

HARMONIC TOURISM, LOCAL DEVELOPMENT FACILITATOR. CASE STUDY: SAN PEDRO TULTEPEC, ESTADO DE MEXICO, MEXICO

Rocío Serrano-Barquín
Centro de Investigación y Estudios Turísticos (CIETUR),
Facultad de Turismo y Gastronomía, Universidad Autónoma del Estado de México (UAEMex)
Toluca, México, México
e-mail: rocioserba@yahoo.com.mx

Daniela Palmas
(UAEMex)
Toluca, México, México
e-mail: hashir04@hotmail.com

Graciela Cruz-Jiménez
(CIETUR), UAEMex
Toluca, México, México
e-mail: gracicj@hotmail.com

Jesús G. Gutiérrez
Facultad de Geografía, UAEMex
Toluca, México, México
e-mail: gaston_g2001@yahoo.com.mx

ABSTRACT

Nowadays, topics about culture and nature have been key elements to find solutions for development and sustainability problems in which scientific and vernacular knowledge of rural communities is permeated. Among these solutions, "the harmonic tourism" is proposed as an element of a complex system that allows correlation between their elements. Also, incorporating sustainability as a fundamentation ideology in which local development can be promoted. This document does pretend to explain "the harmonic tourism" relation as a complex system and sustainability part, to propitiate the local development in *San Pedro Tultepec*, Mexico, which intends to rescue, conserve and preserve their cultural and natural resources.

Key words: harmonic tourism, sustainability, local development, complexity and complex systems.

INTRODUCTION

The negative impact caused by human beings to the environment, have led several natural disasters around the world becoming into catastrophes that jeopardize humans and other living lives. These events have increased the interest in finding out new knowledge to reduce this impact (natural and cultural), producing new paradigms with a main purpose, to explain and diminish these changes.

Between the main scientific and academic events focused in this problematic, among others, we can find the lectures by Founex (1971), Estocolmo (1972), PNUMA (2009), Brundtland Commission (Lebel y Kane, 1997; Gabaldón, 1996; Lezama, 2001; Conesa, 1998; WWF, 2010; OMT, 2002; PNUMA, 2009; Serrano-Barquín, 2008 y 2009; Leff, 2004), which have as a main objective new alternatives searches that allow the consolidation of the society development specially first world countries.

Tourism is considered a social phenomenon that has evolved throughout the years (Panosso, 2007; Acerenza, 2006; De Oliveira Santos, 2004; Farrell, 2004) in which the activities are immersed and closely related with natural and cultural resources in the receiving regions (Buckley, 2004; Higham, 2007; Cruz, *et al.*, 2010). For the economic and social importance, as well as, the impact of tourism, a great number of investigations, congresses, reunions and forums have been exposed with the purpose of promoting the *sustainable tourism* (Lopez and Palomino, 2007). If the analyze *sustainable tourism* from a concept proposed by the *World Wildlife Fund* (WWF, 2010) is the one that satisfies the tourist needs and present regions, at the same time protects and develops future opportunities. Sustainable tourism implies politic decisions which might be difficult to decide on and requires a long term vision, especially at the time of carrying out the planning process (OMT, 2002) in which the participation of tourist experts is crucial.

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Nevertheless, tourism study requires different alternatives of analysis that incorporates the problematic that contemporary society issue (Mowforth and Munt, 2003), for example, the complex system perspective. Some of the authors have considered tourism from this perspective are: Farrell (2004), Lazanski y Klajajic (2006), Faulkner (2000), Forero (2008), González (2004) y Serrano-Barquín (2008); these writers consider the complex system as evolutionary and in which each subsystem cannot be another independent system of study.

Serrano-Barquín (2008) correlates the Complex System Theory by Rolando Garcia (2006) with tourism and states an alternative to propose harmonic tourism as another way of thinking and make tourism that impels the sustainable local development, complementing the primary, secondary and tertiary activities, being tourism part of the complex system.

Among the main concepts by Serrano-Barquín that are being built, it can be found the “homo-ecosystem” seen as a complex system referred as an abstract of reality (environment), constituted by nature and the society indissolubly link to an evolutionary process; the “intuitive-rational environmental exploitation”, based in traditional knowledge of communities (intuition) and scientific knowledge generated in institutions (rational) for the conservation and utilization of natural and cultural resources in benefit of population; “ Participating Integrative Planning” which pretends the incorporation of different actors and sectors of the community, with an integral and sustainable vision based on the territorial ordering and the harmonic tourism as an integrating axis of the local development plan and the “Harmonic Tourism” seen as a complementary activity that impels local development, rescuing and protecting region’s natural and cultural resources to improve living levels in the receiving communities and tourists.

HARMONIC TOURISM, THEORETICAL AND METHODOLOGICAL CONSTRUCTION

From the complexity perspective, every phenomenon has different effects and at the same time is the result of many causes, implying that in real life there is no linearity because this one is much more complex (Morin, 2002, 2005, 2006; García, 2000a, 2000b, 2006; Le Moigne, 1996; Leff, 2000, 2004, 2010). Morin argues that complexity (2004:3) “first, seems to challenge our knowledge... The idea of complexity is an adventure; I would even say that we cannot enter into complexity’s problematic because simplicity is not as simple as it sounds”. Complexity is reality seen as totality, which can be understood through reflection, uncertainty; diversification of ideas and knowledge multiplicity that permits to approach new paradigms which give solutions to current problematic and these solutions could evolve (Palmas, *et al.*, 2011).

The complex thought is consider from the three Morin (2005; 2008) principals: *dialogic*, *resourceful* and *hologramatic* These principles of complex thinking are correlated and complemented to other activities and disciplines, at this focused in tourism, where this activity is part of everything and everything is part of it. The harmonic tourism and the complex thought are correlated, complemented and interrelated as Palmas, *et al.* (2011) says:

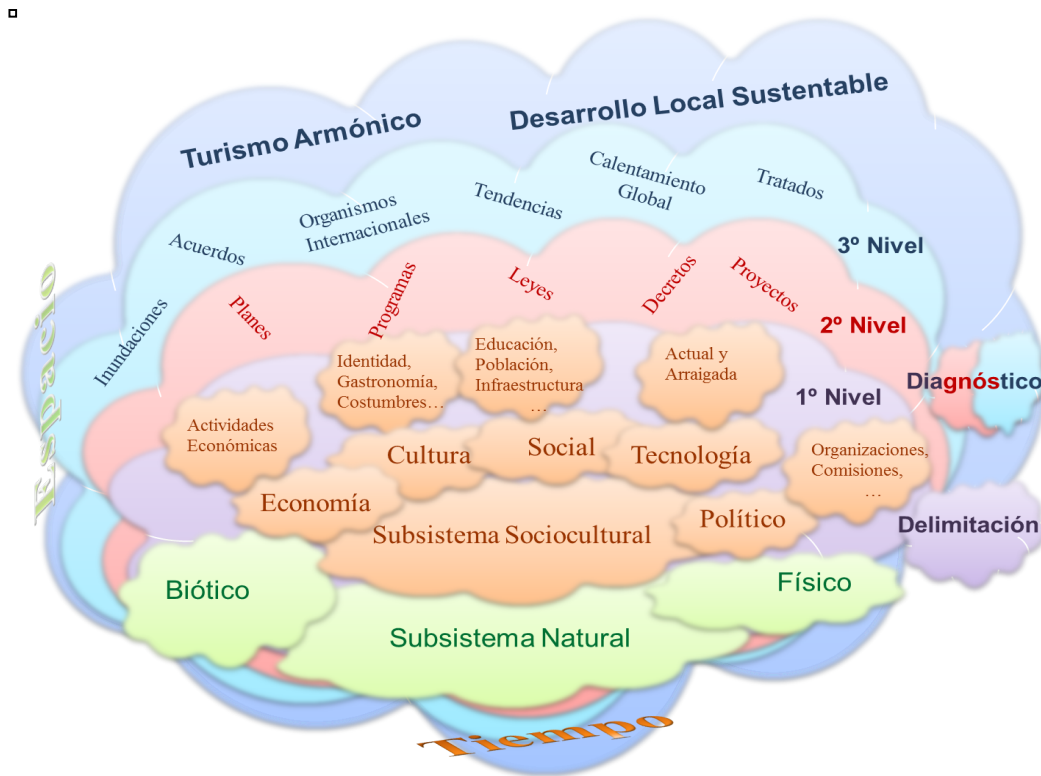
- Dialogic principal sets the complementary net to achieve the development and correct function of a phenomenon; in this case, harmonic tourism is a complementary activity to others that take place in the region. It is also necessary to use dialogic and considers the antagonism of sciences, facts and fundaments, among others, with the purpose of complementing tourism’s knowledge as an object of study.
- Resourceful principal says that a product is a producer at the same time. A cause is produced and it produces and effect; so that, harmonic tourism is an offered product or service caused by international or national politics causing negative (degradation) and positive (generating jobs) impacts to the environment.
- Hologramatic principal says that a part can be found in everything and everything is reflected in the part. That is the way harmonic tourism is considered, as an activity and a social phenomenon that involves movement, consumption, knowledge, interpretation, relaxation and recreation and at the same time connects nature with the social, political, economic, cultural and legal, between others.

From the analysis of complex thought and environmental perspective, we can see that the complex system is not linear (Garcia, 2006; Rivas, 2009; Herrscher, 2003, Serrano-Barquín, 2008), it breaks its causal scheme, because is unpredictability (Miller & Twining Ward, 2005). As for understanding and transforming reality, identifying the general principles and fundamentals of operating systems (Miramontes, 1999: 84), given the complexity of the phenomena, no study can cover all or relationships boundary conditions, however, you must take special interest in the interactions with their environment.

The complex system has no specific limits, and these can be seen through regionalization, cultural features and natural resources and others. That is, the complex system is not defined, and is based researcher who defines the epistemological framework proposed. So if the whole system is a man-modified ecosystem in which they operate different processes, hommoecosystem is a complex system composed of the natural subsystem and the subsystem sociocultural, in which the levels of processes are linked and divided into three: The first level refers to the local, here is embedded in society, the real and immediate phenomena that occur in a particular community or micro-region, the second level or metaprocess considers the region or nation and identifies the processes of the first level, in the third level, reflects a national or international level, and to determine the second-level processes (Garcia 2000b).

Whereas the objectives of the Theory of Complex Systems by Garcia (2006) are to develop a diagnosis and act on the system, the construction of the complex system and the generation of knowledge are carried out from empirical material with theoretical orientation, the dialectic between vernacular knowledge, scientific knowledge and reality. So we propose the study of tourism as an element of Hommoecosystem harmonic as dialogical activity, recursive and hologrammatic in figure no. 1.

Figure No. 1
Tourism as an element of Hommoecosystem harmonic (complex system)



Source: Own

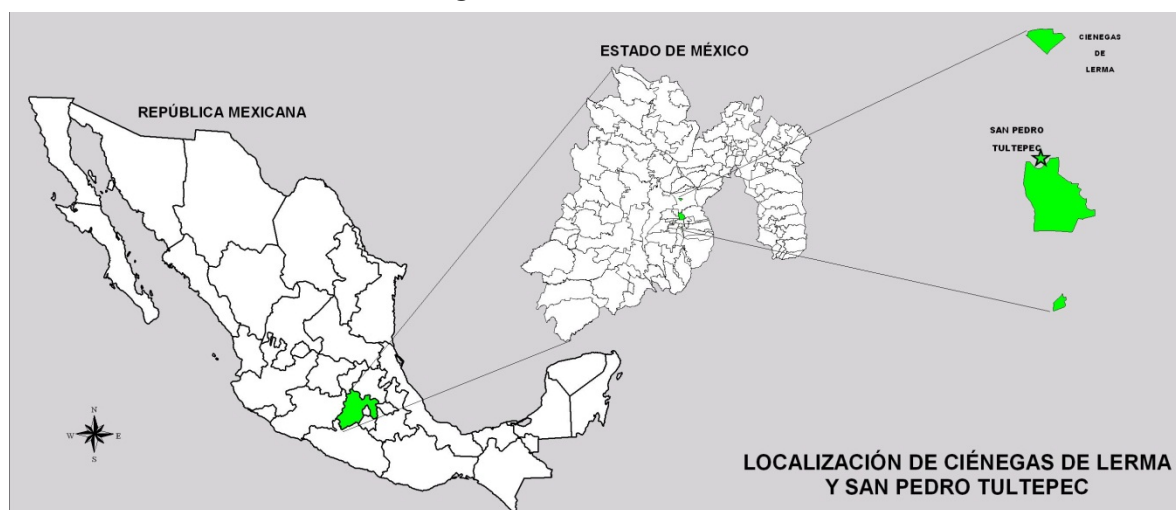
The figure shows the Hommoecosystem from the theoretical sections, in which the whole system is divided into natural and socio-cultural subsystems, each subsystem component is integrated systems, like biotic and abiotic, that from their interactions determine the specific nature of the place, also features like its internal logic, and the interrelationship between the natural subsystem components to determine the socio-cultural subsystem economy, society, culture, technology and politics of the place itself, and in turn, of which breaks down the elements that comprise it, as is the case of plans, programs, food, education, decrees, among others. It is also important to note that this model of complex system can be applied to specific case studies.

CASE STUDY: SAN PEDRO TULTEPEC

San Pedro Tultepec is located in the *Estado de Mexico*, which is one of the five states with more protected areas (SEMARNAT, 2009). However, the generation of solid and liquid waste, the extraction of water to supply the Mexico City and extreme deforestation, among other things, are affecting the ecosystem balance, so it is important to initiate actions to keep natural and cultural resources conserved because they are in risk at this time, that way future generations can count with these resources, This is sustainability's main goal (WTO, 2004). Nowadays, the state's population is over 15 million; the highest concentration is located in Mexico and Toluca's metropolitan areas (INEGI, 2010) which have the main employment's sources and services, causing unemployment, health problems, loss of identity, lack of family integrity and decrease in production levels around these communities.

Toluca Valley has 23 municipalities, it ranks as a second place in urban population concentration and economic activities in this state, also *Río Lerma's* upper part (figure no. 2). Within this, are the marshes of *Lerma* (RAMSAR site), which were composed of about 29 thousand hectares in the early twentieth century, with an average length in its North-South axis of more than 30 km (Sugiura, 1998). Currently there are only about 3 000 hectares (SEMARNAT, 2005). The wetland is divided into three bodies of water: *Chiconahuapan*, *Chimaliapan* or *Chimaleapan* and *Chignahuapan*, contamination's levels are more widespread and *Chimaliapan* Lagoon RAMSAR, which is altering the way of life for residents in *San Pedro Tultepec*.

Figure No. 2 Location sketch



Source: Own

The place's names came from *Nahuatl* dialect which means "tule on the hill" as the ancient inhabitants of this town was engaged in making handicrafts from the tule (Albores, 1995). The community, located in *Lerma's* town, 10 km away from Toluca, has 19.02 km² with 12.368 habitants (INEGI 2010). These municipality's flora and fauna is limited with various birds species about to be extinct, like the *Gachon*, coffee egret, egret, blue-winged, green-winged heron, coot, duck *voludo* boy *chaljuan* duck, redhead duck, duck frieze, duck shred and pintail (Viesca, 2011).

The total population in this place is 1.164 people who speak an indigenous language (CONAPO, 2010). The main economic activities are farming and manufacturing. In addition to workshops and crafts furniture wood (armadillos and furniture made of *tule*). The main religious festivals are the February 2nd *La Candelaria* and the June 27 *San Pedro*, the main tourist attraction is the fireworks, dancing and sale of handicrafts and furniture.

Now, there is the hommoecosystem of *San Pedro Tultepec* (Figure No. 1) where it replaced the natural subsystem and the sociocultural subsystem, and studied their interactions can be proposed harmonic tourism as sustainable tourism, to help in decreasing environmental impacts that are currently present in the studied community. For the specific case of *San Pedro Tultepec*, the community living around the water section, it is important to participate in rescuing, caring and preserving its natural and cultural resources, to achieve harmony

with the environment, which is the primary objective of the sustainable development and also a goal achieved with the integration of theoretical and methodological model.

CONCLUSIONS

Our present culture is facing media's the expansion of industrialization and socialization which makes up new horizons subjective, inter-subjective and alternative turn out to be a significant social problem. Added to this, environmental issues must internalize a knowledge that transcends disciplinary frameworks of specific sciences, in which knowledge is necessary to consider the community's vernacular and apply it with scientific knowledge, to try to interpret and understand the multidimensionality of phenomena that comprise it, forming an ideology based on sustainability. The proposal is under construction, so the goal to achieve this is contributing where participation and criticism are the foundation to strengthen it, to get to the construction of a theoretical and methodological framework for finding alternative solutions to environmental problems and community development, and so, the same actions in a framework of equity and social justice.

Nowadays, approaches have been taken with the community of *San Pedro Tultepec*, in which express deep concerns to curb pollution and save natural and cultural resources which have been passed through generations, and they see harmonic tourism as a tool to facilitate people's approach for caring and preserving their resources. Besides safety, tourism may allow women and young people to not search for a low-paid jobs out there in a different place, because they will continue near home and it will improve their quality of life.

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