

Harmonic Tourism Methodology: A proposal for tourism planning in rural communities

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Harmonic Tourism Methodology: A proposal for tourism planning in rural communities

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Abstract

Over the last years, complex systems and insights from planning theory have gained momentum in tourism planning and local community development. Resilience and vulnerability are structural features of complex systems and contribute in further bridging the gap between tourism development and the wider domain of social sciences. Hence, arises the need to design and implement embedded models that foster environmentally embedded tourism projects rooted in the know-how of communities and their interrelation with institutional knowledge and third-order change. This chapter presents the Harmonic Tourism Methodology (HTM) as an alternative for community-based and community-led tourism planning. The methodology considers the interplay of rational and traditional knowledge emanating from a diagnosis of complex systems at the basis of community tourism projects. Two subsystems (biophysical and anthropic) reflecting embedded environmental and socio-ecological features of livelihoods are acknowledged in the methodology. The methodology was applied in the study of four rural communities in Mexico and one in Colombia. Evidence was collected from key stakeholders, the research community and a review of rational information through a multiscale longitudinal perspective. This chapter concludes that the HTM can be a valuable mechanism in rural tourism planning that enables communities to adapt to site-specific vulnerabilities and, in turn, enhance destination resilience in the long-term.

Keywords: Harmonic Tourism Methodology, Destination Resilience, Rural Tourism; Tourism Planning.

Introduction

Tourism represent nowadays one of most important and growing economic sectors worldwide (UNWTO, 2019a), with developing countries showing a significant upward trend both in terms of travel and revenues (UNWTO, 2011; WTTC, 2018; Yeoman, 2012). Estimates from the United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) for the year 2018 accounted for nearly USD\$ 1,45 trillion in revenues (UNWTO, 2019a), with around 10% of the jobs worldwide being connected to travel and tourism (UNWTO, 2019b). In the forthcoming years, the direct economic contribution of tourism to the world's GDP is expected to growth around 3.9% annually (WTTC, 2018; WTTC, 2019a; 2019b). Overall, tourism is a globalizing phenomenon that encompasses urban as well as rural communities and provides a wide range of skilled and unskilled job opportunities. The geographical reach and the economic diversification of tourism heavily relies on the use and access to natural and socio-cultural resources. The latter need to be efficiently managed in order to enhance the benefits whilst mitigating the negative impacts (Hall & Lew, 2009). Ideally, well-planned tourism development projects should encompass income generation, job creation, regional development, urban revitalization, resource management, cultural identity and protection of endangered flora and fauna through a holistic approach (CNET, 2019). However, the complexity of tourism planning comes with the identification of shortcomings, including the negative externalities of tourism in the natural environment (Acerenza, 2006; Jimenez, 1986) and its sociocultural impacts on the host community (Monterrubio Cordero, 2011; 2018).

More recently, global institutions like the World Bank, the United Nations (UN), the United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) and the UNWTO have promoted tourism as a flywheel for poverty reduction in remote and least developed contexts (UN, 2017; UNESCO, 2010; UNWTO, 2017; World Bank, 2019). Tourism development well suits the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and Agenda 2030. According to the UNWTO (2017, p. 27), "tourism is a key sector for achieving the SDGs and can be a powerful vehicle to promote and reach the milestones of the ambitious agenda". In particular, sound tourism development policies in rural areas and communities can foster "inclusive and sustainable economic growth" (SDG #8) (UN, 2019a, n.p.), reduce poverty and inequalities (SDGs #1 and #10) and promote climate action (SDG #13) (UN, 2019b). To achieve these goals, tourism planners should reconsider the "potential for partnerships that recognise local development strategies, develop community capabilities and build sustainable outcomes based on a locally led agenda" (Hughes & Scheyvens, 2018, p. 17).

The vision for 2030 is to “implement policies to promote sustainable tourism that creates jobs and promotes local culture and products” (UNWTO, 2017, p. 10).

The inclusion of socio-ecological features within the frame of the SDGs can have important positive impacts for sound tourism planning. In particular, it can help support communities in vulnerable contexts, enhance their proactive participation in knowledge creation and reduce their exposure to natural hazards and climate change in the Anthropocene (Hall, Baird, James & Ram, 2016; Saarinen, 2019). Risk reduction to natural hazards and community-driven sustainable development are key to the Sendai Framework (UNISDR, 2015). The framework stresses on the role national and local authorities should play in defining and implementing integrated actions to reduce vulnerability and, in turn, enhance resilience (UNISDR, 2015). Tourism much fits the purpose of resilience building, particularly in remote rural regions prone to short-and-long term environmental vulnerability (Lew, 2014). Under such emerging paradigm, market-driven tourism growth strategies targeting traditional forms of mass tourism are put into question and replaced with ‘alternative’ modes of development that enable socially and economically marginalized local stakeholders to be in the forefront of community-driven, resilient practices of natural and cultural resource management (Ruiz-Ballesteros, 2011). However, many of these initiatives are stand-alone and short-lived cases at the micro-level (Hall et al., 2016), with the majority of tourism development projects conceiving development from a western-minded perspective and little-to-no acknowledgment of the indigenous communities (Moscardo 2011a; 2011b; Mowforth & Munt, 2015).

In practice, much remains to be done. To date, most of tourism development projects do not consider the complexity of societies and the interrelations between ecological, political and socio-cultural dimensions. In this context, this chapter introduces and applies the Harmonic Tourism Methodology (HTM) (Palmas, Serrano-Barquín & Gutierrez, 2017) as a way forward to include the aforementioned dimensions in the study and implementation of sound community-driven and resilient practices of holistic tourism planning. The underpinnings of this methodology are that tourism destinations are complex systems consisting of interdependent and inter-definable elements (Serrano-Barquin, 2008) and that the correlation between vernacular and rational knowledge enables for inclusive and proactive modes of destination governance and decision-making among relevant tourism stakeholders and the local community.

This chapter consists of four sections. The first section provides the theoretical and conceptual foundations of the HTM, with an emphasis on the notions of vulnerability and resilience within the tourism planning discourse. The second paragraph introduces the HTM and its features, with a focus on the findings from the rural contexts in Mexico and Colombia where the methodology was applied. Finally, the conclusions section provides a summary of the content addressed in the chapter and outlines a range of key recommendations for practitioners to consider in relation to the HTM in resilient and inclusive destination planning.

Vulnerability and resilience in tourism planning: A Complex Systems approach

Complexity is the essence that allows science to push aside the simplistic, reductionist and mechanistic thinking and enhance knowledge creation in a dialectic, recursive and hologrammatic way (Morin, 2005). Tourism as a research subject is rather complex to be streamlined under pre-defined disciplinary boundaries, with scholars advocating for transdisciplinary and post-disciplinary forms of knowledge creation (Coles, Hall & Duval, 2016) that acknowledge the complexities of tourism and its multiple overlapping perspectives. The theory of Complex Systems conceives planning as “self-organizing, with diverse agents, many interactions and non-linear dynamics” (Innes & Booher, 2018, pp. 33-34) that ultimately culminate in adaptive practices of decision-making “that reflect the diversity of the environment” (Innes & Booher, 2018, p. 34). The theory of Complex Systems has been applied in the field of tourism (Farrell & Twining-Ward, 2005; Mill & Morrison, 1985; Serrano-Barquin, 2008; Serrano-Barquín, Ramírez, Campos & Melgarejo 2010; Rivas, 2009) and challenges the notion of cause-effect linear systems that dominates mainstream tourism policy-making and destination management (Clarke & Godfrey, 2002; Ejarque, 2003; Mason, 2015). Arguably, the inclusion of Complex Systems theory can be defined as a problem-centred knowledge (or mode 2) in the tourism knowledge system (Tribe, 2004; Tribe & Liburd, 2016) as it stretches beyond the domain of business and management studies.

In ecology and environmental studies, Complex Systems theory can help understand the impact of triggering events and environmental jolts (Linnenluecke & Griffiths, 2013) in relation to socio-

environmental systems. In particular, the alterations of one specific trigger can propagate in multiple ways and forms that, particularly in context of high vulnerability, can lead to episodes of drastic adaptation and reorganization at the landscape, network, actor and personal levels (García, 2006; Geels, 2005; Gössling et al., 2012). According to García (2006), Complex Systems theory enables to appraise the relationship between nature and anthropic activities through a multiscale perspective (local to global) that considers embedded historical and structural constraints and their relevance in the framing of conceptual, epistemological and ontological realities. Table 1 below provides an overview of the items and concepts central to complex system thinking in relation to community-based development. The shift towards reflexive thinking and research positionality addressed in the table underpins the third and fourth stage of qualitative tourism research (Riley & Love, 2000).

TABLE 1 GOES HERE

Alongside Complex Systems theory, two further insights rooted in ecology have been recently introduced in tourism policy and planning. The first one is the notion of vulnerability, here defined as “the susceptibility of a system to disturbances determined by exposure to perturbations, sensitivity to perturbations and the capacity to adapt” (Nelson, Adger & Brown, 2007, p. 396). Vulnerability represents an important paradigm in the analysis of human-environment systems within the framework of sustainability and global environmental change science (Turner et al., 2003). According to Berkes (2007), the study of vulnerability is necessary for three reasons. First, it allows for a holistic approach in the assessment of risks that can undermine natural and social environments. Second, it helps understanding the ability of systems to face, absorb and adapt from risks. Third, it allows a glimpse into the future to explore policy options and how to cope with uncertainty and change the future. In a similar fashion, studies on the vulnerability of tourism destinations predominantly focus on contexts recently affected by natural disasters (e.g. Calgaro, Lloyd & Howes, 2014) and their exposure to short-and-long term triggers like climate change, earthquakes and weather-related hazards. Research on destination vulnerability embodies the notions from the Complex Systems theory (Calgaro, 2010; Njoroge, 2014; Orchiston, 2012), yet it is rather limited As Calgaro (2010, p. 6) observes:

“Much of the published work focuses on a few select factors and, in doing so, fails to capture the complexity of vulnerability and its contextualised manifestation in a given place. But there is a more fundamental problem with current research on destination vulnerability; there are few theoretical parameters for furthering our knowledge and guiding more comprehensive assessments”.

The second insight is the concept of resilience. Studies on tourism and resilience are very recent and are gaining momentum (see Hall, Prayag & Amore, 2017, pp. 53-58 for a review). To date we can identify different definitions of resilience that are relevant to destination policy and planning. While Lew (2014) recalls the concept of ecological resilience deployed by Holling (1973), Larsen, Calgaro and Thomalla (2011) adopt the definition of social resilience introduced by Pelling (2003, p. 489) and link it to the “conception of governance as a negotiated and contested normative process”. On the other hand, Becken (2013) develops a conceptual framework of destination resilience that encompasses the different perspectives of relevant tourism stakeholders, while Adie (2019) stresses on the importance of individuals response and resilience to disaster in destination contexts. It might be argued that scholars are currently some distance from an agreed definition of destination resilience (Hall et al., 2017). Nevertheless, it should be acknowledged that such definitions vary depending on the focus of the study and the type of disaster/crisis affecting the destination. This point is further illustrated in Lew (2014), which conceives destination resilience as the ability of hospitality entrepreneurs and host communities to absorb a given disturbance caused by either slow changes or sudden shocks.

Recent advancements in the conceptualization of destination resilience tend to provide a multi-faceted notion that links to the different dimensions identified in the literature and the concepts of vulnerability and risk reduction (Amore, Prayag & Hall, 2018; Hall et al., 2017). On the one hand, destination resilience acknowledges “how, even though one element of a destination may be affected by change or disaster, other parts may be able to respond and even thrive under new conditions” (Hall et. al., 2017, p. 107). On the other hand, Luthe and Wyss (2014, p. 161) conclude that “change processes and their interrelations have become more complex in a globalized, accelerated world, placing tourism under pressure to respond and adapt to various factors”. Ultimately, destination resilience and vulnerability reduction can be best understood through a multilevel perspective that frames landscape, regimes, niches and actors as integrated elements in

the destination system (Amore et al., 2018). The interrelation between actor and structure underpins the theory of structuration (Giddens, 1984) on “how human agency simultaneously creates and responds to the objectified socio-ecological order” (Larsen, Calgaro & Thomalla, 2011, p. 482).

The theory of Complex Systems and the notions of destination vulnerability and destination resilience are strongly linked to the sustainability paradigm (Hall et al., 2018; Ruiz-Ballesteros, 2011; Xu, Marinova & Guo, 2015). Resilience thinking and the proactive role of communities in reducing socio-ecosystem vulnerabilities are key to pursue long-term sustainability of destinations (Ruiz-Ballesteros, 2011). At the same time, sustainability management in tourism planning and destination resilience building should be conceived two sides of the same coin in order to achieve societal development and thus reduce vulnerabilities (Hall et al, 2017; Xu et al, 2015). As Hall et al. (2017, p. 151) further explain:

Resilience therefore contributes to thinking about sustainability as well as providing a basis for decision-making for sustainability, but it does not replace the concept. Instead, the concept of resilience potentially reinforces the need for better understanding of systems and the interconnections between the different dimensions or ‘pillars’ of sustainability and the central role that the environment and natural capital plays.

Building from Amore et al. (2018), Dredge and Jenkins (2011), Hall (2008) and Hall et al. (2017), we can identify six key attributes of sustainability relevant to vulnerability and resilience in tourism policy and planning. Emphasis is put on the capacity of stakeholders to be able to change, adapt, and implement policies that reflect the specific socio-political and socio-cultural underpinnings of local communities at large. Ultimately, a networked community approach is key in the reframing the governance of destinations towards more participatory and deliberative metagovernance archetypes (Amore & Hall, 2016). Inclusive stakeholder networking is crucial in ensuring participation and ownership of the wider community in tourism planning and policy-making (Hall, 2011), particularly in the management of conservation and pro-poor tourism initiatives in less-developed countries (Nantongo, Byaruhanga, & Mugisha, 2007; Zapata, Lindo, Hall & Vanderschaeghe, 2011).

Community Based Tourism (CBT) represents a viable approach that can help reframing current tourism policy and planning discourses towards sustainability, resilience building and vulnerability reduction. The concept was first introduced in the 1980s (Murphy, 1985) to define tourism services directly activated and operated by the communities to the benefit and diversification of rural economies (Pié et al., 2012). Community Based Tourism practices allow indigenous communities of rural regions to collectively manage their resources and associated tourism services (ACS, 2019; Montoya, 2013), enhance their tourist appeal and generate sustainable practices or economic, social and environmental sustainable development (Azevedo, 2007; Kiss, 2004; Palomino, Gasca Zamora & Lopez Pardo, 2016). The importance of Community-Based Tourism within the frame of resilience is acknowledged in the literature. As Ruiz-Ballesteros (2011, p. 664) observed in the study of Agua Blanca, Ecuador, a communitarian approach to tourism planning:

encourages resilience since it helps members of the community to live with change and uncertainty in mind, nurture the diversity of the socio-ecosystem, combine different types of knowledge and create opportunities for self-organization on the basis of equity in the access and distribution of resources.

The nexus between complex socio-ecological systems, resilience and vulnerability, sustainable development paradigm and the key role of indigenous communities call for a redefinition of tourism policy and planning that blends academically rigorous rational knowledge and vernacular knowledge, with the latter defined the transmission of popular knowledge from generation to generation. On the one hand, the rationalization common to planning professionals and academics facilitates “the planning and management of a hospitality network for development regulated via bottom-up consensus” (Costa, 2013, p. 2). On the other hand, traditions and folklore are priceless attributes common to rural communities that need to be preserved and enhanced to sustain the socio-ecological balance in the face of short-and-long term environmental triggers (Petrini, 2013).

Harmonic Tourism Methodology (HTM) as a basis for project planning.

The HTM arises from the notion of harmonic tourism proposed by Serrano-Barquín (2008). The latter conceives tourism as the linchpin that connects the principles of sustainability, the environmentally intuitive-rational use of natural and cultural resources and their complementarity within complex systems. Nature is the basis of life and it is the essential condition for any social activity, including tourism, to exist (Serrano-Barquín, 2008). A series of steps are needed for tourism to actually constitute the harmonic denominator for the implementation of development practices that respect both nature and society (Serrano-Barquín et al., 2010, p. 973). The HTM provides the ultimate method to empirically apply the principles of harmonic tourism in destination contexts. Building from the theory of complex systems (García, 2006), complexity (Morin, 2005) and the principles of sustainability (Masera, Astier & López Ridaura, 2000; UN, 2015). A first application of the HTM was made in the community of San Pedro Tultepec de Quiroga (Mexico) (Palmas, 2015) and, more recently, in the communities of Acatzingo, San Juan Atzingo and Malinalco (Mexico) and Santa Fe de Antioquia (Colombia). Building from the evidence collected in these five different contexts, Figure 1 below illustrates in detail the steps of the HTM.

FIGURE 1 GOES HERE

As the figure suggests, the first step of the HTM is the identification of the problems for the communities. It is during this phase that the HTM enables to define those socio-ecological vulnerabilities that need to be solved or mitigated. This can either help in the definition of new community-based projects or in the reframing of current projects. In the cases of Malinalco and Santa Fe de Antioquia, there were emerging vulnerabilities among local residents as result of a top-down tourism development approach. These included impacts on public services, the surge of temporary and low-paid jobs and the increase of land values.

Conversely, the communities in San Pedro Tultepec de Quiroga Acatzingo and San Juan Atzingo had to cope with high levels of pollution in the wetland, with no support or poor community-based tourism planning approach from government. In San Pedro Tultepec de Quiroga the communities sought to desiccate the wetland to quickly reverse economic decline. Other environmental vulnerabilities were observed in San Juan Atzingo, with biodiversity loss and increased

deforestation, with relevant consequences particularly among indigenous groups. Finally, in both San Juan Atzingo and Acatzingo, immigration and lack of equal opportunities were observed among the major socio-demographic vulnerabilities. These vulnerabilities further undermine the unique mix of cultural and natural resources.

The second step of the HTM is the characterization of the complex system. It is at this stage that the methodology distinguishes between two subsystems; on the one hand, the characterization of the biotic elements that characterize the local natural environment. On the other hand, the anthropic elements that ascribe to the social, economic, political and technological dimensions of communities. The audit in Malinalco and Santa Fe de Antioquia showed similarities with regards to complex system characterization. These included historic settlement and development, local microclimate, flora and fauna and the welcoming nature of the local communities. Ultimately, these features were all considered in the framing of each of the two sites.

In the case of San Pedro Tultepec, instead, the local complex system was framed from longitudinal and spatial perspectives. In the former case, emphasis was put on the desiccation of the area resulting from the water supply project for Mexico City between the 1940s and the 1970s. In the latter case, the wetland is a protected natural site under the RAMSAR. The community living in the area is a combination of biotic and anthropic features that are reflected in the local gastronomy, music, popular culture and beliefs and arts and crafts.

The rich mix of cultural and natural resources characterizes the complex destination system of San Juan Atzingo and of the Tlahuica indigenous community of. The latter has a long tradition in the area dated back to the pre-Hispanic domination, with customs and traditions carried for generations. Unlike other communities in San Juan Atzingo, the Tlahuica community identity is strongly tied to the complex biotic and anthropic features of the area. Indigenous advocacy groups have been established to preserve the vulnerable ecological system and, in turn, protect culture and traditions from being forever lost. The Tlahuica community retains unique terrain, ecological rural housing, forming a differential harmonic agro-ecosystem, framed by a unique site appreciation, in which pre-Hispanic remains and a simple food are preserved.

The third step of the HTM foresees the diagnosis of the complex system. The auditing of biotic and anthropic foresees the use of pre-defined taxonomies as illustrated in Table 2 below. The use of predefined categories and attributes under two main subsystems helps framing the necessary

information to better understand complex and non-linear systems. In particular, the table facilitates the integration of information from two distinct skills. On the one hand, evidence of the vernacular knowledge that the researcher, as embedded actor, gathers during the fieldwork, the engagement with the participants and the rapport with the community. The role of the community as custodian of traditions and folklore for generations is here scrutinized and assessed with the support of rational evidence, which helps interpreting the symbiotic relationship between communities and the local ecosystem.

TABLE 2 GOES HERE

In this step is the knowledge blending stage, during which the researcher analyses and interprets the evidence from the previous steps. This analytical phase is rooted in qualitative research inquiry and case study methodology for data triangulation and reliability purposes. Case study approaches in the study of community-based tourism is ideal in the analysis of bottom-up tourism planning projects (Dredge & Jenkins, 2007; 2011). As Dredge and Jenkins (2011, p. 3) observe, “for many researchers and practitioners, active involvement in tourism planning and policy processes will contribute very nuanced insights into the social worlds in which tourism planning and policy happens”. Ultimately, case studies contribute to the development of reflective and context-dependent fluid knowledge (Dredge & Jenkins, 2011; Flyvbjerg, 2006).

In the case of Malinalco, the evidence collected shows how natural and cultural resources have been overexploited in the name of tourism growth. However, there are signs of destination resilience, with the community carrying adaptive management processes to mitigate the existing vulnerabilities. Initiatives such as the introduction of alien flora as part of ecological adaptation was observed in Malinalco, with the introduction of plants and agricultural products like agave and mezcal. Moreover, the local community has engaged in adaptive approaches to reflect the demands tourists seeking a closer connection with nature.

Similarly, the community of Santa Fe de Antioquia is particularly exposed to demand-driven tourism growth, with implications in terms of authenticity, local identity and social cohesion. In addition, we assisted to a steady process of community displacement as result of increased land

value. The evidence collected in Santa Fe de Antioquia denotes a high level of disaffection among the local community, with several cases of economic adaptation to reflect the instances of tourists. In terms of liveability and quality of life, services in the area have become more expensive due to tourist inflation. Moreover, the lack of skilled workforce in the area make the area open to jobs for migrants and voluntary seasonal populations.

Focusing on San Pedro Tultepec de Quiroga, the area shows a high degree of contamination in the wetlands and episodes of illegal hunting involving tourists from the United States. Conversely, the Tlahuica indigenous community in San Juan Atzingo is facing extinction, with only 28.35% of the population living in the area and 10.54% of the inhabitants speaking the Tlahuica language. Initiatives towards community-led economic development have sought to valorise biotic, social and cultural capital through tourism. Among these, the collection of wild edible mushrooms and myco-tourism (see chapter by Jimenez and Adie in this book). Ultimately, the analysis carried in San Juan Atzingo enable to assess the potential of tourism projects and their impact in the quality of live of indigenous communities. More importantly, it enabled younger generations to regain interest and knowledge on disappearing traditions and skills.

Evidence from Acatzingo shows the potential of agritourism produce and products. These improve and differentiate local destination marketing, with backyard agriculture further enhancing the appeal of destinations while benefiting the local community. Cultivation translates as an element of both community and destination resilience. On the one hand, agritourism in Acatzingo acts as a counter solution to the interference of cultures from outside the community. On the other hand, is mitigates the vulnerabilities associated to endangered environment and community wellbeing.

The fifth stage of the HTM consists of objective settings, strategy design and implementation (Figure 2). Building from the blending between vernacular and traditional knowledge, the community and the researcher identify the issues undermining the socio-ecological landscape. Subsequently, strategies are outlined to allow the recovery and preservation of natural and cultural resources of the community.

FIGURE 2 GOES HERE

Evidence from Acatzingo, San Juan Atzingo and San Pedro Tultepec de Quiroga confirmed the need for these destinations to address ecological vulnerabilities through recovery and preservation. More importantly, the HTM enabled the identification of new tourism development possibilities. In particular, in San Pedro Tultepec, the methodology identified the wetland as the most important resource for the community. Emphasis is put on disseminating information about tangible and intangible services offered by the lagoon to the community in order to promote ecological awareness and associated benefits. The recommendation is to promote the collaborative work carried by landowners to the wider community and seek for a stronger support from government institutions. Moreover, community education towards tourism is recommended, with tourism seen as a complementary activity to support the local economy and the wider regional development strategy (Palmas et al., 2018).

In the case of San Juan Acatzingo, culture represents the strongest element of the HTM. The nexus between the Tlahuica and the natural resources enhances the valorisation of the forest and its importance for the liveability of the indigenous community. Recommendations are for the development of projects aiming at strengthening the existing harmony between biotic, sociocultural and institutional subsystems. Conversely, the area of Acatzingo shows with traditional food like the hedgehog squash. The latter represents a potential in relations to the natural, cultural and economic subsystems.

The final step of the HTM is the implementation of projects in the communities. This is the ultimate outcome of community-based approach central to the methodology, with the inclusion of vernacular knowledge and local empowerment going hand in hand with rational knowledge and the role of the researcher as a facilitator. In the cases of Malinalco and Santa Fe, research was carried and reported to the corresponding authorities in order to apply an alternative tourism policy paradigm. The shifts from market to the local community is meant in these cases to strengthen local identity and social cohesion.

Focusing on San Pedro Tultepec, a new tourism project was proposed to the community with the introduction of a tour boat on the wetlands. The tour foresees activities aimed at wetland clearance from waste and litter. It then continues with a further itinerary showcasing the mix of flora and fauna living in the wetland ecosystem. The tour ends with a session where local artisans produce and sell tule crafts, with traditional food and products from the wetland. Conversely, in the case of

San Juan Atzingo, the focus is on the preservation of ancestral knowledge within the indigenous Tlahuica community through a cohesive and collaborative approach between different stakeholders. More holistic projects are encouraged, with institutions proactively supporting actions that promote myco-tourism and protect the vulnerable ecosystem. Finally, the community of Acatzingo is encouraged to deliver projects combining vernacular and rational knowledge. Agritourism has the potential to differentiate the rural economy, with the hedgehog squash representing an opportunity to promote the area for niche food tourism.

Conclusions

This chapter presented the HTM and its application to the drafting and implementation of tourism planning practices rooted in community-based approach within the frames of sustainability, vulnerability and resilience. It is suggested that harmonic practices of tourism planning can be built when the methodology is community-driven and empowers proactive local participation. The HTM represents a step forward towards participatory and deliberative archetypes of metagovernance encompassing vernacular traditions, morals, habits and values of the local community. The methodology reflects the postdisciplinary nature of tourism knowledge, with the latter attaining from a different range of disciplines such as anthropology, history ecology, environmental sciences, sociology, business studies, political studies and human geography. It is this flipped approach in knowledge creation that leads to new thoughts and addresses the empirical realm beyond what Sayer (1999) defines disciplinary parochialism.

The integration between vernacular knowledge and rational knowledge can be data-intensive, especially in the prospective of longitudinal research. It is nonetheless necessary to gather as much evidence as possible during the auditing process in order to deliver an effective diagnosis and, in turn, design adequate solutions. This is particularly important in context subject to short-and-long term vulnerabilities tied to climate change, biodiversity loss and other environmental hazards. The transition from vulnerable towards resilient communities requires time and cannot be achieved without the proactive participation of the community. Their capacity to become resilient

encompasses several dimensions and levels connected to each other and are far from being linear. Rather, they are a further reflection of destinations as complex systems.

The HTM and the evidence from the observed case studies suggest that enhanced practices in community-based tourism planning can reduce existing systemic vulnerabilities and enhance the resilience of destinations. From a socio-ecological perspective, the recovery of natural and anthropic features of rural communities can be seen as a valuable practice of resilience building. From a sustainable development point of view, instead, communities proactively participate and contribute in the preservation of natural and cultural resources for future generations.

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