Cultural Sustainability of Tourism in Rural Communities near Puerto Vallarta, Mexico

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Tourism Impacts

We generally recognize three categories of tourism impacts:

• Economic
• Environmental
• Socio-Cultural

The first two are widely studied, while less attention has been paid to the third
Socio-Cultural

• Positive
  – Preserve traditions
  – Maintain cultural spaces / artefacts / heritage
    ... IF they are the tourist amenity

• Negative
  – Selective keeping and losing – ‘remembering and
    forgetting’
  – Community self-determination
  – Access by local community
  – Over-use, destruction of amenity value
Objectives of this research

• Identify what community members perceive as potential cultural impacts of tourism development

• Consider what the implications are for the sustainability of culture, and of tourism
  – And what do residents believe sustainability means, anyway?
Mapa de la República Mexicana y Regionalización del Estado de Jalisco
Methods

• 6 towns

• Resident surveys:
  n=25 each, 16 questions, plus some demographics
  – Perceptions of tourism and its impacts
  – Culture and identity of the community
Results 1: El Pitillal
**WHAT IS YOUR AGE?**

- From 20-30 years: 40%
- From 31-40 years: 24%
- From 41-50 years: 20%
- From 51-60 years: 16%

**WHAT IS YOUR GENDER?**

- Male: 40%
- Female: 60%

**WHAT IS YOUR CURRENT OCCUPATION?**

- Dealer: 40%
- Maid: 28%
- Lawyer: 8%
- Plumber: 12%
- Businessman: 12%

**DESCRIBE YOUR LEVEL OF EDUCATION.**

- High School: 36%
- University: 32%
- Primary: 12%
- Secondary: 20%
- Over 7 years: 40%
- From 5-7 years: 12%
- From 3-5 years: 20%
- 0-1 year: 16%

**HOW LONG HAVE YOU LIVED IN THIS COMMUNITY OF EL PITILLAL?**

- Over 7 years: 40%
- From 3-5 years: 20%
- From 1-3 years: 12%
- 0-1 year: 16%
2. IN A FEW WORDS, WHAT DO YOU THINK IS MEANT BY ‘SUSTAINABLE TOURISM’?
4. - IN A FEW WORDS, HOW WOULD YOU DESCRIBE THE 'IDENTITY' OF EL PITILLAL?

- Tradition: 48%
- Hospitality: 16%
- Dependable: 12%
- Employment: 16%
- Friendliness: 8%

5. - WHAT ARE THE SPECIFIC PLACES IN EL PITILLAL THAT YOU THINK ARE IMPORTANT OR UNIQUE TO THIS COMMUNITY?

- Plaza: 40%
- Trade: 4%
- Historical Center: 4%
- Delegation: 12%
- Church: 40%

6. - WHAT ARE THE EVENTS OR FESTIVALS IN EL PITILLAL THAT YOU THINK ARE IMPORTANT OR UNIQUE TO THIS COMMUNITY?

- Festive Day of San Miguel Arcángel: 64%
- Festive Day of Cristo Resucitado: 12%
- Independence Day: 12%
- Cultural Dances: 12%
Do you think more tourism development will change the identity of the El Pitillal community? If so, in what way?
9. - WHAT DO YOU THINK WILL BE THE MAIN BENEFITS OF MORE TOURISM IN EL PITILLAL OVER THE NEXT 5 YEARS?

- Economic Population: 60%
- Employment: 36%
- Without Benefit: 4%

10. - WHAT DO YOU THINK WILL BE THE MAIN NEGATIVE EFFECTS OF MORE TOURISM IN EL PITILLAL OVER THE NEXT 5 YEARS?

- Pollution: 40%
- Lost Tradition: 20%
- Prise Increase: 12%
- More Insecurity: 28%
11. Do you think El Pitillal will be a better place, a worse place, or no different for your family to live if there is more tourism development? If better or worse, describe how?

- Better: 48%
- Worse: 12%
- Without difference: 40%

12. Do you think more tourism development will create positive, negative, or no change to the 'identity' of El Pitillal that you described in question 4? If positive or negative, describe how?

- Positive: 6
- Negative: 16
13. Do you think more tourism will have a positive, negative, or no effect on the important or unique places in El Pitillal that you identified in question 5? If positive or negative, describe how?

IF SO, IN WHAT WAY?

- Positive: More Tourism 64%
- Negative: Lost tradition 36%
14.- Do you think more tourism will have a positive, negative, or no effect on the important or unique events and festivals in El Pitillal that you identified in question 6? If positive or negative, describe how?

IF SO, IN WHAT WAY?

Without Effect 60%

Economic Growth 40%
15.- What are your overall views of the advantages vs. disadvantages of more tourism development in El Pitillal?

Advantage: More Economy
Disadvantage: Pollution
Disadvantage: Lost Tradition
Some General Conclusions

• Overall positive view of tourism impacts, but mainly in economic terms
• Some concern for environmental impacts (e.g. pollution)
• Some concern about loss of ‘traditions’ but more ambivalence (no impact on culture)
Thank you! Questions?