

# 2 The role of resident's perception in sustainable community-centred tourism management

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## Abstract

Understanding residents' attitudes towards tourism and engaging local communities is central for sustainable tourism destination management. It is a crucial factor in tourism governance and an important field of research. Literature on clustering tourism community members with the focus of discerning residents' view on tourism have all identified host groups with similar responses to segmentation criteria, such as sociodemographic characteristics, psychographic and behavioural variables, or emotions. There is still a gap regarding the segmentation of the local population based on their perceptions of tourism. This is evident given the prevalence of studies carried out in consolidated destinations, so, this research aims to explore different theoretical perspectives at different stages of the tourism development cycle for application to destination management. The work analyses residents of unconsolidated tourism destinations in which there are no episodes of over-tourism, except in very specific cases. In fact, Gipuzkoa is neither a mass tourism destination, nor a very popular urban tourism destination. The chapter aims to provide a preventive and responsible management tool for destinations in the development and consolidation phase.

**Keywords:** residents' perception, tourism impacts, segmentation, cluster analysis, social sustainability

## Theoretical framework

The literature agrees that there are a number of factors affecting residents' perceptions of tourism (e.g. Andereck and Vogt, 2000; Harrill, 2004; Muler et al., 2018).

The first factor is the degree of tourism development in the destination itself. One of the best-known models is Doxey's Irridex model (1975). Despite research to the contrary (Andriotis and Vaughan, 2003), the model suggests that there are reciprocal impacts between visitors and residents, resulting in varying degrees of irritation on the part of residents at the threat to local life.

The second factor is employment in the tourism sector, which, according to most studies, is one of the most significant factors in generating favourable positions. It is based on the Social Exchange Theory (Andriotis and Vaughan, 2003) which suggests that residents who are financially dependent on the tourism industry are much more likely to recognise the benefits of tourism (Haralambopoulos and Pizam, 1996; Wang and Pfister, 2008).

The third factor concerns socio-demographic variables. First, regarding gender, the results of the factor analyses carried out in the different studies differ in their conclusions and it is not possible to establish a clear correlation. Second, studies confirm correlation between age and perception of tourism massification (Perdue et al., 1990; Ritchie and Inkari, 2006; Williams and Lawson, 2001). Regarding education, Kayat (2002) concludes that education is the variable that most influences perception with respect to tourism, although it is closely related to having a job in the tourism industry. Finally, Haralambopoulos and Pizam (1996) found a relationship between the high purchasing power and a more favourable perception of tourism, but the results are not conclusive (McMinn and Cater, 1998).

The fourth factor is attachment to the community. Some studies (Kuvan and Akan, 2005; Lankford and Howard, 1994; Sheldon and Var, 1984) indicate that being born and living in a community can affect the perception of tourism, but the results are not conclusive.

The fifth factor is the distance between the place of residence and the tourism destination. Sheldon and Var (1984) suggest that the closer