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# Community Tourism Strategic Planning—Convergent Model Proposal as Applied to a Municipality in Mexico

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**Abstract:** The planning of tourism activity in the global context has generally been short-term and without inclusion of local communities. This situation has affected the territorial identity and the use of tourist activity itself as a development strategy both globally and locally. In the search for balance, community tourism emerges as a link between economic activity and community participation in a context of changes and new challenges. The objective of this research project was to propose a model built from the theoretical review that shows the convergence between the variables of strategic planning and community tourism applicable to local contexts. The methodology applied focused on the inductive method, with a descriptive and propositional scope. Two types of data collection instruments were developed and applied: a semi-structured interview guide and a questionnaire. The exercise was carried out in a tourist municipality in Mexico and the results reflect the deterioration of territorial identity and social cohesion. Therefore, it is essential to promote the re-evaluation of natural, cultural, and historical resources. Likewise, it was concluded that the proposed model is a diagnostic tool and generator of strategies for community tourism.

**Keywords:** community tourism; strategic planning; convergent model

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## 1. Introduction

Community tourism emphasizes the role of the community during the planning and management of tourism activity. Strategic planning and community tourism produce long-term results for the benefit of the community and the territory.

The community as a social complex is built with ties between people and their relationship with the environment and implies not only social cohesion but territorial identity. Government, as another element of the territory, is complemented by the community and the least complex path for local management is strategic planning. At the municipal level, it is essential to develop an activity that, in addition to using community labor to generate income, preserves its natural, cultural and historical resources as territorial resources.

In the search for alternatives for local development, community tourism is presented as an inclusive activity. However, it is still influenced by globalization. This phenomenon is a homogenizing process which overshadows the deepest and most traditional social practices of the communities. In light of this, it is important to rescue the values, traditions, endogenous elements, and cultural characteristics that make communities unique and unrepeatable, especially in those spaces where tourism is the main economic activity, and where these activities are associated with their natural, cultural, and historical values.

Tourism can represent a way to improve the living conditions of the inhabitants as long as the natural and cultural environment is not threatened. Success stories in countries such as Ecuador, Portugal, Indonesia, Canada, Great Britain, Scotland, the United

States, Colombia and even Mexico identify the following potentialities for community tourism: community empowerment [1–5], community participation [1,3,6–10], collaboration between key actors [1,6,8,11,12], conservation and best practices in the use of natural resources [2,3,8,9,12–14], heritage preservation [1,2,15–17], preservation of culture [14] reinforcement of identity through knowledge and recognition of skills in the community [8,12], highlighting attractions [8,13,15,16,18], employment generation [12], and improvement of the quality of life of the hosts [19].

Maintaining or promoting the potential of community tourism requires effectively implemented planning processes. Participatory strategic planning applied by local governments includes the following stages: preparation of preliminary diagnosis, elaboration of the consensual diagnosis, formulation and implementation of the plan [20]. Nevertheless, Gallo and Peralta (2018, cited in Gallo [21]) contemplated other stages specifically for the promotion of community tourism that included: strategic diagnosis, strategic direction, tactical projection and evaluation. It is important to highlight that the participation of the community in these stages promotes inclusion and permanent empowerment in the development of the local territory. This leads public and private actors to set a common goal or a strong idea, which motivates them to work together to achieve it.

Considering the constructs of community tourism and strategic planning, the objective of this research project was to develop a model of convergence between both constructs, applicable at an international level in local contexts. To visualize the functionality of this model (from now on convergent model) in a practical case, an exercise was carried out in a municipality in Mexico and some of the findings obtained were the following: weak recognition of identity elements; the community has had greater participation in the planning and management of the fairs; however, some sites present unfavorable conditions for the development of tourism activity; no evidence of community leadership was found that includes community autonomy in tourism planning and management; this situation was an effect of the absence of grounded participation mechanisms; factors that promote a harmonious coexistence with tourists and the socio-cultural environment of the municipality are yet to be identified.

The structure of the article is as follows: community tourism (background and current situation), importance of strategic planning, the convergent model proposal, application to a practical case (methodology), results and discussions, conclusions, practical lessons, limitations and references consulted.

## 2. Community Tourism as an Alternative in the Face of New Realities

Conditions in the world have undergone significant changes in the wake of the pandemic. The pace of life to which we were accustomed suddenly stopped, ushering in a period of isolation and uncertainty. Tourism, as one of the main recreational activities, stopped its operation as with many other economic sectors.

Before the pandemic, the World Travel and Tourism Council estimated that the tourism sector represented, up until 2019, 10.4% of the world gross domestic product (GDP) [22]. Likewise, "The travel and tourism competitive report 2019" reported the distribution of tourists in the world through the ranking of the 140 economies globally and identified among the top five tourist destinations Spain, France, Germany, Japan, and the United States. The most representative countries for the Americas, up until 2019, were: the United States, Canada, Mexico, Brazil, and Costa Rica [22] and until 2018, 216 million international tourist arrivals were received [23].

In the current post-pandemic context, after the COVID-19 global pandemic was decreed on 30 January 2020 [24], tourist activity has been affected worldwide to such a degree that a fall of more than seventy percent of international arrivals was identified "with travel restrictions, low consumer confidence and the global struggle to contain the COVID-19 virus, which contributed to the worst year recorded in the history of tourism" [25]. This poses new challenges for the promotion of the sector in its different areas of application.

Community tourism may well be applied in a context of adversity and changes as currently faced by the tourism sector. The diagnostic factor and leadership of the community would open up various proposals for solutions from different sides of the problem, in order to safeguard health in the context of a resurgence of tourism. It is here that community tourism could represent an alternative to the present circumstances; so much so that at the General Assembly of the World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) held on 3 December 2021 in Spain, [26] sessions on rural tourism and entrepreneurship of rural communities were addressed, highlighting their importance for the resurgence of tourism activity; in addition to focusing on the social sector which implies collaboration with key actors of tourism sites and "integrated development strategies (local, regional and international) to mitigate the impact of the pandemic, boost recovery, and address future challenges and risks" (p. 7, [25]).

The report issued by the UNWTO before the pandemic in 2019 [22] identified Mexico in 19th place (Table 1) among the 140 tourism economies worldwide, and according to the assessment of regional opportunities and challenges in the context of COVID for Latin America [25], reiterates its tourism potential due to natural and cultural resources. However, the indicators of "safety and security" and "environmental sustainability" in the travel and tourism competitiveness index remain most unfavorable (Table 1). This last indicator shows that natural resources are not adequately protected, a factor that mainly affects local communities, which is why there is a risk of deterioration of both natural and cultural attributes.

**Table 1.** Travel and tourism competitiveness index (TTCI) for Mexico.

| Indicator | Ranking 2019 (1–140) |
|---|---|
| Enabling environment | 19 |
| Business environment | 98 |
| Safety and security | 126 |
| Health and hygiene | 70 |
| Human resources and labor market | 75 |
| Preparedness for information and communication technologies (ICT) | 81 |
| T & T (Travel and Tourism) Policy and Enabling Conditions | 50 |
| Prioritization of travel and tourism | 29 |
| International openness | 48 |
| Price competitiveness | 84 |
| Environmental sustainability | 108 |
| Infrastructure | 48 |
| Air transport infrastructure | 37 |
| Land and port infrastructure | 75 |
| Infrastructure of tourist services | 46 |
| Natural and cultural resources | 5 |
| Natural resources | 1 |
| Cultural resources and business trips | 10 |

Source: Data from (pp. 65–83, [22]).

In the current post-pandemic context, UNWTO issued the travel and tourism development index (TTDI) which "measures a set of factors that allow the sustainable and resilient development of tourism activity and in turn contributes to the development of a country" (p. 13, [27]). For the construction of the TTDI, data from the travel and tourism competitiveness index (TTCI) issued in the 2019 report were taken up and concepts such as sustainable environment, socioeconomic conditions, resilience, impact and pressure of

travel and tourism demand were integrated; in addition to the incorporation of key actors to mitigate the impact of the pandemic [27]. According to this index, Mexico is in 40th place with a score of 4.3, where one is the best score and seven the worst, that is, it is above the average and therefore has the possibility of sustainably developing tourism activity, incorporating both the protection and conservation of natural and cultural resources.

For the correct promotion of tourism activity, it is important to consider the planning that each country applies in terms of tourism and how the programs or projects that are applied affect or benefit the resources available. In the case of Mexico, a large part of the problems affecting natural and cultural resources is due to the strategies proposed in the planning instruments. "Planning guides its sectoral strategies through public works with infrastructures for development, but sectoral contradictions are ignored with the whole type of development project in dispute, between the needs of capital or social and environmental needs" (p. 3, [28]).

The regulatory instruments of tourism planning serve to strengthen intention and importance when implementing a project at the three levels of government in Mexico. However, the planning of the tourism sector is in purely economic areas, as evidenced in the National Development Plan. This shows that the impulse of tourism activity is found in the national economic policy [29], where the protection of natural and cultural resources takes second place.

According to the results of the travel and tourism competitiveness index [22], tourism planning in Mexico should apply the parameters of rural tourism (which includes community tourism) since its main potential is focused on natural and cultural resources. In addition, to deal with other socioeconomic characteristics that the country faces day by day, Andrade [30] pointed out that tourism in the rural sector of Latin America has become relevant because it has been shown to be a possible strategy to fight against both poverty and migration. Poverty "is the main limitation in promoting correct social cohesion seeing as human development is the key element" (p. 469, [31]). Thus, it can be observed at different territorial scales that the tourism sector is increasingly present because it represents a possible method for development and economic growth. However, the mere existence of tourism resources is not enough, the participation of the community and the actors in the management of these resources is important.

The development of community tourism involves a tourism management system whose community is present at all stages, both in planning and traditional management, as well as in decision-making and start-up of tourism goods and services. However, "although there are many definitions of community tourism, the main aspects that characterize it are community control and management, nature and culture conservation, empowerment and community development" (p. 2, [32]). That is, this type of tourism involves giving the community the power to act and it is important that the government plans for the interests of the community. "Integrated participation does not occur only in the planning process and affiliation between government and community. It is a process to give the local community power of action (decision taking)" (p. 291, [4]). Although it is difficult to interpret the sociological and cultural relationships rooted in a community, for community tourism it represents the basis that encourages participation in the participatory planning process. This premise is reaffirmed through the following factors (Table 2) considered for the development of community tourism:

The development of community tourism must go hand in hand with planning mechanisms throughout the process, not only in the involvement of the community, but also in the capacity of local governments to design strategies in their plans, in order to achieve results that are reflected in the quality of life of their inhabitants and in the development of tourism activities [11,13,15].

**Table 2.** Factors of community tourism.

| Author | Factors for the Development of CT |
| --- | --- |
| Maldonado et al., 2022 [22] | The management and defense of ancestral territories inhabited by the country's peoples and nationalities.<br>The generation of benefits from the protection and preservation of the cultural and natural heritage of the inherited territories.<br>The valuation of culture as a mechanism for the strengthening of identities based on synchronous and asynchronous dimensions.<br>Organizational strengthening for the vindication of collective rights. |
| Dangi & Petrick 2021 [20] | Engagement/participation<br>Community assets<br>Collaboration<br>Cultural and heritage preservation<br>Equity and local ownership<br>Economic benefits<br>Empowerment<br>Leadership<br>Job opportunities<br>Environmental protection and management<br>Infrastructure development |
| Ruiz, 2017 [4] | The consistency of the community as a framework for collective action and decision.<br>The role of local leaders in tourism projects.<br>The level of intensity of external intervention in the development of these initiatives.<br>The local appropriation of tourism phenomena and products.<br>The ways in which local society is inserted, through tourism, into the market. |

Sources: Adapted from (p. 22, [2]), (p. 4, [5]), (p. 20, [33]).

## 3. The Importance of Applied Strategic Planning

The term strategy in the field of planning has a war-like origin, since the methodologies and actions of war require a high degree of planning in the field of attack. This system was adopted in the planning of organizations to make forecasts and, through actions, try to cover the differential between being and duty to be. These generic lines of action are called strategies [34]. Strategies are built through processes of diagnostic analysis and viable proposals adhering to the philosophy, mission, vision, and objectives of the organization [35,36].

Strategies can be designed in a fixed plan as part of the planning process. However, the real challenge lies in its implementation. Creativity and analysis are required, which make the members of the organization strategists with knowledge and cognitive skills who constantly improve their skills and attitudes [36].

The Latin American and Caribbean Institute for Economic and Social Planning (ILPES) proposes a methodology for the development of strategies for local development [37], in which the analyses of strengths, opportunities, weaknesses and threats (SWOT analysis) are applied, as well as the development of problem trees and objectives for the construction of strategies. Below is the methodology process with its four stages (Table 3).

One of the stages in which the community will have the greatest impact, according to the ILPES methodology [37] described, is the diagnosis. At this time the community, key actors, and even managers express their knowledge, perceptions, needs, concerns and suggestions with respect to their contexts and their interest in improving their environment.

In the development of local governments, participatory techniques are generally used at the diagnostic stage for the preparation of plans or projects, but what gives meaning to participation in its fullness is the degree of decision that the actors have throughout the planning process, that is, from the diagnosis, until the implementation and even control of plans or projects. "Success will depend on the degree of organization of the people, flexibility of the institution, and availability of all actors" (p. 2, [6]).

**Table 3.** Stages of the methodology for the formulation of local development strategies.

| Stage | Definition | Instruments |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Diagnosis | Information collection activity to evaluate the potential development capacity of the locality under study. It proposes to analyze the information corresponding to the socioeconomic base and the development capacity of the community<br>To carry out a rapid diagnosis, we will resort, first of all, to conducting interviews with key informants, direct observation and experience of the participants. | Matrix of potentialities, limitations and problems |
| Definition of vocations for local development | Vocations are understood as the aptitudes, abilities or special characteristics that the territory has for its development.<br>An interesting approach to the subject of vocations is one which refers to the need to venture into the issue of local identity and according to what has been expressed above, should be the center of a territorial development strategy. | Vocations are defined from the matrix of potentialities and limitations |
| Definition of strategic and specific objectives | The identification of specific objectives will depend on the characteristics of the area, the existing connections between local economy and foreign economies, potential for economic growth and existing economic groups. | Problem Tree<br>Goal Tree |
| Definition of the local development strategy | After defining the objectives, the next step will be to decide how to reach them. That is, the lines of action and intervention necessary to achieve the proposed goals. The measures must have an impact on the factors that cause the problems and/or prevent the birth of new activities. | SWOT Matrix<br>Matrix of local development objectives and strategies |

Source: compilation based on [37].

Participatory planning takes into account the participation tools to be used in all phases of a plan, promoting inclusion and permanent empowerment in the development of the local territory. The participation of citizens brings important advantages in the development of strategic plans, such as the following (p. 5, [38]):

- It allows the offering of adequate responses to the needs and demands of citizens, favoring greater efficiency and effectiveness of public intervention, from the political field.
- It allows for the planning of actions to be undertaken within the territorial scope and competence of local authorities.
- Through planning, the impact of the measures adopted on the population of the municipality can be calculated.
- It favors an adequate allocation of public resources to the needs and demands considered a priority by both citizens and rulers.
- It deepens the values of direct democracy by involving citizens in decision making; it allows for the inclusion of different and varied segments of the population with diverse interests and claims.
- It allows for reaching greater levels of consensus in the implementation of public programs and reduces the chances of failure that may occur.
- It allows "getting it right" with the needs and aspirations of citizens by incorporating them into the decision-making process.

## 4. Convergence between Strategic Planning and Community Tourism Replicable in Local Contexts

Community as a social complex is built with bonds between the people and their relationship to the environment. This implies social cohesion but also territorial identity. At the local level, it is essential to develop an activity that, in addition to using community labor to generate income, conserves territorial resources, understanding this as related to

nature, landscape, artistic historical heritage, or local culture. The territory is proposed as a resource support and as a resource in itself [39].

Community tourism as an alternative option to conventional tourism, elucidates the role of the community in the planning and management of the activity. This, together with strategic planning, produces expected results in the long term for the benefit of the community and the territory.

The revised theory is presented in the construction of the convergent model (Figure 1), which shows the conceptual relationship between community tourism and strategic planning.

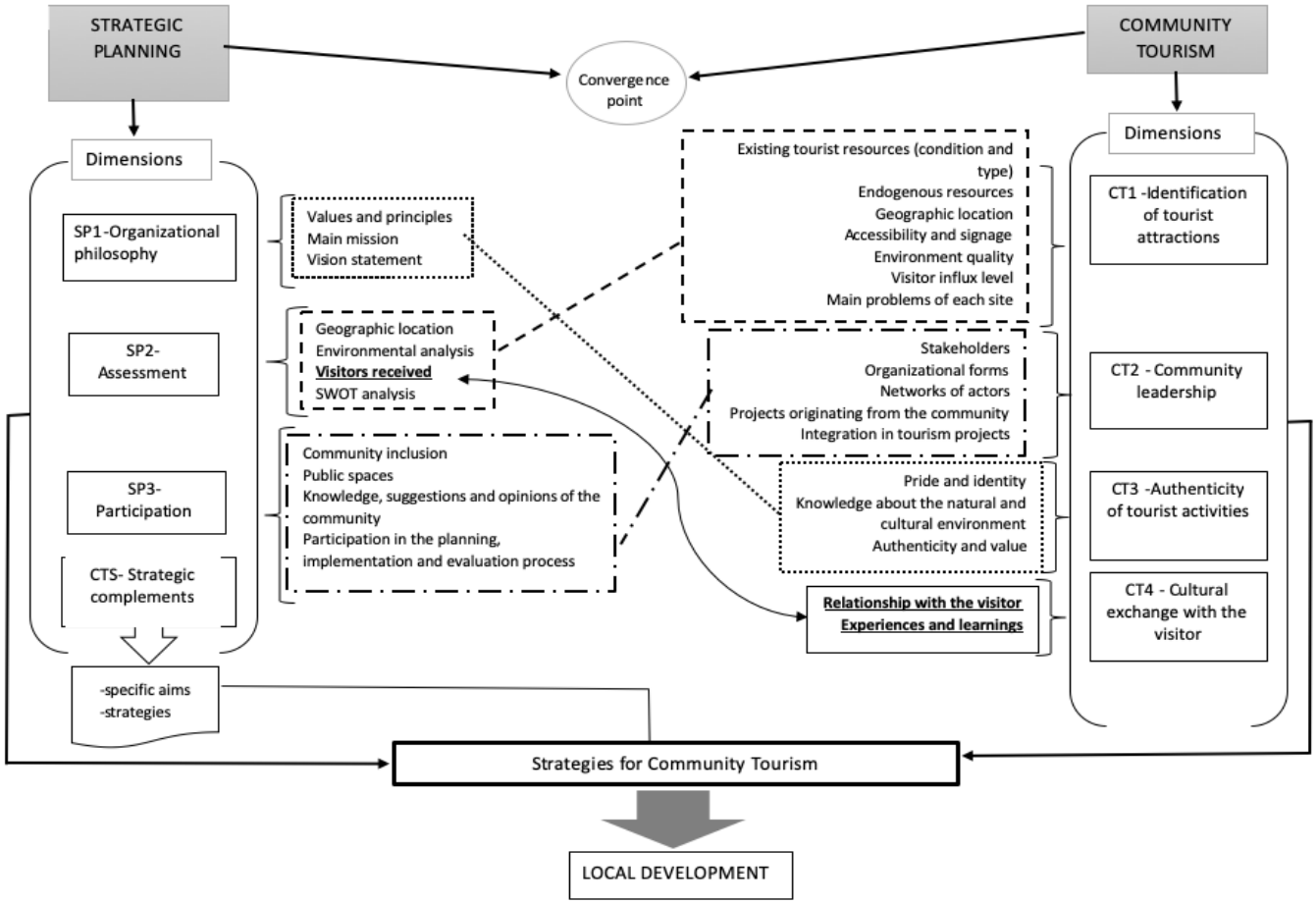



**Figure 1.** Convergent model between community tourism and strategic planning. Source: compilation from the theoretical review.

The construction of the model was intended to show the theoretical connections graphically, as well as demonstrate that the dimensions of both variables complement each other for the design of community tourism strategies. In the field of planning, generating courses of action based on knowledge of the real conditions of the environment is of great importance for the achievement of common goals, which in this case was local development.

The analysis of both concepts with their interrelated dimensions converges and from this the following can be concluded (Table 4):

**Table 4.** Theoretical convergence.

| Id | Dimensions | Theoretical Convergence |
| --- | --- | --- |
| SP1-CT3 | Organizational Philosophy–Authenticity of Tourism Activities [1] | The articulation of the organizational philosophy of a municipality or tourist locality is constructed, taking into consideration the essence and authenticity of tourist activities. These in turn are a reflection of the presence of pride and identity of the environment. The mission therefore defines a specific situation in which tourist activity is managed and concretized in the definition of objectives and strategies. On the other hand, the vision is constructed while considering the aspirations of the community to deploy its potentialities in the field of tourism and local development. "Considering different possible scenarios and identifying a shared vision for the future is a valuable exercise for communities to undertake and to ensure that everyone's views on community tourism are actively heard and considered" [40]. Including these elements in the organizational philosophy and giving them formality in a document, will denote the authenticity of the locality compared to other tourist destinations, and therefore position it as an attractive option; this will also define a clear course to pursue during planning and management. |
| SP2-CT1 | Diagnosis–identification of tourist attractions [2] | The diagnosis represents the starting point within the planning process; it is necessary to know the environment of the tourist area and identify the existing tourist resources and attractions, as well as the conditions in which they are in order to improve and/or preserve their use. With the diagnosis, it is possible to define policies, programs, and plans for tourism development because the specific conditions of the locality are taken into account. By way of example, the diagnostic stage consists of "(a) prior collection of information, background and regulations; (b) seminar and workshop (SWOT and stakeholder map); (c) participatory tour and observation; (d) contribution of the members of the group from their local knowledge; and (e) sharing" [21]. |
| SP3-CT2 | Participation–community leadership. [3] | Community tourism is characterized by the involvement of the entire community (residents, a management team, community leaders, commercial entities, and the government among others) in the management of tourism activity, and it is the community itself that decides the type and level of participation according to their needs, expectations, capabilities and the balance with other obligations or activities that take place in the same territory. The organization of the community and its participation in tourism activities have the objective of improving the conditions of the local population and making the benefits of tourism activity fall on the community itself. For this reason, it is important that a strategic community leadership is forged to direct, manage and defend the values and objectives agreed and established. |
| SP2-CT4 | Diagnosis of the visitors hosted–cultural exchange with visitors [4] | It is important that the tourism offer is clearly defined by the community, considering the target population (tourists) to which it will be directed, in such a way that tourists have a local experience in line with their expectations. This task can be implemented from the diagnostic stage in which data sources collected during the tourist's stay are used, such as general characteristics of the tourist, comments, and suggestions. This feedback helps to improve the tourist experience. There is also another important aspect related to social–cultural sustainability that has to do with the mutual exchange between tourists and the community. The community, on one hand, provides a unique local tourism experience in which the inhabitants share their customs, traditions and ways of life; the tourist, on the other hand, in addition to financial remuneration, lives the experience harmoniously, taking care of and respecting the cultural, social and environmental contexts. In this way, mutually beneficial relationships are forged. |
| Cts | Strategies for Community tourism [5] | The strategic planning of community tourism is implemented by the generation of strategies that will be applied in the long term for the development of tourism activity, and that encompass the aspects described above. The strategies are designed in the planning stage and are permanently implemented during the development of tourist activity. However, they can be modified during the review and/or evaluation stage, depending on the changing conditions and consideration of the decisions made by the community as a whole. |

**Table 4.** *Cont.*

| Id | Dimensions | Theoretical Convergence |
|---|---|---|
| Ld | Local Development [6] | From the strategic planning and the diagnosis of community tourism emerge the strategies for the development of tourism activity, which lead to local development, understanding development as "that which has a spatial character, occurs in a specific place, in a certain territory, where a particular population is in interaction with the environment and produces its own history, customs, and culture. On the other hand, the forms of local governments, peculiar and authentic in themselves, are the platform on which development is built, regardless of the source of resources" (p. 64, [41]). |

Source: compilation taken from [40] [1,3,4,5]; [37] [2,5,6]; [42] [1,2,5]; [28] [1,3]; [21] [2,3,4,5]; [12] [3,4,5]; [33] [3,4]; [41] [6]; [8] [2,3,5]; [18] [1]. Note. The ID key is established from the acronym strategic planning (SP) and community tourism (CT) as well as the dimension number. For further understanding see Figure 1.

The theoretical analysis applied in the convergent model can be summed up in the importance of defining the sense of identity, pride, aspirations and authenticity of the community internalized in the organizational philosophy of the tourist municipality, in specifying the conditions of resources and tourist attractions through a comprehensive diagnosis, in promoting participatory tourism management in order to propose solutions and courses of action to improve the conditions of the local population, and in establishing the congruence between the tourist offering and the target population in order to promote socio-cultural sustainability in tourist activities.

## 5. Implementing the Convergent Model to a Case Study

For this research project, an exercise was carried out in order to apply the convergent model to a municipality. The municipality of Tlacolula de Matamoros (from now on, the municipality) was taken as an example (Figure 2). This municipality is located in the state of Oaxaca, Mexico and was chosen for practical and logistical reasons to the researchers, in addition to its tourist importance in the state. According to the classification of Altés Machín (1995: 33) cited in Navarro (p. 344, [43]) the municipality has 16 out of the 19 types of tourist resources. It should be noted that the convergent model is applicable to any local tourism context regardless of the level of development it has.

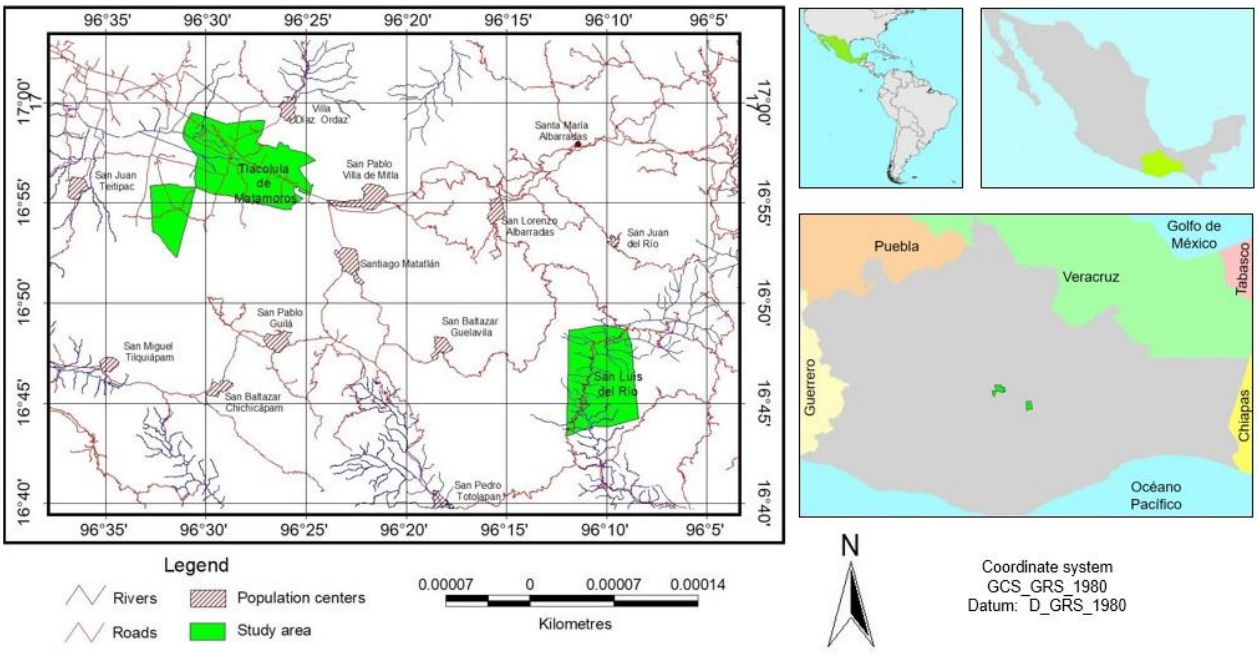



**Figure 2.** Location of the municipality of Tlacolula de Matamoros. Source: Data from cartographic charts E14D58 [44] and E14D59 INEGI [44,45].

To identify the existing resources in the municipality, visits were made. Simultaneously, document consultations were of the Development Plan [46] and sources that disseminate information on tourist resources were also carried out (p. 37, [47]), [48–50].

Once a general overview of the municipality was obtained, the development of information collection instruments was embarked upon, for which the convergent model was fundamental since it led to clarity in the design of these instruments.

Two types of instruments were designed: a semi-structured interview guide (Table 5) and a questionnaire (Table 6), which show categories taken from the convergent model, as shown below:

**Table 5.** Categories of analysis of semi-structured interviews.

| **Strategic Planning** | **Categories** |
|---|---|
| Philosophy of the organization | OP1. Mission |
| | OP2. Vision |
| Diagnosis | D1. Knowledge of tourist attractions |
| | D2. Sources of information |
| | D3. Media |
| | D4. Organizations and institutions |
| | D5. Visitors received |
| | D6. Opportunities |
| | D7. Challenges |
| | D8. Difficulties |
| Community Engagement | CP1. Community inclusion |
| | CP2. Public spaces |
| | CP3. Participation in the planning process |
| | CP4. Participation in implementation |
| Community tourism | Categories |
| Identification of tourist attractions | TAI1. Endogenous resources |
| | TAI 2. Accessibility |
| | TAI 3. Signage |
| | TAI 4. Quality of the environment |
| | TAI 5. Main problems |
| Community Leadership | CL1. Projects originating from the community |
| Authenticity and value | AV1. Pride and identity |
| | AV2. Natural and cultural environment |
| | AV3. Enhancement |
| Cultural exchange | CI1. Relationship with the visitor |

Source: author's compilation.

**Table 6.** Categories of questionnaire analysis.

| Subsection | Categories |
| --- | --- |
| Tourist attractions and community | TA & C1. Knowledge of the existence of tourist attractions |
| | TA & C2. Last visit to tourist sites |
| | TA & C3. Participation in the cleaning, visual improvement, restoration or conservation of the attractions |
| | TA & C4. Participation in the planning and organization of tourism activities. |
| Community tourism | CT1. Attendance at community assemblies |
| | CT2. Condition of community spaces |
| | CT3. Inclusion of the community in activities that favor tourism development |
| | CT4. Motivation of the community in activities that favor touristic development |
| | CT5. Participation in the evaluation of tourism projects in the municipality |
| | CT6. Willingness to make complaints or suggestions known to the corresponding authorities |
| | CT7. Participation in tourist fairs for commercial interestParticipation in tourist fairs due to interest in the culture of the municipality of Tlacolula de Matamoros |
| | CT8. Relationship with the tourist or visitor |
| | CT9. Pride from being a native of Tlacolula |
| | CT10. Practice of customs |
| | CT11. Practice of traditions |
| | CT12. Identification with the elements of cultural identity |
| | CT13. Identification with touristic attributes |
| General Data | GD1. Age of respondents |
| | GD2. Sex |
| | GD3. Place of birth |
| | GD4. Speaking of indigenous language |
| | GD5. Degree |
| | GD6. Activity carried out last week |
| | GD7. Workstation |
| | GD8. Tourists at the workplace |
| | GD9. Suggestions for the improvement of tourism |

The analytic categories of the semi-structured interviews focused on the variables of both strategic planning and community tourism, while the questionnaire categories focused only on the dimensions of community tourism according to the convergent model.

Taking into account the fact that the questionnaires were applied to the population, it was considered important to add more in-depth categories to obtain the answers of the respondents with greater organization and thus facilitate subsequent processing.

Once the instruments were designed, fieldwork was carried out; sample design, collection, and processing of information generated by the instruments (Tables 7–9):

**Table 7.** Description of the methodology implemented in the semi-structured interviews.

| Stage | Parent Elements | Beginning | Development | Result |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Identification of key and community actors | Key actors | Intentional selection of interviewees [1] | Inquiry into possible actors involved in tourism development of the municipality. | List of key actors with contact details (Table 8) |
| Information Collection | Semi-structured interview guide | Development of instrument with 24 categories of analysis | Six interviews were applied in the period 2 March to 7 April 2018. | Six interview guides answered |
| Information Processing | Print interviews answered | Review of interviews, coding | Capture and encoding of the information collected in Excel database | Identification of problems expressed by key stakeholders, through content analysis [2] |

Source: compilation based on [51] [1] and [52] [2].

**Table 8.** Description of the methodology implemented in the questionnaires.

| Stage | Parent Elements | Beginning | Development | Result |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| (a) Probabilistic Sample | Maps and information from the National Institute of Statistics and Geography [44] Mexico Digital Map Software 6.3.0 | Map processing of the urban center of Tlacolula de Matamoros. The layers of basic geo-statistical areas (AGEB key) [1] were used, with information on blocks and population in shp format | The data corresponding to the number of blocks and occupied dwellings were subtracted and corroborated the information through the National Statistical Directory of Economic Units (DENUE) [2] | The data was transcribed and encoded into an excel document. A total of 3689 homes and 355 blocks were identified. |
| | Excel software book with the total of homes and blocks | Application of the sampling formula to blocks. A confidence level of 90% was used with 10% error | The application of the formula yielded 56.81 (57) out of 355 blocks. Subsequently, a simple random sampling was performed with Excel | List of 57 selected blocks with the respective keys that INEGI grants to each block. |
| | List of 57 blocks Map of the urban center of Tlacolula de Matamoros | Selection of the 57 blocks on the digital map. | Verification of the existence of dwellings in the blocks selected according to the DENUE database. | Three blocks of the 57 that did not have homes were identified, which were randomly replaced by others that did have homes. |
| (b) Information Collection | Questionnaire with closed questions (Likert scale 1–5). Maps printed with the selected blocks. | Development of an instrument with 27 categories of analysis | The questionnaires were applied to available residents of homes located north of the lower right quadrant of each selected block over 15 years of age. | 57 questionnaires answered |
| (c) Information Processing | Printed questionnaires answered | Survey review and coding | Capture of information collected in the Software Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) | The analysis allowed to generate descriptive statistics and the correlation of graphically captured variables |

Source: compilation from [44] [1] and [53] [2].

The methodological process for the application of questionnaires was somewhat more arduous, seeing as the participation of the resident population of the urban area was considered important. Therefore, for the selection of blocks, samples were applied through the use of digital maps and the Excel tool. Finally, as described in detail in Table 9, the questionnaires were applied to 57 people living in houses on the selected blocks. It is worth noting that the following characteristics of the respondents: 56.1% were women and 43.9% men, the majority (36.4%) between the ages of 15 and 35, followed by residents older than 66 (21.2%).

To make the participation of the community effective, it was necessary to identify the main and secondary actors, as well as the dynamics between them and other external

actors. It is necessary to understand how the community interacts and organizes, since one of the objectives of participatory planning is to manage tourism based on a diagnosis of actors and their interest in development. The key actors identified in this research are listed in the following Table 9:

**Table 9.** Interviewed as key actors representing the tourist resources of the municipality.

| Tourist Attraction | Key Player |
|---|---|
| Tlacolula de Matamoros as a tourist municipality | Director of Tourism |
| Fairs that promote the cultural elements of the municipality (roast meat expo, red clay craft fair, patronal fair expo, cultural Sundays, bread and chocolate fair, agro-biodiversity fair and the ice-cream and mezcal fair which continues to be promoted) | Tourism Committee |
| Martín González market and Tianguis | Market Manager |
| Archaeological sites: Yagul and Lambityeco. | Anthropologist |
| Chapel of the Lord of Tlacolula | Coordinator of Church Pastoral Care |
| Jaguar Xoo Conservation Center | Director |

Source: compilation from interviews carried out from 2 March to 7 April 2018.

Both the list of problems (Table 7, stage c, result) and the descriptive statistics (Table 9, stage c, result), served as the main source of information to show the implementation of the convergent model in a specific case at the local level, as shown in the following section.

## 6. Contributions to Strategic Planning in Community Tourism

This section shows the findings obtained in the research project and exposes their contrast with the theoretical framework. At the beginning of the previous section, the theoretical convergence of each of the dimensions of strategic planning and community tourism was described. This section will show the same convergent points (SP1-CT3; SP2-CT1; SP3-CT2; SP2-CT4) but applied to a specific case at the local level.

### *6.1. Research Results*

As a first point, the organizational philosophy of the municipality and its convergence with the authenticity of tourism activities is shown. The main findings found in terms of organizational philosophy were: the municipality had a defined municipal vision, but denotes characteristics of conventional tourism; the lack of an organizational philosophy as a tourist municipality was identified; and the existing municipal philosophy ignores the importance of including the community in tourism development (Table 10).

**Table 10.** Diagnosis of the tourist municipality according to the key actors.

| Category | Diagnosis |
|---|---|
| | Strategic Planning |
| OP1. Mission | Currently the municipality does not have a mission as a tourist municipality; therefore, the activities that have been carried out for tourism development have been short term |
| OP2. Vision | The vision of the municipality of Tlacolula de Matamoros in the future (20 years) is of a municipality with a strong tourist influx and with tourist infrastructure that supports the demands of tourists. There was no mention of the interest in encouraging greater inclusion of the community in tourism projects. A vision of conventional tourism can be perceived, in which the creation of hotels and the improvement of the tourist infrastructure are priority conditions for the development of the activity. |

Source: compilation based on interviews applied to key actors.

The limiting characteristic to guide the development of tourism in the municipality was the lack of a definition of the mission and vision as a tourist municipality, which

ideally should be related to the organizational philosophy of the municipal administration or management.

On the other hand, the findings on the authenticity of touristic activities fell on factors of recognition and identity of the tourist environment. It was found that the knowledge that the population of the municipality had about their tourist resources was weak (Figure 3). Therefore, they did not value them as elements of identity and much less as a usable tourist resource. In the addressed case, the participation of the population reflected a disregard and disinterest in its tourist resources, which denotes the deterioration of the recognition of the importance and meaning of a territory, including territorial attractions and products (p. 262, [54]).

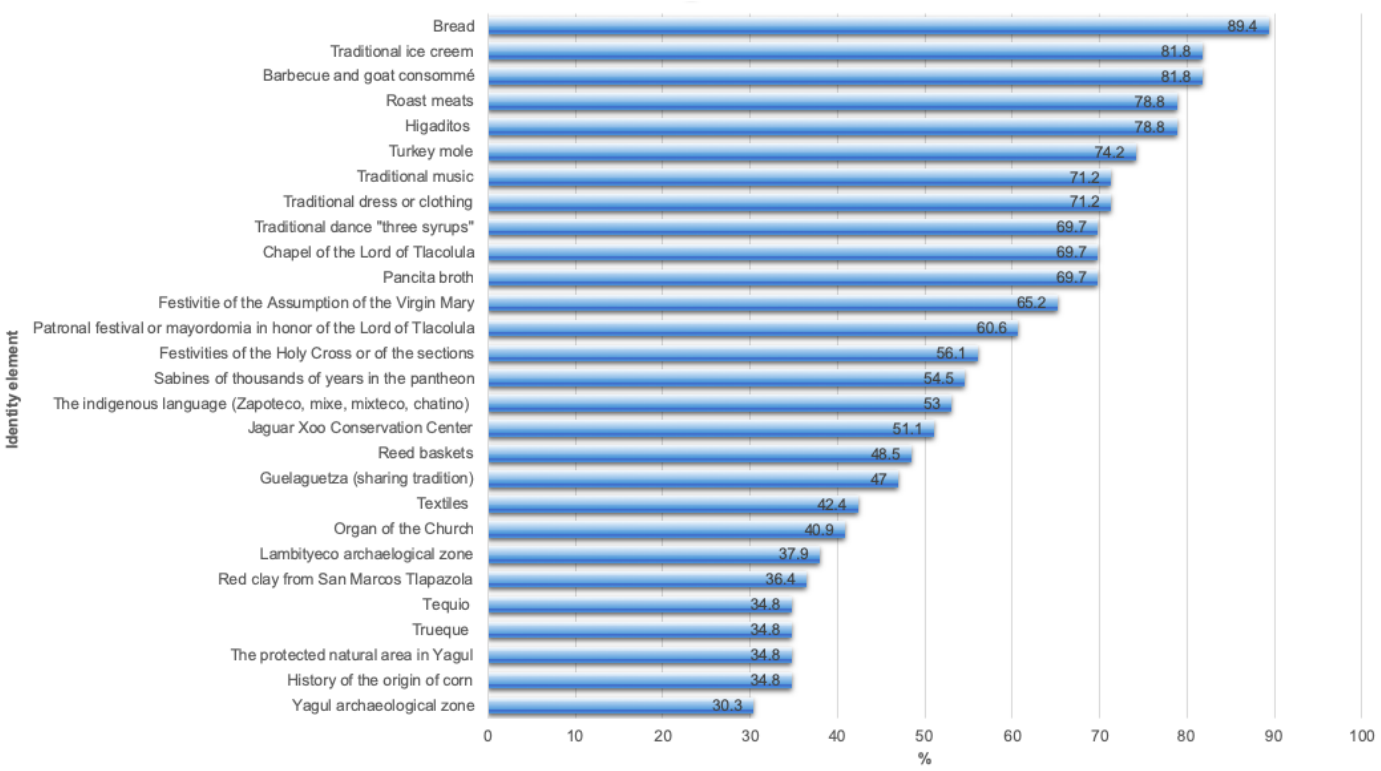



**Figure 3.** Presence of identity elements in the population of the municipality of Tlacolula de Matamoros. Source: compilation from applied questionnaire.

The findings showed that of the identity elements considered (Figure 3), the elements of identity with which the population expressed feeling less identified (percentage less than 50%) were the archaeological sites (Yagul and Lambiyteco), handicrafts (reed basket, textiles and red clay) and traditional practices (barter, tequio and guelaguetza) (Figure 3). Additionally, we noted that the history of the origin of corn and the prehistoric caves of Yagul and Mitla are linked to the history of Tlacolula. However, only 34% of the population identified them as elements of identity. One of the important findings was the lack of knowledge of the natural, cultural, and historical value of the environment on the part of Tlacolulan natives, especially the archaeological zones and the prehistoric caves of Yagul and Mitla.

The elements of identity least perceived by the population of the municipality were those with greater antiquity and historical importance; these were elements that maintain the lives of their ancestors in history.

The second point showed the diagnosis and its convergence with the identification of tourist attractions. The diagnosis and identification of tourist attractions are closely linked, considering the fact that during the collection of information, workshops, participatory observation, etc., tourist attractions and resources with potential to be attractive as well as the conditions in which they are located have been identified. During the implementation

of interviews with the key actors, information was provided about the tourist attractions and environmental conditions existing in the municipality as shown below (Table 11):

**Table 11.** Diagnosis of tourist attractions according to key actors.

| Category | Diagnosis |
|---|---|
| | Strategic planning |
| D1. Knowledge of tourist attractions | The municipality is considered to have a natural, cultural, and historical wealth in its territorial resources. However, not enough work has been done on tourism promotion both inside and outside the municipality to take advantage of its tourist potential. |
| | Community tourism |
| TAI1. Endogenous resources | The endogenous resources exploitable for tourist activity are mainly the artisanal mezcal and red clay of the town of San Marcos Tlapazola |
| TAI2. Accessibility | There are not enough parking lots to meet the demand of visitors especially on "Market Sundays". Furthermore, the access road to the archaeological zone of Yagul is in very poor condition |
| TAI3. Signage | The signage of the tourist attractions is insufficient, and the existing ones are not very visible |
| TAI4. Quality of the environment | The environment of the "Martín González" market has lost its air of traditionality as there is a disorganization between the stalls and the products offered |
| CL1. Projects originating from the community | The project taken up from a proposal by the community was the roasted meat fair |
| AV1. Pride and identity | Gastronomy was presented as the element of identity pride |
| AV2. Natural and cultural environment | The community is very indifferent to the environment, especially the archaeological sites. |
| AV3. Enhancement | The cultural elements that could be valued are: the traditional clothing designs of "Market Sunday" vendors, the cosmogony of the villages of the Tlacolula Valley, the historical value of the archaeological zones, especially the prehistoric caves of Yagul and Mitla |

Source: compilation based on the interviews applied to the key actors.

The diagnosis of tourism resources was also collected during the implementation of the questionnaires to the community. Members of the community were asked when their last visit to the attractions and tourist sites had been. Below are the results.

In the first place, the findings of the fairs as tourist attractions held every year are presented. Their main objective was to publicize the cultural diversity of the municipality, especially gastronomic diversity. It was observed that the most frequented fairs in a period of one to five years were the patronal fair (65.2%) and the bread and chocolate fair (56%). The sorbet and mezcal fair was another of the crowded fairs. These took place four months before the application of the questionnaires and 62% of the community attended. The majority of the population had "never" attended the agro-biodiversity (83.3%), red clay (72.7%) or roasted meat (63.6%) fairs. This behavior was similar on cultural Sundays, because 75.8% had "never" attend such an activity (Figure 4).

On the other hand, the most representative sites of the municipality were the archaeological zones of Lambityeco and the prehistoric caves of Yagul and Mitla. However, they were the least frequented by the community. This is evidenced by 48% of the population who expressed "never" visiting the archaeological zone of Lambityeco and the prehistoric caves of Yagul and Mitla. It was further denoted that the period in which the population identified as the period of having last visited the archaeological zone of Yagul was between six and more than 20 years (Figure 5). This result demonstrated once again the detachment of the population from its environment, even when it included heritage assets worthy of being preserved from generation to generation.

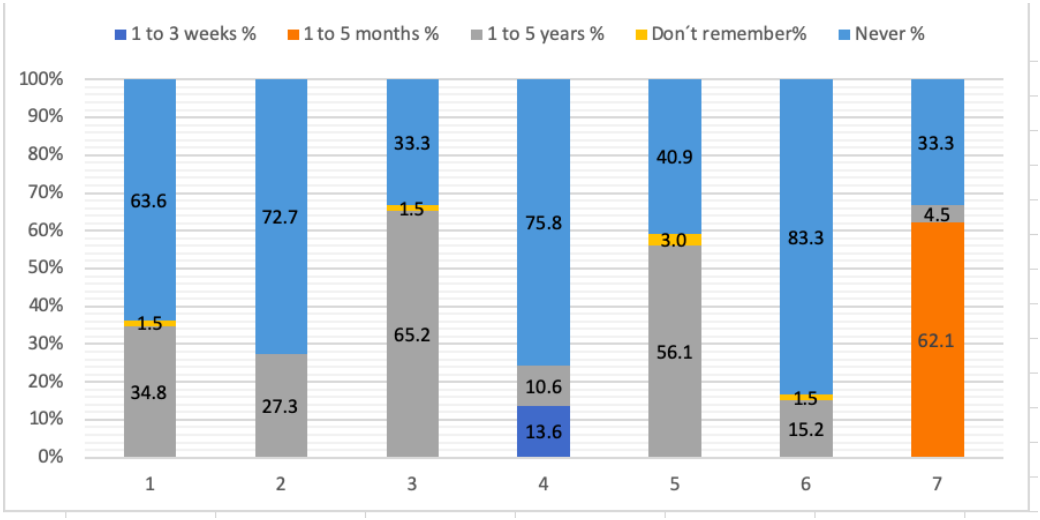



**Figure 4.** Last visit of inhabitants over 15 years old to tourist fairs in Tlacolula de Matamoros. Where: 1: roast meat fair, 2: red clay fair in San Marcos, Tlapazola, 3: patronal fair, 4: cultural Sundays, 5: bread and chocolate fair, 6: agro-biodiversity fair, 7: sorbet and mezcal Fair. Source: compilation from applied questionnaires.

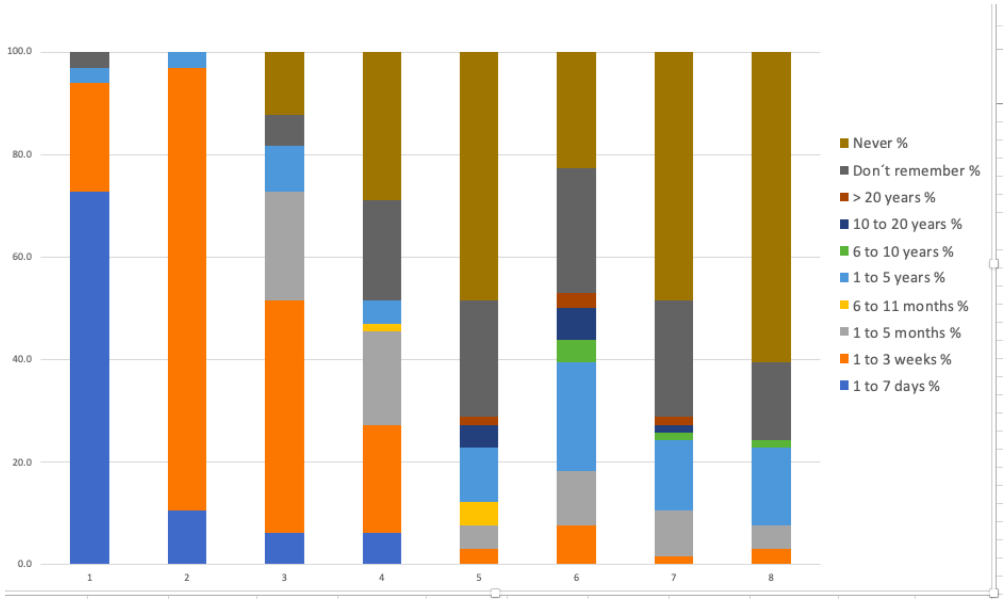



**Figure 5.** Last visit of the inhabitants over 15 years old to the tourist resources of Tlacolula de Matamoros. Where: 1: "Martín González" market, 2: Tianguis, 3: Chapel of Santo Cristo de Tlacolula, 4: church organ, 5: Lambityeco archaeological zone, 6: Yagul archaeological zone, 7: prehistoric caves of Yagul and Mitla, 8: Jaguar Conservation Center. Source: compilation from applied questionnaires.

The third point showed participation and its convergence with community leadership. The findings indicated that more than 80% of the population said they did not participate in the activities carried out for the development of tourism in the municipality (Figure 6).

There was a similar situation of exclusion of the community in decision making concerning places that had natural, cultural, and historical value because 54.6% of the population expressed its level of inclusion as "never" or "most of the time not" (Figure 7).

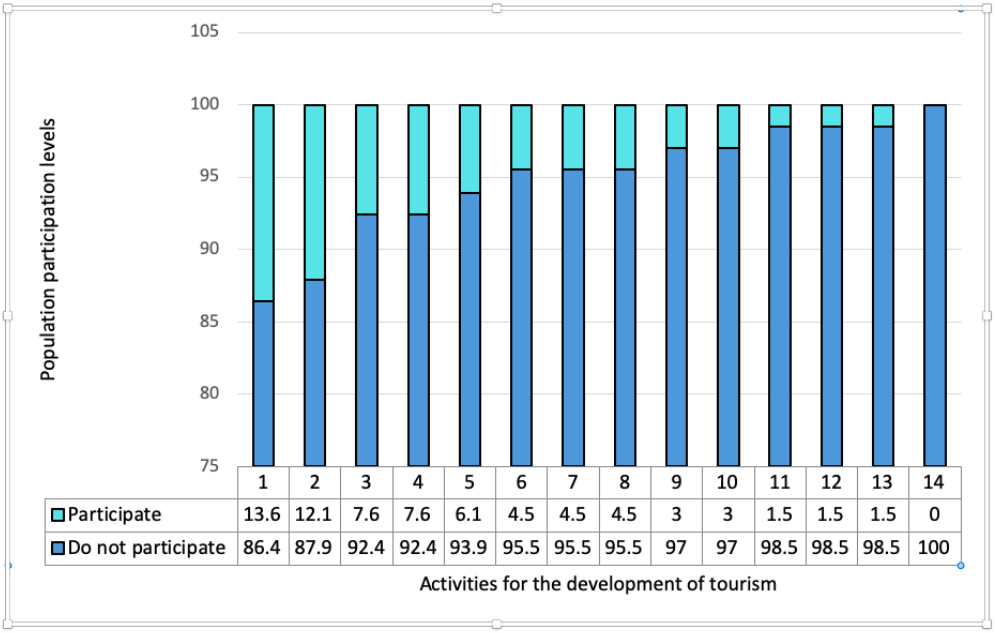



**Figure 6.** Participation of the population over 15 years of age in the tourism development of resources. Where 1: cleaning and visual improvement of the "Martín González" Market, 2: cleaning and conservation of the Chapel of Santo Cristo de Tlacolula, 3: organization of the Tianguis, 4: cleaning and conservation of the archaeological zone of Yagul, 5: cleaning and conservation of the archaeological zone of Lambityeco, 6: restoration of the church organ, 7: management of the opening of the new path of the prehistoric caves of Yagul and Mitla, 8: planning and organization of the patronal fair; 9: promotion of red clay crafts, 10: planning and organization of the bread and chocolate fair, 11: promotion of the Jaguar Conservation Center, 12: planning and organization of the agro-biodiversity fair, 13: planning and organization of the Sorbet and mezcal fair and 14: planning and organization of the red clay fair in San Marcos, Tlapazola. Source: compilation from applied questionnaires.

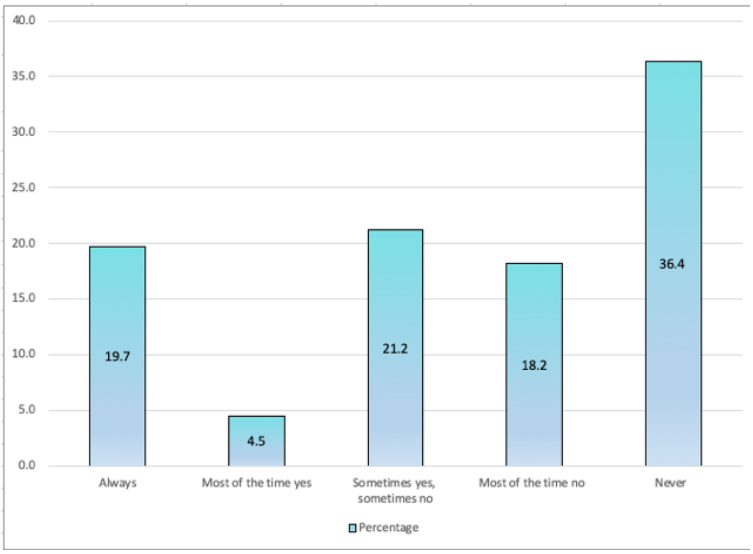



**Figure 7.** Inclusion of the community in decision making concerning places that have natural, cultural and historical value. Source: compilation from applied questionnaires.

As a penultimate point, the diagnosis of the visitors received and its convergence with the cultural exchange with the visitor is shown. The findings showed that in 2017 the tourist information module was created to collect data from visitors received only on Sundays, since the main attraction for national and foreign tourists is to visit the Tianguis

or cultural Sundays. This is also due to the fact that there is greater diffusion of the Tianguis as a tourist attraction. However, considering the existence of other attractions in the municipality, it is necessary to know the type of tourist and assess if it fits the objectives of community tourism.

On the other hand, it was found that the relationship of the community with the visitor, according to interviews and questionnaires, only occurred when they needed guidance or help for the location of a tourist site or service, which denotes, in addition to lack of signage, a lack of interest on the part of the community to be included in cultural exchange projects. A clear example is the promotion of resident tour guides of the municipality.

With respect to the dimensions presented in the theoretical convergence (see Table 4), the findings obtained in the practical convergence are summarized below (Table 12):

**Table 12.** Practical convergence findings.

| Id | Dimensions | Practical Convergence |
|---|---|---|
| SP1-CT3 | Philosophy of organization–authenticity of tourism activities | There is a lack of an organizational philosophy aimed at the development of community tourism and on the other hand there is weak recognition of the elements of identity, a factor that has an impact on enhancing the authenticity of the tourist municipality. The elements of identity recognized and valued by the community must be integrated into the organizational philosophy of the tourist municipality, in order to incorporate them into the objectives, activities and strategies that are contemplated in a tourism development plan. |
| SP2-CT1 | Diagnosis–identification of tourist attractions 2 | According to the classification of Altés Machín (1995, p. 33) cited in Navarro (p. 344, [43]), the municipality has 16 out of the 19 tourism resources among which are the fairs and touristic sites; it should be noted that the community has had greater participation in the planning and management of the fairs. However, some sites present unfavorable conditions for the development of touristic activity. The diagnosis generated during the research shows the need to analyze in depth the conditions of each site, considering other factors such as the inclusion of the community, since in the same way ignorance and disinterest in both fairs and tourist sites are perceived. |
| SP3-CT2 | Participation–community leadership. | The participation of the community in tourism management is not perceived. The perception of the community is that it is not included in the decision-making concerning tourism development. Likewise, its opinion is excluded when a new touristic activity is implemented. On the other hand, no evidence of community leadership was found, which includes community autonomy in tourism planning and management. This situation is an effect of the absence of grounded participation mechanisms. For this specific case in the municipality, it is necessary that the local government in coordination with other groups of tourist interest are the mediators in implementing participatory mechanisms that, in the long term, give rise to the development of community leadership. |
| SP2-CT4 | Diagnosis of the visitors received–cultural exchange with the visitor | The municipality has not clearly defined the type of tourism that it intends to develop, therefore the type of target tourists is not defined either. On the other hand, at the beginning of 2017 it began with the collection of information from tourists hosted only on Sundays, which represents a first approach to finding out the interests of tourists when visiting the Municipality. As for socio-cultural exchange, although the inhabitants share their customs, traditions, and ways of life during the activities carried out in the fairs, in addition to the economic remuneration, factors that promote a harmonious coexistence between tourists and the socio-cultural environment of the Municipality yet to be identified. |

Source: compilation based on findings obtained.

To conclude the implementation of the convergent model, strategies for community tourism were developed, for which the methodology of the Latin American and Caribbean Institute for Economic and Social Planning (ILPES) [37] was used. This consists of four stages: (1) diagnosis, (2) definition of vocations for local development, (3) definition of strategic and specific objectives, and (4) definition of the local development strategy. As part of the methodological process, the following instruments included in the aforementioned stages were used:

1. Matrix of potentialities, limitations and problems.
2. Problem tree.
3. Objective tree.
4. Matrix of strengths, opportunities, weaknesses and threats.
5. Matrix of local development objectives and strategies.

The results found in the implemented exercise reflect weak territorial identity and weak social cohesion in the community of the municipality. Therefore, the analysis of the problems for the design of local development strategies took these two weaknesses as a starting point. As a result, eight general strategies and 21 specific strategies were generated.

### *6.2. Discussion*

Reconstructing the planning processes of a tourist town is a difficult but necessary task, especially since the towns are changing due to constant interaction with diverse cultural environments. The inhabitants of the localities require different solutions that improve their living conditions. Tourist activity carried out in localities is even more delicate terrain but has the advantage of being closer to identify problems and fight them or reduce them at the root.

As a starting point of the planning process, it is necessary to ask ourselves these questions for the fulfillment of objectives: what are we? Where do we want to go? or how do we envision ourselves in the future? Münch [55] mentioned that the planning process requires a series of stages starting with the generation of the organizational philosophy, the result of which lies in the generation of a strategic plan and tactical plans.

Carrying out a diagnosis implies the participation of the community and key actors, since through them the potentialities, limitations, and problems of the sectors of the territory related to tourism are identified. With the information, the situations are analyzed, and solutions are proposed. Although the diagnosis represents the main source of information through which the design of strategies will be based, it is essential that during the collection of information the appropriate sources are reviewed, and biases are avoided when implementing interviews and/or questionnaires.

The idea of Silva and Sandoval [37] applied to the municipality ratifies that for the development of community tourism, the reinforcement of territorial identity needs to be worked on. This would involve working on collective perceptions of the past, traditions, productive structure, cultural heritage and material resources.

If the municipality does not value the potential of territorial resources for local development, then it would be failing to comply with one of the characteristics of the tourism development model proposed by Altés [56] which considered the use of cultural and natural attractions, and the enhancement of local identity. The detachment and indifference of the population to its environment has caused the territorial identity of the municipality, an essential pillar for the development of community tourism, to deteriorate.

Community tourism, as its name suggests, is characterized by the leadership that the local community assumes in the development of tourism activity, both in the planning, programming, and execution of the activities they propose [57].

In community tourism, the intervention of the community has intrinsic importance, which is that it appropriates natural, cultural, and historical resources for their conservation and use.

This weak participation of the population generates detachment and ignorance of their environment, significantly limiting the following factors that drive community tourism [5].

Consistency of the community as a framework for action and collective decision; level of intensity of external intervention in the development of initiatives; local appropriation of tourism phenomena and products. How can the community be involved when it has neither interest in nor knowledge of the usable tourist environment? Where to start generating the link with touristic resources? Who is responsible for the first impulse? When community leadership is not perceived, the foundations of participation have most likely not been laid. The local government in coordination with other groups of tourist interest will be mediators for implementing permanent participation mechanisms so that in the long-term community leadership develops naturally by the fact of being involved in tourism management.

In the municipality, as expressed by Rodríguez-Chávez and Solís-Rosales [16] there is a strong need to internalize heritage assets so that current and future generations revalue and re-signify them. This also implies that each generation transforms the forms of participation within the community, not only with the innovation of new tools but also by changes in ideals. Therefore, it is important that there are spaces where the community expresses its opinions, doubts, and suggestions in order to discuss the present and future of tourism development.

"It is necessary to create spaces that favor the participation of the different stakeholders in the decision-making processes, as well as to achieve constant communication between the different levels of the processes and to generate methods of conflict resolution through institutions that have the flexibility to face diverse situations" (p. 8, [8]).

For the promotion of community tourism, the importance of including the entire community is reiterated, not only commercial entities but also residents, management teams, community leaders, and the government [12].

Part of the implementation of community tourism at the local level lies in the strengthening of identity and social cohesion, but another very important part is complemented by participation initiatives of the local government as the main manager of development. According to Geilfus [6] the success of community tourism will depend on the organization and initiative of the population, but also on the flexibility of institutions. Flexibility in this case refers to the adoption of new tools that allow joint work between community and government.

Part of the diagnostic phase is to know the target population (tourists) to which the tourism products (activities and/or sites) will be directed. There must be a synchrony between tourist objectives pursued by the community and the interests of the tourist. This convergence is considered a feedback loop, since information is constantly collected at the same time that the information previously collected is used to assess if the image the municipality is projecting is attracting the right tourists, in the sense that they respect the culture and interests of community tourism.

"Characterizing the target market is important so that the community is able to effectively market the experience they are offering, and to ensure that visitors to the community have a shared philosophy with community operators, in terms of respect for local culture and an interest in supporting sustainable and equitable local development. The marketing messages must provide a clear and accurate description of what the visitor experience will be like. This kind of information helps the visitor decide if it is the right destination for them" (p. 78, [40]).

Community tourism promotes "a harmonious cultural exchange during which the inhabitants teach their customs to the tourist, who, for his part and so as not to impact in a negative way, provides knowledge and economic remuneration to the inhabitants. The result is a boost, culturally speaking, in the values, customs, and daily work of the members of the community" (p. 159, [21]). Unlike conventional tourism, community tourism pursues mutual benefits between community and tourists, but above all, it aims for a balance between tourism, environment, and culture, ensuring a touristic fairness and a sense of equity, exchange and, respect [33].

The socio-cultural exchange factor in community tourism is very enriching for both the community and the visitor. The community acquires an economic benefit. In addition,

when the community is implicit in tourist activities and frequently relates to the tourist, it also acquires knowledge of other ways of life and cultures. On the other hand, the visitor takes the tourist experience and the knowledge of the cultural, natural and historical value of the town they visit.

To conclude this section, it is important to mention that the design of strategies is contemplated for long-term action aimed at local development. This development is to be understood as a timeless process in which content from the past and present is taken into account, without leaving out a prospective vision to promote common goals of the population. In this sense, for the municipality and for any other locality, the concept of development of Bertoni et.al., (p. 17, [58]) is applied. It expresses that "each society and each era has its own formulation of development, which responds to convictions, expectations, and possibilities that predominate in them". Here, we tried to adjust the situation of the municipality to the characteristics of community tourism, knowing the advantages of tourism activity for the territory and society.

## 7. Conclusions

The analysis of the theoretical framework constituted the fundamental basis of the research project, since it led to the construction of the convergent model, in which the conceptual relationship between community tourism and strategic planning is shown. The essence of the convergent model lies in visualizing how the dimensions of both concepts complement each other in order to improve the planning process of community tourism in practice and the development of strategies.

The convergent model proposal can be subject to feedback through different theories related to the variables of community tourism and strategic planning. The lesson learned during its development is that the sources of information that support it will never be enough. Another lesson is the flexibility of the convergent model in the process of strategy development, given that it is possible to implement other methodologies other than the logical framework.

The result may vary depending on the conditions of each context, but in the case addressed in this study, strategies were proposed to reinforce territorial identity. This implies the participation of artisans, farmers, government actors, and organized groups to provide a boost for the agro-biodiversity fair, archaeological zones, prehistoric caves and Sunday Plaza (Tianguis in Spanish). Strategies were proposed to encourage social cohesion that include the participation of traders, tourism committee, community tour guides, residents (older and younger people), municipal chroniclers, traditional cooks, artisans and local companies.

The methodological contribution of the convergent model in the research was highlighted, since it served as a guide for the development of information collection instruments, which gave meaning and focus to the information obtained. Subsequently, the information processing was carried out according to the dimensions of the concepts addressed.

It is important to note that the convergent model was designed through positioning the local government as a facilitator or mediator and emphasizing the purpose of benefiting the community directly. However, it can be implemented by other entities, such as civil organizations, organized society, committees, and even companies, as long as the objective of promoting community tourism development and all that this implies is preserved.

That said, the convergent model can serve as a planning and management tool to contribute to the design of community tourism strategies for other areas at different levels of government, both in the state of Oaxaca and in other national or international contexts that require designing strategies that involve the variables of community tourism and strategic planning.

It is then concluded that the convergent model can be implemented in any local context regardless of the degree of tourism development, but that there is an interest in promoting tourism with the participation of the community.

## 8. Practical Lessons

The theoretical review for the construction of the convergent model involved a conceptual analysis and the ability to identify those convergent points between different authors; subsequently, a practical case was analyzed to visualize the conditions of a tourist municipality according to the convergent model built; the main practical lessons were derived from the practical exercise.

In the methodological process of constructing the information collection instruments, different items were broken down for both the interviews and questionnaires and categorized in such a way that they are related to each of the dimensions of community tourism and strategic planning. During the process of developing the instruments it was important to keep in mind the revised theory, but one of the lessons learned was to have a first meeting with the key actors, as well as to observed the tourist environment in advance, which is part of the role as a researcher, to always be alert to information that may come from sources other than those that are formal or established.

During the fieldwork, there was a strong interest on the part of the key actors to promote tourism development, but when applying the questionnaires, the community expressed its detachment with tourism resources. Visualizing the categories and dimensions in the instruments during the fieldwork served as a guide for focusing and directing conversations, as well as adding additional information that the community or key stakeholders provided.

When processing the information, findings were made when generating correlations between the variables of community tourism and strategic planning. In general, the situation in the municipality is mentioned below: regarding the development of tourist resources and their relationship with territorial identity, the community of the municipality showed symptoms of detachment and ignorance with its physical environment. This was interpreted as an incipient prevalence of customs and traditions as part of its intangible heritage. There was a deterioration in the recognition of meanings and senses of a territory, including territorial attractions and products. In conclusion, the community was redefining itself from its current context without considering the recognition of the collective meanings configured by the natural and cultural environment.

The convergent model was developed to serve as an instrument for organizations interested in developing community tourism, but do not have the basis to start. The model has the characteristic, as demonstrated, of being implemented as a diagnostic tool and subsequently developing strategies according to particular situations.

It is important to consider that there are other paths for tourism development at the local level, applicable in the municipalities of the state of Oaxaca. Thus, community tourism does not exclude urban localities, although the integration of the community in tourism projects can be taken up. The difference lies in the way projects are managed, since they depend on organization between the different key actors or local organizations.

It has been concluded that the lessons learned during the research process focused on the importance of a cohesive society to achieve specific ends for the benefit of all. Community tourism allows these ties that present cracks of interest in tourism development to be strengthened, starting with the recognition of the limitations and weaknesses that have led to the decline in a community not only economically, but essentially in its identity.

## 9. Limitations

Initially, a more ambitious investigation was proposed that aimed to end with a complete proposal of the strategic tourism plan for the municipality of Tlacolula de Matamoros. However, both field and clerical work were insufficient to achieve what was initially desired.

The time established for fieldwork did not allow for the consideration of a higher percentage of confidence level. The level that was applied to obtain the population sample was 90%, because reaching a higher level implied more field trips. Since only weekends were available to supply questionnaires to the community, this was humanly impossible.

However, despite the limited time available for information collection, the response from the community and stakeholders was fruitful. There was high availability when providing information and, in some cases, the community was interested in the development of research in the field of tourism development in the municipality.

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**Informed Consent Statement:** Informed consent was obtained from all subjects involved in the study. The subjects were informed of their rights with the following legend: The fact that you answer this questionnaire implies your approval to participate in the present study. The data collected will be used only for academic purposes and the confidentiality and anonymity of the data you provide will be respected at all times.

**Data Availability Statement:** The study has not reported any data.

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