RESIDENTS’ PERCEPTIONS OF THE CULTURAL BENEFITS OF TOURISM

Antonia Besculides
Martha E. Lee
Peter J. McCormick
Northern Arizona University, USA

Abstract: Tourism can have both positive and negative outcomes for residents in communities where sharing and preserving their culture could be seen as conflicting goals. This research used a benefits-based approach to examine the perceptions of cultural tourism by Hispanic and non-Hispanic residents living along the Los Caminos Antiguos Scenic and Historic byway in southwestern Colorado, the United States. Results showed that while both groups recognized the value of living along the byway, Hispanic residents felt more strongly that it could provide important cultural benefits to residents and showed greater concern for its management to preserve the distinct cultural atmosphere. Keywords: cultural benefits, cultural tourism, resident perceptions, Hispanics.

INTRODUCTION

In recent years there have been increases in domestic and international tourism for the purpose of experiencing another culture (Vander Stoep 1996). Cultural tourism includes visiting historic or archaeological sites, being involved in community festivals, watching traditional dances or ceremonies, or merely shopping for handcrafted

Antonia Besculides received a Master of Science in Forestry. Research interests include cultural interpretation and the connection between heritage and a sense of place. Martha Lee is Associate Professor at Northern Arizona University (School of Forestry, Flagstaff AZ 86011, USA. Email <martha.lee@nau.edu>). Her research interests include the benefits of visitor perceptions of forest management. Peter McCormick is visiting Assistant Professor at the same university. His research interests include rural development, ethnicity and identity, and the American West.
Studies have shown that this form of tourism can provide benefits to community residents who share their culture as well as to those visiting the communities. Benefits to the host may include reciprocity, community pride, tolerance, and a stronger sense of ethnic identity (Driver, Brown and Peterson 1991). Cultural tourism also has the potential to negatively impact the character and traditional culture of small communities (Keogh 1990 and Johnson, Snepenger and Akis 1994). Providing opportunities for tourists to learn about and experience cultures requires consideration of both the positive and negative outcomes for host communities. A benefits-based approach to managing tourism considers both the benefits and disbenefits to residents and focuses on management actions that ensure benefits to their community (Driver 1996).

The purpose of this study was to use a benefits-based approach to explore community perceptions of the benefits and disbenefits of cultural tourism opportunities along a scenic byway whose purpose is to commemorate the host culture it passes through. Two groups of residents were compared—Hispanic and non-Hispanic—as to their perceptions of the benefits realized from living along the byway and how it should be managed to preserve the Hispanic cultural heritage it was designated to celebrate (while the terms Hispano or Chicano are often used interchangeably, this study uses the former). The culture described in this paper is not one of broad-based ethnic or racial identity but of a distinct geographical region; thus, it is entirely embedded in a sense of place.

Scenic byways were established to benefit both those who travel them as well as those living in local communities. Stated objectives for scenic byways include protecting scenic beauty, celebrating the diversity of American communities, enhancing tourism along scenic routes, and providing economic development opportunities for local communities (Senate 1989; US Department of Transportation 1996). The Los Caminos Antiguos Scenic and Historic Byway (LCA byway) is an example of the multiple functions that scenic routes are set aside to provide.

The LCA byway is 129 miles long and covers the southern portion of the San Luis Valley in south-central Colorado, from Cumbres Pass in the south to the Great Sand Dunes in the north. The valley is nestled between the Sangre de Cristo Range and the south San Juan Mountains. The byway passes through three counties, two of which are the poorest in Colorado. Communities along it range in population from 700 to 7,500 residents. The primary source of their income is agricultural, either farming or cattle ranching.

The primary culture of the area is Hispanic with historic roots in the early settlement of the San Luis Valley in the 18th century. Smaller communities along the byway are approximately 97%, and the valley at large roughly 65%, Hispanic. This predominantly ethnic rural population is somewhat isolated from the mainstream American culture. This is primarily due to a geographical and historical isolation and cultural disparity leading to a lack of both cultural commercialization and influx of other cultures (Nostrand 1992).

Southern Colorado was first visited by Spanish scouts during the
Coronado expedition of 1540. The next major expedition occurred in 1598 with the express purpose of settling and protecting the northern frontier of New Spain in New Mexico’s Upper Rio Grande Valley. At this time settlers met conflict with native Ute, Paiute, and Pueblo peoples who resented the influx of government and religion. The Rio Grande Pueblos succeeded in temporarily driving the Spanish conquistadors out during Popé’s Revolt in 1680. The settlers returned in the early 1700s bringing with them ranching skills, mining technology and acequias, or irrigation systems. These people eventually settled the San Luis Valley, introducing a patron system and carving roads travelled on by Spanish, Indian, and later Mormon people. These roads are now known as Los Caminos Antiguos or “the ancient roads” and the people living along them still continue their traditional lifestyle.

Their skill at adapting to their environment and establishing relationships with many native groups quickly led to a stable cultural region. The foundations were laid for the establishment of a distinct regional culture defined by its mixed Indian–Iberian ancestry, syncretic catholic religion, and attachment to the land. This area is distinguished by its art and adobe architecture, pastoral lifestyle, strong religious ties, food, folklore, and language. Moreover, the local culture reflects an intrinsic relationship with the land shown through the reliance on an agrarian lifestyle. Therefore, many residents fear that tourism and associated developments may remove them from the land and thus their culture. For this reason, some observers view tourism as another form of cultural invasion, reminiscent of conquest (Peña 1999; Pulido 1996). The Hispanic communities in this area are distinctive in culture and isolated from mainstream America, and thus may have stronger feelings about the impacts of tourism on their culture and the appropriate ways of sharing it with tourists.

One of the goals of the LCA byway is to “commemorate the cultural traditions of the San Luis Valley’s ethnic groups and communities” (Interpretive Management Associates 1994:11). These communities are rich in cultural heritage and provide tourists with a wide variety of recreational and cultural opportunities. Museums, historic sites, cultural centers, and other attractions allow tourists to interact with local residents, learn about, and experience the Hispanic culture.

This research seeks to learn what cultural benefits residents feel they gain from living along a scenic byway, including those generated through cultural tourism. The fact that the LCA byway was established in part to celebrate the area’s strong ethnic culture led the study to speculate that Hispanic residents along the byway might have different perceptions than non-Hispanic ones about the benefits of tourism and how the culture should be shared with tourists. The specific objectives of this research were to document the cultural benefits and disbenefits residents perceive are outcomes of living along the LCA byway; to describe how residents feel the byway should be managed to benefit local communities and preserve the culture; and to compare perceived benefits and management preferences of Hispanic and non-Hispanic residents.
Cultural Benefits

While there is an extensive literature on the benefits of recreation and tourism (Driver 1996; Kraus 1997; Sefton 1995; Stein 1994), the role this industry plays in providing benefits to a culture has not been fully explored. Traditionally, cultural resources have been used as a method for enhancing economic stability (Johnson 1986), while minimal research has been conducted concerning other possible benefits that tourism can provide to local communities.

Benefits are defined here as an improved condition or lessening of a worse condition to individuals and communities. They can be categorized as personal (physical and psychological), sociocultural, economic, and environmental. Sociocultural benefits include learning, awareness, appreciation, family bonding, community pride, a firmer sense of ethnic identity, increased understanding and tolerance of others, and stronger cultural identity (Driver et al 1991). Benefits can be realized both by tourists who visit cultural areas and by host communities. This interrelation fosters a cross-cultural communication that can promote understanding between the host and guest (Mathieson and Wall 1984). For example, residents are educated about the outside world without leaving their homes, while their visitors significantly learn about a distinctive culture.

Community residents can realize cultural benefits from tourism in one of two ways. First, tourism exposes the host to other cultures and can result in benefits such as tolerance and understanding. Second, the act of presenting one’s culture to outsiders strengthens the idea of what it means to live within a community, thus increasing identity, pride, cohesion, and support. Stein and Anderson (1999) studied the benefits to communities from two state parks in Minnesota. These included increased pride and identity, cohesion, exchange of ideas, and increased knowledge about the culture of the area. A study examining impacts of festivals found the major benefits to be the establishment of community pride, social interaction, togetherness, sharing of ideas, community identity, and community wellness (Delamere and Hinch 1994). McKean (1978), through observation of tourists to Balinese society, found that this interest created an increase in demand for and production of local arts. He terms this phenomenon “cultural involution” characterized by an increase in the elaboration of established cultural forms and practices resulting in a more prevalent material culture or a degradation of traditions. Thus, because tourism enters a community and there is a market for traditional arts, the art is promoted and possibly saved from extinction.

Expanding upon this concept of ethnic preservation is a case study conducted by Esman (1984) among the Cajun in Louisiana. Through participant observation, this investigation found that tourism profoundly influenced their ethnic pride and sense of identity. Much like the people of Colorado’s San Luis Valley, the Cajuns differ from the dominant culture, yet are considered American. Moreover, they are proud of their differences and celebrate an independent ethnic identity. They speak their traditional language and practice the occupations
of their forefathers. Thus, tourists are attracted to them because it is as if stepping back in time or visiting a foreign country without travelling far from home. To perpetuate such opportunities and ensure continued earnings from tourism, Cajuns began to stage festivals. However, this benefited both host and guest because it revitalized traditional practices, which were declining due to rapid acculturation. Esman found that the revival of traditional arts led to the preservation of some dying customs. In this way, Cajuns became actual “tourists” of their own culture, learning more about those things that were disappearing by presenting them to outsiders. Thus, there is both a renewal of identity and an increase of pride in one’s own culture. Esman suggests that Cajuns acknowledge their exotic culture and actively promote it, thus creating a sense of pride and ensuring its perpetuation.

Research has found additional positive effects of tourism to be cultural exchange, revitalization of local traditions, increased quality of life, and an improved image for the community (Weikert and Kertstetter 1996; Clements, Schultz and Lime 1993). Through proper planning and management, tourism has been found to improve the quality of life of the residents as well as to enhance the sense of place (Burr 1996). However, within tourism is the seed of its own destruction.

Cultural Disbenefits

Tourism has the power to affect cultural change. Successful development of a resource can lead to numerous negative impacts. Among these are over-development, assimilation, conflict and xenophobia, and artificial reconstruction. While presenting a culture to tourists may help preserve the culture, it can also dilute or even destroy it. A number of studies have been conducted to measure such impacts on local communities.

Both negative and positive impacts of tourism are evident in the case of the Amish of Pennsylvania. They are uniquely isolated from mainstream society and are frequently visited by tourists. Through anthropological fieldwork, Boyton (1986) found that tourism resulted in great changes in Amish quilting practices. Quilts produced specifically for sale used non-traditional designs and fabric and were of lower quality than those made for personal use. Furthermore, quilting has become a production created in businesses and cottage industries rather than in the home. Deitch (1977) found similar results in a study of Southwest American Indian arts and craft in that outsiders had a significant influence on such productions as pottery, weaving, and jewelry, including an infusion of ideas in the form of new symbols and materials. Thus, tourism led to a clearly distinctive art form different from traditional Indian styles.

Authenticity has long been an issue in tourism. When tourists visit an area to experience a unique culture, residents often actively attempt to present it in order to attract tourists. This often leads to non-authentic forms of cultural traditions, an example being festivals or dances staged entirely for tourists. In a study of Hindu–Balinese culture in Bali, Francillon (1975) found that developers had copied sacred build-
ings and objects for use in hotel construction and decoration. Furthermore, dances previously considered sacred were being performed, for tourists. Similar results have been documented in Hawaii (Heenan 1978), among the Amish of Pennsylvania (Buck and Alleman 1979), and in the Taos Pueblo of New Mexico (Rodriguez 1994).

Tourism can also lead to acculturation and assimilation. One of the strongest indicators of such impacts is loss of native language as a result of an influx of tourist languages (Coppock 1977; Cybriwsky 1970; White 1974). Anaya studied Indohispano communities of the Southwest similar to those along the LCA byway and warned that residents must hold on to their history and traditional values in order to stave off assimilation, to avoid being “doomed to existence as a tourist commodity, admired for its quaint folkways but not taken seriously” (1989:233).

**Resident Perceptions**

Social and economic factors such as community attachment, length of residence in an area, and economic dependency on tourism, can influence resident perceptions of and attitudes toward tourism. McCool and Martin (1994) found that residents who were strongly attached to their community viewed tourism impacts with more concern than did those less attached to their community. In a study of a resort community in Michigan, Stynes and Stewart (1993) found widely divergent views on tourism development between newer and longer-term residents. The former favored further development, while the latter did not and were concerned about potential changes in the area’s character as a result of such growth. Conversely, Allen, Hafer, Long and Perdue (1993) found that length of residence in ten rural Colorado towns did not have a significant effect on attitudes toward tourism development and Clements et al (1993) found similar results on a study of residents along the Mississippi National River and Recreation Area.

Economic dependency on tourism and proximity to attractions can also influence resident perceptions. A number of studies have found a positive relationship between residents’ acceptance of the industry and their economic dependency on it (Allen, Hafer, Long and Perdue 1993; Haralambopoulos and Pizam 1996; Johnson et al 1994; Jurowski, Uysal and Williams 1995; King, Pizam and Milman 1993). Results of these studies suggest that residents involved in this industry are more likely to encourage tourism than those not. In contrast, research has shown that even when overall attitudes toward tourism are positive, residents living in close proximity to attractions can have greater concern about tourism impacts than those living further away (Keogh 1990; Wall 1996).

**Residents’ Perceptions Along a Scenic Byway**

A mail-back questionnaire was used to collect data on resident perceptions of tourism along the LCA byway. The survey included ques-
tions on the benefits and disbenefits of living along the route, appropriate byway management strategies, and perceptions of the outcomes of sharing the Hispanic culture with tourists. The questions on benefits were developed from information gained in focus group meetings conducted in LCA communities prior to designing the questionnaire.

Surveys were sent to a random sample of 1,000 households stratified over 23 towns along the byway. The number of households receiving a questionnaire in each stratum was proportionate to population size. Households were systematically selected from listed telephone records. Standard methods for implementing a mail survey were followed (Dillman 1978). The mailing packets included a personalized letter introducing the project, a brochure describing the LCA byway, a questionnaire, and a stamped envelope. Residents were given the opportunity to request a copy of the questionnaire in Spanish. The first two follow-up mailings included postcards and questionnaire packet replacements. The final follow-up mailing was sent by certified mail.

Incentives were used due to their proven ability to significantly increase response rate (Gitelson, Kerstetter and Guadagnolo 1993). The names of those returning questionnaires were entered in a drawing for free dinners and passes to area attractions donated by LCA byway business owners. Of the 908 questionnaires sent to valid addresses, 329 useable questionnaires were received (a 37% response rate). A telephone survey was conducted to assess possible non-response bias. Households who did not return the survey were contacted and asked selected questions from the instrument, including ethnicity and education. A comparison between respondents and non-respondents found no significant ethnicity relationship but not so in respect to education. A closer look at the data found that the level of education among non-respondents was significantly lower than those who returned the completed survey.

The sample was divided into two groups: 136 Hispanic and 193 non-Hispanic residents. The latter were 94% White, 2% Native American, and 4% Other (non-specific). SPSS (1997) statistical software was used in the analysis. A one-way ANOVA with a significance level of 0.01 was used to test for statistically significant differences between these two groups on the variables of interest.

The average Hispanic resident surveyed was male, age 56, a farmer or a teacher and had a high school degree or some college education. He was a permanent resident who had lived on the byway an average of 32 years. The average non-Hispanic resident was 55 years old, White male, a farmer or a teacher, and had some college education. He was a permanent resident who had lived on the byway an average of 19 years.

Benefits of Living Along the Byway

The main objectives of this research were to describe the types of cultural benefits perceived by local residents and how those perceptions varied between Hispanic and non-Hispanic residents. The authors acknowledge that the source of any differences in perceptions between these two groups may or may not be attributable solely to
Survey respondents were asked to rate the importance of a list of specific cultural benefits on a scale from very unimportant to very important (−3 to +3). Cultural benefits included such personal ones as “stronger sense of who I am as a person” and “a better sense of my place in the history of the San Luis Valley”, as well as social benefits such as “increased acceptance of others” and “being part of a community rich in culture and history”.

Hispanic and non-Hispanic residents differed in their views of the cultural value of living along the LCA byway. While both groups agreed that one of the most important benefits was “a stronger sense of ethnic identity” (mean=2.1 and 2.0 for Hispanic and non-Hispanic residents, respectively), Hispanic residents rated all other cultural benefits as more important than did non-Hispanic residents (Table 1). The one-way analysis of variance revealed statistically significant differences between the perceptions of these two groups on 11 of 13 cultural benefits (alpha level=.01).

Benefits considered most important to Hispanic residents were “greater pride in my community” (mean=2.1), and “greater knowledge of my own culture” (mean=2.0), “maintenance of my traditional way of life” (mean=2.0), “a better sense of my place in the history of the San Luis Valley” (mean=2.0), “being part of a community rich in culture and history” (mean=2.0), and “feeling good about the way we are caring for our cultural heritage” (mean=2.0).

Non-Hispanic residents rated the cultural benefits as less important than Hispanic residents. The most important were “a stronger sense of ethnic identity” (mean=2.0), “increased acceptance of others” (mean=1.5), and “greater pride in my community” (mean=1.5). They were neutral in their views of the importance of learning and sharing their culture with tourists (Table 1).

Both Hispanic and non-Hispanic residents agreed that the LCA byway provides important benefits, particularly those related to promoting a sense of ethnic identity and tolerance. However, Hispanics were more likely to see the LCA byway as an important vehicle for learning about and interacting with their culture and maintaining their traditional way of life. These benefits were less important to non-Hispanic residents, perhaps obviously, because they are less active in the Hispanic culture, and thus will find fewer cultural benefits.

Managing the Byway

In order for the LCA byway to serve as a viable mechanism for preserving and sharing the Hispanic culture with tourists and providing benefits to community residents, its management must reflect the views of the residents who live there. To assess their opinions about the most appropriate ways to manage the byway area for cultural benefits, survey participants were asked about where management priorities should be placed and what types of services and facilities were most acceptable. They were asked to rate the importance of managing the byway for a
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Benefits</th>
<th>Hispanic Residents</th>
<th>Non-Hispanic Residents</th>
<th>F&lt;sup&gt;b&lt;/sup&gt;</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A greater respect for my cultural heritage</td>
<td>130 2.0</td>
<td>181 0.5</td>
<td>45.9&lt;sup&gt;b&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Greater knowledge of my own culture</td>
<td>125 2.0</td>
<td>177 0.8</td>
<td>34.3&lt;sup&gt;b&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sharing my cultural heritage with visitors</td>
<td>126 1.3</td>
<td>177 0.3</td>
<td>19.5&lt;sup&gt;b&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seeing visitors get excited about our cultural heritage</td>
<td>130 1.5</td>
<td>180 0.6</td>
<td>16.5&lt;sup&gt;b&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A stronger sense of who I am as a person</td>
<td>130 1.7</td>
<td>180 0.8</td>
<td>16.0&lt;sup&gt;b&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maintenance of my traditional way of life</td>
<td>127 2.0</td>
<td>180 1.3</td>
<td>12.9&lt;sup&gt;b&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A better sense of my place in the history of the San Luis Valley</td>
<td>128 2.0</td>
<td>176 1.2</td>
<td>12.3&lt;sup&gt;b&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A greater appreciation for the arts</td>
<td>126 1.7</td>
<td>179 1.0</td>
<td>11.4&lt;sup&gt;b&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Greater pride in my community</td>
<td>128 2.1</td>
<td>178 1.5</td>
<td>10.1&lt;sup&gt;b&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Being part of a community rich in culture and history</td>
<td>127 2.0</td>
<td>181 1.4</td>
<td>9.2&lt;sup&gt;b&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feeling good about the way we are caring for our cultural heritage</td>
<td>128 2.0</td>
<td>181 1.4</td>
<td>8.9&lt;sup&gt;b&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Increased acceptance of others</td>
<td>124 1.8</td>
<td>174 1.5</td>
<td>2.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A stronger sense of ethnic identity</td>
<td>127 2.1</td>
<td>181 2.0</td>
<td>0.4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<sup>a</sup> =−3=very unimportant, −2=moderately unimportant, −1=somewhat unimportant, 0=neither, +1=somewhat important, +2=moderately important, +3=very important.

<sup>b</sup> F-value significant at α=.01 level.

number of community gains, including cultural and economic benefits.

Protecting the cultural and religious sites along the byway and providing economic opportunities for local residents were two dominant concerns of both Hispanic and non-Hispanic residents (Table 2). Managing the area to reduce looting and vandalism of cultural, historic, and religious sites was most important, followed, by providing jobs and improving community services. Hispanic residents showed significantly
### Table 2. Importance of Managing the Byway for Cultural Benefits

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Managing the LCA Byway for …</th>
<th>Hispanic Residents</th>
<th>Non-Hispanic Residents</th>
<th>(F^b)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(n)</td>
<td>mean(^a)</td>
<td>(n)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Preservation of our cultural heritage</td>
<td>129</td>
<td>4.3</td>
<td>178</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Retention of a distinct cultural atmosphere</td>
<td>126</td>
<td>4.2</td>
<td>178</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A stronger sense of community awareness among my community’s young people</td>
<td>130</td>
<td>4.1</td>
<td>181</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maintaining a distinctive main street architecture</td>
<td>12.9</td>
<td>4.2</td>
<td>178</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A greater commitment to care for the Byway’s cultural and historic resources</td>
<td>128</td>
<td>4.4</td>
<td>177</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Increased community pride</td>
<td>131</td>
<td>4.2</td>
<td>181</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Increased quality of life for residents</td>
<td>129</td>
<td>4.3</td>
<td>183</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maintaining a small town atmosphere</td>
<td>128</td>
<td>4.3</td>
<td>183</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reduced looting and vandalism of cultural historic and religious sites</td>
<td>127</td>
<td>4.5</td>
<td>182</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maintaining a rural lifestyle</td>
<td>128</td>
<td>4.2</td>
<td>179</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Improved understanding and tolerance of others</td>
<td>127</td>
<td>4.1</td>
<td>183</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Local economic growth from tourism</td>
<td>129</td>
<td>4.0</td>
<td>183</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More job opportunities for residents</td>
<td>130</td>
<td>4.4</td>
<td>182</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Improving our community’s physical infrastructure</td>
<td>132</td>
<td>4.3</td>
<td>182</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\(^a\) 1=not at all important, 2=slightly important, 3=moderately important, 4=very important, 5=extremely important.

\(^b\) F-value significant at \(\alpha=.01\) level.
greater concern for managing the byway to preserve the distinctive
cultural atmosphere and raising awareness among the young com-
community members. The two groups were similar in their desire to main-
tain a small town atmosphere and a rural lifestyle.

Residents also rated the acceptability of a number of cultural tourism
events and facilities that could occur within local communities along
the LCA byway to benefit both host and guest. Six services and facilities
such as tours of cultural sites were rated on a scale from totally unac-
cceptable (−2) to totally acceptable (+2). All of the cultural facilities
were considered to be at least somewhat acceptable to both groups.
There were no significant differences in their responses to this ques-
tion, except that the non-Hispanic group had slightly lower means
overall. In other words, events and facilities such as “festivals and fairs,”
“cultural centers,” “tours of mission churches,” and “tours of artisan
studios” were less acceptable to non-Hispanic than to Hispanic resi-
dents. Both groups agree that it is important to have cultural services
such as museums and historic sites as well as events such as festivals
and fairs in their communities. They appear to be concerned with the
continuation of the distinct culture of the area as well as improving
economic conditions, even if they do not directly participate in the
culture. Furthermore, both groups may rely on such events and facili-
ties to learn more about the culture of the area.

Sharing the Hispanic Culture with Tourists

To further understand how LCA byway residents feel about main-
taining a balance between tourism and retention of the Hispanic cul-
ture, they were asked to agree or disagree with a list of possible social
and economic outcomes of sharing the culture with tourists. Examples
of possible outcomes included reviving local arts, and traditions, chang-
ing the amount of Spanish spoken by residents, impacts on the local
economic quality of life, and diluting the authenticity of the Hispanic
culture. It was on these questions that the greatest differences between
Hispanic and non-Hispanic residents were found.

Hispanic residents felt significantly more strongly that sharing with
tourists would have positive outcomes for the communities and the
culture. They rated “preserve the stories and folklore which have been
passed down” (mean=1.5), “help local residents learn more about the
Hispanic culture” (mean=1.5), and “provide a stronger sense of self-
identity within the Hispanic culture and community” (mean=1.4) as
the most likely outcomes of sharing the Hispanic culture with tourists.
Hispanic residents also rated “commercialize the Hispanic culture”
(mean=0.2), “dilute the Hispanic culture” (mean=−0.7), and
“decrease the amount of Spanish being spoken among Hispanic resi-
dents” (mean=−0.7) as the least likely outcomes of sharing the culture.

While non-Hispanic residents agreed that the most likely outcome
was “preserve the stories and folklore which have been passed down”
(mean=0.9), they felt that the next most likely outcomes were “revive
the arts and traditions of the area” (mean=0.8) and “encourage His-
panics to actively participate in their culture” (mean=0.7). Non-His-
panic residents agreed with Hispanics that the two least likely outcomes were “dilute the Hispanic culture” (mean=−0.6) and “decrease the amount of Spanish being spoken among Hispanic residents” (mean=−0.4). However they felt that it was also unlikely that sharing the Hispanic culture with tourists would “increase the amount of Spanish being spoken among Hispanic residents” (mean=−0.3). This is contrary to Hispanic residents, who agreed that sharing the culture could increase the amount of Spanish spoken (Table 3).

F-test statistics were significant for all the positive outcomes of sharing the culture, suggesting that Hispanic residents, with stronger ties to it, feel stronger about the positive outcomes of sharing than residents with less strong ties. The two groups showed no statistically significant differences in their perceptions of the negative outcomes of sharing the Hispanic culture with tourists, with the exception of “commercialize the Hispanic culture.” While both groups were generally neutral that commercialization was an outcome (0.2 and −0.2 for Hispanic and non-Hispanic residents, respectively), the difference was statistically significant.

Residents were also asked how active they felt managers should be in sharing the Hispanic culture with tourists. “Activity levels” was rated on a range of 3=very active, to 0=not at all active. Hispanic residents’ mean of 2.3 suggests that managers should be between moderately and very active in sharing the Hispanic culture, while non-Hispanics had mean of 1.6, which is between somewhat active and moderately active. One-way analysis of variance found a statistically significant difference between these two groups. Hispanic feel more strongly than non-Hispanic residents that managers should be active in sharing the Hispanic culture with tourists.

CONCLUSION

The finding of this study support Driver et al’s (1991) ideas about the types of cultural benefits which communities can realize, as well as the original proposition that tourism promotes numerous cultural benefits. Providing jobs for residents is obviously an important byproduct, but residents also see tourism as a means of helping them learn about, share, and preserve their culture. This tells those who manage it that, while the host sees the importance of the LCA byway as way to improve economic conditions in the area, this is not their only concern. Residents identified other positive cultural benefits from managing the byway area to “enhance and preserve”—such as preserving traditional folklore and helping locals learn more about the Hispanic culture.

Both Hispanic and other residents showed little concern that sharing their culture would result in negative impacts, such as diluting and commercializing it or decreasing the amount of Spanish spoken. There were not significant differences in the perceptions of both populations as to the negative outcomes of cultural tourism. This relative lack of concern and the importance that residents place on the positive bene-
Table 3. Perceived Outcomes of Sharing the Hispanic Culture

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Outcomes</th>
<th>Hispanic Residents</th>
<th>Non-Hispanic Residents</th>
<th>F&lt;sup&gt;b&lt;/sup&gt;</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>n</td>
<td>n</td>
<td>F&lt;sup&gt;b&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Increase the amount of Spanish being spoken among Hispanic residents</td>
<td>133</td>
<td>176</td>
<td>124.0&lt;sup&gt;b&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provide a stronger sense of self-identity within the Hispanic culture and community</td>
<td>132</td>
<td>171</td>
<td>73.4&lt;sup&gt;b&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Help local residents learn more about the Hispanic culture</td>
<td>132</td>
<td>177</td>
<td>72.7&lt;sup&gt;b&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Increase local pride in the Hispanic culture</td>
<td>134</td>
<td>176</td>
<td>50.0&lt;sup&gt;b&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maintain my desired image of myself and my community</td>
<td>130</td>
<td>174</td>
<td>49.0&lt;sup&gt;b&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Encourage Hispanics to actively participate in their culture</td>
<td>134</td>
<td>176</td>
<td>32.8&lt;sup&gt;b&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Preserve the stories and folklore which have been passed down</td>
<td>131</td>
<td>177</td>
<td>30.8&lt;sup&gt;b&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Revive the arts and traditions of the area</td>
<td>135</td>
<td>178</td>
<td>30.8&lt;sup&gt;b&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Encourage local economic growth from cultural tourism</td>
<td>132</td>
<td>176</td>
<td>24.0&lt;sup&gt;b&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Commercialize the Hispanic culture</td>
<td>130</td>
<td>170</td>
<td>11.3&lt;sup&gt;b&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assimilate the Hispanic culture into the mainstream American culture</td>
<td>129</td>
<td>176</td>
<td>6.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Decrease the amount of Spanish being spoken among Hispanic residents</td>
<td>132</td>
<td>175</td>
<td>5.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dilute the Hispanic culture</td>
<td>130</td>
<td>173</td>
<td>1.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<sup>a</sup> −2=strongly disagree, −1=disagree, 0=neither, +1=agree, +2=strongly agree.

<sup>b</sup> F-value significant at α=.01 level.
fits of cultural tourism has implications for those who manage tourism on the LCA byway.

To provide both economic and cultural benefits to community members, planners and tourism providers should create an atmosphere in which residents, particularly the Hispanic group, can actively participate in caring for and protecting their cultural heritage, as well as an arena to share their accomplishments with others. Thus, the community is able to care for their culture and benefit more than economically. This conclusion is supported by results presented in Table 2, which show that both Hispanic and non-Hispanic residents would like to see a lot more cultural events, a practice which may lead to the attainment of desired benefits such as “a greater appreciation for the arts” or a “stronger sense of who I am as a person.”

Support was also found for the idea that perceptions of tourism and cultural benefits would differ between Hispanic and non-Hispanic respondents. Other research has shown that residents with the strongest ties to an area—whether through place attachment, long-term residency, or economic dependency—often have different attitudes and perceptions of tourism and its development than those who have weaker ties to an area. Following the same logic, it would seem (and the results of this research support the idea) that those most closely tied to the dominant culture of an area would feel more strongly about cultural tourism that focused on that culture than those not of the dominant culture. While both Hispanic and non-Hispanic residents see the need to protect cultural sites and maintain the rural small-town atmosphere along the LCA byway, the former consistently felt more strongly about the cultural and community benefits of living along the byway, how it should be managed to provide cultural benefits, and the positive outcomes of sharing the Hispanic culture with tourists. Hispanic residents are obviously more directly involved in the culture than non-Hispanics and this is reflected in the results, particularly in the strong differences between the two groups in their perceptions of the outcomes of sharing.

In conclusion, there are differences between the perceptions of Hispanic and non-Hispanic residents as to the cultural benefits of living along the LCA byway, how the area should be managed to provide benefits to residents, and the impacts of sharing culture with tourists. In those instances when there was a statistically significant difference in responses between these two groups, it seems that non-Hispanic residents are more concerned with those benefits and management actions that affect themselves personally and their community as a whole. Moreover, Hispanic residents are more concerned with management plans that directly affect the culture of the area. This is likely due to the fact that they are active participants in the Hispanic culture and it most significantly influences their daily lives and community structure.

This study also bears on the future. The communities along the byway formed a collaborative group to facilitate this research and write a management plan. This group hopes to find an appropriate way to increase visitation and promote the Hispanic culture while avoiding
degradation. This can occur both to the material culture and to the people, through acculturation, assimilation, and cultural drift (Mathieson and Wall 1984). However, there has been limited research directing managers and community planners on how to find an appropriate balance between promotion and dilution. The study results will assist tourism managers in dealing with this dilemma.

The findings of this research on the LCA byway can be broadened for implications outside the area in reminding planners about the importance of involving community members before tourism actions are taken, and the need to truly understand how residents feel about the industry. Additional research is needed on the resulting social and cultural benefits and disbenefits to communities, particularly those using culture as the catalyst for tourism development. Further research should continue to document the direct connection between living in a culturally rich area and the attainment of benefits by residents in domestic or foreign, urban or rural communities with high or low levels or tourism and ethnic cohesion or variation. For example, it would be useful to determine whether relations between Hispanic and Non-Hispanic residents along the byway were negatively affected by promoting and sharing the Hispanic culture to promote tourism.

Finally, there is a need to go beyond this research and look at the interaction of ethnicity and other sociodemographic variables, such as length of residence, age, gender, education, and occupation to determine how those variables in combination influence perceptions of the benefits and appropriate role of cultural tourism both within and outside the Hispanic culture. Such studies are needed to more completely understand the positive and negative impacts of cultural tourism on local residents.

REFERENCES


Mathieson, A., and G. Wall  

Nostrand, R.  

Peña, D.  

Pulido, L.  

Rodriguez, S.  

Sefton, J.  

The Senate  

SPSS  
1997 User’s Guide. Chicago: SPSS.

Stein, T.  

Stein, T., and D. Anderson  

Stynes, D., and S. Stewart  

US Department of Transportation  

Vander Stoep, G.  

Wall, G.  

Weikert, B., and D. Kertstetter  

White, P.  