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GEOGRAPHY OF TOURISM: EVOLUTION OF ACADEMIC DISCOURSE IN UKRAINE

Transformation of social life in Ukraine during the last decades causes changes in the approaches to tourism, in academic domain, in particular. Recent international communications on the geography of tourism in Ukraine, however, lacks detailed presentation of concepts and their logics. The discourse investigation questioning the concepts evolution lifts the veil on the Ukrainian academicians' elaborations in geography of tourism and its role in the core of tourism studies – tourismology – idea.

Key words: geography of tourism, the core of tourism studies, tourismology, Ukraine.

Introduction. Transformations of the society related to the dissolution of the USSR and transition to market-based economy in Ukraine reconstructed the vision of tourism as a phenomenon, approaches to its effects and provisions for the cotemporary development. The former illiberality of international communication and current limitations of inertia, in academic domain in particular, foreground the necessity to communicate the discourse of the geography of tourism and prevailing concepts in the country. Recently the general review of geographic studies of tourism in Ukraine got presentation to the international academic community (O.Lyubitseva, V.Kiptenko et.al. in Wyrzykowski J., Widawski K., *et.al.*, 2012). The briefly traced periods in tourism geography research, however, necessitate the insight on concepts evolution following the logics of the social demand for tourism studies in the country.

The geographic essence of tourism itself (just to mention C. M. Hall and S.J. Page, 1999) puts focus on the basic concepts related to the spatial peculiarities to be understood and taken into consideration. The academicians of the Chair of Regional Geography and Tourism at Taras Shevchenko National University of Kyiv (established in 1991) pioneer and promote the above discourse within the booming tourism studies in Ukraine.

The recent developments facilitate understanding of tourism as a synthetic sphere, which constitutes the subject matter of scientific domains considering its social, cultural, economic and other effects. The edge of 20th-21st century brought forward academic discourse on the complex core of tourism studies. This domain, for example, denominated as “*turystyka*” in Poland (W.Kurek,

2008), germinates in Ukraine under the title of “*tourismology*” (V.Pazenok and V.Fedorchenko, 2004; O. Lyubitseva, M.Malska, Yu.Zin’ko in V.Fedorchenko, V.Pazenok, O.Kruchek *et.al*, 2013). Elaboration of its grounds endures the wide academic discussion, which speculates the specific position of geographic approaches to tourism studies in Ukraine.

We aimed our scoping study, thus, on the nexus of the fundamentals professed. We questioned the logics of the evolution of concepts developed by geographers and their outcomes. The insight on and communication of the intellectual progress refines further debate on the directions of the discourse in geography of tourism approaches and their role in shaping the core of tourism studies by Ukrainian academicians.

Geography of Tourism discourse in Ukraine. Geography and geographers in Ukraine contributed to tourism studies by research and discourse, which have consistent logic. The exploration of the attractions and investigation of the possibilities of their complex usage for the purposes of active tourism based the initial focus of geographical research of the territories and their nature, balneal (springs) resources, in particular, during mid19th - mid20th centuries (V.Fedorchenko and T.Diorova, 2002).

The resources-oriented studies - descriptive in many cases - nevertheless, provided for substantiation of tourism resources and potential classification schemes and prompted further spatial analysis of resorts and recreation areas. Facilities and economic-based studies during 1960s-1980s followed needs of mass tourism and infrastructure and facilities development. Besides substantiation of tourism specialization of various locations, areas and regions discourse of that period brought to the fore the idea of territorial-recreation system (TRS) (V. Preobrazhenskiy, 1975): the recreational and social-geographic system, which integrates the sub-systems of nature complex, engineering structures, personnel, recreants and governing body as subsystems. Based on the above concept the Ukrainian geographer N. Krachylo (1987) substantiated geography of tourism focus on spatial patterns of conditions and special features of tourism industry development in various areas, regions and countries. Further elaborations enhanced the concept of recreation complex (O. Topchiev, 2005), embracing the cycles of recreation activities (with elements of recreation and additional services provision), recreation clusters based on 13 types of recreation activities and sub-complexes of recreation (resorts, cultural and business, sports, ecologic (green), confessional and entertaining, etc.).

The above concepts adjustment in 1990s draws our attention to the varied ties providing for the mechanisms of tourism complex of the territory integrity (Fig. 1).

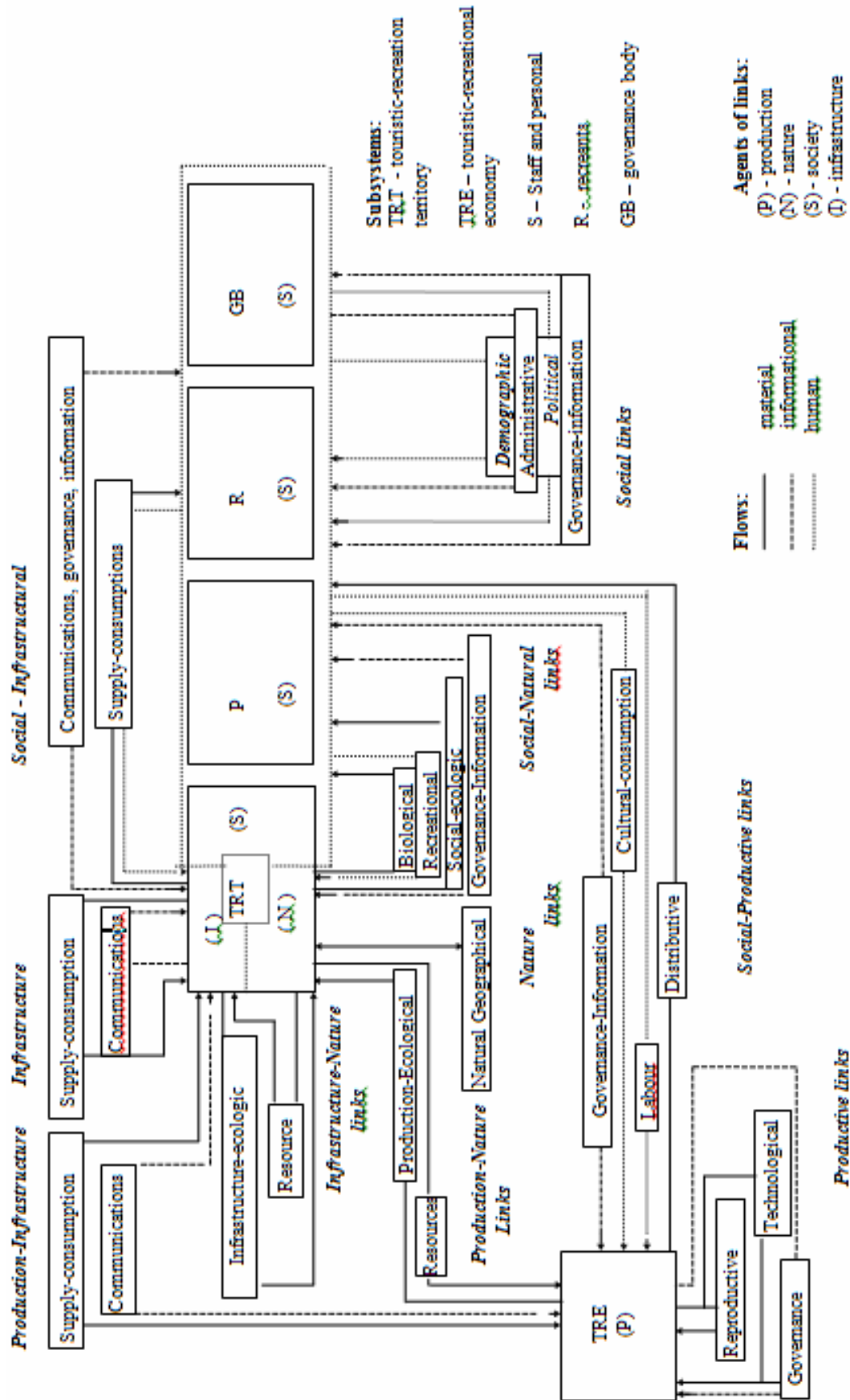


Figure 1. Tourism complex of the territory

The touristic-recreation territory integrates nature, infrastructure and social components and allows differentiation of horizontal and vertical interactions with the touristic-recreation economy and other sub-systems, correlated with the needs of tourism industry, tourism management and planning for the purposes of tourism policy shaping under the new conditions of market-based economy in Ukraine.

The transformations of the 1990s and specific focus on economic efficiency mirror the market-based researches and elaboration of tourism industry concept interpretation as the inter-branch complex, operation of which aims to satisfy diversity of leisure demand in travelling (O. Lyubitseva and V.Babrytska (Kiptenko), 2008) (Fig.2). Grounded by theoretical and methodological discourse of social and economic geography and inter-branch complex research and based on the system approach as well as the doctrine of territorial production complexes, the structure of tourism industry embraces production, territorial and institutional-organizational functional sub-systems. The elements of the spatial patterns of tourism (SPT) integrate the recreation and tourism clusters (a combination of tourism industry components within the specific territory) and form the territorial and production complex of recreation and tourism activities of certain taxonomy level.

Such an approach prospects insight on the basic category of tourism studies: “destination”, which means place having features attractive for tourists and enabling satisfaction of their growing demand, adapted to consumer preferences with regards to quality and safety. Generally it is the place chosen by the tourist to realize the motive of his/her travelling. Its scale varies from the location of certain hotel or resort to the country, region or macro-region. Destination choice reflects the resource-based motivation: attraction as a resource of the territory, which corresponds to the desires of the tourist and his/her perceptions of comfort (accessibility, services and their quality, etc.) and tourism image of the territory of destination. Available hospitality industry facilities, specific services (excursions, leisure, recreation, etc.) entities, transport and other social infrastructure inform the spatial patterns of tourism of the territory (SPT).

The components of the SPT vary dependent on the type of localization (functions and types of settlements, population of the place), size and level of tourism industry entities concentration, specialization and other features. The quantitative parameters substantiate the classification of SPT and the qualitative ones ground its typology. Combination of qualitative and qualitative features of the SPT defines discrete and areal elements. Points, centers and hubs represent the discrete forms while resorts, resort areas and zones constitute the areal ones (O. Lyubitseva, 2003). Besides the form and size the SPT elements vary on attractors/resources, which form the SPT itself and integrate localization of tourism services consumption at this place.

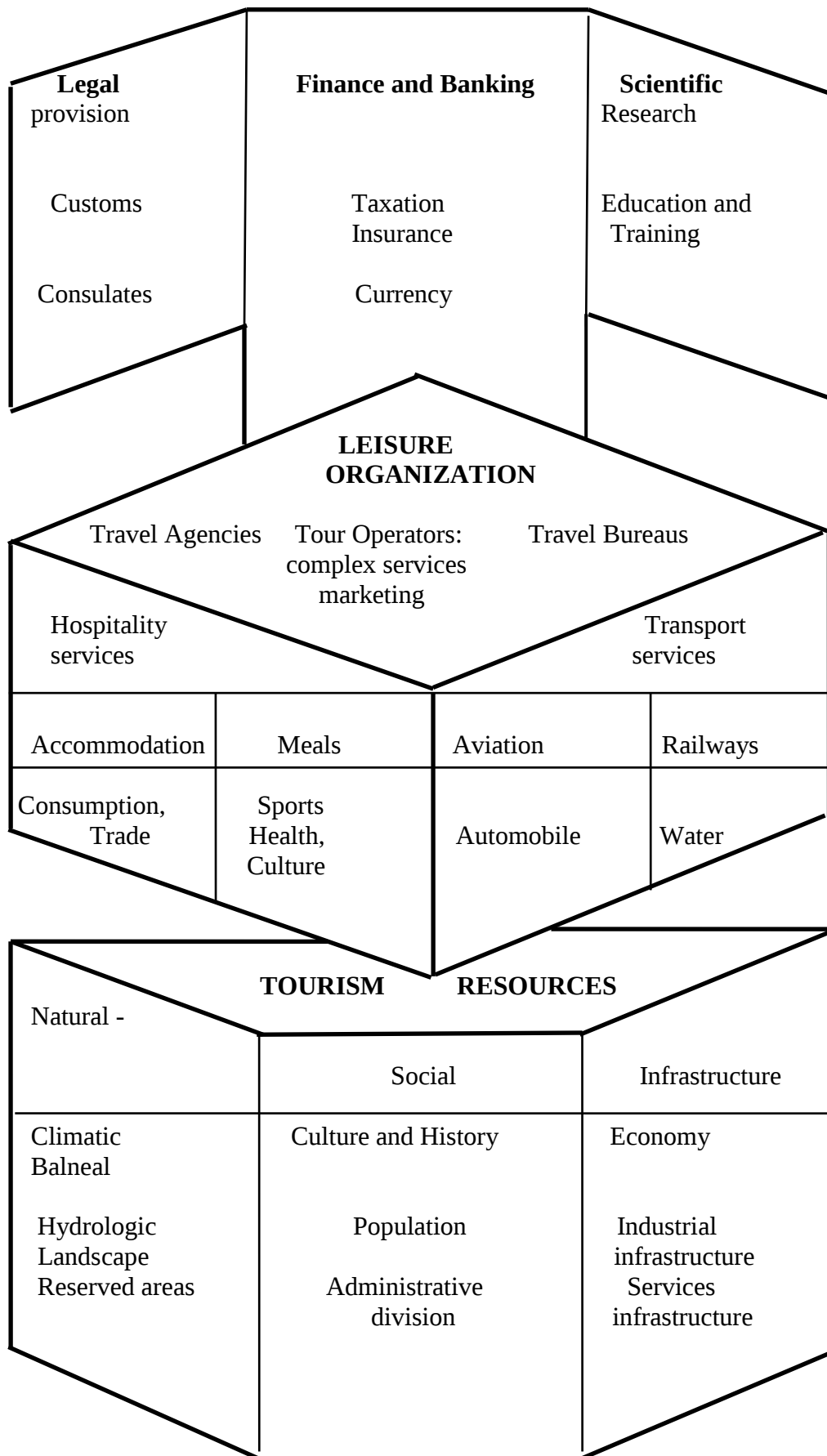


Figure 2. Tourism industry composition

The elements of SPT of any level, thus, differ on combinations composition and formation mechanisms and, actually, represent the destination. In this sense the concept of “destination” corresponds to the concept of “the element of territorial structure of recreation and tourism activity”. The destination, thus, means any territory providing for the recreation and tourism activity (of the tourism services market entities) and tourist him/herself. Based on the above the destination means a territory (place, location) having features attractive for tourists and facilities providing for satisfaction of their growing demand in correspondence with quality and safety requirements. The common usage of tourism resources by tourism industry entities grounds the formation of destinations and conditions their hierarchy based on the form and size of the SPT elements (O. Lyubitseva, 2009).

The above considerations enhance approaches to tourism development from the point of view of the destination’s (place, territory) competitiveness and image. The assessment concept includes five key features: access, amenities, attractions, assortment and address (V. Kiptenko and O. Malynovska, 2009). Each of them gets specific understanding from the geographical point of view. The physical and spatial characteristics ground the concept of *access* together with the evaluation of differentiation of visits regime, psychological, and informational provision for travelling to destinations. It relates to the different taxonomy levels of territories and entities, facilities – *amenities* - involved into productive and servicing process (hotels, molls, shops, restaurants etc., sanitary and parking facilities etc.). Their spatial patterns correlate with the localization of *attractions*: museums, monuments, theatres, castles, sports facilities and proposal related to their operation provided with the appropriate information on destination, its history, natural and cultural features, events, festivals and other festivities. The combination of the previous three features determines *assortment*: the diversity of tourist products, routs, spatial organization of tourism. The *address* targets the proposal of destination on the market. It focuses on geographical (spatial) accessibility, motivational (attractiveness) and operational aspects of touristic interactions within the places of various scales (local, areal, regional/national or international).

The dynamic tourism development requires rethinking of previous principles of geographical studies of tourism in globalized environment. The recreation geography extends its focus to spatial patterns and human behavior during the recreation activities in social and cultural systems (D.Nikolaenko, 2001); the geography of tourism, in turn, subjects on spatial organization of tourism industry (I.Smal, 2010) or spatial organization of tourism process (O.Lyubitseva, 2003). Contrary to the notions of 1970-1990s that recreation geography embraces geography of tourism, consideration of recreation activities as a part of tourism process favours the priority of geography of tourism (N.Fomenko, 2008) or geography of recreation and tourism query, since the above two disciplines are tightly interlinked (O.Beydyk, 1998).

Currently, the subject matter of geographic research of recreation and

tourism infiltrates the sustainable development concept in addition to the explorations of tourist movement, factors of its development, structure and spatial peculiarities of tourism phenomena and nature, social and economic processes linked to its effects. Among them the prospects of nature usage by tourism entities (tourists, tourism organizers), in which balance between levels, rates and directions of development correlates with the complex development of economic, social and ecological components, since tourism represents the resource-based activities and state of natural and social environment is at the same time the resource and the condition for the sustainability.

The transformation of the subject matter of geographic approach to tourism studies substantiates understanding of geography of tourism as an interdisciplinary branch of geographic knowledge on conditions and possibilities of the territory to provide for sustainable tourism development, regularities of its geospatial (territorial) organization caused by exogenous and endogenous factors. The contemporary discourse focuses on tourism process as the social phenomenon, tourism (geo-recreational) space and assessment of its sustainability and adaptability, interrelations of touristic, social, economic and other functions of place (territory). The domain develops in several directions, including recreation and tourism resource studies, areal tourism studies, tourism studies of countries, research of spatial organization of tourism industry and its branches, complex regional research of state and prospects of sustainable tourism development.

In fact, the maturity of geographic approach in studying tourism and its effects on society and environment informs number of reasons to be included to the theoretic generalization of the core of tourism studies or tourismology (Fig. 3). (O.Luvbitseva and V.Kiptenko, 2008).

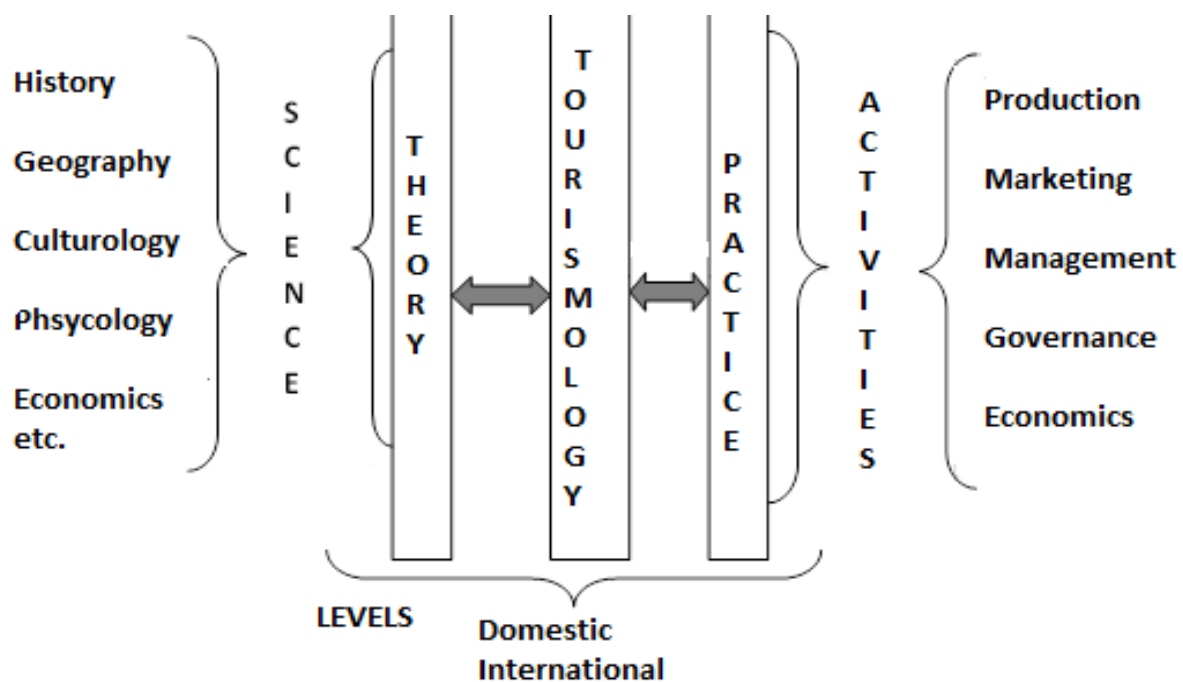


Figure 3. Tourismology magnitude

Tourism as an inter-disciplinary subject matter has chronological, chorological and activity-based dimensions of human affairs. The very definition of tourism brings to the fore the concept of the place and, thus, the logics of the integrative role of geographical approach to the core of tourism studies (Fig. 4).

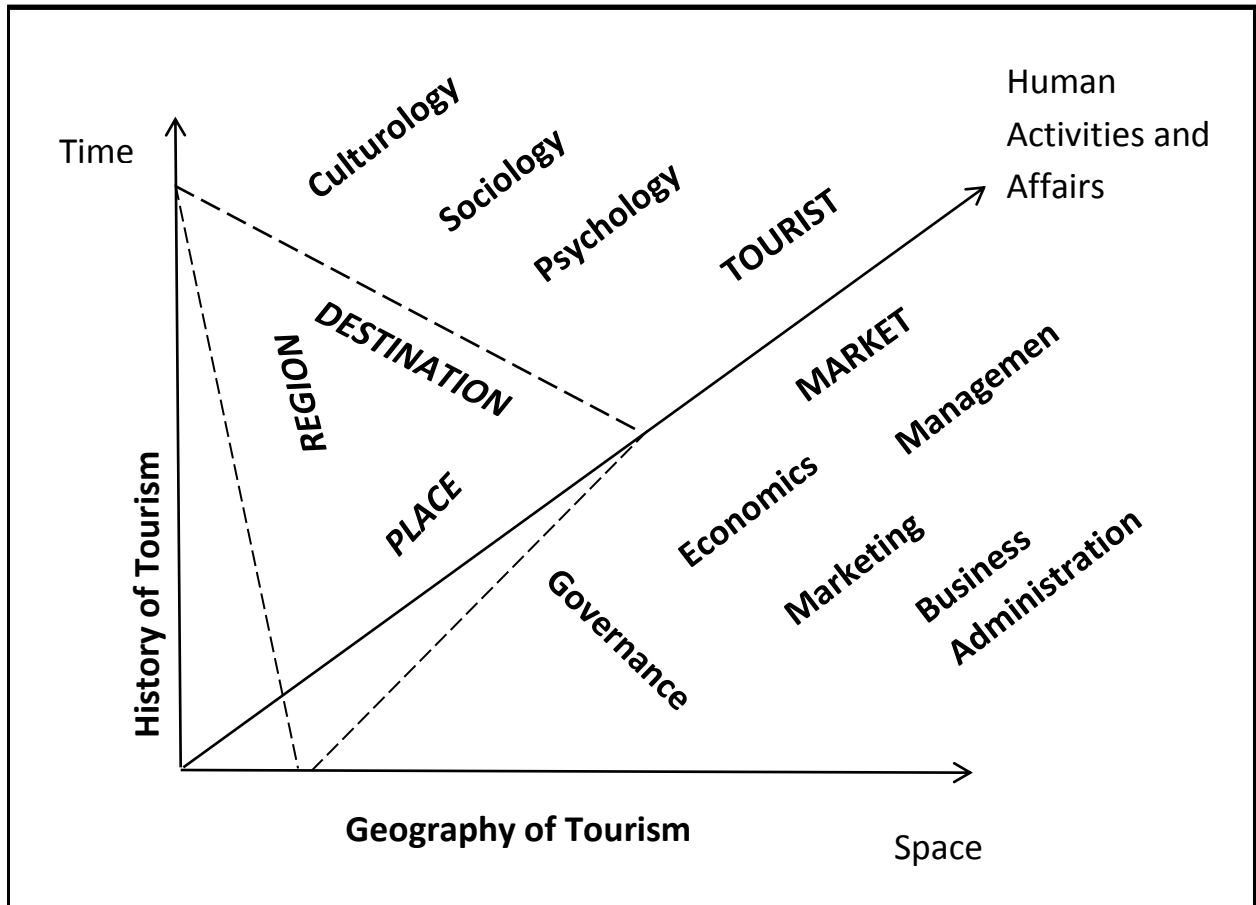


Figure 4. Inter-disciplinary dimension of tourism

Tourism development needs knowledge of space and the opportunities of the territory (as well as water areas (aquatory), and airtory). Requirements of tourists vary more and more together with changes in cultural and living standards and cause the diversification of proposal to stimulate the development of the tourism market. The knowledge of the territory informs the heart of scientific assessment of place conditions and opportunities for sustainable and socially-oriented tourism: limits of recreation activities pressure on certain types of landscapes, development of tourism infrastructure in terms of tourist needs, recreation areas and territorial recreation facilities planning, assessment of competitive position of tourism place, destination, region.

The geographically grounded understanding of place provides a complex view on natural, economic, social, cultural, political etc. environment to supply tourism with the best of possibilities to match demand and proposal. In addition,

geographical comparison as a method and practice allows evaluations of strengths and weaknesses, opportunities and threats from one place to another and serves as a basis for decisions making. In particular it matters for the tourism policy aimed to complex and balanced or - in other words - sustainable tourism development for the benefit of population and economy of certain place, area, country, region.

The logics of geography of tourism concepts evolution prompts reasonable transformation of the current “branch” or “sectoral” approach to the core of tourism studies. Considering the tourismology through the lens of systematic knowledge organization it should generalize the meta-theory of tourism studies embracing the basis of the spatial organization (resources, territorial organization of destinations, sustainable tourism development), history of tourism in the world, regions, countries, etc., organizational and economic (market) aspects (economy, marketing, management, etc.) and technological provision of tourism development (Fig.5).

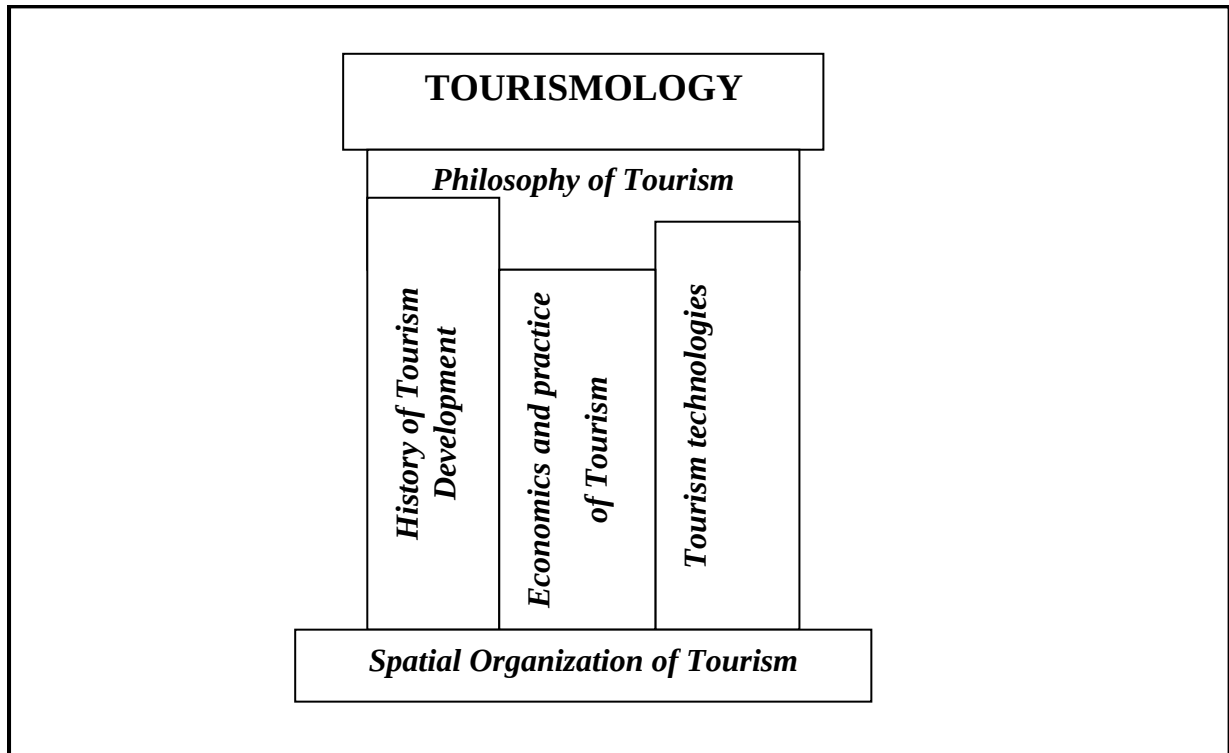


Figure 5. Systematic organization of the core of tourism studies

Conclusions. Geographical approach to tourism studies in Ukraine extends the subject, varies methodological approaches, deepens inter-branch geographical ties and co-operation with non-geographical disciplines. Interpretation of geography of tourism subject developed from resource focus, through tourist flows and patters of formation, location and spatial organization of tourism industry to the inter-disciplinary discourse on spatial organization of tourism activities (including conditions and features of their development and localization) or spatial organization of tourism process (consumption of tourism product during tourist migrations). The evolution of geography of tourism in

Ukraine proves the maturity of its conceptual grounds of research of such multidimensional phenomenon as tourism is. The reach of the current state of geography of tourism in Ukraine grounds its potential to contribute to the core of tourism studies or tourismology by complex research of spatial aspects of tourism.

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