

TERRA. Revista de Desarrollo Local

e-ISSN: 2386-9968

Número 6 (2020), 115-147

DOI 10.7203/terra.6.16601

IIDL – Instituto Interuniversitario de Desarrollo Local

Rural disruption: A first step towards building tourist destinations with territorial approach. An integrated vision from the Grounded Theory

María del Carmen Solano Báez

Investigadora. Observatorio de Desarrollo Rural Local y Empleo (Murcia, España)

carmen.solano@observalocal.com

<https://orcid.org/0000-0003-4431-9956>

Prudencio José Riquelme Perea

Prof. Titular de la Facultad de Ciencias del Trabajo (Universidad de Murcia, España)

halconps@um.es

César García Pina

Doctorando Escuela Internacional de Doctorado (Universidad de Murcia, España)

cesar.garcia1@um.es

<https://orcid.org/0000-0002-0638-3415>



Esta obra se distribuye con la licencia Creative Commons
Reconocimiento-NoComercial-SinObraDerivada 4.0 Internacional

ARTICLE SECTION

Rural disruption: A first step towards building tourist destinations with territorial approach. An integrated vision from the Grounded Theory

Abstract. This research is part of the study of the process of configuration of rural tourist destinations, in which the transition from territory to destination is researched. The aim of this paper is to analyze the process of distancing in the rural environment, identified thanks to the potentialities derived from the use of the triple coding that characterizes the Grounded Theory. Distancing is defined as a multidimensional deterritorialization, characterized by four ruptures: socio-productive, socio-cultural, socio-environmental and political. This process is identified as the moment in which a territory oscillates between decline and reconstruction in order to promote territorial development based on the specificities of the territory. It is a qualitative inductive research, carried out from the glaserian perspective of the Grounded Theory as a research and analysis methodology. It approaches deterritorialization from a philosophical and economic perspective to explain the process of distancing. A phase of conceptualization of the territory prior to the construction of tourist destinations in the rural areas.

Key words: Grounded Theory, distancing, deterritorialization.

Recibido: 02 de febrero de 2020

Devuelto para revisión: 06 de abril de 2020

Aceptado: 14 de mayo de 2020

Citation:

Solano, M^a. C., Riquelme, P. J., y García, C. (2020). Rural disruption: A first step towards building tourist destinations with territorial approach. An integrated vision from the Grounded Theory. *TERRA. Revista de Desarrollo Local*, (6), 115-147. DOI 10.7203/terra.6.16601

IDEAS CLAVE / HIGHLIGHTS / IDEES CLAU

- | | | |
|---|--|---|
| <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. La <i>Grounded Theory</i> construye una visión integrada que mejora la comprensión de las problemáticas del medio rural.2. El medio rural afronta un proceso disruptivo por la agudización de distintos problemas estructurales.3. La disrupción provoca un distanciamiento que se traduce en una desterritorialización multidimensional.4. La disrupción ocasionada por tensiones sociales, culturales, económicas, ambientales y políticas obliga a repensar el territorio.5. La disrupción genera un punto de inflexión que favorece la construcción de un destino con enfoque territorial. | <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. The Grounded Theory builds an integrated vision that improves the understanding of rural issues.2. Rural areas face a disruptive process due to the exacerbation of different structural problems.3. Disruption causes a distancing that results in a multidimensional deterritorialization.4. The disruption caused by social, cultural, economic, environmental and political tensions forces a rethinking of the territory.5. Disruption generates a turning point that favours the construction of a destiny with a territorial approach. | <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. La “Grounded Theory” construeix una visió integrada que millora la comprensió de les problemàtiques del medi rural.2. El medi rural afronta un procés disruptiu per l'agudització de diferents problemes estructurals.3. La disrupció provoca un distanciament que es tradueix en una desterritorialització multidimensional.4. La disrupció ocasionada per tensions socials, culturals, econòmiques, ambientals i polítiques obliga a repensar el territori.5. La disrupció genera un punt d'inflexió que afavoreix la construcció d'un destí amb enfocament territorial. |
|---|--|---|

EXTENDED ABSTRACT¹

The rural is a construct that results from continuous processes of social action that shape its mutant character, being built, deconstructed, reconstructed and/or reinvented day by day. Several authors identify two processes of change that have affected the rural world; modernization and globalization. For them, globalization is the phenomenon that has had the greatest impact on the rural environment, subordinating local processes and making the local and regional processes invisible.

Among the changes associated to globalization, the modernization of agricultural production processes and the weakening of local supply chains have changed the position of agriculture in the rural environment, leaving it in a minor role in its economy. These changes imposed on agriculture have generated changes in the social and cultural relations between farmers and communities. The breakdown (of people, ideas and things) associated to globalization, generates processes of deterritorialization and uprooting, regardless of the definition of their territory.

These changes in the position of agriculture in the economy and society are also the result of reforms in agricultural policies that have altered all aspects of this sector. Today, a dichotomy has been created between a dynamic rural environment and another one that is empty and in decline, while at the same time there is a transition from the productive functions of the primary sector towards the configuration of territories for services. Thus, the research departs from three aspects: a methodology with broad potential to generate explanations, such as the Grounded Theory which, through the conceptualization of data, gives a condensed and abstract view of the patterns identified by the triple coding process of the constant comparative method. A set of dynamic territories that makes them susceptible to test these processes of transition between weakening and activation, which differentiate empty territories from more active ones. Finally, the innovation provided by LEADER's territorial, participatory, integrated, multisectoral and bottom-up approach.

The aim of this paper is to analyze the process of distancing in the rural environment, identified thanks to the potentialities derived from the use of the triple coding that characterizes the Grounded Theory. This conceptual category is articulated around four ruptures identified in the framework of the study on the configuration of a tourist destination with special emphasis on the process of the transition from the territory to the destination. This is a qualitative inductive research, carried out from the Glaserian perspective of the Grounded Theory as a research and analysis methodology, which addresses deterritorialization from the philosophical perspective of Deleuze and Guattari (2002) and Guattari and Rolnik (2006), and the economic perspective of Haesbaert (2011, 2013), in order to explain the process of distancing.

By means of the identification of common phenomena in Spain, Mexico and Thailand, a passage was made between the local and the global, providing greater depth to the analysis and increasing the robustness of the study. The fieldwork was carried out in seven stages, in which different data production tools were combined: interviews, participant observation, photovoice, sociogram and memos recorded in a field diary. In this way it became possible to build an integrated vision of the study area from the different perspectives and tools. The field work was carried out from July 2015 to July 2018. The wideness of this phase is due to the simultaneousness of the data collection, codification

¹ Authors' exclusive translation. The full version of the article is available in Spanish.

and analysis processes, which makes moving forward only after the codification and analysis of each interview.

After concluding the fieldwork, the sample was defined by theoretical saturation of 64 informants with a total of 85 interviews; 65 interviews were carried out in the Region of Murcia and 20 were done among other vulnerable areas of rural Spain, Mexico and Thailand. There were also registered 34 informal conversations with farmers and local business people, who were more accessible through this form of information collection. For the analysis, the stages of the constant comparative method were followed, based on the Concept-Indicator coding model specific to this method. The software Atlas.ti version 8.3 was used for the coding process.

As a result of the theoretical coding process, the information was reduced to eight conceptual categories, and three basic social processes were identified. Firstly, the fragility of the rural world was identified, which was defined as exhaustion and was the outcome of the *in vivo* code “blowing out like a candle”. Secondly, a turning point in the dynamics of the territory was identified, recorded as distancing; it was recognized that, as a result of the process of exhaustion, a profound separation of the territory was produced as a consequence of four ruptures grouped in the conceptual category of multidimensional deterritorialization. Thirdly, reterritorialization was registered, in this case the beginning of a process of valuation of the territory was identified, which leads to the reconstruction of itself. This last basic social process was promoted as the social process from which the central category of the object of study “building destiny through building territory” would be analyzed.

However, the process that is explained in this article, is the “multidimensional deterritorialization” conceptual category. This is the conceptualization of a disruptive process, characterized by mutations at the economic, social, cultural, environmental and political levels, which signifies the starting point for the construction of tourist destinations with a territorial approach.

The ruptures, as a critical border of the process of distancing, are interpreted as the moment in which the territory swings between a gradual decline, or the beginning of a restructuring process. It shows a series of concurrent tensions (productive, social, environmental, cultural, political) that occur in the rural environment as a result of the exacerbation of different structural problems and that, at a critical point, are translated into distancing and subsequent multidimensional deterritorialization. Its understanding as a previous stage to the configuration of tourist destinations, explains the difficulties or easiness of a territory to be transformed into a tourist destination.

The four ruptures linked to the PSB of distancing are:

- Socioproductive rupture: desagrarisation and touristification.
- Socioenvironmental rupture: changes in the relationship with nature and ambiguity in constructs of sustainability.
- Sociocultural rupture: loss of collective memory. Confused identity.
- Political rupture: asymmetries in the management of the territory

Just like an iceberg shows only a very limited part of its overall volume on water, in the rural environment a set of structural problems are shown such as depopulation, rural exodus, the homogenization of the landscape and the loss of ethnographic and immaterial elements that lead to a weakening of the collective identity. However, the processes of deterritorialization of the rural environment that cause these effects, both positive and

negative, and others that are yet to come, are hidden in the submerged base and are not comprehensible at first sight.

The four points outlined, lead to a point of rupture that gradually “crumbles” [the territory] or, alternatively, leads to reterritorialization, as discussed in this article. This process of rupture, which the literature characterizes as deterritorialization, leads to a multidimensional disarticulation that stimulates the different agents to rethink the territory, with the impulse of tourism being one of the most recurrent vectors of modernization. The arrival of rural tourism is the culmination of the socioproductive rupture, which transforms farmers into tourist service providers oriented towards a destination and in which their perspective of the territory is not considered. Scepticism towards the new activity has generated new dynamics in the organization of work: “the peasant is ceasing to be productive at the cost of ‘rural development’ and is becoming a subsidized tertiary asset”.

The question is the following one: is this the best response? And over all, is it the most appropriate response for fragile and disarticulated territories? The searching for economic diversification based on tourism without taking into account the reasons that cause the territory to become distant and, most importantly, without putting forward a real proposal for the value of endogenous resources, is the reason why tourism proposals have been limited to offering disconnected tourism products and services, which prove to be incapable to provide a real alternative for the productive reconversion of the territory. Thus, rural tourism has usually been developed as a strategy to stop or delay the imminent decline of traditional sectors, turning tourism into the activity that displaces agriculture. In short, rural tourism as usually executed, builds a liquid version of what has been considered rural: an unawareness product of what its development implies.