

REVIEW ARTICLE

Smart Tourism Destinations—Reminder to the host community

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ABSTRACT

This article aims to contribute to the construction of critical thinking on tourism, providing reflections on the concept of Smart Tourism Destinations, which should, in the author's opinion, be considered for its timely reconstruction. The concept of intelligence that sustains it is basically questioned, as well as some dangers related to its competitive and commercializing simplification. The methodology is based on argumentative bibliographic research, and is complemented with results of previous empirical research, which are inspired by critical epistemology, which questions the traditional tendency in the construction of knowledge about tourism. It concludes by substantiating a much more encompassing conception of human intelligence and reaffirming the need for a methodology aimed at developing all the intellectual, emotional and spiritual potentialities of the people who inhabit the destinations.

Keywords: intelligence; intelligent destination; Smart Tourist Destination; local actors

1. Introduction

A “new concept” threatens to impose itself in the fashionable discourse of governments and international organizations, including Mexico. It is “smart tourist destinations”, which are taking shape as the technological promise that will guarantee the future of the misnamed “smokeless industry”. The notion has a series of attractions that contribute to sell it as promising; however, it could be suitable as a new curtain for the reproduction of the traditional formulas of tourism, based on an innovative rationalization of capitalism, which, in the official speeches, are accompanied by the qualifier of sustainable or sustainable.

The idea, seen as a potential for worldwide development, has multiple debatable aspects that could be approached from very different points of view, for example: the real divorce that it can provoke with the receiving communities; its elitist character; its reductionist approach to tourism to a strictly commercial phenomenon; among others. However, this article focuses on the limited use implied by the conception of the category of intelligence, as well as on the proposal of some theoretical-methodological considerations potentially useful for the development of the concept.

Intelligence is a distinctive quality of human beings. It has created technology and not the other way around. As a consequence of technological advances, the social representation known as artificial intelli-

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gence has come to life, based on the belief that further techno-scientific development will be able to replace and even surpass natural human intelligence.

However, the conceptions of intelligence, present in current debates, which elevate it to the rank of integrating and regulating function of all human activity, reinforce the criterion of the impossibility of replacing it artificially. The incipient development in this XXI century of the conceptualization of Spiritual Intelligence, as an expression of the human essence, articulating other types of intelligence, such as Emotional and Intellectual, accentuate the questioning of the old ideas that associated it only to the development of intellectual capacities, that is to say, to the famous Intelligence Quotient^[1].

On the other hand, nowadays it acquires a solid investigative support to speak of intelligence, not only to refer to its individual expression, but also including its manifestations in other levels of configuration of the collective social subject, that is, group, organizational, community, institutional, territorial, macro-social.

This article does not question the development of a general concept of ITD; however, it is critical of the linear and simplified way in which it is used today, focused essentially on the use of applications and digital tools, instead of emphasizing the sense of the naturally human intelligence of the actors who inhabit the destinations. They are the real protagonists of tourism activity.

It is indisputable the recognition of the need to use advanced technology, as a means or as a resource for the optimization of human processes involved in tourism. They constitute an indispensable resource nowadays for any type of activity. When placed at the disposal of the empowerment of the natural capacities of the original actors of the tourist communities, technology could become an invaluable tool for the endogenous and sustainable integrative development of these collective subjects.

We also start from the criterion that it is not precisely the use of technology that is the determining

attribute to consider a complex human process as intelligent or unintelligent. Even more so, if we consider the gigantic gaps that still exist in the world for its availability and optimal use. For its part, the recognition of tourism as a bio-cultural, ecological, social, political, human and spiritual phenomenon, as well as a technological one, makes it necessary to consider the systemic dynamics among other multiple elements for the consideration of the quality of a destination.

The objective of this article is to: To submit the concept of DTI to a critical reflection, aided by a more holistic and interdisciplinary understanding of the concept of intelligence. It is an enriched version of the paper entitled: “About the intelligence of tourist destinations.” A divergent look, presented by the author at the Congreso Universal Destinos Turísticos Inteligentes, CECTURM-D Chetumal 2018.

2. The debate

Frequently in the literature dedicated to the promotion and defense of the conception of the ITD, the following definition is reiterated:

Smart Tourism Destination is an innovative space consolidated on the basis of territory and cutting-edge technological infrastructure. A territory committed to the environmental, cultural and socio-economic factors of its habitat, equipped with an intelligence system that captures information procedurally, analyzes and understands events in real time, in order to facilitate the interaction of the visitor with the environment and the decision making of the destination managers, increasing its efficiency and substantially improving the quality of tourist experiences^[2].

This definition could at least be the target of the following objections.

- It superficially refers to intelligence as information gathering and processing.
- It restricts the intelligent potentialities of

destinations basically to the use of information technologies.

- It relegates to secondary levels the intelligence of local tourism stakeholders, privileging the focus on tourists.
- It omits the complexity of the subjective interactive processes that favor the formation of collective intelligence.

Intelligence is a complex capacity of the human being, originated thanks to the functioning of the brain, fruit of a long biological, physiological, psychological, social and spiritual evolution. It is associated with the ability to discern between different alternatives in order to make the right decision, to know how to choose the best alternative, but also to know how to read inside things. It is also the capacity to learn, to understand, to reflect, to interpret, and implies the potential for adaptation, as well as to face new situations not considered before, and also makes it possible to plan, manage and project. Mental self-government is a power that emanates directly from intelligence, as the ability to create itself^[3].

This view of intelligence contributes to rescue tourism as a human space for the reconstruction of meanings, of environmental awareness, of recovery of spiritual values in crisis, of task force for the rescue of nature and culture. However, the concepts of intelligence handled in the predominant notion of DTI, at least evade the complexity of the subject and marginalize the transdisciplinary approach that its study demands. Hence, the importance of promoting critical reflection on the construct of DTI, in order to find methodological paths that provide its best evolution.

3. The foundations of reflection

The theoretical approach that underpins this study consists of understanding tourism as a complex human activity, possessing its own structure and dynamics, starring individual and collective actors, people and groups that enter into a human interaction

motivated towards the satisfaction of the most diverse needs and values, who play different social roles, in varied natural and cultural scenarios^[4].

It starts from a critical application of the conception of “activity” developed by Russian psychology, during the Soviet period, which conceives it as:

The unit of life mediated by the psychological reflex, whose real function consists in that it orients the subject in the objective world. ... it is neither a reaction nor a set of reactions, but a system that has a structure, its internal transitions and transformations, its development^[5].

Apart from the criticism of the conception of subjectivity implicit in this definition, his proposal of analysis of the structural and functional components of human activity constitutes a contribution of great theoretical and methodological value, valid for the study of any activity. Its use contributes to the foundation of tourism as a human activity, which places the subject, whether personal or collective, at the center of the complex social phenomenon that is tourism. This highlights the importance of its subjective dimension, considered as the configuration of the self-regulating psychological processes and formations of the subject's action, among which the intelligence of the persons and groups that act as actors or agents of the process plays a central role.

The study of the subjective dimension of tourism makes it possible:

- To find epistemological alternatives for the construction of scientific knowledge of tourism.
- scientific knowledge of tourism.
- To distance oneself from the unilateral approach of tourism as an economic activity.
- To deepen in real possibilities for the success of alternative tourism.
- To develop organizational modalities of local tourism based on the experiential.

- Obtain information necessary for the empowerment of local actors.
- To give foundation to environmental education modalities oriented to the responsible behavior of the actors^[4].

Tourism activity is therefore understood as a sequence of acts organized in a specific way, carried out by subjects, different personal and group actors in interaction, who pursue the satisfaction of needs, in direct relation to the role they play. The needs that give rise to its unfolding, are usually diverse and are structured in each of the subjects involved in a different and very dynamic motivational hierarchy.

Intelligence is considered as that integrative psychological formation that regulates the activity in function of the satisfaction of its needs to guarantee a successful and ethical behavior. It has been highlighted that it works both at a personal and group, organizational, community level, among others. Therefore, the effectiveness and efficiency of a tourist destination will depend on the coordinated way in which the actors manage to make the destination function as a whole, that is to say, as a system. This depends first and foremost on the level of development of their human capacities. Technology can help in an important way, but the result will ultimately depend on the use that human beings make of it.

In the elaboration of this article we have used a methodology based on the bibliographic study, inspired by a critical epistemological conception, which questions the predominant tendency in the construction of knowledge on tourism, consisting of its simplification as an object of study of the economic sciences by identifying its essence with the commercial activity that accompanies it due to its own complex nature.

In the same way, the theoretical positions presented have been the result of a process of interpretation of empirical evidence accumulated from previous research, related to experiences of alternative tourism development in different communities in the

state of Tlaxcala. The results have also been interwoven as a result of the debates carried out in the teaching process with students and professors of the Master's Degree in Sustainable Regional Tourism Management of El Colegio de Tlaxcala.

4. The notion of intelligence

As any complex concept, intelligence has had a long trajectory, each epoch is marked with a concept of intelligence that satisfied the needs of that historical moment, so it is impossible to summarize in such a short space. For the purposes of this article it is sufficient to point out that, for a long time, the attempts to build a psychological science following the positivist postulates that guided the course of the natural sciences restricted the concept to the domain of strictly intellectual capacities, reducing it to operations linked to the processing of information for an effective response, similar to the functioning of computers. In this way, important areas of psychic life were left out of its scope, mainly those related to such important spheres as the emotional and spiritual. In this regard Marina^[6] argues that:

It is true that intelligence is the ability to solve differential equations, but above all it is the aptitude to organize behaviors, discover values, invent projects, maintain them, be able to free oneself from the determinism of the situation, solve problems and above all pose them.

The concept of the multiplicity of human intelligences, defended by Howard Garner in the 1980s, was a revolution in the concept and in the educational practice developed around it. Regardless of whether or not it encompasses all the intelligences that human beings are capable of possessing, the main contribution of Gardner (1987) consisted in demonstrating that each person is potentially capable of successfully developing diverse activities, thanks to the existence of capacities other than those recognized up to that time, that is, the intellectual capacities linked to IQ and its measurement, which reduced its scope only to the cognitive sphere.

In this way, the horizon of understanding of human intelligence was broadened, since in addition to the logical-mathematical and linguistic capacities, it recognized other general capacities such as visual-spatial; intrapersonal; interpersonal; musical; bodily; natural. This nurtured a more complex and multifaceted view of the human being, which frees him from the risk of being labeled by the circumstantial results of a test.

Later Daniel Goleman, in the 1990s, integrated the results of many other researchers and provoked another significant change in the debate on the concept with the publication of his book *Emotional Intelligence*. The identification and control of one's own emotions in human dynamics, the recognition of feelings, passions and moods of other people, as well as the positive management of toxic affections, such as selfishness, racism, undoubtedly constitutes a generalized capacity in people that determines good relationships, basic for personal success.

Emotional Intelligence has had a great diffusion and multiple programs have been developed for its training and development in various fields, in industry, services, family and has been included in the educational strategies of many countries since primary education.

All these theories have enriched the notions about the importance of intelligence as a regulator of successful personal behavior. Beyond that, research conducted in the group environment has shown that the depth of the dynamics of interpersonal relationships is capable of generating intelligent group processes that emerge from interaction and take on a life of their own. They come to form, in groups, organizations and other social formations, new collective psycho-social qualities, shared by the participants of the interaction, which characterize the way the group acts and make them become subjects of a higher level than the personal.

Peter M. Senge's conception of intelligent organizations clearly illustrates the ideas about the existence and potential of an integrative collective intelligence called to successfully regulate

organizational behavior in the face of the uncertainty that characterizes today's complex environments. The author defines the intelligent organization as:

An organization where people continually expand their aptitude to create the results they desire, where new and expansive patterns of thinking are cultivated, where collective aspiration is left free, and where people continually learn to learn together^[7].

The learning organization, thanks to the potential of communication that guarantees a specific human intersubjectivity, builds new subjectivity and produces a qualitatively different collective intelligence.

In his books, the *Fifth Discipline* and the *Fifth Discipline in Practice*, Senge develops a theory and practice for Organizational Development based on five concrete disciplines, which in an integrated and holistic way guarantee the successful action of the organization: Personal Mastery, Mental Models, Team Learning, Shared Vision and Systemic Thinking. These rigors, interacting together, are what give the organization its potential as a collective intelligent system. They are five human disciplines that interact as a system, to configure a quality of the organization that enables it to make present decisions, as well as for its future projection.

The theoretical approach to intelligent organizations constitutes evidence of the existence and functioning of the collective subject, a confirmation of the vitality of the interactive subject, insofar as it presents the internal dynamics of the organization as a human subject configured in its interior by groups, which function as teams and which are built on the potentialities of the personal domain of its members.

More recently, the Catalan philosopher Francesc Torralba in his book, "*Spiritual Intelligence*" gives an account of another important moment in the development of the concept, with the publication in 2001 of the work of the same name by two researchers: Zohar and Marshall. These authors, based on re-

cent findings of neurosciences and the most advanced discoveries about the functioning of the brain, propose the existence of this new quality of human intelligence. For them, Spiritual Intelligence (SQI) is an integrating quality of the other forms of intelligence, which endows people with superior capabilities that really distinguish it from both the animal world and the most sophisticated technological products.

Spiritual intelligence, according to Torralba, allows human beings to become aware of the universal concatenation of phenomena, that is, of the intimate relationship of everything with everything, to grasp the nexus that encompasses all individualities, to distinguish what is hidden behind the shadows, what is hidden behind the appearance, helps to realize the interdependent character of all reality, its deep systemic connection.

In the words of the author, IES empowers the human being in very important aspects of his life “makes him more receptive, more sensitive, fuller and more integrated in the environment”. He further describes that a person with spiritual intelligence “deeply grasps the problems, intensely enjoys the beauty that is revealed in the wide world, suffers intensely from the evils, injustices, sufferings and all forms of cruelty that are manifested in it”. In this way he highlights how “one of the main benefits of the cultivation of spiritual intelligence is the critical conscience, that is to say, the critical attitude towards oneself and the world.” This capacity provides him the possibility of discernment before the diversity of models of meaning that he has in his environment, to be able to evaluate them with independence of criterion and to assume an active and participative attitude.

Among the specifically human capacities that this modality of intelligence allows, the most important are: the capacity to construct the meaning of existence, the capacity of transcendence, the capacity to act consciously or to take distance, the capacity to feel part of the whole that is the universe, the capacity of astonishment, the capacity to act according

to positive values; among others^[3].

5. Main thesis

An integrating conception of human intelligence, resulting from the consideration of the contributions of all these, and of other conceptions not mentioned, is the one that makes it possible to sustain the following three main theses:

- The concept of ITD is a potentially realizable abstraction that, if achieved, would have invaluable repercussions for the future development of responsible tourism.
- A more holistic conception of intelligence is needed, based on a complex understanding of the structure and dynamics of human systems.
- The community actors that sustain the activity of the tourist destination are the bearers and producers of the destination's own intelligence. They are the protagonists of an adequate and responsible tourism management using technological resources intelligently.

It is perfectly valid to speak of intelligent collective subjects: Smart teams; smart organizations; smart cities and why not DTI. However, when talking about Smart Cities or ITD, the conception of intelligence, as a central construct, as well as the dynamics of the factors that make it possible, should be somewhat different from how they are presented today.

6. On destination intelligence

The article argues that for the real intelligence of a destination to operate indigenously in its management, it requires the presence, in an integrated and complementary manner, of at least the following characteristics:

- To place local, personal and collective ac-

tors: host citizens; independent entrepreneurs, small and medium-sized enterprises, local government representatives, social organizations, among others, at the center of the system, as protagonists of the management of the destination. To achieve the predominance of local actors over external ones, so that they are the ones who take the reins of their development and are the main recipients of the benefits.

- Local stakeholders are those who have a strong sense of belonging to the destination, have cemented in their culture, identity formations that they share and that constitute the most powerful premise for ensuring the sustainability of the destination. This means that local initiative should prevail over the actions of external actors, since the aforementioned purpose of improving the quality of life of the inhabitants can only be fully achieved with greater access to the distribution of the economic benefits obtained.
- In addition to being adequately identified and interconnected, local stakeholders should be sufficiently trained and empowered, all their management capacities should be maximized and their intelligence and capabilities should be developed to the maximum so that they can assume the leading role that corresponds to them in management. This means. Systematic training and empowerment of the actors leads to personal and group mastery that favors the maximum development of their individual and organizational intelligences for the successful realization of management.
- It would be essential to form solidary, empathic and assertive communication networks that truly connect all the actors and allow a cooperative and developing relationship, enabling them to provide systemic and integrative answers. The ITD system should work as a whole, in which team learning is possible, which requires a special disposition and unifying communication.
- As a result of this permanent learning, to build shared assumptions, norms and goals that cohere the collective action and guarantee the unity of the truly intelligent action of the destination as a whole. This is an important premise for the destination's Systemic Thinking to take place, so that it can constantly rectify its course and grow, despite the difficult and unpredictable conditions and complexities of the environment.
- The DTI should build a Shared Vision, which integrates the meaning of its existence, of its *raison d'être* as a collective subject, which would allow systematizing its action in a consensual way the behavior of all, enhancing the development of the Spiritual Intelligence of the destination, with the participation of the actors involved.
- Technology, focused in this case as artificial intelligence, can and should be a means of extraordinary importance to facilitate, promote and enable the achievement of the characteristics explained above, but under no circumstances should it be presented, as is almost always the case, as the essence of the functioning of the DTI.
- Thus, the concept of ITD should be structured on the basis of the following assumptions:
 - Protagonism of local personal or organizational actors
 - Strengthening of the axis: Identity–Agency, Intelligence–Sustainability
 - Systematic training, empowerment
 - Internal distribution of economic benefits

and cooperative investment

- Participation through solidarity communication networks.

Shared assumptions, norms and goals that cohere collective action.

- Systemic thinking
- Shared vision. Sense of life of the social unit of destiny as a whole.
- Use of technology as a guarantee of the optimal functioning of the system.

Only an approach that places at the center of the tourism system the citizen actor of the tourist activity and his intelligence, will be able to lay the foundations for a path that provides: real human development; the consequent improvement of his quality of life; as well as the much heralded, but still distant, sustainability of tourist destinations.

The implementation of a methodology that makes possible the realization of such an approach will be the one that will allow the construction of true intelligent and sustainable tourist destinations. It should begin with a broad program of identification, empowerment, training-empowerment, restructuring and connection of the actors of tourism in the territory, the implementation of strategies of participation and collective construction of norms, goals, assumptions, shared vision, values, that wrapped in their identity and based on their culture guarantee the cohesion and interconnection of the whole territory as a whole and thus the joint and intelligent action.

A development strategy that should be: bottom-up; deeply participatory; inclusive; transparent; supportive and humane. For which a profound change of the existing political and economic power structures, which leave very little room for autonomy, creativity and community innovation and which immobilize local initiative and entrepreneurship, would be indispensable. The centralization of decision-making and the verticality of the prevailing processes in society are a brake on the flourishing of the intelligence and

potential of the population of tourist destinations, without which any attempt to create ITDs would be a fallacy.

7. Conclusions

The above reflections lead to the formulation of a series of questions that should be considered in future research on the problem:

The concept of ITD, as it exists today, could be considered as a modernized contemporary version of a dominant traditional tourism paradigm, which privileges the economic approach oriented towards competitiveness, profit-making, based on tourist satisfaction over the community approach, oriented towards the endogenous development of the destination, which emphasizes environmental sustainability, human development of the stakeholders, socio-cultural identity, equity and collective economic benefit.

Before the implementation of ITD becomes too generalized and irreversible, it might be prudent to assess the potentially negative consequences, especially in economically less favored destinations, where the use of technologies is still far from being sufficiently strong and widespread. Traditionally, there are deep gaps between the discourse on the general foundations of projects and their implementation in practice.

From the general conceptual point of view, the holistic, complex, systemic and integrating character of the concept of ITD should be taken into account, rescuing its essentially human aspects, as well as incorporating the historical and transdisciplinary richness of the concept of intelligence.

The tourist destination should be thought of as an integral socio-cultural product in which the human and spiritual components have a greater presence, with the capacity to achieve dynamic harmony with the natural and cultural environment. The destination consists of its own people and must imprint life and collective soul to the human capacities, seen in their integrity.

In this sense, the creation of human networks of dialogue that, with the help of technology, make possible the participation of individuals and groups of the community in the self-management of the projects that give meaning to their lives becomes important. This is the most authentic way to develop true personal and collective intelligence.

Diversified and multifaceted human interaction at the destination is one of the most fertile avenues for local and community growth and development. Technologies can make a decisive contribution to the construction of networks of links for tourism activities that include, of course, tourists and that stimulate the emergence of new creative subjectivities.

The traditional conceptions of tourism on which the current ideas of ITD are based are loaded with formalization and rationalization, which reaffirms a process of “Macdonalization of society”^[8], in terms that far from promoting the development of intelligence, it muzzles and binds it. A paradigmatic change is needed in the construction of theories on tourism, which frees the creative thinking potentialities of community actors and conceives the development of intelligence as the manifestation of the integrating potentialities of human beings in their own realization.

The logic of change towards the achievement of an intelligent destination should consider the following axis: Sustainability–Local actors–Identity–Formation of the destination as a collective subject–Collective intelligence–Empowerment–Human development–Use of technologies.

The implementation for its success should come from the local level, from the bottom up, starting from the collegiate decisions of the local actors and not as a result of top-down imposition policies. This would imply a general and practically radical transformation of the traditional conceptions of tourism, which would strip its practice of the unilaterally mercantile approaches that have uncontrollably accelerated its development.

Finally, looking at tourism as a complex human

activity, which enhances the spiritual growth of its participants, offers a qualitatively different vision, which shows a distant path from the dominant traditional approaches, which reduce it to being just another business, an industry producing profitable services for select groups, an instrument of environmental destruction in the hands of those who do not sufficiently consider values and ethical restrictions. This look contributes to rescue tourism as a human space of reconstruction of senses, of environmental awareness, of recovery of spiritual values in extinction, of task force for the rescue of nature and culture^[9,10].

Conflict of interest

The author declares no conflict of interest.

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