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WHAT'S THE ALTERNATIVE TO ALLTOURNATIVE?

EXAMINING THE POTENTIAL OF COMMUNITY-BASED TOURISM FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT OF RURAL COMMUNITIES IN QUINTANA ROO, MEXICO



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Abstract

Tourism has recently been acknowledged as a potential means for sustainable development. This study examined what tourism has meant for the community members involved in community based tourism (CBT) projects in rural Quintana Roo, Mexico, with regards to the sustainable development of their communities. The study used a qualitative case study research design to compare two different approaches to CBT with respect to four key dimensions identified by existing literature as important for a tourism project that successfully promotes sustainable development – participation, economic, environmental and social sustainability. Findings indicated that while the private sector initiative, Alltournative, excelled at promoting the economic aspects of development, there was room for improvement with regards to the other dimensions. Conversely Puerta Verde, a civil society organization also engaging in CBT in the area, has been challenged to secure funding and market the project but has been very successful in promoting social and environmental sustainability while working towards independence for local community cooperatives through participation and training. This research contributes academically by increasing the understanding we have of how local people feel about tourism initiatives. It improves the knowledge of CBT impacts by using perceptions as the measurement rather than quantitative indicators, which is thus far lacking in tourism research today.

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Acronyms

A - Alltournative

CBT – Community Based Tourism

CONANP –Comision Nacional de Areas Naturales Protegidas (National Commission of Nature Protection Areas)

PV – Puerta Verde

SEDESOL- Secretatria de desarrollo Social (Ministry of Social Development)

SEDETUR- Secretaria de turismo (Ministry of Tourism)

SEMARNAT – Secretaria de Medio Ambiente y recursos naturales (Ministry of the Environment)

WB – World Bank

1. Introduction

1.1. Research Problem

Tourism is becoming an increasingly important sector for developing countries while poverty continues to plague many of them. As globalization continues to increase the linkages between people and places, tourism has become a major part of the economy of many developing countries. While, developing countries currently have approximately 30% of the world's share of tourism, their share has grown by an average of 9.5% since 1990 (compared with 4.6% worldwide) (Roe 2001:2). Considering this trend, both practitioners and scholars have begun examining how the tourism industry can be harnessed to benefit people in developing countries. Different types of tourism have emerged which reflect this shift. Ecotourism, community-based tourism and pro-poor tourism are some examples of what is now hailed as the alternative tourism sector to the large scale mass-tourism¹ industry (Ashley et al. 2001:2-3).

Case studies on tourism as a means for development have indicated that tourism has great potential for serving as a tool for sustainable development² when it is carried out in a sustainable manner because it can improve the livelihoods of the poor, and promote participation and empowerment (Ashley et al. 2001; Scheyvens 2007:130). Sustainable tourism should meet the needs of tourists, the tourism industry and host communities without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs (Swarbrooke 1999:300). Other positive impacts can include: economic development through diversification of incomes; cross cultural education and communication; preservation of traditions and promotion of a sense of community. While there has been much praise for the potential of tourism as a means for sustainable development, there has also been a considerable amount of criticism. Negative impacts can include: disruption of normal economic activity; interference with social traditions; and conflict (Harrison 1996:299; Richards and Hall 2000). The challenge is to identify ways of carrying out tourism initiatives that will sustain the positive impacts while curbing the negative ones.

1.2 Purpose and Research Questions

Taking into consideration that tourism projects can both contribute to and hinder the development of the communities affected, it is important to plan and implement them in a way that will maximize the potential for sustainable development. Existing tourism literature suggests that tourism can only be successfully implemented as an alternative livelihood development strategy if it is carried out in a way

¹Mass Tourism is criticized for the following features: large scale, new unattractive structures, little contact with local people, transformative effects on local culture, economic benefits to outsiders, indifference to life of local people (Swarbrooke 1999: 18)

² Sustainable development: "Development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs" (United Nations 1987)

that promotes not only economic but also social development, in an environmentally sustainable way (Smith and Duffy 2003:159), with a strong emphasis on genuine participation of the ones affected (Ashley et al. 2001; Sharpley and Telfer: 2002; Tosun 2004). The literature has been critical of tourism research thus far for overly focusing on the economic benefits alone (Ashley et al. 2001; Blackstock 2005; De Kadt 1979; Schilcher 2007). Consequently, rather than relying on quantitative economic indicators as a measurement of impact, this study will incorporate a more holistic approach to assessing tourism projects that claim to be development oriented and use community perceptions to measure the impact of such projects. According to Harrison, assessment of local perceptions is essential for measuring the potential success of any tourism venture (1996:291). There is still not enough research examining the degree to which local people feel they have influence and control over the future development of the industry. More research is required to address the actual impact of tourism on rural communities and to define ways in which participation could be maximized. The assessment of local perceptions is essential for measuring potential success of any tourism venture (Hall and Tucker 2004: 65; Smith and Duffy 2003:291).

Box 1: Defining Community Based Tourism

The use of a community's resources, both cultural and natural, for tourism in order to:

- Promote socio-economic development and provide local people with income sources.
- Encourage community commitment to conservation of bio-diversity and sustainable management of the natural resource base
- Involve people in the process of their own development and give them more opportunities to participate effectively in development activities (Naguran 1999: 41-42).

My research focuses on community-based tourism (CBT) (See Box 1) in the state of Quintana Roo Mexico on the Yucatan peninsula (see figure 1). This location is relevant for this type of research because

Figure 1: Map of the Yucatan



Mexico is the leader of the tourist industry in Latin America (Harrison 1992:88). Also, there are many similar CBT projects in the area, which provided me with the opportunity to find comparable approaches to CBT initiatives, giving more substance to my investigation into how tourism can be carried out sustainably. In this study, I will assess the strengths and weaknesses of a civil society and private sector approach to CBT (discussed below) in their capacity to carry out tourism projects in a way that promotes sustainable development. Local perceptions will serve as the measurement for livelihood sustainability. The impact of the tourism in these regards is captured through interviews with the

community members involved.

The first case is a CBT project called Puerta Verde. This project is a grassroots network of rural cooperatives working closely with a civil society organization called Kanché and CONANP (sub-secretary for Natural Protected Areas) to design and implement community development oriented CBT projects. In order to compare different approaches, I also chose to study a private sector based organization called Alltournative. They operate a CBT project called Mayan Encounter and also claim social and economic development as priorities.

The purpose of this research is to examine what CBT has meant for the community members with regards to the sustainable development of their communities. Their perceptions of the impact of tourism on their communities will serve as the measurement for evaluation as I compare the two different approaches to CBT with respect to four key dimensions identified by the literature as important for a tourism project that successfully promotes sustainable development – participation, economic, environmental, and social sustainability. This comparison will serve to determine in what respects the Puerta Verde and Alltournative approaches differ in the way they impact the sustainable development of the communities that are involved. The findings will be used to answer the following research question:

What are the respective strengths and weaknesses of the Puerta Verde and Alltournative community based tourism initiatives from a sustainable development point of view?

This research contributes academically by increasing the understanding we have of how local people feel about tourism initiatives. It will improve the knowledge of CBT impacts by using perceptions as the measurement rather than quantitative indicators, which is thus far lacking in tourism research today. Analyzing the different approaches to CBT will also contribute to extending the knowledge on how best to maximize participation and sustainable development in CBT initiatives.

1.3. Disposition

To meet the purpose of this study the following section will introduce the issues presented in current literature that detail the essential components necessary to accomplish sustainable tourism through the use of Community Based Tourism (CBT). From this foundation the impacts of CBT will be assessed using the perceptions of community members involved in CBT in two case study projects. The subsequent section presents the comparative qualitative methodology employed throughout the study using twenty-nine interviews throughout the case studies. These are then described in greater detail in the following section. The analysis that follows compares the strengths and weaknesses of the two CBT projects according to their participation, economic, environmental, and social sustainability impacts. In the final section the major findings are presented in conjunction with a discussion on the implications of the study.

2. Literature Review and Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework for this paper will draw on current tourism literature which emphasizes both the potential as well as the shortcomings of using tourism to accomplish sustainable development. First I will identify the issues considered to be important in order for tourism to contribute to sustainable development, and then use these aspects to construct a framework that will be used for analyzing the different approaches to CBT being carried out in the case studies.

2.1. Tourism as a means for development

Tourism for development first emerged in the 1970s. At the time it was praised for its potential in providing financial benefits, balance of payments surpluses, foreign exchange earnings, job creation, backwards linkages, entrepreneurial activity, financing basic utilities, training and education (Ashley et al. 2001; Dann 2002: 236; Harrison 2008; Roe 2001). There is a body of literature which cautiously supports the possibility of using tourism as a means of sustainable development (Ashley et al. 2001; Schilcher 2007; Tosun 2005). This line of thought supports the position that tourism can be positive for development in that it offers communities not only diversification of livelihoods but social development, and empowerment (Ashley et al. 2001; Roe 2001; Scheyvens 2007: 130).

The development rhetoric has focused on sustainability a great deal in recent years. This concept has had a strong impact on the tourism industry as well and many tourism initiatives are now claiming to be sustainable (Mowforth and Munt 2003:212; Smith and Duffy 2003:144). What has emerged is a variety of tourism options that are considered to be an alternative to the much criticized mass tourism industry, some of which include: eco-tourism, nature tourism, cultural tourism, pro-poor tourism, and community-based tourism. Some of these terms can be deceiving as they automatically contain an assumption of sustainability when this may not be the case (Weaver 1998:8). The concern is that communities are rarely given the opportunity to voice their opinion when a government or private sector actor proposes tourism schemes. Participation and sustainability efforts may be minimal or tokenistic to fit the new development oriented tourism image (Smith and Duffy 2003:138). A sustainable approach to tourism requires that the, “continuing/improved social, cultural and economic well-being of human communities is an integral component of environmental renewal” (Richards and Hall 2000:1). It would address ecological, economic, cultural and political aspects of development by improving the living conditions of people (both non-material and physical) (Singh 2003:39).

Community-based tourism is also an important concept for this research study. It is one example of an “integrated approach to tourism that incorporates attention to the environmental, social, cultural, and economic impacts of tourism” (Shores 2003:3). It also emphasizes the community’s participation in the design and decision-making process, and ensures a degree of ownership by the community in the

development process and operations (Naguran 1999:41-42). Case studies have shown that community-based tourism has supported community development³ but has also had some negative effects such as tension over funds, inequitable power relations, resource management problems and dependence on external expertise (Ashley et al. 2001:25; Blackstock 2005; Mowforth and Munt 2003; Smith and Duffy 2003).

2.2 Key Dimensions of Sustainable Tourism Ventures

This section will discuss the four most important dimensions that the literature identifies as significant to consider in the implementation of a sustainable tourism project including participation, economic, environmental, and social sustainability. Each will be discussed in detail below and then later used to analyze the perceptions of the community members involved in the projects.

2.2.1. Participation

One of the most important and essential factors for accomplishing sustainable development through tourism is the involvement and full participation (See Box 2) of the affected communities throughout the planning and implementation process (Campbell and Vainio-Mattila 2003; Harrison 1996; Murphy 1985; Taylor 1995; Tosun 2005). Singh points out that, “socially responsible and environmentally viable

Box 2: Defining Participation

The process through which stakeholders influence and share control over priority setting, policy-making, resource allocations and access to public goods and services... Stakeholder participation is key for ensuring long-term sustainability. Promoting participation helps build ownership and enhances transparency and accountability, and in doing so enhances effectiveness of development projects and policies (World Bank 2008).

tourism development cannot be fostered without a dialogue construed and controlled along indigenous needs and in indigenous terms” (2003: 36). If tourism is to be truly beneficial for the people involved in the industry, however, community participation must go beyond catering to tourists. Tourism that is sustainable aims to,

Empower host communities in a gradual process to take control over tourism development in particular and other local matters in general. This can be achieved by participation of local communities in the decision making process of tourism development and in the benefits of tourism (Tosun 2005: 337).

³ For further studies on CBT projects see Ashley et al. 1003; Mowforth and Munt 2003: 227; Smith and Duffy 2003: 142

Critics of participatory development are concerned that although sustainability is supposed to be achievable by properly involving beneficiaries in development initiatives, there is little evidence of long-term effectiveness of participation actually improving the lives of the most vulnerable people (Cooke 2001, 36). Scholars are concerned that their lives will not be improved unless tourism initiatives consider the influence of unequal power relations that might exist within communities (Ashley et al. 2001; Blackstock 2005; Cooke 2001; Taylor 1995; Tosun 2005) and between the different stakeholders (Hall and Tucker 2004; Mowforth and Munt 2003: 234; Scheyvens 2007).

When conducting research on community based tourism, it is also important not to make assumptions about the concept of community. In tourism research, it is often assumed that a “community” which is supposed to benefit from a CBT project is taken to be a homogenous unit when in reality there may be a tendency for certain members of the community to benefit more than others. This assumption masks unequal power relations within the unit causing conflict over tourism activities to be overlooked (Blackstock 2005: 42; Cooke 2001:6; Mowforth and Munt 2003: 211; Richards and Hall 2000: 7). Unequal distribution of power and flow of information can exclude some members of the community from the decision making process so a free flow of appropriate, understandable and useful information for all sectors of the community is essential (Richards and Hall 2000: 298).

Despite the criticisms that acknowledge that participation has not been implemented to the extent that it should be (Cooke 2001;Tosun 2005;), effective community participation is nonetheless essential and inseparable from development and development activities (Ashley et al. 2001; Campbell and Vainio-Mattila 2003; Chambers 1992; Cooke 2001; Harrison 1992:280; Murphy 1985; Sen 1999; Taylor 1995; Tosun 2005). As such, tourism can contribute to sustainable development by, “Empowering people to mobilize their own capacities and be active rather than passive subjects, manage resources, make decisions and control the activities which affect their lives.” (Naguran 1999:42).

2.2.2. Economic Sustainability

Tourism has been promoted as a way to provide local people with income sources (Naguran 1999:41) and engage in economic development without endangering environmental and social resources (Smith and Duffy 2003:137). In evaluating whether a tourism project enables sustainable economic development it is important to consider how successful the project has been in creating local employment (CONANP 2008, 1OPV, 2OA, 4OA⁴), sustainable economic viability, and inclusion of local communities in the economic benefits (Naguran 1999:39).

⁴ Interview referencing explained below.

Economic development using CBT would not be possible without special attention being paid to ensuring commercial viability. This requires close attention to demand, product quality, marketing, investment in business skills and inclusion of the private sector (Ashley et al. 2001:ix). It is important for different organizations to work together with community members because most community members do not have experience with tourism and lack the capital and training to make certain that the project would be commercially successful (Smith and Duffy 2003:140). At the same time, it is also wise to avoid becoming too dependent on external funding and end up having to focus more on satisfying funding criteria rather than development needs. “In these cases, the projects commonly stalled when the initial grant expired“(Harrison 1996:291).

Tourism can provide a viable alternative source of income for rural community members; however, it is important to acknowledge that it is not the panacea for a struggling economy. It can contribute to economic growth through diversification of incomes and promote a sense of community but careful planning and community involvement are essential (Smith and Duffy 2003:292).

2.2.3. Social Sustainability

Well implemented sustainable tourism has the potential to promote a sense of community and contribute to preserving cultural heritage. It is considered to be necessary for communities to be engaged in the tourism activity in a way that is beneficial to them not only financially but socially as well. Tourism projects often fail to promote understanding between hosts and guests. The relationship between the two is often “transitory, unequal and unbalanced, lacks spontaneity and is limited by spatial and temporal constraints” (Richards and Hall 2000:37). Efforts should be made to reverse the trend from impersonal mass tourism to establishing amicable relations between guests and hosts (Singh 2003:33). The tourism experience should be authentic and valuable not only for the tourists or the organizations operating the project but also for the community members acting as hosts (Smith and Duffy 2003:298).

Tourism that is sustainable would also be a more beneficial means for strengthening social development if the different stakeholders involved in the project communicate well and work together to achieve development goals. Partnerships between different organizations and stakeholders are essential. Without coincidence of interests and joint actions, there will not be cooperation and the different actors will undermine each other (Naguran 1999:44). Development networks between communities can therefore be a useful approach to stimulating community development (Richards and Hall 2000:10).

Another important aspect of social sustainability is cultural preservation. According to the literature on sustainable tourism, there is a tendency of ecologically and culturally friendly tourism to become

marketing strategies rather than fostering any genuine concern for sustainability or respect for culture (Swarbrooke 1999:318). The marketing of tourist destinations and culture has led to the commoditization of those destinations and made it so that visiting a community becomes part of a collection of experiences to be listed off as though the people who live there are irrelevant. Critics point out that even the most ethically conscientious tourists are fundamentally self-interested. This “ego-tourist” is searching for a style of travel that reflects their perception of themselves as a unique person accruing cultural capital (Smith and Duffy 2003:116). They are more interested in bragging right than contributing to community development (Shores 2003:4). Experiencing local culture has been objectified so that local people and how they behave may be considered an object to consume. (Mowforth and Munt 2003:211-212; Richards and Hall 2000:4; Swarbrooke 1999:322). Commoditization of cultures has been an issue in Mexico. The *Mundo Maya* publicity project is an example of how cultures have come to be promoted as tourist attractions. Mayan culture (temples, rituals, history, way of life and people) is being commoditized and merchandized with the purpose of increasing revenues for private business and government and not for the benefit of Mayan communities (Smith and Duffy 2003:4).

As tourism develops it becomes harder to know what host community members are really like when what is presented is a commodified version of reality designed to fulfill tourists’ expectations. The tourism industry often invents its own definition of what is traditional or typical; a negotiation between local perceptions of authenticity and tourists and developers ideal travel experience. Hosts create a ‘staged authenticity’ which is performed by local people (MacCannell 1973:589). A tourist attraction is constructed both as a protection against intrusion into personal lives of the those who are subject to the tourist gaze and their efforts to take advantage of the opportunities provided by tourism (Urry 1990:9). It is thus important for the tourist to be willing to understand other people, places or cultures for what they really are and not what they would like them to be (Smith and Duffy 2003:112-114). Rather than being a marketing ploy, the tourism activities should encourage cross-cultural education and communication and enhance cultural preservation. In this situation it would be a genuinely enriching experience for both tourists and guests.

2.2.4. Environmental Sustainability

Environmental sustainability is a very important issue to address in tourism ventures given that tourism depends upon the presence of a healthy and attractive ecosystem (Singh 2003:29). A sustainable tourism project must therefore promote economic development without endangering environmental resources (Harrison 1996:292; Smith and Duffy 2003:229,137). Ecologically friendly tourism implies that the people supplying the product should benefit and the activity should contribute to conservation of ecosystems (Naguran 1999:39).

The uncontrolled growth of tourism is the danger. When dealing with the forms of tourism that rely on natural and social resources (which is the case with CBT), sustainability cannot be achieved without regulation of tourism growth. Negative impacts on the environment arise when there are large numbers of tourists and an overuse of resources (Naguran 1999:53). It is important to be especially careful since modern tourists are constantly seeking to get further away from the beaten track into fragile ecosystems (Swarbrooke 1999:28). Therefore, tourism that is sustainable is “concerned with the scale of development/ .../it is an exercise in sustainable resource management when safe minimum standards would ensure thresholds of irreversibility” (Singh 2003: 33).

One of the reasons why sustainable tourism has risen in popularity over the last years is emergence of the environmentally conscious “green tourist” who is concerned with preserving nature and respecting cultures (Bergin-Seers and Mair 2008). It cannot be assumed however, that tourists seeking alternative forms of tourism are automatically concerned with sustainable natural resource management. Many who engage in alternative tourism because it is trendy and adventurous but only have a superficial understanding of environmental issues and are unlikely to have genuine concerns for environmental preservation influencing their actions as a tourist (Bergin-Seers and Mair 2008; Swarbrooke 1999). Critics claim that “there appears little evidence of the rise of the green tourist as a real force in the tourism market” (Swarbrooke 1999:26). There are some who do genuinely care for environmental sustainability and tourism developers should make the effort to attract these “dark green tourists.”⁵ Ziffer distinguishes between tour operators who are: sellers (use eco-friendliness as a marketing scheme), sensitive (avoid destructive behavior); and doers (actively working towards natural resources conservation) (Ziffer 1989, quoted in Swarbrooke 1999: 325). An environmentally sound tourism venture would fit with the latter category.

2.3. Analytical Framework

Based on the literature discussed above, the table below summarizes the key dimensions of sustainable tourism ventures. The more the characteristics below apply to the tourism project, the greater the sustainability of the tourism venture.

⁵ Dark green tourists are those who actively seek out tourism activities which are environmentally sustainable. they are choose to protect their environment through the power of tourism consumption decisions (Bergin-Seers and Mair 2008:1).

Table 1: Key Dimensions of Sustainable Tourism Ventures

Key Dimensions	Defining characteristics of tourism that promotes sustainable development
Participation	Local control and involvement in decision-making processes; Training programs supportive of future independence; Sense of ownership; Equitable power distribution
Economic	Reliable income diversification; Local employment; Equitable distribution of benefits; Commercial viability
Environmental	Awareness of ecological preservation issues; Controlled growth; Attraction of environmentally conscious tourists
Social	Sense of community pride; Cross-cultural education and communication; A cooperative environment; Self definition as opposed to marketing objectification; Cultural preservation

These dimensions will be used in the analytical comparison of how Puerto Verde and Alltournative fair in respects to participation, economic, environmental and social sustainability as perceived by the community members they work with. Before that is possible, however, it is important to discuss how my research has been carried out and what methods are most suitable to this type of research.

3. Methods

The following chapter will first describe why I have chosen a qualitative case study research design. It will then discuss the data collection methods implemented throughout the research before finally addressing the quality and ethical considerations that arise in such a research study.

3.1 Research Design

Considering that the purpose of my research is to assess and compare different approaches to CBT projects according to how community members feel they are being impacted by tourism, my paper is based on a qualitative case study research design. It uses community perceptions of tourism rather than quantitative indicators to measure livelihood improvement capacities of different approaches to community based tourism. I chose this approach because the research aims to see the tourism situation of these communities through the eyes of the people involved (Bryman 2004:279). I recognize that basing the study on qualitative data could be seen as a limitation, however this decision was based on assertions made by current literature which point out that the tourism industry is based on human interactions hence it may not be adequate to analyze it using a positivistic/quantitative approach which assumes that there is one true reality and that the researcher must be as objective as possible (Guba 1994:110; Phillimore and Goodson 2004:35). Overall, there is a dominance of positivist models in tourism research (Riley and Love

2000:180), that does not consider the full range of research approaches (Phillimore and Goodson 2004:41). Tourism research has also been criticized for focusing on prescription, efficiency, and economy rather than equality and social justice (Belsky 2004:274). In light of these comments, my study is based on a constructivist perspective which assumes that multiple realities exist and are thus socially and subjectively created (Guba 1994: 109; Holinshead 2004: 74,76).

The research design chosen here is a case study using semi-structured interviews and participant observation to gather data. This choice is appropriate because in a case study, a small amount of cases are studied in detail in order to develop a fuller understanding of that case (Silverman 2005:126). It will be a comparative case study design as I am comparing the respective strengths and weaknesses of a civil society and private sector approach to CBT in terms of capacity to promote sustainable development. The first project, Puerta Verde, was selected as a case representing a civil society approach. It is a project that is primarily operated by community based cooperatives and supported by government and non-government organizations. The literature indicates that this type of approach can be effective when NGOs serve as facilitators, supporting those who lack economic and political power “not speaking for them but giving them the means to speak for themselves” (Jones and Wiggle 1987:108). NGOs and government organizations can provide a range of support – capacity and institutional building, uniting stakeholders, arbitration, funding, negotiations (Naguran 1999:49).

The second CBT project included in the study, Alltournative, was chosen because it represents a private sector approach to CBT. This sector can play a wide range of essential roles such as investment, skill and product development, marketing, and operational roles in CBT initiatives (Ashley et al.: 9, 13; Hall and Tucker 2007: 19). The drawbacks of private sector operation of CBT is that it is often primarily concerned with customers and profits and is mainly driven by commercial opportunity rather than sustainability and local development. This can have negative impacts on the ability of the project to benefit communities (Hall and Tucker 2007: 26), and can lead to the commoditization of local cultures and ecosystems (Mowforth and Munt 2003; Richards and Hall 2000; Swarbrooke 1999).

3.2 Data Collection

The primary data in this comparative case study was gathered over a period of three months (November 2008-February 2009) by means of participant observation, 21 semi-structured interviews conducted with community members and 8 with representatives from the different organizations working with the communities.⁶

⁶ Originally, my intention was to incorporate quantitative methods as well and devised a survey that was to be handed out in the communities. Unfortunately an assessment of the circumstances of the communities and test pilot survey, revealed that the level of literacy was very low and not all of the respondents spoke Spanish well enough to

3.2.1. Semi-Structured Interviews

Since the perceptions of community members towards CBT initiatives was the main focus of my research, semi-structured interviews with them was the main form of data collection (See Appendix A for detailed interview schedule). As the study compared interviews conducted in different communities, it was necessary for the interviews to have some structure (Bryman 2004:97), therefore an interview guide was followed for all interviews (See Appendix B). The drawback of this method was that interviewees may not have had the opportunity to discuss valid concerns that may not have fit within my interview question guide. For this reason respondents were encouraged to discuss any concerns that came up as long as all the important topics of the guide were covered. The qualitative interview method was chosen because it is a good means for interviewees to elaborate on their own experiences and will help me to understand how the respondents perceive CBT tourism and its impacts on sustainable livelihood development (Kvale 1996:104). The weakness of relying on this source of empirical data is that the meaning of what is shared in the interview could be influenced or misinterpreted by the interviewer as they are the main instrument for obtaining knowledge (Kvale 1996:117). In order to make sure I was capturing the actual sentiments of the respondents, I made sure to take note when I felt the respondents might be giving socially desirable responses⁷. I was also careful to consider the asymmetry of power between myself (as an outsider and researcher who could potentially be identified with the tourism organization) and the community members (Kvale 1996:126).

Purposive sampling was used to choose respondents, targeting people who have different relations to the projects. Community member interviews were conducted with both men (12) and women (9) involved in CBT projects in Lázaro Cardenas, Quintana Roo (See map in Appendix D). Interviews were conducted with 11 people involved with Puerta Verde, and 8 with Alltournative. Two interviews were conducted with community members who currently have no involvement with the tourist industry. Finally, interviews were also conducted with management from the 3 primary organizations working with these communities (Kanché, Alltournative, CONANP)⁸. Interviews with the organizations served to provide a wider perspective of the impacts of tourism on the communities of the study and gain a better understanding of how CBT is being implemented in the region.

respond to the survey or understand the concepts. It was thus determined that in-depth interviews would be necessary in more accurately capturing the perspective of the respondents.

⁷ It was important to pay attention to when a respondent was giving a genuine answer or if they felt they would be breaking a social norm if they answered negatively.

⁸ For a full interview schedule see Appendix A.

3.2.2. Participant Observation

Participant Observation was used to enhance quality of the data and interpretation (Dewalt and Dewalt 2002:8). Throughout the three month data collection process, I had the opportunity to visit the communities during day trips on 10 occasions and also had two over night visits of three nights each⁹. These visits contributed to my ability to understand attitudes towards tourism and its impact on communities. Informal conversations with tourists and community members, and daily observations were included in my observation field notes. My observations made an important contribution in the interpretation of the responses in the interviews.¹⁰ The notes from the visits to the communities were included in the qualitative analysis.

3.2.3. Secondary Data

The secondary data in the study included government documents, a government baseline study on Lázaro Cardenas, tourist survey responses gathered by Kanché, and journal articles and books addressing tourism and development issues. All secondary data was screened for academic quality and only academic books or peer reviewed journal articles published in respected academic journals were included. Internet sources other than journals include the official websites of the different organizations involved (Puerta Verde, Kanché, Alltournative, CONANP, SEDESOL).

3.3. Research Analysis

All interviews were transcribed by my research assistant verbatim in Spanish. Responses were translated during the analysis process but then direct quotes were revisited and directly translated. The transcripts from all of the interviews with community members were carefully reviewed and an index code of all of the issues discussed in the interviews was created (See Appendix C). Discussions were then coded according to the index of topics. A matrix was created to organize the coded segments of the interviews. Since this technique has been criticized for taking the analysis out of the original context (Ritchie, Spencer & O'Connor 2003:204), I was careful to maintain the original wording used in the interview and stay away from interpretation at this stage in order to avoid imposing personal preconceptions and carefully note when comments are based on my observations (Ritchie, Spencer & O'Connor 2003:231). Once the matrix was complete a new spreadsheet was created to identify descriptive accounts (Ritchie, Spencer & O'Connor 2003:237), combining overlapping issues and defining the different types of responses given. At this point Alltournative and Puerta Verde responses were regrouped and patterns and differences were identified between the two tourism approaches being studied. This systematic identification of themes, categories and patterns were essential for the analysis of the data according to

⁹ One in December, one in January.

¹⁰ For example, one respondent commented that tourism was going to help them economically but finished the comment with a laugh, clearly indicating he was not exactly optimistic.

the key dimensions of participation, economic, social, and environmental sustainability.

3.4. Research Quality

Qualitative studies are often criticized for lack of generalizability and objectivity (Decrop 2004; Kvale 1996; Yin 2003). However, one cannot evaluate the quality of a qualitative study in the same manner as a quantitative study. The criteria for quality research is thus based upon credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability as opposed to the quantitative equivalents of internal validity, external validity, reliability and objectivity respectively (Bryman 2004:30; Decrop 2004:159). Credibility (internal validity): In order to ensure truthfulness of the findings and verify the consistency of the data collected, participant observation, interviews and secondary data examination (triangulation) were used in my research process (Bryman 2004:30). Transferability (external validity): The purpose of case study research is not necessarily to aim for generalizability (Gomm et al. 2006:5). The case studies were then chosen in order to examine the differences between and strengths and weaknesses of civil society and private sector based CBT initiatives. In order to ensure that the findings are reproducible (Bryman 2004:30), an interview guide was followed (See Appendix C) in each interview and methods have been well documented (Yin 2003:38). Confirmability (Objectivity): Considering that it is assumed that reality is relative and contextual, there is no absolute truth to seek out but it is important that the information that is gathered and presented reflects the intentions and perceptions of the respondents (Decrop 2004:160). For this reason, a preliminary translation and analysis was conducted before returning to the research location to go over the interviews in detail with the research assistant to make sure the translation was as well as the understanding of the meanings of each comment.

3.5. Ethical Considerations

In order to ensure that the research was being carried out in an ethical manner, the context and purpose of the research study were made clear to each respondent before interviews began (Kvale 1996:127). Informed consent was obtained orally from the respondents and they were assured that their conversations were anonymous if they preferred and that they had the right to refuse answering any questions (Brydon 2006:26; Mikkelsen 2007:342). In order to protect the identities of the respondents, each interviewee has been assigned a number (1C-20C). In the case of two respondents engaging in one interview, each was assigned a letter as well. Each interview with employees of the organizations working with the communities was also assigned a letter and number (1O-8O).¹¹ At the end of each code, interview references presented in this text will conclude with either (PV) for those associated with Puerta Verde or (A) for those associated with Alltournative.

¹¹ When two respondents were interviewed at the same time, each respondent will be identified as either 'a' or 'b' (eg. 8aCPV = Interview number 8, respondent 'a', community member from Puerta Verde).

4. Case Studies

We will now have a closer look at the case studies examined in the research, beginning with some details of the location where the research was carried out, followed by a description of the Puerta Verde CBT project and finally the Alltournative one.

4.1. Context

Mexico is an optimal choice for research on tourism for development as it is the developing country that has attracted the largest number of foreign tourists in the last 25 years (Clancy 1999:9) due to its political stability and variety of tourism resources including natural attractions and cultural attractions (Harrison 1992:88-89). The Mexican government began to actively plan tourism growth in the country through the tourism ministry (SECTUR) and beginning in the 1960s it has been very active in the state of Quintana Roo (the state where my research was carried out), essentially building Cancun (one of the country's most important tourist hubs) from the ground up (Clancy 1999:10).

My study was conducted in the Northern part of the state of Quintana Roo in the municipality of Lázaro Cardenas, the poorest municipality of the state (1aOPV; 5OPV). In this area, 74% of the population is indigenous (Solares 2005: 3). Interviews were conducted in three villages associated with Puerta Verde and two villages associated with Alltournative (See Appendix D for community interview location map). The region is composed of isolated rural communities that mainly support themselves through subsistence agriculture based in traditional Mayan techniques. Supplementary income is found in forest exploitation, apiculture, animal husbandry or temporary employment (Solares 2005: 17). With changing markets, climate and low soil fertility, it has become increasingly difficult to survive off of agriculture alone. The land is not very productive which makes it necessary to burn another section of the jungle and recommence cultivation in the new location. For these communities, tourism has been identified as one of the only plausible sources for diversifying rural incomes and an alternative which allows for environmental conservation while increasing quality of life (1OPV, Solares 2005:56). Regarding the mass tourism activity concentrated in Cancun and the Mayan Riviera, it has been noted that in the state of Quintana Roo (QR), “while tourism development generated profit for transnational corporations and entrepreneurial elites, it did not achieve backward linkages that may have improved conditions for local impoverished population”(Hall and Tucker 2004:26). The CBT projects examined in this research project, both claim to be carrying out their tourism activities sustainably in contrast to the mass-tourism industry dominating Cancun.

4.2. Puerta Verde



The Puerta Verde¹² initiative is a network of 14 cooperatives from 7 rural communities¹³ and seeks to promote the conservation of their natural and cultural resources through sustainable tourism. The network is primarily supported by a civil society organization called Kanché and the Comisión Nacional de Áreas Naturales Protegidas (CONANP) (The National Commission for Natural Protected Areas) (Described below). These cooperatives have been working together since 2000. With the support of government and civil society organizations (CONANP, Yum Balam, Kanché), Puerta Verde members have since been participating in training workshops, building touristic infrastructure and establishing their own businesses that work with the nature and culture that surrounds them. The network provides a variety of alternative tourism options.¹⁴ These activities are designed to serve as means for diversifying local economies and elevating the quality of life of local communities while strengthening cultural and social bonds between the communities in the area. They have been working towards setting up tourism in the network for approximately ten years and have been receiving tourists for approximately one year and a half.

Kanché

Kanché¹⁵ is a civil society organization which is funded by donations and government grants to provide training and promotion for the Puerta Verde tourism circuit. Kanché is dedicated to carrying out development projects that use tourism to promote sustainable development. The organization offers rural communities access to the knowledge needed to create their own productive actions that, by fomenting the conservation of nature and culture through sustainable development, may improve their quality of life. This organization uses a participatory approach to build up local sustainable management of natural and cultural resources, promoting rural development while being a link with the tourist hub in Cancun (1abOPV, 5OPV, Kanché 2009).

¹²Puerta Verde means Green Door in Spanish. More information on the initiative can be found at: <http://www.puertaverde.com.mx/quienes.html>

¹³ (Holbox, Chiquila, Solferino, San Angel, Nuevo Durango, Punta Laguna and Camapento Hidalgo)

¹⁴ Visitors have the chance to take in the beauty that nature has to offer by visiting butterfly and orchid gardens or going on walks in search of a variety of birds and monkeys. Visitors can also rappel into caves, zip line over the jungle, kayak through lagoons or a floating forest and experience the Mayan culture by enjoying the local cuisine or participating in a Mayan medicine or embroidery workshop.

¹⁵ For more information on the organization see: www.kanche.org

Over the last five years Kanché and Puerta Verde have accomplished various development projects. For example, in 2005 a project was conducted in conjunction with CONANP to catalogue of the flora, fauna and cultural resources of the area as described by the community members themselves. The resulting publications benefited the communities through the development of pride for local resources and patrimony and offered them a chance to share descriptions of the natural world they are a part of as well as the cultural events and traditions that are socially valuable to their communities.

Comision Nacional de Areas Naturales Protegidas (CONANP)

Also working closely with Puerta Verde is CONANP, a part of the Ministry of the Environment. CONANP has engaged in many environmental protection as well as social development projects in rural Mexico. The organization has a fund for community social development projects in areas surrounding national protection areas. This fund was created because it has been recognized that in order to achieve environmental conservation, it is important to first insure the sustainable development of local communities so that they are not forced into unsustainable activities in order to survive (CONANP 2008).

4.3. Alltournative



Alltournative¹⁶ is a private sector tourism company that is also active in Lázaro Cárdenas. They take a very different approach to tourism as they are a profitable tourism enterprise working out of Playa del Carmen for the last 10 years. The CBT project was initiated when representatives from Alltournative saw that the area would be an attractive location for tourism and made a proposition to the community to develop it (2OA, 5CA, 13CA). The company also expresses a full commitment to sustainable development (See Box 3 below). One of their main attractions is a CBT venture (the focus of my research with them) called Mayan Encounter, which emphasizes a combination of adventure and cultural activities.¹⁷

¹⁶ For more information on the organization see: <http://www.alltournative.com/>

¹⁷ Tourists visit a local cenote (deep water-filled sinkholes) in one of three Mayan villages, zipline over the jungle, and then eat in the village before finally visiting the Mayan ruins of Cobá. My study was conducted in two of these villages – Pachén and Tres Reyes (See map in Appendix D).

Box 3: Alltournative Sustainable Development Objectives

- Increase Maya communities' income.
- Create direct jobs inside the community and avoid migration of the inhabitants.
- Improve life quality for the inhabitants.
- Education of the inhabitants in ecotourism practices.
- Preserve and rescue customs and culture.
- Preserve flora and fauna.
- Foment respect for traditional customs within the community.
- Offer the opportunity of cultural and professional development to the members of the community, primarily focusing on children and adolescents (Alltournative 2009).

Based on the differences in nature between Puerta Verde and Alltournative, it is interesting to compare them in order to assess whether they address the different key dimensions of sustainability and how they contribute to sustainable development of the communities.

5. Analysis and Discussion: Key Dimensions of Sustainable Tourism

This chapter will assess the differences between Puerta Verde and Alltournative regarding whether and how they address and accomplish the four different dimensions of sustainability identified in the literature review. After presenting the results from the interviews for each dimension, the research question will be answered in an analytical comparison of the strengths and weaknesses of each CBT project from a sustainable development point of view. The first dimension to be addressed will be participation followed by the economic, environmental, and social sustainability dimensions.

5.1. Participation

Participation was the most commonly identified necessity of sustainable tourism projects. For this reason it will be addressed first and discussed in greater detail than the remaining dimensions of sustainability. This section will first discuss the organizations' efforts to promote local control and involvement in decision-making processes. Second, it will address the training programs being offered to community members and whether these aim to promote community autonomy. Third, I will examine who in the communities is participating in tourism and whether there are equal opportunities for participation among community members. Finally, I will conclude the section by summarizing the strengths and weaknesses of the respective projects.

5.1.1. Local Control

An important aspect of participation to consider is the extent to which local people have control over the project. In both the case studies, local control is a priority (5OPV, 4OA) and is most often exercised at

community meetings. In Puerto Verde, there are monthly meetings of the steering committee¹⁸, network member meetings (13CPV), and individual cooperative meetings (6CPV). Respondents felt that community members made the decision on all levels of the process be it community wide (8bCPV, 12CPV), within the cooperatives (18CPV, 20aCPV), or on the Puerto Verde network level (20aCPV, 8bCPV).

Local Control was strongly demonstrated by the fact that 5 of the people I interviewed were in leadership positions¹⁹. One community member expressed his content with the extent of local control: "it's nice how we are doing it ourselves. We are managing it ourselves, no one comes to say, 'do this'. We want to manage the tourist and not have them manage us. We want to do things ourselves." (12CPV). The overall sentiment was a strong sense of ownership in the project:

"We don't work with companies, we work for ourselves. I know what I need to learn. No one from the outside is here to direct/.../since the project started we were the founders here in the community, we are in charge" (8bCPV).

Another community member demonstrated his sense of ownership: Interviewer- "Do you like the way the tourism system is being conducted?" Community member, "We designed the way that the tourism system works so I have to be ok with it (laughs)."

In the case of Alltournative, there are also monthly meetings where community members assemble with the organization (4OA). They discuss wages, what is been done right/wrong (3CA), entrance fees, exchange ideas and reach agreements (13CA). When there is a problem, anyone can go to the community board of directors who will take up the issue with Alltournative (15bCA). Although it is clear that the community members involved in tourism are participating regularly in meetings (13CA, 15aCA, 15bCA), there are mixed responses in regards to the extent of their participation in the decision-making process at all levels of the project. One community member was very pleased with the level of participation pointing out that, "Everything is talked through and agreements are reached. That is the nicest, that everyone works the way they want to" (14CA). At the same time, when this respondent was later asked if he felt he participated in the decision-making process, the answer was, "No, actually no. Only the directorate ...like the manager who is in charge of the directorate makes the decisions and plans for the people" (14CA). Another response to what goes on at meetings was, "Yes we are participating...I go to the meetings and they tell us if we are doing things right or not" (3CA). These comments demonstrate that although

¹⁸ 4 men, 1 woman

¹⁹ By leadership position I mean they are either presidents of their cooperatives (18CPV, 20bCPV, 8bCPV); members of the PV steering committee (1CPV), or representatives of the network (12CPV went to London with Kanché to promote the network).

community members feel they are participating in the project, they do not feel they are a part of the decision-making process which means that full participation and local control is not being realized.

A likely explanation for this is the fact that there are no community members in the Alltournative communities who are in leadership or management positions of the organization at all (13,15bCA). The sentiment is that there is no one in the village who could be a manager (15bCA). Instead, community members fulfill various support roles such as photography, cooking, and assisting tourists with equipment. One community member pointed out that the guides are the ones who make the decisions (2CA). The significance of this should be seen in light of the fact that not one of the guides who are in charge of each group of tourists is actually from the local villages (3aOA).

The people I interviewed were very pleased to be working with Alltournative and felt that they were participating in the project but it was clear that the monetary benefits were the primary reason for this satisfaction. They never expressed or demonstrated a sense of ownership in the project. The respondents from these communities always distinguished between ‘us’ (the community) and ‘them’ (Alltournative) (Field Notes 2009). While they did comment that Alltournative was usually attentive to the needs and demands of the community (13CA, 15bCA), there was never an indication that they felt as though it was their project.

The strongest difference between the two approaches is the extent of ownership in the project. Puerta Verde community members clearly indicated a stronger sense of local ownership and control over the project and an involvement in the decision-making processes on a higher level than Alltournative community members did. This may be because while Puerta Verde is owned and operated by community members and only supported by outside organizations; Alltournative’s CBT initiative is owned and operated by the private sector and supported by the community members who cook and assist tourists with safety equipment.

5.1.2. Training Programs

It was acknowledged among community members and organizations working with the communities alike, that training programs are an important part of the development process (12CPV,14CA, 1bOPV, 4OA) . With both initiatives, those participating in the tourism projects have received safety, hygiene, and tourism industry training. Community members had many ideas of what kinds of other training they would like to receive and especially expressed interest in learning English. Also, it was well recognized that the element they lack most is developing their own capacities to promote tourism. Two community

members (8bCPV and 12CPV) discussed their wishes to learn how the communities can promote themselves. “How do I promote myself? How can I sell? I know my product, my product is the tourism, the caves, cabins, food, night walks but how do I sell it? Who do I have to talk to?” (8bCPV). Currently, Kanché is handling much of the promotion aspects for Puerta Verde but they have begun to train community members in eventually taking over this role. “There is a lack of technical support if they want to manage everything themselves. Kanché is working on this in providing the necessary elements to empower the board of directors of the cooperative so that they can function independently” (5OPV). This is important for the community’s efforts towards sustainability as the most sustainable form of tourism is where local communities sell directly to the tourists (Swarbrooke 1999:41).

Alltournative community members have also expressed an interest in learning how to promote their own communities. “We are thinking of having our own company but we need means for promotion” (13CA). However, Alltournative management does not feel as though further training is required, “Business and marketing training is not necessary because they just receive the tourism that Alltournative brings and Alltournative has employees for those activities. In the community they lend their service and receive salaries, rent and commission for each visitor” (4OA). The closest thing to substantive training that is offered by the company is monetary support for 4 community youth with university costs so that they can come back and eventually be guides with the company (2OA). The training they do offer is not training programs that directly benefit community members in terms of development, they merely ensure the quality of tourism product being offered and thus cannot be considered a contribution to sustainable development. In light of this discussion it is clear that training programs for future independence are clearly not a priority for Alltournative.

5.1.3. Equitable Power Distribution: Who is participating?

In Puerta Verde communities, power distribution does not appear to be a problem. As one community member clarified, “When there is a decision to make, everyone has to approve. Everyone has different opinions and they are all of value in the meetings. No one is more and no one is less, we are balanced.”(20aCPV). What varies between the different communities is the amount of people participating. In some villages almost the entire community was involve, in other cases only those who were involved in a Puerta Verde cooperative (around 10 people per cooperative) benefited from tourism. The respondents did indicate, however, that any group of people with an idea for a new tourism initiative that could add to the network would be welcome to join (18CPV, 16CPV). One community member described Puerta Verde as an open door for anyone who wants to work with them (8bCPV). A community member who is not currently involved also acknowledged that it would be possible to join Puerta Verde if they would like to (17CPV). Some respondents felt as though tourism has benefitted and impacted only

those who are already involved in the network (20aCPV, 18CPV, 19CPV). “Tourism has changed things for some people yes but in general no. Tourism is not bringing benefits to the members of the *ejido*²⁰. Those who benefit are the ones who have spent money on the roads and trails up to there (lagoon where the tourism activity takes place)” (18CPV). This signifies that even though participation is open to anyone, benefits are not being accrued by the entire community.

In the Alltournative communities everyone was offered the opportunity to work in tourism and thus benefit. Rent for the ejido, salaries and commission per visitor are paid to those who participate (4OA). The community members I spoke with indicated that all those participating in the tourism activities were benefiting equally (5CA, 14CA, 15aCA, 15bCA).²¹ As with Puerta Verde, only those participating directly in the tourism venture were gaining benefits.

While unequal power relations within the communities were a major concern in the literature, they did not appear to have a strong impact on the case study projects. With both tourism ventures, it was recognized that those who were participating in the tourism activity were all benefiting equally. It was also evident in both cases that while participation was open to anyone, not everyone in the community was involved and those who did not participate, were not eligible for economic benefits.

5.1.4. Comparative Analysis of Strengths and Weaknesses

Puerta Verde’s main strength in regards to the participation dimension of sustainable tourism is the sense of ownership it has instilled in the community members. It is clear that they are in control of the tourism operations and merely supported by CONANP and Kanché. Community independence is the ultimate goal. Another strength is that Puerta Verde is open to accepting new participants who show interest in the project. Their weakness is that those who are not a part of the cooperatives involved in Puerta Verde do not feel they are benefiting from tourism. As tourism develops, more of the community may begin to benefit directly but perhaps sustainability could be enhanced if more efforts were made to incorporate further community members.

Alltournative’s strength is that all community members I interviewed appear to be satisfied with their participation level in the tourism venture. Their major weakness is their lack of local control. While community members discussed meeting attendance, overall they did not indicate that they were participating in the decision making process of the tourism company. There is a lack of community

²⁰ Ejido: Communal land tenure system in rural Mexico.

²¹ I was told in informal conversations that almost everyone in Tres Reyes benefits but at the same time I know that there are 63 tourism associates and over 300 people living in the village (field notes 2009).

representation in any management or leadership roles in the company and this is not likely to change as the community members are not being trained for eventually filling these positions either. It thus is unlikely that the communities working with Alltournative would have the capacity to continue with the tourism venture should the organization decide to terminate relations with the communities. The absence of local control is further demonstrated by the fact that the administration and operations activities are all conducted at the Alltournative headquarters in Playa Del Carmen (located 150km away from the communities).

5.2. Economic Sustainability

This section will address the issues of reliable income diversification, local employment and commercial viability. It is important to note that because the two different projects are not at the same point in their development process, there was not as much data to be collected regarding the Puerta Verde communities and thus it is not possible to compare their progress adequately. However, current sentiments towards tourism and economic development thus will be discussed.

5.2.1 Reliable income diversification

In Alltournative communities, the primary answer for what the organization means for them was that it was a source of work (4CA, 13CA, 14CA, 15bCA). All respondents from Alltournative said they were satisfied with their incomes from tourism. It is very reassuring for them to know that they have a steady income and employment within their community (13CA).

Interviewees showed gratitude for everything the organization had accomplished in the community and felt they were better off. When asked how the community has changed since tourism one community member simply said, "well, before we were poor" (2CA). Tourism has allowed them to make a better living than when they were only working in agriculture (14CA, 15aCA). Another woman was also content with Alltournative's presence but expressed some concern,

It's a good thing they came. If they hadn't come to this village and given their work plan we would have continued as always. Until now they have treated us well and paid us well. But if they were to fail us, well we wouldn't have work...We would have to change or find another company (15bC).

Many from Puerta Verde responded that there were no tourists yet therefore no income to be satisfied with (1CPV, 6CPV, 16CPV,18CPV). Others were pleased with their incomes from tourism: "I feel satisfied because I know how to use the money in a way that will benefit my family"(12CPV).

There is little doubt as to the satisfaction of the Alltournative community members with the organization's contribution to the diversification of their incomes. In the long run however, it is unclear as to whether the tourism venture will be a sustainable source of income diversification since the community is so heavily dependent on the company for running the tourism venture. It is difficult to evaluate Puerta Verde's capacity to provide the community members with reliable income diversification given that they have not been receiving tourists for very long. There are already some positive improvements in local incomes which is a positive sign, however, this is not the case for all communities involved in the project as some are visited more frequently than others.

5.2.2. Local Employment

One of the most important aspects of tourism is that it brings employment to the communities (Ashley et al. 2001; 1ObPV, 2Oa). The respondents from Alltournative highly valued that with tourism they had the opportunity to find local employment (2CA, 5CA, 13CA). "More than anything it (tourism) means employment/.../ this makes us happy because we don't have to leave to other cities to work or leave our families. Here it is sure that we will have work every day"(13CA).

Puerta Verde community members also indicated that they highly valued finding local employment (1C, 6C). They also spoke of their preference of living in their communities rather than migrating to the cities for work (6CPV, 10CPV). Some of them made a point to clarify that tourism is not just about a job and making money (8bCPV, 12CPV).

We have love for what we are doing. I tell my guides not to do things for money. It is not to get rich but to complete the costs of your family/.../ The way I see it, there is nothing nicer than being with your family, living well, living peacefully, happy, here I work when I want and I am in my house with my family. I feel happy (12CPV).

Currently Alltournative is providing local jobs for much of the community where they are involved and this is clearly recognized and appreciated by the community members. The employment opportunities the private enterprise has thus far been able to offer the community members has exceeded the capacity of PV or Kanché to provide such security. Taking the time factor into consideration it is not possible to determine, however, whether employment security is something that is more sustainably provided by the private sector. Also, although Puerta Verde communities do not yet enjoy job security they are also gaining more from tourism than just employment for employment's sake and this could be more valuable in the long run.

5.2.3. Commercial viability

What has mainly been acknowledged by community members in terms of commercial viability is the need for outside help or preferably training in how to market their own project. In Alltournative's case, there is a well developed marketing plan and they have demonstrated considerable business efficiency.

The tours are run under strict time schedules, and group numbers are maximized whenever possible. Advertisements are strategically placed through the Mayan Riviera and Cancun. Merchandizing has been incorporated into the tour, as all tourist groups stop at the company's Disney-like souvenir store to purchase t-shirts, hats, photos and other memorabilia (Field Notes 2009).

Puerta Verde on the other hand has been struggling with the commercial viability issue. While Kanché previously secured funding for the promotion of the circuit, these funds have been depleted and the network is now mostly reliant on their website, word of mouth, people passing on the highway, and the promotion efforts of volunteers to attract tourists. While the equipment, safety and hygiene standards of the activities are up to par with any other adventure tourism venture, there is a lack of organization and relations between hosts and guests are very informal which can come across as a less polished touristic package (Field Notes 2009). Improving their marketing has however been a recent focus area of the organization, including flyers, websites and international tourism expos, and these matters may soon be addressed.

After observing various tours from each of the projects, the commercial development of each is clearly not at the same level. Alltournative's approach to carrying out a tourism venture is more mindful of commercial viability than Puerta Verde, as they are first and foremost a very successful and profitable business.

5.2.4. Comparative Analysis of Strengths and Weaknesses

From the perspective of the community members there is a great deal of dependence on outside help for both cases. The Alltournative communities are entirely reliant on the company to take care of marketing and commercialization. Puerta Verde communities are presently dependent twice over when it comes to promotion and commercialization because they rely heavily on Kanché for promoting their circuit, which in turn is also dependent on government funding. It would be ideal if community members could be trained and begin filling this role as soon as possible.

The economic aspect of the tourism project is undoubtedly Alltournative's strong point. The project is well marketed and commercially viable. Community members are very happy with their income situation. The organization has been working with them for over 10 years and has contributed to improving their standards of living. However, long term economic sustainable development could be considered a weakness. If the tourism industry were to crash or Alltournative decided to invest elsewhere, the communities they currently work with may not manage on their own.

Puerta Verde's strength in economic sustainability is that they approach tourism as an income diversification strategy to help their households, they are not entirely dependent on it (10CPV, 12CPV). In the future they also have potential for economic independence as they are engaging in training programs for promoting themselves and applying for own funding (5OPV). As this is a relatively new project in terms of the amount of time tourists have been received, reliable income creation has thus far not been demonstrated and is thus a weakness in this dimension. Also, due to their reliance on grants, Puerta Verde's development efforts have somewhat stalled out as Harrison (1996) warned. A more significant weakness may be their lack of private sector presence which makes the marketing aspect of the tourism industry a challenge. However, although improving the quality of the tourist package and commercial viability is a priority, it is my opinion that it may be important for them in the future to maintain the current informal relations between guests and hosts which are also important to social sustainability, which will be addressed below. There is also a danger that Alltournative has overly focused on the marketability of their product, thus neglecting the impact this type of activity can have on the environment. This will be taken up in the proceeding section.

5.3. Environmental Sustainability

As the purpose of this study is to assess the perceptions of community members in relation to factors that move beyond economic development, this section will now review three important aspects environmental sustainability: First, local awareness of ecological conservation; second, controlled growth; and finally, attracting "dark green" tourists.

5.3.1. Awareness of ecological conservation

All respondent felt as though tourism had had a positive impact on the environment. They specified that it has contributed to them having a cleaner village and preserving the jungle (9CPV, 12CPV, 15bCA). They are taking better care of the environment because that's what the tourists come to see (1CPV, 6CPV, 13CA, 15a/bCA).

Puerta Verde community members spoke of teaching the tourists (11CPV, 8bCPV) as well as their communities (20aCPV, 18CPV) about nature conservation. They recognize that their livelihoods are dependent on the environment that surrounds them (18aCPV, 20aCPV). For Puerta Verde participants, caring for nature was an integral part of the tourism project. One community member eloquently expressed his purpose for working with Puerta Verde,

We are not doing this project to fill our pockets we do it more for the environment for the love we have for this work because it is familiar and for the love we have for the plants. Whether tourists come or not, these plants will be protected. It is like my private collection, this is like my own paradise, it is where I was born. Born and raised(18CPV).

The community members also demonstrated that they were aware of the importance of environmental sustainability. One man refused to sell stones from the cave to a tourist because the beauty of the cave is not just for them but for their kids and others (9CPV).

In the Alltournative communities, environmental conservation has increased to the extent that the areas around the *ejido* are protected (no clearing or hunting activities are allowed). This is part of the formal contract the community has signed with Alltournative (2OA, 4OA, 13CA). The community members also talked about having a cleaner village (15a/bCA). One directly referred to environmental sustainability saying, “We are enjoying what we have to the maximum without harming anything not one space so we are enjoying the place without exploiting anything ”(14CA).

Both projects have demonstrated that they have raised environmental awareness in the communities. Using tourism as an alternative means of making a living to agriculture prevents parts of the jungle from being burned to make room for cultivatable land. The different approaches however, have significant differences in outcome in terms of sustainability. While Alltournative has signed a formal contract to make sure that the villages cannot clear the land around the communities for the next 10 years, Puerta Verde communities are involved in projects to encourage appreciation for nature (Kanché/CONANP nature/culture catalogue project), and community activities to clean and care for the village together (20aCPV). The latter can be considered a more sustainable approach to long term care of the environment given that a well developed sense of pride in your surroundings does not expire the way a formal contract does.

5.3.2. Controlled growth

For the moment there are only small groups visiting Puerta Verde. In booking tours Kanché has made it clear that keeping the numbers low to minimize environmental and social impacts is a priority (1aOPV, 5OPV). For the moment most respondents said they would like to see more tourism (6CPV, 10CPV, 11CPV, 17CPV, 18CPV, 20CPV), subsequently, as tourism picks up Puerta Verde will have to pay close attention to what the ecosystem around them can handle.

Alltournative communities are very heavily visited every day of the week. On one of the days I accompanied a tour, there were 7 groups on the Mayan Encounter tour with approximately 12 people in each group (3aOA). According to one community member, “We can accommodate 100 people per day. If we had more it would impact us a lot en the environment. We receive the maximum so no more”(2CA).

Limiting the number of tourists that visit Puerta Verde is currently a high priority. It will be important however to maintain this priority as the tourism picks up in the communities since the literature has indicated that there is a strong danger of surpassing ecologically sustainable impacts unless growth is carefully planned (Singh 2003: 31). This is a challenge since it is very difficult to measure what the carrying capacity of the ecosystem really is (Bell & Morse 2008; Swarbrooke 1999:29). Alltournative management, spoke of bringing tourists in a controlled form so as not to impact the environment (4OA), but their claims to sustainability are mostly based on the contracts they have arranged with the communities which restricts locals from hunting and cutting down trees (2OA, 4OA). The heart of the differences between the two approaches is that while Puerta Verde seems to prioritize controlled growth as a means of environmental preservation, Alltournative mainly seems to be concerned with the sustainability of the tourism venture itself.

5.3.3. Attracting “Dark green” tourists

Puerta Verde has expressed the desire to attract environmentally conscious tourists (Puerta Verde 2009). Community members also indicated that they preferred to host tourists that really cared about nature and wanted to learn about how the community cared for it (18CPV, 20CPV). Reviews from tourists after visiting Puerta Verde were excited to have had the chance to get to know local cultures and nature. “Will you recommend us? Why? Yes. Because you are a civil associate that combines love for nature, attractive ecotourism locations and a personal human treatment “(Kanché tourist reviews 2009).

Alltournative’s website speaks a lot of their efforts towards sustainable development but the main focus of the descriptions of their activities is directed towards attracting adventure tourism seekers (Alltournative 2009). One tourist I spoke to had chosen Alltournative because of its contribution to the communities, however, the majority I spoke with were more interested in the adventure activities than anything else²² (field notes 2008).

Even though the objective may be to attract tourists who are concerned about environmental preservation, it is much more likely for both projects to be visited by the tourists who are more likely to fit into the category of ego tourists. Both rely on Cancun and the Riviera Maya for their supply of tourism and tourists visiting these locations are mainly on package vacations just looking for one day of adventure rather than people who are actually seeking out an activity that is striving for community development (field notes 2008, 2009). This supports the arguments in the literature that the new dark green tourist is not as common as some might believe. This may not be a problem however. Perhaps partaking in a tourism activity that is carried out in a way that supports sustainable development will inspire them to be more conscious of sustainability issues.

²² One even requested a stop at MacDonald’s on the way out to the communities.

5.3.4. Comparative Analysis of Strengths and Weaknesses

Puerta Verde has successfully promoted community pride in the environment. This is a strength because community members were aware of sustainability issues and spoke of preserving nature for future generations, not just for the sake of tourists. The project can be identified as a “doer”(Ziffer 1989) as it is dedicated to actively promoting sustainable resource management. The project is in an early phase in terms of tourism presence and it will take great effort to maintain the level of tourism at a sustainable amount since it is difficult to measure what that amount would be.

Alltournative’s strength is their formal contract with the communities which prohibits destruction of jungle for agriculture, which demonstrate that they seek to avoid destructive behavior - Ziffer’s “sensitive”category (1998). While they do not seem to promote environmental sustainability only to “sell nature”(ibid), the environmental conservation components of their contracts primarily could be seen as a measure to protect their investment in the communities rather than a genuine concern for the environment. If Alltournative ever decided not to renew the contract, the community may have to rely on agriculture again if they do not have another organization to work with. Furthermore, not only the community’s activities in the jungle that have an impact. It is my opinion that Alltournative would do well to reflect more upon the impacts that their own tourism activities are also having on the ecosystem. Such as, the impact the constant flow of tourists has on the *cenotes*.

5.4. Social Sustainability

The social aspect of sustainability is the final dimension addressed in this study. Socially sustainable tourism projects are able to promote understanding between tourists and guests, cooperation between important actors, equitable power relations, a sense of community pride, cultural preservation and gender equality²³. This section will address three of these important issues.

5.4.1. Cross-cultural education and communication

If a CBT venture is to be sustainable, the communities should gain more from the experience than simply monetary compensation. This is recognized by the Puerta Verde project and in order ensure a maximum experience for both tourists and guests, visiting groups are limited to 10 people. The tour is flexible and allows for the maximum interaction between hosts and guests as possible. It is important for Puerta Verde to attract tourists who are looking to learn something about culture and nature in an environment of mutual learning (Puerta Verde 2007). This feature of Puerta Verde’s approach to CBT was evident as

²³ An entire other thesis could have been written on the gender issues that came up through the interviewing process. Unfortunately, due to space constraints, this topic is beyond the scope of this thesis.

community members often spoke of gaining social value from the project through exchanging language, gaining friendships, and learning about different cultures (8bCPV, 10CPV, 11CPV, 12CPV, 16CPV, 6CPV). In an interview for a video about Puerta Verde, the president of the network specifically mentioned how much he appreciated the reciprocal relationship whereby both the tourist and the community member were engaging in an exchange of ideas and knowledge. “I’m doing what I like to do. I enjoy showing what is ours because people also share what they know and bring discussions about their countries”(Puerta Verde 2007).

This stands in contrast with the Alltournative communities where the tour schedule is rigid and so many groups come through per day that the community members do not have a chance to speak with the visitors on a one to one basis. When describing their interaction with tourists they referred more to impersonal activities such as getting equipment ready (2CA) or having tourists watch while the women cook (3CA). When asked if he had time to speak with the tourists one community member said, “Well the truth is that there is very little time to talk to the tourists because they come and go down (into the *cenote*) and then sometimes more come right after and so with the rappel or the zip line, there is not time...it’s not really possible.(13CA)”

The analysis revealed that those who got more out of tourism than just making a living were those who had the time to really share something with the tourists and develop personal relationships. In this instance, Puerta Verde communities have clearly gained more from the tourism project socially than Alltournative where there is a more superficial interaction between tourists and guests. Even an Alltournative guide I spoke with felt that Mayan Encounter was not a genuine experience (3aOA). I cannot help but conclude that the setting is more one of “staged authenticity”(MacCannell 1973) than a genuine experience for both tourists and guests.

5.4.2. A cooperative environment

Without cooperation between all project actors it would be very difficult to promote sustainable development. The Puerta Verde project has served to enhance cooperation within and between the communities involved. There is increased interaction between the communities as they work to promote each other’s cooperatives and discuss challenges together at the meetings. Communities have also worked together to clean up their villages (12CPV, 14CA). There is very good communication between Kanché and Puerta Verde. Jesus Mesa and Lili Gonzales, who run Kanché, were described as good friends (8bCPV, 18CPV) who have helped the communities out a lot. They were especially recognized for their efforts to bring tourists to the communities (16CPV, 12CPV, 18CPV). The community members expect to learn a lot from them, especially how they can promote themselves (12CPV).

Although the communities stand to gain from being involved in the network, there is still room for improvement and a need to work more closely between the different cooperatives (8bCPV, 12CPV). There also needs to be improvement in the communication between the different organizations that support Puerta Verde as there has clearly been frustration on this front. There is an overlap in the activities of the organizations supporting Puerta Verde which has led to an inefficient use of funding. For example, both Kanché and the CONANP spent a significant amount of funds to design logos for the cooperatives. One community member felt the members of the cooperatives themselves would be much better off managing the money as they know better what is really needed (12CPV).

In the case of Alltournative, there is good communication between the organization and the communities. Relations between the two are formalized as there is a contract between Alltournative which grants the organization exclusivity to carry out tourism activities in the area. The community members acknowledged that whenever there are conflicts, there is a manager that people can speak to and he does his best to resolve the issues (13CA, 14CA, 15bCA). At times, however there is some tension between community members and the guides as they are all from the city and have a very different mentality from the community members (40A). This issue will be taken up again in the next section when we have a closer look at cultural issues.

Cooperation and communication between Alltournative and the communities is open and working well, however it is based on very formal and contractual relations. Puerta Verde communities work well within the communities but there is room for improvement in cooperation between communities and support organizations as their lack of coordination has led to them duplicating each other's efforts. Improving these relations will be essential to the sustainability outcomes of the project so that the network can be a more effective way for them to promote social development.

5.4.3. Cultural Preservation

Most community members said traditions remained the same since before the tourism project began. Community members were very proud of what they have, the comradery of the village life (12CPV, 14CPV), and natural food free of chemicals (10CPV, 14CA). Only interviewees from Puerta Verde, however, specifically said that they felt their cultural heritage had actually gotten stronger through the tourism venture (16CPV, 1CPV). It was also discussed that traditional ceremonies that had faded have recently come back (10CPV). Respecting culture is part of the project and one of the reasons why the community members decide to participate (18CPV).

Cultural preservation is also an expressed priority of Alltournative (2OA), however, they may be unknowingly contributing to the decline of cultural traditions in the community by using Mayan ceremonies as a tourist attraction. The only time that Mayan ceremonies were mentioned by Alltournative respondents was when they were speaking of the ritual performed for tourists. The shaman I spoke to conducting the ceremonies with tourists made a point to say that it was the real thing and not just a show (4CA). However, it does not appear as though these ceremonies are performed other than for tourists. The current value of the ceremonies is mainly just as a source of employment for older generations. "The ceremonies are part of the package. It is just so that the older people have a project, they can't do hard labour so we have an agreement with the company that they have to give a source of employment for the older people"(13CA).

Considering that the core Alltournative staff (guides, management) are from the cities or abroad and have an outsider's perspective of the community's way of life, there were some strong differences in cultural perspective from community members. At times the guides are not as respectful of the community members as they should be, expecting a city pace and telling community members to hurry up (4OA). This outsider's perspective was also demonstrated when I asked an Alltournative staff member what would happen if the ceremony they performed to ask permission to use the cenote for tourism would have resulted in the spirit denying permission. His response was: "Well we would have to convince him. We have to contract a good shaman so that he is well convinced right?"(4OA). That being said Alltournative upper management did explain that in working with the communities, "I always offer a lot of respect their culture to the village. We work as partners so after a while they were happy with us and we signed a 10 year agreement "(2OA).

Unfortunately, it appears as though Alltournative leans more towards using the Mayan culture as a marketing strategy rather than having genuine respect and desire to promote cultural sustainability. The ceremonies that are a part of the tourist package suggests a commodification of culture and further contributes to an atmosphere of staged authenticity (MacCannell 1973). This is strongly contrasted with Puerta Verde's community run project which is committed to preserving their Mayan heritage and sharing genuine Mayan culture with visitors. The activities of the organizations supporting the network have also demonstrated genuine concern for cultural preservation (Kanché/ CONANP cultural catalogue).

5.4.4. Comparative Analysis of Strengths and Weaknesses

Social sustainability is strength for Puerta Verde as the communities have gained from increased interaction between communities of the network and from having the time to get to know people from

other countries. Cultural Preservation is also a strength since the project makes a strong effort to emphasize the cultural value of community traditions. Their weak point is the communication and coordination between the different organizations involved with the network.

Alltournative community members do not feel their community has been negatively affected socially since becoming involved in tourism and there is good communication/coordination between Alltournative and the communities. However, community members do not have the time to interact with tourists beyond a superficial level. Although Alltournative expresses an interest in social development and hold events and activities for the communities (Alltournative 2008), they could do more in this area. One respondent expressed his desire for Alltournative to contribute more in terms of social development. “Yes, Alltournative helps socially; a little...not much really...it would be good if they would give us more support in that respect “(13CA). More concerning is Alltournative’s use of culture as a marketing tool and tourist attraction. The Mayan ceremonies are only performed for tourists (commodification). This can have a seriously negative effect on the local culture as the ceremonies lose the meaning that they once held. The role of Shaman is no longer a respected position in the community but a source of employment for older members who are unable to do physical work.

5.5. Research Reflections

As is the case with many research studies, there are many themes and topics that were brought up throughout the interviews that I was unable to include in the thesis. For example, many of the female community members discussed how gender affected the participation in the project. Also, it was not possible to add a discussion of what tourism has meant for the infrastructure of the communities.²⁴ These two topics and many others would be interesting for future research.

Conducting original field research was a very challenging and rewarding experience. It was necessary to change my approach on many occasions due to language and education barriers or not being able to spend as much time in the communities as I would like. While it was a challenge to adequately incorporate the insights from so many different perspectives, I feel that the study has benefited from the added knowledge of how two different organizations have approached sustainable development tourism rather than just focusing on one case study. I would have also liked to interview more people who are not involved in the tourism projects to gain a better understanding of the overall view of tourism in the community. This would be an interesting approach for future research. Another possibility for future would be a longitudinal study

²⁴ For instance, before Alltournative’s arrival, the community of Pacchén had to walk on a path through the jungle to reach the nearest clinic. One community member’s son died because they could not bring him to the hospital in time (3CA).

on the economic development of the area. Finally, I think it would be useful to supplement my qualitative findings with a more quantitative study that would measure economic benefits and evaluate environmental carrying capacity issues.

6. Conclusion

This research has revealed that while both Alltournative and Puerta Verde have changes to make in the future if they are to be sustainable in the long-run, there is evidence that the community members involved in both projects feel their communities have benefited from the presence of tourism. What has stood out most significantly is that if one were basing an assessment solely on economic indicators as many research studies in the past have done, one might have concluded that Alltournative is a more successful project. Taking the other factors into consideration however, it is apparent that there is much more to sustainability than economic benefits. Although Puerta Verde needs to improve their ability to promote economic development and coordinate better among the actors involved in the tourism venture, from a sustainability point of view they were generally stronger than Alltournative. The major difference between the two is that when the members of Puerta Verde communities spoke of benefits, their descriptions went beyond economic benefits alone. Alltournative community respondents spoke mainly or only of economic compensation when they discussed what tourism meant for them. The Puerta Verde experience shows how important a qualitative approach to research can be since factors that cannot be charted and measured in a statistical fashion are integral to success.

The strengths and weaknesses of the different approaches in promoting the four key dimensions of sustainability reveal that there are significant differences between the way the private sector and civil society carry out CBT ventures for community development, which has impacted their capacity for promoting sustainable development. While the private sector CBT excels at providing monetary compensation for communities, their efforts towards the other dimensions of sustainable tourism development are somewhat lacking. Even though they acknowledge the importance of respecting culture and participation, in practice the way they approach the tourism venture in some instances only allows for a superficial implementation of these themes. They could improve their efforts towards promoting sustainability by training community members for management positions; conducting studies on the threshold capacity of the *cenotes* they visit frequently with tourists; or by offering tours that would allow for more interaction between tourists and guests. With Puerta Verde, their strengths and weaknesses are reversed. Participation and cultural preservation are strongly emphasized, however, they lack the financial and business knowledge resources to market and promote the tourism venture without relying on outside funding. It is also important for the different actors working with Puerta Verde to communicate and align their activities better so as not to undermine each other's efforts. They could learn a lot from Alltournative

in terms of marketability, and coordination. What can be taken from this research is that while Puerta Verde and Alltournative have vastly different approaches to their respective ventures, both have succeeded in contributing to sustainable development. The fact that these two had the differences they did, leads one to think that there can be a wide range of social/economic/environmental factors at play while still achieving some level of sustainability. This is important to note because it shows that there is not one particular formula that can be applied to a given organization to determine its potential for sustainability. After comparing the strengths and weaknesses of the two approaches, it can be concluded that the ideal approach to sustainable tourism would be to combine the marketing and financial resources of the private sector with the genuine concern for social, cultural and environmental sustainability demonstrated by civil society. Puerta Verde and Alltournative may not be perfect in their efforts towards sustainability but they have both already accomplished a lot for the communities they work with. By maintaining the community well-being as their priority, and taking the various dimensions of sustainability into account, they will continue making positive steps on the path to sustainability.

Although these findings cannot necessarily be generalized to similar tourism ventures in Mexico or elsewhere, the strengths and weaknesses discussed above contribute to identifying what areas of sustainability may be most challenging if one is to carry out a CBT using one of these approaches. I anticipate that this research can be useful both for Puerta Verde and Alltournative as an opportunity for them to learn about how the community members involved in the projects perceive tourism's impact on their communities. At the same time, the study also contributes to general knowledge of how tourism can impact community development. I would like to conclude by posing some important questions for further reflection: Will the community members feel positive towards tourism as the number of visitors and impacts intensify? Is economic development and the other dimensions of sustainability mutually exclusive? As the world's socio-economic and environmental circumstances continue to evolve, what will ultimately determine if it will be sustainable or not?

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Appendix A: Interview Schedule

Int.ref: Code for each interview - O = organization staff; C = community member, (a/b when two people were interviewed at once)

ORGZ: PV = Puerta Verde; A = Alltournative; Gov = government

<u>Transcribed</u>		<u>Date</u>	<u>Int.ref.</u>	<u>Orgz</u>	<u>Research Activity Description</u>	<u>Location</u>
	1	4-13 Nov	1Oa/b	PV	Initial Informal Interviews Kanché Staff members (notes only)	Cancún
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	3	1 Dec	2O	A	MIC 2008-11-10 14:03:04 Interview with Alltournative upper management	Playa Del Carmen
	4	4 Dec	1C	PV	Community Member (CM) interview (notes only)	San Ángel
	5	8 Dec	3a/bO	A	Discussion with Alltournative Drivers (notes only)	Pacchen
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	6	8 Dec	2C	A	CM Interview	Pacchen
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	7	8Dec	3C	A	CM Interview	Pacchen
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	8	8 Dec	4O	A	Alltournative Manager Interview	Pacchen Tres Reyes Punta Laguna
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	9	8Dec	4C	A	CM Interview (Shaman)	Pacchen
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	10	8Dec	5C	A	CM Interview	Pacchen
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	11	9 Dec	6C	PV	CM Interview	Nuevo Durango
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	12	9 Dec	7C	PV	CM Interview	Nuevo Durango
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	13	10 Dec	8a/bC	PV	CM Interview	Nuevo Durango
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	14	10 Dec	9C	PV	CM Interview	Nuevo Durango
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	15	10 Dec	10C	PV	CM Interview	Nuevo Durango
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	16	10 Dec	11C	PV	CM Interview	Nuevo Durango
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	17	11 Dec	12C	PV	CM Interview	Nuevo Durango
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	18	18 Jan	13C	A	CM Interview	Tres Reyes
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	19	18 Jan	14C	A	CM Interview	Tres Reyes

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	20	18 Jan	15a/bC	A	CM Interview	Tres Reyes
	21	19 Jan	5O	PV	Kanché interview (notes only)	Cancun
<input type="checkbox"/>	22	20 Jan	6O	Gov	CONANP Interview	Cancun
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	23	23 Jan	7O	Gov	CONANP Interview	Cancun
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	24	27 Jan	8O	Gov	SEDETUR Interview	Cancun
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	25	28Jan	16C	PV	CM Interview	San Ángel
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	26	28 Jan	17C		CM Interview	San Ángel
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	27	29 Jan	18C	PV	CM Interview	Solferino
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	28	29Jan	19C		CM Interview	Solferino
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	29	29Jan	20a/bC	PV	CM Interview	Solferino

Appendix B: Interview Guides

Interview question guide for community members

FU – Possible follow up suggestions (seguimiento)

1. ¿Piensa usted que el turismo ha cambiado la vida comunitaria en los últimos 5 años?
(Do you think that tourism has changed the way you live over the last 5 years?)

FU: ¿Cómo era antes del turismo? (How was it before tourism?)

¿Cómo es ahora? (How is it now?)

¿Cómo le gustara que fuera en 5 años? (How was it five years ago?)

2. ¿Qué significa para la comunidad turismo aquí?
(What does tourism mean for the community?)

FU: ¿Cómo le siente cuando vengan turistas a esta comunidad? (How do you feel about tourists visiting your/this community?)

¿Cómo le beneficia el turismo? (How do you benefit from tourism?)

¿Piensa que todas las personas en la comunidad puedan beneficiar del turismo? {Do you think that all the people in the community can benefit from tourism?}

Qué le molesta del turismo? (what bothers you about tourism?)

3. ¿Le gustaría recibir más turismo en su comunidad?
(Would you like to receive more tourism in your community?)

FU: ¿Cuántos reciben en este momento por semana? (How many tourists come here per week?)

¿Cuántos le gustaría recibir por semana? (How many would you like to come per week?)

4. ¿Su comunidad le enseña algo nuevo e importante al turista?
(Does your community teach something new and important to tourists?)

FU: ¿Qué?

5. ¿Cómo la actividad turística afecta la conservación de su naturaleza?
(How does tourism affect nature conservation?)

FU: Do you believe that tourism helps with nature conservation?

6. ¿Piensa que sus tradiciones y la identidad de la comunidad han cambiado en los últimos 5 años?
¿Cómo?

(Do you think that your traditions and community identity have changed in the last 5 years? How?)

7. ¿Se siente satisfecho(a) con los ingresos (dinero) que obtiene del turismo?
(Are you satisfied with the money you are making from tourism?)
8. ¿Qué le parece de la manera que está realizado el turismo en su comunidad?
(What do you think of the way that tourism is carried out in your community?)
9. ¿Cómo participa en las actividades turísticas en su comunidad?
(How do you participate in the touristic activities in your community?)
FU: ¿Qué entrenamiento o capacitación ha recibido para recibir visitantes? Le gustaría recibir capacitación en algo más? (What training have you received for receiving tourists? Would you like to be trained in anything else?)
¿Quién de su comunidad participa más? (do some people in your community participate more than others?)
10. ¿Usted participa activamente en la toma de decisiones y planeación del turismo en su comunidad?
(Do you participate actively in the decision making process and planning of tourism in your community?)
FU: ¿Cómo?
11. ¿Siente que su opinión puede ser escuchada con la gente de Alltournative con respecto a los visitantes y el turismo?
(Do you feel that your opinion is heard with the people from Alltournative (Puerta Verde, Kanché?))
12. ¿Le gustaría estar más involucrado en la planeación de proyectos turísticos?
(Would you like to be more involved in the planning of tourism projects?)

Question Guide for Organization: Questions for Kanché (Questions for other organizations varied slightly)

1. How did Kanché first get involved with Puerta Verde?
¿Como fue que Kanché se involucró con Puerta Verde?
2. What projects have you accomplished so far?
¿Que proyectos han completado?
3. How does Kanché work to promote sustainable development socially, economically and socially?
¿Como es que Kanché trabaja para promover un desarrollo sustentable, social y económico?
4. Has there been a change over the years that you have worked with the communities (Livelihood improvements)?
¿Ha habido cambios en las comunidades en estos años que llevan trabajando (mejoras en su estilo de vida)?
5. What are the greatest challenges of using tourism for development?
¿Cuáles han sido los desafíos más grandes utilizando el turismo para el desarrollo?

6. How are benefits from the tourism projects distributed among community members?
¿Como se distribuyen las ganancias que provienen del turismo entre los miembros de la comunidad?
7. What is the process for incorporating new communities?
¿Cuál es el proceso para incorporar nuevas comunidades?
8. How do you decide what kinds of development projects will be conducted with Puerta Verde and how they will be conducted?
¿Como deciden que tipo de proyectos para el desarrollo se llevarán a cabo con Puerta Verde y como se realizarán?
9. Do you believe the community members have a positive view of tourism?
¿Crees que los miembros de la comunidad ven positivamente el turismo?
10. How are community members involved in the management of the tourism operation?
¿Qué tanto se involucran los miembros de las comunidades en la dirección de la operación turística?
11. Which community members are more likely to participate (only the leaders, men)?
¿Que miembros de la comunidad participan más?
12. How do you deal with barriers to participation (language, business training, marketing knowledge etc)?
¿Como afrontan las barreras para la participación (lenguaje, entrenamiento en negocios, conocimiento de marketing, etc)?

Appendix C: Analysis Index

Livelihoods (Village Life Before and After)

L1 - Education

L2 - Health

L3 – Employment: a) making a living in the community vs. migration, b) income (community economy))

L4 - Village life (pride, preference over city)

L5 - Social relations

L6 – Traditions: a) language, b) food, c) ceremonies, d) celebrations, e) clothes)

L7 - Environment

L8 - Infrastructure (roads, electricity, telephone)

L9 – Dealing with the hurricane (house materials, harvest)

L10 - Government support (projects, funding)

L11 - Food

L12 - Other

perception of Tourism

P1 – Significance of tourism

P2 - Sentiment towards tourists visiting

P3 - How things are going with the organization (tourism development process, conflict management)

P4 – Description of interaction with tourists

P5 - Teaching the tourists (learning from each other)

P6 - Things that are lacking

- P7 - Origins of tourism in the community
- P8 - Description of what the organization does for/with the community (Significance of organization)
- P9 - Benefits
- P10 - Awareness of sustainable tourism concepts
- P11 - Impact of tourism on the community (How has the community changed in the last 5 years)
- P12 - Amount of tourism
- P13 - Satisfaction with income from tourism
- P14 – Other

Participation

- PA1 - Their role in the tourism industry
- PA2 – Meetings - a) frequency, b) who participates
- PA3 - Management
- PA4 - Suggestions
- PA5 - Level of participation
- PA6 - Training
- PA7 - Desire to participate more
- PA8 - New participants
- PA9 - Gender
- PA10 - Sense of ownership in the project (do they feel they have a say?)
- PA11 – Other

Appendix D: Interview Location Map



● - Community Interview Locations

Puerta Verde Communities

1. Solferino
2. San Ángel
3. Nuevo Durango

Alltournative Community

4. Tres Reyes
5. Pacchén