Sustainable Community Tourism in Belize: Assessing Community Involvement, Product

Development, and Social and Economic Impact

By

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sectors

Abstract

The thesis focused on acquiring a sufficient level of understanding of how and to what extent tourism is implemented in livelihoods of the indigenous people (Maya and Garifuna) of Belize and if it truly benefits their lives. The research provided an assessment of actual and perceived economic, social and other effects of tourism on the livelihood of two communities in southern Belize - the inland community of Laguna and the coastal community of Hopkins Village. Gender was a cross cutting element of the analysis. The study was approached from the pragmatic perspective and included the multiple case study framework, literature review, semi-structured interviews and observations. The research was conducted from January to February 2015.

The results of the study demonstrated that the communities of Laguna and Hopkins are at different stages of integration into the tourism industry, Hopkins is exposed to the uncontrollable mass tourism development and foreign investments, whereas Laguna is trying to pursue their own community-based strategy, while setting limits to growth. The research revealed that the economic, social and cultural effects of tourism and its importance for local livelihoods varied between both villages and was dependant on a number of factors – geographical, cultural, social etc. The issues of preserving cultural heritage, problems of marginalization, lack of skills, exclusion and other were all identified as significant factors. A number of recommendations were made based on the results of the study.

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Chapter 1

<u>Sustainable Tourism in Belize</u>

1.1 Introduction

According to The *World Tourism Organization (UNWTO),* tourism represents "a social, cultural and economic phenomenon which entails the movement of people to countries or places outside their usual environment for personal or business/professional purposes" (UNWTO). Tourism is a unique industry, which instead of delivering goods and services to a consumer, transports consumers to a product and where the production of goods coincides with their consumption (Wilson, Ypeij, 2012). These features give tourism an ability to affect and transform local economies, local population, tourists and the natural and built environment they interact and function in (UNWTO). Tourism is also able to put a certain value on local resources such as climate, environment, culture, and historical heritage (Wilson, Ypeij, 2012). Along with these values, long-term international tourism growth brings an increasing stress on natural habitats and indigenous cultures, which usually represent the main mass tourism attractions (Babu, 2012). Acknowledging those impacts, as well as the growing number of tourism stakeholders and a complexity of their interactions, the expanding production of tourism-related goods and services, a need for a new tourism development strategy was developed(UNWTO).

The search for such approach led to a general assumption that community-based tourism with a focus on sustainable development might be a universal solution that could not only provide a working mechanism for an equitable distribution of benefits amongst all tourism stakeholders, "through a system of local development control and consensus-based decision making" (p. 298 Spenceley & Meyer, 2012), but as well empower, increase participation and secure ownership and

control over development processes by members of local communities (Wilson & Ypeij, 2012). It is agreed that communities have an ability to shape tourism development processes and at the same time are the most important resource tourism relies on. In some cases they are a primary reason behind a destination choice, and their attitudes and receptiveness predefine a success of tourism in a particular region (Richards & Hall, 2000).

Governments, development agencies and non-governmental organisations continue to invest in initiatives that aim to benefit communities through sustainable tourism development (Spenceley & Meyer, 2012). A policy on responsible tourism was adopted in Belize, a small country located on the northeastern coast of Central America, the primary focus of my research. In 2011, Belize Tourism Board introduced to the public a "National Sustainable Tourism Master Plan of Belize for 2030" where tourism was officially named one of the most important sectors in Belize economy, contributing anywhere from 18% to 25% of the total GDP, and accounting for about 28% of total employment. This document identified unique assets and highlighted main constraints for local tourism industry, and set a number of long-term goals that will help to transform Belize into an an internationally recognized multicultural sustainable destination (Tourism Master Plan of Belize, 2011). The plan includes the sustainable development program that will provide the framework balancing three main components of sustainable development: social accountability, environmental conservation and economic prosperity. The program will also address resource management and land use issues. While the actual implication of this program might still be in question, the fact that the sustainable policy was approved at the national level makes the perspective for further development quite promising.

1.2 Study background

The goal of any community-based tourism development project, and especially of a sustainable one remains to ensure that tourism benefits all its stakeholders, especially communities, natural environment and wildlife as they are essential elements of tourism processes. Simpson (2008) identified a number of questions and topics that need to be carefully studied in relation to this kind of projects. For instance, he specifically pointed out that a researcher should acquire a clear idea of how essential is the level of participation, ownership and control to the success of tourism initiative, and, for example, and how other stakeholders are involved in the development process (Simpson, 2008). Moreover, in order to acquire a sufficient level of understanding of how and to what extent tourism is implemented in livelihoods of the indigenous people of Belize and if it truly benefits their lives, it is necessary to take into consideration a large number of factors, such as local customs and lifestyles, changes in local demographics, changes in economic wealth, changes in local real estate and labor markets, and changes in the environmental health. In this study I undertook an analysis of the current state of tourism in the communities of Laguna and Hopkins Village and answered the following questions:

1. How do residents of each community perceive tourism and its impacts i.e. what benefits or disadvantages tourism brings in their livelihoods?

2. What is the actual economic, social, and cultural effect of tourism on communities' livelihoods, and how this effect is related to the location, ethnicity, governance systems, and gender relations?

1.3 Goals and objectives

The overall goal of this study was to provide an understanding of the role of tourism in the livelihood strategies of residents of the communities of Laguna and Hopkins Village and to identify the nature of the economic contribution.

The specific objectives of the study are:

1. to analyze communities' perception of outcomes that tourism brings to their everyday life, and compare this with the actual economic and social effect;

2. to perform a comparative analysis of two communities in terms of the role of location, cultural presettings, and benefit distribution in the tourism development; to provide an assessment of tourism's contribution to the livelihood strategies of two communities.

Gender is be a cross cutting element of the analysis as men and women from indigenous communities participate in the process of development and in the distribution of perceived benefits differently (Wilk & Chapin, 1990).

1.4 Significance of the study

Tourism, the world's fastest growing industry, is frequently promoted as a route to economic development. However, there are often indications that said development does not provide benefits to local communities. Belize has recently undertaken a Sustainable Tourism strategy developed in order to enhance its economic development and provide opportunities for its citizens. While a laudable goal, there are indications that many indigenous communities may not benefit significantly from this initiative. The current study provides valuable information regarding the nature of tourism's economic effects on indigenous communitities and individuals and identify means to both enhance positive impacts and reduce negative impacts.

Chapter 2

<u>Literature review</u>

2.1 Social, economic and ecological impacts of tourism

Sustainable tourism as a concept seems to represent a perfect compromise/trade-off between positive effect on local people, benefits to tourism companies and the positive experience of tourists themselves, with a respect to the environment which, according to the most common definition of sustainability introduced by Brundtland Report (1987), should be carefully preserved for the sake of future generations. The World Tourism Organisation stated that "sustainable tourism developed in certain geographical areas may become a fundamental tool in the economic development of and the reduction of poverty in certain areas" (p. 70, López-Guzmán, Sánchez-Cañizares & Pavón, 2011). However, the term "sustainable tourism" is considered being nothing more than a buzzword by many researchers. Stabler in "Tourism and Sustainability: Principles to Practice" (1997) claimed that "the overall effect of sustainable tourism is negative, where, like ecotourism, philanthropic aspirations mask hard-nosed immediate self-interest" (p.45). Such critique is based on the argument that tourism, however sustainable or not, largely relies on air transportation, and, therefore, contributes to greenhouse gas emissions similarly to other industries.

Moreover, tourism is primarily a business activity that can significantly impact and shape local development strategies. Researchers distinguish diverse impacts of the tourism industry that are unique to this particular sector. Tourist activities, as it follows from the definition introduced above, include two major elements: the transportation of consumers to a local community – tourist destination where they are accommodated, and where the tourist product is consumed. Talwar (2006) stresses that the tourism industry is organized in a unique way, where the consumer

is brought to the product, and not the opposite as is common for other global industries. It is argued that such distinctiveness generates all kinds of social impacts on host communities (Talwar, 2006).

Although the most common approach underlines that tourists buy a non-material product - experience. But communities don't sell experience, they sell their heritage, wealth, and legacy. Therefore, tourism is often interwoven with lives of many indigenous communities. They see it as a tool that could possibly help the communities to overcome marginalization and gain political power. However, the majority of the approaches to tourism development do not take into account indigenous perspective. The tourism managers tend to promote and develop the most "salable" or appealing aspects of the community. In cases where tourism activities negatively impact the life of the community (e.g. degrade the wealth of the community, lead to the depreciation of the heritage) and, therefore, decrease the satisfaction of visitor experience, tourism managers can easily change the promoted destination, but the community will have to face the consequences of such degradation (Tao, 2006). The depletion of the social and natural systems of a community is hard to avoid. The interactions between foreigners and indigenous population within local settings can dramatically change social, economic and other relationships historically formed in a community. This effect of tourism development becomes a huge concern in small isolated indigenous communities where traditional social system is a center of attraction.

It is argued that, despite an optimistic title, sustainable tourism can cause degradation of local systems (ecological, economic, and social). For example, tourists, who might have culturally formed habits of high consumption and high waste, could damage natural areas or impose a great pressure on towns' waste management infrastructure. Those changes could be devastating for natural areas and, consequently, become deleterious to local residents who rely on these areas

(Kandari & Chandra, 2004). Kandari & Chandra (2004) claims that "the resulting economic losses can encourage socially deleterious economic activities such as prostitution, crime, and migrant and child labour" (p.39).

2.1.1 Ecological impacts of tourism

According to the theory, proposed by Kuznets (1955), economic growth results in the increased environmental protection. However researchers, for example Buckley (1993), claim that more often, prosperity leads to the increasing environmental impact. Theories that aim to prove the opposite are based on the confusion between pattern and a causal chain. The development history shows that the wealthiest countries bring resources from and outsource manufacturing industries to the developing nations, this represents just a pattern. It is stated that Kuznets' hypothesis is only valid in settings where strong social institutions exist and inclined to promote environmental awareness (Buckley, 2003).

In small countries with significant tourism flows governments are often facing the challenge of managing natural resources in such a way that the effects of the extensive tourism development, material consumption and pressure on the environment would be neutralized or even reversed. For example, Karthikheyan (2010) argues that the Maldives experience serious tourism-related problems, aggravated by lack of means and experience in protecting natural resources and balance of local ecosystems. The Maldives suffer from various tourism-related environmental impacts, such as the increasing pressure and depletion on country's limited natural assets – natural resources and marine ecosystems, and pollution and waste generation. (Karthikheyan, 2010).

The switch towards the concept of sustainable tourism development is considered now a reasonable solution to the resource depletion problem. However, to this date, there are different understandings of what sustainability is, and, with the absence of a universally approved definition or set of criterions for sustainability when it comes to tourism industry, which leaves a lot of room for debating this concept. According to Priskin (2001) the only feature that is acknowledged everywhere is that all types of sustainable tourism rely on natural resources. However, any nature-based activity and all types of tourists require a certain level of infrastructure, belonging roughly to either transportation, accommodation or recreation sectors. Some researchers suggested to divide accommodations for nature-based activities into several categories within the range of "hard" and "soft" dimensions. "Soft" accommodation is characterized with a high level of comfort and usually is represented by hotels, motels, guesthouses etc. An example of the "hard" accommodation will be camping in the wilderness (Priskin, 2001).

For a number of reasons one of the major concerns is the effect of tourism on water. Water is required communities' wealth, might represent an attraction, transportation route, source of livelihood and be a center for tourist activities. Furthermore, a safe and reliable source of water is an important factor sustaining the health of both tourists and local people. Stonich (1998) argues that effects of tourism development could be quantitative (reduction of water available in total), as well as qualitative (decrease of the quality of water). At all stages of development tourism is competing with other uses of water resources, especially on small islands that often are characterized with limited sources of water. Unfortunately, in such destinations the tourism season is also the dry season, which creates extra pressure on already limited water resources, as the demands of tourism industry are often more significant than general local demands (Stonich, 1998).

A number of other environmental consequences of tourism development should be taken into account: "destruction of habitats stemming from tourism-related infrastructure (e.g., road building and hotel construction), deforestation, and erosion that lead to increased sediment loads; the use of fertilizers and pesticides to maintain golf courses, lawns, and gardens; tourist transportation (cruiseships, motor boats, and other vehicles); and the behaviors of individual tourists who throw bottles, cans, and other garbage" (p.28, Stonich, 1998).

In circumstances, when environmental conditions are favorable, tourism is able to boost directly and indirectly an economic development in the area, creating a higher demand for goods and services. However, UNWTO separates tourism's "economic contribution" which is a result of the direct effect of tourism and is easily measured, and tourism's "economic impact" which is a much more complicated and broad phenomenon encompassing both direct and indirect impacts of tourism (UNWTO).

2.1.2 Economic impact of tourism

From the first glance the impact of tourism on a destination's economy appears to be positive. However, along with the positive economic impact of tourism, there are many unobvious unfavorable economic effects on the host community (UNEP). The local area gets direct revenues from tourism that remain after miscellaneous mandatory payments. Those payments that are usually maid outside the area, are called leakages. Most of the tours that are usually sold to tourists bring profit to the international companies running tourism industry, and not to local businesses or workers.

Some less developed countries are simply unable to supply food, equipment and accompanying products that meet the requirements of tourists. Therefore, these products are often imported, and local products just cannot compete with the global market. As a result, the local supply chain remains undeveloped and the considerable amount of the income goes as a payment for the import.

Above all, tourism development requires from local government and local taxpayers substantial investments. In order to make the development successful often significant improvements are required in infrastructure, adjustments in legislation and tax revenues' distribution, which affects other segments that rely on governmental support, such as healthcare and education (UNEP).

Another negative consequence of intensive tourism development would be price inflation, which is a result of tourism driven increase in demand for goods and services. Real estate and commodity prices changes accordingly, while the income of local people remain the same. Locals get massively attracted to the new industry that provides them with the significantly higher revenues. However, diversification is a distinctive feature of a healthy economy, and if a country or region relies heavily on one industry to provide its well-being that might lead to the lowering ability of both industry and the economy to successfully recover from stresses and crises (UNEP).

2.1.3 Social impacts of tourism

In addition to the effects outlined above, there is the social perspective of tourism impact. Researchers argue that the growth stage of the tourism development process is often characterized with certain social problems, such as crowdedness in public areas, traffic congestion problems etc. It is also suggested that tourism brings all kinds of social diseases, according to Kim,

Uysal & Sirgy (2013) "begging, gambling, drug trafficking, and prostitution, as well as uprooting traditional society, and causing deterioration of the traditional culture" (p.528). But this is not a complete list of negative social effects. In terms of interactions between tourism and local culture researchers mostly agree that tourism is a "culture exploiter" and criticize it for negatively affecting traditional cultures and changing historically formed behavioral ways (Kim, Uysal & Sirgy 2013).

Indigenous people are most subject to these kinds of impact. In cases when tourism activity in the area uses indigenous culture as a main attraction, negative impacts might affect indigenous groups if they don't have enough control over the development process. Control and tensions between indigenous groups and tourism industry are important issues along with the effects of tourism on the main societal systems, such as cultural, political, economic, social, as well as on the physical environment. Unfortunately, those factors are extremely difficult to control (Butler & Hinch, 1996).

Moreover, some argue that wealthier nations do not consider tourism as a successful career field, it is more associated with lower wages, status and entry skill requirements, while developing countries that just began being involved in tourism see tourism jobs may as more prestigious and high-ranked than traditional activities. These jobs generally bring more consistent and more significant income than traditional activities, as well as allow women to benefit from jobs at the same level as men. On the downside, traditional activities may not be able to compete with tourism for the local workers and get abandoned. (Tao, 2006).

Additionally, Sofield (1996) cited in Tao (2006) claimed that foreign investors in tourism development in Solomon Islands sometimes demonstrated insensitivity to local value systems and experienced difficulties because of inter-cultural misunderstanding. Shift in power distribution devaluated agreements protecting the rights of local communities, and made the development

process totally unacceptable for locals. Processes of development themselves, even carefully planned, and accelerated modernization might negatively affect indigenous communities, especially traditionally oriented ones. Introduction of a new economic activity usually leads to the participation of local people in western procedures and imposes alien approaches, causing conflicts and misunderstanding. Tao (2006) argues that development accompanied by these effects might result in alienation of local people from their land, ancestors and heritage.

Analyzing all these disturbing effects that tourism is able to bring into a host community, it is easy to get an impression that tourism industry does express any interest in things such as ethics, morality, and values. The economic aspect, for instance, cultivates an idea of maximizing an individual income with no regard for moral issues, which are often a result of a collective thinking (Caton, 2012) and which form the basis for what we may call a "sustainable development". Along with the ethical dilemma, the discussion is ongoing whether or not developing countries truly benefit from tourism, and does it really positively impact their economic development and poverty level. It is impossible to find any single-dimensional argument, therefore, along with the destructive aspects, positive economic effects of tourism, such as increasing government revenues, new business and financial opportunities, should be researched.

According to UNEP, the income generated through export and import of tourism related goods and services might be used to stimulate investments in other sectors of economy. Moreover, tourism can act as a direct and indirect contributor to the government revenues - through taxes derived from tourism industry itself and from supporting industries. Tourism can boost infrastructure improvements that would benefit both tourists and local communities. It is even suggested that informal and unreported employment which does not bring tax revenues to

the government still positively affects local economies by returning money to the system (multiplier effect) (UNEP).

Social aspects, with a focus on power struggle and clash of culturally diverse societies, brought up the arguments around the ethics of tourism development. However, researchers, for example Cole (2006) argued that "tourism may bring pride, confidence, strengthened political identity and external contacts" (p.640) to the host communities.

Jafari (2001) mentioned a long-term dispute between two groups of tourism researchers, so-called "optimists" and "pessimists". "Optimists" believe that tourism as a source of pleasure and freedom (even being associated with economic development) cannot be the cause of any considerable conflict between an individual and society or environment. "Pessimists" mostly concentrate on the destructive effects of tourism. This argument is unlikely to be resolved, and tourism should accommodate both these perspectives, using sustainable and responsible development as a compromise (Caton, 2012). In particular, it is believed that physical impacts of tourism may be reduced if tourism development is following an ecologically sustainable course (Priskin, 2001). Ecologically sustainable development includes "the complex of the activities that maintain the resource base and do not compromise future generation's ability to utilise the resource" (Priskin, 2001, p.640). In some cases, when tourism is directly relying on conservation and require the protection of the natural assets in order to function, this type of development is a non-optional strategy. At the same time, tourism might also contribute to the conservation. The tourism-related revenues may be used to ensure that certain areas maintain their conservation status, despite being pressured by alternative land uses and development. (Priskin, 2001).

2.2 Tourism as a livelihood strategy. Economic perspective.

Even considering all the impacts, tourism is a powerful force and, despite all the demand fluctuations, governments of developing countries are using it to diversify and develop local, often rural communities. Tourism easily provides entrepreneurial opportunities to local communities in both formal and informal sectors (Kokkranikal & Morrison, 2011).

In countries where tourism was chosen as a development strategy, and therefore was provided with state support in marketing and/or promotion, tourism inevitably replaces traditional rural economies (Ramsey & Everitt, 2008). However, the domination of tourism related revenues, especially in the third world countries, does not necessarily mean that locals do not have other sources of income. Moreover, if these other activities have a seasonal character that coincides with the visitor season, they are more likely to interfere and conflict with tourism. Tao and Wall (2009) noted that as it is typical for poor communities to earn their living through multiple jobs, tourism should be "incorporated into an existing system" (p.91), rather than replace it. It is, therefore, believed that the goal of any tourism initiative should be to contribute to the sustainable livelihood of the community, instead of being sustainable within itself and endanger traditional sources of livelihood (Tao & Wall, 2009, Kokkranikal & Morrison, 2011). According to Tao and Wall (2009) among its many contributions to local livelihood tourism can act "an adaptive response to longer-term declines in income or entitlements, due to serious economic or environmental changes beyond local control" (p.91).

From the economic perspective, tourism as a tool for enhancing livelihood opportunities has the following advantages: 1) relatively fast growing market that provides new employment opportunities for both high trained and unskilled workers, 2) not necessarily import-based industry - goods provided to tourists and required for the infrastructure can be locally produced, 3)

relatively low entry barriers (although not everywhere) and, 4) high income elasticity of demand (Guha & Ghosh, 2007).

The actual economic effect of tourism on local livelihood is, however, hard to measure. This effect varies from segment to segment. Global mass tourism is easily analyzed using categories of scale and scope, but with small-scale destinations and forms of tourism more factors have to be considered. For instance, an overlap occurs between the consumption of mass and local products. Hampton (2005) gives an example of backpackers in Indonesia that were eating in McDonalds from time to time. In this case economic benefits for locally owned restaurants are obviously lower in comparison with the number of visitors. Therefore, to evaluate an economic effect of tourism on local livelihoods it is necessary to carefully examine the following factors - accommodation (use of local materials), catering (local food and beverages), direct employment in these sectors (also the type of employment and gender distribution should be considered), capital costs, leakage, and ownership (Hampton, 2005).

Researchers also suggest that it is necessary to distinguish between needs and goal of the community (Ashley, 2000). The most direct way to assess the direct contribution of tourism to the needs of the community is to calculate household earnings in cash. The needs and goals framework recognizes three types of cash income plus the joint income earned by the members of a community. These are - income earned from the direct employment, earnings from selling food, crafts, materials, and profit from owning a tourism enterprise. Collective income mostly refers to sales of hunting or fishing rights and similar earnings. The effect of this type of income, according to Ashley (2000) depends on how it is spent. The cumulative economic effect of tourism on the community, however, will depend on local presettings, type of tourism developing in the area, local policies, cultural aspects and the relationships within the community (Ashley, 2000).

2.3 Community-based tourism

Community-based tourism (CBT) could be defined as a form of community development which directly involves locals in the processes of decision-making, project implementation and further evaluation and distribution of benefits (Sebele, 2010). As a form of tourism, "community-based" refers to an activity where "the social, environmental and economic needs of local communities are met through the offering of a tourism product" (p. 4, Goodwin & Santilli, 2009). Metaphorically, CBT might be described as a market where tourists and locals are the main actors. Tourists are getting unique travel experiences provided by locals in exchange for economic benefits, and, indirectly, power, control, and education. Ideally, CBT should encompass sustainable use of the environment with the development of local communities and give to their members an opportunity to empower themselves, to control and be involved in tourism development processes, and, consequently, gain benefits for the community (Denman, 2001).

World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) and *United Nations Environment Programme* (*UNEP*) established a number of key characteristics (Figure 1) that are common to the majority of CBT cases.
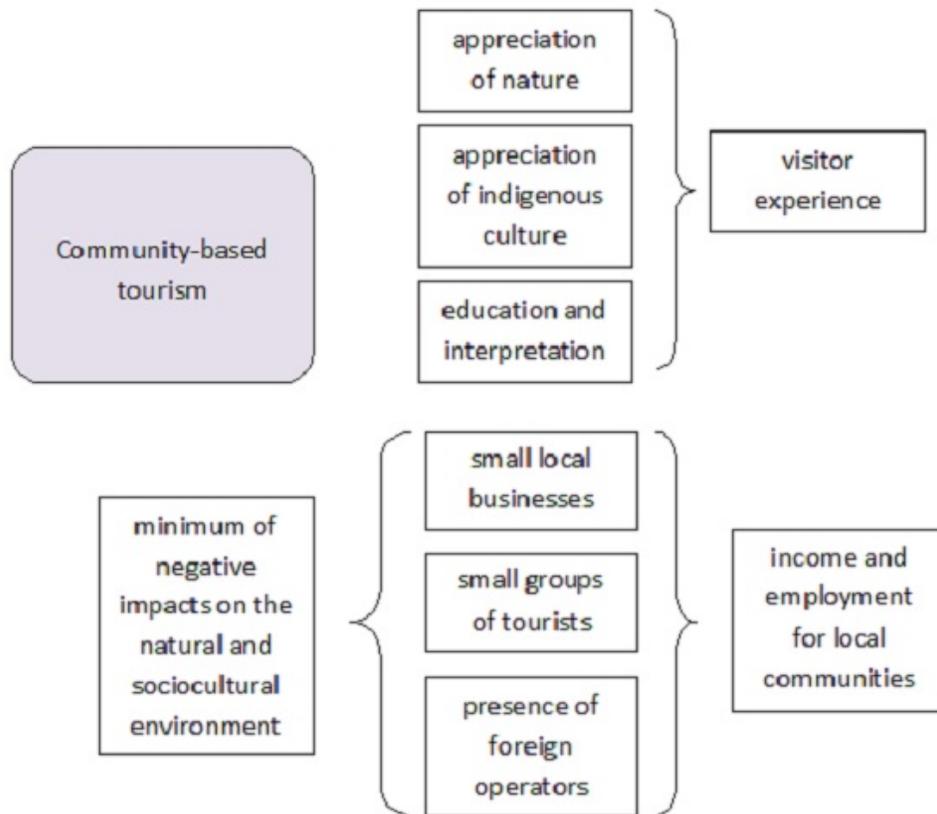
Figure 1 - Key characteristics of community-based tourism (adapted from endruralpoverty.org)

Existing research concentrates mostly on the community perspective, which is definitely a crucial element of success of this type of tourism. First of all, it is commonly agreed that the decision to develop community-based tourism i.e. "to exploit natural and cultural resources in order to draw up development policies" (p. 70, Lopez-Guzman, Sanchez-Cañizares & Pavón, 2011) should be made by the local community itself, and preferably as a part of a larger community development strategy. This will help to ensure that all the processes and desired outcomes are consistent with the community's culture and heritage and sometimes will provide a required education, tools and support (Community Empowerment Network, 2014).

Sebele (2010) claims that, from the perspective of the industry, active participation of the community not only maintains the development of the product, but as well ensures that this development is sustainable, controls local attitudes and protects local resources. Community participation is supposed to provide equal opportunities for people with different skills and from different social classes. And it is believed, that their participation is required to tourism development not just because of the unique knowledge that is held by those people, but because without full and equal participation of the locals tourism development cannot be objectively called sustainable (Sebele, 2010).

The idea of community-based tourism remains attractive because of the considerable number of tangible and intangible benefits acquired by all the stakeholders (Table 1).

Table 1 - Community-based tourism related benefits (adapted from Simpson, 2008).

Economic benefits	Environmental benefits	Socio-cultural benefits	Building of skills and influence
- employment opportunities (direct and indirect)	- switch to the environmentally friendly activities	- intensive infrastructure development	- skill enhancement
- development of local economies	- increase of environmental awareness	- increase in safety and security	- enforcement of policy-making processes
- diversification of traditional industries	- establishment or improvement of environmental management system	- promotion and popularization of cultural heritage, cultural education, knowledge transfer	- community empowerment (gender, social, political, financial, phsycological)
- increase in local income level		- preservation of local traditions, skills and practices	
- increase in land values		- stimulation of cross-institutional communication	

However, Simpson in his study of community benefit tourism initiatives stressed that all the

issues related to participation, empowerment of the communities and factual improvement of

their livelihoods through tourism should be subject to a detailed analysis. The reason is that a number of negative impacts occur along with all the outlined benefits. For instance, communities might face any number of conflicts - from internal power struggles to conflicts between stakeholders, external pressure and issues with structure and governance may occur (Simpson, 2008).

Moreover, Goodwin & Santilli (2009) argued that sustainable community-based tourism projects are not monitored well enough and often are evaluated quite subjectively. There is a very small number of studies that proves an actual positive effect of tourism development on environmental quality or community livelihood. The majority of community-based initiatives are not self-sustaining and suffer from poor governance and miscommunication between stakeholders (Goodwin & Santilli, 2009).

2.4 Key stakeholders of community-based tourism

Overall impression from of a destination encompasses the general tourist experience and the quality of services that a particular place provides (Velecco & Mancino, 2010). The experience, services, and hospitality offered by the destination largely depend on its organizational structure that represents a network of interdependent and multiple stakeholders (Waligo, Clark & Hawkins, 2013). Therefore, the outcome of a tourism initiative is correlated to the nature and extent of participation of each stakeholder (Simpson, 2008). Waligo, Clark & Hawkins (2013) suggested to define a stakeholder as a group or an individual who is related to tourism development initiative and, can to a degree influence or be influenced by any activities and decisions made in this regard.

Researchers have identified a numbers of main stakeholders groups. Waligo, Clark & Hawkins (2013) named six categories: tourists, local community, industry, special interest groups,

government, and educational institutions. Simpson (2008) argued that the success of the tourism development strategy mostly depends on the extent and nature of interaction of local community with the following categories - the private sector (which includes private interpreters, investors, managers, developers, planners), public sector (national or regional tourism organizations, governmental organizations) and NGOs (Figure 2).

According to Simpson (2008), traditionally, the majority of government agencies (GAs) were allowing private sector to take over tourism development. The participation of the government was limited to tax collection. Recently, GAs acknowledged the role of tourism as an important driver of socio-economic development and a tool for environmental management. Simpson argued that GAs became more interested in influencing the course of tourism development as the issues of sustainability became an international "hot topic" (Simpson, 2008). Ruhanen (2013) noted that governments interested in increasing tax returns and other revenues gained from visitors tend to intervene in the tourism industry more than other service sectors. Various researchers claim that this intervention and regulations by GAs is required for sustainable tourism development (Ruhanen, 2013).

Generally, government is able to help to minimize negative effects of tourism through proper regulations, planning and management in land-use, labour and environment sectors, through creating an infrastructure and through provision of basic social and environmental services (Simpson, 2008). To fully achieve community oriented tourism objectives it is necessary that government integrates sustainability principles and practices within tourism planning policies and processes (Ruhanen, 2013).

According to Ruhanen, researchers mostly concentrate on the relationship between the local community and the government at the destination. The reason is that although local

government does not control national policy and legislation, it certainly is responsible for the crucial elements of tourism project planning, for instance, land-use issues, development permits and regulations. The local government also possesses a unique local knowledge and is able to consider a local specificity (Ruhanen, 2013).

In addition to local communities and local govenrmnent, NGOs are often important actors in community tourism development. A non-governmental organization is defined by the United Nations as "any formal association that neither is a government nor hopes to replace a government or its officials. It is funded from voluntary contributions and is not involved in for-profit activity" (p.184, Kennedy & Dornan, 2009). Ideally, NGOs can work as facilitators of poverty reduction process for developing countries educating, advocating for pro-development policies, conducting necessary research and attracting funds (Kennedy & Dornan, 2009). NGOs working with tourism projects often act as consultants, and in some cases roles of NGOs and governmental organizations overlap. However, NGOs are more interested in empowering communities, fostering "bottom-up" initiatives and raising awareness regarding developing countries (Simpson, 2008). Researchers mostly refer to NGOs as "non-political, non-religious and non-profit" (p.187) stakeholders that seek neither control nor power or influence over local people (Kennedy & Dornan, 2009). However, NGOs have been often criticized for pursuing personal hidden interests and focusing more on self-promotion through awareness increasing events. Most often they have no or very little personal connection with the community and, therefore, no real commitment to the community-based project (Simpson, 2008).

Unlike NGOs and governmental organisations, the private sector faces the same problems that any local tourism initiative has to face and small private enterprises are as well extremely receptive to the external impacts. In the end private sector also has the same goals as local

communities implementing a tourism initiative - economic and financial stability and sustainability and livelihood improvement (Simpson, 2008).

A number of case studies across the developing countries showed that the interaction between private sector stakeholders and local communities is a two-way process. Private companies benefit by getting new business opportunities, and communities receive goods and services required for tourism project implementation, new employment options (Harrison & Schipani, 2008). According to Simpson (2008) the private sector can play the following roles in community tourism initiatives - along with NGOs and government it can provide accounting, planning, marketing, sales, training services, make donations to the communities etc.

However, Tao and Wall (2009) stressed that it is important to draw the line between sustainable tourism development and sustainable development through tourism. First concept, in case of a community-based initiative, requires from private sector to prioritize community interests and preservation of natural assets and to make a long-term commitment to the local development project. Simpson (2008) argues that small businesses tend to be opportunistic and respond generally to the most profitable trends of the market. For instance, tour operators lose interest in promoting community initiative as soon as they find a destination that brings more profit. Proper rules and regulations do not always help.

2.5 Role of the host community

Sustainable tourism development may take several directions. Saarinen (2006) (in Holden, 2010) highlighted three main sustainability trends characterising tourism projects. First one focuses on conservation of the environment through limitation of activity in the area and calculation of various thresholds such as carrying capacity. Second is an approach where tourism-

related activities are considered as positive contributors to sustainable tourism development. This approach is usually promoted by stakeholders interested mostly in profitable capital investments. The third trend can be characterized as a democratic philosophy arguing for the involvement of host communities in tourism development at all stages (Holden, 2010).

The supporters of the community-based approach consider the role of the host community to be critical to the success of tourism development. It is argued that the contribution of the community is the crucial element that creates the gap between "just destination" and a unique and competitive project (Saufi, O'Brien & Wilkins, 2014). However, community participation is a concept that also takes several forms that vary depending on, for instance, political and economic situation in the area or socio-cultural presetting. Researchers tried to classify various types of community participation or community roles, and, finally, in 1999 Tosun developed with the typology of community participation, that, he believed, could be adapted to tourism development.

Tosun (1999) distinguished three main varieties of community participation that are usually identified by most researchers, but named differently from study to study (Figure 3).

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                    ┌─────────────────────────────┐
                    │   Community participation   │
                    └─────────────────────────────┘
                   ╱             │             ╲
        ┌──────────────┐  ┌──────────────┐  ┌──────────────┐
        │  Spontaneous │  │   Induced    │  │   Coercive   │
        └──────────────┘  └──────────────┘  └──────────────┘
```
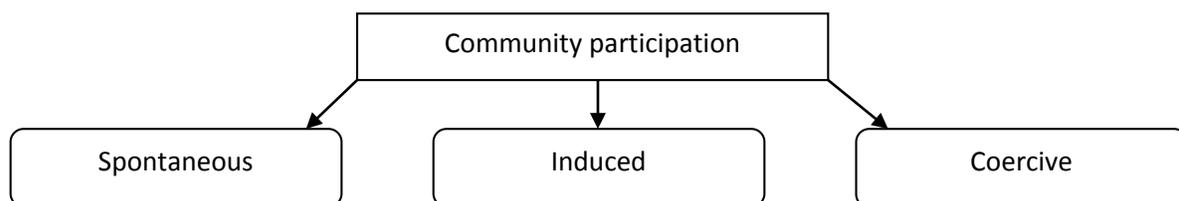
Figure 2 - Types of community participation according to Tosun (1999).

In the case of the spontaneous participation the community plays an active role, voluntarily takes actions on implementing their own ideas without external support. The main component of success of this type of participation is that local people act as independent stakeholders, they don't

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feel that they are manipulated or pressured. Induced participation is quite common in developing nations around the world. Community plays a more formal role, being directed, sponsored and mandated by government. Therefore, in this case community implements decisions made by government, that also defines rules and the extent of this participation. Coercive participation is also known as oppressive participation. The community is manipulated and forced to participate in a tourism development project, and this lack of public support in a long-term perspective, obviously turns out to be counterproductive (Tosun, 1999).

Although Tosun in his studies stated that spontaneous participation is an ideal scenario (Tosun, 1999, 2000), researchers still argue that community should share roles and responsibilities with other stakeholders, or, at least, allow them to share knowledge about tourism development (Cole, 2006). That not only empowers local participants, but as well facilitates the transfer of benefits derived from tourism (Saufi, O'Brien & Wilkins, 2014).

Saufi et al. (2014) generally supported Tosun, however they also noted that the role of the community and the extent of the community participation are always defined by the context, i.e. social and cultural environment of a destination, level of tourism development in the area etc. These factors should be carefully studied at the stage of the preliminary tourism project planning.

2.6 Research objectives

The goal of any community-based tourism development project, and especially of a sustainable one remains to assure that tourism benefits all its stakeholders, especially communities, natural environment and wildlife as they are essential elements of tourism processes. Simpson (2008) identified a number of questions and topics that needs to be carefully studied in relation to this kind of projects. For instance, he specifically pointed out that a

researcher should acquire a clear idea of how essential is the level of participation, ownership and control to the success of tourism initiative, and, for example, what role do different stakeholders play in the development process (Simpson, 2008). Moreover, in order to acquire a sufficient level of understanding of how and to what extent tourism is implemented in livelihoods of the indigenous people of Belize and if it truly benefits their lives, it is necessary to take into consideration a large number of factors, such as local customs and lifestyles, local demographics, labor markets, changes in economic wealth, changes in the environmental health. In this study I undertook an analysis of the current state of tourism in the communities of Laguna and Hopkins Village and answered the following questions:

1. How do residents of each community perceive tourism and its impacts i.e. what benefits or disadvantages tourism brings in their livelihoods?

2. What is the economic and social effect of tourism on communities' livelihoods, and how this effect is related to the location, ethnicity, governance systems, and gender relations?

Particular objectives are: first, an analysis of communities' perception of benefits that tourism brings to their everyday life, and a study of social, economic and other effects that tourism has on the communities; second, a comparative analysis of two communities in terms of the role of location, cultural presettings, and benefit distribution in the tourism development; an assessment of the economic contribution of tourism to the livelihood strategies of two communities.. Gender is a cross cutting element of the analysis as men and women from these indigenous communities participate in the process of development and in the distribution of perceived benefits differently (Wilk & Chapin, 1990).

Chapter 3

<u>Methodology</u>

3.1 Study settings. Sites description

The research project concentrated on two communities in Southern Belize - Laguna and Hopkins Village (Figure 4).

Figure 3 - Location of Laguna and Hopkins Village on the map of Belize (google.com)

The community of Laguna is located about 10 miles west of Punta Gorda Town, in Toledo district in Southern Belize. It is a Qekchi (Kekchi) speaking village with a population of 300 people. Laguna has mostly a farming economy with communal land ownership and traditional governance. The village is easily accessible by road from the newly paved highway and offers to visitors

following accommodation options - homestay, the TEA guesthouse (a two story building, running water in the outdoor showers, no electricity). The community offers eco-cultural tours as part of the local initiative Toledo Eco-tourism Association. Main attractions near Laguna are a cave in the jungles, hiking and birding opportunities in the Aguacaliente Nature Reserve (Campbell & Penados, 2014; "Southern Belize", 2014).

Hopkins village is a Garifuna community of about 1000 people along the coast of the Caribbean in Stann Creek District in Belize. The community's economy is based on farming and fishing with individual land ownership. Recently, the growing tourism industry started employing local people in large foreign owned resorts located along the coastline. The village itself also developed sand-sun-and-sea type of tourism. The village is accessed by bus from nearby towns and villages. Local infrastructure includes health clinic, bars, crafts and gifts shops, restaurants, guesthouses. The community offers tours around the village and to ocean islands (Campbell & Penados, 2014; "Hopkins Village", 2002).

3.2 Research approach

The previously outlined research questions were approached from the pragmatic perspective. The pragmatic approach is based on concepts of "belief", "doubt" and "habit". These concepts are related to a general assumption that there is no purely true answer to any research question (this is particularly applicable to a social science research), and the obtained knowledge is always contextual and inseparable from "beliefs, interests and projections" (Pansiri, 2006, p.197). My research considers social, historical and political contexts as it is believed to be crucial to the results.

In terms of the research procedure, the pragmatic worldview allows one to focus on the research problem and does not restrict the choice of methods and techniques that meet the purpose of the study (Creswell, 2003). Basically, pragmatism neglects the choice between paradigms and allows the researcher to use both qualitative and quantitative methods if they are applicable to certain problems within the research (Pansiri, 2006).

The Pragmatic worldview is traditionally associated with the mixed-method approach to the study. In this study quantitative economic data was not available and, therefore, the study relied on qualitative indicators of the economic impact on livelihood strategies.

3.3 Case studies

In particular, an exploratory case study framework was chosen to address the outlined themes of the research. It is applicable to the study of Laguna and Hopkins Village because a contemporary phenomenon (tourism) was investigated within a specific real-life context (Xiao & Smith, 2005). The end result relies on multiple sources and, despite the common belief that case study research is biased, because it inevitably reflects researcher's values and perspective (although this type of bias is consistent with the pragmatic worldview), contributes to the pool of knowledge about the phenomenon. The research has time and place boundaries.

Triangulation i.e. "the combination of two or more data sources, investigators, methodologic approaches, theoretical perspectives, or analytical methods within the same study" (Thurmond, 2001, p.253) is often seen as a challenge for case study implementation. However, in my study triangulation was a direct result of posed research questions.

3.4 Study population

The population under study consisted of all adult members of the Laguna and Hopkins Village communities regardless of connection to the tourism industry. Study participants were recruited through a snowball sampling techniques with initial introductions provided by village leaders at the request of ISIS and University of Belize. I continued to sample the community until I reached saturation. Additionally, I attempted to engage participants who had a diverse degree of connection to tourism, thus ensuring that the views of those who do not directly benefit from tourism inform my results. Saturation was achieved at approximately 20 individuals.

3.5 Research strategies

Participants were asked to participate in a semi-structured interview lasting approximately 30 minutes focussing on the role of tourism in their livelihood strategies. Participants were informed that their responses were entirely confidential and of any risks or benefits of their participation. With permission all interviews were be recorded on a digital voice recorder and at the end of each day the files (.wav) were transferred to a password protected laptop computer and stored as encrypted files. A backup of the files was stored on a locked SSD drive and stored in a locked suitcase.

All data was aggregated for analysis and raw data will be destroyed 2 years after the completion of the project.

3.5.1 Semi structured interviews

Interviews were conducted over a four week period in January/February of 2015.

The semi structured interview allowed me to probe further with the participants and have them elaborate on how tourism may or may not affect them. It further allowed the participants to share their own stories and provide a richer image of the nature of tourism in their community.

The primary method of analysis of the semi structured interviews was through content analysis to identify emerging themes.

3.5.2 Participant observation

Participant observation is a significant part of the qualitative research as it allowed me to obtain better insights into the context, relationships and behavior of the manner in which tourism impacts the communities (Mack *et al.,* 2005). In addition to being a data collection method, it is also a process by which hidden information might be revealed. Participant observation enabled me to be "personally involved" with the research participants. A number of benefits have been identified to using participant observation.

a) Extensive variety of data could be collected

b) Reduces the problem of reactivity

c) Helps the researcher to understand the cultural activity deeply

d) Equips the researcher with more sensible questions

e) In certain contexts, participant observation could be the only data collection method successful where all other methods may fail (Bernard, 2006).

Participant observation also aided me in becoming "a part" of the activity under investigation and provide a first-hand experience which will improve my understanding of the phenomena (Woods, 2006). Participant observation can also be extremely time consuming if not properly planned for (Mack *et al.,* 2005). In general however the benefits to participant observation

outweigh the negatives and particular attention was paid to keeping an open mind during the observation process.

Participant observation only occured during the production, sale or delivery of tourism products and as such not all participants were observed. In order to acquire consent for observation participants who identified that they produce goods or deliver services for tourists, and tourists who consume these goods and services were asked subsidiary questions on the informed consent script.

Observation was conducted only during identified tourism "experiences" and only in public spaces, for example market, local café, local restaurants, tourist trail or drumming site, and street. Private places such as accommodations and participants homes were free from observation.

Chapter 4

Results

4.0 Introduction

The goal of this study was to provide an understanding of the role of tourism in the livelihood strategies of residents of the Hopkins Village and Laguna in Belize and to identify the nature of the economic contribution tourism makes to their livelihoods.

Two research questions were addressed in this study.

1. How do residents of each community perceive tourism and its impacts i.e. what benefits or disadvantages tourism brings in their livelihoods?

2. What are the actual social, economic and other effects of tourism on the communities' livelihoods, and how is this effect related to the location, ethnicity, governance systems, and gender relations?

Data reported in this section begins with a description of the study participants and then is organized by the findings on the two communities.

4.1. Respondents

Through the course of the research process 34 interviews were conducted, 24 interviews were conducted with communities' members (12 in Hopkins, 12 in Laguna), 8 tourism business owners (4 in Hopkins, 4 in Punta Gorda - Toledo district), and 2 representatives of the Belize tourism board. Hopkins interviewees were mostly male (11 out of 12), in Laguna 6 interviewees were male, 6 - female.

4.2 Hopkins Village

Interviews with the community members revealed a number of topics and themes that cast a light on what is the role and meaning of tourism for Hopkins, what are the benefits and effects associated with it. Key themes that emerged were employment tensions, conflict of interests, and resentment towards big resorts, marginalization, and resilience.

Livelihood structure and resilience

The two communities fit quite differently in the tourism industry. In Hopkins all the people that were interviewed claimed that they are the first generation that gains consistent income from tourism, and only 4 of them supplement their earnings with farming or fishery. However, it was indicated by 3 interviewees that these activities are carried out more as a leisure, than a full-fledged livelihood. In respect to the gender ratio in tourism, although almost all of the respondents were men, I was told that there are actually more women working in tourism. The common explanation to that trend was that the vast majority of jobs offered to local people are minor jobs, such as housekeeping, waitressing, cooking, reception etc. Local young men consider these jobs "unmanly" and avoid taking them.

Hopkins interviewees interact with a considerable number of tourists on a regular basis (anywhere from 50 to 400 a month) due to the neighboring resorts, and notice and are somewhat affected by seasonal fluctuations in these numbers. One of the respondents mentioned that it is quite necessary to have an additional source of income to survive through the low season drop, the rest admitted that they have no need to get involved in other activities as they get to save some money during the high season. Moreover, respondents who are employed by big resorts, such as Hamanassi, are resilient to the changes in number of tourists, they continue to be paid the

same wage and get additional training from the resort during the low season. However, in small guesthouses this is obviously not the case.

Specific of tourism employment in Hopkins

It should be noted that 9 out 12 of the Hopkins interviewees were either self-employed or worked in big resorts, so they represented two out three different types of local tourism workers. The interviewees have a certain level of education and training, they have guiding and diving licenses. It was pointed out to me by 3 of my interviewees that getting a tour-guide license is certainly a challenge in Hopkins. Candidates have to travel outside of the village to take courses, to get all the permits and record checks. It requires significant time and monetary commitments. However, most of my respondents managed to either save money for that or got training while working in one of the big resorts. Moreover, Hopkins entrepreneurs pointed out that their marketing and promotion suffer from the lack of funds as well. Internet development in Belize is quite expensive, so they are using the word of mouth or share the cost of a website with other entrepreneurs, or leave flyers in local restaurants and small guesthouses.

The third type, the least successful type, are seasonal and opportunistic workers. These workers do not have a full-time job in tourism, they combine several seasonal shifts in housekeeping or waitressing, playing music in bars or gardening. This group is the most vulnerable and least resilient. One of the guesthouse owners mentioned that they get about a dozen people asking about any kind of minor jobs daily (while interviewing the hotel staff I myself witnessed 5 people inquiring about vacancies). Competition is very high and the resorts are not trying to protect the interests of Hopkins residents.

Employment tensions and conflicts of interests

According to the information provided by the resorts' staff that were interviewed, they only employ anywhere from 50 to 80% of local residents, local meaning from Hopkins or Sittee River. However, local people pointed out some existing tendencies that aim to exclude them from tourism even more. The first trend is that new companies building hotels and resorts in the area started bringing all their staff with them, hiring no people from Hopkins. Second, the resorts' management fires employees after they gained some experience and hires new less costly staff with no experience from outside of Hopkins. And finally, resorts discourage their visitors from visiting Hopkins village. The first tendency was explained by the fact that resorts simply want to employ people with a certain qualification and training right from the start, second tendency was explained as an attempt to save money, as it is necessary to pay more money to the trained and experienced staff according to Hopkins residents.

Interestingly, tourism enterprises have another explanation for these tendencies. The guesthouse owner who employs only staff from Hopkins shared with me that they wish they could hire Mayan workers from somewhere, as local employees are not as hard-working and can skip several days of work without any particular reason given. Several restaurants in Hopkins only employ Mayan workers for that exact reason. Finally, the last tendency was the one that got an impulsive reaction from the hotels' management. They unanimously denied discouraging visitors from exploring Hopkins, however one of the employees shared an opinion that there certainly is an indirect discouragement. Big resorts sell not just rooms, they sell packages that include food and tour programs. Resorts host cultural nights, they have everything from gift stores to miniature golf courses and as a result visitors simply do not have to leave the resort, they do not buy meals in

local restaurants, they do not buy snorkeling tours from local guides. And a couple of concerned comments from the staff about safety issues in the village could "seal the deal". This creates a great tension between Hopkins residents and the resorts.

The most significant emerging theme in my interviews with Hopkins residents was their resentment towards big resorts. The resorts were to blame for increasing marginalization of the locals, increase in crime due to the exclusion of people from participation in tourism, for imposing their regulations on the villagers (such as noise restrictions), for not contributing back to Hopkins for using their culture, name and other assets. The picture is obviously not just in black and white. There are resorts and big businesses that contribute to the community one way or another, for instance by paying for school of the children of their employees, fixing the road, donating money for celebrations and events. However, there are no agreements regulating these kind of relationships and it does not look like anything will be signed in the near future.

Miscellaneous themes and issues

Another topic that was raised quite often - a big land dispute about where the boundary between Hopkins and Sittee River lies. Hopkins residents claim that resorts and hotels that are technically located on the Sittee River territory, pay all the taxes and duties to Sittee River, do not contribute to Hopkins in any way, but still use the name Hopkins in their address. This dispute is a convenient excuse allowing stakeholders to refuse to negotiate any kind of contribution, until the boundaries are clearly established. In order not to choose who to pay liquor taxes to, the resorts and hotels prefer to transfer payments centrally to a single organization that distributes the money later.

Another existing issue related to the land ownership was highlighted during my conversations with Hopkins residents. Expats are buying property on the shoreline, "forcing" locals to move to the rear of the village. According to my interviewees this again leads to the marginalization of the people, to the split within the community as friends and relatives are getting separated from each other, and to the greater division between the rich and the poor.

And, finally, the theme that was raised by both resorts owners and Hopkins residents themselves - overdependence of local people on tourism that leads to the abandonment of the traditional activities and, therefore, reduces resilience.

4.3 Laguna

The nature of Laguna's tourism

Tourism in Laguna functions at a completely different scale than in Hopkins. Laguna is theoretically a part of the Toledo Ecotourism Association group and so far all the tourism development that has ever taken place there is a result of the TEA management. An attempt to start another guesthouse, independently of the TEA, resulted in all the activity being seized and the person in charge being called to the community meeting for explanations. With that being said, all the tourism infrastructure in Laguna consists of one guesthouse. According to one of my interviewees, it is possible to accommodate 20-25 people there at a time.

The interviews with the villagers provided a valuable insight into how the TEA guesthouses system was developing and functioning under somewhat challenging conditions.

The idea behind the organization was to create a valid alternative to the traditional sources of livelihood. The mechanism is supposed to distribute tourists equally to all of the villages. In each

village, there is a number of families participating in the guesthouse program. A rotation system also operates within each village, families take turns cooking and cleaning. Right now the official TEA website lists 10 villages with approximately 8 families in each village participating in the program. The TEA collects entrance fees from families joining the program and 10% of any sum of money that tourists coming through the TEA pay to the communities. On a district level the communication within the organisation was established through the elected board of members. This is the theory, the reality, however, turned out to be quite different.

The TEA was successful until the hurricane Iris in 2001 brought major destruction to the area and affected all the industries, including tourism. Iris was a recurring theme in our communication with the villagers, and was identified by some as the main reason for why tourism stopped in Laguna. The village recovered from this event and even took a loan to rebuild the guesthouse (which they completed in late 2014), however the TEA itself seemed to be unable to cope. Laguna was relying on the TEA as the promoter and main supplier of tourists. Without its help, the community struggles to get the desirable visitation.

It was pointed out to us by community members that the TEA closed their office in Punta Gorda (in reality, however the office moved to a different location, which is really hard to find) and stopped having board meetings, making it impossible for villages-members to address the organization with questions and concerns, as well as to communicate with other villages.

In Laguna 7 families are currently participants of the TEA program. The process of joining the TEA includes application, entrance fee and the group approval. My interviewees mentioned that there is not enough clarity what their decision regarding membership applications might be based upon. The topic of bad communication at any level - between the village council and

villagers, between the TEA members and potential new members, between villages was raised quite a few times by my respondents.

Integration of tourism into the livelihood of Laguna residents

Overall in Laguna 3 people stated that they currently have no income related to tourism, and 2 people mentioned that this income is more occasional, than consistent. The main source of livelihood for all Laguna households, that were studied, is farming. The products are mainly consumed within the household or sometimes sold within the village. The income from selling natural products is the only income available for some community members. Therefore, all of my Laguna interviewees shared an opinion that more substantial income from tourism is highly desirable and will be used for an education of their children, however, only one person would give up farming if they were gaining enough money from tourism to provide for their families. All the rest of the respondents see farming being something bigger than just a source of livelihood, it was named "the way of life" and basis for the local culture and traditional lifestyle, which at the same time is considered to be the main attraction of the village.

Women's participation in tourism

As in Hopkins, Laguna interviewees indicated that there are more women involved in tourism, 3 women are even certified to give village tours. It was explained as being related to the type of work that needs to be done for tourists - housekeeping, cooking, craft-making, and to the fact that men are mostly responsible for work out on the farms. Laguna also organized a women's group, the idea behind it is that by paying a 10 dollar entrance fee any Laguna woman gains access to the building in the village, where women gather to make and sell crafts, learn and teach each other. This group does not have assigned hours, women meet at any time they choose.

Current state of tourism in Laguna and existing issues

My interviewees struggled to name any exact number of tourists they encounter in their village. The responses ranged from 20 a month to 10 tourists a year or none at all. Further complicating this issue is the fact there are no official visitor records kept in the community, and there is a very little understanding of how much income tourism brings on a regular basis. It has to be noted that the visits of the student groups from ISIS (CELA) is the biggest (if not the only) part of the tourism flow. The hurricane Iris was mentioned quite a few times as a primary cause for tourism activity slowing in the area. However, the representatives of the Belize tourism board pointed out that the reason might be much more prosaic - there is no direct access to the community from the nearby centre Punta Gorda, the bus that made this route twice a day was cancelled. Despite that, one of the interviewees told us that the jungles around the village still get quite a few visitors from the guesthouses in the area (outside of the village). The interviewee added that those visitors usually had their own guide, who used to pay a 5 dollar fee to the alcalde of the village as courtesy. No other villagers benefited from these visits in any way.

The Lagoon and the caves around the village were named by my respondents as Laguna's main attractions, however they also admitted that after the collapse of the organisation that took care of the Lagoon, the area is not exactly suitable for visitors – the trail to the Lagoon is no longer maintained, at the Lagoon itself there are no boats, no docks, and no means to access water for visitors.

Miscellaneous themes

Other topics that came up during the interviews were the limits to growth or carrying capacity, and quality vs quantity. Four of my interviewees mentioned that they do not want to encourage an uncontrollable growth of tourism, they have a basic understanding of how many people they can take care of at a time and they clearly did not wish to exceed this amount despite the additional income this could bring. Moreover, two of the respondents expressed the opinion that Laguna does not want tourists to interfere their way of life, and they are not ready to change the village rules for the visitors. Alcohol, loud noises and walks at night time are prohibited. Moreover, I was told that the community does not accept marriages between the same genders. People in Laguna were quite certain that they are willing to sacrifice the quantity of their visitors in order to preserve their lifestyle.

Chapter 5

<u>**Discussion**</u>

Comparative analysis of various factors influencing tourism development in Laguna and Hopkins

5.0 Introduction

Various approaches exist to evaluate and predict performance level of tourism initiatives. For instance, Molina-Azorin et al. (2010) studied the main factors influencing the success of tourism enterprise and different models examining those factors. These models, such as Porter's Diamond Model or Crouch and Ritchie Model (Molina-Azorin et al., 2010), propose to combine destination characteristics into clusters varying in size and number, while the analyzed components remain the same. Molina-Azorin et al. (2010) suggested that these models can be simplified and factors affecting performance can be divided into two big groups: external circumstances (named "location or destination effect" (Molina-Azorin et al., 2010)) and the internal characteristics of the enterprise i.e. its resources. Although their research concentrates on the tourism enterprise performance, it can be adapted to the case of Laguna and Hopkins to evaluate and predict their performance in the tourism industry with a few basic assumptions. The two villages can be seen as two different firms, functioning and developing their tourism initiatives in a set of external and internal conditions and factors within one destination (Belize). Using the models outlined earlier, I defined the factors crucial to my case study that were analyzed in relation to the performance in tourism industry of each community (Table 2). External factors represent the assets of any sort and internal factors refer to the ability of the communities to successfully use these assets.

Table 2 - Factors affecting performance in tourism industry

External factors	Internal factors
Geographical location and environmental characteristics	Skilled labour
Cultural assets	Marketing resources and management
Demand and competitors	Motivations and goals
Supporting industries and stakeholders	Financial opportunities
Economic and political environment	
Tourism infrastructure	
Historically formed cultural aspects and demographics (ethnicity, mentality, religion, gender roles etc.)	
Constraints to sustainable community tourism	

It is important to note that although external factors are more numerous and visually seem to have more weight than the internal, in fact they are equally important and have to be thoroughly studied. Moreover, historically formed cultural aspects and demographics, including ethnicity, mentality, religion, gender roles and traditions, were included in both external and internal groups, as technically they are assets, however they also affect internal characteristics and communities' ability to use other tangible and intangible assets.

5.1 External factors

5.1.1 Geographical location and environmental characteristics

In regards to this aspect the tourism industry is similar to the real estate market - it is all about location, location, location. Location, climate and environmental quality are sometimes seen as primary tourism resources and are definitely a part of a destination image. Moreover, climate forms seasonal tourism demand and therefore challenges tourism's viability (Becken, 2010).

Figure 4 - Map of Belize with locations of both Hopkins and Laguna

(http://www.ncqadventuretours.com/about_belize/maps_of_belize#Previous)

The community of Hopkins is located in the coastal area of the Stann Creek District of Belize. Geological landscape includes the Maya Mountains and the Cockscomb Range inland, and the Sittee River. Laguna village, on the other hand, is situated in the southern part of the country, in Toledo District, approximately 10 miles west of the coast. Laguna is bordered by Agua Caliente Wildlife Sanctuary and Machaca Forest Reserve from the north and a small mountain range to the south. Climate in both places has similar traits - tropical, with both wet and dry seasons that affect the tourism flows. And, finally, occasionally both areas suffer from hurricanes.

Landscapes, surrounding both Laguna and Hopkins, are able to provide various experiences for visitors. Jungles and mountains around Laguna have high biodiversity (especially numerous bird species) and are largely in pristine condition. These assets would be appreciated by specific types of tourists (see Demand), however most of the places of interest (Maya caves, bird walk around the Lagoon) are not accessible or accessible with some difficulties due to the bad or no maintenance. And, as it was noted before, Laguna is removed from the coast which excludes a big segment of potential visitors for whom the ocean is an important part of their stay.

Hopkins, on the other hand, is located right on the shore, and, as one of my interviewees mentioned that "Hopkins and Placencia are the only natural beaches in the country". Moreover, the Belize Barrier Reef is within 40 km distance of the shore of Hopkins, which makes it accessible by boats. At the same time Hopkins is situated within driving distance from the Cockscomb Basin Wildlife Sanctuary and Jaguar Preserve in Stann Creek, various Maya archeological sites, and picturesque natural areas. However, the environmental degradation issues are quite pressing. Despite the creation of the multiple protected areas inland and within the Belize Barrier Reef Reserve System, littering and deforestation, as well as oceanic pollution occurring due to

uncontrolled tourism, shipping, and fishing, are a big concern. The beach area of Hopkins is covered with organic and non-organic litter. In order to stay usable the beach needs to be cleaned almost every day, most of the hotels clean the parts attributed to them, and the northern part is cleaned by the group of volunteers from Hopkins.

Both locations certainly have geographical and environmental assets, both have dramatic landscapes. Hopkins can be suitable for multiple categories of travellers and be the "base camp" site, however, the local interviewees (apart from those who are the part of this volunteer group that was mentioned earlier) do not see such popularity being the cause of increased environmental degradation and pollution. Laguna residents have the opposite point of view, every one of the interviewees mentioned that nature of the area is highly valued by the residents and that nature degradation is a common and shared fear related to tourism development. Laguna might never be a mass tourism Mecca, but it has potential to become a sustainable destination, whereas Hopkins is already caught between zones of mass tourism development in the north and south and has very little influence on its tourism development course.

5.1.2 Cultural assets

Culture is what attracts more sophisticated tourists, people who are already saturated with the simple beach type of vacation. Both communities that were studied represent cultural attractions within themselves, however there is a core distinction between them.

There are only ten Garifuna communities in Belize (National Garifuna Council of Belize, ND) and, according to my interviewees, Hopkins is considered to be the cultural centre of Garifuna people. It is the only village promoted this way online and in magazines (figure 6), where Hopkins promises to its visitors a successful combination of a comfortable stay and cultural experience. As

was mentioned before, all my interviewees named culture and its components, such as cuisine, drums, language, and traditional fishing activities, their greatest assets, and some Garifuna people expressed concern over their culture slowly fading away. Those opposing this view argued that the basis of their popularity simply cannot fade away, as it is being popularized and promoted at a high rate. The truth in this argument is, as always, somewhere in the middle. Overall, Hopkins does not have a lot to offer in the traditional European understanding of cultural experience - there are no museums, historic sites, fancy cultural shows, as well as there is nothing to offer in the new "real-life" exploratory way. However, now in Belize if you say "Garifuna", you think "Hopkins" and vice versa.

Visit Hopkins Belize | Belize Travel Guide

Welcome to Visithopkinsvillagebelize.com - Your Hopkins Belize travel guide .

Hopkins Belize is a Garifuna Village on the Central Coast of Southern Belize. This Unique Cultural destination is located just minutes away from all of Belize's Major Attractions. Hopkins Belize is a beautiful community with a population of 1,500 people.

This tiny village of friendly locals welcomes visitors from all walks of Life.

People that travel to Hopkins often talk about the friendly people of the Village. If you are a traveller interested in experencing new cultures, Hopkins Belize is the #1 Cultural Destination in Belize.

Figure 5 - The way Hopkins is promoted online

Laguna on the other hand is one of dozens Mayan villages in the country (there are over 30 villages in Southern Belize alone). According to the Tourism Board representatives, Mayan culture is the main subject of interest for tourists visiting Toledo district. However, only 2-3 people a year ask about Laguna (R., pers. communication). Visitors usually do not have a lot of time and prefer to rush to the villages that have to offer something worth the route (effort) - Mayan ruins, waterfalls, adventure tours, spectacular caves, as well as the authentic lifestyle. Despite the Lagoon and the caves far away in the jungles, in the mind of an outsider, Laguna does not stand out as a cultural attraction. Villagers make crafts, however some of my interviewees admitted that those crafts are

no different than what other villages have to offer. In terms of the actual "cultural involvement", some respondents mentioned that they consider meals in the Mayan households being such, although without a narrative component or an interaction other than serving food this does not contribute much to the visitor experience. The interviewees told that they can organize village tours or farm tours, however there was none offered to me. Eventually we managed to schedule a jungle tour and a farm tour, but we had to personally talk to the villagers and inquire. The general impression I was left with after visiting Laguna, was such that local people certainly have a potential to attract tourists and offer them a cultural "dive" of a sort, the advantage they have over other villages is a proximity of Laguna to Punta Gorda. But, on the other hand, Laguna is long ways behind in terms of the product development and promotion.

Overall, both communities have a rich cultural resources, however in both cases they are not used to the full capacity.

5.1.3 Demand and competitors

Harrison (2014) made an estimate of the overnight tourism in Belize and concluded that 85% of tourists belong to a low and middle-end segments. This includes campers, backpackers, students, eco-tourists and business travelers. The remaining 15% are shared between high-end "boutique" travelers and professional divers and sailors. The author also identified the types of tourism product that is offered to those tourists - "(1) sun, sea and sand recreation tourism (2) gastronomic tourism (3) inland and coastal nature-based adventure tourism (4) Mayan and cultural tourism (5) sex, drugs and ragamuffin tourism (6) diaspora and ex-pat family and friends visits (7) events and conferences (8) specialized fishing, diving and yachting expeditions (9) regional "Mundo Maya" tourism (10) business, charities and retirement/resettlement scouting (11) natural-

history/cultural education and charity travel" (Harrison, 2014). Through the course of my research I confirmed these general tendencies, and noted trends specific to Hopkins and Laguna.

Hopkins has no opportunities to regulate their tourism demand, meaning they do not get to choose the type of tourism that will be developed, and therefore the type of visitors that they will have to accept. The tourism demand in Hopkins is mostly predefined by their location (sea coast, proximity to the major attractions) and existing infrastructure. All of my respondents mentioned that most of the tourists they interact with are from the United States and Canada, and they are the mix of all the categories outlined above, with fishing, diving and nature-based adventure tourists prevailing. It is necessary to note that this ratio is shaped by the resorts, surrounding the village, however if we take into account only small guesthouses within Hopkins, the cultural, expat, retirement, charity and adventure predominate.

Those residents of Hopkins who are concerned about the Garifuna culture fading away, do not however relate this to the type of visitors attracted to the area. Based on my observations in Hopkins, it is not possible to reshape tourism demand, as most of the tourists come from the big resorts that are not overly interested in the community-based component of their business. Moreover, the development in the area provokes the rise in commodity prices and the chase after higher income makes the switch to the less profitable sustainable development strategies very improbable.

Trying to establish the main competitors of Hopkins in the tourism market, I realized that Hopkins does not have direct competitors, although the village is often compared to Placencia, Placencia is more of a high-end resort destination, which never positioned itself as a community-based destination. The village of Barranco, which is another Garifuna village at the sea coast, is far

south from major attractions and does not have accommodation infrastructure. However, Hopkins faces competition from the resorts, located in and around the village. The interviewees, both residents and resorts employees, described those resorts as towns within themselves that uses all the resources of the village (therefore have the same basic assets), without contributing back, and are for that reasons Hopkins' main competitors.

Laguna has a different tourism dynamic than Hopkins. While Hopkins is a destination in itself, Laguna is one of a few similar sites within the "destination" of Toledo district. This difference brings the competition for the consumers to the larger scale.

Interviewees responded that most of the visitors come from Europe and then US and Canada. Those tourists are backpackers, eco and cultural tourists and the majority of them are transit tourists. Toledo does not have a strong traditional sea, sun, and sand (SSS) tourism, there are very few beaches, and most of the tourists come to the district to experience Mayan culture or passing by from and to Guatemala. Unfortunately, it is impossible to get an estimate how many people and what origin visit Laguna specifically and with what purpose, because of the poor record-keeping in the village.

Laguna, has quite a few direct competitors among other villages in the area that offer similar cultural experience. The representatives of the Belize tourism board named the most popular villages in the district - San Pedro Columbia (Mayan ruins and cacao farm), San Antonio (the oldest and the largest village in the district), Blue Creek (caves and ziplining). Overall, five out of ten TEA villages have guesthouses (including Laguna and San Antonio), however the accommodation provided is very basic and tourists prefer to stay in the jungle lodges and resorts from the area and make short day trips to the nearby villages.

Unlike Hopkins, Laguna is not yet forced to fiercely compete for their market share of inland tourists, whose number in this district is not very high. The village does not advertise itself, the only source of information available to tourists is the TEA website which gives a very scarce description of the village and limited logistics details. However, if Laguna chooses to claim their position on the market, they could compete for the sustainable tourism niche. \

5.1.4 Supporting industries and stakeholders

Modern industries are highly fragmented, they are based on the collaborative decisions and partnership approach (Bramwell & Lane, 2000). Tourism is one of the businesses that is rarely managed and developed single-handedly, and tends to bring together assets (resources or skills) of multiple stakeholders. And although a multi-partner system might bring in complications at the decision-making stage, it is still believed to provide an incomparable competitive advantage to the entrepreneurial initiatives. On the non-business side, involvement of multiple stakeholders insures that the interests of the parties affected by the development are met. However, the admittance to these circles is often selective and is based on the assets that the stakeholders are able to contribute (Bramwell & Lane, 2000). In that case the development process loses clarity and appear to be unfair to some stakeholders. This appears to be the case in **Hopkins**, where the locals are not included as the stakeholders in the decision-making process regarding the development of tourism in the village. The village is represented by the council, however no legal agreement or oral arrangement was made to inform or consult Hopkins council on a regular basis or contribute to the village.

"…There is nothing in black and white that says that (the) hotel owners have to give back to the community…We cannot make an official agreement because there is a dispute between the Sitee River and Hopkins about where the boundaries are, so all the money are on hold until we clarify where Hopkins ends and Sitee River begins…" (P8)

The lack of clarity and involvement was referred to by P2, for instance, as a *"wall between big businesses and the village"*. Existence of such barriers, both actual and imaginary, aggravates the sense of exclusion for local people. Hopkins people have little understanding of what their place and roles are in the tourism development of the village. And according to the study by Alonso & Nyanjom (2015), that suggested to look deeper into the notion of 'roles' while studying stakeholders, the roles that are assigned to the participants influence their attitudes and perception of the tourism industry and of the effect on their lives and self-value. Therefore, the absence of such tourism "self-determination" among the host community residents can be a major drawback for sustainable development.

Interestingly enough, roles work both ways – they can be assigned (or voluntarily chosen) according to the assets one possesses, meaning they can be played by the participants that match the content of the role, but participants also tend to commit to their roles and act accordingly even though they might not be a suitable match for the role.

In any case, it is agreed that stakeholders see tourism development through the prism of their roles, and therefore the perceptions and attitudes also change with the changes in participants' roles (Alonso & Nyanjom, 2015).

Hopkins residents are integrated in almost all sectors of tourism (Figure 7), however they mostly occupy lower positions in the industry. If we take a more general definition of a

"stakeholder" by Business Dictionary (businessdictionary.com) stating that it is "a person, group or organization that has interest or concern in an organization…can affect or be affected by the organization's actions, objectives and policies", Hopkins residents tend to always be "an affected" party, and the rest of the stakeholders do not seem to be willing to let them change it. Sense of exclusion discourages locals from expressing the initiative when it is possible.

*"**The tourism is just something happening to us**…... I am trying to involve more people in tourism, so it won't be like in San Pedro or Placencia. Tourism happened to them too. People's culture was not given a chance. So those indigenous cultures died. Now tourism is just like in Cancun, where big investors come in, build these mega-resorts and **people are left to scavenger at the bottom**, but it's hard to explain to people…" (P1)*
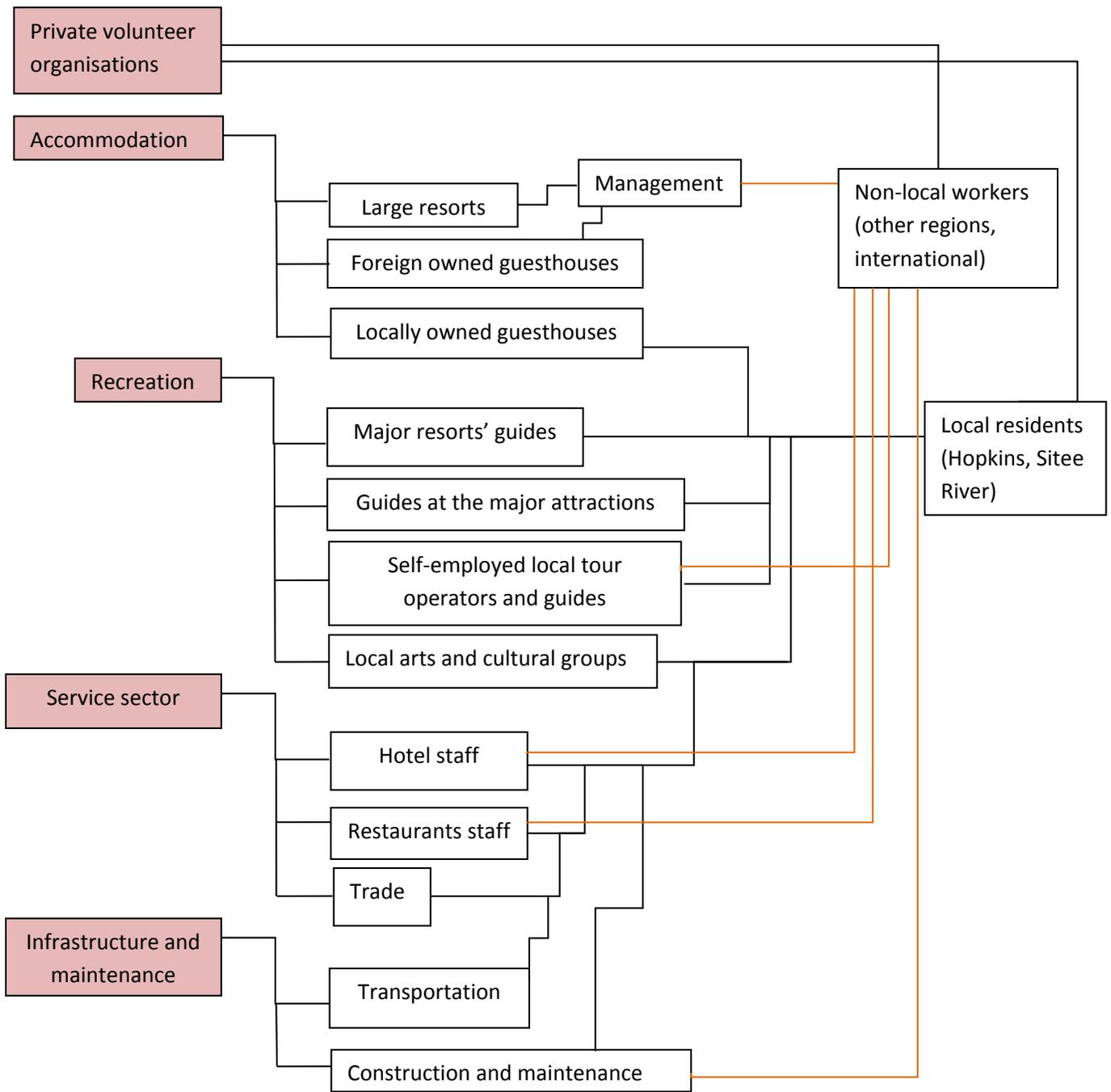
Figure 6 – Integration of residents and non-residents into Hopkins tourism sectors

Due to **Laguna's** limited tourism development its residents have managed to secure a certain level monopoly on tourism. Their tourism at this point is almost completely self-sustaining, the villagers are generally providing tourists with food supplies, accommodation, merchandise and

entertainment. However, the capacity of the village is very limited and would not be able to handle a larger number of visitors. Moreover, they are still relying on the external organisations to direct tourism flows, though the benefits of this are insignificant on a larger scale. If Hopkins residents are somewhat suppressed by other stakeholders, Laguna, on the other extreme, does not show an intention to delegate some duties and control to new stakeholders who might be more skilled and knowledgeable, when it comes, for example, to marketing or promotion.

At the same time, the community avoids taking advantage on minor occasional collaboration opportunities:

"And then I call them "I have a guest here" (and the response is) – "Don't you have a truck to take them here?" -"No, man, not me, I just give you (tourists)"… (PG t-o)

"Most of the time when I call them (Laguna), I have two people who want to go there, these guys - the farmers, they have to buy food, buy stuff, and sometimes I pay for the food, I do it because I like these guys, but I keep telling "not again, I am just giving you tourists, I am not running them"…A lot of them are very good people, but they have been used to people helping them a lot, giving them stuff…" (PG t-o)

In addition there are key infrastructure links missing (e.g. no public transport), and it is obvious that in order to maintain a functioning tourism operation, whether sustainable or not, Laguna will have to change their view on collaboration with stakeholders. They have an advantage of choosing the pace and terms of that interaction, however, an effective collaboration with both stakeholders and supporting industries has to be built using the principle of reciprocity. It might be equally damaging to be either taking from one's partners, or constantly giving.

5.1.5 Economic and political environment

The tourism industry is extremely sensitive to shocks and crises at any level of tourism operations (Kapiki, 2012). Tourism in some way is restricted by both economic and political environment, for instance politically unstable conditions can result in reduced visits to a country, economic stagnation or crisis alienate investors etc. Overall, it is suggested that the main reasons of any downturn in tourism development are hidden in various trends "in the economic, political, sociocultural and environmental domains which affect demand and supply in generating and destination countries" (Kapiki, 2012, p.19).

Belize is no different when it comes to political/economic climate - tourism relations. I studied the Belize National Sustainable Development Report, which reflects on the progress and main challenges in sustainable development in the country. The creators of this report highlighted economic and political conditions that are constraining sustainable development in tourism and other industries. Politically Belize is now relatively stable, despite some existing land rights disputes at the national and international level. Economically, Belize is characterized as "a small open economy highly dependent on external trade and vulnerable to internal and external factors that influence the economy's macroeconomic aggregates, sectors, and the individual microeconomic units within the society" (UNCSD, 2012). The country relies heavily on agriculture, tourism and export connections with the US (30% of export), therefore Belize is quite vulnerable to the changes in climatic conditions, natural disasters - hurricanes and floods, that damage infrastructure and affect production, commodity prices and oil market fluctuations. The lack of diversification and overdependence on existing industries and economic partners also increases the country's economic vulnerability. Those features are observed at a smaller scale in both Hopkins and Laguna,

for instance Hopkins residents' overdependence on tourism. Moreover, Belize's economic conditions were characterized by the Belize information portal as quite challenging for foreign investors and businessmen, due to "a plethora of rules and regulations, incompetent or corrupt politicians and bureaucrats" (Belize.com, 2015).

5.1.6 Tourism infrastructure

Laguna and Hopkins are at the completely different stages of the infrastructure development. Hopkins is developing along with the big resorts development and expat population growth, whereas Laguna is even losing some of its existing infrastructure.

Draghici et al. (2010) proposed to look at the four elements while analyzing tourism infrastructure - the transport infrastructure, the accommodation base, restoration and recreation infrastructure. I expanded this list and made a comparison of an infrastructure of Hopkins and Laguna (table 3).

Table 3 - Infrastructure comparison for Hopkins and Laguna (adapted from Draghici et al., 2010)

		Hopkins	Laguna
Transport infrastructure	Road system quality	- Paved road from the main highway to the village -paved/gravel/sand&clay roads within the village	- Gravel/sand&clay road from the main highway to the village - gravel/sand&clay roads within the village
	Public transit	- regular (2 times a day) bus service from Dangriga to Hopkins and back - no public transportation within Hopkins	- regular (2 times a day) bus service from Punta Gorda to the intersection of the main highway and the road to Laguna - no transportation to the village or within the village
	Rental facilities	- car, motorcycle rentals in Hopkins	- no car rentals in Laguna - car rental in Punta Gorda

	Location access	- Airport in Dangriga (~30 min away from the village) - taxi services in Hopkins and Dangriga	- Airport in Punta Gorda (~30min away from the village) - taxi services in Punta Gorda
	Recreational transportation	- boat rentals	
Accommodation base		- guesthouses/resorts/hotels (37 facilities including restaurants within Hopkins)	- 1 guesthouse (outdoor flush toilet, cold water shower, no cooking facilities) - homestays (outhouses, no shower facility)
		- wifi access in the hotels - cell coverage	- no internet access - limited cell coverage
Restoration		- 37 facilities including accommodations food facilities within Hopkins - Several stores with food and beverages	- home cooked meals - local store with cold beverages

	- Fresh vegetables market	
Recreational infrastructure	- souvenirs and crafts shops	*- souvenirs and crafts*
	- marine/inland tour operators	*- inland tours*
	- drums shows - local musicians shows - village feasts and parties	*- crafts lessons*
	- bicycle/buggies rentals - fishing gear rentals	

The recreational infrastructure in Laguna is not an infrastructure per se (if we take the basic definition of infrastructure being "the fundamental facilities and systems serving a country, city, or area" (Sallivan&Sheffrin, 2003), these are community members providing named services upon request.

Just a rough estimation shows that Hopkins is more developed infrastructure-wise, than Laguna. However, Hopkins infrastructure is growing to suit the needs of the flow of mass tourism, whereas Laguna is still oriented more on the needs of the local residents and not on those of the tourists.

5.2 Internal Factors

5.2.1 Skilled labour

Tourism is a competitive industry and nowadays tourists expect quality service and good communication in every destination. A skilled national workforce is a key element that allows the country truly benefit from the economic opportunities offered by tourism (Kaplan, 2004). The issue of skills and qualifications was raised quite a few times during the interviews with people from Hopkins and Laguna. In **Hopkins**, some of my interviewees were the first generation in their families that got a full high school education. Two of my interviewees shared that they were the only students in their school classes who pursued a higher education in college.

Additionally, some of my interviewees, along with some resentment, expressed quite a bit of gratitude to the big resorts, as they often directly and indirectly contribute to the training and education of their employees. For most of the Hopkins residents jobs in the resorts is the only way to acquire the necessary training, and the fact that employers choose to bring skilled workers from the other districts is very disturbing for the villagers.

Most of my **Laguna** interviewees do not have a full high school education, however all of them realize the importance of proper education in today's world. The primary reason behind Laguna tourism initiative was to accumulate funds for school education of the children. Laguna residents who are currently involved in tourism in this village do not possess minimum skills required to keep tourism going. There is also an issue of workforce leakage, as the younger generation leaves the village to seek more promising job opportunities. The question of training community members that are, for example, members of the TEA remains open, because any

education is going to be time-consuming and, unless it is paid for, will be considered an unnecessary distraction from their main activities.

Education and training are important issues for both Hopkins and Laguna, more so for Laguna, as Hopkins residents objectively are exposed to more training opportunities.

5.2.2 Marketing resources and management

Marketing or, to be precise, its absence was the issue of both communities that resonated with me the most. Marketing is an essential part of any economic activity, it is the exchange of meaningful information about company and its activity, or a destination in this case. So it is an essential element that links customers and companies.

Hopkins and Laguna are not promoted at the international level. As one of my Hopkins interviewees noted, resorts, hotels and tourism businesses in Hopkins market themselves, but there is no separate promotion for the village as a destination. The same thing applies to Laguna, there the information about the Mayan villages of Toledo is placed at the TEA website, however this information is limited and leaves more questions than answers.

The internet connection and website maintenance in Hopkins is very expensive, therefore local tour-operators create joined web-pages or choose facebook marketing instead. Some of my interviewees admitted that they prefer WoM marketing and old style paper flyers that they leave in local restaurants and hotels, although they all plan to join the www at some point.

In an attempt to overcome this limitation, some Hopkins residents came up with the initiative to create a website providing information about Hopkins, however this idea was still not implemented at the completion of my research.

Laguna has no internet promotion either. My interviewees that work part-time in the nearby resorts shared that they only "promote" Laguna on the rare occasions when guests are asking about local attractions.

"-Do you maybe tell or put flyers about Laguna in the resort where you work, so the tourists know about it?

-No I only tell if they ask me…." (P7-L)

It is clear that promotion is underestimated and is not yet seen as a tool by which Laguna residents could achieve the goal of attracting specific types of tourists (or any tourists at this point). The idea of hiring an external specialist to manage the marketing was met with a polite rejection.

These trends outlined above lead to the more global challenges Hopkins and Laguna are facing. Neither Hopkins nor Laguna have a solid development or management framework at the level of the municipality. The individual initiatives in Hopkins are limited by the lack of financing. Laguna is constrained by both financial challenges and the traditional governance system, where approval of any personal initiative requires 3/4 of the villagers to approve it in an open vote.

5.2.3 Financial opportunities

The issue of financial constraints was brought up a lot throughout the analysis. The tourism development initiatives require both the initial capital investments and continuous reinvestment

that are generally not affordable for small communities like, Laguna. Local banks offer business loans, however according to my respondents these loans are hard to get and loan interest rates are very high, moreover the loan amount is sometimes income based, which is very disappointing for people wanting to start a business. In Hopkins, people prefer to save money working at minor jobs in order not to deal with banks credit systems.

Belize's economic environment is generally more favorable for foreign business investors, than to its own people, for instance foreigners can avoid paying income taxes by transferring income into a Belizean International Business Corporation (IBC), as dividends from the IBC are not taxable.

"Big businesses influence the government and manipulate the laws. People who are at the bottom of the economic pyramid are going to be victimized and discriminated." P2 (Hopkins)

In seeking financial resources Laguna could try and use the TEA membership to their advantage and apply for sustainable development grants from national and possibly international organisations. After all, the type of tourism functioning in Laguna would not require enormous investments. However, at present they lack the capacity to write such grants and would require the assistance of an outside intervener.

5.3 Historically formed cultural aspects and demographics (ethnicity, mentality, religion, gender roles etc.)

These assets are extremely important to analyze as, disregarding the physical characteristics of the area, economic and political factors, these cultural and social features are the ones that shape (encourage or constrain) tourism/host communities interactions. Key & Pillai

(2007) depicted tourism as a conflict-based interaction between local population and tourists, as tourists technically compete with the host community for the same resources. The attitudes towards this conflict in some cases might be formed in accordance with the individual ideas about historically formed power balance, social roles, and ethnicity. In other words, the inner traits of the community are extrapolated on and affect tourists in a similar way that they modify interactions within the community (Key & Pillai, 2007).

Laguna and Hopkins are villages inhabited by two different ethnic groups that always occupied different economic niches and generally did not compete for the same resources. The commonality between two groups was the reliance on nature as the source of livelihood, while residents of Hopkins were exploring marine resources, and Mayans of Laguna preferred inland farming.

The two villages represent a culturally diverse population. Hopkins is mostly inhabited by Garifuna people (African & Carib heritage), small number of Creole, Mayan people (various families from different districts) and the growing number of ex-pats from different countries. Laguna residents are the Q'eqchi' Maya.

The cultural distinctions affecting the performance in tourism industry were reflected on by Hopkins residents from the positions of both employers and employees. Historically, the Garifuna and its predecessor - African culture were characterized by the relaxed and slow pace of life. The growing tourism industry requires an extremely fast, adapting hard-working workforce, and the conflict arises when the tourism managers are unable to match the western views on quality service with the labour. This imbalance triggers the inflow of Mayan and Creole migrants from

other regions of Belize and, thus, the employment-related tensions between different ethnic groups within the community.

In Hopkins western faith coexists with traditional beliefs and rituals, whereas Mayan people of Laguna completely moved away from their ancestors' worldview. Strict religious beliefs affect Laguna's performance in tourism. On the positive side the community maintains safe and peaceful environment, the individuals in Laguna work hard to provide their tourists with good quality services and make them feel welcome. On the other hand, village rules that formed under the influence of religious missions restrain and limit tourism development. For instance, individuals claimed that they can only accept tourists overnight if they are willing to follow the village rules and regulations, such as - alcohol consumption is prohibited, no noise or walks after 8 pm etc, there was even a slight hint of homophobia in those rules.

"…there are some rules….like man and man come together, woman and woman… we don't really agree with such things. And some… like alcoholics, the villagers do not really agree that we should accept people who are like that. There are some rules that villagers are still holding on to, no walking during the night… from seven or eight hours, people are not allowed to be drinking in the streets either… the radios, you don't really hear it during the night and during the day you are not allowed… the volumes, to put it on speakers" (P7-L)

In a word, the community is willing to share their culture and lifestyle with people who basically can relate to their values and beliefs, which is a common religious way of thinking.

Gender roles

Hopkins

Culturally formed gender roles shifted in an interesting way due to tourism development. In the traditional Garifuna social group there exists a very harsh gender discrimination, where women cannot get well-paid or management jobs. Tourism brought a large number of minor jobs that were mostly taken by women, as men who used to be the providers were mostly oriented towards the high-level jobs (which they were generally unable to get due to the lack of skills and training).

"Women, they are more employed in tourism. They work in the resorts, they are cleaning and stuff like that. So mostly women, men are involved too, but not on a same scale. This is because of the types of jobs that are available, culturally they are seen as women jobs." (P1 – H)

Women suddenly became the providers, and as international employers are generally free of gender prejudice, some women ended up being promoted and getting those management jobs men anticipated to be hired for.

"I work here (foreign-owned hotel) *for two years now, before that I was a housekeeper in Jaguar Reef Resort" (P12 – H)*

Based upon the statements above, and the nature of traditional Garifuna culture it is clear that tourism is beginning to reshape gender roles in Hopkins, allowing women to take on higher responsibilities jobs that would have previously been considered the domain of men.

Laguna

I was curious to compare Hopkins gender dynamics in relation to tourism with the one present in Laguna. Because while being different in a number of cultural aspects, the perception of gender roles is one area where it is possible to find some similarities.

"- Who seems to be more involved in tourism? Men or women?

- ….when I am thinking I would say women, because they are the ones who are into the crafting and they take care of tourists.

- Do they do village or jungle tours too? Some of them?

- No, because how to say it… they are "the back" for their husbands, because it's the culture. They are the ones who should wann(sic)a cook, should wann(sic) a weave baskets, tell a story, and the men are the once who go to the jungles. So that's the women who do most of the work and who have a "bigger buck" from it." (TO – PG)

In Laguna women's input in tourism is sometimes easily overlooked, as their responsibilities mostly involve their usual daily routine – cooking, cleaning, crafting. They are the "face" of the village, people that interact with tourists the most, even outside of their village – by selling their craft and by working part-time in resorts and hotels. Some of the Laguna women were struggling to communicate with visitors because of the language barrier, this took away a part of the experience and comfort from the interactions, leaving you with an awkward feeling of an observer of a live display behind the glass. I felt that those who actually have sufficient language skills are capable to enhance tourist experience so much just by introducing visitors to their lifestyle and

traditional activities. Men have less time and opportunity to connect with tourists due to their hard work outside of the village, however they are the ones who give jungle tours and tours to the Lagoon – very important components of tourist experience. This confirms the suggestion that knowledge of English is a critical factor.

5.4 Constraints to sustainable community-based tourism

Summarizing and taking into consideration all the research data analyzed above, it would be fair to say that there is a significant number of development constraints related to both the conditions "out of the scope of influence" and to the participants of the tourism development process, as well as their worldview, their education, experience, background, system of values etc.

5.4.1 Laguna

Primarily, any initiatives and actions of all the actors in a rather conservative community with the traditional governance and communal land ownership, like Laguna, are only able to succeed if they are encouraged and supported by those in power. In other words it is absolutely necessary that the development projects are supported by the community leaders (in case of Laguna it is their current *alcalde* and the village council).

"When it comes to leadership the relation to public is very low, because if people had good relations with the leaders when it comes to projects, especially in tourism, everything would just go fine. A very big problem here in Laguna is politics." P11

One of crucial development challenges - the perception of the current community condition and views on its future, as well as opinions on the tourism development initiative are able to drive

future actions. Cavaye (2001) points out that the perception can be institutionalized and become dependent on local power arrangements. Therefore, community leaders are capable of influencing the development process both directly (by providing support and guidance or creating additional constraints, facilitating or complicating the collaboration with external organisations etc.) and indirectly (by shaping people's views on the community, the course of its development, views on prosperity and necessary goods and services. Views (or perception) are extremely important as the ideas, such as "They can't change an issue because it is outside their influence, or they don't have the resources or assistance etc.; they don't want to change - enough; they don't know how to change – they lack the direction, organisation or expertise to take action; they think they can't change" (Cavaye, 2001, p.119), are much more destructive for the development process than even lack of basic resources.

In Laguna, the tourism industry is based solely on the malfunctioning TEA guesthouses system. It was clear from the interviews that generally community members are not opposed to the idea of tourism development in the village. However, the important fact is that villagers do not perceive tourism as a potential substitute to all or some of their other sources of their livelihoods. Most of the interviewees see tourism only as a side activity supplementing their earnings with the amount of cash that is generally spent on school supplies for children.

"Tourists come and buy crafts, it is very interesting and it brings money. Especially now when we need to send our children to school." P4-1

"…tourism is helping with schools, we would like to earn more money from tourism – fast money in comparison to farming." P5

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This disposition towards tourism sets substantial limits to its extensive or, more importantly intensive growth in Laguna. Although a dramatic increase in visitation is not desired by the community members, they are still interested in the consistent amount of tourists providing them with the "school money". Yet, to maintain this consistent flow a number of actions should be taken on a regular basis, for instance, the village website development and support, promotion, tour product development, trails maintenance etc. (I will cover the main recommendations in a separate section). Here comes the classic "chicken and egg" dilemma, where community members either do not have skills or time or money to invest in tourism development, consequently tourism doesn't bring enough income, therefore people are forced to concentrate more on other activities, and as a result - even less time or money for tourism. This dilemma is undoubtedly related to the challenge of perception mentioned above, as well to the loyalty to the traditional ways and activities.

"We will not stop doing farming, we need money to improve farming." P1

"I will continue (doing farming) because this is my life." P8

Members of the community who understand or see a need for a change and are able and willing to make important development decisions are more involved in the existing power struggle between the old alcalde and new alcalde. The fact that all the land resources in the village are communal, and the permission of the village council is required not just for a new business initiative, for instance, but for any slightest change in the existing "strategy", brings this power struggle to a whole new level, where it slows down an implementation of any kind of decision or project. Moreover, this resistance might create an exclusion issue, where people loyal to one party

are excluded from participation in the rotation system, and people loyal to the other, on the contrary, get a priority access to the program.

"- How do you join TEA?

- I don't know, they just come and pick who they want. It seems like it is not open to people." P12

The exclusion problem might not be as noticeable right now, when tourism is relatively slow and the supply is balanced with the demand, however later, when or if tourism brings more money into the village, the tension between community members (that already exists) will grow and might lead to an open conflict.

Another challenge is the lack of skills. The successful development of any kind of enterprise in the modern world requires all kinds of specific skills that usually cannot be learned in middle or high school. A very low percentage of Laguna children go on to pursue higher level education and even if they do, they do not necessarily want to be involved in the altruistic work in the community. They tend to concentrate on earning their living and lose some connection with their home village. The older members of the community have nowhere to get those skills and end up being stuck at the stage where tourism slowed down and is nearly non-existent. The idea of hiring a specialist for certain tasks (such as website development) was not met with excitement by the elders of the community. Apart from being somewhat protective of the community privacy, they anticipate considerable expenses for a long-term period. If the latter might be partially avoided by applying for the support from, for example, the international charitable foundations, the issue of collaboration with the "outsiders" remains and needs to be dealt with.

*"… They (the villagers) don't have training in managing the finances, they might not be able to invest money, no marketing skills, hospitality training…"*P3

The TEA as an organisation is close to disappearance. Right now it consists of a couple of people who are obviously not providing enough support and guidance to the villages-participants. Above all, the rotation system in practice is not as fair to all the villages. The initial choice of a destination belongs to the visitors and in this case some villages have an advantage related to their location, attractions etc. Promotion plays an important role in the tourists' decision-making process. Laguna is not promoted in any way at any level, therefore chances that it will be chosen for a visit are low. That is supplemented by the absence of any kind of transportation services connecting the village to the major centers. In addition, Laguna does not have a solid tourism product to promote. All the TEA villages offer the same basic option - authentic experience of life in the Mayan village. This experience may differ from village to village according to the natural assets present in each location. However, such thing as tourist experience has to be planned and controlled, and the more authentic this experience is expected to be, the more careful and deep planning is required. Laguna possesses important competitive advantages - the fresh water lagoon and a relative proximity to the historic cave system. However these assets are misused and poorly maintained, and acting as part of the tourist experience only accidentally or by the request of more informed tourists. The villagers themselves claim to be offering the real authentic experience of life in a real Mayan village, and although it includes staying overnight in the village and meals in the families, this experience is fairly limited due to the lack of the direct interactions between tourists and villagers and the existing language barrier.

Overall, Laguna is facing multiple challenges trying to establish themselves as a sustainable tourism operation on the market. However, these challenges are only a reflection of the core issue - tourism is not an essential source of livelihood, it is not a priority. The questions remain - will it ever be a priority? Or does it need to be a priority for this particular community?

5.4.2 Hopkins

Laguna's challenges are mostly internal issues of growth and direction of development, and of effective communication and coordination. Constraints that Hopkins is trying to overcome are of a different nature. Of course, Hopkins is not free of internal problems. A sense of disunity and lack of awareness were strongly transmitted through the interviews. However, the phenomenon that represents the greatest challenge and affects the whole of development dynamics in Hopkins is of an external origin – mass tourism development and the relationship with the foreign businesses that drive that development.

Recent literature intensively studies the effect of foreign direct investments (FDI) in tourism on the local communities (Blonigen & O'Fallon, 2011; Andergassen & Guido, 2013). Foreign investments in tourism in local communities are seen as a "kick" for local economy, but they also might bring the risk of loss of cultural and economic self-sufficiency or limit the benefits from the industry for the local community. Brohman (1996) noticed that foreign investment based development "reproduces historical patterns of structural inequalities between developed and developing countries" (p.54) and generally favors the mass type of tourism. Other challenges created by FDI are loss of control by locals over resources (in case of Hopkins – loss of land

ownership), leakage of tourism earnings outside of the community, and top-down decision-making (Brohman, 1996).

In other words, while bringing what looks like a drive for development, FDI brings elements of degradation – abandonment of traditional activities, increase in crime, declining quality of life (through increasing cost of living, loss of land ownership, unemployment, depletion of natural resources), restrictions put on local people (noise, freedom of movement). Sadly, Hopkins has very little control over the situation and local Garifuna are left with very little opportunities to truly benefit from tourism. Even the private volunteer organization of hotel owners that seems to be trying to help and bring positive changes into the village do not rely on opinions of local people in decision-making.

People of Hopkins succeeding as individual entrepreneurs are an exception because of the limited access to specialized education and training, as well as to the bank loans. There is a division between those who earn enough to support themselves and their businesses and those, who earn 1.75 USD per day without any opportunity to jump to a higher socio-economic status. The nature of involvement in tourism for most people in Hopkins is opportunistic and very self-oriented. And while here there is no fault of locals, this affects negatively the chances to shift to sustainable development one day.

Overall, Hopkins suffers from a "curse" of most local communities that had to face foreign development. The situation gets aggravated by the limited knowledge about tourism and reduced livelihood diversification and, therefore, reduced resilience.

5.5 Summary

In this section various factors influencing tourism development and, specifically, sustainable tourism development in both communities of Laguna and Hopkins were analyzed. All the themes and trends that were studied emerged from the interviews with communities' members, participant observations, and personal interactions and experience.

The key differences and similarities between Hopkins and Laguna tourism development courses were established, as well as their predisposition towards sustainable tourism development based on the internal and external factors.

The main constraints to the sustainable tourism development in both villages were also identified.

Chapter 6

Conclusions and recommendations

6.1 Introduction

This chapter brings together the results of the research, describes what goals and objectives where achieved. The study had some limitations that will be outlined here as well. The principal recommendations on how to adjust the tourism development strategy in Laguna and Hopkins will be provided.

6.2 Meeting the objectives

In this study I analysed the current state of tourism in the communities of Laguna and Hopkins Village. I answered the following questions:

1. How do residents of each community perceive tourism and its impacts i.e. what benefits or disadvantages tourism brings in their livelihoods?

2. What is the economic, social and other effects of tourism on communities' livelihoods, and how this effect is related to the location, ethnicity, governance systems, and gender relations?

I achieved specific goals: evaluated communities' perception of benefits that tourism brings to their everyday life, and studied the actual effect tourism has on the social, economic environment; and performed a comparative analysis of two communities in terms of the role of location, cultural presettings, and benefit distribution in the tourism development.

6.3 Study limitations

The main limitations of my study were limited research time period, however I managed to conduct a sufficient number of interviews, reached saturation and noted all the emerging themes.

Another limitation I anticipated was that of bias of some of the interviewees related to their work ethics, nonetheless I believe any possible bias was eliminated during the data analysis stage.

Another constraint was the absence of the actual economic data in case of Laguna, as their income comes in a natural form and monetary income related to tourism, for instance, is not consistent and hard to estimate due to the poor record keeping.

6.4 Recommendations

6.4.1 Hopkins

I struggled to come up with recommendations for Hopkins. Having a significantly higher tourism dynamics than Laguna, they have to deal with issues that are generally out of the scope of their abilities and capacity. Therefore, it was clear that any recommendation I could provide would not be able to reverse existing trends, at least in the nearest future. However, I believe that it is possible to improve the position of local residents and to help them to compete for a share of the tourism market.

The theme that was brought up several times in the interviews was lack of skills and awareness. Schools and some resorts are starting to help with the first, while the latter remain the matter of accident and individual experience. The community needs to come up with an initiative that will aim to educate and inform local residents about the industry of tourism, about how to interact with it and how not to lose cultural, personal consciousness. Local people need to develop an understanding of what kind of assets they possess, how they can manipulate those assets to truly benefit from tourism. The concept of resilience needs to be explained to the locals as well, in order to give them ideas about how they can secure their livelihood during tourism low season or

in case of unexpected events that might take place in the future (for example, natural disasters, economic crisis etc.)

The dispute about the borders of Hopkins, hopefully, will get resolved, and village council can start negotiations with Hopkins resorts. The village council needs to develop a document, indicating what help and improvement Hopkins require, for example, school supplies or road repairs, funding for cultural celebrations. Of course, for the resorts and foreign businesses that are already functioning, their participation will have to be voluntary, which is acceptable as many of business owners are trying to help the village anyway and would gladly listen to what the needs of the village are. However, for future development within the borders of Hopkins, the village council would be able to work on the solid agreement with the new businesses that will ensure their contribution.

Another idea that could be a great initiative coming from Hopkins residents is the creation of the Garifuna museum/cultural centre. It does not have to be a museum in a traditional understanding, although having there some Garifuna artefacts would be quite interesting for the tourists. This can be the place where tourists are introduced to the Garifuna culture, get familiar with the traditions, cuisine, and history. I do believe that this is the component that Hopkins is clearly missing in terms of tourist experience.

6.4.2 Laguna

First and foremost, the community of Laguna has to establish the purpose of tourism development, meaning the desired share of tourism among other sources of livelihood. This will be necessary for the creating a strategy for further development and defining further steps. However, disregarding their decision on that matter, it is quite clear that Laguna has to separate itself from

the TEA and pursue its own initiative. By relying on the TEA, Laguna's tourism "industry" has become stagnant, and the only tourists there are the student groups coming through ISIS (CELA) and occasional accidental visitors. The interviewees from Laguna acknowledged that the number of guests (which was impossible to count, due to the poor documentation) and frequency of their visits is insufficient to fund the education for the children (the main purpose of tourism development in Laguna, as identified by the community members). Moreover, the TEA does not provide the community with any guidance or advice. Therefore, Laguna has to come up with the new development strategy for tourism, taking into the account its main assets and advantages, as well as challenges they will have to face.

Table 4 - SWOT analysis of Laguna's assets

Location and natural assets	
Advantages	Disadvantages
The Lagoon	No transportation from PG
Proximity to the caves	No major water bodies
Rich fauna (attraction for birdwatchers)	
Social environment	
Traditional lifestyle	Traditional lifestyle
Safety	Lack of skills and education
	Communal land ownership

Laguna has a number of comparative advantages that can be used as pillars for their tourism product. First, the location of the village provides a walking access to the fresh water lagoon, which is a good fishing ground and home for multiple bird species, and to the cave system, which has an important historical and ritual significance for Maya people. The type of tourism that can be developed with the help of those resources matches perfectly the type of tourists that are attracted to the area (mostly backpackers). However, those assets are not maintained in a decent condition and are not properly presented to tourists. So one way or another Laguna has to solve the marketing issue. One of the solutions I would propose in that regard is the collaboration with one of the local tour-operators, who will be able to use their "client base" and marketing tools.

The access to Laguna also represents a challenge. There is no direct transportation from PG to Laguna, the only option for potential visitors is to take the bus from PG to the intersection and then walk for about a mile. Although it is acceptable for some tourists (backpackers aka hippies), the majority would prefer not to walk for a mile with heavy backpacks and suitcases. If it is impossible to launch the bus service again, the help from local tour-operators will be necessary, as they have their own vehicles to transport people.

The important recommendation for Laguna will be to consider collaboration with Toledo tour-operators. They would provide basic marketing and advertisement, bring visitors, and share some inside knowledge on what needs to be improved or changed in infrastructure or services provided. That, of course, might mean sharing part of the profits, but this is a necessary investment that would allow Laguna to compete with other villages in the region.

It would be also advisable to simplify the procedure of implementation of new tourism ideas to encourage both collaboration with Toledo tour-operators and local initiatives.

Looking a little further in the future, I would suggest to step away from the TEA system completely. This initiative looked very promising, however in the circumstances have changed, and Laguna has to look for new ways to support its tourism. The rotation system can be kept as it ensures some fairness in participation and benefit distribution. Nevertheless, Laguna has to work on new ways to attract tourists without the help of TEA.

6.5 Conclusions

I was collecting data in order to find out what tourism means to residents of Laguna and Hopkins in terms of their livelihoods and what are its impacts that they experience on a daily basis, as well as those that they anticipate in the future, – both negative and positive.

Both villages are facing the transition from subsistence economy to a cash-based market economy. Laguna and Hopkins residents see tourism as their tool to secure their place in this is relatively new to them market situation. However, the two villages are at the different stages of that transition and their views on what role tourism plays in their lives vary accordingly.

At this stage Hopkins tourism is pretty much the driver for the local economy and, at the same time, the main constraint and oppressor. Tourism in Hopkins developed spontaneously (Tosun, 1999). It is viewed by locals as the only possible future, as their traditional activities are no longer able to supply enough monetary income. The Garifuna traditional fishing grounds are being turned into protected areas, the price of fuel for fishing boats goes up, and farming only provides personal consumption products. Tourism is the only other livelihood option within arm's reach. It has been a minimum of 15 years since tourism started changing the village. The attitudes and opinions differ in nuances depending on whether or not the participants are satisfied with their

place in the industry. However, the residents share an understanding that tourism became vital for the community and, as much as it is hard to succeed in this industry, they could not imagine Hopkins without it. Tourism became the primary source of livelihood for the majority of the village.

It became clear to me that the income from tourism is the crucial benefit for local people. Those who got passed their original excitement about the "fast" money focused their attention on intangible benefits. Tourism broadens the horizons, opens educational opportunities, brings the clash of cultures into the village, and facilitates infrastructure improvement.

After being in the spotlight of Belize's tourism industry for more than a decade, Hopkins residents certainly got a chance to experience tourism's negative effects. Many of the harsh comments addressed to tourism were the results of participants' personal negative experience with particular resorts and people. Some of the more general concerns were, interestingly, the reverse sides of the benefits associated with tourism. Opportunities that became available to the ones highlighted social and financial inequality for the others, mix of nations and globalisation brought the fear of the traditional culture fading away, infrastructure development forces local residents to move from their family land.

It is evident that tourism in Hopkins is currently not sustainable, nor does it have a tendency of becoming one. The tourism development is chaotic and unplanned. Moreover, I believe that this process went too far to be significantly influenced or affected by the locals. The best strategy for Hopkins would be to try to secure their position as the residents and hosts, and gain some economic independence that would increase their livelihood resilience.

In contrast to Hopkins, Laguna has a long way to go before it reaches the point where it can no longer control the direction of tourism. Currently, tourism in the village is quite slow and undeveloped and was initially induced (Tosun, 1999) as a result of an external NGO. The main

source of livelihood for local people is still farming, and very few of them are seeing tourism as something worth giving up their traditional activities for. However, it brings them some additional cash to fund the education of their children, which is the main incentive for investing in tourism development. Looking at a bigger picture, I noticed that competition is a driver as well both within Laguna and within Toledo district. The villagers of Laguna compete with each other and all the Toledo villages do the same. It is a very interesting trend that is partially responsible for the continuing attempts of Laguna to keep their tourism initiative. Unfortunately, the organization that was established specifically to ensure the fair terms of that competition, to market the villages and support their tourism initiatives is no longer performing these functions. Laguna is now left with a guesthouse, which represent a very basic accommodation, with no solid recreational base, no promotion or marketing strategies, no skills or means to create them, no tourists, and with a very little understanding of how to "make it work". The only consistent visitors in Laguna are student groups sent by ISIS, however they cannot be considered tourists in a traditional sense.

It became clear that the small number of visitors did not give local people enough experience to learn about the negative impacts that the growth of tourism might have, but accentuated the possible benefits. The perceived negative impacts are mostly associated with the "undesirable" types of tourists and their behaviour, positives are related to the additional income.

Laguna is determined to keep their tourism industry, however they will require collaboration with the partners that have experience in the industry. The residents have to understand what the term "collaboration" means and realize that even if they want to keep tourism at a low level, they have to sacrifice their time and effort into sustaining it. The community members that are currently running tourism in Laguna might consider delegating part of

responsibilities to a younger generation who are getting a better education and can relate more to modern technologies.

Laguna is in charge of their own tourism, they have an opportunity to develop a fully sustainable initiative, however it will require a serious reconsideration of their current approach to tourism. This involves, of course, resolving some technical issues (infrastructure, marketing etc.), and, more importantly, overcoming and solving the social challenges related to the traditional patriarchal system of relations and governance in Laguna.

With my research, I achieved specific goals: evaluated communities' perception of benefits that tourism brings to their everyday life, performed a comparative analysis of two communities in terms of the role of location, cultural presettings, stakeholders' relations, and studied the role of tourism to the livelihood strategies of two communities. Unfortunately, the assessment of the actual economic effect was impossible, as Laguna has no adequate records of the income gained from tourism.

6.6 Future research

There is a number of opportunities for future research. First, there is a need for understanding of how the traditional patriarchal system of governance influence the negotiation of tourism development. Second, what is the role of the state in assisting communities in developing their tourism initiatives, particularly in the context of the National Sustainable Tourism Master Plan. Third, motivations, expectations and satisfaction of the tourists with the current product needs to be studied.

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Appendix A

Sample Questions for community residents (Toledo and Hopkins)

1. Do you or any members of your household gain any income (describe if necessary) from tourists? No – probe with Q #
   a. Make souvenirs for sale to tourists
   b. Provide food services
   c. Do tours
   d. Do homestays
   e. Drumming
   f. Work in hotel/resort

2. What do you do or sell to gain this income?
3. How many tourists do you deal with on a (daily, weekly, monthly basis)
4. Are there times of the year when you see more tourists?
   a. What do you do for the remainder of the year
   b. What percentage of your income comes from tourists?
5. Can you tell me what tourists do when they visit your community?
6. Does your community try to attract tourists?
   a. How do they do this? Or
   b. Why do they not do this?
7. Is there someone in the community who organizes tourist activities?
8. Why do you think tourists come here?
9. What products do you think are most appealing to tourists?
10. Are you interested in gaining more income from tourism?
11. What are some of the problems you have seen as a result of tourists coming here? – probe
12. What might be some of the problems if more tourists were to come?

Appendix B

UNIVERSITY
OF MANITOBA | **Research Ethics
and Compliance**
Office of the Vice-President (Research and International)

APPROVAL CERTIFICATE

December 2, 2014

IDRC

TO: **J. Michael Campbell**
        Principal Investigator

FROM: **Susan Frohlick, Chair**
        Joint-Faculty Research Ethics Board (JFREB)

Re: **Protocol #J2014:158**
        **"Sustainable Community Tourism in Belize: Assessing current Community
        Involvement, Cultural Products and Market Demand"**

Please be advised that your above-referenced protocol has received human ethics approval by
the **Joint-Faculty Research Ethics Board**, which is organized and operates according to the
Tri-Council Policy Statement (2). **This approval is valid for one year only**.

Any significant changes of the protocol and/or informed consent form should be reported to the
Human Ethics Secretariat in advance of implementation of such changes.

> **Please note:**
>
> - If you have funds pending human ethics approval, please mail/e-mail/fax (261-0325)
> a copy of this Approval (identifying the related UM Project Number) to the Research
> Grants Officer in ORS in order to initiate fund setup. (How to find your UM Project
> Number: http://umanitoba.ca/research/ors/mrt-faq.html#pr0)
>
> - if you have received multi-year funding for this research, responsibility lies with
> you to apply for and obtain Renewal Approval at the expiry of the initial one-year approval;
> otherwise the account will be locked.

The Research Quality Management Office may request to review research documentation from
this project to demonstrate compliance with this approved protocol and the University of Manitoba
Ethics of Research Involving Humans.

> **The Research Ethics Board requests a final report for your study** (available at:
> http://umanitoba.ca/research/orec/ethics/human_ethics_REB_forms_guidelines.html) **in order to
> be in compliance with Tri-Council Guidelines.**

umanitoba.ca/research

	Human Ethics
University of **Manitoba** | **Research Ethics and Compliance** Office of the Vice-President (Research and International)	208-194 Dafoe Road Winnipeg, MB Canada R3T 2N2 Phone +204-474-7122 Fax +204-269-7173

AMENDMENT APPROVAL

January 14, 2015

TO: **J. Michael Campbell**
Principal Investigator

FROM: **Susan Frohlick, Chair**
Joint-Faculty Research Ethics Board (JFREB)

Re: **Protocol #J2014:158**
"Sustainable Community Tourism in Belize: Assessing current community Involvement, Cultural Products and market Demand"

This will acknowledge your request dated January 5, 2014 requesting amendment to your above-noted protocol.

Approval is given for this amendment. Any further changes to the protocol must be reported to the Human Ethics Secretariat in advance of implementation.

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