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THE ENVIRONMENT/DEVELOPMENT INTERFACE IN LATIN AMERICA: ECOTOURISM AND COSTA RICA'S SEARCH FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

By

Deborah Renee Meadows

A THESIS

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ABSTRACT

THE ENVIRONMENT/DEVELOPMENT INTERFACE
IN LATIN AMERICA:
ECOTOURISM AND COSTA RICA'S SEARCH
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Viewing *local participation* as central to sustainable development, this research explores the relationship between local participation and Costa Rica's pursuit of ecotourism as a *sustainable* tourism strategy. Using a theoretical framework developed from human systems ecology, the research employs qualitative methods to gather data in communities near the Carara Biological Reserve in the Pacific Central region of Costa Rica. Local involvement in the case study area is viewed as "insider-generated" and "outsider-demanded" participation. Through examination of the local participation component, the research identifies the dilemmas being confronted in ecotourism development, reveals critical variables for analysis, and proposes recommendations that may help guide

ecotourism policies, planning and projects toward sustainability not only in Costa Rica but other Latin American and Caribbean countries.

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To Ben and Joan, for their support

and

George and Nancy, for their inspiration and

their guidance

And, of course,

the people of Tárcoles, Bijagual and Quebrada Ganado,

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INTRODUCTION

"...like a wise people, the Costa Ricans
have not fallen asleep
over their present prosperity."
Paul Biolley
Costa Rica and Her Future, 1889

In recent years, the notion of "ecotourism" or "nature tourism" has surfaced as a means of economic development while financing natural resources conservation efforts. Though the definitions of "ecotourism" are abundant, one which touches the many dimensions of this phenomenon as explored in this document is: a "planned approach by a host country or region designed to achieve societal objectives beyond (but including) those of the tourist" (Ziffer, 1989). This definition hybridizes the various aspects of this concept embodied in descriptions of "nature tourism," or "green tourism," each of which may reflect the particular outcomes desired by the definitions' authors or proponents.

Despite the varying interpretations of what ecotourism means, scientists from differently developing countries have touted the concept as a means for conserving biodiversity (Boo, 1990). Policy-makers in some countries are embracing this idea

as a strategy for rural development while reducing the national debt (Whelan, 1991). And ecotourism entrepreneurs are attempting to capture their portion of expanding worldwide tourism revenues (Farrell & Runyan, 1991), which have increased from $83.3 billion in 1979 (Waters, 1990) to a forecasted $775 billion in 1993 (Eiben and Labate, 1993, January 11), roughly seven percent of world trade.

Ecotourism is the fastest growing segment of the tourism industry. With an expansion rate of 30 percent (Holing, 1991), demand for ecotourism continues to increase due to the overall growth of tourism, the growth in specialty travel and increasing awareness and concern for the environment (Ziffer, 1989).

However, fundamental questions surface when ecotourism is critically examined as a form of "sustainable development." Many believe ecotourism exemplifies "sustainable development"--a "process of change in which the exploitation of resources, the direction of investments, the orientation of technological development, and institutional change are made consistent with future as well as present needs (WCED--Brundtland, 1987)." Others believe that especially for poor, rural people in close proximity to fragile ecosystems which provide their subsistence, this interface between environment and development raises issues of poverty, power and social justice intertwined with issues of environmental preservation and resource control and accessibility (Wells, 1992; Axinn, 1991; Adams, 1990; O'Riordan, 1988; Redclift, 1987).

Many countries in Latin America are encountering this thorny intersection between conservation and development policies as they attempt to manage their natural resources for development goals. In the region, growing urbanization, farmland expansion, increased food production and infrastructure projects are recognized as some of the key threats to environmental protection (Sevilla, 1987). As the needs of the region's poor people must be addressed, there is also much at stake in protecting the wealthy biodiversity and promoting sustainable utilization of natural resources.

This study, conducted over a 20-month period, explored ecotourism's intersection of environmental protection and sustainable development, from the perspective of local people in Costa Rica. Central to this exploratory research were the questions: *Is local participation related to the sustainability of ecotourism in the study area? And, if it is related, how is it related?*

With the intention of understanding the relationship between local participation and the sustainability of ecotourism, qualitative primary data were collected in the central Pacific region of Costa Rica during four months of field research funded by the Inter-American Foundation. Also data gathered from a variety of secondary sources were utilized. While ecotourism was put in its context as part of a world, capitalist economy, the local viewpoint of ecotourism as a way to "make life better" was the focus of this research.

Costa Rica as a field site was selected for a variety of reasons. First, the country is touted as a leader among Latin American countries in its pursuit of integrating conservation and development goals. As Costa Rica's attempts to provide a "better" life for its poor, rural citizens (*campesinos*), the country also has a great stake in protecting its wealthy biodiversity. Also, the country's aggressive promotion of ecotourism and its closing agricultural frontier offer a unique opportunity to assess ecotourism's role as a sustainable development strategy. Finally, the country's approach to development was especially provocative in light of the current rethinking of Latin American development theories within a "world system" framework (Kay, 1991), and in terms of "putting people first" (Cernea, 1991/1985).

The idea of a "world system," developed by Immanuel Wallerstein (1984; 1991), is one step in the evolving theories which attempt to explain the phenomenon of "development-underdevelopment." In the most general of terms, Wallerstein's theory, and the variations penned by its proponents, describes a world economic system focussed on the never-ending accumulation of capital. This capital is accumulated by "center" countries, having been extracted from "semi-periphery" and "periphery" countries in the form of human and natural resources. In this way, the "center" becomes developed, while the development or accumulation of capital in the semi-periphery or the periphery countries is of no

concern to the "center." In this process, all of the actions taken by the "center" are to maintain its position at the center of the world, capitalist economy.

Kay's (1991) integration of theories developed by Latin American scholars ("marginality" and "internal colonialism") revises the world-system paradigm. Drawing from the Latin American experience, he argues that development and underdevelopment are "primarily rooted in social relations of production and not in relations of exchange" and calls for more research into the local forms of domination and political control.

These theories are relevent and worth noting in an effort to examine ecotourism as part of a larger macroeconomic process yet may neglect attention to what's happening at local levels. For this reason, this study focuses on "development" in the form of ecotourism at the micro level, where people as individuals and groups are interacting in ways to "make their lives better" as they confront the challenges of a global economy.

The development process, in its ideal, begins by "putting people first"(Cernea, 1991/1985). The notion of "putting people first" in the development process means:

> "giving people more opportunities to participate effectively in development activities. It means empowering people to mobilize their own capacities, be social actors rather than passive subjects, manage the resources, make decisions, and control the activities that affect their lives (Cernea, p. 10)."

It is this "people-centered" idea of development which has provoked this research, exploring *local participation* in ecotourism in Costa Rica and scrutinizing claims of ecotourism as a form of *sustainable* development.

Provocative questions about local participation in ecotourism planning and projects can be posed in the broader context of internationalization: Who is guiding ecotourism--determining who will accrue benefits and who will pay the costs? Who controls the fate of irreplaceable ecosystems upon which local residents may depend for their subsistence? To what extent has local participation been incorporated in planning and decision-making related to ecotourism? How have individuals become involved? What has been the role of non-governmental organizations, both endogenous and exogenous, in influencing ecotourism-related issues?

This exploratory research begins to search for answers to these questions. Viewing *local participation* as central to sustainable development, this explores the relationship between local participation and Costa Rica's pursuit of ecotourism as a *sustainable* tourism strategy. Through examination of the local participation component, one may identify the dilemmas being confronted in ecotourism development, reveal critical variables for analysis, and propose recommendations

that may help guide ecotourism policies, planning and projects toward sustainability not only in Costa Rica but other Latin American and Caribbean countries.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Tourism, as a research topic and as a field of study, is in its infancy. Therefore, one must explore the literature in a wide variety of fields to find research related to ecotourism. Some of the most fruitful areas for this search are those fields which link disciplines such as geography, sustainable development studies, park and recreation resources, ecological anthropology, environmental sociology, and wildlands management.

Over the past two decades, abundant research has related tourism and development (Getino, 1991; Pearce, 1989; Schluter, 1988; Mathieson & Wall, 1982; deKadt, 1979; Smith, 1977), indicating many imbalances and contradictions in locales around the world. While cultural, social and economic impacts of tourism occur in all sectors, poor people in urban and rural settings have received few benefits since they have had little control over the influences which determine the size and character of the tourism industry (Lea, 1988).

This linkage between tourism and development is generating renewed interest and a new research agenda, demonstrated in the publication of volumes such as *Tourism Alternatives: Potentials and Problems in the Development of Tourism*, edited by Smith and Eadington (1992). Drawing from a wide range of disciplines, this collection highlights the theoretical attributes and dimensions of tourism from international and interdisciplinary perspectives. As explained by Dennison Nash in

the epilogue, *Tourism Alternatives* calls attention to the notions of a *touristic process* and *touristic system* as a means for understanding the larger phenomenon of dependency, which may be promoted by tourism as well as other forms of development.

Although this literature provides a provocative beginning to the exploration of local participation, the majority of the literature fails to explore the obtacles and opportunities for participation within a Latin American context. Additionally, using methods from the social sciences to research and document impacts, the research serves to identify problems and provide useful planning frameworks. It does not include assessment frameworks for use as diagnostic tools prior to tourism planing.

The literature relating tourism and the environment can best be placed into four categories, described by Dunkel (1984) as: theoretical concepts and national park polemics; social impacts; environmental threats to and from tourism; and, policy and planning. Research in this area is now intensifying, especially in Latin America where environmental impacts of tourism as well as tourism's role in financing conservation are being explored. Among those reports most frequently cited, Boo(1990) combines existing data in five Latin American and Caribbean countries (including Costa Rica) to examine the status of the tourism industry; status of tourism to protected areas; impacts of tourism to protected areas; and,

obstacles and opportunities in nature tourism's development along with case studies and visitor surveys. Whelan (1991) presents numerous descriptions of nature tourism destinations and some "nuts-and-bolts" articles on how to implement and manage this enterprise. Ziffer (1989) provides a theoretical overview of ecotourism, and examines its relevance to a rural system. She also recommends ways to implement successful ecotourism strategies. However, her general recommendations do not fully incorporate the complexity of local participation and the reality of local people in rural areas in Latin America.

Economic perspectives seem to be best represented in what could be called the first "limbs" in a small but growing body of research-based ecotourism literature. The Forest Economics Research group of the USDA Forest Service has produced various works such as those by Healy (1988) and Laarman (1986), Laarman and Durst (1987) and Laarman and Perdue (1989). A survey-based approach incorporating contingent valuation ["willingness to pay"] and "criteria of fairness" was used by Baldares and Laarman (1991) as they explored user fees at protected areas in Costa Rica. They found that both residents and non-residents (e.g. foreign tourists) agreed that residents should pay less than non-residents, and residents favor higher fees than non-residents. Travel-cost based research on the value of a tropical rainforest was conducted by Tobias and Mendelsohn (1991). Other volumes such as Lindberg's *Policies for Maximizing Nature Tourism's Ecological*

and Economic Benefits (1991) have application in Latin America, exploring ways in which economic instruments such as user fees and royalties can promote improved management of conservation areas. There has also been recent literature related to the marketing of ecotourism (see Wight, 1993) as well as a bibliography by Ingram and Durst (1987) devoted solely to this aspect.

Published proceedings of various congresses and conferences devoted to an exploration of the topic of ecotourism draw from experiences around the world. This includes such volumes such as *Ecotourism and Resource Conservation*, gathering together papers from the 1989 and 1990 International Symposia on Ecotourism in Mexico and Florida respectively (Kusler, 1991). There is also a collection of papers from the 1991 World Congress on Adventure Travel and Ecotourism as well as a volume summarizing the First Seminar of Nature-Oriented Tourism held in Quito, Ecuador in 1989 (Fundación Ecuatoriana de Promoción Turística[Ecuadorian Foundation of Tourism Promotion][FEPROTUR], 1990). However, one may note that these collections feature more general and descriptive articles by professionals in this field rather than those with insights based on scholarly research.

Valuable references to this topic can also be found in collections dealing with management of protected areas. These include volumes such as that edited by McNeely and Miller(1984), providing perspectives from the International Union

for the Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources'(IUCN) Congress on National Parks and Protected Areas in 1982, and presumably a forthcoming publication from the 1992 IUCN Congress in Venezuela; the collection, *Management of Protected Areas in the Tropics*, compiled by MacKinnon et al(1990); and, *La Situación Ambiental en Centroamerica y El Caribe [The Environmental Situation in Central America and the Caribbean]*, edited by Hedstrom (1989). Many of the articles included in these compilations relate to the measurement of total costs and benefits of tourism in protected areas. One valuable work which addresses the distribution of these costs and benefits is an article by Wells (1992). He concludes that benefits related to protected area tourism can be small at the local level and substantial at the transnational/global level. Meanwhile, economic costs follow an opposite trend, being locally significant and globally small. This suggests that local people are important stakeholders in the process of ecotourism development since they have little to gain and a lot to lose given existing practices and policies related to protected area tourism. This would be consistent with references cited by McNeely (1990) and work by Bromley & Cernea(1989).

Also descriptive in nature have been numerous "popular press" articles featuring ecotourism in general (Kallen, 1990; Kutay, 1991; Quammen, 1992; Jones, 1993) and specific ecotourism projects such as the Kuna in Panama (Breslin

and Chapin, 1984), the Galapagos Islands (Emory, Plage & Plage, 1988), and Lake Titicaca in Peru (Healey and Zorn, 1983). Additionally, there is the consumer-oriented *Earthtrips: A Guide to Nature Travel on a Fragile Planet*, attempting to connect potential "ecotourists" with advice on tour planning and "responsible ecotravel" (Holing, 1991).

However, there has been little social change and development research which has examined local participation--a cornerstone of sustainable development (World Commission on Environment and Development, 1987)--in ecotourism planning and projects. Consequently, Latin American policymakers, development practitioners, and resource managers may not recognize local capabilities or opportunities to benefit from ecotourism policy or become involved in projects (Farrell & Runyan, 1991; Korten, 1984).

Local participation in tourism was touched on by Murphy (1985), descriptively applying concepts from community and systems research in the field of ecology to the development of tourism. Others in various forums have also touched on the subject (Wallace, 1992; Lillywhite & Lillywhite, 1991; Drake, 1991.). Some important linkages between tourism, environment and sustainable development have been made in a descriptive manner by geographer Richard Butler (1989; 1991), who concludes that coordination of policies, pro-active planning, acceptance of limitations on growth, education of all parties involved

and commitment to a long-term viewpoint are prerequisites to the successful linking of tourism and sustainable development. This echoes some of the earliest ideas in this area articulated in philosophical terms by Gerardo Budowski in the article "Tourism and Environmental Conservation: Conflict, Coexistence, or Symbiosis?" which appeared in 1976 in *Environmental Conservation* and expanded upon in *La Conservación Como Instrumento para El Desarrollo [Conservation as an Instrument for Development]* (Budowski, 1985).

The field of development studies offers some of the richest literature related to local involvement and local participation, especially work by Axinn (1991), Chambers (1983 & 1985), Uphoff (1993), Cernea (1985/1991), Korten (1991), Esman (1991) and others who incorporate concepts related to local participation within more general criteria for movement toward sustainable development. All of these scholar-practitioners bring valuable insights gleaned from their work in rural development. Axinn adopts a model for which moves away from the linear growth and focuses on a systems approach. Within his cyclical model, Axinn incorporates a concept of an "aquisition system"--a collection of ties between groups which is utilized by a given local group of people to get what they feel they need to accomplish their desired objectives. This helps in the understanding of linkages between the components in the human system which relate to ecotourism.

Chambers (1983) refers to "insiders" and "outsiders." The "insiders" are the

rural and poor people who inhabit villages where basic needs are not being met; outsiders are those people "concerned with rural development who are themselves neither rural nor poor" and who "underperceive rural poverty." Uphoff (1993) better defines "local participation" is its spatial dimension--that is, what constitutes "local." Cernea (1985/1991) focuses more on the process of putting projects into action, outlining a strategy to put "people" first, as initiators of ideas and strategies for development rather than the last consideration by "technical experts", development workers and others.

The field of political science also makes a contribution to the understanding of local participation, especially as an informal process as elaborated by James C. Scott in *Weapons of the Weak: Everyday Forms of Peasant Resistance* (1985). Scott concludes that techniques of evasion and resistance represent a significant but often ineffective means of class struggle. He discusses a spectrum of resistance as participation, ranging from petty acts of "insubordination" to violent, guerilla activities. Also important to Scott is the role of the "State": its agents, in the form of institutions and the people who represent these institutions; its policies, and the process for developing these policies; and, how the State responds to the various types of local participation.

In relation to information specific to ecotourism and development in Costa Rica, research conducted by geographer Susan Place (1991;1988), examines

ecotourism and rural development in Tortuguero. She notes that "some studies have suggested that local participation from the beginning of conservation projects is critical to their success." Place concludes that ecotourism has emerged as one of the options for integrating parks and people when rural people are able to replace direct exploitation of biological resources in areas of protected status with income from tourism sustained by those resources. Market-oriented, economic research by Laarman and others is Costa Rica-specific. Marajh and Meadows (1992) have synthesized some perspectives involved in development of ecotourism in Latin America and the Caribbean, with a portion dedicated to preliminary observations related to Costa Rica. In a more general vein, articles unrelated to specific research but nonetheless pertinent to ecotourism in Costa Rica (Budowski, T., 1990) have provided important insights regarding its character and the responsibilities of ecotourism operators to assure a tourism industry sensitivity to issues related to sustainability.

In choosing a theoretical framework and research methodology for this thesis, literature in the area of human systems ecology and social impact analysis, both with roots in anthropology and sociology, was consulted. The volume edited by Emilio Moran (1990), *The Ecosystem Approach in Anthropology: From Concept to Practice* provides a rich collection of articles, especially those by Bennett and Moran, which deal with the methodological problems in ecological anthropology.

The recent work by John Bennett in DeWalt and Pelto (1985), that by DeWalt(1988), and various chapters authored in the volume edited by Smith and Reeves(1989) suggests the basis for a framework well-suited for examining ecotourism, which involves complex social transactions at many levels and differing patterns of environmental adaptation. *Social Impact Analysis and Development Planning in the Third World*, with Derman and Whiteford (1985) as editors, is also valuable in providing insights to the theoretical framework and research methods most suited for this investigation as was *Natural Resources and People: Conceptual Issues in Interdisciplinary Research* by Dahlberg and Bennett (1986). Also consulted were several articles related to assessment of issues facing protected areas such as that by Schelhas (1991). Participatory research methods were examined through the work of Robert Chambers (1992) in order to explore ways to collect research information reflecting the human values and perceived needs and goals of local people.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Because of the researcher's perception of ecotourism as complex in nature and closely related to resource management concepts as well as development theories and issues, the researcher chose to modify a theoretical framework from the field of ecological anthropology.

Of particular interest for this research have been concepts presented by the ground-breaking work of John Bennett and their refinement by other scholars who have used these theories of "human systems ecology." Human systems ecology, as described by Smith and Reeves(1989) concerns the "two-way interaction between human values, perceived needs and goals on one hand and the *material conditions* on the other, as these are mediated by technology and social organization." Its most fundamental assumption is that adaptation is the result of human decision-making and so it is necessary to illuminate linkages between the local specifics of human thought and behavior and macro-scale institutions such as markets and government agencies.

The unit of analysis becomes regional in focus through the notion of a "socionatural system." Bennett's concept of socionatural "implies a system in which diverse human groups have adapted in patterned ways to plant, animal and environmental resources, to one another, to hierarchical market and administrative forces, and to pressure groups and other forms of quasi-organized social and

political interests (p.14)." (Smith and Reeves, 1989). It implies a "micro-macro" nexus (Bennett, 1985; Moran, 1990; Smith and Reeves, 1989), appropriate for examining ecotourism which involves complex social transactions (e.g. household decision-making, administrative forces, market conditions) at many levels and differing patterns of environmental adaptation. Through this framework, one can attempt to overcome the ecosystem approach's neglect of the decision-making activities of the individual (Moran, 1990). This type of approach also takes time, space and hierarchical level into account (Gross, 1990; Moran, 1990).

While Bennett's framework and its modified versions serve as a theoretical foundation for understanding the *system* in which ecotourism operates, a different construction is necessary to understand the phenomenon of local participation and its relation to sustainable ecotourism development within this concept of human systems ecology.

The accompanying diagram [Figure 1] indicates the framework developed to incorporate the phenomena of local participation in the context of ecotourism operating within a human system. In this framework, ecotourism is seen as a technology in the form of an idea (rather than "tool"). It is constantly adaptated as a process of mediation between material conditions and the individual human condition. Ecotourism is shaped and mediated by the agents of social organization, which generally incorporate government, markets, kinship, religion

ECOTOURISM within a HUMAN SYSTEM

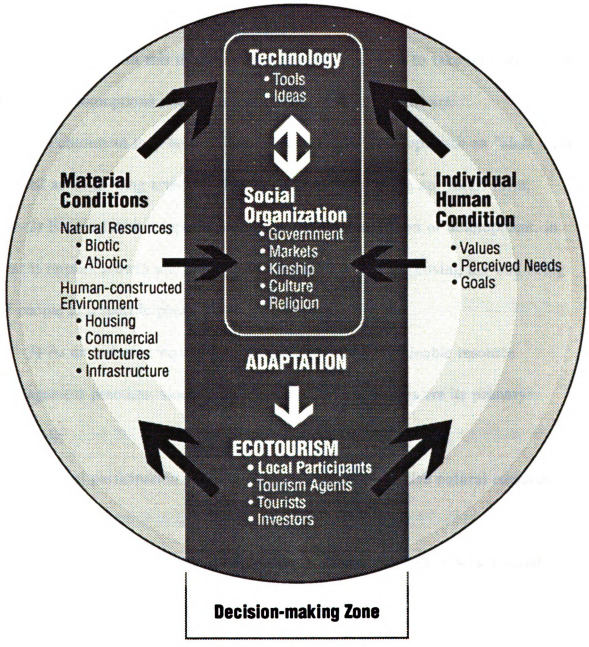


Figure 1. Ecotourism within a human system

and culture. Specific processes are included in the phenomenon of ecotourism, including local participation, tourism industry development, and recreation behavior--all of which occur within a decision-making zone, again affected by the dynamic mediation between material conditions and the individual human condition.

In keeping with this theoretical framework, one needs to take into account the following assumptions related to this specific research. These are:

1) Ecotourism may be considered as a normative concept with an "ideal form as well as an existing activity, which may or may not reach an "ideal" form;

2) Ecotourism is a type of tourism and therefore a form of development, in that it implies growth and change with the intention of improving the well-being of people in a specific place;

3) As an industry, ecotourism is dependent upon sustainable resource management practices, since undisturbed natural ecosystems are its primary materials;

4) Local participation plays an important role in effective natural resources management; and,

5) Resource management is "ultimately a site-specific task in which social, political, legal and historical dimensions are at least as important as environmental ones" (Moran, 1990).

Objectives for this research included: 1) identifying historical and current activities and policy goals guiding development of ecotourism activities in Costa Rica, especially related to local participation; 2) developing an understanding of how selected groups in Costa Rica view "ecotourism"; 3) determining to what extent and how local residents, community leaders and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) have had the opportunity to influence current ecotourism development proposals or projects in a given area; and 4) providing a useful framework for practitioners involved in the area of ecotourism.

KEY CONCEPTS

Ecotourism

For purposes of this study, ecotourism is considered both as an ideal and as practice.

The definition of ecotourism most suited to this research is stated in an "ideal" form by Ziffer (1989). Her definition, hybridized from a wide array of possibilities, portrays what ecotourism *should be* if it is to provide sustainable development. Central to this notion of ecotourism in its idealized form are the ethical obligations inherent for those who travel as ecotourists; conservation requisites that governments should include in their ecotourism development and management strategies; and, an informal code guiding the behavior of responsible

ecotourism operators. For purposes of this study, describing ecotourism in its "ideal" form provides a way to examine how closely existing ecotourism projects and programs in Costa Rica measure up as sustainable development.

Ziffer begins her description of ecotourism as an ideal "form of tourism inspired primarily by the natural history of an area, including its indigenous cultures." Ziffer also adds some standards that must ideally be met by all of those who are participating in ecotourism. For the ecotourist, they visit relatively undeveloped areas in the spirit of appreciation, participation and sensitivity. They practice non-consumptive use of wildlife and natural resources. They also contribute to the visited area through labor or financial means aimed at directly benefitting the conservation of the site and economic well-being of the local residents. The visit will strengthen the ecotourist's appreciation and dedication to conservation issues and specific needs of the local population.

Ziffer stresses the "managed approach" component of her definition, with the country or region making commitments to:

1) establish and maintain ecotourism sites with the participation of local residents

2) marketing the sites appropriately

3) enforcing regulations

4) using proceeds of the ecotourism enterprise to fund the area's land management as well as community development.

However, this study has selected an area of "ecotourism" based on what it is in practice today. In this sense, eotourism is a specialized type of tourism, described simply as travel to natural areas for the purpose of enjoying the natural feature which can be found in a given area. As a form of tourism, it conforms to the life-cycle developed by Butler (In Lindberg, 1991) (Appendix C). In keeping with the Butler model, it may or may not be sustained over time. And, as a type of tourism development "spurred on by the profit-seeking of individual entrepenuers", it has a tendency to over-expand (Healy, 1988).

Ecotourism, as a practiced form of tourism, carries with it positive and negative consequences which correspond to international tourism as a development strategy. Some of the favorable aspects of ecotourism include: the expansion of the economy at relatively little cost; generation of foreign exchange revenue; economic development and diversification; increased economic activity in rural areas; and the establishment of areas to conserve biodiversity (Pearce, 1981; Boo, 1990; Lindberg, 1991.) Some of the unfavorable aspects include: an imbalance of power and influence characteristic of international tourism, with intermediary companies controlling the metropolitan origins of tourists to "the Third World"; inequity, with foreign demands for a luxury being met by local requirements for hard currency, in circumstances where few alternatives exist; dependence on tourism flows which may be affected by external factors such as political instability, bad

weather, and international currency fluctuations; and, environmental degradation (Lea, 1988; Boo, 1990; Butler, 1990).

Sustainable Development

There is a rich collection of literature exploring the definition and significance of "development" and its more environmentally-rooted incarnations of "sustainable development" or "ecodevelopment." It is beyond the scope of this research to delve very deeply into this labyrinth. However, a brief discussion of development and sustainability as it is viewed for this research is necessary.

For the purpose of this research, development as an "ideal" connotes "steady progress toward improvement in the human condition; reduction and eventual elimination of poverty, ignorance and disease; and expansion of well-being and opportunity for all (Esman, 1991, p.5)." It is change, but change directed toward specific, value-driven ends. It is seen as a kind of change which utilizes low-energy strategies, resource recycling, land use and settlement planning based on ecological principles and appropriate technology (Sachs in Adams, 1990).

As a process, development is cyclical in nature and moving between states of balanced development and over- and under-development [Appendix A] (Axinn, 1978), perhaps not unlike the cyclical process of tourism. At any given point in this cycle, it can be viewed as a collection of forces and countervailing forces for

change [Appendix B] (Axinn, 1978).

The normative aspects of sustainability are crucial to its success as a new paradigm for development. However, for purposes of this research, sustainability is viewed more narrowly in its temporal context: that is, *how long* a development activity will last in a state of balanced development within a given human system.

Local Participation

The concept of "local participation" is of fundamental importance to this research since it is postulated that the sustainability of ecotourism is related to the nature and level of local participation. However, since the term "local participation" conveys a variety of meanings, this research considers the concept in its two parts: *local* and *participation.*

In this research, *local* is defined through the approach used by Uphoff (1993). In his work related to grassroots organizations and NGOs in rural development, Uphoff identifies three levels that constitute "local." These include: the locality, the community level, and the group level (See Figure 2 -Levels for Decision-making and Activity for Development).

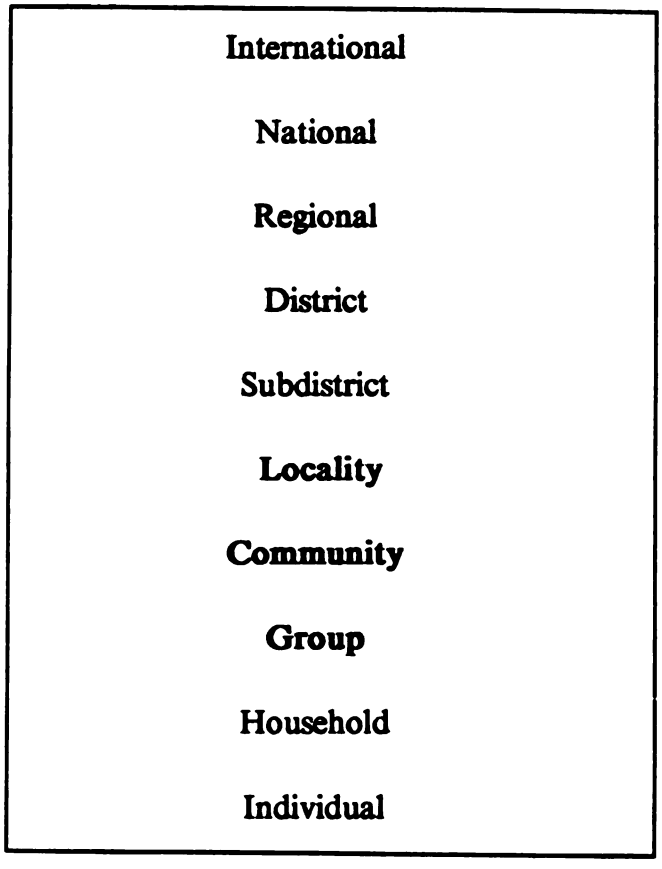


Figure 2. Uphoffs' Levels for decision-making and activity for development. Modified from Uphoff(1993).

The locality includes the set of communities "having social and economic relations, usually with interactions centered around a market town." The "community" refers to an "established socioeconomic residential unit, often referred to as the village level." Finally, Uphoff identifies the group level, as a "self-identified set of persons with some common interest, such as occupational,

age, gender, ethnic, or other grouping." This will include persons in a small residential area like a neighborhood.

While household and individual levels are recognized by Uphoff, he says they do not "present the same problematic issues of 'collective' action found with groups, communities and localities." Local, for the purposes of this research, was explored more at the community and group levels.

"Participation" is less succinctly defined, and cannot be separated from a concept of decision-making. For the purposes of this research, "participation" moves beyond the "numbers"-based notion that "the more people involved, the better the participation." In this researcher's conception, participation also needs to be viewed in its qualitative nature, and in its formal and informal dimensions.

Participation, in its formal dimension, may be stated simply as who comes to the "decision-making table" and how those people are involved in the decisions which are made at that table, especially those related to who will pay the costs and who will receive the benefits which result from any given decision. It is a conception intertwined with Susan George's (1984) questions: Development for whom? By whom?

Following from this, there is the informal dimension of participation: how will those individuals participate if they are not allowed access to the formal decision-making process? How will they express their needs? What strategies will they take

to make their voices heard? What actions will they take to meet their needs? Within this conception of local participation, it can be analyzed in a more qualitative manner in the three ways suggested by Chambers (1985), who examines:

1) *who participates*;

2) *what institutions are involved* (the institutions through which local participation occurs, such as local government authorities, development committees, self-help groups, public meetings, local interest groups); and,

3) *what objectives and functions participation fulfills*: making known local wishes; generating developmental ideas; providing local knowledge; testing proposals for feasibility and improving them; increasing the capability of communities to handle their affairs and to control and exploit their environment; demonstrating support for a regime; doing what government requires to be done; extracting, developing and investing local resources (labor, finance, managerial skills, etc.); and, promoting desirable relationships between people, especially through co-operative work.

Within this analysis of local participation, two streams of initiatives, communication and resources must be taken into account: "those which are top-down, originating in government headquarters and penetrating towards and into the rural areas ["outsiders"]; [and] those which are bottom-up, originating among

the people in rural areas and directed upwards into the government machine ["insiders"] (Chambers, 1985)."

Within this "top-down" stream, local participation may be viewed as *outsider-driven.* Outsider-driven is the kind of participation "outsiders" promote in their policies or practices, encouraging *their* conception of what local participation *should* be. For example, this may include various provisions in law for "public participation" via representation on a commission or designation of revenues to "community" projects, which may or may not serve a "community" interest. Formal outsider-driven partipation tends to be driven by the "government machine" via mandated public participation mechanisms. Informal outsider-driven participation tends to be motivated via the private sector. For example, the offering of employment to local is an informal decision made by an individual entrepeneur. In turn, local workers may or may not choose to work for this enterprise.

On the other hand, "bottom-up" participation might be viewed as *insider-generated*--that is, how "insiders" view their participation and from what sources they generate their desired participation. For instance, here one begins to ask why local people choose to express collective action in a particular way--such as organized strikes or seemingly random sabotage. While focused more on the version of local participation as a "desired outcome" for ecotourism as sustainable

development, the research was conducted in awareness that local participation as "passive resistance" may exist. Insider-generated participation may also take form in new organizations to take action on new ideas that will benefit the community. For example, some communities in Costa Rica have developed ecotourism-related services which are owned and operated by local people. Figure 3 represents this configuration of local participation.

Based on literature (Bromley and Cernea, 1989; MacNeely and Miller, 1984; Budowski, 1985) which suggests that different types of local participation will result in resource managment at different levels of sustainability, it is hypothesized here that evidence will suggest that this will also hold true for local participation in ecotourism. Figure 4 illustrates this relationship.

In summary, for this research, local participation is a qualitative phenomenon which:

- takes place at a specified social/geographic level
- possesses formal and informal dimensions
- relates to who participates and how they participate as well as how many participate
- may be outsider-driven or insider-generated
- serves specific functions

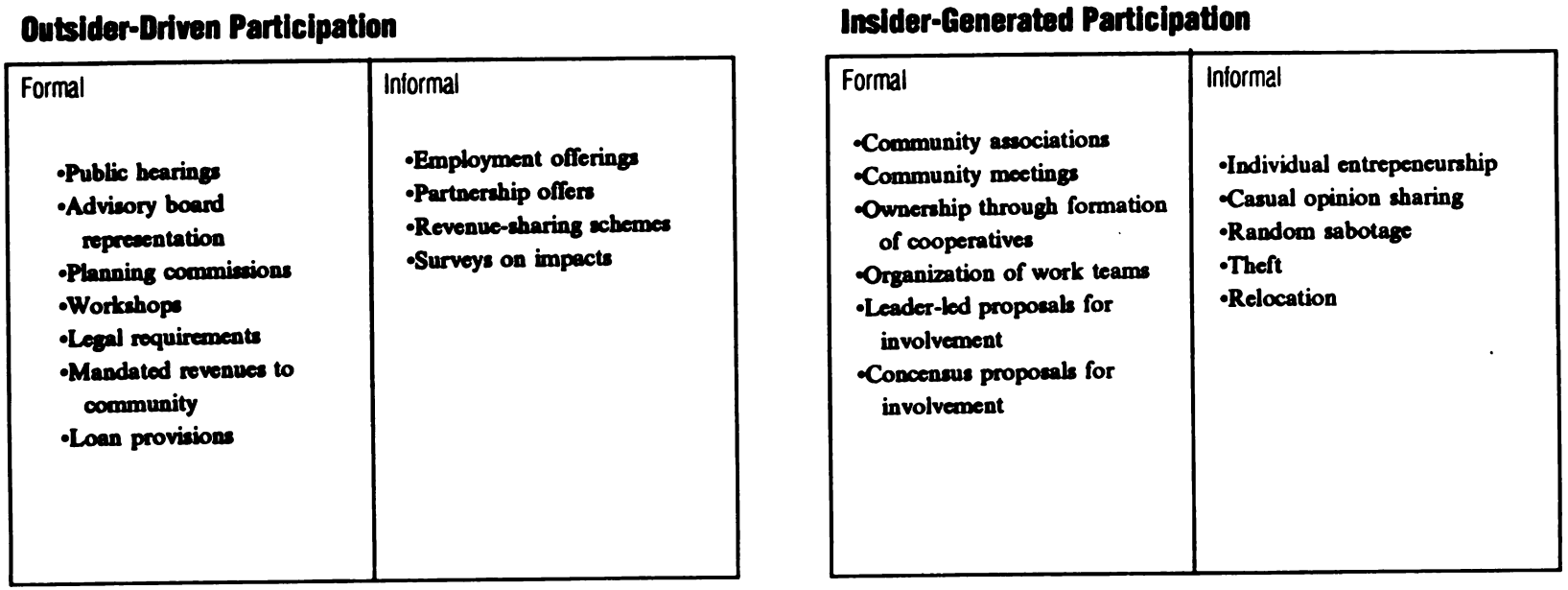


Figure 3. Types and examples of local participation in ecotourism.

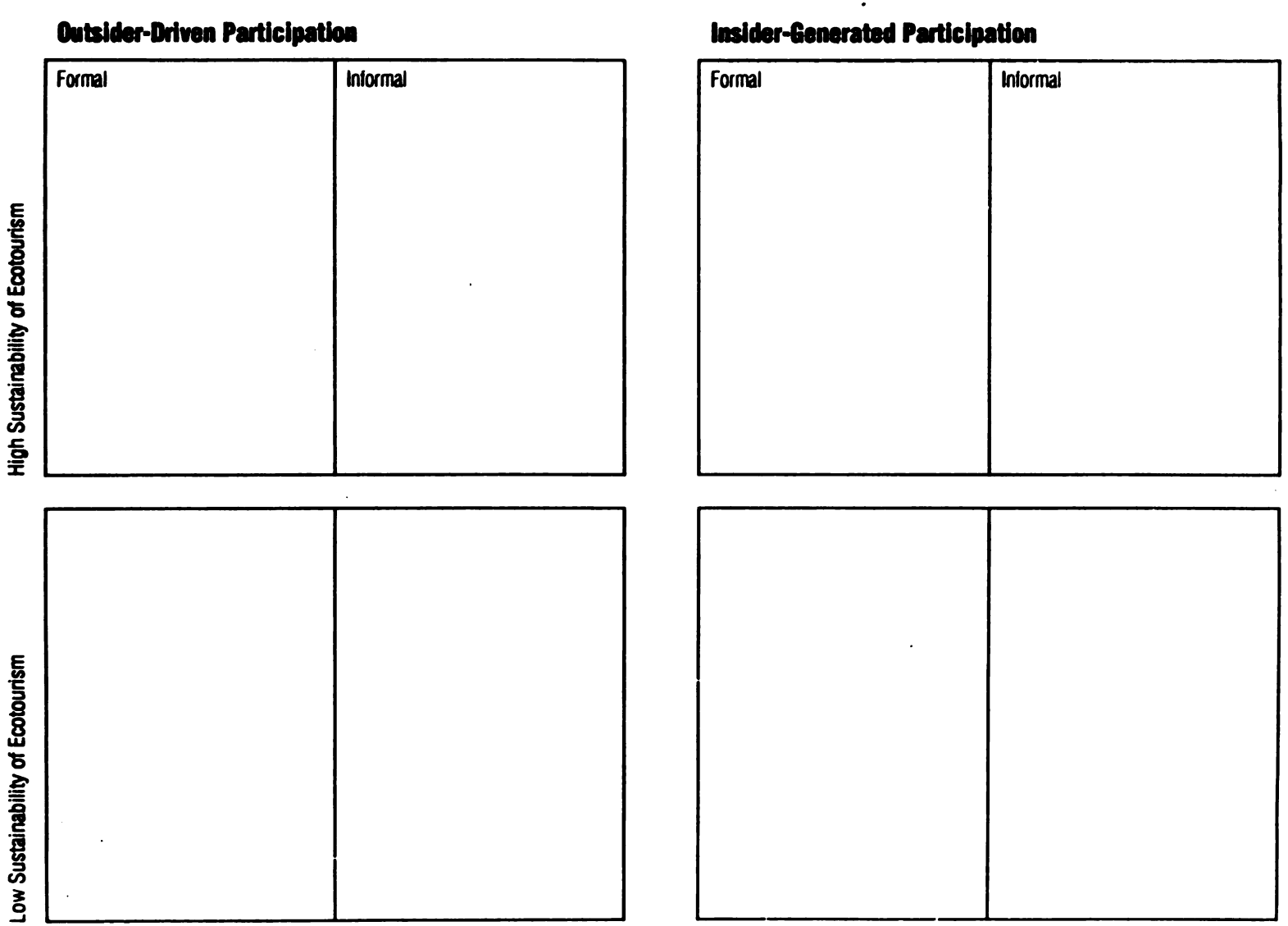


Figure 4. Sustainability of ecotourism related to local participation

RESEARCH METHODS

This study involved primary, qualitative data collection as well as information from secondary data sources. This approach was chosen because of the complexity of the research topic, in hopes of providing a stronger theoretical foundation for a phenomenon which has very little prior research upon which to draw. The intent, however, was to pursue an understanding of the phenomenon from the perspective of local residents since this seems to be neglected in existing research related to this topic.

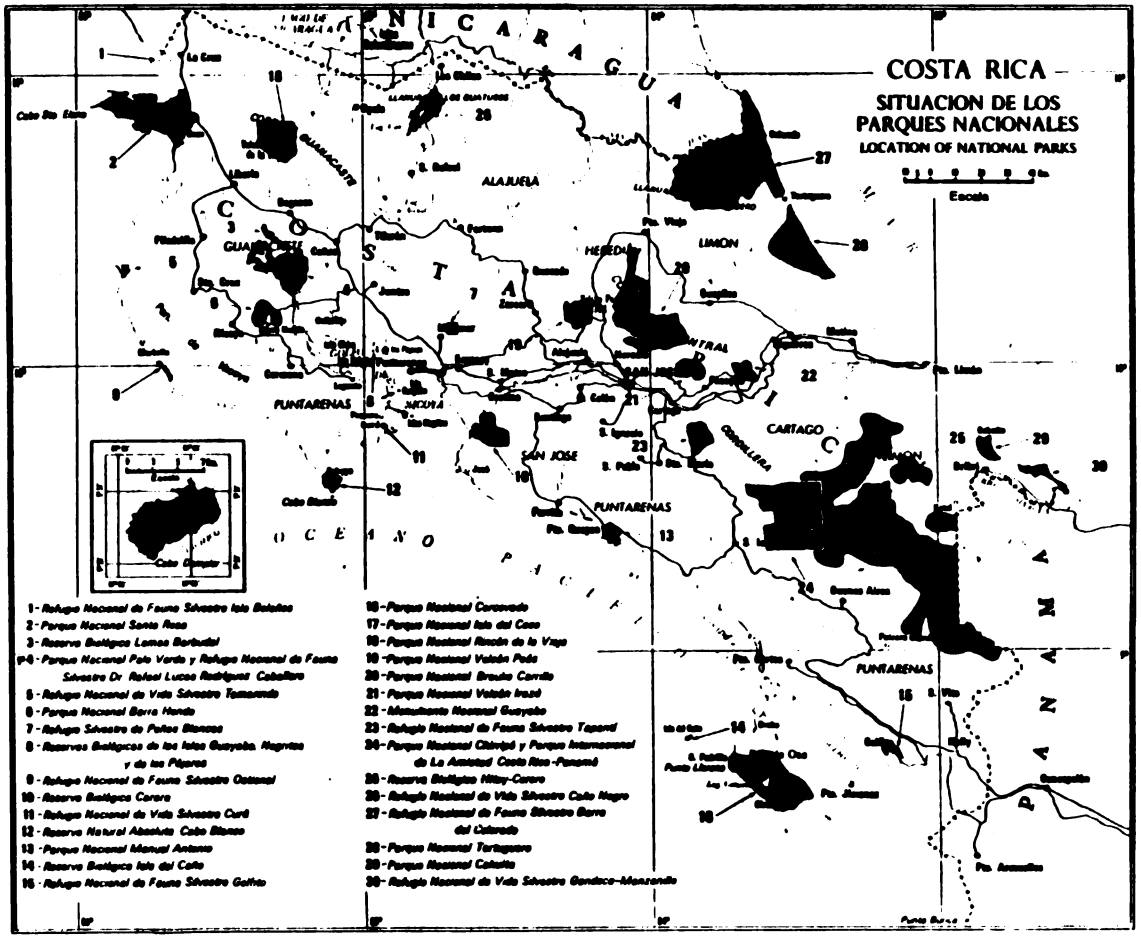
This research was comprised of basically three phases, with various activities carried out over a 20-month period. These phases included 1) preliminary research and field research site selection; 2) field research in Costa Rica, for which funding was provided through a Master's Field Research Fellowship granted by the Inter-American Foundation; and, 3) data analysis and preparation of findings.

In the first phase, from January-December 1992, an extensive literature review was conducted along with interviews of various ecotourism experts in the United States, Costa Rica and Ecuador. During this phase, pre-field research visits were made to Costa Rica and Ecuador in order to determine what areas were encountering high levels of ecotourism activity and identify relevant institutions, policies and programs with involvement in ecotourism. This pre-field research was conducted through exploratory interviews with individuals involved in ecotourism,

conservation, and development as well as site visits and library research of documents useful for this study.

Based on this first phase, Costa Rica was selected as the field research site, using a single case study area of Carara Biological Reserve near the central Pacific Coast (Map 1). A two-pronged approach to field work was used during this second phase, which was carried out during January-April 1993. This involved 1) ecotourism policy research, conducted primarily in the Costa Rican capital of San Jose (approximately five weeks); and 2) a case study of the socionatural system connected with Carara Biological Reserve, in the central Pacific region of Costa Rica (approximately ten weeks). This case study served as a way to examine the implementation of ecotourism policies and practices, with specific attention paid to the component of local participation.

Field research consisted of primary and secondary data collection through: content analysis of newspapers and relevant government and non-government documents in order to chronicle the history of ecotourism development decisions; informal interviews with policy-makers and NGO representatives to chart policy development and implementation, especially efforts to involve local communities; and, open-ended formal and informal interviews with rural citizens (*campesinos*) in the case study region to provide information on the extent to which they participate in or resist ecotourism planning and projects in the region. Nearly all



Map 1. Location of National Parks in Costa Rica. Carara Biological Reserve is indicated as No.10. Source: Bosa (1988).

of the interviews were conducted in Spanish, a second language for the researcher.

Participant observation and participatory research (to a lesser extent) were also used in primary data collection in the various communities investigated as part of second phase.

In the case of the open-ended interviews, interviews were conducted with individuals who had differing levels of "voice" in the community. Additionally, taking into account a potential interviewer bias, a series of interviews and conversations were conducted with sampled individuals in order to establish a more trusting relationship (Jones, 1985).

Content analysis was used to interpret the data from interviews as well as newspapers/documents. Concerns about reliability were avoided since only one coder worked with the data.

While in the case study region, the researcher lived in the homes of local residents in the communities of Tárcoles and Bijagual, as well as spending approximately two weeks in the Carara Biological Reserve's main station. In order to not "go native" (Miles and Huberman, 1984), day and week-end trips were taken out of the area on a regular basis.

The third phase, consisting of data analysis and the report of findings, was conducted from May-August 1993.

While the research methods selected proved to be suitable for this research, there were some limitations. While the researcher was confident in her Spanish language abilities, interviewing in a second language always leaves room for the possibility of misunderstanding. Whenever in doubt, the researcher would always ask for clarification of responses. Also, the good nature of the Costa Rican people and their desire to "help the *gringa*" may have persuaded individuals to provide responses that would please the interviewer. Efforts to remedy this influence included "testing" the response by asking a follow-up question or a similar question at a later time. Whenever possible, triangulation of data was used. Yet, much of the available secondary data relevant to local communities was too outdated or aggregated at levels which did not serve the purposes of this research. However, given the nature of this research with its focus on local participation, primary data reflecting the viewpoints of local people were considered to hold more value than "official" secondary data.

While the researcher planned to use visual participatory methods (e.g. drawings, graphic presentations) more extensively, they were found to need more modification than expected and so were employed in a limited way. This limitation with these methods may have been due to: the researcher's experience in their use; the fact that there was an individual researcher versus a team of researchers (preferred for these methods); or cultural differences between Costa Rican society

and organization and the cultures and customs of the African and Asian collaborators with whom many of these methods were developed. It should also be noted that with few exceptions, most of the publications which have used participatory research methods have focused on action-oriented projects rather than gathering data for more exploratory research.

THE COSTA RICAN CONTEXT

Since the 1850s, Costa Rica has relied upon its natural resource base for its development. Until 1950, it was predominantly an agro-exporting economy. Coffee and bananas reflected 91 percent of total exported goods. Although Costa Rica had her representative democracy, an oligarchy of coffee with producers as the dominant social class controlled the provision of minimal services to the larger population. About 67% of population was agrarian and there was no expansion of the internal market.

From 1950-1963, "modernization" took place, with the resultant state bureaucracy and emergence of social classes. Public spending increased by 70%, with funds focused in areas of health and education. There were also large efforts in infrastructure improvement (roads, energy projects,etc.). By 1963 until 1973, import-substitution led development. Costa Rica looked to increase her internal market via the regional market of Central America. An empresarial state appeared

in 1974 until 1979, when Costa Rica entered a period of crisis. A deepening fiscal deficit and external debt occured as a result of continued public spending, despite worsening international economic conditions and the marked deterioration of the Central American Common Market due to violence in the region. The public debt tripled between 1978 and 1982, from $1.1 billion to $3.1 billion. Interest payments alone on the debt in 1982 would have required 70 percent of Costa Rica's export earning (Quesada M., 1990).

From 1983-1989, a period of recuperation occurred as the government pared itself down, increased attention to exportation, controlled inflation, augmented internal production and improved salaries and employment opportunities.

Today, the government has described itself as "orientador del desarrollo dentro un concepto de amplia participación [advisor of development within a concept of wide participation]." Tourism plays an important part in this strategy, now the second largest earner after bananas (EIU, 1993). This revenue, however, cannot counter a more rapid growth of imports. In the first ten months of 1992, the trade deficit nearly doubled to $462 million, compared with $233 million during the same period in the previous year. This deficit appeared to be offset by capital inflows, since international reserves remained stable (EIU, 1993).

Despite the depletion of its natural capital during Costa Rica's

"development,"[1] the country's conservation program has been hailed as a model for other developing countries. An estimated 27 percent of the country's national territory is under some type of protected status in an attempt to preserve biodiversity, which represents about five percent of the planet's plant and animal species (Umaña, 1990). Costa Rica's natural resources have attracted scientists from all over the world for tropical forest research and spawned a collection of institutions addressing issues of tropical agriculture and forestry, and more recently, biodiversity. Today, the wealth of Costa Rica's ecosystems is also the "capital" in an aggressive government push to promote ecotourism as a strategy for sustainable development (Swet, 1990). The Calderón Administration (1990-1994) has continued the push for ecotourism as part of a wider development strategy with the government serving to "orient development within a concept of wider participation." Simply put by Tourism Minister Luis Manuel Chacon, Costa Rica is actively trying to "increase the length of stay and the money spent and attract higher quality tourists (Orlebar, 1991)."

Legislation over the past four decades in Costa Rica has been directed

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[1]Raul Solórzano et al., in **Accounts Overdue: Natural Resource Depreciation in Costa Rica**, provide evidence that Costa Rica's accounting system has failed to make the economic costs of environmental degradation explicit. For example, 1989 depreciation of three resources--forests, soils and fisheries--amounted to more than 9 percent of gross domestic product.

primarily toward the promotion and development of tourism, with marketing strategies attempting to capitalize on the natural heritage of the country, and incentive programs which use various tax-related mechanisms and infrastructure financing to encourage tourism investment in Costa Rica. Less planning and policy development has been oriented toward the management of tourism activity; and still less directed specifically for the management of ecotourism as a subset of this form of development.

The country's aggressive promotion of ecotourism (Quesada, 1990; Umaña,1990) and closing agricultural frontier offer a unique opportunity to assess ecotourism's role as a development strategy.

One may view Costa Rica's push for ecotourism in relation to its substantial external debt. Debt service charges alone represented about 41% of exports in 1990 in an economy that has a Gross Domestic Product of an estimated $5.6 billion (22% from industry; 19% from agriculture) (U.S.Department of State, 1992). In response to this situation, international lending institutions such as the International Monetary Fund (IMF), United States' Agency for International Development (U.S. AID) and the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB) have developed lending strategies aimed at maintaining stability and promoting trade and investment liberalization (U.S. Department of State, 1992), such as the $270 million multi-year loan program being considered the the World Bank and IDB at

the start of 1993. So it is not surprising that the tourism sector would be looked to by government officials and private entrepreneurs as a means of generating revenue for the country. And it seems logical to consider ecotourism as one of the promising foreign exchange generators for a country with a rich natural heritage and stable political structure.

During the past decade, growth in the tourism industry in Costa Rica has been dramatic and it is a boom which continues unabated (Economist Intelligence Unit, 1993). According to data from the Instituto Costariccense de Turismo(ICT) [Costa Rican Tourism Institute], the number of international tourists arriving in Costa Rica has doubled, increasing from 326,142 in 1983 to 620,000 in 1992 (See Table). This influx generated revenue of $427 million in 1992, up 29% from 1991 (EIU, 1993). If projections hold true, by 1994 tourism will bring $500 million to the national economy, supplanting bananas as the first-place foreign export earning industry by the middle of the decade (Fernandez, 1992; Orozco Coto et. al, 1991; EIU, 1993).

Current data indicate that about 74.5% of the foreign tourists visit one or more of Costa Rica's national parks, reserves and wildlife refuges (CANATUR,ICT, and MIRENEM, 1992).

As a result of this increased flow of tourists, there has been a building boom to house Costa Rica's guests, with the number of rooms available jumping 63%

over three years--from 5,456 rooms in 1989 to 8,661 rooms in 1992, and with increasingly higher occupancy (ICT, 1992).

Orozco Coto et. al. report that each tourist spends approximately $95.88 per day. However, this does not include the amount spent on hotels and other services as a result of contracts with international tourism companies (Orozco Coto, et al, 1991). The economic multiplier of tourism income in Costa Rica has been estimated to be between 3.2 and 5.5 (Chaverri in Boo, 1990).

Tourism-related Institutions

Costa Rica has one national agency charged specifically with tourism responsibilities: the Instituto Costariccense de Turismo (ICT)[Costa Rican Institute of Tourism], located within the Ministerio de Economía [Ministry of Economy]. ICT's mission, defined by law in its 1955 enabling legislation, is to increase tourism by:

1) developing the image and visitation of Costa Rica; 2) promoting the construction and maintenance of facilities for tourist lodging and recreation; 3) promoting Costa Rica externally; 4) promoting and supervising the private sector and its attention to tourism. (Salazar, 1991).

In theory, ICT is available to help communities promote their tourist product as long as a community has a locally organized Chamber of Tourism (Pedersen,

1988).

Other sectors with responsibilities and interests in ecotourism include the Ministerio de Planificación y Política Económia[Ministry of Planning and Political Economy], which places the tourism development in the broader context of national development. The Ministerio de Recursos Naturales, Energía y Minas (MIRENEM) [Ministry of Natural Resources, Energy and Mines] theoretically controls the environmental impacts of tourism development, and is also involved through the Servicio de Parques Nacionales (SPN) [National Parks Service] in the natural resources management of popular ecotourism destinations. Responsibilities for watching over protected lands outside the purview of SPN, falls to the Ministerio de Agricultura y Ganaderia (MAG) [Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock], primarily the Dirección General Forestal (DGF) [Forest Service] and the Instituto de Desarrollo Agrario(IDA)[Institute of Agrarian Development]. IDA has been exploring the potential for "agro-ecotourism" during the past two years as a complementary economic activity to the basic food production of the campesino, which often fails to meet commercial levels (Arrieta M., 1991).

Municipalities also may control certain land use decisions related to tourism development via local ordinances, a power provided as part of the Municipal Code (Salazar C., 1991).

A variety of laws regarding the "national patrimony" also exist, helping to

define responsibilities for the protection of archaeological sites, natural monuments and other land forms which may serve as tourist attractions.

Various training programs to encourage a labor force skilled for tourism (such areas as arts and crafts) are handled through the Instituto Nacional de Apprendizajze [National Training Institute], part of the Ministerio de Trabajo [Ministry of Labor].

Despite national tourism laws and provisions in other laws which have some reference to tourism, the inadequate legislation relating tourism to environmental concerns, and a lack of administrative coordination (Salazar C., 1991; Quesada M., 1990) have allowed management of new ecotourism enterprises to fall primarily under the direction of the private sector. Enforceable laws which could be used to guide and control ecotourism exist, such as that regulating the environmental impact review process and restrictions on construction in maritime zones, but in many instances, these laws have not been enforced.

The Cámara Nacional de Turismo (CANATUR)[National Chamber of Tourism]) along with other private-sector associations play important roles, primarily in the promotion of tourism and the endorsement of projects. Additionally, there is a national ecotourism commission. Members have been appointed to this Commission and the group is operating informally.

Interactions between the various agencies and programs are encouraged

through formal agreements or informal cooperation. [Note: For a more detailed description of the authority and responsibilities of the various government agencies, see Appendix D].

Laws & Institutions Related to Local Participation

Despite the deeply-rooted tradition of democracy and the in Costa Rica, the formal mechanisms for local participation in tourism, and in fact, resource management in general are very few.

One of the few explicit provision for local participation is the Ley Indigena. Through one provision, changes in indigenous reserves or indigenous-owned areas must be authorized by the indigenous community and CONAI (the government's Comisión Nacional de Asuntos Indigenas[National Commission on Indigenous Subjects]) (Salazar C., 1991). Recently enacted legislation related to the administration of Areas of Conservation, encourages the formation of groups of "stakeholders" to assist in the management of the areas.

Provincial and local governments, where individuals could presumably have more access, are seen as weak. Of the two, municipal governments in each canton [county] have more potential influence, having the authority to grant or deny construction permits, liquor licenses and other actions. However, in many coastal areas, such as that included in the buffer zone of Carara, municipal governments

are "typically understaffed, unable or unwilling to systematically collect revenue, highly politicized, and sometimes corrupt (Foer and Olsen, 1992).

While there is an environmental impact review process for proposed projects, there is no provision for formal public participation, such as public hearings. However, once completed, the review document is public information.

One of the means of local participation is through non-governmental organizations, which are increasing in Costa Rica. In some areas, non-governmental organizations such as ATEC (Talamanca Association for Eco-tourism and Conservation) have been attempting to force the government to live up to its mandates or are calling for legislative reform in order to assure development which is in the interests of local people.

Finally, it needs to be noted that Costa Rica constitutionally guarantees on behalf of the individual and society the right to a healthy environment. Recourse for violation of this right is exercised throughout the Costa Rican judicial system.

DESCRIPTION OF CASE STUDY REGION

The socionatural region of Costa Rica examined in this research may be roughly demarcated on Map 2. This includes the city of Orotina to the north and Jacó in the south. The Bay of Nicoya defines the western boundary, with the Cerro of Turrubares as the eastern boundary. The region has the Carara Biological Reserve at its heart, and the lower portion of the river Grand Tárcoles as its main ecological "artery" and the highway, Costanera Sur, as the human-built "artery." This demarcation attempts to include not only geomorphological features, but also the social networks which extend beyond political boundaries. For purposes of this research, this area will be referred to as the Central Pacific Region.

Within this area, the interaction between three communities--Tárcoles, Bijagual and Quebrada Ganado-- and the ecotourism attraction of Carara Biological Reserve were studied.

Carara Biological Reserve

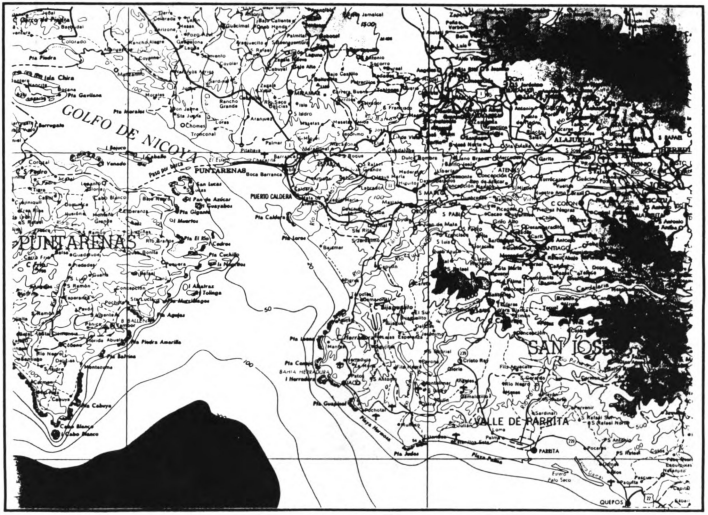
One of the most outstanding natural features in the Central Pacific Region of Costa Rica is Carara Biological Reserve [RBC-Reserva Biológica Carara]. Part of Costa Rica's extensive public lands holding since 1979, RBC extends over 4,700

hectares or 11,616 acres near the Central Pacific Coast, alongside the Rio Grande de Tárcoles (Map 3). The reserve, along with a patchwork of protected lands and remnant forests, are critical to the preservation of biodiversity and the protection of water supply for roughly 18,000 human inhabitants of the region (Cifuentes A, 1983).

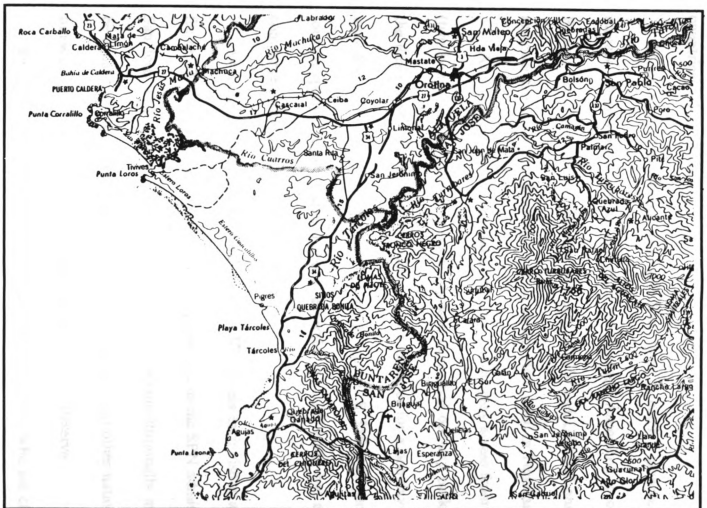
Once part of a small number of large land holdings, the Reserve represents one of the largest intact forests in the region (Gildesgame, 1990). Since the colonial period, surrounding forest resources and wildlife of the area "have been nearly totally destroyed and it is difficult to find forest remnants of more than 40 hectares" (Cifuentes A., et al., 1983).

While the ecological attributes of the RBC and surrounding communities are carefully delineated in the RBC management plan (Cifuentes A., et al, 1983), most notably, RBC provides habitat for nearly 240 scarlet macaws (*Ara macao*). This represents about 80% of the population of this endangered species (Vaughn, McCoy and Liske, 1991), for which there is high ecotouristic value.

Since the completion of the highway Costanera Sur in 1985, RBC has witnessed an exponential increase in the number of visitors who come to walk its two trails through the tropical forest which serves as a transition from the tropical dry forests to the north and the moist forests to the south. Between 1988 and 1992, the number of visitors had increased 686 percent, rising from 3501 to 24,015



Map 2. Central Pacific region of Costa Rica, roughly demarcated by the center quadrant (1:500,000). Source: Instituto Geográfico de Costa Rica (1987).



Map 3. Case study area of Carara Biological reserve and surrounding communities of Tárcoles, Bijagual, and Quebrada Ganado (1:200,000). Source: Instituto Geográfico de Costa Rica (1988).

visitors annually. Most of these visitors are foreigners from non-Spanish speaking countries (RBC, 1992).

Many of the "ecotourists" who visit RBC hope to catch a glimpse of the macaw, whose voice is just as loud as its red plumage. According to one study in Peru, a free living macaw generates between US$750 and US$4700 annually in revenues from tourists (Beissinger and Buchner, 1991, cited in Norman, 1993.)

As a result of RBC's natural attractions and its easy access from San José (two hours via highway), tour operators have developed one-day packages to visit the Reserve. Vaughn et al (1991) estimate that expenses for a one-day visit including hotel, food, car rental or tour range from U.S. $86-$100 per tourist. One tour company. Geotur, claims a special expertise for RBC visits, but many companies offer package trips to Carara.

As is the case at other national parks, RBC charges each visitor an entrance fee of c200[2] or roughly US$1.46, which is passed on to the SPN administration in San Jose. This amount is set by executive order but constitutionally mandated to be equal for both Costa Rican nationals and visitors from other nations. Many times this fee will be included in a tour package to the Reserve.

The Reserve is administered by employees of the SPN, who are charged with

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[2]Throughout this document, the exchange rate used is 137 Costa Rican colones for each U.S. dollar.

the protection and management of the reserves' physical and biological resources. There is a main station, and two satellite posts--one in Bijagual and the other in Bajo Capulin.

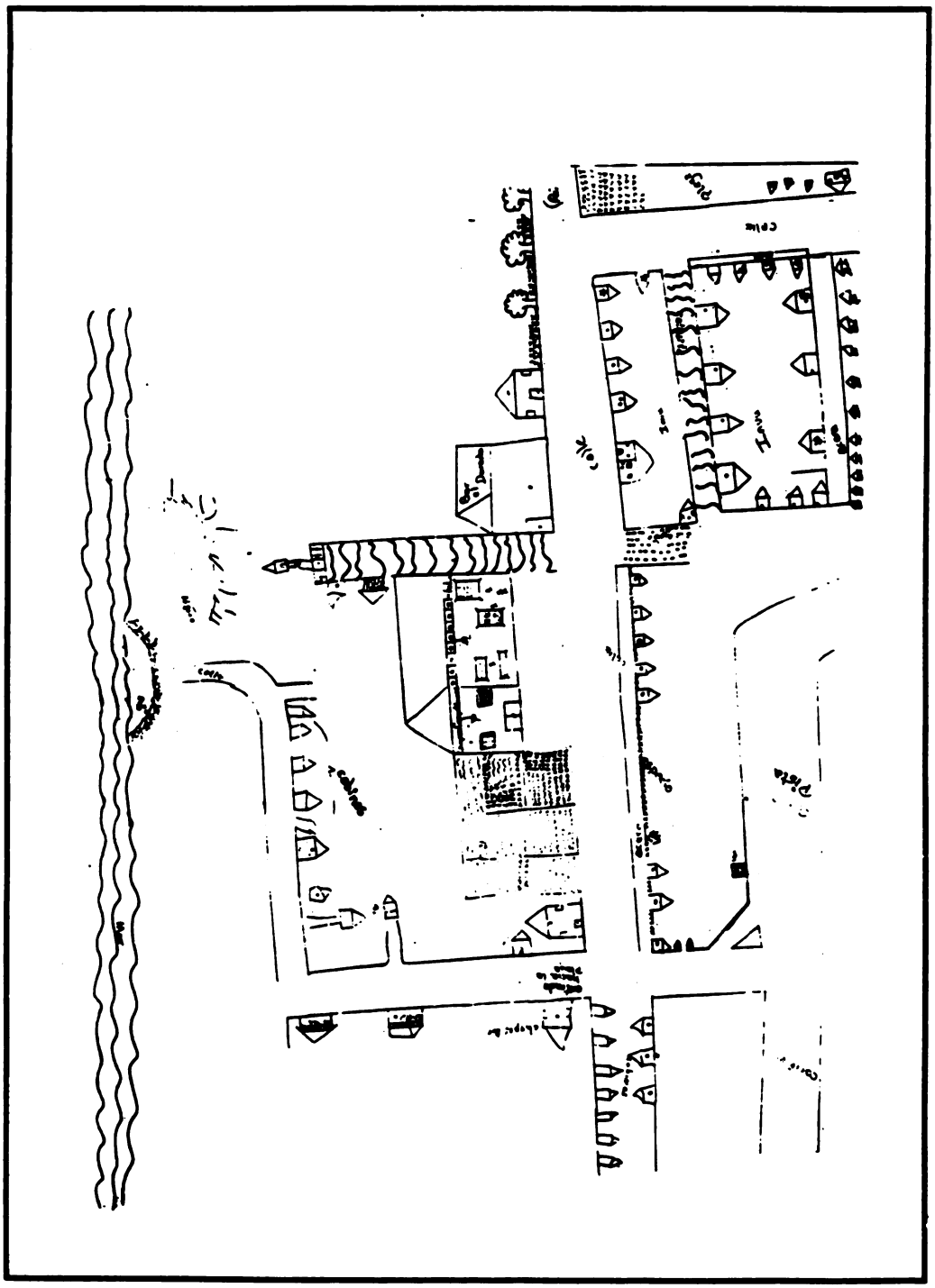
Selected Communities Near the Carara Biological Reserve

While many, small communities can be found in the buffer zone of the RBC, this study focuses primarily on three of the larger communities: Tárcoles, Bijagual, and Quebrada Ganado.

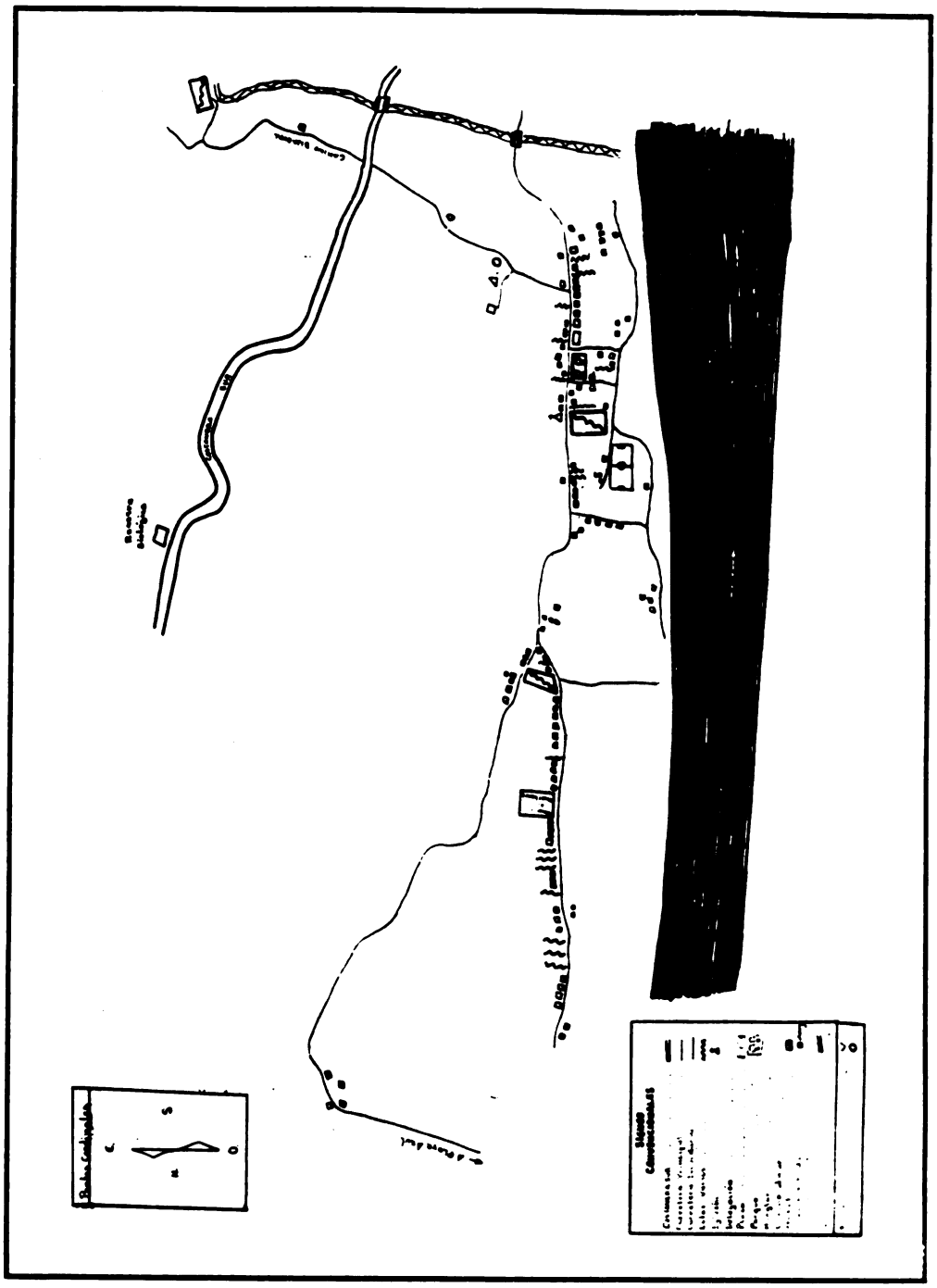
Tarcoles

Tárcoles is the largest community in close proximity to the ecotourism activity at the RBC headquarters. Health records (Ministerio de Salud, 1992) indicate a year-round population in the area of Tárcoles of 531, representing 126 families. About 32 percent (169) of the residents are under 10 years of age.

Today, its residents view Tárcoles as two "neighborhoods" linked by bridge over the Rio Tarcolitos, located about 3 kilometers south of the RBC (See Map 4). On the south side of the river is what the local residents refer to as "INVU," in reference to the Instituto Nacional de Vivienda y Urbanismo [National Institute of Housing and Urban Planning], which constructed most of the residential dwellings found there. "Cabinas" [cabins] line the beachfront, and are owned, with one exception, by Costa Ricans. There are two "official" pescaderias [fish markets] in



Map 4. Social map of the INVU area of Tárcoles, prepared by community research collaborators.



Map 5. Social map of the commercial district of Tarcoles

the area of INVU--La Cristal, and the Coopetarcoles, along with three *pulperias*[mini-markets] (one of which has a community telephone), one small *supermercado*[supermarket], a bar/dance salon, and a restaurant/bar.

Over the small bridge near the mouth of the Tarcolitos river, one finds "Tárcoles." This might be considered the "commerical" district of the community, with a dance salon, several bars, pool room, a small restaurant, one hotel (capacity of 100 people) with a restaurant, pool, and a community telephone, and another, smaller hotel (about 20 people). A primary school is also located on this side, as well as a rural health and nutrition center, and a livestock farm, last remnant of the large latifundia of which Tarcoles was a part earlier in its history.

Although not included in the first descriptions of their community, residents also recognize other "Tarcoleños" who live in houses north and south along the Costanera Sur. Additionally, there are social linkages with the smaller beach community of Playa Azul, with 74 year-round residents representing about 12 families (Ministerio de Salud, Tarcoles, 1992).

According to social mapping conducted as part of this research, the most common income-generating activity is artisanal fishing, which became predominant in Tárcoles within the past decade. In INVU, approximately 46 of 72

working individuals were identified as fishermen.[3] They employ a type of fishing more rudimentary than the semi-industrial shrimp or sardine boats which can often be seen off-shore. Usually a two-person team will travel out into the Bay of Nicoya in 16-foot "pangas", with 25-horsepower boats mounted at the back. Fishing is conducted using one of two methods: line fishing (*linea*) or net fishing (*trasmallo*). Many local fishermen sell their catch to one or more of the six area *pescaderias*. The fish are destined for various markets in Costa Rica for domestic sale and exporting companies for sale in the United States. An "exceptional week" of fishing may generate as much as US $585 per individual fisherman (Romero, February 8, 1993; Miranda G., February 3, 1993). However, this depends on a variety of factors including number of days fished, variety caught, etc. Additionally, fishermen report a substantial drop (400 percent) in catch over the past five years which they attribute to overfishing by semi-industrial and industrial fishing operations, increased numbers of artisanal fishermen, and pollution. This is consistent with a reported decline since 1982 of the artisanal fishery's asset value with increasing effort in the Gulf of Nicoya. (Solórzano et.al., December 1991). Other income-generating activity includes national tourism, agriculture, business,

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[3]Nearly all of those participating in artesinal fishing are men. However, there are several women in the community who occasionally join their male partners as part of the fishing team.

construction and miscellaneous day-labor. Reported data indicates a monthly family income averaging $US 706 (Ministerio de Salud-Tárcoles, 1992).

Various community organizations exist in Tárcoles, the most active of which is the Asociación de Desarrollo Integral [Association of Integral Development], with various committees that primarily handle infrastructure needs of the community, such as road & bridge construction and maintenance, water supply (untreated from mountain streams, carried by plastic tubing), adequate housing, and community areas maintenance (e.g. two soccer fields and the cemetery) (ADI, 1988-1992). There are also other committees associated with the school, such as the parents of students. Until recently, the fishermen's cooperative ("Coopetárcoles") was active, as was a cooperative organized by the wives of the fishermen ("Supercoopetárcoles").

Transportation services consist of: bus service for Orotina and Jacó, available at the two entrances from the community to the highway and one which passes round-trip through the community to Playa Azul once per day; taxi service from Orotina; and, some private autos, which often serve as taxis, for hire as needed. Walking within the community is common, although bicycles are frequently used for longer distances such as to Playa Azul, Quebrada Ganado or beaches further south.

Preventative health services are available through the health post, which is

open at specified times during the week. Also, routine care, such as insulin injections, is handled by trained volunteers who live in the community. Other health services are obtained in the clinic of Orotina or Jacó or the hospital in Puntarenas or San José. While there is no Alcoholics Anonymous or Al-Anon group, alcoholism and drug abuse are mentioned frequently by residents and health care workers as one of the most challenging community problems.

Bijagual

Bijagual is an agricultural community about 13 kilometers from RBC head-quarters. It is accessible from the highway via approximately 10 kilometers of winding, dirt roads, which occasionally "touch" the edge of RBC.

Residents view the community as three parts: the village of Bijagual and its two *asentamientos: Bijagual* I (also called the "hacienda," in reference to the area's history as part of a large farm owned by one person); and, Bijagual II. These latter two refer to the settlements created through the Instituto de Desarrollo Agrario's [Institute of Agrarian Development] program of land reform. These *asentamientos* are comprised of a collection of small parcels of land, averaging 15.4 hectares per family (according to IDA, March 1993), which are sold at low prices to qualifying campesinos who agree to cultivate the property. There are 18 parcels in Bijagual I and 22 parcels in Bijagual II. Including these settlements,

government data (Ministerio de Salud-Bijagual, 1992) indicate a total of 331 residents, comprising 75 families. Of these residents, 26.5 percent(88) are less than 10 years old.

Nearly all of the residents are involved in agriculture--either subsistence farming, cash cropping, livestock raising, farm labor, or market preparation and transport of agricultural products. One of the most important cash crops to community is *tiquisque (Xanthosoma sagittifolium)*, an edible tuber which is exported to the United States. Other important cash food crops include chiles, tomatoes, beans, corn and coffee, to a lesser extent, bananas, pineapple and coffee. Yucca (or cassava) are grown for consumption in the home. Some tree nurseries are also found, growing species primarily suited for woodworking. Managed livestock in the area includes primarily cattle and calves, horses, pigs and chickens. The European Economic Community has provided technical assistance and credit to farmers and financial assistance to the community for various buildings and shared equipment.

Although not formally surveyed, residents reported a wide range of annual incomes, from what one resident noted as the average family income of US$137 per month to US$906 per month calculated by another farm family. Typical monthly wages for soil preparation, harvesting and other manual farm labor is

about US$100.[4] Those women who work outside the home usually do so on a temporary basis, either working to pack the tiquisque after harvest for shipment, or doing domestic jobs (e.g.cleaning, ironing) for the wealthier households. Many of those interviewed cited job employment for young people, especially young women, as a high-priority concern. Some noted that the young people are leaving for larger urban areas since they lack interest in farming.

Preventative health services are offered through the local health post. Residents obtain other services at the health clinic in Orotina or the hospital in San Jose or Puntarenas. There is also an organized Alcoholics Anonymous group as well as its counterpart, Al-Anon.

There are two primary schools in the area--one in Bijagual and the other in Bijagual I. Those who have the means to continue in high school, must travel to Orotina or Puriscal. Area churches include a Catholic church, which was built by parishioners, and an evangelical Christian church.

Round-trip bus transportation is provided once a day from Bijagual to Orotina. Orotina taxis will also provide service to Bijagual. Other forms of motorized travel include privately-owned autos and motorcycles. Horse travel is

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[4]As reported in *La Nación* (pp.4-5A) on March 8, 1993, data processed by the government's Institute of Economic Science Research indicated that in 1991, the basic household necessities (food, clothing, shelter) cost US$324.

also common, especially between Bijagual and Asentamiento I, as well as other smaller communities in the area; and especially during the rainy system.

All homes in Bijagual have electricity, but the asentamientos are awaiting hook-up to the system. Water is taken from mountain streams via above-ground piping. There is one community telephone, located at the larger of two pulperias in Bijagual.

Recreation facilities include a sports field, the *salon communal* ("town hall"), a *redondel* (bullring) and a privately owned pool hall.

Community organizations in Bijagual include the Asociación de Desarrollo Agrario (also in Bijagual I, Asociación de Productores, Asociación de Agricultores, the Junto Pastoral (related to the Catholic church) and two school-related committees, the Patronato Escolar (Parent's Association) and the Junta Educativa (school board).

Quebrada Ganado

There are 701 residents, representing 200 families, who reside in this community (Ministerio de Salud-Quebrada Ganado, 1992), located about 6 kilometers from the RBC headquarters. Of these residents, 32% (230) are under 10 years of age.

Quebrada Ganado is very strongly tied to the 300-hectare beach-side resort

"Club Punta Leona," often referred to by residents simply as "The Club." While historically, Quebrada Ganado was an agricultural community, the construction of Club Punta Leona in 1976 transformed the local economy from primarily cattle ranching and crop production (rice, beans and corn) to one of providing service labor for the hotel and private condominiums at the Club. According to Club administrators, of its 238 full-time employees, 96 are from Quebrada Ganado. Others from the community are hired as part-time or temporary employees. While wages vary by position, Punta Leona administrators indicated that the average monthly wage for a waiter at the Club was US$ 620. Data was unavailable for average monthly income.

The community has one primary school, as well as a pre-school. A Catholic church can be found near a sports field, large bullring and town hall. Business establishments include two bars/dance salons, a bakery, two small restaurants, and two supermarkets as well as a pulperia. Local residents credit, in part, the steady flow of employment and the civic contributions made by the Club with the growth and well-being of the community.

Electricity is available to all residents, and there is a community telephone at the larger of the two supermarkets.

Primary community organizations are the Asociación de Desarrollo Integral, with its various committees, as well as a church committee, and two school-related

organizations-- the Junta de Educación (school board) and the Patronato Escolar (parents'association). The Club employees have also organized as a group to provide liaison between the community and the Club.

The community is served by bus, which makes a loop through the community. The Club also provides daily bus service for its employees, corresponding to shift schedules. Motorcycle travel is also common and there are some private autos owned by community residents. Bicycle and foot traffic is also common. There are sidewalks and paved road throughout the community.

FINDINGS: LOCAL PARTICIPATION AND SUSTAINABLE ECOTOURISM

> *"There are many possible kinds of participation, and who participates and how may be more crucial to project success than any purely quantitative expression of participation."*
>
> (Uphoff in Cernea, 1985).

This research integrates the key concepts noted earlier into the central questions for this research: *Is local participation related to the sustainability of ecotourism in the study area? And, if it is related, how is it related?* Evidence from this research suggests that local participation is related to sustainability. At this point in time, in this case study area, there are wide gaps in formal local participation, both "outsider-demanded" and "insider-generated", in the planning and management of ecotourism planning and projects. These gaps are filled by informal local participation, primarily "insider-generated." Thus, in this case study area, "insider-generated", informal participation appears to have more to do with the ability of ecotourism to be sustained.

Evidence presented here relates to the phenomenon of local participation and has been categorized by type of participation process (formal and informal) and the source of initiative for the participation ("outsider-demanded" and "insider-

generated"). Two highlighted functions of local participation which specifically relate to ecotourism were 1) the ability and opportunity to extract, develop and invest resources for economically productive activities related to ecotourism; and, 2) exploitation and management of the primary material of ecotourism--the ecosystems which attract visitors in the first place. However, local participation in the study area has served other functions in a more general sense, along the lines of those functions identified by Chambers (1985) including: making known local wishes; generating developmental ideas; providing local knowledge; testing proposals for feasibility and improving them; increasing the capability of communities to handle their affairs and to control and exploit their environment; demonstrating support for a regime; doing what government requires to be done; extracting, developing and investing local resources (labor, finance, managerial skills, etc.); and, promoting desirable relationships between people, especially through co-operative work. Some examples of local participation serving these functions are also presented in these findings.

Outsider-Demanded Participation (Formal and Informal)

To the neglect of other dimensions of development, most of the present rhetoric, policies and practices related to ecotourism in Costa Rica have focused on the ability of ecotourism to spur economic growth, without addressing how or

even whether the benefits of ecotourism and its associated activities will be distributed equitably, and through what process local participation will be achieved.

As a practical matter in this regard, ecotourism in the studied region may be best described as a "zero-sum game" --where one stakeholder may benefit only if another loses (Axinn, 1991; George, 1984). That is to say, as ecotourism grows as an economic enterprise, some will win while others will lose. While the winners (very often "outsiders") may view this type of growth as "sustainable" development, the losers (very often "insiders") experience another reality which tends to prevent them from even "entering the game" as formal participants. Therefore, with formal participation restricted, their participation becomes informal, largely in activities which potentially shorten the ability of ecotourism to be sustained.

This is most evident in the lack of formal participation in the planning and management of existing and new ecotourism projects in the studied area. Decisions regarding who receives the benefits and pays the costs are largely "outsider-driven." From the very start, hosting "ecotourists" at RBC has been a government decision. According to enabling legislation, the designation of a biological reserve *excludes* tourism. However, this national level, *de facto* acceptance of tourism in RBC has created dilemmas for the on-site RBC administrators who operate with

limited staff and financing (an annual budget of approximately US$22,000 in 1993). The RBC has found itself unprepared for the exponential influx of visitation and unsupported by a budget controlled by a centralized administration. RBC administrators do not see their role as serving the necessities of tourists. However, a recent agreement between Costa Rica's National Parks Service, ICT, and CANATUR, and an Inter-American Development Bank funded project are intended to improve visitor services at selected ecotourism destinations, including RBC. While local people were interviewed in relation to this initiative, this interaction was very limited. However, it appeared to be among the first contacts related to local participation in ecotourism planning.

There is also very limited economic exchange between area visitors and/or RBC administrators with the local communities. Private tour operators have full control over the structure of their visit to the RBC. Based on RBC visitor records, RBC tourism staff indicated that the majority of the visitors arrive at the reserve on "day-trips" from San Jose or as a stop in a tour "package" between San Jose and Jacó or one of the most frequently visited national parks, Manuel Antonio. This means that most of the visitors don't need overnight lodging in the area. Meals are generally not necessary depending based upon what tour companies offer in their packages. Some tour packages provide boxed lunches, or time their trips to take lunch at a restaurant in Jacó. Limited economic interaction

consists of one locally-owned restaurant which caters to tour groups. They offer items which can be purchased at other locally-owned restaurants at much lower prices. Another restaurant in the area, owned by U.S. citizens, also attracts some of the visitors for meals. Also, their prices are much higher than other locally owned restaurants.

Until this time, there has been no research or experimentation in potential sale by local people of locally-inspired and produced arts and crafts as tourist souvenirs. However, in February 1993 efforts began in this area through an *artesania* project being sponsored in Tárcoles and other smaller communities by the Iguana Verde Foundation. The Iguana Verde Foundation supports research and projects utilizing wildlife management for integrated resource management and sustainable development in rural communities.

The RBC is also not generating local employment opportunities. With a change of RBC administration in late 1993, a decision made by the National Parks Service leadership, only 3 of the current 15 regular employees are from the region.[5] Only one is from a RBC buffer zone community. During the high tourist

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[5]This composition of the work force poses a dilemma, however. Those involved with administration of the RBC felt that efforts to control hunting could be improved by reducing advanced knowledge of enforcement activities. This task could be more difficult due to wide and deep family ties among residents in the local communities.

season this past year, two Tárcoles residents were given to permission to sell refreshments to tourists. They carted a supply of soft drinks by bicycle and posted themselves at the RBC's trailhead farther north on the highway to sell the drinks to thirsty ecotourists.

There are no requirements that trained, local guides be used on RBC trails. Although a group of young people in Tárcoles expressed an interest to participate in a guide training program, they perceived lack of English and, to a lesser degree, limited "scientific" knowledge of the RBC ecosystem as overwhelming obstacles for their involvement.

Food supplies and other equipment for the RBC are bought in Orotina, approximately 21 kilometers to the north of the RBC, or in San José. Some small items, such as toiletries, are occasionally purchased at one of several "pulperias" in nearby Tárcoles or the small supermarket in Quebrada Ganado.

Given the lack of available transportation in the evenings and the nature of vigilance activities for RBC staff, a "night-out" to an area restaurant, bar/dance salon, pool hall, or some other recreational facility is not commonplace. When these social outings occur, very often it involves travel to Jacó or Orotina.

Access to bank credit and special tax incentives provided under current tourism development laws and policies are not perceived to be easily obtained by local people nor are there responsive relationships with those "outsiders" who may

have this information. In Bijagual I, where one of two RBC field stations are located, it was reported that about two years ago, representatives from a large, non-governmental organization visited the area with inquiries about local interest in an ecotourism project there. While community leaders expressed interest, they have heard nothing more from the group.

In terms of individually-based entrepreneurial opportunities, most of the local people often have little or no collateral to offer the banks. Additionally, the credit facilities are located outside of the communities, in Orotina and Jacó. While these are within 20 kilometers of the communities, the distance still contributes to the "transaction costs"--including time away from work and actual travel costs.

In relation to incentive programs, if local people have knowledge of the existence of incentive programs, they perceive that these programs are targeted at large-scale projects rather than small tourism-related enterprises. Smaller projects also may require smaller loans, but cash may be needed more quickly than the application and processing time required by government programs or the lending institutions. For their part, lending institutions may respond more favorably to larger projects because of the lower costs of servicing larger loans due to the economies of scale in lending.

On a community-based level, or group level (e.g. cooperatives), there are no strong mechanisms to respond to outsider-demanded participation. In all of the

studied communities, the local development associations were more concerned with "bricks and mortar" necessities rather than human resource development in order to promote economic development in a service industry. The members of the associations tend to organize around short-term projects, responding with one-time fund-raising events to finance these projects. For instance, in Bijagual, there was a weekend civic festival to raise funds to pay off construction of the town hall and help finance road repair. The women of the supermarket cooperative in Tárcoles hosted a community dance to pay off some debts associated with the operation of the supermarket. This type of experience with community organizing, while valuable, provides limited knowledge for use in ecotourism projects, which require sustained collective action with fewer immediate and/or tangible outcomes.

Meanwhile, "outsiders" are utilizing the benefits created by government incentive programs to build new ecotourism facilities in the area. This is creating some new, local jobs. For example, newly-developed overnight accommodations include "Hotel Villa Lapas" and a nearly completed lodge at the mouth of the Rio Grande de Tárcoles. The former is tied to a large hotel complex in Puntarenas and hopes to capture the revenue generated by ecotourism groups. Room rates of $72 per night are far beyond the reach of local people and many middle-class Costa Ricans. It is a source of 31 jobs, with approximately half of the jobs filled by residents of Quebrada Ganado (who are viewed by hotel management as more

"apt" and therefore receive the higher paying jobs) and the other half from Tárcoles. Local residents were also hired as construction labor. The lodge, under construction, is affiliated with Rancho Naturalista in Turrialba and is owned by a U.S. citizen. The owner hopes to attract birdwatchers, perhaps some of his Rancho Naturalista clients who pay $500 for a week's stay. To manage the lodge, the owner anticipated hiring someone from outside the area, and most probably outside Costa Rica.

From a practical stand-point, the local people in Tárcoles, Bijagual, or Quebrada Ganado do not have a great deal of time that they can afford to divert from productive activities to invest in training or making the necessary connections to launch a small business in ecotourism. For instance, fishermen in Tárcoles report sharp drops in their daily catch, which they attribute to over-fishing by commercial shrimp and sardine operations and/or contamination of the Grande Tárcoles. This has required them to invest two- or three-day fishing excursions for the amount caught previously in one day, thereby reducing their amount of leisure time. As one fisherman commented: "We've sold our lives to fishing."

Finally, there is no formal process in place to include local community members in the resource management issues related with the reserve. While there was a seminar late in 1992 bringing together locally elected or designated

representatives together with RBC administrators and others to discuss issues related to tourism and natural resources management in the zone, as of early April 1993 there had been no visible outcome of this first effort to more formally involve the communities and their representatives.

Figure 5 attempts to categorize the types of local participation occurring in the area and the activities' relationship to the sustainability of ecotourism.

Insider-Generated Participation (Formal and Informal)

In place of this formal, "outsider-driven" participation in ecotourism, there is "insider-generated" participation which involves some formal but more informal processes.

On a formal, albeit limited basis, there is some evidence of entrepreneurship among local people. Some of the fishermen in Tárcoles say they have taken tourists out in their *pangas* for fishing excursions. This, however, has occurred only on a one-time basis, rather than a regular service. Fishermen have related that this largely relates to the physical nature of their equipment, which is outfitted for function rather than comfort or safety. The boats also are not suited for ocean-access to the Grande Tarcoles river and its estuary, where the scarlet macaws roost. Many also do not own their equipment, although there were ideas shared among the fishing cooperative members about the possibility of purchasing

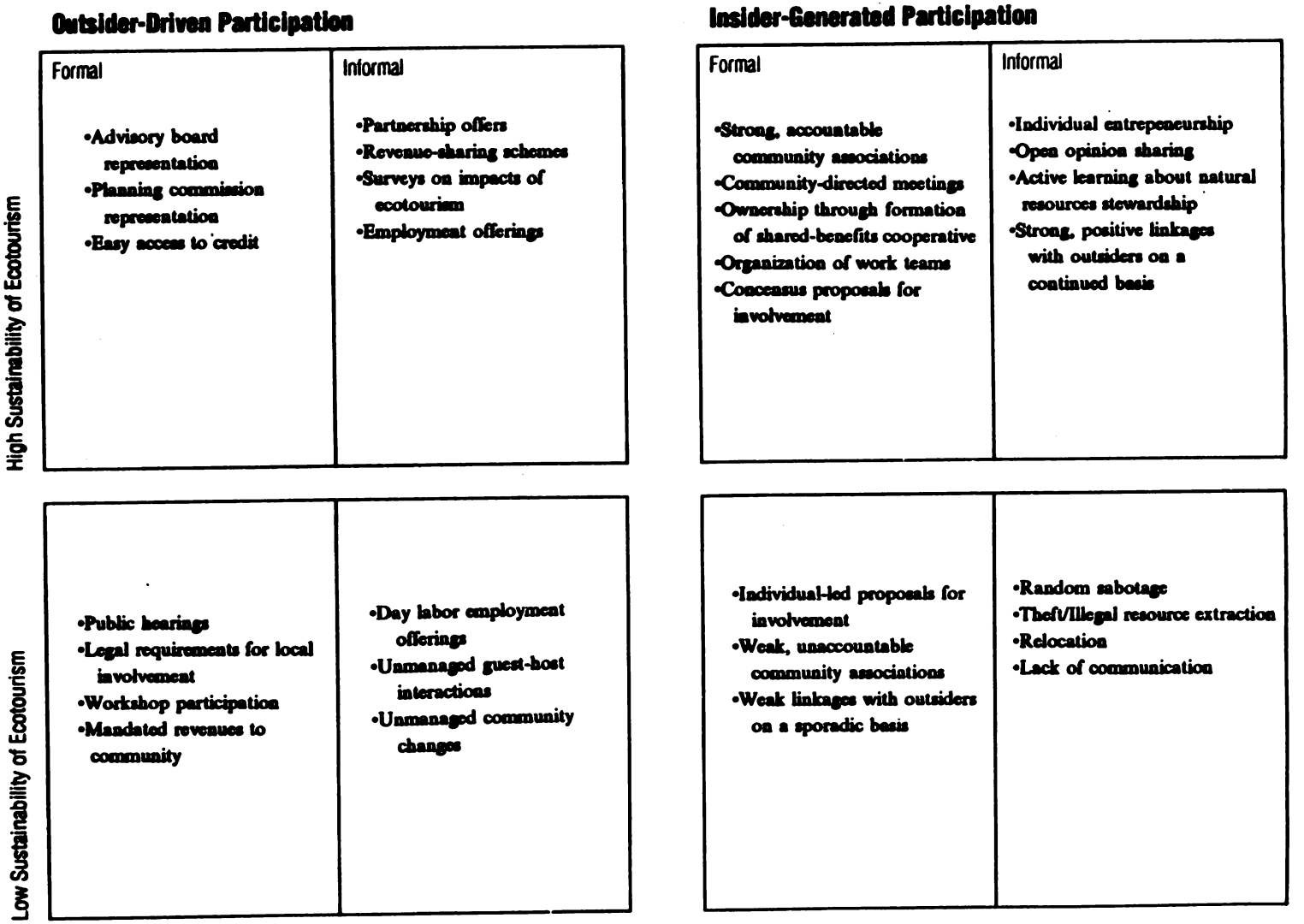


Figure 5. Sustainability of ecotourism related to local participation in Carara area

a larger boat specifically for tourism excursions.

While there is strong community cooperation in Bijágual, there have been no formal efforts to organize the community to take advantage of the occasional, curious visitors who travel the winding road with spectacular vistas. There is no sign posted at the road's entrance from the highway, indicating "scenic vistas." More community effort has been placed on simply maintaining the existing transportation infrastructure--the road and its small bridges. There has been some local sharing of ideas about potential ecotourism services such as little restaurants overlooking the views from the road, camping facilities, and horse excursions in the reserve or nature hikes in forested areas on the larger farms.

One can also point to the "hikes" led by local residents in Quebrada Ganado to a nearby waterfall. While this could potentially generate income, the hikes were offered to interested visitors who had become friends with the local hike leaders.

One sees more evidence of local participation in informal ways which tend to decrease the sustainability of ecotourism. These could be viewed as acts of "everyday resistance." For instance, RBC administrators report increasing destruction to and robbery of articles in rented cars parked while ecotourists walk one of the trails. This problem, however, is not severe in comparison to the illegal hunting which occurs in the reserve and the control of forest fires. The illegal hunting activity in RBC involves the poaching of the endangered "tepescuintle"

(*Coelogenys paca*) for commercial or personal consumption and the "snatching" of scarlet macaw and other tropical bird hatchlings for illegal sale in the pet trade market. Estimates of the income-generating potential of this "black market" trade include US$15 for each tepescuintle (weighing about seven kilos) and $36.50 for each scarlet macaw.

At any given time, only 10 park guards cover the 4,700 hectares of RBC, working out of two smaller "stations" in addition to the main headquarters. There has been additional vigilance by the Iguana Verde Foundation. However, there is still undefended territory where poaching can easily occur. Bijagual, among others, is considered problematic in this regard, with strong traditions in the use of forest resources for subsistence and/or recreation.

Some residents from the studied communities have been criminally charged in illegal hunting activity. The importance of this poaching to ecotourism is its potential for destruction of the natural resources upon which the ecotourism activity depends. From another perspective, it provides income in lieu of what ecotourism could provide or in place of what may be lost due to environmental degradation, loss of wildlife habitat affecting traditional activities, and/or changing land use. In the case of illegal hunting, the state has responded with a wildlife conservation law effective in 1993, greatly increasing fines and penalties.

Also important to the protection of the RBC biodiversity is the control of

forest fires. During the dry season, which is also the high season for tourism, vigilance is critical. While farmers are required to have a permit to burn their fields, their attention to this requirement and their willingness to employ fire control methods or assist others if fire gets out of hand afford opportunities for informal participation in activities which could either enhance or decrease sustainability of ecotourism.

The informal participation process is much more difficult to document and analyze but may have as significant an impact on the sustainability of ecotourism as formal participation.

SUMMARY and CONCLUSIONS

Usually local participation is portrayed as an "ideal" for development projects, with "more people involved" being considered "good", that is, a desired outcome. Many criteria for "true" development are based upon strong, equitable and self-determined local participation.

This research suggests that local participation is key to the existence of ecotourism over time. In the development of sustainable ecotourism, local participation focuses on primarily two functions: extraction, development and investment of local resources; and, the exploitation and management of natural

resources. Local participation is essential for community well-being as ecotourism grows and develops in a given area.

The process of local participation may be formal or informal. In this case study area, a lack of formal processes for participation encourages informal participation, which occurred in a form generated by "insiders." Given narrowly focused community organizations concerned with immediate needs, this informal process will decrease the sustainability of ecotourism, an activity which local residents perceive to have a longer time horizon and broader scope than their reality and vision allows.

In the case of ecotourism in Costa Rica, local people are limited in their ability to collectively respond to outsider-demanded participation because it involves an assumption on behalf of the outsiders that local people are organized or willing to respond to their demands. Therefore, local people lose out on potential opportunities for direct economic involvement in ecotourism enterprises. While many smaller communities have community organizations, many do not have the ability to respond to complex issues involving complicated institutional arrangements and strong, outside influences. In some situations, community organizations are unable to serve the community interests in the area of ecotourism because of a failure to engage meaningful involvement of local residents. Many reasons may lead to this condition, including: lack of effective

communication; obstacles related to time available for voluntary activities; orientation of the "leadership" (e.g. serving individual vs. community interests); inadequate process of goal-setting; lack of perceived benefits of membership; and others.

Ecotourism is often promoted on the basis that this form of "sustainable" development can help in natural resource conservation while providing a way for "locals" to meet their basic needs. However, this relies on several assumptions which may do not hold true in the case study area. Based on the evidence, the following considerations must be made:

- Local participation may be viewed in terms of its direct connection to the costs and benefits of economically-related activities of ecotourism. However, local participation in the management of the natural resources which attract the ecotourism activities must also be incorporated in efforts to enhance local participation in formal processes.

- Even though in close proximity to natural areas, a community, depending on its nature and level of community organization, may not always desire or be suited for involvement in ecotourism.

•Ensuring local participation is not an easy process, even with generous resources from the "outside."

As pointed out by Cernea (1985), "if 'people participation' is to be more than a trendy slogan, development planners must face the nuts and bolts of organizing participation--the details of who participates, how they can participate, and to what extent they could participate in project design, execution and monitoring." This statement holds true for ecotourism as a sustainable development activity.

Limitations of Study

While the field research portion of this study was conducted over a four-month period, additional time could have provided an opportunity for even greater depth in of the research.

Also, the researcher limited the study area to one region of Costa Rica. Although there were opportunities to visit several other ecotourism destinations, additional site visits could provide the basis for interesting comparative research. Given additional funds, this could include research in other countries.

Finally, although it is acknowledged that there is a rich collection of research related to campesino organization in Costa Rica, given limited time and funding, this aspect of participation was not specifically addressed in this research. This

area of inquiry could prove intriguing in the search for mechanisms to more fully incorporate local populations in ecotourism.

Recommendations Related To Local Participation in Ecotourism

Uphoff, as summarized by Cernea, defines five ways of ensuring beneficiaries' participation in project design and implementation. These, with some modifications, may provide the basis for sound recommendations for ecotourism in Costa Rica:

1) The degree of participation desired must be made clear at the outset and in a way acceptable to all concerned parties; this must take into account the different functions, processes and levels of local participation;

2) There should be realistic objectives for participation and allowance must be made for the fact that some stages of planning, such as design consultation will be relatively protracted, while other phases such as the transfer of assets for utilization, will be shorter;

3) Specific provisions for introducing and supporting participation are needed, given the complex nature of ecotourism as form of international tourism;

4) There should be an explicit, adequate financial commitment to local participation; this needs to include provisions for methods for insuring accountability toward stated goals and objectives for local participation.

5) There should be plans to share responsibilities in all stages of the project cycle.

Additionally, and more specifically to RBC:

6) Despite limited staff and budget, RBC administrators need to take more initiative in seeking opportunities for positive interactions with citizens in surrounding communities to share in the formulation of RBC goals and activities which relate to these goals.

7) RBC in conjunction with the local communities need to better understand the positive and negative impacts of the flow of tourism in the area and ways to address those impacts while maximizing the capture of benefits on an equitable basis.

8) Formal participation by local communities could be enhanced through formal and informal mechanisms such as citizen-based advisory groups, regularly-scheduled community meetings, and community events participation, to ensure that local concerns and opportunities for involvement in ecotourism and RBC management are shared.

9) Ways to more actively provide opportunities for local people to foster positive economic exchange between RBC visitors and administrators should be explored and implemented.

10) Efforts to involve local people in ecotourism should include formal and informal environmental education programs in the local communities.

Recommendations For Future Research

Given that the study of local participation in ecotourism is an emerging area of inquiry there are many opportunities for further research. For example, a multiple case study could identify and reveal the importance of certain factors related to success of locally-controlled ecotourism projects in Costa Rica. Leadership and accountability are two phenomena expected to be of relevance in this type of study.

Also, cross-cultural or comparative studies of local participation in ecotourism in other Latin American or Caribbean countries. Along these lines, local participation in island ecotourism could be compared with mainland ecotourism. Comparative views of how policies incorporate local participation through formal mechanisms could also be a fruitful area of research.

Given the research which has been conducted on campesino organizations in Costa Rica, the process of empowerment could be explored in relation to ecotourism development and short-term development needs.

Finally, there is a need to further explore research methodologies available for investigation of this multi-dimensional topic. This alone could offer a potential research project, given the lack of "tried-and-tested" methods applied to scholarly research in this area.

On a more practical level, there is a need for good assessment tools for

development practitioners who work with ecotourism projects. It is important to note that while the rhetoric is abundant, there have been few tangible examples of ecotourism where local participation has successfully been put into practice in ecotourism planning or activity. Consequently, some Latin American policy makers, development practitioners, resource managers, or ecotourism operators are searching for transferable strategies to enhance the capabilities and/or opportunities for local people to control ecotourism policy or projects (Baez, 1992; Vinicio, 1992; Farrell & Runyan, 1991; FEPROTUR, 1990).

It is not an easy proposition to get local people involved, especially in projects which they perceive to lack incentives for their involvement. As Adams states succinctly: "The policy proposals of these development-conservationists may be as alien to the conceptions of the local people as any proposed by other developers, and as adverse to their interests..." (Adams, 1990).

However, there are some projects which are in various stages in Costa Rica which hold promise as models for local participation. One of these is the "insider-generated" ecotourism project called, "Las Delicias," near the Costa Rican national park Barra Honda in the Nicoya peninsula.

The local community development association, Asociación Pro-Desarrollo de Barrio Cubillo, initiated the project which occupies 20 hectares primary tropical dry forest adjacent to the Barra Honda entrance. Officially opened in January of

1993, the ecotourism complex is comprised of three solar-powered cabins, each able to offer accommodations to six people; a camping area, with 16 spaces for tents; a restaurant, which serves food bought from the local community; a small store where locally produced souvenirs and artesanía can be purchased; as well as a small "deer nursery." Nearing completion is a small "mini-market" to provide a variety of necessitities for local people as well as the tourists. There are also trained, local guides who will accompany visitors who wish to go into the caverns of Barra Honda. The 42 caverns (19 of which are explored) are among the park's primary natural features which attract ecotourists to the area.

According to a park administrator, it is a project which "has been pure force of the people." Formed in 1988, the Asociación Barrio Cubillo was organized by local residents to provide for the economic future of their community. It consists of 16 men and 14 women, all of whom are involved in the construction and operation of the ecotourism project and are beneficiaries of its "profits." Founders said the vision for the Asociación was to provide for a means to generate economic diversification, especially offering other forms of employment for the young people of the community, who have either been involved in families' subsistence farming and/or day-labor in sugar cane-harvesting on nearby plantations.

Watching the arrival of tourists in this region, leaders felt they had an

opportunity to take part in the growing economic activity. Their first step in the group's ecotourism project was the purchase of the 20-hectare farm "Las Delicias." Having made prior contact government officials and interested non-profit organization in San Jose, they were able to acquire the purchase of the property with approximately $3650 from World Vision and $7300 from the Government of Costa Rica. Other support became leveraged by these initial grants, including support from the Inter-American Foundation, and additional government assistance in the form of auxiliary employment through the Ministry of Labor to construct the cabins.

Today, the complex has been built, and community members are facing the task of marketing their project to prospective visitors. While they have placed advertisements San Jose newspapers, these have relied on those tourists who may read Spanish. To make reservations, one must call the community telephone and leave a message in Spanish. Still, occupancy met expectations and "word-of-mouth" seems to be bringing interested ecotourists to the project. Noting the barriers posed by language, some members of the group are engaging in English language lessons and are attempting to hire an English-speaking driver who can serve to bring tourists from San José to the project.

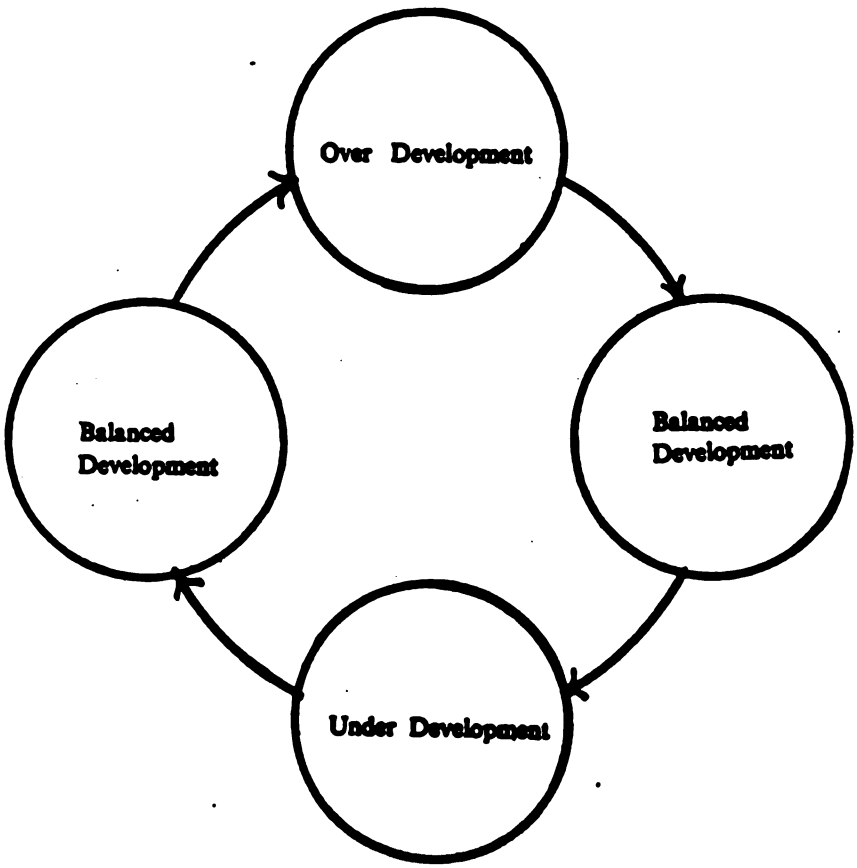
The creation of "Las Delicias" has also led to increased involvement of the community in the administration of Barra Honda, active in committees of

vigilance to protect against illegal hunting and forest fires.

Committed to community-controlled enterprises, Asociación leaders have been dedicated to sharing their successes and passing on the lessons from their failures with other community associations interested in similar projects.

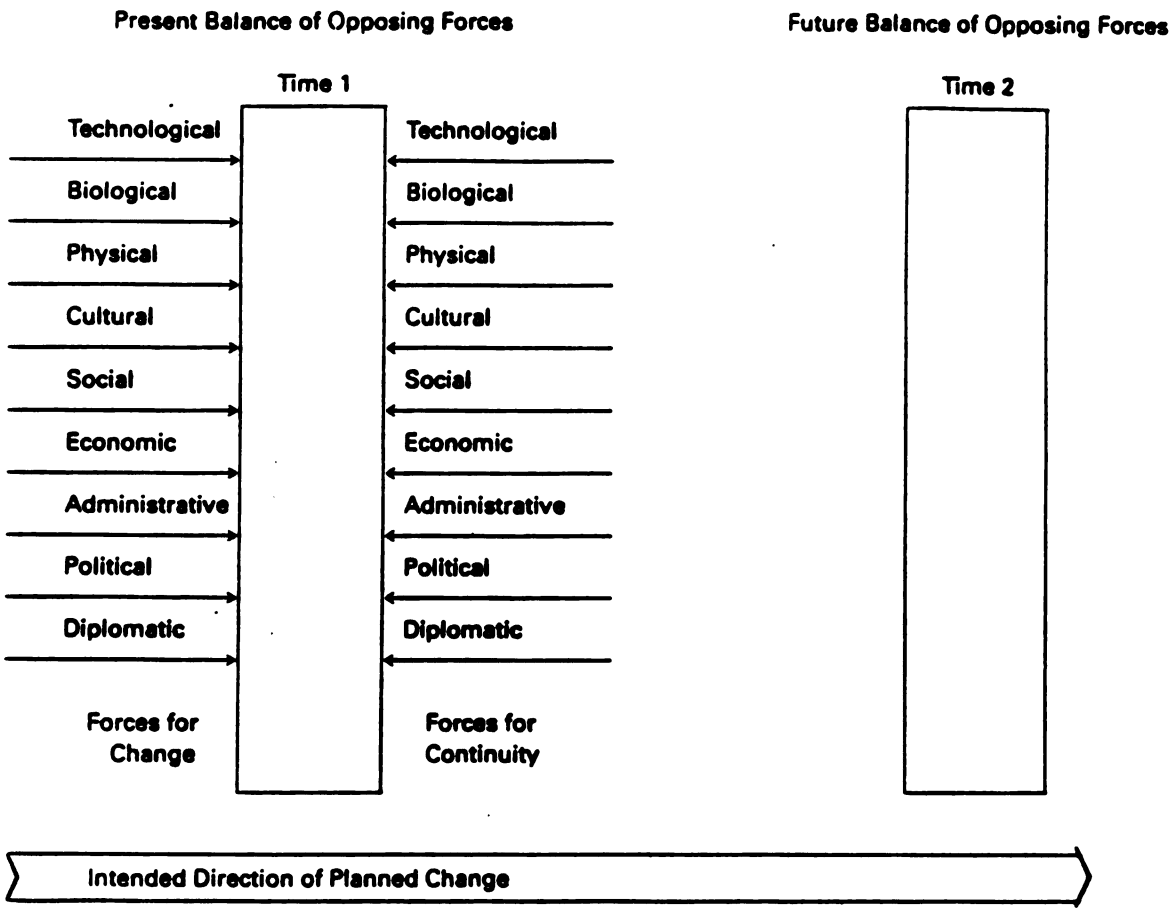
Despite the challenges yet to be faced by the group, "Las Delicias" offers an innovative example of *insider-generated* local participation, with hallmarks of empowering group initiative and momentum that diversifies the local economy, shares economic benefits equitably and builds local appreciation for the natural environment and a commitment to its protection.

Appendix A - The Development Cycle



From: Axinn, 1978

Appendix B-Forces of Continuity & Change

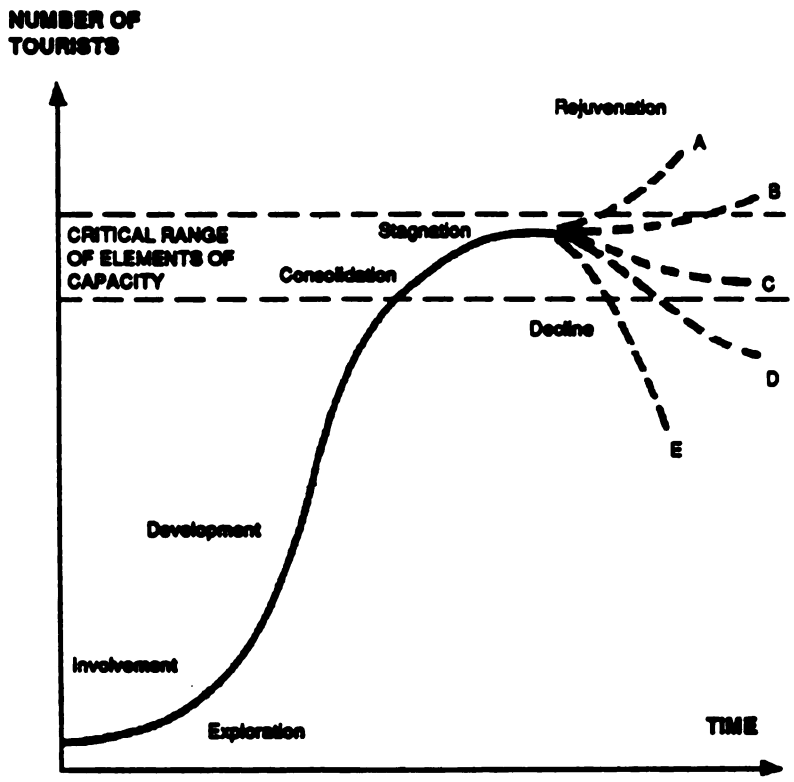


The Future Situation will be different from the Present Situation to the extent that there are either increases in the Forces of Change; decreases in the Forces for Continuity; or some combination of the two which results in a different balance.

From: Axinn, 1988

Appendix C-Butler's Tourism Model

The Tourism Cycle



SOURCE: R.W. Butler, "The Concept of a Tourist Area Cycle of Evolution: Implications for Management of Resources," *Canadian Geographer*, vol. 24, no. 1, 1980, p. 7.

In: Lindberg, 1991.

Appendix D-Background on Costa Rican Tourism Institutions & Policies

Prepared by Deborah R. Meadows

THE GROWTH OF TOURISM

Tourism has been viewed as one of the promising foreign exchange generators for Costa Rica--a country with a rich natural heritage and stable political structure.

During the past decade, growth in the tourism industry in Costa Rica has been dramatic and it is a boom which continues unabated (Economist Intelligence Unit, 1993). According to data from the Costa Rican Tourism Institute, the number of international tourists arriving in Costa Rica has doubled, increasing from 326,142 in 1983 to 620,000 in 1992 (See Table 1). This influx generated revenue of $427 million in 1992, up 29% from 1991 (EIU, 1993). If projections hold true, by 1994 tourism will bring $500 million to the national economy, supplanting bananas as the first-place foreign export earning industry by the middle of the decade (Fernandez, 1992;Orozco Coto et. al, 1991; EIU, 1993).

Data related to how much of this income generation is due to "ecotourism" rather than "tourism"could not be found, although about 36% of surveyed visitors indicated that "ecotourism" was among their major motivations for travel to Costa Rica (Costa Rican Board of Tourism in Boo, 1990). Current data indicates that about 74.5% of the foreign tourists visit one or more of Costa Rica's national

Table 1. Number of International Tourist Arrivals in Costa Rica.
Source: Modified from information in Orozco Coto et al.(1991); Castro F.(1993); ICT(1992).

1970 - 154,867
1971 - 170,396
1972 - 202,269
1973 - 246,825
1974 - 271,864

1975 - 297,207
1976 - 299,039
1977 - 327,548
1978 - 340,442
1979 - 317,724

1980 - 332,883
1981 - 333,102
1982 - 371,582
1983 - 326,142
1984 - 273,901

1985 - 261,552
1986 - 260,840
1987 - 277,861
1988 - 329,386
1989 - 375,951

1990 - 435,037
1991 - 504,649
1992 - 590,000(Estimated)

Table 2. Annual revenues in US$ produced by touristic activities
Source: ICT (1992); Banco Central in Briceño (1993);

1989 - 206 Million
1990 - 275 Million
1991 - 314 Million
1992 - 416 Million

Table 3. Annual Investment in Tourist Projects
Source: ICT/Incentives Department in Briceño (1993)

(In colones)
1986 - 2,433,564 Million
1987 - 231,875 Million
1988 - 1,162,793 Million
1989 - 2,235,650 Million
1990 - 3,521,311 Million
1991 -10,983,984 Million
1992 -19,407,570 Million

parks, reserves and wildlife refuges (CANATUR/ICT/MIRENEM, 1992).

As a result of this increased flow of tourists, there has been a building boom to house Costa Rica's guests, with the number of rooms available jumping 63% overthree years--from 5,456 in 1989 to 8,661 in 1992. Correspondingly, the number of rented guest rooms increased from 1,058 (1986-1989) to 1,908 in 1991 (ICT, 1992).

Orozco Coto et. al. report that each tourist spends approximately $95.88 per day. However, this does not include the amount spent on hotels and other services as a result of contracts with international tourism companies (Orozco Coto, et al, 1991). The economic multiplier of tourism income in Costa Rica has been estimated to be between 3.2 and 5.5 (Chaverri in Boo, 1990).

INSTITUTIONS

Costa Rica has one national agency charged specifically with tourism responsibilities: the Costa Rican Tourism Institute (ICT-Instituto Costariccense de Turismo), located within the Ministerio de Economía [Ministry of Economy]. Other sectors with significant responsibilities and interests in ecotourism include the Ministerio de Planificación y Política Económia[Ministry of Planning and Political Economy], and Ministerio de Recursos Naturales, Energía y Minas [Ministry of Natural Resources, Energy and Mines] (MIRENEM). The National

Chamber of Tourism (CANATUR-Cámara Nacional de Turismo) along with other private-sector associations also play important roles. (Additionally, there is a national ecotourism commission. Although members have been appointed to this Commission, this group has been meeting informally.

ICT came into being in 1955, replacing Costa Rica's first national tourism board, the Junta Nacional de Turismo created 24 years early. ICT's mission, defined by law, is to increase tourism by:

1) developing the image and visitation of Costa Rica; 2) promoting the construction and maintenance of facilities for tourist lodging and recreation; 3) promoting Costa Rica externally; 4) promoting and supervising the private sector and its attention to tourism. (Salazar, 1991).

In theory, ICT is available to help communities promote their tourist product as long as a community has a locally organized Chamber of Tourism (Pedersen, 1988). While ICT experienced budget cuts and curtailed authority in the 1970s and early 1980s, the stagnation of investment in the manufacturing sector gave new impetus to tourism as a development strategy (Economic Intelligence Unit, 1987). During the Arias Administration (1986-90) the tourist board was reorganized and central government monies were added to the amount received for the ICT's operation via a tax on air fares and hotel accommodations. With a raise from five to eight percent for the airport tax and a three percent hotel tax,

the board operated with a $6 million budget, with $1.7 million of that spent on marketing (Economic Intelligence Unit, 1987).

In 1987, the Comisión Consultativa Nacional de Turismo [National Consultative Commission on Tourism] was created by decree (17719-MEC) to coordinate institutional cooperation and to assess the policies and structure of tourism development.

The Calderón Administration (1990-1994) has continued the push for ecotourism as part of a wider development strategy with the government serving to "orient development within a concept of wider participation." According to Tourism Minister Luis Manuel Chacon, ICT is actively trying to "increase the length of stay and the money spent and attract higher quality tourists (Orlebar, 1991)."

The other agency influential in the development of tourism is the Cámara Nacional de Turismo, or National Chamber of Tourism. According to its President, CANATUR's mission is: "to promote and endorse the development of tourism projects devoted to the policies and laws which relate to this subject. Likewise, maintain a firm position according to fulfillment of the norms, ethics and morals necessary to achieve a sustainable development of the touristic activity without destroying the idiosyncracies and good Costa Rican customs" (Castro F., 1993).

OTHER AGENCIES WITH RESPONSIBILITIES RELATED TO TOURISM

Many of Costa Rica's ministry have interaction with various tourism development policies and projects.

The Ministry of Natural Resources, Energy and Mines, (MIRENEM) created in 1986, has major responsibilities for executing the various laws related to environmental matters. Theoretically, through the environmental impact review and permitting process, MIRENEM is able to control environmental impacts as a result of tourism development and programs. However, this system has come under criticism, with charges that environmental impact reviews are a "cookie-cutter"process, where only the pertinent details regarding name and location are substituted in a standard environmental impact statement.

Also key to the administration of protected areas is the National Park Service (Servicio de Parques Nacionales-SPN), under MIRENEM authority, which is responsible for development use and management policies to assure the preservation of biodiversity in the nearly one million hectares of land under its charge. Responsibilities for watching over protected lands outside the purview of SPN, falls to the Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock. Primarily the Dirección General Forestal and the Instituto de Desarrollo Agrario must carry out various statutes such as the Forestry Law (Ley 4465 of 1969 and reforms).

Municipalities also can control certain land use decisions via local ordinances,

a power provided as part of the Municipal Code (Salazar C., 1991).

A variety of laws regarding the "national patrimony" also exist, helping to define responsibilities for the protection of archaeological sites, natural monuments and other land forms which may serve as tourist attractions.

Various training programs to encourage a labor force skilled for tourism (such areas as arts and crafts) are handled through the Instituto Nacional de Apprendizajze, part of the Ministerio de Trabajo.

The Instituto de Desarrollo Agrario(IDA), which is the agency in charge of Costa Rica's agrarian reform, is another institution actively attempting to participate in the "tourism boom." The agency has about 700,000 hectares--or 23 percent of the national area in farming--under its control in the form of "asentamientos campesinos." Based on certain criteria, these small plots of land are provided to farmers to meet their needs for self-sufficiency, in an effort to improve and "equalize" the distribution of soil resources. IDA has been exploring the potential for "agro-ecotourism" during the past two years as a complementary economic activity to the basic food production of the campesino, which often fails to meet commercial levels (Arrieta M., 1991).

INTER-INSTITUTIONAL COOPERATION

Agreements have also been forged, linking various institutions with direct responsibility for tourism with those that do not have this mandate. Developing these types of linkages were part of the charge of the Comisión Consultiva Nacional de Turismo, established by decree 11719-MEC in 1987 (Salazar C., 1991). In 1988, Decree No, 18722-MIRENEM, was a letter of understanding between MIRENEM and ICT to join forces in the management and planned development of tourism in protected areas. Most recent of these inter-institutional agreements include that signed in October of 1990 between the Instituto de Desarollo Agrario(IDA) and ICT; between CANATUR, ICT and MIRENEM in December of 1992.

The agreement signed by ICT and IDA was to improve cooperation between the agencies and foster this type of cooperation among the sectors which they represent. The CANATUR, ICT and MIRENEM agreement established a "Tripartite Commission" with the general objective of working together to undertake concrete actions to support and improve ecotourism in Costa Rica's protected areas and to make recommendations for the planning and development of ecotourism in the public and private sectors (Cámara Nacional de Turismo, et al. 1992). This may assist in the implementation of National Park Service's operating plan for a "national strategy of ecological tourism," under the

coordination between MIRENEM and ICT (Costa Rica, Govt. of, May, 1992).

POLICIES RELATED TO TOURISM AND ECOTOURISM

Government policy in Costa Rica has been directed primarily toward the promotion and development of tourism, with marketing strategies which have attempted to capitalize on the natural heritage of the country. Less planning and policy development has been oriented toward the management of tourism activity; and still less directed specifically at the management of ecotourism as a subset of this form of development.

Through ICT and CANATUR, the country is sponsoring aggressive international marketing campaigns--including market-specific advertising and articles along with representation at international tourism trade markets and its own Expotur(ICT, 1992).

Its marketing campaign, expanding beyond the 1985 theme "Costa Rica...is natural", appears to follow a strategy attempting to lure tourists to Costa Rica specifically for ecotourism, since it did not have high levels of existing tourism activities for which ecotourism becomes an "add-on." Its 1992 marketing slogan "Join Us...Costa Rica Awaits You" continues to use imagery from nature to woo potential visitors.

Tourism policy in Costa Rica has tended toward development of specialized

tourism. The National Tourism Development Strategy establishes infrastructure priorities, and area for resort projects. A combination of private investment, international agency funding, and government monies are then used to implement this strategy (EIU, 1987). The 1984-90 Tourism Development Strategy identified four areas for increased activity: nature and adventure tourism; sun and beach tourism; cruise ship tourism; and convention or business tourism (Boo, 1990). Among the biggest projects has been the attempt to link "tourist circuits," with appeal to more of a mass market. This has included plans for hotel construction in San Jose, a large (300 room) beach hotel in Puerto Carillo and a lodge at Lake Arenal National Park. With an initial investment of $51 million, the Spanish investment group Sol Melia has begun plans for a development on the pristine Playa Conchal at the southern end of the Gulf of Papagayo, on Costa Rica's Pacific coast.

Also recently completed on a scale smaller than planned is a 400-room hotel development at Playa Tambor in the Nicoya peninsula Owned by the Catalan company Barcelo, the Playa Tambor project has been embroiled in controversy and is the target of an international boycott due to the charges of environmental activists who claim that the hotel violated environmental laws in its construction along the coast.

INCENTIVES FOR TOURISM DEVELOPMENT

One of the most powerful pieces of legislation related to tourism development is Costa Rica's Incentives Law for Tourism Development (Ley No.6990-Ley de Incentivos para el Desarrollo Turistico) passed in 1985 with significant modifications (Ley 7293) in 1992. These direct incentives relate to hotels, national and international airlines, aquatic transport companies (cruise lines,et al), travel agencies and car rental agencies. Although there are variations for each of these groups of the tourist industry, the law provides incentives such as:

1) Exemption from taxes and surcharges on the importation or local purchases for the functioning of new businesses or businesses offering new services.

2) Accelerated depreciation

3) Speedy consideration of municipal licenses

4) Exoneration of property taxes for 7 years

5) Import duty exemptions

6) Assistance with project financing

By 1990, the law had effected 258 contracts, including: 146 hotels; 13 restaurants; 8 airlines; 36 travel agencies (receptive); 30 car rental agencies; and 25 aquatic transport businesses. Most of these were established in the provinces of Guanacaste, Puntarenas and Limón. In 1992 alone, there were 116 tourist

contracts: 54 hotels, 4 airlines, 15 auto rental agencies; 14 aquatic transport, and 4 restaurants (Briceño, 1993).

A regulating commission, composed of one representative of ICT, Ministry of Housing, and the Ministry of Natural Resources, Energy and Mines, as well as two representatives from private tourism-related enterprises determines the approval of tourism contracts which allow companies the opportunities to take advantage of the incentives. However, it is important to note that non-governmental organizations which may wish to develop ecotourism destinations may not qualify for these incentives.

OTHER LAWS AND POLICIES

An excellent summary of the tourism laws as they relate to natural resources protection can be found in **Legislación y Ecología en Costa Rica** by Roxana Salazar Cambronero (1991). Currently, one of the most influential laws related to the management of Costa Rica's 72 protected areas is the 1991 legislation integrating the National Park System within a National System of Conservation Areas (Ley No.11315) (Costa Rica, Govt. of., 1991, August 19) Cited as a factor in the need to establish the System, nature tourism poses a "challenge and a grand opportunity for rural development and financing of the System (Costa Rica, Govt. of, 1992, February)."

There have been various agreements related to this "new focus" such as the Project of Institution Strengthening, with funds provided by the Government of Japan (Convenio ATN/JF-3917-CR) and involvement by the Inter-American Development Bank.

ANALYSIS

Despite national tourism laws and provisions in other laws which have some reference to tourism, the inadequate legislation relating tourism to environmental concerns, and a lack of administrative coordination (Salazar C., 1991; Quesada M., 1990) have allowed management of new ecotourism enterprises to fall primarily under the direction of the private sector. While this may bode well for the economic growth component of ecotourism, it does much less for the other Esman criteria of development. For example, the only explicit provision for local participation is the Ley Indigena. Through one provision, changes in indigenous reserves or indigenous-owned areas must be authorized by the indigenous community and CONAI (the government's Comisión Nacional de Asuntos Indigenas[National Commission on Indigenous Subjects]).

Concerning equity, recent government incentive programs for tourism development "favor large, experienced developers over local people with ideas for small-scale business (Salazar, Palmer, et al., 1990)." In some areas, non-governmental organizations such as ATEC (Talamanca Association for Eco-

tourism and Conservation) have been attempting to force the government to live up to its mandates or are calling for legislative reform in order to assure development which is in the interests of local people.

The government, for its part, has recognized the need for access to credit as part of capacity-building to allow the development of "micro-enterprises" which could claim their share of the "green gold" flowing over the terrain of Costa Rica. ICT sponsored "Primer Encuentro Nacional de Microempresarios Turísticos" held August 6 and 7, 1992 in San Jose. This workshop brought entrepreneurs together to explore available and potential assistance for "growing" their own place in the market for ecotourism-related goods and services. However, as expressed by various participants in this workshop, the length of time required to seek funding and the assets necessary to guarantee loans have left many potential entrepreneurs unable to access financing.

Tourism enterprises are also developing their own planning processes and tapping expertise of Costa Rican scientists as they explore new areas for development and attempt to maintain their position in an increasingly competitive market. On the consumer side, the Ecotourism Society recently announced Costa Rica would be studied as part of a year-long research and development program to design the first consumer evaluation program in the world to gauge the level at which tour operators are protecting the environment and providing benefits to

local people (Ecotourism Society, 1992).

The inherent conflicts between tourism/ecotourism and other land uses have also surfaced in Costa Rica, sometimes in dramatic fashion. Many of these appear to be played out in the media rather than through an adequate permitting process. For instance, Earth Summit organizer and Canadian millionaire Maurice Strong bought land in the region of Cahuita National Park, along the Caribbean coast. He constructed a hotel as a stated means of "helping the locals out" by protecting land resources from banana cultivation. However, there has been confusion in permitting procedures and jurisdiction over the facility's proximity to the KeKoldi Indian Reserve and Gandoca-Manzanillo Wildlife Refuge (Martin & McPhaul, 1992). In Tortuguero, recent proposals to build a road through the area have been met with opposition, not only from the local community but also from ecotourism interests in which Costa Rica Expeditions plays a large role (Kaye, 1992).

While concentration of the ecotourism industry in Costa Rica (one operator, Costa Rican Expeditions conducts 60% of the business) (Govt. of Costa Rica, 1990) may reflect the "infancy" of ecotourism development, it may also mean that smaller, less-capitalized agencies may have a tougher time breaking into the market (Budowski, T., 1990). Those hoping to attract ecotourists to more remote or less developed areas, with fewer economic resources, may be short-changed from receiving the touted economic benefits of ecotourism in a country where the

per capita income is $1,810.

Visitation has also been concentrated in a few "hot destinations." For those travelling with Costa Rica Expeditions, about 52% of the visitors travel to the cloud forest in Monteverde (often referred to as "the Gringo park" in reference to the large number of North American visitors), and 51% to Poas Volcano (Govt. of Costa Rica, 1990). This has resulted in environmental degradation to these areas, the extent of which scientists are just now beginning to explore. Some strategies for limiting tourist numbers or impact have been implemented by the NGO managing the Monteverde property, including limiting the number of visitors on the trails to 100 at any given time. However, new hotel accommodations were recently built in the area in anticipation of hosting increasing numbers of visitors to the park.

This concentration continues as government financing of infrastructure support is directed toward popular tourism destinations, particularly road improvements in the northwestern part of the Guanacaste Province (Tico Times, 1993, January 22).

The concept of user fees pays little part in the actual financing of visitor management in protected areas. It has been stated that while 70 agenices sell "tours" to the protected ares, only five agencies collaborate in some manner with the national parks (Salazar S., and Evans-Pritchard, D., 1992, August 6). This

collaboration is self-determined by the tourism owners ethics and sense of responsibility to compensate for use of the primary materials for their industry--Costa Rica's wealth of biodiversity.

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