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The Tourism System of a Secondary Destination and its Challenges to Achieve Collective Action towards International Markets

Case-study: Cajas Massif Biosphere Reserve, Ecuador

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Abstract

While some regions are endowed with a combination of conditions to become main tourism destinations such as location, iconic attractions, political power or logistics and infrastructure, other less favored regions remain as secondary destinations constantly struggling to attract visitors. The challenge is even greater when trying to attract international visitors that fit a specific profile according to the destination's development goals, which is especially critical for regions with declarations of world importance. Firstly Social Capital theory is applied to explore the particular challenges (barriers or enhancers) of a secondary destination to achieve collective actions. Secondly Systems Thinking theory is used to provide a vocabulary and understanding of the particular structure and dynamics of a secondary destination aiming towards international markets. The case study is the city of Cuenca in the Cajas Massif Biosphere Reserve, southern Ecuador, where four different UNESCO's declarations coincide. It was found that social capital barriers come from a lack of: capacity to collectively set shared goals of higher value and act accordingly, continuity of processes, trust, personal motivations and concrete results.

Key words: system, social capital, brokering or facilitating agent, secondary destination, challenges, collective, international markets.

Hoewel sommige regio's voorzien zijn van een combinatie van voorwaarden om belangrijke toeristische bestemmingen te worden, zoals locatie, iconische attracties, politieke macht of logistiek en infrastructuur, blijven andere minder begunstigde regio's als secundaire bestemmingen steeds moeite hebben om bezoekers aan te trekken. De uitdaging is zelfs groter als internationale bezoekers het doel vormen die passen bij een specifiek profiel volgens de ontwikkelingsdoelstellingen van de bestemming, wat vooral kritisch is voor regio's met verklaringen van wereldbelang. Ten eerste wordt de Sociaal Kapitaaltheorie toegepast om de specifieke uitdagingen (barrières of versterkers) van een secundaire bestemming te onderzoeken om collectieve acties te bereiken. Ten tweede wordt Systems Thinking theorie gebruikt om een woordenschat voor en begrip van de specifieke structuur en dynamiek van een secundaire bestemming gericht op internationale markten te voorzien. De casestudy is de stad Cuenca in het Cajas Massif Biosphere Reserve, zuidelijk Ecuador, waar vier verschillende UNESCO-verklaringen samenvallen. Het bleek dat barrières afkomstig zijn van een gebrek aan: capaciteit om gezamenlijk gedeelde doelen van hogere waarde te stellen en dienovereenkomstig te handelen, continuïteit van processen, vertrouwen, persoonlijke motivaties en concrete resultaten.

Sleutelwoorden: systeem, sociaal kapitaal, facilitator, secundaire bestemming, uitdagingen, collectieve, internationale markten.

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I Introduction

Both domestic and international tourism play a crucial role in the economy of certain countries; this economic importance can be understood as the multiplier effect of tourism resulting in a range of economic benefits going from the increase in the amount of jobs to positively affecting the growth of other sectors, like agriculture and other (sub)sectors of the service industry (Rusu, 2011, p. 70). In this way, it is expected that a geographical area can benefit in both a direct and indirect way from tourism, which explains why tourism destinations would want to develop in order to attract tourists. By accessing international tourism markets the original multiplier effect obtained by domestic tourism, if it was already present, will see itself intensified resulting in even more advantages for local, regional and national economies. Of course, also the possible leakages should be taken into account, but this does not overshadow the probable benefits obtained from gaining access to international tourism markets (Rusu, 2011).

If tourism destinations want to develop, there must be compliance with several conditions; in this context, the importance of the notion of “capital” rises. Nevertheless, like Bourdieu (2002, pp. 81-82) says, this importance cannot be restricted to the only form of capital recognized by economic theory: economic capital. This conception will lead automatically to capitalism, whereby other forms of non-material capital are ignored because they are not directly convertible into money. Therefore, not the mere presence of economic but also the presence of social, cultural, symbolic and political capital (and many other forms) is necessary to reach development. Possessing all these forms of capital and mobilizing them in the appropriate way is not something axiomatic for tourism destinations. Therefore development in terms of accessing international tourism markets appears often problematic.

This research will focus on and will search for the presence of one specific type of capital at the level of a tourism destination: social capital. It results difficult to give one conclusive definition of this phenomenon, since literature presents different ones in abundance and no general agreement about its dimensions is found. One of the most suitable and recurrent definitions is the one of Bourdieu (2002) that will be further elaborated in the first chapter of the theoretical framework. In other words, this investigation is going to look into social capital at the level of a destination, focused on finding examples of a specific vector of social capital: dynamics resulting in collective action towards common goals. In this thesis, the goals are narrowed towards tourism approaches of international markets. By looking at the facilitator’s perspective and identifying a central or brokering agent at the tourism destination, the thesis will explore the network of this latter and try to find examples of the presence or absence of policy and management processes and dynamics resulting in

collective action. Therefore the main focus is on analyzing what type of dynamics between the different agents facilitates or hinders the (attempted) collective action(s). The final purpose is the assessment of the tourism destination's ability to achieve common goals by mobilizing social capital and recommendations in case enhancement is needed. Last but not least, since an integrative approach of tourism recommends avoiding segmentation, the research will rely on systems thinking to provide an integrative vocabulary and introduction to study and to take into account that tourism is a complex phenomenon.

This research will attempt to answer four main research questions:

- What are the characteristics of the CMBR's network of relationships between agents (structure of the system)?
- What is the role of social capital in the network and what is the importance of the central (brokering) agent in the process of creating a network and developing social capital (and consequently collective action) at the level of the tourism destination?
- What enhances or hinders the capacity of the CMBR for collective action towards the objective of accessing international tourism markets?
- What can be possible future improvements for the CMBR in order to access international markets in a better way and how can social capital be used (even more) as a lever?

The Cajas Massif Biosphere Reserve (CMBR) in Ecuador was chosen as a case study for several reasons. The main reason is the fitting of the thesis in the context of a broader doctoral study conducted by PhD researcher Santiago Rodríguez Girón. Thus, the thesis is a complementary study facilitated and supported by the knowledge of a doctoral research in progress and interviews performed by Santiago Rodríguez Girón. For this investigation, a qualitative research methodology is preferred and the focus will be on the network of the CMBR. Within the CMBR network, a particular organization stands out by playing a central or brokering function: the local Destination Management Organization (DMO) *Fundación Municipal de Turismo para Cuenca* (FMTC). In this context, the FMTC is the leading actor for regional tourism development, and the one selected as the "entry point" for the present study. Data from preliminary research and a contact person for cooperation are available. By mainly investigating social capital in the DMO's direct network in the CMBR and by using systems thinking as a methodology to understand the related complexity, the tourism destination will be perceived as a system with elements, functions, dynamics, etc., and its capacity of generating social capital or using social capital will be researched.

The chosen methodology is a qualitative one based on semi-structured in-depth interviews. Two rounds of data collection can be found: one round of interviews conducted by PhD researcher Santiago Rodríguez Girón in January, February and March 2016 (first-round methodology) and a second round of own data collection in April 2016 (second-round methodology). After the introduction the first two chapters, subdivided in subchapters and sections, start by giving a theoretical overview of two fundamental concepts: social capital and systems thinking. Both of the concepts will also be explained linked to tourism and the attention will be fixated on one specific dimension of social capital: collective action. The third big part and corresponding chapters embody the empirical research which partly consists of a presentation of the research area, a more general overview of tourism in the south of Ecuador and a description of the used methodologies. The empirical research is extended by chapters four and five and they complete the third big part by giving results on respectively the first and second round of methodology with a focus on the network of the CMBR, collective action initiatives towards international markets, barriers and enhancers of social capital and more general barriers and enhancers. Last but not least, the sixth and last chapter of the empirical research formulates key findings and further recommendations which should imply reflection on possible (further) improvement.

II Theoretical framework

1. Explaining social capital and collective action in relation to tourism

1.1 Social capital

1.1.1 Definition of social capital

The notion of social capital contains an important concept that asks for further explanation: “capital”. This latter is defined by Bourdieu (2002, p. 280) as *“accumulated labor . . . which, when appropriated on a private, i.e., exclusive, basis by agents or groups of agents, enables them to appropriate social energy in the form of reified or living labor.”* In this way, capital is not merely reduced to an economic matter and it can explain why inequality is present in contemporary society; different agents or groups of agents possess distinctive types of qualities which, accumulated, lead to diverse advantages expressed in manifested labor. This explains why, at a certain moment and place, some efforts and practices have a higher chance of succeeding. Bourdieu also stresses the social dimension and considers capital and ordinary agency the objective basis that determines society as well as something that is created by society and exercised in a subjective way. Furthermore, he emphasizes the importance of the three fundamental guises of capital, economic, cultural and social, in order to understand the structure and functioning of the social world, characterized by different types of exchange and in which mercantile exchange, stemming from economic capital, does not predominate; although both cultural and social capital finds itself in the position of being converted eventually, in certain conditions, into money, which leads again to the economic form of capital (Bourdieu, 2002).

In this context, social capital is often cultivated due to economic motives or possible benefits like reducing transaction costs of monitoring, negotiating and enforcing formal agreements (Fukuyama, 2001). In this context, the production process present in society’s structures generates a surplus value through investment in social relations (Lin, 2005). It results difficult to give one conclusive definition of the above mentioned notion, since literature of different authors in the field presents various ones in abundance. One of the most suitable and recurrent definitions in other works is the following of Bourdieu who defines the concept of social capital as:

The aggregate of the actual or potential resources which are linked to possession of a durable network of more or less institutionalized relationships of mutual acquaintance and recognition – or in other words, to membership in a group which provides each of its members with the backing of the collectivity-owned capital, a “credential” which entitles them to credit, in the various senses of the word. (Bourdieu, 2002, p. 286)

This definition refers to the basic idea that the effects deriving from such connections cannot be reduced to the mere sum of the qualities possessed by each individual agent; combining those individual properties, new dynamics arise that would not be present if the agents operated independently and which influence the final social effect in a positive (or a negative) way. In this way, there exists an interaction between both the agent at the individual level and the network at the aggregate level. The acquired social capital of one agent influences the total social effect on the one hand. It also sees itself determined by the size of the network (the number of connections) and the quality of the social capital possessed by alternative connected agents on the other hand (Bourdieu, 2002).

Nevertheless, the clarification of Bourdieu is only one possible definition and some authors stress different dimensions of social capital in the current theoretical overviews. As well as highlighting certain dimensions, there is also a distinction being made between those definitions that refer to social capital itself and those that include its manifestations. The former ones are more likely to see the core dimensions of social capital, which will be explained below, as a by-product resulting of the mere existence of social capital itself, because they do not constitute the phenomenon of social capital itself (Fukuyama, 2001). While there is still an ongoing debate and absence of consensus about how to define, conceptualize and operationalize the phenomenon of social capital, two principal axes are recognized in the context of the conference of the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) in 2001, in which the different ways of approaching the definition of the concept can be aligned. According to the first axis, social capital is more defined as a capacity to mobilize determined resources, possessed by a group, leading to notions like empowerment and leadership. The second axis focuses more on social capital being about the availability of networks of social relationships; this implicates the notion of associativity leading to the vertical and horizontal character of the relationships. Thus, social capital of a certain social group can be understood as *“the effective capacity to mobilize productively and for the benefit of the whole, the associative resources rooted in the distinct social networks, to which members of the group in question have access”* (own translation of Atria, 2003, p. 582¹; Barbini, 2008, p. 73).

It also should be stressed that this research is looking into social capital as a collective phenomenon or attribute; relations as well as norms and institutions that facilitate cooperation of a group, organization and community are approached. Social capital at the level of the individual will not be investigated (Atria, 2003).

¹ Original citation: *“la capacidad efectiva de movilizar productivamente y en beneficio del conjunto, los recursos asociativos que radican en las distintas redes sociales a las que tienen acceso los miembros del grupo en cuestión”* (Atria, 2003, p. 582).

1.1.2 Dimensions and indicators of social capital

This section is about explaining different dimensions or forms of social capital; again the problem about definition and conceptualization rises, especially due to its multidimensional nature. However, there is one recurrent definition that takes into account its principal dimensions providing a neat division of the concept into three essential building stones. Durston (own translation 2002, p. 15²) defines social capital as *“the content of certain relationships and social structures, that is, the attitudes of trust that are given in combination with reciprocity and cooperation behaviors.”* From this definition, three important dimensions pop up: relationships and social structures, trust and reciprocity and, last but not least, cooperation. The title of this section also mentions “indicators”. This brings us to the complication and debate about two types of indicators used in social capital: proximal and distal indicators. By using the former ones, outcomes of social capital directly related to its key dimensions (networks, trust and reciprocity and cooperation) are seen as proximal indicators. An example is community engagement in tourism development which can be considered an indicator of social networks. On the other hand, distal indicators measure outcomes of social capital that are not directly related to its key dimensions. In the context of social capital and tourism, job creation or growth can be seen as a distal indicator, because it is not directly related with measures of social capital itself and neither with proximal outcomes of social capital (Stone, 2001). This research will measure collective action as an indicator of social capital, which is directly related to the core dimension of “cooperation” or “collective action” itself, so proximal indicators are used. Therefore, the lines between certain dimensions and its indicators are blurred.

There certainly is consensus about the crucial role of the presence of a “network”. It is exactly in the structure of relations between and among persons (the different connection points) that social capital resides (Coleman, 1990). The network facilitates the use of resources for various actors and generates eventually a return for the actor who made use of a specific kind of resource (Lin, 2005). Social relationships constitute the basis for these networks, because agents try to achieve their interests by engaging themselves in durable relationships; in this way, social relationships can be seen as both a resource and a dimension of social structure and capital (Coleman, 1990). The network can be seen as the “structural” dimension of social capital and at the same time as a result of the conceptualization of social relations and structure. This is why it is one of the more measurable and “tangible” dimensions (Stone, 2001). All the statements of (authority) relations and their information potential, structure, groups, families, memberships, institutions, private or public organizations, etc. (Coleman, 1990) coincide under the same denominator of “network”. Networks

² Original citation: *“el contenido de ciertas relaciones y estructuras sociales, es decir, las actitudes de confianza que se dan en combinación con conductas de reciprocidad y cooperación”* (Durston, 2002, p. 15).

can manifest themselves in several ways, representing specific aspects and characteristics, leading to different types of social capital, which will be discussed in the next section.

Not only the structure of the social relations is important, but also their quality; which brings us to the second dimension consisting of “norms of trust and norms of reciprocity” varying across different network types (Stone, 2001). Coleman (1990) describes the concept of “trust and reciprocity” on the basis of an interaction between obligations and expectations which leads to credit slips; person A will only do something for person B if he trusts the other enough in order to know he will get eventually something in return. Person A expects something from person B and this imposes an obligation on the latter. Both the level of trustworthiness in a network and the extent of the present obligations determine the final form of the social capital. Concerning the second dimension called “norms” he refers to the importance of sanctions to give them effectiveness and to the distinction between prescriptive and effective norms. Especially the last type can be harmful to social capital, because they possibly reduce innovativeness in certain social structures or organizations (Coleman, 1990). Fukuyama (2001) approaches “trust” in a more integrative way by covering all the different dimensions of social capital with his “radius of trust”: *“the circle of people among whom co-operative norms are operative.”* A society consists of several overlapping radii and every radius can be bigger than the group or organization it belongs to. With this reference to trust, both the first mentioned structural (or network) dimension and the third dimension of cooperation are covered. Stone (2001) treats the second dimension by making a clear separation between “norms of trust” and “norms of reciprocity”. The first can be divided in three types: personalized trust or trust within the network, generalized trust or trust extended to strangers and, thirdly, civic or institutional trust. “Norms of reciprocity”, on the other hand, are based on relationships of exchange and can be seen as “social contracts”. All the above mentioned concepts can be summarized in one dimension concerning “norms, trusts and reciprocity”. This is the second and more “intangible” dimension of social capital, which constitutes the cognitive “content” of the networks and is therefore more difficult to measure.

Last but not least, the third dimension “cooperation” or “collective action” is waiting for a further explanation. Since this research is mostly dedicated to this dimension or indicator of social capital, it will be extensively discussed in the next chapter 1.2 Collective action.

1.1.3 Typology of social capital

Being a social construction, social capital is not conceivable in a static or unambiguous way; it changes over time, is understood in a different way in each community and in every sector in which it is integrated and reveals itself in different values, beliefs and attitudes (Barbini, 2008). Only with the change of (one of) the three principal dimensions, the final social capital form changes with them and

both the nature of the social structure and the individual agents themselves vary over time and space (Coleman, 1990). Giving a typology and determining characteristics of social capital remains difficult. In general, it refers to *"norms and networks allowing people to act in a collective way"* (Barbini, 2008, p. 74) and a typology of different types of social capital, distinguished by different authors, is made by Barbini (2008):

- "Intensive" vs. "diffuse and extensive" social capital, or a compact network characterized by connection points within the own community vs. social capital that bridges between dissimilar groups and communities (Granovetter, 1985, cited in Barbini, 2008, pp. 74-75).
- "Horizontal" vs. "vertical" social capital, or social capital that generates connection points between members of a community vs. social capital that establishes connections between dissimilar groups. The first one is only oriented towards benefits for the members of the own community, while the second opens up economic opportunities for less powerful or excluded groups (Narayan, 1999, cited in Barbini, 2008, p. 75). This coincides with the types above.
- "Formal" vs. "informal" social capital, or social capital in organizations in which a structure, authorities, functioning networks, etc. can be identified vs. social capital expressed in different forms of spontaneous social cohabitation (Putnam, 2000, cited in Barbini, 2008, p. 75).
- "Dense" vs. "sparse" social capital, or social capital characterized by frequent contacts vs. sporadic contacts (Putnam, 2000, cited in Barbini, 2008, p. 75).
- "Bonding" vs. "bridging" social capital, or social capital stimulating homogeneity and reciprocity of the groups vs. social capital orientated towards outside the groups in order to generate even more broader reciprocities (Putnam, 2000, cited in Barbini, 2008, p. 75).
- "Intern" vs. "extern" social capital, or social capital existing between members within a specific sector vs. existing because of a general public interest (Putnam, 2000, cited in Barbini, 2008, p. 75).
- "Individual" vs. "community" social capital, or social capital concentrated on the advantages for a single person, based on a network in which no common broader social objectives can be identified vs. social capital present in complex institutions characterized by cooperation, policy and management pursuing benefits for the whole community (Durstun, 2000, cited in Barbini, 2008, p. 75-76).
- "Micro level" vs. "macro level" social capital according to its range and "structural" vs. "cognitive" social capital according to its forms and manifestations. "Cognitive" social capital exists because of norms, values, trust, shared attitudes and beliefs that can be observed from the subjective and intangible environment; "structural" social capital, on the other hand,

manifests itself because of the existence of a(n) (in)formal social organization and the existence of associative networks (Grootaert & Van Bastelaer, 2001 & Molinas, 2002, cited in Barbini, 2008, p. 75).

- “Bonding” vs. “bridging” vs. “linking” social capital according to the type of relationship between the involved parties. The first type is present between friends, families and neighbors, the second constitutes a horizontal connection between persons with similar characteristics and the third type is able to go beyond the group through interactions with people in a position of power (Molinas, 2002, cited in Barbini, 2008, p. 75).
- “Limited” vs. “broad” social capital, or when there is a predominance of internal social networks (inwards the group) vs. when there is a predominance of external social networks (outwards the group). This latter contributes, in a larger way, to a better quality of social life (Atria, 2003, cited in Barbini, 2008, p. 75).

The below illustrated scheme of Barbini (2008, p.77) results from considering all these types and dimensions together and taking into account the different classification criteria.

Criteria of classification	Categories			
Type of relationship (individual-society)	Individual vs. community			
Forms of expression		Structural	Formal	
		Cognitive	Informal	
Scale	Micro vs. macro level			
Type of established networks	Amplitude (grade of homogeneity/range of reciprocity)	Intensive vs. extensive	Bonding vs. bridging	Limited vs. broad
	Inclusiveness (representativeness of interest groups/distribution of the power)	Intern vs. extern	Bonding vs. bridging vs. linking	
	Density (frequency of the contacts)	Dense vs. sparse		

Table 1: Translated scheme of Barbini (2008, p. 77).

Nevertheless, some additions and adjustments need to be made concerning the different types of networks, and therefore also different types of social capital, are distinguished. Based on Coleman (1988) and Gluckman (1976), Stone (2001) gives a different interpretation to “dense” and “sparse” networks by defining them, not based on the frequency of contacts, but on the extent to which network memberships overlap. Typical for “dense” networks are the multiplex relations. Persons in multiplex relations are linked in more than one context, like in the following example: a tourism entrepreneur and a person working for the Ministry of Tourism are also bound by friendship outside the context of the tourism industry. These types of multiplex relations enable the members

of different social structures to use resources of one specific relationship in other relationships. Coleman (1990) also differs between “open” and “closed” networks, whereby social relationships exist among all parties in the closed ones and trust will be promoted, while in the open one this is more difficult to achieve. This is because not all the actors are interconnected and not knowing the reputation of actors in a network will negatively affect the existing trust. Another distinction takes place between “homogeneous” and “heterogeneous” networks, determined by the characteristics of the members themselves and differs therefore from the difference between “bonding” and “bridging” social capital (Stone, 2001). After these structural adjustments and additions, also a relational adaptation can be made; instead of marking the opposition between “vertical” and “horizontal” based on contact points within or outside the community, another distinction is applied based on the type of relations. “Vertical” or hierarchical relations occur between citizens and people in power, while “horizontal” or equal/democratic relations are those existing between citizens (Stone, 2001).

Concerning the needed transition between “limited” and “broad” social capital in order to benefit the quality of life, Atria (2003) proposes two strategies. The first is one of empowerment, which should alter the already existing influence or leadership within a group into influence of the entire group to the outside; the second is known as associativity or extending the already existing relationships to other social groups that can be considered allies. This last strategy facilitates collective action, which constitutes the subject of the next section.

As a response to the first research question about the characteristics of the CMBR’s network of relationships between agents, it can be said that in this stage the network of the local broker or facilitating agent in Cuenca (FMTC) can only be partly identified according to the above mentioned typology. It is already known that the present social capital in its network is of a “formal”, both “intern” and “external”, “community” and “structural” type. A Municipal Foundation has a formal structure, authorities and functioning networks, it focuses specifically on the tourism sector, but it is also characterized by cooperation, policy and management with broader social objectives and its social capital manifests itself clearly and structural due to the simple fact that is a recognized organization with associative networks. This latter does not mean that there is no cognitive social capital present; norms, values, trust, shared attitudes and beliefs are still important in such an organization. If the FMTC’s social capital is “dense” or “sparse”, whether it is about the frequency of contacts or the extent to which memberships overlap, cannot be known yet; neither the range (“micro” vs. “macro”), the openness (“open” vs. “closed”) of the network or the homogeneity of the members can be already identified. The FMTC’s network is certainly not limited to connections within the destination itself (hotels, travel agencies, attractions, etc. within the CMBR); this corresponds to the “intensive” or “horizontal” (the one of Narayan, 1999) type of social capital. The

FMTTC is also likely to have connections with organizations outside the CMBR (e.g. tour operators, other DMOs, etc.); this can be seen as “diffuse/extensive” or “vertical” (the one of Narayan, 1999) social capital. Besides this, a Municipal Foundation can have “bonding” and “bridging” social capital: it has ties with other players within the own group, institution, organization, etc. (they are already part of the DMO), but also ties with other but similar kind of actors (tourism players within other groups, institutions, organizations, etc. who have a connection with the FMTTC). Besides these two, the FMTTC also has “linking” social capital: ties and connections with people, groups and organizations in control and power (e.g. Ministry of Tourism). In this way, the opposition between “bridging” and “linking” social capital corresponds partially with the one made between “vertical” and “horizontal” by Stone (2001). In the fourth chapter, part of the empirical research, the description of the network of the FMTTC will be completed with information gathered from the first round of in-depth interviews.

1.2 Collective action

1.2.1 Collective action: dimension, indicator and outcome

Some authors only recognize the “network” and the “norms of trust and reciprocity” as the elemental dimensions and consider “cooperation” or “collective action” as an expression of this social structure and its internal prevailing norms; in this way, the third dimension of social capital is more likely to be a consequence or a manifestation of social capital. Bourdieu, Putnam and Coleman all think of social capital as a resource to collective action (Stone, 2001) and Fukuyama (2001) looks at collective action and cohesion as achievements and therefore they constitute critical qualitative measures of social capital. Durston (2002, pp. 18-19) on the other hand, clearly includes “cooperation” in his three principal dimensions and defines it as *“a complementary action aimed at the achievement of shared objectives by a joint entrepreneurship”* (own translation³). Nevertheless, it can be seen as a dimension and different types and grades of collective action also constitute an indicator of structural social capital according to Barbini (2008), who used the Integrated Questionnaire for the Measurement of Social Capital conducted by the World Bank in 2002. Thus, again there is a blurring between the outcomes and indicators of social capital, due to the fact that the outcomes are often used as indicators to measure the phenomenon. It is not a coincidence that, if social capital has to be measured, collective action and cooperation often pop up; they are considered being the output of the social relationships of trust and the existing norms within the networks and they constitute therefore an even more “measurable” dimension than the “network” dimension. This is because, only measuring “networks” or the structure of relationships, will not be

³ Original citation: “una acción complementaria orientada al logro de los objetivos compartidos de un emprendimiento común” (Durston, 2002, pp. 18–19).

sufficient in order to speak of real social capital; if people are connected by groups or social structures in which no norms of trust or reciprocity are recognized, it remains problematic to talk about social capital. Therefore, the searching for and finding of all kinds of dynamics resulting in collective action towards common goals is a more efficient way to measure the phenomenon, because this dimension combines both the structural and the more intangible dimensions and testifies to the presence of social capital. The mere presence of a network or just the having of norms is not enough evidence for the existence of social capital; and collective action, on the contrary, is. No cooperation is present without any proof of a network, social relationships, an organization, etc. or without the slightest existence of norms of trust or reciprocity. Only when both of these dimensions are represented, in a more formal or informal way, collective action can take place.

1.2.2 Risks and benefits of collective action

Individual humans are likely to be labeled as self-interested and rational, but this does not mean that they are not willing to cooperate; if they form part of a social structure or group by their common interests, they may share a certain objective. Exactly due to this human nature of self-interestedness, it would be logical to think that they would act collectively to achieve the objective. But nothing is less true; unless the group size is limited, or they feel forced to cooperate or there is a supplementary incentive besides the attainment of the objective. If not, their self-interested human nature would not be willing to participate (Olson, 1999). If people do not have the outlook of an individual compensation or benefit, they will start to focus on their own interests and this can develop free riders or even opponents in the group. Therefore Ostrom (2010) proposes a different and broader norm-based theory of human behavior, because the previous explained model only applies to human behavior in competitive market settings, which is not always the case in the context of collective action, often linked to social dilemmas. Together with the risk of non-contributing members and members only focusing on their own interest, it is also difficult to work with larger groups as they are more difficult to coordinate; this increases the organizational costs (Schmidt et al., 2015).

Even though there are several challenges and risks connected to collective action attempts, this is not a reason to neglect their many benefits, which often exceed the disadvantages. Increased revenues, economies of scale and agglomeration, reduction of costs, increased bargaining power, decreasing of risk, reduction of conflict, a greater capability of negotiation, a bigger influence of stakeholders in the decision-making process, giving equal consideration to economic, social and environmental impacts of projects and knowledge building are considerable advantages. The gains are not only narrowed to economic ones, because the desire to acquire or improve reputation, respect, friendship and other social and psychological aspects also originate from engaging in

collective action (Austin, 2001; Maeda and Saes, 2009; Sachs, 2003; Saes, 2008; Olson, 1999; Brito, 2001 cited in Schmidt et al., 2015; Waayers, Lee, & Newsome, 2012).

1.2.3 Determinants influencing the probability and efficiency of collective action

It is necessary to investigate what makes collective action efficient and therefore some crucial determinants of effective collective action are distinguished by Schmidt et al. (2015) and Ostrom (2010): the formality of group governance, face-to-face communication, information about past actions which entails trust and reputation, how individuals are linked, whether individuals can enter or exit voluntarily, leadership, whether benefits are subtractive or fully shared, the number of participants involved, and heterogeneity of the participants. Concerning the last three determinants, according to Schmidt et al. (2015) it is obvious that collective rationality and fully shared benefits are necessary in order to more easily achieve collective goals; otherwise self-interests will prevail, like mentioned above. With respect to the group size, small groups seem to be more efficient than larger ones; but why? Free riders are more likely to be detected, organizational costs will be less and the benefits obtained collectively are more apparent to each individual member. About the heterogeneity of the group, no consensus is reached. This is largely due to the different possible conceptions of heterogeneity; some define it referring to ideas (diversity among individuals) and others do it in terms of interest (individual differences of interest).

Concerning these determinants affecting the likelihood of outcome, Ostrom (2010) differences between those that are important whether or not the situation is repeated: number of participants, face-to-face communication, subtractive or fully shared benefits and heterogeneity of the group; and those having a possible additional impact when the situation is repeated: information about past actions, how individuals are linked and the freedom of participants to enter or exit. The seven determinants are linked to the second key dimension of social capital: the norms of trust and reciprocity, and their interaction is presented in Figure 1.

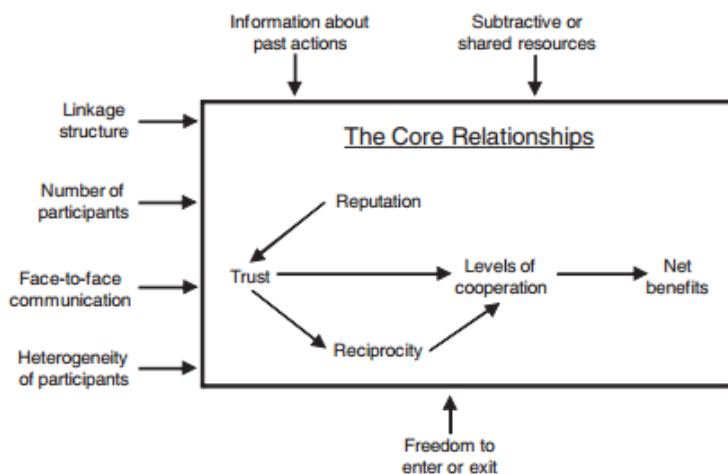


Figure 1: A framework linking determinants to the core relationships in a focal dilemma arena (Ostrom, 2010, p. 163).

Reputation, trust and reciprocity all affect collective action, and reputations for being trustworthy, levels of trust, and reciprocity are positively reinforcing. This means that a good reputation of a certain participant in collective action will positively affect the trust and confidence of other participants in this specific stakeholder; that trust and confidence of participants in other stakeholders will stimulate participants to engage in reciprocity-situations; and that all these elements positively affect the likelihood of an (efficient) collective action in a direct and indirect way. Describing the relationship between the above determinants and the key dimensions of social capital remains difficult; reputation, trust and reciprocity are always being affected by multiple determinants at a given time influencing at their turn collective action. In this way, the interaction between the determinants generates norms and helps or hinders building reputations and trust. All these possible interactional effects complicate the study of collective action even more (Ostrom, 2010). Furthermore, it is also important to mention that the possibly exists that some determinants or interaction effects are missing from this figure. For example, positive outcomes of collective action or positive net benefits may reinforce reputation and levels of cooperation even more. Therefore, during the empirical part of the investigation, there will be attention paid to possible overlooked determinants and interaction effects.

The first determinant of the non-exhaustive list is the number of participants and it seems that a moderate group size is the most ideal situation; in this way, there are still enough resources to mobilize in order to achieve collective action, the transaction costs are limited and the group is not too big to stimulate free rider-behavior. This determinant may also influence other determinants that affect collective action at their turn. Concerning face-to-face communication, it is clear that it stimulates efficient collective action; this way of communication helps as a moral obligation for the participants, stimulates trust and solidarity, and helps them to keep their promises. Also the nature of the benefits is important, nonsubtractible outcomes of collective action even tolerate bigger group sizes; this is because there are more resources present and the outcome is jointly enjoyed by every participant. Of course, this will be the other way around with benefits that are not fully shared. The influence of heterogeneity on collective action is here seen as a negative one, due to the possible conflict that would exist over the distribution of benefits and costs to be borne and the higher transaction costs. In situations that are being repeated, information about the outcome of past actions positively affects collective action; this is only in small group sizes, because reputation and trust become more and more important as group members increase due to the fact that it is impossible to inform every participant about the outcome of actions of the others. In the same way as information has an influence, also the way in which individuals are linked, matters. In order to avoid free riders, there should not be a pool of joint resources where can be benefited from by every participant; people should be linked by unilateral relations which oblige them to contribute resources

if they want to make use of some themselves. Last but not least, also the ability of participants to choose at liberty if they cooperate or not and with whom, will increase the probability of efficient collective action (Ostrom, 2010).

This investigation searches for barriers or enhancers of social capital that influence collective action initiatives towards international markets. It is clear that these can be deduced from the current section; each determinant implies a possible barrier or enhancer of social capital with consequences for the likelihood of an effective collective action with the objective of accessing international markets. They can be seen as both a barrier and an enhancer, depending on the context. To give an example: the existence of high levels of trust is obvious an enhancer in a specific network, while the lack of the same determinant can be considered a serious barrier. Therefore, these determinants will be structured in an analysis scheme and possible barriers or enhancers of social capital can be identified due to the application of this scheme on the in-depth interviews. The analysis scheme and a further explanation can be found in both 3.2 Description of the first-round methodology and 3.3 Description of the second-round methodology.

1.2.4 Need of a brokering or facilitating agent in relation to social capital, collective action and tourism destinations

The relevance and usefulness of the presence of a good functioning network, social structures and relationships has already been commented in the previous sections. Nevertheless, this is not something self-evident and easy to establish at the level of a tourism destination. Many actors that have different statutes, interests, personalities, levels of experience, etc. can be distinguished and bringing these together in an efficient network is not an effortless task that can be done by any actor. But this is exactly what many tourism destinations need: networking among the different stakeholders. Even if tourism entrepreneurs are competitors, it does not mean that they are not open to possible cooperation or the so-called “coopetition”. A lot of tourism businesses are small and medium enterprises and this type of firms need connections even more; leakages towards other tourism destinations can be scaled down and more local employment and income generation can be created, stimulating the multiplier effect all together. Especially in tourism destinations considered being secondary or complementary the networking is even more crucial, because the leakages towards other tourism destinations are a big barrier. The concept of a secondary tourism destination will be further elaborated in the third chapter about the presentation of the research area. Thus in order to motivate, stimulate and facilitate the cooperation of stakeholders involved in tourism, networking or the development of collaborative networks and tools is essential (Vanneste & Ryckaert, 2011; Wilson, Fesenmaier, Fesenmaier, & Van Es, 2001).

Networking clearly refers to the first key and more structural dimension of social capital and by doing an effort to achieve this, shared and broader objectives can be reached by, for example, creating strategic alliances. This takes place in a broader social capital context and it explains why it is also dependent on other conditions like commitment, trust, competence, control, etc. Again, the interaction effect between the earlier mentioned key dimensions and determinants pops up. The average type of network of a tourism destination includes a presence of different actors, both from the public and the private sector; in the ideal situation they all try to work together, to share information and to reach higher shared objectives. In this context, the superseded notion of “government” is obliged to make room for “governance”, which goes beyond a rigid steering function and decision-making only in the hands of the government. This implies a governing process influenced by more and different actors, going from public authorities, to institutional organizations, tourism entrepreneurs and many more (Pansiri, 2008; Vanneste & Ryckaert, 2011).

It seems obvious that this so-called “governance”, the improving of the network and the stimulating of collective action initiatives leads to the necessity of big efforts and time-consuming activities together with a considerable amount of challenges and difficulties. This is exactly why key persons or organizations starting and sustaining the network, dealing with conflicts in the networks (e.g. handling free riders in the group) and facilitating collective action are indispensable. The step towards proper coordination of a network or a group that wants to achieve collective action is not something easy to accomplish; not only does this person or specific organization has to have the required managerial and coordinating capacity to do this, it also needs the support of the network members. Professional or institutional organizations are often preferred due to their capacity and the lack of having an own agenda. The latter implies that this broker or facilitating actor is only indirectly concerned by tourism development, which makes sure that its approach is not orientated towards individual or particular benefits or uses. If the brokering role is taken over by an entrepreneur or a political entity or person, own agendas appear on the stage. The approach might become respectively explicitly enterprise-orientated, which does not benefit the entire group of stakeholders, or it might be of a temporal nature due to elections, which hinders continuation of policy (Vanneste & Ryckaert, 2011).

In this context, the FMTC seems to be an appropriate actor to assume the role of a brokering or facilitating actor. Being a municipal foundation for tourism, the organization should dispose of the needed managerial and coordinating capacity. It is exaggerated to say that the FMTC is only indirectly concerned by tourism development; it is indeed an entity promoting tourism in their area of interference and therefore the clear objective is, of course, tourism development in the canton of Cuenca. However, no direct economic benefits are involved for the members of the FMTC, neither are the positions determined by political elections. Thus, no clear own agenda can interfere

in the managed approach. They are estimated to be professional enough to assume a coordinating and brokering role, which possibly constitutes an important barrier or enhancer of collective action initiatives. Whether they are really suited and supported by the actors to execute this important role needs to be pointed out by the analysis and results of the interviews in the third big part of this investigation.

1.3 Social capital and collective action in relation to tourism

1.3.1 The importance of social capital for a tourism destination

The keyword in this chapter is tourism development and in the empirical part of the thesis: tourism development towards accessing international markets. Local or regional tourism development is not merely dependent on economic circumstances; researchers who manage this rigid conception risk losing out of sight the importance of the community and social aspects (Macbeth, Carson, & Northcote, 2004). Nevertheless, the economic form of capital and its importance cannot be neglected since tourism is an economic sector or industry in the first place with a clear supply and demand side. It is exactly the economic dimension that should stimulate broader social objectives like strengthening networks of social cohesion or creating alliances (Barbini, 2008). Aside from political, cultural, symbolic, natural, human and economic capital, also social capital can be distinguished. This latter should be seen as both a condition and tool for tourism development, if there is absolutely no presence of any functioning level of social capital at the tourism destination, development stays out of the question. At the same time, there exists a bi-directional relationship between social capital and tourism development. Macbeth et al. (2004) point out that tourism development can only be successful if social capital does exist and, the other way around, development can contribute to and improve the already existing social capital at the tourism destination.

In this way, common social objectives become equally or sometimes even more important than the mere economic dimension of tourism; this will be recognized by tourism agents and leads to cooperation in a variety of activities. The complexity of tourism, with its abundance of public, private and social agents and the blurring of the lines between them, provides many local agents who have a possibility to participate and intervene. Therefore they have an influence on tourism development. Exactly the complex nature of the relationships and the various ways to capitalize local potential culminate in unequal local development. Thus, different tourism destinations evolve and develop in distinctive ways and at slower or faster rates, which can be explained by the fact that the range and nature of social relationships, present at a destination, differ over time and space. After all, social capital is a social construction and this characteristic makes clear why identical efforts or attempts of

collective action in different destinations have different results when implementing certain policies or institutions (Barbini, 2008). Nevertheless, it is not only a social construct and therefore social capital also has tangible and objective components such as inherited know-how, know-what, etc. from the past.

Another important keyword is networking, which refers to the first above explained dimension of social capital that has to be present in order to achieve collective action or joint operations. This structural dimension facilitates and promotes the organization of collective action and can be seen as coalitions of joint operations. In tourism, these networks obviously include public and private partnerships and civil society, where the formal and informal relationships between local government, the community and the industry are influential. If tourism destinations want to innovate or develop in order to attract the desired type of tourism, the importance of networks improving and boosting collective action cannot be underestimated. These networks are likely to be found within and around tourism's formal organizations, constituting a forum for management and policy towards common goals, and exist at different geographical scales (which is the case with the CMBR). A (local) DMO is certainly one of the most considerable formal tourism organizations and *"the linkages between the LTO [local tourism organization] and local government represent one of the most important and influential networks shaping the development of the industry at the local level"* (Dredge, 2006, p. 270). This development includes both the opportunities and the restraints of networks shaping collective action due to possible narrow-minded and competitive politics influencing the relationships. In this thesis, the network of the local DMO will be investigated exactly because of its high organizational potential to promote, achieve and improve collective action (Dredge, 2006).

1.3.2 The importance of collective action in relation to tourism

Three types or dimensions of action can be distinguished according to Cara (2008): public action, private action and collective action. While the first two are starting from the logic of the state or the market respectively, collective action starts from the logic of consensus and conflict. Tourism development is considered not to be an economic process but the establishment of a social mechanism in which communicational processes and interaction between various agents shape conflict or consensus, and therefore collective action is necessary; whether it is in an institutionalized, organized or spontaneous form (Cara, 2008). If tourism destinations want to develop in a sustainable way a lot of resources are required, which are not entirely possessed by a single tourism agent. If different agents do not collaborate in order to combine these resources, it will be difficult to meet the demands of the consumer and to guarantee the long-term benefits and the sustainable nature of the tourism projects; therefore, collective action appears to be a first

important step to overcome these complications. As a matter of fact, it is not reckless to say that collective action is essential for tourism development because it is *“any form of cooperation and association that brings together people with common interests that would be more difficult or even impossible to accomplish individually”* (Olson, 1999; Nassar, 2001 & Sandler, 2004 cited in Schmidt et al., 2015, p. 250).

Collective action circumscribes the phenomenon of sharing resources, joint planning and decision-making, ongoing relations, cooperation and competitive situations, formal and informal contracts, entities of representation, etc. In this way, a DMO is an important agent that can organize, promote and engage in all kinds of collective action initiatives. Furthermore both good leadership and coordination of the group appear to be decisive for the success of collective action attempts (Schmidt et al., 2015). In the study of Schmidt et al. (2015) about collective actions in sustainable rural tourism in Paraná, Brazil, several collective action initiatives were found: hospitality workshops, visits to other collective tourism initiatives, participation in events and conferences and advertising material including catalogues, brochures and websites. They also underpinned the importance of coordinating institutions in the bringing together of the different stakeholders and creating awareness. Due to the fragmented nature of tourism, a DMO is therefore essential. Coordination is needed if many different tourism agents are participating in the tourism planning process. It is one of the first steps that have to be taken towards collective action initiatives (Waayers et al., 2012). Thus, this leads back again to the crucial role of the DMO, whose network will be explored and identified according to the typology made in 1.1.3 and according to Granovetter's typology (1973), who says two types of networks can be found: homogeneous with strong ties and heterogeneous with weak ties. They refer to the characteristics of the members themselves, like Stone (2001) mentioned, and in the first, the same knowledge and resources are shared by the participants; while in the second, there will be more conflict but it will be easier to achieve innovation. A balance between innovation and absence of conflict should be found (Schmidt et al., 2015). The related typology of the FMTC will be discussed in the empirical research part 4.1 Network of the Fundación Municipal de *Turismo para Cuenca*.

1.3.3 The evaluation of collective action in tourism

Besides the determinants mentioned above in section 1.2.2, also other conditions determine the possible success of collective action: motivations, personalities, perceived roles of the participant stakeholders, recognition of interdependence among stakeholders and joint formulation of aims and objectives (Waayers et al., 2012). Bramwell & Sharman (1999) developed a theoretical framework to evaluate collective action initiatives in tourism policy-making and their collective learning and consensus-building. Three categories were proposed: the scope of collaborative arrangements,

intensity of collaborative arrangements and the extent to which consensus emerges. Concerning each category, several levels of relationships and representations pop up, that are summarized by Waayers et al. (2012, p. 677) represented in Figure 2 below:

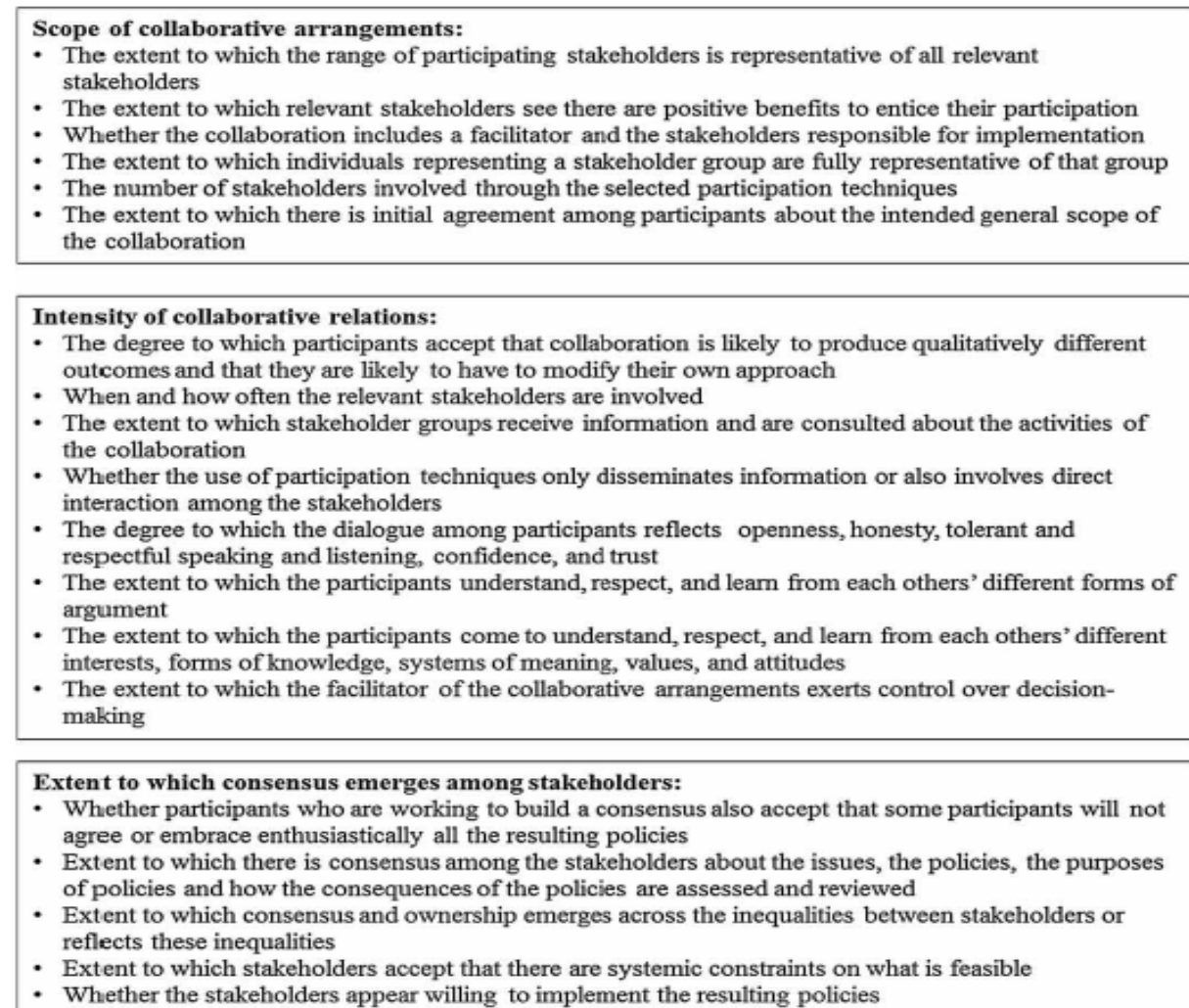


Figure 2: Framework to evaluate collective action initiatives in tourism policy-making and their collective learning and consensus-building (Bramwell & Sharman, 1999 modified in Waayers et al., 2012, p. 677).

As can be seen above, several issues and dimensions need to be addressed when evaluating collective action attempts. Again, the importance of a stakeholder with a brokering or facilitating role is underlined by the third item of the first category. A DMO can take initiative and encourage participants and at the same time they may be the one partly responsible for the policy implementation, which is important for the availability of accurate information and promotion of acceptance of the solutions by others. This is also tricky, because they can initiate a project without sufficient involvement or resources and can be held responsible for the implementation. Nevertheless, the control of the facilitator or convenor over the decision-making process remains important and is often expected by the members; this is reflected by the last item of the second category (Bramwell & Sharman, 1999; Vanneste & Ryckaert, 2011).

Next to this theoretical framework, also another theory can be used in order to judge the success of collaborative processes: Mandell's (1999, p.6) continuum of collaboration, which takes into account varying degrees of collaborative efforts going “*from loose linkages and coalitions to more lasting structural arrangements*”. The continuum is represented in Figure 3:

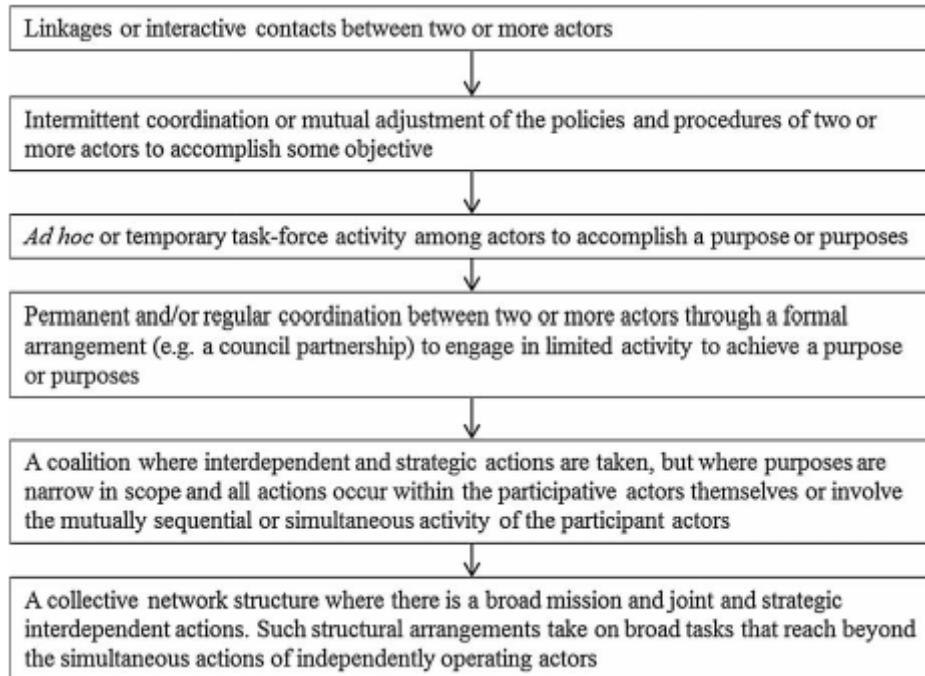


Figure 3: Continuum of collaborative efforts (Mandell, 1999, p. 6 modified in Waayers et al., 2012, p. 678).

Starting from simple informal contacts, collaboration can quickly evolve along the continuum into a collective or network structure, characterized by interaction between the tourism agents and strategies, supported by policy and management, in order to execute action towards common goals (Waayers et al., 2012). Both of these theories and models will be used in part 3, the empirical research, in order to analyze the most significant successful and less successful collective action initiatives in the CMBR.

2. Using systems thinking to look into and understand tourism complexity

2.1 Systems Theory and systems thinking as a methodology

2.1.1 Background and evolution of thinking in systems

General Systems Theory goes way back and its founders and adherents did all share the same idea about a whole being more than the sum of its parts; this was already formulated and argued by Aristotle. His holistic view experienced some struggle and had to contend with the more reductionist approach that rather breaks down the whole in order to study and look at the individual parts, which favored separated concepts, theories and methodologies for each science. In this way, single sciences became more focused on themselves and halfway through the 20th century the necessity for communication between disciplines arose: integrative approaches, or system approaches, developed and General Systems Theory served as a universal language between the different sciences. In this way systems thinking has evolved over time into a practical methodology, leaving behind its rigid use as a mere theoretical framework (Dekkers, 2015).

Systems thinking as a methodology is used for more abstract modeling as well for (more practical) applications and a distinction can be made between hard systems thinking (in e.g. engineering, management, computing, etc.), systems theories as aid to decision-making (often in socio-technical organizations) and soft systems thinking (focused on social systems). These last two combined cover “systems analysis”, which developed separately from systems theory and is not only restricted to mathematical models for decision-making, but also provides qualitative models focusing on informational systems and organizations. It is exactly in this domain that Applied Systems Theory lends itself for practical use and as a more applied approach; a more formal way of modeling to describe and analyze different systems is provided by the practical and holistic methodology of Applied Systems Theory (Dekkers, 2015). Therefore, the latter seems not inappropriate to discuss when describing social capital, or rather collective action, at the level of a tourism destination; social capital and tourism being both complex and holistic phenomena that ask for an applied approach. This last thought will be further elaborated in the next two sections (2.2 Systems thinking and tourism and 2.3 Systems thinking, social capital and collective action).

Nevertheless, this more specific type of systems theory and methodology makes use of basic concepts, definitions and models intrinsic to systems thinking in more general systems theories, due to their shared focus on understanding the complexity of different systems. Basic concepts such as elements, functions, relationships, dynamics, etc. will be discussed in the next section and the focus will be on both general systems (for the basic concepts) and on complex systems (for additional

concepts) because systems thinking will be used as an introduction for understanding the complex systems of tourism and social capital.

2.1.2 Basic concepts of system thinking and complex systems

The way in which a system is investigated depends on the nature of the study. Therefore also the aims and the perception of the investigator influence the looking at a system and the identifying of the basic components. The most basic component of a system is an “element” and the general rule says that every element within a system needs to be directly connected to at least one other element in the system in order to be considered as a part of the system; these “relationships” or dependencies amongst elements can be mono-or bidirectional. Extra relationships with elements outside the systems, in the “environment”, are also possible and in this way, both an internal and an external structure of the system can be recognized (Dekkers, 2015). A possible system is represented in Figure 4 in which the dotted line represents the boundary of the system and the separation between the internal and external structure.

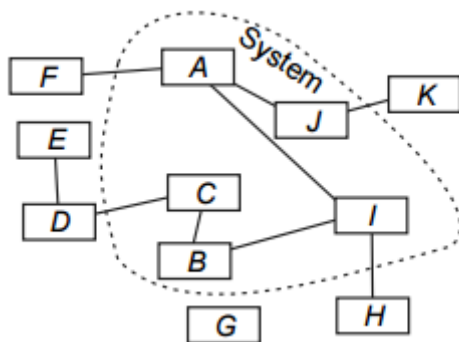


Figure 4: System with elements and its relationships in which D,E, F, G, H and K are not part of the system (Dekkers, 2015, p. xiv).

The second concept is that of “functions” which are generated through “processes”, due to the possible dynamic character of systems (they can also be static). Elements process a certain input and generate a possible different output and therefore they have a certain role or “function” within the system. This automatically leads to the next and third concept of “dynamics”, another key word of this thesis, referring to the possible dynamic behavior of a system and to the interactions between the different elements caused by their “functions” that influence the working of the different elements. These interactions can generate, at their turn, an effect that is broader and therefore not only limited to the single elements but affects the whole system; new outcomes can pop up and influence the system again, which is seen as the fourth concept or “synthesis” (Dekkers, 2015; Hoff, 1992 & Mella, 2012).

Last but not least, the concept of “environment”, or the external structure, pops up, which is different than the “universe” because the “environment” forms a part of the “universe”, or the reality, and is therefore smaller; only external elements that have a direct relationship with one of

the system, but are not part of the system itself, can be seen as the “environment” (Dekkers, 2015). In Figure 4, this would be elements D, F, H and K. It should also be mentioned that all the above mentioned concepts can be placed on a continuum going from the individual level (the parts) to a more integrated level (the whole); which is explained by zooming and considered to be an fundamental rule to study systems by Mella (2012). The author also emphasizes the importance of an important element of this thesis: “the dynamics” and stresses that both linear and circular, thus the relationships and the interrelationships, between elements should be investigated. Together with the first and most basic concept of “element”, the four other concepts of “synthesis”, “dynamics”, “environment” and “universe” are considered being the most crucial ones in this investigation. Therefore these will be further elaborated in relation to tourism, social capital and collective action in the next two sections 2.2 Systems thinking and tourism and 2.3 Systems thinking, social capital and collective action.

2.2 Systems thinking and tourism

2.2.1 The tourism phenomenon as a system

It is generally known that tourism is a complex and multidisciplinary phenomenon that cannot even be defined in an unambiguous way. One of the oldest and recognized definitions considers tourism as *“the sum of the phenomena and relationships arising from the travel and stay of non-residents, in so far as they do not lead to permanent residence and are not connected to any earning activity”* (Hunziker & Krapf, 1941). Exactly because of these complex relationships arising from interconnectedness of different tourism elements, it lends itself ideally to be understood from a systems thinking viewpoint and terminology. The systems thinking holistic approach of looking at the whole rather than the individual elements and understanding that a whole is larger than the sum of its parts, fits perfectly the idea that the tourism phenomenon is not a mere jumble of accommodation, transportation, attractions, services, etc. (Hartman, 2016). Therefore the above presented definition of tourism asks for renewing and adaptation, because it is more than a simple sum. The basic elements of the tourism system can be seen in Figure 5 and were defined by Leiper (1979, p. 395-402) who distinguishes tourists (the human element), three geographical elements: tourist generating region, tourist destination region and transit region; and an industrial element or the tourist industry. All the elements are (inter)connected, influenced by broader environments or the universe (physical, cultural, social, economic, political, technological, etc.) and the tourist industry is present in every geographical element. The subjoined system is only one of the many possible conceptions of the tourism system and it seems rather dated and simple. Nevertheless, it gives a basic understanding of the phenomenon.

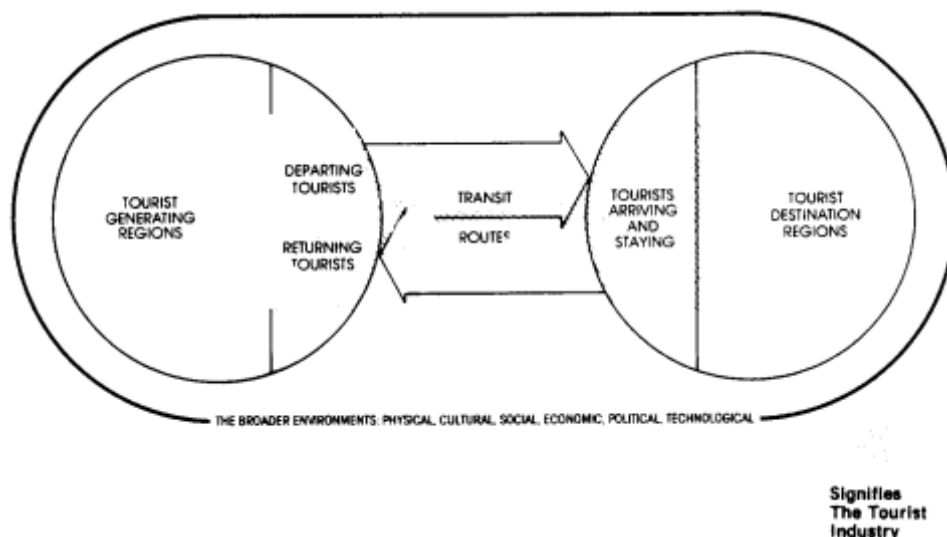


Figure 5: The tourism system (Leiper, 1979, p. 404).

How to analyze the structure and behavior of a system? Two ways are possible: looking into the system as a whole or focusing on certain elements and relationships, without forgetting the interaction with their environment and universe (Dekkers, 2015). In this research, the focus is on the CMBR as a tourist destination region; thus, on a specific element of the tourism system being one of the geographical elements. The CMBR on its own constitutes a “subsystem” consisting of a cluster or subset of elements within the original system; at the same time, the original system becomes the new environment that influences the subsystem. It is even possible to consider the whole tourism system as a set of interrelated subsystems. Nevertheless, this consideration of a tourism destination as a subsystem of the tourism phenomenon does not change the original relationships; they all remain the same and the subsystem becomes a system in its own right (Dekkers, 2015).

Within this subsystem or the CMBR, different “elements” or components like tourism players, attractions, accommodation, etc. are distinguished. In a tourism related context of system thinking, these tourism players are often called “agents” or “actors”. They function in a system that can be considered dynamic. This means that a tourism destination or the CMBR is showing interaction with its environment, that it is characterized by dynamic behavior and that it is therefore seen as unpredictable. For a tourism destination even the slightest change in the environment or the external structure possibly means an alteration in the internal and/or the external structure of relationships of the subsystem. Also the environment sees itself influenced by the history of events over time: e.g. tourism flows towards Ecuador and within Ecuador can decrease due to an economic crisis. What the exact output of these changes will be is different in every situation and therefore the system’s dynamic behavior is unpredictable. The result of these characteristics is the presence of complex dynamics both within the CMBR and outside this subsystem: relationships between actors are influenced by events both in –and outside the tourism destination and circular cause-and-effect

relations are omnipresent. This latter means that a small change in one relationship or element possibly influences other elements or relationships, possibly having again effect on the first relationship or element. Referring to the concept of “non-linearity” of systems thinking explaining complexity, the above mentioned unpredictable behavior is a clear consequence of a tourism destination being characterized as a “non-linear” complex system. This means that an outcome of the system cannot be brought back to the individual behavior of a single element; various elements interact with each other producing complex patterns (Dekkers, 2015; Hartman, 2016).

Besides paying attention to a subsystem, or the tourism destination constituted by the CMBR within the global tourism system, this investigation also looks into an “aspectsystem”. Again, just like a subsystem, an aspectsystem is a system in its own right. Within the CMBR, not all the elements or components are important for this study; the focus will be on certain relationships within this subsystem. Only relationships between actors within the network of the brokering or facilitating agent, the FMTC, are investigated; thus constituting the aspectsystem, or subset of relationships, of interest. This means that some elements are discarded due to the lack of a relationship with the FMTC. In Figure 6 below, the CMBR can be represented as a subsystem, consisting of the grey area, within the tourism system. However, if A would be the FMTC, the focused on aspectsystem would be the relationships existing between A, F, I and J (Dekkers, 2015).

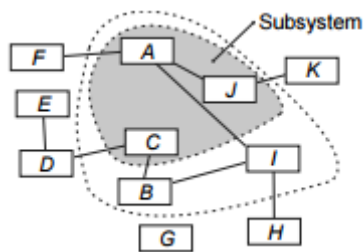


Figure 6: A subsystem within the tourism system (Dekkers, 2015, p. 28).

To finish the current section, one remaining problem still needs to be discussed: the boundaries of the system. Defining the boundaries of the global tourism system remains an impossible task. Being an open system shaped by its environment and universe, the boundaries change all the time, influencing the dynamics in both the internal and external structure of the system. It is obvious that also the CMBR as a subsystem and the network of the FMTC as an aspectsystem are open systems. They interact with their environment and universe and therefore the lines between the actual system and its environment are blurring and continuously changing. However, in order to study a subsystem or an aspectsystem, boundaries between the internal and external structure should be established. For the subsystem these coincide with the geographical boundaries of a tourism destination; it is the territory of the CMBR that constitutes the internal

structure. Concerning the aspectsystem, the internal structure corresponds with the actors forming part of the network of the FMTC located within the geographical territory of the CMBR. The external structure, on the other hand, consists of actors included in the FMTC's network but located outside the geographical boundaries of the subsystem (Dekkers, 2015).

2.2.2 The tourism destination as a complex adaptive system

Not only is the tourism phenomenon known for its complexity, also tourism destinations can be seen as complex systems. Both the internal complexity existing due to the big amount of actors and the possible emergence of unpredicted new dynamic behavior cause this complexity. In the ideal context, tourism destinations should behave as "complex adaptive systems" (CAS). This means that they should have the capacity to be adaptive, which is a necessary condition to develop, to stay competitive in the global tourism market and to offer a sustainable kind of tourism. Tourism destinations are dynamic systems, characterized by multi-level and multi-actor processes. In a tourism destination, the different elements are interrelated products, sectors, institutions, etc. managed by a variety of tourism agents whose simultaneous interactions lead to labor, firms, networks, technologies and institutions (Brouder & Eriksson, 2013; Dekkers, 2015; Hartman, 2016).

Understanding this complexity has as objective the improvement of the tourism destination's behavior; stimulating adaptive capacity and self-organization can lead to a more optimal functioning system. These characteristics imply the capability of, in this context, a network of tourism actors to react in an adequate way to changes and to improve their performance. Self-organization also refers to the ability of doing this without one single agent controlling the entire process. This requirement brings us again to the shift from classic government to governance: not only public authorities are needed, but a multiple involvement of both public and private actors in issues concerning policy making and decision-making is needed together with a mixture of top-down and bottom-up approaches (Hartman, 2016). This idea and the related requirements are further elaborated in the next section.

2.3 Systems thinking, social capital and collective action

The study of social capital at the level of a tourism destination lends itself perfectly to a systems thinking approach. Both tourism and social capital are complex phenomena characterized by their final appearance or form being more than the mere sum of its constituent parts. This idea is already explained in the previous section in relation to tourism and it was said in the very beginning that, in relation to social capital, new dynamics arise from social connections that would not have been present if the agents operated independently. The final tourism phenomenon is not the same as an enumeration of primary and secondary tourism products and in –and outgoing tourism flows; just as

the simple presence of relationships is no conclusive evidence of the existence of social capital. These thoughts are perfectly explained by two, one of them earlier explained, concepts of systems thinking: “non-linearity” and “emergence”. This latter refers to *“properties of the whole that cannot be solely explained by the properties of the constituent elements”* (Dekkers, 2015, p. 23). As a result, the holistic and integrative approach of systems thinking seems suitable. Furthermore, it explains why a reductionist approach on the other hand will lose the dynamics between the elements out of sight, due to its investigation of the elements one by one (Dekkers, 2015).

Social capital at the level of a tourism destination can be seen as a separate subsystem system within the general and global social capital system. It is formed by several elements or actors that are connected through mono –or bidirectional relationships; the system is, just like a tourism destination, a complex system with all the earlier mentioned characteristics. The only difference is that the basic elements and relationships to consider will be people and their interactions. Again, the boundaries need to be defined, which is difficult in the case of open social systems. The subsystem corresponds to social capital at the level of a tourism destination, thus at the level of the CMBR. Only in social capital present at the level of the network of the FMTC will be looked into, which makes this network a social capital aspectsystem. The internal structure coincides with the territory of the CMBR, while the external structure of the social capital system is to be found in the part of the FMTC’s network outside of the boundaries of the subsystem.

The network or structural dimension of social capital coincides with the relationship aspect of systems thinking, which transforms this dimension in the social capital aspectsystem of interest. In this context, collective action can be seen as the result of all kinds of dynamics originating from the interactions in this aspectsystem. It is both proof of the existence of a network and of the presence of norms of trust and reciprocity. Nevertheless, the persons forming part of the network still have to interact with each other in cooperative way stimulated by these norms in order to really achieve (efficient) collective action. If this happens, a certain dynamic arises leading to results that cannot be brought back to the mere existence of a network in which norms are present. Furthermore, the effects of these interactions do not only influence one single element or person; on the contrary, the whole network can be affected. It can even create for example new network partners or synergies which will influence the system again. This idea refers to the earlier mentioned concept of “synthesis” and again to the concepts of “non-linearity” and “emergence”.

Like mentioned before, tourism areas *“are more or less cohesive entities, being increasingly conceptualized as systems and networks”* (Hartman, 2016, p. 303; Haugland, Ness, Grønseth, & Aarstad, 2011, p. 268). Of course, not all tourism areas are considered complex adaptive systems, but they can eventually evolve into one. They are continuously changing and are characterized by uncertain development paths towards the future; therefore adaptive capacity can be reached over

time. Several authors emphasize diversity as one of the most important conditions to reach and improve adaptive capacity and to tackle the complexity issue (Duit, Galaz, Eckerberg, & Ebbesson, 2010; Jacobs, 2016). This diversity can be understood in relation to tourism firms, products and experiences. Having more options to choose from will only increase the likelihood of various positive future development paths. However, diversity can also increase the complexity and therefore limit the adaptive capacity again; a high amount of actors and networks will only hinder the governance process (Hartman, 2016). In this context, De Roo (2012) mentions the necessity of finding a balance between both diversity and coherence, which is a real governance challenge. If this is achieved, tourism areas will be both robust and dynamic; they can overcome difficulties imposed by the internal and external structure and new development paths can be obtained. It is exactly here where the importance of social capital and collective action pops up again. Having the possibility of choosing and changing between different development paths asks for good governance, coordination and collective efforts. In order to find a good degree of diversity, a high degree of interconnectivity within the system is needed. Both vertical and horizontal linkages should be established; these *“connect actors on different spatial scales or governance levels and support a balance between centralized and decentralized control”* on the one hand and *“they connect public and private actors and institutions from different sectors and policy domains across a spatial scale or governance level”* on the other hand. In addition, also a brokering or facilitating agent (or organization) is required to try to preserve these linkages, which was already mentioned in the previous section. The author also refers implicitly to the crucial role of social capital by saying that: *“All these networks and arrangements [...] are important to build trust among actors, ease communication and coordination, foster exchange of views and stimulate effective collaboration”* (Hartman, 2016, p. 307; Haugland et al., 2011, p. 269).

III Empirical research

3. Presentation of the research area and methodology

3.1 Presentation of the research area: “Cajas Massif Biosphere Reserve in Ecuador”

3.1.1 The extended Biosphere Reserve Macizo del Cajas

The choice for the Cajas Massif Biosphere Reserve (CMBR) in Ecuador as the research area is related to the context of a broader doctoral study conducted by PhD researcher Santiago Rodríguez Girón, with a focus on the CMBR which in turn has to do with personal experiences at and contacts with the Cuenca Municipal Public Enterprise for Telecommunications, Drinking water, Sewage and Sanitation (ETAPA EP). It was this organization that led the Promotional Committee for the Declaration by UNESCO of the Biosphere Reserve Area *Macizo del Cajas* as a world Biosphere Reserve. The CMBR is the common name used throughout this thesis to denominate the research area; nevertheless, the actual research zone is more extended than the corresponding geographical area of the biosphere reserve and can be seen as the general south of Ecuador. This designation is quite open to interpretation and what can be seen as part of this destination varies between different interviewed actors. The following represents the territory of the CMBR, accompanied by smaller map visualizing the location of the biosphere reserve in Ecuador.



Figure 7: Territory of the CMBR (ETAPA EP, 2017).

The Cajas Massif was declared a Biosphere Area by UNESCO's Man and the Biosphere Program. It was finalized on May 28, 2013 and thanks to its multi-scalarity, several development plans (national, regional and local ones) were aligned with the conservation of the diversity present in the area. Biosphere reserves constitute learning laboratories for sustainable development. In this way, they are areas in which new approaches and policies are tested, always with three main objectives in mind: stimulating biodiversity, improving quality of life and focusing on development that is sustainable in an economic, sociocultural and environmental way. Sustainable development is the keyword and viability between the three different dimensions is pursued in the CMBR. Not only is the area declared as a UNESCO Biosphere Reserve in 2013, also several other UNESCO declarations are to be found in the territory. The first one is Santa Ana de los Cuatro Ríos de Cuenca, or more specific, the historic city center of Cuenca dating from the Spanish colonial era. It was its unique architecture and urban structure that led to its declaration as UNESCO World Heritage Site in 1999 (book, p. 103). The second one is the "Panama Hat" that has its origin and is manufactured, unlike the name suggests, in three southern Ecuadorian provinces: Manabí, Azuay and Cañar. The straw hat is made from the *toquilla* palm to which the Spanish name refers: *sombrero de paja toquilla*. It was declared as Intangible Cultural Heritage by UNESCO in December 2012 (book, p. 102). Last but not least also the Andean Road System of 30,000 kilometers, once created by the Incas because of

defense, trade and communication objectives, became a UNESCO World Heritage Site in 2014. The network, or *Qhapaq Ñan*, crosses Ecuador and various other Latin-American countries like Argentina, Bolivia, Chile, Colombia and Peru. All these declarations make Cuenca, capital of the Azuay Province, and the southern region of Ecuador a unique destination (Rodríguez, S., Rodas, F., Schubert, A., & Vasco, S., 2015; UNESCO World Heritage Centre, 2017).



Figure 8: Área de Biosfera Macizo del Cajas (Ecuador Times BG, 2013).

Besides the big degree of biodiversity and diversity in terms of culture, climate and geography, also an administrative diversity is present in the CMBR. Like displayed in Figure 8, the CMBR covers several administrative boundaries and to be more specific: four provinces, fifteen cantons and 64 parishes. Ecuador knows an administrative division of 24 provinces and corresponding provincial governments of which Cañar, El Oro, Azuay and Guayas are the four lying partially within the territory of the biosphere reserve. The second-level subdivision is the one of the cantons or municipalities; fifteen of them are being part of the CMBR. Next in line are the rural and urban parishes of which there are 64

included in the biosphere reserve; the capital of each canton is the parish with the corresponding name. Each administration level disposes of a decentralized autonomous government or a *gobierno autónomo descentralizado* (GAD). These decentralized institutions receive certain political, administrative and financial autonomy and besides the provincial, cantonal and parochial GADs also several regional GADs at a higher level are installed. This multi-scale governance and administrative divisions make the CMBR even more complex and difficult in terms of tourism policy, planning and management (ACTIVATE ECUADOR, 2014; Instituto Nacional de Estadística y Censos del Ecuador (web), 2016; Rodríguez, S. et al., 2015).

3.1.2 General facts and figures about tourism in the southern region of Ecuador

The current section is based on the most recent statistical rapport available at the time of doing this investigation about the tourism offer and demand in the city of Cuenca. In the next chapter of the results, the lack of statistics will be often mentioned, so the current discussed rapport is already a big improvement. The research was carried out by the Faculty of Economic Sciences of the University of Cuenca in August 2016. Visitors were questioned in two moments: when they left their accommodation (only hotels were counted) and when they left the city through the airport or the bus station. In order not to count the same visitors twice, only the visitors that were leaving with private transport were questioned in the hotels. Separate results were obtained for international and national visitors (Grupo de Investigación en Economía Regional GIER, 2016).

Concerning the age, the minimum and maximum ages vary between 20 to 76 and 20 to 80 for respectively international and national visitors. The averages are quite similar: 37,9 for international and 36 for national visitors. With respect to the origin of the international visitors, the biggest international market is clearly the USA, and most of all New York, with a percentage of 34,6%. Like the report mentions, this is probably due to the proximity and the use of the dollar. The USA is followed by Germany (8%), Spain (7,2%), Colombia (6,9%) and Argentina (4%). After these countries, Canada is next in line with 3% and other Latin-American countries like Chile and Venezuela follow with significant low percentages. 30% is originating from elsewhere over the world. For the national visitors Quito, Guayaquil, Loja and Machala are the biggest visitor generating provinces with percentages of respectively 27%; 8,2%; 7% and 4,9%. The percentages of the other provinces are so disaggregated and dispersed that they are not significant at the individual level (Grupo de Investigación en Economía Regional GIER, 2016).

The principal reason for the visit in the category of international visitors was quite clear: 63% indicated recreation. Other examples of principal motives were visiting family and friends (15%), business and professional activities (12%), studies or investigation (3,8)%, shopping (1,9%), other (1,9), congresses (0,6%) and health (0,3%). In the category of the national visitors only 17,5% indicated recreation; the main motive was visiting family and friends (35%), followed by business and professional activities (28,3%), health (7,5%), studies or investigation (6,5%), congresses (2,3%), shopping (1,6%) and other (1,2%). On the question measuring the reasons why they chose Cuenca, one third of the international visitors answered it was for the attractions (29%). Other answers were the climate (25%), culture (24%), nature (9%), prices (8%) and gastronomy (4%). The national visitors also indicated attractions the most (30,08%), followed by culture (22,46%), climate (14,83%), nature (12,71%), the prices (11,02%) and gastronomy (8,9%) (Grupo de Investigación en Economía Regional GIER, 2016).

In relation to the organization of the trip, it seems that the independent segment is still prevailing; both international and national visitors are traveling significantly more alone, this followed by traveling with family or the partner. People making a trip with an organized group were only represented by 4,1% of the international visitors and by 1,9% of the national ones. Among the international visitors, 35% were repeat visitors; while this was even 91,2% for the national ones. Last but not least, the spending of the visitors still needs to be discussed. Because this is determined by both the principal motive and the length of stay, the average daily expenditure per person linked to the motive seems the most appropriate variable. The results can be found in Table 1Table 2 (Grupo de Investigación en Economía Regional GIER, 2016).

Average daily expenditure	International visitors	National visitors
Recreation	\$46,42	\$47,54
Visiting family and friends	\$79,21	\$29,36
Business	\$148,38	\$104,98
Congresses	\$0,00	\$75,96
Studies	\$33,93	\$32,36
Health	\$8,33	\$21,93
Shopping	\$300,00	\$61,39
Other	\$87,50	\$7,00

Table 2: Average daily expenditure per person for international and national visitors, in US Dollar (own reprocessing of tables in Grupo de Investigación en Economía Regional GIER, 2016, pp. 24,41).

3.1.3 The southern region of Ecuador as a secondary tourism destination

This section will elaborate further on tourism in the southern region of Ecuador. First of all, a theoretical distinction has to be made between primary or main tourism destinations and complementary or secondary destinations. This latter is sometimes also called a stopover destination, which includes a short length of stay and often no overnight stays. Like the name says, these are destinations visited on the way to or from a primary destination. Furthermore, a difference in both tourist motives and behavior contributes to the distinction between two types of independent travelers (so no organized groups or packages): those who chose the tourism destination as primary or only location and those who see it more as a secondary or stopover destination. Not only do primary destination tourists travel more often in order to visit friends or family, they are also inclined to spend more, stay longer, diversify their activities and they are characterized by an interest in visiting backcountry areas. Besides the behavior and the motives, also the flight length influences the choice for a certain destination type; visitors coming in with long-haul

flights are more likely to be secondary destination travelers, while short-haul markets have higher chances of being considered main destination visitors (McKercher, 2001; McKercher & Wong, 2004).

If the earlier mentioned theory is applied to the CMBR or the southern region of Ecuador, it is expected that the destination is seen as a secondary or stopover destination for international visitors. Coming in with long-haul flights means spending a big amount of time to get there; therefore they are interested in visiting several destinations, which would make the CMBR not their main destination. This reasoning also expects a lower average time or night spent, a lower visitation number for neighboring attractions in the “backcountry” (e.g. municipalities of Cañar, Paute, Gualaceo, Chordeleg, Sígig, Saraguro, etc.) and main interests limited to visit convenience-based attractions in well-known tourist nodes or along main transportation corridors (e.g. historic city center and museums, Cajas NP, etc.). In this case it is expected not only to be true for independent travelers but also for organized groups and package travelers, or at least the ones that compose them. They are also expected to have the same vision about Cuenca and surroundings being a secondary destination. Contrary to the long-haul market, the short-haul travelers or in this case the domestic market and the neighboring markets are more likely to see the CMBR as a main destination, which results in a longer time of stay and a participation in more diversified tourist activities that are maybe located further away from the tourism nucleus (McKercher, 2001; McKercher & Wong, 2004). It is also important to mention that long-haul travelers as well can be primary destination travelers and the other way around; secondary destination visitors can also fall under the category of short-haul travelers.

These expectations are confirmed in the next chapters by the analysis of the in-depth interviews and the corresponding description of their results. This section will also try to give some more statistical explanation. Due to the current general lack of statistics, which will be also further explained in the next chapter, it remains difficult to give adequate numbers and figures. Nevertheless, a presentation of the Ministry of Tourism of Ecuador about tourism visitations in the province of Azuay did contain some useful information. The province of Azuay does not entirely converge with the CMBR, but it is a crucial nucleus of the territory. It is important to mention that these numbers were estimated for the year 2015, focused on projections deduced from tourism numbers of the previous years. The concentration of demand per province is given both for international and national visitors in Figure 9 and Figure 10. The estimation was a total number of 197.082 international trips to the province of Azuay, which is only 12,63% of the international trips going to Ecuador. It is obvious, that in comparison to the northern and eastern parts (i.e. where Quito and the beach destinations are), the southern region is rather a secondary destination within Ecuador. Concerning the visited destinations within the province of Azuay, 91,01% of the international trips to the province only visited the canton of Cuenca.

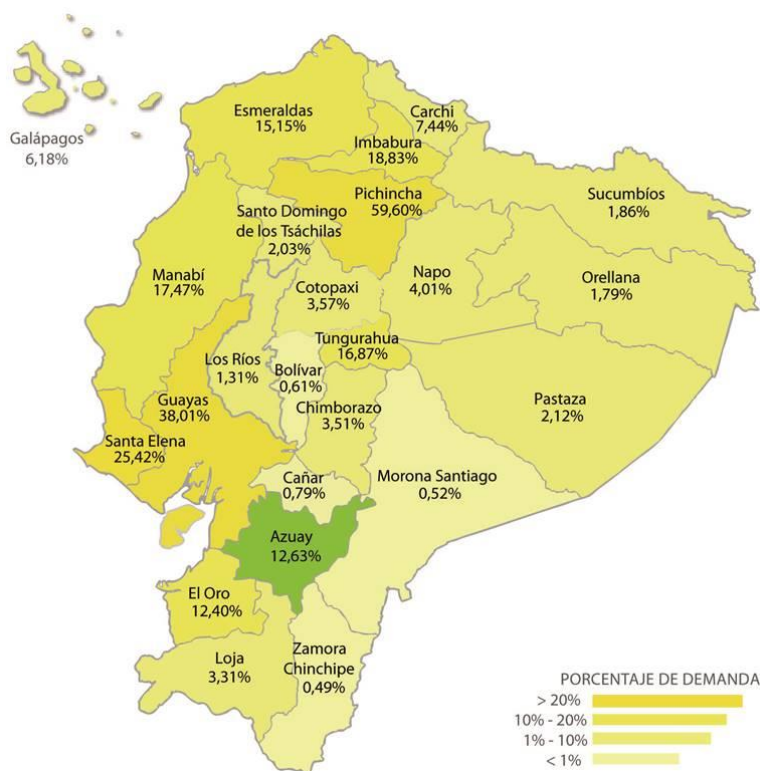


Figure 9: Concentration of demand per province for international visitors (Ministerio de Turismo, n.d.).

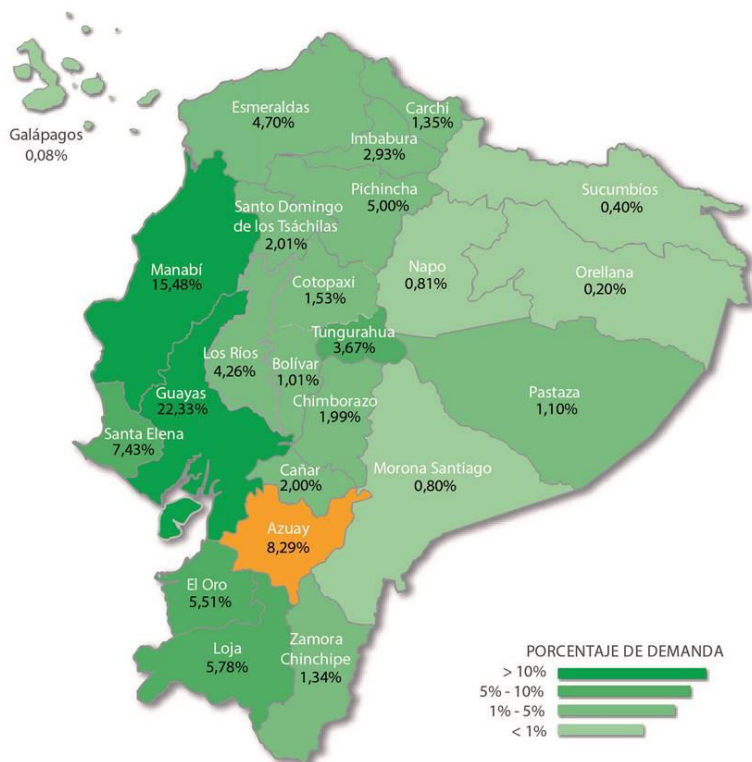


Figure 10: Concentration of demand per province for national visitors (Ministerio de Turismo, n.d.).

Chordeleg and Gualaceo were next in line, but they can only count, each separately, on 2,29% and 2,17% of the international visitors going to the Azuay province. The other cantons are barely visited. This last observation supports the above mention assumption of visitors considering the south a

secondary destination, being less interested in diversified tourism activities and more remote attractions. In relation to national trips, 1.008.265 internal trips going to the province of Azuay were estimated for 2015, which corresponds to 8,29% of the national trips over the whole country. It is remarkable that here only 40,76% of the national trips to the Azuay province is focused on a pure stay in the canton of Cuenca. The canton of Santa Isabel is next in line with 17,85% of the 1.008.265 visits, followed by Gualaceo (14,97%), Paute (11,08%), Sígfig (4,32), Girón (2,90), Pucara (1,39%), Nabon (1,20%), Guachapala (1,10%) and the other cantons (4,43%). Like mentioned earlier, a higher visitation number for neighboring attractions in the “backcountry” and interests not limited to visit convenience-based attractions in well-known tourist nodes were expected; this seems to be confirmed by these projections (Ministerio de Turismo, n.d.).

Even though it were projections, The World Bank Group (2017) partly confirms them by saying that Ecuador had 1.543.000 international tourism arrivals in the year of 2015. This is close to the projected number of the Tourism Ministry: 1.560.428 (obtained by deducing the total number of international tourist arrivals from 197.082, which is 12,63%). It is clear that the southern region of Ecuador is a complementary destination for international travelers, even if the above mentioned percentages for international (12,63%) and national (8,29%) arrivals in the province of Azuay are compared. However, a higher percentage of international than national visitors coming to the Azuay province does not mean it is a more consolidated destination on the international level. Only 197.082 international visitors visit the province of Azuay, while for national visitors this is a number of 1.008.265 travelers and therefore these percentages cannot be compared in an absolute way. Besides this the potential international market is significantly bigger than the potential Ecuadorian market, which makes the number of 197.082 even more miniscule. Furthermore it can be deduced from Figure 10 that the province of Azuay is not a complementary or secondary destination: after Guayas and Manabí it is the most visited destination. Concerning the international market and associated challenges for a DMO at a secondary destination in terms of marketing, McKercher & Wong (2004) point out two strategies. The first one is inclusion of the destination in packages visiting the main destination and positioning it as something that cannot be skipped. The second and also a necessary one for the CMBR is trying to maximize the length of stay.

3.2 Description of the first-round methodology

3.2.1 Introduction and selection of relevant stakeholders

As mentioned in the introduction, this Master thesis and research takes place in the context of a broader doctoral study that focuses on understanding how social capital of a tourism destination can be enhanced for and by local actors to access international markets, to be selective in this process

and to steer these markets in a way that attracts the desired types and quantities of tourism flows. Relevant tourism stakeholders in Cuenca and its region of influence were asked about capacities and limitations in the region to decide and act together in relation to develop and attract the desired type of tourism. In this context, the Master research examines the conditions or characteristics that improve or impede working together to access international tourism markets. A more detailed way is used and attention is paid to barriers or enhancers of social capital.

For the first-round methodology, already 61 in-depth interviews were conducted in January, February and March 2016. 35 of these were selected as the relevant ones containing information in relation to dynamics and collective action (CA) towards accessing international markets. Since the investigation is focused on the direct network of Cuenca's Municipal Tourism Foundation (FMTC), the 35 original interviews were reduced to nineteen important ones constituting the network. This could be done by reading and analyzing the two interviews conducted with the FMTC itself: one with the executive director and the other with the project coordinator, who mentioned which actors form part of their network. After the analysis and the describing of the results, two more interviews and corresponding actors were found relevant in terms of collective action and accessing international markets: the Center for Interamerican Studies Foundation (*Fundación Centro de Estudios Interamericanos* or CEDEI) and the Communitarian Tourism Association (Saraguro community) and simultaneous tour operator Sara Urku. These stakeholders were not mentioned in the earlier conducted interviews with the FMTC, but identified as important during personal communication and a Skype conversation on the 14th and 28th of March, 2017 with respectively Santiago Rodríguez Girón and the project coordinator of the FMTC. Therefore the list of the used first-round interviews (fieldwork in 2016) in Annex 1: List of used first-round in-depth interviews sees itself extended to 21 interviews. In Annex 2: Structure of the first-round in-depth interviews the structure of the first-round interviews can be found and the transcriptions are found in a separate digital file (Annex 5: Transcriptions of the first-round and second-round in-depth interviews

3.2.2 Focused on information and topics during the analysis of the first-round interviews

The 21 interviews were used as a preparation tool for own research and they were read and analyzed in order to get five specific products or kinds of information before conducting new in-depth interviews in April 2017 (second-round), in Ecuador:

- 1) What is the structure of the network of our "entry point": the FMTC (local DMO)?
Institutionally speaking, the CMBR is still in the process of creating an official Management Committee. Therefore there is not a central organization in place to talk to, regarding the different matters of the Biosphere Reserve. However, in the field of tourism, this local DMO,

which is part of the main municipalities in the CMBR's territory, already plays an influential role as a key actor since several years ago, connecting several players from inside and outside the CMBR's territory. This is why this central or brokering organization will constitute the starting point.

- 2) What is the perceived general profile and behavior pattern of the international visitors that currently visit the south of Ecuador? The answer on this question helps to describe the perceived dynamics and geographic territory that constitutes the secondary destination in the eyes of the interviewed actors. This question is more to inform about current dynamics than investigating social capital at the destination.
- 3) What possible cases of collective action (both towards domestic and international markets), can be identified?
- 4) Which are the barriers and enhancers of social capital to access international markets? In this part, conditions that, according to the interviewed actors, facilitate(d) or hinder(ed) collective action will be identified.
- 5) What are general barriers or enhancers, not related to social capital, that facilitate(d) or hinder(ed) collective action towards international markets?

3.2.3 Analysis of the topics and codification in Nvivo

The answer on the first question will be structured in a scheme (cf. 4.1 Network of the *Fundación Municipal de Turismo para Cuenca*) in the results in which the central element is the FMTC and the different connections constitute the FMTCs social capital range. Starting from the two available in depth-interviews with the FMTC, the direct network of the local DMO was selected. In this way, the first question is related to the structural dimension of social capital: networks. Later, also the type of social capital or network of the FMTC is identified according to the typology explained in 1.1.3 Typology of social capital, with special attention towards “bonding”, “bridging” or “linking” social capital. This is why also coding in Nvivo is used. The different interacting agents are stored in a node named “Type of social capital” with the three following “child-nodes”: “Bonding”, “Bridging” and “Linking”. This classification allows a more systematic approach and remains one of the more important ones, because it encompasses other typologies like mentioned in the concerning section.

The second question about the profile and the behavior was analyzed in Nvivo using codification of the interviews. If material (keywords, phrases, etc.) appeared in relation to the general profile and behavior of the international visitors, it was coded under a virtual container or node named “Profile and behavior of international visitor”. Different child-nodes helped to structure the information even more: “Way of travel” (packages, personalized, independent), “Origin” (which continents, regions or countries do they come from?), “Age”, “Length of stay” (how long do they stay

in the south and in other regions?), “Other regions” (which other regions in Ecuador do they visit besides the south?), “Within the region” (which places do they visit in the south of Ecuador?), “Interests” (in what are they interested?), “Entry and exit” (where do they enter or exit Ecuador?) and “Desired profile and behavior” (which type of tourist does the interviewed actor want to attract in reality?). It is important to make a distinction between the first seven child-nodes and the last one: while the first seven constitute the stated profile and behavior in the eyes of the interviewees, the last one is a “desired” profile and behavior.

The third question corresponds to two separate nodes in the codification process: “CA towards international markets” and “CA in general”. This latter not related directly to accessing international markets but some initiatives also can have positive results that will possibly lead to attracting international visitors in the end. Furthermore these initiatives can also manifest barriers or enhancers that result important; both of social capital and more general ones.

Three separate nodes are used to answer the fourth question and they correspond to the three different key dimension of social capital, explained in 1.1.2 Dimensions and indicators of social capital. The first one is called “Structural barriers or enhancers”, the second one corresponds to “Cognitive barriers or enhancers” and the last one is called “Barriers or enhancers of the nature of the CA itself”. In the first one, different material is stored under several child-nodes all considered determinants that affect the likelihood and success of collective action (cf. 1.2.3 Determinants influencing the probability and efficiency of collective action having something to do with the structural dimension: “How individuals are linked”, “Number of participants”, “Heterogeneity of participants”, “(In)voluntary entry or exit”, “Formality of group governance”, “Leadership”, “Coordination of the group” and “Other”. This last child-node refers to other possible determinants that were not found during the elaboration of the theoretical framework, but that can still have an influence. It is in the second node that cognitive and personal influential elements are stored that have to do with the cognitive dimension of social capital: norms and trust. The following child-nodes can be found: “Trust”, “Norms”, “Reciprocity”, “Reputation”, “Personal motivations”, “Recognition of interdependence among stakeholders”, “Personalities”, “Perceived roles of the participants” and “Other”. Last but not least, also the nature of collective action itself can provide some barriers or enhancers which are presented in the child-nodes of the third node: “Face-to-face communication”, “Information about past actions”, “Nature of the benefits”, “Joint formulation of aims and objectives” and “Other”. Of course, these determinants can influence each other, are not always talked about by every interviewed actor and sometimes the lines between the different key dimensions can start to blur; nevertheless, this distinction helps to structure the results.

To answer the fifth and last question, a fourth node besides the key dimensions is also added, called “General barriers or enhancers”. In this virtual container, additional information about

barriers and enhancers that have nothing to do with social capital, is stored; e.g. elements of the economic environment that hinders or facilitates a collective action initiative, etc. Last but not least, it is important to mention that possible interaction effects between the barriers or enhancers and the key-dimensions of social capital will be discussed in the results.

For the general and social capital related barriers or enhancers, the analysis scheme is structured the following:

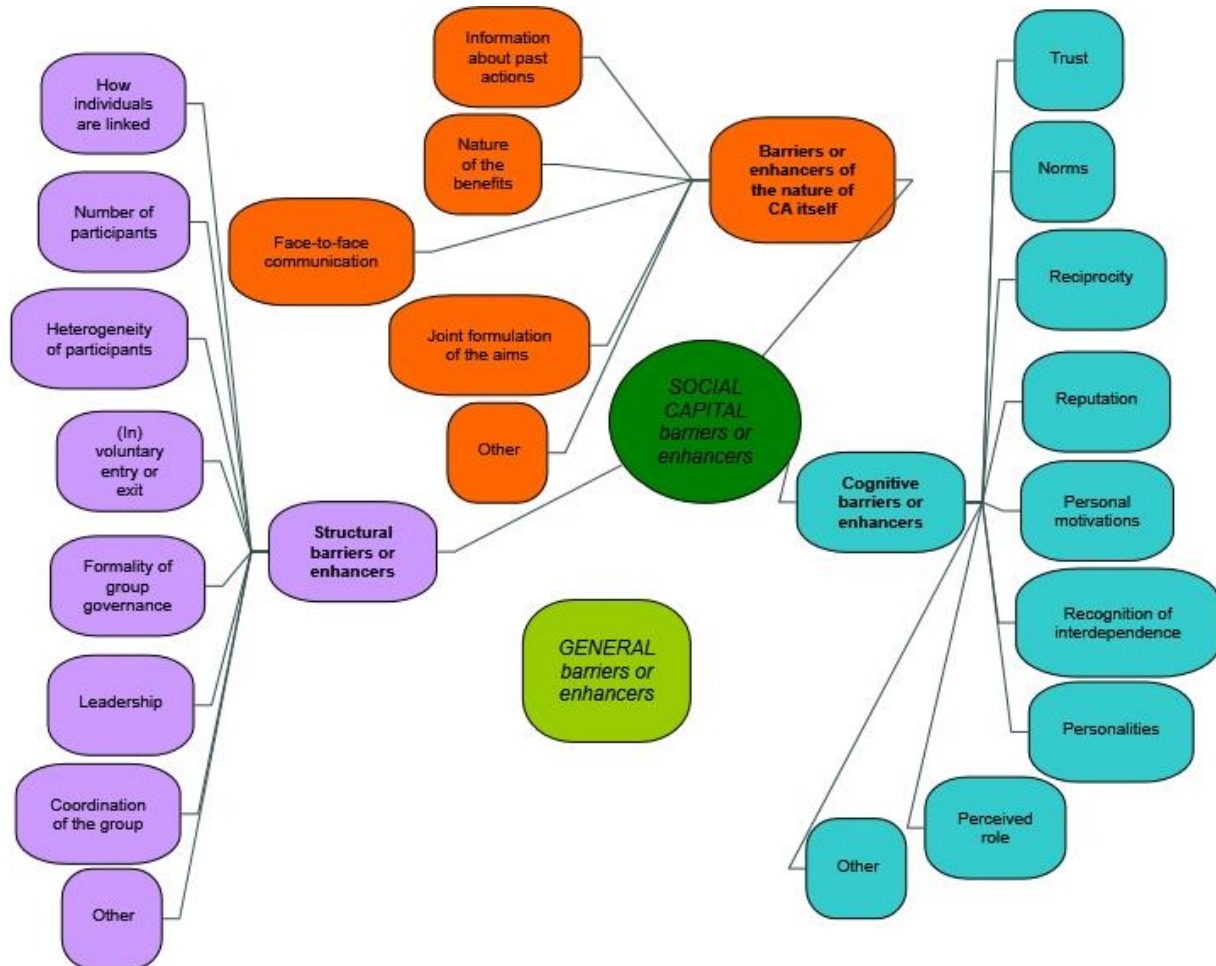


Figure 11: Analysis scheme for the barriers or enhancers in the first-round methodology.

3.3 Description of the second-round methodology

3.3.1 Selection of relevant stakeholders

The second-round methodology is, of course, based on the first one and tried to gain a deeper insight in what hinders or enhances the capacity of the CMBR in order to access international markets through collective action initiatives. The analysis of the 21 selected relevant in-depth interviews from the first-round methodology resulted in a well-considered choice of actors to interview. After looking at the most significant collective action examples, the related actors and participants were chosen to interview a first or a second time. Also key actors in the CMBR were interviewed, even if they were

not always participating in specific collective actions. In order not to forget possible future collective actions, also another actor, namely CEDEI, who does not form part of the network of the FMTC was interviewed because of the big cooperation potential. Last but not least, also smaller actors included in the network of the FMTC were interviewed, due to the lack of an existing interview with them. The secondary results will start with a brief discussion of the interviewed actors (cf. 5.1 Interviewed actors and detailed second-round methodology). The secondary methodology resulted in eleven semi-structured in-depth interviews, with a total time of six hours and seven minutes, conducted in the southern region of Ecuador in April, 2017. The list of the second-round in-depth interviews, their structure and transcription can be found respectively in Annex 3: List of second-round in-depth interviews, Annex 4: Structure of the second-round in-depth interviews Annex 5: Transcriptions of the first-round and second-round in-depth interviews.

3.3.2 Focused on information and topics during the analysis of the first-round interviews

The eleven interviews were read and analyzed in order to get seven specific products or kinds of information answering the following questions and leading to the eventual results, conclusion and recommendations:

- 1) What are the most significant collective action initiatives towards international markets and what was the role of the FMTC?
- 2) What are the structural barriers or enhancers that hinder or facilitate the CMBR's capacity to access international markets?
- 3) What are the cognitive barriers or enhancers that hinder or facilitate the CMBR's capacity to access international markets?
- 4) What are the barriers or enhancers of the nature of CA itself that hinder or facilitate the CMBR's capacity to access international markets?
- 5) What are general barriers and enhancers that hinder or facilitate the CMBR's capacity to access international markets?
- 6) What are the scope, intensity and ease of consensus-reaching of the mentioned collective action initiatives?
- 7) Where on the continuum of collaboration can these collective action initiatives be placed?

3.3.3 Analysis of the topics and codification in Nvivo

All these questions were analyzed in Nvivo using codification of the interviews. Several virtual container or nodes were used and different child-nodes helped to structure the information even more. Regarding the first question, only a node for the role of the FMTC was created. For the second, third and fourth question, the same Nvivo codification scheme as for the first-round of in-depth

interviews was used. Nevertheless, the analysis of these showed that the child-node “Other” was necessary and therefore the relevant newfound barriers or enhancers were stored in separate child-nodes for the analysis of the secondary interviews. This was especially the case for “Barriers or enhancers of the nature of CA itself”, where two more barriers and enhancers resulted relevant: “follow-up, monitoring and feedback” and “the having of results”. The latter is of course important to provide motivation in order to continue with the present or new collective action initiatives. The fifth question is answered with a separate node “General barriers or enhancers” and in this virtual container, additional information about barriers and enhancers that have nothing to do with social capital, is stored. The sixth question refers to the theoretical framework to evaluate collective action initiatives in tourism policy-making and their collective learning and consensus-building of Bramwell & Sharman (1999), explained in Figure 2. Therefore the node “Evaluation” is created and three child-nodes are added: “Scope of collaborative agreements”, “Intensity of collaborative relations” and “Extent to which consensus emerges among the stakeholders”. The last question refers to Mandell's (1999, p.6) continuum of collaboration, which takes into account varying degrees of collaborative efforts based on frequency of contact, formality, and temporality. This also evaluates the collective action; it receives a separate node “Continuum of collaboration”.

For the general and social capital related barriers or enhancers, the analysis scheme is structured the following:

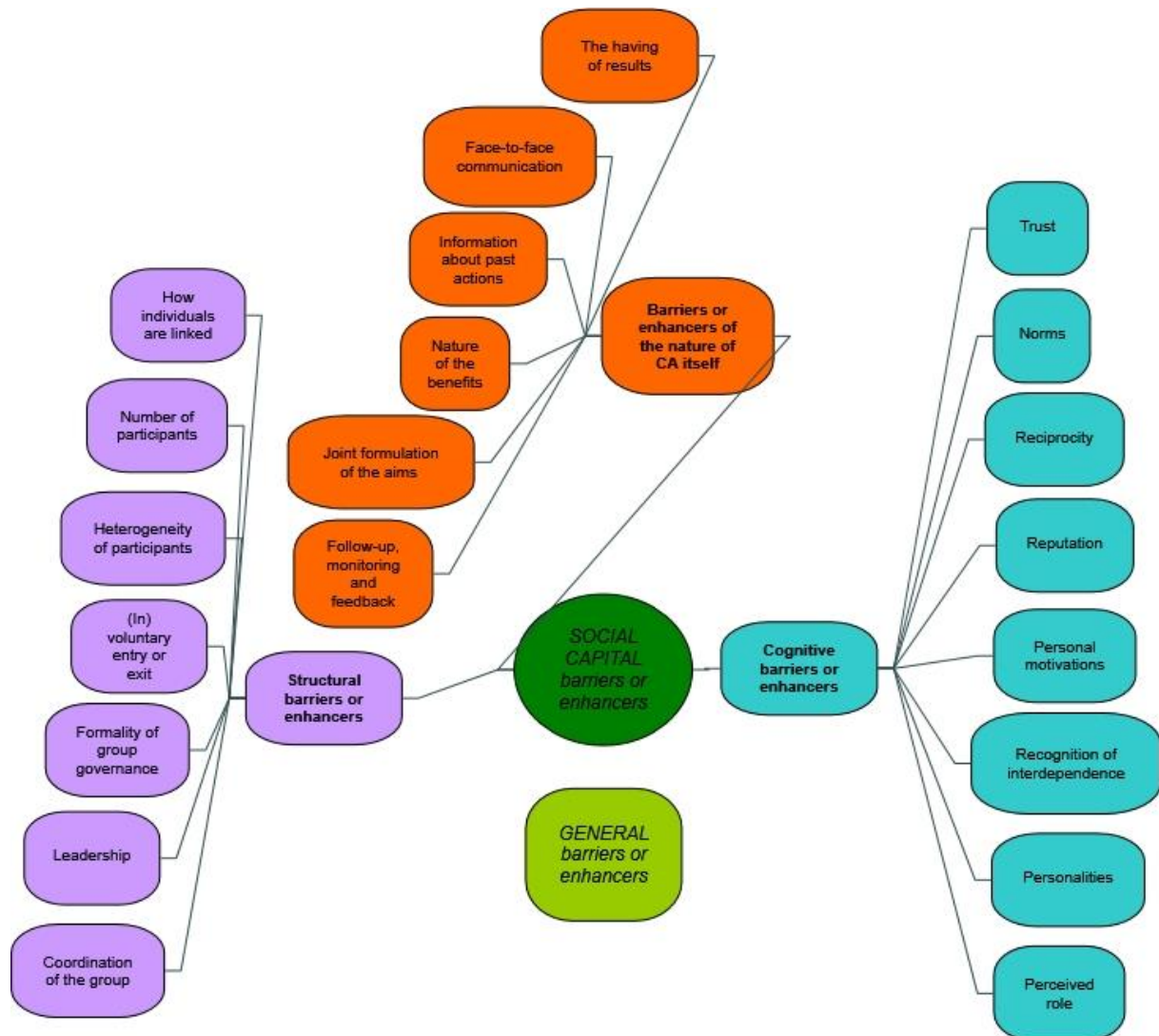


Figure 12: Analysis scheme for the barriers or enhancers in the second-round methodology.

4. First-round results

In this chapter, like mentioned in the introduction, the analysis and corresponding results of the first round of interviews are presented. Chapter four is followed by a new chapter consisting of the results of the second and own round of data collection.

4.1 Network of the *Fundación Municipal de Turismo para Cuenca*

Three stakeholder groups are deduced from the analysis of the interviews with the FMTC, which correspond with bonding and linking, bonding and bridging and bridging social capital. In this context, the three groups can also be described as government and policy actors, private sector actors and a more mixed group with especially tour operators. Figure 13 represents these three levels, starting with the highest one of bonding and linking social capital, and ending with the lowest level of bridging social capital. Corresponding to each group, a table will be given as an oversight with the name of the institution, the job title or the department of the respondent, the location of the interview, and the code used for references in the further results. More information like age, gender, date, duration and associated page numbers of the transcriptions can be found in Annex 1: List of used first-round in-depth interviews For the FMTC, the following codes for references are used: FMTC-ED for the executive director and FMTC-PC for the project coordinator.

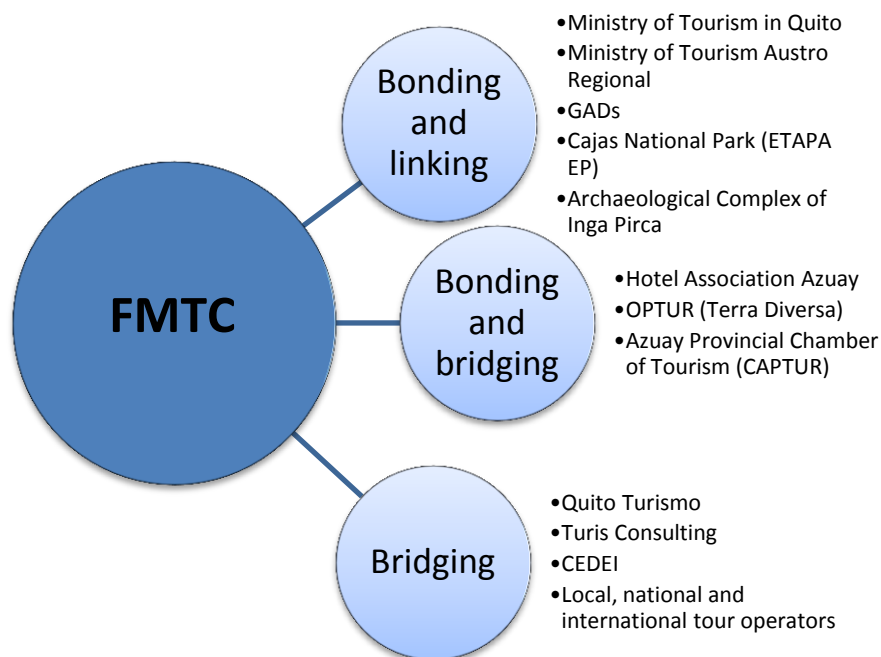


Figure 13: Network or structural social capital of the FMTC.

4.1.1 Bonding and linking social capital: government and policy actors

Since the FMTC is an institution that is part of the decentralized autonomous municipal government of the canton of Cuenca (*gobierno autónomo descentralizado* or GAD in Ecuador), it is an institution

in power at a more local level being part of the national government of Ecuador at a higher level. Therefore, their connections and relations with the Ministry of Tourism in Quito, the Ministry of Tourism Austro Regional, occupied with tourism in the sixth planning area or the Austro region consisting of the provinces of Azuay, Cañar and Morona-Santiago (Gobierno Nacional de la República del Ecuador, s.d.), and the decentralized autonomous governments of Paute, Gualaceo, Chordeleg, Sígig, and Cañar, can be considered as both bonding and linking social capital. They all form part of the Ecuadorian governmental structure at the municipal level and are considered institutions in power. The Cajas NP is managed by both the municipality of Cuenca and the Municipal Public Company of Telecommunications, Water, Sewer and Sanitation of Cuenca (ETAPA EP) and the Archaeological Complex of Inga Pirca is managed by the National Institute of Cultural Heritage; therefore these connections are also considered both bonding and linking social capital. There are six interviews that correspond to this type of social capital:

Institution	Job title or department of the interviewee	Location	Code for references
Ministry of Tourism	Sub secretary of Tourism Development	Cuenca	MT
Tourism Ministry Austro Regional	Destination Planning Unit (occupied with spatial planning, tourism planning and possible cooperation with tourism plans of the GADs)	Cuenca	MTAR
Municipality of Cañar	Director of Tourism	Cañar	MC
Municipality of Gualaceo	Director of Tourism	Gualaceo	MG
Cajas NP (ETAPA EP)	Tourism Unit – Technical Analyst of Protected Area	Cuenca	CNP
Archaeological Complex of Inga Pirca	Systems Analyst	Cañar	IP

Table 3: Bonding and linking social capital of the FMTC.

4.1.2 Bonding and bridging social capital: private sector

In the directory of the FMTC, the private sector is reflected by the voice and vote of the representatives of the Azuay Hotel Association, the Provincial Chamber of Tourism of Azuay (CAPTUR) and the National Association of Inbound Tour Operators of Ecuador (OPTUR). The President of the Hotel Association represents the affiliated hotels and the President of CAPTUR speaks for several hotels, bar and restaurants located in Cuenca. Concerning OPTUR, it is the tour

operator Terra Diversa, located in Cuenca, which is the face of the 66 members of OPTUR (Optur, 2013). This is the reason why Terra Diversa is part of the bonding and bridging social capital and why they are not repeated in the next group (of bridging social capital) under the remaining tour operators. Three interviews correspond to this type of, namely bonding and bridging, social capital. On the one hand they are linking due to their presence in the directory; they form part of a municipal and therefore an institution in power. On the other hand, they are bridging because they belong to other tourism organizations, institutions and groups that are not included in the FMTC itself.

Institution	Job title or department of the interviewee	Location	Code for references
Hotel Association Azuay	President	Cuenca	HAA
Inbound tour operator Terra Diversa	General Manager	Cuenca	TD
Azuay Provincial Chamber of Tourism	President	Cuenca	CAPTUR

Table 4: Bonding and bridging social capital of the FMTC.

4.1.3 Bridging social capital: remaining actors

As bridging social capital, several actors were found having connections with the FMTC: the DMO Quito Turismo, Turis Consulting (a tourism consultant) and multiple local, national and international tour operators. In this group, also CEDEI fits but they are not part of the actual network of the FMTC. The initial eighteen interviews with tour operators, as part of the 31 relevant ones, were reduced to eight crucial ones (of which Terra Diversa is one), based on which ones are part of the network, are located in Cuenca and play a more active role in terms of accessing international markets. The following table shows the bridging social capital of the FMTC:

Institution	Job title or department of the interviewee	Location	Code for references
Quito Turismo	Technical Director	Quito	QT
Turis Consulting	Director	Cuenca	TC
Inbound tour operator Southland Touring	General Manager	Cuenca	ST
Inbound tour operator Expediciones Apullacta	General Manager	Cuenca	EA
Inbound tour operator Cazhuma Tours	Manager	Cuenca	CT

Inbound tour operator Horizontes Andinos	Manager	Guayaquil	HA
Inbound tour operator South American Tours	Chief Operating Officer	Quito	SAT
Inbound tour operator Gray Line	Sales and Contracting Manager	Quito	GL
Inbound tour operator Sara Urku	Manager and native guide	Saraguro	SU
Center for Interamerican Studies Foundation	Executive Director	Cuenca	CEDEI

Table 5: Bridging social capital of the FMTC.

4.1.4 Characterization of the social capital in the network of the FMTC

Like mentioned in 1.1.3 Typology of social capital, the present social capital in the DMO's network is of a "formal", "intern", "community" and "structural" type. Nevertheless, it cannot only be seen as "intern" social capital, due to the fact that it also has "extern" objectives; the FMTC's objective and influence take place within the tourism sector, but the foundation also exists because of a general public interest since tourism is considered as a motor for development, creating wealth and employment, that should benefit as many actors as possible:

Exactly. Exactly, in other words a [tourism] development a development that goes to what we are proposing in the plan, that it is benefiting and productive economically, socially, culturally for Cuenca. (FMTC-PC, p. 241)

Furthermore, the network can be both seen as "dense" and "sparse" depending on the connected actors in question (Putnam, 2000, cited in Barbini, 2008). It results difficult to identify the network in this way, because no exact data about the frequency of contacts between the FMTC and its network members is available and on this will be focused during the second-round methodology. Nevertheless it can be said that contacts on a regular basis are established with the Azuay Hotel Association, Provincial Chamber of Tourism and OPTUR, because they are members of their directory:

Let me see, our directory, the directory of the foundation is integrated by the Chamber of Tourism that represents some hotels and many bars and small restaurants, by the president of the Hotel Association, which represents the affiliated hotels of an approximate number of 85, knowing that legally registered hotels in our city are around 265, and there is also the OPTUR representative, OK? So these three directors mentioned represent the business sector and they have voice and vote in our directory, in other words, the Foundation, every

decision that it takes is in consensus with and has to be reported to this directory. (FMTC-ED, p. 169)

Also frequent and necessary contacts occur between the FMTC and the Ministry of Tourism in Quito and the Ministry of Tourism Austro Regional, because they are the governing body at the national and more local level of the tourism activity and organize therefore promotion activities, press trips, familiarization trips, fairs, road shows, etc.: *“The Ministry of Tourism. Basically, being the governing body of the tourism activity at the national level, the link is close and direct with this entity”* (FMTC-ED, p. 160). The same goes for the tour operators, with whom the FMTC participates in collective action initiatives:

And at the national level, well basically also for the international part, with the Ministry of Tourism basically because it is the governing body of the activity and also with, at the national level it is essential because especially if you want to reach the sector to the international segment of international tourism, to the receptive, with the tour operators of Quito. Those are the biggest connection. (FMTC-PC, p. 215)

Although they were mentioned as part of their network by the FMTC, no contacts take place with the Archaeological Complex of Inga Pirca, because the interviewee was not even really aware of the existence of the FMTC.

The network also consists of “extensive” or “vertical” social capital; the connections of the FMTC go further than their interference, which is strictly limited to the canton of Cuenca and its urban and rural parishes:

So it is true that the area of influence is Cuenca, but destinations such as the valleys of Paute, Gualaceo, the Sígsig area and Ingapirca in the Cañar province like I mentioned before, are a whole, right? [...] Now we also have to link with the GADs, with the different GADs of the cantons as I mentioned them, of Paute, Gualaceo, Chordeleg, Sígsig, of all the cantons and with mayors of other cities like Cañar and and Azogues, no? (FMTC-ED, p. 165-166)

They have relations with public, private and public-private entities located within and outside their jurisdiction and this could open up opportunities for less powerful or excluded groups (Granovetter, 1985 & Narayan, 1999 cited in Barbini, 2008). According to the classification of Stone (2001) this distinction between “vertical” and “horizontal” can also indicate power relations; both relations between people and institutions in power and more democratic or equal relations can be found in the network of the FMTC. This was already discussed in the above sections. Concerning the range of the social capital, it is not exaggerated to say that it is of a “macro level” type; this because of the exact same reasons mentioned above and due to their attachment to the decentralized autonomous government of Cuenca, which makes them a governmental institution with a broader significance

(Grootaert & Van Bastelaer, 2001 & Molinas, 2002, cited in Barbini, 2008). The network of the FMTC is also balancing between “limited” and “broad” social capital, the ratio between internal social networks or bonding capital (and in this case also linking capital) and external social networks or bridging social capital is quite similar, but due to their municipal attachment their bonding and linking social capital seem to prevail, not in quantity but more in terms of their binding to certain political statutes and its rather limited area of influence, which will be explained later (Atria, 2003, cited in Barbini, 2008). Following Coleman's (1990) differentiation between “open” and “closed” networks, it is clear that this network is an “open” one: social relationships do not exist among all the actors, but this does not mean that a level of trust along the network does not exist.

Determining whether the network is “homogeneous” or “heterogeneous” is remains difficult; it refers to the personal characteristics of the members themselves and this is not really deductible from in-depth interviews of approximately an hour. Nevertheless, it is in all probability a more heterogeneous network, due to the big variety and different dedications of the actors: there is a presence of government actors, private entrepreneurs, communitarian actors, etc. All of these are likely to have different agendas. To get back to Granovetter's typology (1973), it is more likely that this network is more a heterogeneous one with weak ties. Like mentioned above, not every actor has a good knowledge of the FMTC and their task package. This type of network also contains the danger of conflict and difficulty to reach consensus, due to the different backgrounds and interest, though it will be easier to achieve innovation (cf. 1.3.2 The importance of collective action in relation to tourism).

4.2 General profile and behavior pattern of the international visitors that currently visit (the south of) Ecuador

The current subchapter and corresponding results are provided to present a raw sketch of the secondary destination and its dynamics. It has no direct connection with social capital and the associated barriers, although certain types of information were found necessary in order to familiarize with the case-study and to better understand the social capital related results.

4.2.1 Provided and perceived quantitative information by the respondents

First of all, it should be mentioned that there is a general lack of tourism statistics in Ecuador and this is mentioned various times by almost every respondent. The present statistics are collected in two different ways: by hotels in order to measure indicators of average occupancy rate and stay and by institutions like the General Migrations. The presence of statistics does not necessarily mean accuracy: not every hotel measures indicators, only formal tourism is measured and in this way hotel statistics do not take into account every tourist (e.g. Airbnb or tourists staying with family/friends,

etc.). In addition, General Migrations also counts non-tourists. In this way, the number of 1.500.000 international visitors in 2015, given by the Ministry of Tourism should be reduced, since new residents, employees and migrants are counted too. Furthermore, statistics given by the interviewees should be treated with caution, since formal, recent and accurate statistics lack and the given ones are often coming from own experience or estimations. Nevertheless, the FMTC signed at the beginning of 2016 an agreement with the University of Cuenca in order to get more accurate statistics; it was this report that was discussed in the previous chapter in the section about general facts and figures about tourism in the south of Ecuador.

The occupancy rate of hotels in Azuay was around 40% in 2014, which is less than several years before. Even 70% of this 40% is national corporate or business tourism and the occupancy rate during the national holidays in April also declined. Therefore the president of the Hotel Association establishes a decline of both national and international tourism. Nevertheless, this observation can be due to the growing informal accommodation sector because according to the current statistics of the Ministry of Tourism there is a rise in the percentage of international tourists that go to the south of Ecuador. According to the Ministry of Tourism Austro Regional and Turis Consulting, around 13 % of international visitors (which corresponds to 197.000 visitors) go to the south, which is between the 10 and 15% as reported by the Ministry of Tourism in Quito. These statistics are confirmed by the information given in the presentation of the Ministry of Tourism discussed in 3.1.3 The southern region of Ecuador as a secondary tourism destination where 12,63% was mentioned as amount of international tourists visiting the Azuay province. This proves that some actors are definitely aware of the ongoing tourism fluxes.

It is obvious that this lack of accurate statistics is considered as a barrier for tourism development:

We are, how should I say it, lacking ... very ... how can I tell you? It is a very complex situation that we have. This is the lack of a statistical tool that is clear, transparent, and that really indicates us, that gives us, above all, the indicators on what type of tourism we need, here, in the city. We do not have it. We are working on it. Unfortunately ... We are working with the universities to give us that tool that we need. Both public authorities, and like us, entrepreneurs need to know the type of tourist we need in the city in order to generate development. [...] But, well, these data are going to be more sincere, hopefully, because in these days some agreements have already been signed with the University of Cuenca, so that they give us accurate data, and give us the statistical tool that we need in order to know to which type of tourism to aim. Because, as I say, it is what we need: to know what market to aim for so that the resources go to that market. (CAPTUR, p. 86-87)

So I think we should have that relationship, and that is why the theme of statistics is very important, no? Here it would be interesting to have a clear idea of what the tourist is wanting, for us to supply them to our attractions. We spoke in one of our strategies with the Catholic University to have a system of permanent collection of information, where we have very clear the panorama of what is going to be required for our tourists, and it is a multiplier effect , if we are going to do what the tourist wants, things are going to be easier. (MG, p. 536)

4.2.2 Way of travel of international visitors traveling to (the south of) Ecuador

According to the majority of the interviewed inbound tour operators, international visitors who travel in organized groups or buy packages are prevailing. This is, of course, due to the fact that independent travelers not often make use of the services of tour operators and that they were the ones interviewed; this part of the supply side deals obviously more with the organized segment. Most of the organized group travelers reach the south of Ecuador through international travel agencies or inbound tour operators located in Quito. Independent travelers are also present and they reach the operators directly via the Internet, via guidebooks or are plucked from the streets and considered “walk-in” tourists. This last group often consists of backpackers with a lower spending capacity. This ratio is also confirmed by other private and public entities but it was the President of the Azuay Hotel Association that marked a new trend; organized groups and packages are declining so that organized travel and independent travel are starting to level off. According to this respondent, this was not only the case in the affiliated accommodations of the association (only 90 of the 180 formal accommodations), but also in the accommodation sector in the province of Azuay in general. This trend returns in the given numbers by the local inbound tour operator Terra Diversa: 60% are independent travelers and only 40% are groups, which contrasts with ratios of other inbound tour operators going from 70 to 80 and even 95% organized groups. A possible explanation is again the secondary positioning of Cuenca with respect to other destinations in Ecuador:

International tourism is low, in the situation in which we have talked with the Ministry of Tourism and there the operators showed several data within the meetings with the operators that we have had and it resulted that Ecuador has been sold from outside Ecuador and a long time is being allocated, well a time of 5 days for Galapagos, about 4 days for Quito, and the northern area and they leave us one or sometimes they do not leave anything for Cuenca. So it is there where we find a little bit the problem of the dropping of tourists that come packaged, or come by way of tour operators. (HAA, p. 103)

This possible explanation might also be the cause of the very low percentage of organized groups (4,1%) measured in the statistical report of 2016 (cf. 3.1.2 General facts and figures about tourism in the southern region of Ecuador).

4.2.3 Origin of the international visitors traveling to (the south of) Ecuador

The origin of visitors traveling through tour operators or travel agencies mainly depends on the focus of the tourism players in question; in general, a distinction is made between “natural” markets and other markets. The former consists of those countries that will travel to Ecuador anyway and that have a lower spending capacity in comparison with other markets and therefore, there is often not a lot of attention paid towards these markets. This natural market coincides with the Latin-American market going from Mexico all the way to the south, with Argentina, Brazil and Chile as leaders, followed by equal parts of Colombia, Mexico, Peru, Puerto Rico, Central America and Uruguay; it would equal 700 million potential tourists. Nevertheless the percentages from the statistical report of 2016 are different: only Colombia and Argentina are popular markets and others show significant low percentages (cf. 3.1.2 General facts and figures about tourism in the southern region of Ecuador). It was only the inbound tour operator Gray Line that focuses on this market, which represents 80% of their international visitors in comparison with 20% of other markets:

Q: And as it says, 700 million, of which 1% is at an economic level greater than, equal to or greater than Europe... – A: It is a matter of taking the Forbes list. – Q: So seven million Latin Americans... – A: And we received as Ecuadorians one million and a half of visitors, that the number is undoubtedly false... – Q: Yes. – A: ...statistics in this country do not exist, at least in tourism, so you are going to tell me that there are not seven million Latin Americans who have the same or higher purchasing power than all the Canadians, Germans, North-Americans and UK's and British who the Ministry wants to attract. (GL, pp. 338-339)

The majority of the interviewed inbound tour operators focuses primarily on the North-American market (USA and Canada) followed by the European market (France, Switzerland, England, Spain, Germany, Belgium, Italy etc.). Nevertheless, they do not underestimate the potential of this natural market, due to the labeling of Brazil as an emerging market:

But in this moment as emerging markets, which is the word they use, which they are looking for, are mainly, to say the least, Brazil, because Brazil is a giant country, and there are a lot of people who do tourism, there are people who think about tourism. (EA, p. 206)

A: So, Latin tourism should not be underestimated, for example, Brazil is totally underdeveloped, I think the Brazilian market could be impressive for Ecuador. – Q: Let's say under exploited. – A: Totally under exploited because and I believe Brazil would be mainly interested in what is the sierra and Galápagos. [...] A: And I insist, the least exploited in

Ecuador is Brazil, 200 million people and we are not so far away from them. (HA, pp. 498, 499)

Other private and public institutions mention the same statistics: a dominance of the North-American market, followed by the European market and also a considerable part of the natural Latin-American market. This latter and mainly the Colombian one would represent 30% of the international visitors according to the UNWTO, but this percentage would not take into account possible migration. It was the technical analyst of the Cajas NP who mentioned new emerging countries in the European market like Finland, Poland, Russia, Denmark and Ukraine as a result of the FMTC's participation in fairs.

4.2.4 Age of the international visitors traveling to (the south of) Ecuador

In general, all ages come to visit Ecuador and the south of the country, but more precisely, two age groups can be distinguished: young people in their twenties and elderly going from 50 years old to 70 and older, which includes the retired people:

I think there are two segments, one, the international visitors that are in an age range, I'll talk a little about that, about 45, who are people coming for a cultural destination, they are mainly, I would say up to about 50 years and older, mainly, yes, I think you change the age, 60 years and up, in other words I'm talking about the third age, about the oldest people who come rather to get to know the history itself and that... [...] – Q: Is that the only international visitor? – A: No, no no no, and from there we also have the young visitor [...]. (MTAR, pp. 268-269)

Some inbound tour operators focus specifically on the older group of tourists by offering targeted packages and it is also this group that travels the most in group via tour operators or travel agencies:

The biggest groups are in fact, our biggest market in this moment is the Senior Active and Senior. With these Senior Active, we are talking about people from the age of 50 to 70, I have come to lead groups of people of 85 years and that walked better than I, so, we did not separate for the age issue, but yes we segmented in the sense of Senior Active, so that people understand that it is, that it is focused on an older person, a mature person, but who has strength and has the energy to develop an activity. (ST, p.2)

The fact that Cuenca has been declared three years in a row as the best city to retire for North-Americans by the magazine *International Living* has only intensified the influx of elderly and retired people; they come to get to know the region and want to know why it was Cuenca that received this title. On top of this, the retired people already living in Cuenca or expats also attract family and friends that come to visit them. The other age group consisting of people in their twenties is mostly formed by independent travelers (often backpackers), both students and working people who often

take a year off (e.g. Argentinians), or by organized academic tourism; both of these younger traveler segments see the opportunity of learning Spanish in the many language schools in Cuenca as an important motivation.

4.2.5 Length of stay of the international visitors in Ecuador and the southern region

The average stay of international visitors in Ecuador, including the Galapagos Islands, varies between twelve and 21 days. Since the Galapagos Islands are often the main motivation to visit Ecuador, international visitors spend between four and seven days at this tourism destination and have to divide their remaining time over the different sights and destinations on the continent. With Quito and surroundings as a primary destination on the continent and a fairly long stay in the north and other regions, the international visitors have limited time left to visit Cuenca and the southern region. In this way, there are only two or sometimes three days to explore the city and its surroundings, which is not enough for a proper visit. Therefore the average number of nights spent in Cuenca is 1.5 nights. The typical pattern of visitors traveling with packages is the following:

In other words, they offer ... what they basically do is the end of the Avenida de los Volcanes where you arrive on your first day in Cuenca at six in the afternoon, you sleep, you have dinner at the hotel, the next day a "city tour" and "city tour" and then you leave for Guayaquil or with some luck you stay one more night in Cuenca and the next day Cajas and you go. (FMTC-PC, p. 220)

In the surrounding municipalities it is even less: e.g. in Gualaceo day visits are the norm and only specialized tourists (e.g. researchers and bird watchers) stay overnight, which is why they should be more included in the tourism offer of Cuenca:

A: Yes, we are stuck at one point ... in a day and a half and if we think that way, that Cuenca does things alone, we will stay as we have been doing in the last few years since the tourism boom: in isolation, in an average overnight stay of 1.5. – Q: Then the management of the foundation would have, have, I ask, to include all these other cantons also, not perhaps in the name of canton, but because several of the attractions are also in those other sectors? – A: Necessarily yes, necessarily. (FMTC-ED, p. 169)

The only exception to the rule is the segment of academic tourism (exchange students), language tourism and community tourism. The visitors who belong to these types of tourism stay between two weeks and six months. Last but not least, also the origin seems to have an influence on the length of stay: Europeans stay longer in Ecuador, three to four weeks, while North-Americans have more limited holidays that only allow them to stay eight to ten days or maximum two weeks.

4.2.6 Other regions visited by international visitors traveling to (the south of) Ecuador

The Galapagos Islands are a major attraction and therefore the international tourism is mainly distributed over this destination, the capital of Quito with its surroundings and the coastal areas; the former is a necessary stop for connecting flights to the Galapagos and the capital is one for international visitors that simply want to stay longer and visit the continent. No exact percentages about the distribution of the international visitors over the Galapagos Islands and the continent could be given and estimations of the inbound tour operators Gray Line and South American Tours and the Project Coordinator of the FMTC diverged a lot, which is again proof of the lack of accurate statistics. It was the Project Coordinator of FMTC who marked a new trend by saying that the tour operators in Quito are starting to be more interested in the “land theme” by not always wanting to sell Galapagos. Back on the continent, the northern, eastern and central regions of Ecuador seem the most popular and are often included in the classic packages.

The eastern region is also popular and visited due to its Pacific coastline all the way to the south and corresponding tourism attractions. Guayaquil and the corresponding province of Guayas is still a sub developed but growing tourism destination that is visited quite a lot by international visitors due to its inclusion in the classic triangle Quito-Guayaquil-Cuenca. The fact that Guayaquil has an international connectivity due to its airport certainly plays a role in this development process. It is difficult to determine the exact limits of the southern tourism destination, but some connection points can be mentioned: the main connecting attractions are the *Avenida de los Volcanes* with more than 70 volcanoes going from north to south and ending close to Cuenca and the train ride from and back to Alausí (province of Chimborazo), often seen as the northern limit of the southern tourism destination, passing by the *Nariz del Diablo* or the Devil’s Nose.

4.2.7 Attractions and places visited by international visitors within the southern region of Ecuador

The south is often seen as an extension or a complementary tourism destination, but after the Galapagos Islands, Quito and Guayaquil, Cuenca (capital of the province of Azuay) is a preferred destination among international visitors and also part of the triangle Quito-Guayaquil-Cuenca:

Exactly. We are still a complementary aspect ... in spite of the perception that tour operators have, Cuenca is a destination with a lot of potential that has much to offer but it is still not told what else and more can be done in Cuenca. (FMTC-PC, p. 220)

Due to the lack of time and popularity of other regions, like mentioned in 4.2.5 Length of stay of the international visitors in Ecuador and the southern region, the stay in the south is rather short and therefore the tourism dynamics are often limited to the city of Cuenca itself. Cuenca with its historic city center, squares, churches, museums and the river is seen as the most important city of the

south, the center of operations and the main tourism development pole of the southern region. This is exactly why all the other surrounding tourism attractions and destinations cannot be disconnected from Cuenca, where the offer of tourism services is taken care of. The majority of the bigger inbound tour operators usually limits their packages to the classic city tour in Cuenca and sometimes an extension is made to two other already consolidated tourism attractions: Cajas NP (also in province of Azuay) and the Archaeological Complex of Inga Pirca (province of Cañar). This is why the package “Southern Wonders” of the inbound tour operator Southland is so remarkable, in which the six day itinerary is the following: Guayaquil - Inga Pirca - Cuenca - Cajas NP – several cocoa plantations (e.g. *El Deseo*) – Guayaquil. Firstly it was sold in combination with other packages but the plan was to start selling it as a stand-alone package in June 2016. Nevertheless, there are almost no international visitors that travel exclusively to the south of Ecuador. This does not mean that the southern region lacks interesting tourism attractions or sights, but the main influencing factor is the length of stay. As mentioned above, independent and younger travelers, academic, language and community project tourists or people that do not go to the Galapagos Islands stay longer. Thus, they are the ones that are more likely to visit the surroundings. So if the length of stay is longer or there are specific interests, several other places are visited in the near cantons and corresponding cities of Paute, Gualaceo, Chordeleg and Sigsig and Cañar.

4.2.8 Interests of the international visitors traveling to (the south of) Ecuador

The CMBR attracts a lot of heritage tourism due to its four UNESCO world heritage declarations (cf. 3.1.1 The extended Biosphere Reserve Macizo del Cajas): international visitors come to experience the colonial character of the city center and the authenticity of the people, to admire the architecture, the scenery and the landscapes, the flower market on the Plaza de San Francisco, the “Panama heat” or *sombrero de paja toquilla*, the numerous handicrafts, museums, etc. Culture is still the primary interest and motivation to visit Cuenca, especially for the older less active people and this is also reflected by the numerous visits to the Archaeological Complex of Inga Pirca and other sites close by:

Generally, it is culture. What we sell, with Cuenca, is culture. Cuenca is Cultural Heritage of Humanity. We have always been in the vanguard of this situation, because it seems to me that it is the third cultural heritage that Ecuador has, and one of the "plus" that also has Cuenca is, by the sector of El Cajas, which is also one of the attractive and important points of the international tourism ... Also the Qhapac Ñan passes here, which has also been named Archaeological Heritage of Humanity. We have the Cajas Massif, which is a biosphere reserve, at the international level. We have the straw hat and one of the

important points is the city of Cuenca. [...] Thus, Cuenca is characterized by that, for the cultural question [...]. (CAPTUR, p. 76)

Also the gastronomic theme is well represented: gourmet tours are being offered in the city and in the surrounding communities it is even possible to cultivate and prepare your own food together with local people, which can also be seen as community tourism. The surroundings of the city offer excellent getaways for the more active, both younger and older, visitors that are interested in nature tourism or even adventure tourism; biking, walking, hiking, horseback riding, rafting, kayaking, rappelling, canyoning, bouldering, etc. are all possible in the surroundings. Also the possibility to observe birds attracts tourists and sometimes even more specialized bird watchers (often from the UK) come to visit the region. Since the declaration of Cuenca as best city to retire for North-Americans, a specific interest of retired people in the city has been manifested; elderly come to get to know the city and surroundings and keep in mind aspirations to become expats. Another important type of tourism with a particular interest is the language tourism, which goes often hand in hand with academic tourism or community tourism (especially in the province of Cañar); students do not only learn the language but also participate and volunteer in agricultural or irrigation projects in the surroundings. Besides the above mentioned interests, the motive of visiting family also attracts international tourism: people come to visit related expats or Ecuadorian migrants come back to visit family.

All these types of tourism are still sub developed in comparison to the cultural interest and cultural tourism remains the most consolidated type of tourism. Nevertheless, whether the interest is more culture, nature, language, community or adventure oriented, the central focus remains the experience itself; experiential tourism becomes more and more the norm and international visitors do not want to undergo everything in a passive way. This is certainly the case with the European market that is looking for unique authentic experiences that do not look too arranged; they want to get to know the indigenous life in an unforced way and participate in activities:

But now, above all, the current trend that we were told by tour operators is that it is, and above all for the European market, to look for a lot more experiential experiences. They do not longer just want photography tourism to see the cathedral and be told about it "bla-bla", but it is sharing with the people: I want to go to the pottery workshop and they no longer want them to be explained only the origin of the pottery, they want to take the clay and sit on the lathe and be playing with the clay to some extent, right? (FMTC-PC, p. 220)

A certain irony is present in this desire because in order to arrange contacts between certain communities and tourists, certain preparations in relation to safety and hygiene are precisely what is required and authenticity still remains a negotiable concept. Furthermore, they are more interested in staying in colonial houses or authentic accommodations. The opposite can be found with the Asian

market and tourists from the USA, who are more looking for entertainment or spectacle and are not bothered with staying in modern buildings or hotel chains.

4.2.9 Entry and exit points of Ecuador for the international visitors

Ecuador has only two international airports: the Mariscal Sucre International Airport in Quito and the José Joaquín de Olmedo International Airport in Guayaquil; therefore, international visitors arriving and leaving by flight will use only these two as entry or exit points. The chosen entry or exit point often determines the itinerary of the tourist: if they come through Quito, they probably will spend some time in Guayaquil because there they have to take a flight to the Galapagos Islands and if they come through Guayaquil, tour operators will more easily offer them a package in the Andes. In general, the main entry point for international passengers is the airport in Quito, while the one in Guayaquil is mostly used for domestic flights to the Galapagos Islands or as an exit point to leave Ecuador again. These dynamics are due to the presence of the many attractions in the city of Quito itself and the surroundings and cause the difficulty for Cuenca to capture these international tourism flows. If more international visitors would enter through Guayaquil, more of them would automatically visit Cuenca like they would otherwise visit Cotopaxi NP if they entered through Quito; in this case, Cuenca would not depend that much on the inbound tour operators in the capital to send through and receive the international tourism flows. The fact that Cuenca has no international airport and that every flight going to the Galapagos leaves from Guayaquil with an obligatory previous stop in Quito is a barrier in terms of attracting international markets:

A: Do you know what the problem of Cuenca is? The problem is its geographical situation, and that there are many passengers that come for the Galapagos, but they have to stop in Quito, because the flight, there are no direct flights to Galapagos from there [Cuenca]. – Q: Sure. – A: It ruins Ecuador. – Q: Yes. – A: The fact is that they have to come to Ecuador... – Q: Sure. – A: ... to be able to go to Galapagos. – Q: Okay. – A: ... then when they stop in Quito, those who have few days, they want a "full day", so what is sold to them? The things close to Quito. – Q: Of course, what you achieve, of course. – A: If I wanted to sell Cuenca, it would mean that I would have to send them on a flight to Cuenca and that is not the problem, the problem is the price, which increases. (SAT, p. 421)

Besides the entry and exit points by air, also the entry and exit points on the land should be mentioned: many younger independent travelers and organized groups of international visitors doing round trips in several countries make use of these on the borders with Colombia and Peru.

4.2.10 Desired profile and behavior of the international visitors traveling to (the south of) Ecuador

As described above, the international visitors who stay longer in the southern region and who are therefore more likely inclined to visit the surroundings of Cuenca, are often young and independent travelers. A big part of them are backpackers disposing of a lower budget and they constitute exactly the segment that the majority of the respondents do not want to attract for their region. They do want international visitors with more time, but this should be combined with a higher spending capacity; which corresponds with the desired profile of cultural tourists that are more educated or academically prepared, determined by the inbound tour operator Gray Line and the project coordinator of the FTMC. It was the executive director of the FMTC who pointed at the importance of the quality of the tourism and not the quantity:

And they [hotel sector] say, that more tourists should come, that is not the solution, that is not the solution, the solution is not that more tourists should come, the solution is, they could be different, one could be, those who come, do not stay a day and a half, that they stay two days, stay three, so the destination would be more attractive and the city would offer more activities so that the tourist does not stay only 1.5 but longer. Another thing, that not only low-budget tourists come, but that tourists from segments that we are interested in come, ornithologists are occurring to me. [...] we must focus on that tourist, that tourist who is the tourist of quality that comes here, who spends, who intelligently, who technically, respectfully does his work or or satisfies his his his need or has fun in his activity, that is the tourist that we need. (FMTC-ED, p. 174)

In order to attract this more qualitative tourist, they are also aware of the fact that they should improve the quality of the destination and use specific promotion to reach this higher target and stop focusing on the mass. Furthermore, there is a growing conscience about the need of determining the desired type of international tourist. This will be further elaborated in the next chapters and sections.

From the above described results it is clear that general and accurate statistics are lacking. Besides this the secondary destination is having difficulties to be included in tour operator packages which results in a short length of stay in the destination; this problem only sees itself reinforced by the available entry and exit points for the international travelers. Last but not least, it is obvious that the interviewed respondents share the same general thoughts about an ideal type of visitor who has exactly the opposite profile of the visitors they are currently attracting: the independent younger traveler or backpacker. They want professionals with a higher spending capacity and a longer length of stay in the city and its surroundings; these visitors are more likely to reach the south through

organized travel but the independent segment clearly prevails. Nevertheless, no precise collective determination of the desired type of international tourist took place which results in the absence of a univocal positioning of the destination and targeted marketing and promotion. An important initial step to achieve this would be, of course, the presence of clear statistics. These findings will be further elaborated in relation to social capital in the next subchapters and sections.

4.3 Collective action initiatives

4.3.1 Collective action initiatives towards international markets in which the FMTC participates or has participated

In this part, only collective action initiatives towards international markets in which the FMTC plays or has played a role and were mentioned by one of the nineteen respondents, will be dealt with. This is due to the focus of this investigation on the role and influence of this organization in achieving collective action. The following paragraphs will show a brief overview of the mentioned collective action initiatives together with their stated objective, the named participants and their perceived success.

A road show was organized in Canada and the United States in May 2015 in which Ecuador got promoted during sixteen days. Southland Touring was the only inbound tour operator from Cuenca that was present and also the FMTC and the Ministry of Tourism joined this initiative; all the actors agreed that it was a successful undertaking. Besides these road shows, also a lot of other international fairs were mentioned: a fair about incentive tourism events in Lima, a future fair in Cuzco, a future international tourism fair on the 10th of August, 2017 and several actors just mentioned their general participation in international tourism fairs and road shows. For most of them, no exact date of further specification was given. For all these events, besides the fair in Cuzco, the main goal was of course promoting Ecuador and attracting new markets; especially the North-American market will be targeted with the future fair in August, 2017. The future fair in Cuzco will be directed towards the Peruvian market and focus on making a connection between Cuzco and Cuenca. The FMTC participated in all of them and was even seen as a facilitator of the joint work in one of them, several ones were assisted by the Ministry of Tourism and tour operators also took part in most of the examples. In both the future fairs in Cuzco and the one in August, 2017, also the Azuay Provincial Chamber of Tourism and the Azuay Hotel Association will participate. It was Cazhuma Tours that participated in the fair about incentive tourism events in Lima, which was not a perceived success due to the lack of uniformity: there were three stands to represent Ecuador and there was no umbrella stand to promote the whole country, unlike other represented countries at the fair. Many times it was stated that the participation did not lead to concrete results, due to the lack of

follow-up by the tour operators after the initiative. This in contrast to the tour operator Terra Diversa who was positive about their assistance, which led to the creation of some new accounts, and the Cajas NP, who participated together with some local general suppliers, who said the fair led to a greater presence of Russian, Danish, Polish, Finnish and Ukrainian markets.

Another category of collective action initiatives are the press trips and the familiarization trips organized respectively for journalists and (international) tour operators. The objective of both of these trips is clear: get them to know the destination of Cuenca and the southern region on a free trip, promoting the destination and, in the case of the press trips, let them write or blog about it. With the familiarization trips there are often meetings organized between the international tour operators, national and local ones and all kind of tourism services suppliers. In the majority of the cases, the FMTC organized the trips, the Ministry of Tourism also participated and it was a tour operator that took care of the operations. Expediciones Apullacta, Gray Line and South American Tours were mentioned and also Quito Turismo was an important player: in some cases they shared the costs with Cuenca. There were press trips organized for Mexican, Brazilian, North-American, Canadian, Peruvian and Chilean journalists or bloggers and one specific press trip was organized in order to make a Costa Rican television program about Cuenca as a destination in 2015. Concerning the perceived success, some trips were still future plans, the television program was a success and certain actors mentioned the presence of scarce results in comparison to the whole effort. Again it was said in certain examples that the absence of success was due to the lack of follow-up after the trip.

Along with the road shows, fairs and trips, also more general promotional activities were organized. There were reunions about cooperation activities for Cuenca in which budgets were put together among e.g. Gray Line and the FMTC. Also Quito Turismo and Cuenca shared budgets for promotion activities of Ecuador in Brazil. Last but not least, one more specific collective action example towards international markets is worth to be mentioned. The tour operator South American Tours of Quito was planning to include a visit to the *Asociación De Toquilleras María Auxiliadora* in Sígig in his package. It should be ready in 2017 and the objective is to learn and show the tourists how to weave and to give them a real experience. In this context, the FMTC visited the association and had to take photos and make a description for the tour operator. South American Tours was really enthusiastic about the FMTC and a new meeting about the theme should have taken place in March 2017. On this, a further elaboration will be given in the next big chapter.

It was difficult to find concrete collective action examples and different actors mentioned several loose initiatives. Therefore, the above list is definitely not exhaustive but rather a summary of the most important ones, varying between loose informal ones and more concrete formal ones, that were mentioned in a more specific way or that were repeated by various actors. It is this list that

forms the basis of the second-round data collection; a few concrete collective action initiatives will be selected and the concerned actors will be interviewed a second or maybe even a first time during a fieldwork in April 2017.

4.3.2 General collective action initiatives

Besides the numerous examples earlier mentioned, a whole range of other collective actions were mentioned that have, indeed nothing to do with accessing international markets or participation of the FMTC, but that can still be considered important. By taking a look at these initiatives orientated towards national markets, cooperation and according strategies, alliances, projects etc. pop up, that can possibly be used to attract international markets on a longer term. Moreover, related recurring mentioned barriers and enhancers discussed in the next section, whether they are of a general or a social capital type, can also be interesting for this analysis and the prospective further recommendations.

Between the more concrete ones, the consultancy between Southland, Horizontes Andinos, and other tour operators and the Ministry of Tourism (January 2016) to work on the *Viaja Primero Ecuador* campaign of the Ministry by helping to potentiate the coast of Ecuador through promotion by “sales islands”, results being an excellent example of collective action oriented towards national markets. In this case, there was a joint investment of the Ministry and the private sector in order to have some “sales and promotion islands” in shopping centers and in the airport of Cuenca, where the tour operators could sell packages. Another example with possible future international resonance is the collaboration agreement on tourism and culture and the collective promotion and corresponding shared costs between the FMTC and the decentralized autonomous government of Gualaceo; this latter has a bigger budget for tourism, while the former has more knowledge and experience. Together they can strengthen their destination and this might even attract international visitors. The participation of Southland, who was the only local tour operator responding to the free invitation, in the cultural fair in Quito in 2011 together with the FMTC and Quito Turismo, in honor of its declaration as Cultural Capital of the Americas, can count as another initiative towards national markets (Travel Pulse, 2012): “A: We did an open announcement and it was Southland who said “I’m going to this”. – Q: And this was free? – A: It was free. – Q: And it was the only one who answered? – A: Exactly” (FMTC-PC, p. 237). As well, the participation and promotion of the FMTC in national fairs can be put on this list. Also the Archaeological Complex of Inga Pirca is working together with tour operators and different decentralized autonomous governments to develop an archaeological tour; a project that includes the recuperation of certain abandoned parks. Besides this, they also focus on community tourism and progress is made specifically with the communities of Sisid and Cuaguanapamba (province of Cañar) and the aim is involving all the 24 communities by organizing a

monthly fair at the complex itself in which those can sell their local products. These two examples certainly have potential to attract international visitors. Another case can be seen as an umbrella category of workshops organized by the FMTC: during several familiarization trips to Cuenca, they organize an information exchange workshop between the national and invited tour operators to strengthen the connection; besides this, they also organized several workshops between different tourism actors in Cuenca in January 2016 to develop the new tourism development plan for the city. Concerning the previous tourism development plan, in which Green Consulting participated, it was said that the workshop did not lead to concrete results and that follow-up was lacking. Another example are the collaboration agreement and technical reunions between Quito Turismo and the FMTC in order to interchange expertise, train the main executives of the FMTC and get to know the management model of Quito Turismo. Besides this, the municipality of Gualaceo also cooperated with the technical teams of the GADs of Chordeleg and Sígsig in the creation of a tourism route, called Santa Bárbara. This project could not be continued due to political issues but the objectives were generating alliances and routes, aligning tourism products and innovating their handicraft workshops. Also CEDEI focused on attracting international students by establishing a mutual support agreement with the Casa Grande University of Guayaquil and they assisted to workshops together with other institutions and universities in November 2015 concerning best practices in relation to studying abroad. Last but not least, also the “pool” initiative of several local tour operators in Cuenca can be mentioned, an association created to capture international “walk-in” tourists in a better way and to offer them joint operations; in this way, less cars have to be used and the tour operators can share the costs which is cheaper for both the operator and the tourist. The FMTC does not participate in its reunions and it is more considered as a passive example of accessing international tourism markets.

Other general collective actions are the classic ones expected in the tourism field and were mentioned in an undetailed way, going from cooperation between tour operators and hotelkeepers; projects between tour operators and attractions like the promotion and inclusion of a *cacao hacienda (El Deseo)* in the tourism offer or conversations between Inga Pirca and tour operators to define policies and do joint promotion; a community tourism project between Horizontes Andinos and the Manglares Churute Ecological Reserve; alliances between tourism suppliers and the public sector and social networking; “Project Seven” of the Tourism Ministry which consists of information gathering of hotels in order to make statistics and do a re-categorization of the hotels at the national level and renewing the regulations concerning the classification; projects between the FMTC, the municipality and the Ministry of Tourism Austro Regional related to promotion and the joint struggle against the growing informal accommodation sector, in which also the police department participated; the participation of Cajas NP in scientific conferences and “round tables “ with tourism

entities; the initiative of the Ministry of Tourism that consisted of inviting tour operators of Cuenca to do a “round table” with German tour operators present on a familiarization trip in Quito; approaches between the Foundation and the municipality of Gualaceo to link and complement the tourism offer; to the agreement between the municipality of Cañar and the *Mancomunidad del Pueblo Cañari* (cantons of Cañar, Suscal, El Tambo and Biblián) to focus on tourism and training and the development of a tourism axis. Again, this is not an exhaustive list and almost every example of minimal cooperation can be seen as a collective action initiative, depending on the point of view that has been used.

It is evident that clear collective action initiatives towards international markets are not abundant; they are difficult to identify or to distinguish from other and looser collective projects. Likewise, it was hard for the respondents themselves to mention examples. This is proof of the fact that there is enough room for improvement of and more focus on collective goal setting and execution of sustained strategies.

4.4 Barriers or enhancers of social capital in relation to accessing international markets

4.4.1 Structural barriers or enhancers

The first recurring barrier refers to the structural dimension itself: the need of being connected to different actors in order to get Ecuador known all over the world and the importance of the existence and being included in networks, productive chains and strategic alliances is mentioned various times as strategy to avoid the geographical isolation and improve cooperation. It was the president of the Chamber of Tourism of Azuay who literally said:

We declare that Cuenca is a separate point in the tourism development of Ecuador. We have positioned ourselves, somehow, isolated from the rest of the tourism destinations in Ecuador. We are a separate point. But we are working to connect with the country's tourism development. (CAPTUR, p. 75)

Likewise, the technical director of Quito Turismo insisted on the importance of ties and interconnection between Quito and Cuenca: they both have World Heritage, which is a theme that could be used, and they should go together to international fairs. It proves that networking at a national scale is still very weak. Then again, the sub secretary of the Tourism Ministry in Quito alluded to the importance and need of a certain level of associativity between tourism suppliers at the internal level, but no response came to their associativity initiatives:

A: ... they do not manage to overcome this issue, and we see this even in Quito and elsewhere, and I have finally talked a lot about it, one of the initiatives of the Ministry of Tourism that promotes internal tourism based on an associativity, we have had to finish adjusting it because the market did not react to an associativity, it is quite complex. – Q: Let me see, the market, you are referring to the market, the consumer, the tourist? – A: No, I mean rather the supply. – Q: Ah, the local actors? – A: Yes, the local actors. – P: They do not respond to... – A: Yes. (MT, p. 389)

Concerning the way how individuals are linked, nothing was mentioned by the respondents. It was said before that there should not be a pool of joint resources where can be benefited from by every participant and that people should be linked by unilateral relations which oblige them to contribute resources if they want to make use of some themselves. Nevertheless, it seems that in most of the cases there is not a joint pool: if actors want to participate in cooperation initiatives, investments need to be made. A good example in this context is the participation of the private sector in tourism fairs. This contribution of economic resources is often seen as a barrier, which will be explained later under the cognitive barrier or enhancer of personal motivations.

With respect to the number of participants, the ideal situation of a moderate group size mentioned by Ostrom (2010), seems disputed. Many actors mention the lack of participating stakeholders and therefore resources are limited; if actors cooperate, costs can be shared and budgets can be put together:

We already had the meeting with Quito Turismo, with the Tourism Foundation of Cuenca to join budgets and to take actions together, but if there were more actors, that is to say, if a hotel came and said, "I also want to add up", and if Los Tiestos [local restaurant] comes and says "I want to go to a training", and we managed to make a group of 20 people where [...]. (GL, p. 336)

It was stated that fully shared outcomes of collective action even tolerate bigger group sizes and this is likely to be the case. If Cuenca and the southern region are promoted no direct individual benefits are experienced for specific actors, which then again can also be a barrier because it influences the motivation to participate in a negative way. But it is more about growing tourism influxes that will benefit the entire tourism sector in a later stage. Therefore, more participating actors are needed in order to combine resources and achieve greater results. But it was the manager of Cazhuma Tours who insisted on a lower number of participants and referred to the “pool” initiative of the local tour operators in Cuenca. They left the group due to the inability and difficulty to reach consensus and concrete decisions between six members and the time consuming process related to this. Thus, whether a high number of participants is seen as a barrier or an enhancer is very case dependent. However in the case of the CMBR in general, more participants are needed in order to really attract

international markets. It also important to mention the existent effect of both the barriers or enhancer of the structural dimension itself and the way in which individuals are linked on the number of participants. If there is a higher degree of associativity, more actors are likely to participate in initiatives and if there is a joint pool of resources, tourism players will be more motivated to engage in cooperation. The latter also explains the effect of the cognitive barrier or enhancer of personal motivations on the number of participants.

Also the heterogeneity of the participating stakeholders is an important factor and is often correlated with the number of participants: most actors want more and different participating organizations. The heterogeneity is mostly related to the public or private sector, or to different sectors within the general public one. Several actors mention the necessity of cooperation between both of these sectors and the absence of this type of action between public institutions and enterprises is often seen as an important barrier influencing the access towards international markets. So more and both public and private actors are needed. In this context, also the possible evolution of the FMTC towards a real DMO and public enterprise can be mentioned; in this way, they could become a real place for the development of public-private alliances. This possible change of statutes will be further elaborated and explained in the next section.

Nothing about the possible (in)voluntary entry or exit was mentioned. It was said before that having the ability to choose at liberty whether you cooperate or not and with whom positively influences the probability of efficient collective action. In the majority of the examples, this liberty was present. However, it was not possible to deduce from the interviews whether this really constitutes a barrier or an enhancer.

Concerning the formality of group governance, no explicit barriers or enhancers popped up. This is probably due to the obvious formal environment in which the collective action initiatives take place. International fairs, certification processes, collaboration agreements, workshops etc. already have a formal nature and the presence of public, private and public-private actors reinforces this formal atmosphere even more. Nevertheless, the project coordinator of the FMTC stresses the importance of adherence to what is established in formal plans: “[...] then if we have a plan, we have to work based on the plan and everything that is done has to be grounded in the plan” (FMTC-PC, p. 234).

The presence of an actor who clearly takes the role of leader and coordinates a certain project at the same time is sometimes definitely seen as an advantage. The Chief Operating Officer (COO) of South American Tours clearly referred to the need of a leading figure and associated assets like the capacity to act, organize and mobilize and reunite other actors:

P: A specific person. - A: He knew his way around. – Q: So a leader. – A: He, a leader yes, just like a leader. He gathered the people, he organized the visit, [...] this is super interesting to

see etc., etc., but he did not stop the contact, he managed to gather The people and managed to train them in order to get them ahead and it was well received. (SAT, p. 438)

Nevertheless, due to the statutes of the FMTC, this municipal institution does not profile itself as a leader in collective actions but rather as a facilitator. It was the project coordinator of the FMTC who confirmed this by saying that *“we do not have to be the principal actors [in the road shows], we need to be a supporting actor”* (FMTC-PC, p. 216). Also the general manager of Southland Touring confirms this by saying that they can only help with the promotion and possible selling of tourism products; the operation, implementation or organization cannot be done by the FMTC. This leads automatically to the last important barrier or enhancer of the structural dimension that will be discussed below: coordination of the group.

In this way, also the necessity of a good coordination of the collective action and its corresponding group members results important. This partly because of the fact that most actors are directed and working towards their own level. Both the manager of Cazhuma Tours and the tour operator Sara Urku clearly formulated the need of an organization or supplier that is appointed as a coordinator. Also the positive effect of sequence was put forward which refers to keep processes and having the same face to communicate with (and not every once in a while a new actor). The coordinating actor should also respect its role and transmit information correctly and on a regular basis. Besides the awareness of this necessity, it was also added that the coordinating actor and its corresponding support should be preferably situated at a higher level. In this context, the role of the FMTC pops up and Southland Touring said literally: *“with institutions like the FMTC it is easier and it works better to determine joint goals”* (ST, p.22). The municipal institution often acts as a facilitator of collective action initiatives by providing assistance for promotion and management activities and their facilitating capacity is explicitly mentioned by various interviewed actors. For example, the technical analyst of protected areas of the Tourism Unit of Cajas NP refers to the FMTC as a clear facilitator of the international fairs which lead eventually to a greater presence of Russian, Danish, Polish, Finnish and Ukrainian markets at the NP. Likewise the director of Turis Consulting refers to the possible communication and coordination role of the FMTC:

It is the need to collaborate in a solid and integral way, isn't it? Towards a value chain, which, that is there and not only, and also the attitude has to change a little, the attitude not only to complain about what happens, but to act, and in that I believe that the Foundation or the enterprise must have some specific and open channels of communication to promote this performance and interaction of these people with the market or with the, with the reality of the destination. (TC, p. 311)

And also the sales and contracting manager of Gray Line mentioned the following idea:

Yes, it is an interlocutor, it is a distributing entity, and it is someone who unites because it is where the whole union comes together, they can speak and spread information faster and summon the actors and make sure that don't say no, that is another important issue because if you ask, you can say no, but if the foundation asks, they do not say no. (GL, p. 344)

Even the COO of South American Tours mentioned the coordinating capacity of the FMTC and their ability to motivate and organize as important factors to mobilize tourists to visit the south. Last but not least, also the FMTC itself, and more specifically the executive director, emphasizes their coordinating role:

I think that the foundation, despite its economic limitations, can be a management body, in which various actors can come together as I have said, the different GADs, private enterprise and the Ministry of Tourism, that brings together the different visions, the different concepts, because eventually everyone occupied with tourism from the private or public sector has a clear objective, we do not really know where to begin, but the objective is that Cuenca, that already is a tourism destination, is strengthened and consolidated. (FMTC-ED, p. 179)

In this context, the FMTC can become a catalyst actor of information, support, agreements and management. From this paragraph it is clear that many barriers or enhancers are interrelated. Good (face-to-face) communication (barrier or enhancer of the nature of the CA itself) is something that needs to be provided by a coordinator. The continuity and sequence of processes (a new-found barrier or enhancer that will be explained later) is also something that needs to be maintained by a coordinator. Furthermore the perceived role of the participants (cognitive barrier or enhancer) also results important: the FMTC is the perceived authority for coordination of collective action towards international markets by many actors and also the institution itself recognizes this. However they lack the economic ability and legal structure to consolidate themselves like this and also professionalization and technical training are needed; this will be discussed in the section of the general barriers or enhancers. No specific barriers and enhancers that were not mentioned above and that should be placed in the category "Other", were found.

Both the role of social capital in the network and the importance of the FMTC in the process of creating a network and developing social capital seem clear. Social capital is essential in order to get the actors to unite, to trust each other and to be motivated to engage themselves in collective action initiatives. In this way, more and different participants can reach a certain level of associativity, which is clearly recognized as a requirement for accessing international markets. The role of the FMTC in this process cannot be neglected: it is a known and often respected organization in the CMBR's

system and therefore the actor par excellence to bring both the public and the private sector together in collective action initiatives towards international tourism markets. In this way, the FMTC can fulfill a coordinating and facilitating role and be a supporting and motivating actor by providing information, assistance and expertise at crucial moments.

4.4.2 Cognitive barriers or enhancers

The lack of trust appears to be one of the most important barriers for the tourism system of the CMBR. Private enterprises explicitly mentioned various times that the trust in both public and political institutions was absent and one actor even said they were almost bugging or thwarting them instead of helping (a local tour operator). Some actors were not always that positive about the management of the FMTC and refer to the continuous change of faces in this management. This lack of continuity, constancy and transparency in both public and political institutions reinforces the trust issue, causes sometimes indifference and can be seen as an important sub-barrier or sub-enhancer of trust. The absence of continuity was underlined with clear words: *“Probably, the actors who did that investigation, these workshops, are not here anymore, so, tourism is still not a government policy, the new, the new Minister comes and there is no continuity”* (FMTC-ED, p. 176). These examples are obvious proof of the influence of the political environment on the tourism system of the CMBR. Also between the public sector and the hotel sector in specific, there seems to be a trust issue: the latter is often afraid to give exact statistics due to professional jealousy or the fear of getting extra taxes if they have a high occupancy rate. Nevertheless this is changing, because they are starting to realize that these statistics are needed in order to strengthen the destination and to encounter the informal accommodation sector. Besides trust issues between public and private sector, also confidence between private tourism players is often lacking: tour operators do not trust the hotel sector completely or are not always eager to participate because they suspect hotels of having secret agreements with informal tourism actors (e.g. with guides that charge lower fees and that give commissions to hotel receptionists). Again an interaction effect between barriers or enhancers is observed: absence of a high degree of confidence hinders associativity and alliances, a high number of participating actors and the political environment (general barrier or enhancer that will be explained later) of the CMBR causes the trust issues partly. Last but not least, it is important to mention that this trust barrier cannot be explained in isolation from the others that will be discussed in the next paragraphs. For example, the lacking of adherence to norms and regulation influences trust negatively and a low level of trust lowers the motivation of actors to participate.

The tourism system of the southern region of Ecuador and even of the whole country is facing informality problems: there is a lack of regulation and control of the tourism activity. In this way, formal tourism businesses often feel neglected and shortchanged due to related and recurrent

issues: complex online booking systems for the Cajas NP for tour operators and associated complaints of tourists due to the waiting time at the park itself, informal accommodation on Airbnb and tourism activities (often owned or operated by retired foreigners who live in the region that do not pay business taxes), Uber, guides on social media, the fact that official tourism actors do have to ask for authorization, follow rules and pay licenses, etc. It is obvious in the eyes of the interviewed actors that a better application of and control over the system of norms and a quality management system should be installed in order to encounter and avoid the informality problems. This should also help to improve trust feelings in the CMBR system and various actors share the opinion that it should be implemented from the governmental level. In this context, the FMTC is estimated by various tourism players to be an important actor with possibilities in this field:

Of course, we work with with the Tourism Foundation for, Municipal Tourism Foundation for Cuenca, which is a foundation, they are in charge of more than what is a little publicity, of making known the destination or things, but they do not handle anything of regulations, nothing of these things, right? It is an entity that is, that is part of the municipality, isn't? But they are trying to improve, they are trying to change, they want to stop being a foundation in order to change and have some more capacities right? Because at the moment they do not not not have them... (EA, p. 197)

However regulation and control and the corresponding execution of ordinances are currently absent in their competences. This problem of statutes leads to an important general barrier or enhancer that will be discussed in section 4.5 General barriers and enhancers in relation to accessing international markets.

Also the reputation of certain tourism players seems to influence cooperation inclinations. While some actors are more negative about the FMTC, others are very positive about their realizations and consider them "trustworthy professionals" who have put Cuenca on the map: "Q: What role did the play? – A: Promotion, promotion, in other words, they have put Cuenca on the map" (GL, p. 343). This stimulates of course possible future collective actions and interacts positively with the first mentioned barrier or enhancer in this section of trust. Furthermore, if actors make sure there is an efficient application of the norms and a related control, reputation will be positively influenced. The same goes for the general barrier or enhancer of the political environment discussed later: a complex political environment and associated problems can hinder a good reputation for the political institutions.

Concerning the personal motivations, the public sector often mentioned the lack of motivation of the private sector to invest, participate and be innovative. The interaction effect of the different barriers seems clear, because this is mainly caused due to the above explained low existing level of trust of the private sector in the public sector, the absence of norms and the barrier of

personalities and the political environment, both described later; this all together leads to less motivated tourism players. The public sector complains about both the minimal participation of local tour operators and the lack of their follow-up after their assistance to road shows, international fairs, etc. This former appears to be caused by the private sector's vision of participation in these collective action examples: more than being considered an investment, the participation is seen as an expensive cost (it can go up to twelve thousand dollars for a complete participation):

A: Well, all of them have worked very well before also in terms of defining routes and offers, but they have not been able to take the plunge in terms of business. – Q: What is it that is missing? – A: Business decisions, decisions and investments. – Q: Investment. – A: Decision and business investment, because they can have the conditions and, and I tell you for my case, that I have many friends there and that I used to sell them and that I used to sell them only as suppliers. It has been a special motivation in order to let them succeed in stepping out and the frustration is such because they do not react, so that's why I told you, it is not an institutional point of view, it's personal, but much depends on the conception of private business in order to step out and there are many who complain about their situation, but they do not want to take the plunge. (MT, p. 391)

Therefore their motivation to participate is often small and they miss the opportunity of getting a bigger return on the investment in a later stage. Risks need to be taken by the private sector if they want success, this while the willingness to invest often only follows the actual or immediate success; the lack of a clear vision of the possible benefits explains why there is often no reaction to initiatives of the Tourism Ministry. This leads to the negative effect of both the barriers or enhancers of how individuals are linked (absence of a joint pool of resources) and the nature of the benefits (no direct individual ones) on the personal motivations: *"Exactly, and also that ... I tell you, in other words, if they had made this investment, what do I know, ten or twelve years ago we would have much more developed the destination much more developed tourism now"* (FMTC-PC, p. 231). However the recognition of the expenditure as an investment and not as a cost is there:

Exactly, well, always when you measure tourism, in other words, because when we do Fams and Press [trips], the return on investment is always complicated because tourism is always in the medium and long term. [...] No and and trust and support, this is a future investment so it is not immediate, the collaboration with the FamTrips, with the PressTrips, with the, with the courtesies, with all this that we do want to do and about which we obviously know that it is and investment for hotelkeepers and for the growth of restaurants, but we know that in the long run they will give results. (GL, pp. 340, 342)

Also the need of a general feeling of co-responsibility in which the private sector is not only focused on its own agreements and operations but orientated towards the whole tourism destination, was

put on the table by the FMTC who sees it as a crucial element because tourism and the joint development of the destination is beneficial for everyone. This is not only necessary for the private sector, also the public sector needs to engage; engagement and compromise of the actors in general and taking planning seriously are, of course, needed to achieve collective action. In this context the realization that working together, opposed to the desire of fulfilling personal goals leads to a bigger range of possibilities, is an important first step:

Exactly, I go first, don't I [talking about actors in the private sector]? So maybe that small part is still missing. And that is what, and that should be clarified that, the moment you work in a collective, yes? The scope may be higher, and also the volume may be better.
(CNP, p. 45)

One of the most recurrent and probably also one of the most significant barriers, or in this case enhancer, is the recognition of interdependence among stakeholders. This refers mainly to the relationship between the public and private sector, but also within each sector separately, and is perfectly expressed with the following statement:

We have to work together. The private company, even more because it is working directly with the tourist, in the face-to-face, as we say ... The support that it receives from the public sector cannot be sidestepped. This has to be a synergy, it has to be a joint effort. A strategic union, which we have always manifested. That is, we are always ready to work together with the public sector. Because the public sector is obliged to promote the destination, and we are the ones who force them to work in the tourist service of that destination. (CAPTUR, p. 85)

Many actors are aware of the necessity of joint efforts between different sectors in order to access international tourism markets; the awareness of interdependence is definitely present and mutual support should be given. Permanent interaction between both of the sectors is important and minimal agreements and planning based on long term visions cannot be underestimated. In this way, the costs are shared and reduced and in most cases the benefits remain the same. In relation to the road shows and international fairs, the FMTC clearly states the crucial necessity of participation of the local tour operators and their investment, rather than the ones in Quito, because the foundation itself cannot be the principal actor and it is still the private sector that is responsible for and should take care of the business side and sales:

Of course, it is the problem that generally the participating tour operators are the slightly larger tour operators that are located in Quito so obviously they already have a sale at the national level. The participation of local tour operators is minimal then, that is what is missing, obviously that eh... we can have... this. (FMTC-PC, p. 216)

Besides this, the awareness of the necessary involvement of the private sector in the making of the tourism development plans is also stated by the FMTC. Another related problem and one close to the

barrier of personal motivations has to do with the investments. Both public and private sector seem to wait for each other to start investing; a tour operator will not invest in a new tourism attraction if the neighboring roads are in a bad state, while the public sector will wait for the private investor to include the attraction in its itinerary before working on decent roads. In this context, the interdependence of their investments results obvious and both are crucial:

Exactly, exactly, but you need a budget because why? How did the north develop? With government investment and by seeing that government investment exists, then the people, of course, say "Then I also invest and I will do it", then something similar has to be here because people say, "How should I take risks if I still do not have the facilities that are needed for the destination to be developed?" So that is where we see ourselves limited, why? Because you are stuck with the same offer as always. (MTAR, p. 258)

Of course, this barrier or enhancer influences the number and the heterogeneity of participants. Furthermore it also sees itself interrelated with all the cognitive barrier or enhancers mentioned in this section.

The barrier or enhancer of personalities is here more related to the Ecuadorian or even Latin-American socio-cultural environment of the CMBR. The phenomenon of entrepreneurial actors, and people in general, in Ecuador having the desire to get along with everyone and saying “yes” to everything rather than admitting something is not going to happen or feasible for them, pops up among certain actors as a barrier. This attitude is common in order to avoid a bad reputation, but at the same time it interacts in a negative way with trust, reputation and personal motivations. It was described by one of the language schools and institutions in the region:

A: Sometimes I think that in this culture here you always have to have, in English we say “safe face”, it is like I never want to look bad, right? – Q: Yes – A: And in this point I think, it is indeed true that I can’t generalize too much, but the importance of this and not looking bad to people causes this or the impossibility of saying no for example. – Q: OK, yes indeed, here it is... – A: Here the people say yes, yes, yes – Q: Of course, getting along is what we say here –A: You have to get along, exactly and in this sense, you and I can agree about something in a certain reunion but afterwards nothing happens, even if I said yes... (one of the language schools and institutions in the region)

Besides the above mentioned personality characteristic, there is also a lot of professional jealousy (cf. hotel sector and sharing statistics) which often hinders a decent level of associativity that is so badly needed: *“Now, we also lack in the country and in the tourism sector a quite marked low level of associativity, there is a lot of jealousy, entrepreneurial jealousy that even entrepreneurs of a more advanced level cannot overcome...”* (CAPTUR, p. 389). While the Ecuadorian society is a very

collective one at the social or familiar level, this collectiveness is often absent at the business level due to professional suspiciousness and the corresponding difficulty to reach agreements.

It results that the perceived role of the participants is quite ambiguous: clarity of roles is often absent, while everything should be clear at the beginning of each collective action initiative. It was the head of the Destination Planning Unit of the regional Tourism Ministry who affirmed this:

A: So the competences of every level of government are not clear, even starting with the agreements that are valid, so it is a problem – Q: The clarity of roles – A: Clarity of roles, there is no clarity of roles, I mean, we know that we are the governing body [of tourism], but we gave them some kind of competence, but... (MTAR, p. 280)

This is also partly explains the reason why a lot of actors are convinced of the role of the FMTC as the institution guarding the adherence to the norm system; according to them control and regulation should be in foundation's hands but in reality it is not included in their legal structure (cf. 4.5 General barriers and enhancers in relation to accessing international markets). In this way the perceived role can cause trust issues. With respect to the barrier or enhancer reciprocity, nothing was found in the interviews with the 21 interviewed actors. No specific barriers and enhancers that were not mentioned above and that should be placed in the category "Other", were found.

4.4.3 Barriers or enhancers of the nature of collective action itself

Again, like with the structural barriers or enhancers, the first one refers here to the dimension itself: the existence of the ability to work together or having a joint management capacity. This differs from the cognitive barrier or enhancer of personal motivations that have more to do with the desire and intentions to achieve collective action, than the actual capacity of realizing it. Therefore it is more connected to the cognitive barrier of personalities, and it was even mentioned that the vision of collective work just lacks: *"So it seems to me that what, what lacks is this vision of working together, right?"* (TC, p. 310). Several interviewed actors report about this capacity as an important one in order to really attract international tourism markets. This barrier also sees itself influenced by the general ones mentioned in 4.5 General barriers and enhancers in relation to accessing international markets: the budget or broader economic issue and the need of professionalization and technical training. It is self-evident that a lack of economic resources or skills hinders the ability to work together. Furthermore it is also possibly determined by a good coordination of the group.

Likewise the type and process of communication seems an important barrier and enhancer. Often the problem of bad communication between public and private sector or the lack of communication between the different Ministries is stated. Concerning the type of communication, face-to-face communication is still preferred by most of the actors due to the many associated benefits, it was the project coordinator of the FMTC who stated that passing on information to tour

operators, that were not present at the fairs or road shows, is not the same as standing with them and doing it together and that talking face-to-face between interested parties and tour operators is a better way of arranging it:

It's because they were not there, they did not see them, it's not the same as being in a face-to-face situating and saying "of course, I can arm you with this product because, wait a moment, because I have this and I'm going to make a proposal for you, and this is where the click is made. (FMTC-PC, p. 230)

Regarding the collective action example between the FMTC and South American Tours about the inclusion of a visit to the *Asociación De Toquilleras María Auxiliadora* in Sígsg in their package, the COO of the tour operator admitted that speaking the FMTC face-to-face was definitely better than a telephone conversation. Besides this also the communication of accurate information or statistics is lacking, which is already partly explained in the structural barrier or enhancer of coordination, in the cognitive barrier of trust and again quoted in the barrier written more below of joint formulation of aims and objectives. It is also important to mention that good communication can influence the existing trust level, reputation and coordination of the group in a positive way.

The barrier or enhancer information about past actions is quite similar to the cognitive one of reputation, but this one has more to do with the deliberate communication of behavior, results or information of other actors in the context of a specific collective action initiative. Nothing specific concerning this barrier was mentioned, but it can be seen as interconnected with a new identified barrier in the last paragraph: the having of results. Knowing the concrete results of a certain collective action can enhance or hinder future cooperation inclinations; this can also be seen as receiving information about past actions.

Also the nature of the benefits plays an important role and in most of the collective action cases not only the benefits are fully shared but also the cost are, which constitutes an extra benefit. According to the systems analyst of the archaeological complex of Inga Pirca fully shared benefits are necessary in order to get people working together: *"The problem is that they say that the complex [of Inga Pirca] only benefits a few. So what has been expressly wanted is to link management plans so that everything is linked and everyone is benefitted"* (IP, p. 556). Their current management plan only benefits a few neighboring towns and this is why he recognizes the need of linking different managements plan to get everyone to gain from it; convincing tourists to not only visit the complex or putting tents at the complex itself where the communities can sell their handicrafts are already steps in the right direction. Apart from the fact that they are fully shared or subtractible, also the time range of the receiving of the benefits seems determining. The private sector wants to obtain economic benefits as quick as possible; otherwise they are not inclined to participate. In most of the times, the benefits have to be evident and related to economic earnings. In this way, the barrier is

interrelated with both the structural dimension itself and the number of participants, with the personal motivations and the having of results (described at the end of this section).

A joint formulation of aims and objectives appears to be a barrier or enhancer that possibly determines the success or the failure of a collective action, like the general manager of Southland Touring affirms with following example:

I did a, a, a project in Logroño about training for technicians in rural tourism. What was the problem that we encountered with the rural tourism technicians? What was the thing that, that tied our hands? [...] The people did not have clear concepts of what they wanted to do, so, which complicated a lot. (ST, p. 710)

In this way, having an agreed on clear and higher objective together with good problem identification, knowing what is needed and where to end can be seen as key first step or basic enhancer and condition facilitating the success of a collective action. It is not exaggerated to say that this barrier or enhancer might influence all the other ones. This determination should, of course, be done in a collective way between both the public and the private sector through permanent interactions. Knowing which international market to attract, to focus and spend money on in a collective way, is an important first step in this context and this is also why accurate and transparent statistics are needed. Besides this, also the advantage of having a tourism strategic development plan and marketing plan with concrete steps, directions and objectives is put forward. Concerning this barrier, the Executive Director also underlines the importance of having a concrete higher objective which is not too general; strengthen and consolidate Cuenca as a tourism destination is a shared objective among many actors, but this is certainly too broad. It was the head of the Destination Planning Unit of the regional Tourism Ministry that referred to the fact that a lot of tourism players have a higher objective, but that they do not act corresponding to it and that the long-term vision and corresponding planning lack:

There must be a series of agreements between the actors on the greater objectives that the destination pursues, I think that is fundamental, that everyone has clarity of those greater objectives and that commitment towards it is planned, I think those ... [...] I believe that this is what, what is the main thing that exists in the great efforts of, having a common goal that must be reached and after this that there is a capacity for these great tourism objectives to be fulfilled through a compromise that would have to be established objectively, no? based on inter-institutional and inter-company collaboration to achieve this goal. (MTAR, p. 309)

In the category other some important barriers and enhancers were found during the analysis of the interviews. The first one is the having of results (e.g. of earlier collective action initiatives); it is exactly this output that provides the input to keep on trying to work together. Both

private and public sector are counting on the presence of immediate results of their initiatives and investments; this is why tour operators often stop participating in fairs and road shows after a lack of the desired return. The president of the Azuay Hotel Association literally mentioned that the promotion island in the national airport of Cuenca in January 2016 lead to positive results, thus constituted a catalyst for other reunions and collective actions between other sectors besides the hotel sector:

So for me it is a success because we have been able to gather everyone and from there a quantity of things to do has arisen, such as working together with travel operators in the in not spending the money indi ... in which a company is going to one thing and others to a fair, but that it is better to go all together. [...] It's a, well for me it is a success, why? Because through that it has been possible to unify all, not to unify, well, to associate all, for several projects. (HAA, pp. 124, 126)

It was also in this context that the tour operator Cazhuma Tours left the “pool” initiative: due to the lack of results. Furthermore, the systems analyst of Inga Pirca remarked that their initiative to involve the surrounding communities did not work; they were not willing to cooperate because they wanted to see results first. Also the executive director of the FMTC alludes to the absence of results or concrete agreements concerning certain FamTrips, workshops, planning processes and development plans. Furthermore, both the FMTC and the regional Tourism Ministry point out the lacking of results of the workshops and joint planning with Green Consulting concerning the previous tourism development plan for Cuenca:

A: We had the profile of the current tourist and also the profile of the potential tourist that we want to reach was handled a little bit. Basically the potential tourist on which is focused more is the one that was arriving to Galapagos, a bit with a higher spending capacity, who has a little more academic preparation and of a spending range that is a little bit higher. But how this tourist would have to be was not defined in a detailed way... – Q: OK, so they didn't come to developing a profile of which type of tourist that they want to attract for Cuenca? – A: No. – Q: OK. – A: And yes it is interesting to have that... (MTAR, p. 233)

This barrier sees itself obviously positively interrelated with the cognitive ones of trust, reputation and personal motivations, because results stimulate further cooperation interests. In addition it is obvious that every mentioned barrier or enhancer can influence the having of results. They all determine the likelihood of efficient collective action and efficient also means achieving something: the presence of results.

Another relevant discovered barrier under the category other is the lack of follow-up, monitoring and feedback, both during and after the collective action initiative. If there is no follow-up from the beginning or afterwards, it is difficult to know what is missing or what went wrong and

therefore impossible to improve. A good example of how follow-up is influenced by the efficiency of continuity of processes is given by the technical director of Quito Turismo who mentioned having the same management team and director during political changes and the survival of their tourism symbol of Quito, even while four different administrations have passed in time:

Quito has a tourism brand, which is a symbol of a hummingbird and a sun. This tourism brand was designed in 2003 and, until today 2016, four administrations of the local government have passed and it is still the same tourism brand. (QT, p. 345)

This barrier often causes the above mentioned barrier of the lack of having results and it is necessary to improve this; because there seems to be a gap between the agreements and the action. Again there exists an interaction between this barrier and the cognitive one of the lack of trust and political continuity; changing political faces hinder the possible follow-up, monitoring and feedback even more.

4.5 General barriers and enhancers in relation to accessing international markets

One of the most recurrent barriers is definitely the fact that Cuenca is, despite its big potential, a secondary or complementary tourism destination within Ecuador for international tourists, contrary to Quito or the Galapagos Islands that are already consolidated tourism destinations. It is even said that Ecuador in general is already a secondary tourism destination, which makes Quito and Galapagos tertiary ones and Cuenca even a quaternary one:

A: No. I say that Ecuador is a secondary destination and Quito is tertiary. – P: Ah. – A: Cuenca is tertiary, quaternary. Hahaha... – Q: Of course... – A: In other words, and... – P: Of course, it is the complement of a complement, of course, yes. (QT, p. 368)

Guayaquil absorbs a considerable amount of the incoming tourists due to its air connection to the Galapagos; nevertheless, the relatively new close by airport also caused an increase in incoming tourism fluxes for the southern region:

Yes we have, the tourism issue has undoubtedly increased in the Cuenca destination, yes? Taking into account the issues that I mentioned before, like the airport theme, the issue of the change of operation frequencies of some actors, yes it has increased. (CNP, p. 39)

Besides this, Cuenca and the south are very much dependent on Quito in terms of incoming tourism fluxes; almost every organized group reaches the south through the incoming tour operators in the capital. Therefore, possible success of the south is heavily determined by the connection to, willingness and openness of national tour operators in Quito (cf. 4.2.9 Entry and exit points of Ecuador for the international visitors). Moreover, many local tour operators adopt a wait-and-see attitude and do not undertake action themselves. At the same time the above mentioned problem is associated with the connectivity and lack of adequate tourism infrastructure in the southern region

of the country. The development of the secondary tourism product suffers from this isolation of the tourism action or boom: roads are not always in a good condition, hotels, restaurant and guides are lacking in more remote areas, there is no international airport which obliges the tourists to go back in time to Quito or Guayaquil to catch their flight, domestic flights are expensive, etc. Furthermore a process of stagnation seems to be going on at the destination of Cuenca and the south of Ecuador: the tourism product and offer is not creative or innovative anymore and this is why the public sector relies even more on the private one to take a risk and make investments. New attractions should be created that can keep the tourists longer in the city:

I think a greater investment in promoting the Cuenca destination is necessary and I also think it is necessary, because the promotion part, well, the public part can do it, right? Actually it would be ideal if we could do it together, but we will say, who under these circumstances can do it with more budget is the public part, but it is necessary that the private part is more creative, they are in a stagnation, the only thing they have done is implementing hotels in heritage houses, that is all the tourism activity that they have been doing and a city cannot live from that, a city has to have tourist activities, the destination has to be entertaining, fun. I think the private part lacks being more creative. (MTAR, p. 178)

Furthermore, also experience-based tourism attractions are needed in order to respond to the demand trends and in this context the cooperation initiative between South American Tours and the FMTC to include a visit to the *Asociación De Toquilleras María Auxiliadora* in Sígfig in their package would have been a good example; unfortunately this initiative was not continued. Also the municipality of Gualaceo is aware of the classic character of their offer of handicraft workshops; they know they need more creativity and innovation, which goes by all means hand in hand with attracting investments:

Yes, the theme of innovation, I think there is the point, we are, let me see, we are without being an old product in tourism, there are no products that old, if we look around the world, there are products like Disney that probably, I know, they will be 50, 100 years old and it is still, it is still selling as well, we are not an old product, we are probably also 50 years old or 100 years old, but there has been no innovation, probably in the destination of Miami-Disney, there is innovation all the time, there has been no innovation here, so we have not invested, very little has been done, there is no innovation. (MG, p. 536)

This barrier is influenced by the one of the lack of budget or the broader economic issue. Then again it also lowers the motivation to invest and participate in cooperation initiatives. However the latter causes the circular effect: investments are not often made because they know it is only a

complementary destination, but this causes the stagnation which does not allow the destination to escape from this situation.

The second barrier is related to the current positioning of Cuenca at the international level; this positioning and the established tourism itineraries are already consolidated and therefore difficult to change. New perspectives for Cuenca could really be an enhancer. The city is seen as the end of the itinerary of the *Avenida de los Volcanes* and consequently tourists will do this route and their stay in the region sees itself therefore limited. At the same time, the image of Cuenca as best city to retire for North-Americans, declared by *International Living*, also has its consequences: many retired North-Americans come to live in the region (cf. 4.2 General profile and behavior pattern of the international visitors that currently visit (the south of) Ecuador and not every tourism player thinks this is the ideal positioning to attract the desired international tourism markets. The opinion that Cuenca's positioning should be based on a unique and differentiating value and that it should aim at a positioning as an academic, a creative or a world heritage destination is shared by several interviewed agents. It is also an important destination for higher education:

A: Yes, yes, that is something important because you see, Ecuador, as you say it is a secondary site, I do not agree on that – Q: A secondary destination. – A: ... a secondary destination, sorry, but yes, I would not say this in a world of "Study Abroad", because all over the world, Ecuador is on the sixteenth place for students who come from the United States to study in another country. And in Latin America, Ecuador is on the fourth place included from Mexico to Tierra de Fuego, including the Caribbean and in that sense, Ecuador has had, well, generally a good reputation... (CEDEI, p. 461)

This leads automatically towards an important sub-barrier or –enhancer: the small existing link between education and tourism. It leads to minimal attention and investments of the authorities towards this type of tourism, while this type of tourist is exactly the one that stays longer at the destination and that is inclined to visit the surrounding attractions of the city. Besides this, Cuenca is also known for its handicrafts and popular arts, which makes it an ideal creative destination:

For me, the artisanal capital of this country is Cuenca. It's funny, but UNESCO has an initiative called "Creative Cities", the network of creative cities. And the city that is registered by Ecuador as a creative city in crafts and popular arts is Durán... (QT, p. 370)

The third and not less crucial barrier is the economic or budget issue, which is seen as the biggest barrier by various actors and which really complicates and impedes the access of international tourism markets. It sees itself interrelated to the first mentioned barrier of 4.4.3; possessing the capacity to work together is often strongly determined by the possession of the necessary financing to do so. In this context, the FMTC has to put up with only one tenth of the budget that has the DMO of the capital, Quito Turismo, and the Tourism Ministry Austro Regional

only has a 600.000 dollar budget that has to be divided over the three provinces of Azuay, Cañar and Morona-Santiago. Nevertheless many actors, like already mentioned with the cognitive barriers and enhancers, remain positive about the realizations of the FMTC even with their limited financing. This barrier can be placed in a broader political and economic context; during the economic world crisis and also in times without an economic crisis, tourism is still not seen as a government priority or taken seriously; it has always occupied a second background, has often been executed with a certain level of ignorance and a decent policy is lacking:

Although the management of the Ministry has improved in the recent years but previously it was not, let me see, it was not that simple right?, due to the budget issue and because of the fact that the Ministry of Tourism and Environment always occupy a second background.
(CNP, p. 41)

In addition, Ecuador has become a more expensive destination due to the dollarization of the economy, the fall of the oil prices in the country and several devaluations. An example is the rise in the price of the visas.

Another important repeated barrier is the need of professionalization of and technical training for people in the tourism sector; the power of human resources, expertise and technical support cannot be underestimated:

Q: What do you think are the necessary conditions to be able to reach, to generate a culture working for joint goals? – A: Well, I would say a professionalization of the tourism sector in the southern part of the country, and another, the fact that they may have a renewed offer of the tourism product anchored to the classic visits, initially... (MT, p. 397)

This sees itself related to a better monitoring and follow-up of the academic part or: in which direction do they want to lead or bring the people that are studying tourism right now at the local Universities? People occupying high tourism positions should definitely consider the development of tourism as a real policy and should dispose of adequate entrepreneurship, management skills and multilingualism but this is not always the case. It was also the manager of Horizontes Andinos who stressed the importance of the need of educated and professionalized people to coordinate and to build trust:

So yes, in this sense yes, but what I see, if we go to that, if we want to reach self-determining entities in tourism development, I believe that many areas of the country really lack the capacity, well, there are not enough skilled people, prepared people who have this vision to develop it at a local level. (HA, p. 499)

I think yes, I guess, well that it would have to be experienced people, like you people who study, who know where to go and I think for them, it is the reason why I used the word facilitator, and they would have to see how, how do they manage to get access? How do

they manage to break that, I don't know, mistrust, mutual ignorance, I don't know. (HA, p. 513)

Therefore, the existence of a good training system is crucial, especially for tourism services suppliers. In this way, they can make sure their offer corresponds to the reality of demand and that they are willing to invest. This barrier is interrelated with the ones of personal motivations, trust, the nature of the benefits and follow-up or monitoring: professionalism in terms of techniques, procedures and tools to promote deals after promotion and to do follow-up is needed to generate trust. If actors know what the benefits will be and that results will follow, they will be more motivated and understand that the required spending is an investment and not an expense.

Also the statutes of the FMTC seem to include some barriers that are difficult to overcome and mentioned as problematic by several actors: they can only help with the promotion and possible selling of the products, not with the implementation, organization, operation or possible sharing of costs with the private sector in order to motivate them. This is due to their attachment to the municipality or GAD of Cuenca, which also determines their interference area. They can only strictly promote the canton of Cuenca and its rural and urban parishes, which seems problematic because international tourism fluxes also move outside this limited tourism system of the canton of Cuenca and therefore collective promotion is necessary:

A: That it is a tourist entity, public, private, in its current conception, that groups those destinations of the canton of Cuenca, right? That is where this foundation has influence and there yes, there is an administrative limit, right? Because obviously that administrative limit has to do with the delegated competences within a, of, of a Canton, it would be hard for the foundation to try to plan the destination... – Q: From other territories. –A: ... outside the boundaries of the canton of Cuenca because this does not belong to them, however, the foundation is absolutely aware that the area of influence of Cuenca goes a little further. (TC, p. 287)

Apart from this, their capacity to regulate, control and execute ordinances seems absent, this despite the decentralization of the Ministry after which this specific competence was actually given to them. So besides promoting and strengthening the destination, they should also take care of control and regulation because it is not the task of the Ministry of Tourism Austro Regional. But neither of them is doing this, which results in a huge tourism informality chaos:

When I started to work, in the Munici... the Ministry, among the actions that were transferred to the Municipality, was regulation and control, but the Municipality had not done this, because the foundation does not have this among its statutes to do so, it is only limited to promotion basically, promotion and strengthening of the destination, but among its powers is not regulation and control, and well the Ministry had already transferred their

powers so this was a no man's land, right? Municipality did not do it, Ministry did not do it, no man's land, informality a real chaos. (FMTC-ED, pp. 166-167)

There is no coherence in the internal institutional structuration to apply for this authority; on the one hand the municipality itself has the decentralized competencies for tourism control in the canton but on the other hand the tourism instance of the municipality, the FMTC, does not have the legal structure to apply for this authority. A possible solution or enhancer would be the adaptation of the legal structure to the current needs: the creation of a public enterprise or tourism department which would change the statutes of the FMTC. They would stop being a foundation and in this way they could fully carry out the transferred competences that were delegated by the Tourism Ministry:

No. Let me see, what I know, what should be done in this city, in my opinion is creating a public tourism enterprise as they exist in other cities, such as Quito and Guayaquil where they function very well, the objective is that this public tourism enterprise is, as it describes its name, sustainable isn't it? Sustainable and able to fully carry out the transfers that were delegated by the Ministry of Tourism, among them... [...] Regulation and control. (FMTC-ED, pp. 167-168)

Both Quito and Guayaquil have this type of public enterprise which can attract more budgets due to the possibility of doing business. In this way, they would also be more independent from the municipality which allows them to build more extensive public-private alliances and to improve cooperation and articulation with the private sector. Of course, the barrier of the statutes sees itself negatively influencing the trust level and at the same time it reinforces the image and positioning of Cuenca as a secondary destination: a lot of innovative and creative attractions are found outside the area of influence of the FMTC and these are exactly the ones that are needed to become a primary destination.

Furthermore the political environment, like already mentioned in relation to the trust barrier, plays an important role. Besides the lack of political continuity, constancy and transparency, also the centralized way of taking care of things is often reported as precarious. The centrality of the Ministry of Tourism causes bureaucratic circumstances because they take the decisions and define everything from there, as described by the President of the Azuay Provincial Chamber of Tourism:

Unfortunately, the one that is a little reluctant to join, due to the lack of ..., due to the bureaucracy and who has the power to liberalize the resources is the Ministry. Because the private company when it says: "We need a thousand dollars", the private company takes the money and puts it on the table. Meanwhile, the public one is the one that needs authorization, that needs so much paperwork... (CAPTUR, p. 87)

The political environment hinders the different actors to work together for common goals and causes a limited power in decision-making, autonomy and independence for the Tourism Ministry of the southern region, which results in a restricted management:

However, we have tried, without success, but we have tried, there is division, there is the local division of the Zonal Coordination 6, which is the entity, the Sub secretary of Austro, to work together in various projects, but the limiting factor is the budget, because all the activity at the level of the central government, is, excuse me for the redundancy, is centralized. So, in my personal opinion, and in this I want to be very clear, which is my personal opinion, is that in addition to not having money, they do not have power in decision-making, right? Because for many things sometimes, although it is true, the economic factor is a barrier, but sometimes the management factor could open other other ways of management right? But having no power, no money, no possibility, no autonomy, then management sees itself limited. (FMTC-ED, p. 166)

Policies and budgets are imposed and often there is a disconnection between what is decided behind a desk and the concrete tourism reality:

Exactly, well, I can tell you, a reality that I have already seen in these 6 years that I have been in the Ministry, because from the outside you see another reality right? Another thing is to be inside, it is that centralism will never cease to exist, in other words, is a theme of, you have an institution, its head is in Quito and and more than anything, the people and technicians, directors, will never understand the reality of the territory because they want to work from behind a desk. (MTAR, p. 248)

According to the Regional Tourism Ministry, the political problem is deep rooted and hinders a lot; e.g. political issues are the reason that there does not exist cooperation between the *Prefectura del Azuay* and the Tourism Ministry or the neighboring GADs. Political issues even hindered the development of the so-called Santa Bárbara tourist corridor: an initiative of the Provincial Government of Azuay in 2007 to generate alliances, align tourism products and to do joint promotion between the three cantons of Chordeleg, Gualaceo and Sígig. The alliance had to stop due to changing political administrations and today any level of integration between the three municipalities is lacking. This integration is exactly what is needed, because tourism has no frontiers; instead of only visiting Sígig, the tourist is interested in visiting the whole zone, area or surroundings. It becomes more and more essential that the tourism offer is aligned and integrated regardless the political or geographical limits.

Also the long process related to including a new tourism attraction into an itinerary or tour operator package can be seen as a hindering condition. Tour operators need to check and arrange everything long in advance and it requires considerable high costs and planning. This partly explains

the low tourism fluxes in the surroundings of Cuenca (e.g. surrounding municipalities of Sígüig, Chordeleg and Paute and communities like Saraguro) and at the same time it is interrelated with the trust barrier: communities need to be trustworthy before tour operators want to commit to them and this requires a long organizational process because they do not always see commercialization as included in their everyday task package. Also the checking, approval of the tourism agencies, marketing planning and unexpected visits are both time consuming and expensive and do often not bring enough return on investment.

Last but not least, also the global environment is influencing the tourism system of the CMBR. Some examples were given by the general manager of Apullacta: tourism fluxes are sensitive to what the press writes about certain countries and destinations, to the fact that airlines fly to certain countries (e.g. if Qatar Airways would install a luxury flight to Ecuador, the Qataris with money will come), to exchange rates, to the economic world crisis, etc.

In addition, it is important to mention the interconnectedness and interaction effects between the different barriers; all barriers have to be studied in relation to each other, because an isolated analysis will miss important aspects and relations. Concerning the general barriers and enhancers, it is obvious that the geographical barrier, and associated tourism isolation of the southern region of Ecuador, becomes a real mental barrier. The lack of economic means or budget is partially consequence of political problems, distrust and lack of continuity, which leads in turn to a low level of trust in the CMBR's network. This shortfall of confidence sees itself even more reinforced by the growing need of norms and standards to encounter the informality problem; again, this battle is made more difficult by the problematic statutes of the FMTC. The lack of trust and norms, the absence of having concrete results and the difficulty to gain direct economic benefits influences the personal motivation of the actors to participate in collective action initiatives. Also the structural barriers related to the group size and heterogeneity are interrelated with the cognitive one of the recognition of interdependence among stakeholders: more and different actors are needed and this is certainly realized by a majority of the tourism players. All the social capital barriers and enhancers are interrelated and neither can they be seen loose from the more general facilitating or hindering conditions.

5. Second-round results

5.1 Interviewed actors and detailed second-round methodology

Eleven actors were interviewed due to several reasons. The FMTC was, of course, interviewed a second time due to its role as entry-point of the investigation. Also the tour operators Southland Touring, Expediciones Apullacta and Sara Urku were interviewed for a second time as a result of being respectively a significant participant in collective action initiatives, being the tour operator of CEDEI and being recommended by the project coordinator of the FMTC. CEDEI itself was chosen again due to the desired profile that popped up from the analysis of the first-round interviews. A segment that stays longer in the city of Cuenca and surroundings is highly solicited, which leads automatically to the potential of the students coming to Cuenca. However, CEDEI, which is an important player in educative and academic tourism, was not mentioned by the FMTC as part of their network. This all together makes CEDEI an actor with big future potential for collective action initiatives worth being included in the second-round methodology. Furthermore, Cajas NP and the Tourism Ministry of the Austro Region were interviewed a second time due to respectively its role as key attraction in the CMBR and being the governing body for tourism at the regional level. The actors from the three municipalities of Sígsig, Chordeleg and Paute were interviewed a first time, because they were mentioned as part of the network of the FMTC and no interview with them was available. Finally, also the municipality of Saraguro was questioned because of its recommendation by the FMTC. Part of the interviews was already scheduled a week before leaving to Ecuador on April 1, 2017: the FMTC, Southland Touring, Expediciones Apullacta, Cajas NP (ETAPA), the Tourism Ministry Austro Regional and CEDEI were contacted by WhatsApp before the actual departure and appointments were made. The interviews with the four municipalities and the one with Sara Urku were scheduled in the beginning of the stay in Ecuador and the project coordinator of the FMTC provided the contact information. An oversight of the list of the interviewed actors and the interview guide used for the second-round interviews are given respectively in Annex 3: List of second-round in-depth interviews and Annex 4: Structure of the second-round in-depth interviews. The same codes for references were used as in the first-round results and for the new interviewed municipalities the codes are the following: municipality of Sígsig (MS), municipality of Paute (MP), municipality of Chordeleg (MCH) and municipality of Saraguro (MSAR).

These actors were chosen in consultation with Santiago Rodríguez Girón based on the collective action examples that can be found in the second annex of the interview guide (Annex 4: Structure of the second-round in-depth interviews) and that were sometimes used as a trigger during the interview. Originally, the earlier mentioned example in 4.3.1 Collective action initiatives towards international markets in which the FMTC participates or has participated of the cooperation between

the FMTC and Southland Touring concerning the inclusion of a visit to the *Asociación De Toquilleras María Auxiliadora* in Sígfig in a tour package was chosen to investigate in a more detailed way. Unfortunately, the project coordinator of the FMTC announced on the 14th of March by means of personal communication that the cooperation has not been continued. In addition, Santiago Rodríguez Girón mentioned on the 23rd of March the existence of ongoing certification processes with Tour Cert for both Cuenca as a Sustainable Destination in general and for Southland Touring. The cooperation with the German expert for certification and consulting in sustainable tourism and corporate responsibility was driven by the Tourism Ministry and it was expected that the FMTC would play the role of a catalyst or facilitating actor. Again, these examples were added to the list of the interview guide and used as possible triggers during the interviews. The next section will elaborate on these most significant collective action initiatives and sometimes other examples were discussed and mentioned by the interviewees and therefore added. Just like in 4.3 Collective action initiatives it is not an exhaustive list and a distinction is made between these examples in which the FMTC participated and that are orientated towards international markets and between examples in which the FMTC did not participate or that are more orientated towards national markets (TourCert, 2017).

5.2 Collective action initiatives and the corresponding role of the FMTC

5.2.1 Collective action initiatives towards international markets in which the FMTC participates or has participated and its corresponding role

The most recurrent examples are the familiarization trips, press trips and the joint participation in international tourism fairs like the International Tourism Trade Fair in Spain (FITUR), the International Travel Trade Show in Berlin (ITB) and the World Travel Market Latin America (WTM). The principal actors are the FMTC, the Tourism Ministry and the tour operators together with other tourism entrepreneurs; before 2015 it was the Tourism Ministry who organized the participation of Ecuador in these fairs. However, in 2015 it stopped due to budget problems and Quito Turismo took over this role and now the Ministry can only pay for the stands but the rest of the economic investment is up to the private entrepreneurs themselves. The main objective is establishing the presence of Cuenca as a destination at the international level by presenting the offer together with the tour operators. These last ones are important because they are the ones in charge of the selling of the destination. Regarding the familiarization trips, workshops are often organized by the FMTC or the Tourism Ministry to connect the present international tour operators with the local tourism entrepreneurs. It is obvious that the FMTC is a facilitating and coordinating actor in these examples. They unite

different tourism players and provide information. It was the general manager of Expediciones Apullacta who said the following:

A: [...] They cannot be sellers. But what they can do is being coordinators, facilitators. – Q: Yes, and they do this? – A: And they do this, in addition to being people who advertise. It is the advertising and promotion part that is really the number one goal of them. And within that, these other things derive like being coordinators, facilitators so that we unite among the professional parts of tourism and... – Q: They facilitate? – A: Yes, facilitate, that is it [...]
(EA, pp. 626-627)

The FMTC also promotes Cajas NP at international tourism fairs, because they are the most important environmental part of the destination. Nevertheless, the park itself does not participate directly in such tourism activities.

Another initiative concerns the certification processes, in which the FMTC, the Tourism Ministry, Southland Touring and TourCert were participants. The general process of the certification of Cuenca as a Sustainable Destination started in April 2017 and it will take six to nine months to complete it. Besides this, the FMTC also mentioned the international certification at a more individual level: sustainability standards and corporate social responsibility (CSR) were central and this led to already twelve certified companies in Cuenca. An example in this context is the certification of Southland Touring focused on the company's sustainable management, which includes restrictions on child labor, sexual protection and the working together with indigenous communities in order to make sure they generate an income by being themselves the suppliers of tourism services. In contrast to what was expected, the general manager of Southland Touring did not mention the FMTC as a participating actor; it was only the Ministry of Tourism that was seen as an endorsing and coordinating actor because they brought the certifiers to the destination and paid them. Nevertheless, these can be considered more passive examples of collective action. They are not directly orientated towards international markets but they have the possibility to attract international tourism flows in the long run.

Also the organization and establishment of joint tourism routes between Colombia and Ecuador can be seen as a collective action example. The routes connect historical cities like Cartagena, Bogotá, Quito and Cuenca that have patrimonial recognitions. In this way, Cuenca can be strengthened by benefiting from a connection with already consolidated and positioned destinations at the international level. In this example, it was Quito Turismo who had a coordinating role and the FMTC was just another actor in the initiative.

Concerning the interviewed surrounding municipalities of Cuenca, only two collective action initiatives with the FMTC towards international markets could be found. The first one is the development of a crafts fair of Chordeleg in Cuenca and an associated fixed exposition place for the

products. This project was discussed in a joint planning reunion with the principal actors and it was the FMTC that provided both coordination and facilitation in order to develop the plan and make the municipality of Chordeleg and their craftsmen manage it. In this way, the craftsmen can bring their artisan jewelry closer to Cuenca and the tourist, because a lot of visitors do not visit the surrounding communities. The second one is about the inclusion of Saraguro and its crafts in a promotion book of the FMTC that was also exhibited at the tourism fair in Germany. In this context, the FMTC considers Saraguro as part of its area of influence, which is an important step of improvement. The municipality of Saraguro clearly considers the FMTC a supporting actor in terms of promotion and a facilitating actor in order to make the promotion exchange possible.

5.2.2 General collective action initiatives

Surprisingly the municipalities of Sígsg and Paute could not mention one example of cooperation with the FMTC, although they were mentioned by the FMTC as part of the network. However, an initiative of the municipality of Sígsg without the FMTC and directed towards international markets popped up. Together with the Department of Culture of Cuenca and the association of *toquilleras* they went to China in order to exhibit their product, make the tourism link and try to sell the merchandise. Another example is more about cooperation at the regional level, but it still has potential of attracting international markets. They work together with neighboring cantons like Cañar and Azogues during territorial committees, in which also the Department of Culture of Cuenca is present, in order to exchange tourism and cultural products; pictures of cultural heritage are taken and distributed together to promote the cantons as cultural heritage destinations. In this context, they celebrated together the Day of Cultural Heritage of Azogues. The municipality of Paute could not even cite one collective action initiative, whether it was with the FMTC or not or/neither towards national or/nor international markets.

Another significant project with potential international resonance is the project and process of Chordeleg to become a Creative City in the context of the UNESCO program of Creative Cities. The city was nominated potential candidate in the Austro Region by UNESCO through the Ministry of Culture and the National Institute for Cultural Heritage (INPC). Besides Chordeleg, also Saraguro has an initiative, indeed more directed towards national tourists; every first Sunday of the month they organize a cultural fair of crafts and gastronomic products in front of the city hall. The tour operator Sara Urku had no cooperation history with the FMTC, but the relationship and joint packaging with a French travel agency constituted the central topic of the interview. Nevertheless, the selling is not really collective action and not specifically aimed to the south of Ecuador: he sells Ecuador as a whole and Saraguro is often not included in the package. Besides this, they also try to ally with more specialized tour operators in terms of hiking and adventure. In this context, they opened a route in

the Amazon, which is a more than hundred years old path used by the Saraguros to walk from the municipality to the Amazon. After being abandoned, they are now recuperating the path together with the community in order to develop a tourism project. Besides the alliances with the French travel agency and the other more specialized tour operators, they also have a more informal trade agreement with Expediciones Apullacta to exchange tourists. It is unwritten and not signed, but the commitment seems to be respected by both parties.

With respect to the Cajas NP, no collective action initiative in a tourism context can be given. Nevertheless, they do participate together with the FMTC in reunions related to the environmental, legislative and operative part of their work. Other involved actors are the Ministry of Environment, the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), whom all are considered strategic allies. During these meetings the FMTC is seen as a coordinating entity that brings together different offers, proposals and alternatives in a more coherent way. They have a municipal representative that makes this canalization possible. Last but not least, also CEDEI mentioned an important collective action initiative at the national level with potential international consequences. They work together with Pro Ecuador, an organization which is part of the Ministry of Commerce, in building a space at the world's largest international education conference of the Association of International Educators (NAFSA) that will take place in Los Angeles in May 2017. In this context the Spanish language is seen as an important export product of the country and at the conference Ecuador will be promoted by various institutions and universities as an educative destination.

5.2.3 Potential cooperation with and role of the FMTC

The municipality of Sígig and the tour operator Sara Urku are both convinced that cooperation with the FMTC would be positive and also necessary. This because tourism in Ecuador at the national level is more established in the southern region and therefore is the interchange of tourism between Cuenca and other cantons crucial. They are prepared to cooperate and facilitate information in order to establish joint initiatives. Being included in the promotion of the FMTC could really enhance their market access potential, because for smaller entrepreneurs it is often difficult to participate in fairs. This is the same for the municipality of Sígig who needs the FMTC's help to promote the *toquilleras* and get them to know at the international level. Alliances with the foundation are seen as a clear enhancer because it would help them to introduce projects to other significant and more international tourism actors. The same goes for CEDEI, who blame the absent cooperation link to the fact that educative tourism has not been recognized yet as a type of tourism with big future potential. The municipality of Saraguro already cooperated with the FMTC but they are convinced

that the joint action could be broader: training in tourism and participation in international fairs are considered excellent opportunities.

Concerning the role of the foundation, it seemed that some actors were not really aware of their precise task. Nevertheless, they agreed on the potential role besides the promotion part: they should be an actor who endorses and facilitates actions, who coordinates, who unites principal actors and stimulates conversations, and provides guidance because they have the knowledge and experience. The following quote embraces this thought:

And that would be very good if the foundation could help us in other contexts also to go to Europe, to go to North America. That would be very very important. But we need, as I say, an advice, a coordination of them to help us, because they already have all the knowledge and we are still little concerning this type of activity. (MS, p. 642)

Last but not least, it was the general manager of Southland Touring who underlined the potential role of the FMTC in certification processes. He is convinced that they should look after the quality of the destination in general, and not only of individual tour operators, and therefore the application of a global qualification system for e.g. restaurants and hotels is necessary. Nevertheless, this competence of control is not included in their current statutes and management policies; this will be further elaborated in section 5.4 General barriers or enhancers in relation to accessing international markets.

Again, just like in the description of the first-round results, it is clear that the existing collective action initiatives are scarce and it was striking that some of the interviewed actors never had contact before with the FMTC. However, the reputation of the foundation seems to be a positive one and therefore many actors are definitely prepared to work together and to accept the municipal institution as a coordinating, facilitating and supporting actor.

5.3 Barriers or enhancers of social capital in relation to accessing international markets

5.3.1 Structural barriers or enhancers

The first clear enhancer is the structural dimension itself and was discussed by several respondents. The need of associativity within the private sector in order to overcome the budget barrier and to do bigger investments clearly fits in this context. In general, strategic alliances and inclusions in already existing networks and routes are seen as the ideal strategy for smaller entrepreneurs to improve the market access capacity. This is certainly true for smaller or secondary destinations like Cuenca and its surroundings. This associativity does not only apply to the private sector only, but also between

public and private sector in general. In this context, the FMTC is seen as a possible contributor: they can help with the establishment of alliances:

Yes, alliances with different actors that are, as in this case, what you said, with the Tourism for Cuenca, with them, or with other operators that do have the ability to establish our program and to take it [to the international level] and that they promote us. (SU, p. 677)

The strengthening of associativity will also positively influence the representativeness, because it will lead to larger and more general networks; this will be discussed in 5.4.1 Scope of collaborative agreements. Also the qualitative barrier or enhancer of trust influences networking in a positive way and it was the head of the destination planning unit of the Tourism Ministry of the Austro Region that underlined this idea:

I believe that it is necessary to generate greater confidence and for this we need better economic policies, and with this we start to generate more commercial alliances, especially in tourism, with great powers like the United States, like the European Union, well, now we signed an agreement with the European Union that in some ways, although it is a commercial matter, also opens the doors to tourism. Yes, I believe that on that side a little bit more work could be done, especially by us, as a ministry, because we are in the general public policy. Yes, at the local level of destinations, I believe that it would also be important for destinations to look for strategic alliances with destinations, that sister cities are connected where it is possible to generate an exchange of tourism, commerce, many things. There are sister cities that are so similar to Cuenca that can focus on some pretty interesting topics of culture and tourism exchange. (MTAR, p. 695)

The crucial role of the Tourism Ministry in strengthening these alliances at the international level was also stressed by the respondent. Both the idea of the importance of networking and the role of a brokering or facilitating agent discussed in 1.2.4 Need of a brokering or facilitating agent in relation to social capital, collective action and tourism destinations are corroborated by these results.

Again no specific barriers or enhancers in relation to how individuals are linked popped up. Concerning the number of participants the same results as in the first-round interviews appear. More participating actors are needed and not once it was said that every possible important or needed actor was already participating. There is always a demand for more resources which will lead to combined budgets and cost sharing. This barrier or enhancer leads automatically to the one of heterogeneity of participants: not only more but also different actors of the CMBR system are demanded in the collective action initiatives. Again like in the first-round results, this heterogeneity refers principally to cooperation between public and private sector. Other heterogeneity types like the one of personalities are difficult to investigate in this study. In this context the FMTC mentions the fact that the present collective actions are mostly limited to the public sector and the

municipality of Saraguro says that the private sector needs to be more included. They are trying to achieve this latter by having conversations and training workshops with the private sector and by approaching and visiting CAPTUR (e.g. interchange of the students of their gastronomy school to the cultural fairs in Saraguro). It was also pointed out during the interview with Cajas NP that the entrepreneurs and associations of the surrounding communities (e.g. Sigsig and Chordeleg) are missing during the reunions, while they have interesting practices in rural –and community tourism. With respect to demanded public heterogeneity, all the three interviewed tour operators agree on the need of a major participation of the public sector and they ask for more support and training of the FMTC, the Tourism Ministry and the municipalities. Furthermore, both Expediciones Apullacta and CEDEI ask for the presence of universities in collective action initiatives; universities should be included in familiarization or press trips and Cuenca should be more promoted to the student segment. Thus, a general recognition of the importance of a union between public and private sector is present and this will be further discussed in 5.3.2 Cognitive barriers or enhancers Just like in the first-round results, the absence of heterogeneity can constitute an important barrier for international market access.

In relation to the (in)voluntary entry or exit, the formality of the group governance and leadership nothing specific was said that could lead to related barriers or enhancers. Last but not least, a good coordination of the group is definitely needed. The importance of this enhancer was already elaborated in both 1.2.4 Need of a brokering or facilitating agent in relation to social capital, collective action and tourism destinations and 5.2.3 Potential cooperation with and role of the FMTC and the beginning of the current section proves that the FMTC seems the actor by choice for fulfilling the role of brokering and facilitating agent. The municipal organization is clearly seen as an actor with knowledge, experience and capacity. Besides this, there is the absence of a personal agenda. All this together possibly explains the support expressed by the interviewed actors for the foundation as a coordinator of different collective action initiatives towards international markets:

In that case it would be the foundation that could help us for example by helping our toquilleras, who are a fundamental part here, in the Sigsig canton, that we are cultural heritage of Ecuador. They would help us to promote, they would help us to go to other places, for example, to the fairs. We have little support, we are looking for almost everywhere to find where they can invite us to go or where we can go without an invitation, but we would need that coordination [of the FMTC]. (MS, p. 642)

5.3.2 Cognitive barriers or enhancers

Again like in the first-round results, the trust issue between public and private sector remains a big barrier to overcome. The accommodation sector still shows suspicion towards public institutions due

to the fall of the average occupation rate and the prices, which makes cooperation between them and public institutions more difficult. There also seems to be a partiality problem: sometimes actors blame public institutions of favoritism towards certain tourism players, which leads clearly to a trust barrier because they often are the ones coordinating and facilitating. Biased behavior is also interrelated with distrust in the political environment, which is also an important general barrier or enhancer (cf. 4.5 General barriers and enhancers in relation to accessing international markets); supposedly, the last decade the government was more inclined to choose state universities or universities with an interest towards the political party PAIS Alliance to work with. Besides the lack of confidence between the public and private sector, also trust matters are present within the private sector. If tour operators work with communities, a rigorous follow-up is needed in their opinion because they become easily demotivated when tourists are not there and disorganize themselves quickly. The same goes for cooperation between tour operators and other tourism actors like carriers, hotels, restaurants, etc. While tour operators cannot directly own e.g. transportation and are dependent on carriers and have to pay taxes, the latter often want to sell directly to travel agencies, in order to earn more, without going through the tour operators as intermediaries first. In this way, they become informal tourism players that are not included in tour operator packages and that hinder the eagerness to cooperate. This barrier cannot, just like in the first-round results, be considered loose from the one that will be discussed in the next paragraph: norms. Nevertheless, besides confidence problems, there is also an obvious presence of trust in certain relationships. A good atmosphere of trust between the members of the earlier mentioned “pool” initiative, during reunions with the FMTC and Cajas NP, between other actors at international fairs, etc. cannot be neglected as an important enhancer. Furthermore, also continuity, constancy and transparency within public and political institutions is an important sub-barrier or sub-enhancer in this category. The continuity of processes within public institutions is often absent and this influences trust in the system in a negative way:

There is no continuity, another one comes again, we begin to explain the objective and all the things and when it is finally clear, this person goes away and another one comes and this is, this is very exhausting really this relationship with them [talking about the public sector]. (EA, p. 639)

[Talking about including the surrounding communities in reunions and projects] I assume that there must be time, even budgets, because remember that this complies with an administration that lasts four years, five years, in other words, often projects last a little longer. So maybe it is the foundation that should appear here, but they should also have something designed, a strategy, that is, no matter who comes, no matter who comes next. If I leave a management plan to involve the communities, any government, administration,

etc., can come, but it is a road map to follow and to continue with what was done. (CNP, pp. 681-682)

Also the absence of norms and associated control causes the above mentioned trust issue partially and can therefore be seen as an important barrier of the CMBR system to achieve collective action towards international markets. This might even have a repercussion on personal motivations of the tourism actors: *“So, informality, at the end of the day what it does is that people do not have as much confidence in more investment”* (EA, p. 628). No investment means no participation in collective action initiatives like e.g. international tourism fairs, which leads to a lower international market access. At the same time, the informality problem also threatens the quality of the destination and this is why the public sector should intervene. Again it is said that the FMTC should do this (cf. 5.2.3 Potential cooperation with and role of the FMTC), but this leads automatically to another important barrier or enhancer that will be discussed in 5.4 General barriers or enhancers in relation to accessing international markets. Furthermore, also general norms in the system are required and seen as an important condition improving collective action towards international markets:

Q: OK, and besides professionalization or the fact that there is a professional, can it also be the existence of norms or confidence or all of this? – A: Yes yes yes, and these have to be backed up with documents in which it is very clear how it has to be. (EA, p.640)

At the same time, the existence of norms might see itself interrelated with the earlier mentioned structural barrier or enhancer of the formality of group governance. Formal documents outlining in a clear way how things have to be done, or in other words norms to which participants need to obey, seem preferred.

It was the tour operator Southland Touring who attached importance to reciprocity as an enhancer for collective action. If there would be a positive discrimination based on merits or a “meritocracy”, tourism actors would be more motivated to participate in order to gain something. In this way, it also influences the personal motivations. It was related to the organization of familiarization trips:

A: Of course, planning and another thing: that there exists meritocracy. What does that mean? Merit is what you deserve by working for it, yes? And not just that the people who win a FamTrip or who start working on it, that they can do it. They have to deserve to do that. Another thing, which is very important, the foundation does FamTrips, but they do it, and they cannot do it. Legally they cannot do. – Q: No? – A: They are the first and legal of the city, the FamTrips they have to grant them to any company in Cuenca, anyone, not me. They need to plan it a month in advance: “gentlemen a group of ten people comes to

Cuenca, we want you to make a program and the program that wins, is the program that will be bought” and they will win both in terms of programs and in prices. (ST, p. 622)

In addition, when tour operators do organize and give away a familiarization trip, they also expect something in return like promotion for their business. Nevertheless, due to being a public municipal foundation the FMTC cannot benefit private companies and therefore even implicit publicity is out of the question. This demotivates small entrepreneurs to participate in such collective action initiatives. Being rewarded is important to motivate participants and quite often it is generally accepted that it is not only taking, but also giving:

So yes it is important for us that we could be participants in this project and that they also would promote us, promote us, and we do not want to be a simple, we do not simply want to say “give it to us”, but we can participate, that is, if they come on an exploration trip here, to Saraguro in order to get to know our projects and things, we also want to make an investment in that. (MSAR, p. 672)

The barrier or enhancer of reputation is handled in this paragraph with respect to actors who did not yet cooperate with the FMTC. Others are discussed in the next section under the barrier or enhancer of information about past actions. It has to be said that no specific barriers or enhancers related to the reputation of the FMTC were mentioned. Nevertheless, both the municipality of Sígsg and the tour operator Sara Urku were positive about them, especially in terms of their knowledge and experience, and about potential cooperation.

Concerning the personal motivations, the same results as the ones deriving from the first fieldwork in Ecuador are likely to be found. The public sector blames the private sector for not being involved, participating and investing. Again this is partly caused due to the low trust levels, the big informality problem and personalities described in respectively the first, the second and the next to last paragraph. Nevertheless, the project coordinator of the FMTC indicated that they are starting to overcome the barrier of lack of investment:

So we are working on these types of articulations. With the private sector, it is a little more complicated with the private sector, they have to ... it is already beginning to see the international actions of promotion as an investment and not as an expense. And there is little else moving but initially there was not really this relationship. (FMTC-PC, p. 594)

This barrier can also be tackled by networking or the first barrier or enhancer of the structural dimension discussed: the dimension itself. Associativity makes bigger investments possible and will lead to more motivation; again there is an interaction effect. Also engagement, compromise and a feeling of co-responsibility are needed in order to gather for collective action with international market access as an objective: “... and co-responsibility among all the actors because you cannot simply say “foundation do this, or municipality do that”, but no here we are going to do it all

together, then everyone has co-responsibility and has to respond” (FMTC-PC, p. 604). In this context the Tourism Ministry of the Austro Region wants more commitment of the GADs at the level of the parishes, municipalities and provinces, and the FMTC wants the tour operators to organize a follow-up after their participation in fairs and road shows. Realizing that together more can be achieved than being focused on own interests and objectives, is necessary to approach each other or to participate in collective action initiatives. Thus, it can be said that initiative or collective will is generally lacking; both the public and the private sector accuse each other of this. The tour operator Sara Urku is willing to cooperate with the FMTC, but he says he has never been approached by them, by the municipality of Cuenca nor by the Tourism Ministry. Likewise the municipality of Sígsg says the following:

A: I think a little bit more promotion lacks, of the foundation itself in promoting, sending news, indicating things, because I am practically, I will be 8 months in the department, but I have not had any invitation or anything about this, no. – Q: OK, it is a little bit the initiative that lacks. – A: Exactly, the initiative lacks. Maybe, I do not know, it could be our initiative or theirs, but this organ, the foundation that is in Cuenca, they should better ask us. (MS, p. 641)

The same goes for the inclusion of the surrounding communities in the municipal meetings of Cajas NP, the FMTC and the other above mentioned actors in 5.2.2 General collective action initiatives. The FMTC has not showed initiative yet in terms of approaching them. Likewise, CEDEI is very open to any future cooperation possibility and sees this lack of initiative as an important barrier: *“Sometimes people do not come out of their comfort zone to meet other people with interests, and really for me yes, talking about the foundation, really of tourism, the fact that they have not really approached us in many years”* (CEDEI, p. 707). Nevertheless, this barrier cannot be studied separately; the general lack of budget and the economic issue, which will be discussed in 5.4 General barriers or enhancers in relation to accessing international markets are certainly not unimportant in this context.

Next in line is the recognition of interdependence among stakeholders as an important barrier or enhancer, which is interrelated with several structural barriers or enhancers: the dimension itself, the number and heterogeneity of participants. Like the results of the previous round of interviews, it is again obvious that both the public and the private sector realize they need each other and that the connection should be improved and strengthened. The following quote embraces this thought:

The private sector is fundamental, especially the tour operators, because they are the ones that have the direct contact with their international contacts that have to be underlined there. So the link with the sector has to be articulated even more. (FMTC-PC, p. 596)

Likewise, the Tourism Ministry also recognizes this: *“Yes, yes, so you have to be clear, because the foundation can do a lot of management, just like the Ministry, but those who end up selling and offering the product are the operators”* (Tourism Ministry Austro Regional, p. 687). Besides their direct link, they are also the ones with the economic resources and investment potential, which makes them highly needed in initiatives. The inclusion of the surrounding communities of Cuenca in the tourism offer is definitely recognized by the Cajas NP and the municipalities of Sígig, Chordeleg and Saraguro hope to include and unite more private entrepreneurs in their future projects. Also within the private sector, more cooperation of other actors is wanted and needed; in this context e.g. Expediciones Apullacta wants more members in the “pool” initiative. Within the public sector the Tourism Ministry wants a better connection with the foreign Ecuadorian Embassies, because they are the representatives of the country and therefore the gateways to show what Ecuador can offer in terms of tourism. Besides this, also the inclusion of the academic institutions and organizations in cooperation initiatives is recognized as necessary. Nevertheless, only Expediciones Apullacta, CEDEI and the Tourism Ministry mentioned this. This is also a barrier and will be discussed later in 5.4 General barriers or enhancers in relation to accessing international markets. Not one single interviewed actor indicated that there was a satisfactory grade of participation of all the necessary tourism players. The realization of the requirement of bringing together different sectors was also observed by CEDEI and can be considered an important barrier or enhancer:

And in this sense, I think we have been working in order to give ideas to work with groups of different sectors really, because for me that is something very important, unite sectors, because many, obviously, hotels have interest, obviously restaurants have interest. (CEDEI, p. 700)

With respect to the personalities nothing new in comparison with the previous results was found and it influences the trust barrier in a negative way. Professional jealousy still hinders collective action and makes it difficult to reach agreements. Furthermore, promises are not always kept or they take a long time to be fulfilled. Again this barrier might be more related to the collective personality of Ecuadorian people and in this context Southland Touring and CEDEI underlined:

In any case the public sector is needed, but this is also the problem. Andrés is my personal friend and invites me to his house and I go to his house and equally he comes to my house, he is a very good friend. But Andrés ... I need an appointment with an actor from the municipality and it takes four months to get one, four months. They get you the appointment and then they cancel you the appointment later... (ST, p. 617)

And in this way, it is interesting because, something that I spoke about with Santiago the first time is that one of the things that I have recognized in my 14 years here is that of things of

sales and things like tourism, people do not work well together here, for being a collective society, by its nature, they do not work well together. (CEDEI, p. 703)

Regarding the perceived role of the participants it was striking that some actors were not really aware of the exact role and functions of the FMTC:

Let me see, well, I honestly do not know much about the work, what the Tourism Foundation for Cuenca does, but personally and as a representative of this community tourism initiative that we are here in Saraguro, I would like and I am very willing to coordinate, to cooperate, to provide information, whatever is convenient, but, as I said, I do not know the work very well, that is, it is that I do not know very well, no, I do not know, I do not know what the work of them is and I could not give an opinion about this. (SU, p. 669)

In this context, a first important step would be informing all the relevant tourism actors about the precise role of the foundation. Whether this is a clear barrier or enhancer, is difficult to conclude; nothing specific was said about clarity of roles during collective action initiatives. However, like earlier mentioned in section 5.2.3 Potential cooperation with and role of the FMTC, the interviewed actors do agree about the potential role of the FMTC and its corresponding importance concerning stimulation and guidance of collective action initiatives. This recognition and support of the respondents can, of course, be seen as an enhancer.

5.3.3 Barriers or enhancers of the nature of CA itself

Regarding the dimension itself, or the ability and capacity to work together, not much was commented by the respondents. Although, it was the technical analyst of protected areas of the Cajas NP who said the following:

Q: OK, good. And what are, in your personal opinion, the conditions that mainly facilitate or help the ability to work together towards international markets? – A: Collaboration first, to have all the predisposition from the actors involved so that I can approach the foundation. (CNP, p. 685)

It is not remarkable that in these days digital communication is prevailing: emails, telephone and Skype conversation, WhatsApp messages, etc. are usually the first way to approach each other. Both advantages and disadvantages are attached to this type of communication. It easily replaces face-to-face communication and implies less time consuming appointments and the possibility to contact more geographically dispersed tourism entities, which makes sure that more actors can participate in the communication:

Q: OK and do you think that face-to-face communication is like an advantage, something that helps to make decisions, to agree or is it something that does not matter? Can it also be

replaced by telephone or digital communication? – A: Yes you can obviously work with topics via Skype via ... that does not pose a problem. (ST, p. 616)

And from there, between me and people from other institutes, other universities, we started to talk a little about how we can reach more people, and from there we have been working in groups, just that we have for example a group of WhatsApp and that we are always messaging to people all over the country, but they are people interested in international education from everywhere. (CEDEI, p. 703)

Often in later stages, this digital communication turns into real meetings if the opportunity arises. However, some actors are still convinced of the surplus value of face-to-face communication, because it enhances trust and stimulates commitment of the participants:

Q: And after the mail there is like a face-to-face communication? – A: Yes, yes, in the end we have a communication ... but it should be a bit more, it should be a bit more broad ... I do not know, it should be in a way that we commit more. (EA, p. 634)

In this way, face-to-face communication can also help to overcome the earlier mentioned personality barrier of saying “yes” and not really meaning it or keeping the promise (cf. 4.4.2 Cognitive barriers or enhancers). It was the head of the Destination Planning Unit of the Tourism Ministry who literally approached the defaults of their digital communication around the invitation and participation of international fairs. The calendar of the fairs and road shows is communicated at the beginning of the year through the website of the Ministry and emails are sent:

But it is not the best medium that has been used, because we have already noticed that sometimes or the emails are not sent, or they do not reach them, or they have changed mails and they were not updated, and it becomes a problem and people complain why they have not been informed of the participation in this fair or another one. So... (MTAR, p. 691)

So she admits that other communication channels are definitely needed and she would prefer convocations in order to inform everyone. In this way, the absence of good communication, and in some cases face-to-face communication, can definitely be seen as a barrier to achieve collective action in terms of accessing international markets.

Disposing of an earlier cooperation history or information about past actions positively influences trust and reputation and will increase the likelihood to engage in new cooperation agreements. In this context, the relationship of many years between the FMTC, the Tourism Ministry and Quito Turismo can be mentioned. A cooperation agreement was even signed between the two DMOs. Likewise the FMTC and the Cajas NP, being both municipal institutions, can rely on information of previous cooperation which positively influences collective action. It seems that this cooperation history is especially the case for public institutions: both the municipalities of Chordeleg and Saraguro worked with the FMTC before and are positive about them and this stimulates future

cooperation behavior. Only one actor from the private sector, accidental or not, mentioned the following as an answer on the question about their relationship with the foundation and before starting to talk about the familiarization trips: *"Euhm ... There are some specific cases that give me a little bit of sorrow..."* (EA, p.624).

Concerning the nature of the benefits, the same results as in section 4.4.3 Barriers or enhancers of the nature of collective action itself can be found. The private sector is eager to see direct results, which makes this barrier or enhancer interrelated with the one discussed in the last paragraph from this section, the having of results. Moreover, they need to be of an economic nature and they have to be clearly defined in advance. This last idea is proof of an interrelation with the next mentioned barrier or enhancer of joint formulation of aims and objectives. Besides this, it is also obvious that the nature of the benefits influences the personal motivations: if direct and clearly defined economic benefits are likely to achieve, the private sector will more easily engage in collective action initiatives. Nevertheless, the general manager from Apullacta recognized the need for long-term thinking: *"Always, always, tourism in particular, tourism is an action that is not immediate, tourism takes time to show results"* (EA, p. 637). In relation to the inclusion of the private entrepreneurs from the surrounding communities of Cuenca in the tourism offer, it was said:

Logically, as you make a strategy of a management plan for the public sector, it does not matter who comes, here we would have to give a business plan for the private sector, because the private sector if they involve it is not only to collaborate, but "I need to know what will benefit me, what will be my benefit." (CNP NP, pp.682-683)

Before engaging in collective action initiatives a joint formulation of the aims and objectives is necessary in order to achieve efficient results. In this way, the barrier or enhancer is interrelated with the last one of having results. During the interviews, most of the respondents said that this formulation happened before the actual cooperation. Nevertheless, it was always in a more limited form and there was no room for long-term goals or higher shared objectives between more than only the participating actors. A rise in sales or promoting Cuenca and benefiting from the increase in tourism flows were most common, but these objectives appear to be too general. A first important step towards the formulation of these higher shared and long-term aims is being on the same line and selling the same product:

So it is certain that it has to be articulated better [with the private sector] to be able to hold on to and to manage for example a same image of the city, to have a destination brand with which there is identification, to have the same slogan and to all sell the same product. (FMTC-PC, p. 597)

The same was said by the Ministry of Tourism with respect to a broader national and international positioning of Ecuador:

A: So I think that in general the strong national campaigns, the international campaigns were strong for tourism promotion where we show and permanently, say and we are saying the benefits that the country has, although there have been economic problems and everything, but they have not been as catastrophic as they wanted to show internationally, because here also the media influence a lot. – Q: Yes, of course. – A: Yes. Then we can have that strong voice and be able to tell the world, to see, this is Ecuador and that is how it is. (MTAR, pp. 695-696)

Nevertheless, this still stays general and clearer objectives are needed. It is exactly the lack of a clear definition of which international markets to target, written in a punctual agreement or plan, which causes the inability to establish a connection with the foreign Ecuadorian Embassies. Because they do not know which Embassies of which countries should be focused on. Long-term objectives should be established:

Of collective nature there are goals that are obviously to achieve the operation of Cuenca as such, as a destination, and of course, within the operation of Cuenca, what is it that carries the performance for each actor, what are my benefits? However, perhaps there may be other interesting objectives not so short-term, but in the medium- and long-term, that is, I have the positioning of Cuenca, I have my advantage, my benefit of being positioned, but, okay, what do I want after that?, what do I want in 5 years, what do I want in 8, what do I want in 10 years? (CNP, p.683)

And these long-term objectives should be established in a collective way. In this context, the strategic tourism development plan was worked out in 2016 and the Ministry of Tourism indicates that it is exactly there where these higher shared and long-term goals can be found. But, of course, economic resources are needed to execute the plan, which leads to the related barrier or enhancer that will be discussed in section 5.4 General barriers or enhancers in relation to accessing international markets.

The next barrier or enhancer is the one of follow-up, monitoring and feedback during and after the collective action. In the cases of the establishment of routes between Colombia and Ecuador, of the certification processes, of the inclusion of Saraguro in the promotion book of Cuenca and of the initiatives of both the Tourism Ministry and CEDEI, no follow-up, monitoring nor feedback took place. Nevertheless, not one single actor said this would be unnecessary or superfluous. The FMTC recognized this problem and in order to tackle it, they organize reunions in which they identify the important points of improvement to strengthen the tourism activity:

So this has allowed us to generate this process, and to do a follow-up in a compulsory way because you have to present yourself at a table, a formal aspect, and this has generated that ... and joint responsibility between all. (FMTC-PC, p. 604)

It becomes clear that an obligatory follow-up also influences the personal motivations in a positive way. The Cajas NP mentioned the presence of follow-up indicators and strategies, but indicated that it was not clear what should be done afterwards with this information. Concerning the international fairs and road shows, the Tourism Ministry mentioned that a follow-up was done between the entrepreneurs, but the Ministry does not play a role in this. At the same time, this is due to the lack of continuity of processes in public and political institutions and the centralization issue which will be discussed later; again the interaction effect between barriers or enhancers pops up:

A: No, that is a weakness that has the Ministry, because it has not generated a follow-up for the participation that has been done in the network. Rather, it is the operators themselves who carry out this monitoring in some way and that are aware of how to inform or generate the links and strengthen those links that have played a role in the participation they had in the fairs, but no, there has not been established a way to do a follow-up by the Ministry and perhaps it has much to do by the fact that everything is handled in Quito and that from them, there is much rotation of functionaries. Then the next one did not know what the previous one did and it stayed there. – Q: No, because there is no continuity in politics. – A: Exactly. (MTAR, p. 692)

In this context, the municipality of Chordeleg also mentioned the need of having one and the same responsible person in each canton for the follow-up. They see collective follow-up as an important condition influencing the likelihood of efficient collective action towards international markets.

The interrelation with the time range of the benefits, i.e. the need for direct results for the private sector, is already discussed above. Thus, again the having of results is interrelated with the nature of the benefits. Some actors mentioned the absence of results of their collective action initiatives, but this might be due to the short-term sight because e.g. the routes between Colombia and Ecuador were only presented in March 2017. Furthermore no results of the press and familiarization trips were observed by Apullacta and this influences the personal motivations negatively:

The only thing that will give motivation as I said in the course of time is to see a benefit in things which creates more effort and which makes everything better, no? But if there are no results like you say, instead of investing a lot of time in this, I prefer to invest time in other things. (EA, p. 637)

However, Southland Touring saw concrete results from their participation in the fairs and both the municipalities of Síg sig and Saraguro noticed a gradual increase of foreign visitors in their communities. CEDEI was very positive about their previous assistance at the NAFSA conference and contributed their increase in students from the USA, Canada and Sweden to this initiative. They expect even bigger results, because this year Ecuador invested for the first time in a real stand for the

conference, and not just a small table. In this way, the disposal of economic resources and budget can obviously influence the having of results. Also the continuity of processes in public and political institutions possibly affects the likelihood of results. This is even truer for the participation in fairs; direct results from fairs are seldom and therefore the assistance should be continued every year:

And also, in the specialized fairs I believe that it is very important that Ecuador is present, because it is a country that has so much that is so unknown, but we need to solve this in time, that is, not to cut the continuity of the presence in these fairs. Then I believe that for the results that were there at the time, there is a before and an after for the theme of the fairs. 2016 was a complete cut of the presence of the country at fairs. Until 2015 we were present at all the most important ones for consecutive years managing a new brand of the country that already was positioning itself with a strong campaign, the “All you need is Ecuador”, but in 2016 the budgetary subject cut us off. Then it was like Ecuador disappeared from the map and so, well, the statistics say it, we had a drop of 8% in tourist influxes.
(MTAR, p. 693)

The budget or economic issue seems to have a circular effect on the having of results: if the scarce budget that is present is used to invest in e.g. participation in tourism fairs, direct results are expected but these are often absent. Tourism players ignore the long-term thinking and will cut their budget for collective action towards international markets even more, which automatically leads to the absence of any future results or benefits.

5.4 General barriers or enhancers in relation to accessing international markets

The CMBR is still a secondary or a complementary destination and this poses difficulties in order to sell Ecuador to the international markets:

Cuenca does not even enter in the mental map of the people. Ecuador is separated from the Galapagos, the mental map of the people is: Galapagos is a country, Ecuador is another country, Peru is another country and Machu Picchu is ... Machu Picchu. (ST, p. 613)

This also influences the selling behavior of the tour operators; it is exactly why Souhtland Touring, who sells both Peru and Ecuador, focuses more on selling the Galapagos and Machu Picchu or Ecuador in general. The southern region of the country is not their priority and it is easier to sell what is already in the mind of the tourists. The same goes for their package “Southern Wonders”: they always try to sell it in combination with Peru or the Galapagos, because these destinations sell better than Ecuador. These results prove that Ecuador (without the Galapagos) and especially the region of the CMBR are still not consolidated destinations, but that they are more likely to be visited as stopover destinations on the way to primary destinations like the Galapagos or Machu Picchu like mentioned in before. Also in the eyes of the tourism players and journalists of familiarization and

press trips, Cuenca and surroundings are seen as complementary. The FMTC often attracts them after they were already invited in Quito and in this way they have seen already the big things:

And in addition, this is what we do: we talk about the same Andes, we talk about the same things, talking about the same Amazon and we talk about the same Galapagos Islands and our beaches, as it is for Quito or Cuenca. But, they already did it before; they did it with many more resources, in all terms of economic resources. So, what happened? That we really have only been something complementary. That is a shame. (EA, p. 624)

Like the quote says, this barrier or enhancer sees itself influenced by the budget or economic issue. Also the problem of stagnation of the offered tourism products can be mentioned here, just like in the results from the previous chapter. Being already a complementary destination, the CMBR system should make sure that provide enough new and innovative products in order to keep on attracting visitors. This also brings us to the notion of diversity and its importance to develop into a complex adaptive tourism system like mentioned in sections 2.2.2 The tourism destination as a complex adaptive system and 2.3 Systems thinking, social capital and collective action. A broader choice of tourism products and experiences will result in more possible future development for the destination. Also networking was discussed: a decent degree of interconnected actors improves the adaptive capacity even more. In this context, links with the surrounding communities and their tourism offer seem a good possible solution in order create more diversity and make the tourist stay longer. This idea is supported by various actors, like the Tourism Ministry, and it was the Cajas NP who said:

Chordeleg, Sigsig, Sayausí, Molleturo, Miguir, Soldados, in other words, there are a number of communities, that is, I can mention many communities that have many interesting good practices to offer. Others are perhaps executing them in isolation. So, of course, the involvement of the surrounding social part is missing from the nucleus, which is in this case the city of Cuenca. (CNP, p. 681)

Again the budget issue makes initiatives from the FMTC towards the surrounding communities sometimes almost impossible. Likewise, their statutes hinder them to promote outside of their area of influence, which only complicates their inclusion into the tourism offer of Cuenca.

The second general barrier or enhancer has to do with the positioning of the CMBR and can be associated with the first one. Instead of only focusing on a positioning for the region as a stopover destination or as an ideal place to retire, also promoting the academic segment would be a good idea. In terms of educative tourism, it is not a secondary destination and at the same time this type of tourism is of a multiplier nature. Both Apullacta and CEDEI emphasized the fact that family and friends come to visit the students when they are in Ecuador. Likewise, when they grow up they often

come back with their own family. In these cases, the spending capacity is not that limited as the one of a simple student:

Their parents come, and yes the boys do not spend a lot of money, they often take their parents with them, when they are here: they come to visit and as they are going to come to Ecuador, they go to the Galapagos, to the Orient, to the coast and the parents do not want to be backpackers anymore and they want a boat, they want a good hotel, they want good things, this is the big difference. If the expenses of the students are limited, the others are more than these. And this is good for the country. (EA, p. 632)

CEDEI blames the FMTC and other institutions of not recognizing the huge potential and also the Ministry of Tourism admits the following:

Well, as Ministry we have never been seeing it as an opportunity, and I believe and we have already said several times to consider it and about the importance of giving strength to the topic of educative tourism. Well, also studies related to tourism, because it does generate but in reality it would be a permanence that people have here, but I think that as a city also the foundation could work much more on that subject, considering it as a big offer of Cuenca. (MTAR, p.696)

Being on the same line and presenting uniformity in terms of positioning Cuenca and being present at promotion activities as one country or destination is also seen as an enhancer. This was already mentioned in the previous section 5.3.3 Barriers or enhancers of the nature of CA itself One solid promotion campaign of the FMTC would be preferred by the Tourism Ministry:

And they should generate a promotion campaign as a big destination, not isolated actions: here a fam trip, there a press trip, here a publication, there promotion activity, we go to a fair and there it ends. No, something much bigger. Just as the country does, they should do it also. (Ministry of Tourism Austro Regional, p. 697)

Probably one of the most recurrent barriers is again the budget or economic issue that directly influences the representativeness of the CMBR and its international market access. This problem affects many earlier mentioned barriers or enhancers and limits the general capacity of the majority of the tourism actors to achieve collective action towards international markets. It causes for example the absence of the FMTC and the Tourism Ministry at the biggest international tourism fairs like ITB and FITUR in 2017. Networking and creating strategic alliances, like mentioned in 5.3.1 Structural barriers or enhancers can partly help to overcome this barrier; especially for the smaller surrounding municipalities whose budget is even smaller: “And we, on our own account being in a big event, demands many expenses and we are not able to assume these ..., we do not have it. But for us, yes, it is important to ally ourselves” (Sara Urku, p. 677). This can be placed in a broader context:

tourism does not get the priority by the government that it should get according to many actors. The FMTC said the following:

Yes yes yes, so although tourism is supposed to be defined as a priority within the country's economic improvement tools, considered within the change of the productive matrix as one of the priority activities, it has not been given this force. So what happens is that the country in general loses stimulation. (FMTC, pp. 600-601)

So in that sense I think there has been a big decay, in other words, we have to pick it back up. Let us hope that with the new government this can be understood and that the necessary priority is given to be able to be present again in the ring, and to be present in the world we need investment in promotion. (MTAR, p. 694)

And the tour operator Sara Urku complained: *"Meanwhile the State keeps saying that tourism is a productive matrix, and a lot more, but there is not done what should be done"* (SU, p. 677). Until 2015 the Tourism Ministry assured a good international presence, but in 2015 budgets were cut and Quito Turismo had to take over the role. This latter could not subsidize the private entrepreneurs (e.g. tour operators) like the Tourism Ministry did before. Thus, an even bigger investment and motivation was required for them to participate. However the budget or economic issue does not seem entirely loose from social capital. If social capital at the CMBR could be strengthened, better cooperation would be the consequence. Likewise a good planning and joint formulation of higher shared and long-term objectives could lead to a wiser spending of the available budget. Priority markets could be chosen and together with one strong positioning of the CMBR, more could be done with less money.

Many times the demand and need of professionalization of and technical training for people in the tourism sector was repeated. It was the FMTC who considered the disposition of accurate management capacity, both in the public and in private sector, as the most important condition to work together. Apullacta confirms:

The main thing that should be done is to have a technician who knows a lot of the reality of tourism in other countries so that he can focus, first analyze, and find out who are the possible real buyers there, or sellers there, who are going to buy our product and give us sellers or buyers if they are direct. (EA, p. 625)

And Sara Urku added: *"Training [is important], we do not speak languages, which is also a very key thing"* (SU, p. 677). Apullacta also said the following about who should be the head of the FMTC:

So someone is needed, a professional without inclination to one or another thing [within tourism] to give the pertinent value to each actor, to each element that conforms the tourist offer. And within that percentage he should give the interest and the space to each one. (EA, p. 640)

An important and recurrent sub-barrier or sub-enhancer in this paragraph is the lack of planning and long-term thinking: *“But there is still a more serious problem, that they lack planning the foundation”* (ST, p. 606). The tour operators often have no idea of the plans of the FMTC and they do not know to which fairs or road shows they will go. No planning is made or communicated and this is necessary for the private sector because they need time to prepare themselves: budgets have to be determined, catalogs have to be made and business relations and clients need to be contacted. Southland Touring, Apullacta and the municipality of Chordeleg even see it as the biggest barrier of all. The municipality of Chordeleg said the following in the context of meeting with the FMTC:

It is because of the lack of planning, yes, that is the main weakness, because with a planning you already have planned to meet even monthly, fortnightly, evaluate, control, see solutions. So this is the fault, nothing more. (MCH, p. 658)

However, Cajas NP does not experience this problem:

In reality, this does not happen to us, because with the foundation it is very specific issues that are addressed in our area, and, in fact, planning goes about something as simple as, for example, setting meeting schedules when required and they are respected, and what the objectives are, in case we have any joint work, and in what time it is going to be done. (CNP, p. 685)

It is likely due to the fact that they are both municipal institutions who are used to working together and who sometimes have more obligatory meetings. Again, the above mentioned barrier related to economic resources hinders this presence of good trained and professional people occupying important positions in the tourism field. The lack of planning, on the other hand, hinders the possible follow-up, monitoring and feedback during and afterwards the collective action.

Like mentioned in the previous results, the barrier of the statutes is directly influencing the budget or economic issue. Being a municipal institution, and not a public enterprise like Quito Turismo, they cannot generate income or budget themselves. This means that they are completely dependent of the budget of the municipality of Cuenca. Neither can they directly sponsor private businesses which consequently influences the motivations of the private sector. Nor can they easily promote or approach the surrounding communities, which might come across as a lack of initiative or innovation of the foundation. Nevertheless they still try to do it in small ways (cf. the example of the inclusion of Saraguro in their promotion book). It was Southland Touring who elaborated further on the need of the inclusion of control and regulation into the management policies of the FMTC. He is convinced that they should increase their efforts:

So it is that the foundation does not control, they cannot control because the foundation is m-u-n-i-c-i-p-a-l and with all vehicles it is m-u-n-i-c-i-p-a-l. So what can the foundation do? OK, this office cannot control, but if I were a functionary, I would get out a little bit of my

duties and I would go to the municipality and I would say: "Look, Lynse you're from the traffic police, help me with this that it can be controlled". (ST, p. 612)

Another barrier or enhancer that cannot be underestimated is the influence of the political environment. Interviewed actors complain about the centralized way of taking care of things: *"It is political instances that manage over here with their staff that is there, so neither do we have the space or possibility to say something"* (SU, p. 671). Like mentioned before (cf. 5.3.3 Barriers or enhancers of the nature of CA itself, also the Tourism Ministry sees the centralization as an important issue and it influences the possible follow-up, monitoring and feedback. Furthermore, complaints are uttered concerning the provision of new and innovative products: *"And I think that here it is needed to take away a little bit the political shirts and ideologies that are present in order to be able to work together and develop large destinations, with new products"* (MTAR, p. 690). In this context, the example of partiality or bias from the State towards universities (cf. 5.3.2 Cognitive barriers or enhancers), can be mentioned as well. Last but not least, it is important to indicate the difficulties this barrier causes in order to build trust in the CMBR system. Besides confidence, it also influences other cognitive barriers or enhancers like reputation and personal motivations.

Concerning the long process related to including a new tourism attraction into an itinerary or tour operator package not much was mentioned. This is probably due to the fact that only tour operators located in Cuenca were interviewed: local tourism attractions are already foreseen in the majority of their packages. The same goes for the global environment, only the economic and political environment of Ecuador were addressed and the related barriers or enhancers were already discussed in the paragraphs above.

5.5 Evaluation of the collective action initiatives

5.4.1 Scope of collaborative agreements

Concerning the representativeness of the participating stakeholders of all relevant stakeholders, not one collective action example succeeds. It was obvious from the interviews that different actors are missing, like mentioned before in the barriers or enhancers of number of the participants, heterogeneity of the participants and recognition of interdependence among the stakeholders. An example from the public sector is the following:

No, let's see, I think the public sector needs a little more participation from the territories. Why? For example, I will give an example here: we are in charge of an area that includes three provinces, Azuay, Cañar and Morona-Santiago. However, the presence is always only of Cuenca as a destination. (MTAR, p. 689)

With respect to the representativeness of individuals representing a stakeholder group, it was again clear that in many cases full representativeness was lacking. Even if the “pool” group represents the tour operators of Cuenca, more participants are needed. Also the municipality of Chordeleg recognizes the problem with the private sector:

So that is why especially the private sector has its particularities and sometimes one of them can try to speak for everyone, because there is no proper participation of all actors and they cannot give us a concrete idea of what they want. (MCH, pp. 655-656)

Likewise the Ministry of tourism says:

Exactly, because we have a Chamber of Tourism in the province of Azuay, we have a hotel association. However, they are not all there and there is not a very good communication in order that they let know all their affiliates what is being done and how they can participate in the development of the destination. (MYAR, p. 690)

For all the participating actors it was clear which positive benefits are attached to their participation. Nevertheless, like mentioned before, the private sector needs to step away from the expectation of direct economic benefits in the short term. It is exactly this expectation that often hinders them to participate in collective action initiatives. The evaluation criterion of the presence of a facilitator was already discussed in sections 5.2 Collective action initiatives and the corresponding role of the FMTC and 5.3.1 Structural barriers or enhancers and regarding its responsibility for implementation nothing was mentioned. The criteria of the number of stakeholders and the extent to which there is initial agreement among participants about the intended general scope of the collective action, are already discussed in the paragraphs about the barriers or enhancers of the number of participants and the joint formulation of aims and objectives. The fact that these can be more considered barriers than enhancers proves there is still room for improvement.

5.4.2 Intensity of collaborative relations

Every respondent indicated the existence of a relative good atmosphere between the participants during the cooperation. The quality of the dialogue and the degree of understanding and respect between the actors were certainly acceptable:

No the topic is ... basically with the tour operators of Cuenca, the topic is quite good, there are good relationships, it is almost a topic of friendship. We have a good relationship, yes, with the sector of operators in general. (FMTC-PC, p. 602)

Apullacta mentioned the fact that the “pool” members are also friends and the municipality of Sígüig said the following about the territorial committees: *“So, yes, there is a good dialogue, there is a good understanding in these meetings, positive”* (MC, p. 647). About the municipal meetings, Cajas NP added:

A: No, quite good, in other words, it is ... no, very good... - Q: So... - A: In other words, there is more than a working relationship, because from a very personal point I tell you, that is, with the great majority of the people of the foundation we have a relationship that goes many years back. Then, of course, it is the political reality that has allowed us in this time to be in these circumstances, but it is very bearable, very fluid. (CNP, p. 684)

When and how often the participating stakeholders are involved, obviously differs between the different initiatives. It was remarkable that for many cooperation examples no meetings or contact moments were arranged on a regular basis. The FMTC arranges business conferences for local tourism actors during familiarization trips when the tourism players are already in Cuenca and for the routes between Colombia and Ecuador there was no continuous or established work mechanism. Although lately the FMTC is trying to organize meetings, previous to the actual trip, for the tour operators. No regular reunions were found between the FMTC and the municipality of Chordeleg due to lack of planning, like mentioned above. Neither the community of Saraguro met with the FMTC on a routine basis and CEDEI tries to have reunions whenever it is possible for the participants. However, also contact moments on a regular basis were organized. In the beginning Southland Touring met with stakeholders, concerning the certification process, every Monday and later on a monthly basis. The municipality of Sígig is present at the territorial committees every three months and they have digital contact with Azogues on a regular basis. Chordeleg meets with its citizen actors every month. The municipal meetings between Cajas NP, the FMTC and other governmental actors are held every four to six months and CEDEI has continuous contact with other institutions, universities and Pro Ecuador through WhatsApp.

The discussed cooperation examples go further than a mere information exchange. After the earliest stage of informing each other, direct interaction takes place between the involved stakeholders. Only one example is the elaboration of tourism routes between Colombia and Ecuador: Quito Turismo provides offices for the FMTC, advises them and there is a joint participation. Also the extent to which participants receive information varies between the collective action cases. It is logical that stakeholders who are involved more often receive a bigger amount of information and that they are more up-to-date. In general, no one complained about the quantity of received information. However the above mentioned communication problem by the Tourism Ministry in section 5.3.3 Barriers or enhancers of the nature of CA itself, about the summoning of the tour operators for fairs and road shows, is a clear example of miscommunication and shortage of information receiving. In relation to the extent to which the facilitator of the collective action exerts control over decision-making, nothing was mentioned or found.

5.4.3 Extent to which consensus emerges among the stakeholders

The extent to which there is consensus goes together with the acceptance of the fact that not all participants will embrace the final results, the acceptance of constraints and whether they are willing to really implement the resulting policies. The interviewees acknowledged the impossibility of achieving an outcome that is welcomed by everyone in the same way, but this was not seen as a real barrier:

A: Let's see, one thing is the relationship that you have related to work and another thing is to reach a consensus, because you and I can be good friends, but if you have a position that you are defending and I have mine, of course, one thing is the affective part of friendship and another thing is the working part. Consensus is never easy anywhere. You have to talk. You use friendship as your tool to try to sort things out, this yes. – Q: But they were willing to listen and to implement and to modify... – A: Of course. No, there is no doubt about this, no doubt. (CNP NP, pp. 684-685)

Nevertheless the FMTC said the following about consensus reaching with the private sector, besides the tour operators:

A: With the sector of ... with the sector of tour operators yes. With the other sectors is a little more complicated, but we are talking about the topic of tourism promotion to capture ehhh foreign markets, there the operators are priority. – Q: OK and why is it more difficult with the other sectors? – A: They are a little more suspicious, so for example with the accommodation sector the subject is a little more complicated, ehh ..., and it is understandable because as there has been an ahhh there are less tourists and then the hotel occupancy has lowered and the prices have also dropped and then they are worried. – Q: Yes. – A: And then they expect more immediate answers. But they do not stop being present, they do not stop collaborating nor supporting, but it is a bit complicated. (FMTC-PC, p. 603)

It is clear from the above quote that actors try to understand each other's motives of certain behavior. Of course the extent to which consensus emerges is influenced by all the above mentioned barriers or enhancers: e.g. if there was no joint formulation of aims and objectives, it is not unexpected that consensus reaching results more difficult. Likewise, absence of trust influences consensus reaching negatively, etc. Concerning the extent to which consensus and ownership emerges across the inequalities between stakeholder or reflects these inequalities, nothing was said or found.

5.4.4 Continuum of collaboration

Six levels can be distinguished in the continuum of collaboration of Mandell (1999). The example of the routes and the associated broader cooperation between the FMTC and Quito Turismo can be placed on the fourth level: *“permanent and/or regular coordination between two or more actors through a formal arrangement to engage in limited activity to achieve a purpose or purposes”*. A cooperation agreement is signed between the actors years ago and regular coordination takes place, not only with the routes but also in terms of joint participation in fairs, guidance, training, etc. Both the certification processes mentioned by Southland Touring and the FMTC can be placed on the third level: *“Ad hoc or temporary task-force activity among actors to accomplish a purpose or purposes”*. The cooperation between the FMTC and the Tourism Ministry concerning the fairs and road shows and their broader alliance coincides with the fifth level: *“a coalition where interdependent and strategic actions are taken, but where purposes are narrow in scope and all actions occurs within the participative actors themselves or involve the mutually sequential or simultaneous activity of the participant actors”*. This seems logical because the Ministry is the governing body in terms of tourism, and the FMTC is a municipal institution for tourism; the cooperation between them goes a long way back. The participation of tour operators in the fairs and the associated relationship between the FMTC and the Tourism Ministry are likely to be placed on the fourth level. The mere assistance and joint participation at the fairs can also be placed on the third level, but also business conferences and familiarization trips are organized and the actors try to cooperate on a more permanent or regular basis. The municipal meetings between the FMTC, Cajas NP and other actors coincide with the fourth level: being both municipal institutions, this is a necessary and obvious coalition with environmental, legislative and operative objectives. The inclusion of the community of Saraguro in the promotion book of the FMTC can be placed on the third level: for the time being, it is only a temporary cooperation with a clear purpose. The same goes for the initiative between them and the municipality of Chordeleg: the development of the crafts fair and a fixed exhibition place is only of a temporary nature.

The cooperation between the municipality of Sigsig and Cañar and Azogues can be situated on the fourth level. Their exchange of culture and tourism is in a more regular way and it becomes formal through the quarterly territorial committees coordinated by the Department of Culture of Cuenca. The relationship between CEDEI, Pro Ecuador and other institutions and universities takes place on the same level. The clear purpose is promoting Ecuador internationally as an educative destination at the NAFSA conference; they have formal meetings and keep contact on a regular basis. About Sara Urku not much can be said, because the discussed initiative is not really collective action. It was about their relationship with a French travel agency, which can be classified under private action. However if it should be placed on the continuum, it would coincide with the fourth level. They

have a formal agreement and clear objective: selling trips to Ecuador organized by Sara Urku through the travel agency. Besides this, their unwritten but respected trade agreement with Expediciones Apullacta about the exchange of tourists takes place between the first and the second level: between *“linkages or interactive contacts between two or more actors”*, and *“intermittent coordination or mutual adjustment of the policies and procedures of two or more actors to accomplish some objective”*. They have loose contact but a clear objective: exchanging tourists in order to both have a rise in sales.

It is important to mention that all these examples take place in the sixth level: *“a collective network structure where there is a broad mission and joint and strategic interdependent actions; such structural arrangements take on broad tasks that reach beyond the simultaneous actions of independtly operating actors”*. The network of the FMTC promotes, facilitates and coordinates collective action towards international markets. Although the actors operate often in an independent way, they all share a broader, even it is a general, objective: the tourism development of the CMBR and its desired international market access in order to step away from its positioning as a secondary or complementary destination. In this context, both their independent actions and cooperation initiatives take place within the attempt to achieve this broader shared goal.

By looking at the fourth and the fifth chapter, it is obvious that both social capital related and general barriers or enhancers recur. No outstanding differences or contradictions can be found if the two rounds of results are compared. The second-round results are inclined to reinforce the already discussed barrier and enhancers of the first round. The added value of the second-round methodology consisted in gaining more profundity in the case-study together with gathering new information about specific collective action initiatives and the existing or potential role of the entry-point of the study: the FMTC.

6. Conclusion and recommendations

6.1 Key findings

First of all it is crucial to discuss the exhaustiveness and possible generalization of this thesis investigation. 32 semi-structured in-depth interviews, divided in two rounds, is certainly not a sufficient quantity in order to say that all the possible opinions, facts and perceptions of the relevant actors in the CMBR are covered. Furthermore it remains impossible to gain total insight in an actor's point of view by means of in-depth interviews of maximum one hour and a half. However it can be said that the findings are useful and open new topics for investigation and discussion. Concerning the generalization, an important reference to one of the basic concepts of systems thinking can be made: the "environment" or the external structure of the CMBR as the subsystem of focus or of the FMTC's network as the aspectsystem of focus. The results described above cannot be considered loose from the political and socio-economic environment of the FMTC's network within the CMBR and therefore complete generalization and application of the results on other tourism destinations stay out of the question. Nevertheless, some findings in terms of general or social capital related barriers or enhancers are likely to be found in other secondary tourism destinations and even more in Latin American ones.

Concerning the first research question: *what are the characteristics of the CMBR's network of relationships between agents (structure of the system)?* it is clear that the CMBR's network of relationships is of a "formal", "intern", "community" and "structural" type. Besides "intern", it has also "extern" characteristics and furthermore it is typified by "extensive" or "vertical" social capital, no matter which definition is operated: the related actors go further than the interference of the FMTC and both institutions in power and more equal relations are common in the network. Its social capital is of a "macro-level" type and both evidence of "limited" and "broad" social capital can be found. Besides being an "open" network, it can also be seen as a "heterogeneous" one with weak ties, characterized by a great potential of achieving innovation and a higher risk of conflict. Besides a detailed characterization of the network of the FMTC, also the role of this entry-point was explored and analyzed: *What is the role of social capital in the network and what is the importance of the central (brokering) agent in the process of creating a network and developing social capital (and consequently collective action) at the level of the tourism destination?* One of the most important results is the actor's perceived ability of coordinating, facilitating and stimulating policy and management processes and dynamic resulting in collective action. The potential of the FMTC's network cannot be reduced to the sum of the qualities possessed by each single actor in the system; if they are gathered new dynamics arise and the final effect is by no means the same as the initial effort. This clearly refers to the concept of "emergence" and it is exactly why a facilitating or

brokering agent is highly required to bring these different actors of the system together and to coordinate the governance process endowing the destination with new collective capacities. The facts that the FMTC has no own political or entrepreneurial agenda and that it is estimated to possess the required managerial capacity, only reinforces the expressed support for the foundation as coordinating actor par excellence. However, the earlier mentioned barriers of the lack of budget and professionalized people might influence the execution of its role in a negative way. It can be concluded that the foundation is crucial for tourism development since this latter can only be successful if social capital does exist and since development can also contribute to and improve the already existing social capital. In this context, also the adaptation of the structure of the FMTC towards a local DMO and public enterprise would be essential: a higher organizational potential in order to promote, achieve and improve collective action can be the result.

With respect to the third research question: *What enhances or hinders the capacity of the CMBR for collective action towards the objective of accessing international tourism markets?* a whole separate system of barriers or enhancers can be deduced. This system can be seen as an aspectsystem within the present social capital subsystem at the level of the FMTC's network. The interaction and interrelatedness between the different barriers or enhancers is one of the most important findings: all barriers have to be studied in relation to each other, because an isolated analysis will miss important aspects and relations. It is exactly this interaction and interrelation which makes the social capital system at the level of the CMBR so complex and therefore it opens doors for new and more detailed investigations. Not a single barrier or enhancer was found to be free from influences of other conditions and this is an important finding in relation to the improvement of the CMBR's capacity. Relationships between the actors are influenced by events both in –and outside the tourism destination and circular cause-and-effect relations are omnipresent. It is exactly this non-linear behavior that makes the FMTC's network unpredictable: a small improvement in one relationship or barrier or enhancer is likely to influence all the other barriers or enhancers or relationships.

The final purpose of this research was the assessment of the tourism destination's ability to achieve common goals by mobilizing social capital and giving recommendations in case enhancement is needed: *What can be possible future improvements for the CMBR in order to access international markets in a better way and how can social capital be used (even more) as a lever?* It is obvious from the first –and second-round interviews that the current collective action initiatives concerning international market access are scarce, not sufficient and that they not always lead to the desired results. Sometimes it was even difficult for the actors to identify collective action initiatives, which is clear proof of the weakness of collective goal setting and the lack of sustained strategies. Enhancement is needed and some basic barriers need to be addressed for potential improvement. It

was said that cooperation is one of the most significant evidences of the existence of social capital, because it arises from the presence of networks, social relationships and structure as well as from norms of trust and reciprocity within this structural dimension. Therefore both the structural and the cognitive dimension need to be enhanced in order to strengthen cooperation behavior and results. The next subchapter will discuss the possible recommendations but it is important to mention that these are personal arguments based on findings from the 32 in-depth interviews.

6.2 Recommendations

Giving recommendations is not an easy assignment since this research was conducted by an external person without any field experience. Moreover it is evident that a stay of three weeks in the research area is not sufficient in order to really understand a destination's tourism dynamics. Likewise, as mentioned above, the cultural differences between geographical locations and consequently destinations complicate this process of understanding even more. In this way, one of the principal recommendations consists of the need for further research and information about the CMBR and its barrier or enhancer to achieve collective action towards international markets. However, this lack of experience with and foreknowledge of the case-study can also be seen as an advantage: fresh insights can be provided and therefore the results are certainly not negligible.

The second key-recommendation is related to the basic barrier or enhancer of joint formulation of higher shared aims and objectives. This is the first step in the planning process and the desired type of tourist behavior and profile should be determined before collective action towards international markets take place. It is exactly the lack of this process that causes a discrepancy between the expressed desires and the actual results or the absence of these. A concrete example can be given: more independent travelers than the desired segment of professionalized people of a higher spending capacity are visiting the region. The improvement of this barrier could also help to overcome the budget or economic issue; if the desired type of tourism is collectively defined, both public and private actors know on which markets and corresponding promotion activities money should be spend and more results could be achieved with the same amount of economic resources. This will also positively influence the motivations of actors to participate: clearer and more direct (economic) benefits are visible and cooperation inclinations will increase. Furthermore, this will also have a favorable effect on other cognitive barriers or enhancers like trust and reputation. If trust is reinforced, more and different participants will engage in initiatives and higher levels of associativity could be reached. Then again, this increases the contributed resources and costs can be shared; which will also help to overcome the economic barrier. Investments will happen with a higher frequency and this contributes to the triumph of the barriers of being a secondary destination and having an inadequate positioning, which leads to the second recommendation. The increase of resources will also lead to more professionalization and training within the tourism sector: more adequate tools and mechanism are going to be the result which consequently improves the accuracy of statistics, follow-up and continuity of processes. Again, more trust in the competences of certain tourism actors will be generated.

The following key-recommendation is aiming for diversity and the corresponding development into a complex adaptive system. If the stagnation of the tourism offer sees itself

transformed in a more diverse and innovative offer of experiential activities, the CMBR system is more likely to evolve into a robust and dynamic tourism area. Several development paths to choose from will be present and difficulties are more likely to be overcome. In this context, a first step would be the marketing strategy that was earlier recommended: the inclusion of the CMBR in packages visiting the main destination and positioning the secondary destination as something that cannot be skipped. These are first steps towards maximizing the length of stay and becoming a more important destination at the international level. The importance of social capital cannot be forgotten: more diversity means more complexity and interconnectivity in terms of tourism actors (e.g. including the surrounding communities in the tourism offer of Cuenca) and therefore good governance and corresponding coordination is needed; which leads automatically to the crucial role of the FMTC.

A third key-recommendation is the adaptation of the structure of the FMTC to the current needs within the CMBR. Amplifying the area of influence would only help to execute the previous mentioned recommendation and changing the legal structure would improve norms and trust, which on the other hand is possibly followed by benefits mentioned in the first recommendation. If regulation and control becomes part of their competences, the FMTC will improve the application of and control over the system of norms. Also their transition towards a public tourism enterprise might cause the same results: they could generate own income and benefit private businesses. Again, this would lead to the same benefits as mentioned in the first key-recommendation.

Last but not least, it would be advised to consider the academic segment as an important international market. Even if the students do not dispose of the required higher spending capacity, they are still characterized by a longer average length of stay. They consider the CMBR, because of the city of Cuenca where most of the academic facilities are located, a primary destination and are inclined to diversify their activities: visiting backcountry areas like the surrounding communities and municipalities is definitely done by the educative tourism segment. Furthermore this type of tourism can be seen as a multiplier: friends and family often disposing of higher spending capacity come to visit them and in later stages, the students come back and take their own family with them. In addition to the academic visits, also professionals of a higher spending capacity looking for a different, more experiential type of visit do study visits generated by Spanish schools. It can be concluded that this type of tourism has big potential in order to generate positive results for the tourism destination and surroundings in the long term.

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V Annexes

Annex 1: List of used first-round in-depth interviews

Institution	Job title	Gender	Age	Date	City	Start	End	Pages in Annex 5
1. Southland Touring	General Manager	Male	36	January 6, 2016	Cuenca	/	/	pp. 1-23
2. Cajas NP (EP ETAPA) - Tourism Unit	Technical Analyst of Protected Areas	Male	39	January 8, 2016	Cuenca	11:20 AM	12:15 PM	pp. 24-50
3. Terra Diversa	General Manager	Male	46	January 12, 2016	Cuenca	09:35 AM	10:35 AM	pp. 51-73
4. Azuay Provincial Chamber of Tourism	President	Male	42	January 13, 2016	Cuenca	10:25 AM	11:30 AM	pp. 74-94
5. Azuay Hotel Association	President and owner of Hotel Río Piedra	Male	38	January 13, 2016	Cuenca	03:06 PM	04:20 PM	pp. 95-135
6. Cazhuma Tours	Manager	Female	37	January 14, 2016	Cuenca	11:15 AM	12:15 PM	pp. 136-163
7. FMTC	Executive Director	Female	46	January 14, 2016	Cuenca	03:15 PM	04:30 PM	pp. 164-181
8. Expediciones	General Manager	Male	54	January 21, 2016	Cuenca	11:05 AM	11:20 AM	pp. 182-210

Appullacta								
9. FMTC	Project Coordinator	Male	43	January 22, 2016	Cuenca	03:15 PM	04:40 PM	pp. 211-245
10. Ministry of Tourism Austro Regional	Destination Planning Unit	Female	33	January 27, 2016	Cuenca	05:45 PM	06:50 PM	pp. 246-282
11. Turis Consulting	Director	Male	40	February 3, 2016	Cuenca	10:10 AM	11:35AM	pp. 283-316
12. Gray Line	Sales and Contracting Manager	Female	45	February 15, 2016	Quito	08:30 AM	09:25 AM	pp. 317-348
13. Quito Turismo EP	Technical Director	Male	45	February 15, 2016	Quito	03:20 PM	04:40 PM	pp. 349-374
14. Ministry of Tourism	Sub secretary of Tourism Development	Male	42	February 15, 2016	Cuenca	05:10 PM	06:20 PM	pp. 375-405
15. South American Tours	COO	Female	40	February 18, 2016	Quito	10:10 AM	11:30 AM	pp. 406-448
16. CEDEI	Executive Director	Male	40	March 4, 2016	Cuenca	15:15 PM	16:40 PM	pp. 449-476
17. Horizontes Andinos	Manager	Male	49	March 8, 2016	Guayaquil	05:10 PM	06:30 PM	pp. 477-513

18. Sara Urku	Manager/native guide	Male/female	36/26	March 16, 2016	Saraguro	10:30 AM	15:30 PM	pp. 514-526
19. Municipality of Gualaceo	Head of Local Development and Tourism	Male	39	March 18, 2016	Cuenca	10:40 AM	11:06 AM	pp. 527-539
20. Archaeological Complex of Inga Pirca	Systems Analyst	Male	31	March 21, 2016	Inga Pirca	10:30 AM	11:30 AM	pp.540-565
21. Municipality of Cañar	Director of Tourism	Male	38	March 21, 2016	Cuenca	12:30 PM	13:01 PM	pp. 566-592

Annex 2: Structure of the first-round in-depth interviews

INTERVIEW GUIDE Fieldwork in the process of Doctoral investigation December 2015 – March 2016

Theme

Research topic: Access to international tourism markets by local actors.

Research question: How can the social capital of a tourism destination improve the access of local tourism actors to international markets?, and; How can they do it in a way that the desired type and amount of tourists are attracted?

Academic Institution: Catholic University of Leuven (KU Leuven)

Division: Geography and Tourism – Investigation Group in Tourism

Interviewer: Juan Santiago Rodríguez Girón

INTERVIEWED ACTOR

Name: _____

Institution: _____

Function: _____

Gender: _____ **Age:** _____ **Date:** _____ **City:** _____

Start: _____ **End:** _____

INTRODUCTION

- The purpose of this interview is to collect the views and experience of **relevant tourism stakeholders** in Cuenca and its region of influence.
- The topic of interest is about the **capacities and limitations** in the region to **decide and act together** in relation to **attract and develop the desired** type of tourism.
- We consider this to be a very important issue for you, because it deals with how decisions are taken and joint actions are realized to access the desired international tourism markets.

- We want to know your opinion about:
 - How do you perceive the tourism destination in which you are? (In terms of geography, actors, attractions, forms of tourism)
 - How do you perceive the ability of the actors at your destination to determine joint goals and act collectively?
 - What do you think are the conditions or characteristics that improve or impede working together to access international tourism markets?
 - We want to develop knowledge about the discrepancies that exist and why these discrepancies exist, between what is determined on paper as joint goals (agreements, plans and strategies) to attract international markets, and what is actually achieved in practice (joint actions and results).
-

CONSENT AGREEMENT

- Letting know and subscribe the respective form attached to this interview as an integral part of it.
-

OBJECTIVES OF THE FIELDWORK

1. COLLECT INFORMATION ON "THE DESTINATION"

- 1.1 Determine what the actor understands by "Destination"
- 1.2 Determine the geographical limits and main attractions and activities of what the actor considers encompassing the "Cuenca Destination" in which he participates
- 1.3 Identify the actors who should be interviewed on the topic
- 1.4 Identify the type of receptive international tourism (type of visitors and activities) in which the actor participates in the destination (as identified by the actor)
- 1.5 How does the actor access the international visitor flows he currently handles?

2. COLLECT PERCEPTIONS ON SELF-DETERMINATION IN TOURISM DESTINATIONS

- 2.1 What does the actor understand by self-determination?
- 2.2 How should the principle of self-determination be applied for the development of tourism destinations?
- 2.3 What is the level of collective self-determination of the destination of the actor with respect to the type of international visitors they DESIRE?
- 2.4 What is the level of collective self-determination of the destination of the actor with respect to the type of international visitors that they succeed attracting?

3. COLLECT CONTRIBUTIONS ON SOCIAL CAPITAL DIMENSIONS TO BE CONSIDERED IN A TOURISM DESTINATION

- 3.1 Identify, from the reasoning of the actors and their discourse, the main characteristics of the Social Capital in a Tourism Destination, as a basis to determine the dimensions for its evaluation.

3.1.1 **NOT providing concepts** about the dimensions cited in the literature, but **ask questions** that allow the actors to reflect on Work networks, Trust and Collective action in an indirect way.

3.1.2 Point 3.1.1 refers to not asking “what do you think, for example, about the concept of Networks?” But to **ask questions about their point of view** in different aspects of networking and cooperation in their experience, perhaps **around the terms "WORK FOR COMMON GOALS"** in relation to initiatives and results of the destination as a collective.

3.2 **TRY TO IDENTIFY EXAMPLES OF THE REAL LIFE OF THE CASE OF STUDY AND MAKE THEM TALK ABOUT THEM.** Identify, for example, cases/projects of joint work where the Social Capital can be expressed in action.

INTERVIEW GUIDE

1. COLLECT INFORMATION ON “THE DESTINATION”
--

1.1 What do you understand by hearing the term "Tourism Destination"? What is a "Tourism Destination"? (trigger: it can be from his own particular perspective, from his role as an actor, from the perspective of the visitors with whom he interacts, from the collective with which he collaborates, etc.)

1.2 How do you define the tourism destination (in relation to Cuenca) in which you participate/operate/provide your service in relation to international visitors? (trigger: it can be from his particular role, from the perception of the international visitors with whom he interacts, from what he as an actor tries to position, or from what another actor or group tries to position)

1.2.1 How would you call your destination?

1.2.2 Geographical limits:

1.2.3 Principal attractions and activities:

1.3 In relation to the destination that you have defined, what are the main actors with which you interact in relation to international visitors? *(trigger: can be residents/companies/governments/communities/associations/collectives, etc.)*

1.3.1 Names, type of interaction and location (use the Functions of "The Framework of Tourism Processes" as a guide to stimulate reflection on interactions)

Names	Interaction	Location

1.3.2 Other relevant actors in the destination that you can mention and their roles:

1.4 With what type of international visitors do you interact/provide service/relate? *(trigger: you can describe them by way of travel -independent, personalized or package- nationality, ages, interests, etc.)*

1.4.1 Description of the type of international visitors

1.4.2 Description of the type of activities carried out by international visitors or the type of interactions between you and international visitors

1.5 How do you succeed to reach or attract the international visitors you currently attend (in the case of companies) / **arrive at this destination** (in the case of governments, groups, public institutions)? *(trigger: They arrive spontaneously at the door of their premises (in the case of companies) / at their destination (in the case of governments, groups, public institutions), or are the result of actions aimed at attracting that specific type of visitors - in any case how, in what form, what mechanism, strategies?)*

2. COLLECT PERCEPTIONS ON SELF-DETERMINATION IN TOURISM DESTINATIONS

2.1 What do you understand by hearing the term "Self-Determination"?

2.2 Do you think that self-determination is related to the development of a tourism destination? How should it be applied? Do you consider it important? *(trigger: for example for residents, for a company, for a government, for a community)*

2.3 Do you think that in this tourism destination where you work, you have collectively determined the type of international visitors you DESIRE?

(trigger: have they discussed it with other actors, have they jointly determined the type of visitors they want, participated in some kind of process or discussion on the subject, some planning process or strategy ?, or perhaps never discussed it With other actors of their destination?)

2.4 Do you believe that in this tourism destination where you work it has been achieved through collective efforts to ATTRACT IN PRACTICE the desired type of international visitors? *(trigger: it refers to the existence of a case in which the type of international visitors it receives is the result of some form of collective action with other actors in the destination, or related to the destination, to attract precisely that type of visitors)*

3. COLLECT CONTRIBUTIONS ON SOCIAL CAPITAL DIMENSIONS TO BE CONSIDERED IN A TOURISM DESTINATION
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3.1 Can you name some cases of success or failure when Working for Joint Goals in your tourism destination? What strengthened them, which weakened them? *(trigger: preferably with respect to the intention of accessing/attracting international visitors, but it may also be in relation to development initiatives or strengthening of the destination)*

3.2 Based on your experience, what do you think are the conditions necessary to Work for Joint Goals in your tourism destination that allows you to access international markets? (*trigger: their Networks of Work and Cooperation, the existence of Confidence and Norms of conduct, the ability to carry out Collective Actions, leadership, trust, financing, technical support, etc.*)

RECOMMENDATIONS ON OTHER ACTORS TO BE INTERVIEWED:

Contact 1: _____

Contact 2: _____

Contact 3: _____

RECORDAR RECOLECTAR:

- **Statistics** on arrivals of international visitors to Cuenca and the region
- **Collect plans**, laws, ordinances, etc. on tourism development
- **Obtain photos** that exemplify SC in action (Networks - Trust - Collective Action)

AFTER THE INTERVIEW MAKES NOTES ABOUT:

- How was the interview? (Was the interviewer eloquent, cooperative, nervous, formal/informal, etc.?)

- Where did the interview take place? (Exact address and room -i.e. office, lobby, sitting room, cafeteria, etc.)

-
- Other impressions about the interview? (did it open new topics of interest?)

-
-
- The environment (noisy/quiet, many/few people around, old/new installations, use of computers, etc.)

-
-
- Documents or other forms of information was given to me or referred to (plans, regulations, reports, reports, business cards, etc.)

ANNEX - Consent for participation in a research interview

Research topic: _____

Institution: KU Leuven (Catholic University of Leuven).

I agree to participate in the present research project led by Doctoral student Juan Santiago Rodríguez Girón, from KU Leuven (Catholic University of Leuven), Belgium.

The purpose of this document is to specify the terms of my participation in the research project as an interviewee:

1. I have been given enough information about this research project. The purpose of my participation as one of the interviewees in this project has been explained to me and it is clear.
2. My participation as one of the interviewees in this project is voluntary. There is no explicit or implicit coercion to participate.
3. The participation involves being interviewed by the researcher. The interview will last approximately 60 minutes. I allow the researcher to take written notes during the interview.
4. I also allow recording of the interview. It is clear to me that in case I do not want the interview to be recorded I have a full right to stop the recording at any time.
5. I have the right not to answer any of the questions. If I feel uncomfortable in any way during the session, I have the right to withdraw from the interview.
6. I have been given explicit guarantees that, if I so desire, the researcher does not identify me by name or function in any report using the information obtained from this interview, and that my confidentiality as a participant in this study is protected.
7. I have been given the assurance that this research project has been reviewed and approved by the relevant Supervisory Committee of KU Leuven.
8. I have read and understood the points and statements on this form. All my questions have been answered to my satisfaction, and I voluntarily agree to participate in this study.
9. I have been given a copy of this consent form signed jointly by the interviewer.

Place and date

Name of the interviewee

Signature

Name of the investigator here

Name of the interviewer

Signature

For more information, contact: Name of the investigator – Function – Department – University of Leuven (KU Leuven) – GEO-INSTITUTE – Address: – Mobil: _____ – Email: _____ –
Web: _____

Annex 3: List of second-round in-depth interviews

Institution	Job title	Gender	Age	Date	City	Start	End	Pages in Annex 5
1. FMTC	Project Coordinator	Male	44	April 3, 2017	Cuenca	09:28 AM	11:45 AM	pp. 593-605
2. Southland Touring	General Manager	Male	40	April 4, 2017	Cuenca	02:31 PM	03:22PM	pp. 606-622
3. Expediciones Apullacta	General Manager	Male	61	April 6, 2017	Cuenca	11:19 AM	12:13 PM	pp. 623-640
4. Municipality of Sígsg	Head of the Department of Culture for Tourism and Heritage	Male	53	April 7, 2017	Sígsg	09:40 AM	10:04 AM	pp. 641-650
5. Municipality of Paute	Administrative Director	Male	65	April 7, 2017	Paute	12:00 AM	12:08 PM	p. 651
6. Municipality of Chordeleg	Director of Social and Economic Development	Male	32	April 7, 2017	Chordeleg	03:00 PM	03:22 PM	pp. 652-660
7. Municipality of Saraguro	Director of Culture	Male	37	April 10, 2017	Saraguro	09:01 AM	09:24 PM	pp. 661-668
8. Sara Urku	Manager	Male	38	April 10, 2017	Saraguro	10:59 AM	11:29 AM	pp. 669-678
9. Cajas NP (EP	Technical Analyst of	Male	40	April 12, 2017	Cuenca	11:20 AM	11:42 AM	pp. 679-686

ETAPA) - Tourism Unit	Protected Areas							
10. Ministry of Tourism Austro Regional	Destination Planning Unit	Female	34	April 19, 2017	Cuenca	03:23 PM	03:54 PM	pp. 687-697
11. CEDEI	Executive Director	Male	41	April 20, 2017	Cuenca	09:24 AM	10:04 AM	pp. 698-710

Annex 4: Structure of the second-round in-depth interviews

Interview guide

Field work for thesis research

April 2017

Theme

Research topic: Challenges for local actors in relation to access to international markets; the importance of social capital and collective action in terms of barriers and enhancers to achieve this objective (i.e. factors and conditions that help or prevent access to international markets).

Research question: What are the most notable examples of collective action towards international markets in which the FMTC participated or is still participating?, What is/was the role of the organization in these examples?, and; What are the barriers and enhancers of social capital that influence this collective action to access international markets?

Academic institution: Catholic University of Leuven (KU Leuven)

Division: Geography and Tourism – Master in Tourism

Interviewer: Lynse Vermeulen

INTERVIEWED ACTOR

Name: _____

Institution: _____

Function: _____

Gender: _____ **Age:** _____ **Date:** _____ **City:** _____

Start: _____ **End:** _____

INTRODUCTION

This thesis research sees itself reinforced by the more extensive Doctoral research of Juan Santiago Rodríguez Girón. His research aims at the pilot application of the "Integrative Model for Decision-making in Tourism", which allows analyzing how to improve collective action of the destination in order to access international markets. After analyzing some of the interviews already conducted by him, we have identified initiatives and actors related to the Foundation that will serve as a case study to determine more punctually what are the barriers and enhancers that influence collective action to access international markets. These inputs will be the basis for proceeding to the application of the Model in the final stage.

1. Collect general information about the examples of collective action, their success, barriers and enhancers of social capital and the role of the FMTC

1.1 Can you cite an example, or some examples, of working together/collective action with the FMTC in relation to the goal of accessing international markets? → annex with examples as trigger

→ Yes: **interview guide (1)**

→ No: **interview guide (2)**

INTERVIEW GUIDE (1)

1.2 What is/was the role of the FMTC in this/these joint work(s)? (*Trigger: leadership, coordination, support, facilitation, catalyst, etc.*) → refers to barriers and enhancers of the structural dimension: "leadership", "coordination of the group", "formality of the group governance" + of the cognitive dimension: "perceived role of the participants" → **1.2 A or the general interview guide**

1.2 A. If the FMTC does not have/had a role as mentioned above: Is/was there any actor who has/had a role as leader, coordinator, facilitator, catalyst or supporting actor? And what is/was the degree of influence of this actor on the final decisions? → refers to the same barriers and enhancers mentioned above + "intensity of collaborative relations" (the extent to which the facilitator of the collaborative arrangements exerts control over decision-making)

➔ To the general interview guide

INTERVIEW GUIDE (2)

1.2 Can you cite an example, or some examples, of working together, not necessarily with the FMTC, in relation to the objective of accessing international markets? ➔ annex with examples as trigger ➔ 1.3

1.3 In which cases or issues would it be better or necessary to work together with the FMTC to attract international visitors? Or what is missing, in your opinion, for this cooperation? ➔ can refer to barriers and enhancers of the three dimensions ➔ 1.4

1.4 What should be the role or task of the FMTC, in your opinion, in relation to joint work towards international markets? (Trigger: leadership, coordination, support, facilitation, catalyst, etc.) ➔ refers to barriers and enhancers of the structural dimension: "leadership", "coordination of the group", "formality of the group governance" + of the cognitive dimension: "perceived role of the participants" ➔ 1.4 A or the general interview guide

1.4 A: If the FMTC should not have a role as mentioned above: Is/was there any actor that has/had a role as leader, coordinator, facilitator, catalyst or supporting actor? And what is/was the degree of influence of this actor on the final decisions? → refers to the same barriers and enhancers as mentioned above + "intensity of collaborative relations" (the extent to which the facilitator of the collaborative arrangements exerts control over decision-making)

➔ To the general interview guide

GENERAL INTERVIEW GUIDE

2. Collect more information about the success of collective action, the structural and cognitive dimension of social capital and related barriers and enhancers → only for actors who can mention an example of concrete collective action in relation to access to international markets (even if it is not with the FMTC)

2.1 What are/were the other actors involved in the above mentioned collective action towards international markets? And is/was their participation of their own free will? If it is/was of their own free will, what are/were their motivations to participate? → refers to barriers and enhancers of the structural dimension: "number of participants", "heterogeneity of participants" and "(in)voluntary entry or exit" + of the cognitive dimension: "personal motivations" + "scope of collaborative agreements" (the number of actors involved through the selected participation techniques) ➔ **2.2**

2.2 What would be other relevant or necessary actors, in your opinion, in collective action

initiatives to attract international visitors? → refers to barriers and enhancers of the cognitive dimension: "recognition of interdependence between stakeholders" + "scope of collaborative agreements" (the extent to which the range of participating stakeholders is representative of all relevant stakeholders) → **2.3**

2.3 Why do you think these relevant or necessary actors are not participating/did not participate?

Or what is lacking, in your opinion, for this cooperation or participation? → refers to barriers and enhancers of the three dimensions and more specifically of the cognitive dimension: "trust", "norms", "personalities", "personal motivations", "perceived role of the participants", "reputation" and "reciprocity" → **3.1**

<p>3. Collect information about the success of the collective action and about barriers and enhancers related to the nature of collective action itself → only for actors who can mention an example of concrete collective action in relation to access to international markets (even if it is not with the FMTC)</p>
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3.1 What is/was the way of communicating between actors in this joint work and what kind of information do/did the actors receive through this communication? And is this the first time that there is cooperation between you and these other actors? And what was your knowledge about who these actors are, what they do or what they have already done? (Trigger: face-to-face

communication, business wheels, telephone or digital communication, etc.) → refers to barriers and enhancers of the cognitive dimension: "reputation" + of the nature of collective action itself: "face-to-face communication" and "information about past actions" + "intensity of collaborative relations" (the extent to which stakeholders groups receive information and are consulted about the activities of the collaboration → **3.2**

3.2 Have the objectives and goals of the collective action been jointly formulated in advance between the actors? And what are/were the advantages or benefits of participating in this collective action? Does/did each actor receive an equal amount of the benefits? → refers to barriers and enhancers of the nature of collective action itself: "joint formulation of aims and objectives" and "nature of benefits" + of the structural dimension: "how individuals are linked" + "scope of collaborative agreements" (the extent to which there is initial agreement among the actors about the intended general scope of the collaboration, whether the collaboration includes a facilitator who is also responsible for implementation and the extent to which relevant actors see there are positive benefits to entice their participation) → **3.2 A o 4.1**

3.2 A: If it is not the case (no joint formulation or individual benefits): Does/did each actor participate in the same way or are/were there actors who do/did more or less? (Trigger: possible opportunists or 'free riders') → **4.1**

4. Collect more information about the success of the collective action and about related barriers and enhancers → only for actors who can mention an example of concrete collective action in relation to access to international markets (even if it is not with the FMTC)

4.1 Do you think that each participant of the collective action is sufficiently representative of its group of relevant actors, i.e. that the present private/public actors sufficiently represent the private/public sector in general? → refers to the "scope of collaborative agreements" (the extent to which individuals representing a stakeholder group are fully representative of that group) → **4.2**

4.2 When and how often do/did the relevant actors of this collective action come together? And is/was it only about exchanging information or is/was it also about direct interaction between the actors? → refers to "intensity of collaborative relations" (whether the use of participation techniques only disseminates information or also involves direct interaction between the actors and when and how often the relevant actors meet) → **4.3**

4.3 How is/was the atmosphere between the actors during meetings and communication? Are/were they willing to listen to and learn from others, to modify their own visions? Are/were they sincere, honest, respectful or tolerant of others and is/was there trust? → refers to "intensity of collaborative relations" (the degree to which participants accept that collaboration is likely to produce qualitatively different outcomes and that they are likely to have to modify their own approach, the degree to which the dialogue among the participants reflects openness, honesty, tolerant and respectful speaking and listening, confidence and trust, the extent to which the participants understand, respect and learn from each other's' different forms of argument and the

extent to which the participants come to understand, respect and learn from each other's different interests, forms of knowledge, systems of meaning, values and attitudes) → 4.4

4.4 Is/was it easy to reach consensus among the actors? And are/were the actors willing to accept unexpected decisions and to really implement the resulting policies? → refers to "the extent to which consensus emerges among stakeholders" (all the parameters) → 4.5

4.5 Was there a follow-up of the processes afterwards or is there a follow-up going on? And are/were there concrete results of the collective action that led to concrete actions, the achievement of certain objectives or the promotion of new initiatives? → refers to barriers and enhancers of the nature of collective action itself: "Others" (barriers defined during the analysis of the already conducted interviews: lack of feedback, monitoring/follow-up and concrete results) → 5.1

5. Collect information about general or social capital related barriers and enhancers in relation to attracting international visitors and accessing international markets

5.1 What are the conditions, in your opinion, that prevent or facilitate mainly the ability to work together with the goal of accessing international markets? → can refer to different general barriers and enhancers or to the ones related to the three dimensions of social capital

ANNEX- Consent for participation in a research interview

Research topic: Challenges for local actors in relation to access to international markets; the importance of social capital and collective action in terms of barriers and enhancers to achieve this objective

Institution: KU Leuven (Catholic University of Leuven).

I agree to participate in the present research project led by master student Lynse Vermeulen, from KU Leuven (Catholic University of Leuven), Belgium.

The purpose of this document is to specify the terms of my participation in the research project as an interviewee:

1. I have been given enough information about this research project. The purpose of my participation as one of the interviewees in this project has been explained to me and it is clear.
2. My participation as one of the interviewees in this project is voluntary. There is no explicit or implicit coercion to participate.
3. The participation involves being interviewed by the researcher. The interview will last approximately 60 minutes. I allow the researcher to take written notes during the interview.
4. I also allow recording of the interview. It is clear to me that in case I do not want the interview to be recorded I have a full right to stop the recording at any time.
5. I have the right not to answer any of the questions. If I feel uncomfortable in any way during the session, I have the right to withdraw from the interview.
6. I have been given explicit guarantees that, if I so desire, the researcher does not identify me by name or function in any report using the information obtained from this interview, and that my confidentiality as a participant in this study is protected.
7. I have been given the assurance that this research project has been reviewed and approved by the relevant Supervisory Committee of KU Leuven.
8. I have read and understood the points and statements on this form. All my questions have been answered to my satisfaction, and I voluntarily agree to participate in this study.
9. I have been given a copy of this consent form signed jointly by the interviewer.

Place and date

Name of the interviewee

Signature

Lynse Vermeulen

Name of the interviewer

Signature

For more information, contact: Lynse Vermeulen – Master student – Geography and Tourism – University of Leuven (KU Leuven) – GEO-INSTITUTE – Celestijnenlaan 200E, B-3001 Heverlee, Belgium
– Mobile: 0032 471 40 53 47 – Email: lynse.vermeulen@kuleuven.student.be

ANNEX – examples of collective action (triggers)

- The **FMTC**:
 - ✓ Certification process: Cuenca as a Sustainable Destination (with TourCert)
- Actors who can mention examples in which the FMTC participates / has participated:
 - **Southland Touring**:
 - ✓ Certification process, promoted by the **Ministry of Tourism (Austro Regional)**. Role of the **FMTC**: motivator and facilitator ~ catalyst + mediator between interested companies, the **Ministry of Tourism (Austro Regional)** and TourCert (German certifier)
 - ✓ Road show in Canada and the USA in May 2015 (case of success: 16 days of promoting Ecuador), with the **FMTC and Ministry of Tourism (Austro Regional)**
 - **Ministry of Tourism (Austro Regional)**:
 - ✓ The examples mentioned above (2)
 - ✓ Press trips for Mexican, Brazilian, American, Canadian, Peruvian and Chilean journalists + familiarization trip for the Chileans. The **FMTC** organized the trips and **Apullacta** went to Chile and gave them the familiarization trip
 - ✓ International tourism fairs, press or familiarization trips, road shows or international promotional activities with tourism operators and the **FMTC**
 - **Apullacta**:
 - ✓ Example mentioned above
 - **Cajas NP**:
 - ✓ International tourism fairs with the **Ministry of Tourism (Austro Regional)**, local suppliers and the **FMTC** as a facilitator of the joint work (leading to greater presence of Russian, Danish, Polish, Finnish and Ukrainian markets)
- Actors likely to mention only examples in which the FMTC does not participate or have participated:
 - **CEDEI**:
 - ✓ With the Casa Grande University of Guayaquil: mutual support with the objective of attracting international students (more European and Canadian students for Cuenca and more American students for Guayaquil)
 - ✓ Two-day workshop in November 2015, with 24 institutions and universities from Ecuador for people in charge of international departments. It dealt with “best practices” concerning studying abroad. With the American Embassy and the organization "Formal Education Abroad" (from the USA and creates norms for the institutions). It is an example of success: great presence of actors because it was paid by the American Embassy.
- Other actors who are not yet interviewed but who are likely to mention the FMTC in relation to collective actions towards international markets:
 - **Municipality of Paute**:
 - **Municipality of Síg sig y Chordeleg**:
 - ✓ Creation of a DMO between Gualaceo, Síg sig and Chordeleg (in collaboration with the Catholic University of Cuenca, the FMTC and the technical teams of the GADs of Gualaceo, Síg sig and Chordeleg)

Annex 5: Transcriptions of the first-round and second-round in-depth interviews

See separate submitted transcriptions and digital file.