



## TOURISM DEPENDENCE AND HOST COMMUNITY PERCEPTIONS. NOTES ON THE SOCIAL EXCHANGE THEORY

### LA DEPENDENCIA DEL TURISMO Y LA PERCEPCIÓN DE LA COMUNIDAD DE ACOGIDA. APUNTES SOBRE LA TEORÍA DEL INTERCAMBIO SOCIAL

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#### ABSTRACT

This article examines the opinions of the local population on the south coast of the Spanish province of Alicante regarding the development of tourism in recent years, analysing their perception of the benefits of tourism using the social exchange theory. This study is presented in two stages. The qualitative stage, which is based on in-depth interviews and focus groups, acts as a guide for the second stage, which consists of a survey conducted with the resident Spanish population. It was found that people linked to the tourist sector through their work view tourism as the driving force behind the economic and social development of their towns, although they are more critical than others of the model that has been established. They defend the development process that has taken place, but feel that overcrowding brings their towns to a standstill and needs to be resolved.

#### KEYWORDS

Residential Tourism, Sociology, Social Perception, Costa Blanca, Spain

#### RESUMEN

La valoración de la población local del desarrollo turístico acontecido en los últimos años en el litoral sur de la provincia de Alicante (España) es el objeto de este artículo. A partir de la teoría del intercambio social se analiza la percepción de los residentes sobre los beneficios del turismo. El trabajo se presenta en dos fases. La fase cualitativa, basada en entrevistas en profundidad y grupos de discusión, guía la segunda fase consistente en la aplicación de una encuesta a la población residente española. Se ha hallado que las personas que se encuentran laboralmente ligadas al sector turístico reconocen el turismo como el motor que ha impulsado el desarrollo económico y social de sus localidades pero son más críticos con el modelo establecido. También son los que defienden el proceso de desarrollo llevado a cabo pero interpretan la masificación alcanzada como un problema de colapso que hay que solucionar.

#### PALABRAS CLAVE

Turismo Residencial, Sociología, Percepción Social, Costa Blanca, España



## 1. INTRODUCTION

It is not possible to develop effective planning for sustainable tourism activity if the attitudes of the resident population are not known and taken into consideration (Allen *et al.*, 1988; Ap, 1992; Diedrich and García-Buades, 2009; Ritchie and Inkari, 2006). Local and regional managers have learnt this lesson from errors made in the past. For researchers into tourism, and particularly for sociologists, the study of the impact of tourism on host societies has been a key issue. In broad terms, research into this issue can be divided into four lines of work: a) studies which use research into marketing as a reference point and devise categories of residents based on their opinions of tourism (Williams and Lawson, 2001; Smith and Krannich, 1998; Ryan and Montgomery, 1994); b) studies that examine relationships between how urban space is occupied and attitudes towards tourist development, paying particular attention to the physical distances separating tourists and residents (Gursoy and Jurowski, 2002; Korça, 1998; Tyrell and Spaulding, 1984); c) analysis of the socioeconomic factors of perception, such as length of stay or opinions on the revenue generated (Harrill and Potts, 2003; Teye *et al.*, 2002; Besculides *et al.*, 2002); d) studies along very similar lines that examine residents' perceptions in terms of their economic situation and the real economic benefits that they obtain from tourism (Akis *et al.*, 1996; Haralambopoulos and Pizam, 1996).

So as to establish an order for the explanations of residents' attitudes, certain well-known psychological and sociological theories have been adapted, amongst which Rich Harrill (2004) is of particular note: a) the growth machine theory, which creates a model that groups together the perception of variables that directly boost or hinder economic development in tourism; b) the community attachment theory, which explains the process of tourist participation and integration into community life; and c) the social exchange theory, which includes notions of the previous theory, but with greater emphasis on actions which involve

an exchange of resources between tourists and residents.

In developing the study upon which this paper is based, the various lines of research mentioned have all been taken into account. Nevertheless, this study focuses mainly on the social exchange theory. The authors feel that the results obtained make an interesting contribution that may help to perfect this theoretical approach. Using the social exchange theory to explain how the tourist system works is based on a simple idea: residents' opinions will depend on their perception of the benefits and costs resulting from tourism (Ap, 1990, 1992). Abraham Pizam (1978) analysed the relationship between residents' attitudes and their dependence on tourism. Specifically, he found that residents working in the tourist industry express more positive opinions about tourist development than those that do not. Although some doubts have been expressed about the validity of this principle (Liu and Var, 1986), it is true that most researchers have confirmed it (Andereck and Vogt, 2000; Caneday and Zeiger, 1991; Jurowski *et al.*, 1997; King *et al.*, 1993; Milman and Pizam, 1988; Perdue *et al.*, 1990).

The following pages explain the findings from a study of a tourist area characterised by overcrowding and urban saturation in the southern part of the Spanish province of Alicante, on the Mediterranean coast. Specifically, the implications of these findings will be presented as regards a possible reformulation of the central idea set forth in the social exchange theory.

## 2. STUDY APPROACH: THE CONTEXT OF RESIDENTIAL TOURISM

Almost all of the coastal towns in the province of Alicante have undergone their modernisation process under the umbrella of what is known as "residential tourism", associated on the one hand with traditional summer holidays and, on the other, with the emergence of new lifestyles and types of residential mobility linked to the construction of second homes on a massive scale. Debates on the validity of the expression



“residential tourism” have not abated since it was first used in academic discussion in the late 1970s (Jurdao, 1979), and researchers into tourism and economics from the property sector have not reached a consensus on the best way to define and approach this social phenomenon (Duhamel, 1997; Mateu and Lladó, 2003; Mazón and Aledo, 2005; Monreal, 2001; Raya, 2001; Salvà, 2005). In the context of Mediterranean societies, and particularly Spain, the conceptual problem is very closely linked to the development of contemporary migration between European countries, the dynamics of which are now highly complex (Huete, 2008; King, 2002; O’Reilly, 2007; Williams *et al.*, 2000).

Beyond the conceptual problems, the process of residential tourist development is hegemonic in almost all tourist resorts on the Spanish coast. Since its beginnings in the 1960s, the huge economic, sociodemographic, cultural, political, town-planning and environmental changes that this process has led to in parts of the Mediterranean have modified residents’ perception of where they live and their relationships with neighbours and new visitors (be they permanent, sporadic or seasonal), and have created new systems of meanings with which to make sense of the tourism phenomenon (Huete *et al.*, 2008; Mantecón, 2008a,b).

In the province of Alicante between 1960 and 2000, around 350,000 homes were built for tourists, which led to a supply model based on promoting property (rather than tourism itself) that was guided mainly by property developers’ speculative interests (Mazón, 2001, 2006). The work created by the building, sale and fitting out of second homes is an economic backbone for

these regions. It is no surprise, then, that there is talk of the triumph of the tourism property sector over the tourism sector in its stricter sense.

Three towns on the southern coast of Alicante province were chosen for this study: Santa Pola, Guardamar del Segura and Torrevieja (figure 1). Their social definition as residential tourist resorts has turned all three into areas with a predominance of non-hotel accommodation and very high levels of seasonality. There are thought to be more than 625,000 people occupying second homes, whereas there are only slightly more than 4,000 hotel beds (Valencian Institute of Statistics, 2007). The urban continuum formed by the three towns is typical for the coastal region, with a residential dynamic bordering on saturation, with a noticeable overflow in property activity linked to tourist urbanisation (Mazón and Huete, 2005).

Table 1 shows that in these three towns, the number of businesses and employees directly linked to construction and property development is higher than those linked to the hotel and catering industry. Table 2 shows the importance of the property sector in this area according to figures from the Population and Housing Census carried out in 2001. The three towns show similar levels, with homes for potential tourist use at around 78% of the total number of homes, confirming a predominance of residential tourist activity.

The identification of this area as a mass tourist resort linked to large-scale real estate activity is confirmed by the data shown in table 3. This table also indicates that the number of hotel places

**Table 1 - Businesses and employees linked to property and tourism sectors**

	Property construction and development			Hotel and catering	
Santa Pola	Businesses	204	21.0%	160	16.4%
	Employees	793	18.8%	708	16.8%
Guardamar del Segura	Businesses	161	27.5%	112	19.1%
	Employees	914	34.3%	488	18.3%
Torrevieja	Businesses	851	28.5%	507	16.9%
	Employees	3886	26.9%	2048	14.1%

Source: Tesorería General de la Seguridad Social (2006) [Social Security General Treasury].

Figure 1. Location of the Costa Blanca on the Iberian Peninsula.



is little more than symbolic, particularly when compared with homes used as accommodation for stays dedicated mainly to leisure rather than to production. Whilst at the height of summer Torrevieja can receive more than 500,000 visitors, its hotels can only accommodate 1,524 tourists. There are approximately 150,000 bed spaces in homes in Santa Pola, whilst its hotels cannot even accommodate 1,000.

The main objective of this research was to understand what residents in this area think of the modernisation that has occurred as a result of the growth of tourism and related property development. This paper examines the results for two specific purposes: a) to discover what residents think of residential tourism as regards their perception of the benefit that it brings; and b) to analyse the

implications of the results for the social exchange theory.

### 3. METHODS

Most studies on the social perception of the impact of tourism choose a quantitative methodology based mainly on the survey technique. However, for this research a combined methodology (Morgan, 1983) was used, and qualitative and quantitative research methods were applied in a sequential fashion (Tashakkori and Teddlie, 2003) to examine the perception of the impact made by tourism, and the relevance of this opinion. The first step was to conduct semi-structured interviews and organise focus groups. The results of the qualitative phase were then fed directly into a questionnaire to measure reliability and its relevance among the population.

Table 2 - Total number of homes and potential homes for tourist use

	Second and empty homes	Homes	%
Santa Pola	26,531	33,753	78.6%
Guardamar del Segura	12,129	15,706	77.2%
Torrevieja	80,643	102,355	78.8%

Source: Population and Housing Census, 2001. Instituto Nacional de Estadística (2002) [Spanish National Institute of Statistics]

Table 3 - Hotel capacity

	Total no. of hotels	Total hotel capacity
Santa Pola	4	825
Guardamar del Segura	10	1,633
Torrevieja	12	1,524

Source: Local tourist supply, 2008. Agència Valenciana de Turisme (2009) [Valencian Tourism Agency].



The first part of the field work was carried out between March and October 2007. A total of 45 in-depth interviews were conducted and two focus groups were organised with different social agents that can be classified into four groups as follows:

- 1) Those not directly involved in tourism: four bank managers, one trade union representative and six representatives of traders' associations.
- 2) Economic agents directly involved in the industry: seven managers of hotels and hotel associations, five travel agency managers, five estate agency managers, three property developer entrepreneurs and two tourism officials.
- 3) Representatives of the political parties with municipal representation: five councillors from the *Partido Popular* (Spain's main right-wing party), three councillors from the *PSOE* (Spanish socialist party), two councillors from the *USP/UPSP Unidos por Santa Pola* (minority independent coalition), one councillor from *Izquierda Unida* (communist-led coalition) and one from *Los Verdes* (left-wing green party).
- 4) Citizens in two focus groups held at the Santa Pola Cultural Centre (one with six people over the age of 45, and one with six people under the age of 45).

The interviewees were selected and classified into these four groups according to the planning model based on the stakeholder theory that Sautter and Leisen (1999) adapted for the tourism sector. The model was re-devised here to fit the residential tourism system that exists on the Alicante coast, using previous research experience (Mantecón, 2008 a,b; Mantecón and Huete, 2007, 2008).

The interview script was structured around a series of open-ended questions linked to general and predetermined 'thematic sections', which form the conceptual structure of the residential tourism system: 'the tourist', 'the economy', 'the environment', 'social interaction', 'the tourism model' and 'social change'. Discourse analysis generated a variety of codes relating to

economic, geo-environmental and sociocultural issues. The material gathered was then reclassified by associating ideas and drawing up story lines (Sandelowski, 1995). The number of interviewees was decided upon based on the criterion of discursive saturation of the issue categories explored for each group of social agents.

The qualitative work had a dual purpose for this research: a) to understand the key sociological elements that determine the host society's opinions on residential tourism in order to create an improved design for the survey planned for the second stage of the study, and b) to conduct a discourse analysis that would allow for a better interpretation of the data gathered in the following stage of the quantitative work.

The second stage of the research involved carrying out a face-to-face survey with Spanish nationals resident in the area aged 18 years or over who had been included in the 2001 census. From a population of 71,475 inhabitants, 430 people were surveyed (97 in Guardamar del Segura, 152 in Santa Pola and 181 in Torrevecija). A stratified sampling method based on proportional allocation was used. This sample is statistically representative of the area population, with a margin of error of  $\pm 4.71\%$ , a 2d (95%) level of confidence, and a population variance of 50%. A structured questionnaire directed by interviewers was administered to this sample in April and May 2008. The survey featured 44 statements or questions, grouped by subject into five sections: a) opinion on the town's economic situation; b) appraisal of the different effects that tourism has on the town; c) opinion about tourists; d) the relation between tourism and economic development; and e) sociodemographic and statistical classification questions. The following variables will be analysed in this paper: definition of the town as a tourist resort; the town's most important economic activity; degree to which tourism has positive effects on other economic sectors; relationship between tourism and problems in the provision of municipal services (overcrowding at the busiest times for tourists, with a saturation of people





**Table 4 - Degree to which tourism has positive effects on other economic sectors (percentages)**

	Construction	Commerce	Industry	Agriculture/fishing
Not important	0.7	0	13.0	12.3
Little importance	3.0	1.8	27.3	31.9
Quite important	37.6	36.2	37.6	35.0
Very important	58.7	62.0	22.1	20.8

N= 430.

and vehicles excessive building work and road works, pollution, excessive water consumption); causes of these problems; attitude to tourism; attitude to tourists; profession; self-perception of being professionally related to tourism business; reason for which tourists choose the town as a place to spend their holidays; impact of tourism in work opportunities. To strengthen internal reliability, the questionnaire was pretested on a convenience sample of 30 local residents. All statistics were computed using the SPSS 15 statistical analysis software.

The results below are collated from the two stages of the research to aid understanding of the argument that this paper aims to present

## 4. RESULTS

### 4.1. DEFINING THE SITUATION

When the citizens were asked whether they considered their town to be a tourist resort, 97% answered in the affirmative. Asked what they thought the town's most important economic activity was, 62.4% answered tourism, with construction a long way behind at 24.4%, followed by commerce (6.2%), agriculture and fishing (5.9%) and industry (1.1%). The claim made by some experts that residential tourism is not tourist-based does not match how the residents of these towns define the situation. The heavily property-based nature of the accommodation available did not cause residents to question the tourist nature of such activity, although the repercussions on the economic sector of construction and commerce were noted:

“It has benefited us, and I know that we have a very high standard of living thanks to what the tertiary sector and our tourist sector have

contributed. I mean everything to do with construction, hardware stores, locksmiths, carpenters..., all the trade that lives off tourism. We're very happy”  
(*Partido Popular* councillor).

The view that construction and commerce are the sectors that most benefit from tourism reaches high levels of consensus, as in both cases more than 95% of the population thought that its influence is “very” or “quite” important, although it was also thought to be generally important in all sectors, particularly those involved in production (table 4).

As regards negative impact, 46.4% of the population thought that tourism can cause problems in the provision of municipal services, whereas 52.4% felt that there was no such risk. Residents identified the following as the main problems caused by tourism: a) overcrowding at the busiest times for tourists, with a saturation of people and vehicles (70.2%); b) excessive building work and road works (27.1%); c) pollution (18.8%); and d) excessive water consumption (16.0%).

Most of the interviewees attributed these problems to poor planning. The response from the interviewees is revealing of a situation that could be classed as endemic in many areas affected by this model of development, as 51.6% of the interviewees blamed the situation on a complete lack of suitable and rational town planning by the authorities. Furthermore, 29.6% were of the opinion that the main cause of the problems is at a managerial level, where economic profit from urbanisation is more important than solving any problems and needs arising in the town:



“It’s not a political choice, but an economic choice by developers and town planners [...] It’s been for exclusively economic reasons” (*Izquierda Unida* councillor).

On the other hand, despite being aware of certain aspects that do not function properly, 13.1% of those interviewed considered that the lack of proper management is due to the fact that development has been so fast and so intense that nobody has been able to anticipate and plan the infrastructures demanded by property development and population growth. Finally, 5.8% gave other reasons. However, these figures should be read in light of the revealing fact that when asked the question “Are you in favour of there being tourism in your town?”, only 2.5% of the population said they were not. Furthermore, 6.4% of those interviewed said that their answer depended on the type of tourism that might be established in the future, whereas 90.8% were openly in favour of tourism. In other words, barely a tenth of those interviewed imagined a future without tourism. How tourism develops may be open to discussion, but not the idea of continuing with the same rate of growth:

J: We don’t have any choice. There’s no industry and the fishing activity is not good.

A: Yes. We just have to accept that this is the way things are.

N: We can’t live from the sea anymore, and there’s no industry. We have to depend on tourism” (focus group).

Both the qualitative and quantitative data indicate that the host society accepts different means to ensure the future development of their town, as long as they are subject to the persistence of the existing formula. Ultimately, the number of people stating their displeasure with the presence of tourists in their town is negligible, whereas almost half of the population interviewed (48.5%) felt that the more tourists visit the town, the better things will be. Although the remaining 47.1% admitted

that tourism caused certain inconveniences, they felt that they should tolerate them, as tourism is a positive economic activity for local interests.

#### 4.2. INQUIRING INTO TOURISM DEPENDENCE

Following the argument of social exchange theory, what follows is an attempt to determine the existence of significant differences in the opinions of those who work in the tourist sector and those who do not. However, first it is necessary to determine who is who and how much of the population each group represents.

Two questions were used to determine to what extent the job of those interviewed was connected to the tourism industry. The first was an open question: “Describe the type of work that you do (or did)”, to which the interviewees answered by indicating their profession. The answers were then re-codified according to the researchers’ criteria, attempting to establish an objective classification using the following categories: 1) Directly related; 2) Indirectly related; 3) Not related. The second question was: “To what extent is your work (profession) related to tourism?” The answers give a subjective perception (or self-perception) of those interviewed with regard to the link between their work and the tourism industry. This variable was re-codified into a dichotomous variable: “My work has nothing/very little to do with tourism”, and “My work has quite a lot/a lot to do with tourism”. In this way, two similar-sized groups were established, as the population is divided equally between those who say that their work is (very and/or quite) related to tourism (50.4%), and those who say that their work is not related (at all/very little) to tourism (49.7%). If we take the first question (objective classification) and reduce it to two categories, 53.2% of those interviewed work directly and indirectly with tourism, compared with 46.9% whose work is not related to tourism. In each case, the percentage difference between the objective and subjective classification is very small and within the margin of error. In other words, from both the subjective point of view and from an objective classification based on stated profession, the population



is almost equally divided between those who have tourism-related jobs (either directly or indirectly), and those who do not. The analysis continues using the variable generated from the self-perception of whether the interviewees felt their work is tourism-related. From here on the sample is reduced to working people (N=346).

### 4.3. TOURISM DEPENDENCE AND HOST COMMUNITY PERCEPTIONS

At this juncture, the attention shifts to focus on recognising the differentiated and consistent perception profiles regarding whether or not the interviewees' work relates to the tourism sector. A series of chi-square tests was applied to examine any statistical difference between the two groups. These tests only show the variables for which significant differences were observed between the groups.

A total of 53.8% of the citizens whose work is linked to tourism agreed with the statement that "the more tourists in town, the better". For those whose work is not related to tourism, the percentage agreeing with the statement is ten points lower (43.9%,  $X^2 = 11.333$ ,  $sig = 0.003$ ). In general, the population was of the opinion that tourism has positive effects on their family income, although these effects are seen more positively by those who clearly link their job to property and tourism development, as was to be expected:

"What we are creating is a series of needs and services, where people can find a job and, what is more, within the tertiary sector, which is a sector that

traditionally pays quite a bit better and gives a better quality of life and working standards compared with other sectors. And these are stable jobs that are being created [...] This is what's generating wealth, and what I think is benefiting us" (Property Developer entrepreneur).

Indeed, far more residents who see their job as directly related to tourism felt that their income would drop without tourism (66.7%), whereas those who do not consider their work to be tourism-linked thought that their income would not be affected (84.2%;  $X^2 = 93.295$ ;  $sig. < 0.005$ ).

Furthermore, those who work in the sector see tourism as a dynamic part of the local economy that creates local jobs (table 5).

Upon analysing the questions on the perception of interaction between tourists and residents, and of a possible cause-effect relationship between tourist development and problems with municipal services, differences were found between the two groups (table 6).

Citizens whose work is tourism-related feel that tourism causes problems with municipal services or make excessive use of water to a lesser extent than those whose work is not tourism-related. The latter do feel that tourism leads to situations in which the towns are brought to a standstill due to major overcrowding during the busiest times of year. Even though all those interviewed thought that interaction between tourists (foreigners and Spaniards) and locals is positive, those whose work is linked to the tourism sector are less enthusiastic.

**Table 5 - Degree of agreement with "There is more work thanks to tourism" based on people's working relationship with tourism.**

	Little/no relation to tourism n (% valid)	Quite/very related to tourism n (% valid)	Total
Strongly agree	48 (28.1)	73 (41.7)	121 (35.0)
Agree	87 (50.9)	74 (42.3)	161 (46.5)
Disagree	20 (11.7)	23 (13.1)	43 (12.4)
Strongly disagree	16 (9.4)	5 (2.9)	21 (6.1)
<b>Total</b>	171 (100)	175 (100)	346 (100)

$X^2 = 12.142$ ;  $sig. = 0.07$ ;  $N = 346$





**Table 6 - Perception regarding municipal problems and social interaction based on people's working relationship with tourism**

	Little/no relation to tourism (% valid)	Quite/very related to tourism (% valid)
<b>Tourism causes problems in municipal services</b> <i>X<sup>2</sup> = 6.372; sig. &lt;0.05; N= 343</i>	52.7	39.1
<b>Tourism makes excessive use of water</b> <i>X<sup>2</sup> = 5.326 ; sig. = 0.021; N= 161</i>	22.6	8.8
<b>Tourism causes overcrowding and brings the town and traffic to a standstill</b> <i>X<sup>2</sup> = 5.326 ; sig. = 0.021; N=161</i>	63.4	80.9
<b>The relationship with foreign tourists is good</b> <i>X<sup>2</sup> = 16.964 ; sig= 0.001; N=336</i>	90.3	75.4
<b>The relationship with Spanish tourists is good</b> <i>X<sup>2</sup> = 13.427 ; sig= 0.004; N= 345</i>	89.4	76.0

Amongst those who answered that tourism causes problems for municipal services (161), when asked about the cause of the problems produced by tourism, the majority blamed a lack of local planning (51.6%), followed by the tendency to think only of the economic benefit (29.6%). Meanwhile, 13.1% attributed the lack of planning during the different stages of the process to the speed at which changes had occurred. If we take into account the interviewees' working relationship with the tourism sector, there is a significant difference, in that more people whose job is tourism-linked thought that it is not possible to anticipate or plan infrastructures for such rapid development, whereas those whose work is least connected with tourism are of the opinion that the main cause of the problems brought by tourism is the tendency to consider only the economic benefit ( $X^2 = 8.810$  ;  $sig. = 0.032$ ).

Five items were given as possible answers to the question about the main reason for which tourists choose the town as a place to spend their holidays. No statistical differences were found in any of the categories (climate, beaches, accessibility, accommodation), with the exception of the statement "because they couldn't afford to go anywhere else". Most of those who chose this latter reason have a job

that is related to the tourism sector ( $X^2 = 10.06$ ;  $sig = 0.002$ ).

Citizens who admit to having benefited directly from the production of wealth generated by tourism (generally because their job depends on it) viewed tourism more positively than those whose work is unrelated; however, they were also more critical in some of their opinions. There is, therefore, a certain ambivalence in the views expressed.

## 5. CONCLUSIONS: IMPLICATIONS FOR THE SOCIAL EXCHANGE THEORY

The case studied in this research, consisting of the towns of Santa Pola, Guardamar del Segura and Torrevieja, on the southern coast of Alicante province, features a model of tourist development with an almost negligible rate of hotel accommodation, particularly compared with the great number of second homes that dominate the tourist sector along this area of coastline. In the face of such a situation, a model of urban growth has arisen in which development policies have been characterised by the economic interests of property developers and speculation processes. This extensive urban development, based on the building of all kinds of villas, semi-detached and town houses, has evolved to the extent that these towns have



entered a stage in which problems have begun to arise due to the lack of available land upon which to build, which is necessary in order to be able to perpetuate the property and tourist development model that is currently in place.

It is in such a scenario that the results from this research are presented, seeking to determine how the resident population views the changes that have taken place as a result of property and tourist development since the 1960s. The work began with the hypothesis that “the population employed in the tourist sector expresses more positive opinions about tourist development than workers employed in other economic activities”. This is the principle upon which tourism studies apply the social exchange theory. However, in the context of the case studied here, this argument requires that certain nuances be noted. In the light of the results, it emerges that there are certain aspects of the situation relating to tourist development that do not coincide with this theory. According to the results obtained, people whose work is involved in tourism are more critical than those whose work is not tourism-related. This is probably due to the fact that they have a deeper knowledge of the reality of tourism in their towns and its problems. It should be noted that this group has the most interests in clarifying and highlighting the critical issues, as they will be the first to benefit from their solution.

Similarly, those linked to tourism defend the legitimacy of the residential tourism process that has occurred in their towns. An example of this can be found in an issue about which there seems to be almost unanimous criticism, which is the poor planning (or lack thereof) in both urban development and tourism in this area. On this point, tourism professionals justify the situation by arguing that development and the resulting changes that the area has undergone have been so rapid and on such a large scale that they have been impossible to control. In any case, for this group of residents the problem resides in the lack of available resources with which to manage the situation, particularly in terms of services and infrastructures required

by property development and population growth.

The population whose work is tourism-related sees the industry as the driving force behind the economic and social development of these towns, and agrees with the statement “the more tourists, the better”. This is the group that sees tourism as a dynamic activity within the local economy and one that creates jobs. People whose job is not tourism-related, however, do not share this view, as they feel that even if fewer tourists were to come, their income would not be affected. This is a group of citizens who believe that their family income does not depend on tourism and feel less threatened by the possible crises that the sector could suffer.

Finally, it is important to point out that those involved in the tourist economy feel that the overcrowding that occurs at the busiest times brings the town to a standstill, with the negative consequences that such a situation entails, causing problems linked to municipal services and excessive water consumption. However, it is surprising that those not involved in tourism perceive this question as a less important issue, even though they feel that tourist activity does bring about problems, particularly for municipal services.

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