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## **RURAL TOURISM AND POVERTY REDUCTION**

A CASE STUDY OF THE RURAL POPULATION'S LIVELIHOODS

IN SAN PEDRO DE COLALAO, ARGENTINA

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## Abstract

The aim of this study was to analyse rural tourism as a tool for poverty reduction, by examining the role of the regulatory framework, including the public and the private sector; and how the participation in rural tourism activities shapes people's livelihood outcomes in San Pedro de Colalao, Argentina. A case study was carried out, which sought to gain an in-depth understanding about people's livelihoods, through the lens of the sustainable livelihoods framework. Mainly qualitative interviews were therefore conducted with rural dwellers involved in tourism related activities, between November and December 2018. The provincial government proved to take on an important role in increasing people's human capital to generate employment opportunities, which have led to an additional income and therewith contribute to poverty reduction. However, the sustainability of such is debated, as these seem to be vulnerable to external threats. Additionally, a deficit involvement of the local government in providing infrastructure and protective measures, seems to have led to negative livelihood outcomes, including a restricted access to water and land.

**Keywords:** rural tourism; sustainable livelihood framework; livelihood diversification; poverty reduction; case study; rural development; San Pedro de Colalao; Argentina

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### **Turismo Rural y Reducción de Pobreza: Un Estudio de Caso de los Medios de Vida de la Población Rural en San Pedro de Colalao, Argentina**

El objetivo de este estudio fue analizar el turismo rural como una herramienta para la reducción de la pobreza, examinando el rol del marco regulatorio, incluyendo los sectores público y privado. Así mismo el estudio exploró cómo la participación de pobladores rurales en actividades de turismo rural determina los medios de vida de las personas en San Pedro de Colalao, Argentina. Para desarrollar este objetivo, se llevó a cabo un estudio de caso, con el cual se buscaba obtener una comprensión profunda de los medios de vida de las personas, a través del marco de medios de vida sostenibles. Así, se llevaron a cabo principalmente entrevistas cualitativas con pobladores rurales involucrados en actividades relacionadas con el turismo, entre noviembre y diciembre del 2018. Uno de los hallazgos importantes fue que el gobierno provincial demostró desempeñar un rol importante en el aumento del capital humano de las personas, para generar oportunidades de empleo, lo que ha dado lugar a un ingreso adicional y con ello contribuye a la reducción de la pobreza. Sin embargo, la sostenibilidad de estas oportunidades es debatible ya que estas son vulnerables a amenazas externas. Además, el déficit de la participación del gobierno local en el suministro de

infraestructura y medidas de protección, ha dado lugar a resultados negativos en los medios de vida, incluyendo el acceso restringido al agua y a la tierra.

**Palabras clave:** turismo rural; marco de medios de vida sostenibles; diversificación de medios de vida; reducción de pobreza; estudio de caso; desarrollo rural; San Pedro de Colalao; Argentina

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## Acronyms

ETT	Entity of Tourism of the Province of Tucumán
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
IFAD	International Fund for Agricultural Development
INTA	National Institution of Agricultural Technology
RNFE	Rural non-farm economy
SALFF	Secretary of Agriculture, Livestock, Fisheries and Food
SLF	Sustainable Livelihoods Framework
SLFT	Sustainable Livelihoods Framework for Tourism
SPC	San Pedro de Colalao
SSI	Semi-structured interviews
UEDP	Executing Unit for Productive Development
WB	World Bank

## I. Introduction

*The world can and must harness the power of tourism as we strive to carry out the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (UNWTO & UNDP 2017: 20).*

United Nations' Secretary General, António Guterres, launched the 'International Year of Sustainable Tourism for Development 2017' with these words, demonstrating the importance of the sector, contributing to the Sustainable Development Goals.

Tourism is one of the world's fastest growing industries, making up for ten percent of the global gross domestic product (GDP) and is thereafter said to have significant potential to contribute to economic growth, employment generation and poverty reduction in the developing countries (UNWTO 2018a: 6). In Argentina, the sector accounts for 10,4 percent of the GDP and is considered an important income source for the country's development (WTTC 2018: 1). It is strongly promoted by the state and has been applied as a financial alternative during difficult economic times, namely waves of hyperinflation in the 1990s and the economic crisis in 2001 (Schenkel 2015: 621-622). Such policy should encourage international investments and generate economic growth and employment (ibid.). To this effect, Argentina was the first Latin American country to remove the value added taxes for tourists in 1992 (ibid.: 622). This strategy can be viewed as the use of tourism as a tool for poverty reduction on a national level, promoting and financing numerous projects and therewith boosting tourist activities for regional development (ibid.: 624-625).

Simultaneously, on a household level, various studies have identified rural tourism as a strategy of rural livelihood diversification and a means of poverty reduction in many regions of the world (Ashley et al. 2000; Harrison 2008: 851; Machado Padilha & Nayar Hoff 2011). Argentina is considered a pioneer in the Latin American field, dedicating first farming spaces for rural tourism in 1973, followed by Uruguay in 1980 and Brazil in 1986 (Mendivil 2009: 5). Rural villages opened their spaces for tourists, offering a broad spectrum of activities and establishments, such as horseback riding, restaurants, small hotels and wineries (Román & Ciccolella 2009: 13).

However, although rural tourism is acknowledged as a means of promoting rural development through economic growth, the, in rural areas, often-lacking employment opportunities and the diversification of the local economy, there is a debate questioning the

actual positive impact of tourism on rural livelihoods (Ashley et al. 2000; Tao & Wall 2009; Meyer & Meyer 2015; Chen et al. 2018;). These possible negative externalities include environmental, social and cultural aspects. First, natural resources could be affected by the tourism industry and be object to competition among rural dwellers, who are in need thereof for their numerous activities (Ashley 2000: 13, 15; Ashley et al. 2000: 1-2). Second, with regard to social aspects, conflicts within communities have been observed to arise due to competition regarding tourism activities (Ashley 2000: 13-20; Chen et al. 2018: 2). Third, the tourist influx in rural villages could harm the local culture and traditions, especially where there are indigenous peoples (Verner 2009: 2; De la Maza 2018: 108). Fourth, the importance of the government as a regulator of the sector, with regard to environmental impacts and the provision of infrastructure, has been widely recognized (Ashley 2000: 28; Zapata et al. 2011: 734; Chen et al. 2018: 10, 13).

These points show that numerous factors, which go beyond the financial aspects cash income and economic development, seem to influence the livelihood outcomes, caused by rural tourism activities. The present thesis thereafter aims at analysing rural tourism as a tool for rural poverty reduction, by applying the sustainable livelihoods framework (SLF) to examine the influences of rural tourism on people's livelihoods.

Rural tourism is defined based on the World Tourism Organisation (UNWTO 2017: 11):

Rural tourism is a type of tourism activity in which the visitor's experience is related to a wide range of products generally linked to nature-based activities, agriculture, rural lifestyle/culture, angling and sightseeing. Rural Tourism activities take place in non-urban (rural) areas with the following characteristics: i) low population density, ii) landscape and land-use dominated by agriculture and forestry and iii) traditional social structure and lifestyle.

The application of the SLF will benefit this investigation, as the framework seeks to measure poverty in holistic ways and not based on the economic calculations of the poverty line (DFID 1999: chapter 1.3). It is also the first framework to admit that rural livelihoods do not rely on agriculture as the only income source, but by contrast include non-farm activities and therewith a broad spectrum of income strategies, which are based on the rural poor's available assets (Krantz 2001: 10-11).

Conforming to such approach, this thesis' focus will be laid on the before mentioned household level, not the national macro level, and therewith investigate the local people's

involvement in rural tourism from their own perspectives. This is a subjective approach, which will complement existing research in the field with a qualitative case study, contributing to the debate on rural tourism as a poverty reduction tool from a livelihoods' perspective. Nevertheless, it seems important to include the government's role, based on the above-mentioned importance put on policies for the sector's regulation.

San Pedro de Colalao (SPC), a little valley in Argentina's province of Tucumán, is situated in a mountainous area in between two rivers and offers adventure sport activities, cultural archaeological sites of the indigenous population and a known local gastronomy (ETT 2019). It is said to be an important touristic hotspot in the province (ibid.). Nevertheless, it seems unclear to what extent the local population benefits from its mostly national touristic fame. It therefore stands to reason to investigate the outcomes of rural tourism in SPC, in order to answer the following research questions:

- A. What role does the regulatory framework, including the public and the private sector, play in the field of rural tourism?
- B. In what ways has the participation in rural tourism activities shaped people's livelihood outcomes?

The study will first give an overview over the growth of rural tourism in the development field, then summarize existing literature on rural development thinking, ending with remarks about livelihood diversification, in order to subsequently develop the theoretical framework, followed by methodology, analysis and conclusion.

## II. Rural tourism growth

A historical and socio-economic analysis of the diversification of rural livelihoods and the subsequent rise of rural tourism as a poverty reduction tool, will in this chapter be further developed to give a background understanding about the current situation in the field.

### 2.1 New rural spaces

Several researchers have identified an increased diversification of rural livelihoods into non-agricultural activities throughout the past decades, which has been ascribed to the new rurality concept (Kay 2008; Ramírez-Miranda 2014). The concept is said to have originated in Latin America, capturing changes the neoliberal globalization conveyed (Kay 2008: 919; Ramírez-Miranda 2014; Gómez Pellón 2015: chapter 2). Emphasis was thereafter newly put on the diversification of rural activities and the importance of non-agricultural incomes, as part of the rural transformation, which demonstrates similarities with the sustainable livelihoods approach that had emerged in Europe earlier (Kay 2008: 920, 922).

The implementation of the neoliberal market structures in several Latin American countries, subsequent to the Washington Consensus and the Structural Adjustment Programs during the 1980s, are deemed responsible for the withdrawal of the state from the rural sector and the subsequent privatizations, agro-industry growth and implemented large-scale agro-export monoculture model (Loewy 2008: 76). This led to a significant increase in both rural and urban poverty, such as a rising income inequality throughout the continent (Kay 2006: 455-456). Especially small- and family farmers were forced to diversify their income sources and did so mostly through off-farm wage labour in the capital-intensive farming sector (Kay 2015: 76-77). Today, the rural non-farm economy (RNFE) consists in 35 to 50 percent of the rural income in developing countries, which represents a major revenue source and makes it an important field of investigation (WB 2017: 2).

This shift caused changes also in Argentina, a country that is now characterized by its dual agrarian structure, dividing the Pampean region<sup>1</sup> and the north-western one (Paz & Jara 2014: 81). The former is now mostly made up of large-scale export oriented agricultural production and the latter still consists in 81 percent small producers, in comparison to 42 percent in the Pampean region<sup>2</sup> (ibid.: 82). It can be observed that subsistence farming still is an important

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<sup>1</sup> In the central eastern part of the country.

<sup>2</sup> Based on data from the national census in 2002.

activity in this particular region, which is considered to be the poorest one in Argentina, including the province of Tucumán, where SPC is located (ibid.: 75, 85; Gasparini 2004: 4).

Relating thereto, rural tourism is said to have emerged due to the industry crisis of smallholder farmers, who recognized an additional income source for their subsistence in rural tourism activities, not least to avoid whole villages from disappearing (Mendivil 2009: 4; IICA 2010: 21).

## **2.2 Rural tourism as a poverty reduction tool**

Rural tourism first emerged in Europe after the Second World War, as a means of restoring the affected regions (Dachary et al. 2005: 9, 51; Román & Ciccolella 2009: 9). It was then politically implemented both in Europe and the developing region throughout the 1960s, 70s and 80s, as a significant component of economic development and macro-economic growth (ibid.; Torres & Henshall Momsen 2004: 294-295). Not until later, namely in the 1990s, tourism was recognized as a poverty reduction strategy on a household-level (Ashley et al. 2000: 1; Torres & Henshall Momsen 2004: 295; Harrison 2008: 851).

The rapid increase in tourism in developing countries, between 1950 and 1970, led to the incorporation of the sector's financing by international organizations such as the World Bank (WB) (Harrison 2008: 851-852). With the implementation of the Millennium Development Goals in 2000, which put the eradication of poverty on the development agenda for the first time, the claim that tourism would support the goal, was spread even more (UNWTO 2006). The focus was newly set on different types of value chains, including rural tourism as a growth-oriented approach to boost the RNFE, creating alternative income and employment opportunities to alleviate poverty (ibid.; Saarinen & Rogerson 2014: 24; WB 2017: 26).

Many concepts, such as pro-poor tourism, sustainable tourism and integrated rural tourism, arose in face of this new global development focus (Ashley et al. 2000; Chok et al. 2007; Hall 2007; Saxena et al. 2007; Schilcher 2007; Cawley & Gillmor 2008; Harrison 2008; Panyik et al. 2011; Budeanu et al. 2016). These concepts have the common denominator of putting the deprived at the centre of tourism development, so that they can benefit there from and their livelihoods are not negatively impacted (ibid.). It is also about promoting sustainability of cultural, social, environmental and economic resources through bottom-up approaches to empower the local people (ibid.).

This change in focus could also be observed in Argentina, as international development institutions, such as the WB and the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), focussed on more diverse income generating activities, away from agricultural production, in order to alleviate rural poverty. Between 2004 and 2014, Argentina received international financing from the WB for the development of rural transportation infrastructure to boost the RNFE, since former studies had shown positive effects there from, on income diversification (WB 2017: 48-49). IFAD (2010: 14) Argentina published a country strategic opportunities programme in 2004, incorporating objectives such as the development of human capital, to generate employment opportunities outside the agricultural arena, whereas the former intentions had been based on credits for small producers and therewith solely focussing on the agricultural production. Some of the financed projects resulted in the development of rural tourism programs (ibid.: 32).

### **2.3 Complexity of the concept**

A frequently stated aspect of rural tourism is the complexity of the concept. The high vulnerability to external and internal threats in a constantly (re)shaped field with changing actors, preferences and perceptions, calls for a thorough analysis of all aspects of rural tourism and their interrelation (Dachary et al. 2005: 12; Streimikiene & Bilan 2015: 31; Budeanu et al. 2016: 291). It therefore stands to reason to investigate rural tourism through the analysis of people's livelihoods, not least because rural tourism has been identified as a form of livelihood diversification, as indicated above. Additionally, it becomes apparent that the context, where rural tourism takes place, is of importance. It therefore makes sense to analyse rural tourism through the SLF, as it implies a thorough analysis of the context, people's assets, strategies and outcomes (DFID 1999).

However, as indicated in the introduction, several researchers have brought up criticism regarding rural tourism, questioning its effective and sustainable poverty reduction power, which contributes to the complexity of analysing the impact of rural tourism on people's livelihoods. First, ambiguity exists when it comes to gender, as on the one hand, rural tourism is promoted by international organizations as empowering women through increased employment opportunities (UNDP 2011: 6; Castillo et al. 2015: 6; UNWTO 2018b: 4). On the other hand, studies have shown that it rather reinforces traditional gender roles, as women are mostly responsible for household chores and men represent the business (Sparrer 2003: 188; Morales Hernández et al. 2018: conclusion).

Second, with regard to tourism being a diverse, labour-intensive industry, the inclusion of the informal sector is broadly promoted for the purpose of employment generation (Zapata et al. 2011: 741-742). This has also been linked to increased labour opportunities for women, as they are said to be highly involved in informal activities (Chok et al. 2007: 148). Hence, the informal sector within rural tourism is regarded upon as a chance to maximize opportunities for self-employed small-scale enterprises and the rural poor (Ashley et al. 2000: 3, 5; Ashley 2002; Zapata et al. 2011: 741-742; Meyer & Meyer 2015: 199).

Third, there is a wide range of controversial findings regarding the impacts of tourism on indigenous peoples, many of them referring to Latin America (Verner 2009; Vom Hau & Wilde 2009: 16, 22; Carr et al. 2016; De la Maza 2018). The positive effects include rural tourism as a tool for social and economic empowerment for the indigenous peoples, not least through an increased self-confidence, due to the nurturing of cultural arts, languages and traditions, when the tourism projects are self-managed (Verner 2009: 1; Carr et al. 2016: 1070). However, the negative consequences include high cultural and environmental costs through a growing tourism influx and a possible distancing away from cultural traditions (Verner 2009: 2; Carr et al. 2016: 1071). There also seems to be a nexus between land rights and tourism, which makes it difficult for the indigenous peoples to benefit from tourism, as they mostly do not own the land they reside on (Vom Hau & Wilde 2009: 16).

### **III. Rural development thinking**

The aim of this study is to analyse rural tourism as a tool for rural poverty reduction, by applying the SLF to examine the impacts of rural tourism on people's livelihoods. It therefore makes sense to at this point investigate the origins of said concept. For this purpose, chapter three will assess rural development thinking in history, in which the SLF is said to have emerged (Ellis & Biggs 2001: 443-445; Scoones 2009: 173-175; Shen 2009; 6).

#### **3.1 Structural transformation**

Structural transformation is a globally accepted concept of measuring economic growth and development through the relative decline of the agricultural sector's contribution to the GDP, based on the Western world thereby becoming industrialized and wealthy. This may not hold true today, as the West is characterized by a strong service sector, being the third sector in the structural transformation theory. As a matter of fact, it has been recognized that the service sector takes on an important role in the structural transformation process, accounting for half of the global jobs in 2016, in which the importance of the tourism sector increased between 2001 and 2016 (UNCTAD 2017: 4).

Structural transformation is attributed to the modernization belief, which praised the new urban hotspots and disguised rural and agricultural areas that were regarded upon as outdated and not contributing to the new era of industrialization (Alexander 1967: 302-303). In other words, rurality and agricultural development were important for industrialization and economic growth to happen, but were not per se of interest. However, structural transformation and its sectoral changes are said to be a critical starting point for the development of the RNFE, because of the required diversification of the national economy, assumingly leading to industrialization (Start 2001: 492-493).

But other than presumed, such dual economy theory with an automatic movement of labour from the agricultural sector to the industrial one, did not successfully translate into well-being in many developing regions and was therefore highly criticized. Poverty remained the same, income disparities grew, the illiteracy rate did not improve and despite the green revolution, there was only small growth in food production, parallel to an increasing population (Leupolt 1977: 7).

Similar patterns can be observed in Latin America. Although the region demonstrates steady urbanization, a small agricultural sector and an increasing agricultural labour productivity,

which should translate into an increased wellbeing, these do not seem to generate significant poverty reduction or social inclusion improvements (IFAD 2016: 92). On the contrary, less influential actors in society, such as indigenous peoples and rural communities, are being left out and national inequality rates have grown (ibid.: 92-93).

Furthermore, it has been detected that actually developing countries follow distinct paths of structural transformation than the developed ones did (Bah 2011: 16). Although Latin America is said to have taken on a similar one, it is marked by high employment in the service sector and low employment in both the agriculture and industry sector, which does not go in line with the structural transformation prediction (ibid.: 17).

Argentina is no exception. Based on modelled ILO estimates, 78 percent of the total Argentinean labour force are employed in the service sector, in contrast to 22 percent in the industry sector and 0.06 in the agricultural one (WB 2019a, 2019b, 2019c). This data demonstrates a labour movement to the third sector and not to the industrial one. Furthermore, the service sector makes up for 57 percent of the country's GDP, compared to 22 percent contributed by the industry sector and six percent by the agricultural one (WB 2019d, 2019e, 2019f).

Nonetheless, Latin America's service sector is said to suffer from low productivity and high informality, which calls for an increase in educational efforts and the reduction of obstacles for business registrations (Bah 2011: 17). This somehow contradicts the findings in chapter 2.3, where it was suggested to include the informal sector as such, in order to generate more employment opportunities. The ILO (2013: chapter 1: 8, 12; chapter 2: 4) summarizes the two standpoints well, in stating that it has to be taken into account that the numerous informal components of tourism certainly represent an opportunity for low skilled workers with social and capability disadvantages, but that policies, regulations and strategies need to act against, as informality does not have a positive long-term effect.

Pursuant to this, IFAD (2016: 93) suggests fostering the non-farm economy, with the inclusion of the informal sector through policies and programmes and therewith the generation of more secure rural employment. Such approach should trigger an inclusive rural transformation, such as supporting disadvantaged groups, including indigenous peoples and rural women, to decrease inequality and improve social protection policies (ibid.: 94). The idea is that successfully transforming economies shall, through the RNFE, be able to absorb

the agricultural workers, who are being forced out of the capital-intensive farming sector (Haggblade et al. 2010: 1429).

It seems as if this new approach does no longer coincide with the traditional structural transformation theory of increasing agricultural labour productivity, but rather moves away from agriculture as the main economic activity and therewith recognizing the important role the service sector, including the tourism industry, plays for economic transformation (UNCTAD 2017: 23).

### **3.2 Smallholder phase**

Keeping this in mind, it can be said that rural development thinking has gone through two major paradigm changes (Ellis & Biggs 2001). First, the smallholder phase from the mid 1960s onwards, promoted small-farm agriculture as an engine of economic growth and development (ibid.: 440; WB 2008). The shift lies in the distancing from the prior ‘modernization’ belief outlined above, suggesting that farming could only play a passive role in economic development aimed at structural transformation; to the orthodoxy of rising the yields on small farms, in order to boost economic growth (Ellis & Biggs 2001: 441).

The focus was newly set on the importance of the development of rural spaces for economic growth, in which agriculture was the main player in the development agenda and not, as before, solely the contributor to industrialization (Byerlee et al. 2010: 15). The idea that small farmers could contribute as much, or even more, to economic development than large ones, if they have the necessary tools to increase their yields, gave rise to the ‘pro-poor agricultural growth’ concept. Small farms were considered more efficient, through their intensive use of abundant labour and a low capital requirement (Ellis & Biggs 2001: 441).

International organizations, such as the WB, the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) and IFAD, drove such rural development approach and still promote policy implementations to foster public and private investments in smallholder agriculture, to help maintain employment and food security and therewith reduce poverty (WB 2008; IFAD 2013; Mikecz & Vos 2016).

The integrated rural development approach (IRD) was thereupon implemented in face of the above-mentioned failures and negative outcomes associated with the modernization model. Although it approved the formerly praised need of modernization and technological advancements to reach economic growth, it also called for inclusion of the unprivileged rural

masses and a better use of human and natural resources (Leupolt 1977: 9). The concept of ‘rural development’ was therewith first introduced (Shen 2009: 7).

This more holistic approach to rurality gave rise to intensive research that found proof of the rural dwellers’ actual economic activities that had been long neglected by policy makers (Ranis & Stewart 1993: 75; Haggblade et al. 2010: 1429). They found that these, in fact include non-agricultural incomes (ibid.). Subsequently, new approaches for rural poverty reduction enter the rural development arena, as further elaborated in the following chapter.

### **3.3 Rural livelihood diversification**

To that effect, the second paradigm shift in rural development took place in the 1980s and 90s (Ellis & Biggs 2001: 443). Livelihood ideas retrieved from the Brundtland Report (1987), Sen (1983, 1995, 1997) and Chambers (1983, 1987, 1995), influenced the implementation of bottom-up approaches with a more empowering component for rural dwellers to make their own decisions, followed by the implementation of the SLF in the late 1990s, which recognizes the importance of the diversification of rural livelihoods (DFID 1999: chapter 1.3; Ellis & Biggs 2001: 444-445; Shen 2009: 9-11). This new starting-point of non-agricultural activities for development contrasts the smallholder phase thinking, in distancing the analysis away from the agricultural aspects of rurality and focusing more on the diversity of rural livelihoods.

In face of the rapidly growing revenues from the tourism sector in the developing world and the new focus on the RNFE, tourism is recognized as a tool for poverty reduction, as outlined in chapter 2.2. The objective is to put poverty at the centre of tourism agenda, as it is said to be an important opportunity for marginalized and remote areas to diversify their local economies, where there are not many other income sources or diversification possibilities (Ashley et al. 2000: 1-2). The involvement in tourism related activities can thereafter be regarded upon as a tool to increase rural livelihood diversity for poverty reduction.

Relating thereto, numerous changes took place within development thinking. First, Sen’s (1983, 1995, 1997) ‘capability approach’ contributed to a new definition of poverty and opened the door for the development of the livelihoods concept (Ellis 2000: 17). In line with Sen, poverty should be measured based on people’s ‘capabilities’, which give them opportunities to live a fulfilled life. Thereafter, poverty is referred to as a capability deprivation, rather than the traditional income deprivation. Whereas capabilities are referred to as varying and of physical or social origin, such as “...being well nourished, being

adequately clothed and sheltered, avoiding preventable morbidity, and so forth, to more complex social achievements such as taking part in the life of the community, being able to appear in public without shame, and so on” (Sen 1995: 15).

Although Ellis (2000: 16-17) legitimately argues that concepts and terms, such as ‘livelihoods’ should not be mixed and borrowed in different contexts, it is widely accepted that Sen’s capability approach was further developed by Chambers and Conway (1991: 4) and later adopted in the SLF by Scoones (1998: 6; Frediani 2010: 184; Anafo 2014: 4). In line with Scoones (ibid.), the notions ‘capability’ based on Sen and ‘well-being’ in reference to Chambers, broadened the livelihoods concept, allowing for the inclusion of more than only material elements.

Accordingly, Chambers (1995: 175, 191) argues that ill- or well-being refer to personal experiences and should therefore be defined by the deprived themselves, as it is mostly not measurable by outsiders. Sustainable livelihoods in this sense serves as a concept to empower the people and let them express their priorities themselves (ibid.: 191-192).

Along these lines, the objective of the SLF is to understand livelihoods and especially the ones of the deprived (rural) population, in order to tackle poverty at its roots, including both its economic and non-economic dimensions (DFID 1999: chapter 1.3). This people-centred approach seeks to analyse context-specific features of poverty through participatory methods to achieve lasting poverty reduction and serving as a development tool (ibid.; Ashley & Carney 1999: 5, 8).

The analysis on how rural tourism affects the rural dwellers’ livelihoods will therefore be made through a SLF lens, as this investigation seeks to gain a holistic view of poverty and its underlying economic, social, institutional and environmental elements and investigate the role tourism takes on in said conceptualization, presented in chapter four.

Several authors have taken on the task of investigating rural tourism through the SLF on various continents and therewith legitimize the approach chosen in this thesis (Ashley 2000; Simpson 2007; Shen 2009; Tao & Wall 2009; Hazarika 2016; Chen et al. 2018). Shen (2009) has made an interesting contribution, identifying gaps in the analysis of tourism through the SLF lens, concluding in the addition of new elements, which will be adopted in this thesis, as further outlined in chapter 4.2.

## IV. Conceptual framework

This thesis' analysis is based on the SLF developed by the DFID (1999), as it puts emphasis on how regulations influence people's livelihoods and does not only focus on the household level (Tham-Agyekum 2015: chapter 1.4). The SLF will thereafter be presented in chapter 4.1, followed by the operationalization in chapter 4.2.

It has to be taken into account that the SLF is an analytical tool rather than a theory, but its adaptable design and acceptance to changes makes it applicable in various contexts, where the objective is to holistically understand a "...socially constructed environment", as aimed at in this thesis (ibid.).

### 4.1 The sustainable livelihoods framework

Based on the SLF, livelihoods are looked upon as multi-dimensional and context-dependent (DFID 1999: introduction). They are sustainable when they are resilient to the vulnerability context, as to say, when they can recover from stresses and shocks with the help of the available assets (ibid.: chapter 1.4). The aspect of sustainability is crucial in this framework, as it seeks to provoke a long-lasting poverty reduction and improved livelihoods.

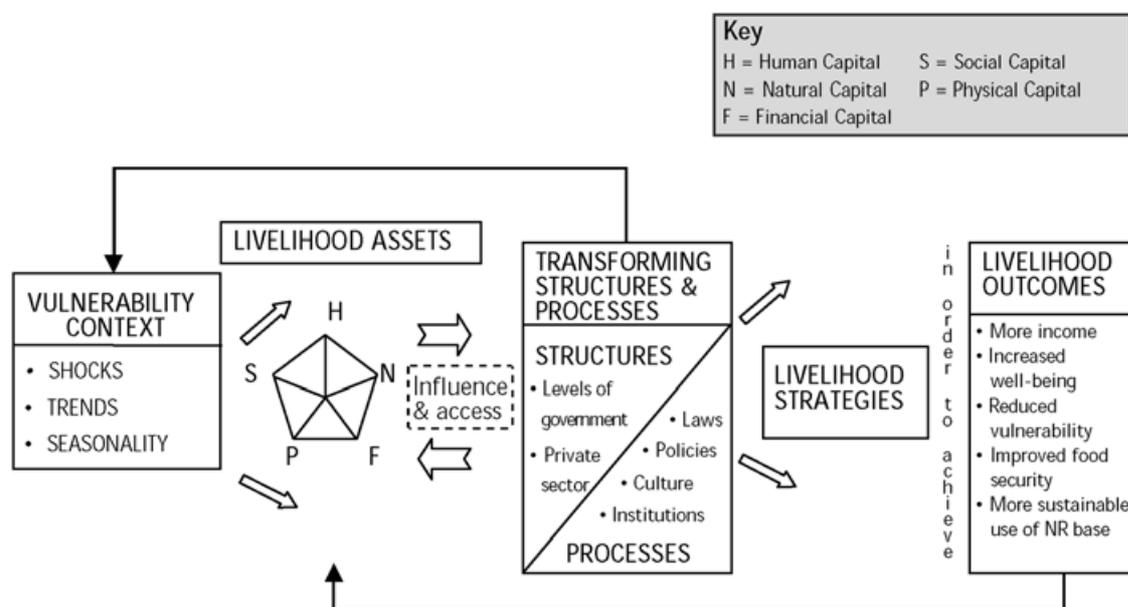


Figure 1: Sustainable livelihoods framework based on DFID (1999: chapter 2.1)

### ***Vulnerability context***

Livelihoods are embedded in a vulnerability context that can be affected by trends, seasonality and shocks, which either have a positive or negative impact on people's access to livelihood assets and subsequently their wellbeing (DFID 1999: chapter 2.2). These are factors like population trends, conflicts, seasonality of employment and natural shocks, which lie outside people's control and can therefore have devastating impacts (ibid.).

### ***Transforming structures and processes***

Transforming structures and processes, of the one part, including the public sector with its laws, policies and institutions, and of the other part the private sector, with its commercial enterprises, civil society organizations and societal norms and beliefs; play a crucial role in the framework, as they both influence people's access to assets and the vulnerability context (ibid.: chapter 2.4). However, this relation is reciprocal, as individuals and groups themselves can influence the structures and processes and therewith ideally respond to the vulnerability context more easily (ibid.).

### ***Livelihood assets***

The core of the SLF is the asset pentagon, representing the access to human, natural, financial, physical and social capital and is based on the belief that people need access to several of these assets to reduce their vulnerability and generate wellbeing (ibid.: chapter 2.3). The five assets and their natural interrelation are deemed necessary for the generation of sustainable and positive livelihood outcomes (ibid.). The type of assets needed, however, is to be analysed from case to case and depends on the context (ibid.).

#### ***Human capital***

Human capital among others includes health, education, skills and employment opportunities. The access to good health, education and a salary are necessary to make use of the other four assets and therewith indispensable for sustainable livelihoods (ibid.: chapter 2.3.1).

#### ***Social capital***

Social capital is developed through social networks, in which collaboration and reliable relations arise (ibid.: chapter 2.3.2). This has a direct impact on the other assets. Financial capital for example can benefit from trustworthy economic relations and natural capital can be protected through a collective management of common goods (ibid.). Nevertheless, social

capital can also be used in a negative way through exclusion from groups and networks (ibid.).

### ***Natural capital***

Land, forests, biodiversity and wildlife form part of the natural capital, such as also intangible public goods, including water and air (ibid.: chapter 2.3.3). These are important stocks from which especially rural livelihoods retrieve their resources for survival and are therefore interlinked with other assets (ibid.). People's health depends on natural capital and humans form part of the complex ecosystem it entails (ibid.).

### ***Physical capital***

Infrastructure, such as roads, public transportation, telecommunication and producer goods that people use to make a living, form part of the physical capital (ibid.: chapter 2.3.4). The access to such commodities is crucial for the development of people's human capital in form of employment opportunities and a productive advancement, in order to increase their financial capital (ibid.).

### ***Financial capital***

Financial capital is what most deprived lack and what makes their livelihood outcomes to a large extent depend on the other forms of capital (ibid.: chapter 2.3.5). The main sources of financial capital are savings, including livestock and land tenure and the regular inflow of money in form of income, remittances or transfers from the state (ibid.).

### ***Livelihood strategies***

Livelihood strategies are diverse and changing over time (ibid.: chapter 2.5). It is said that the more flexibility people have regarding their livelihood strategies, the better they can adapt to the vulnerability of their context, the more resilient they are (ibid.). It is also assumed that the greater the access to numerous assets and their combination, the better the choices of livelihood strategies that improve the livelihood outcomes (ibid.).

Transforming structures and processes can either increase or restrict people's livelihood strategy choices (ibid.). Policies, regulations and market systems should in this sense serve to widen people's choices, reduce costs, improve the access and therewith encourage the livelihood outcomes people pursue (ibid.: chapter 2.4).

Although the term ‘strategy’ seeks to acknowledge the deprived household’s agency, Rakodi (2002: 7) calls attention to the fact that it is questionable to what extent households actually have control over their assets and can choose their livelihood strategies (Prowse 2010: 219).

***Livelihood outcomes***

Livelihood outcomes can be looked upon as people’s outputs of their livelihood strategies, which are based on people’s priorities that vary widely and are not necessarily visible at first sight (DFID 1999: chapter 2.6). It can however be assumed that people strive for beneficial livelihood outcomes, although these can be conflicting and lead to trade-offs (ibid.).

More income is a widespread objective, but not all people seek to maximize their revenues and have other priorities (ibid.). An increased wellbeing through good health, trustworthy social networks, environmental sustainability through a cautious resource use and access to services, can be as valuable (ibid.).

**4.2 Operationalization**

The SLF used in this thesis’ analysis is based on the above outlined elements from the DFID (1999), including the additional element tourism context that was developed by Shen (2009: 46, 58), who created the so-called ‘Sustainable Livelihoods Framework for Tourism’ (SLFT), to improve the analysis of rural livelihoods and tourism.

In line with the subsequent figure two, it is assumed that the five assets human, natural, financial, physical and social capital, are influenced by the regulatory framework and based thereupon either lead to the involvement in tourism or non-tourism related activities, which subsequently provoke certain livelihood outcomes:

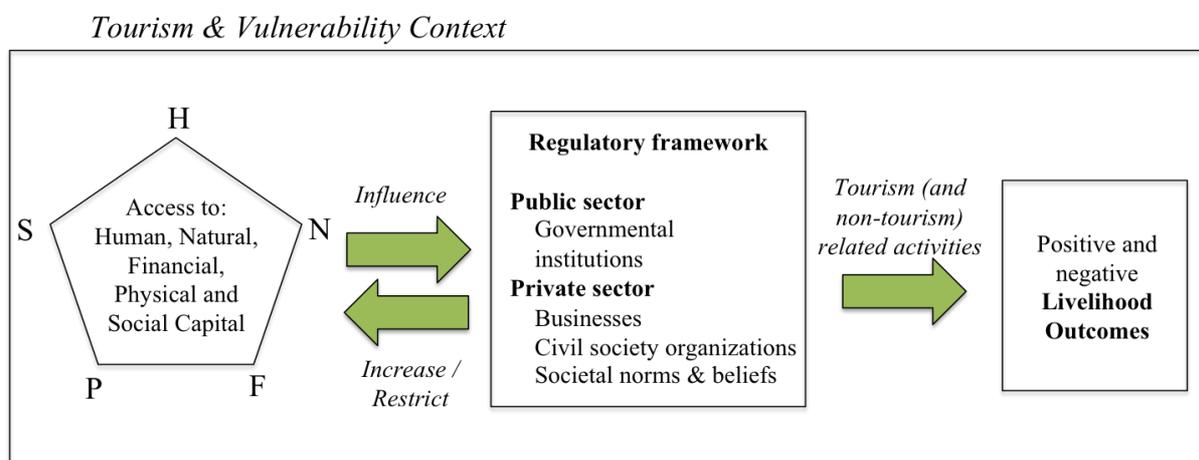


Figure 2: By author adapted sustainable livelihoods framework based on DFID (1999) and Shen (2009: 58)

The green arrows are thus the important steps for the analysis, feeding onto the elements ‘regulatory framework’ and ‘livelihood outcomes’, which are the two aspects that are to be analysed in order to answer the research questions.

Furthermore, with regard to the assets being the core of the SLF, it stands to reason to analyse each one of them separately (DFID 1999: chapter 2.3). Thereafter, first, the influence of the regulatory framework on the particular capital, which shapes the decision of getting involved in tourism related activities or not, will be examined in chapter 6.2, including the possible reciprocal influence generated by the asset itself. This information serves to answer research question A. Second, such specific livelihood strategy leads to certain livelihood outcomes, which will be explored in order to answer research question B. The following chapters will provide details on the two focus points.

#### **4.2.1 Role of the regulatory framework**

*What role does the regulatory framework, including the public and the private sector, play in the field of rural tourism?*

The regulatory framework refers to the aspects of the transforming structures and processes in line with the DFID (1999). It is to be looked upon as public and private settings that shape people’s access to assets and therewith either increase or restrict people’s possibilities of getting involved in tourism related activities (DFID 1999: chapter 2.4; Scoones 2009: 185-187). As shown in figure two, these, with regard to the public sector, include the involvement of governmental institutions in the tourism sector. With regard to the private sector, businesses, civil society organizations and societal norms and beliefs are to be looked at closely.

In line with Prowse’s (2010: 220) critique of the SLF and the findings in chapter 2.3, importance will be put on the aspects of gender and ethnicity according to Ellis’ (2000: 16, 38), who emphasises that social relations, being people’s positions in society, influence the access to assets. Gender and ethnicity will accordingly be included in the SLF’s element societal norms and beliefs.

The assets are to be examined based on the definitions outlined in chapter 4.1. It is, however, assumed that natural capital is of great importance for the analysis of rural tourism, as beautiful landscapes are considered necessary for its development (Ashley 2000: 15). Shen (2009: 242-243) takes it one step further and suggests the addition of the ‘attraction capital’ to his SLFT, including cultural and natural attractions, such as events that can be attributed to

the tourism industry. In this thesis however, natural capital will be analysed in line with the SLF.

The additional element tourism context includes the tourist profile, defining whether it is a domestic or international tourism (Shen 2009: 58-59). Such aspect should be considered in this study, as it is said to influence the components of the SLF. International tourists may require higher standards, which poor villages are not able to provide and which therefore makes it more convenient for them to attract domestic tourism (ibid.).

Regarding the vulnerability context, seasonality of employment is said to be an important aspect within tourism-related activities (Shen 2009: 62). This will, together with the other aspects of the vulnerability context, such as possible trends and shocks, be taken into account.

#### **4.2.2 Livelihood outcomes**

*In what ways has the participation in rural tourism activities shaped people's livelihood outcomes?*

With regard to the aim of this study of analysing rural tourism as a tool for rural poverty reduction, the use of the SLF itself indicates that the concept of rural poverty is not defined in a monetary way, but includes other dimensions that are embedded in people's access to assets. Bad health, illiteracy, or no access to social services, which prevent the deprived from improving their situation and effectively reducing poverty, can thereafter be defined as poverty indicators (Krantz 2001: 10-11). In line with the DFID (1999: chapter 2.6), people seek to enhance their livelihoods through beneficial outcomes of their chosen strategies and therewith contributing to poverty reduction.

The livelihood strategies in this study represent the involvement in rural tourism related activities. However, as chapter 3.3 has shown, rural tourism has been recognized as a tool of diversification, which implies the recognition of other, non-tourism related activities. It additionally has to be taken into account that the use of the SLF requires a holistic view and therefore should include both, although importance will be put on livelihood strategies related to the tourism sector (Shen 2009: 58). These livelihood strategies then lead to different types of livelihood outcomes, which do not always correspond to the beneficial results people aim at. Based on the SLF, the outcomes can be conflicting and lead to trade-offs that ought to be dealt with. In this sense, the livelihood outcomes are categorized as positive or negative ones, as shown in figure two, whereas such division is based on the people's subjective classifications.

## V. Methodology

This chapter will provide information about the decisions taken throughout the qualitative data collection process, by explaining research design, site selection, sampling methods, followed by information about the data collection, use and presentation. Limitations and biases of the corresponding methods will be included in each chapter.

### 5.1 Research design

This paper's ontology is idealism, which implies the creation of knowledge through multiple interpretations of events, based on people's subjective presumptions (Slevitch 2011: 77). Understanding a phenomenon thereafter implies analysing all possible aspects of an event, which results in an interpretative perception throughout the research steps (ibid.). Accordingly, interpretivism guides this study's epistemology, in which social life is constructed by those who form part in it (Mikkelsen 2005: 135). Thereafter, the individuals' and communities' realities to be analysed, are constructed through the meaning they ascribe to their actions (Prowse 2010: 215-216). Every interviewee was accordingly treated as someone with agency, resulting a joint creation of knowledge by the respondents and the investigator, as a non-harmful cross-cultural exchange (Scheyvens & Leslie 2000: 125).

In line with such interpretivist epistemological positioning, a qualitative research design was chosen, as this investigation aims at gaining an in-depth understanding of rural people's livelihoods (Creswell & Poth 2018: 45). These are complex in nature and therefore require a holistic understanding of how rural dwellers construct their lives through their own interpretation of things (Mikkelsen 2005: 135-137). It can be said that I therefore followed an abductive approach, entering the field with some sort of pre understanding acquired through former dealing with existing literature and fed the knowledge gained through my own study into the existing one (Bryman 2012: 401).

As the SLF calls for a context-dependent understanding, the research was designed as a case study (Flyvbjerg 2006: 222-223). Rural livelihoods and tourism are both place-dependent, which is why the case is bound by its location, making it a single instrumental case study, seeking to understand the role of rural tourism as a livelihood strategy in a particular place (Stake 1995: 3-4; Creswell & Poth 2018: 98).

It would have been enriching to carry out a cross-case analysis, including various sites in the region, but with regard to the aim of gaining an in-depth understanding of the topic, which is

time- and resource consuming, such undertaking did not lie within the scope of this thesis (Creswell & Poth 2018: 102).

## 5.2 Site selection

Henceforth, the single location for the case study, SPC, was selected through purposeful sampling, choosing an information-rich site with regard to tourism-related activities (Creswell & Poth 2018: 100). Accordingly, Tucumán was one of the provinces with most received tourists in Argentina, of which 86 percent were detected in SPC, in January 2017 (La Gaceta 2018). Furthermore, the latest national census in 2010<sup>3</sup> revealed the northern region of the country, including the province of Tucumán, to be the poorest, which makes it a meaningful location for this case study (DINREP 2014: 6).

Moreover, previous research on tourism in SPC revealed the importance of high season between mid-December and mid-February (Comuna SPC 2019). This could have influenced the data collection, which was carried out between November and December 2018. Although it seems to have benefitted the study, as I therefore had the possibility to accompany the respondents in their preparations for high season and observe difficulties and expectations, it was challenging to find time for the interviews, as the respondents were occupied with preparations. To facilitate things for them, I adapted to their availabilities and mostly visited their houses.

All in all, it can be said that SPC is not a unique case, but an appropriate selection for the aim of this study and also fairly concordant with the definition of rural tourism outlined in chapter one, including places with a ‘low population density<sup>4</sup>, land-use dominated by agriculture and a traditional social structure and lifestyle’, as further elaborated in chapter 6.1.3.

## 5.3 Sampling

Both, key informants and target group were chosen through purposive sampling, which was based on the inclusion criteria of having a relation to rural tourism in SPC (Robinson 2014: 26-27). Other than that, the sample was kept heterogeneous with regard to *gender*, including

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<sup>3</sup> Unfortunately, there is no more recent data on poverty available, but it can be assumed that it is worsening due to the macroeconomic shocks the country is experiencing with an inflation rate of almost 50 percent in 2018: <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-argentina-economy-crisis/how-a-year-of-endless-storms-battered-argentinas-economy-idUSKCN1OJ18G>.

<sup>4</sup> See <http://mapoteca.educ.ar/.files/index.html@tema=demografico.8.html> for a map on population density in the municipality of Trancas, where SPC is located, in comparison to the other municipalities in the province of Tucumán.

14 females, eight males and seven interviews or visited events, where households or groups responded together; *age*, consisting in respondents between the ages of 25 and 75; *ethnicity*, including seven indigenous and 21 non-indigenous respondents<sup>5</sup>; such as *variety with regard to tourism-related activities*, which are made up of entrepreneurial activities, such as artisan food production, the creation of culturally meaningful textiles and leather products, but also hotel employment and tour guiding (appendix B).

In light of applying the SLF, it was assumed that different groups of people within the sample universe have a varying access to assets, depending on personal attributes, such as age, gender and ethnicity, which is why such heterogeneity was deemed important for the study. However, the interviews with the target group ended up being with ten females, out of which eight are single and have set up their tourism-related business on their own, three males and seven mixed-gender families or events, which indicate a higher number of female respondents. It was difficult to find single males, involved in tourism activities, which is why there is a gender difference regarding the respondents that will be further analysed in chapter 6.2.1.

The key respondents are composed of private and public, local and provincial actors, including the cacique<sup>6</sup>, members of local associations and representatives from the National Institution of Agricultural Technology (INTA), in order to obtain special knowledge with regard to tourism and rural livelihoods in SPC (Mikkelsen 2005: 172).

Purposive sampling methods are inherently biased by the researcher, as the participants are selected based on the investigator's subjective presumption that they will contribute to an information-rich case (Etikan et al. 2016: 4). The data is therefore not statistically representative and no general assumptions can be drawn about the population of SPC (ibid.). Nevertheless, to counteract such risk of leaving out important respondents, the target group was kept rather heterogeneous, as indicated above.

The gatekeeper was of importance for the initial access to the field. She is the president of the cooperative named Generar<sup>7</sup> and has personally been accompanying and advising some tourist projects in SPC for the past ten years. She introduced me to three of her students she had worked closely with, but did not influence the decision of who would form part of the

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<sup>5</sup> Ethnicity was defined based on the following question in the questionnaire (Appendix C): Do you consider yourself of indigenous origin?

<sup>6</sup> In Latin America and the Caribbean a cacique is a native chief:  
<https://en.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/cacique>

<sup>7</sup> <http://www.cooperativagenerar.com.ar/quienesSomos.html>

target group. The data sampling is characterized by my independent interviewing and selection of respondents based on the characteristics outlined above.

Additionally, the gatekeeper gave access to exclusive secondary data from the governmental Executing Unit for Productive Development (UEDP) of the province of Tucumán. The data consists of information from 34 households in SPC, which applied for public funding at the UEDP. The application form required them to fill in their tourism- and non-tourism related, income-generating activities, which was used in this study (chapter 6.2.2). It is unique data that has not been published anywhere.

The list of said participants additionally served to find first respondents for the case study, although importance was put on including other target group members, who had not applied for the project funding, nor were related to the gatekeeper, in order to get a more holistic perspective and minimize the bias that could arise. Use was therefore made of snowball sampling, in order to generate a referral process (Robinson 2014: 37). For this purpose, all respondents were asked at the end of the interview, if they would like to suggest another respondent.

Nevertheless, snowball sampling is also subordinate to bias, as it could lead the data collection into certain social networks (Biernacki & Waldorf 1981: 160-161). But as I, based on the above-mentioned characteristics of heterogeneity, chose which suggested respondents I would additionally talk to, I would like to assume that such bias was counteracted. However, the question remains as to how far I got away from the initial circle.

Moreover, the study would have benefitted of including a control group, consisting in local people, who are not involved in any kind of tourism-related activities, in order to detect the reasons for such decisions. But as it was almost impossible to find rural dwellers in SPC, who are not related to any kind of tourism-related activity, such undertaking was laid aside in the course of the data collection process.

## **5.4 Data**

Primary data was collected in the respondent's natural setting, to analyse their livelihoods within their context (Creswell & Poth 2018: 43). Several methods were applied to make use of multiple sources of information and therewith build validity (Yin 2003: 97). 21 semi-structured face-to-face in-depth interviews, one telephone interview, four participant observations and three walking interviews were carried out, based on the questionnaire guide in appendix C (ibid.; Creswell & Poth 2018: 43). The two latter completed the method

triangulation based on Denzin (1978: 294-307), as a cross-verification of the collected data. Data triangulation was applied through the use of primary and secondary data, the latter being derived from existing literature and the above-mentioned exclusive data from the UEDP project application (ibid.).

Following ethical research guidelines, all respondents were informed about the independence of the investigation, purpose and use of the interview material, the confidential handling of personal details and asked for consent, prior to the interviews, which were carried out in Spanish (Mikkelsen 2005: 342; appendix C). Although Spanish is not my mother tongue, I have lived in the Latin American context for over five years and have a vast understanding of both language and context.

#### **5.4.1 Interview**

Semi-structured interviews (SSI) are widely used in qualitative research, as questions can be formulated during the interview and therewith make it possible to follow up relevant issues and increase the natural flow of the conversation (Mikkelsen 2005: 89, 169). With said purpose, SSI were carried out with nine key informants, of which one was the gatekeeper, and 15 households in SPC. Most respondents agreed upon being interviewed in their houses, which benefited the investigation, as additional observations of the surroundings and the tourism-related activities could be carried out.

It has to be acknowledged that the interviewer's personal attributes such as age, gender and ethnicity can influence the respondent's answers (Mikkelsen 2005: 177). To counteract such possible bias, Denscombe's (2003: 179) tactics of asking for examples and clarifications, such as summarizing the respondent's thoughts, were adapted throughout the interviews.

#### **5.4.2 Walking interview**

Conducting interviews 'in movement' has been recognized as a fruitful research tool within the past years, as it serves to get a better understanding of people and their relation to the surrounding environment (Evans & Jones 2011: 857). It is considered a promising tool that can raise awareness about the ways people's practices are bound to places (Anderson 2004: 257).

As I have argued that tourism and rural livelihoods are context and place dependent, this tool should benefit the present study. Three walking interviews were carried out, where two of the respondents took me on a walk to show me their rural tourism projects. The third was the

school director, who gave me a tour in the local primary school, while explaining the surroundings we passed. It was interesting to see how, in line with Evans & Jones (2011: 850), passing certain streets or objects made the respondent's give more intimate information about their daily context and therewith enriching the findings.

Nevertheless, it has to be kept in mind that this method could exclude certain participants, due to the fact that it is carried out in movement and the questions need to be shaped by places that are accessible by foot, which is why it was solely adapted as a supplement to the SSI (Evans & Jones 2011: 849).

### **5.4.3 Participant observation**

Participant observation is used in qualitative research to learn about explicit aspects of people's life routines or events (DeWalt & DeWalt 2011: 1). I therefore partook in four events as a moderate participant, where I mostly observed the dynamics, but also interacted with the people informally (ibid.: 23). Two of the events were workshops, organized by the provincial government, to teach the participants a craft they should transform into a tourism related activity. I was invited by the governmental organizations themselves and was specifically interested in the social dynamics between the attendees that fed into the understanding concerning the social relations, not least between the indigenous and non-indigenous. I also wanted to grasp the meaning these workshops represent for the participants, to evaluate if they could possibly translate into fruitful tourism businesses. The platform of the events moreover served to get in touch with people, who were willing to meet for an interview, which was important to get a more independent opinion, out of sight of the governmental employees. The third participant observation included a visit in the INTA office, to discuss their involvement in tourism related activities. The fourth one embodied a visit to the provisional camp of the indigenous families, who had been displaced from their houses, where I sought to understand the vulnerability of the indigenous peoples with regard to land and shelter.

However, there are several possible biases that have to be acknowledged when carrying out participant observation (ibid.: 93-94). The investigator's observations could be influenced by research question and theory, such as personal attributes, which together lead to subjective observations that should be treated as such (ibid.). Henceforth, no generalizations were made with regard to the findings and I put an effort in entering the field with an open mind, acknowledging inevitable pre-dispositions we all carry (Funder 2005).

#### **5.4.4 Use and presentation**

In line with the habitual procedures of qualitative data analysis, the data was coded into different themes and concepts guided by the research questions (Mikkelsen 2005: 181-182). First, and as suggested by Creswell and Poth (2018: 186-190), preliminary codes were formed based on the information gained from prior literature review. Second, the primary data was then either coded into the existing themes, or new ones were created for findings that did not fit the existing ones (ibid.: 193). The codebook was kept flexible at all times, in order to allow for unexpected topics to evolve and to include all data gathered, to get a holistic understanding of people's livelihoods. However, due to the limited scope of this thesis, not all data could be included in the analysis. Therefore, data specifically serving to answer the research questions was given priority, while the additional one was used to comprehend people's contexts.

The interviews were transcribed from the recorded audios and directly translated into English. Although it is said that meaning could be lost in translation and therefore a verbatim transcription is suggested, I assume to essentially have countered such bias, as I carried out all research steps by myself and therefore believe to have grasped the meaning of the respondent's messages (Van Nes et al. 2010: 314). The English translations were fed into NVivo 12 and coded into themes and concepts (see appendix D for list of nodes).

## **VI. Analysis**

As argued above, rural tourism has been detected as a livelihood diversification strategy and shall now be analysed through the lens of the SLF developed in chapter 4.2, in order to detect how the rural people of SPC adapt rural tourism as part of their livelihoods.

First, in chapter 6.1, background information about rural tourism in Argentina, including the government's role, and case-specific information about SPC, will give the reader the additional knowledge for the subsequent case analysis.

Second, the data analysis in chapter 6.2 follows the organizing principle outlined in chapter 4.2, in which each of the five assets will be analysed separately, to finally answer the research questions in chapter 6.2.6.

### **6.1 Rural tourism in Argentina**

#### **6.1.1 The government's role**

Argentina has pursued a progressive national tourism strategy to foster the country's development, as mentioned in the introduction. Numerous governmental rural tourism projects, aiming at rural development, were implemented in various regions of the country (Pezzoni 2014: 4-5). But it was not until the year 2000, when the Secretary of Tourism of the Nation and the Secretary of Agriculture, Livestock, Fisheries and Food (SALFF: 2019), signed an agreement that led to the rapid expansion of the rural tourism sector, through the 'National Rural Tourism Program' (Pezzoni 2014: 4-5). The institutions jointly implemented projects, targeting rural municipalities with appealing tourist attractions, supplying them with basic infrastructure, equipment and trainings (ibid.). Rural tourism was based thereupon implemented as a diversification strategy to generate new employment opportunities, mitigate the emigration process, improve the quality of life, especially of indigenous communities, rescue the rural culture and strengthen the role of women and youth (SALFF 2019).

This aim was formalized in 2005, when tourism was declared of national interest, through the introduction of the National Law of Tourism (Title 1, Art. 1). The government therewith sought to strengthen the sector to enhance the country's productive development, with tourism defined as a non-traditional export sector (ibid.: Title II, Art. 32).

The Entity of Tourism of the Province of Tucumán (ETT) was consequently created in the same year, declaring tourism an important economic activity to be further developed in the province (ETT 2005: Chapter 1, Art. 1, Art. 4). In their current strategy plan 2017-2021, rural

tourism, defined as all services and activities carried out in rural areas, such as rural accommodation, the elaboration of local artisan (food) products, and recreational activities, proves to be an important part of the province's tourism strategy (ETT n.d.: 85). The following chapters will reveal what kind of rural tourism projects have been carried out in Argentina and specifically SPC.

### **6.1.2 Rural tourism projects**

Several studies have been carried out in the field, including the evaluation of gastronomy as a rural tourism development tool, the analysis of implementing rural tourism in response to the progressing desertification, caused by livestock farming (Almoguera et al. 2002; Navarro & Schlüter 2010). The diversification into rural tourism activities should both counter desertification through the reduction of livestock farming activities and offer an alternative income opportunity for the affected sector (Almoguera et al. 2002: 47, 51). Then, the proposal of including tourism activities in a tobacco cultivation region in the province of Tucumán, to contribute to the cultivator's family economy, is another published investigation (Salim Grau & Melik Matar 2016). Staying in Tucumán, the study of the impact of tourism and migration on rural spaces in SPC's neighbouring department Tañi del Valle, such as the analysis of the rural tourism sector and the subsequent multifunctionality of the rural space in the neighbouring province Santiago del Estero, are other examples of what has already been done (Morales Gaitán & Rainer 2013; Martínez & Zárate n.d.; Coria 2014).

The studies come to similar conclusions, stating that tourism activities and the subsequent pluriactivity benefit the rural communities through employment opportunities and economic development and therewith contribute to a better quality of life and hence serve as a poverty reduction tool, such as revalue the local culture and identity (Navarro & Schlüter 2010: 921; Martínez & Zárate n.d.: 344-345). Nevertheless, problems regarding lacking infrastructure and sanitation systems, such as waste pollution, were detected (Navarro & Schlüter 2010: 925). In some cases, there also seems to be a problematic relation between the local community and the local government, contributing to a lack in tourism planning and the needed protection of the local natural and cultural heritage (ibid.: 926; Morales Gaitán & Rainer 2013: 580). Furthermore, land occupation seems to be an issue, as summerhouses are being built, provoking a substantial rise in land prices and generating strong tensions between different visions for land use (Morales Gaitán & Rainer 2013: 576-577).

### 6.1.3 San Pedro de Colalao

SPC, with its 3065 inhabitants<sup>8</sup>, located in the province of Tucumán, in the north-western part of Argentina (see map in appendix A), is said to be a relevant tourism destination, receiving both numerous people who own a summerhouse, such as visitors from nearby provinces (Galíndez et al. 2010: 21; SPC 2019b). It is situated in a valley in between two rivers and has many natural tourism attractions to offer, which can be appreciated through hiking tours, mountain biking, horse rides or journeys on quadricycles (ETT 2019). Besides these natural attractions, the village and its surroundings count with archaeological sites from the local indigenous population Indio Colalao, such as religious ones, traditional artisan leather craftsmanship, textiles and the local gastronomy (López 2003: 237-238; Fogliata 2009: 172-173).

These handicrafts represent the traditional lifestyle and are incorporated in so called thematic circuits, promoted by the provincial government, which seek to connect mostly remote villages and therewith foster rural development through employment- and income-generation for the local communities (Martínez & Zárate n.d.: 340). SPC is included in the ‘Circuit of the Choromoro Valley’, including the ‘Artisan Route’, promoting local crafts persons; the ‘Religious Route’ that attracts many guests visiting the famous cave of the Virgin Lourdes<sup>9</sup>; then popular festivals on specific dates and adventure tourism (ETT n.d.: 153-161, 208, 210, 212).

However, despite these initiatives, the employment conditions in the village are disputable, as 58 percent of the population does not work (Galíndez et al. 2010: 70).<sup>10</sup> Additionally, the most important economic activities are construction work, domestic employment and day labour, which are said to be temporary and therefore generate economic instability in the family, as no continuous income is guaranteed (ibid.). With regard to agricultural activities, SPC is historically known for animal breeding, for dairy and meat production, and small-scale crop farming, which are increasingly losing importance and have predominantly transformed into subsistence farming (ibid.: 69, 74-75).

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<sup>8</sup> The number of residents is based on the national population census 2010, but is said to consist in around 5000 inhabitants, according to unofficial data, with no official numbers regarding the indigenous population (SPC 2019b).

<sup>9</sup> The catholic Cave of Virgin Lourdes is a replicate of the original one located in France and attracts many visitors each year: <https://www.tucumanturismo.gob.ar/prensa/15624/san-pedro-de-colalao-revivira-el-milagro-de-lourdes>.

<sup>10</sup> It has to be taken into account that this could be outdated evidence, but unfortunately, there is no data available from the latest National Census 2010 regarding the employment rate on a communal level.

## 6.2 The case

As mentioned above, chapters 6.2.1 to 6.2.5 are guided by the analysis of each of the five assets. In each chapter the increasing or restricting influence of the regulatory framework on the access to the specific asset needed for tourism activities, will be analysed in line with chapter 4.2.1. Then, the positive and negative livelihood outcomes generated through the livelihood strategies will be examined as outlined in chapter 4.2.2. Chapter 6.2.6 provides a summary of the analysis' findings and the answers to research questions A and B.

### 6.2.1 Human capital

In line with the SLF, transforming structures and processes should serve to expand people's opportunities, reduce the costs and facilitate the access to assets (DFID 1999: chapter 2.4). In terms of the human capitals education and employment, this was tried in SPC through the province's governmental initiatives, conforming to the notion of creating alternative income and employment opportunities through rural tourism, to reduce poverty (UNWTO 2006; Saarinen & Rogerson 2014: 24; WB 2017: 26).

In 2008, a public tertiary education with orientation in rural tourism was implemented to support young people's access to education, for them to start their own rural tourism project and be able to live off such, instead of leaving the village, as many do (Interview 7, 18). Some respondents had graduated there from and commented that it was a good initiative, but unfortunately the content did not correspond to said objective (Interview 3, 5, 7). Thus, it did not prepare them to initiate own projects, due to a lacking practical orientation (ibid.). Additional internal difficulties within the board of the school resulted in the shutdown of the degree six years later, which solely left the access to primary and secondary school in the village (ibid.; Interview 7, 18).

Then, the cacique carries out a leatherwear workshop in the name of the provincial Ministry of Education, to similarly increase people's access to employment through the teaching of a craft, in line with the ETT's (n.d.) strategy plan (Participant observation 1). Although the workshop is open for everyone, it is mostly directed at the Indio Colalao (ibid.). Besides being a traditional handicraft, as outlined in chapter 6.1.3 and therefore important for nurturing the indigenous peoples' cultural arts and self-confidence, as stated in Verner (2009: 1) and Carr et al. (2016: 1070), it should serve to initiate own entrepreneurial businesses related to the tourism market (Interview 1). But out of the eight people, who are registered in the course, only four appeared at the workshop (Participant observation 1). The cacique

explained that people lack time, as they pursue several jobs to feed their families (ibid.). Although such diversity of economic activities, as per chapter 3.3, is promoted within the concept of rural livelihood diversification, it here appears as a rather negative effect, restricting the participation in tourism related activities. This goes in line with Rakodi's (2002: 7) critique of the SLF, stating that it is questionable to what extent deprived people can actually choose their livelihood strategies (Prowse 2010: 219).

Furthermore, Niehof (2004: 324, 330) detects the importance of time allocation, as regards the analysis of livelihood strategies and states that it can be prone to gender differences, as it mostly depends on the household's composition and the caretaking of young children, which usually is the woman's role. With regard to the above-mentioned workshop however, such gender aspect cannot be confirmed, as there is no available information about its participants. Based on the respondents' answers, it rather seems to be an issue regarding the numerous activities and the diversification itself, that possibly restricts the participation in human capital enhancing events; a potential problematic that does not seem to be addressed in the SLF.

The data analysis also revealed that the company IBM in 2016 chose SPC for their project of community development to increase people's resilience (Interview 17). The objective of this private sector involvement was to boost the local entrepreneurial spirit in the village with workshops on how to set up own businesses and therewith based on the SLF, again, contributing to an increased access to the human capitals education and employment (ibid.). Respondent 17 was in charge of the implementation of said project that seemed to be a success, with the initial participation of 80 people from SPC and neighbouring villages (ibid.). But similarly to the leatherwear workshop, people stopped engaging, which she alternatively illustrates as a restriction caused by the local societal norms and beliefs (ibid.):

And I have understood the problem myself now. We, here in Buenos Aires, have no time to wait for people to change, you know. Our business rhythm is very different from the one people in SPC are living daily. They need time to get adapted to new things, to maybe change the way they work or do things. Such cultural changes take a long time and people there in the village take their time and that is okay. The only thing is that nowadays almost nobody will wait for these changes to happen and that is maybe a negative characteristic of ours.

The local market however, represents a successful example of the government's facilitation of the human capital employment. It was initiated by the provincial Ministry of Social Development, together with the gatekeeper's cooperative Generar and is still an important income source for around 30 participants, since its set up in 2013 (Interview 8; Generar 2019). The institutions provided market stands and carried out trainings for all local dwellers who wanted to participate (ibid.). The majority of the vendors are women, who therewith have an increased access to the human capital employment and generate an additional income source for their families (Walking interview 2, interview 15).

It can thereafter, in line with the UNDP (2011: 6), Castillo et al. (2015: 6) and UNWTO (2018b: 4), be said that the implementation of the governmental tourism project has increased women's employment opportunities and possibly contributes to their empowerment through more financial independence. However, the following statement shows that the importance of the additional income, in comparison to the male's more secure income, is questionable:

We are twelve people living together; me, my husband, three daughters, three sons and four grandchildren. I would say that the most important and significant income we have is my husband's, who works as a gardener at various people's summerhouses. It is a fixed monthly income. Then I work with these plants you can see here and sell them [to the tourists] at the market...It is an unstable income, but it is enough to supplement my husband's income (Walking interview 2).

Additionally, women's involvement in tourism related activities could in this sense in line with Sparrer (2003: 188) and Morales Hernández et al. (2018: conclusion), be regarded upon as reinforcing traditional gender roles, as they to a large extent include the sewing of textiles and the preparation of traditional foods (see appendix B for activities). It furthermore seems as if the more secure employment opportunities, including construction and caretaking of summerhouses, are male-dominated and the unreliable income sources, including the production and selling of local products, which depend on the tourism influx, are female. It is interesting to see that in contrast to Galíndez et al. (2010: 70), construction work and day labour are looked upon as secure employments by the respondents, when compared to the entrepreneurial activities, although both are rather insecure, as further outlined below. Notwithstanding, it has to be taken into account that the women themselves are in charge of their small businesses that seem to represent an important income source especially for single women, which is not to be underestimated, as eight out of the nine single-headed households of the target group, are women (see appendix B).

There is, however, difficulty with regard to informality. Although the respondents did not mention it as a problem, but rather as the normal way of doing things, there were two cases, where it became visible that informality contributes to the vulnerability of the workers. One respondent had a heart attack a few weeks before I interviewed her and a subsequent multi-day work loss (Interview 24). She cleans summerhouses and was unsure about how to cover the medical costs of the treatments, as she would not have any income during that time, which indicates a restriction in the access to the human capital health. Also, if she would not soon be able to go back to work, the house owner could replace her, which would take away her only rather stable income source. Yet another respondent mentioned the bad treatment she experienced as an informal employee at a hotel owned by locals, where her overtime was not paid (Interview 11). In this sense, there seems to be a trade-off between the livelihood outcome increased job opportunity and bad health, such as deteriorating social relations, provoked by an unprofessional employer-employee relationship.

It is questionable why such difficulties do not seem to have been raised by the authors, who promote the inclusion of the informal sector (chapter 2.3). However, ILO's (2013: 8) standpoint in linking the sector to poor working conditions and weak social protection, becomes visible in these examples. Thereafter, it is undisputed that rural tourism in SPC generates employment opportunities, but again, there is doubt with regard to the quality of such; an aspect that was also raised in De los Angeles Huizar et al.'s (2016: 168) study on tourism and quality employment, where they bring up the problematic of informality, seasonality and low payment, which leads us to the following chapter.

### **6.2.2 Financial capital**

The country's financial crisis marked by an inflation rate of almost 50 percent has increased people's vulnerability with regard to financial capital. This macroeconomic shock becomes visible in the case study in multiple ways. First, a respondent was not able to gather enough money to buy all the ingredients for the bakery products she sells at the local market, due to increased product prices, restricting her financial capital and therewith her possibility to involve in tourism related activities (Interview 22). Second, life becoming more expensive could prevent people from going on vacation and therewith negatively impact the tourism influx in SPC (Interview 13). That said, some respondents hope for an increase in visitors, as the inflation rate might prevent the Argentinians from leaving the country and instead going on national holidays (ibid.; Interview 4).

These explanations indicate that the vulnerability context, as to the financial situation of the country, has an impact on the tourism context, people’s livelihood strategies and outcomes. Based on the DFID (1999: chapter 1.4), livelihoods are sustainable, when they are resilient to the vulnerability context. However, it seems difficult for people to, under these circumstances, prepare for the upcoming high season, from which they seem to make an important additional income that gives cause to doubt the sustainability of their livelihoods.

What nonetheless contributes to resilience is public social assistance, which seems to be one of the rare regular money inflows and therewith represents an important aspect of the respondents’ financial capital (Interview 2, 8, 11, 16, 19, 20, 21; walking interview 2; participant observation 1; DFID 1999: chapter 2.3.5). That is to say, as the SLF suggests, rural dwellers in SPC are involved in numerous economic activities, including both tourism- and non-tourism related ones, which goes in line with the new rural spaces, where the non-farm economy takes on an important role (Kay 2008: 920, 922; WB 2017: 2). First, this is illustrated in the exclusive secondary data from the UEDP that was accessed through the gatekeeper (Ministerio de Agroindustria 2018):

The majority of tourism related activities are of entrepreneurial origin and involve small-scale production of textiles, leather goods, artisan food products and many more.

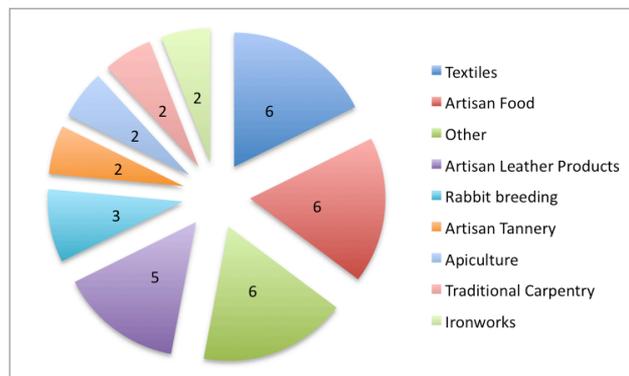


Figure 3: Number of people involved in certain tourism related activities, own creation in excel, based on data from the UEDP project application.

Most project participants have further income sources, of which the biggest part is covered by social assistance, followed by other non-agricultural services not related to tourism and agricultural small-scale production, which is mostly subsistence farming.

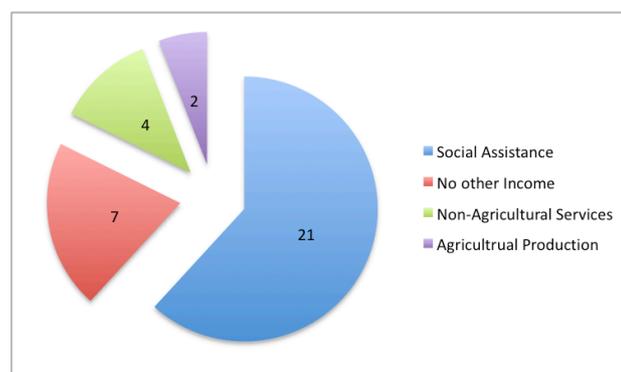


Figure 4: Number of people involved in certain additional non-tourism related activities, own creation made in excel, based on data from the UEDP project application.

Second, the data collected through the case study, similarly reveals all respondents being involved in diverse economic activities, both tourism- and non-tourism related. The former similarly include entrepreneurial activities, such as handicrafts, artisan food production, tannery and leatherwear products, which mostly represent the local (indigenous) culture (Interview 1, 8, 11, 12, 14, 22, 23, 24). Then, there are other kinds of tourism related activities, generated through SPC being a famous destination for national summer vacation (Galíndez et al. 2010: 70). Argentineans from the capital of the province buy properties and therewith generate significant employment opportunities in the construction, housekeeping and gardening sector (Walking interview 2, Interview 7, 16, 24). The non-tourism related activities, equivalently to the secondary data, include public employment and social assistance for children or pension plans (Walking interview 2, Interview 2, 6, 11, 12, 19).

It seems as if this diversity and quantity of people's economic activities can be related to the unpredictability the seasonality of tourism brings, as part of the vulnerability context, as suggested by Shen (2009: 62). It generates an outcome of financial uncertainty and impacts people's livelihood strategies, since SPC is known for its festivals on specific dates and more importantly high season (Interview 5, 8). The majority of income-generating tourism activities are aimed at such (Interview 5, 14, 21). Hence, they are forced to go after other income opportunities during the low season months, which are mostly related to the summerhouse tourism:

I clean two summerhouses two days a week, then I work in the hotel El Albergue here during high season and sell my textiles and sometimes tortillas at the market on weekends. I also form part of the leatherwear workshop for the indigenous community to improve these skills and in the future maybe be able to sell such leather products (Interview 24).

It can thereafter be observed that people seem to have adapted to this seasonality context and follow flexible and changing livelihood strategies, to mitigate such. Also, although tourism related activities do not seem to be the respondents' main or secure income sources, such additional income has proven to lead to positive livelihood outcomes:

My oldest daughter was doing an education to become a pharmacist in the city San Miguel de Tucuman and could pay for the fees and the bus ticket there and back through what she sold at the market. That was good, because we could not have supported her (Interview 12).

However, these findings also show that there do not seem to be many income possibilities other than social assistance or tourism related ones, which contradicts Tao and Wall's (2009: 90) notion, as to seeking a balance between tourism and other income-generating activities. The question arises, as to what extent tourism has replaced other activities, rather than being a diversification, and the outcomes thereof.

### **6.2.3 Social capital**

As regards social capital, it seems as if there has been a rise in local initiatives in the past years, caused by the involvement in tourism related activities. Networks are being formed with the aim of collaboratively organizing the local rural tourism sector. First, the Coquena foundation formed in 2008, through the grouping together of some of the graduates of the tertiary education mentioned above; with the aim of raising awareness among tourists and the locals, regarding the importance of preserving the local natural and cultural resources through sustainable tourism (Interview 2; Fundación Coquena 2019). Second, in 2014, the Hotel Association was formed by hotel owner and respondent 13, with the aim of carrying out events, collaborating with and receiving financial capital from the ETT, in order to further develop local tourism (Interview 2, 13, 21). Third, the same respondent in 2017 created the local Chamber of Tourism that politically depends on the ETT, in order to position SPC in the public sector (Interview 13).

The reciprocal relation, here, between social capital and the regulatory framework, as suggested by the SLF, becomes visible. These new networks could influence the public sector, as regards the new positioning in the governmental field through the involvement with the ETT; and the private sector, including the societal norms and beliefs through Coquena's aim of raising awareness, such as increasing collaboration among the villagers. This development can be compared to what Ashley (2000: 13) detected in her study in Namibia, namely a 'stronger social organization for tourism management'.

However, the tourism context seems to negatively influence social capital, relating to the social relations formed between the locals and the tourists. Many respondents explain that the vast majority of tourists are domestic, have a low purchase power, a questionable behaviour causing waste and sound pollution, come in masses and are therefore even described as depredators (Interview 1, 2, 3, 6, 7, 8, 11, 20, 23). It is interesting to see that, although all respondents acknowledge that they benefit from the high tourism influx during main season,

they demonstrate dissatisfaction with the type of tourist visiting the village, which confirms the threat of a 'socio-cultural intrusion by tourists' (Ashley et al. 2000: 5).

To this matter, respondent six suggests promoting international tourism with high-quality products to discourage the current type of tourist to visit SPC and thereby recognizes the deficient quality products in the village: "In order to attract tourism of quality, first of all you need products of quality (Interview 6)." This goes in line with the SLF's tourism context, suggesting rural villages not being able to attract international tourists because of a lacking possibility in offering higher standards. Additionally, Shen (2009: 58-59) suggests domestic tourism to benefit the villages more than international tourism, as less investment is required and the locals themselves can service it. Based on the access to physical capital analysed hereafter, this seems to be applicable also in SPC, where the rural dwellers complain about deficient infrastructure restricting the development of the tourism sector.

#### **6.2.4 Physical capital**

Based on the SLF, the access to the above outlined human and financial capitals are influenced by the access to physical capital in form of infrastructure, such as roads, public transportation, telecommunication and producer goods. This being said, there seems to be a broad dissatisfaction with the local government regarding infrastructure in SPC, an aspect that was also found in Morales Gaitán & Rainer's (2013: 580) study in the neighbouring department. In SPC, the archaeological sites lack sanitary installations and accessibility that impede tourists to visit the places (Galíndez et al. 2010: 87; Interview 1, 5). The roads are not being repaired on a regular basis, road signage is lacking and the deficient wifi connection impedes payments by credit card, which is deemed problematic in a village with only one cashier machine (Galíndez et al. 2010: 87-88; Interview 6, 8, 18). Although the village counts with 1185 beds for accommodation, problems of waste disposal and basic infrastructure are said to impede a healthy development of tourism (ETT n.d.: 37; Galíndez et al. 2010: 88; Interview 2). In line with Navarro and Schüler's (2010: 926) study on tourism in Argentinean rural villages, there also seems to be a non-harmonious political relationship between the rural dwellers and the local government in SPC, which contributes to a lacking organisation of the sector:

It can be said that there is no public policy here, which means that there is no vision on how rural tourism should be developed. There are several investments such as for example in the reparation of streets that was actually done in October and is destroyed

again for this season. These are investments that could be worth millions, but they don't convert into benefits for the community. The local government does not collaborate with any organization from the village...(Interview 2).

Based thereupon, the lacking governmental provision of basic infrastructure, policymaking and involvement in the sector, do not seem to provide a sustainable framework for tourism development. Such lack in infrastructure can, according to the SLF, lead to the restriction of access to other assets such as natural capital and have negative livelihood outcomes, as further discussed in the following chapter.

### **6.2.5 Natural capital**

Natural capital is an important asset attracting tourism in SPC, as mentioned in the introduction and in chapter 6.1.3. The asset should therefore be protected; to secure sustainable livelihood outcomes through the involvement in tourism related activities (Shen 2009: 63). Nevertheless, the tourism industry seems to negatively affect natural resources, through an uncontrolled use of such, making these object to competition among the local population, as also recognized in Ashley's (2000: 13, 15) study in Namibia.

First, especially in the dry summer season, when the water system is overstrained by the additional high season tourism influx, the access to water is limited (Galíndez et al. 2010: 87, Interview 2). Second, an excessive material extraction from the local rivers for the construction of summerhouses has been detected, which does not seem to be stopped by the local government (Interview 2, 20). Third, numerous adventure events organized by the local tourism office are said to have led to the erosion of the village's viewpoint, which is preoccupying the indigenous population that lives below said hill, as in rainy seasons parts of it are washed down (Walking interview 1). Fourth, the problems with regard to land occupation, recognized in Morales Gaitán and Rainer's (2013: 576-577) investigation, have to a limited extent also been observed in SPC. That is to say, the popular tourism real estate market has restricted the access to land for livestock farming and agriculture, especially as younger generations are not interested in the traditional lifestyle and economically benefit more from selling the inherited properties (Interview 20). The majority of respondents however, did not mention such summerhouse tourism as a negative aspect, probably as many of them profit from financial incomes of such. This notion goes in line with agriculture losing its importance in SPC, as recognized by Galíndez et al. (2010: 74), stating that the urban zone between 1999 and 2007 grew, leaving less space for agriculture and livestock. Especially

members of the indigenous community seem to have recognized this development as a problematic and wish to protect the land they live on (Walking interview 1, Interview 11). This in turn can be compared to Morales Gaitán and Rainer's (2013: 577) finding of change in land use, leading to tensions between different actors with different visions for the rural space.

Additionally, the nexus between tourism and land rights, as detected in Vom Hau and Wilde's (2009: 16) working paper on indigenous movements and poverty, can be recognized in SPC. Namely, on the 11<sup>th</sup> of December 2018, national police forces restricted the Indio Colalao's access to land, as they displaced the around 40 families without prior notice (Participant observation 4; El Tucumano 2018). This incident can be referred to as a shock to the indigenous community, who depend on subsistence farming for the production of the local cheese and other gastronomic products they sell to the tourist (Interview 11; walking interview 1; participant observation 4). The land was reclaimed due to private property rights, which are said to go against national and international treaties Argentina has signed (El Tucumano 2018). There were rumours in the village that the land was reclaimed to be sold for tourism purposes (Participant observation 4; UPNDT 2019). However, on the 25<sup>th</sup> of April 2019, the provincial Appeals Chamber published the decision to return the community to its territory, as several irregularities were detected in the process that caused the arbitrary eviction (La Gaceta 2019). In relation to the SLF's societal norms and beliefs, or social relations based on Ellis (2000: 38), it thereafter seems as if ethnicity plays a role in SPC's society, as they live under uncertainty of being displaced, which represents an increased vulnerability in comparison to the non-indigenous villagers.

### **6.2.6 Summary of findings**

Concluding this chapter with regard to research question A, one might argue that the regulatory framework plays an important role in the field of rural tourism, where especially governmental institutions within the public sector, have taken on the lead, focussing primarily on increasing the access to human capital for the development of tourism projects. But also social assistance represents an important and, in many cases, the only secure income source, contributing to the financial assets and therewith giving the locals a sort of buffer to informally get involved in tourism related activities for an additional income. However, there appears to be a lacking involvement of the local government with regard to the regulating role deemed important, which restricts the access to natural capitals and limits a sustainable

development of the tourism sector, due to a deficit implementation of the physical capital infrastructure.

With regard to the private sector, the locally owned businesses provide mostly seasonal employment opportunities, although these are generally of informal origin and thus prone to trade-offs between livelihood outcomes. However, it should be taken into account that civil society seems to have been strengthened in the past years, as new associations and foundations have formed and therewith contribute to an increased collaboration. This in turn can be defined as the reciprocal influence on the regulatory framework, where an increased access to assets can lead to the people's increased decision power. Although the latter has not been exemplified yet, it could be assumed that the local's bargaining power increases therewith. The local societal norms and beliefs, however, seem to have a restricting impact on the involvement in tourism related activities, either due to time constraints, the normal and therewith slower way of doing things, or being indigenous. Furthermore, although the tourism related activities could enhance gender roles, they also represent an important income source especially for single mothers, despite the fact that their activities seem to be more vulnerable to seasonality.

With respect to research question B, which seeks to understand the livelihood outcomes provoked by the involvement in tourism-related activities, it can be said that first and most importantly, tourism causes the positive outcomes additional employment opportunities and an increased income. These do, however, only to a limited extent contribute to secure livelihoods, as they are exposed to the vulnerabilities of seasonality, the country's macroeconomic shock of an increasing inflation and informal working conditions. Therefore, the rural dwellers of SPC are involved in multiple economic activities, of which the tourism related ones are only to a limited extent looked upon as the reliable ones. Second, the tourism context, with its specific tourist profile, does not seem to correspond to the local societal norms, which leads to unfavourable social relations between the tourists and the local dwellers. Third, there however seems to be a positive livelihood outcome of an increased collaboration between the locals, who are involved in tourism, as they form social networks to better organize the sector. Fourth, access to water and land seems to be restricted by the tourism market, which are negative livelihood outcomes that additionally cause tensions between different actors with distinct visions of land use.

## VII. Conclusion

This thesis sought to analyse rural tourism as a tool for rural poverty reduction, by applying the SLF to examine the impacts of rural tourism on people's livelihoods in SPC. The analysis disclosed the involvement in rural tourism activities to most importantly have contributed to poverty reduction in terms of additional employment opportunities, income and the generation of social capital through local tourism networks. There are, however, negative outcomes, which are related to the deficient role of the government, with regard to lacking infrastructure, leading to a limited access to water and land and restraining a sustainable growth of the tourism sector. This calls for the need of strong regulatory frameworks to enhance a sustainable development of tourism and protect the local communities.

Former studies carried out in Argentina, Latin America and other continents come to similar conclusions, which confirms the potential transferability of the results to other contexts, although it has to be taken into account that the SLF calls for a thorough analysis of each case in itself, as livelihoods are formed within their specific environments.

The positioning of this thesis within the development field of sustainable livelihoods and the subsequent use of the SLF, has thereafter benefitted the present investigation, allowing for a thorough analysis of the complex rural livelihoods, interrelating with tourism activities and has possibly added information to existing discussions on rural tourism and poverty reduction. However, the study is too small and limited to contribute to the broad academic debate on the topic. Furthermore, the findings demonstrated possible pitfalls with regard to tourism as a livelihood diversification strategy, including time constraints due to pluriactivity and a possible replacement of former activities, in contrast to the assumed diversification. It would have been interesting to further evaluate these insights, but it was beyond the scope of this study, to compare people's livelihoods before and after their involvement in the tourism sector. Nevertheless, these topics could be interesting for further research in the area.

All in all, it be confirmed that rural tourism activities contribute to several positive livelihood outcomes, it should not be defined as a secure poverty reduction tool in itself, as they are prone to elements of the vulnerability context, including seasonality and macroeconomic shocks. The notion then arises, as to accept rural tourism as a contributor to development and poverty reduction and not the end in itself and to improve the organizational aspects of the sector to foment its environmental, social and cultural sustainability and make people more resilient within this permanently (re)shaped field with diverse actors, who represent different

needs and visions. Only then can the world fully harness the power of tourism and its development potential, in this endeavour of reaching the SDGs by 2030.

*Word count: 14 846*

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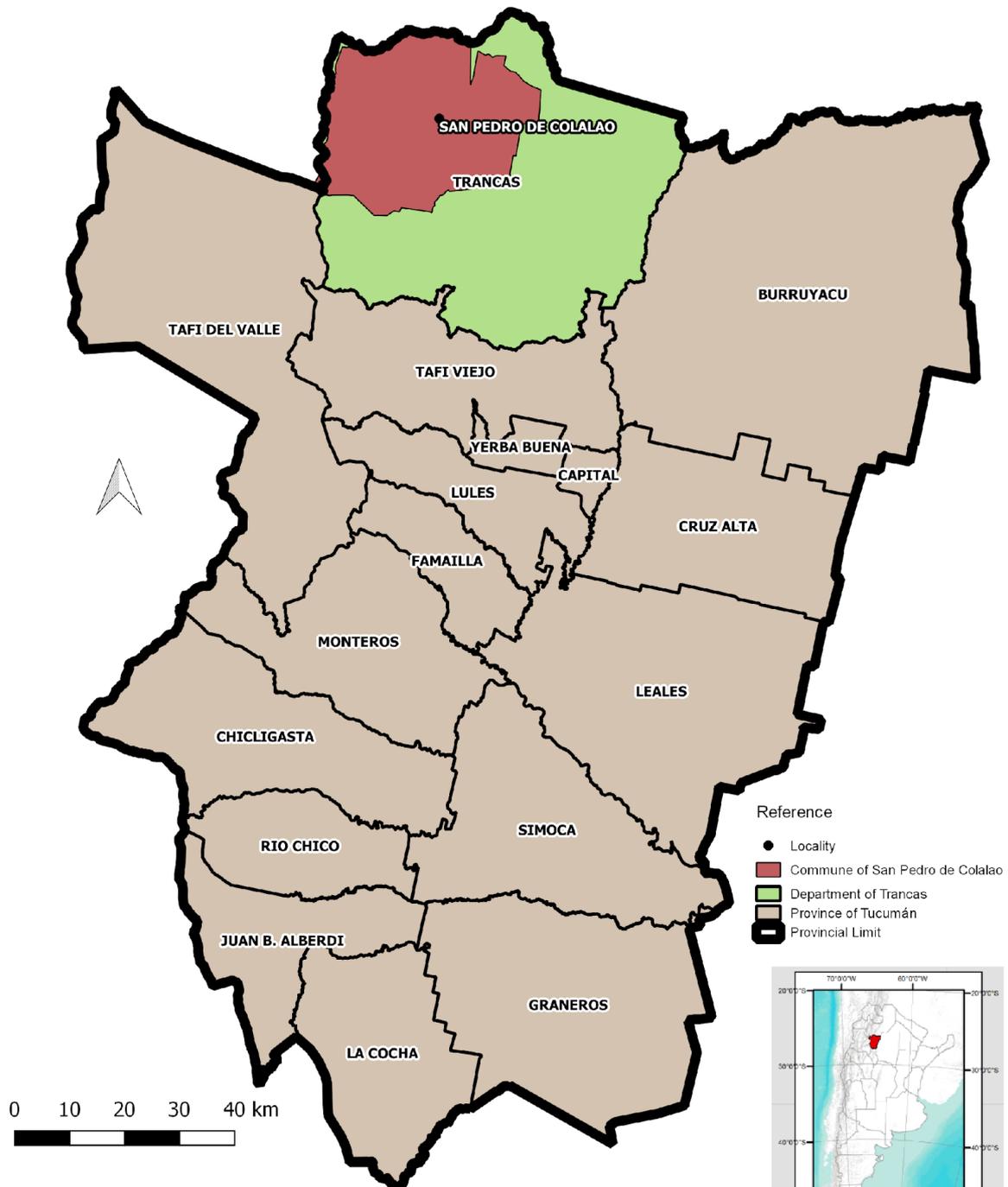
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## Appendix A: Map of San Pedro de Colalao

Commune of San Pedro de Colalao in the Department of Trancas and the Province of Tucumán



## Appendix B: List of respondents

No	Type of Respondent	Gender	Age	Ethnicity	Role	Interview No <sup>11</sup>	Data collection method
1	Gatekeeper & Informant	F	40-50	Non-indigenous	Director of the cooperative Generar with projects in San Pedro de Colalao	Interview 5	Face-to-face interview
2	Informant	M	55-60	Non-indigenous	Employee at the INTA in San Pedro de Colalao	Interview 7	Face-to-face interview
3	Informant	M	25-30	Non-indigenous	Director of the tourism office in San Pedro de Colalao	Interview 4	Face-to-face interview
4	Informant	M	45-50	Indigenous	Cacique of the indigenous population Indio Colalao	Interview 1	Face-to-face interview
5	Informant	M	50-55	Non-indigenous	Former Director of the Breeder's Association of San Pedro de Colalao	Interview 20	Face-to-face interview
6	Informant	F	45-50	Non-indigenous	Employee at the company IBM in Buenos Aires, who carried out several projects with regard to the entrepreneurial activities of the local population of San Pedro de Colalao.	Interview 17	Telephone-Interview
7	Informant	F	40-45	Non-indigenous	Employee at the INTA in Trancas (department to which San Pedro de Colalao belongs to)	Participant observation 3	Participant observation
8	Informant	F	55-60	Non-indigenous	Director of the local primary and secondary school in San Pedro de Colalao	Walking interview 3	Walking interview
9	Informant	M	55-60	Non-indigenous	Employee at the INTA of the province of Tucumán	Interview 18	Face-to-face interview

No	Type of	Gender	Age	Ethnicity	Tourism-related	Interview	Data
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<sup>11</sup> Based on coding in NVivo and references in analysis.

	<b>Respondent</b>	<b>&amp; civil status</b>			<b>activity</b>	<b>No<sup>12</sup></b>	<b>collection method</b>
10	Target group	<u>M</u> <sup>13</sup>	50-55	Non-indigenous	Artisan food	Interview 8	Face-to-face interview
11	Target group	<u>F</u>	35-40	Non-indigenous	Nature Guide	Interview 3	Face-to-face interview
12	Target group	<u>F</u>	40-45	Non-indigenous	Horse riding guide	Interview 2	Face-to-face interview
13	Target group	M	40-45	Non-indigenous	Hikes with llamas	Interview 6	Face-to-face interview
14	Target group	X <sup>14</sup>	X	Non-indigenous	Textiles	Interview 12	Face-to-face interview
15	Target group	<u>F</u>	25-30	Non-indigenous	Artisan food	Interview 14	Face-to-face interview
16	Target group	<u>F</u>	60-65	Non-indigenous	Hotel	Interview 13	Face-to-face interview
17	Target group	F	40-45	Indigenous	Textiles	Interview 24	Face-to-face interview
18	Target group	<u>F</u>	65-70	Indigenous	Artisan food & leather products	Interview 11	Face-to-face interview
19	Target group	X	X	Non-indigenous	Artisan leather products	Interview 25	Face-to-face interview
20	Target group	<u>F</u>	50-55	Indigenous	Textiles & Artisan food	Interview 22	Face-to-face interview
21	Target group	X	X	Non-indigenous	Hotel	Interview 21	Face-to-face interview
22	Target group	<u>F</u>	40-45	Non-indigenous	Artisan food	Interview 23	Face-to-face interview
23	Target group	X	70-75	Non-indigenous	Artisan tannery	Interview 19	Face-to-face interview
24	Target group	<u>F</u>	40-45	Non-indigenous	Textiles	Interview 16	Face-to-face interview
25	Target group	F	45-50	Non-indigenous	Plants	Walking interview 2	Walking interview
26	Target group	M	35-40	Indigenous	Nature Guide	Walking interview 1	Walking interview
27	Target group	X	X	Indigenous	Leatherwear workshop	Participant observation 1	Participant observation
28	Target group	X	X	X	Communal Cheese Factory Workshop	Participant observation 2	Participant observation
29	Target group	X	X	Indigenous	Displacement of the Indio Colalao population	Participant observation 4	Participant observation

<sup>12</sup> Based on coding in NVivo and references in analysis.

<sup>13</sup> All underlined letters are single-headed households.

<sup>14</sup> The X in the cells means that the interview, observation or walking interview was carried out with several people or the whole household. Gender, age and ethnicity are in those cells therefore not defined specifically.

## Appendix C: Questionnaire guide

It has to be taken into account that the following questionnaire was solely used as a guide during the interviews. The questions were not necessarily discussed in this specific order, not all questions were asked and additional ones were raised when deemed necessary. Although the questionnaire is divided into different parts, aimed either the target group or the key informants, such division was not strictly followed either, as the aim was to follow the natural course of the conversation, in order to get a holistic understanding of rural livelihoods in SPC.

### INTRODUCTION

Thank you for taking your time. I would first like to introduce myself and tell you about the reason I am here. I am Brita Bamert from Switzerland and am doing a University master's degree in Sweden, for which I am now writing my thesis. I have chosen to write about rural tourism here in San Pedro de Colalao and that is why I am interested in speaking to people from the village, who are somehow involved in a rural tourism activity.

This investigation is independent from governmental institutions and other organizations. Your personal details will be handled confidentially at all times and the results gained through the conversation will only be used for the purpose of the thesis and published by the University. You can leave this conversation at any time and do not have to answer certain questions, if you do not want to do so. Also, if you agree, I would like to record this conversation with my phone, so that I can then transcribe the interview in order to use it for my data analysis and not to forget any important details of this conversation. The audio will not be shared with anyone. Do you agree with this? Do you have any further questions?

### PERSONAL INFORMATION – TARGET GROUP

1. Are you originally from SPC or another city? How long have you been living in SPC?
2. How many people live in the same household and depend on the same income?
  - a. How many children and how many adults form part of the family?
3. Do you consider yourself of indigenous origin?
4. How old are you?
5. Gender

6. Which ones are your income sources? How do you distribute your time for each one of them? Which activities are for subsistence and which ones give you a monetary income? Which ones are related to the tourism sector? Are the economic activities formal or informal? Which income would you consider most important for you and your family?

Activity (formal / informal)	Tourism / non-tourism related	Subsistence or income generating?	Income in pesos in % of the total income	Time distribution in % of total time

**RURAL TOURISM PROJECT**

7. Which is your rural tourism Project?
8. How did it initiate? Out of which necessity?
- a. Lack of other employment opportunities
  - b. Need of income
  - c. Benefit from the high tourism influx
  - d. Other
9. Did you receive any kind of help or support for the initiation of your project? If yes, what kind of support?
- a. Governmental organizations
  - b. NGO or other private entity
  - c. Family or friends
  - d. Own means
  - e. Other
10. Do you like being involved in the rural tourism sector?
11. Has anything changed in your life since you are involved in the tourism sector? With regard to the family situation, your own wellbeing and so on.
12. How do you perceive the tourist?
13. What role does rural tourism play for the population in SPC?

14. What is needed to get involved in the tourism sector? Could anyone enter it?

**SLF**

***Human Capital***

15. (Question 6)

16. Which is your highest education? Has it helped you to develop your rural tourism project? Are you in need of education to develop your project? What kind of education?

a. Do your children go to school here in SPC or in another village or city?

***Social Capital***

17. Do you form part of an association or organization? If not, would you like to form part of such? What is needed for you to be able to participate?

18. Who do you turn to when you are in a difficult situation? Family, friends or other groups?

***Natural Capital***

19. Does the land you live on belong to you?

20. Do you have access to all the natural resources, which you need to pursue your rural tourism project, such as water, land, forest and so on?

21. Have you noticed any change in the natural environment that could be caused by the tourist?

***Physical capital***

22. Are you happy with the village's infrastructure? Does it help the tourism sector to develop?

23. Which kind of infrastructure do you make use of?

***Financial Capital***

24. (Question 6)

25. Where did the financial means come from to initiate your project?

26. Do you receive money from family or friends?

27. Does your income change with the seasonality of tourism?

### KEY INFORMANTS

28. What is your role with regard to SPC?

29. What do people in SPC live on?

30. Which role does tourism take on in the village?

31. How has tourism developed in the past decades?

32. Has the sector helped the locals to improve their livelihoods and in what sense?

33. What kind of rural tourism projects are mostly pursued in the village?

34. Can there be observed changes in the local community that could be related to the rural tourism sector?

- a. Economic
- b. Changes in the productive activities
- c. Use of technologies
- d. Land use
- e. Pluriactivity

35. What impacts does seasonality have on people's livelihoods?

36. Are there any conflicts with regard to land use?

37. How has the local culture be affected by tourism?

38. Would you say that the vulnerability of people's livelihoods has been reduced through the involvement in tourism related activities?

39. With whom else would you recommend me to talk?

## Appendix D: List of Nodes

- Name ▾
  - ▼ ● Tourism
    - Tourism context
    - Seasonality
    - Perception of Tourist
  - ▼ ● Social Relations
    - Indigenous community
    - Gender aspects
    - Between local villagers
  - ▼ ● Provincial Government
    - Social Assistance
    - Project support
    - Education
  - ▼ ● Physical capital
    - Infrastructure
    - For tourism activities
    - Natural capital
  - ▼ ● Local Government
    - Public employment
    - Involvement in tourism
    - Environmental protection
  - ▼ ● Civil Society
    - Local associations
    - Cultural, societal norms
    - Companies
  - ▼ ● Agriculture
    - Livestock
    - Cultivation

- Name ▾
  - ▼ ● Livelihood Strategies
    - ▼ ● Tourism Activities
      - Tour guide
      - Summer Houses Caretaker
      - Restaurants & Hotels
      - Other
    - ▶ ● Handicraft
      - Construction
      - Artisan Textiles
      - Artisan Food Production
    - Diversification
  - ▼ ● Employment
    - Opportunities for young people
    - ▼ ● Non-Tourism Activities
      - Subsistence Farming
      - Social Assistance
      - Public employment
      - In other regions
    - Informality
  - ▼ ● Economy
    - Financial capital
    - Economic crisis