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RELATIONAL DYNAMICS OF ACCESSIBLE TOURISM IN FRANCE, SPAIN AND MOROCCO

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ABSTRACT

The knowledge on the tourist actors of the territory and their relations is a basic element for the active management of any tourist destination, since they have a special importance for the strategies and the actions that must be undertaken to adapt to the new conditions of the context. These conditions are characterized, among other things, by the disintermediation and the new habits of the tourist demand, in which the experience, the major activity in the destination and the discovery and self-organization are key factors. After reviewing the main features of accessible tourism and its situation in the current world context, this paper will examine the correlation in three specific Mediterranean countries (France, Spain and Morocco) between the level of development of accessible tourism and the relational dynamics generated by the actors involved in it. For this particular purpose, the Analysis of Social Networks and the Analysis of Contents of Social Networks will be applied.

KEYWORDS

Relational Dynamics; Accessible Tourism; Social Networks Analysis; France; Spain; Morocco

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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1) ON THE FEATURES OF ACCESSIBLE TOURISM

In the current global context, tourism has a great socio-cultural, economic, environmental and political importance due to the changes in the demand trends and to the new motivations of more experienced tourists who seek more different, specialized and tailor-made products (Burnett and Baker, 2001; Teo and Lim, 2003; Ávila and Barrado, 2005; Martínez 2006; Wall and Mathieson, 2006; Sharma and Dyer, 2009), accessible tourism is becoming an emerging sector, opening a range of new possibilities.

It should be noticed, for instance, that it attracts new clients to different destinations. People with disabilities, for example, have the same desires and needs as the rest of the population (Brinckmann & Wildgen, 2003; Kwai-Sang Yau et al., 2004), so they want to travel and enjoy tourism. According to the EDAD survey (INE, 2008), 22.4% of the disabled people would like to go on some sort of trip. This is an opportunity for the sector, which, in order to achieve this goal, must base itself on those differential elements that make accessible tourism valuable (Domínguez et al., 2011).

Several definitions of accessible tourism are put forward in the literature. Mazars Tourism (Pérez and González, 2003), for example, defines *accessible tourism* as that one which guarantees the use and enjoyment of tourism for people who have some sort of physical, psychological or sensory disability. That is, it is that type of tourism whose primary goal is to make tourism infrastructures and services accessible to people with disabilities.

The main aim of this type of tourism is to provide an accessible experience. It is very important to bear in mind all the elements of the tourism value chain as well as and to define the needs of this segment. Darcy et al. (2008) remark that accessible tourism is a process of enabling people with disabilities and seniors to function independently and with equity and dignity through the delivery of universal tourism products, services and environments. This definition is inclusive of the mobility, vision, hearing and cognitive dimensions of access. Most recently, there has been a call for the tourism industry to adopt universal design principles as a foundation to

achieve greater social sustainability as part of the triple bottom line (Rains, 2004, in Darcy and Dickson, 2009).

There are four areas that must be accessible to this type of tourist: information, transport and transfers, infrastructures (buildings, shared areas and correct evacuation procedures) and the services provided at the destination (control, support, activities and excursions) (Darcy et al., 2008). Among these, the main problem undoubtedly lies in the lack of information and knowledge that people with disabilities have as regards their real needs during a tourism experience (Eichhorn, et al., 2008) since for them, unlike for other tourists, there are qualities which, as a consequence of incomplete or incorrect information, cannot be compensated (Daniels et al., 2005). What makes it even worse is that, despite the increasing number of accommodation with adapted rooms, there are few adapted shared spaces (Molina and Cànoves, 2010).

There are several types of disabilities, including various physical and mental impairments, that can hamper or reduce a person's ability to carry out his day to day activities (mobility and physical impairments, spinal cord disability, brain disability, vision disability, hearing disability, cognitive or learning disabilities, psychological disorders, invisible disabilities) (DePoy and Gilson, 2004). Thus, these impairments are termed as people's disabilities to do their day to day activities (Darcy et al., 2008).

Nevertheless, besides these barriers, other obstacles arise for the kinds of people during the whole process of going on a trip. Among these obstacles the following ones are mentioned: service booking (website not accessible, accessibility in travel agencies, agency staff not prepared to deal with disabled people, etc.) (Simon & Gunter, 2005), not adapted ways of transport (access, platforms and terminals, as well as the lack of adapted services in the means of transport itself) and not adapted destination (access and interior not adaption in recreational and leisure spaces, in sports facilities, in the existing tourism resources and in associated services).

As a result, the accessibility of tourism activities to disabled clients and to clients with special needs is not guaranteed at present. In order to bring their services closer to all types of clients, some establishments are beginning to introduce accessibility, both in their facilities and in their presentation, on the basis of universal accessibility (Stumbo and Pegg, 2005; Molina and Cànoves, 2010).

It is a constantly increasing market, with some 600 million people affected in the world (WHO, 2006; ONU, 2006) 127.5 million of them are in Europe (ENAT, 2011), a figure which represents 27% of the total number and which generates approximately 68,000€/per year. Another important factor here is that people aged above 65 represent one sixth of the European population, and that 1 out of every 25 citizens is over 80 years old.

This correlation between ageing and disability is evident, since, at the moment, 63% of the people with some form of disability are older than (60% of them are women). This figure is likely to continue increasing in the future since disabilities appear quite frequently as a consequence of old age. On the contrary, according to the European Commission, 14.5% of the EU working age population (16-64 years) declares some type of disability, 20% of the people aged between 60 and 64 suffer a serious disability, and 17.1% have a moderate disability.

On a global level, the United Nations estimate that by 2050 21% of the global population (that is, 2,000 million people), will be over 60 years of age (WTO, 2006). The two reasons that account for this situation are, on the one hand, the decrease in the birth rate and, on the other, the increased life expectancy, which will result for the first time in history in the same amount of young and old people.

As a matter of fact, a significant increase in the population with some form of disability is estimated, due not only to the high number of old population, but also to the traffic and work-related accidents that are increasingly taking place year after year (González and Marcos, 2003).

In sum, we are dealing with a tourism sector whose demand will soon increase as a consequence of a number of opportunities, among which the following ones stand out for being quite remarkable:

- a) An increase in the demand: accessible tourism generates a competitive advantage, since its specialisation and differentiation entails the possibility of attending not only the usual clients, but also those who belong to a segment which up to now has not been catered for. As a general rule, disabled people travel with an average of 1.5 companions and usually spend a stay period between 2 and 4 weeks in their destination (González and Marcos, 2003; Molina and Cànoves, 2010).

- b) Socio-demographic changes: It should be noticed here that, despite the high level of spending power that is so characteristic of the old population in the more developed countries, this kind of people also require too much personalized care (Ander and Zemsky, 2006; Reques, 2011).
- c) Off-season tourism: accessible tourism increases off-season holidays, since the majority of the disabled people do not work (according to Eurostat data, 51% of this sector is in a situation of inactivity) and receive a disability allowance or a retirement pension.
- d) Competitive and quality tourism: the population of those countries that, in terms of accessibility, are described as the most developed ones consider travelling, on the one hand, as one more activity of their daily lives and, on the other, as another kind of self-fulfillment (Ander and Zemsky, 2006).
- e) A more inviting image of tourist destinations: by offering an image directed to everybody, without any type of exclusion, some destinations foster their development (González and Marcos, 2003).
- f) Technical and economic improvements: since the population is becoming more aware of this type of tourism, the public and private sectors are increasing the number of technical and economic grants in order to help people to perform these activities (Ching-Fu and Pei-Chun, 2010).
- g) New offers: it is also important to mention here some specific events, such as the Paralympic Games, as well as the kind of tourism named “social tourism” which bases itself on helping the less socially and economically favored people to travel.
- h) A social right for everybody: according to the United Nations Rights Convention on people with disabilities, accessible tourism is a right for all people (ONU, 2006).

It seeks equality of rights and opportunities for the entire population, and not only to compensate or overcome the functional limits of the disabled population because there are going to be quite often barriers in charge of preventing or limiting them. As a consequence, the tourism industry cannot ignore this type of information. By doing so, the accessibility to travel would be denied to many disabled people and both, several business and the overall community, would lose a high income. At the same

time, the relations that have existed up to now would have to be reconsidered (Dwyer & Sheldon, 2005; Darcy & Dickson, 2009; Urteaga, 2011).

Although Nevertheless, there are no reliable data as regards available accessible tourism the accessible tourism available, the results derived from an empirical study carried out in Andalusia (Fernández, 2009) have demonstrated both, at a general (i.e. at the hotel as a whole) and an individual (i.e. at the different departments of a hotel) level, that real and perceived accessibility to hotel establishments. In addition, according to the same study, 99% of the hotel managers consider that the number of physically disabled clients who stay at their hotels is lower than 20% although they do not know the total real scale of this tourism sector.

1.2) CURRENT SITUATION OF ACCESSIBLE TOURISM:

Germany, The United Kingdom and France are the European countries that have the largest number of population with some type of disability in absolute terms. On the other hand, in Finland and Holland there is more than 20% of the population with some type of disability. Because of this, several policies have been developed in Europe to facilitate accessible tourism, although no long-term strategy has been put into practice yet.

Consequently, those countries that have taken take the step forward and have adopted adopt accessibility policies will have a more competitive edge than those that have not started yet (ENAT, 2007). Thus, several countries, among which the Nordic countries, Germany, France and the United Kingdom are to be found, are more developed than some others as regards accessibility.

Furthermore, the European Commission has also developed projects in order to promote accessible tourism such for instance, as “Tourism for all”, in which countries such as Austria, Germany, Italy, Luxembourg, Norway, Sweden, Switzerland, Holland and Spain take part.

Another interesting initiative has been developed in France, where, in 2001, *Tourisme & Handicaps* was created as a mark of quality to guarantee adapted services to disabled tourists (Molina and Cànoves, 2010). It is important to bear in mind that in France 74% of the people over 60 and 32.2% of the population between 20 and 59 years old present some type of disability (INSEE, 2011).

In Spain, more than 3.5 million people have some type of disability, a figure which represents more than 19% of the population (INE, 2011). The majority of the Spanish Spain's autonomous regions and/or main cities have associations, programmes, infrastructures, services and internet guides for accessible tourism. The ECOM Federation, for example, is an association which has brought more than 100 organisations together over the past 30 years with the aim to ensure that people affected by some type of disability freely participate in all kinds of social activities.

Moreover, the White Paper on the Accessibility Plan was published in 2003, as a result of the agreement between the Institute for Older Persons and Social Services (IMSERSO), as part of the Ministry of Labour and Immigration, and the University Institute of European Studies (IUEE) at the Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona, it analyses the possibilities and actions required to achieve accessibility in all types of environments, products and services (IMSERSO, 2003).

It is also important to mention the European Council has organised a Committee of Experts in Universal Design named "Universal Design Accessibility for People with disabilities" with representatives from the different member states. It is remarkable the Recommendation of the Committee of Ministers of the Member States on the "Council of Europe Action Plan to promote the rights and full participation of people with disabilities in society: improving the quality of life of people with disabilities in Europe 2006-2015", which with the desire to integrate disabled people into society, outlines a coherent policy model for people with disabilities based mainly on the principles of full citizenship and independent life. Thus, it eliminates obstacles of very different nature (psychological, educational, family-related, cultural, social, work-related, financial, and architectural) to integration (Fernández, 2009).

The United States have great experience in this regard because it has one of the largest communities of people with restricted abilities in the world, as a consequence, the majority of its states and large cities have accessibility guides. The most significant of them all is the Virginia Travel Guide for People with Disabilities, available since 1988. Nevertheless, there are other interesting guides, such as those of the states of Florida and California and the city of New York, where the headquarters of the Society for Accessible Travel and Hospitality, a not-for-profit NGO which has been representing tourists with disabilities since 1976 are located. In Canada there are also very complete guides for the cities of Quebec and Montreal.

As regards Latin American countries, it has to be noticed that the development of accessible tourism is still in its first stages, although some projects do stand out in Mexico, a country with more than 4 million disabled people; Colombia, with accessibility projects for the cities of Medellin and Cali; Peru, with accessibility projects for the main tourism centres; there are also some other more limited projects in Chile, Brazil and Argentina.

Some other accessible tourism programmes have been developed, to a greater or lesser extent, in other countries such as Japan, Israel, South Africa, Australia and New Zealand. Without any doubt, one of the main initiatives has been to create the European Network for Accessible Tourism (ENAT), a not-for-profit international association created in 2008 to help companies and organisations from 30 countries, in the five continents to study, promote and practice accessible tourism (ENAT, 2007).

1.3) OBJECTIVES:

The number of academic works focusing on the territory, the actors and the relations that take place among them is growing quite rapidly nowadays (Vernon et al., 2005; Novelli et al., 2006; Shih-Yu, 2006; Michael, 2007). It is worth mentioning here that within them a new line of thought concerning the relationships between tourists actors has appeared (Aas et al., 2005).

Many of them show the need to perform analytical approximations that study the basic territorial dimensions of tourism; something which means that tourism can be treated as an instrument of local development. Nevertheless there is a problem underlying these works since, due to the scarce analytical treatment they offer about the relations produced in the territory, they are not able to decide which are the dynamics of the relations.

As a consequence, then, new analytical tourist perspectives have to be developed in order to overcome the more traditional ones, the new analytical approximations find their theoretical basis in the concept of Productive Local System. Its main interest lies in the actors who operate in the tourist activity of the tourist area studied. It is precisely in this new line of thought where the present work is to be located, since a new analytical model is introduced to approach the tourist study of the active

management of destinations. The present analysis focuses mainly on the tourist actors of the territory and on the relationships that are established between them to promote tourism in the above mentioned territory for this purpose new techniques of reticulated analysis based on the Analysis of Social Nets will be used.

The main aim of this work consists of establishing a relation between the relational dynamics generated by the actors involved, first, with accessible tourism in a certain destination, and second, with the level of development of the above mentioned tourism in this territory. To do so, we consider the hypothesis that the more an area has been developed for tourism, the more relations between the agents involved in accessible tourism, from the perspective of the protagonists of the process, since the relations between agents, and not only the qualities as a demonstration of the social structure, have a significant power to explain social behaviour (Molina, 2001). The model that will be used is the one proposed by Merinero and Pulido (2009) and Merinero (2011), who analyze the dynamic factors of the relations between the tourist actors, basing themselves on the Analysis of the Social Networks (SNA) and on the Analysis of the Content of the Social Networks (SNCA).

The case study is applied to three Mediterranean countries: France, Spain and Morocco (table 1). They have been chosen as the object of analysis due to their tourist competitiveness and to their importance as tourist receivers.

	France¹	Morocco²	Spain³
Foreign tourists (millions)	76,8	9,3	52,7
Hotels	17.283	1.947	14.976
Hotel beds	612.475	185.040	1.424.711

Table 1: Tourism statistics

Sources: 1: INSEE, 2011; WTO, 2011

2: Observatoire du Tourisme, 2011

3: INE, 2012; WTO, 2011

France, the country that receives more visits from foreign tourists, presents the best range hotels. Spain, the second country in terms of the number of foreign tourists received, has a greater capacity of hotel rooms available, since, in general, its hotels are bigger. Morocco ranks lower both in the number of tourists received and in the number of hotels and hotel vacancies, although its hotels follow the same construction plans as the Spanish ones.

In sum, by analysing the structure of the social networks between the actors operating in accessible tourism, we think that this work may offer a relevant and interesting analysis which will help to highlight the different stages of accessible tourism development (Merinero and Pulido, 2009).

1.4) METHODOLOGY:

The methodology proposed to contrast the hypothesis considered between the local agents and their content, is based on the analysis of social networks (NSA) Requena, 1989, 2003; Hanneman, 2000; Sanz, 2003; Merinero & Pulido, 2009).

The research has been carried out in three different steps. The first objective of this work has been to identify some of the actors related to accessible tourism and to classify them in types. For that purpose, we have made personal interviews to four key informants; specifically, to four organizations directly involved in accessible tourism: ASPRO, ADIS, PREDIF and ONCE. In the second place, a questionnaire has been sent to the actors that have been pointed out by the key informants in order to determine the basic distinguishing features of their relations. And finally, thanks to the method employed, the so-called “snowballing” method, the questionnaires have been sent again to the new identified actors.

The actors from France (F), Morocco (M) and Spain (S) have been divided into four groups (*table 2*):

A (private associations and organisations)

B (magazines and Internet websites)

C (tourism organisations and associations)

D (governmental organisations)

	F	F	F	F	M	M	M	M	S	S	S	S
step	A	B	C	D	A	B	C	D	A	B	C	D
1	12	9	13	10	6	5	5	7	8	14	13	12
2	8	13	10	4	3	4	3	1	3	5	6	4
3	5	3	4	2	1	0	2	1	1	2	1	2
total	25	25	27	16	10	9	10	9	12	21	20	18

Table 2: Steps and actors selected according to their type
Source: Own elaboration

It should be mentioned here that some other information related to accessible tourism in the territories selected, such as, for instance, statistics, informative material, websites, leaflets, etc., has been gathered.

Once all the data have been collected, the agent relationships have been examined with the help of two programs that enable the identification of the structural characteristics of the agents' networks: UCINET 6 (Borgatti, et al., 2002) and Netdraw (Molina, 2001; Merinero and Pulido, 2009):

a) *Density of the network*: this indicator helps to measure the proportion of the existing relations out of the number of total possible relations. By doing so, the intensity of the relationships within the entire network will be specified. Additionally, it also identifies the different nodes in them and their connections and typologies.

b) *Cohesion of the network*: three important factors are to be considered under this rubric; (i) the distance of the relations; that is, the effort of an agent to reach another one; (ii) the density of the cohesion, also referred to as "compactness"; (iii) and their "breadth" or distance-weighted fragmentation.

c) *Centrality*: by means of this indicator, three extremely important features of the agents' relationships are to be calculated; (i) their "degree", that is, the directness of the agents' relationships in the network; (ii) their "betweenness" ("Freeman nodes betweenness"), which, in turn, controls optimum communication flows by indicating the extent of the intermediary role agents play in relation with other agents; (iii) and their "flow centrality" ("Freeman flow betweenness"), which states the particular position of an agent in his communication with the other agents (Wasserman and Faust, 1994; Quiroga, 2003; Rodríguez and Mérida, 2005).

Finally, in order to carry out the Analysis of the Content of the Social Networks (SNCA), a lot of information has been analysed in order to reach basic characteristics of the aforementioned relations (nature, subject matter, degree of formalization, temporality).

2. RESULTS

France

The following diagram results from the analysis of the network created by the agents associated with accessible tourism in France (*figure 1*):

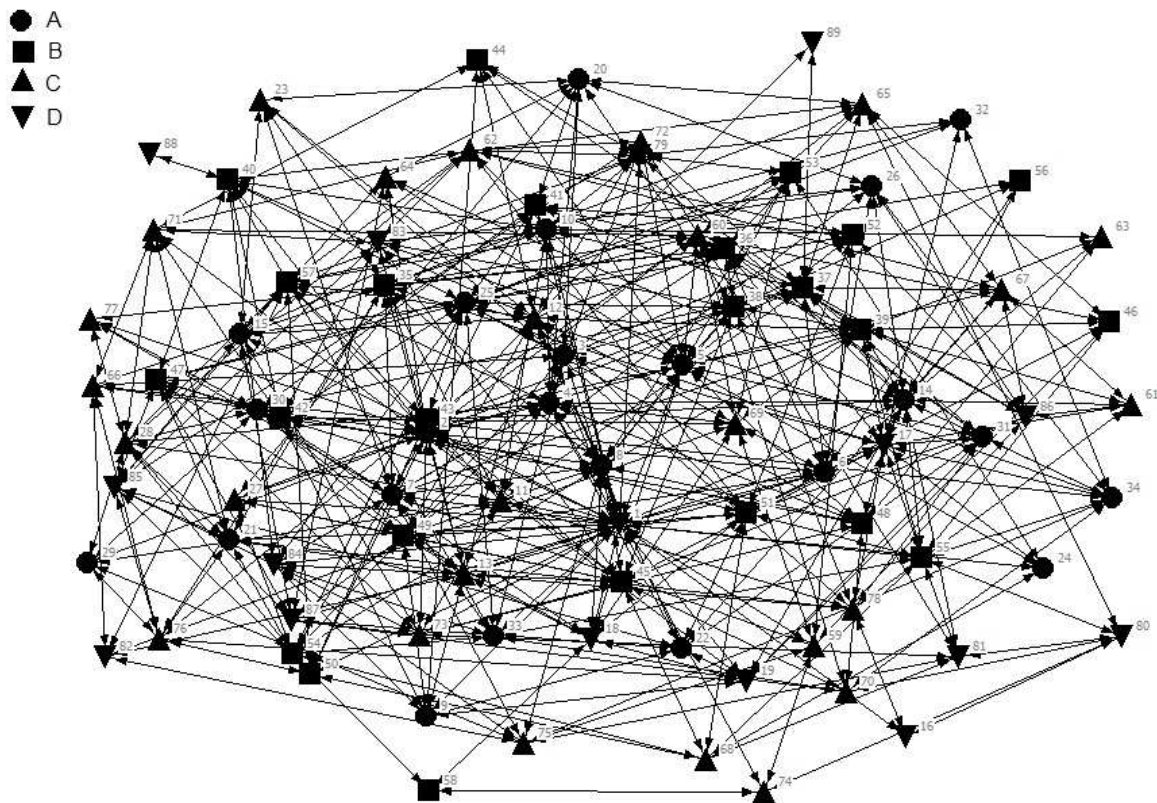


Figure 1: Network created by the agents associated with the accessible tourism in France
Source: Own elaboration with Ucinet 6 & Netdraw

The first characteristic to consider is its low density (10.0%), since there are 93 agents ("nodes") and 856 relations ("ties"). The second aspect to remark concerns the cohesion of the network. 2.222 is the shortest average distance between the nodes in the system of assistance relations; 0.458 is the distance based on cohesion ("compactness"); and 0,542 is the "breadth" value. And finally, as regards the value for centrality (26.146%), it has to be noticed that there is a "node betweenness" of 12.01% and a "flow betweenness" of 3.02%. It is also important to remark that the most centrally positioned agents, that is, those with the greatest power of betweenness in the network, are the associations devoted to disabled people at the following nodes:

n° 1 (FFAIR-Fédération Française des Associations et Amicale des Insuffisants Respiratoires), n° 2 (FFAIMC-Fédération Française des Associations des Infirmes Moteurs Cérébraux), n° 5 (EEP-Éclaireuses et Éclaireurs de France), n° 14 (JPA-Jeneuse au Plain Air), n° 8 (APAJH-Association pour Adultes et Jeunes Handicapés) and n° 25 (PRONADIS), n° 12 (la AFIT-Agence Française Ingénierie Touristique), n° 37 (la Guide Accesible) and n° 49 (website Yanous).

As can be observed, in France, the most active agents are some associations for disabled people, as well as some guides, magazines and websites directly related to these groups.

Spain

As regards Spain, the following diagram results (*figure 2*):

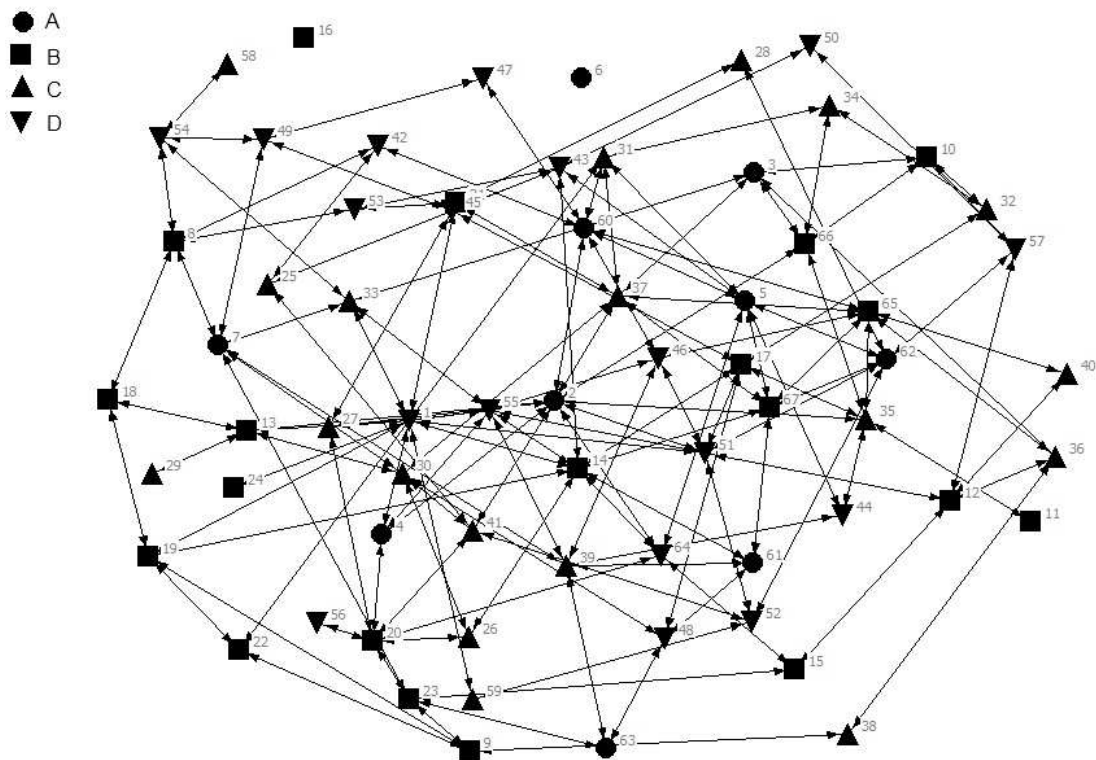


Figure 2: Network created by the agents associated with the accessible tourism in Spain
Source: Own elaboration with Ucinet 6 & Netdraw

The first characteristic to highlight is its very low density (5.88%), with 71 agents and 292 relations. Secondly, the cohesion of the network is 2.908, the compactness is 0,333 and the breadth is 0,667. And finally, as regards the value for centrality (11.429%), it has to be noticed that there is a “node betweenness” of 9.67% and a “flow betweenness” of 4.965%. It is also important to remark that the most centrally positioned agents, that is, those with the greatest power of betweenness in the network, are the associations devoted to disabled people at the following nodes:

nº 1 (Fundación ONCE-Organización Nacional de Ciegos Españoles), nº 2 (ADIS-Asociación de Disminuídos Físicos) and nº 60 (ASPROS), websites nº 20 (Polibea), nº 13 (Cermi) and nº 14 (Discapret), the organisation nº 35 (PREDIF-Plataforma Representativa Estatal de Discapacitados Físicos) and the public organisms nº 43 (Dirección General de Turismo), nº 51 (Turisme de Catalunya-Generalitat de Catalunya) and nº 54 (Turespaña-Instituto de Turismo de España).

As can be observed, in Spain are the most active agents also some public and private associations and organisations directly related to disabled people.

Morocco

The analysis for Morocco (figure 3) leaves the following results: a remarkable low density (5.55%), with 38 agents and only 78 relations. A value of 3.37 for the cohesion of the network, one of 0.219 for its compactness and a value of 0.781 for its breadth, and finally, as regards the value for centrality (10.957%), it has to be noticed that there is a “node betweenness” of 22.44% and a “flow betweenness” of 10.589%. It is also important to remark that the most centrally positioned agents, that is, those with the greatest power of betweenness in the network, are the associations devoted to disabled people at the following nodes:

nº 1 (CENAUDI-Centro de Atención a personas con Autismo y Discapacidad Intelectual), nº 3 (ADFM-Association Démocratique des Femmes du Maroc) and nº 7 (FMSOURDS-Association Forum Marocain des Sords), the magazine nº 9 (la Guide Accesible) and the website nº 13 (Proxihandicap).

As can be observed, the lowest accessible tourism development in this country is explained by correlated with the low number of agents involved in this kind of tourism, especially public organisations and private associations.

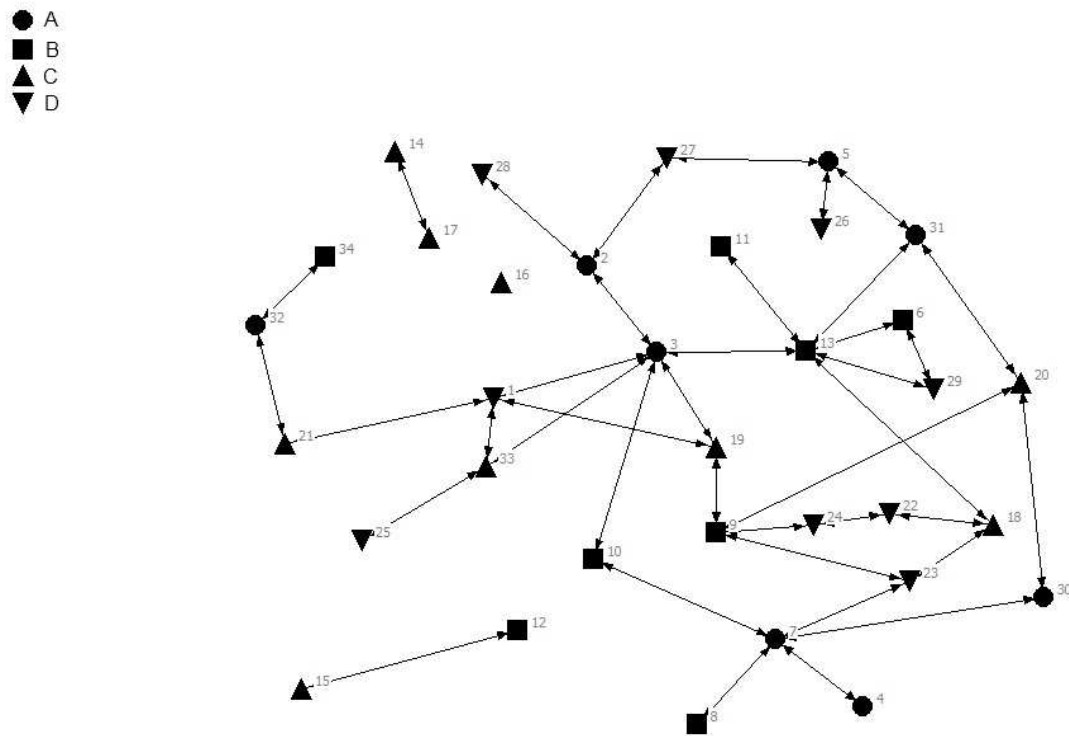


Figure 3: Network created by the agents associated with the accessible tourism in Morocco
Source: Own elaboration with Ucinet 6 & Netdraw

If we compare the characteristics of the relations between the agents identified for each of the three countries selected (*table 3*), it can be observed that the relational dynamics generated by the agents more directly involved in accessible tourism in each of the three countries matches the same low-density relational model, though with different nuances, the same steps as in their tourism development are, thus, followed.

SOCIAL NETWORK ANALYSIS	Spain	France	Maroc
Nodes	71	93	38
Ties	292	856	78
Density	5,88%	10,00%	5,55%
relationship type	multilateral	multilateral	bilateral
coordination of the relationships between actors	stable & confidence	stable & confidence	punctual & confidence
COHESION			
Distance	2,908	2,222	3,370
Compactness	0,333	0,458	0,219
Breadth	0,667	0,542	0,781
CENTRALITY			
Degree	11,429%	26,146%	10,957%
Freeman nodes betweenness index network centrality	9,67%	12,01%	22,44%
Freenan flow betweenness index network centrality	4,965%	3,012%	10,589%

Table 3: SNA & SNCA. Comparative table
Source: Own elaboration with Ucinet 6

On the basis of these characteristics, it can be maintained that France, the country with the greatest tourism development of the three countries examined, is the one that has highest relational dynamics in accessible tourism management. On the other hand, Spain, occupying the second place of the rank in terms of tourism development, has a moderate level of relational dynamics of accessible tourism agents. And finally, Morocco, the third country in the ranking, has the lowest level of relational dynamics. It is clear, thus, that there is an evident correlation between collaborative dynamic and the level of development of this kind of tourism: the higher relational dynamics are the highest the level of development of this class of tourism is.

Everything seems to point out, then, that those countries that present intense relational dynamics to manage the development of accessible tourism are privileged over those with lower dynamics. This is so because the expectations and needs of this kind of tourism find a more effective response when collaborative dynamics in the management of the destination are high.

3. CONCLUSIONS

The analysis carried out in this work has proved that collaborative dynamics clearly correlate with the level of development of accessible tourism in each of the three countries analyzed that is, the higher the level of development of accessible tourism in a country is, the higher the relational dynamics of the agents involved in accessible tourism are. As a consequence, then, the countries that present more intense relational dynamics to manage this kind of tourist activities are in better conditions than those with lower relational dynamics. This is so because the expectations and needs of disabled tourists are highly satisfied if collaborative dynamics in the management of the destination are high enough.

The tourism sector must take this new social reality into consideration in order to remain competitive, since people may go through different situations of mobility difficulties throughout their lives, a trend that is increasing with the ageing of the population. Therefore, accessible tourism facilities can be more widely used by the population of a particular place. The exclusive view that creates spaces and products just for a specific kind of people should be, thus, transformed into an inclusive view that, quite on the contrary, allows all people, regardless of their physical and psychological conditions, to enjoy a complete tourism experience.

In this context, small and medium-size companies and associations devoted to accessible tourism should not continue acting independently any longer. Instead, they must look for collaborative dynamics. This way the small companies and associations will obtain a minimum critical business mass that will enable them to attain the sufficient levels of profitability and competitiveness; and the medium-size companies, in turn, will be able to develop this kind of tourism, making it available to all kinds of disabled people.

To achieve this goal, the role of the different public administrations is essential. They should promote and encourage as much as possible accessible tourism development and the expansion of social networks designed for disabled people, within a framework of territorial cooperation between all the public and private agents involved (organisations, associations, social leaders, etc.).

To have intense relational dynamics, the relations must be stable and articulated formally, which is essential in the active management of any tourist destination, so

much more if still he is in an initial phase of his tourist development. In these cases, the intensity of relational dynamics helps to take agile decisions on the management of destinations and to make the implied agents take an active part in them.

In addition, this work has demonstrated a direct relationship between the degree of development of accessible tourism in a territory and the relational dynamics that takes place between the agents involved in it.

As it has been demonstrated in this work, a correlation exists between the territorial development of accessible tourism and the relational dynamics generated by the actors involved in this kind of tourism. It appears as an opportunity for the agents to favour the expansion of the social networks related to this kind of tourism, taking into account both, the diversity of the disabled groups and the offers for them.

The knowledge of the tourist actors of the territory and their relations is a basic element for the active management of any tourist destination, since these have a special importance for the strategies and the actions that must be undertaken to adapt to the new conditions of the context. These are characterized, among other things, by the disintermediation and the new habits of the tourist demand, in which the experience, the major activity in the destination and the discovery and self-organization are key factors.

The interactions between the public administrations and the private actors (businessmen of the sector and social agents with some incidence in this tourism) are a key factor to bear in mind in the valuation of the capacity of action of any territory that wants to develop this type of tourism. Thanks to their cooperation, the territory will improve its adjustment to the new requirements imposed by the national and international context.

This paper, together with the literature on the topic dealt with, provide several potential avenues for a further integration of networks and spatial analytic strategies in the development of accessible tourism. We conclude this paper by highlighting that nowadays social communities are showing a great interest in accessible tourism and are opening, as a consequence, new possibilities that may prove especially fruitful in a near future.

On the other hand, the results obtained have demonstrated the usefulness of this type of analysis for the management of tourist destinations, as well as the adequacy of the methodology and the technologies used during the process of investigation.

Last but not least, future research could investigate the mechanisms of how space works in detail. Does space create an opportunity for interaction due to proximity, or does it create, on the contrary, a hindrance to interaction due to distance? Further research could shed light on these questions by interviewing subjects and analyzing more closely reasons for frequent and non-frequent interactions, as well as by types of interactions and types of layouts. Furthermore, organizational purposes may come into play and may form an interesting factor to consider in the same way as the individualistic purposes of those organizations.

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