The Decolonial Power of Community Tourism –

Challenging Colonial Paradigms in Ecuador´s Tourism Industry

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I hereby confirm that this thesis on *The Decolonial Power of Community Tourism – Changing Colonial Paradigms in Ecuador's Tourism Industry* is solely my own work and that I have used no sources or aids other than the ones stated. All passages in my thesis for which other sources, including electronic media, have been used, be it direct quotes or content references, have been acknowledged as such and the sources cited.

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Abstract

This study focusses on the pedagogical effect of Community Tourism in the Ecuadorian context. Within the encounter between Western tourists and local rural communities, it analyses the potential reflection on structures of Coloniality that these projects can generate. The research draws upon a combination of participant observations and in-depth interviews with both groups, while using Autoethnography as a method to integrate a critical personal reflection of the researcher. The study has shown the potential that direct contact between these two groups, and a self-determined and clear concept from the community have for decolonizing the tourism industry. The findings may be useful for communities offering touristic products to further strengthen their positions of auto-management and self-determination.

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Index

I'm here to experience the differences and I'm finding a few. But mostly I find some similarities. We have travelled before and people always have the same values […]. So, one of the things that I've said with groups that I traveled with: "People's values are the same the world over. […] They want their children to be happy, well educated, they want a peaceful lifestyle […]." And for us to live this culture just reinforces that. Everywhere we go. We are reinforced by meeting people with similar expectations on life. Although with different ways of doing it. And that is a different way of doing it and that might affect my decisions in my life. (Tourist while visiting the San Clemente community in Ecuador)

1. Introduction

The global tourist industry is growing rapidly and offers great opportunities for economic growth to receiving countries. However, since most international tourists are coming from Western countries and the trend to travel to countries of the Global South is on the rise, this kind of tourism also bares risks for strengthening patterns of *Coloniality*[1] (Grosfoguel et al, 2012); especially due to the strong economic imbalance and uneven power structures between the countries. In Ecuador, the conceptualization and implementation of Community Tourism started in the 1980´s which makes it one of the earliest countries in Latin America to strategically use this form of tourism to develop communities (Ruiz Ballesteron and Solis Carrión, 2007, p.6). Since then, this strategy has been re-evaluated constantly. Today, by definition, communities should gain responsibility over their own territory while offering products such as local accommodation or community visits. The concept of Community Tourism promises to increase independence, control the possible risks for communities and to learn skills to manage their own territory and cultural representation towards tourists; all of which are aspects which can be described as decolonizing. Nevertheless, with often short visits and a strong focus on economic gain, the effect that Community Tourism projects have on tourists depends on each individual project, and rarely can be seen as a motor to counter colonial perceptions. By focussing on the pedagogical effects generated within tourists through these experiences and on balancing the power relation between tourists and locals, this research aims to answer three main questions: 1) if Community Tourism can become a tool for decolonizing, 2) if it can be used to break global colonial perceptions within the contact between Western tourists and rural communities in Ecuador and 3) if it can prevent the strengthening of modern structures of Coloniality.

Specifically, this study will focus on the following question: *How can Community Tourism become a pedagogical tool for decoloniality?*

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[1] The academic concept of *Coloniality* will be discussed extensively within the Chapter 2 (Conceptual Framework)

The objective is to understand the ways in which communities can promote more critical, reflexive perspectives for tourists in order to create more equal encounters between these two groups.

To address these issues in a structured manner I will first define the *conceptual framework* of the study, which is based on the concept of *Coloniality of Power* by Anibal Quijano. Additionally, within this section the *decoloniality* concept will be defined, and will be linked to practical forms of applications within the area of *Community Tourism*.

Secondly, I will discuss the *methodology* of the research, which is based on qualitative methods including participant observation and in depth-interviews. Moreover, I will include autoethnography as a research method to present my personal bias within this project and to limit Eurocentric perspectives within the research process.

Afterwards, I will focus on the global and national tourism industry and how they are linked to colonial elements. Starting with my personal motivation for this project, this chapter will later provide an overview over different aspects which create unequal power structures within the global tourism industry.

The following chapter will include a general introduction to the Ecuadorian context, by giving an insight into the struggles by the indigenous movements to decolonize the country. Furthermore, it will present the historical and current developments of *Community Tourism* in Ecuador.

Later, I will analyze the visits of two rural community projects, including the perspectives of local leaders and community-members, as much as reactions by tourists to their experiences and my own experience during these stays. Within this chapter I will also present the methods used by communities to create a critical reflection on colonial structures within their visitors, although not always explicitly labeled as such.

A last chapter will answer the research questions and will focus on summarizing the results and on formulating recommendations for countering colonial structures within *Community Tourism* based on my analytical findings.

2. Conceptual Framework

The following chapter introduces the concepts behind the terms *Coloniality* and *Decoloniality* which provide the starting point for this research. It aims to give general insight into the development of the Coloniality movement more broadly. Finally, I will provide a specification on the most central aspects of the concept of Decoloniality which have importance for the sector of tourism.

2.1 The concept of Coloniality

The term *Coloniality* was firstly introduced by author Anibal Quijano in 1991 (Restrepo and Rojas, 2010, p. 91) and can be defined as a global power pattern which hierarchizes broad aspects of the world prioritizing Eurocentric structures (p.16). Often compared to Postcolonial Theory, this concept is in some ways more extensive as it focusses not specifically on political aspects of Colonization, but other sectors such as knowledge-production, spaces, humans or labour (C. Walsh, personal communication, November 10th, 2017; Restrepo and Rojas, 2010, p.16). Moreover, it is not seen as a 'leftover' of the colonial era, but as a highly active and present pattern (ibid, p.94). Furthermore, the concepts have been mainly developed by Latin-American authors and thus represent another regional focus, since Postcolonial theory mainly has been discussing postcolonial structures in Asia and Africa (Coronil, 2004, p. 8). In recent years, the term *Coloniality* has been significantly shaped by the M*odernity/Coloniality/Decoloniality*-collective, which consists of several authors related to the Latin American context. There are various concepts that have contributed to the development of the subject of Coloniality, a central one being Wallerstein´s theory of the *Modern World System* from 1974 (Mignolo, 2015, p. 51). This theory sees modernity and the capitalist economy as a *World System*, which divides the world into core, semi-peripheral and peripheral regions (Kaussen, 2008, pp. 18) with West-Europe and the US at its core. The theory states that the origins of *Modernity* do not lie "in Enlightenment, but in the sixteenth century, the age of European expansion into the Americas" (ibid). Thus, only with the European expansion to the Americas, and at the simultaneous geopolitical inventions of this region, Europe could define itself as modern. Besides, the recognition of the ´birth´ of modernity as part of the European expansion underlines Mignolo´s definition of Coloniality as the other,

darker side, and even as a strategy of modernity (Mignolo, 2015, pp. 51). Hence, it is through modernity that the division between the Imperial North and the colonized South was enabled (Lander, 2011, pp. 2). This division created a remaining imagination of the global South as inferior, pagan, barbaric and underdeveloped. It thus positioned the global North at the centre of this new *world system*. This aspect is defined as the *Colonial Difference* (Mignolo, 2015, p. 53). Lander summarizes the experience of the Colonial Difference by describing the fundamentally different consequences of modernity for these two regions:

> *In the North, modernity eventually led to material abundance, citizenship, democracy, science and modern technology. For the majority of the planet's population living in the colonized, subjugated South, modernity has been an experience of imperial and colonial domination, genocide and slavery. This dark underside is as modern, as essential a component of the modern experience as the experience of the North. Colonialism, genocide and slavery were not in any way pre-modern. They are constitutive of the global modern experience.* (Lander, 2011, p. 3).

Based on this differentiation authors have linked the concept of Coloniality to various sectors of today´s life. Quijano´s *Coloniality of Power* represents the first and most general conceptualization in this context, as it describes the implementation of today´s power structures by using codifications such as race, ethnicities or nations. In this sense, Quijano describes this *Coloniality of Power* as a colonization by the Occidental or European culture on other cultures, in which also internally the imagination of 'the dominated' is colonized (Restrepo and Rojas, 2010, p. 98).

Furthermore, the concept has been extended to other areas, some of which will be presented in the following paragraphs. Landers, Dussel, Coronil and others, first introduced the term *Coloniality of Knowledge* in 2000. This concept deals with the Eurocentric structures within the production of knowledge and criticizes the "epistemic arrogance"[2] of the occidental world, as it claims to posses the exclusive access to true and valid knowledge while it abandons and stigmatizes other forms of intellectual input (Restrepo and Rojas, 2010, p. 137). Lander regards the *Coloniality of Knowledge* as a universalization of neo-liberal thinking, imposed by the

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[2] All translation from Spanish are my own

modern world. This thinking is presented as objective, scientific and advanced (in comparison to the non-modern) and at the same time as normal within the human experience (Lander, 2000, p. 5). Furthermore, he criticizes modernity for having developed "objective science, a universal moral and an autonomous law and art, [which are] regulated by own logics" (ibid, p. 6). Through this monopolization, unification and rationalization of knowledge, the occidental world separated itself from the rest of the world, while including it in a universal, Eurocentric system. This separation can be still found in the idea of a superiority of modernized states within the concept of *Development* or the definition of *liberal states.* Often times, this assumption of superiority occurs without awareness for the underlying Eurocentric and colonial structures (Dussel, 2000, p. 29).

Additionally, Lander criticizes the hegemonic form of social sciences which overcame any other form of social organization by presenting its civilized perspective as the only possible form of life (Lander, 2000, p. 9). With the establishment of social sciences, modernity ensured the naturalization of broad aspects of knowledge, which are summarized as followed:

> *"1) the universal vision of the history associated to the idea of progress (from which the classification and hierarchization of all people, continents, and historical experiences is constructed); 2) the "naturalization" of the social relations as much as "human nature" of the liberal-capitalist society; 3) the naturalization and ontologization of the own multiple separations of this society; and 4) the necessary superiority of the knowledges which this society ('science') produces above every other knowledge". (ibid)*

According to Lander it is not only social sciences that the occident monopolizes. There is a global division which gives the modern, occidental world easier access to all sciences in comparison to the rest of the world (ibid, p. 10). Dussel further criticizes the ambivalent justifications of irrationality used by the modern world despite its discourse on rationality. This is shown at the example of violence towards peoples, regions and cultures which was committed in order to make them follow the European example and to justify the modern superiority (Dussel, 2000, pp. 29).

The *Coloniality of Being* is another aspect which has been shaped widely by Dussel and his theories on *Exteriority* and *Totallity of Being* and has been further developed by authors such as Mignolo and Maldonado-Torres (Restrepo and Rojas, 2010, pp. 156). This concept criticizes

that within the modern/colonial global order the "White, European, Post-Renaissance man" is the only population defined as a complete being, while other populations feel only partially complete, as they are positioned in an inferior place within racial and geographical hierarchizations. In this sense, a great part of the world per definition feels a certain *exteriority* of a global system defining modernity as a normative (ibid, p. 157). On one side, this *Coloniality of Being* is reproduced by the subalterned subjects which experience the notion of not being complete. On the other side, it is also reproduced by those being defined as complete beings, since they express their own feeling of superiority. This understanding of an incompleteness of the human being has led to a form of *dehumanization* of these other groups, which is reflected in the common roles of slaves and servants which were assigned to indigenous, black and other subaltern populations (e.g. Maldonado-Torres, 2007, p. 257). As much as other forms of coloniality, this subject of the *dehumanization* of specific groups, is highly current. Within the Ecuadorian case Ávalos describes the Ecuadorian identity as "constructed on the oppression of ethnically "inferior" groups, creating in the indigenous and rural communities a sense of powerlessness that has for many years allowed for the exploitation of resources and of human capital in favor of the elite minorities." (Ávalos, 2012, p. 140). Thus, as this thesis specifically studies the encounters between Western tourists and rural Ecuadorian communities, these imaginations of subaltern groups as non-equal humans and inferior beings, play a crucial role in understanding colonial structures within this kind of tourism.

In order to get a deeper understanding of the aspect of Dehumanization, the *Coloniality of Gender* gives another clear example of this concept and it is also based on Quijano´s theory of the *Coloniality of Power*. First introduced by Lugones in 2008, the *Coloniality of Gender* criticizes the imposition of masculine, hetero-normative perspectives on the colonized cultures and at the same time, the hegemonic perspective of classical theory of feminism. Lugones proposes an intersectional perspective of gender and race, in order to analyse the racial categorizations, which represent coloniality within feminist theories, as they represent mainly realities and perspectives of "white bourgeois feminists" Lugones, 2016, p. 28). As colonial structures have been mostly ignored in theories of feminism, Lugones bases the *Coloniality of Gender* on the understanding that non-Western males and females were understood as "genderless animals", thereby returning again to a certain understanding of *Dehumanization*. Non-white, colonized females were "sexually marked as female, but without the characteristics of femininity" (ibid, p. 28). The claim that women were represented as

"fragile, weak in both body and mind, secluded in the private, and sexually passive" (ibid) was not applicable to the expectation of enslaved women. Most of the time colonized women were thought to be able to do any kind of hard physical labour and often were presented as sexually perverted (ibid, p. 29). Lugones emphasises the importance of 'race' within this example and states that this form of dehumanization does not exclusively apply for women but also for men and children.

As we have seen above there are several returning aspects within the subject of Coloniality:

(1) The social classification of people based on the concept of "race" which creates a justification of seeing European and white populations as superior and other populations as inferior as these groups are characterized within the division of the 'civilized' and the 'primitive' (Restrepo and Rojas, 2010, pp. 99). Extreme forms of this classification can lead to a dehumanization of "the others" (Mignolo and Vázquez, 2017, p. 505) by presenting these groups within a biological hierarchy based on the term 'race'. (2) A distorted and partial representation of knowledge production and history based on Eurocentric perspectives while claiming to obtain the objective and only 'truth'. (Ferrera-Balanquet, 2017, p. 462). (3) The paradigm that rational thinking is worth more than other forms of experiencing and representing the world (emotional, physical) (Mignolo and Vázquez, 2017, p. 498).

While all these are claimed to be hegemonic structures, the movement does not limit these patterns of thinking to Europeans or people of the Western countries. Much more it claims that these are imposed structures which are repeated and accepted on a global scale, and thus, by the affected subaltered themselves (Mignolo, 2015, p. 406). Having outlined the numerous dimensions and global scale of Coloniality, the challenge for this paper will be to operationalize this term in a way that allows for its application to the particular case of Ecuador´s Tourism Industry.

2.2 Decoloniality and decolonial pedagogy

Having defined main lines of the concept of Coloniality, this section focusses on the term *Decoloniality* and explains some of the aspects which are essential for Ecuadorian Tourism and specifically for Community Tourism.

Restrepo and Rojas define Decoloniality (2010) as the process of historically overcoming coloniality and thus, colonial power patterns (ibid, pp. 16). Meanwhile Estermann claims that decolonialization is an "open and unfinished process" that can be even described as "utopian" (Estermann, 2014, p. 6). As seen in the former chapter, coloniality consists mainly of an imposition of Eurocentric structures, and a process of hierarchization that prioritizes European characteristics. In this sense, challenging colonial structures would mean the rupture of these structures and hierarchies, leading to a form of self-determination, auto-management and creation of self-confidence of people and cultures in the global South. This process can take a great amount of different interpretations, as colonial structures can be found in almost every aspect of life (C. Walsh, personal communication, November 10th, 2017). This is the reason why Walsh sees a conflict in a clear definition of decolonial practices since they highly depend on a personal interpretation of what decolonial actually is. Thus, for her, the 'decolonial' lies often in the way in which people are doing something *different* and *how* people construct their own practices and processes. For her, this question is much more important than *what* people practice, especially since often the practice seems to be decolonial, but the environment or form in which it is done does not leave colonial structures. In this sense, she also warns to label practices too easily as decolonial (ibid). While such definitions integrate an element of vagueness into the concept of decoloniality, Walsh´s understanding of the concept shows that it is highly connected to its forms of practical application. Thus, even though people might not base their practices on the concepts of *Coloniality* or *Decoloniality* themselves, they might be practicing it.

Walsh understands the term *Pedagogy* in this context nor as an instrument of teaching nor as limited for the institutional education sector. Much more she bases her understanding on Freire´s definition of pedagogy, and thus as "an essential methodology within and for the social, political, ontological and epistemical fights for liberation" (ibid, p. 29).

Moreover, there are several authors who see a process of *re-humanization* as a central objective of *Decolonialilty* (Walsh, 2013, p. 31; Mignolo and Vázquez, 2017, p. 492; Maldonado-Torres, 2007, p. 261) which has been commonly linked to the re-establishment of human relations. Having seen that *Coloniality* often is connected to the dehumanization of non-white and non-occidental peoples, this aspect is central. Within the international tourism industry this aspect becomes clear when tourists apply other ethical standards for locals than

for themselves. As described in more detail later in this thesis, the often ruthless photography of indigenous peoples, represents a vivid example. While tourists often take the right to make close-up photos of strangers without asking for permission, they would not accept the same standards the other way around. Thus, this example shows a form of objectification and dehumanization of the other. While Community Tourism often reinforces these structures, the direct encounter between occidental tourists with locals offers potential to create human relations and empathy between these groups. Hence, a focus on dialogue and on the rediscovery of human similarities between both groups can create a re-humanization within this relation.

The concepts of Coloniality and Decoloniality have been criticized to often being exclusive to academia (e.g. W. Ocaña, personal communication, November 22nd, 2017). As there is a concrete need to decolonize global structures (C. Walsh, personal communication, November 10th, 2017), I am personally interested in finding practical forms of applying decolonial theory. To find more specific actions of decoloniality, Ferrera-Balanquet defines several aspects in his article *Pedagogías creativas insurgentes* (2017). Having emerged from the specific context of a local art project some of them fit accurately in this research project:

1) *Understanding the coloniality of gender, which was imposed on the bodies and the indigenous communities […]*
2) *Create a political-cultural strategy which integrates ancestral knowledge*
3) *Analyse the construction of colonial stereotypes and the Eurocentric vision which imagined our ancestors as primitives*
4) *Recognize the complex logics of the modern colonial matrix and its ambition to deny the materiality and human resources which were caused by the colonialism of settlement, slavery and mineral extractivism in the territories Abya Yala*
5) *Identify the geometry of the masculine heteronormative era and imagine other times*
6) *Regenerate other forms of the sensitive life and reinterpret painting and performance from the knowledge of our ancestral territories*
7) *Open the way towards understanding occidental education as an instrument of cognitive racism*

8) Create physical exercises which translate the critical concepts within expressions and gestures to heal the body and spirit from coloniality. (Ferrera-Balanquet, 2017, p. 449)

Even though these points might be quite specific to the local context and area of Ferrera-Balanquet, there are some strong connections to the different aspects discussed in the former paragraphs. Therefore, I will define several practical examples of applying the concept of Decoloniality linked to Community Tourism, based on Ferrera-Balanquet´s definitions.

As we have seen within the concept of *Coloniality of Knowledge*, there are often colonial/modern assumptions about owning the 'only truth'. On the one hand this aspect can be understood as the result of the Western world view's prevalence in the documentation of world history. On the other, there is a hierarchy in understanding occidental knowledge as more valid than other sources. With regards to community tourism this paradigm can be challenged on a practical level through:

1. The decision which information is presented to the tourists in order to prepare them for the cultural and historical context.
2. The presentation of ancestral culture and history through other forms than "rational" presentations of information, but through own forms of knowledge production.
3. A critical vision of the colonial history and the effects that the history and the present colonial structures have on the community.

Related to the subject of *Coloniality of Being* we have seen the aspect of a racial hierarchization in which non-white populations are subordinated and partly dehumanized in the modern/colonial world view. Within Community Tourism there are several practices which might have an influence on this process of dehumanization:

4. The creation of personal interaction and relations between the tourist groups and the local community, based on input from both sides in order to humanize the contact and to find relating subjects between these two groups.
5. The implementation of certain rules or requirements for tourists in order to create respect and empathy for the influence of tourism on the communities.

6. The designing of touristic products where tourists are pushed to integrate into local structures and activities in order to show a different and equally valid way of life and to de-exoticize the own cultural presentation.

Furthermore, in the Ecuadorian context the concept of decoloniality has often been linked to territory, as it is mainly because of colonial influences that vulnerable groups historically have lacked access to land (W. Ocaña, personal communication, November 22nd, 2017). In the Andean regions indigenous populations were forced to work on *haciendas* and farms until the beginning of the 20th century, often serving Creoles or Mestizo landowners. In the coastal region afro-descendant populations for a long time worked on broad territories used for banana, cocoa or other plantations. And in the Amazon region indigenous communities had no right to own land. One could argue that owning land was not necessary, as most of the communities were nomads. However, with the beginning of the oil exploitation in this area, they broadly were displaced by mestizo workers migrating from the Andean region and by oil companies (ibid). The struggle of indigenous and afro-descendant populations often was therefore linked to the fight for territory. In the area of Community Tourism this aspect becomes visible in the objectives of the FEPTCE (*Federación Plurinacional de Turismo Comunitario del Ecuador*), which started in 2002 in close relation to the Ecuadorian indigenous movement. This federation has the goal of representing Community Tourism projects through offering networks and trainings. Since its creation it is centered around four objectives which are based on decolonial ideals (ibid). Working with communities they aim to ensure the following aspects:

- Organizational strengthening
- Cultural revitalization
- Solidary economy
- Managing and defense of the territories

Even though the FEPTCE has lost a lot of influence during the last decade, these four objectives give an insight into practical ways of applying Decoloniality in the context of Community Tourism.

Thus, decoloniality can take on a lot of different forms and practices, which often can be seen as subjective and their decolonial effect highly depends on the way they are executed.

3. Methodology

Since this study aims to present different examples of practices which create decolonial reflection for tourists and communities, the analysis of their encounters is crucial. As a result, this project focuses on a qualitative representation of the decolonial practices applied within touristic offers by communities in Ecuador. Here again, it is worth mentioning that the definition of what actually is a decolonial practice is highly subjective. In this sense, this paper follows Walsh´s understanding in which she prefers not to talk of best practices, but to focus on *how* people create their own practices and "something different" (personal communication, November 10th, 2017). Thus, the results are not thought to be used as a recipe for *Decolonial Tourism*, but as an inspiration of including reflection on colonial thinking patterns into the concept and products of Community Tourism.

The research methodology used within this project, focusses on the study of practices within a cultural group (Ecuadorian rural communities), which I am an outsider to. In order to get a deeper understanding of the local context, this project began with three orientational in-depth interviews with academics, offering different perspectives on Coloniality/Decolonialty and Community Tourism. In order to get a first-hand perspective on the subject of Coloniality and Decoloniality in Ecuador, Catherine Walsh, member of the Modernity/Coloniality/Decoloniality-collective and coordinator of the doctoral programme *Estudios Culturales Latinoamericanos* at the *Universidad Andina Simón Bolívar* in Quito was interviewed. Later on, interviews with Walter Ocaña, lecturer on *Tourism* and *Territorial Development* at the *Universidad Tecnológica Equinoccial* in Quito and Enrique Cabanilla, director of the *Ecological Tourism* Department of the *Universidad Central del Ecuador* in Quito, offered an insight into the context of Community Tourism in Ecuador.

Moreover, Ellis, Adams and Bochner (2011) list participant observation, fieldnotes and interviews with cultural members as central research methodologies for ethnographic studies (ibid, p. 3), which are also methods recommended specifically for studying Ecuadorian communities (E. Cabanilla, personal communication, February 5th, 2018). Thus, I chose to participate in the general touristic activities, observe the interaction between locals and tourists and to conduct personal interviews with touristic leaders of the communities, as much as with tourists themselves. By combining these methods, I hope to give a profound and

personalized representation of the effects of community visits on tourists, and the intentions which communities might have to create reflection within their visitors.

Furthermore, there has been a strong criticism of the epistemology of research from a "[w]hite, masculine, heterosexual, middle/upper-classed, Christian, able-bodied perspective" (Ellis et al, 2011, p. 2) due to a long history of an overrepresentation of this group within academic research. And specifically, within the subjects of Coloniality and ethnographic studies, critiques of Eurocentric perspectives of Western researchers are central aspects (e.g. Quijano, 2010, p. 134). As a researcher I am representing these categories in nearly every aspect, which is why the research methods had to be chosen with great care and critical reflexivity. In the former chapter on the *Coloniality of Knowledge*, we have seen that the Eurocentric perspective within academics has often been portrayed as the only truth and as "objective". On the contrary, the autoethnographic method has been discussed as a tool which "acknowledges and accommodates subjectivity, emotionality, and the researcher's influence on research, rather than hiding from these matters or assuming they don't exist." (Ellis et al, 2011, p. 2). Besides, it has been a result of a search for countering colonialist perspectives within research (ibid). Thus, I will use this tool throughout this project to counteract colonial assumptions and to show the subjectivity within my choices as a researcher.

In addition, in the dialogue of Mignolo and Vázquez (2017) on their decolonial summer school in Middelburg (NL), Mignolo points out that their goal is to provoke a reflection process which makes the participants understand how they are impacted by the *Coloniality of Power*. Thus, their goal in teaching about decoloniality is not necessarily to acquire specific knowledge, but to integrate reflection as a central part of one´s understanding of the world (ibid, p. 493). This aspect is also essential to the *autoethnographical* method as it "seems to ask more questions than it may answer" (Tomaselli, et al, 2008, p. 348). In order to integrate reflection in the research process, I used *Narrative Ethnography*, with aspects of *reflexive interviews* (Ellis et al, 2011, p. 6). As there were certain limitations to this project which did not allow me to develop more internal understandings of the communities, these methodologies offered the chance to analyse the research content as an outsider while including my personal experience and my motivation for the subject (ibid. p. 6).

During my fieldwork, I visited two rural communities in the Ecuadorian Andes. Having lived exclusively in the Andean region and experienced this region in much more detail than the coast or the Amazon region, I chose two communities which are situated in this area. Both communities were recommended by my interview-partners. Catherina Walsh recommended the community San Clemente as an interesting example of a decolonial approach within Community Tourism, as it is…

> *"…not thought from the tourists. So, their logic is very different. It didn´t happen because an NGO or organization said "great, let´s make Community Tourism here". […] But this community first of all is auto-sufficient […]. They created a space where they can share their own logic and vision of life with others. Mainly with tourists from other countries, because few nationals go there. So, you live together."* (C. Walsh, personal communication, November 10th, 2017).

Additionally, the fact that San Clemente is an indigenous community makes it a relevant example within the concept of *Coloniality.*

On the other hand, I visited the community Yunguilla which is located in the cloud forest and which is mainly inhabited by a *Mestizo* population. Ocaña mentions the successful approach of the community regarding Community Tourism. According to him the community "has better living conditions, the people are participating, even if not all of them, [and] the youngsters are empowered" due to its touristic activities (W. Ocaña, personal communication, November 22nd, 2017). Moreover, Cabanilla presents Yunguilla as a successful community within Community Tourism, as it has experienced economic and cultural gains through offering touristic products (E. Cabanilla, personal communication, February 5th, 2018). As this community was founded as a result of an international NGO, it represents an interesting contrast to San Clemente in this regard.

In order to gain a realistic impression of the perspective of a daily tourist within these communities, I participated within both of the touristic programmes for four days, while accompanying different groups of tourists throughout my stays.

Being a European and not having lived in the communities which are the subject of this project, I took the decision to analyze the communities within participatory observation as an outsider and from the perspective of other tourists. While I included interviews with community-

members in order to understand how they are creating reflexive environments for tourists, I am nonetheless aware that my perspective has Eurocentric aspects and limitations to fully grasp the complex social and political structures within the local communities. In this regard, Catherine Walsh, who came to Ecuador from the United states 25 years ago and who has worked for many years in the subject of *Decoloniality*, says that we have to keep on questioning our colonial assumptions, which often we do not realize that we have (C. Walsh, personal communication, November 10th, 2017). To the question on how she is including auto-reflection working on the subject of decolonization, Walsh answers: "[Paulo Freire] told me that you have to walk [through life] asking questions and to keep on asking questions while walking". And these questions are not meant to be answered by other people, but to create a reflection on one's own colonial views. In this sense, I will include my personal reflection on the subject of Coloniality and my intention of creating reflection in other people throughout this project.

4. Tourism and Coloniality

International Tourism, especially the one coming from Western tourists to the global South, is always connected to encounters thought as between two unequal cultures, which are positioned within the global hierarchy described as the *Coloniality of Power*. In this regard, similar to the cases of international migration or international development work, this form of tourism has structures of Coloniality at its core. This aspect becomes clearer when imagining a power matrix, in which occidental characteristics in aspects such as ethnicity, locality or culture are placed in a higher position than non-occidental ones. These power relations, even though they are often not completely understood, can lead in all the aforementioned fields to patriarchal structures, abuse of power or an imposition of own perspectives. Moreover, Ocaña describes why he considers tourism as inherently colonial: "When you, as a tourist, go from one place to another, you generally go with your own ideas, your own cultural schemes, your own images, your mental schemes and your own egos." (W. Ocaña, personal communication, November 22nd, 2017). With a general imbalance between travel opportunities of people from the global North and the global South, described in more detail in the following sections, these 'own schemes' have a strong impact on the local environments and represent a form of power. Thus, there is a broad spectrum of possible approaches when analysing structures of coloniality within the tourism industry.

Having travelled as a European extensively in Ecuador, as well as having worked for several years in international tourism, I personally have witnessed and belonged to patterns of colonial thinking and behavior. Personally, I consider these often-unconscious patterns lying in a negation of an own privilege, the lack of empathy towards other social and cultural contexts and the normalization of one's own culture above others. Moreover, it is worth noting that it was not until I had personal contact with people from other cultural backgrounds, who pushed for more reflection, that I was able to grasp the extent in which these patterns were part of my own behaviours. Reflected in Walsh´s perspective of the importance of a continuous process of reflection, these own colonial patterns might never be fully dissolved.

Based on the aforementioned, I want to use my personal experience in order to present several aspects of colonial structures within the tourism industry. Thus, I begin with presenting

my personal motivation for this research project and will later discuss specific aspects of colonial structures within international tourism. As this project focusses on the direct encounter of Western tourists with Ecuadorian rural and partly indigenous populations, I am mostly interested in the efforts of countering the hierarchization that comes from the understanding that these two groups are "naturally" unequal.

4.1 Personal research motivation

In 2008 I travelled for the first time to Ecuador, besides other countries in Latin America, and met my present wife. As in the following years we kept on moving between Latin America and Europe due to our academic and professional life, we experienced often a bias in which people talked about the respectively 'other side of the world'. For a long time, I could not certainly locate these comments and experiences within a greater socio-political and even geographical understanding. Later, I got in contact with the subject of Postcolonial Theory. This subject seemed to grasp quite well, the different aspects of the experiences which my wife and me had witnessed throughout the years, which always were based on a certain asymmetrical power structures between the occidental views, cultures, political structures and ethnic characteristics, compared to the non-occidental world (Lossau, 2011, p. 654). It is important to mention that these perspectives of superiority were not limited to people from occidental countries, but much rather included people from different countries all over the world and included ourselves in some aspects. Reading more postcolonial authors, I started questioning more and more the basis of these perspectives of 'unequalness' and at the same time some of my own behaviours and points of views. After studying Postcolonial Theory, I was drawn more to the Latin American context and to the subject of Coloniality, which I found often more accurate, especially as it describes colonial forms as more active and current.

Parallel to my academic experience, I started working in international tourism, where I was regularly reminded of subjects I had read about throughout these theories, while critical reflection on colonial perspectives received little to no consideration in everyday work. Even within the sustainable tourism realm it became obvious that the focus was placed on ecological and economic sustainability rather than social sustainability and reflexivity. Besides, during my work with European travellers; occasional questions, comments and behaviors

seemed to reconfirm perspectives of coloniality. For example, while accompanying European travel groups as a *tour leader,* I frequently observed tourists ridiculing local habits in front of Ecuadorians, treating staff members of hotels and tours from a top-down perspective or taking close-up pictures of people without asking permission.

Within these journeys we also made day tours to different communities, which I consider to be more radical forms of encounters under a lens of coloniality. Comments on backwardness and the lack of pre-modern "authenticity" as much as a general lack of empathy for the local context, made me reflect more on the importance of other forms of shaping encounters between these two groups. While a majority of the visited communities seemed to reinforce colonial structures, I also learned about projects in the Ecuadorian context which took on a more critical take on the colonial history, tourism and cultural representation. In his presentation at the Forum 2017 for the International Year of Sustainable Tourism, Walter Ocaña, (15th of November 2017) described the turning point in which Ecuador finds itself as a touristic destination. As there is still a lack of a coordinated direction between public, private and academic players of the Ecuadorian tourism sector, this liminal stage is crucial to actively decide on the forms of tourism which the country wants to create and support. Within a personal interview he mentioned: "Within this trajectory we have never sat down between the political, the private and the public actors, the academics, the cooperation and civil society to say what we actually want." (W. Ocaña, personal communication, November 22nd, 2017). Thus, through this research I aim to contribute to the field and to underline the importance of decolonial practices for the Ecuadorian tourism industry, specifically within the example of Community Tourism.

4.2 Tourism and the superiority/inferiority complex

Coming back to the theoretical concept of *Coloniality*, the *Coloniality of Power* describes specifically a structural power imbalance between different regions and peoples, which is a central issue within international tourism. As before mentioned, these structures are often leading to a subordination of locals to foreign tourists. This power imbalance has a variety of causes including economic and social factors.

4.2.1 Economic coloniality

Economic factors often play a role within the hierarchization created between tourists and locals. The economic privileges within the global tourism industry are reflected in the amounts of Europeans being able to travel internationally. While the number of tourists from emerging countries such as China and India is growing rapidly (Molavi, 23rd of august 2017), tourists from Europe still represent a vast majority within the global tourism market. In 2016, they represented "half of the world's international arrivals, followed by Asia and the Pacific (24%), the Americas (17%), the Middle East (3%) and Africa (3%)." (UNWTO, 2017, p. 12). The great flows from Western countries to destinations in the global South, underline the inequality for opportunities to travel to other countries. As tourism often has been seen as a tool for economic development and modernization (Lopéz Santillán and Marín Guardado, 2010, p. 237), there is a push for the implementation of tourism structures in poorer countries, which affects ethnic minorities to a great extent:

> *"peasants, shepherds and fisherman have watched themselves being involved in projects of community tourism, ethno-tourism, ecotourism, agritourism, and so on, not only due to the stimulation of the market opportunities, but also through the hegemonic politics of the international and global organisms –which are adopted and supported by the own national states– which propose these activities as the alternative and the basis of local development (Mowforth y Munt 2003; López Santillán 2010). Thus, these mentioned localities decide or are forced to risk their natural and cultural resources."* (Lopéz Santillán y Marín Guardado, 2010, p. 231).

At the same time the development of the industry creates dependencies on the economic gain, which pressures locals to change their own life structures towards the expectations of Western tourists. On a micro level, these dependencies generate another form of inequality, often represented in supplying tourists with what they expect, based on their own Eurocentric expectations. The argument of "having paid for it" is then often used to cloud the unequal power balance between tourists and locals. I have experienced this phenomenon extensively throughout my work with European tourists in Ecuador. Comments about 'bad service' associated with the lack of Western food in local restaurants is one example, which were often times linked to comments about 'underdevelopment'. As a consequence, power imbalance pushes for changes towards Eurocentric structures on the local basis, promoting the

subordination of locals and their interests to tourists, with the goal of economic gain. Within Community Tourism, Cabanilla describes this subordination to tourists for economic reasons as the "red carpet"-phenomenon, which seldom has been overcome in the Ecuadorian context (E. Cabanilla, personal communication, February 5th, 2018). Furthermore, he sees this neo-colonial system of subordination as a central part of governmental policies and NGOs, who push communities to change their local structures in order to create economic gain. While this phenomenon has great impact within Community Tourism, it also has been linked to the general context of international tourism. Smith (2009),

> *"argues that tourism is 'dominated by Western developed nations, rendering host nations dependent and subservient to its needs' (Smith, 62). Therefore, tourism reinforces an unequal balance of power between the West and host nations, so that many locals, especially in poorer areas will never have the opportunity to leave their homelands and instead, are often condemned to lives of servitude in the tourism sector.* (Smith in Williams, 2012, p. 193)

Furthermore, Lopéz Santillán and Marín Guardado (2010) as well as Baltodano Zúñiga (2017) describe globalization and the expansion of a global capitalist economic system as a structure of coloniality which is highly present in international tourism. This "new coloniality [...] through the capital and transnational companies" (Baltodano Zúñiga, 2017, p. 45) means economic gain but also structural changes and economic dependency for poorer countries. Additionally, despite the high demand for touristic products most of the economic benefits are gained by transnational companies which are again located in the industrialized world. Within tourism in Latin America this can be seen in the establishment of big hotel chains, which dominate the touristic market and affect local providers (Baltodano Zúñiga, 2017, p. 48). As a result, tourism on a global scale strengthens colonial structures between sending and receiving countries (Lopéz Santillán and Marín Guardado, 2010, p. 238).

4.2.2 Tourism and Ethnicity

Another aspect of the superiority complex of Western tourists can be found in the colonial characteristics of ethnicity. As we have seen in the theoretical conceptualization of Coloniality, ethnic hierarchization plays a great role in this subject. In tourism the encounters between

people from different ethnicities are an integral part of the industry. The overrepresentation of white, Western tourists within countries of the Global South, has an impact on how tourists and locals understand this ethnic imbalance. Seeing touristic products and routes being mainly used by these populations, creates an understanding of tourism as inherently reserved for occidental ethnicities. Urry´s theory of *the Tourist Gaze* supports this unequal understanding between tourists and locals. Urry´s and Larsen´s book *The Tourist Gaze 3.0* for example shows that picture of non-whites is highly absent from touristic advertisement saying that "if there are any non-white faces in the photographs it would be presumed they are the 'exotic natives' who are being gazed upon." (Urry and Larsen, 2011, p. 71). In this sense, international tourism becomes economically, socially and conceptually an exclusive privilege to certain regions, people and ethnicities. As described within the conceptual framework of the *Coloniality of Knowledge*, the superiority complex often happens without the consciousness of Eurocentric structures (Dussel, 2000, p. 29). Within my own experience as a traveller and tour leader, I often came across the notion where tourists mentioned their "deserved vacation" after working hard for earning it. This idea of a deserved 'outbreak' of the daily routines (Hierneaux in Navarro Cerdas, 2014, p.48), again underlines the lack of consciousness of privilege that comes with the own occidental ethnicity and geographical position. While local touristic staff might work hard in front of tourists´ eyes and will hardly have the chance for travelling to the occidental countries, there is a certain relieve to justify the own privilege of travelling with 'hard work'. Coming back to an aspect described within the subject of the *Coloniality of Gender*, this phenomenon can be understood as part of a dehumanization process based on ethnicity.

This means that in order to not have to consciously accept the own privilege, and the inequality that comes with it, racial categories create a way to take other peoples out of this equation. In this same moment, they are not seen as equal humans, but as part of another system, which is not thought to have the same rights, opportunities and privileges (Lugones, 2016, p. 28). This subordination based on a structural and historical process, still is linked to what is thought of biological characteristics (ethnicity). And as European characteristics are defined as 'normative', the concept of dehumanization becomes again a clear indicator for colonial perspectives within tourism.

Again, ethnic minorities can be exposed even more to these perspectives. Castro-Gómez and Restrepo (2008) describe this aspect with the example of the museum Tayrona in Colombia, which promises its visitors to meet the descendants of the Tayrona culture, supposedly represented by the indigenous communities currently living there. They describe their exposure due to colonial views of the incoming tourists:

> *"The indigenous people have been converted into the butlers of the tourists, in human carriers for their luggage or in their entertainment; they should wear their traditional clothing to create a pleasant environment for the realization of the postcolonial phantasies of the tourists. The indigenous identity produces itself in this way in the frame of the global capital; the ancestral customs are slowly deprived of their ritual contents and are joint to the logics of the market.[…] The market offers the indigenous people the opportunity to manage their identity, to make their way of living exotic, in front of the eyes of the tourists […] In this context, the indigenous identity is merchandized and assigned to the dynamics of the global capital, but at the same time it represents the indigenous people as essential individuals who should be outside of the commercial circuits, far away from the change; their job is to stay original."* (Castro-Gómez and Restrepo, 2008, pp. 85)

Seeing the role of entertainment and service that indigenous populations are pushed into and expected to fulfill, is a reality in diverse community projects I visited in the Ecuadorian context. These descriptions provide a striking example of what Community Tourism can look like without a process of decolonial reflection.

4.2.3 Colonial epistemes and othering

Having defined the *Coloniality of Knowledge* and the *Coloniality of Being*, there is another important aspect when looking at the image of an unequal encounter between Western tourists and locals from the Global South. The idea of a general epistemological superiority comes to play also in their direct encounters. Comments of tourists of my groups about the backwardness of the Ecuadorian society, and the idea of 'having not yet arrived', were not only common within tours to local communities, but present throughout the whole journey on a daily basis. On the other hand, throughout my time living in Ecuador, comments from

Ecuadorians, about the backwardness of their own culture in comparison to the European one, have proven to be as frequent. In such statements, development is understood as a purely linear process, a notion that has been criticized by the Coloniality-movement (e.g. Dussel, 2000, p. 29). As the rest of the world has been pushed to follow the historical example of Europe, cultural differences are more likely to be assigned a development status within the linear model exemplified by the west, rather than being assessed within the context of local meanings and values. Still, the fact that this perspective is mirrored and adopted by local populations, reinforces the idea of backwardness for foreigners and even creates moments of ridiculing the local context.

Furthermore, Ash and Turner (1991 in Navarro Cerdas, 2014) describe the search of people from the global centres of power (mainly Europe and United states) to find "peripheries of pleasure", which can be seen as a search for a romanticized encounter with the pre-modern (pp. 47). Within my experience as a tour leader, we visited an indigenous community in the Amazon region with a group of European tourists. One of the travellers was disappointed at the "Western clothing" used by the community-members, as his expectation was to see an "authentic indigenous tribe". He even mentioned that the program description of his European travel agency had described the community as wearing traditional clothes. While indigenous peoples wearing Western clothes might be a much more 'authentic' and current image of what globalization means for the context of this community, the imaginary of 'the other', seems to be more attractive. This Western imaginary is also extensively discussed in the book *Envisioning Eden. Mobilizing Imaginaries in Tourism and Beyond* (2010). Here, Salazar describes the (neo)colonial imaginaries which the global tourism-industry creates and promotes through marketing, institutions, travel guides and other forms. Especially within Western tourism in developing countries, Salazar sees an enforcement of colonial stereotypes such as exoticizing and othering (ibid, pp. 43). In the search to give authenticity to certain people and places, the tourism industry often (re)uses a travel narrative of a first contact with the 'other' instead of finding common ground between human beings (ibid, p. 46). In the general picture this form of 'othering', as described within the *Coloniality of Being*, can again lead to a form of dehumanization of the local populations. Examples of this rhetoric can be found on numerous travel websites, e.g.:

"During this personalized tour, you'll be given the opportunity to meet people from both the Neoneno and the Bameno Hoarani communities. Immerse yourself in their world as you learn about their ways of life, which are strikingly different than ours in the modern world." (Kuoda Travel, 2017a)

Between the marketing of authentic indigenous encounters on the one hand, and the highly promoted beauty of well-conserved colonial architecture and centres on the other one (e.g. "Stunning Colonial Architecture", Kuoda Travel, 2017b), the colonial structures within the touristic industry are hard to deny. As the knowledge production within tourism often is defined abroad or by foreign expatriates (Salazar, 2010, p. 75), the *Coloniality of Knowledge* shows the lack of local and indigenous influence in information and education which can be found also in this industry. Even more so: "being acquainted with colonial views actually turns out to be an asset when working in tourism because natural and cultural heritage are often packaged, represented and sold in ways that are reminiscent of colonial times" (Burner; Hall and Tucker in Salazar 2010, p. 75). As a result, it is not only tourists who impose the colonial imaginary on local identities but "[t]ourism imaginaries do circulate locally and become part of how indigenous people interpret their own culture to themselves" (Salazar, 2010, p. xiii).

Within the specific context of Community Tourism and eco-tourism, López Santillan and Marin confirm these structures by summarizing them in the following way:

"The leaders of ecotourism propose a small-scale tourism (low impact), stimulated by the ideologies of environmental conservation and sustainable development, same as prescribed in the care of nature, respect for cultural difference and the promotion of community participation, as well as the income distribution for the benefit of localities (Ceballos-Lascurain 1998; Boo 1990). Although some authors have highlighted certain satisfactory results related to the revitalization of the identities, the conservation of the territories and the "empowerment" of the communities, countless works have highlighted the discursive nature of such a model of development, which responds to market strategies and which expresses a new form of colonialism, which is associated to the appropriation of territories, to forms of representation of the "other" as naturalized and exotic beings, and imposes organizational patterns, power relations and patterns of life (Young 1999; Daltabuit Meethan 2000; 2002; 2001; Trench 2003 Mowforth and Munt 2004;

25

West and Carrier). This in addition to the traditional development costs: environmental pollution, abandonment of productive work, dependence on the market, worsening of the social differentiation and loss of local knowledge" (López Santillan and Marin, 2010, pp. 231).

As seen in this chapter, colonial structures are deeply ingrained in the global tourism industry and also, in the Ecuadorian travel context. While indigenous populations might be most affected by colonial perspectives, the multiple dimensions of colonial structures within tourism – knowledge, economic power, ethnicity – demonstrate that society as a whole perpetuates these structures. Furthermore, the understanding of colonial perspectives being constructed and repeated by foreigners as well as the local populations, gives an indication of the extent of their presence and the difficulty to recognize and minimize them.

5. Community tourism in Ecuador

Having focussed on the general context of tourism and Community Tourism and the colonial structures that can be found in both industries, the following chapter is introducing the social and political context of Ecuador and to Community Tourism in this country: its historical and current development.

5.1 The indigenous movement

Before the Spanish colonization started in Ecuador in 1534 (Mora, 2008, p. 5), Ecuador had already experienced a long period of foreign rule, as it had been conquered by the Incas in the 15th century (ibid, p.3). Being ruled by the Spanish crown for about 300 years, Ecuador in 1830 was part of the first region of South America which became independent (ibid, p. 17). However, the independence did not stem from a revolution of the most colonized populations, but much more from the Creoles -the descendants of Spaniards born in the colonies-, who were tired of their duties towards Spain. In this sense, within the region, the hierarchical structures established during the colonial rule were not challenged at their core. Àvalos describes the maintenance of these social structures in today´s society, which comply strongly with the power structures described within the concept of *Coloniality*:

> *"The power structures developed during Ecuador's colonial past heavily segmented the population and developed a stratified social structure. The cultural personality of the contemporary Ecuadorian society evolved within a context in which the "ethnic" and "traditional" were used as jaundiced descriptors of the marginalized 'indigenous' populations, while Westernized "white-mestizo" and urban subjects enjoyed social mobility and economic opportunity. Consequently, ethnic inequality succeeded in both delegitimizing the cultural value of indigenous languages, as well as subjugating native communities."* (Àvalos, 2012, p. 141)

Furthermore, Àvalos mentions the portrayal of the Ecuadorian urban context as superior to the rural one. (ibid, p. 142), which again is an aspect criticized within the concept of *Coloniality* and will be discussed further down. In this sense, structures of Coloniality are highly visible and present within the Ecuadorian society. It was not until the 1920´s that an indigenous

movement struggling for decolonization became organized to overcome slavery-like conditions; influenced by socialist concepts entering the Andean region, indigenous communities started to demand "rights of territory, the right to study, [and] having a salary" (W. Ocaña, personal communication, November 22nd, 2017). In this sense, the struggles represented in the concept of decoloniality, are far from being a new phenomenon in Ecuador but have much earlier roots than its academic representation. Becoming increasingly organized, the movement led to the establishment of the first indigenous organization called the FEI (*Federación Ecuatoriana de Indios*) and to two agrarian reforms in the 40´s and 60´s. These reforms granted land to indigenous communities, exclusively in the Andean region (ibid). In the Amazon and coast region the right to land has been given to communities even later, with communities struggling until today to access and manage territory. When in the 1970s the country started to exploit oil and let oil companies enter the Amazon region, indigenous populations began to organize and fight for their right to land. Living as nomads before, there was no need to own land. Then due to the contamination of oil companies and great migrations from the rest of the country to the Amazon region, territory started to become scarce. Thus, while the Andean movements stayed limited to certain regions and managed to mainly combine agricultural workers, industrial workers and women´s groups for a limited time, the indigenous movement had grown to an organized and powerful collective of groups from different ethnic backgrounds and regions by the end of the 20th century:

"The indigenous based organizations, not only of the highlands, and the Amazon region, but also the Afro-Ecuadorians and the Montubios and rural communities [were] joining to create a great mobilization in order to take over Quito. So, there is a great mobilization with around 80.000 to 100.000 people arriving to Quito" (ibid)

With protest such as this occupation of central places in Quito in 2004, the movement managed to create a public discourse on a national level. Struggling for rights, territory and political power, they even entered political positions. With a new constitution being developed during this time, indigenous organizations such as the CONAIE (*Confederación de Nacionalidades Indígenas del Ecuador*) or their political party Pachakutik, which included "Indigenous, Montubios, Afro-Ecuadorians, Mestizos [and] women" organizations (ibid), managed to enter municipal governments and the constitutional assembly. Thus, they were

able to include indigenous concepts and notions in the constitution and to pronounce Ecuador a pluri-national state; a concept which Walsh defines the following way:

> *"The idea of the plurinational finds its primal sustenance in the literally plural character of the national. I refer to the plural here both in terms of geographical differences –the mountain highlands, coast, and Amazonian regions that make up Ecuador- and in terms of ancestral differences — those that continue to organize the ways of living, including the relationships with territory and nature, the exercise of authority, and the practices of law, education, health and of life itself."* (Walsh, 2009, p. 68)

While the Pachakutik party did not manage to establish itself on a national level and struggled to combine all the interests of the different internal groups, (W. Ocaña, personal communication, November 22nd, 2017) in 2007 the newly elected president Rafael Correa and his party Alianza País brought a promising stability into the political arena. While the party invested a lot in the modernization and infrastructure of the country, critics claim that it failed at integrating and implementing the interests of the indigenous movement. Today the indigenous movement continues to operate as "alternative political movements in local territories." (ibid). As mentioned later in this thesis, several leaders of the San Clemente community were, and still are, active in this movement (J. Guatemal, personal communication, March 9th, 2018). As it can been seen in the ongoing debate about indigenous rights, the debate about decoloniality and the struggles for breaking colonial structures are highly current in Ecuador.

5.2 The history of Community Tourism in Ecuador

Ecuador can be seen as a pioneer of Community Tourism in Latin America, as products started evolving relatively early and as a great variety of projects has been established throughout the different regions (Ruiz Ballesteros and Solis Carrion, 2007, pp. 6). Within Ecuadorian communities, touristic products started evolving in the 1980´s. Community Tourism was first implemented by NGOs in the Amazon region, connecting the discourse about sustainability, with communities' fight for own land and the 'exploration' of the recently studied ethnic groups of the Amazon. Still, Ocaña describes the colonial echoes present in these projects:

"The first projects were imposed. It was like "Me, the NGO, gives money to you. I give you workshops, I tell you how to form political entities, or I show you how to generate an own identity […] But on the other side I want you to come and do what I tell you." And this is how Community Tourism started. So, this is the discourse of the NGOs. When the touristic operators were saying "We will bring 10 or 15 tourists, put your traditional clothing and dance" a lot of times they did not pay them. They only were taking photos. And actually you have a lot of travel guides with photos of people from the Cofanes, Sionas or Secoyas who are there with the traditional clothing, with their feathers, and the tourists are right there." (W. Ocaña, personal communication, November 22nd, 2017)

During the following two decades communities struggled to manage and create their own touristic operations, leading to the foundation of the of the National forum on the community participation in ecotourism (*Foro Nacional sobre la participación Comunitaria en Ecoturismo*) in 1998; generally considered to be an important turning point for the promotion of Community Tourism in Ecuador (Ruiz Ballesteros and Solis Carrion, 2007, pp. 24). Nevertheless, it is still common that homestays or other products are offered by external providers. Community tourism became institutional through its inclusion in touristic strategies by the Ministry of Tourism in 2002 and has since then been considered a tool for rural development. In the same year, the FEPTCE (*Federación Plurinacional de Turismo Comunitario del Ecuador*) was founded as a federation created by the indigenous movement to represent and offer training in Community Tourism projects on a national level. As mentioned before, the organizations' objectives were clearly decolonial (W. Ocaña, personal communication, November 22nd, 2017). The FEPTCE was further brought to life with the aim of creating clear directions and concepts around Community Tourism, as there was and still is a lack of a common direction and definition in this area:

"[T]here is no text that tells you "We as groups, collectives, ethnicities or communities see Community Tourism this way…". If you asked one community what their focus is: they focus on Community Tourism. And if you ask another community they see it as an alternative to economic development. Another community sees it as a struggle to regain rights, another community sees it as a

> *struggle for territory. There is no clear concept."* (W. Ocaña, personal
> communication, November 22nd, 2017)

Although it started quite successfully, the membership in the FEPTCE declined throughout the years. Cabanilla states that in 2015 only 50% of projects recognized them as their own network, since it tried to control and define Community Tourism according to own standards and did not distribute enough economic resources (E. Cabanilla, personal communication, February 5th, 2018). Nevertheless, the FEPTCE is still an active organization trying to create and support successful initiatives.

Cabanilla estimates around 400 Community Tourism initiatives in Ecuador today, in comparison to 230 in 2015 (ibid). He bases these numbers on the definition of Arnaldo Rodríguez from 1999 who defines Community Tourism as:

"a tourist activity where the management, decision-making, and shareholding of this activity is - partially or fully – carried out by communities settled in a natural area suitable for this activity, in which - the community and not individuals - receive a significant portion or all of the benefits generated by this activity. Communities should assume the responsibility to conserve their natural and cultural resources - and to provide appropriate services to visitors in a way that guarantees their satisfaction" (Rodríguez, 1999 in Ruiz Ballesteros and Solis Carrion, 2007, p. 68)

Cabanilla´s predicted growth of Community Tourism is reflected in the numbers of Ecuador's general tourism industry. With Rafael Correa as president, Ecuador has become a growing tourist destination in the last decades. Between 2010 and 2015 alone, the numbers of foreign tourist's arrivals increased by 47,5% (INEC, 2016) and after dropping due to a disastrous earthquake in 2016, 2017 saw rising numbers again (Ministerio del Turismo, 2018). Tourism represents the third biggest non-oil related industry of the country contributing 2,1% directly and 5,1% indirectly to the national GDP (Ministerio de Turismo, 2017). Offering a broad spectrum of ecological and cultural diversity within a relatively small territory, and including the famous Galapagos islands, the country has invested in marketing and promotion of itself as a touristic attraction and improved its national and touristic infrastructure. Campaigns such as "All you need is Ecuador" (Ministerio de Turismo, 2014), have generated considerable attention and brought Ecuador on the map of global tourism destinations. Despite the high amount of Community Tourism projects, the lack of a common national organization in this

area is reflected in the low numbers of projects registered through the Ministry of Tourism. Of the 230 counted initiatives in 2015, only 6-7 were inscribed in the ministry (E. Cabanilla, personal communication, February 5th, 2018).

5.3 Current developments and issues

The Ecuadorian Community Tourism industry today faces a multitude of structural issues/challenges. One of the most important aspects is the stabilization and sustaining of existing projects. As it has become clear through various interviews, a key indicator for success in Community Tourism, was the underlying assumption that it should figure as an addition – rather than an alternative – to traditional economic activities (E. Cabanilla, personal communication, February 5th, 2018). The fact that a lot of projects failed in keeping other forms of generating economic income alive has two main reason: one is the idealization of the power of Community Tourism which presents the concept as the single saviour for the development of communities, and second, the push for a radical approach of the concept of *Sustainability*; often imposed by NGOs and the government, which demanded a direct and equal implementation of ecological, social and economic improvements (ibid). Cabanilla illustrates this point with the example of Yunguilla:

> *"The conservative concept of tourism always pushed to see tourism as an alternative, because it said "Don´t destroy nature, organize tourism!". So, I think that the communities when they were starting didn´t know about this risk. Why? Because tourism didn´t give them enough to not have alternatives. The ones that started to appreciate tourism where the ones that used it as a complementary. So, "we do it, but this complements it". And every time this complementary grows, we can go down with the other one. In Yunguilla they complemented tourism. Did they exploit nature in the beginning? Yes, they did. [Tourism] kept on growing, so they exploited less. Tourism went up, and they stopped doing it a bit more. And until now Yunguilla has problems with cutting trees, right? Not everyone is completely committed to stop. But every time we have seen that when the complementary grows more, it becomes less."* (E. Cabanilla, personal communication, February 5th, 2018).

Despite the extent to which the concept of sustainability was pushed globally in the last decades, this example shows that *Sustainable Development* again can be seen as an imposition of the Global North, and thus as a Eurocentric concept. In Ecuador the concept of the *Buen vivir* or *Good living*, has been debated extensively in the last years. Originating from indigenous culture (originally Sumak Kawsay) *Buen vivir* increasingly found its way into national and international policy debates. Cabanilla argues that instead of the *Sustainability* concept, Community Tourism should focus on the concept of *Buen vivir*, as it responds to colonial imbalances and puts more emphasis on well-being.

> *"The context of the Buen vivir or Sumak Kawsay is bigger than the sustainability of various processes such as the natural, the social, the economic one etc. lifting it to a level in which the indicators do not only measure the development, but a state of inherent happiness and well-being of humanity, which at the same time lives in a constant construction, forging in itself the same element that keeps it in crisis."*
> (Cabanilla, 2016, p. 406)

In this sense, this concept could be a more fitting approach when offering Community Tourism, representing a return and valorization of a local and indigenous worldview. Despite challenges around creating stable and lasting projects, Cabanilla´s doctoral thesis, in which he analysed different Community Tourism projects (Alta Florencia, Kapawi, Yunguilla, Saraguro, Salinas and Shandia), shows the mostly positive image that community members have of their touristic projects. In projects from different regions, community members found the projects predominantly satisfying and contributing economically and culturally to their lives (Cabanilla, 2016, p. 387).

Furthermore, Cabanilla mentions another issue which is closely linked to the concept of Coloniality. According to him, the self-consciousness of the people of these communities on one hand, and their economic dependency on the other, often provokes a submission of the locals towards the tourists. According, to Cabanilla, very few projects within Ecuadorian Community Tourism have left the so-called „red carpet stage" and moved on to a stage of meeting tourists as equals (second stage). A third stage according to Cabanilla is the complete rejection of tourism. The fact that Ecuadorian communities have for the most part stayed in the first stage (E. Cabanilla, personal communication, February 5th, 2018), shows the persistence of colonial patterns within these encounters. However, Cabanilla notes that within

Ecuador itself structures of discrimination against these groups are often more present than from Western foreigners. As many occidental cities have experienced the negative effects of tourism, he sees a certain reflection and carefulness of Western tourists in how they affect local communities. Nevertheless, Cabanilla sees communities exposed to several colonial structures, which mainly are imposed by NGOs and political players, as much as structures of Eurocentric perspectives. This influence of structural programmes of NGOs becomes clear when looking at the similarity between the different products: "A cabin, a typical dish which was not common in the community, the part of the way of living, rituals and a bit of folklore. All the products of Community Tourism sold the same" (W. Ocaña, personal communication, November 22nd, 2017). Another aspect which Cabanilla considers problematic, is the focus on economic gain in tourism which he mentions as the first motivation to start community tourism. In this sense, the market and money can be seen as one of the strongest colonial structures within the field, as it counts as the single priority (E. Cabanilla, personal communication, February 5th, 2018). In this regard, Quijano Valencia summarizes the risks of this power of the economy for local structures:

> *"[T]he liberal economy integrates the course of colonial and neo-colonial domination, that under a plurality of projects manages to install representations, narratives, discourses and practices, demolishing the social structures and traditional institutions featured in the colonies, this time in favor of an economic system governed, regulated and governed exclusively by the market and its expansive practice."* (Quijano Valencia, 2013, p. 112)

Another current development in Ecuadorian Community Tourism is the shift from the foreign market, to a growing national market. In the last 10 years alone, the national market has grown from almost zero to around 50% today (W. Ocaña, personal communication, November 22nd, 2017). This development means also a shift of learning about new clients for the communities which can lead to new challenges and forms of colonial structures (R. Collaguazo, personal communication, April 3rd, 2018 and Z. Molina, personal communication, March 8th, 2018). In this regard, Ocaña mentions: "The foreign tourists will come and ask for the simplicity of the community. The national one will ask for a tv, cable tv, internet and wifi." (W. Ocaña, personal communication, November 22nd, 2017).

Thus, as Community Tourism is a growing industry, there are several issues, which are mainly based on a lack of clear direction, of diversification and stability of the projects. Still, there are positive examples of projects which locals perceive as having a beneficial influence on their overall life.

6. Living the encounter from a tourist perspective

As mentioned before my field work within this project consisted of visits to two different rural communities in the Andes. Both are considered successful and, in some ways, decolonizing Community Tourism projects. Both, San Clemente and Yunguilla offer homestays with local families, and a combination of cultural, ecological and sportive activities. Nevertheless, they have broadly different approaches to tourism and started in quite different ways. Thus, this chapter will present landmarks of both experiences including autoethnographic elements in order to understand the rupture of colonial structures and creation of critical reflection and their effect on tourists. The experiences will be complemented with interviews of other tourists and people from the community.

6.1 Homestays and the concept of service

Having analyzed colonial structures within tourism, one could argue that the mere fact that local families are pressured to let people in their private homes based on economic dependencies, is a form of coloniality. Especially since sharing the private living space with foreign strangers on a daily basis is something one might not expect people in occidental countries to do. In San Clemente, the option of not creating a hotel within the community, was also a choice against becoming economically dependent on loans or investments of NGOs. Homestays in this sense, were the cheaper option (J. Guatemal, personal communication, March 9th, 2018). However, the choice of offering homestays is more than just an economic one, as it also humanizes the contact between visitors and locals. In this regard, both San Clemente and Yunguilla have actively decided to receive tourists in their private houses instead of building a hotel within the community (J. Guatemal, personal communication, March 9th, 2018 and R. Collaguazo, personal communication, April 3rd, 2018). In this way, it is made sure that more respect is shown by the tourists towards the family. About the choice of offering homestays, Collaguazo from Yunguilla stated:

> *"[W]e saw very quickly that this generated good results. There were guys with*
> *programmes that lasted one month. And after this month they had to leave*
> *already. And a lot of people did not want to leave and left crying. And sometimes*

they left and came back. And we said "Wow, something interesting is happening here." And we realized that not all the tourists have the opportunity to live together with a family. The conventional tourism offers you sometimes a 5-star hotel, a luxury restaurant, but you only share with the waiter. [...] You don´t live this daily experience of the people. This customs and culture of the people. So, we realized that this actually worked" (R. Collaguazo, personal communication, April 3rd, 2018)

When I arrived in San Clemente, my host mother Zoila was hanging up clothes in her garden and welcomed me in a friendly way. As the rest of the travel group was about to arrive, she showed me the entrance of the house and welcomed me to sit and wait for the rest of the group. On the wall there were several photos of the whole family including the child photos of the five children of Juan and Zoila. While waiting I got to talk with Evelyn, Zoila´s daughter-in-law who was preparing lunch and who also lived in the same house. When the travel group arrived all the other host-parents had arrived to the main house to welcome their guests and bring them to their own places. After a personal welcome of Juan, the leader of the touristic project, we got to know our house and dropped our bags in the rooms. The family´s rooms were located close to the kitchen and a bit separated from the visitor´s. Still, the house was decorated in a personal manner with photos, instruments and local designs and the visitor´s rooms were an integrated part of it. As there was only one guide for a group of 13 people, personal questions about the stay had to be directed straight to the family members or translated by other tourists who spoke Spanish. Thus, questions about extra blankets or the Wifi-connection were often communicated with a mix of Spanish and English and often directly from the passengers to the families. As we were invited to the personal homes, even though we paid for the stay, we asked questions respectfully as a guest in a foreign house. In this sense, this form of accommodation creates control over tourists in the community and at the same time a different understanding of the concept of service. The concept of *Service* is an important aspect when understanding colonial forms of hierarchizations. Maldonado-Torres (2007) links the *Coloniality of Being,* to the perspective of the colonizers who within the colonial era understood people of color as being "inherently servants and their bodies [as forming] part of an economy of sexual abuse, exploitation, and control" (p. 248). In this sense, it is crucial to understand the connotations that being treated exclusively as service, might have for rural and indigenous peoples.

Furthermore, there are certain standards regarding service which might be expected in a hotel or hostel, but not when being invited into a private house. For example, while we received towels by our host family in both of the communities, I did not receive soaps or shampoos during my homestay in Yunguilla. Instead I could use the ones in the shower used by the whole family, which represent another form of equalization between these two groups. Also, the idea of shared meals pushes for a higher participation than in a hotel. In both projects meals were prepared by the local family, but still people were very much encouraged to participate in cooking, and to set and clear the table. Thus, within both projects, me and other tourists were often checking if we could help out in the kitchen or help to set the table. And each of the tourists staying in my same host family, at some point was involved in the meals, their preparation or even in washing dishes. The motivations came from a combination of good will towards the family, the enjoyment of participating as part of the programme, or social pressure from seeing other tourists helping. In this sense the idea of service, often entailing colonial perspectives and structures, can be challenged by a sense of personal relation, as seen in the following statement from Pupiales in San Clemente:

> *"Our idea is not to turn the families into a hotel. […] We offer to live together. I always say that I would get bored with more than 5 people in my house, because I want to be in individual contact with each of the visitors. Because if there are more than 5 […] you are running around organizing and attending them instead of creating dialogue. So, this is our objective. To live with the families. We do not want to become a hotel or hostels […]. There are a lot of families that say 'no, I have capacity, I have money, I will create more rooms.' This has never been our goal."*
> (S. Pupiales, personal communication, March 9th, 2018).

Thus, the idea of becoming a purely service-oriented provider is clearly rejected by the tourism project. Instead the focus lies in creating contact and an experience of living together. This aspect seemed to be appreciated. One of the guests said that he would prefer the tourist groups within the families to be even smaller, as it makes contact with the local family even easier. But he finds the shared moments extremely important (B. Hall, personal communication, March 8th, 2018). As mentioned before Castro-Gómez and Restrepo see a risk of Community Tourism in the instrumentalization of indigenous peoples to become entertainers, butlers or mere creators of colonial phantasies for tourists (Castro-Gómez and

Restrepo, 2008, pp. 85). Nevertheless, in San Clemente the refusal to become a service-only was also reflected in the way our host family in San Clemente made no effort to fill silences or create any other form of 'entertainment' for the travelers at the table. If they did not participate in the conversations, they would often have daily conversations in Spanish or Quichua about the organisation of the day, or just focus on the meal. This showed that visitors are encouraged to adapt to the local structures. Furthermore, it also did not fit into the concept of the aforementioned red-carpet phenomenon described by Cabanilla, as it did not put unlimited priority to the tourists. While some of the tourists found it hard to communicate, especially due to the language barrier (e.g. B. Hall, personal communication, March 8th, 2018), all of them talked positively about the contact with their families when asked about their experience. In this sense, my host-mother underlined the fact that homestays have an extra value in comparison to a hotel:

> *"Well, before we started this work in tourism we made evaluations, we made first meetings, we walked around, we got to know things…for example about the strategies which hotels use. And the hotels offer you this and that, and you pay […] and you leave. In the hotel people enter and they almost never get to know the owner […]. They never get to know him or have a conversation with him, because everything is taken care of. This is what we realized. It´s about getting more and more money, but not about creating contact. […] This is what we do, sharing, talking, doing things together. How are all the things made…the organic products which we have, how do you harvest, how do you cultivate them. […] And like this you can say 'she is like my mother, they were like my mother or my father'."* (Z. Molina, personal communication, March 8th, 2018).

Becoming part of the family is an important aspect, which in San Clemente is repeatedly communicated throughout the programme (J. Guatemal, personal communication, March 9th, 2018). Jaime, one of the other hosts in San Clemente, explained to me in a conversation that the community puts a lot of effort into involving toursists and making them feel a familiar connection to the people of the community. These efforts fit well in Mignolo´s aforementioned vision of decolonial pedagogy with the objective of "re-establishing human relations" (Mignolo and Vázquez, 2017, p.492).

One of the tourists stated:

"One of the things I like is the fact that […] there is only 4 of us staying in each house and all of us have their own family with different dynamics, different family members. And stuff like being able to go and help them in the kitchen makes you feel involved and feel less like you are sort of scrunching off of them, which I like. Because you are in someone else´s house and if I was visiting my friends at home I wouldn´t just let them cook dinner for me. I would be in the kitchen chatting and helping. So, I like that aspect. I think that is what makes me more included and immersed in the culture. […] It´s different than being in hostel or a hotel. I like to help out." (C. Mitchell, personal communication, March 8th, 2018)

In Yunguilla, this family connection was also promoted. On the last day of our stay, all host families and tourists came together for an official good-bye. Tourists were motivated to give positive and negative feedback and each family gave a small present to their visitors. We were all thanked for becoming part of the community. The reactions of the tourists speaking were personal and emotional. We all stated that we felt a personal connection to our families within less than four days. Each of the eight host families were hugged and thanked heartfully by their personal visitors and some of the tourists shared their appreciation of the experience with the whole crowd.

There are still differences between both communities regarding the idea of service. As Yunguilla created their own enterprise within the community which sells own products and receives a share of all the touristic incomes, they have created a legal brand with the name of the community. Thus, the image that the project wants to establish is a modern and commercial one. One aspect in which this difference becomes clear is the use of uniforms. In Hotels like *Casa del Suizo* in the Amazon region, a large part of staff members is indigenous. As all staff members wear uniforms, these can create an understanding of a natural hierarchy between locals and tourists. Especially as the staff members are not seen as individuals and seem more likely to receive orders or demands. In Yunguilla guides use t-shirts or vests with the logo of the community, while in San Clemente people are dressed in their daily clothing. While uniforms might create the impression of people being in a service function, in Yunguilla they have specifically the function of strengthening the brand name of the community (R. Collaguazo, personal communication, April 3rd, 2018) and thus represent a modern image of a corporation. On the other hand, modernization might also mean a step towards Eurocentric

structures and demands. Collaguazo says in this sense: "In the future we are planning to standardize the service a little more. But we are working on that. And there are some houses that have already very comfortable rooms, the bathroom, hot water…everything that the tourist demand." (R. Collaguazo, personal communication, April 3rd, 2018). Thus, San Clemente and Yunguilla might both aim to create respect for their community members: San Clemente by a vision of a complete humanization of the contact, and Yunguilla by creating a recognizable brand.

In both ways, the perspective of leaving a certain position of serving can be seen as an important step towards a change of the general touristic paradigm of expecting obedience for a paid service. It creates an understanding among the tourists that an economic hierarchy does not need to strengthen the social one. Thus, with regard to the second research question, this aspect shows that certain forms of global colonial perceptions can be challenged within the encounter of Western tourists and communities. Moreover, it signals a certain dignity and determination of the community itself. In how far a modernization and standardization of services in Yunguilla might lead to higher expectations by tourists for service and European standards will be an interesting aspect to observe in the future.

6.2 Interaction and contact at eye level

As described within the red carpet-phenomenon, contact at eye-level between tourists and locals is hard to find within Ecuadorian Community Tourism. Even though this hierarchization is hard to fully overcome, both of the communities have found activities were locals have the opportunity for contact at eye level with the tourists. As mentioned before, the vast majority of tourists in both communities do not speak Spanish nor Quichua, which can make it more difficult to talk with the hosting family. Still, sharing three meals a day pushed the visitors to communicate in which ever way possible and created a sense of equality between tourist and locals. These actively created moments of interaction are represented in Maldonado-Torres´ understanding of decolonization:

> *Decolonization itself, the whole discourse around it, is a gift itself, an invitation to engage in dialogue. For decolonization, concepts need to be conceived as invitations to dialogue and not as impositions. They are expressions of the*

> *availability of the subject to engage in dialogue and the desire for exchange.*
> *Decolonization in this respect aspires to break with monologic modernity.*
> (Maldonado-Torres, 2007, p. 261)

In both projects, conversations between tourists and locals, even though in broken Spanish, varied from talking about the children and families, to the current situation of the community and even political perspectives. Having experienced day-tour visits in other communities, I recognized a great difference in terms of respect and closeness towards the people within the community. While the contact in other day-tours was often limited to tourists taking photos, buying handicrafts and listening to the guide´s translations, there is barely a direct contact between tourists and locals. In San Clemente, we were invited to a meal prepared and shared by all the families hosting tourist and presented as a buffet on a tablecloth on the ground in the garden of one of the families. When filling our plates locals and tourists were mingling, chatting and serving each other food. In general, food in both communities is a great connector, as it creates conversation about local recipes. As mentioned before, I witnessed several times that tourists were participating in the preparation of meals, asking about the ingredients of local dishes, and even writing them down.

Another form of this encounter, are the daily communal activities which tourists are part of. As I joined two different travel groups throughout the visit in San Clemente I witnessed a variety of activities within the community. Besides sportive activities as horseback riding or hikes, there are a lot of other activities which push tourists to get to know the local context and to interact. In San Clemente for example, tourists can learn to knit with local materials and designs, preparing dishes from corn with members of the local families or work in the fields. There is a consciously chosen strategy behind these cultural activities, as the tourists are included actively in all of them. Within the knitting experience which was organized in a small group, our host mother explained the technique with great patience. Trying it ourselves while watching her skilled technique, created laughs on both sides and provoked several compliments and respect for her ability. Furthermore, it created a calm moment in a small group which allowed personal conversations and interaction. A concept that promotes this kind of dialogue and specifically the inclusion of decolonial structures for an equal interaction between two different cultures, is the broadly discussed concept of *Interculturality* (Ferrão Candau, 2013, p. 156). Again, this concept is hard to grasp within one specific definition (Moya

and Moya, 2004, p. 74), but it stems from a vision of an equal representation of colonized cultures in society through creating dialogue:

> *"The goal is not the mixture or hybridization of forms of knowledge, nor a form of invention of the best of two possible worlds. On the contrary, it represents the construction of a new epistemological space that incorporates and negotiates the indigenous knowledge and Western (and both their theoretical and experiential bases), maintaining the coloniality of power and the colonial difference of subjects consistently as the fundament."* (Walsh, 2007, p. 51).

In this regard, the experience in San Clemente, can be understood as a step towards *interculturality*, which promotes a dialogue between cultures, but at the same time a push for an equalization of these cultures. One of the tourists said in this context that "living in the house with the family doing the things that the families do is really important" (B. Hall, personal communication, March 8th, 2018). And indeed, the community members Juan Guatemal and Susana Pupiales explained that the tourists are included in the seasonal activities, and thus integrated to some point into the local times and structures. Through this integration the own culture is more likely to be maintained and is represented as equally valuable as the visitor´s culture.

In Yunguilla too, activities were highly interactive. We helped in the fields, tiding up the communities´ installations and shared soccer games with the people from the community. While these activities are pre-selected and frequently offered by the community, our steady inclusion in the itineraries again created moments of interaction and connecting between both parties. The fact that these activities bring a notion of local daily life into the tourist´s experience and are often connected to the knowledge and teaching by the community, brings a human-focused experience to the encounters. In both communities, the activities lead to common laughter and conversations.

Still, again there is a great difference between the experience in both communities. One important aspect is the idea of photography of locals, which in San Clemente was much more present. The fact that people wear the traditional clothing seemed to motivate tourists to take photos without asking permission and more frequently. The Ecuadorian guide of the first travel group in San Clemente, confirmed that in her own experience pictures of indigenous people were often taken in much less respectful ways than photos of other people, which she

perceived as a form of objectification. Taking close-up pictures of indigenous babies, children and family members without asking permission happened regularly in San Clemente. As described in the former chapters, these practices can be strongly connected to forms of dehumanization and an understanding of indigenous culture as different and, in some ways, inferior. In this regard, the community of San Clemente has a higher burden to overcome than the one of Yunguilla.

Moreover, in general colonial perspectives and stereotypes can hardly be fully overcome through a stay of a few days. For example, in a private conversation one of the tourists commented the fact that the daughter of his host mother had a child at a young age with the German expression "Andere Länder, andere Sitten" (Other countries, other customs). This expression can have a quite condescending connotation, which illustrates that despite the communities' efforts to create moments of dialogue, the perception of dealing with an inferior culture persisted. In the interviews too, tourists called the local community an "indigenous *tribe"* and it was several times mentioned that visitors were surprised about how developed or Westernized both communities are (e.g. B. Hall, personal communication, March 8th, 2018, Isabella, personal communication, April 5th, 2018). Thus, while prejudices seem to be deeply ingrained in people, the mentioned surprise of these tourists seems to make a change of perspective possible. Also, one of the tourists mentioned that despite being mainly interested in finding differences, within this kind of tourism he finds mostly similarities, as societies throughout the world have similar values and expectations towards life (B. Hall, personal communication, March 8th, 2018).

One might think that the interaction between tourists and locals is part of the product and thus mainly a sort of entertainment or 'authentic experience' for the tourists. However, Ocaña and Cabanilla, both discussed the importance of locals learning from foreign perspectives for rendering the encounter reciprocal and creating a more human relationship. In this regard, Pupiales stated: "I ask how the health system in their country is working, and I share ours with them. How the health system within the communities works, how the Ecuadorian system works. We have shared these things." (S. Pupiales, personal communication, March 9th, 2018*).*

Furthermore, both communities have mentioned the development of the self-esteem of the community as an important benefit of this contact with Western tourists.

> *"In the beginning we were thinking: 'How are we going to live together with another culture, if even the people from the city, the mestizos, don´t accept us as we are.' They are saying that we are 'dirty indios', 'stupid indios'. So we thought, that it is going to be worse with the people from Europe. They will tell us that we are the worst. But we have seen a great change. They show us great respect. Much more than the Ecuadorian people from the city right here, or the Latin Americans in general. Thus, these encounters have strengthened our identity, it has strengthened things like our language, our clothing. The fact that the foreigners accept our way of dressing, it makes us see that it is something valuable. That it is something beautiful and it should be kept alive. Meanwhile, the people from the city are saying 'No, this dress of the indios is not for me. It is not for me'. But if the Europeans come and say 'this dress is so beautiful. I want to have one', it becomes worth something. It is valuable. And I am valuable. [...] So, our self-esteem grew."* (ibid*).*

In Yunguilla the community had a similar experience through their tourism project.

> *"The people have recovered their self-esteem. They have recovered their self-worth. Sometimes we, as people living in rural areas, have a very low self-esteem. Because we believe that the people from the city are above us, because maybe they have studied more, because they were shoes all the time, because they don´t get their hands dirty, right? And sometimes we think that this is something better. But we are wrong. And we have worked on that here with the people. We have changed this self-esteem of the people. Because now all people from this community are very proud to talk about their community. And this is very important for us. As I said sometimes we have a very low self-esteem because we think that the countryside is not valuable and so on, and that the people from the countryside do not know a lot. But the people of the community here in Yunguilla are very prepared in different things. [...] Now there are people from the city, who know Yunguilla and who say 'we envy you for what you have'."* (R. Collaguazo, personal communication, April 3rd, 2018).

The development of self-esteem was reconfirmed in a conversation with my host-mother of in Yunguilla. She told me that her grandparents had a saying in which they warned their

children to not get in contact with any foreigners, as they would kidnap them and turn them into sausages. This fear and insecurity of contact with anybody outside of the community had quite an impact on her and led to her hiding, when the first Western tourists entered the community. But she explained that now, through their activities with foreign tourists, her children have a lot of confidence to be in contact with foreigners as they have grown up with it.

The idea of the inferiority of indigenous and rural peoples towards people from the city and the West show the continuity of colonial structures, which both of the communities have experienced. Even more so Pupiales´ statement shows the exact hierarchy described within the theory of *Coloniality* placing Europeans above Ecuadorians and the urban above the rural context. But the positive impact that both tourist projects had, against their expectation, proves that it was possible to overcome certain structures of coloniality through direct encounters. Thus, returning to the research questions, the direct contact and interaction at eye level can be seen as a tool to actively encounter social hierarchies and thus colonial structures. Ocaña has witnessed this process of equalization and thus of an appropriation of communities of their own identity to some extent in Community Tourism projects and describes it as a real form of decoloniality (W. Ocaña, personal communication, November 22nd, 2017). The active creation of spaces for dialogue, interaction and equal encounters, therefore seems a possible opportunity to decolonialize relations. Still, the direct exposure of communities to tourists comes with risks. The example of photography shows that direct encounters, can strengthen certain forms of objectifications and hierarchical structures, if they are not actively limited.

6.3 Traditions and economic activities

In San Clemente and Yunguilla other economic activities are seen as crucial within the communities and both have established tourism as a complementary activity. Susana Pupiales stated:

> *"Our goal is not to be economically dependent of tourism. Tourism is a complementary part of our economy. […] This is our goal. It is not to depend on tourism. Because that would be a different thing. So, we want that the families work in tourism, and also work on their land, on their handicrafts, and also work in the city. […] This is why we have always said that tourism will not change the rhythm of life of the community. […] Well, until now we did not have to worry that hundreds of tourists would change the rhythm. But we are thinking in creating a regulation to not change the rhythm of the community."* (S. Pupiales, personal communication, March 9th, 2018)

In San Clemente, agriculture and the production of handicrafts are the main complements to tourism, which are practiced and have partly even improved through touristic activities. During the visit in San Clemente our group was invited to buy local handicrafts, such as scarfs, traditional shirts and skirts. The women presenting the products explained about the change that selling handicrafts to their own visitors had on the community. Before, women of the community produced a great number of handicrafts and clothing, which was sold to bigger retailers in Otavalo, one of the most commercial centers of Ecuador. Selling to these retailers the women were paid a minimum percentage of the actual worth of their products. With tourists coming to the community they did not have to produce the same amounts as before but received 100% of the gain. One can say that this discourse is just another way of motivating tourists to buy handicrafts, but in comparison to other visited communities, tourists seemed moved and motivated to contribute. They asked a lot of questions about the products and the work behind them, while during other tours, I have often witnessed tourists distancing themselves or feeling cheated when handicrafts were offered. Here again, personalized contact and understanding of the local context seems to create empathy and humanizes the experience.

Another aspect is the re-valorization of own land, traditions and activities, which both projects mentioned as a great benefit from letting foreigners entering their communities (e.g. *R. Collaguazo, personal communication, April 3rd, 2018)*. In this regard Pupiales mentioned the valorization of the own culture and clothing through the attention and respect that foreign tourists had for them:

> *"[W]e had to train ourselves to discover, why we are wearing this clothing, or why do I talk like this, or why do I live like this or I dance like this. To discover the WHY of the things. Because the foreigners come and ask us "And why do you dance like this? And we didn´t know. We did it because it was the rhythm of our life, but we didn´t know about the value of the things, which we did or we lived".* (S. Pupiales, personal communication, March 9th, 2018)

And also, Molina who noticed the general acculturation, especially of the men in San Clemente, appreciated the fact that due to tourism now "at least they use the poncho and the hat" (Z. Molina, personal communication, March 8th, 2018). Finding the right way between representing the own culture and keeping it alive in its complete sense, seems one of the most difficult challenges in Community Tourism. One of the tourists even said that as he expects a certain comfort, but still wants to experience a daily notion of the culture, "it is a very fine line that they need to follow to keep reality of the culture" (B. Hall, personal communication, March 8th, 2018). As Ocaña explained, when Community Tourism started there were very few communities that diversified their activities. San Clemente has proven to keep a lot of its daily activities and to integrate visitors into their own local structures. However, the *Cultural Nights* which can be booked by tourists and which I followed with different groups in two consecutive nights in San Clemente, can be understood as a form of *folklorization* of the local culture. A dance that was practiced already within an earlier activity and the traditional dresses which locals and tourists are using for the night (ponchos/dresses and hats) seemed planned and thus running counter to the more organic types of interactions between tourists and locals. On the other hand, the ritual of the family showing us how to dress and the fact that the tourists on both nights all participated and seemingly enjoyed the activity again proved the power of active participation. In two cases, tourists mentioned that they much rather participate than watching dances or shows of the locals (C. Mitchell, personal communication,

March 8th, 2018; B. Hall, personal communication, March 8th, 2018). Still, Hall feared a risk for the programme, if more tourists are coming:

> *"[T]he more tourist that come in, it's going to help them economically but it's going to wash away or dilute that culture until it is just a dance group that is coming to present. It is not their culture. It is what they would be producing, what the customer expects, rather than what they´ve lived. And that´s what I fear for them. In some places [where] I've been, the cultural night is a group of professional dancers that come in and perform for you. And that I don't want to see. To me that's just a waste of time and money for me, to see a group of professional dancers and singers performing. It is not the culture."* (B. Hall, personal communication, March 8th, 2018)

It is important to mention that despite this comment, this was not Hall´s experience in San Clemente. The idea that a culture could be completely diluted through tourism is far from reality. Still, tourism always brings changes to communities. In this regard Ocaña stated the general risks that this sort of identity recovery through tourism entails:

> *"So, has [the community] changed? Yes. Has it generated a recovery of identity? Yes. I would say that it did. Has it generated new identity processes? As well. […] If we asked if these processes are positive or negative, most of them have been positive. But you also reach a point where you cannot go back. If I stop offering tourism, what am I going to do? What happens with my structures of identity? Maybe this is what first breaks apart. Because the goal of the community breaks apart."* (ibid)

Thus, here again, communities have to find an own form of creating well-being within these cultural and identity changes and choose which aspects they want to push forward. The fact that tourists might not even search for an extreme form of folklorization, could give an inspiration to challenge the dynamics of repeating and common cultural products even more.

Furthermore, as aforementioned the territory plays a great role in the Ecuadorian understanding of decoloniality. Here, both projects understood the fact of getting to know and appreciate the local ecology as a major benefit from tourism. Juan Guatemal explained that by starting the tourism project the community was encouraged to stop trashing and to

tidy up their land. Moreover, there have been common efforts to replant original trees and plants which had been overtaken by Eucalyptus trees imported centuries ago by the Spaniards (J. Guatemal, personal communication, March 9th, 2018).

Now, all of the food given to tourists is made from local products (Z. Molina, personal communication, March 8th, 2018). The community has changed their diet through tourism, as before the diet of the community relied heavily on carbohydrates. In order to offer what tourists were demanding, the community learned to value more diverse meals including their locally produced vegetables and fruits (S. Pupiales, personal communication, March 9th, 2018). In both communities each family has their own vegetable garden, and surplus is traded between the families. Thus, there is a clear understanding and management of the own territory.

The experience of re-valorization of the territory in Yunguilla is similar. Before the NGO *Fundación Maquipucuna* entered the community with the purpose of creating eco-tourism, the main activities were the production of wood and coal. While these activities destroyed broad parts of the territory, the opening of the touristic project also created a new consciousness of the great biodiversity of the area. Collaguazo said:

> *"[A]fter 23 years, this is the biggest achievement that we have. To change the mentality of the people. This is not easy at all. […] Imagine to change the mentality of people, good carbon and wood workers, to being good conservators. This is not easy. And especially to convince the people that they can live in harmony with the environment."* (R. Collaguazo, personal communication, April 3rd, 2018)

In this sense, the knowledge about the area might be imposed, but it created a return to a traditional connection with nature, new economic means and later enough independence to focus on other traditional agricultural activities. Ocaña described these developments again as a form appropriation:

> *"It is surprising to hear a person of 75 or 80 years in Yunguilla saying "Before we were taking down the forest to make carbon, and today no. Today we take care of the trees." And you say: is this discourse prepared as part of tourism? But then you remember that it is not. Because I am there as a person who works with them. And*

I am not a tourist. And they are actually giving me a discourse about appropriation." (W. Ocaña, personal communication, November 22nd, 2017)

Furthermore, in Yunguilla the first success of the Community Tourism projects, lead to an initiative in which a large share of local families supported by foreign NGOs gathered their savings to buy common territory, which they subsequently have turned into a protected area (ibid). Thus, in this case tourism lead to the growth of personal property. Additionally, other traditional activities, such as the milk production or farming, have grown extensively and brought higher revenues due to tourists coming to Yunguilla. As to the question if Community Tourism can prevent the strengthening of modern structures of coloniality, the success that tourism meant for other economic activities in both communities, shows the power of leaving economic dependencies. In this regard, it can counter economic forms of colonial structures. As Cabanilla mentioned, the reason that communities leave the 'red-carpet'-phenomenon is mainly due to having enough economic independence (E. Cabanilla, personal communication, February 5th, 2018). This aspect is visible in the context of Yunguilla. My host-mother Maria told me that she sells a great amount of her milk to the community store, which produces own cheeses, and the brand that Yunguilla created with its own name has produced marmalades, yoghurts and other local products. She also explained to me that the community wants to keep on working in agriculture to not become as dependent on tourism as the town Mindo. Being a very well-known touristic destination, Mindo stopped its agricultural activities almost completely and has become a place almost exclusively focussing on tourism.

The aforementioned experiences demonstrate the importance of accepting changes through tourism while finding a form of living well with them and including them for own advantages within the community. Culture and identity are fluid and can be rediscovered and re-valuated through tourism. As these experiences show, ownership is essential to address these constant changes in the community.

6.4 Rules and limitations

Returning to the phenomenon of the red-carpet described by Cabanilla (personal communication, February 5th, 2018), the inferiority complex often leads to a lack of boundaries for the visitors and the prioritization of tourists concerns over those of the

community. This aspect can be understood under two different forms of coloniality: one is the social inferiority towards capital, which Cabanilla sees in the fear of loosing customers and thus economic gain if one limits the freedom of visitors (ibid). Second, the *Coloniality of Being* clearly shows a subordination of non-occidental towards Western people as much as one based on ethnic characteristics. Communities in this sense, might experience several degrees of subordination, as they are from the global South, from a rural area and partly indigenous. Cabanilla mentioned that the lack of codes of conduct and rules for tourists is a prove that the red-carpet phenomenon has not been overcome (ibid).

In Yunguilla, the community has created a code of ethics, which is passed to volunteers and tourists who stay for long terms. This code includes several rules including the prohibition of alcohol and littering, as well as a respectful behaviour towards the community members. Furthermore, Collaguazo explained a case of a learned lesson, which later was included in the code of ethics (R. Collaguazo, personal communication, April 3rd, 2018). Here foreign volunteers started dating local youngsters, which in several cases led these youngsters to leave the community in order to live abroad. Originally, however, Community Tourism was intended to create incentives for youngsters to stay in their local communities. Since me and the travel group were short-term visitors, these rules were not clearly communicated to us. Also, in San Clemente we did not receive clear rules or limitations throughout my stay, nor did tourists receive a lot of information or rules in advance (C. Mitchell, personal communication, March 8th, 2018). According to the interviews within both projects, the communities apparently have not witnessed strong cases of disrespect by Western tourists (R. Collaguazo, personal communication, April 3rd, 2018 and Z. Molina, personal communication, March 8th, 2018). However, during my stay in San Clemente, I witnessed several moments where I felt a lack of respect of tourists towards the local population. Photographing indigenous people without their permission was already raised as an example in this context. A similar disregard was shown, when one of the tourists took a local baby on her arms and passed it on to several other tourists. The mother of the baby was eating at that point, and did not intervene, even though she did not seem content with this situation.

Creating rules for tourists might seem like a risk for losing clients, but it can create also clarity, respect and empathy towards the local situation. As described before, there is a risk for the people of the communities to not be considered as equals. Nevertheless, tourists have

mentioned the fact that getting to know the daily lives and situations, as much as being welcomed to the private homes and considered part of the family, are highly important and valued aspects of the touristic experience. In this sense, receiving clear rules and understanding the reasons behind them, seems a great way to get a clear understanding of the current local context and to understand the shared human experience of the local population. The fact that the tourists themselves might have doubts to give their own babies to a group of strangers, but naturally do not consider the local, indigenous population to have these doubts, shows the need to further humanize the encounter and create an understanding of equality. Clear rules and limitations which protect private spaces and the communication of the reasons behind them, can help to mitigate both of these problems, and thus be seen as a tool to break colonial perceptions. It can also represent a strong form of auto-determination towards the own community and tourists, which again plays an important role in a step towards decolonial pedagogy (Walsh, 2013, p. 46).

Even though, the communication of rules to tourists in both projects might be worth extending, both have learned to give clear limitations to NGOs and travel agencies. As mentioned before, San Clemente has been named a great example of a self-determined project, as it started its touristic activities without a major influence of NGOs (C. Walsh, personal communication, November 10th, 2017). The project within the community started for very specific reasons. As the community lost territory, but the population within it grew, there was not enough employment for the younger generations. This lead to a high migration from the younger generation to the cities around San Clemente (J. Guatemal, personal communication, March 9th, 2018). Yunguilla experienced similar problems:

> *"So, this group of youngsters is in charge of the restaurant. For them it is also an opportunity, because sometimes in these small, rural communities it happens that the youngsters leave to study and then they don´t want to come back to their communities, as there are no opportunities. And the people migrate and the communities stay empty. This is what we have also accomplished. To lower down the migration. And to tell the youngsters "come back because here you have opportunities".* (R. Collaguazo, personal communication, April 3rd, 2018)

Being a community with a lot of indigenous leaders, who joined the struggle for indigenous rights, in San Clemente this migration also meant a threat to these social movements. As

agriculture and handicrafts did not create enough economic revenue the community started to look for economic alternatives. Having seen studies about the possibility of applying Community Tourism and with Juan Guatemal visiting an indigenous community in Norway which offered a successful form of tourism, the community started to implement their own form of tourism. (J. Guatemal, personal communication, March 9th, 2018). Moreover, the possibility of dealing with external entities such as NGOs or the government, is not an option for Guatemal due to former experiences.

> *"After we started we have worked with NGOs, not exclusively within the subject of tourism but in other projects. When we work with NGOs, the NGO or the public institution or whatever institution comes with their own document, saying 'We will work like this, this is how it works […]', right? They come with their rules. But here we haven´t accepted that. […] There are two aspects. The economic one, and the political one. The economic part because the NGOs come to give you money. The people do not value importance of the money when it is given to them, as if it would be their own, right? So, we said "Now we will take care of it ourselves with our own sacrifice". So, we started to take credits, but me being responsible of this credit. When it is my own effort it hurts me to see that the resources are gone from the night until the next day. […] On the other side, with the political part we said 'here we are going to draw our own policies for touristic development, its administration and so on. We will create all the basic criteria for the development of tourism ourselves'. If someone wants to help us financing it […] it has to happen under our own rules. Not under the rules of the NGO, nor of the municipality or the local council."* (J. Guatemal, personal communication, March 9th, 2018)

This establishment of rules towards external actors is also reflected in the determination of sticking to the own touristic concept. Pupiales explained that external travel agencies often come with specific requirements about more tourists staying in one house, or specific expectations about food, which the community has denied. In this sense, it managed to establish rules and limitations which ensure a faithfulness to the own culture and well-being. Thus, in this perspective San Clemente can be seen as a truly decolonial project, as it also reflects Paulo Freire`s definition of a pedagogy of liberation, which Walsh sees as a central one for decolonial pedagogy:

> *"A pedagogy that has to be forged with, not for, the oppressed (as individuals or peoples) in the constant struggle to recover their humanity. This pedagogy makes oppression and its causes objects of reflection of the oppressed, and from this reflection should come its necessary commitment in the struggle for their liberation. It is in this fight that the pedagogy is made and re-made. The central problem is this: How can the oppressed as not authentic, divided human beings, participate in the development of the pedagogy of their liberation?"* (Freire in Walsh, 2013, p. 39)

While San Clemente (maybe because of its high representation of indigenous leaders) had a vision of auto-determination and auto-sufficiency from the beginning (C. Walsh, personal communication, November 10th, 2017), in Yunguilla the establishment of own rules towards external players developed with becoming more successful in managing tourism and other economic activities internally:

> *"Now we are depending still on NGOs, but we are not depending on the fact that they come to do the things for us. We now have strategic alliances with a lot of NGOs, with public institutions, with the municipality […]. But now we elaborate our proposals from the community here, depending on our necessities. We are elaborating the proposals and always search for the possibility of financing them. […] This is what should really happen in all the communities here and even in the whole country. The proposals should be based on the necessity of the people, the necessities of the communities. Because this is what happens in a lot of communities. NGOs come with proposals with their own vision. A vision from abroad. Sometimes this vision from abroad is not the same as if you are inside living the daily life in your own reality."* (R. Collaguazo, personal communication, April 3rd, 2018)

The economic independence and structural organizational change that Yunguilla has gone to, shows that the lesson learned within Community Tourism, can empower communities to counter modern structures of Coloniality. In comparison to other Community Tourism-projects such as Runa Tupari in Otavalo, both communities are completely in charge of their touristic operations and handle their own reservations. In Runa Tupari the operations are handled by an external agency, which sends tourists to different families within the

community and receives a part of the payment (W. Ocaña, personal communication, November 22nd, 2017 and J. Guatemal, personal communication, March 9th, 2018). While auto-management seems an important factor for both communities, there seems to be a great difference in how both communities have arrived to these positions. San Clemente created clear limitations for external parties in an early stage of their existence through a high consciousness of the risks from external impositions. Yunguilla reached this process of self-determination through a slow process of liberalization. As both cases appear to be successful in their current management, both could serve as an inspiration for other communities to target a process of becoming independent of economic and political institutions with own requirements.

6.5 Knowledge production and critical history

As described in the theoretical framework, the *Coloniality of Knowledge* describes the monopoly that Eurocentric perspectives have within the global understanding of knowledge. As these understandings center around a scientific perspective which is perceived as objective and a rational 'truth', I put a lot of focus on the way other forms of knowledge were given attention to. In San Clemente, there were several moments when other world views were communicated and even critical perspectives to Western or capitalistic thinking were shared. These perspectives were not always part of the planned programme, but often organically shared during conversations throughout the experience. Starting with a walk through the local forest, our local guide Jaime explained the importance of traditional plants for the community which still uses them for medical, energizing and other reasons. The indigenous understanding of nature and plants having genders and souls made several tourists smile and laugh. Nevertheless, the repetition of these facts throughout their 3-day stay, as much as the inclusion of some of these plants within the daily meals, created a more serious understanding of this perspective among the tourists. One of them asked for recommendations of plants for her swollen foot. After the walk Jaime and Juan thanked the group for their participation and explained how the knowledge of plants is passed orally from generation to generation, and that this costume lives on until today. They also told the group that they believe as much in the effect of the plants, as in modern medicine. Furthermore,

before a shared meal with all host families and tourists, the families included the tourists in taking a moment to thank the *Pacha Mama* (Mother earth) for the food. Thus, other forms of knowledge are clearly communicated to the tourists and are presented as ancestral and still active. However, in how far these different understandings have an impact on tourists, stays questionable.

The idea of receiving groups in the own living space, who occasionally visibly ridicule the own culture, seems something that me or my social environment in Europe have seldom experienced. At the same time, it is a widespread phenomenon. The suggestion of law and order being supposedly completely absent in countries of the global South, as much as mocking local believes or traditions, are just some examples, in which Western tourists express colonial thinking when travelling abroad. Even though, the same might happen when Southern tourists are travelling to Northern countries, the above described economic and conceptual dominance of Western thinking in global tourism, suggests a great imbalance. During a journey to a community in the Ecuadorian Amazon region, I joined a travel group watching locals opening up fallen trees to search for grubs. As grubs are prepared as local dishes in this area, the locals told us that they were collecting these animals for a shared meal in the community. The mixture of gestures of disgust and laughing of our group, standing in the middle of the local community, indicates how this kind of exposure can affect local self-esteem.

While this project focusses strongly on the efforts from communities towards creating reflection within tourists, visitors themselves have an urgent responsibility in creating consciousness about the social effects of their behaviors. Therefore, the inclusion of decolonial reflection and the creation of awareness and empathy for the local context becomes a crucial task for players in the global tourism industry. Besides, the aforementioned examples show that the mere presentation of other forms of knowledge from communities might not be enough in this regard. Here again, the concept of *Interculturality* can offer a great tool to understand the importance of representing own knowledge as equal. Walsh understands this notion of interculturality as:

> *"…knowledge and thinking that is not isolated from the dominant paradigms or*
> *structures; [But] by necessity (and as a result of the process of coloniality) this logic*
> *"knows" these paradigms and structures. And it is through this knowledge that it*

> *generates an "other" knowledge. An "other" thought which guides the program of*
> *the movement in the political, social and cultural spheres, while it operates by*
> *affecting (and decolonizing), both the dominant structures and paradigms as much*
> *as the cultural standardisation that builds "universal" and occidental knowledge."*
> *(*Walsh, 2007, p. 51)

By understanding colonial structures, it becomes clear that the inclusion of a broader context, a personal relation to the person explaining and a presentation of this knowledge as equal to the Western can create more empathy and de-exoticize this information. All these elements were respected when Juan took us to the vegetable garden to get to know the different plants. He explained that the community lives completely self-sufficient since each of the family has their own garden, and the surpluses are sold to other families within the community, or in the city. He went on telling us about the fact that NGOs brought chemicals to the community in order to plant vegetables more consistently. Though as big and 'perfect' they looked, they had much less taste. So, the community took the decision to ban chemicals and return to their natural way of planting. The fact that Juan communicates the negative influence of NGOs to us in a passionate and personal way, creates an understanding of the risks that an imposition from outsiders can bring. Returning to the research questions, the communication of the own culture and knowledge as equal to the occidental one, shows a practical way of breaking colonial perceptions. Tourists might reflect upon their views of seeing local cultures as a mere 'follower' of the Western example, and even develop critical opinions about Western impositions. Maldonado-Torres understands this form of creating critical reflection as crucial for a process of decoloniality:

> *The Decolonial Turn is about making visible the invisible and about analyzing the*
> *mechanisms that produce such invisibility or distorted visibility in light of a large*
> *stock of ideas that must necessarily include the critical reflections of the 'invisible'*
> *people themselves. Indeed, one must recognize their intellectual production as*
> *thinking - not only as culture or ideology. (*Maldonado-Torres, 2007, p. 262)

In Yunguilla, the fact of talking critically about NGOs comes with the risk of losing further funding. Generally, the discourse in Yunguilla represents a more passive rhetoric that in San Clemente. Comments like "The only thing we knew was how to produce carbon and wood and hunting animals, turkeys and bears. This is what we did until this year" or "we also realized

about the natural resources which have always been there. But we hadn´t used them in the right way. Thus, the tourists made us appreciate the resources that we have." (R. Collaguazo, personal communication, April 3rd, 2018) show that the empowerment which the community acknowledges of having developed, is seen as something that was purely incentivized through external parties. On the other hand, in San Clemente the discourse on critical influence of NGOs as much as political statements are a strong sign of decolonial thinking. Sharing negative experiences directly with tourists and connecting them to a person in who´s house they might be staying at, creates a vivid experience of the risks connected to an imposition of foreign knowledge.

Another aspect is the inclusion of political opinions. Having passed a preparation course for tour leading of a Dutch travel-company, guides and tour leaders are taught to avoid political discussions. As travel-companies might see political disagreements with tourists as an economic risk, it also makes it hard to bring up critical perspectives of colonial structures in traditional travel-programmes. However, in San Clemente political subjects and critical perspectives were not actively avoided. When we were having dinner in our host-family and were talking about politics, Juan explained to all of us, that he does not believe in the national and local governments, as too often they have let the community down or have strived for own interests while pretending on helping the community. His wife Zoila said in an interview that the only reasons that political subjects are rare in the encounters with tourists are the short time that the tourists stay and the language barrier (Z. Molina, personal communication, March 8th, 2018). Thus, as Juan´s conversations show, political criticism towards external parties is an integral part of the experience, which can organically be communicated to the tourists and thus present another form of decolonial perspectives. In Yunguilla, political issues were less present and critical opinions about external actors stayed completely absent from my experience. Still, by working with the people in the fields and through other activities such as hikes through a pre-colonial path between coast and Andes-region, certain aspects of local knowledge are conveyed.

One of the most important factors of both communities is the representation of an alternative system towards a hegemonic global liberal economy. Having created a *social economy,* based on self-sufficiency and local structures of sharing and exchanging products, represents a rupture of what Cabanilla called the strongest colonial structure: *The Economy*. An example

of the Colombian Misak community shows the importance of these alternative structures for indigenous cultures:

> *"The word economy does not exist, it did not exist in the language. For us after getting to know it, the economy is not just money but if one has an animal, if I have my land, if I have my house, if I have my trees, if I have the cultivation, and even if this is not money, we begin to say that I have an economy, a good economy. The economy isn't the money, the economy is in the labor force, thus we began to call it that, we called it the economy for subsistence."* (Muelas in Quijano Valencia, 2013, p. 132)

This different understanding of the concept of economy, is also noted by the visitors. Having talked with tourists in both projects, tourists appeared to perceive these local structures, which do not conform with Western structures of modernity and capitalism, as inspiring. One of the tourists in San Clemente said:

> *"In Scotland if you are farmer you have vast quantities of land and you don´t grow it yourself. You don't grow in your garden just to eat it and then share it with your family. […] The sharing aspect of the community I really like. Cause I think that´s sometimes lost a bit where we are, where I live […]. It is nice that everyone knows each other, and we just had this lovely lunch that was a combination of all the different families bringing whatever they had."* (C. Mitchell, personal communication, March 8th, 2018)

And this experience of a certain form of envy and recognition of this lifestyle seems to be shared by more tourists. Another visitor of San Clemente noted:

> *"They very much have differences to our own. The values in life. I mean this community here, the social structure, where everyone shares the income that comes in. It is not one house in the community that takes people in all the time but it is everyone in the community that takes their turn to make home-hosting. So, the community is sharing the incoming wealth and that I think is very good. And that sort of really is a difference in our culture. Our culture is often saying 'I want it. It should all come to me and I hire you to do something for me. But I'm not going to get you part of the deal'. Whereas this culture is more like 'our community is the*

> *one that is getting the value. We will all take a little piece of that value.' And that*
> *I think is very good and interesting. It is an interesting aspect of what I found here."*
> (B. Hall, personal communication, March 8th, 2018)

And also in Yunguilla one of the tourists mentioned here admiration for the local structures:

> *"I think a lot about Community living and I think a lot of people in our group [do].*
> *And sustainable agriculture and being low-waste and making the things that you*
> *use in your life. And I think being here makes it really possible. They are doing it, so*
> *that is a change. And I definitely heard that from a lot of our group. Like Naomi*
> *who I was rooming with […] was talking about how she would love to live in a*
> *commune or something. And this makes it seem very practical and doable. So*
> *that´s…I guess that it is inspiring"* (Isabella, personal communication, April 5th,
> 2018)

Creating small-scaled social economies, living self-sufficiently and in sustainable ways, are aspects that both communities convey to their visitors, and which actually enable them to represent an alternative to capitalistic structures. Furthermore, the aspect of a strong community seems a clear decolonial lesson which tourists take home.

7. Conclusion

Having discussed the main results of the field work, this chapter returns to the research questions formulated in the beginning of this thesis and gives further conclusions about the subject.

1. Can Community Tourism become a tool for decolonizing?

Even though neither of the two projects have an integral pedagogical strategy which actively uses the concept of Decoloniality, both have adjusted their products based on learned lessons and evaluations; and both have included decolonial aspects in their programmes. Within both communities the direct contact and interaction between tourists and locals, have created a humanization of the 'other' as much as control over the form and extent in which tourists impact the community. Aspects such as the re-valorization of their own culture and natural resources, self-determination, appropriation, the gain of confidence and the communication of different forms of living are just some of the possible outcomes of well-organized Community Tourism. In this context, it is worth noting that I had only short insights into both communities and therefore dependent on interviews with leaders of the touristic projects, which might give a distorted or idealized picture of reality. However, the shared experiences between both communities, several academics in the field, and my and other tourists´ experiences have complimented these interviews and thus shown that certain forms of decoloniality are recognizable. While both communities have been presented as successful examples of Community Tourism, a lot of other communities still have a much higher gap to pass. It is important to understand that Community Tourism in Ecuador is far away from being aligned with decolonial practices. Even within both projects the objectification of indigenous people, the stereotyping of local culture and impositions of external actors are examples of present colonial structures. Nevertheless, the opportunity of a direct, relatively profound contact between two groups, which otherwise hardly would get into dialogue, bares a clear chance to actively reduce social hierarchies. Additionally, as the demand for a social and ecologically responsible tourism is on the rise, the economic opportunities for communities can create more independence and attention for alternative economic systems. In this sense, Community Tourism can offer basic conditions for applying decolonial pedagogies within communities and for tourists.

2. Can Community Tourism be used to break global colonial perceptions within the contact between Western tourists and rural communities in Ecuador?

As the interviews within and outside of the communities have shown, Western tourists seem often more conscious of their personal impact within tourism than the theory of Coloniality might suggest. Several tourists expressed their surprise at how developed the communities were. Additionally, all the tourists who were asked, would still recommend these Community Tourism projects to other people. Thus, when the tourists´ expectations of experiencing "traditional authenticity" are not met, it does not necessarily result in a rejection of the experience. Even more so, the participation in daily activities and encounters with locals at eye-level have been mentioned as a great extra value within the touristic experiences. By focusing on similarities between locals and tourists, the projects managed to change the visitors' expectations about stark differences between the groups. Still, the objectification of indigenous peoples shown within the subject of photography in San Clemente, as much as stereotypes of backwardness of indigenous and rural cultures seem difficult to eradicate within short-term stays. The inclusion of pedagogical moments before and during the tour can create more consciousness of the cultural context and generate empathy towards the shared human experiences, thus minimize common forms of colonial thinking. Furthermore, even though homestays with local families are thought as a mainly economic decision within the communities, these products can be seen as a first step towards a decolonial tourism. The respect and personal relation that the invitation to a private house creates within tourists, prevents an interaction solely based on a paid service and automatically establishes basic rules of respect. The importance of keeping visitor groups small within each family, has been mentioned by community members and tourists as a crucial aspect of this experience. In this sense, even if some colonial perspectives might be strengthened, both communities seem to break more colonial paradigms than they create. As the national tourism market in both projects is growing, and as national tourists are clearly showing similar social hierarchizations in the Ecuadorian context, these activities can be as effective for a process of humanization between different local groups.

3. Can Community Tourism prevent the strengthening of modern structures of Coloniality?

Conclusion

The global tourism industry in itself holds highly colonial structures, as the economic and structural privilege of travelling still is reserved mostly for people of the global North and the global South has become a great receiver of travellers. Furthermore, the capital behind Western and transnational travel companies and their economic power also show colonial perspectives, that often leave local communities with limited revenues. Both of these cases are also recognizable in the Ecuadorian sector of Community Tourism. Thus, even if within the touristic experience encounters at eye-level occur, the more fundamental set-up in which these visits take place impedes full equality between tourists and local populations. Additionally, communities in Ecuador often become too dependent on the economic revenues of tourism, which can lead to an even stronger social and economic hierarchy when receiving tourists. Both of these hierarchies are represented in the 'red carpet-phenomenon' described by Cabanilla. In order to minimize these forms of hierarchy, communities have to create independence which can be achieved by a high form of auto-determination and the continuation of traditional economic activities besides tourism. Moreover, the fact that the communities have to accept changes when letting foreigners into their lives, shows another risk for tourism reinforcing colonial structures. This is reflected by Ocaña's and Cabanilla's theses that says that tourism in itself is a colonial practice (W. Ocaña, personal communication, November 22nd, 2017 and E. Cabanilla, personal communication, February 5th, 2018). While often these changes mean a step into the globalization and thus into a form of Westernization, it is the own search for a good living (Buen vivir) within these changes that can lead to a higher form of auto-determination and economic independence. As mentioned by various community-members, self-confidence and improvement of other languages within the younger generations through the contact with foreign tourists, is seen as a positive impact (e.g. Z. Molina, personal communication, March 8th, 2018). Hence, on one hand a step towards globalization can be understood as the integration into a modern, capitalist society which represents a structure of Coloniality. On the other, it can be a tool for self-determination in a hierarchized world.

Returning to the principal research question of "*How can Community Tourism become a pedagogical tool for decoloniality?",* the question of the "*how?"* becomes crucial for defining the actual degree of decolonial effects. As Walsh stated, the activities organized often seem *decolonial* but the way they are organized, are happening within the broader structures of Coloniality. Having seen two projects that are both successful and have somewhat similar

products, the way in which decolonial practices are integrated stays highly distinct. Comparing the concepts of *Sustainability* and *Buen Vivir* in the implementation of Community Tourism, this question takes on a crucial role. While the sustainability concept presents a clear goal of *what* to achieve (a balance of economic, ecological and social factors), the *Buen vivir* can open the debate on the "how" and leave room for diverse ways of arriving to a state of well-being with the given conditions.

Within this research I have identified several aspects which can lead to a decolonization of certain structures within Community Tourism. Still, I do not consider these aspects a 'recipe' for Decoloniality. San Clemente represents a great example of a community which denied the support and rules of NGOs and government institutions and created a high level of auto-management. Furthermore, both communities have found somewhat alternative economic systems, which are based on auto-sufficiency within the communities themselves and can be described as *social economies*. Within the experience of tourists, these forms of auto-organization had a great impact and even inspired visitors. Other important aspects are the control of tourism through established rules, encounters with tourists at eye-level and personal contact. Additionally, the communication of own knowledge and world views can represent a different form of understanding and valorization of the local context. While all of these aspects might be interesting for other communities to implement, the way they are implemented and the way in which communities find a well-being within them, must not be a rigid concept but responsive to the communities' needs and local context.

However, as Cabanilla has stated, the economic dependencies remain a big obstacle for a true process of self-determination, since they keep communities in a certain insecurity and prevent the establishment of clear rules. Furthermore, these dependencies are linked to the very starting point of Community Tourism, as its economic benefits are pushed by NGOs, the state and the communities themselves. Hence, communities have to be aware and informed about the risks they take when starting Community Tourism projects. Furthermore, Ocaña states that NGOs pushed for very similar structures within the projects:

> *"So, until today the NGOs have a model where they created a hut for the accommodations and you will prepare typical dishes, and here we will present the folklorization of your way of living, here we will show dances, the folklore and handicrafts. As you might have noticed, the products of Community Tourism are*

the same almost everywhere." (W. Ocaña, personal communication, November 22nd, 2017)

This aspect seems to be recognized also by the tourists (e.g. B. Hall, personal communication, March 8th, 2018). Even though San Clemente has similar products than most other Community Tourism projects, it has also pushed tourists into existing structures and thus constructed its own, *different* project. This individual form of tourism bares another sort of attraction and appreciation of tourists and can be seen as a true inspiration for other projects.

This thesis has mainly focussed on the pedagogical methodologies used by Community Tourism projects. However, the tourism industry as much as tourists themselves have a great responsibility in admitting and reflecting on the own colonial influences. During this research, I was often asked what tourism in Ecuador had to do with Colonialism. If tourism is inherently a colonial practice, as many authors argue, the industry and its social impacts will be ethically questionable. Even though, there are many different theories which might describe power relations within tourism, there is still a lack of consciousness about the personal colonial perspectives and behaviours, as well as their impact on local environments. In addition, the *Sustainable Tourism* concept has brought a lot of consciousness about the ecological, economic and social effects of tourism, while a personal reflection about ones' preconceptions and biases within concept is lacking. Hence, the understanding of the subject of *Coloniality* and the reflection of the personal colonial thinking patterns, might offer a broad and personalized way in which tourists can start questioning the industry. While an integration of this subject by touristic players in travel programmes can be beneficial, Walsh warns that there is a risk of a commercialization of the *Decoloniality* concept:

"So, I have written a bit about what I call the 'risks or the threats of the Decolonial' and about them becoming very 'light', or a replacement for the term 'alternative', or 'critical' and becoming just anything. If you look on google there are 'Decolonial tourism', 'Decolonial food', I mean there is everything. So, there is a tendency of commercializing these terms, right? To merchandize these concepts and terms. And this is actually happening. So, one can say "great, now it is a global term" because all the people in different parts are talking about it. But there are risks, because if we come back to their initial sense, to create, to construct something that breaks the system,

a lot of these practices don´t do that. But they are part of the system and of this neoliberal multiculturalism where everything is okay. And this is the risk. This is why I am so careful about how to talk about the concept and its actions and practices and what I want to say when I talk about it. Nevertheless, it is also important to create spaces where a broader audience start to question their own logics, concepts and forms of thinking and to start questioning this system of domination, or dominant system in which all of us live." (C. Walsh, personal communication, November 10th, 2017)

Hence, to create the term *Decolonial Tourism* for certain products might bare the risk of abusing the concept for commercial reasons or creating vague categories or rhetoric. These vague commercial utilizations, I personally witnessed on numerous occasions in my work with tourism companies, which use repeatedly the rhetoric of *Sustainability* on their websites, praising their sustainable approaches and consciousness. On the other hand, Walsh criticizes Ecuador´s lack of spaces for collective reflection on the concept of *Decoloniality*, as the development of the concept seems to be limited to a small academic community (ibid). Thus, the establishment of more interconnected networks in the Ecuadorian academic, private and public sector is another aspect worth considering in order to create a broader integration of the concept into local practices. For the academic community and especially for researchers from the global North, it is important to acknowledge and to internalize that reflection about *Coloniality,* as much as the filtering of own colonial practices, are ongoing processes. In this way, imagining ourselves as 'cured' from colonial perspectives by dealing with the subject of Decoloniality is naïve.

Thus, with this thesis I hope to create a motivation for the inclusion of a regular self-reflection by tourists as much as within the tourism industry, and a possible tool for communities which are involved in tourism activities or wish to engage in it.

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