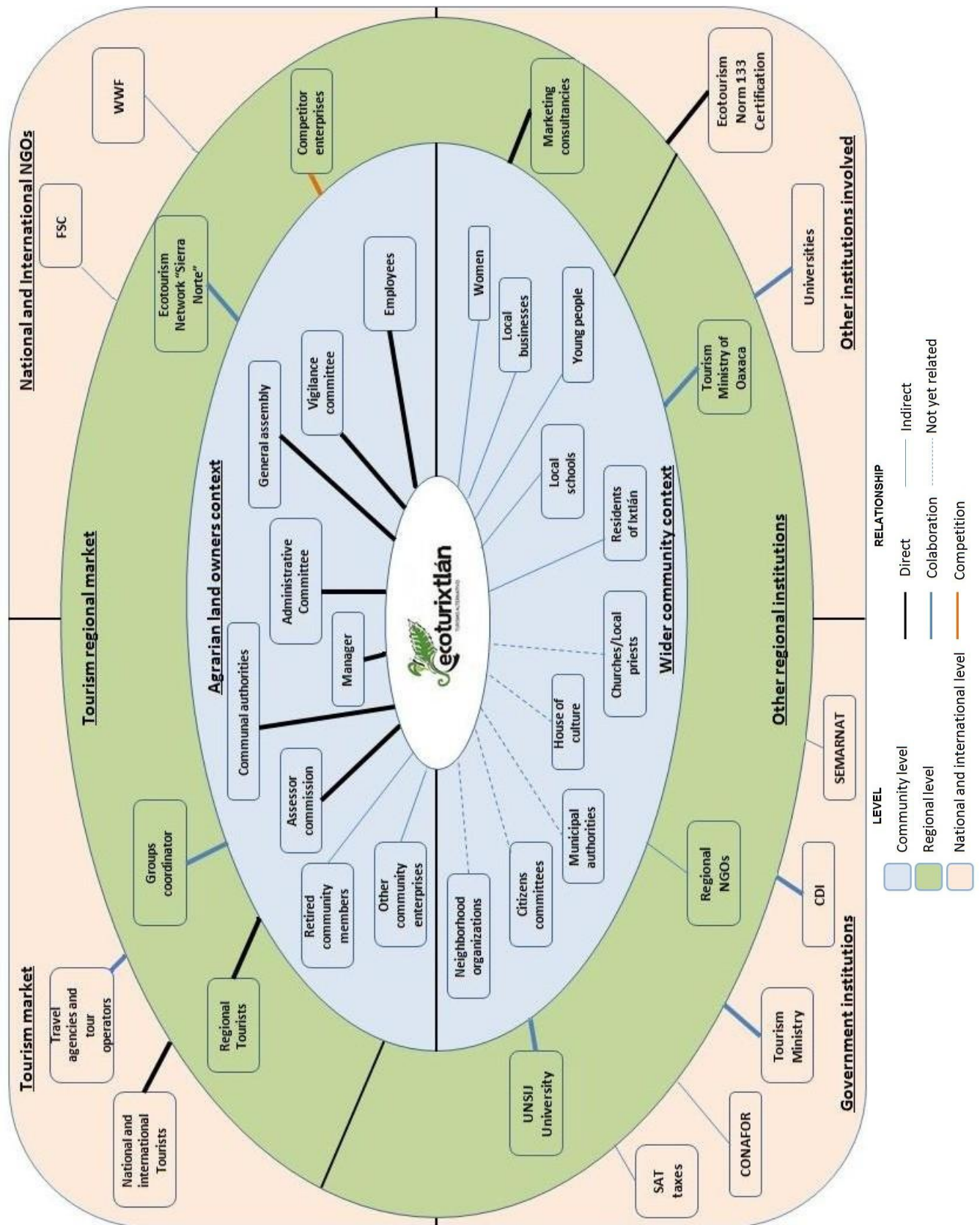


Figure 36 Map of actors and stakeholders involved in Ecoturixtlán. Source: Author

7.5 Applying the TALC and Irridex models to Ecoturixtlán

Ecoturixtlán could hardly be a genuine long term platform for the participation of the community if it does not succeed in attracting tourists to the town and its premises and providing them a quality alternative tourism experience (CESTUR, 2007). In this sense, it becomes relevant to analyze the current situation of the community company in terms of its success as a tourism enterprise. In order to do this, Butler's Tourism Area Life Cycle is used in conjunction with Doxey's Irridex index of community attitudes towards tourism (Butler, 1980, 2006; Doxey, 1975). The inputs for this analysis are secondary statistical data gathered by the State Tourism Ministry in Oaxaca and provided by the general manager of Ecoturixtlán and primary qualitative data gathered during fieldwork which provide insights into the current and past attitudes of the community towards tourism development (Secretaria de Turismo de Oaxaca, 2012).

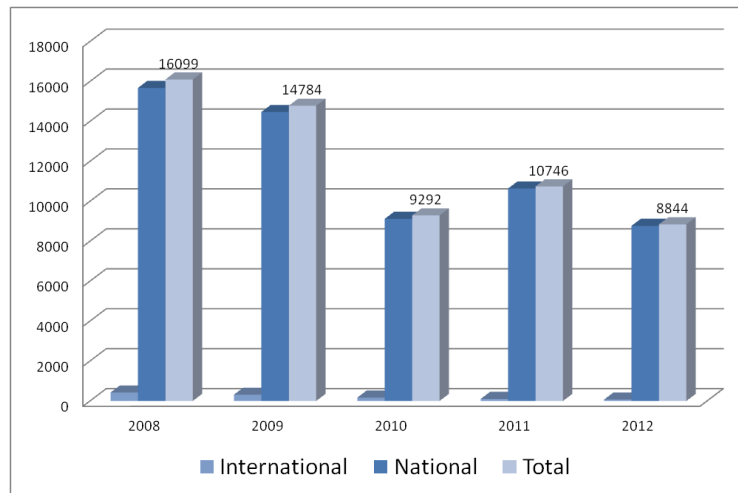


Figure 37 Evolution of tourist arrivals to Ecoturixtlán. Source: This study using data from Oaxaca State Ministry of Tourism, 2012

Figure 37 shows the evolution in the arrival of tourists to Ecoturixtlán in the last five years. From this it is clear that the main customers that Ecoturixtlán is currently catering to are the regional tourists coming from Oaxaca City as well as the national tourists coming from elsewhere. For example, in 2012 only less than 1 percent of the arrivals to Ecoturixtlán were international tourists, while 99 percent were domestic tourists. Figure 37 presents an alarming decline in tourism arrivals for Ecoturixtlán, from approximately 16,000 in 2008 to about 8,800 by 2012.

The general decline in tourism activity in the region is not the reason for this rapid decline for Ecoturixtlán, as the same source of statistical information reports an increment of almost 20 percent in the tourism arrivals for the Sierra Norte region from about 49,000 tourists in 2008 to about 59,000 in 2012 (Secretaria de Turismo de Oaxaca, 2012). Instead, it is necessary to analyze the local dynamics of tourism and the influence that some crucial factors have had in the development of Ecoturixtlán.

In late 2007, the neighboring town of Capulápan a collaborator in the Ecotourism Network but also one of the most important competitors for Ecoturixtlán in the regional market of alternative tourism was awarded a certificate as a Magic Town (Spanish "Pueblo Mágico"). SECTUR's "Magic Towns" program was developed in order to contribute to the tourism development of small towns that have "symbolical attributes, legends, myths, history and transcendental events as well as everyday customs and traditions that confer it a sense of "magical" in the collective imaginary" (SECTUR, 2007b). In this sense, Capulápan received significant funding to improve important infrastructure and general aesthetic characteristics of the town. This began to attract more tourists to the Capulápan which is only further down the highway, only minutes away from Ixtlán de Juárez. Figure 38 compares the evolution of both

destinations in the same period. What is evident is the general increment of tourists in Capulálpán and the decline in Ixtlán. The certification as a “magic town” might have played a major role in this trend.

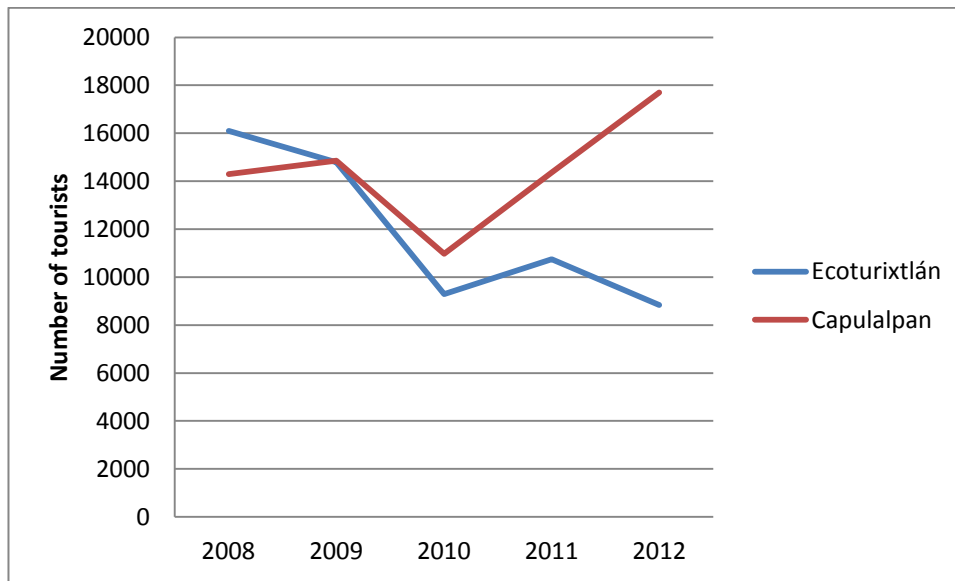
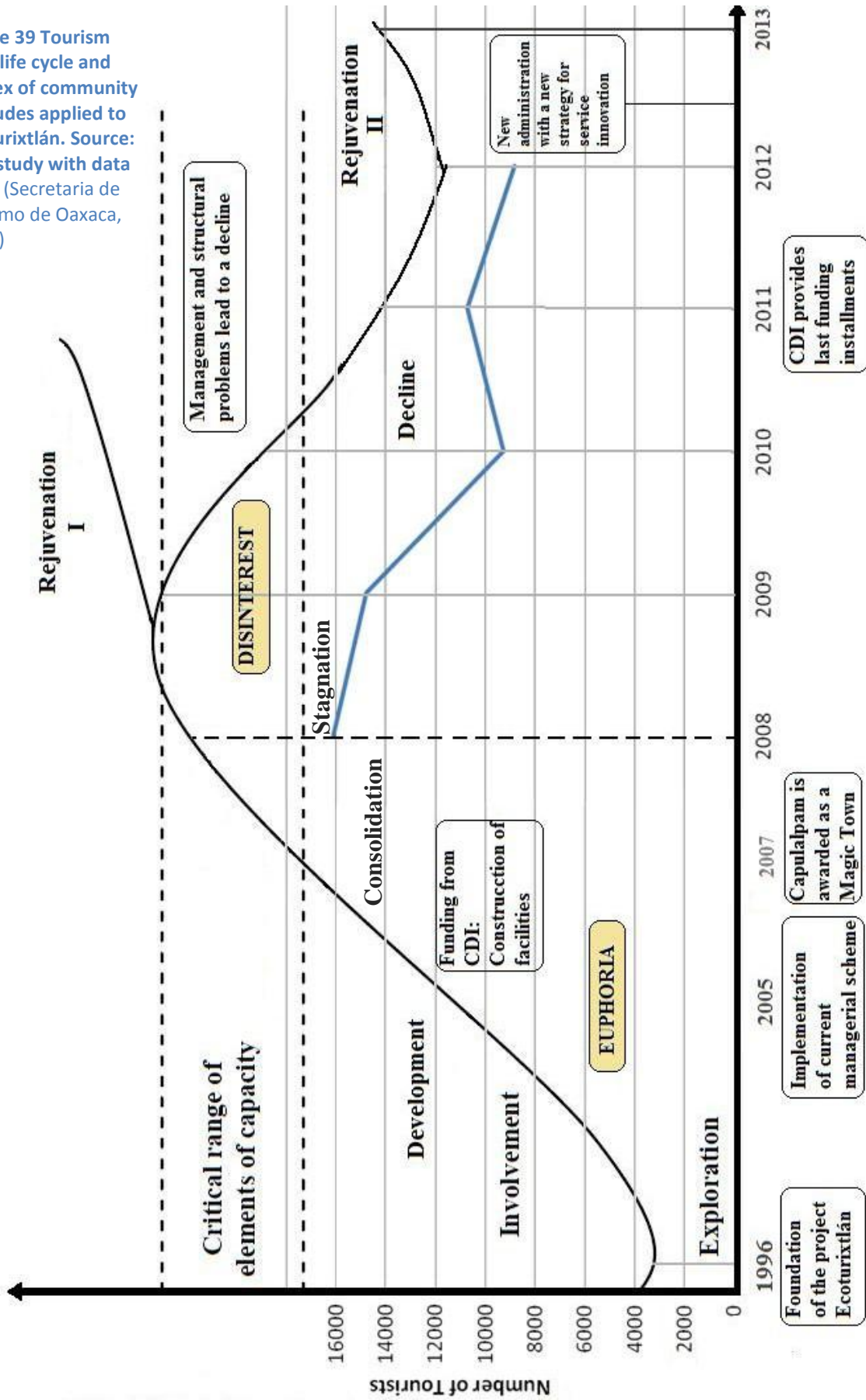


Figure 38 Comparison in the evolution of tourist arrivals for Ecoturixtlán and Capulálpán (2008-2012) Source: Author, based on data provided by Oaxaca Ministry of Tourism (2012).

Moreover, poor administrative practices and leadership between the years 2009 and 2011 also have been pointed out by members of the community as causes of Ecoturixtlán’s decline. Taking into account this information, **Figure 39** summarizes the development of Ecoturixtlán until now and couples with the TALC and Irridex models, with some adaptations to the case of study (Zhong et al., 2008).

Figure 39 Tourism area life cycle and Irridex of community attitudes applied to Ecoturixtlán. Source: This study with data from (Secretaria de Turismo de Oaxaca, 2012)



Coupling the information of tourist arrivals to Ecoturixtlán to the Butler's model and Doxey's Irridex , **Figure 39** shows the major phases of the development of Ecoturixtlán. As an explorative phase, it began in late 1995 when it was first proposed by a community member and in 1996 when it was officially founded as a community-owned alternative tourism enterprise. During its beginnings, tourism activities were not formalized and the actual lodging and provision of other services took place in the town itself (Paz et al., 2012). Community attitudes ranged from curiosity, and genuine interest in understanding the activities.

In the involvement phase, community members began lobbying for resources at the state and federal level. Some NGOs also got involved, such as the World Wildlife Fund for Nature (WWF) and the Forest Stewardship Council (FSC). During this phase, the general attitudes of the community can be in general described the euphoria stage, according to Doxey's Irridex; people were excited with the prospects of getting funding, constructing the cabins and receiving people.

Immediately following this phase, the community managed to get significant funding from the CDI and began with the developmental phase of the project. Facilities for the accommodation of tourists in the form of cabins, a restaurant and the conference room were built using the funding from the federal government. At this time the community enterprise began to formalize the activities, with guides getting training and even uniforms and it is during this year, 2005, that the current managerial scheme in the company was implemented.

By 2007 Ecoturixtlán was already a consolidated alternative tourism option in the region and in 2008 it reached its highest capacity; the cabins were not enough to accommodate everyone as there were groups of people coming in buses to the premises of the community enterprise. A long time employee recalls those times pointing out:

“We had uniforms, it was like a theme park. During spring break we had a lot of people, we even had to set up tents, they even slept in the caretaker's cottage... buses came filled with people and we used to sell up to 80 trouts every weekend. There were many more employees too”

The consolidation of Ecoturixtlán was followed by a brief period of stagnation, as its critical elements of capacity were reached. According to the TALC model, the rejuvenation stage follows stagnation when these elements are replenished (marked as Rejuvenation I in Figure 39). In the case of Ecoturixtlán, the lack of leadership and internal conflicts were factors that prevented reaching this stage.

In 2007, the neighboring town of Capulálpán received the certification of magic town which coupled with bad management practices from 2009-2011, (a brief period during which the communal authorities changed the manager several times), marked the decline of Ecoturixtlán as an important alternative tourism destination in the region. In 2011, the national commission for the development of indigenous peoples stopped giving funding to Ixtlán, making the situation even worse. This also led to the general disinterest in tourism matters in the community and in some cases apathy towards the community company. However, no clear antagonism was reported or shown in the community towards tourism, not even in the consolidated stage of the enterprise.

In mid 2012, a new administration of Ecoturixtlán began, with new ideas and prospects to improve the quality of the service and providing innovation. This could mark the beginning of a possible rejuvenation stage, marked with the second position in Figure 39, (Rejuvenation II). The prospects for the community are quite challenging, as the competition with similar enterprises is high, in any case the community in general would play an important role in its revival.

Chapter VIII: Conclusions, recommendations and further research needs

This chapter is concerned with the final outcomes of the results and analysis of this research and gives a set of recommendations for the advancement of Ecoturixtlán both as an alternative tourism center and as a platform for the participation of the community.

As a first section the conclusions of the thesis in terms of each of the specific objectives are reviewed, followed by a brief discussion on the status of the hypothesis stated in the first chapter of the thesis. Next, a section is dedicated to a brief discussion on the prospects for the future of the community company as a concluding remark for the previous analysis on the development of tourism in Ixtlán de Juárez.

Some recommendations are proposed regarding three groups identified in the community i.e. the administration of Ecoturixtlán, (including the general manager and committees) the community members with land rights and the community members with residential status. The suggested changes and enforcements are done taking into account the daily operation of the enterprise, the structures and institutions for decision-making and distribution of benefits and responsibilities.

The final section of the chapter deals with some limitations and constraints related to the actual fieldwork and the approach taken for the research and suggests new avenues for future research according to the knowledge vacuums identified in the during their development.

8.1 Conclusions

In the theoretical-conceptual realm, the initial allocation of alternative tourism and its role for the development of communities according to the principles of sustainability was deemed a necessary basis for setting the context of the study. Likewise, the establishment of a working definition for the concepts of community participation and community-based tourism was an important step towards analyzing the situation of Ecoturixtlán as a case study. Finally, the definition of conceptual approaches for the development of tourism was found relevant for this study as it gave room for comparison and analysis.

The guiding specific objectives were set to provide a basis for the completion of the main objective of the thesis. In this sense, they build on each other and are complementary, creating the smaller pieces of the big picture for the assessment of community participation in the case study of Ecoturixtlán. The conclusions that follow are structured according to each specific objective of the study.

The literature review, analysis of secondary data and interviews with local researchers revealed numerous works and information pertaining the study area in various fields, from which it was possible to provide the general social and economical living conditions, natural characteristics, organizational structure and environmental problems of the region and their relation to the practice of alternative tourism. The conclusions drawn in relation to this contextualization of the study area include the following:

- The community of Ixtlán de Juárez in the municipality bearing the same name is located in a highly complex social, political and cultural environment that is the result of the hybridism between their indigenous ascendancy, colonial domination and nationalistic policies.
- Likewise, the area is one of the most biodiverse areas in the world and offers a rich natural heritage that is now being managed by the community.
- The diversification of economic activities has been a major strategy adopted by the community of Ixtlán de Juárez, and in the case of Ecoturixtlán, has also served as an avenue for receiving significant funding from outside agents.

During the fieldwork, the interviews with key actors revealed details regarding the diversity and structure of the communal enterprises in Ixtlán de Juárez. Alternative tourism in Ixtlán de Juárez has

been a business with a relative long duration and is now in consolidation. In relation to the other community companies and the attitudes of the community, the following conclusions can be drawn:

- Before disintegration, most community enterprises related to the forest were part of the UCFAS enterprise, comprising the whole chain of forestry, from extraction to product manufacture and recreational uses of the forest.
- Ecoturixtlán is at the end of the chain of forestry production in the sense that it completes the whole cycle of resource management, from extraction to recreational uses.
- Ecoturixtlán is currently going through a decline in tourism arrivals, with the possibility of rejuvenation through product innovation. However, this means that Ecoturixtlán is one of the companies in bad financial shape which, coupled with the lack of more public funding, results in a general disinterest of the community.
- The main benefit of Ecoturixtlán is not necessarily generating income for the community in terms of profits, but instead is expressed by giving jobs to young people, contributing to the good image of the community and most importantly ensuring the protection of the forest resources.

The organization of the wider community has advanced the possibilities for inclusion and community participation in alternative tourism but it also means inherent constraints. The analysis presented in this study contemplates the following conclusions:

- The community of Ixtlán de Juárez is heterogeneous in the sense that it includes people from various groups. The most important division is the distinction between community members with agrarian lands and those who have only a residential status and whose participation is thus limited.
- Likewise, two major power bases were identified in the study. First there is the community agrarian unit made up of the community members forming the general assembly and other bodies. Second, the municipal authorities, which do not participate in land or communal companies decisions.
- Since 2005, Ecoturixtlán and most of the other seven communal companies have implemented a managerial scheme that enables for more efficient decision making but at the same time limits community participation at the operational level.
- The distribution of direct benefits generated by Ecoturixtlán and the other companies also follows the logic of community member vs. resident, putting first the former. Nonetheless, other more general benefits of the company are more widely distributed, such as the improvement of the general economic conditions in the town.

The social appropriation of natural resources in the communal territory of Ixtlán was found to be a historically divided process and also very dynamic, responding to outside influences and adapting to them. From this specific objective, the following conclusions can be drawn:

- The community of Ixtlán de Juárez has gone through the three major stages of economic activities appropriating their natural resources, first as farmers and loggers, then moving to industrial forestry and furniture production and finally appropriating their resources for tourism services.
- The realization of the possibility to include tourism as another way for using the forest did not come to the community as an outside agent intervention. Instead, the development was first

endogenous and informal, with the later provision of outside funding facilitated and negotiated by community members as well.

- The community cannot afford to be dependent on its forest resources, and in this sense, other alternatives besides alternative tourism have been proposed and are now being implemented e.g. investing in real estate in Oaxaca, etc.

In the light of the findings and results obtained and compared to what the working definition of community afforded for this study and its further meaning for participation, the hypothesis stated at the beginning of the thesis as such is rejected. Ecoturixtlán does not take into account *all* members of the community for the decision making processes concerning resource management, this is only partially so. Moreover, *tequio* and mutual help play significant roles in the both the municipal and communal spheres, but these systems are currently not related to the practice of alternative tourism in Ixtlán de Juárez. This took place only during the beginning of the project and contemplated the community members with agrarian rights exclusively. Finally, the last piece of the hypothesis can be said to be true, as the community company has accomplished its mission to create among the members and residents alike a sense of ownership and pride of their community, as was demonstrated by the results.

8.2 Prospects for Ecoturixtlán

The alternative tourism center is now in a critical stage of its development. The statistical information and the qualitative results derived from direct observations confirm this affirmation. It is for this reason that the decisions of the committees, general manager and general assembly are crucial as to determine what will come next. The following are the focal points to be considered

- **Revision of mission and vision statements.** Ecoturixtlán was founded to be an alternative tourism center, however it does not necessarily mean that alternative tourism could be the most profitable model, at least in financial terms. Up to now, the biggest segment for Ecoturixtlán is the regional market coming from Oaxaca, which is less demanding in ecotourism activities and focuses more on recreational and family activities. Ecoturixtlán could work as a recreational park but keeping its sustainability principles and foundations (Ramos, personal communication).
- **Upgrading the quality of the services.** What is a major constraint for the success of Ecoturixtlán is the poor quality of some of its services. The focal point here is the training of the guides (CESTUR, 2007). Establishing a certification and training program and also maintaining the guides working by keeping the rotation of personnel low are essential measures to be taken.
- **Marketing and promotion of Ecoturixtlán.** It is fundamental to promote Ecoturixtlán through the appropriate channels that will contact the segments to which the services are meant for. The current use of internet-based social networks is a very significant achievement. However, there are other opportunities to be harnessed, such as the possibility of an English-based website and the promotion in specialized websites for international markets.
- **Networking and learning from other's experiences.** Finally, although Ecoturixtlán is currently the member of the Network of Ecotourism in the Sierra Norte, there are other possibilities for membership. The advantage of becoming a member of these organizations is the possibility of sharing knowledge and experiences that will ultimately improve the quality of the services provided (Chávez, 2010).

8.3 Recommendations

What follows is a set of recommendations, based on the interpretation of the results through the perspective of community participation in an alternative tourism project. A previous note on this,

however, must be added: the participation of any individual or group is ultimately a matter of individual decision and it may or may not be suitable or even possible due to cultural factors, legal and political factors. Having this in mind, the following recommendations have only a suggestion value.

8.3.1 Regarding the manager and administration of Ecoturixtlán

- The possibility of giving more decision making power to the other employees is suggested as a way for advancing participation.
- Employees should have the opportunity to get involved in the meetings between the general manager and the committees as they could provide more insights and details in the decisions to be taken.
- Implementing more excursion routes and activities taking place in the town itself could be a way to improve the participation of the wider community and of local people. Places to visit could include: the local street market selling regional products every Monday, collaboration with the House of Culture and the Historian of Ixtlán as well as with the local churches and their representatives.
- As was concluded in the focus group of this research, the involvement of the older generations would be beneficial for improving the service of the guides.

8.3.2 Regarding the community members with agrarian rights

- Giving more room for inclusion. Although it is recognized that community members with agrarian rights were actively involved in fighting for their land communal titles, it is suggested that more mechanisms for the inclusion of residents are implemented, as long as these do not encroach on the rights of the former.
- An informative campaign regarding Ecoturixtlán, its mission and vision, its objectives put clearly and its main value for the community should be carried out in order to fight attitudes of disinterest, apathy or disdain towards the alternative tourism center (Roberts, 2011).
- Participation mechanisms for women and young people should be reassessed, as they still represent a small proportion in the total number of active community members.

8.3.3 Regarding residents and the community at large

- The municipal authorities should create a joint panel on tourism development involving representatives from the community members with residential status and community members with agrarian rights. The creation of a liaison position between both authorities regarding this issue is also deemed a possible suggestion.
- The general assembly of citizens, which in time elects the municipal authorities, should consider among its issues, the tourism sector. This is suggested due to the fact that Ecoturixtlán does not represent *the entire* tourism sector in Ixtlán de Juárez; there are other local businesses interested in tourism development.
- The inclusion of other institutions, such as the churches, cultural institutions such as the House of Culture, representative from the transportation sector, etc. should also be contemplated.

8.4 Study limitations and avenues for further research needs

Finally, a self critical element is presented in this section, regarding the limits of this study in the theoretical, methodological and analytical-interpretative perspectives followed by what this means for the possibility of future research projects in the study area or in the same topic.

In terms of the theoretical perspective from which the study case was analyzed was that of community participation circumscribed within the framework of sustainable development through alternative tourism. In this sense, it borrows from several conceptual frameworks to create a sort of composite lens. However, it is recognized that the study could have taken a different theoretical approach, taking into

account the perspective of indigenous communities and what role they play in development and using post-colonialism development theories. This is something that this study *does not* address in any form.

From the methodological perspective, the study tried to encompass a wide set of data collection carrying out a triangulation between data sets. However, this meant that neither of the approaches was deep enough to get the complete insight even when compared. As a result this work is by no means meant as a rigorous ethnographic assessment or a strictly statistical analysis. Instead, it borrows from both approaches and conforms a composite picture. This is in a sense a double-edged arm as it gives strong advantages but also disadvantages to the study.

In terms of the analysis and interpretation of the data, the depth to which it was possible to analyze the collected data was limited by the factors of time and space for discussion. Also, the interpretation of the data is influenced by the background of the researcher, as was explained in Chapter III dedicated to the methodological approach to the thesis.

Having these constraints in mind, future research regarding topics of community participation in the development of alternative tourism projects can be addressed according to the following lines:

In terms of other methodological approaches needed

- Study of the dynamics of community participation utilizing a full ethnographic approach, taking into account the interactions tourist-community member and tourist-resident.
- Participative research, considering that there are community members who are actually researchers themselves.

In terms of different theoretical perspectives

- Social cohesion as a factor mediating community-based enterprises success.
- Indigenous cultural identity and its role in creating a successful alternative tourism product.
- Post-colonialism theories regarding organizationally hybrid and heterogeneous indigenous communities in rural settings and development projects.

In terms of marketing and tourism trends

- The development of competitiveness in community-based alternative tourism enterprises and the role of the community in such a process.
- Successful marketing strategies for community-based tourism enterprises in the Sierra de Juárez region of Oaxaca.
- Regional tourism development assessment and networking interactions and dynamics; factors contributing or inhibiting such dynamics.

This list could go on; however any of these topics could be useful for the expansion of knowledge in this line of research and would serve also serve a good purpose for the communities involved.

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Annexes

Annex 1. Questionnaire applied to the employees of the community enterprise Ecoturixtlán.

Guía de entrevista y cuestionario sondeo para proyecto de tesis: **Participación Comunitaria en el centro de Turismo Alternativo Ecoturixtlán, municipio de Ixtlán de Juárez, Oaxaca México**

Edad: _____

Sexo: (H) (M)

Estado civil: solter@ casad@ divorciad@ viud@ Hijos: _____

Estatus en la comunidad: _____

Educación o capacitación: _____

Puesto y responsabilidades:

Sueldo y comisiones: _____

¿Qué tanta libertad tiene para decidir sobre diferentes aspectos de su trabajo?

En una escala del 1 al 5, siendo el máximo 5, ¿Cómo evalúa el nivel de participación que tiene en los beneficios que genera el turismo en su comunidad? 1 2 3 4 5

¿A quién recurre cuando tiene algún problema o duda respecto a su trabajo?

¿Qué opina del proyecto de turismo alternativo y la oportunidad que le ha dado a usted para participar en su organización?

¿Qué le gustaría cambiar de la forma en cómo está organizado el proyecto?

Annex 2. Questionnaire applied to the community members and residents of Ixtlán de Juárez
Cuestionario para la tesis: **Participación Comunitaria en el centro de Turismo Alternativo Ecoturixtlán, municipio de Ixtlán de Juárez, Oaxaca México**

Objetivo: Evaluar la percepción de la población local acerca de su participación y beneficios en el proyecto Ecoturixtlán, municipio de Ixtlán de Juárez, Oaxaca

Perfil del Entrevistado

Sexo: (H) (M) Edad: _____

Estado civil: solter@ casad@ divorciad@ viud@ Hijos: _____

Nombramiento en la comunidad: _____

Educación o capacitación: _____ Ocupación: _____

Proyecto con el que se encuentra relacionado directamente

_____ () Ninguno

¿Ha participado en la toma de decisiones importantes para los proyectos productivos que emprende la comunidad?

() Sí () No

¿Conoce usted sobre el proyecto de la comunidad llamado Ecoturixtlán?

() Sí () No

En que consiste: _____

¿Qué tan informado se encuentra usted sobre el estado del proyecto?

Nada informado Totalmente informado
() 1 () 2 () 3 () 4 () 5

¿Ha estado involucrada(o) en la toma de decisiones en el proyecto Ecoturixtlán?

() Sí () No

Si lo ha hecho, ¿de qué forma ha participado?

() Voto en la asamblea () Como trabajador () Comentando en asamblea
() Provee recursos Otros _____

Teniendo en cuenta su participación en el proyecto comunitario Ecoturixtlan, que tan de acuerdo se encuentra con los siguientes enunciados:

Conozco el efecto que puedo tener en el rumbo de este proyecto

Totalmente en desacuerdo
() 1 () 2 () 3 () 4 Totalmente de acuerdo
() 5

Mi participación se ve reflejada en las decisiones finales que se tomen en la operación del proyecto

Totalmente en desacuerdo
() 1 () 2 () 3 () 4 Totalmente de acuerdo
() 5

Me siento responsable por el rumbo que lleva o pueda llevar la empresa comunitaria Ecoturixtlan

Totalmente en desacuerdo
() 1 () 2 () 3 () 4 Totalmente de acuerdo
() 5

Ecoturixtlan es una empresa comunal que nos pertenece y utiliza recursos que nos pertenecen a mí y a nuestra comunidad en general

Totalmente en desacuerdo
() 1 () 2 () 3 () 4 Totalmente de acuerdo
() 5

He recibido beneficios económicos directamente atribuibles al éxito de la empresa

Totalmente en desacuerdo
() 1 () 2 () 3 () 4 Totalmente de acuerdo
() 5

Me he visto beneficiado(a) indirectamente de la empresa Ecoturixtlán.

Totalmente en desacuerdo
() 1 () 2 () 3 () 4 Totalmente de acuerdo
() 5

¿Qué beneficios cree que le ha dado a usted y su familia Ecoturixtlán a lo largo de su operación?

En su opinión ¿qué futuro le ve a la empresa comunal Ecoturixtlán?

Sugerencias o comentarios

¡Gracias por su participación!