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# Social Entrepreneurship in Mexico

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Additional information is available at the end of the chapter

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## Abstract

The main objective of this chapter is to show how social entrepreneurship favors endogenous development of indigenous communities to improve their quality of life, while contributing to the preservation of their cultural heritage and also promoting environmental protection and sustainable development. In this context and based on the approaches of the Theory of Entrepreneurship, it discusses what is meant by social entrepreneurship and the impact of social capital in the creation of such enterprises.

To this end, and using case methodology, three Indigenous social enterprises located in Mexico are examined in depth, indicating how their distinct way of understanding the individual's role in society or their concept of property determines a social capital embedded in their DNA as an indigenous people. In this sense, their collectivist culture shapes a type of enterprise that goes beyond the social, to one that may be called communal.

**Keywords:** social entrepreneurship, endogenous development, indigenous peoples, sustainable tourism, social enterprise

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## 1. Introduction

The main objective of this chapter is to show, through social entrepreneurship, a way to mitigate the negative effects of the complex historical problems of emigration and marginalization experienced by indigenous populations [1]. This type of enterprise allows for endogenous development of indigenous communities so that their quality of life can be improved and their cultural heritage preserved, while also contributing to environmental conservation and sustainable development [2].

Among the research developed centered around the topic of entrepreneurship, one can find study approaches focused on the personal characteristics of entrepreneur, others who study

the process of company creation itself, as well as more complex approaches to studying social, cultural, and economic factors. Therefore, it can be concluded that entrepreneurship is a broad and complex process that includes very diverse factors, such as economic, social, public policy, situational, and cultural factors [3].

However, the conclusions drawn by researchers that consider psychological variables, personality traits, and demographic factors as the factors that characterize the entrepreneurial activity are not entirely reliable because of their ambiguity. For this reason, De Carolis and Saporito [4] propose the inclusion of social capital as an emerging research theme in the field of creating companies.

Furthermore, the ecological approach of the population studies the entrepreneur's relations within context, focusing on the relationships created to obtain information, resources, and social support. In this sense, Grossman et al. [5] argue that in uncertain contexts with a high risk potential, the ability to use faithful social relation is considered a most valuable asset, specifically to reduce the inherent risk in the act of undertaking new ventures.

The context chosen for the study of this phenomenon is Mexico, due to the high ethnic diversity and the high percentage that represents the indigenous population (11%), according to the CEPAL [6]. Furthermore, in ref. [7], indicators of living standards of indigenous peoples are clearly inferior to the rest of the population, which highlights the marginalization and poverty of these people. So, entrepreneurship is seen as a way of integration of indigenous groups into the economic activity, increasing their quality of life without compromising their lifestyle and identity [8]. However, despite being a relevant phenomenon, it has not yet been sufficiently analyzed [9], hence the contribution of this work to literature.

This chapter continues with a brief exposition of the main approaches used in the study of entrepreneurship, a review of the main contributions of social entrepreneurship, and the role of social capital. It is followed by an analysis of indigenous entrepreneurship in Mexico, through an in-depth study of three cases. The results and conclusions close the chapter.

## **2. Main approaches to the study of entrepreneurship**

The creation of companies can be considered a complex and comprehensive process that includes a wide range of public, social, economic, political, cultural, natural, and situational factors [3].

Therefore, within the literature on entrepreneurship, there are different works [10, 11] that are classified into three different approaches. These depend on the importance that the researcher gives to entrepreneurship: the business focus, the organizational approach, and the approach that combines social, cultural, and economic factors, also called ecology population.

### **2.1. Approaches focused on the characteristics of the entrepreneur**

The importance attributed to the entrepreneur as the central agent in entrepreneurship is the literature trend, which examines the formative characteristics of the entrepreneur and their

influence on the decision to create a company [12]. Therefore, it is believed that the entrepreneur has psychological and demographical characteristics that differentiate him/her from the rest of the population [13]. This trend is divided into two influencing factors: one based on the behavior and personality of the founder and the other based on demographics [14].

Among the main contributions within the psychological approach to entrepreneur can be found the work of McClelland [15], which is based on personality traits of the founder that are the basis for being an entrepreneur, such as the need for achievement, locus of control, or risk appetite, among others.

Moreover, the most relevant demographic variables that influence entrepreneurial behavior are, according to the literature, age, sex, education, prior entrepreneurial experience, academic background, and entrepreneurs in the family [16, 17].

## **2.2. Approaches focused on the process of starting a business**

The literature review approach, which was performed based on the characteristics of the entrepreneur [18], focuses its analysis on the set activities that must be carried out to successfully manage the creation of the company, concluding that success depends on the ability to identify the business opportunity [19]. On the other hand, the main criticism of this approach is based on the fact that each study identifies different phases between the baseline and the final stage in the creation of a company.

In this approach, the study focuses on the activities carried out for the commissioning of a company [12]. Gartner [20] is a pioneer in the study approach that focused on the process of entrepreneurship. According to Gartner [21], entrepreneurship is an activity and not an occupation. Within this activity, the entrepreneur has the ability to identify business opportunities, accumulate resources, produce, build organizations, and respond to the government and society, among other tasks. This approach sees entrepreneurship as a process containing two dimensions, traits of entrepreneurs and the process [22].

## **2.3. The population-ecology model**

To Welter [23], the context helps to better understand the phenomenon of entrepreneurship and argues that “the context is important to understand the when, how, and why that involves the entrepreneurial spirit”.

This approach is based on the population perspective and on the study of relations between the company and its environment [11, 24], emphasizing social relationships or the employer contacts for business success [25, 26]. Therefore, it is argued that environment is a key factor influencing the process of creating a business. At the same time, it is based on the axiom that the entrepreneurial spirit is influenced by society, which cultivates contacts that can be a supportive resource. Therefore, according to Johannisson [27], the network is vital for the entrepreneur, because within it is the characteristic of trust that encourages entrepreneurs to launch and grow their business. Here, Grossman et al. [5] argue that in uncertain situations and those with high risk potential, reliable social networks are a highly valuable asset in

reducing the inherent risk involved in business activity. Shapero and Sokol [28] found that the intentions to create a business are influenced, among others, by the cultural environment.

Finally, the economic condition of the region where the company is located is believed to be of influence. Economic stability will always be a predominant factor in the decision to create a company or not [29]. Entrepreneurship is similarly influenced by market structure [30] or unemployment levels [3], among other economic factors.

### 3. Social entrepreneurship and the role of social capital

#### 3.1. Social entrepreneurship

Social entrepreneurship is a fertile field in which many researchers are working in the construction of a theory, which is not yet complete [31]. Therefore, social entrepreneurship is “an innovative activity, the creation of social value, which occurs within and across nonprofit, business, and government sectors” [32].

According to Mair and Martí [31], the definitions of social entrepreneurship are grouped into three clusters (1) nonprofit entrepreneurs in search of finance or management, with schemes to create social value; (2) entrepreneurship understood as social responsibility; and (3) social entrepreneurship as a palliative to social problems.

Social enterprises are created from a set of objectives that include personal objectives [33]. Based on the foregoing and in accordance with Peredo and McLean [34], social entrepreneurship depends on the different objectives of the company, but always include a clear mission: “Social entrepreneurship is about the search for new and better ways to create and sustain social value” [34], that is, creating value and the coverage of necessities [31]. “This allows us to understand that social entrepreneurship is not isolated from entrepreneurship [economic], but coexist” [35].

So if the goal is to create social value, entrepreneurship does not end obtainment of economic benefits from the business activity, even so the creation of economic value is also given, not only as an objective, but as a result of the mission of social entrepreneurship [36].

Speaking in particular of the case of indigenous social entrepreneurship is the search for viable alternatives that do not conflict with their lifestyle. “Indigenous peoples around the world are trying to revive and strengthen aspects of their indigenous identities that are lost or have been eroded by colonization and they are using these project as a means to earn a living and as a way to give back to the indigenous communities” [37].

While it is indeed true that the indigenous peoples have done everything possible to keep their traditions and life by fighting for their rights, aimed at achieving their own development objectives under their social, economic, and cultural patterns that characterize them as indigenous peoples [38], there are indigenous communities, where entrepreneurship and enterprise “are widely accepted as the key to building a more vibrant economy,” as illustrated by Peredo et al. [38] who cite and extend the works of Anderson and Giberson [39] in Peru.

Therefore, indigenous people should have independence to create or recreate themselves if they wish to continue resisting western economic trends and have a more vibrant and restored model from both a political and a cultural standpoint [40], that is, to foster their own development of self-determination.

About this, it is important to recognize that research in indigenous social entrepreneurship is an emerging theme in the literature of entrepreneurship. As mentioned by Dana [41], it has taken many years to develop at least an approach, not a theory, to indigenous social entrepreneurship, which was a novel topic in 2001 when it was still pending recognition as a concept of indigenous entrepreneurship in business literature [42]. Moreover, while indigenous entrepreneurship is an emerging field of research in business, although not presently appropriate to drawing conclusions thereon, there has been a major breakthrough while discovering the Universal Declaration of Mother Earth Rights (In Spanish: *Declaración Universal de los Derechos de la Madre Tierra*) [43], which seeks to preserve the planet Earth based on the following six principles: harmony, collective good, guarantee of the regeneration of Mother Earth, respect for and defense of the rights of Mother Earth, no commercialism, and multiculturalism, all based on indigenous people in Bolivia as an example of culture, values, and worldview having a positive impact on human beings and the planet as a whole.

In this regard, one of the main contributions which has identified indigenous entrepreneurship is Peredo et al. [38], where they are characterized by their attachment to the heritage and culture of their ethnicity, their lands, and actively participate in the entrepreneurship and development. Moreover, social capital and social networks are important to understanding indigenous entrepreneurship. Contrary to the principles of the Entrepreneurship Theory, the incidence of the historical context, sources of capital, and the social network are key and the conceptualization of these can be very different from what is commonly known [38]. In the case of indigenous issues, it is important to stress the importance of what it is to be considered part of their people and their territory, and that “creation” is an element of identity, which is why the indigenous entrepreneurship is often associated with notions of economic development based on the community and “any indigenous community comprises the following elements: 1. A plot of land, delimited and defined for possession; 2. A common story flowing from mouth to mouth and from one generation to another; 3. A language variant of the people, from which we identify our common language; 4. An organization defining the political, cultural, social, civil, economic and religious aspects; and, 5. A community system of law enforcement and administration of Justice” [44]. In this case, the community is explained through the concept of commonality and is composed of elements that “ensure their understanding, which are as follows: 1. The Earth, viewed both as a mother and as a territory; 2. The consensus decision-making in Assemblies; 3. Free service, as exercising authority; 4. Collective work, such as the act of recreation; and, 5. Rites and ceremonies, as an expression of communal gift” [45]. Whenever there is reverse work at any time in communal life, as explained [46] while announcing that the work is given by decision in a community assembly; “Work in civil-religious hierarchy through coordination, work such as reciprocity through the collective construction work benefiting the community and work through the fiesta system”.

Therefore, one can say, in the case of indigenous communities, this type of undertaking is different from other forms of entrepreneurship [47] in terms of the context of the enterprise [37]. To explain the foregoing, Dana [41] states that “There is rich heterogeneity among indigenous peoples, and some of their cultural values are often incompatible with the basic assumptions of mainstream theories of entrepreneurship,” which has been created in a western culture with an economic model of capitalism and neoliberalism. In this case, indigenous peoples have a propensity for social entrepreneurship as these values lead them to think together as a unit [48]. Furthermore, Hernandez [49] points out that there is a big difference between the neoliberal economic models and indigenous values, since the former are geared toward “economic growth and export orientation, contrary to the cultural worldview of Indigenous peoples.” In closing, the indigenous entrepreneurship tends to have explanatory noneconomic variables such as egalitarianism, trade, and communal activities, in contrast to capitalism and neoliberal economic model [41].

For example, Peredo [50] speaks of the Andean indigenous peoples who manage local development through community work, preservation of heritage, and common welfare balancing individual and collective sustainable benefits [38]. So also, we have found that there are differences in the Western venture [51]. Therefore, the indigenous social entrepreneurship is an emerging issue that may be able to deliver a new paradigm in entrepreneurship [41–43].

Anderson and Giberson [52] consider it a challenge to build in the field of entrepreneurship literature, a theoretic paradigm ad hoc to the context of such peoples, especially since the difference is based on communal enterprise values, with a strong link between entrepreneurship and earth, nonprofit, and decisions based on the common good [38, 51], among others, but one cannot ignore that it is an emergent investigation field for future projections [53].

So, what characterizes indigenous communities is their cultural and social background, where their attachment to their lands and traditions must be joined with economic development [54], and is key to cooperative venture projects.

Rooting gives identity and belonging to the community, where one of the key elements is Earth conceptualized as *Mother* defined as [43] “the living dynamic system consisting of the indivisible community of all systems of life and living beings that are interrelated, interdependent and complementary, and share a common destiny ... ‘*Madre Tierra*’ (Mother Earth) is considered sacred, from the worldviews of nations and native indigenous peoples”, that is, as the provider of all resources, therefore any action by an individual not only affects other people and living things, but also the environment and even supernatural beings [55], which shows that the social, political, and economic action taken has a worldview effect<sup>1</sup>; “as a basis for society on the characteristics and properties of their environment [...] Each worldview implies a specific concept of human nature” [57].

In short, to understand the difference between social entrepreneurship and indigenous social entrepreneurship in a simple manner, Farrelly [58] explains this: one is indigenous because “the management is based on indigenous values culturally specific and visions of the world.

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<sup>1</sup> The world view is closely linked to religion, politics, economics, and the environment. In the cosmological systems of indigenous Mexican tradition, it has a huge weight [56].

Indigenous social entrepreneurship lays greater stress on creativity, innovation and risk-taking of entrepreneurial initiative, while prioritizing social welfare over economic benefits.”

### **3.2. Social capital and social networks: impact on social entrepreneurship**

Social capital is a multidisciplinary concept, having been the subject of interest from various disciplines, such as public politics, sociology, economics, among others; its importance is given, in part by socio-structural resources “real potential or that is linked to possession of a durable network of relationships (...) of knowledge or mutual recognition” [59] provides assets and facilitates actions [60], and provides support within them.

In this regard, in relationships of trust, friendship, and respect, “entrepreneurs with a high degree of trust are able to take advantage of their relations, according to Liao and Welsch [61]. The importance of social capital is given by elements such as rules, trust, reciprocity to strengthen cooperation [62], and finding a joint interest which increases the benefits [63].

In this sense, trust is *a sin equa non* for the existence of social capital, for it constitutes its base. So if the confidence is increased between different social actors, they will be willing to help each other, strengthening their ties and interdependence [64].

Therefore, in relations where a higher degree of trust is developed, the social capital probably increases, achieving influence over cooperative norms, facilitating new forms of partnership and innovation [61], impacting economic growth, and minimizing inequalities and ethnic differences [65].

It should be stressed that relations implanted in social capital give each person the value of trust in each other and provide the key elements to prosper through new forms of social cooperation to achieve common goals [64]. To do so, indigenous groups in Mexico “are continuing the tradition of decision-making through the community assembly, where the benefits and beneficiaries of public actions are agreed upon” [66].

According to Coleman [67], social capital is given on individual and community levels, manifesting the latter in Mexican indigenous communities, through the work called “hand back” where the benefit has direct impact on the community, especially for the preservation of traditions and customs such as the cargo system, community work, and decision making in the community assembly [55].

## **4. Indigenous entrepreneurship in Mexico**

Although one of the main characteristics of the indigenous peoples of Latin America is that they are so diverse, many of them share language, culture, and attachment to the land, which dates back their pre-Columbian ancestors. According to CEPAL [6], it is estimated that throughout Latin America there are between 50 and 60 million indigenous people, representing about 10% of the total population, and in Mexico just over 11%.

This research is based on an exploratory study of three cases, to analyze the reality of the social actors immersed in social entrepreneurship. Because the issue of study *sui generis*, which is



being analyzed, it is important to emphasize the qualitative case study method, which allows for a profound knowledge of the subject under study to contextualize it in reality [68, 69].

In particular, with respect to entrepreneurship, there have been several authors who have used this method in their investigations [70, 71]. Precisely, the ultimate goal is to examine and analyze the reality of the characteristics of entrepreneurship in indigenous communities. As for the method of data collection, the semi-structured interview was chosen, according to the qualitative type of information requested. In this sense, very valuable information was obtained from the interviews from an exploratory point of view.

Each case study is contextualized by indigenous group that belong to companies that have been studied and are found in rural areas in indigenous communities in Mexico. Respondents were founders of three target companies. In addition, it was decided to perform a cross-analysis of cases to find the general characteristics of indigenous peoples' entrepreneurial ventures (Table 1).

Attribute	Puebla	Morelos	Quintana Roo
Language	Nahuatl	Nahuatl	Maya
Exchange and reciprocity	Hand back <i>momakue palo</i> , or <i>tequio</i> , both men and women	Hand back	Reciprocity and community participation in territory
Social organization	Politically, agrarian laws are fulfilled and titles are taken for ladder Religiously, group decisions	Authority in charge of <i>Huehuechiques</i> like municipal assistants, who they are prestigious elders that serve as counselors.	Autonomous social organization by region. Each municipality has a president and counselors or <i>ediles</i> , peace judges and police subordinate to governments of each state. The <i>tata nohoch</i> , scribes (sacred) and <i>rezadores</i> (people who pray), form a select group that is integrated into the municipal administration.
Features of worldview	Duality as a fundamental principle (male/female, cold/hot, day/night)	Dual of opposites. Heaven/earth, light/dark, male/female, two main types of complementary and opposite forces, similar and invested, understood in terms of polarity: positive and negative.	The life cycle of the cornfield and religious holidays. <i>Ichcol</i> , the cornfield is in the center of Mayan communal flower

Source: Authors, based on [72–74] y 46].

**Table 1.** Comparison of the local characteristics of entrepreneurs indigenous groups.

This research has focused on the approach that marks the difference between the venture that currently collects literature and work on indigenous entrepreneurship such as Peredo et al. [38, 50], especially the work of Dana and Smyrniotis [51], which summarizes these differences,

and returns the context of the indigenous entrepreneur to the roots which provide the social capital he possesses.

In the case of Mexico, the indigenous ethnic language is one of the identifying characteristics of the people; however, maintaining it is not an essential factor for the existence of ethnic continuity. Indigenous groups are governed by their own authorities and customs; their justice systems allow conflicts to be resolved within the community, seeking a balance with the cosmos [1].

#### 4.1. Case 1: State of Puebla

Case 1 is an ecotourism company that offers services such as catering, accommodation, and other leisure and recreational activities. It is found in the state of Puebla, which is located in central Mexico, and belongs to the Nahua people.

In this case, the company has 68 worker-members, dedicated to ecotourism, who are grouped into *ejidos* (shared lands). The center is staffed by land-owners, all from the region.

The first stage of the project is, thanks to contact CDI (before INI<sup>2</sup>), made with landowners, through the coordinating office, inviting them to participate in an ecotourism project. To do this, the landowners met with the purpose of evaluating the possibility of entering the program. From the beginning, the CDI has been the consultant and project manager, according to the comments of the president of administration:

*The CDI before INI, has been the advisor and manager. As CDI meets the resource and they look for us to give them the information to make the project of some cabins.*

*All support has been from the CDI and it is the manager of the infrastructure, because the materials of the region are from the ejido.*

During the process of creating the community, the landowners met with the purpose of evaluating the possibility of creating the company, so ultimately, the decision was made communally.

Since the beginning of the project, the founding partner stressed to the ejido owners that they had to start getting involved, mainly in the acquisition of the necessary knowledge of the ecotourism sector, because they had gone about their normal activities and had never paid a service to a tourist. The infrastructure is based on compromise and respect for the environment.

The entrepreneur acknowledges that he has had very supportive family and friends, and they kept him motivated from the start, which helped him continue the project without abandoning it. He also explains that initially his family members did not understand the project objectives and who the landowners would be, so were hesitant. But having that knowledge, they became motivating and engaging; even more so, they have provided both emotional and physical support by helping launch the business, and actively participating by working at the company.

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<sup>2</sup> INI: Instituto Nacional Indigenista (National Indigenous Institute), which changed its name to Comisión Nacional de Desarrollo de los Pueblos Indígenas, CDI (National Commission for Development of Indigenous Peoples) on July 5, 2003.

#### 4.2. Case 2: State of de Morelos

The second case of indigenous entrepreneurship is located in the state of Morelos. In this community the indigenous Nahuatl language is spoken, therefore, those who originate from the zone are called Nahua.

The company consists of 24 members and its purpose is to offer ecotourism products, assuming that they benefit the conservation and protection of natural resources, preservation of culture and tradition of indigenous groups, mainly from the community of San Juan. This initiative was born within the community, and came from the idea of a few members of the community who saw the negative impact on the area from the lack of control of tourists who visit the zone, and decided to create a sustainable company, in which their home and heritage would be maintained. That is, its main purpose was directed to the preservation of the environment through education of their culture and tradition, as indicated by the entrepreneur interviewed:

*Our motive was born from the desire to preserve our environment [...] to our community all the time we see that more people arrive to walk, but there is no control and so that was another of the causes, so we want a controlled tourism because we have also noticed that those arriving take things away with them, begin to plunder a plant, a stone [...] and in that way they are extracting our resources and therefore we must have control, so we discussed the situation at a community meeting.*

*[Our families] initially had a little bit of incredulity, because they thought how is it possible to do, because in the past we repeatedly tried to do things and have not been achieved, obviously with other people. The important thing here is that several people, entire families, parents and children joined and said we come together.*

Therefore, the launching of a company is a form of resistance and defense of indigenous traditions and environment, whose main purpose of implementation was not to seek economic goals, but rather an impact on the indigenous community. Furthermore, commonality comes from the emphasis on the authorization of the project, which was agreed by the community assembly, where all community members supported the beginning of operations. The founder of the organization explains:

*The act of providing information, was what opened the doors to us [...] everything was done as part of a community meeting to explain the project and community members said there was no problem, we can arrange, then to have the interest, we start somehow [promote] the project, but we knew we needed a collection and for that we managed the first [funding].*

Therefore, trust, as a key element, as well as the common good, supported the organization's creation from the first moment. Similarly, they have managed to obtain the "great advantage," as they call it, which is the existing unity within the community; besides knowing that their project comes from "social base" (as it has been named) and is a company that is growing internally, so they why and for whom is clear in what they are doing.

### 4.3. Case 3: State of Quintana Roo

Case 3 refers to an enterprise located in the State of Quintana Roo, where the ethnicity is Maya. Quintana Roo is located in the South-East of Mexico. Entrepreneurship is contextualized in an indigenous Maya community. The identity of the indigenous Maya remains intact due to the concurrence of at least three related factors, “the daily use of the Mayan language, the persistence of religious rituals and customs, and social organization of autonomous communities” [73].

The idea of entrepreneurship was developed with young workers at the Blue Lagoon, who, thanks to the proposal of a biologist, convinced the landowners in the area to participate in catchment courses. At that time the members attend these courses, they begin to conceive a possible business that may provide an alternative and sustainable income. So they began offering services such as interpretive trails, visits to the Cenote, swimming in the Blue Lagoon, camping, and kayaking. After 2 years, arose the idea of diversifying the business, by adding the rural community to tourism. So they created the cultural route, where community members are invited to demonstrate their festivities, customs, and values, such as the typical food, dances, traditional medicine, to present the world of bees, and storytelling.

*After two years we realized that we can offer more and we had more potential in the community, as [our] culture; and I sat down and started to think what else we can do, something like storytelling, make traditional food, traditional medicine dances, [to present] the bees Melipona. [with which] one says yes, my grandfather tell stories, listen, invite him for this, and so we were diagnosing, analyzing everything we had in the community, and then saw that there was that.*

To achieve the “cultural tour,” a great deal of convincing was necessary for the members of the community, because they did not understand how tourists could be interested in their customs. Despite this, they managed to gather a group of people who offered typical Mayan food service and Mayan dancers, among other activities.

Other achievements emphasized by the founding member have been the responsible management of waste from and care of the Blue Lagoon. Thus, they have achieved other environmental prevention measures, such as an environmental education workshop, which is directed at children. The way to reach them is through the school involvement in the project, with the aim of preserving and valuing the traditions, culture, and the environment.

The importance that the community places on the territory that belongs to them—ejido—is demonstrated in the organization of the company. Cooperative members are sons of landowners and nonlandowners, so they do not have the same rights; therefore, they need the consent of the ejido to develop their activities. That is why on the ecotourism tour the guides are sons of *ejidatarios* (land owners) and on the cultural tour, in the absence of exploitation of ejido, the authorization of the Commissariat is not necessary.

*It is also why we created the cultural part, and the maintenance part of Blue Lagoon belongs to the ejido, we are only guides, it clearly benefits them and many people at this time. In*

*community tourism we are the direct [CM] because we cater to the people of the Community.*

One of their main objectives is that as much as the community, that tourists understand both the impact that man has on the environment, and why he should care.

## 5. Discussion of results

While the indigenous populations studied are located in areas of Mexico where more poverty exists, through the case studies we can observe that the worldview of these indigenous peoples has put these types of businesses into motion, and have been successful, thanks to the possibility of alternative economic resources they provide to their communities.

The obtaining of an economic benefit is not the primary goal that drives these companies, but is an added incentive. Through the motivation to preserve the environment, tradition, and culture, both the entrepreneurs and the community benefit as a whole.

From the beginning, the decision to launch the company was based on consensus, in other words, they respected the views of the Community Assembly (in one case the ejidal organization) for all matters concerning the company.

Without a doubt, the bonds that provide the social capital of a community greatly influence the achievement of the enterprises; confidence in the community, and attachment to the land, and the community is manifested when making the decision.

In the cases analyzed, the struggle between the preservation of their customs, culture, and environment and the pursuit of economic development was not a shock, because the indigenous people have managed to balance their enterprises, within an external system that conceptualizes life, through the preservation of the environment, identity, and culture. This is reflected in the comparative table of the enterprises, showing the characteristics of indigenous entrepreneurs (**Table 2**).

Element	Case 1 (Puebla)	Case 2 (Morelos)	Case 3 (Quintana Roo)
Conceptualization	Worldview	Worldview	Worldview
Goals	Economic and noneconomic Community-based	Economic and noneconomic Community-based	Economic and noneconomic Community-based
Value	Community	Preserve the resources of the region Survival of the community	Environmental sustainability Rate the local culture and the Mayan language as well as keeping the environment

Source: Authors, based on [51].

**Table 2.** Summary of case studies.

## 6. Conclusion

The main contribution of this study has been to show the differences between the indigenous entrepreneur and the profile identified by the literature specializing in entrepreneurship, through profound interviews of three indigenous entrepreneurs who belong to ecotourism businesses in the Mexican States of Puebla, Morelos, and Quintana Roo.

It is evidenced that the practices of entrepreneurship are embedded in the culture and values of the group to which the entrepreneurs belong. Through entrepreneurship they are seeking to publicize the cultural value of these indigenous groups. Their aim is to convey to the world the values of their culture and to emphasize their ethnic worldview.

Indigenous enterprises began looking for projects to serve the good of the community, where economic goals were not the driving force, but have also achieved economic gains from business activity. Furthermore, decisions were made by consensus, according to the organization of the groups; thus it is discovered that the indigenous entrepreneur has a strong attachment to the land of his ancestors and wishes to be identified in his ethnicity. Therefore, it is observed that all the entrepreneurs interviewed feel the same sense of pride and identity.

In conclusion, one observes that the social entrepreneur profile, what we might call indigenous, is unlike the profiles commonly accepted in literature, where the need for achievement plays a predominant role [75]; because, in the case of the indigenous entrepreneur, the individual achievement is subordinate to the common good, and the entrepreneurial intention is dependent on the will and support from the community, in line with the point made by Dana and Smyrnios [51]. Forms of cooperation, collaboration, and reciprocity in the community as manifestations of social networks and social capital are evident.

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