This article is intended to strengthen qualitative studies on the social character of rural communities associated with protected areas. The objective is to characterize the social ethos of the community of La Peñuela, located in the National Park Nevado de Toluca, to know their values, beliefs, behavioral norms, preferences and motivations in relation to the development of tourism in the area. For its fulfillment takes the investigation having as theoretical premise-methodological sociological phenomenology of Alfred Schutz, and by applying an interpretive model that allows a content analysis as proposed by Lalive d'Epinay. Since a result we managed to identify the values and behavioral norms that limit the development of tourism in spite of having natural resources that are of great attractiveness.

KEY WORDS: community, qualitative study, tourism.