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Naming the Game of Plutocracy in Tourism and in its Research: A Critique[1]

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Abstract

Producing allegedly beneficial but destined to be mainstream and growth-oriented products to sustain wealthy and prosperous consumers' hedonism and business profits will not be "just" unless ecological, social and ideological problems surrounding the global tourism and its research paradigm are recognised and addressed. In the midst of the recent pandemic, turned the world upside down, this brief critique aims to bring a number of oxymoronic issues surrounding the business of global tourism in general and its linearized research paradigm in particular into the front to spark further debates. Following the linear mentality dominant in the business of global tourism, one expects that "*destinations abundant with touristic resources should be the most developed, prosperous and the happiest*" and "*destinations in the focus of researchers for many years should have resolved their problems and already prospered*." Generally speaking, neither the new forms of tourism nor the layered lens of research have provided a panacea for suffering tourism destinations. One wonders why we don't put business growth, profit and academic promotion aside for a while and place the "human life" in the center of research and development.

Keywords: Global Tourism, Degrowth, Linear Research, Plutocracy, Precariat, Supply, Tourismtification

INTRODUCTION

The Covid-19 outbreak, along with the unthinkable economic crisis that will probably deepen, has shaken global tourism industry unprecedentedly. The balances of many tourism-dependent countries, where mass tourism and its so-called "specialized" derivatives, worshipped to date as the heroes of economy, were largely shattered (UNWTO 2020; Yüksel, 2020). The growing uncertainty and the irrepressible contagion rate of covid-19, engulfing almost anything on its path in a light speed, has made the fragile industry to be more prone to "business droughts" unless new realizations in tourism and a new culture of doing tourism research begin to dawn on us.

[1] This critique is a collection of personal views and opinions based on my readings and experiences, and it is levelled against the *status quo* traditions and commitment to linearity and plutocracy in tourism and in its research, For more views on "*fallacy of positivism and tourism research*" please see Yüksel, A. (2020).

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While many destination authorities enthusiastically embrace tourism due to its likely positive effects on generation of income and employment, tourism and its "scientism" can be a source of problems as well, particularly when they are not well planned, managed, and researched (Yüksel, in press). This brief critique aims to bring a number of questions surrounding the business of global tourism in general and its linearized research mentality in particular into the front to spark further debates. While I will touch on a number of issues (e.g., What is the organizational and political structure of global tourism, is it democratic or plutocratic? Who is tourism and its research for? Is tourism for consumption or production? If global tourism, as it is said, brings economic wealth, prosperity and happiness all alone, then should all tourist receiving destinations abundant with touristic resources in the developing world be the most developed, the most prosperous and the happiest? If it is not properly handled, can global tourism become an economic curse for developing countries? If global tourism, as it is claimed, is an innocent "exploration" of other cultures to reduce tension, then how come this innocent "exploration" has turned into "exploitation" increasing tension?" What is the real agenda of doing tourism research: to get published, to help business make profit or to make the world of the researched more just?), the central effort will be on the essential question of "what will be the new "consciousness" in tourism and in its research?"

Tourism: A Savior or a Devastator?

Personally speaking, conventional tourism (CT) resembles a pleasure district, where value is produced through commodification of hedonism (Johnson, 2015). And, this "*…mass-consumed experiences centered on pleasure principle*" (Kontogeorgopoulos, 2004: 87) in this district is expected to bring "peace and prosperity" (Yüksel, in press). Generally speaking, this has not happened at all, since tourism has quickly been transformed into a *plutocracy*, a mutual, somewhat bilateral, exchange of economic activity mostly among the wealthy. Despite the alleged benefits of tourism, there is more than initially meets the eye in the global tourism industry. Recently new and allegedly more sustainable, ecological forms of tourism have been launched as saviors. But, as Butler notes "*it is almost impossible to have a form of tourism development that does not impact on the location in which it occurs*" (1999: 12). The CT and other forms of tourism are not mutually exclusive at all (Butler, 1999). CT strongly connects with such forms of "ecotourism" and "sustainable tourism", which by their very nature are oxymoron. I am under the impression that what is sustained in most of the sustainability cases is not the culture nor the nature but the consumers' hedonic pleasures. Hence, several destinations around the world have started to propose or implement strict measures to limit or restrict sustainable tourism.

System-wise, tourism economy is linear. That is, touristic resources are discovered and used to make the tourism product (destinations) and after their use, worn-out destinations are thrown away (take-make-dispose). In the linear economy of global tourism, the launch of new tourism forms is like a neoliberal game which has been in place for a long time (Yüksel, in press). Seemingly, some researchers, marketers, and destination authorities are keen to take part in playing this game for the sake of enhancing profits and prestige. But as they are often victims of their own success, not all large-scale games are harmless (Yüksel, in press). At present, the CT is still popular globally and it continues to manifest itself as a strong instrument of western hegemony, containing imperial ideologies, interests, values and practices (Cater, 2006). CT closely resembles imperial colonial tools (Palmer, 1994), used in the process of substituting a place's social, cultural, natural, psychological and commercial identity and fabric for the exploitation of the tourists and capitalization of the tourism industry. And it holds potential to turn into a burden even for the developed world (see Jover & Parra, 2019; Minguez et al., 2019; Sequera & Nofre, 2018). It capitalizes on the demand for hedonism, leisure and entertainment for making profits (Yüksel, in press). It is a way of colonizing and commodifying the life, culture, heritage, environment, etc., of local people for the gain of both economic and ideological profits (Palmer, 1994). CT values "independence, mobility, and property of self-righteousness" of the materialist tourist who wants to feel like a king or queen for a few days. It is mostly built on inequality and on wealthy and bourgeois tourists' exploitation of the way of, often primitive, life of locals, their cultural customs, heritage etc. In contrast to its promoted goals, such kind of so-called interchanges as cultural, educational and/or spiritual rarely transpire in the CT context. And interestingly, conventional and often linearized research tends to neglect this dehumanizing and exploitative nature of globally consumptive tourism, by focusing mostly on managerial attributes and issues that are highly likely to enhance business outputs and profits (Yüksel, in press).

The Process of Tourismtification

Before delving into what is meant by linearity and plutocracy in tourism, it is imperative to shed light on the process of *tourismtification* and the *paradox of plenty*. Due to the dire and inconcealable consequences of wild and gluttonous global tourism, many new tourism types (e.g., humanistic, gastronomic, historic, exotic, Antarctic etc.,) have been created with a concern to sustain tourism resources through controlled consumption spread over time. Regardless of the "*naming*" game played in the tourism store, the real name of the game is "*tourismtification*", particularly in destinations with weakly institutionalized societies (Yüksel, in press). Tourismtification -the process rendering a destination helpless first and then resorting it to embrace tourism as the only option, and making rural or urban spaces, resources suitable for exploitation – is inevitable, particularly in plutocratic environments. Tourism, if not handled properly, can turn into an economic trap and it often "*becomes the ring of fire causing self-destruction of the destinations*" (Unsever, Yılmaz & Arikan, 2018: 2).

Tourismtification fulfills its aims through several instruments, including commodification, commercialization, maximization, gentrification and touristification. In the process of tourismtification the chance to experience one, or all, of the problems mentioned below, by destinations in the developing countries with a weak institutionalised society is highly likely (Yüksel in press): *Firstly*, foreign capital takes over domestic capital. This results in a change in the status of ownership and hence the attractiveness of locality (e.g., naturalness, localness, heritage etc.) is expended for the sake of urbanization and rapid economic returns. *Touris(m)tification* through foreign capital taking over local capital is likely to bring in growth, "economic enlargement" without development (Ghatak 1995). *Secondly*, economic enlargement often involves construction and alterations for pleasing outsiders as opposed to all-year round residents. And locals are generally employed in low-skill positions. Under these circumstances the possibility of human capital or skill-upgrading through *tourism* is unlikely to happen. As locals remain underqualified, foreign operators will push for migrant labour force for achieving higher service quality. And this migration will eventually generate resentment due to social injustice and income leakages.

Employment in the tourism industry will often be dehumanizing as it demands displays of "friendliness and servitude" that locals may find it insulting (Fouberg, Murphy & deBlij, 2015). *And thirdly*, dehumanizing nature of *tourismtification*, with a very narrow economic perspective by commodifying local cultural and natural assets, will result in congestion, overcrowding and conflicts in "open social museums" in which wealthy and bourgeois visitors enjoy their time while staying oblivious to the real problems of those who are kept in prison against their free will (Yüksel, in press).

The Paradox of Plenty

Despite the widespread tourism-led-growth belief, research and anecdotal evidence (Adamou & Clerides, 2010; Copeland, 1991; Capo et al., 2007; Holzner, 2011; Katircioglu, 2009; Sheng & Tusi, 2009) suggests that global tourism in developing world may suffer from the resource curse, also known as *the paradox of plenty* (Sachs & Warner, 1995), which refers to the paradox that destinations with abundance of touristic resources (such as nature, culture etc) tend to have less economic growth, less happiness and worse developmental outcomes than destinations with fewer touristic resources. That is, destinations in developing world, particularly with weakly institutionalized societies and corrupted regimes but endowed with a bounty of tourism resources may fail to benefit from them (Deng & Ma, 2014). This is because as global tourism economy in developing countries prioritizes continuous growth in the first place to remain stable and profitable, an increase in "private riches" is achieved through chocking destination wealth. Tourism in developing countries tends to crowd-out possible but comparatively more laborious economic activities, like agriculture, manufacturing that improve economic better outcomes. Its crowds-in an environment characterized by conflicts, corruption and rent-seeking where powerful riches and *elites* have the ability of hijacking and grabbing tourism resources to their advantage. Many tourism destinations in developing countries suffer from the rule of elites (Jamal & Robinson, 2009), and this small but wealthy group implements highly impersonal economic policies, expropriate wealth of locals, and use the proceeds for their own glorification. As long as major superstructure and infrastructure are in the hands of global corporate plutocrats and local elites, profit is likely to leave destinations as quickly as it comes in.

Plutocratic Tourism

Global tourism is not an immortal, indestructible and almighty savior and certainly it is not the only economic solution. As any concept ending with "ism" is finite in itself, aging or ending of tourism is not an exception (Bellaigue, 2020). After all, the "gene of endism" is spontaneously, inherently and unexceptionally exists in every "organism" (Yüksel, in press). Despite the unceasing efforts in creating catchy names for *de facto* devouring tourism, the "care" in picking a word and placing it before the word of tourism does not change the reality in that tourism is in fact plutocratic in general (Standing, 2019) and linear in particular.

Global tourism has somewhat a covert political and organizational structure which is yet to be unveiled by researchers. Politically and organizationally speaking, likewise economy, global tourism is linear and it is more plutocratic than democratic. Plutocracy, a self-reinforcing system, means "rule by the wealthy." Once a group of wealthy people are in charge, they can use their wealth and political power to change the rules to make sure that they only get more wealth and power. The business of global tourism is not an exception.

A bunch of the richest of the rich, more obviously a few of the globally wealthiest men, through alliances, mergers and acquisitions manage the world tourism. Besides, the global tourism business reflects and attenuates the emerging class structure of the new global economy, topped by plutocracy of billionaires, followed by *elite, salariat, proficians, proletariats* and the *precariats* (see Standing, 2019; Johnson, 2015).

Tourism mostly rewards the wealthy consumers, social elite of the developed world. Only the rich, upper-class with disposable income, means and passports can afford incurring expenses of travel. This "traveler class" or "mills-chasers", comfortably participate in international tourism. The poor, lacking both in disposable income and power are unable to take part. The wealthy group, who wonders "what the poverty is?" or "how primitive locals live?", may purchase tailored and packaged tours to witness the "poverty" or the "primitiveness" safely at a "socially" and "physically distance", in self-contained bubbles of privilege.

At the destination leg of plutocratic global tourism, the business is generally dominated by either international capital or by the powerful and rich sovereign locals who have established lucrative deals and partnerships with global or national plutocrats. They tend to foster a business model where decisions in relation to tourism management from development to legislation to enforcement must be approved first by the rich corporate plutocrats and elites even when they are conceived and before they are put into practice. The privileged and the powerful are very resourceful and great at ruling and logrolling for protecting their own interests. As they are unflinchingly fierce and decisive in protecting their own interest, this makes them resistant to the kinds of sacrifices that would make real changes for the benefits of locals at large. In plutocratic destinations there exists an extreme inequality, of political *statis*, of democratic erosion, and the business culture is infected by phony windows dressings in terms of growth prospects in big numbers.

In plutocratic destinations locals are the *precariat's*. They are anxious about their economic future and they tend to look for rich saviors or heroes, as richness equates with intelligence. Locals, along with their culture and tradition, are liken to underground resources that needs to be exploited and inevitably they become subservient to the power of the plutocrats and elites. Although viewing "local friendliness" as a resource is very exploitative and dehumanizing, plutocratic destinations breed less hospitality, friendliness, prosperity and more contempt. Healthcare, education, infrastructure, transportation and standards of living, all become subpar at plutocratic destinations, as plutocracy, by its very nature, does not save anything for future but destroys and devours what it likes.

The plutocrats, elites and kleptocrats, though they are supposed to be shortsighted as they put on less value on long-term returns but more value on short-term returns, they cunningly create an "organized disorganization" to maintain their *status quo* (Acemoğlu, Robinson & Verdier, 2004). Examples include accusation of external forces for economic mismanagement, divide-and rule strategy to create further poverty and inequality, absence of equal opportunities in market entry, illicit arrangements that halt local *precariat's* to take collective actions, corruptions through strategically placing friends and relatives in vital managerial positions and building influential connections to overcome any planning and legislative obstacles, etc. Thus, benefits in *plutocratic destinations* is bound to flow upwards not to trickle down to the grassroots.

Plutocracy in Research

Like global tourism, its research and publishing business has turned into an enormous industry with profit margins rivaling to Google. The publication industry resembles a "shelf" within a department store in which scientists are volunteered to exhibit their results on shelves to get credits, status and promotion in return. Therefore, scientists, mostly funded by their governments, give their research to the publishers for "free"; the peer-review is done by the volunteered scientists for "free", and then the publisher sells the product back to the government. The scientists who created the product in the first place cannot read the final article in the store without a "*subscription fee*"!

The overall class structure that Standing (2019) offers can be reproduced not only in the business of global tourism but also in the business of research and publication. With all due respect, the top of the publication business is occupied by a small number of pioneering trademark publishing companies and their journal brands, strictly protected by international laws on patents and copyrights. They issue the rules, set the golden standards, elaborate guidelines and obligations in research and publications. They expand their brands by fragmenting science into sub areas of expertise and exert too much influence over what academics choose to study. Shaping the way how science is to be conducted, how journals and scholars are to be classified, graded and ranked, these *plutocrats* build fortunes by taking publishing out of the hands of scientists who are busy with chasing promotional carrots.

Underneath of the plutocrat is the *elite.* One needs to be very careful in separating the grains from the chaff, however *elite and prestigious* journals serve mainly to plutocrats' interests through watchdogging the research world and the business of publication. They are very competitive and creative. When competition among *elites* reach a point undermining collaboration, elites either engage in a vicious turf war as they are very much aware of the fact that "what goes up must come down" or invent a mutual enemy to mud the water. In order to maintain the existence of plutocrats and their purposes, *elites* tend to feel an urge to declare their loyalty to the plutocrats often. In this respect, they open war to so-called dubious, fraudulent, predatory rivals to distract and put the blame of why science goes dire on the enemy's shoulders. The invented enemy allegedly usurps academic outputs and strikes gold from luring the young and inexperienced *proficians*. While they occasionally fight with "invented" enemies for the sake of "valid and absolute" science, they do it not to lose share from the pie and to gain substantial prestige and huge profits.

Below the hegemonic elite journals is the *salariat*, relatively a shrinking number of second or third-tier mediocre quality, bureaucratic and traditional journals who want to climb up the ladder of the class structure into the upper elite group. The underneath is the *proficians*, mainly the scholars who are under constant pressure of "*publish or perish*." The majority of *proficians* are literarily in a rat-race not only for their papers published in *elite* and first tier journals but to finish the line "first." *Proficians* are in fact the commodified labor force of the publication business, as their labor and research endeavors constitute the basic product. Some "fast and furious" *proficians* like to compete and hunger for prestige, promotion and remuneration encourages scientific dilutions, misconducts, bending research procedures for the sake of more publications, citations and prestige.

Underneath are the *proletariats, those scholars* who cannot compete with the ambitious proficians and give themselves more to teaching issues. They publish rarely but mostly in third-tier or legitimate but non-ssci journals, often quote and distribute what proficians have disclosed in their research. *Proletariats* are complacent and only moderately interested in doing research with a new argument as they are unequipped with necessary resources and tools to dig deeper. They not only lack in sufficient resources (funds, language skills, infrastructure, statistical programs etc.) but also, they are deprived of accessibility to resources that are widely open only to the privileged proficians.

Below is the *precariat*, who is unstable, part-time labor involved in research projects, like phd students whose only target is to have a stable job and aspire to become a full-time researcher. For a precariat the research is only instrumental for obtaining a meaningful career, and hence the “research” is not for solving a social problem, say poverty. *Precariat’s* may emulate the most famous, the most cited researcher in area of their interest. They are resorted to do all the unwanted chores in research under the duress of senior scholars (e.g., fill in the forms, enter data) and are therefore supplicants. As they strive to find direction in the scholarly blue ocean and they are open to any kind of risk, they are neither innovative nor rebellious. They often prefer to follow the beaten track in research.

As was aforementioned, the *plutocrats* shape the business and the *elites* enforce the rules and procedures of “absolute” research. These rules gradually become the standardized framework on which any topic can be researched and addressed. To recapitulate, the most important rule of the research in publication business is to serve the basic business purposes, that is “the maximization of profit”. Obedient of this rule prioritizes “causes and their effects” of business profits more than putting the "human" in the center. And the name of the framework that prevails in the research business is “*positivism*”. Like global tourism, it’s research is also mostly linear and exploitative. Rule obedient *proficians*, as in globalized tourism, have no qualms in exploiting the conditions, traumas and psychology of researched for their own vested interests. In this respect, plutocracy in research is very conducive to creating fiction altruism that best works for plutocrats not for locals. Generally speaking, the *proficians* hypothesize in advance about the strength and the direction of the relationship among subjectively chosen dependent and independent variables. The proficians then engage participants accordingly with the predeveloped questions, experiments etc. But, in general, the proficians neither care about the researched nor they share the results with participants. And they almost never wonder what had happened to the subjects after the research was completed and published. Is this humanitarian? Broadly speaking, the outcome of the process of hypothesizing, data collecting, analyzing, interpreting and finally publishing does not have any concrete benefit neither to the destination nor to the researched. When the research is over, proficians do not generally return to the researched, who were forced, through research questions, to remember and talk about their current or past traumas they may not want to remember, and they are then left with a deteriorated psychology. Almost no care exists as to whether the so-called fancy recommendations, produced as a result of the empirical research, are applied to improve the conditions of the researched. Thus, there exists a “selfishness, greediness, self-indulgence and exploitations” in plutocratic research in that the research is meant to gain status or personal prestige through publication. The purpose of plutocratic research is not to solve “real problems” of locals, say how to increase their social welfare, and create a just world but to create a new “*profitable variable*” for the linear research and the publication industry.

Linearity in a nonlinear world

Once the outbreak has started, I have personally hoped that the “halt” imposed by the outbreak could help raise a different consciousness in tourism and in its research. Regrettably, leaving the comfort zone of traditions of making safe but arid predictions behind and dive into a shining new world of understanding will not be that easy. Among the midst of pandemic, there is an accelerating haste, particularly among tourism researchers in the race of making predictions as to what is going to happen after the pandemic is over, as if pandemic is an experienced, well-known issue. Moreover, a growing number of calls for participation in online surveys demonstrates that hopes in predictions are pretty much tied to quantitative, online surveys and their outcomes. Using a single survey instrument, often accompanied by conceptually biased questions with limited scope, to predict, particularly exponential effects and outcomes in tourism and life is problematic. This is because surveys with a single indicator chasing one-off solutions, cannot even predict the first-order-effects precisely, let alone the second-order-effects or the third-order-effects and likely multiple outcomes, especially when these effects and outcomes are nonlinearly bound.

The effect of pandemic itself is not singular. It may be plural, circular and spiral (or physical, psychological and spiritual). That is, the effect is not always linear but it is nonlinear, exponential, so chasing one-off solution sounds problematic. Despite the general inclination of belief pertinent in current online surveys which idealizes the world as “numerous” in which “things happen in isolation, and life always exists on a linear curve, that there is one-to-one ratio between cause and effect”, the most of the world does not exist on a linear curve at all. There exists a “twilight zone” where there is an inverted curve and there exists an "exponential zone" where there are thousands of possibilities in which things can rise gradually but fall rapidly, rise quickly then taper off, fall sharply and then fall gradually or *vice versa*.

Indeed, life is replete with examples of nonlinear relations. And this is why even the most carefully structured survey instruments turn incompetent in predicting. Try too hard to get what you want in life (e.g., happiness, joy, respect, etc.,) often you end up with the opposite effect (lonely, dejected and miserable). Infidelity to fidelity, ungratefulness to favors, bite the hand that feeds… Even the most satisfied customers defect branded companies. No matter what is rated in 1+1 makes 2 type scales, this does not adjust people’s attitudes and behaviors, as 1+1 in scales often makes 360 in real life. When surveyed about whether people care about environment the answer would be almost always “yes.” But when you further survey whether they are willing to pay extra for sustainable products, the answers are disappointingly “no.” Similarly, participants in surveys generally agree that they are “very concerned about privacy”. Then, how come these very “privacy-concerned” people agree to sign up for loyalty programs that involve disclosure of sensitive personal details? In a linear world, one who is concerned about privacy should take precautions to protect it, shouldn't it? (De Langhe, Puntoni, & Larrick, 2017).

If I return to the subject matter, as a rule of thumb, there would be two main categories of outcomes in online surveys seeking opinions as to what is going to happen when the covid-19 has done with the world. These two categories may accommodate many tones of grays within and in-between. As far as the pandemic is concerned these two, possibly opposing, camps of outcomes in an online survey would be a) “what is the big deal, no need to make fuss?” and b) “the world is ending, future will not be the same”. If the majority of participants in one of these surveys stated that “the world was ending” then are we supposed to believe that the world is ending? In contrast, if the majority of participants inclined that there was no big deal then would we be supposed to feel relief that there is no need to make fuss about covid-19?

We are all aware of sloppiness, misgivings, misleading, deceptiveness, objections, warnings against the use of questionnaires (Beam, 2017), but despite the one's better judgment, it is very curious why relying on questionable questionnaires is still vastly in play. One of its limitation, often ignored, is noteworthy. The online surveys, designed by the current mind-set which likes to make simple straight lines that can be easily followed, struggle to understand nonlinear relationships. But we are in an unprecedented exponential era in which past instruments, frameworks, tools, past but nonconforming experiences, all become unavailing efforts. The world has moved away from so-called systemic, well-defined and determined one toward iterative, ambiguous and open world.

There is always a disparity between “talk” and “action”. The simple truth is that people often do lie.” And hence, answers people give in surveys do not correspond to what is really going on either in their heads or in external world. Asking people online what they feel, think and do, and then blackballing of verification through introspection sounds a pathology, as responses are evaporative and discredited in the face of reality (Beam, 2017). Asking biased questions online or offline shakes the water, thereby produce wobbly, lament answers unrepresentative of reality. And one final note “the tourism needs more understanding than arid predictions.” Hence, obedient proficians, can you please stop inviting respondents "to have an opinion" for your "predesigned conclusions?"

CONCLUSION

This critique aimed to bring a number of oxymoronic issues in the linear nature of global tourism and in its linearized research mentality into the front to spark further debates surrounding the essential issue of what will be the new conscious in tourism and in its research after the covid-19 has done with the world. Literally speaking, tourism appears to be a linear economic activity based on “take-make-dispose” and it is carried out between rich countries (GU, 2018). Moreover, in line with popular culture, it is heavily consumption driven and exploitative. A very quick glance at the world tourism shows that global tourism, already consuming 10% of global oil, responsible for 18.9% of emissions during July and August alone, seems to have often stepped out of its line (GU, 2018). Examples around the world evidence that if not properly handled, tourism could become an economic curse, suffering from *Dutch disease*, particularly for developing countries. That is, t*ourist receiving destinations abundant with touristic resources in the developing world have not become the most developed, the most prosperous and the happiest.* The profits are likely to leave developing destination as quickly as they come in, as long as major tourism superstructure and infrastructure are in the hands of global corporate plutocrats. And last but not the least, tourism research appears to be linear and its structure is plutocratic, with *an agenda of getting published to climb up in the class ladder*.

The outbreak, though devastating, may provide an opportunity to break the plutocratic chains. Indeed, signs of dramatic changes are everywhere and despite the hopes, the covid-19 is rewriting the future on its own. Established definitions, procedures, rules, models, paradigms in global tourism and its research may no longer exist. That is, the “urge” for reckless mobility and the consumption-driven tourism society, “*seeking material goals and pleasure, and avoiding pain in a home away from home*” may become a distant memory

(SOID, 2020). While we are all socially and physically isolated by the shockwaves of covid-19 in a world turned upside-down, it is high time that we envisioned likely ontological, epistemological and methodological shifts that may take place in linear tourism and in its research, generally shaped by the ideology of (*post*) *positivism* which states that the ultimate aim of science is to "*predict and control phenomenon*" (SOID, 2020).

Efforts in the form of webinars, live presentations, discussions, etc., to predict what the future holds for tourism business under the shadow of *covid-19* are in place. These are all worthy of commendation and hopefully they will help notice the fact that we have entered an era of "*degrowth*" (Andriotis, 2018) in which we need to find alternative travel lifestyles, new ways to maintain tourism industry without growth and new tourism research frameworks uncontaminated by contagious issues of the past. It all boils down to a simple truth: the importance of underpinning a discussion with "a broad understanding" of ontological, epistemological and methodological issues in aging tourism, as opposed to making arid predictions by widely accepted but mostly outdated lenses of knowledge production, is now a timely agenda. The study of a contemporary subject through outdated and ageing frameworks, designed mostly to foster business growth of plutocrats and overconsumption, sounds adventurous since current imperatives, if they are to continue, are somewhat different from the past. Among the midst of environmental and ecological justice, recently we have witnessed unprecedented examples of scientific collaborations and interdependence shattering the borders of *parochialism*, simultaneous focus on a single topic for the first time, open-science and open-data for rapid information sharing and more "digital dance" in research (SOID, 2020).

The pandemic makes it clear that we have a social responsibility for putting "human life" in the center more than prioritizing "*business profit*" or selfishly pursuing vested interests for "*academic promotion*." Tourism, as well as, doing tourism research ought to be more humane, with more respect for environmental and social harmony, spiritual quotient, values, ethics, integrity and human life (Yüksel, in press). Strictly speaking, linear growth-oriented tourism and profit-driven channels of publications may not remain immune to shockwaves of covid-19 for long, and who knows, they may be revolutionized to "*non-profit*" tourism, science and journalism (SOID, 2020).

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