Ecotourism in the Republic of Ecuador

Assessing indigenous empowerment in Community-Based Tourism projects

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Introduction

In Ecuador, October 2019 was marked by severe protests against the government. After 10 days of national demonstrations, the government cancelled the abolishment of a fuel subsidy that would make the prices of gasoline and diesel double. The subsidy already existed for forty years, but the measure would provide the State Treasury approximately four billion euros, which was required for a loan from the International Monetary Fund. Negotiations on the cancellation of the measure were conducted between the government and the indigenous population and were broadcasted live on national television (de Volkskrant, 2019). The indigenous population was not the only group in the country that would be affected by the proposal, but the fact that they took a principal role in the negotiations demonstrates their current strong and influential position in the country.

Although the above-mentioned situation shows the strength of the indigenous community in Ecuador, this has not always been the case. The indigenous population has been marginalized for a long time (Vogt, 2016). Nowadays, those communities still face mining and the extraction of oil in their territories, often placing them in subordinate positions (Postero, 2013). Nevertheless, the indigenous community in Ecuador is one of the strongest in Latin America and the members have united through protests to demand self-control over their territories, without the interruption of other groups (Rice, 2011). The current strong position of the communities has been a gradual process and could also be seen in community-based tourism (CBT), in which the local community is supposed to take all decisions. Currently there are approximately 285 CBT projects in Ecuador (FEPTCE, 2019).

Even though the local indigenous community ideally manages CBT, it is unclear whether this is always the case and if communities are in the leading position in those local initiatives. This thesis will analyse the position of the indigenous community in CBT projects and will assess it in terms of empowerment and ownership. This work aims to give an answer on the following research question: To what extend are indigenous Ecuadorian communities empowered to take decisions in community-based tourism? The hypothesis suggests that communities are empowered to exercise control over the projects and do also take decisions, but with the arrival of other (foreign) parties, this would attenuate. Furthermore, it is hypothesized that there will be differences between the projects in this grade of control, as would for example be the case in projects in the Ecuadorian Amazon and the highlands.

Various scientific studies have been done on CBT in Ecuador (Cabanilla, 2014; Cañada, 2015; García Casado & Palacios Estremera, 2014; Hutchins, 2007; Ruiz-Ballesteros & Hernández-Ramírez, 2010). However, none of the studies has looked at local empowerment in combination with the grade of decision-making of the local community in CBT. Therefore, this thesis will provide some insights in the position of the indigenous community on a local scale.

The first chapter will discuss some of the key concepts and will focus on the importance of empowerment for indigenous communities. Also, this chapter will explain what are theoretically the possible opportunities for the local community to exert influence in tourism during the implementation of a project and what could be the problems. In the second chapter the indigenous uprising in Latin America will be analyzed. Furthermore, this chapter will discuss the development of community-based tourism as a result of the Latin American indigenous movements and their demands of self-control. This will outline a background for the establishment of CBT in Ecuador. Finally, the third chapter of this thesis will analyse the extent of indigenous empowerment in local communities in Ecuadorian CBT. This chapter will focus on the ownership of those indigenous groups in Ecuadorian CBT and discuss the grade of control that local communities have in it.

In the first place, the research builds on a literature analysis, using secondary sources. The study is further completed by primary material, gathered through statistical data from the Ministry of Tourism of Ecuador and semi-structured depth-interviews with people who are working in the sector. One could think of indigenous participants of CBT projects and people working for NGOs. Interviews have been held over the phone, on Skype and in a face-to-face setting. Everything has been done from the Netherlands. This created the possibility to conduct interviews with a variety of people from different parts of Ecuador. The interviews in a face-to-face setting were conducted in the Embassy of Ecuador in The Hague and the Pro Ecuador office in Rotterdam. All interviews took place in the period between October and November 2019. Interviews focus on both the empowerment side and the ownership side of Ecuadorian CBT.

Chapter 1

Indigenous Tourism and Empowerment

In this first chapter the key concepts, which will be used in this thesis, are discussed. The importance of empowerment for indigenous communities will become clear, as well as the possible role of tourism in achieving this. This chapter will furthermore explain what are in theory the possible opportunities for the local community to exert influence within tourism during the implementation of a project.

1.1 Empowerment

In this first part, the concept of empowerment will be explained. Some definitions will be compared, which will lead to an understanding of the concept in this thesis. Afterwards, this section will focus on the empowerment of indigenous communities.

1.1.1 Understanding empowerment

According to Rowlands (1995) the terms empowerment and power are often being confused. An important part of empowerment is 'power'. Power could be seen as the obtainability of a certain person or group to get another person or group to act against their will. This kind of power can be found within decision-making practices and conflicts. It could be labelled as a 'zero-sum': the more powerful the one person or group is, the less the other is. Usually, power is described as a 'power over', because certain people seemingly have control or influence over others. 'Power over' principally occurs by males over other males, males over females or by dominant economic, political, cultural and social groups over those who are marginalized. Hence it could be seen as a mechanism of domination, whose use could be observed in people's private lives, in their personal relationships, in their societies and elsewhere.

The description of power in terms of complete control and dominance is in contrast with the one that generatively describes it as follows: ''the power some people have of stimulating activity in others and raising their morale'' (Rowlands, 1995, p. 102). An important characteristic of this form of leadership is that it arises from the desire to see a group accomplish what it is capable of, while there isn't any conflict of interests and where the group is able to set its own communal agenda. An important difference is that this model is not a zero-sum. The increase in ones power does not automatically mean the diminishment of the others (Rowlands, 1995). In this case one could talk about the concept of 'empowerment.'

The concept of empowerment can be defined as "a progression that helps people gain control over their own lives and increases the capacity of people to act on issues that they themselves define as important" (Luttrell et al, 2007, p. 16). Empowerment will mainly be understood in this thesis according to the above-mentioned definition of Luttrell et al. (2007). Furthermore, "'Empowerment' can be defined as a social-psychological state of confidence in one's ability to challenge existing relations of domination'' (Drury & Reicher, 2005, p.35). These two authors focus more on the psychological part of the concept, which will be less relevant for this thesis.

According to Drury and Reicher (2005), empowerment holds the idea of 'gaining strength'. It is an attempt to change the existing power structures as well as an attempt to bring about 'class conscientization'. Villeval (2008, p. 254) adds that ''Empowerment thus seeks a political goal: to ensure equal access to the same rights and opportunities for all.'' This description of the concept is similar to the earlier mentioned definition of Luttrell et al. (2007), but doesn't mention the necessary increase of capacity to actually change the power structures.

People who find themselves outside of the decision-making process should be brought into it to be able to talk about empowerment. Individuals should be able to exploit the available opportunities exclusive of any limitations from the State or other groups (Rowlands, 1995). Another, similar definition of empowerment states the following:

> Empowerment is the capacity of individuals or groups to determine their own affairs. It is a process to help people to exert control over factors that affect their lives. It represents the top end of the participation ladder where members of a community are active agents of change and they have the ability to find solutions to their problems, make decisions, implement actions and evaluate their solutions (Smith & Robinson, 2006, p. 97; Cole, 2006, p. 631).

Empowerment should contain the undoing of destructive social structures. People who are affected by those constructions should eventually see themselves as capable and granted to have an influence. There are three additional dimensions of empowerment: personal, close relationships and collective empowerment (Rowlands, 1995). This latter dimension is the most important for this thesis. In the first place, personal empowerment is about establishing a feeling of individual confidence and ability to undo the consequences of internalized domination. In the case of close relationships, empowerment is about creating the ability to discuss and influence the nature of the power relations and the decisions, which are made within them. Finally, collective empowerment states that individuals should work as a collective to be able to achieve

more than each individual could possibly alone. One could think about participation in political constructions, but also about communal action built on cooperation instead of competition. This collective activity may have a local focus, for example within a village or a neighborhood, but may also have an institutional angle, for instance national networks or the United Nations (Rowlands, 1995). Mainly the final dimension is necessary in community-based tourism to make it successful.

In sum, this thesis uses the term empowerment according to the definition of Luttrell et al. (2007). Additionally, it is important that this thesis will talk about the collective dimension of empowerment in which a group of people, who were outside of the decision-making process, is brought into it (Rowlands, 1995).

1.1.2 Indigenous emancipation and empowerment

In the case of indigenous populations, empowerment has often been a result of emancipation and social movements. In this way, indigenous group gain their desired control over their own territories.

Postero (2013) states that indigenous groups are immersed in broad national power relations. Since times of colonialism, unequal structures shape the relations. Later, racism and economic and political institutions, as well as cultural logics, reinforced this inequality. Furthermore, national development through extraction privileges the mining of resources over local land rights of the indigenous population. The power relations are constantly redefined due to certain moments.

Yet, the vulnerability of indigenous populations not only has to do with the characteristics of those groups, but also with the beliefs of modern states. Those states are engaged in nation-building and want all habitants of the country to be part of a national identity with a common language. This should correspond with the territory of the state and results in the annihilation of minority cultures, unless they are protected. As almost every state is involved in nation-building processes, the indigenous communities everywhere face the same pressures from the states (Ehrentraut, 2011). According to Canessa (2006), the indigenous population is seen as the last local obstacle for the globalisation of culture. Indigenous movements could challenge governments and their desire of globalisation (Rousseau & Ewig, 2017).

Indigenous people have united in social movements to demand respect for the existing differences in culture and to end discrimination. Furthermore, the claims they made were material (Sieder, 2011). The failure of governments to deliver on the indigenous rights, together

with integrated human rights, made indigenous movements critique the hegemonic forms of development and globalization. The movements increasingly challenged liberal conceptions of rights based on ideas of property as something that can be allocated a financial value and could be brought by persons without the importance of their connection to a certain territory (Sieder, 2011).

The Latin American movements became stronger since the 1980s. The combination of an expending worldwide discourse of multiculturalism and democratization in the region made it possible for indigenous people to unite and participate in national politics (Rousseau & Ewig, 2017). In Bolivia for example, the social movements also began to organize in the 1980s and 1990s. The initial claims were both cultural and ethnic claims and historical claims to land and autonomy (Postero, 2013). Nevertheless, in general the claims of indigenous movements are as follows: acknowledgment of indigenous ways of governance, respect for cultural variance in matters of education, language and health, self-rule of indigenous peoples on their familial territories and involvement in state policy-making that touches indigenous livings (Rousseau & Ewig, 2017). According to Sieder (2011), across Latin America indigenous people still fight for greater autonomy and also protest against the consequences of prevailing patterns of economic development.

During the 1980s and the 1990s a shift took place within Latin America regarding the recognition of indigenous people. Either new constitutions or reforms in existing agreements were recognized. This however varied in details from country to country in the region, but what all countries had in common was the recognition of the 'multicultural' and the extension of their rights such as collective property, accustomed law and bilingual schooling (Sieder, 2011). In the last two decades the collective rights of indigenous groups also have increasingly been codified. In Latin America for example, this began with reforms in the constitution during the 1990s in which several rights were adopted (Sieder, 2011).

Important is that traditionally marginalized groups rarely obtain political empowerment without their mobilization in social movements. In Latin America, progresses from same-sex weddings and worker's rights were the outcome of massive movements. Political empowerment will more likely be gained if the indigenous population has a strong movement (Rousseau & Ewig, 2017). While the indigenous groups in Latin American countries have been seen as minor for a long time, nowadays they are increasingly seen as being iconic for the country (Canessa, 2006). Tourism plays in important role in this picture.

1.2 Indigenous empowerment and ownership: Ecotourism and CBT

In this second part it will be explained how ecotourism and community-based tourism could contribute to the empowerment of indigenous people. Ecotourism could in turn be one of the results of social movements, as will be seen in the second chapter.

1.2.1 Ecotourism and community-based tourism

One of the important ways in which empowerment could be achieved and which will be discussed in this thesis is trough ecotourism. Fennel (2008) explains that ecotourism is a form of tourism that predominantly takes place in natural areas. It is defined as 'responsible travel to natural areas that conserves the environment, sustains the well-being of the local people, and involves interpretation and education' (TIES, 2015). Ecotourism is a concept of sustainable tourism development with the intention of supporting environmental conservation. The participation of the community is increased in the management, so it provides economic benefits to the (indigenous) community (Pforr, 2001). Tourism becomes increasingly common as both a practice and development policy, which involves culture and nature in innumerable ways (Hutchins, 2007). Ecotourism can only function as a mirror of the society and the community. The impacts of ecotourism should be seen in connection to the social structures, values and practices (Palmer & Chuamuangphan, 2018).

One form of ecotourism is community-based tourism. According to Cañada (2015, p. 160), community-based tourism is understood as a model of touristic activity in which the local population from a certain rural area (often indigenous) has an important role in the control of their territory and distribution of the benefits through their cooperative assemblies and associations of groups and families. Ruiz-Ballesteros and Hernández-Ramírez (2010) are more specific about the role in the control of the communities in CBT and state that indigenous and mestizo communities have the control over management, the organization and also over the running of tourism practices. The empowerment of the community is considered a necessity for support from the community for tourism (Shahrukh et al., 2019). This kind of tourism is based on the experience of living with the indigenous communities and hence sharing their lives for a short period of time. The home is being placed at the core of the business (Ruiz-Ballesteros & Hernández-Ramírez, 2010).

One should however not think that in *turismo comunitario* everyone from the community participates directly. It should just be seen as a form of tourism that is organized from a communitarian point of view (Ruiz-Ballesteros & Hernández-Ramírez, 2010). Also, the younger generations leave their homes in order to find nourishment in other parts of the country (Hutchins, 2007). They start studies in gastronomy and hotel schools, but they do not want to

dedicate themselves to agriculture like their parents did, although this is the base of CBT (Ruiz-Ballesteros & Hernández-Ramírez, 2010). The tourist wants to experience the lives of the people in harmony with their environment and their working on the land (Neudel, 2015). The desire of cultural conservation from indigenous groups is comprehensible not only because it sells as a tourism product, but also because a significant part of the members feel that their cultures are being lost (Hutchins, 2007).

Community-based tourism encourages a specific way of participating in the market. In different activities that have a focus on capitalist exchange, such as fishing, picking wild food, farming and agriculture, the communities inhabit an entirely dependent position. This differs in community-based tourism where, paradoxically, the communities have a vaster degree of control over the endeavors (Ruiz-Ballesteros & Hernández-Ramírez, 2010).

The term CBT is almost similar to the term indigenous tourism. Indigenous tourism can be understood as a tourism activity in which the indigenous communities are directly involved either through control and/or by using their culture and habits as the core of the attraction (Butler & Hinch, 2007). Indigenous tourism, which is collectively owned, tries to guarantee the good of the community. Participants try to uphold the voices of the members who cannot speak for themselves. Different ways of doing this are through tribal assemblies, advisory panels, cultural committees and partnerships with other, local sites of cultural productions. Profits or efficiency will be sacrificed if that would mean the maintenance of cultural relations (Bunten, 2010).

'Indigenous' and 'non-indigenous' are commonly used terms to define the disparities between the original habitants of a territory and the people who are originally from elsewhere (Carr et al., 2016). Where indigenous people differ from ethnic groups is that they frequently have common experiences of colonization and hence were forcibly removed from their homelands. Also, access to their historical, natural and also cultural resources was denied, while those could support their incomes through for example tourism (Carr et al., 2016). Because of the similarities, the terms indigenous tourism and CBT will both be used in this thesis.

1.2.2 Ownership in tourism

As mentioned by Cañada (2015), it is essential that the local population from a certain rural area (often indigenous) has control over the territory. Furthermore, communities should control the management of tourism projects (Ruiz-Ballesteros & Hernández-Ramírez, 2010). It is important that when there is multi-ownership within tourism, particular power relationships will be created between firms and other groups. Not only do the webs of power exercise control over

the business environment, they also have control over the visitors who will come to a certain destination (Mottiar & Tucker, 2007). If someone is talking about indigenous ecotourism, indigenous people must also be involved in the management. One of the crucial points is indigenous control or ownership in ecotourism on their ancestral homelands. The involvement of the indigenous community can include a complete or part ownership, as well as partnerships, joint ventures, service delivery and employment by external tourist firms (Zeppel, 2006). Communal ownership could provide all of the members to agree on the establishment of certain operational rules and the application of them in a cordial and respectful way (Silva-Flores, Hernández-Díaz & Wehenkel, 2016). Jänis (2014), who investigated community-based tourism in Namibia, states that complete ownership is promoted through empowerment.

Globally many indigenous groups believe in the importance of regaining ownership and control over their homelands, as they consider the territories to be undividable from themselves, their culture and their character. Development is predominantly conceptualised as control, empowerment, independence and leadership by indigenous groups who take part in the projects (Addison et al., 2019). The form of ownership could influence the role of the local community.

1.3 Indigenous empowerment or 'power over the indigenous': Ecotourism and CBT

This third part focuses on the discussion regarding tourism and empowerment. As the following discussions will show, the relation between indigenous empowerment and CBT is not unequivocal, and that is contingent to pre-existing social relations.

1.3.1 Local empowerment as a result of tourism

Pereiro (2016) observes that nowadays tourism isn't viewed as a threat anymore for indigenous people, but rather as an opportunity for their development and empowerment. Sustainable indigenous-owned projects are initiated over the entire world. The indigenous form of capitalism rather focuses on wellbeing than just profit (Bunten, 2010). Pereiro (2016) adds that success in the projects is generated through the resistance of indigenous communities to external control and the flexibility and adaptation of the indigenous groups. Mendoza-Ramos and Prideaux (2018) state that ecotourism principally endeavours the recognition of indigenous land ownership. Furthermore, there is an increasing realization in Latin America that development should be sustainable. Even though it is a national or international party who supports the development, the empowerment and education should always be part of the program (Honey, 2008).

CBT can possibly lead to the empowerment of the indigenous communities through self-management of the territories and the natural resources (Torres-Alruiz, Pilquimán & Henríquez-

Zúñiga, 2018). According to Zeppel (2006), ecotourism could be used as a development tool for indigenous communities. This requires the empowerment of the members of the community, which could be obtained once the political and economic control from the governments, NGOs and multilateral organizations is shifted to the members of the community. Moreover, CBT is a way of accomplishing self-management over the own resources and territories for the communities (Ruiz et al., 2008; Ruiz-Ballesteros & Hernández-Ramírez, 2010). Once a community could give their voluntary input in tourism, a sense of involvement will be reached. Together with a strong sense of their land this will eventually lead to pride and community empowerment (Smith & Robinson, 2006).

Friedmann (1992) distinguishes four kinds of empowerment that could be the result of ecotourism. Besides economic-, psychological- and social empowerment, the author emphasizes political empowerment. In the first place, ecotourism could bring lasting economic rewards to the local community. The cash that is earned with tourism will be divided between a certain amounts of households within the community. A variety of improvements could be observed, such as money used for more perpetual materials for the building of houses and improved water systems. However, the author states that most profits go to the local elites, agencies, outside operators and government agencies. Not everyone within the community will benefit, mainly because they lack either capital of appropriate skills.

The psychological empowerment described by Friedmann (1992) refers to an augmented self-esteem of community members, because there is an appreciation of their culture, natural resources and traditional practices from outside. This increased confidence could lead to the desire of more educational and training possibilities. Important is that many people haven't shared in the welfare of ecotourism and face adversities towards this form of tourism.

The third form of empowerment, social empowerment, is described as the improvement of community cohesion. Families and other individuals collaborate to develop a fruitful ecotourism venture. Several funds are dedicated to the development of the community, such as the building of schools and the improvement of roads. On the other hand, many individuals within the community will take on external values and lose their respect for their own traditions. Instead of cooperating, people might also compete with each other for the apparent benefits of ecotourism.

The fourth kind of empowerment mentioned by Friedmann (1992) is political empowerment. The political structure of the community, which exemplifies the needs and the interests of all the groups within a community, will offer a forum through which community members are able to

raise questions in regard to the ecotourism venture. The agencies, which initiate or implement the projects, ideally seek out the sentiments of all the groups within a certain community, such as youth, women and other groups. Those groups will become active in the decision-making process. From a negative point of view, communities will have autocratic or self-interested organizers. In this case the agencies will treat the members of the community as passive beneficiaries. This will result in the feeling from the community of little or no control over the ecotourism project.

If the planning is thoughtful, tourism can be a way for indigenous communities to take back the power from dominating groups. Tourism could be used as an instrument to regulate what is shared with visitors and what isn't (Bunten, 2010). Power should be transferred to indigenous people in order to support their accommodation, participation and protection in modern states (Ehrentraut, 2011). Many indigenous communities are gaining back some of the control over their territories because the legislation of land rights and schemes of land acquisition. This land is often located in remote areas and the values of conservation are very high. Therefore those lands could potentially be used for the implementation of cultural and ecotourism projects. This creates a potential economic use of the lands for the communities (Buultjens, Gale & White, 2010).

One of the examples of an indigenous community that has been empowered as a result of land ownership is the Coba community in the Yucatan Peninsula, Mexico. The land ownership made them engage successfully with the tourism sector (Mendoza-Ramos & Prideaux, 2018). The Mäori society in New Zealand have controlled their own tourism for decades, namely since the mid-1970s. A cultural revival began through tourism and came principally as a result of self-empowerment, pressure on the government and the subsequent return of inherited lands. Nowadays their ecotourism attracts many tourists to the community from over the entire world (Pereiro, 2016). Even though the community has control in the projects, this won't always guarantee the success of the projects. Where some indigenous groups succeed in tourism, others won't. This could have to do with factors outside the control of the community (Carr et al., 2016).

Li (2006), who surveyed residents of a local community in the Chinese Sichuan Province, shows another possibility. The results showed that local residents had the feeling that they received benefits from tourism, although they apparently did have little input in the decision-making process. This contradicts with the literature saying that participation in decision-making is essential for the success of certain projects.

1.3.2 Obstacles to indigenous empowerment through CBT

Government's authorities have legitimized the role of indigenous communities in the overall control and management of the protected areas in order to both protect the people and their homelands. One of the main conditions of ecotourism is land tenure of the indigenous communities over the area in which ecotourism occurs. Additionally, ecotourism should promote the ability to make decisions of land use for the communities (Coria & Calfucura, 2012).

Furthermore, governments can have an important responsibility in assisting ecotourism development. This can be by training the communities, create funds for investment in infrastructure, give support for marketing etc. This means that governments can play a critical role in the process of empowerment (Mendoza-Ramos & Prideaux, 2018). The implementation, development and management of those indigenous groups are essential and should be underlined by the values of sustainable development and the natural resources management (Carr, Ruhanen & Whitford, 2016). However, the reality shows that there are also obstacles in CBT, which are predominantly passive community participation, uneven distribution of economic benefits, paternalist NGOs, an increase of relative poverty and unequal power relations.

First of all, according to Cole (2006), in practice participation of the community is actually often passive when you analyse tourism in isolated areas of the world. The hurdles to participate are a lack of confidence, knowledge, skills, capital and also self-belief. Confidence, pride and an improved political identity are aspects of empowerment, which are brought with tourism, but they will not necessarily mean further participation. For communities to be able to participate in decision-making, it is necessary for them to understand the processes within tourism development. They need to understand the tourists, but also their wants and needs and the different development possibilities. The access to relevant information is therefore necessary. The first stages of empowerment could then be converted into the capability to determine their own development.

Secondly, although ecotourism hypothetically could improve the conditions of the indigenous communities, the reality shows that economic benefits are sometimes unevenly distributed. Stakeholders outside the protected area and local elites from the community tend to be favoured. Also, the lack of community control over the land and resources averts the indigenous societies from investing in ecotourism. Furthermore, uneven power relations between the indigenous communities on the one side and stakeholders on the other suggest that the first don't have a real voice in management decisions (Coria & Calfucura, 2012).

In the third place, while international development agencies, NGOs and governments intend to use ecotourism for the improvement of economic realities of indigenous communities, they could have a rather paternalist function in the organization and development of ecotourism projects. This does not necessarily contribute to the long-term empowerment of the indigenous groups or to their financial independence in certain projects (Coria & Calfucura, 2012). The power of the nation-state can be visible in projects of development. Not a single power could sell in the Amazon solely to other parts of the world. This in turn creates possibilities for the tourists, government employees, travel agents and indigenous leaders. But also for institutions such as NGOs and ministries which in favourable circumstances tend to push their own agendas and encourage their own interests (Hutchins, 2007).

Fourth, from a theoretical perspective it has been suggested that this type of intervention, due to the unequal situation in which the most impoverished populations are in relation to the large tourist capitals, widens the gap in terms of the political capacity of rural communities to take decisions on the aspects that affect these territories and their resources, which contributes to increase their relative poverty (Canada, 2015). According to Manyara, Jones and Botterill (2006), community-based tourism is not always meant to help. Sometimes it could be used as a neo-colonial strategy that is more concerned about the environmental issues of the West than the needs of the communities. The majority of the projects is highly dependent on help of NGOs and other external parties.

Finally, power in ecotourism projects sometimes still lies with the NGOs and government agencies. The indigenous communities are limited or even restricted in the use of resources. There is limited commitment among the stakeholders to redistribute the power of decision-making (Zeppel, 2006). The participation of the community is considered as unqualified expression in which various groups with various interests participate relatively to their power given in the community (Tosun, 2006).

1.3.3 Ecotourism implementation

Commonly, international parties implement the projects. Almost every major organization in the field of conservation from the United States is working with ecotourism in some part. This could be from providing technical assistances to the operation of projects in developing areas. Most of the NGOs are based in countries with a high level of development. They operate principally in developing nations (Honey, 2008).

According to Honey (2008), global aid and lending agencies invest billions of dollars into plans with components of tourism. Most of those projects are sustainable- or ecotourism projects. The

goal of the programs is sustainable rural development, infrastructure development, poverty lessening and institutional capacity building (Honey, 2008). Palmer and Chuamuangphan (2018) state that the development of CBT and ecotourism is often driven by international development funding aimed at achieving rural economic diversification, with tourism being identified as an alternative livelihood activity. It is apparent that the employment of community-based ecotourism (CBET) as an economic and business development tool is often encouraged or advocated in traditional, non-westernized cultures. It has been identified in a number of tourism studies that the existence of power elites and connections to the most powerful can affect the ability of local people to influence tourism decision-making. Coria and Calfucura (2012) mention that eventually just the communities who have the financial capability to make investments or the ones with access to funding from NGOs or other partners will eventually control a significant share of the revenues from ecotourism. When used as a development tool, ecotourism mainly means the movement of visitors from the North to the South. Or as could be said, from developed to developing nations (Honey, 2008).

In places where indigenous communities have major presence, CBT starts as a reaction to tourism exploitation of other parties in their homelands and the exploitation of their resources and culture. This makes that the grade of control is low for the communities themselves. Because tourism is not a traditional activity for those rural communities, they have very little experience with the subject professionally nor personally. This makes that tourism development becomes a privileged camp for international agencies and other technical players (Cañada, 2015). The receiving communities do usually not take an active part in the development of tourism in their homelands. Tourism is an external force with effects on the host community (Pereiro, 2016). In the case of development, the following could be said:

> Empowerment can be approached from the perspective of 'partnership' or 'capacity building', both closely linked and sometimes confused. We regard partnership as the overarching political framework within which capacity building seeks to foster empowerment, understood here as a social process to reach political objectives (Villeval, 2008, p. 252).

Because of different factors, and mainly because of the lack of knowledge of the communities about the activity, and excessive dependence on external actors, the final result is that after ten to fifteen years the cooperation projects do not make up for a positive balance (Cañada, 2015). Usually the NGOs undertake tasks such as business management, marketing, financial management and product research because the communities lack those skills. This often places

the indigenous communities in poverty traps and prevents the construction of human capital within those groups in the future (Zeppel, 2006). Honey (2008) states that if ecotourism is used as an instrument for rural development, economic and political control should be shifted to the local community or people as well. This is, as the author states, often the most challenging and time-consuming principle in the ecotourism projects. In practice, foreign operators and other partners often repudiate to do so or just do it moderately or formally.

If indigenous people will benefit from decentralization, their participation should be completely or partly built upon their own institutions (Ehrentraut, 2011). The local communities better comprehend the nature and the characteristics of their tourism products than outsiders. The products are often related to local habits and conventional and cultural standards and meanings. Therefore the local communities are more likely to know what will be suitable for their local setting in the development and planning process of tourism (Tosun, 2006).

In conclusion, empowerment is necessary for local indigenous communities to make decisions over their territories and tourism projects. Although different authors defined empowerment in a certain way, this thesis will understand empowerment according to the idea of Luttrell et al. (2007) and focuses on the collective dimension (Rowlands, 1995). Both social movements (Rousseau & Ewig, 2017) and tourism (Friedmann, 1992) are ways in which especially indigenous empowerment could be reached, though the latter could be the result of the first, as will be seen in the next chapter. In practice it is unclear who leads in the decision-making processes of CBT. The question is how empowered the local communities are in CBT projects. As the communities often lack knowledge, development agencies can be leading (Cañada, 2015).

Chapter 2

CBT as a Result of Indigenous Emancipation

In this second chapter the indigenous uprising in Latin America will be analyzed. Furthermore, this chapter will take a look at community-based tourism as a result of the Latin American indigenous movements and their demands of self-control.

2.1 Indigenous emancipation in Latin America and Ecuador

It could be said that the indigenous population in Latin America has faced a certain degree of repression in the past centuries. However, this is slowly diminishing, especially because of the movements created by the indigenous population themselves. The first part of this second chapter will focus on those movements and their demands. After a general look at Latin America is being taken, this part will focus on Ecuador specifically.

2.1.1 Indigenous exclusion in Latin America

The indigenous communities in Latin America have been facing exclusion from social and economic activities in Latin America since the period of colonization. Indigenous people in Latin America have been economically, socially and politically demoted (Vogt, 2016). They have been subjects of the state, belonged to landlords or have had limited freedom because the churches exiled them from their own lands. Furthermore, their freedom of cultural manifestation and movement was limited, and so was their autonomy (Yashar, 2005).

Nowadays, there is an undeniable drive of the state towards the exploitation of resources in indigenous territories (Sieder & Barrera Vivero, 2017). Even with world geopolitics, state governments and the past colonization, the communities living in the rural areas endure. Although they just form a small percentage of the worldwide human population, they remarkably seem to settle in environments with strategic importance. Territories that were discharged before now become more important (Ruiz-Ballesteros, 2011). One could think of lands with oil reserves.

The extensive extraction of mineral resources in for example the Amazon Basin progressively penetrates into isolated regions with a sizeable biodiversity. Often indigenous communities inhabit those areas (Bozigar, Gray & Bilsborrow, 2016). Grounds with gas and oil often overlap with indigenous territories (Finer et al., 2008). As a result oil exploration usually leads to permanent complications, such as the loss of biodiversity. Also, it has a significant impact on both human and cultural variety (Orta-Martínez & Finer, 2010). Other direct results include

deforestation for access roads, pipelines, boring platforms, discharges of wastewater and the contamination from oil spills. Mainly deforestation has affected the principal areas of certain indigenous groups (Finer et al., 2008). Because indigenous communities often lack political influence due to their small size, they commonly face social disadvantages (O'Faircheallaigh, 2013).

As mentioned, the extraction of natural resources distresses small areas. Oil exploration undertakings have contributed to different situations of interaction with indigenous communities who live in intentional isolation. This contact has resulted in the outbreaks of diseases among those communities, leading to high mortality rates. The health situation of the indigenous people is put in risk with the arrival of the outsiders. Furthermore, the isolated indigenous groups tend to migrate because oil activities open access to the settlement of others from outside the community (Orta-Martínez & Finer, 2010).

According to O'Faircheallaigh (2013), the extractive industries could also generate supplementary earnings with chances of employment in the field of those extractive activities. Often however, the indigenous people obtain little of the wealth that could be created by the extractive industries. CBT could be a way to combat those extractive practices, since the community itself regains control over the territory. Polluting activities such as oil drilling have no place in this model of tourism.

Furthermore, from the 1930s on the idea of *indigenismo*, the idea that indigenous cultural history should be preserved without forcing indigenous groups to modernize, became stronger (Van Cott, 2007). Eventually, the fight of indigenous groups for the recognition of their cultural identity created an important regulation of their rights on both national and international level. One of the results of the 'fight for freedom' was the *Indigenous and Tribal Peoples Convention*, which later became the *Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous People*, approved in 1989 (Rodrigues Pinto & Dominguez Avila, 2011). One of the main ways in which the just mentioned results of the 'fight for freedom' were achieved, was through movements, as will be seen in this chapter.

2.1.2 Social movements for indigenous inclusion

To reach ethnic inclusion in a society with ethnic discrimination, Vogt (2016) argues that social movements are a key driver. According to the author, it is more probable that indigenous populations, who have strong social movements, achieve inclusion in administrative state power than those who don't.

In the past decades, Latin America has seen a wave of political organization among the indigenous communities. They have formed cultural centres, as well as political parties and law centres. In this way, the historical image of indigenous groups being subordinate to others is challenged and instead the indigenous identity is being embraced. The demands have existed of political representation, bicultural schooling and territorial self-rule amongst others (Yashar, 1998; Chong, 2010).

Van Cott (2007) states that in the 1960s and the 1970s independent indigenous political endeavours were suppressed by the military regimes. Even in countries such as Peru and Ecuador, were the state organized elections regularly, various legal bars for voting by indigenous persons were raised. The countries imposed, for example, literacy tests to prevent them from voting. Even with the shift to civilian rule, new difficulties became clear. One could think of fraud and the shortage of nearby polling places that restricted the participation of indigenous people from political activity. The author mentions the appearance of indigenous social movements from Argentina to Mexico in the 1970s. According to the author, in the first place those movements tried to defend the land rights, but later the focus was more on cultural issues such as self-government and multilingual education.

During the 1980s, national-level indigenous organizations were formed in the following countries: Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Colombia, Ecuador, and Venezuela. Countries where big parts of the land were covered by indigenous organizations were Chile, Mexico, Nicaragua, Panama, and Peru (Van Cott, 2007). According to Yashar (1998), All of those groups shared the duty to organize and protect 'Indians as Indians'. They wanted the state to officially acknowledge the rights of native communities. Even though the characteristics of those groups and their agendas were different, they have generally insisted on respect for democratic and constitutional shared indigenous rights. Some of the movements transformed into revolts, as was the case in Mexico. In Venezuela for example, the indigenous groups formed non-violent organizations (Chi-Hung Wei, 2016).

The idea of territorial autonomy for indigenous groups as an illustration of self-rule and the central role that the indigenous organizations played in it became important in the 1990s[1]. At

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[1] Not everywhere did the state have the same influence on policy. For example in the Amazon, the government has traditionally been weak. Neither corporatist nor populist programmes found substantial control in the Amazon. After the expansion of the state after the World War II in the Andes region, the Amazon continued to be moderately marginalized from modern politics, the market and the influence of the state in both. Therefore this region did not see numerous indigenous protests. Contrarily, between the 1960s to the 1980s the economic and political influence of the state in the Andes increased. They constructed policies for development and stimulated cattle ranching and oil exploration amongst others. The

the end of the decade this idea was founded in the activism of indigenous social movements in Latin America. Autonomy became important for a substantial amount of the indigenous organizations. Indigenous groups tried to realize the right of self-government. This demand had a strong discursive and political drive. However, at the end of the 1990s not much had changed and in some cases there was even the risk of losing all of the self-control (González, 2015).

Eventually, with the indigenous protests and the return of democratic institutions after many years of dictatorships and civil wars, together with the existence of a general process of broadening political participation, the main advances in Latin American constitutions were generated. Also, the reforms that occurred were responding with the demands for recognition of diverse groups of Amerindians who were organizing at increasingly wider levels and claiming their culture, their territories, their institutions and their right to participate (Rodrigues Pinto & Dominguez Avila, 2011).

Even though it varied in degree per nation, constitutional reforms had to respond, or partly, to the demands of the indigenous groups. The reforms varied in both content and language (Sieder & Barrera Vivero, 2017). The inclusion of indigenous people in politics caused an increase in the representation of the democratic dimensions. Citizens, which were once excluded, became part of the decision-making process. The two countries in Latin America that first constitutionally recognized the rights of the indigenous people were Colombia in 1991 and Bolivia between 1994 and 1996 (Van Cott, 2007).

The indigenous social movements in Latin America have revitalized both local and national politics. Furthermore, they fought for the defence of shared rights (Van Cott, 2007). Currently, the constitutions of Ecuador, Colombia, Venezuela and Bolivia have the most elaborate documents on indigenous rights. Although its full application was not yet completed, such constitutional texts were well accepted by local indigenous movements (Rodrigues Pinto & Dominguez Avila, 2011).

Van Cott (2007) claims that within nations where indigenous groups make up a large share of the population, the political and legal integration of those groups means a big shift in power. Also, it would mean the diminishing of influence of the institutions that were built to exclude them from the system. Nevertheless, internal factionalism in a movement might still destabilize

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independence of indigenous groups from the state, which they had remained in this specific area for a long period, was challenged. As a result indigenous movements appeared to encounter these developments (Yashar, 1998).

the political efficiency of a certain mobilization (Vogt, 2016). As will be seen, this was not the case in Ecuador. Moreover, most of the indigenous people live in the highlands. The identity of the different groups hence remains principally local (Becker, 2010).

2.1.3 Indigenous social movements in Ecuador

One of the countries with an important indigenous social movement is Ecuador. Ecuador is a country with multiple indigenous populations with different languages and cultures. About 40% of the population is indigenous. All of those different groups had to deal with economic and social discrimination and invasions of their land. The Ecuadorian indigenous community has never used insurgence to declare their rights or show their frustrations. However, they have been involved in public protests and movements (Cleary, 2000).

One of the strongest indigenous Latin American movements is Ecuadorian. The movement and the indigenous population have seen both political exclusion and inclusion in the previous decades (Vogt, 2016). According to Rice (2011), the indigenous movement from Ecuador was considered the best organized within Latin America. This mainly had to do with the capacity of the movement to monitor mass mobilizations and create political agreements in an institutional framework (Chong, 2010). Also, The movement managed to evade intra-ethnic conflict, as was the case in for example Bolivia. This is one of the biggest vulnerabilities for certain movements. Furthermore, they were able to unite the interests from the different highland, coastal and Amazon region (Rice, 2011).

The indigenous people from Ecuador could be separated into two principal cultural groups. On the one hand one could observe the people from the highlands, who are generally Kichwa. On the other hand one could observe the people from the Amazonian lowlands. This is a smaller group and this group is also more disjointed, because the group has approximately ten different languages (Becker, 2010). According to Yashar (2005) the Ecuadorian state has tried to include and control indigenous groups from the Andes since the colonial period. However, the Amazon was neglected and so were the indigenous communities living there until the second part of the twentieth century.

Ecuadorian indigenous people from both the Andes region and the Amazon have been opposed to economic marginalization and the intrusion of their lands. However, this especially happened in the Amazon, where oil was located in the late 1960s (Cleary, 2000). Even while Ecuador does have an obvious presence of indigenous people, the politicians have often not paid attention to them. This changed in the 1990s and the following decades, when the indigenous movement attained a significant amount of organization and coordination (Ruiz-Ballesteros & Hernández-

Ramírez, 2010). In June 1990, an influential uprising took place across Ecuador. This *levantamiento* resulted in the paralysation of the country for a week. All indigenous populations from the Ecuadorian highlands, coast and Amazon united in defence of shared political goals (Becker, 2010).

In 1980, a decade before the uprising, The *Confederación de Nacionalidades Indígenas del Ecuador* (CONAIE, Confederation of Indigenous Nationalities of Ecuador) was created with the goal of promoting the consolidation of indigenous people. The organization was the result of the continuous fight of the separate communities, centres, federations and confederations of indigenous peoples for indigenous land and territories and their own intercultural bilingual education. Furthermore, CONAIE was a result of the fight against the oppression of civil authorities. It was also a result of the fight for the cultural identity and the dignity of indigenous peoples and nationalities (CONAIE, 2020).

During the 1990s protests, eventually an influential movement surfaced from groups of people who had been seen by the dominant classes as passive and reluctant. COINAIE became the most important party in those protests and they defined a program encouraging indigenous control over their own concerns. Their demands were a threat to the elite white people in power. The concerns and issues of Ecuadorian indigenous people were placed at the centre of the debate (Becker, 2010). According to Becker (2010), indigenous people referred to the uprising as a *pachakutik*. This word means 'a return' in the Quechua language and signifies a change, transformation or rebirth. The term was introduced in the Ecuadorian indigenous movement.

Whereas the communities from the Andes tried to defend their private and shared landholdings obtained through corporatists programs, the communities from the Amazon tried to maintain their control over the areas which the state had ignored for a long time and suddenly approved for new developers and colonizers. Both in the Amazon and the Andes indigenous movements appeared to defend the local independence (Yashar, 2005). Even though the Ecuadorian state did make concessions to indigenous communities sometimes, they continued with neoliberal reforms irrespective of the indigenous concerns. This resulted in enormous protests from the indigenous sides. Even with the political chaos, the indigenous groups formed a rather political than revolutionary force as they sought discussions with the state (Chi-Hung Wei, 2016).

As mentioned, the protests with CONAIE as the leading party shut down business for a week and hence obligated the government to discuss with them about several subjects. At the end of the century, the organization sustained their power of mobilization and was considered an important voice when development policies, bicultural schooling and institutional proposals

were debated. Also, several of their regional and national frontrunners were chosen in the national office (Yashar, 2005). Many indigenous Ecuadorians protested in the context of neoliberalism. However, protests never intensified to revolts (Chi-Hung Wei, 2016). Eventually in 1988, the constitutional restructuring of Ecuador involved the acknowledgment of the multi-ethnic and pluricultural state as well as the identity, education, ancestral knowledge, intellectual property, law and health of indigenous people (Sieder & Barrera Vivero, 2017).

2.2 Development of CBT in Latin America and Ecuador

One of the demands of the indigenous movements across Latin America and Ecuador was the control of their own territories. Eventually this demand was partially granted with CBT. This was seen as a solution. With help from the governments and external parties, different CBT projects were started in the region. This second part will focus on the development of this form of tourism in Latin America and specifically in Ecuador. This will be linked again with the indigenous emancipation through movements.

Numerous initiatives of community-based tourism have developed in Latin America recently. Most of those projects emerged in rural areas where indigenous groups live. Besides the establishment of communal and cultural capital, CBT forms part of a larger historical context. This context is the struggle of defiance, the practices of territorial dispossession, and the yearning to destruct the identity of the groups that persist in the policies of governments of neoliberals. Communities have been adaptable to exterior tremors, such as neoliberal policies, territorial removal and extractive programmes (Torres-Alruiz et al., 2018). Indigenous tourism in Latin America can only be understood in the background of leftist programmes and a new generation of indigenous people with a communitarian and ethnic agenda. Indigenous organizations and leftist groups encourage CBT across Latin America as an instrument for advancing their cultural and political agenda (Ullán de La Rosa et al., 2019).

In the 1970s, Ecuador, like several Latin American countries, was experiencing a period of dictatorships that slowed down tourism processes. The oil boom marks a break that paused other productive activities until looking at its real dimension. This time was marked by large negative impacts on the natural environment (Cabanilla, 2014). At the beginning of the 80s, global tourist flows began to increase and expand territorially. Also, the concerns over the environment began to increase. The idea of reorienting tourism development towards an alternative way of tourism, in which nature and its conservation gained greater importance, became more important (García Casado & Palacios Estremera, 2014).

For its part, Ecuador is identified within Latin America as a pioneer in the development of community-based tourism, an activity that emerged since the 1980s in response to the strong sense of exclusion of communities, which manifested more as an object of appreciation than as a subject in the development of tourism in their territories (Cabanilla, 2014). The development of the tourism sector is identified with the neoliberal globalization and therefore stands as a model of capital accumulation with all the implications and externalities of the system. Those are generally negatively impacting the populations of the local places where it is implanted, causing social exclusion, appropriation of the territory and negative effects on the environment. Also, the greatest economic benefits usually went to the foreigners (Loor Bravo, Alonso Alemán & Pérez Pérez, 2018).

A large number of CBT initiatives additionally began as a response to the economic crisis caused by the fall in prices of traditional agricultural products, such as coffee or cocoa. They were also a reaction to the neoliberal public policies that harmed the peasant sector (Cañada, 2015) and the indigenous groups call for the preservation of their cultures and habitats. Not only because this is the part that sells as a tourism product, but also because they feel that their cultures were being lost to dominating cultures, desires and values (Hutchins, 2007). As seen before, the oil extraction also negatively influenced the living areas of the communities.

Community-based tourism is configured as a model of collective institutionalized action in the territory of a community, born as a successful response and demand of communities to stop being passive objects of tourism practices. Instead they became active actors of territorial development, in all stages of the implementation (Cabanilla, 2014). In Ecuador, community-based tourism is also seen as a form of tourism in which both the indigenous and the mestizo communities regulate and manage the organization of the tourism processes (Ruiz-Ballesteros & Hernández-Ramírez, 2010).

Tourism in Ecuador is nowadays the third most important economic activity, after the extraction of oil and the banana production. Ecuador receives about seven hundred thousand visitors a year. The diverse biodiversity and the cultural variation of Ecuador are the catalysts of the tourism sector (Ruiz et al., 2008). In the case of the Amazon, this is a habitat of an abundant diversity of flora and fauna. In this region, several communities have begun to develop indigenous tourism as a source of increasing their living circumstances (García Casado & Palacios Estremera, 2014).

In 2001 the Ecotourim and Sustainability Regulations of the country legitimately recognized CBT in Ecuador. In the following year, this form of tourism attained full legal status under the *Ley de Turismo*. This law also acknowledged the *Plurinational Federation of Turismo Comunitario in Ecuador* (FEPTCE) as the nation's speaker for CBT. The Ministry of Tourism identifies a principal position for the FEPTCE in the regulation and characterization of indigenous tourism (Ruiz-Ballesteros & Hernández-Ramírez, 2010). *Turismo comunitario* is part of a broader strategy that incorporates political practice and indigenous development. Both FEPTCE and the local communities themselves also see it as a way of gaining control over the own territories and reserves (Ruiz-Ballesteros & Hernández-Ramírez, 2010).

The goal of FEPTCE is to bring together indigenous populations that are involved in tourism in Ecuador. Those communities are traditional agents of Ecuador's environmental and cultural heritage. Often those people suffer economic marginalization, illiteracy and high amounts of infant mortality among other challenges (United Nations Development Programme, 2012). FEPTCE (2019) states that there are approximately 285 projects that have established in the country. However, the Ministry of Tourism of Ecuador (2018) talks about only 37 registered projects. Furthermore the Ministry mentions a total of 306 rooms and 870 places to sleep for the tourists in all national CBT projects. Total numbers are therefore not totally clear. CBT projects could nowadays be found in all different provinces in the country.

In conclusion it could be said that indigenous people in Latin America have been economically, socially and politically demoted for over decades (Vogt, 2016). They have also faced territorial deterrence (González, 2015). The indigenous people in Ecuador have participated in protests to demand self-control (Cleary, 2000). In Ecuador two important regions could be divided: the Andes and the Amazon. According to Cleary (2000) people of both areas have the experience of economic marginalization and the intrusion of their lands.

Not only did CBT eventually rise as a mean of diversifying the income for local communities (Torres-Alruiz et al., 2018), CBT does also form part of a larger historical context: the emancipation of indigenous people, especially through social movements in Latin America. Also, this context is the struggle of defiance, the practices of territorial dispossession, and the yearning to destruct the identity of the groups that persist in the policies of governments of neoliberals (Torres-Alruiz et al., 2018). Indigenous organizations and leftist groups nowadays even encourage CBT across Latin America as an instrument for advancing their cultural and political agenda (Ullán de La Rosa et al., 2019). Initially CBT projects also came in response to a

strong sense of exclusion of indigenous communities, which manifested as an object of appreciation, rather than a subject of tourism in their territories (Cabanilla, 2014).

CBT could be an important way for the indigenous communities to protect themselves from the disadvantageous extraction of oil, in which local control is being lost to external parties. Ecuador has the best-organized indigenous community in the region and therefore one could already talk about a certain degree of indigenous empowerment. The social movements, as seen across Latin America and specifically in Ecuador, are a first step in the empowerment process of the indigenous population, as they help the communities gain control over the issues they consider important. CBT could help to further empower indigenous people not only on an organizational scale, but also on a smaller, communal scale.

Chapter 3

Empowerment and Ownership in Ecuadorian CBT

Firstly, this chapter will analyse the empowerment of local communities in Ecuadorian CBT. Afterwards this chapter will focus on the ownership of local indigenous communities in Ecuadorian CBT. The analysis will be made using a total of fourteen conducted interviews.

The fourteen semi-structured interviews (Annex I) have been conducted with different experts on the theme. The subject has been studied from different points of view, such as from the perspective of NGOs, participants of CBT projects and governmental organizations. All interviewees have been asked questions about the capability of communities to take decisions in CBT projects and the actual grade of control that local communities have over CBT. Both the empowerment side and the ownership side will hence be discussed.

Examples of projects which the interviewees had experience with, are the Yunguilla project and the Otavalo project in the Ecuadorian highlands and the Mashpi Shungo project in the Ecuadorian Amazon. As some of the participants had experience with projects in the Amazon region and others with projects in the Andes region, answers could be compared. All of the interviews took place in the period between October and November 2019. Whilst several interviews were held in a face-to-face setting, the majority has been conducted over the phone or by using Skype.

3.1 Indigenous empowerment in Ecuadorian CBT

As seen in the previous chapters, CBT is both a result of indigenous empowerment and a means to achieve indigenous empowerment. However, the question is how empowered the indigenous communities are in the case of tourism. The empowerment in both the setup phase and the aftermath of a CBT project will first be analysed.

3.1.1 Empowerment at the beginning of a project

The answers given in the interviews point to a problem at the beginning of a CBT project: the lack of knowledge by the local community. Almost all of the interviewees identified that the local community isn't capable of managing a CBT project from the start on. Mainly because it is new for them and the members simply don't know how it works. Therefore, external help is needed, mainly in the way of transferring knowledge. D. Cerda Tapuy (personal communication, November 12, 2019), a tour guide from the Napo province in the Ecuadorian Amazon, stated the following:

Después de que haya construido algo, ellos (externos) apoyarían con algo de capacitación para poder trabajar en el turismo, porque tú como comunidad podrías construir la casa. Podrías tener cinco, seis, siete casas, pero si no tienes un conocimiento sobre el servicio, como poder traer a la gente, igual no te serviría. Allí se metería la parte de gobiernos autónomos, o de empresas privadas, o de una organización o una fundación que te podría ayudar.

C. García Ahijado, whose husband is indigenous and tried to start a CBT project in Puyo in the Ecuadorian Pastaza province, gave a similar example. ''No tenían una persona que supiera cómo promocionar y esto pasa en muchos sitios. Quedaron las cabañas que dio el Ministerio y luego no sabían cómo hacerlo funcionar'' (personal communication, November 4, 2019). Or as said by X. Contreras, assessor of FEPTCE: ''Todos son interesados en que haya desarrollo, una mejora, que se cree fuentes de trabajo para sus hijos y ingresos para ellos. Pero el turismo no necesariamente es algo que entienden'' (personal communication, November 18, 2019).

The communities lack knowledge in basically all different aspects of tourism and usually won't be able to do it by themselves. However, specifically the quality of the services, hygiene, and knowledge on how to acces markets, promote the project and finance is scarce. The latter is also the reason why many projects eventually have to stop (V. Muñoz Bernal, personal communication, November 8, 2019). External parties could provide the lacking knowledge. One of the interviewees, who works at the Fundación Imaymana and started a project called Río Mashpi, believed that external help isn't necessary, but it could be an important benefit. ''Si llega esa posibilidad, es una buena oportunidad para motivar a la gente para acelerar un poco el proceso, porque no es súper difícil. Es que se requiere de una a otra manera inversion, y no solo en términos económicos'' (A. Cobano, personal communication, November 12, 2019).

The above mentioned observations are in line with the findings of Dodds, Ali and Galaski (2018), who stated that the management of local activities, which is considered important in CBT, is often outdone by the actual capabilities of the communities to manage tourism enterprises. The community needs training in capacity building to meet the needs of the guests. Usually, training in specific skills is provided by external agencies (Dodds et al., 2018).

Even though external parties could empower the local community through capacity building and by training them in certain tourism skills, a second problem was mentioned by one of the interviewees: it is not necessarily positive that external parties capacitate the local community, as certain uneven power relations keep existent. Anthropologist R. Toapanta Mejia (personal

communication, November 11, 2019) stated it as as follows: "Los ONG están en una posición de superioridad de conocimiento. Como tú no sabes, tengo que ponerte cosas. Existe una relación muy colonial en este sentido en las relaciones con la comunidad."

Furthermore, when an NGO assists in capacity building, it does not always mean that they have the adequate knowledge about the theme themselves. One interviewee pointed out that projects that are lead by NGOs that are not specific experts in tourism are often very weak in the sense of market access. They frequently don't recognize the profiles of the clients, what the future visitors are looking for in the destination and what their motivations are to visit the particular CBT project (J.M. Juan Alonso, personal communication, November 14, 2019).

A third observation is that besides capacity building from outside the community, the process could also be done the other way around. Members of the community, mainly young people, could go to the city to study and return to their community with knowledge about tourism that they could use in practice. However, as is often the case in the remote areas of the country, the younger generations don't return and therefore communities will eventually still be dependent on external parties for capacity building. D. Cerda also observes this problem in his community. He states that if there won't be people that have studied in the community, a dependence on other organizations will exist to be able to continue with CBT (D. Cerda Tapuy, personal communication, November 12, 2019).

Dodds et al. (2018) state that the communities should not be to dependent on external agencies such as public governments, private businesses and training institutions, because otherwise they will not be empowered enough to eventually manage their own tourism enterprise. As seen in the above-mentioned example, it is rather difficult not to become dependent on other parties. Not only because communities lack knowledge, also because the younger generations often don't return after their studies in the city. If there is a strong dependency on those external parties, uneven colonial relations will possibly prevail.

3.1.2 Empowerment after the project has finished
Ideally, the local community will be empowered by external parties during the setup phase and will be capable to make their own decisions and control the activities afterwards. In this ideal situation, which as seen is not always the case, no colonial relation exists between the community and for example the NGO. To make the process of capacity building optimally efficient, external parties give the communities gradually more responsibilities until they are ready (A. Boekhoud-Montoya, personal communication, November 15, 2019). This idea is underlined by N. Eichkorn, who works as a sustainable tourism expert for a German

governmental aid institution: ''The amount of support from international organizations is high in the first year, lower in the second year and minimal in the third year. After four years the community should be able to do it themselves'' (personal communication, November 18, 2019). The earlier mentioned Río Mashpi project shows this gradual increase in capacities as well.

> Ha cambiado bastante en términos de las capacidades personales de todos los miembros, tanto individual como colectiva. Al inicio, dependía mucho de mi compañero de la fundación o de mí para los grupos, para la administración. Ahora, sin embargo, ya no. Justo ayer tuviera una reunión para organizarse para un grupo, ya son capaces ellos. Ya saben cuándo tienen que tocarle a qué guía, cuándo tiene que cocinar tal señora. Ya hay una organización que viene de toda la experiencia de estos años. Al inicio, era un caos (A. Cobano, personal communication, November 12, 2019)

One could however also observe another idea about external help in capacity building, which is less optimistic. J.M. Juan Alonso, a tourism consultant with experience in several Ecuadorian CBT projects, states that the given training simply isn't sufficient for the community to successfully continue. As a result, for example tour operators don't want to cooperate with them.

> Muchos organismos se apoyan proyectos de turismo comunitario, pero desarrollan el producto, formación de guías, pero no les forman en marketing. Luego, las comunidades no tienen capacidad de continuar por si solas y por otro lado muchos operadores no le gusta trabajar con turismo comunitario, porque no cumplen las expectativas de sus clientes (personal communication, November 14, 2019).

Indigenous people will improve several capacities, but it won't be enough to manage certain projects themselves. This is illustrated in the following point: ''En general las comunidades pueden hacer bien el componente de productos. Pueden dar un buen servicio, pero no saben realmente como hacer para todos los demás. No saben como hacer para comercializar, hay muchas problemas con el idioma también'' (J.M. Juan Alonso, personal communication, November 14, 2019).

Gascón (2013), shares this rather negative point of view. According to the author, no matter how much time has been spent on training the local population, they probably won't have an appropriate foundation to make decisions coherent with their expectations and interests (Gascón, 2013). Also, the process of tourism is a complex activity because of different factors

(value chains, required working hours etc.). Therefore, training will always be inadequate and frequently just theoretical.

In sum, it is clear that the communities lack knowledge about tourism and therefore aren't able to start a project in the field of CBT themselves. External parties could capacitate the members of the community, so they will eventually be able to make decisions. However, NGOs do not necessarily have all the knowledge either and if they do, one could talk about an uneven relationship between the sender and the receiver of this information. Theoretically, communities do not need external parties to be capacitated, as local members could study and return with the right knowledge. However, often the younger generation does not return and another party is still desirable.

One could say that the local community will be empowered by external parties through CBT. External help aims to gradually capacitate the local community in the field of tourism. An important point, as became clear in one of the interviews, is that the empowerment is basic and communities still won't master all facets of tourism once the setup phase has finished. This would mean that the community needs more help from different parties to gain all knowledge of CBT after the setup phase has finished. Therefore one could say that communities are empowered, but just on a basic and often insufficient level. As was also observed by Zeppel (2006), power in ecotourism projects still lies with the NGOs and government agencies.

3.2 Indigenous ownership in Ecuadorian CBT

This second part will focus on ownership. Where empowerment refers to the capability of controlling CBT, ownership refers to the question whether indigenous communities actually take decisions. If someone is talking about indigenous ecotourism, indigenous people must be involved in the management. One of the essential topics is indigenous control or ownership of ecotourism on their ancestral homelands (Zeppel, 2006). In this part the decision-making of the local community in CBT in general will be analysed. Also, this part will focus on the decision-making in the daily program specifically, as well as on the observed existing problems in control. Finally, some differences between the projects in the Highlands and the Amazon will be highlighted.

As seen in the second chapter, CBT in Ecuador is often a way of taking back control over the own land from external parties such as oil companies. As said in the previous chapter, the extractive activities could also generate employment. Particular regions were CBT could take place are often marked by a high presence of unemployment, as is also the case in the Amazon region. ''Hay gente desempleada, bastantísimo. Como yo vivo en la parte amazónica, vivo en la parte de

la selva, una opción es la explotación petrolera. Hay gente cuando tiene oportunidad se van a trabajar. Se van a trabajar allí'' (D. Cerda Tapuy, personal communication, November 12, 2019). X. Echeverria, who works as a tour operator in Ecuador, also underlines this problem of money. He states that a community needs to receive many tourists to earn the same amount of money as they used to receive from the oil companies (personal communication, November 13, 2019).

3.2.1 General ownership in the projects

One first important observation from the interviews is the importance of a strong leader who listens to the community, especially when the area has oil fields available and could potentially earn quick money (S. Hernández, personal communication, October 19, 2019). One of the main characteristics of CBT in Ecuador, compared to countries like Peru, is that communities are very committed to the community and most of them have those strong leaders. The heads discuss with community members to decide what they are going to do (V. Muñoz Bernal, personal communication, November 8, 2019). According to X. Contreras it is very important that there is not just one leader, but varios actors in the community who could decide (X. Contreras, personal communication, November 18, 2019). The necessity of strong leadership is underlined by the following example:

> In the case of the Guaraní people, there was a community leader. And the issue of this leader was that he got corrupted....That is why he negotiated with the Chinese oil company and he accepted that they entered in the area of the project. Despite that there was a lot of resistance from the community that were part of the project, they said they didn't accept the oil exploitation, but this leader was forcing them to accept. You also need to create some kind of mechanism so the power can be allocated to all members of the community (M.G. Guijarro Fuertes, personal communication, November 18, 2019).

Overall the interviewees seem to agree on the fact that the community is making the decisions, whether they are capable to do so or not. External parties could share their ideas with the community, but the latter decides. 'The meeting is were the business takes place. Of course there is a kind of advice that we give from our experience in the way of what is an interesting product. If they take the advice is also up to them'' (N. Eichkorn, personal communication, November 18, 2019). According to another interviewee, most decisions are indeed taken in meetings that are open for all members of the community. Those meetings often take approximately two hours and inform the community about the important issues (H. Collaguazo Proaño, personal communication, October 21, 2019). Almost all of the interviewees also agreed on the fact that control and decision-making should be in the hands of the community. However, some of the participants had another point of view:

If for every single thing I have to ask the community, it does not work. This is very difficult. I cannot put in the hands of the community technical decisions that they don't have expertise about. They want to be democratic, but at the end in many cases it is a disaster because a lot of people are giving their opinion on things they have no clue of. They take weeks do decide a single thing. For a marketing consultant, as is my case, you have to take very quick decisions sometimes, and it does not work. The NGOs stick to work with this because they want to leave everything in the hands of the community. This is part of the program (J.M. Juan Alonso, personal communication, November 14, 2019).

That the above-mentioned difficulty exists is explained by A. Cobano who, from the point of view of a foundation, mentions the following: "También la fundación entendiendo que estamos interviniendo en su casa, en su espacio. Entonces, siempre hay una coparticipación entre la comunidad o la asociación y la fundación" (A. Cobano, personal communication, November 12, 2019). External groups are aware of the fact that they are in the territory of the indigenous communties and hence let them decide.

The findings are not in line with those of Gascón (2013), who states that regardless of the proposed democracy and participation process, if the communities do not have in-depth experience with CBT, the process in reality won't be democratic or participatory. Nor are the findings in line with those of Cole (2006), according to whom participation of the community in tourism is often passive in isolated areas of the world. The results of the conducted interviews show that the process is always participatory, even though this could lead to a loss of time and sometimes to frustrations. Furthermore, Peredo, Ordóñez and Belohrad (2015) mention that to maintain the communities' support, communal ownership is essential.

In general it could be said that the communities are the ones that have all the control in the management. Besides, they have control over the prices of the food, prices of the housing, prices of the guidance, and at the end of the day the also decide which tour operator they want to work with (A. Boekhoud-Montoya, personal communication, November 15, 2019). If you don't have that, one is not going to have community-based tourism. Instead you will just have to talk about ecotourism (M.G. Guijarro Fuertes, personal communication, November 18, 2019). Thus, one could talk about genuine forms of CBT in the above-mentioned examples, although is is not always optimal for the development process of certain projects.

3.2.2 Daily program in CBT

Communities also seem to have control over the daily program in the CBT projects. In the Yunguilla community for example, the members of the community make the program. It gives them a higher grade of control because they know how many people there are available and what the facilities are (H. Collaguazo Proaño, personal communication, October 21, 2019). D. Cerda Tapuy confirms this idea of ownership. ''En si es la comunidad que decide. Son dueños del territorio, dueños del sitio dónde están ubicados'' (personal communication, November 12, 2019). Externals could also help the community members in creating a program for the tourists, as is sometimes the case. One of the interviewees, a national tour guide, described that it could be profitable for the local community to cooperate with others. ''The community has ideas of how things can be done and are closer to the people. They ask us our opinion because we know directly what the tourists like or not. We give them advice and we do it together'' (S. Hernández, personal communication, October 19, 2019).

Communities will not be forced to do things, but once a commitment has been made they must stick to it. C. García Ahijado states that sometimes certain agreements should be followed. ''Aquí nadie obliga que vayan vestidos tradicionalmente, No, pero hay veces que actividades están programadas y las comunidades tienen que hacer esas cosas. Hay que hacerlo. Estás ofreciendo un servicio y lo tienes que hacer'' (personal communication, November 4, 2019). Tour operators do not have control over the program either. ''We as a tour operator don't go without permission of the community or from the people who are living there'' (X. Echeverria, personal communication, November 13, 2019).

According to X. Contreras, it is the tourist however who decides what the program looks like, but without knowing it. ''La oferta ha sido planificado más en que se podría gustar el turista. Ya hay planes establecidos. Ya hay programas establecidos. En un principio ha sido así'' (personal communication, November 18, 2019). This could point to the idea that communities make decisions and seem to be in control, while in practice the often western tourists decide during their visit.

3.2.3 Problems with control in CBT

While the communities generally control the management part of CBT and decide what the daily program looks like, the interviews show that in some cases the tour operator decides and therefore communities should be careful in starting a cooperation with them. The decision of which tour operator the community wants to work with is important because it might influence the decision-making of the community in general. One interviewee conversely stated that the tour operator has nothing to do with the final decisions, unless the tour operator is part of the

community (A. Boekhoud-Montoya, personal communication, November 15, 2019). However, according to another interviewee it could be the tour operators who take decisions in certain projects, as in practice there isn't any influence of the local community in the market insights and in the operational side. They just provide a service and that's all. Simply because tour operators will never sell anything they cannot control (J.M. Juan Alonso, personal communication, November 14, 2019). Also, three other observed problems with ownership in CBT seem to exist: the lack of empowerment, objectification of the community and the misuse of the term CBT.

Besides the possible control of tour operators, a second identified problem with ownership is that although the community usually takes decisions in management, pricing etc., it does not necessarily mean that they have been empowered to do so. One interviewee stated that the community shouldn't have all of the control either. ''The control has to be partly by the community, but also by external parties to make it work better in areas as finance and access to markets'' (V. Muñoz Bernal, personal communication, November 8, 2019). If only a few members have the capacities to act in tourism, the process of decision-making could be very slow (N. Eichkorn, personal communication, November 18, 2019). In some cases, such as in Yunguilla, the community has many years of experience and is capable of acting autonomously and deciding what happens. No external help is needed anymore (H. Collaguazo Proaño, personal communication, October 21, 2019). In other cases this is different, because the community simply isn't able to decide in tourism. This is illustrated in the following example:

> Obviamente hay ciertas limitaciones y decisiones que, como organización, no se puede dejar en manos de la comunidad, porque muchos casos se implemente por conocimiento. Es como si yo quisiera meterme en temas de cuidados de vacas, no me voy a meter (A. Cobano, personal communication, November 12, 2019).

Another problem that has been identified in the interviews is that although most of the communities are now leading the tourism projects and control tourism, not all do. Not just because the community has not been empowered, but mainly because they are still seen a subordinate. This is closely related to a lack of empowerment, as the community isn't able to work without externals and needs them in different aspects of tourism. This is also explained by X. Contreras.

> La gran mayoría de comunidades ha logrado hacer su actividad por ellas mismas…. También hay otras comunidades, que por esa falta de información, siguen en esa

dinámica donde son tomadas como objeto. Es un mínimo porcentaje, yo podría decir que estaríamos hablando de una veinte, veinticinco comunas que ya están en esa dinámica....Hay comunidades que por ejemplo no saben como hacer llegar turistas, hay agencias que les imponen precios, les imponen horarios, tarifas....La idea es trabajar con los intermediarios, pero con condiciones éticas (personal communication, November 18, 2019).

A fourth problem is the confusion between CBT and projects that seem to be CBT, but appear to be different. When a project is called a CBT project, it does not always mean that the community indeed takes all of the decisions, as the name could be misleading. One should therefore look carefully at whether one could actually talk about CBT. R. Toapanta Mejia describes it as follows:

También hay proyectos que se dicen comunitarios, pero que se llevan a cabo por empresas turísticas. Hay de todo. Hay proyectos que son manejados por la comunidad, pero también hay proyectos que son manejados por empresas turísticas. Todo esto se marca por el turismo comunitario, es una etiqueta más que una noción clara. En la amazonia hay de dos, pero más de empresas turísticas (personal communication, November 11, 2019).

Although the community does still not manage some projects, tourism involving indigenous community has undergone some notorious changes. Indigenous tourism already existed a few decades ago, but the indigenous communities generally had a more passive position within tourism. This is also illustrated in the following example:

Ya existía turismo en algunas comunidades, pero esas comunidades estaban tomadas como objetos. Los operadores venían, traigan turistas para la foto, para comprar artesanía barata y a veces les pagaban sin tener una política de tarifas ni nada. A veces les daban productos como arroz, azúcar, o bebidas gaseosas (X. Contreras, personal communication, November 18, 2019).

In the vast majority of the cases, the local community has owership of the projects. However, there are some exceptions in which the community is still the object of tourism instead of the leading party. Thus, ownership is not always in the hands of the community in Ecuadorian CBT, making this kind of tourism loosing it's value for those particular communities.

3.2.4 Differences projects Highlands and Amazon

Finally, one could observe some differences between the projects in the highlands and the projects in the Amazon regarding ownership. In the latter the dynamics of the projects are different and people are usually more individualistic. This means that leadership and therefore decision-making is more in the hands of the leaders of a community instead of the whole community (R. Toapanta Mejia, personal communication, November 11, 2019). This is confirmed by D. Cerda Tapuy: ''Sin la decisión del presidente, no se podría construir. La primera cosa es estar bien organizada. Tener la votación de todos los socios de la comunidad y allí es el presidente que va a organizar.'' The community members are the owners of the lodges, but the president eventually decides what is happening (D. Cerda Tapuy, personal communication, November 12, 2019).

In the highlands it also frequently happens that tourism companies that know some people from the communities just go there and start to convince them to work with this kind of activities. The companies organize the activities and they start inviting people to join them. Not as an owner, but as a supplier of the activities (X. Echeverria, personal communication, November 13, 2019).

Also, as mentioned by X. Contreras, in the Amazon the organization is more based on associative than communitarian tourism (personal communication, November 18, 2019). He explains the differences as follows:

> Lo comunitario hace referencia en que son espacios reconocidos por la constitución donde grupos humanos comparten un territorio con características culturales similares y ellos trabajan en forma como comuna. Los proyectos lo maneja la comuna y todos están insertados de una o otra forma en el proceso. Son dueños de un proyecto turístico...Lo asociativo es de lo privado, pero hay varias comunidades que han dado aval a grupos de gente de su comunidad para que sean socio ocho a diez personas y el estado les da un reconocimiento, desarrolla un proyecto. Ya no pertenece a toda la comuna, pero tiene el aval de la comuna, y dan ciertos beneficios como un porcentaje por cada turista (X. Contreras, personal communication, November 18, 2019).

In sum, it is important to have a strong leader who listens to the community. In the ideal situation a community has more than one person who makes the final decisions. Usually the communities seem to make the decisions in CBT, both in the general management decisions and the daily program, which is sometimes leading to frustrations by externals that intend to support the community. Some problems with ownership in CBT seem to exist as well.

It could be concluded that capacity building is necessary for communities to be able to eventually control CBT and have actual ownership. Or as one of the interviewees explained it, ''Sin información, sin capacitación, difícilmente podrán tomar el control. Allí esta la clave para que tengan el cien porciento del control. Es la información y la capacitación y el ejercicio diario de la actividad'' (X. Contreras, personal communication, November 18, 2019). Both empowerment and ownership are strongly related.

Conclusion

This thesis tries to answer the following research question: To what extend are indigenous Ecuadorian communities empowered to take decisions in community-based tourism? The hypothesis suggests that communities are empowered to exercise control over the projects and do also take decisions, but with the arrival of other (foreign) parties, this would attenuate. Furthermore, the hypothesis suggests that there will be differences between the projects in this grade of control, as would for example be the case for projects in the Ecuadorian Amazon and the highlands. This thesis analysed both the empowerment and the actual decision-making of local communities in CBT projects. The sustainability aspect of CBT has been left out of this thesis.

In the first place it is important to understand that indigenous people in Latin America have been economically, socially and politically demoted for over decades (Vogt, 2016). People in both the highlands and the Amazon region have experienced economic marginalization and the intrusion of their lands (Cleary, 2000). The indigenous population has, as a reaction, participated in protests to demand self-control (González, 2015). Not only did CBT in Ecuador rise as a mean of diversifying the income for local communities (Torres-Alruiz et al., 2018), CBT does also form part of a larger historical context: the emancipation of indigenous people, especially through social movements in Latin America. CBT projects additionally came as a response to a strong sense of exclusion of indigenous communities (Cabanilla, 2014). CBT could nowadays be an important way for the indigenous communities to protect themselves from the disadvantageous extraction of oil and the mining in their territories, in which local control is being lost to external parties.

The social movements, as seen across Latin America and specifically in Ecuador, are a first step in the empowerment process of the indigenous population, as they help the communities gain control over the issues they consider important. CBT is an option to further empower indigenous people not only on an organizational scale, but also on a smaller, communal scale. Therefore, CBT is both a result of indigenous empowerment and a means to achieve it.

The first part of the hypothesis states that communities are empowered to exercise control over the projects and also take the decisions within them. Nevertheless, the arrival of other parties, such as NGOs and tour operators, would make this control decrease. It could be concluded that this hypothesis is partly true. Indigenous communities indeed take decisions in CBT, but are not always empowered to do so. In some specific cases, the arrival of new groups in the territories

could make the influence of the own community diminish, but this is unusual. However, it does create a dependent position sometimes, because the external groups are often the ones that could provide information about tourism to the local community.

Before the communities could start a project in the field of CBT, empowerment through capacity building is necessary. Communities lack knowledge about tourism and therefore aren't able to start a project in the field of CBT themselves. For example NGOs could capacitate the members of the community, so they will eventually be able to make decisions in the projects taking place on their territories. However, NGOs do not necessarily have all the knowledge either and if they do, one could talk about an uneven relationship between the sender and the receiver of this information. Those findings are in line with those of Cañada (2015), who mentioned that because tourism is not a traditional activity for those rural communities, they have very little experience with the subject professionally and personally. This makes that tourism development becomes a privileged camp for international agencies and other technical players.

One could hence say that the local community could be empowered by external parties. The external help aims to gradually capacitate the local community in the field of tourism. An important point is that the empowerment is basic and communities still won't master all facets of tourism once the setup phase has finished. This would mean that the community either needs more help from different parties to gain all knowledge of CBT after the setup phase has finished or should learn by practice. Therefore one could say that communities are empowered, but just on a basic and often insufficient level and that there is a certain dependency on external help in the setup phase. Those findings correspond with those of Manyara, Jones and Botterill (2006), who state that the majority of the projects is highly dependent on help of NGOs and other external parties. Furthermore, Coria and Calfucura (2012) also observed that external help does not necessarily contribute to the long-term empowerment of the indigenous groups or to their financial independence in certain projects. Zeppel (2006) also described the lack of skills as a poverty trap, because insufficient knowledge gained through external help prevents the construction of human capital within those groups in the future. Importantly, the existing dependency on external parties does not mean that control is being lost to them. Additionally, capacity building is necessary for communities to be able to eventually control CBT and have actual ownership. Both empowerment and ownership are strongly related.

Even though the indigenous communities are not fully empowered to take decisions over all different tourism aspects, the analysis shows that in practice they often do. The local communities usually take all decisions and therefore the grade of control they have is very high.

Not only does the local community decide in management issues, they also decide what the daily program looks like. Those findings are not in line with those of Cole (2006), who states that in reality participation of the community is actually often passive when you analyse tourism in isolated areas of the world. This study shows that the high degree of decision-making by the local community sometimes stands in the way of optimum project progress, which could possibly be achieved if external parties would have more control in the projects. The findings of this study also do not correspond with those of Pereiro (2016), who observed that the receiving communities do usually not take an active part in the development of tourism in their homelands. Nor are the findings in line with those of Zeppel (2006), according to whom power in ecotourism projects still lies with the NGOs and government agencies.

The second part of the hypothesis states that there are differences between the projects regarding decision-making and ownership. This is also partly true. There are cases in which the community is not the one who decides, although those are relatively scarce. In those cases, the lack of empowerment seems to be the problem. Local communities are used as passive objects, simply because they are not able to work autonomously and their lack of knowledge and capacities makes their position weak. In the making of decisions, communities should therefore be careful in choosing the tour operator that they will work with, as this could potentially make their own influence diminish again. In general however, there are no differences between the projects in the grade of decision-making and ownership and all projects have a high degree of indigenous control.

There does seem to be a difference between the projects in the Amazon and the Andes region regarding decision-making, but in both the own community generally decides what happens in CBT. However, in the projects in the Amazon region in general individual leaders instead of the whole community take the decisions. In the Andes region it is usually the whole community. The differences thus only exist in the organizational structures and couldn't be observed in the grade of control.

What could be said is that the local position of the indigenous community in CBT generally is as strong as their national position. The principal condition is that the communities must be empowered to be able to control the projects, which is often done by external parties. Once could talk about a dependency, but there often isn't a loss of control. Important is that the participants of the CBT projects must be careful in choosing who they will work with after the setup phase has finished.

Although this study gives some insights in the empowerment and ownership of indigenous communities in Ecuadorian CBT, some further research would be recommended. This study focuses on CBT in general and analyses projects over the entire country and it would be useful to study some projects specifically, as this would give some more detailed insights. Carr et al. (2016) observed that some indigenous groups succeed in tourism while others don't. This could have to do with factors outside the control of the community. It would be useful to analyse some specific projects to analyse whether this is the case.

This study would be a good base for further research in the field of empowerment and CBT. As seen, the degree of control the local community has over CBT generally is very high. However, it would also be interesting to analyse this for different groups within the community. One could think of women and younger people. As mentioned by Friedmann (1992), the political structure of the community, which exemplifies the needs and the interests of all the groups within a community, will offer a forum through which community members are able to raise questions in regard to the ecotourism venture. The agencies, which initiate or implement the projects, ideally seek out the sentiments of all the groups within a certain community, such as youth, women and other groups. It would hence be interesting to study their roles within decision-making, as this study doesn't focus on those specific groups.

Annex

Annex I: Interviewees

3. List of conducted interviews				
Name of interviewee	Function or role	Subjects discussed	Place and date	Duration
1. Paul A. Josephus Jitta	Honorary Consul of Ecuador in the Netherlands	CBT general conditions, external parties, decision-making within CBT	18th of October 2019, telephone call	65 minutes
2. Soledad Hernández	National tour guide, Quito. Often visits CBT projects and works closely together with them	CBT general conditions, external parties, decision-making within CBT	19th of October 2019, Whatsapp telephone call	75 minutes
3. Henrry Wilmer Collaguazo Proaño	Employee Embassy of Ecuador in The Hague, pioneer of Yunguilla CBT Project	CBT general conditions, external parties, decision-making within CBT, project Yunguilla	21th of October 2019, Embassy of Ecuador in The Hague	85 minutes
4. Carolina García Ahijado	Teacher Universidad Estatal Amazónica (Puyo), husband is indigenous and tried to start a CBT Project in the Amazon	CBT general conditions, external parties, decision-making within CBT, local control CBT Amazon	4th of November 2019, Whatsapp telephone call	60 minutes
5. Verónica Muñoz Bernal	Director TourCert Ecuador, Quito (sustainable tourism promoter). Supports CBT Project through certifications	CBT general conditions, external parties, differences highlands and Amazon	8th of November 2019, Whatsapp telephone call	75 minutes
6. René Toapanta Mejia	Anthropologist, was part of CBT Project in Quito	CBT general conditions, differences highlands and Amazon, local control over tourism	11th of November 2019, Skype video call	80 minutes
7. Dorian Saul Cerda Tapuy	Local tour guide CBT Project in the Amazon, Napo	CBT general conditions, CBT in the Amazon, local control over tourism	12th of November 2019, Skype video call	70 minutes
8. Ana Isabel Cobano	Fundación Imaymana, started CBT Project in Mashpi Shungo, Ecuador	CBT general conditions, CBT in the highlands, control of foundations over tourism	12th of November 2019, Skype video call	60 minutes

9. Xavier Echeverria	Latin Trails, tour operator from Quito who travels to CBT projects	CBT general conditions, CBT in the highlands and the Amazon, control of tour operators over tourism	13th of November 2019, Skype telephone call	75 minutes
10. José María de Juan Alonso	Director KOAN consulting. Did ecotourism/CBT projects in Ecuador, Madrid	CBT general conditions, CBT with NGOs, control local communities over CBT	14th of November 2019, Skype video call	80 minutes
11. Andrea Boekhoud - Montoya	Pro Ecuador Rotterdam, Ministry of Production, link between Ecuadorian government and the Netherlands	CBT general conditions, CBT and the government, local control over CBT	15th of November 2019, Office Pro Ecuador Rotterdam	75 minutes
12. Nora Eichkorn	Import Promotion Desk Germany (IPD), Works with CBT in Ecuador as foreign aid, Berlin	CBT general, CBT and foreign aid, local control over CBT	18th of November 2019, Whatsapp video call	65 minutes
13. Maria Gabriela Guijarro Fuertes	Was part of Ministry of Tourism Ecuador, CBT consultant, lecturer University, Quito	CBT local control, CBT structures	18th of November 2019, Whatsapp video call	95 minutes
14. Xavier Contreras	Assessor Federacion Plurinacional de Turismo Comunitario del Ecuador (FEPTCE), Quito	CBT general conditions, CBT and FEPTCE, local control over CBT, differences Amazon and highlands	18th of November 2019, Whatsapp telephone call	55 minutes

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