

Public Policy and Regional Tourism Development: Evidence from the Pueblos Mágicos Program in Michoacán, Mexico

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Cultural tourism has become one of the leading economic activities, not only in Michoacán but throughout the world, making it essential to conduct an analysis of this topic. Mexico's public policies have recognized that the promotion of cultural heritage can be key to the development of local economies, leading to the creation of Programs such as the "Pueblos Mágicos" initiative. This research focuses on the perceptions that residents of these Pueblos in the state of Michoacán have regarding the changes this government initiative has brought about in their economy and quality of life. Through the application of both qualitative and quantitative methodologies, it was observed that although there are discrepancies among the responses, the overall perception of this public policy is positive.

Keywords: *heritage preservation, public policies, cultural tourism, Programa Pueblos Mágicos, Michoacán.*

Introduction

Cultural tourism, related to historic heritage, is a basic activity for the development of cities and locations recognized as World Heritage Sites by UNESCO. Recently, cultural heritage has taken on a role as a socioeconomic revitalizer and promoter of local development, doing so by its exploitation as a new format of tourism: Cultural tourism. In Mexico, cultural tourism has been exponentially put into practice in the last few decades, becoming a priority for the Mexican Government. In 2001, Mexico, through its Department of Tourism (SECTUR), established the public policy called *Programa Pueblos Mágicos* (PPM), designed to identify Pueblos with unique cultural and physical features that represented the everyday life of each local community. Drawing from this, SECTUR sought to bring both Mexican and international tourists to these sites, reinforcing their touristic visibility and thus improving their economy by promoting local craftworks, gastronomy and trade; in turn, this would help to gather resources to rehabilitate and preserve the Pueblos' representative appearance.

While this policy entailed attractive intentions for the comprehensive development of some least favored communities, it has resulted in significant alterations of Pueblos deemed as "Mágicos": transformation of economic activities, privileging touristic aspects over sound living conditions for locals, continuous migration, and the physical

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transformation of the very features that earned Pueblos such distinction. 25 years into its creation, the Program has registered 177 Pueblos, 10 of which are located in the State of Michoacán.

This research focuses on two main objectives: First, to analyze the consequences of public policies, such as the *Programa Pueblos Mágicos*, on tourism-based regional economy through the inhabitants' perception. And second, to analyze the economic activities of the selected Pueblos registered by said Program. The methodology is based on data collection from sources such as the Mexican National Statistics, Geography and Information Technology Institute (INEGI), economic census, the touristic observatory for *Pueblos Mágicos* and the Department of Tourism, and confront such data with the information obtained by the fieldwork conducted with the inhabitants of the 10 *Pueblos Mágicos* located in Michoacán: Angangueo, Cotija, Cuitzeo, Jiquilpan, Paracho, Pátzcuaro, Santa Clara del Cobre, Tacámbaro, Tlalpujahua and Tzintzuntzan. Finally, we will cross-check the information to identify the current context of touristic activity and local economy and thereby diagnose the future of cultural tourism in Michoacán by identifying right decisions and areas of improvement.

Literature Review

One of the elements that defines past and present societies is their memory, which is passed down from generation to generation and provides them with identity and a sense of belonging. Collective memory forms part of heritage, whether tangible or intangible, and, as a social construct, as Sigaut notes, "Heritage is a social construct" (Sigaut, 2007) and is therefore part of their culture. Following this line of thought, she proposes the need to reexamine this concept of cultural heritage, which is traditionally presented as something untouchable, separated from the reality in which it is immersed, and therefore isolated from the very society that originally gave it value.

Therefore, Muñoz asserts that "cultural heritage is that which is of interest to a social collective because it is embedded in its sociocultural dynamics, as it shapes its memory and identity, concepts that are intimately related" (Muñoz Aréyzaga 2018). Therefore, this symbiotic relationship must be rethought and redefined today, especially since it has in many cases been reduced to a mere consumer product for tourism.

Cultural tourism has been a major driver of the economy in many countries over the past few decades, as every society possesses a cultural heritage that can appeal to visitors. It can vary in that it may be intangible (such as traditions, festivals, rituals, etc.) or tangible (such as architecture, cultural routes, paintings, sculptures, etc.), but together, they provide an experience that postmodern society increasingly values. Newer generations prefer to travel and experience other cultures rather than invest in buying homes or material goods—or even starting a family trend evident in the declining birth rates observed in many nations.

On this topic, Alvarado notes that "Tourism has become a predominant economic activity in postmodern society and can be defined as a subjective construction of imaginaries related to societal ideals of happiness, a return to nature, and everyday life. In this social and collective construction of the tourist imagination,

beliefs, forms, and images surrounding a place are significant; these are (re)constructed through the experience of travel, advertising, and the narratives the visitor receives before and during their stay, but also through contact with the daily lives of the local residents.” (Alvarado Rosas 2019)

These representations of “otherness” have become consumer products and, as such, factors that have shaped national, regional, and local economies. However, this activity has not always led to improved economic development and, consequently, a better quality of life for residents; in many cases—such as in cities like Seville, Venice, Paris, etc.—authorities have had to control or even reject the excess of tourism that overwhelms their neighborhoods. In this regard, Ávila considers it essential that this activity always be placed at the service of local communities. “Cultural heritage constitutes one of the basic resources for shaping a tourist destination, which must be valued and transformed into a product serving sustainable local development” (Ávila Aldapa 2014).

In this regard, governments have developed public policies aimed at addressing all aspects of cultural tourism, primarily from an economic perspective. Merino defines public policies as “a deliberate intervention by the state to correct or modify a social or economic situation that has been recognized as a public problem” (Merino 2013). Regarding the topic addressed here, it is undeniable that tourism has become a priority issue for the government, not only because it affects local economies (positively or negatively) but also because it has an impact on the preservation of cultural heritage. For example, visitors from other places arrive with different cultural backgrounds and different ideas, which often have an adverse effect on the identity of traditional communities. The intention to expand services for these tourists without taking local identity into account—such as by introducing international commercial chains like Starbucks—is also often viewed negatively, as it ultimately has a negative impact on the local economy.

These government instruments have undergone changes over time, as societies have evolved and social issues and needs have shifted, just as the political trends of governments have changed over the years. Electoral cycles often define the priorities to be addressed through social policies, as Merino notes: “Public policies are part of their historical context, their institutional environment, and the social networks in which they are embedded” (Merino 2013). This is evident in the evolution of the PPM since its creation in 2001, which will be discussed later.

A fundamental part of this element of governance is the accompanying legislation, as May notes: “Policies can take various forms, including laws, decrees, regulations, and other government actions” (May 2018). In the case of cultural tourism in Mexico, the applicable legislation falls under the purview of the Ministry of Tourism, at both the federal and state levels, where regulations have been established primarily for the operation of the *Programa Pueblos Mágicos*, and which have been amended mainly due to the increase in the number of Pueblos enrolled in this public policy.

The concept of perception in this research is based on Vargas’s definition: “It is understood as the form of behavior that encompasses the process of selection and symbolic elaboration of sensory experience, bounded by human biological capacities and the development of man’s innate capacity for the production of symbols” (Vargas 1994)

On the other hand, the construction of identity as a relationship with a physical and cultural environment depends largely on society and its process of constructing meaning based on the experiences these places offer their inhabitants, which then become commodities for tourism. According to (Enriquez Acosta J.A., 2019), “The attitudes and perceptions of the population living in tourist destinations are important for understanding the impact that tourism development has on economic, sociocultural, and environmental aspects.”

For his part, (Arias 2006) views “perception as the result of stimulus-receiver interaction, where the subject processes information from the environment in which they operate.” According to Arias (2006), social perception is shaped by the situation in which it occurs; that is, the context and the receiver’s objectives influence how that perception is formed (Arias 2006).

The Program known as Pueblos Mágicos (PPM) was launched by the Federal Ministry of Tourism in 2001 as a result of the Mexican government’s economic policies. The Program’s objectives are far-reaching; among other things, they aim to highlight the tourism value of Pueblos with fewer than twenty thousand inhabitants in the country’s interior, in order to develop an innovative and original tourism offering that meets a growing demand for culture, traditions, adventure, and extreme sports in natural settings, or the simple yet unique daily life of rural communities.

The PPM aims to promote cultural tourism, with the goal of highlighting specific destinations and boosting local development. Through this Program, the Ministry of Tourism promotes small settlements that, since time immemorial, have been distinguished by one or more unique characteristics, defined by a magical aura—whether stemming from the landscape, nature, history, legends, traditions, anecdotes, events, or real or fictional characters. Its Mágicos, so to speak, extends to the local level, the region, and, in some cases, the national sphere, to the extent that it is recognized in the collective imagination (López Levi 2015).

The Program dates back to 2001, when the Mexican Government’s Ministry of Tourism, as part of the 2001–2006 National Tourism Program titled “Tourism: The Force That Unites Us,” recognized the need to develop a complementary and diversified tourism offering in the country’s interior, in accordance with the provisions of Chapter 5, Section 5.3: “The promotion of the country’s tourism offerings is a priority for sectoral development. The growth, diversification, differentiation, and regionalization of destinations, products, and services require strategic actions that primarily focus on stimulating catalyst projects, general investment, and tourism financing in all its forms” (Secretaría de Turismo 2020) it was decided to create a public policy that supports the development of local economies, primarily in Pueblos with fewer than 20,000 inhabitants that have the potential to attract both cultural and nature-based tourism, thereby generating social and economic development for the benefit of those communities. This Program aligns with the National Tourism Policy, which seeks to promote Mexico as a global tourism destination by highlighting the country’s tangible and intangible cultural heritage (Cámara de Diputados LXIII Legislatura 2017).

The report presented by SECTUR in 2006, which outlined the operating rules of the PPM (which at that time included 32 Pueblos Mágicos), lists the eligibility criteria in effect at that time, which are:

1. Involvement of the Community and Local Authorities.
 - 1.1 Commitment to the local community.
 - 1.2 Commitment from state and municipal authorities.
2. Planning and Regulatory Instruments.
 - 2.1 State and Municipal Development Plans.
 - 2.2 Municipal tourism development Program.
 - 2.3 Urban image regulations and management plan in accordance with the Programa Pueblos Mágicos.
 - 2.4 Program for the reorganization of semi-permanent and/or street vendors.
3. Promotion of Municipal Development.
 - 3.1 Various Programs to support municipal development.
 - 3.2 Continuation and consolidation of tourism development Programs and/or initiatives.
4. Attractions and Services.
 - 4.1 Having a symbolic tourist attraction.
 - 4.2 Having distinctive tourist attractions.
 - 4.3 Tourist services that ensure their commercial potential.
 - 4.4 Assistance and security services.
5. Unique Value: “The Mágicos of the Town.”
 - 5.1 Developing a thesis on the Mágicos of the town.
 - 5.2 Designation as a “Historic Monuments Zone.”
 - 5.3 Actions to preserve tangible and intangible heritage.
6. Conditions and Territorial Spaces.
 - 6.1 Land accessibility.
 - 6.2 Feasibility for tourism marketing.
 - 6.3 Tourism product.
7. Impact of Tourism on the Locality and Area of Influence.
 - 7.1 State tourism information system.
 - 7.2 Assessment of tourism impact at the regional and/or municipal level.
8. Local Capacity Building
 - 8.1 Programa Pueblos Mágicos induction workshop.
 - 8.2 Workshop on cultural tourism planning and management.

As can be seen, the first and most important point is the involvement of society and local authorities; that is, the role of social participation within the different stages of implementing the PPM is considered fundamental according to these operating rules. However, the studies and research cited above show the exact opposite in many cases, significantly limiting social participation (Secretaría de Turismo 2006).

In 2013, nominations for Pueblos Mágicos were suspended while a comprehensive evaluation of the Program’s actual performance was conducted, analyzing each of the 111 Pueblos Mágicos that existed at the time. SEGOB stated the following in an agreement that year: “Thirteen years after the establishment of the Programa Pueblos Mágicos, it was necessary to conduct an assessment to identify the progress, problems, and opportunities arising from its operation, in order to seek new alternatives for its restructuring and consolidation as a comprehensive, effective program independent of others also operated by the Ministry of Tourism, in such a way as to reduce the

significant disparities that currently exist among the localities, as well as to establish adequate monitoring of actions and control through indicators that allow for the accurate assessment of their economic impact” (Secretaría de Gobernación. (26 de 09 de 2014).

These new operating rules, resulting from the aforementioned restructuring, emphasized two broad categories: sustainability and competitiveness as the guiding principles of the PPM. As shown below, the requirements for joining the Program remained consistent with those of the original PPM in 2001.

- I. Formal establishment of a Pueblo Mágico Committee;
- II. Approval by the municipal council of the town’s application to join the Programa Pueblos Mágicos;
- III. Approval and resolution by the State Legislature establishing the budgetary resources to be allocated to the applicant locality;
- IV. Budgetary resources allocated or to be allocated for tourism development in the applicant locality;
- V. Government Programa and actions that have an impact on tourism development in the applicant locality, with a minimum projection of 3 years;
- VI. Current municipal regulations with an impact on tourism development;
- VII. Evidence of the symbolic appeal of the applicant locality;
- VIII. Description of public health and safety services to assist tourists in the event of an emergency;
- IX. Private and social investment for tourism development in the applicant locality; and
- X. Any other aspects deemed relevant to tourism by the Secretariat.

In these ten points, it is clear that there is no mention of the importance of social participation (residents and local authorities) in various aspects such as decision-making and involvement in the development and implementation of the PPM, unlike the 2006 version, which did include it—and in a prominent position, at that.

In 2018, with the arrival of a new political group in the Mexican government, the end of the PPM was announced, in the sense that the financial support component would be discontinued. Thus, starting in 2019, funding was no longer provided to the municipalities participating in the Program, and it was consequently removed from the Federal Expenditure Budget (Tolentino Morales 2023). Subsequently, in 2020, the National Strategy for Pueblos Mágicos was published (Secretaría de Turismo 2020) in which it can be seen that several eligibility criteria have changed and are now as follows:

- a) An updated inventory of tourism resources and attractions, accompanied by a photographic report, based on Form B of Annex 1 of the National Strategy.
- b) An updated directory of tourism service providers, based on Form C of Annex 1 of the National Strategy.
- c) A Municipal Tourism Program aligned with the National Development Program, PROSECTUR, the National Strategy, as well as sectoral and/or institutional plans and Programs at the state level. To this end, this Program

shall include, at a minimum, the following sections:

1. Assessment of socioeconomic conditions and tourism in the municipality.
 2. Sustainable tourism, with a special focus on the conservation and restoration of cultural heritage.
 3. Inclusive tourism with a social perspective.
 4. Management and allocation of budgetary resources focused on the maintenance and development of urban infrastructure related to tourism.
 5. Registration of information in the National Tourism Registry.
 6. Data entry into DATATUR.
 7. Quality standards and tourism certification.
 8. Training and professional development of tourism service providers.
 9. Development of the Ethnographic Classroom.
 10. Tourism promotion of the locality.
 11. Private sector participation.
 12. Integration of value chains.
 13. Comprehensive safety and security for tourists.
 14. Health and environmental safety.
 15. Section on indicators and targets.
- d) Cartographic information on the geographical boundaries of the tourist area to be designated as a Pueblo Mágico, highlighting the areas where the town's symbolic appeal is most clearly expressed.
- e) An official statement from the City Council declaring the following commitments regarding the tourist area:
1. To grant building permits only to structures that harmonize with the local architecture, in accordance with applicable regulations.
 2. To implement programs for the improvement and conservation of urban infrastructure.
 3. Implement a program to reorganize semi-permanent and/or street vending.
- f) A letter of commitment from the State regarding the allocation of budgetary resources and the management and implementation of actions aimed at the well-being and sustainable tourism development of the applicant locality.

As is evident, none of the above points mention the social participation of the community and local authorities, which, like the 2013–2014 version, leaves out this fundamental aspect—one that should continue to serve as the foundation upon which the entire PPM is based.

However, PROSECTUR 2020–2024 makes no mention of social participation in any of its four priority objectives (Priority Objective 1: Ensure a social approach and respect for human rights in the country's tourism sector; Priority Objective 2: Promote the balanced development of Mexico's tourist destinations; Priority Objective 3: Strengthen the diversification of tourism markets at the national and international levels; and Priority Objective 4: Promote sustainable tourism within the

national territory) mentions social participation that would support economic development, which confirms this tendency to ignore local communities, which, after all, are the custodians of that natural and/or cultural heritage (Secretaría de Turismo 2020).

The collaborative project led by Liliana López Levi and Carmen Valverde, titled “Pueblos Mágicos: An Interdisciplinary Perspective,” brings together specialists from across Mexico in various fields of study (architects, urban planners, anthropologists, etc.). The goal was to analyze all the Pueblos Mágicos from a variety of perspectives. This collaborative effort resulted in a five-volume collection comprising 20 chapters each one, each focusing on a different Pueblo Mágico and offering a unique perspective. This work has served as a benchmark for all scholars of the subject, addressing diverse topics such as identity, commerce, artisanal production, sustainable tourism, natural heritage conservation, collective imaginaries, the influence of marketing, the quantity and quality of tourism services, demographic shifts, environmental risks, the preservation of traditions, the influence (negative and/or positive) of local governments, the impact on infrastructure, paradigm shifts, and foreign influence, among many others.

Among the major studies that have focused on the local economies of the Pueblos Mágicos, we can mention some of those presented in this collective project, such as López Levi’s study on Valle de Bravo—which was designated a Pueblo Mágico in March 2005—in which he analyzes the relationship between tourism and real estate development (López Levi, L. (2015). Another notable study is the case of Amealco de Bonfil (González Gómez 2019), in which the authors correlate five elements to analyze the economic situation of this town: the town’s origins, its geographic identity, economic backwardness, the inertia of the PPM, and government support.

Another recent study is the one conducted by Arellano, Rojas, and Larios on Xicotepec, in which they analyze how to determine strategies for economic and sustainable development in this Pueblo Mágico based on a study of the local issues that influence the local economy (Arellano Solís 2022).

Finally, another 2025 study by Covarrubias, Vera, and Ascencio (2025) analyzes tourism in the Pueblos Mágicos from the perspective of economic activity development and as a source of job creation.

Methodology/Materials and Methods

To measure the impact of tourism on the local population in Michoacán’s Pueblos Mágicos, a direct method was used that relies on information provided by the local population, service providers, and tourists, focusing on the social perception of the economy. To achieve this objective, the necessary instruments were designed to obtain quantitative and qualitative data on residents’ perceptions of how the implementation of this public policy has impacted their local economy.

The methodology chosen to determine how residents assess the economic, social, and cultural impact of the program involves the use of standardized questionnaires and open-ended interviews (Hernández Sampieri 2008), the latter of which were recorded and subsequently transcribed. The questionnaires consisted of 20 items,

ranging from basic information such as place of origin, length of residence in the locality, age, gender, and type of work; the second part covers questions about their understanding of what this public policy entails, such as whether they are familiar with the program's regulations, how both local and federal governments handle decisions that affect them, what their rights and obligations are as residents of a Pueblo Mágico, who their representatives are before the authorities, among others; finally, the third section contains specific questions about their perceptions, such as whether they have noticed changes in the unemployment rate, whether the number of tourism services has increased, whether they have noticed improvements in the local economy, whether their economic activity has improved since their town was enrolled in the program, and whether their quality of life has improved.

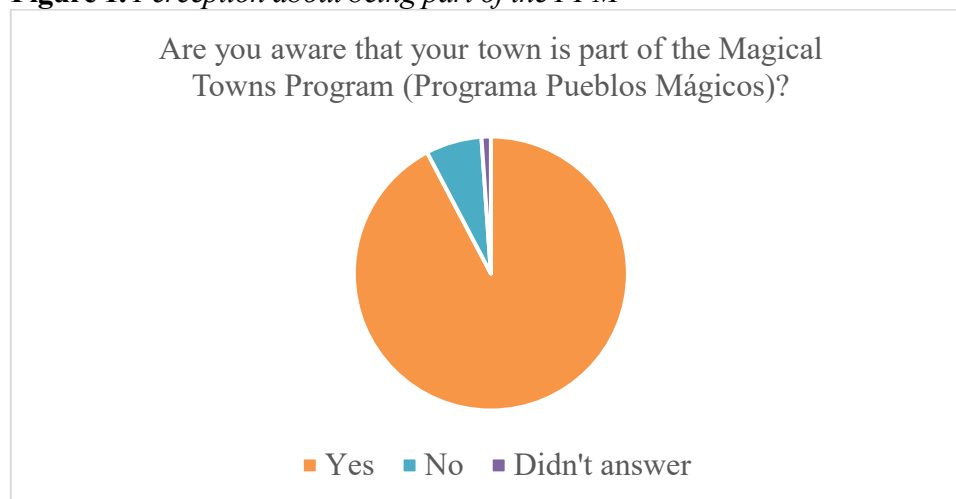
From August through December 2025, questionnaires were administered to key stakeholders (residents, tourists, merchants, and authorities); however, this document refers only to the residents of Michoacán's "Pueblos Mágicos," as defined by the date they were designated as part of the PPM: Pátzcuaro in 2002; Tlalpujahua in 2005, Cuitzeo in 2006, Santa Clara del Cobre in 2010, Tzintzuntzan, Jiquilpan, Tacámbaro, and Angangueo in 2012, Paracho in 2020, and Cotija in 2023. Using the following formula, the sample size of 272 questionnaires was calculated based on the number of inhabitants, with a 5% margin of error and a 90% confidence level.

$$\frac{\frac{z^2 \times p(1-p)}{e^2}}{1 + \left(\frac{z^2 \times p(1-p)}{e^2 N}\right)}$$

The results were cross-referenced with information gathered from government data sources, literature on the PPM, news articles, and official Mexican government websites.

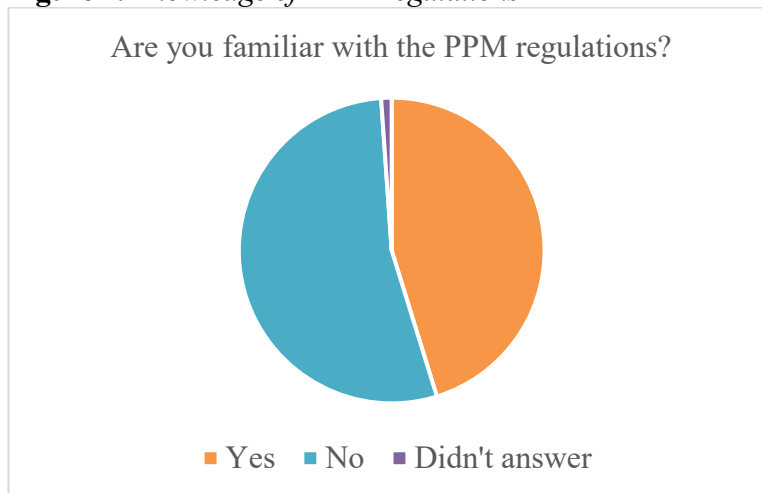
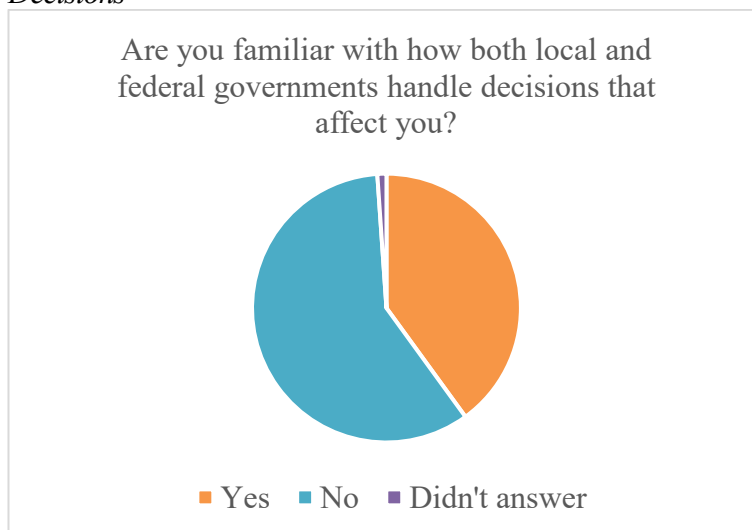
Results and Discussion

Using the information gathered, the data obtained were analyzed within the theoretical and methodological framework, yielding the following results.

Figure 1. Perception about being part of the PPM

When asked about their awareness of the Program's membership (Figure 1), it was found that the vast majority of the population was aware of it, but a few were unaware of this situation, even though it is obvious that it should directly affect them. When comparing this information with the following question (Figure 2) regarding whether they were familiar with the rules and regulations applicable to the PPM—such as the National Strategy for Pueblos Mágicos document published in 2020 and currently in effect—nearly half stated they were unaware of them, which can be interpreted as a lack of interest on the part of the population in understanding how this public policy directly affects them.

One of the biggest problems affecting the Mexican population in general is their lack of interest in participating in and learning about the public policies that affect their quality of life, economy, and even the social, political, and cultural contexts in which they live their daily lives, thereby ignoring the reality they face. This was evident in the responses to the question about their knowledge of how both local and federal governments handle decisions that affect them (Figure 3), as several respondents had never seen the government reports issued by their authorities each year or during each election cycle, or, if they had heard of them, they had never analyzed them.

Figure 2. Knowledge of PPM Regulations**Figure 3.** Regarding Knowledge of how both Local and Federal Governments Handle Decisions

When considered alongside this question and the next one (Figure 4), the lack of awareness and apathy surrounding this program becomes clear, as a high percentage of the population is unaware of their rights and obligations, resulting in virtually no active participation in anything related to the PPM—which ultimately affects their way of life.

In the following section of questions on specific aspects linking perception and the economy, the Sustainable Development Goals set forth in the UN 2030 Agenda were taken into account when drafting the questions, particularly Goal 8 on decent work and economic growth. The aim of this goal is to promote sustained, inclusive, and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment, and decent work for all.¹

¹Data obtained from the UN website <https://agenda2030.mx/ODSGoalSelected.html?ti=T&veArb=ODS0080&goal=0&lang=es#/ind> [05/04/2026]

Figure 4. *Regarding Knowledge of the Rights and Obligations as a Resident of a Pueblo Mágico*

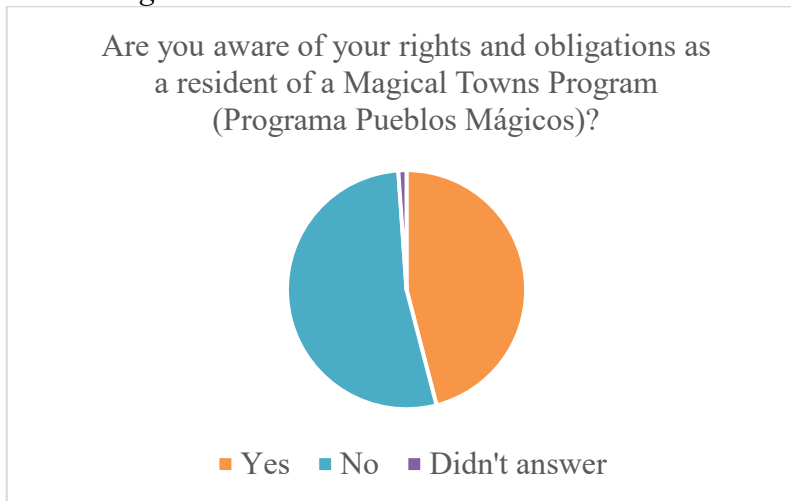
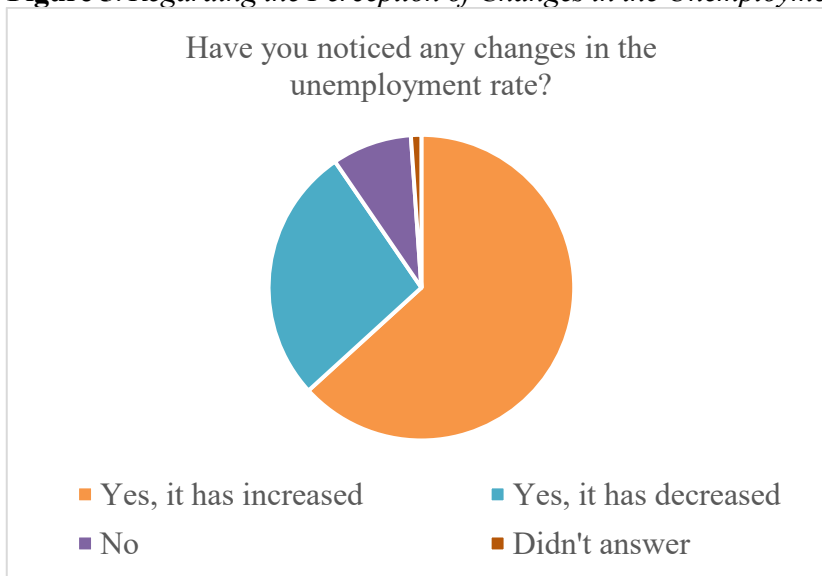


Figure 5. *Regarding the Perception of Changes in the Unemployment Rate*



According to government data available on the Data México website, the state of Michoacán has an unemployment rate of 1.17% for 2025, 1.17% for 2020, and 5.3% for 2010, indicating that, overall, unemployment has declined over the past two decades. However, 63% of the population in the surveyed Pueblos Mágicos perceives that unemployment has increased (Figure 5), mainly because there has been a significant rise in informal trade, which skews statistical data and negatively impacts established businesses.

One of the sectors most affected by informal commerce is tourism services, primarily due to the rise in tourist guides without formal training, the sale of handicrafts made in China, the sale of souvenirs not produced in the Pueblos Mágicos, and the sale of food at street stalls that do not meet minimum health standards, etc.

This can be seen in the results of Figure 6, where 67% of respondents report that established tourism services have not increased, in contrast to the number of informal businesses, which has skyrocketed in recent years.

Figure 6. *Regarding the Perception of the Increase in the Number of Tourist Services*

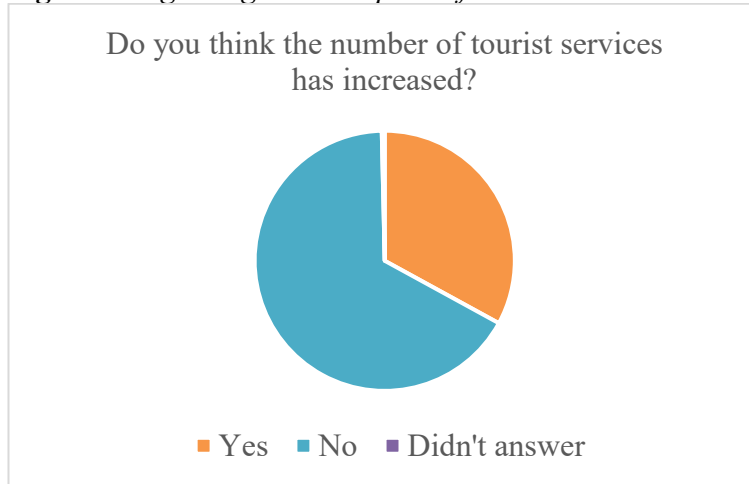
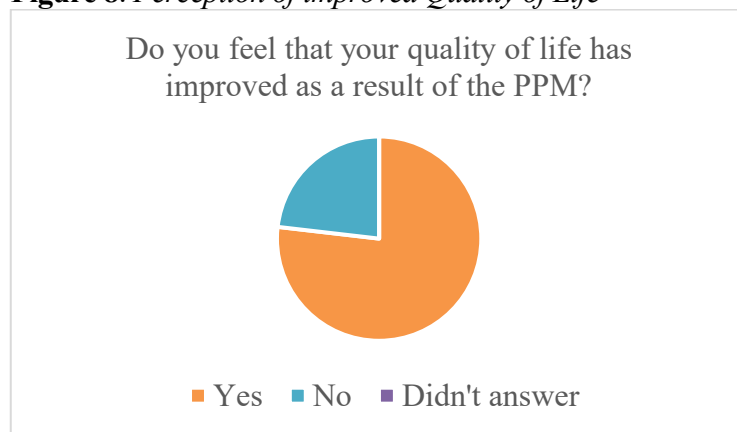


Figure 7. *Perception of Improvement in Personal Finances*



In contrast to the previous responses, the majority of the population perceives that their economic situation has improved since their town was enrolled in the PPM (Figure 7), and that the development of the local economy has generally improved. According to the responses obtained, respondents note that as visitor numbers have increased, the infrastructure of their Pueblos has improved (with the exception of Cuitzeo, where they believe it has not improved in any way). They view the increase in tourism as positive and believe that the economic benefits it brings have been beneficial for most residents.

Figure 8. *Perception of improved Quality of Life*

Together with the responses to the final question regarding whether their overall quality of life has improved (Figure 8), it is possible to see the correlation between the perception of economic improvement and improved quality of life (once again, with the exception of Cuitzeo) following their inclusion in the PPM.

Conclusions

Throughout this document, the research design process was outlined. Although this is only one component of the broader research project titled “Michoacán’s Pueblos Mágicos: Development, Tourism, and Sustainability”—funded by the Universidad Michoacana de San Nicolás de Hidalgo and conducted from 2024 through 2027—it forms an integral part of that initiative. The development of the theoretical and methodological framework guided the research, enabling the design of effective tools for collecting reliable data that captured the perceptions of residents in the ten Pueblos Mágicos of Michoacán regarding public policy, its implementation, and its impact on local economies.

By cross-referencing data with information obtained from official sources, the scope was broadened, identifying disparities between the reality of the reported figures and what the people perceive in their daily lives. The creation of graphs facilitated their analysis and interpretation.

The results from the second set of questions show that a significant part of the limited effectiveness of this public policy stems from the public’s lack of awareness regarding the PPM, as well as their apathy toward it, despite the fact that it has a real impact not only on their economy but also on their daily quality of life. Cultural tourism also impacts the preservation of both tangible and intangible heritage, as well as achieving the sustainability necessary for genuine development across all sectors: social, economic, environmental, and others.

Regarding the third section, the greatest difference was observed in the respondents’ perceptions of the relationship between public policy and the economy. For example, they acknowledge their lack of knowledge about the PPM and their apathy toward actively participating in its implementation, yet at the same time, they perceive improvements in their economic situation and quality of life.

In conclusion, we can state that further research is needed on the challenge of establishing a symbiotic relationship between public policy, cultural tourism, and the economy. The development of better governance tools, support for local tourism businesses and stakeholder groups such as artisans and service providers, improved public education regarding the PPM as a whole, and the enhancement of legislation governing cultural tourism all pave the way for more effective solutions.

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