

**TOURISM AND DURABLE
DEVELOPMENT**

DOMINANT THEORETICAL PARADIGMS IN THE STUDY OF TOURISM A CRITICAL REVIEW

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***Abstract:** The main subject of analysis in this paper is the issue of change of the dominant paradigm in the study of tourism. In this sense, first the following key categories are being examined: pre-paradigmatic stage, paralysis, transformation or paradigm shift, borrowing and adaptation of theories from other disciplines and their applications in tourism. Then, the tourist system is being analyzed in detail, which is still the dominant paradigm, and which provides a coherent conceptualization of tourism. In contrast, there is postmodernism, which stands for discontinuity and deconstruction of existing theories and systems. This is, in fact, a post-disciplinary approach that insists on the demolition of the walls between the individual disciplines, i.e. on “forgetting separate disciplines,” and puts exclusively the research of a certain phenomenon - in this specific case, tourism, in the spotlight. Also, it is strived for complete dedication and specialization of researchers, as well as the reintegration of knowledge fragments of previously collapsed systems, but also for collecting new fragments in favor of the new tourist paradigm. In this context, the post-disciplinary approach presented gives a new contribution and reasoning in support of the review and revision of the existing concept of tourismology, as a unique scientific discipline on tourism, and the constitution of a new tourismology, as a specific “post-disciplinary discipline”*

***Keywords:** holistic approach, reinterpretation, reconceptualization of tourismology, springboard theory*

Introduction

Since the beginning of tourism study to this day, the statement that “its theory is lagging behind practice” is being repeated constantly, and it has become common place. However, it seems that, in theoretical literature, this trend of “lagging behind” continues, especially bearing in mind the quantitative and qualitative changes that have occurred in the modern tourism, under the influence of the development of high technology in the sphere of communications and transport, as well as the acceleration of the globalization process. In this context, the logical question of whether the existing theories,

created in earlier periods and borrowed from other disciplines, can adequately explain tourism at the beginning of the 21st century. In regard to this, in the leading scientific literature, the new concepts arisen in the bosom of postmodernism are increasingly being used, while traditional discourse that relies on outdated paradigms is still dominant in the “more underdeveloped” theory of tourism. With this in mind, it is necessary to examine critically the current value and usability of the ruling paradigms in tourism, on the one hand, and the possibility of assuming or creating new paradigms, adjusted to the spirit of the era and the development of tourism in the future, on the other hand.

Dominant paradigms in tourism

A paradigm can be understood as a certain conceptual framework, a system of assumptions and methods in scientific research. Paradigms are theoretical and value concepts that are accepted by the scientific community that uses them in their research. They define the rules that are universally accepted in a particular discipline and enable its progression. Every science has its own models and principles that serve to guide researchers. Kuhn (1970:43-51) defines a scientific paradigm as “universally recognized scientific achievements that for a time provide model problems and solutions to a community of practitioners.” He believes that the development of science takes place in the form of leaps and breaks. According to him, a scientist who is not satisfied with the dominant paradigm seeks another theory that can explain the subject of study in a better way. Science develops and matures through a successive change of paradigms, otherwise there is a “paradigm paralysis,” i.e. the inability and refusal of the scientific community to overcome the dominant models of thought (e.g. a dramatic shift from geocentric to Galileo’s heliocentric theory). With this in mind, it is necessary to examine critically whether the dominant paradigms in the study of tourism are still able to provide an explanatory framework for modern tourism, whether their transformation is possible, or a complete change is necessary.

Tourism development is, as already pointed out, faster than the development of a theory that explains it. In addition, the theory of tourism has mostly been under the strong influence of certain disciplines, particularly economics and geography, which have used their monopoly position in certain academic areas to block a greater participation of other disciplines that would allow for this phenomenon to be viewed in totality. In addition, a number of true, independent scholars of tourism is small, because the specialists in economics, geography, sociology, psychology, anthropology, and other disciplines are often only incidentally and occasionally engaged in the research of tourism. The researchers are also, to a great extent, focused on case studies and individual sites, according to the principle of the outdated distinction between the emitting and receiving regions and countries. In order to explain

tourism, as already mentioned, theories and methods from other scientific disciplines are usually being borrowed and adapted. Finally, despite the pursuit of a holistic view of tourism through an interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary approach, today the multidisciplinary study of tourism is still dominant.

In the area of tourism, there is no unified theory that is able to unite all researchers on a common methodology. With that in mind, Phillmore and Goodstone (2004) distinguish the following stages in the development of the tourism theory: *Pre-paradigmatic stage*, *System approach*, and *New (post-disciplinary) approach*. The authors have inserted the so-called *Transitional stage* between the last two stages. First the pre-paradigmatic stage will be presented briefly, and then the system approach and the post-disciplinary approach will be the subject of a more detailed analysis, bearing in mind their importance and relevance in the modern study of tourism.

The pre-paradigmatic stage includes a group of authors who were first engaged in the theoretical analysis of tourism: Hunziker and Krapf (1942), Fuster (1971), Burkart and Medlik (1974), Jafari and Ritchie (1981) and others. These authors believe that tourism should be approached as a specialized scientific field, but with the help of other scientific disciplines, such as psychology, economics, statistics, social sciences, etc. “Objective” reports from field research and a depersonalized approach are dominant. Researchers are treated as experts, and their findings have the status of facts. Efforts are being made to formalize and categorize qualitative research while preserving the commitment to a positivist view of the world. Representatives of this movement do not propose the creation of a specific method, but they believe it is possible to assume some methods belonging to other disciplines. Also, they reject the partial approach and advocate a holistic understanding of tourism. In this sense, they consider transdisciplinarity to be the best way of studying tourism. However, due to certain difficulties and limitations that this approach possesses, the most realistic way to achieve this is to accept multidisciplinary and interdisciplinarity.

Systems theories of tourism

When it comes to systems, the reflections stated by Solar (1985: 11-30) are very relevant; he starts with the statement that there is a kind of “transcendental yearning for the system” (Lukacz, 1973: 32-5). However, he believes that it does not belong to human nature *per se*, but to a particular epoch of human history. With this in mind, the “size” of science, philosophy, and art is understood as the opposite to fragments, i.e. “parts,” thus totality is also a value category. This implies the standpoint that large works, such as novels and the philosophy system, have a greater value than some works smaller in volume, such as short stories, poems, or essays. In Kuhn's (1970) opinion, the system approach is the ruling paradigm. It is largely accepted by the academic

community and when it comes to tourism research. In addition, some scientific theories are very ambitious attempts to provide a comprehensive explanation of certain phenomena in nature and society. They compose complex systems, whose parts should fit perfectly into a seemingly coherent whole, i.e. the monolithic, monumental pyramid of knowledge.

When it comes to tourism, the systems concept has experienced extensive distribution and popularity. It has been upgraded and improved by a number of authors who applied the general systems theory to tourism. Cuervo (1967), Wahab (1977), Leiper (1979), Sessa (1985), Beni (1988), Boullon (1995), Martinez (2005) and others are among the most important representatives of this school of thought. "The tourism system" is still the dominant paradigm in the study of tourism, because it best explains the dynamics of the phenomenon, although it still contains elements and connections that have not been fully explored.

Some authors believe that the main function of this system is - communication, i.e. that tourism is a communications system through which both positive and negative pieces of information are being transmitted. The main components of this kind of system are, as Wahab (1973) believes, people, space and time, i.e. the movement of people through space and time, during which communication links between various participants in tourism and nations are being made.

In Holden's opinion (2006: 11-13), one of possible approaches to the understanding of tourism is a synthesis of different elements in the system. Thinking about tourism as a system can be interpreted in a dynamic way, open for change and continuity, and its functioning in the geographical area can be viewed. This approach enables a holistic interpretation of tourism, with the help of a multidisciplinary approach to this phenomenon. The systems approach reduces complex situations from real life and numerous interconnections to the framework of a relatively simple model, and global tourism is seen as a "spider web," in which each part is networked with all the other parts, so that changes in one segment consequently affect the whole system. This model seeks to integrate historic and dynamic perspectives in the explanation of the tourism system, where changeable political, economic, social, and technological processes in society that affect tourism are highlighted. In the epoch of globalization, all countries are interconnected and interdependent, and the simplistic division into exclusively generating or receptive countries increasingly fades away, because there is reciprocity, since every country has both functions simultaneously, but in an asymmetric form. Tourism, therefore, can be seen as a complex and dynamic system that involves reciprocity by bringing changes both in the origin and in the destination of tourism movements.

The "springboard" theory, which was conceived by the prominent American theoretician of tourism Jafari (1987), is a very complex and logical

model of the systemic approach to tourism. This model is relevant in socio-cultural terms, tourism conceived, and structurally integrated into the whole corpus from which tourism emerges and to which it returns. Given that the common denominator of tourism is the tourist, he is in the center of the analysis during the construction and the application of the model. It can be expanded to conceive a comprehensive model of tourism that represents an explanatory framework, and it can be used as a reference basis or a jointly context through which heterogeneous fragmentary contributions from the past can be investigated and kept under review, different themes and directions of research can be identified, new hypotheses and techniques can be tested, and also new questions and challenges of the future can be opened. Such efforts can contribute to the further development of knowledge and its application in the field of tourism. The model is not perfect, and as such, it may be subject to review and revision, however, it is a model that is comprehensive and, into which nearly all aspects of tourism can be integrated, from its causes to consequences. The model includes the following key components: Starting platform - everyday existence; Release - the abandonment of everyday existence; Animation - a life of unusual flotation; Repatriation - return to daily existence; Incorporation - reintegration into everyday existence, and Lost time in the place of residence. These components constitute a coherent tourism system, which provides a comprehensive overview of tourism, tourists, their movements, activities, and transformation, which was not distinct in earlier studies.

Finally, it is necessary to observe each system, as well as the shown one, in a critical way. Namely, cases in which astute critics quickly undermined these large systems, finding one or more weak points that were completely compromised, are not rare in the history of science. The systems were destroyed as a house of cards, by pulling out a single misplaced card from its foundations. In this sense, Baudrillard (1991) is right when he says that "in each system, there must be a neuralgic point that, when touched, causes a contraction of the whole system and its implosion." This has led to a loss of confidence in large systems, and therefore the loss of motivation by researchers to create such systems.

Given the above, since the second half of the 20th century, as Solar (1985) believes, the most influential philosophical works are no longer synthetic reviews of the entire philosophical problematics and large closed studies, instead they are fragmentary, open, unfinished, and mostly in their expression - methods - provocative in their conclusions, relatively short and undeveloped in all their aspects. If this sounds like an apology of fragments and essays, then we should beware of a mere rotation of Lukac's view (1973) on the absolute scale of values, a view according to which the value of the fragment and essays is, in its essence, "a consequence of decadence." An abundance of contemporary essays itself warns of the danger that the openness of one form

and one way of thinking simply cannot be understood as the complacency of abandonment. The essay is a “process” and a “fragment;” it can really oppose the elaboration of the whole, which the novel, the philosophical or the scientific system achieve in a certain way. Lukac’s high grade for the essay is actually the result of a low grade for our epoch, i.e. contemporarity, which, according to him, does not possess the own principle of summing up the totality of experiences, and therefore cannot be expressed in anything else that is not a fragment or a part of the whole. However, Lukac does not believe that each novel and each philosophy system is always more valuable than any essay or any short story.

The contemporary predominance of fragments over the system, which has been shown, can be interpreted as a reflection of fragmentation and decadence. However, fragments can be viewed from a completely different angle, as potential “material” for a future system, as a process of creating component parts of a new puzzle, i.e. collecting various stones, which will eventually create a complete mosaic of a different knowledge system. The subject of research, in this context, may include some universal questions of human existence, which are being addressed by traditional philosophical disciplines, and which, so far, have been neglected when it comes to tourism theory: aesthetics, ethics, ontology, epistemology, metaphysics, freedom, aspirations towards values and ideals, the absolute, and the ultimate meaning of tourism. In addition to the update of the “classical” philosophical questions, it is also necessary to identify the most important new, postmodern fragments of knowledge that will serve as the basic material for post-disciplinary tourismology (Comic, 2000 and 2004): geopoetics of tourism; kinetic dimension of travel; total institutions; simulations and simulacra; delocalization, concentration, and implosion; fiction, deceptions and illusion; surreal eclectic combination of incompatible; aesthetics of extreme kitsch and complete triviality; multilayer reduction and compression; alignment of value hierarchies; annihilation of geographical space; spatiotemporal compression; system of heterotopias; extraterritoriality and solipsism of cultural cocoons; dialectic of places and non-places; to have and to be modes of communication; globalization and glocalization; differentiation, homogenization, and hybridization of cultures; interaction between virtual and real journeys; imaginary and real topography of a place; society of experiences, pluralization and de-differentiation of experiences; journey as a temporary negation and reaffirmation of one’s own culture; fluid existence, and a postmodern nomad - *flaneur*, etc.

Post-disciplinary tourism theories

Post-tourism and post-disciplinary tourism theories were conceived in the womb of postmodernism. It represents a radical discontinuity, a step aside, and the deconstruction of theories and ideologies of modernity. In this sense, Derrida (1972) believes that the deconstruction does not proclaim only “the end

of grand narratives,” but requires the breakdown of their external support, the destruction of the metaphysical centrality, a pluralistic burst of meaning and the end of absolute pretensions and transcendent guarantees for the great pyramid of Certainty. Postmodernism is, in its most important aspect, the universe or a chaos of differences. Finally, it is a condition in which the civilization realized it was “founded” rather in the absence of foundation, than on any identity, regardless of how much it was yearned for obsessively.

The peak of postmodernism occurred in the last two decades of the 20th century, but then it was a subject of criticism, only for “the death of postmodernism” to be prematurely declared by some authors, and the epoch of metamodernism and post-postmodernism to be presented. However, none of these new theories and epoch labels has been successful, nor is it widely accepted. With this in mind, the postmodern paradigm is still alive and corresponds with the changes brought by the global information society, and is also used as a general explanatory framework for contemporary international tourism. This, of course, does not mean that the shelf life of postmodern paradigm is unlimited and that we do not need to think about new concepts, no matter what they are called: metamodern, transmodern, or otherwise. Any kind of “fad” should be avoided in this sense, i.e. longing for change to change at any cost.

Post-tourism, according to Holden (2006), is a new paradigm, a new historical category that changes certain fundamental, preformed concepts. High technologies and their impact on tourism development are in the foreground. The importance of the relationship between the visitors, the host, and the impact that they have on the interdependence between the generating and receptive places is also highlighted. This *new approach* proclaims “the end of grand narratives,” introduces a versatile and more innovative analysis in research, as well as a contextually specific theoretical approach. It casts doubt on generalization and the veracity of social research. The reflectivity and the influence of the researcher’s personal biography on the research results are highlighted. The authority of researchers as objective experts is being disputed, and their voice is treated as one of many. Multiple interpretations and blending of different theories, techniques, and approaches, as well as the use of more creative methods, along with other more conventional qualitative methods are encouraged. Also, questions related to gender, race, and class are being raised, i.e. the influence of these affiliations on the type of questions asked, as well as on the ways in which the researchers interpret the data.

Many contemporary phenomena are much broader and more complex in scope than the previous ones, and as such, they are inherently interdisciplinary by their nature. They are looking for a larger scale of knowledge production than those that were created in “the context of applied sciences and knowledge,” which have been developed in the existing research practice. All this has led to the destabilization of the usual understanding of

disciplinarity and to the creation of a new concept that is labeled as the “post-disciplinary” approach. Its main characteristic is that “scientists forget about the disciplines and ideas that can be identified with any of them, they are primarily identified with knowledge, not with disciplines.” With this in mind, in addition to the traditional arguments in favor of tourismology as a special scientific discipline, it is possible to contribute new arguments that are based precisely on the post-disciplinarity concept.

Some authors at this stage propose new models and interpretations with the aim of overcoming the paradigm of “tourist system.” Urry (1996), Tribe (1997), Trigo (1988, 2003), and Nechar (2005) belong to this group of authors. These authors have developed a reflective and interpretive criticism of tourism contents, abstract theoretical constructions, as well as the search for meaning. They also advocate the inductive-deductive process of thinking, the application of logic, hermeneutics, phenomenology, epistemology, and dialectics. Tourism is also seen in the context of the post-modern consumer society, a new international order, changes in lifestyle, as well as in relation to new technologies, especially when it comes to global communication and transportation systems that directly influence the development of international tourism. Tourism is also analyzed as an agent of globalization (intercultural communication) and is one of the important factors of transformation of the modern world. Simultaneously, it is being insisted on the growing significance of philosophy, because it makes people prone to reflection, which affects their socially responsible activities. The need for “thinking people” to appear on the labor market is being perceived increasingly.

Tourismology - the post-disciplinary approach

Before we approach presenting arguments in favor of the revised status of tourismology in the context of the “new approach” and the concept of post-disciplinarity, it is necessary to refer to certain dilemmas and controversies in the academic community that relate to tourismology from its conceptualization to today. There is no consensus among researchers whether a separate scientific discipline that explores tourism is possible or not. Namely, Horner, Arillaga and Fragola, who first used the term “tourismology,” believe that it is possible to constitute a special scientific discipline - tourismology. According to Jovičić (1982: 36-40), a pioneer of tourismology research in Serbia, “it is desirable that many scientific disciplines are engaged in the research of tourism, but it is necessary that one scientific discipline examines the integrity and the complexity of this phenomenon.”

The constitution of a special science, as the author believes, does not only provide the unity and the complex capture of this unique phenomenon, but it also makes room for faster and more diverse development of existing scientific disciplines on tourism. The subject of tourismology is tourism - a

compound and complex spatial, social, and economic phenomenon. The constitution of a new scientific discipline is a long and complex process. It takes much time and a large number of researchers in order to verify and adopt some things; this applies both to the name and the theoretical fundamentals of tourismology, as well as to specific studies and their application in practice. The author is aware of the difficulties in this path, but does not hide his optimism, “the science of tourismology will perhaps be disputed, but it is certain that we will not wait long for its full affirmation.” However, even after 50 years since the beginning of studying tourismology, it is still being disputed and has to fight for the status of a recognized scientific discipline within the academic community.

Namely, the number of authors, both in Serbia and abroad, who deny this possibility is not small: “Although tourism is a legitimate area of research, at the moment, it lacks an adequate level of theoretical merits, which would enable it to become a scientific discipline” (Franklin and Krang, 2001). Based on the criteria for determining scientific disciplines, identified by them, it is possible to verify whether tourismology is a scientific discipline or not. First, the study of tourism covers numerous concepts (e.g. tourist motivation), but they are rarely specific for the study of tourism, given that they have emerged elsewhere and have been adapted and contextualized in order to get a tourist dimension. Second, tourism concepts do not constitute a distinct network. They can generally be understood only in the logical structure of the disciplines from which they have come. They do not constitute a coherent theoretical framework, thus the study of tourism, by itself, does not provide a distinct, structured way of analyzing the phenomenon, as does sociology. Third, the study of tourism does not have claims and standpoints that can be verified in practice, by using the criteria that are specific to the study of tourism, instead, criteria that are also borrowed from other disciplines are used. Therefore, tourismology is not in accordance with the above criteria for a scientific discipline, and the biggest disadvantages in this respect are the absence of internal theoretical and conceptual unity and heavy reliance on the contribution of other disciplines.

In addition to the previously established criteria, some authors formulate other ones, as well. So, for example, Phillimore and Goodstone (2004) include a different set of criteria for determining scientific disciplines such as the existence of the scientific community, the communication network, the tradition and a distinct set of values and beliefs. The question of to what extent these additional criteria relate to tourismology is raised. First, when it comes to the academic community of tourism researches, there is an increasing number of researchers, colleges and universities, scientific and research institutes where tourism is studied. In addition, there is an increasing number of researchers who identify themselves as “tourism researchers” and who are

no longer predominantly related to some other disciplines, as was the case earlier. Second, the tourism academic community has developed a global network of communications consisting of associations, organizations, conferences, books, magazines, websites, social networks, etc. When it comes to the research tradition of tourism, it is not as long the research tradition of history or geography, for example, but it is not completely irrelevant either. In fact, bearing in mind that serious, institutionalized academic research of tourism began in the nineteen seventies, and according to some authors, much earlier - in the late 19th century, it can be said that the research of tourism is around a hundred years old. During this period, tourism researchers, through growingly intensive exchange of knowledge and research results, gradually reach a high level of shared values, identity, and beliefs, i.e. paradigms within which they position their research.

The concept of post-disciplinarity gives new arguments in favor of reaffirming tourismology as a specific “post-disciplinary discipline,” as well as the possibility to review or change its dominant paradigms. One of the advantages of post-disciplinarity is that it allows tourism researchers to free themselves from traditional intellectual shackles imposed by a certain discipline. This freedom encourages innovation and creativity. It provides a new interpretation of ideas, finding different connections between them, as well as the construction of a new explanatory framework of research, which is not in accordance with the previously determined, rigid frameworks. It is also significant to tourismologists that the production of post-disciplinary knowledge encourages greater specialization among researchers. The strictly disciplinary approach imposes the need for researchers to develop skills and competencies in each area, as well as adequate methods and instruments of research. In contrast, the post-disciplinary approach encourages tourismologists to devote themselves exclusively to the study of tourism in the development process of their specialization. At the same time, the artificial, external paradigm, as a regulatory measure of value, is rejected, which is a key difference between the inter- and post-disciplinary studies of tourism. Finally, post-disciplinary research encourages new, hybrid, and more flexible forms of production of knowledge on tourism, but it is not intended to be intellectually “liberated from everything,” that is, although the post-disciplinary approach denies the need for disciplines, it requires a certain degree of self-regulation and self-discipline.

Therefore, given the above, it can be concluded that, despite the disapprovals, there are new arguments in favor of postmodern tourismology. However, if one wants to go along the path of the construction of a new tourismological paradigm in the context of post-disciplinarity, it is necessary to first deconstruct the existing systems into fragments, as well as to make an effort to collect new fragments that will form constitutive elements of a new theory.

Conclusion

When it comes to the post-modern approach to the scientific study of tourism, it can be concluded that, instead of the domination of multidisciplinary, interdisciplinary, and transdisciplinary approaches, the concept of post-disciplinarity has been gradually expanding. This concept supports the reaffirmation of tourismology, whose status of a special scientific discipline has been disputed from its emergence. Namely, tourismology can fit in the conceptual framework of post-disciplinarity to a large extent, i.e. it can be formally labelled with the contradictory term a “post-disciplinary discipline.” However, in order for tourismology to be redefined in accordance with the spirit of time and to receive a new status, it cannot keep the old paradigms, but it has to strive for a substantive internal self-transformation, which implies an initial deconstruction of the existing theories and systems into fragments, as well as the identification of new relevant fragments of knowledge. On the ruins of the “old tourismology” i.e. by means of recomposition, different linkage and interpretation of old and new facts (because facts themselves do not say anything), it is possible to access the construction of the “new tourismology” not in the form of a substantiated pyramid of knowledge, but in the form of a coherent and firm, but unsubstantiated construction.

In this context, the way in which epistemology (theory of knowledge) metaphorically examines these two concepts is very relevant. In fact, as pointed out by Blackburn (1999: 108), here two main metaphors are dominant. The first is the metaphor of the building or pyramid, built on the foundations. According to this concept, the task of the philosopher is to lay the reliable foundations and to identify a safe way to construct it, so that the structure is solid. This metaphor privileges a certain idea of the “given” as the basis of knowledge, as well as a rationally defendable theory of confirmation and reasoning as a method of construction (foundationalism). The second metaphor is the metaphor of ships or fuselages, which have no foundations, but owe their power to stability that is provided to them by tightly integrated parts. It rejects the idea of the “given” in foundations and privileges the idea of coherence and holism.

Bearing this in mind, the new tourismology can be conceived as an “unfounded” (devoid of the previously given) but a coherent post-discipline composed of tightly integrated old and new components, where the idea of the inherent human “longing for the system” cannot be completely ruled out. Finally, it should be noted that the concept presented does not have the function of the apology for a “revolutionary breakthrough” but it has been created with the intention to be “provocative” and cause brainstorming. It also does not pretend to be completed and rounded. On the contrary, it is open to criticism, and is simply “the start of the works on one of the possible locations, whose duration is uncertain.” This is also an attempt to initiate a creative conflict of opinions, in order to overcome the current “paradigm paralysis” and, via the

interpersonal approval of tourism theorists enable a leap towards new paradigms and the development of tourismology.

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