

EXTENDED ABSTRACT

ETHNOTOURISM: AN APPROACH TO THE OPPORTUNITIES AND THREATS THAT IT IMPLIES FOR INDIGENOUS CULTURES

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Over the years and favored by the widespread use of new technologies that have shortened distances and make it possible for different segments of the market to satisfy the needs of products and services, tourism has become one of the main sectors of the economy. diversify and facilitate travelers access in a massive way to places promoted or recognized as tourist destinations. Specifically, megadiverse environments¹ where cultural plurality is found, traditional and contemporary way of life of indigenous peoples, biodiversity, diversity of places and natural landscapes, historical, cultural and environmental assets that constitute the heritage of ethnic communities, represent the great attraction for travel of modern leisure and can be considered the trigger for what has been called “indigenous tourism”, “aboriginal tourism”, “community tourism” and “ethnic tourism or ethnotourism” expressions used to refer essentially to the same aspects. The first use of the term is attributed to Smith (1977) who defines it as the commercialization to the public of the customs of indigenous peoples, often exotic and popular.

This economic activity arises from the incorporation of the indigenous population as new actors in the tourism industry, was promoted with the opening of markets and demands understanding and awareness in the decisions made in establishing intercultural contact, with nature, history and heritage. The World Tourism Organization (UNWTO), one of its promoters, considers it one of the mechanisms that allows the widest distribution

1 The United Nations Environment Program (UNEP, 2015) identified megadiverse environments in different regions, including Southeast Asia (China, Philippines, India, Indonesia and Malaysia), on the African continent (Madagascar, Democratic Republic of the Congo and South Africa), in Oceania (Australia and New Guinea) and in America (Brazil, Colombia, Ecuador, the United States, Mexico, Peru and Venezuela), mainly because they are the countries with the highest biodiversity index on earth, together more than 70%, assuming their territories 10% of the surface of the planet, so that they advance cooperation efforts that seek to promote common interests and priorities related to the conservation and sustainable use of that diversity.

of economic and social benefits, therefore, one of the most powerful instruments to eradicate poverty in the world (Cox, 2009), ethnic groups show motivation to explore, recover and interpret the traditional aspects of their local identity, which favors understanding and establishing a more equitable relationship between indigenous people as hosts and their visitors, makes it possible to demonstrate responsibility to ourselves and others. with others, understanding between cultures, empathy and peace, in that sense, ethnotourism can represent an opportunity. Nonetheless, tangible and intangible heritage is constituted in the main attraction of travelers and ethnotourism input, its practice is seen as a threat to megadiverse environments. These are generally inhabited by indigenous communities whose foundation of life is their goods and resources, in interaction with the non-indigenous population that comes to visit them, they exchange expectations, stereotypes and expressions of identity and culture that generate a transaction of money and evidence of lack of empathy influenced by neoliberal policies, neocolonialism, fundamentalism, racism, militarism, including bullying to other people, causing consequently imbalance in the development of the activity, therefore, it has come to be described as a destroyer of cultural and environmental authenticity. Table 1 compiles aspects considered approximation to opportunity or threat in the development of ethnotourism activity.

Table 1
ETHNOTOURISM THREAT OR OPPORTUNITY FOR MEGADIVERSOS
ENVIRONMENTS

FACTOR	SCENARIOS	AUTHORS
REPRESENTS THREAT WHEN	Needs empathy as a force in the fight against xenophobia, product of neoliberal, neocolonial, fundamentalism and militarism influences, manifested in intimidating, racist and bullying attitudes to other people.	Tucker, (2016); Schwarzin, (2012); Pedwell, (2012b).
	Majority groups dominate and manipulate the ethnotourism activity, commercialize cultural representations of ethnic minority groups, especially for economic purposes.	Yang, et al., (2016)
	Evidence of ideological tension due to incompatible actions that seek the preservation of cultural integrity over the commodification of products and services. Usually, the discourse in the sector is dominated by non-indigenous voices that have Western tourist motivations and a lack of orientation towards long-term sustainability, contrary to the interests of ethnic communities and there are no or limited socio-economic statistics to inform decision-making, leading to establish broadly generalized political guidelines.	Heldt y Miranda, (2015); Nielsen y Wilson, (2012); Hill, (2011); Yang, (2011); Yang y Wall, (2009).

FACTOR	SCENARIOS	AUTHORS
REPRESENTS THREAT WHEN	Poverty is seen as a direct threat to cultural integrity or acculturation in ethnotourism businesses.	Cannon, (2011).
	It is unknown structural problems lacking authority and autonomy.	De la Meza (2016); Ryan (2002).
REPRESENTS OPPORTUNITY WHEN	Empathy among actors is demonstrated, including, but not limited to, a moral encounter, social justice, intercultural understanding, the notion of peace. That is, there is a good level of intersubjective understanding that is the basis for positive social transformation, recognizing and respecting the subjectivity and representation of others without oppressive power hierarchies across geopolitical borders.	Mostafanezhad y Hannam, (2014a); Moufakkir y Kelly, (2010); Tomljenovic (2010); Higgins-Desbiolles, (2006)
	The evolution of the capacity of systematic organization of ethnic community contributes positively to development and economic growth and these, facilitate the development of tourism with alternative income related to revaluation of cultural traditions and practices, visualization of their objects, good performance of art and culture also influences the ways in which people see themselves and perceive their identity.	Zhang, (2016); Chen, et al., (2016); Heldt y Miranda, (2015).
	Ethnotourism is recognized as a common business of the service industry, a market niche allied to serve objective markets of foreign affiliates interested in inhibiting international competition, with indigenous people being the leaders in the promotion of these projects.	Cohen, et al., (2016); Anderson, et al., (2008); Imanishi, (2007)
	Applying three explicit principles: the local population uses, controls and manages their resources; equitable distribution of benefits; and imperative of environmental and cultural sustainability. For this, it is up to ethnotourism actors to make decisions based on their real situation, needs and distinctive characteristics, with the support of knowledge of local elders as a central component.	Turner y Turner, (2012).

Source: self-made.

Approaches in Table 1 show an imbalance in this economic activity in the current globalized environment, which arouses the interest of international organizations such as the United Nations within the framework of the Organization for Education, Science

and Culture (UNESCO)² from where managements for the protection and preservation of mega-diverse environments. Academics also consider it important to state the incidence of macro-environmental and local processes on their heritage, which, configured as a product and service, is occasionally used, commercialized and marketed by the government, industry, the dominant society and even by other ethnic groups and urges effective management that helps to minimize the latent concern for the need to balance the use of the exotic of the indigenous peoples as a great attraction, with cultural protection and ethnic pride. Probably, systemic failures do not favor the competitiveness, productivity and sustainability of ethnotourism and to achieve its efficiency it must be promoted in the micro and small organizations that predominate in the activity, processes oriented to the development of skills and abilities to implement improvement actions that generate changes systemic organizations and benefit the local context. Likewise, integrate the economic, social, cultural and environmental objectives, plans and strategies into the policies, plans and strategies, with a prospective vision for the implementation of an innovative process.

Innovation is associated with economic and social dynamics responsible for the production and transformation of scientific and technological knowledge in economic wealth, social welfare and human development (Robledo, 2013). In the tourism industry this process involves the analysis of factors that may be different or shared with that of other service industries. Their drive in ethnotourism implies considering that micro and small entrepreneurs have limitations in this type of knowledge, rarely have R & D departments, have only established links with clients and have ignored relationships with other local interest groups³. Which is fundamental for the flow of knowledge and new ideas that transformed or implemented in processes, products and services generate value within the framework of procedures that demonstrate learning externalities, mediated both by documents and protocols and by verbal structures and symbolic interactions. Although conceptual and theoretical contributions of the subject are available, researchers and political and governmental actors have shown more interest in studying it in large companies, which in some cases exhibit their great experience and in others, unequal performance with little empirical evidence of its effectiveness.

This study, the first approach of its kind made from the bibliographical analysis of scientific information specialized in the subject, examines the implications of ethnotourism for indigenous communities, potential opportunities and threats that they face worldwide and that should be considered when desired promote activities of transfer, appropriation of technology or innovation, because they will be constituted either in vectors of change or in elements to be overcome. Debates on the subject would be important for micro and small ethnic organizations to be competitive, achieving system changes with equity and social justice.

2 Since 1970, UNESCO has maintained the “Man and Biosphere” program, which is of decisive importance for the study of the interrelation of human action and its natural environment. Under its impetus, the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands and the Convention on the Protection of World, cultural and natural heritage. Among its actions is the declaration of World Heritage to places that are in danger and are limited in financing for their maintenance, protection and conservation.

3 Groups that have an interest in the activities of the organization because they affect or are affected by the achievement of organizational objectives (Wheelen and Hunger, 2012).