

The relationship between endogenous development and rural tourism for sustainable economic growth in the territory

La relación entre el desarrollo endógeno y el turismo rural para un crecimiento económico sostenible en el territorio

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Abstract

The objective of this research is to analyze the theoretical proposals of endogenous development and rural tourism as perspectives to approach the territory of Aticama, a locality of San Blas, Nayarit. These approaches allow considering the effects of conventional development, which generates gentrification, significantly affects the environment and has strong effects on social inequality in the territories.

From the basis of the recognition of the territory, endogenous development and rural tourism are proposed as interpretations that are associated, to achieve to account for other views and strategies using the own resources focused on the locality. The analysis built from this was carried out in the field through a qualitative approach, with non-probabilistic sampling by convenience. The theoretical evidences found propose perspectives, ways to transit the development process, however, it is the social actors who, from their resources, can make these development dynamics possible, as well as economic balance and sustainability in the territory.

Endogenous development, Rural tourism, Territory

Resumen

El objetivo de la presente investigación es analizar las propuestas teóricas del desarrollo endógeno y el turismo rural como perspectivas para abordar el territorio de Aticama, localidad de San Blas, Nayarit. Estos enfoques permiten considerar los efectos del desarrollo convencional, el cual genera gentrificación, afecta de forma relevante el medio ambiente y tiene fuertes efectos en la desigualdad social de los territorios. Desde la base del reconocimiento del territorio, el desarrollo endógeno y el turismo rural se proponen cómo interpretaciones que se asocian, para lograr dar cuenta de otras miradas y estrategias utilizando los recursos propios enfocados en la localidad. El análisis construido a partir de esto se realizó en campo a través de un enfoque cualitativo, con muestreo no probabilístico por conveniencia. Las evidencias teóricas encontradas proponen perspectivas, formas para transitar el proceso del desarrollo, sin embargo, son los actores sociales quienes, a partir de sus recursos, pueden hacer posible esas dinámicas de desarrollo, así como de equilibrio económico y sostenibilidad en el territorio.

Desarrollo endógeno, Turismo rural, Territorio

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Introduction

Development theories allow understanding processes and initiatives that intervene in the transformation of countries, whether in the economic, cultural and social area, for decades governments have focused on the growth of the economy focusing on increasing income and gross domestic product to improve development indices, without taking into account other factors such as the deterioration of natural resources, pollution, gentrification, in this sense, as societies are transformed, the term development has also acquired new mechanisms and contributions, which has allowed it to act according to the requirements of these societies (Vázquez, 2018).

On the other hand, Tourism also follows different initiatives and processes, it adapts and interpellates to the models of tourism, economic, social and cultural development, making it the economic engine of countries (Zepeda, 2020), in this sense, tourism activity takes on special connotations and characteristics depending on the space where it is developed (Gordziejczuk and Mikkelsen, 2023).

In Mexico, conventional tourism development models have caused deterioration in natural resources, gentrification and have generated poles of inequality, the latter is reflected in the GINI index, currently the country has an index of .445 and is among the 25 countries in the world with the highest level of inequality in its population (Bank of Mexico, 2020), Nayarit has an index of .324 and San Blas has an index of .324 and San Blas .32 (CONEVAL, 2020), which highlights the policies, plans and programmes that the country uses to manage resources according to the results, which alerts us to the levels of well-being that localities and territories are reaching.

According to the international agenda 2030, in its Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), global goals that were established by the United Nations in 2015, as a tool to put an end to various problems of social inequality such as poverty, protect the planet's natural resources, as well as to safeguard by 2030, natural resources so that all inhabitants enjoy prosperity and equality (UN, 2015), however, a few years after the date set, the GINI percentages of the country and the state show that it is necessary to seek new routes to reduce inequality indices and address existing problems.

The International Monetary Fund (IMF), the World Bank Group, the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), among other institutions, have sought to integrate actions through development plans and programmes or other instruments, so that economic dynamics are turned around through cooperation, however, despite the actions, no great results have been achieved, in this sense the challenges and inequalities of the peoples are marking time, as well as a continuity in the economic and social gaps.

The systematisation of conventional development models makes options and ways of life precarious, in addition to limiting, but above all weakening the environment, both in natural, cultural and social resources (Escolano, 2019), it follows that through new reorientations in economic practices, as well as tourism, congruencies in development are made possible and agreed upon.

In this thematic sense, for the present work, based on the critical elements that the two perspectives reviewed contribute, information was gathered through empirical research, as well as field visits with non-participant observation, which allowed us to consider categories and units of analysis in order to complexify the approach to the reality of interest, the town of Aticama in the municipality of San Blas, Nayarit. It can be proposed that by working in the territory, new lines of action could be generated based on the interests that the local actors decide to promote.

Some methodological notes

The present research is constructed through empirical research, with a qualitative approach, using techniques such as non-participant observation and instruments such as semi-structured interviews to collect data on economic activities carried out in the community. Evidence found in these interviews motivates us to emphasise endogenous development and rural tourism as concepts that complement each other and identify units of analysis in the territory that propose opportunities aimed at generating growth and raising levels of well-being in the territory of Aticama.

Likewise, during field visits, it was observed that an important part of the local actors and actresses, apart from the two main activities that the resources of the territory allow, fishing and agriculture, are involved in trade, participating in the area known as the *cabañitas* (small restaurants, which were established through projects managed by the organisation of oyster farmers and fishermen), cooking or serving, but also working in livestock farming as an activity that is not as central as the previous ones mentioned. Likewise, some of the dynamics that take place in Aticama at a local level, are also carried out in the interior, thus strengthening their identity as a coastal town, which is building their territory.

Consequently, this article is based on preliminary studies and research that refer to elements related to endogenous development and rural tourism, and builds information from an articulation between these two terms that allows us to emphasise important categories to think about a reorientation of development towards achieving a resilient economy, as well as elements that provide an integral basis for other visions to prevent possible damage to the territory, damage that is undoubtedly caused by conventional tourism.

Theoretical perspectives to be considered

Endogenous development appears as a way of rethinking and reflecting on the actions in the territory, (Sánchez and Ruíz, 2019), in this sense, it values the local, the rural, precedes a recognition of the local without losing sight of the global, articulating the development of the territory in all its dimensions (Arocena, 2017) and (Vázquez, 2018).

Consequently, in the process of endogenous development there are various processes that emerge to revalue productive activities and contribute to strategies to counteract the instability of markets, above all they seek the balance of the communities, among others we can find as dynamics of action: popular economies, agroecology, as pointed out by Macías and Sevilla, with these economies "it seeks to build relations of production, distribution, consumption and financing based on values of reciprocity, cooperation, justice and mutual aid" (Macías and Sevilla, 2018). (2023 p,107).

For its part, rural tourism responds to new interpretations of development to reclaim not only territories and the market, but also to conserve natural, social and economic resources (Condeso, 2011), and Condeso also points out that rural tourism considers economic alternatives that promote the conservation of culture. In this line, processes such as the creation of networks, strategies and joint actions that benefit communities in a sustainable manner are highlighted.

Therefore, this research analyses endogenous development as a process that makes visible and proposes strengthening dynamics in the territories in congruence with local agents, and also converges with activities carried out in such territories, such as tourism as a way of generating new views on development, reconfiguring realities to enhance the endogenous, recategorising knowledge, economic and social forms, in this particular case, rural tourism.

Characteristics of endogenous development

Endogenous development is a process that focuses on the local scale, its characteristic is that it builds from within dynamics and activities that create stability in the territories (Gatica F., 2020), in this sense, it generates balance, builds its actions and economic projects that focus primarily on raising the levels of welfare in the population (Vázquez Barquero, 2007), since through the endogenous, socio-economic systems are known and social systems are recognised.

For their part, Rueda and Rodríguez (2021) point out that through endogenous development it is possible to understand the problems of the social system, since these development processes work on their own, the internal aspects of the territories, and also affirm that it articulates the planning of knowledge and values that strengthens entrepreneurship, manages productive and sustainable activities that strengthen the identity of the communities.

In this sense, Sánchez and Ruiz (2019), affirm that endogenous development serves to increase "the quality of life of the inhabitants of the environment" (p.1), as it rethinks aspects of the locality, of nature and builds the territory in a sustainable way. As it has been established, by focusing on the territory's own resources, it integrates the diverse actors and actresses that interact in society, it seeks to result in a better quality of life, it aims not only to improve economic development, but also human development, thus, these actors and actresses produce, they organise themselves autonomously generating in this process diverse dynamics within their territory, Carrizo (2001) names it as "the sovereignty of the local communities design their destiny" (p. 18). In this way, this perspective strengthens and consolidates from within, their economy, their territory, highlighting the local-global. (Vázquez Barquero, 2009).

In this same analysis, starting from dynamics that emerge from the territory, as a transforming agent, he identifies the essence of identity and conservation of traditions to activate endogenous development, giving coherence and cohesion to economic dynamics through the conservation of natural, social, cultural, institutional resources, etc. According to Vázquez Baquero (2009, p.5), "the United Nations human development programmes show that the valorisation of local capacities and the formation of territorial networks (of companies, institutions, and service entities) make it possible to improve the productivity and competitiveness of companies and territories".

In summary, endogenous development interprets and proposes new investment options as an alternative for solutions to crises and problems that affect peoples and nations, the intervention of activities and social structures that are established in the territories themselves, which is why it seeks to reduce poverty, generating jobs and encouraging economic, social and sustainable progress, in the words of Vázquez Barquero (2009) with the premise of the territory as the basis, since the essence of this theory is woven around it.

Rural tourism, an economic dynamic for territorial development

Rural tourism seeks to offer new, unique and sustainable tourism experiences and activities, integrating the management of rural resources and the preservation of the environment. Therefore, rural tourism is born in contrast to conventional tourism, as it promotes natural environments and experiences based on the rural (Condeso, 2010) in this sense, it manages tourism activities in the communities, encourages the participation of the social actors of a territory, for Sánchez and Ruíz (2019), it is in this context that traditional sectors are recovered and the local economy is diversified, promoting rural and local resources.

Therefore, rural tourism fosters new approaches to achieve transversal economic growth, it has gained relevance, as it makes other proposals visible to generate a boost in the communities, for Sosa (2023), these proposals generate not only an economic boost, but also promote planning based on the needs and requirements of the social actors. In this context, Astrata, Acuña and De los Ríos (2018) state that this approach develops the socio-economic and productive capacities of those who inhabit the territory.

As noted in previous paragraphs, both concepts, endogenous development and rural tourism, promote the use of the territory's own resources, thereby promoting the work and cooperation of social actors in the locality to achieve sustainable tourism activities. For Stratta, Acuña and De los Ríos (2018), this is how localities are revitalised, as they affirm that there is a multifunctionality in rural tourism as in endogenous development, which leads to new initiatives that promote learning and the sharing of knowledge. For his part, Bengoa (2006, p.5) stipulates that it is in the territory where the "virtuous processes" take place, in this sense, the territory is a place of interaction, understanding and action of society, it is the space where the social actor builds social dynamics that allow for the growth of development. (Llanos, L. 2000).

The literature on rural tourism not only focuses on analysing tourism activities as a trigger for the economy of the territory, but also analyses the consequences and variables that have an impact on localities and the natural resources that make up the environment, endogenous development, by re-evaluating the growth process, seeks to integrate strategies from below that generate dynamics to conserve resources and thus solve the challenges that arise; therefore, rural tourism and endogenous development promote the conservation of the territory, rural resources and culture, Vázquez Barquero (1988) and Condeso (2011).

In this context, the World Tourism Organisation (UNWTO, 2023) provides guidelines and lines of action to generate sustainable tourism practices and economic dynamics aimed at self-development. In this scenario, with respect to the G20 economies, "a roadmap has been developed to make tourism a central pillar of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development" (UNWTO, 2023).

Therefore, by focusing on the sustainability of resources, these organisations seek a balance that sustains and preserves principles that contribute to achieving the goals set out in the programmed agendas. With only seven years left to reach these goals, the gaps and problems are still unresolved. Therefore, taking strategic steps that lead to the mainstreaming of economic dynamics, with the participation of the local actors of the territory, will make new routes or alternative solutions to the aforementioned problems visible.

In this context, empirical studies are taken up that show how endogenous development and rural tourism highlight what is unique to a territory: natural resources, gastronomy, cooking recipes, (subjectively) imprint knowledge journeys, nourish walking routes, feed trails, composting and, on the other side of the road, sow fields of experiences and learning, among tortilla tacos, one learns about herbal teas, mole and seeds (Estrada, 2023).

Similarly, taking into account the wear and tear on nature, climatic changes, divergent times, and political instability, the interpretation of development and tourism can be analysed and viewed from other perspectives, and therefore the question is: how can Aticama manage development through rural tourism, and how can the endogenous resources of the territory be used to promote tourism? The articulation of the previous elements proposes joint dynamics, where the development of the locality and the tourist activity, foresees ecological impacts, or is not so severe in the territory, consequently, dynamics of action are generated "in order to generate strategies that allow to revert processes of degradation and to foment beneficial practices of life for the communities" Macías and Sevilla. (2022, p. 12).

In order to sustainably diversify the territory's own resources, rural tourism proposes that the social actors are the main beneficiaries, since using rural resources stimulates the local economy, preserves its culture and reduces ecological impacts (Scutariu and Scutariu, 2023), thus achieving harmonious congruence with nature, i.e. generating a relationship of community participation to achieve the endogenous development of a locality, preserving a relationship and balance between natural, cultural, social resources and economic income.

In this way, rural tourism seeks solutions and dynamics to give endogenous development new perspectives, especially taking into account the community, using participatory methodologies where the social actors are the ones who manage these activities to avoid the depletion of nature and resources, as well as promoting the conservation of traditions, It also promotes the conservation of traditions, the continuity of knowledge, raises awareness of the actors and agents involved in these dynamics of action, so that through rural tourism, agro-tourism, eco-museums (Méndez, 2021), agro-ecology and popular economies (Macías and Sevilla, 2023), processes of sustainable endogenous development can be built in the territories.

Aticama, a gateway to the sea, an endogenous development and rural tourism perspective

Aticama is a town located in the municipality of San Blas Nayarit, Mexico. It stands out for its natural resources, as a coastal town, it is renowned for its fishing products, which allows the bay to attract tourism, its seafood-based gastronomy is an attractive source of income that receives and promotes tourist activity. Likewise, between the production of banana bread and other coconut-based sweets, it contributes to the development of this locality in the tourist area and positions it as a place of tourist gastronomy among the tourist localities of the state.



Figure 1 Geographical location of Aticama.
Source: INEGI (2020)

This gastronomy is based on seafood, specifically fish and shellfish, especially oysters, which are an endemic feature of the locality. This community resorts to tourism activities to make the local attractions known, through gastronomic dynamics it seeks to attract tourists, for this reason, currently the hotel offer is not very wide, but local agents rent their houses, which diversifies the accommodation options. There are also other activities related to tourism, mainly commerce. But agriculture is a fundamental axis of community life. Aticama is an ejido, so many of the forms of participation and decision-making are based on this.

Given the characteristics and aptitudes of the territory, the theoretical foundations that have been reviewed propose economic deployments in a cross-cutting manner, on the one hand, "rural tourism can be an alternative for its positive effects in capitalising on the growing preference for rural tourism and creating strategies for tourism development" (Scutariu and Scutariu, 2023, p.13).

On the other hand, these activities cover different dimensions of development such as: human development, sustainable development or development from below (Vázquez Barquero, 2007). In order to establish this transversality, the main elements provided by both proposals, grounded in the dynamics found in the locality through the fieldwork, are as follows.

1. Interprets economic processes from the local level, proposes new perspectives for economic activities.	Local actors within the locality generate activities based on the characteristics of their territory.
2. Uses local resources, this generates a spiral in development, by using its own resources it generates synergies.	
3. Strengthens the economy in the locality, it is strengthened in all senses, generating a transversal economy.	Most of what is produced is directly related to the resources of the territory, be it sea products or agricultural products. However, commercial activity imports foodstuffs and goods for other needs, which is why they are incorporated into the economic dynamics and services offered in the territory.
4. Improve the productive sectors of the locality.	
5. Promotes entrepreneurship, generates empowerment in the social actors.	What is generated in both fishing and agriculture is largely transformed into houses and small tourist gastronomy businesses, much more accentuated in fishing.
6. Promotes the conservation of natural, cultural and social resources.	The projects that have been promoted by the fishing organisations (oyster and shrimp farmers) and the trade organisation, for the former, have enabled them to obtain support to establish a beachfront restaurant corridor. The traders have improved aspects of their service.

Table 1 Benefits proposed by endogenous development and its congruence in the territory studied
Source: own elaboration based on fieldwork

If endogenous development seeks to interpret the processes of the territory in a planned manner, considering the local as the approach to achieve the identity of the localities, promoting the resolution of different problems that occur in the communities, generating a system of action on "a limited territory, capable of producing common values and locally managed goods" (Arocena, 1995, p. 20). (Arocena, 1995, p. 20), in Aticama there are already processes in this sense. Economic activities in line with a sea territory have allowed for a tourist construction almost since its foundation, but one not anchored to conventional tourism due to its rocky conditions, hence the oyster market, but to the possibilities of offering particular flavours. Associated with that, in Aticama, are the agricultural processes, which have been another line of work for the people. Both processes have their own trajectories of intervention in the territory, of building networks for commercialisation chains, which in the case of tourism are short, of social and productive organisation for this purpose, and therefore of diversified knowledge.

1. It generates a diversity of tourist activities in the territory, rural tourism proposes to show the essence of the villages.	Tourist activity is basically gastronomic.
2. It allows a transversality in the economy, economic activities are not centred on a single person or institution..	Transversality has been established by taking advantage of primary production in the territory and transforming it into value-added products as a strategy for family production units. This has made it possible to permeate other indirect activities.
3. It promotes the authenticity of cultures, as well as gastronomy, herbalism, sowing cycles and the way the land is produced.	
4. Through activities with essence; as well as a catalogue of natural and cultural resources, it allows the exchange of knowledge between communities and tourists.	The women prepare dishes using family recipes. The production cycles are well established and the production units are organised around them.

5. Preserves and protects to a greater degree the regeneration of natural resources caused by tourist activities in the localities.	The gastronomic activity allows for contemplative and exchange times. There is also a local tianguis, of organic products, promoted by foreign residents.
6. Decreases the ecological impact of rural areas.	

Table 2 Benefits proposed by rural tourism and their congruence in the territory studied
Source: own elaboration based on fieldwork

There is a kind of paradoxical situation that is not strange, since development issues are never linear, on the contrary, they are built on contradictions and conflicts that the actors and actresses are capable of resolving. The possibility of the type of tourism that the territory confers to the local actors and actresses allows them a tourism where cultural exchange is a fundamental part, since it is not about sea and beach, but about culinary and landscape tasting, however, it has not been possible to transcend to a diversified tourism that does not aspire to massification per se, but that involves the visitors in the daily community activities, respecting the principle of rural tourism on the scale. Where people's ways of life can be shared. The cross-cutting nature of the activities, especially in terms of the income derived from them, means that fishing is expanding in the area of the cabins and restaurants, as well as some agricultural products. Those who are not fishermen, oystermen or farmers can provide other services, such as house owners who rent rooms for lodging. There are family production units that are in more than one or all of these areas. But it can be better planned as a community on the principles of the approaches discussed, especially in order not to fall into monoactivity, but on the contrary to promote the diversification of local economies.

It should be noted that no community processes for the conservation of the environment and its resources have been detected. There are some efforts that are driven on a very small scale by foreigners or weekenders, whose permanent residence is in urban areas. But it is not something that is, at least not yet in the public conversation, part of their priorities. Another important risk is that despite not having a territory for sea and beach tourism, its proximity to other territories that do have these characteristics is propitiating the presence and acceleration of gentrification processes.

Final considerations

In this context, analysing the endogenous and rural relationship to achieve the development of localities, empowers social actors, builds from the local-global to maximise resources and diversify the economy (Guzmán, 2017), in the same way, rural tourism not only promotes the economic, it gives way to a subjective analysis of this type of tourist, social and productive activity, promotes culture from the actors, integrates knowledge, synchronises spaces, making effective the relationships between nature, culture and economy within the territories themselves, which allows us to observe other perspectives and generate new visions of social dynamics to generate sustainable economies, giving rise to the spiral of development, in this case endogenous development and rural tourism.

The relationship that exists between both approaches provides an overview of the economic dynamics that Aticama is going through to achieve the development of its locality, which allows mapping how the theoretical interpretations are intertwined in the territory to boost the economy in a sustainable and transversal way, but also gives rise to other proposals aimed at the growth and welfare of the locality such as:

- (a) Expanding the economy and diversifying opportunities: i.e. not only activities should be generated for the locality. Nowadays, external agents intervene and are beneficiaries, such as street traders, or food suppliers, making reference to the local-global. However, this diversification should be taken into account, pointing out precisely that there are different strategies of social reproduction. Where the permanent construction of local identity continues to be based on its own strategies and capacities for cultural, social, economic and political exchange, for the construction of networks and processes of territorial management.
- (b) It preserves the territory's endogenous natural resources; the conservation of natural, cultural and social resources is important in the economic dynamics, and rural tourism helps to strengthen the economy and the environment. customs and traditions. This is a pending task as a community project, which can be worked on through participatory processes.
- (c) Integration of the social actors; the participation of the actors in tourism activities to generate development of their environment, generates synergies, at the same time, preserves customs and traditions strengthening their identity and gives them a sense of belonging. The possibilities of achieving the proposals depend on these processes. The community already has its own forms, but the forms of participation and decision-making at the local level do not allow for the same opportunities. To the extent that local actors are able to open up spaces and find ways to build common agreements, the integration achieved will be reflected in territorial dynamics, including identity dynamics.

- (d) Creation of new sources of employment, generating diverse jobs either internally or externally is fundamental to engage in activities from the local to the global, for development these dynamics generate levels of well-being. Closely linked to point 1), it is necessary to broaden the view of conventional employment. It is important to understand that most of the local actors are owners of their means of production, which places them in another category, but that within the forms of organisation of the production unit, generating internal and external employment is necessary for local economies.
- (e) Resilient development. It is through sustainable dynamics that we can speak of endogenous development and rural tourism, both of which are incorporated to give way to integral growth. These dynamics should be built in a participatory manner based on priorities derived from problems identified and reflected upon by the actors involved, and on the strategies they consider appropriate to solve, always in relation to their networks and management potential.

The above, distinguishes a series of proposals that allow rethinking and directing the processes carried out in Aticama through endogenous development actions and rural tourism, by way of planning. They are based on the integration and revaluation of available resources, which provides a series of elements that strengthen and contribute to the development of Aticama, without neglecting resources such as identity, natural resources, tourism, gastronomy, etc. (Sosa, 2023). In this sense, Arocena (1995) and Carrizo (2001) point out that in order to achieve the development of localities, it is necessary to take up the daily life and the immediate social environment.

Although it is true that the new modalities of development and tourism arise mainly to respond to economic problems, to counteract damages caused to nature, to promote transversal economies, it is not guaranteed that the results are the most satisfactory, due to the lack of commitment on the part of some social actors, or external agents that get involved in the practices of development, the aforementioned, unfavourable results.

However, preliminary studies consider that involving local actors in the processes leads to more favourable results, as participation focused on their needs conditions the objectives, so that respect for the social actors is paramount. In this sense, Stratta, Acuña and de los Ríos (2018) underline the importance of respect for the population, as it is a value and principle that conditions the development of resources and territories, generating the integration of diverse economic, social and cultural areas, which are important factors for promoting endogenous development and rural tourism, in order to strengthen transversal, dynamic and holistic growth. It should be emphasised that the key condition is that these are participatory processes, both for the principle of the perspectives reviewed and for the very logic of the transformations sought, as has been argued throughout this paper.

In this sense, these approaches allow the displacement of sustainable activities, which preserve natural, cultural and gastronomic resources for future generations, as well as fostering culture, cooperation, organisation and community work, creating a participatory, active and congruent awareness, which gives a sense of resilient environments, with significant benefits, as these economic dynamics integrate all areas together, so that the relationship between endogenous development and rural tourism offers an opportunity to promote sustainable growth of communities.

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